

EVERYTHING BECOMES ISLAND:  
GULF ISLANDS WRITING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF REGION

by

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## ABSTRACT

Literary conventions in the writing of the Gulf Islands of the British Columbia coast have "invented" the islands as a distinct region. Lying at the centre of the Strait of Georgia urban region, the islands function as objects of pastoral desire: in representing escape from the city, they are perceived as "natural" by contrast. The landscapes of the Gulf Islands posit a version of "nature" radically different from that common elsewhere in Canada. The protected waters of inland sea and archipelago, benign climate, naturally-occurring alternation of forest and meadow, and defining liminal zone of the beach make the local landscape seem inherently pastoral. As does the pastoral mode, the tropes of discovery and settlement provide convenient, familiar frames for neo-colonial experience of nature and representation of landscape.

Using a broadly historical approach, the thesis traces the longevity of local landscape conventions since Spanish exploration of the islands in 1791 and 1792. Rapid population growth intensifies the dominance of the pastoral, while tropes of discovery and settlement give newcomers and established residents the rhetorical means to claim origins in the Gulf Islands. The need to establish origins shapes community politics, which are codified in the Islands Trust, the provincially-funded body that oversees land-use issues in the islands.

The thesis consists of ten chapters, the first two of which examine local conventions for defining Gulf Islands space and for writing the history of the islands. Chapters Three and Four discuss the tropes discovery and settlement, respectively, and Chapter Five focusses on characteristic narratives used to express the notion of "Gulf Island." Chapters Six through Eight revisit the themes of the previous three chapters, inverting the order of discovery and settlement in the second cycle to reflect the ahistorical, simultaneous invocation of these ideas locally. Whereas Chapter Five demonstrates how one Gulf Island version of pastoral dominates the region's presentation of itself in imaginative writing, Chapter Eight examines the consequences for local narrative when events cannot be articulated within the pastoral mode. As a counterpoint to analysis, in Chapter Four, of how settlement functions as a rhetorical device in Gulf Islands writing, Chapter Six examines aspects of the physical, settled landscape--specifically architecture and the ornamentation of holiday homes and homesites with objects gathered from the beach--as deliberate expressions of indigenouness. In a similar pairing, Chapter Seven examines nostalgic uses of the "discovery" trope intended to express local space, extending the scope of Chapter Three, which explicates attitudes toward the islands expressed through two "original" European voyages of discovery in the islands. Chapters Nine and Ten discuss the role of intertexts in Gulf Island writing: only very recently has the idea of a Gulf Islands "canon"--as indicated by intertextual references between Gulf Islands texts--become current, Gulf Islands writing continues to rely on intertextual references to imperial foundation texts to define, and determine significance in, local landscape. The "sketch" form, which permeates all genres and modes of landscape representation in the islands, in itself articulates the "natural" and thus expresses the condition of "Gulf Island."

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This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Jeremy Rayner, who suggested that scholarship might be compatible with the Gulf Islands, and who made the sacrifices that brought us back to live there.

*Local patriotism rests on the intimate experience of place, and on a sense of the fragility of goodness: that which we love has no guarantee to endure.*

Yi-Fu Tuan, Topophilia, 101

*Pastoral's ancient and universal appeal--to come away--requires new examination in an age in which there is no away.*

Glen Love, "Et in Arcadia Ego," 198

*In the West some beginnings are still remembered.*

Cole Harris, "The Emotional Structure of Canadian Regionalism," 13

*Crevecoeur . . . unwittingly reveals in the latter portion of his Letters to an American Farmer that the only really new persons are those who have forsaken white civilization for the tribes. 'As long as we keep ourselves busy tilling the earth,' he says, 'there is no fear of any of us becoming wild.' And yet, conditions being what they were then, it was not that simple. It was not always possible to keep one's head looking down at the soil shearing away from the bright low blade. There was always the great woods, and the life to be lived within it was, Crevecoeur admits, 'singularly captivating,' perhaps even superior to that so boasted of by the transplanted Europeans.*

Frederick Turner, Beyond Geography, 244-45

*Chronology is the temporal equivalent of a Euclidean space: both are operationally efficient because they deny the historical nature of the realms they manipulate.*

Paul Carter, The Road to Botany Bay, xix

*And everything thick, a kind of hair in the world, even the earth her boots sank into, powder earth composed of rootlets and fir mulch, a fibrous mass [sic]*

Daphne Marlatt, Ana Historic, 40

In Canada, the term "region" describes huge geographical areas--the Maritimes, the "east," central Canada, the Prairies, the West Coast, the North--that can span whole provinces or even several provinces. The Gulf Islands of the southern British Columbia coast, by contrast, lie in Georgia Strait, between Vancouver Island and the mainland and between Comox in the north and the Saanich Peninsula to the south. They cover a relatively small geographical area, of which their land mass is a much smaller proportion, while their combined permanent population amounts to that of a small town (according to Statistics Canada Census information, 15,428 people lived in the Islands Trust Area in 1986).<sup>1</sup> Despite being dwarfed by the national or continental scale of the Canadian notion of region, however, the Gulf Islands constitute a region as sharply differentiated and culturally distinct as any other "region" in Canada. Whether this regional identity can be verified by any objective measure of "difference" is not the point: as a rhetorical construct, the Gulf Islands have acquired a regional identity.

For the purposes of this study, I have adopted the Islands Trust definition of the boundaries of the Gulf Islands region (Figure 1). Many other versions of what constitutes the "Gulf Islands" still exist, despite (or in opposition to) the Trust's definition, but the Islands Trust area is the only legal definition of that space. Just as the Islands Trust

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<sup>1</sup> These figures are taken from an untitled Islands Trust policy document dated June 26, 1992, which cites Statistics Canada as its source. One substantial barrier to widespread acceptance to the idea of the islands as a region is the difficulty of collecting information about the area. The islands are not considered a discrete area by Statistics Canada, and such information as the federal government disseminates must be laboriously gleaned from accounts of the separate islands. The Islands Trust has nothing like enough funds necessary to conduct its own statistical research on the area.



is not the central focus of this dissertation, the degree to which the Trust designation differs from local variations on what spatial arrangement is meant by the term "Gulf Islands" is only a peripheral aspect of Gulf Islands space as I discuss that space in this study. Instead, I posit that the existence of the Trust (rather than the placement of the Trust Area's boundaries) rests on conventions of representing the islands, however constituted, as a discrete place, a region separate from the surrounding British Columbia, or Pacific Northwest, coast. As a site of political debate over the islands, the Trust embodies habits of mind and language that can be traced through writing about the islands over the past two centuries. My subject is not directly the politics of local space but the rhetoric that informs statements of local, which often has political consequences.

The title of the dissertation, "Everything Becomes Island," is a quotation from "Benchmarks," a poem by Doug Beardsley, who also wrote "How Things Get Started," the whole of which appears as an envoi to the dissertation.<sup>2</sup> The passage "[e]verything/ becomes island" describes for me a phenomenon I encountered while reading the primary materials for this study and planning the dissertation: I originally conceived of this project as an iconography of the Gulf Islands, an approach that seemed obvious, even inevitable, given how often aspects of the Gulf Islands landscape, both physical and social, are transformed into icons of Gulf Island-ness. I abandoned the notion of iconography in favour of a study identifying and analysing rhetorical patterns of the local--beginning with

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<sup>2</sup> Beardsley's poem physically and discursively traces a line away from the last lines of my conclusion. I refer to two descriptions of the island landscape that emphasize the insubstantial nature of that landscape: as Beardsley writes, there is "nothing to touch." His title both echoes the grounding of this study in a personal experience of landscape, and brings the path of the dissertation back to the beginning again, underscoring the point that this study cannot be the final word on the subject.

precisely the urge to define the characteristics of the local that had prompted my earlier approach--in order to investigate why the impulse toward assembling and using a local iconography is so prevalent in Gulf Islands writing.

The icons I identified, among which ferries, driftwood, and the arbutus are conspicuous examples, tend to be repeated from one island to another: such repetition indicates shared conventions that group islands together into a rhetorical region. Problematically, however, these icons are used to represent not solely or even principally a Gulf Islands region but individual islands which in turn stand for the condition of "Gulf Island." The shift from the singular island in the phrase "everything becomes island" to the plural islands in my subtitle reflects the ambiguous relation between the archipelago and the individual islands in the group as rhetorical constructs. The common practice of considering one Gulf Island (or aspects of that island) as a metonymy for the whole region calls into question the validity of the notion "Gulf Islands region," but I interpret that blurring of the distinction between two spatial entities as a determining characteristic of Gulf Islands writing, since fluid relations between the local and the region helps define Gulf Island space.

In the Canadian context, the word "region" carries connotations of populist resistance to centralized federal power: depending on the region, this power is perceived to reside in "the east," in central Canada, in Ontario, or in Ottawa. In the Gulf Islands, all of these locations of control obtain, but they are complicated by other oppositions: to the rest of Canada beyond the Rocky Mountains, to the rest of the province beyond the Coast Mountains, to the urban centres--Vancouver, Victoria, and Nanaimo and their suburban

peripheries--that surround the Gulf Islands, to the Regional Districts (rural versions of municipal government) around the Strait under whose jurisdiction the islands fall, and to the Islands Trust, a specially created government body intended to permit greater local or community control of Gulf Island development.<sup>3</sup> As a colonial space in all of these senses, the Gulf Islands region hardly needs other imperial models against which to define itself: to a great extent, however, the islands--whose European settlement was initially overwhelmingly British--continue to reflect English culture, not solely, however, by replicating the landscape and literature of the imperial centre, but by persisting in defining local space in reaction both to that centre and to all the other poles against which the islands define themselves. The crucial, paradoxical element of Gulf Island neo-colonialism is that here, immigration means not recreating a remembered imperial past but repudiating that past: the immigrant to the islands "goes native," shedding earlier constructions of self

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<sup>3</sup> Formed by the provincial government in 1975, the Islands Trust is "the local government agency responsible for land use planning for the islands and water in the Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound" ("Framing Our Common Future"). Each of the thirteen main islands in the area has two elected trustees, who elect from among themselves an executive council to oversee the Trust (the core islands are Bowen, Denman, Hornby, Gabriola, Galiano, Lasqueti, Mayne, North and South Pender, Salt Spring, Saturna, and Thetis). The Trust has authority over only a very few aspects of Gulf Island life, all of which stem from issues of land use. For all other municipal purposes, each island is assigned to the regional district closest to it: in all, the Gulf Islands fall into seven different districts. Given their physical separateness from these districts, and their relatively low tax base, the islands are generally less well-served by those districts than their mainland community counterparts. The Regional Districts are responsible for building codes, property taxes, road maintenance, garbage collection and recycling, and parks and recreation. Except for the southern Gulf Islands, island schools also belong to off-island school districts with very different priorities and problems than island schools. The Islands Trust itself is compromised by the fact that it is funded largely by the provincial government, rather than by local taxes: since much of the islands' land area is owned by forest companies, and timber revenue is a crucial source of provincial income, for example, Trust objections to industrial-scale logging cannot be enforced.

in favour of identity as a Gulf Islander. Entering Gulf Islands space means crossing the beach into nature.<sup>4</sup>

This tendency does not reflect a persistent imperial interest in the islands, but rather results from the great influence of nineteenth-century English adventure fiction on those who visit, emigrate to, and write about the Gulf Islands. The ability to use these fictions as interpretive frames for making sense of a place depends upon the degree to which the islands can be perceived as "natural" space, as undisturbed, that is, by previous imperial activity. From the perspective of English culture--that of a small, heavily populated island, settled for thousands of years--untouched, pristine nature, which is to say wilderness, is not the significant factor in identifying that space: rather, the crucial criteria of this "natural" space are the absence of previous texts and the absence of settlement. Neither are these requirements absolute, however, since what is necessary is apparent or perceived absence. Apparent absence permits the imaginative colonization of Gulf Island space; it also permits the emigrant an illusion of priority that naturalizes all evidence to the contrary. The rhetorical vehicle by which this naturalization occurs is the pastoral mode, through which evidence of settlement can be stripped of its colonial implications and made to read as uncolonized "nature."

This dissertation demonstrates the rhetorical processes that operate in the Gulf Islands to make that place a separate region. I use the term "rhetoric" to indicate the

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<sup>4</sup> Greg Dening uses the island beach as a metaphor for inversion of the imperial project of colonization in the Marquesas in the South Pacific. For Dening, to cross the beach is to cross the cultural boundary from the colonizing power to the colonized place: the colonizer abandons the imperial project--to recreate in a new place the society left behind--and divests himself of his original culture in favour of identifying himself entirely with the culture of the new place.

language, imagery, and intertextual references by which Gulf Islands writing demonstrates a particular ideology of the local. My thesis rests on the principle that the islands are generally defined as "natural" space, in contrast to the places--variously perceived as not-natural--against which the Gulf Island region distinguishes itself.<sup>5</sup> As a concept by which the Gulf Islands are defined, "nature" consists of one pole of a juxtaposition with an

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<sup>5</sup> The Islands Trust implicitly rests upon this notion of the islands as natural space: it is primarily this characteristic that the Trust is intended to promote and maintain. Among the first steps taken by the Trust after its formation in 1975 was the compilation of a comprehensive "Natural Areas Study," a key Trust document that identifies the natural amenities of the individual islands and ranks them according to their vulnerability and value.

The term "Islands Trust" announces an inherently conservative, and conservationist, ideology: the Trust's motto--"to preserve and protect"--resonates with the familiar law enforcement motto "to serve and protect." In 1988, a group of volunteers assembled a book, Islands in Trust that supports and describes the influence of the Trust on the individual islands in the Trust Area: in the summer of 1991, many of the same volunteers began a periodical to serve the Trust Area and promote the Trust. The title of the periodical--The Gulf Islands Guardian--reiterates the notion of protection that the term "Islands Trust" connotes. Islanders opposed to the Trust's capacity to regulate land use perceive in the Trust a program of imposing conservationist values on the islands and enforcing those values through control of bylaws and zoning regulations. In 1993, a disaffected Pender Island resident launched a periodical (which ran for only a few issues) called "The Liberator" as a vehicle for voicing opposition to the Trust: the rhetorical function of "liberator" as opposed to the regulatory, inhibiting connotations of "trust" codifies the polarity over how "nature" is interpreted in the islands. The Liberator's viewpoint perceived "nature" in the context of frontier ethics, as freedom from restraint and government interference.

As if this polarization were not enough to make the Trust's role difficult, the unspoken context of the notion of "nature" and of initiatives such as the "Natural Areas Study" is that "nature" is perceived by the provincial government, the source of the Trust's mandate and funding, as primarily a recreational resource. The Islands Trust Acts of 1975 and 1989 give the Trust the task of overseeing land use in the islands not only in the interests of islanders but in the interests of all other residents of the province also. In setting up the Trust in this fashion, the provincial government codified the idea that the islands' main function was as a playground for the rest of the province: needless to say, the interests of recreational users of Gulf Island nature conflict profoundly with the interests of residents, who resent the increased noise, pressure on ferry transportation, traffic on island roads, and harvest of fish and shellfish that visitors entail.

undesirable state from which the islands represent an escape. For the most part, that state is characterized as urban, developed, sophisticated, crowded, noisy, dangerous, artificial, alienating and rigidly codified in its social structures and economic order. The "nature" that the Gulf Islands offer, by contrast, has a visible, quantifiable aspect because its topography and indigenous, wild flora and fauna remain undisturbed by human presence in the landscape. To the degree that this undisturbed state is perceived, that state eliminates the perception of human presence also. The term "pastoral" participates in a similarly subjective range of interpretations. I use the word "pastoral" here both to indicate a series of constructions of local nature as intrinsically beneficent and to signal the rhetorical means by which even very obvious human manipulation of the landscape can be naturalized, subsumed, that is, into an overarching perception of the islands as "natural" in the sense I have suggested. The nostalgic connotations of the pastoral mode, furthermore, permit a foreign space--as the islands must be to immigrants--to be "recognized" as home, a crucial element in the neocolonial rhetoric that operates locally.

The identification of Gulf Island space with nature is so pervasive as to seem invisible; it penetrates statements--both verbal and non-verbal--about local identity to an overwhelming degree. I have assumed, however, that such an equation is not inevitable--not a product of some intrinsic characteristic of Gulf Island topography--but a construct that enables people to claim a personal connection to this place. In order to understand why such claims might be required or desired, it must be recognized that the population of the Gulf Islands grew by more than 25% in the five years between the 1986 and 1991 census counts, a figure that the Islands Trust states is "among the fastest growing in

Canada."<sup>6</sup> Even though the enormous scale of development that increased the number of lots--and hence potential population--exponentially in the early 1970s has been curbed by the Islands Trust, many thousands of those lots remain undeveloped more than two decades later. The rate of building on those lots has been steady, however, and continues to increase: since the creation of a subdivision in the islands usually means little change in the actual topography, other than the building of roads and a proliferation of surveyor's tape, it is easy to read subdivided land as "natural," since it is usually covered with second-growth forest and appears to be undisturbed. As soon as a lot is cleared for building, however, that topographical statement of "nature" is profoundly compromised.

In realizing their ambition to move to the Gulf Islands and into "nature," immigrants to the islands find themselves resented for disturbing the appearance of "nature" that their predecessors have assumed to be inviolate. Once this repeated chronology of arrival and disturbance begins, the notion of priority inevitably dominates the rhetoric of local identity. Needless to say, issues of land use and land tenure dominate island politics, and those politics penetrate every aspect of community life. To be able to discuss the genealogy of land tenure becomes the mark of a local, that is, indigenous person: but acquiring that

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<sup>6</sup> The Islands Trust used this information in a flyer ("Framing Our Common Future") sent to all Trust Area residents in 1992 when the newly-appointed Minister for Municipal Affairs required the Trust to form a policy statement to apply to the whole Trust Area. The flyer invited island residents to attend public forums intended to gather local views about the future of the Trust Area. The flyer was unusual in that it addressed not the concerns of individual islands but focussed instead on the entire area served by the Trust: responses to the proposed policy statement varied widely from one island to another. On Gabriola, islanders were suspicious of the entire process, which they viewed as costly, redundant, and an attempt to divert attention from the pressing issue on the island: the anticipated sale of much of the island's area by Weldwood of Canada. The Gabriola version of the public forums suggested that islanders had little sympathy for the idea of a Gulf Islands region, at least as that idea is represented by the scope of the Islands Trust.

knowledge requires losing the sensation of living in a natural, unclaimed place. This genealogy, however, remains a subject for conversation,<sup>7</sup> a way to position oneself, face to face, with neighbours and other islanders, rather than entering into written representations of the islands. In writing, the rhetoric of belonging shifts radically back to constructions of the Gulf Islands as natural.

The pressure of increasing population makes the rhetoric of belonging a crucially important factor in being comfortable, at home, in the islands, both for recent immigrants and for those who came earlier but feel themselves competing for space--both physical and discursive--with more recent arrivals. The fact of immigration explains why the two most persistent tropes in that rhetoric of belonging have been "discovery" and "settlement," both

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<sup>7</sup> Cole Harris mentions the importance of conversational material in "The Emotional Structure of Canadian Regionalism" (1981):

Even today, genealogical conversation is a Maritime staple, a reflection of communities whose people have known each other through the generations. In the West such conversation is rarer for the local texture has been different, having less of custom and the generations and more of movement, technology, markets, and memories of other places. (16-17)

The topics of Western conversation that Harris identifies are strikingly absent in the Gulf Islands, where genealogies of land tenure, rather than of people, reflect local notions of "community."

I have interpreted "local" writing to mean not only that produced by residents but that of visitors to the islands also. I do not distinguish between insider and outsider views of the islands, primarily because I have found many more points of similarity than contrast between the two. Visitors often appeal to the islands as "home," thus invoking a variation of the settlement trope, while islanders even more often speak and behave like tourists, using an iconography of sunsets and beaches, for example, to refer to their home islands, as if writing postcards. The notion of a common cultural and literary landscape binding the Gulf Islands into a region must thus include, in my view, the perspective of those who do not live there. The mandate of the Islands Trust, to preserve and protect the islands not only for residents but also for all British Columbians, sets a precedent for including in construction of the region views of the islands from elsewhere.

of which rest on the notion that upon arrival in the islands, the immigrant engages with a natural landscape unmediated by previous arrivals. Paradoxically, however, these tropes also dominate visitors' descriptions of the islands, who have as much--perhaps more--of an investment as island residents in perceiving the islands as natural. The tropes thus function as statements of origins and as claims to authentic Gulf Island experience. As elements in colonial narrative, both tropes require identification of the islands as "natural" space, since "discovery" describes initial recognition of a new landscape, while "settlement" similarly records the act of being the first to inhabit that landscape. Both of these terms invest heavily in the notion of priority, and in the Gulf Islands they retain the colonial implications that such priority is the principal, perhaps only, grounds on which a claim to possession of land can be made. In the islands, where such claims are the moral basis of local politics of belonging, these terms carry enormous rhetorical weight.

In the context of Canadian literature, the trope of "discovery" as frame for both landscape representation and narrative has received a great deal of critical attention. Studies such as Frank Davey's article on the explorer figure and Linda Hutcheon's analysis of historiographic metafiction examine the strong tendency in western Canadian fiction to recover and reread tropes of discovery and exploration as sites of engagement with landscape and identity. Both Ian McLaren and T.D. McLulich have discussed the trope as a literary convention (particularly the variations on the persona of the explorer or discoverer) in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century exploration narratives in the Canadian west and north. Graham Huggan's analysis of maps and mapmaking tropes in Canadian and Australian fiction examine another variant on the discovery trope. Maria Tippett and

Douglas Cole have traced the influence of British coastal explorers on representations of the British Columbia coast landscape. Since the Gulf Islands are not recorded in any English exploration narrative as the genre is understood by these commentators, the use of the discovery trope in the islands does not refer to local historical fact.

Mary Louise Pratt considers the discovery trope to be a particularly Victorian invention for articulating imperial engagement with a new landscape. Rather than the taxonomic procedures used by followers of Linnaeus, or what Pratt calls "the poetics of science" used by those travellers who emulated Alexander von Humboldt, the Victorians, she says, "opted for a brand of verbal painting whose highest calling was to produce for the home audience the peak moments at which geographical 'discoveries' were 'won' for England" (*Imperial Eyes*, 201). Since the Gulf Islands did not receive attention from English imperial travellers (namely the Royal Navy) until the mid-nineteenth century, the dominance of the discovery trope in representations of the islands is not surprising. Pratt perceives three separate conventions operating in the English version of "discovery": the traveller aestheticizes the landscape, seeks "density of meaning" in that landscape, and establishes "a relation of mastery between seer and seen" (202). Despite the reduction of the trope to a much simplified, less directly imperial version in Gulf Island writing, the same conventions apply. The ultimate purpose of those conventions, however, is quite different in the Gulf Islands.

By contrast, as opposed to "nature," "wilderness," or "the land", "settlement" is not a term that has much currency in Canadian criticism, much less on the coast. In the United States, the connection between "settlement" and the west was firmly codified in the

discourse of the "frontier": in Canada, however, that discourse did not operate (or operated on a much reduced scale). As a trope in Canadian literature, settlement is identified predominantly with the prairies, the landscape that corresponds most directly to the notion of "the land" upon which the American frontier thesis rests. To speak, therefore, of "settlement" on the coast--a place identified in both popular and literary consciousness with sea rather than land--is to disrupt a convention of the notion of literary regions in Canada so automatic as to seem inevitable. The trope of "settlement" has very little valence on the Canadian west coast, and has received little if any attention either in coastal literature or in criticism of that literature. In examining that trope in the Gulf Islands context, I follow not Canadian critical models but the example of Paul Carter's assessment of how the settlement trope functions in the spatial history of Australia.

With regard to both tropes, I am aware that my approach bypasses complex issues of power and privilege that the tropes "discovery" and "settlement" often embody. In the case of the Gulf Islands, the imperial structures to which the tropes allude have little local significance. This is not to say that European displacement of indigenous peoples no longer occurs in the islands, quite the reverse. But the rhetoric of Gulf Islands ideology is not primarily directed toward justifying that displacement: rather, the discourse that invokes tropes of settlement and discovery concerns the competing claims of European presence in the region.

Tracing the use of discovery and settlement tropes in Gulf Island representations forms a core around which I have structured the dissertation. To investigation of those tropes as vehicles for identifying with the local, I have added analysis of representative

narratives also intended to make that identification. In addition to the pastoral mode and tropes of discovery and settlement, I have found that certain kinds of narratives are used in the islands to make the same statements of authenticity. In this study, the term "narrative" refers to a local version of story-telling, in which exemplary stories are used both to define and to claim indigenoussness. These stories are limited in scale, lacking developed plots and characters, and thus resemble anecdotes rather than literary texts. Nearly all imaginative writing about the islands--and much non-fiction also--uses some variation of the sketch, a form associated with colonial culture: in the islands, sketches are used in the place of declarative statements to illustrate the character of the local place, just as anecdotes illustrate a person's character more efficiently than description in biography. Furthermore, the telling of local stories in itself constitutes indigenoussness: local conventions of narration--conventions both of subject and of form--confer authenticity on those who use them.

My study thus combines analysis of foundational tropes suggested by The Road to Botany Bay (1987), Paul Carter's spatial history of Australia, with William Cronon's insistence on the connections between narrative and place in writing history, principles that he describes in "Nature, History, and Narrative" (1992) and illustrates in his history of Chicago's relation to its hinterland, Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West (1991). The central portion of the thesis thus concentrates on settlement and discovery tropes and on narrative: despite my methodological models' being historical, however, the structure of the thesis is not deliberately or strictly chronological. Having discussed these three local rhetorical modes in Chapters Three, Four, and Five, I then devote three further

tropes and on narrative: despite my methodological models' being historical, however, the structure of the thesis is not deliberately or strictly chronological. Having discussed these three local rhetorical modes in Chapters Three, Four, and Five, I then devote three further chapters to discussing them again. Doubling the central chapters illustrates that the notion of a history of the Gulf Islands as a rhetorical construct is problematic since, rather than constituting a series of changes, whose development can be traced as a logical sequence, the rhetoric of the local endlessly replicates foundational tropes of beginning. Variations do occur over time, as in response to the environmental politics of the late twentieth century, for example, but the variations pale in comparison to the remarkable persistence of the basic tropes. The chronology that is implied in considering the two tropes--discovery and settlement--together does not obtain in the islands, because neither is used locally to initiate a sequence, but rather to identify and arrest a specific moment that in itself encapsulates experience of the local. Narratives of encounters with Gulf Island topography are similarly consistent. Chapter Four discusses how the pastoral as a rhetorical mode overwhelmingly dictates both form and plot of Gulf Island narratives, while Chapter Eight demonstrates what happens to local narrative conventions when actual experience in the Gulf Islands radically transgresses those conventions. Like the double chapters on tropes, however, the discussion of Gulf Island gothic in Chapter Eight further demonstrates the profound degree to which pastoral is considered the only appropriate narrative frame for the islands.

The scholarly literature on the pastoral is extensive, and the modes in which the term is applied virtually endless. William Empson's Some Versions of Pastoral (1935)

demonstrates how diverse both the manifestations of pastoral and its implications can be, and uses Marxist analysis to show how pastoral is invoked in literature to articulate power relations between social classes in England. Sixty years on, Lisa Robertson, writing in a Canadian context, describes pastoral as "the nation-making genre": "within a hothouse language we force the myth of the Land to act as both political resource and mystic origin" (95). She states that pastoral utopias "efficiently aestheticize and naturalize the political practices of genocide, misogyny, and class and race oppressions" (95). My discussion does not find the pastoral operating directly in any of Empson's versions, or in Robertson's, but the Gulf Islands pastoral, in all its varieties clearly has a political function. In general, the identification of the islands as pastoral utopias is common to all representations of the islands (always remembering that the views of the Salish do not form part of the debate): what is at issue is in which aspect of the islands and Gulf Island culture that utopian character resides.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> In Canada, the pastoral is widely perceived as irrelevant--even grossly misleading--as a frame for interpreting the Canadian landscape. In his 1943 review of A.J.M. Smith's anthology of Canadian poetry, Northrop Frye applauds what he perceives as "very little Tarzanism in Canadian poetry." He finds that "few really good Canadian poets have thought that getting out of cities into God's great outdoors really brings one closer to the sources of inspiration" (209). Frye's repudiation of nature as a source of literary inspiration constitutes a rejection of a major variation of the literary pastoral. Gaile McGregor suggests in The Wacousta Syndrome (1985) that pastoral has no place in representations of the Canadian landscape. To use the pastoral, in her view, is fundamentally to misrepresent the inherent character of that landscape. McGregor's position parallels Frye's, who finds in Smith's anthology proof that "the outstanding achievement of Canadian poetry is the evocation of stark terror," the "immediate source" of which "is obviously the frightening loneliness of a huge and thinly settled country" (209). As will become clear in my dissertation, the Gulf Islands have never been perceived as "a huge and thinly settled country," quite the opposite. Despite scholarly challenges to both Frye's and McGregor's theses, critical studies devoted specifically to pastoral in the Canadian landscape, or the landscape of any region in Canada, are noticeably absent. Margaret Atwood's Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (1972) has had an enormous influence in

function as a frame for engagement with the natural landscape. The pastoral, he explains, values heroic efforts both to control the landscape and to escape all social relationships. Meeker believes that both projects are doomed to failure, and pastoral then treats the landscape destroyed in its name as the noble ruins of a great endeavour. As Meeker points out, the implications of this great endeavour for the integrity of nature and the natural landscape are catastrophic: he locates in pastoral assumptions about appropriate relations between humans and the non-human world that destroy both social relations and the natural world. Given that the two aims of pastoral as identified by Meeker can be readily observed operating in the Gulf Islands, albeit on a limited scale, the implications of the pastoral for the local are alarming.

The current study, however, is not intended as a critique of Gulf Islands ideology but as a study in the relationship between the landscape and writing of a particular place. I use the term "Gulf Island writing" throughout the dissertation as a deliberate alternative to the expression "Gulf Island literature." I include in the notion of "writing" other modes of expression than the purely verbal, particularly architecture. As I discuss in the conclusion, the term "literature" misrepresents the character of nearly all representations of the islands, since the Gulf Island aesthetic generally rejects the conventions of high art. The absence of most of the imaginative writing about the Gulf Islands from this dissertation may nonetheless seem strange. One crucial convention of Gulf Islands writing, however, is that a literary landscape, considered in the sense of a collective identification of a particular place or topography with a particular author or literary work, cannot be said to exist in the islands. It would not have been possible, for instance, to structure this dissertation as

Frederick Turner does his book Spirit of Place: The Making of an American Literary Landscape (1989). In that book, Turner visits places associated in the collective American consciousness with individual authors who have "made" those places by writing about them in literary works, specifically novels. In the Gulf Islands, by contrast, local histories and autobiographical cruising narratives overwhelmingly displace imaginative writing (by which I mean canonical literary genres) as the means of assigning significance to the landscape. Setting the Canadian context against the American, Eli Mandel refers to Robert Kroetsch's view of "regional writing not as a matter of place so much as a matter of what he calls 'voice.'" Mandel prefers this shift in focus because it "moves us from mere landscape art to something else in writing, something closer to the shared assumptions of a region, something carried in the folk culture, or the unofficial culture rather than in literary traditions as such" ("The Regional Novel," 110). This "something" is the subject of my study of Gulf Island writing.

In attempting to locate that "something," I based my methodology primarily on Prairyerth (1991), William Least Heat Moon's "deep map" of the Flint Hills in Michigan, his own place of origin. The notion of the deep map requires repeated journeys through local territory, at different times of the day and year, through shifting light and weather, taking different angles and paths through the familiar landscape until it acquires a complexity and texture that makes intimacy with it as intoxicating as encountering an alien land. This process describes not only movement through the landscape, but, as Least Heat Moon demonstrates, through its history, legends, language, prejudices, economics, food, literature--its culture, in short. Clifford Geertz uses the term "thick description" to describe

the anthropologist's version of this approach. I have used Least Heat Moon's model to approach the Gulf Islands through a kind of triangulation of local rhetoric: changing the angle through which I view the textual landscape and passing through it more than once gives me a clearer view of the relationship between the points I perceive. The two studies that most closely resemble my own in the Canadian context are Gerard L. Pocius' book A Place to Belong: Community Order and Everyday Space in Calvert, Newfoundland (1992) and David M. Rayside's A Small Town in Modern Times: Alexandria, Ontario (1992): while I perceive in Gulf Islands writing many of the same elements Pocius discusses (belonging, community, domesticated space), Rayside's illumination of the gap between a community's self-identity and the reality of its dynamics also resonates with elements of Gulf Island ideology. The extremely local, rural focus of these two studies offers a precedent for my own work, though neither is specifically concerned with representations of place in writing. Comparison with Pocius and Rayside, however, also raises a significant point of difference between their studies and my own: I have chosen not to use as primary sources oral testimony or my own observation of local rhetoric in use at community meetings, on the ferries, at dances and other social events, in conversations overheard in pubs and restaurants, or exchanges I have had with island business owners, to give some examples of encounters that have illustrated for me many of the processes I describe in this dissertation. Instead, I confine myself to printed materials and, in the case of Chapter Six, to physical structures. In the absence of other scholarly investigations of Gulf Islands writing, I felt it was important that the primary materials discussed in this study be readily accessible to anyone who wishes verify those materials or challenge my

interpretation of them.<sup>9</sup>

Like Prairyerth, the dissertation is a palimpsest rather than a chronology.<sup>10</sup>

Prairyerth is by no means a history of the Flint Hills, but the history of the place resides in the book: in the book's structure, chronology gives way to the region's key spatial arrangements of county grid and watershed. Like *Least Heat Moon*, and like Carter in his

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<sup>9</sup> Also, I wanted to avoid writing from an anthropological standpoint, since my own position as a scholar is inevitably complicated by my being a resident of the islands. This study is the indirect result of many childhood summers on family property on North Pender, and of renting, with my husband, homes on Galiano and Mayne for several months. After years in Québec and Ontario, we came back to the west coast, finally buying a home on Gabriola in 1991. In 1994, having decided that Gabriola was not a "real" Gulf Island (by virtue of its increasingly suburban relationship to Nanaimo), we moved to Thetis Island. These five are the islands I know best, but I have also visited Gambier, Bowen, Salt Spring, Denman, and Hornby. My acquaintance with the islands is clearly by no means complete, and my own viewpoint has often been that of the tourist rather than the resident. But the notion of the islands as the site of my "field work" (which an anthropological approach would imply) from which I would return to the academy, does not accommodate the fact that the islands are also my home.

My entirely personal assessment of the limitations of Gabriola is an example of my own engagement with this project: I am motivated in this study by the same impulse toward definition of the islands that I discern in the primary material I analyse. My motivation is similarly political: I share the conservationist standpoint represented by the Trust, whatever my reservations about its actual practice. To a large extent, I have tried to keep my own biases out of this study, primarily because in Canada, as opposed to the western United States, the personal essay is not regarded as an appropriate mode for scholarly studies of landscape and literature (to use both terms broadly). In order not to edit myself out of the project entirely, I have used footnotes to include my own experience in the main line of argument.

<sup>10</sup> This dissertation resembles PrairyErth further in that it echoes *Least Heat Moon's* practice of prefacing each chapter in that book with a substantial group of epigraphs. *Least Heat Moon* describes his epigraphs as extracts "from the commonplace book": the idea of a commonplace book informs several Gulf Islands works, also, as I mention in my conclusion. The epigraphs for each chapter of the dissertation are arranged in a sequence that loosely sketches the line of argument in that chapter. In that they stitch together scraps of scholarly commentary and local writing, the epigraphs resemble a patchwork quilt, another key Gulf Islands image. *A Gulf Islands Patchwork* (1962) is the best-known local history of the islands, and arguably the most highly disseminated source of "Gulf Islands" among the works I discuss.

account of Australia, Cronon makes spatial relationships--specifically the polarity between an urban centre and its hinterland--the fundamental fact of Chicago's identity. Despite their emphasis on space, all three writers treat local history as a source of insight into the coordinates of local identity. Local history is the means by which people who consider themselves indigenous to a place tell themselves the stories in which that indigenouness originates. All three of these cultural historians find in local histories rhetorical strategies intended to invest those spatial relationships with historical inevitability. Echoing the way in which Cronon, Carter, and Heat Moon articulate the relation between space and history, I devote my first two chapters to these two notions, considering the idea of the Gulf Islands as a region in Chapter One and how that region is defined in local history in Chapter Two.

Chapters Nine and Ten present a final set of paired chapters, both concerned with how intertextual references contribute to constructions of the Gulf Islands as a distinct region, but approaching the idea of local intertexts from two very different perspectives. Chapter Nine assesses how completely Gulf Island texts conventionally ignore one another, except for guide books--which are usually written by people who do not live locally--which consistently borrow material from local non-imaginative writing, especially local histories.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The category containing the greatest number of Gulf Island books is guide books, a form that most directly disseminates and reflects popular constructions of the islands because its readership is so widespread. I do not include the form in this study, however, except incidentally, because they very seldom use original material, relying instead on other sources of information about the islands: previous guide books, local histories, anthropological and archaeological works, sailing directions, eighteenth-century exploration narratives, and field guides. The guide book form, moreover, cannot be considered a local characteristic: most guide books belong to series in which the same structure is used no matter what the place being described: the local tends not to influence how guide books are written. Very few guide books refer only to the Gulf Islands: most include the islands with other areas: generally Vancouver, the San Juan Islands, Victoria, or Vancouver Island. Similarly, very few can be considered guide books in a pure sense: most consider

This absence of local intertextual references stems from the same impulse--the need to ignore previous activity (or in this case previous texts) in order to claim priority--that makes discovery and settlement such attractive tropes. Chapter Ten demonstrates that the absence of local intertexts accompanies the heavy use of literary intertexts from outside the region, especially nineteenth-century English novels of adventure that use islands as sites of narrative escape and transformation. It is a peculiarly local practice, also, to quote not the actual literary text referred to but a cultural memory--partial, selective, often erroneous--of that text.

Finally, I argue in my conclusion that the characteristics of Gulf Island writing (and architecture) that I have discussed--including tropes of discovery and settlement, pastoral narrative frames, the sketch medium, the "craft" aesthetic--all demonstrate a desire to interpret island culture and identity as fundamentally natural. At this point, topography becomes secondary to the consequences of rhetorical constructions by which that topography has been described. The consequence for the region's writing is an anti-literary bias that defines the region by deliberately rejecting high culture in representing that region. To have structured my analysis as a study of the "literature" of the islands would thus not only have required making an arbitrary distinction between literary and unliterary writing but would have profoundly misrepresented a fundamental code of the region's representation. Casual references are often made to the islands as places, either individually or collectively, that support a "community" of published, literary writers, but individual writers--such as Jane Rule--deny that such a community exists, or that it would

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the islands from the point of few of one or another forms of recreational travel: kayaking, cruising, hiking, bicycling, diving, or (in one case) pubbing.

be welcome if it did exist.<sup>12</sup> Writers' groups abound in the islands, but these are almost invariably the sphere of amateur, untrained writers, the point being that writing is considered a craft that any islander feels free to try, rather than an elite art whose practice separates writers from the rest of the Gulf Island population. In the islands, local culture has made the choice to reject elitism and define itself by a deliberately rustic, unsophisticated, and formulaic aesthetic.

The nostalgia for indigenous culture that such an aesthetic attempts to satisfy automatically makes much of the critical theory that currently dominates literary criticism inappropriate for this particular place. In particular, a region that defines itself so adamantly through neo-colonial rhetorical strategies does not lend itself to analysis through a postcolonial perspective. As opposed to literature relating to other parts of British Columbia, Gulf Island writing is anomalous in that it almost entirely ignores references to First Nations, autochthonous presence in the region as a means of connecting to or interpreting that space, or of producing an "authentic" literature of that region. The question of appropriation of voice, a key issue of postcolonial criticism, does not arise locally. The avoidance of First Nations inhabitation of the islands by Europeans is not the

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<sup>12</sup> In her 1981 essay on the notion of "community" on Galiano ("Stumps"), Rule repudiates the notion that the island's writers (or any other category of islanders) form a "community":

When the CBC tried to do a program suggesting that we are turning into an artists' colony, everyone scoffed, including the people interviewed. Because there are a number of independent women living here, rumor in the San Francisco bars has it that this island is about to be renamed Lesbos. If I ever did find myself in an artists' colony or lesbian community, I'd move.  
(187)

subject of my study but rather one of its findings, a feature of local rhetoric.

Perceptions of the Gulf Island landscape as unoccupied originate in patterns of land use practised by the Halkomelem, a Salish people, in whose territory the islands lie. The individual groups speaking the Halkomelem language (Pentlatch, Sechelt, Squamish, Halkomelem, and Straits) define their territories as stretching east/west from Vancouver Island across Georgia Strait and the islands and many miles into the interior of the mainland. The annual cycle of food gathering and ritual involved movement from one side of the Strait to the other: the Gulf Islands were not the site of permanent villages but rather temporary, summer places for gathering roots and berries and fishing in the passes between the islands. Their presence in the islands, therefore, was more intermittent than in other parts of the province.<sup>13</sup> The physical traces of their presence are also much less visible than on other parts of the coast, especially the northern territories of the Haida and Kwakiutl. Salish material culture tended not to use the huge trees of the rainforest (not readily available here in any case) for totems and massive longhouses, so the great shoreline villages of the north coast were never a part of the Gulf Island landscape. Neither did the Salish develop a visual aesthetic of wooden masks and other permanent artifacts:<sup>14</sup> their culture rather flourished in fibre--Salish weaving and Cowichan sweaters

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<sup>13</sup> In Maps and Dreams (1981), Hugh Brody has shown that Europeans tend to consider First Nations peoples' seasonal, intermittent use of land--especially for hunting and gathering--rather than permanent settlement to invalidate their right to claim that land.

<sup>14</sup> In Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast (1979), Hilary Stewart confirms that unlike the culture groups on the north coast, the Salish have no tradition of pole art, and little in the way of carving in wood on a large scale. According to Stewart, the finest wood carving among the Salish was confined to animals depicted on spindle whorls, a form that underscores the importance of fiber, centring on the weaving technique the Salish developed that uses a two-bar loom, to Salish art forms. The Salish have also made much

(the latter a post-contact development) being the best-known modern survivals of those skills--which not only deteriorates much more quickly than wood but does not command the same presence, to European eyes, as ritual objects from farther north.

The only residual evidence of Salish culture in the island landscape consists of the intensely white clamshell beaches and the shell-flecked ash soil of their middens at the water's edge, and petroglyphs carved in sandstone. Both are easily overlooked, the shell beaches and middens simply because they appear to be naturally occurring, if they register on non-indigenous consciousness at all, and the petroglyphs because they are often inaccessible, often hidden beneath thick layers of moss, and soon eroded when exposed to the elements. Crucially, too, even when petroglyph images are found and recorded by white immigrants to the region, they cannot be resolved into recognizable icons, much less linked to an oral culture that tells stories about the images. Salish legends of the local landscape have been collected, just as other aspects of Salish culture have been subjected to anthropological study, but the link between verbal and visual narratives that operates so directly elsewhere on the coast does not exist here. Local bands state that they themselves cannot interpret the petroglyphs beyond recognizing them as sacred images.<sup>15</sup>

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less use of painted two-dimensional art than other indigenous coastal cultures.

<sup>15</sup> In late June 1992, an elder from the Nanaimo Band gave a talk to Gabriola Islanders about the petroglyphs on the island: the audience--entirely non-First Nations--had expected to be shown the petroglyphs and to have the images explained to them. Instead, the elder did not leave the parking lot where interested people had been told to gather, and his discussion of the petroglyphs consisted not of exegesis but of a plea for help in protecting the glyphs from vandalism (from both individuals and from land development) and an explanation of the spiritual importance of the petroglyphs to the band. By contrast, in the 1993 book They Write Their Dreams on the Rock Forever: Rock Writings in the Stein River Valley of British Columbia, Annie York, a First Nations elder, explains the iconography of individual images.

In consequence of this absence of physical and textual presence in the Gulf Island landscape, it is not difficult to perceive the landscape as previously uninhabited, even by indigenous peoples. The practice of "quoting" First Nations culture that so deeply characterizes non-indigenous regional writing on the British Columbia coast cannot obtain in the islands because to European eyes, very little of that culture is available to be quoted. Reference to autochthonous experience of local space is so rare that it cannot be said to play a part in defining the local. The absence of the indigene makes a key aspect of post-colonial criticism--exposing and challenging colonial representations of indigenous peoples--irrelevant here. The scope of my dissertation--European constructions of Gulf Island space--thus omits Halkomelem versions of that space, not because they do not merit attention but because they do not influence the neo-colonial rhetorical strategies by which immigrants to the islands construct that space.<sup>16</sup> Comparison of Salish with European immigrant spatial perceptions would constitute a quite different project from that which I undertake here.

In a place where immigration perpetuates colonial rhetorical strategies long after the imperial structures in which that rhetoric developed have ceased to operate, the term "Europeans" meaning non-autochthonous or not First Nations is problematic. For lack of a more efficient term, however, in this study I use the word "European" to mean everyone

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<sup>16</sup> Especially rich scholarly sources of Halkomelem notions of Gulf Islands space are Wayne Suttles' Coast Salish Essays (1987) and David Lewis Rozen's thesis Place-Names of the Island Halkomelem Indian People (1985). Testimony collected by the Comprehensive Claims Branch of Indian and Northern Affairs for the purpose of settling local land claims also suggests how the Salish perceived their territories. See, for example, Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard, "Traditional Territorial Boundaries of the Saanich Indians" (1991).

except the First Nations culture groups who consider the islands to fall within their traditional territories. Nearly all residents of--and most visitors to--the Gulf Islands are of European descent, though they often emigrate to the islands from other places in North America: despite the strong Asian presence in surrounding urban centres, especially Vancouver, people of non-white racial backgrounds rarely live in the islands.<sup>17</sup> Marie Anne Elliott has described the Japanese-Canadian population which farmed very successfully on Mayne before the Second World War, a piece of racial history that Jane Rule incorporates into her novel After the Fire (1989). The presence of several black families among the first settlers on Salt Spring in the 1850s, has also been described in local histories, but in both cases, it is questionable whether these exceptions to the European social landscape in the islands have had much effect on collective notions of the islands as a region. I recognize that my decision to use only print materials in this study gives disproportionate weight to certain groups of people in the islands, particularly those of white, wealthy, English, middle- and upper-class backgrounds. Using print materials alone, it is easy to form the impression that the islands, at least until the Second World War, were populated

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<sup>17</sup> In a curious local anomaly, representation of "Gulf Island," especially in architecture and in other visual art, often incorporates an Asian aesthetic, or rather, an aesthetic based in Western notions of what that aesthetic might be. In his watercolours of the Gulf Islands (among other coastal places), for example, Toni Onley refers consciously to Chinese and Japanese practices (see Toni Onley: A Silent Thunder (1981)). The Hornby Island woodbutcher style of architecture sometimes incorporates Japanese motifs into its statements of the local. Such references are rare in writing about the islands, though they do occur: Jane Rule incorporates Japanese settlement in the islands in her novel After the Fire (1989), while Lorna Crozier records Gulf Islands adoption of Japanese landscape values in her poem "Crossing Willow Bridge":

On the farm a willow bridge  
though this is Saltspring island  
not Japan.

exclusively by this social group. I am well aware that such was not the case, and this study is not intended to perpetuate the disenfranchisement of other "voices" in the islands. Since, however, my subject is the conventions of Gulf Islands writing, rather than whatever distance there might be between those conventions and an external reality, the degree to which those conventions perpetuate the notion of the islands as enclaves of expatriate British-ness is another of my findings. The apparently racially homogeneous population of the islands does not disturb--it rather reinforces--neo-colonial attitudes, and thus inhibits a local version of postcolonial discourse.

In the absence of genealogical claims, the immigrant to this place requires language and narrative to demonstrate or claim local authenticity. The rhetorical constructs I examine in this study are intended to define local authenticity, and by extension indigenusness. This dissertation is itself a survey, both in the literary sense of a broad discussion of selected texts belonging to a particular place and in the colonial sense of mapping initial, arbitrary co-ordinates by which that place, as a textual construct, can be organized and described. I have not been immune to the prevailing Gulf Island preoccupation with issues of authenticity and indigenusness: my preoccupation has been as much to write an "authentically" Gulf Island work as it has been to observe the standards and conventions of scholarly enquiry. Since the Gulf Islands have never before received scholarly attention as a constructed or "written" region, the usual corpus of scholarly criticism a dissertation both rests upon and challenges is missing in my case: in the absence of critical apparatus upon or against which to articulate a critical position, I have tried to allow local texts themselves to suggest lines of enquiry, rather than to impose

on this highly local culture models of critical analysis borrowed from other places. Rather than codifying a regional literature, I intend this study to initiate a dialogue through which a semiotics of Gulf Island can be discussed.

*In my best dream I have crossed the border  
and my coins are wrong. Without the tongue  
I gesture, sweat and wake aboard this boat.  
Ladies in their staterooms write bad poems--  
mountains in the distance evidence of God.  
Maps are hard to read. Two nations own  
these islands. The shade of green on one  
could be Canadian, but firs and grebes  
are mine. The latest run of Springs  
are far too international to claim.  
Yet they use our rivers for their graves.*

*The law protects the San Juans. No bilge here.  
Gulls still trail the ferry but go hungry.  
You can buy an island. In my worst dream  
I am living here, contented and alone.  
That house is mine. The blue smoke rising  
means I'm cooking. Constant knock of water  
means I'm drunk, enjoying private jokes  
and bowing as the walls begin to roar.  
The Coast Guard breezes by my door.  
They haven't stopped to chat in twenty years.*

*In no dream I am standing on this deck  
admiring the sheep on what turns out  
to be the final island before landing.  
I woke up dead among these islands--  
this boat chugging in a bad direction--  
the north I go, my wake already failing.*

*Richard Hugo*

**Home Waters: Gulf Island Regions**

*I had previously decided that most of my serious studies were going to be undertaken above latitude 52° in regions where I would encounter few people and a great many more life forms, so this run off the east coast of Vancouver Island, while pleasant on a day like we were enjoying, was nothing more than travel time, necessary miles that had to be covered before we reached the waters and coastline that really interested me.*

R.D. Lawrence, The Voyage of the Stella, 69

*Up to now for most U.S. boaters, the Gulf Islands have been only a protected alley in getting from Here to There. No more. This sensibly-organized book will make them a Destination.*

Walt Woodward, backcover blurb, Gunkholing in the Gulf Islands

*Passing Porlier Pass, we caught a glimpse of the broad, peaceful Gulf and almost wished we were taking the outside passage, but the unlimited variety, the never ending wonder and delight of the scenery of these islands through which we are now passing, more than compensates for the difference.*

"A Landsman," "The Cruise of the Mineola," 33

*We wandered through a maze of waterways where islands, or even whole groups, suddenly detached themselves from a solid shoreline to confuse us. Then having thoroughly identified themselves as islands, they performed a disappearing trick by merging again with the green wooded shores when we looked for them astern to get a bearing.*

*"This country leaps about so," I protested.*

Kathrene Pinkerton, Three's a Crew, 88

*The mainland seemed to loom threateningly against the horizon; the channel they were crossing felt to Zoe in a state of disorder--lumpy islands strewn sloppily about, no rhyme or reason to their disposition among the waters of Howe Sound; she could easily believe that they habitually changed their*

*positions, just to be perverse.*

L.R. Wright, A Chill Rain in January, 117

*You know where you are with an island. It is where you are, and no mistake. The water wraps you round and seals you off and everything else is foreign territory. . . .*

*When I am standing on my porch looking out to sea and a visitor asks, "What's that over there?", I always answer, automatically, "Royal Head." And the visitor says, "No, I don't mean Royal Head, I know Royal Head, I mean over beyond that." And I say, "Counter Point." And the visitor says, "No, no, not there." And I say, "Well, I guess it could be Ponkay or Sonder, they kind of run together."*

*Other people's islands always do run together.*

Jean Howarth, Secrets the Island is Keeping, 39

*Then the channels began to have some definite direction, and the islands sorted themselves out--the right ones standing forward bold and green; the others retiring, dim and unwanted.*

M. Wylie Blanchet, The Curve of Time, 67

*Take a flat map, a globe in plano, and here is east and there is west as far asunder as two points can be put. But reduce this flat map to roundness, which is the true form, and then east and west touch one another, and all are one. So consider man's life aright to be a circle . . .*

John Donne, Sermon XXVII, Folio of 1640

### **Part One: Without the Tongue: Defining Region**

*Sidney (48°39'N., 123°24'W.) is a residential community which is also a ferry terminal used by the Washington State Ferries, operating to and from Anacortes, Washington.*

Government of Canada, Sailing Directions: British Columbia Coast (South Portion), 117

Richard Hugo's "wrong" coins pun on the elusive cultural currency of region in the

Pacific Northwest, a particularly American concept of a space that links Oregon and Washington with Alaska, while paradoxically (or ambivalently) including and excluding Canadian space lying between. The notion of Pacific Northwest thus conceptually connects the northern unctiguous state with its contiguous counterparts across the border. If a coast can destabilize these topographical and political barriers, the Gulf Islands--defined, divided, and challenged by coast-ness--constitute a region whose borders waver, whose limits both proliferate and restrict.

"The Anacortes-Sydney Run" hovers on the threshold of a region that includes neither of the places named in its title but lies between them. Like the poem, Hugo's voyage crosses the border into a place where a notion of region obtains as other spatial definitions dissolve, that dissolution becoming a marker, a signpost to the region. This apparent paradox mirrors a cluster of similarly contradictory elements in the poem: at the same time that it speaks in the idiom of travel writing, of the literary gloss on quest and insight that the genre demands, the poem also echoes a discourse of tourism, of reduction to characteristic images and conventional interpretations in which guidebooks are written. Against the self-reflexive meditation on the experience of foreignness that is the subject of much travel writing, Hugo erects the endlessly-recurring structures of tourism. The confusion of available models for writing the foreign is exacerbated by the element of home-ness in this poem's second stanza and--significantly--in its title: the word "run" suggests a familiar, regularly-repeated voyage whose very repetition reduces its route, the landscape it traces, to domestic, prosaic space.

In the first stanza, Hugo's "best dream" requires foreign-ness, the terrifying yet

exhilarating dislocation that lack of language--lack of cultural currency--bestows on the traveller. The region's very inexplicability energizes Hugo: unlike the detached writers who keep their eyes on distant mountains, finding there "evidence of God," which they translate into "bad poems," Hugo can only gesture and sweat. The writers in their cabins ignore the immediate landscape through which they travel, focussing instead on the distant prospect: this long view enables them to substitute literature for experience. The next line, "Maps are hard to read," addresses the problem from another angle: cartography offers as little direction to this space as the literary conventions of the sublime. If region cannot be apprehended using literary landscape conventions, perhaps the border can fix the mind on definitions. But Hugo veers away from political abstraction into absurdity--ownership of islands means as little as ownership of colour and entire species of wildlife. The omission of definite articles indicates not specific individuals but the entire genus, the idea of firs and grebes. The salmon, whose "runs" echo the cycles of movement suggested by the poem's title, perhaps offer a salutary model of movement through this space: migration as a recurrent, oscillating pattern, rather than a single, imperial act.

The "worst dream" confirms the inappropriateness of possession, rather than travel or tourism, as the grounds for regional identity: Hugo here touches on one of the major tropes of Gulf Island desires--the dream of owning an island, or at least a reasonable facsimile of an entire island. Solitude and contentment, the core of the pastoral vision that keeps Gulf Island real estate and literary desires in motion, offer Hugo no convincing cues to region. But this notion of indigenusness springs from ubiquitous, highly-simplified versions of island pastoral, the state of being-at-home interpreted through dim cultural

memories of tropical island seclusion, little different from the distant proofs of God in mountain vistas. The two sentences that follow, placed so that the verb "means" begins two lines in succession, invoke the guidebook and foreign language phrase book, in which the dictionary form mimics the field guide, a prosaic alternative to the means of landscape representation offered by the language of the sublime. The reference to meaning suggests that the entire poem is about codes, signs, and definitions of place or region: the semiotic imperative impels the poet's frustrated attempts to find words.

In the second stanza, Hugo invokes two versions of landscape perception, one visual, the other aural. In the first, he turns the notion of indigene into a deflating image of domesticity: the culturally-encoded "smoke signal" of European codes for North American indigenous people, never appropriate to the Pacific Northwest in any case, is a tourist's notion of indigene, of unreadable, threatening signs of native, hostile presence and intent. As Hugo suggests, such signs, being so heavily encoded as to be familiar to the point of cliché, are thoroughly naturalized into the known, familiar territory of home. In the phrase "constant knock of water," Hugo complicates the issue of indigenous language still further: his aural sign, the "knock" announcing presence at the threshold of domestic space, is produced by water, the non-human background to the landscape. This sentence resists interpretation until the codes are detached from expectations of landscape and the fixed, interior space of the previous sentence: constant knock of water and walls that begin to roar accompany the bowing--the rising angle of the bow--of a boat underway and picking up speed. One interior space is exchanged for another. Hugo shifts the terms of placement and context from island to house to boat until these environments merge,

blurring the boundaries that define them (each in terms of the other). Perspective is a problem throughout the poem: the term "these islands" signifies being inside the region, including the islands in the same spatial range as "this boat" and "this deck" in the first and last stanzas. The middle stanza turns viewpoint--the critical point of origin for landscape appreciation--inside out: the "island" (singular) becomes centre ("I am living here") while the direction "that house" makes life on the island peripheral, as is reiterated by the return to the boat.

In his complaint about the Coast Guard, Hugo equates the public institution of control and protection with its physical manifestation in the boat. The Coast Guard here stands for another definition of region: the territory and mandate--the scope, in short--of a regulating power. The very term "Coast Guard," ambiguously joining two nouns, can be interpreted in more than one way: "coast" can indicate only the locale of guardianship (itself an ambiguous term) but its very object. As Hugo says at the beginning of the stanza, "[t]he law protects the San Juans." Exactly the same notion of law obtains in the Gulf Islands, where debate over land use and the resulting effects on landscape takes place within the structures of the Islands Trust, a term that structurally and semantically echoes "Coast Guard." The tone of complaint about the Coast Guard's indifference mirrors similar conflicts in the Gulf Islands about the mandate and responsiveness of the Trust to island residents.

The third stanza returns to the paradigm of voyage rather than settlement, and to a cluster of cultural, especially literary, connotations associated with the notion of voyage. "No dream" is clearly death, though Hugo puns here on the notion of wakefulness as

another state of not dreaming ("I woke up dead"). Here Hugo combines images of the Stygian voyage with the pre-eminent image of pastoral--the admirable sheep. The last sentence (the final three lines of the stanza) is even more enigmatic than the rest of the poem, resisting syntactical as well as semantic analysis. Syntactical confusion culminates in the penultimate phrase--"the north I go"--inverting subject and object, making "go" a transitive verb, making the self its object, making north the agent of voyaging. Perhaps death is the final abstraction, the unchartable region--to conceive of "a bad direction" is to apply standards of morality and value to a concept (or concepts, death and direction) without moral valence. The sign of passage cannot permanently obtain ("my wake already fading"), and neither the tools and language of cartography nor definition through literary allusion have currency in this region.

Why this poem? Why begin a chapter setting out the case for a Gulf Island region with a poem written by an American, about American coastal desires rather than Canadian, that never mentions the Gulf Islands directly, while naming their American counterparts, the San Juans? Why analyse that poem at such length, when it cannot--by reason of nationality--qualify as a Gulf Island literary work? The act of migration, of movement through waters that are local and foreign at the same time, fundamentally describes experience, both American and otherwise, of Gulf Island space. The international boundary that must be crossed--physically and psychically--for an American to enter the Gulf Island region is only the most obvious of the boundaries through which that region emerges from undifferentiated space. Yet the region's borders remain ambiguous: the international

border, which defines people by their place of habitation, is invisible. The stone markers that physically trace the border on the mainland have no equivalent on the water. Neither can the border be enforced with physical barriers at sea; in the islands, crossing the international boundary does not require asking anyone's permission. As Hugo implies by undermining the notion of national "ownership," the notion of nationality is irrelevant in the islands: except for the Salish, whose notions of territory and belonging preclude the idea of "ownership" in any case, everyone is immigrant to the Gulf Islands. Even those born in the islands are descended from immigrants, and are so vastly outnumbered by those not born here that they barely impinge on the dominant immigrant perspective. Making the passage into Gulf Island space initiates the impulse to define that space: immigration is thus a crucial factor in how the islands are constructed. The tenor of Hugo's reverie and the poem's structure and discursive models all characterize the preoccupation with interpretation that the Gulf Island landscape appears to require.

The poem oscillates between the literary voice of the self-referential traveller and the laconic voice of reductive iconography. The juxtaposition of two mutually-antipathetic discourses parallels a similar clash of perspective on region: the inevitably self-absorbed outsider as against the indifferent, smug resident. Yet Hugo makes both of these positions inadequate. He refers also to the mode of the ubiquitous field guide, often as dictatorial a sign (or text) of region, a definition based on the notion of "range," as any other textual guide to region. The phrase "firs and grebes are mine" suggests that to sight and identify indigenous flora and fauna is to own region (as field guides imply), to be able to claim indigenoussness for oneself on the assumption that recognition confers possession. Unlike

the field guide, however, which values the distinction between species--signified by Linnaean Latin names and by similarly two-part common names, always capitalized--Hugo uses lower-case, single-word contractions of proper names only (firs rather than Douglas firs, grebes rather than Western grebes), the mark of an outsider's ignorance. Conversely, in the next line, Hugo refers only to the sub-species--Springs--rather than to salmon generally, a usage that implies an intimate knowledge of the various species of salmon and their habits. Here, however, Hugo rejects the notion of ownership ("far too international too claim"), whether through intimacy or any other means. The possessive pronouns in the last line of the stanza, however, complicate the notion of "nature" and its contribution to competing notions of region.

Despite the poem's mythic allusions, especially in the last stanza, to literary constructions of the voyage as the passage to death (or of the soul after death), and more general references to the often portentous conventions of the quest narrative, Hugo constantly undermines these cultural frames of reference. The title alone, with its direct statement of the scope of the voyage, mitigates the "universal" scale or significance of those allusions. "The Anacortes-Sydney Run" refers not to a voyage of exploration or self-knowledge but to regular ferry service between two small communities, Anacortes in Puget Sound and Sidney on the Strait of Georgia. Here direction is indicated by sequence and a hyphen rather than the prepositions "to" and "from," suggesting not only the institutionalized labelling of the voyage (the hyphen being the usual grammatical link between ports of departure and destination in ferry schedules) but also signifying an essentially static experience. The term "run" implies a fixed route, an endlessly-repeated

movement back and forth, rather than a journey or quest. The misspelling of Sidney comments ironically on the scale of this journey compared to the desires Hugo invokes it to satisfy: from Anacortes to Sydney, New South Wales would perhaps be a voyage of epic proportions, whose antipodean goal might support the intertextual weight Hugo assigns it (destination--destiny). But the direction-less hyphen and the prosaic "run" call into question, even mock, the epic baggage accompanying this voyage. The ironic disjunction between the voyage and the expectations it creates is precisely the point: in the first stanza, Hugo has already crossed the border and entered that place of foreign-ness that makes him strange. As a literal statement, this intoxicating anxiety in the presence of the Other is absurd: the coins and language of two nations are virtually interchangeable here, the border itself invisible because drawn in water. But crossing the border cannot be literal, since Hugo hovers throughout the poem in the space between the two nations that share that border. This is a directionless voyage; its signposts are voiced and discarded in turn, creating not a sequence but a cluster of partial definitions that cohere only through the homonymic associations of punning: syntax and narrative break down, even sequence obscures direction.

Hugo neatly combines two opposing constructions of Gulf Island experience: the traveller who yearns for an alien space without conventions, and the resident, settled into a system of codes that defines the region and the settler's place in it. The last stanza defers arrival at the same time as it offers narrative revelation at "what turns out/to be the final island before landing." The position of the line break in this phrase suggests the impulse toward landscape interpretation that parallels the desire for arrival (the goal of both pilgrim

and immigrant) at some final, authentic version of self. The crucial phrase "these islands" that begins the seventh line of the first stanza slides to the end of the fourth line in the last stanza, signifying a shift from beginnings to endings. The islands move from point of interpretive departure at the beginning of the poem, to destinations in the second stanza, to another kind of an ending in the third. Against the solid finality of "landing" with which the third line concludes, the last line ends with "fading," veering away from finality to dissolution. The same verb form similarly shifts from the concrete noun to the evanescent present continuous verb.

The final sentence, comprising the last three lines of the poem, diverts the voyage into another direction ("a bad direction") or perhaps no direction at all. The dashes with which the antepenultimate and penultimate lines end would seem, grammatically at least, to function quite conventionally to set off the middle phrase parenthetically, but they do not bridge a grammatical space, since the two clauses they separate bear no syntactical or semantic relation to one another. Instead, the dashes point horizontally away from the poem, toward the margin of the page and beyond. They loop back to the indeterminate hyphen of the title, whose direction remains vague. The clause "the north I go" floats rudderless, its syntactical confusion the logical result of the loose dashes. Paradoxically, it is only in this distorted statement that any specific direction appears--syntactic breakdown, the loss of sequence and relationships between linguistic markers (signs or buoys), makes the meaning of "north" and its subject/verb/object relations ambiguous if not unknowable. But the phrase "the north I go," in its very twistedness suggests intense desire.

Hugo dreams the border into place only to pass beyond it: his desire creates an

alien space in which conventions of language and other modes of exchange have no currency. In his worst dream, by contrast, the conventional codes of region dictate his experience: the conventions of landscape representation, of travel-writing, of law, of settlement, of ownership, of pastoral retreat, define and circumscribe the region. Yet both the first and second stanzas assemble a list of normative statements about the region and how it can be read. These lists correspond to the discourse of reference works, by defining, delineating. They belong as much to the dictionary and encyclopedia as to guide books, field guides, and foreign-language phrase books (especially the latter, by virtue of their simplified structures and unambiguous syntax). Only in the final stanza does Hugo abandon these apparent certainties, literally sensible in some places, decodable word-play in others. Here Hugo shifts subtly from the declarative present tense of the dictionary, tour guide, and field guide, to the present continuous mode. The voyage, the definition or mapping of region, is not something achieved and superseded by later actions, as imperial historical narratives would suggest, but a continuous process.

**Part Two: Seven Types of Pastoral: Admiring the Sheep**

*the displaced modern pastoral preserves the theme of escape from society to the extent of idealizing a simplified life in the country or on the frontier.*

Northrop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism, 43

*These spores and seeds and bits of invasive root are the treasures I fling backwards, over my shoulder, into the hokey loam of an old genre.*

Lisa Robertson, "How Pastoral: a Manifesto," 98

*Some people who come to Madronna Island never know that they do not become citizens. You are not a citizen unless you know how to stoke the Community Hall stove.*

*Madronna has a vigorous community life centring on the hall, and every event is accompanied by eating and drinking. As almost all of the 64 islanders (or 63 if Captain O'Grady is in jail on the mainland) are likely to attend, this represents work. If you are one of those who help clean the hall for an event, help with the serving of food, and help wash up the dishes, you are a citizen.*

Jean Howarth, Secrets the Island is Keeping, 59

*What people in advanced societies lack (and countercultural groups appear to seek) is the gentle, unselfconscious involvement with the physical world that prevailed in the past when the tempo of life was slower, and that young children still enjoy.*

Yi-Fu Tuan, Topophilia, 95

The phrase "admiring the sheep" is Richard Hugo's only gesture toward the pastoral, but in these three words he encapsulates the principal interpretative frame applied to the Gulf Islands. The point is not just that the sheep inhabit the islands, but that the appropriate response to them is admiration: they are to be engaged with, as is the landscape they ornament, aesthetically, though with some restraint (admiration is hardly a passionate response). The pastoral mode functions in the Gulf Islands in variant combinations of pastoral themes, images, and connotations that co-exist and inevitably contradict one another. The pastoral trope is used so extensively in the islands as to seem the inevitable mode of representation, so ubiquitous as to be invisible. Another factor in its invisibility is that the pastoral is applied to such divergent landscapes, climates, ways of living, and narratives as to have become virtually meaningless. The trope's appearance in the Gulf Islands rarely offers any radical redefinition; this is not the place where post-

modern reassessment turns the pastoral back on itself, or inside out, or upside down: it is its very conformity that makes Gulf Island pastoral difficult to perceive and assess. The one departure from the norm is the appropriation of the pastoral for political ends: in the Gulf Islands, the pastoral becomes a political position.<sup>18</sup> The Islands Trust's conservationist origins rehabilitate nostalgia, making it radical as well as conservative.<sup>19</sup>

The local usefulness of pastoral as a political idea lies in its appeal to the notion of home. The anomaly in Richard Hugo's inclusion of pastoral in "The Anacortes-Sydney

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<sup>18</sup> The pastoral conservatism that informs Trust rhetoric runs directly counter to the social justice agenda of the bioregional movement, a specifically northwest coast--from northern California to British Columbia--product, and one that many Gulf Islanders embrace. One of the leading advocates of bioregionalism is the poet and academic Gary Snyder, one of the premier poets of the Pacific Northwest. Snyder was one of the first to embrace the notion of the earth as "Turtle Island," a concept borrowed from a First Nations creation story. In "Regenerate Culture!," Snyder suggests that the most important aspect of living in an ethical relation to the land is to stay in one place, to learn not only the local community of nature but to acquire also the stories and origins of local culture. A concomitant principle of bioregional living is to live from the local land, choosing food and materials for clothing and shelter from the local, indigenous environment, rather than those imported from elsewhere. Snyder's essay is included in Turtle Talk: Voices for a Sustainable Future (1990), one of several books on bioregionalism published by New Society, based in Philadelphia (formerly in Santa Cruz) and on Gabriola Island. Among these is Boundaries of Home: Mapping for Local Empowerment (1993), Doug Aberly's guide to mapping bioregions: Aberly's M.A. thesis in the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia is entitled "Bioregionalism: A Territorial Approach to Governance and Development of Northwest British Columbia" (1985). Despite the currency of bioregional ideology in the province and in the northwest United States, Gulf Island politics rarely invoke its discourse.

<sup>19</sup> In the Trust the two ends of the political spectrum overlap as the rhetoric of conservation gives way to that of ecology; a radical idea takes over from a conservative one. Both pastoral and ecology rest upon notions of nature, but the implications of the two are vastly different. Ecological considerations are regarded on some of the Gulf Islands with deep suspicion: in that the Trust has the ability to restrict interference with local ecosystems, many islanders view the Trust as simply another layer of government, intent upon regulating their lives (especially with regard to developing land) in ways they moved to the islands to avoid.

Run" is that there pastoral emerges as a feature of travel writing. The pastoral denotes a landscape, and an emotional state (admiration) so domestic, so mild that it is hardly worth going away for: the pastoral mode connotes the quiet pleasures of home, of not travelling. Pastoral ignores the exotic, celebrating that which is not exotic. Since Hugo's poem articulates a desire for exoticism, for a place across borders where he has no words or coins to exchange in local currency, the appearance of sheep in the final stanza marks a reversal, a turning back toward the familiar. The failure of direction prompts the syntactical reorientation in "the north I go:" the north is the place where pastoral cannot operate, where wilderness--and hence exoticism--necessarily prevail.<sup>20</sup> "The Anacortes-Sydney Run" has all the hallmarks of a quest narrative, except that it disrupts its own narrative in every line. In its confusion of subject, object, and verb, the statement "The north I go" is a classic quest narrative: the relation of self to nature is ambiguous in this sentence. No longer does the self as subject, nature as object, and settlement or discovery as verbs dominate the syntax of engagement with nature. Spirit quests enact subsumation

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<sup>20</sup> In Orientalism (1978), Edward Said describes a version of the East that attracts the European to foreign travel, the charm of an exotic culture: people who crave the north and therefore wilderness, on the other hand, are searching for the exotic in the absence of culture, a place without any tongue, where words have no purchase (speaking of currency.) Said's orientalism explains travel that turns east: the idea of north has replaced west in the rhetoric of frontier and wilderness, except that north has become a place to disappear into rather than a place in which to settle and to change by the process of settlement. North attracts people who want to be naturalized rather than to change nature to reflect their image; so north also indicates a change in ideologies of nature, from settlement to something that is closer to nature writing, perhaps quest. Aritha van Herk's novel No Fixed Address (1987) posits the notion of losing oneself in north, while Barry Lopez's Arctic Dreams (1986) combines nature writing and ecological ethics to ponder the meaning of place, extending into the Arctic the notions of dreaming and desire that Hugh Brody perceived in Maps and Dreams (1981), his analysis of cultural conflict over the interpretation of landscape in northeastern British Columbia.

into nature, the voluntary loss of self in order to gain insight. In this poem, the Gulf Island region both is and is not "north," and by extension it both is and is not nature.

Literally, home for most people who travel to or through the islands is urban or suburban, but rhetorically home is rural, specifically pastoral. For these immigrants and visitors, being in the islands feels like being both home and away: the charm of "away" lies, paradoxically, in the perception of the islands as authentically--rather than in sordid practice--home. The rhetoric of "Gulf Island" overdetermines the region as pastoral. Local landscape connotes pastoral so overwhelmingly that other characteristics of place--economics, social organization, government, and politics, for example--appear to fall inevitably into the category of pastoral also. The islands cling to the relics of agricultural land-use to bolster claims to the region's "rural" character: the degree to which the appearance of a rural landscape coincides with its function is moot, however. The Cool Mediterranean zone, into which the islands on the west side of the Strait fall, often produces natural meadows, small, grassy clearings, that is, that occur randomly in the forest. Visually, therefore, even the natural landscape in the Gulf Islands is inherently pastoral: it does not depend on the mediation of European settlement for its pastoral appearance. This bioclimatic anomaly is only one of many instances in which the lines between wilderness and culture or civilization blur in the islands.

On the other hand, since very few farms in the islands are still worked, either for crops or for pasture, the pastoral becomes a charming illusion: the landscape that was once used for these purposes retains its visual integrity, but its persistence depends not on stable conditions but on deliberate steps taken to preserve it. A paradox of pastoral in the Gulf

Islands is that it is very difficult to make a living from the land, as the European settlers of the period 1860 to the First World War would have understood it. Working on the land, for most of the twentieth century, means in the Gulf Islands creating a product or service whose marketability rests on the idea of the land (which paradoxically includes the sea) rather than working the land to produce food, clothing, and shelter, the substance of life. Economies of scale and difficulties of transportation mean that island farms and working forests cannot compete with those on the mainland or on Vancouver Island. Chapter Six, for example, begins by referring to a story based on the harvest of salal for sale to florists in urban centres around the periphery of the Gulf Island region. What is being sold here is not so much a product of the land as the idea of nature: salal provides the evergreen backdrop to arrangements made from flowers that are not indigenous to the region. Similarly, and crucially to the conclusion of the thesis, the story uses a marketable notion of nature derived from the pleasant idea of harvesting indigenous plants in a rural setting.

Island farms and other local businesses have only one advantage over competitors outside the Gulf Island region: they can appeal to the notion of the islands as natural and authentic by comparison with other places. This naturalness and authenticity derive from the nostalgia that accompanies the pastoral: one need only consider the success of pioneer histories like Peter Murray's Homesteads and Snug Harbours (1991) to recognize how powerful that nostalgia can be.<sup>21</sup> The pastoral has conventionally referred not simply to a landscape but to the figures in that landscape: it has, that is, been associated with certain

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<sup>21</sup> A measure of that nostalgia is the placement of the word "home" in the titles of both of Murray's Gulf Island histories, Homesteads and Snug Harbours, a history of the entire region, and Home From the Hill (1994), a collective biography of three English pioneers who settled in the islands.

kinds of work on the land, and hence with particular workers. The literary and voluble shepherds of the Greek and Latin bucolic poets give way in nineteenth-century English pastoral to Wordsworth's leech-gatherer and the peasant child of "We are Seven": in figures such as these the Romantic pastoral finds not delicacy of feeling and poetry but simpler virtues of clear sight, natural piety, and affection. Since the traditional roles of hunter and gatherer, farmer and shepherd are greatly circumscribed in the Gulf Islands, the pastoral is located instead in various kinds of artisans, a category of work so broadly interpreted as to include much of the work that is done on the islands.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the identification of the Gulf Islands with artisans and craftspeople is so pervasive as to be a defining characteristic of the region. Indeed, many islands now produce maps that alert the visitor to the studios and shops in which art and crafts are sold: with these maps, the Gulf Island region becomes literally delineated or defined by craft. The traditional practices of working on the land--hunting, fishing, farming, and especially forestry--have all acquired varying degrees of ideological incorrectness as a result of the devastating effects of these practices on natural places, generally outside the region. As a result, people who earn a living in these ways are perceived as threatening to the pastoral character of the islands, rather than elements of that character. The artisan, by contrast, has little direct effect on the landscape: engagement with nature takes place on an aesthetic rather than physical level. The craftsperson's "products" manifest the idea of nature rather than necessarily incorporating material removed from the landscape. Those crafts that do require natural materials tend toward those that make little impact on the natural environment: driftwood, shells, fir bark, twigs

and branches, clay, herbaceous and annual plants, and surface minerals. Many Gulf Island artisans work in photography, watercolours and oils, processes that require nothing from the local natural landscape. All of these processes, however, require nature as a referent.

The work of the craftsperson and artisan is doubly natural in that both the processes and the subjects of their work can be perceived as closer to nature than other kinds of work. To take the latter case first, the products of Gulf Island craft either refer self-consciously to the materials--gathered from nature--from which they are made or represent some natural scene--landscape, in short. These products ground themselves in the intensely local: their marketability depends upon their associations, both actual and ideological, with the islands from and upon which they are made.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, such direct references are not completely necessary, since the mere practice of craft is enough to designate Gulf Island: neither materials nor medium need be local. In the latter case, the associations of craft with folk memory, with amateur, unsophisticated, simple skills, participates sufficiently in the rhetoric of nostalgia to be included in the pastoral equation of work and the land.

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<sup>22</sup> For this reason, and because incomes in the Gulf Islands tend to be lower than in surrounding areas, craftspeople must look beyond the islands for markets if they are ambitious for more than a subsistence income. As a result, the financial health of these cottage industries depends directly on a reciprocal relationship with surrounding urban centres. William Westfall distinguishes between formal regions--connoting "an area that exhibits a similarity of features" (7), like the Gulf Islands--and "functional" regions, a term used "to group together the elements that are functionally related within a system" (7), such as what is beginning to be called the Strait of Georgia urban region. The relation between craftspeople and those who buy their products echoes other political and economic relationships that mitigate against the islands' being a separate region, the role of regional districts being the most obvious example. On an ideological level, however, the "functional" region--the Strait of Georgia urban region--provides the context within which the islands can mark themselves off as separate and special, as a region unto itself.

The point of invoking this equation is to establish authenticity: unmediated by the artificial conditions of work that pervert human relations in the city, craft permits a direct relation not only between the worker and the land, but between the worker and his or her product. In the pastoral setting, the alienation of the worker does not occur, since the means of production are natural. The necessity of work, therefore, does not interfere with the authenticity of the worker's identity: on the contrary, work reinforces, even establishes in the first instance, the authentic person. In the Gulf Islands, the products of craft--the products of nature--link the craftsman to the natural landscape and to the intensely local. The authenticity of the product connotes the authenticity of the artisan.

This emphasis on pastoral--in the form of a code of artisan or craft--in Gulf Island work dominates even literary production in the islands. Just as the place seems to bestow upon every islander the capacity to be an artisan, the region also enables its inhabitants, purely by virtue of belonging to place, to be writers. In part this may be a result of the popular association of the Gulf Islands with literary and artistic communities: to an extent this impression is well-founded, given the number of nationally- and internationally-known authors who live here (some examples are Audrey Thomas, Dorothy Livesay, Daphne Marlatt, Betsy Warland, Susan Musgrave, Phyllis Webb, and Jane Rule). Despite the annual literary festival that began in the early 1990s,<sup>23</sup> however, these writers deny the existence of a literary community. The cult of the artisan in the islands both makes writing available to the amateur and influences the particular genres in which islanders write. As I

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<sup>23</sup> This festival was the result of a particular occasion, an urgent need to raise funds to save land on Galiano that was being sold by MacMillan Bloedel and thus threatened with development. Whether it would have occurred otherwise is moot. Note that the list of readers is restricted to island residents, past and present.

discuss in Chapter Five, Gulf Islands narratives almost invariably constitute sketches, rather than more fully-realized literary forms. A consequence (or perhaps a cause) of this scale of literary endeavour is that local newspapers have been the principal means of publication. Journalists (such as Jean Howarth and Don Hunter) and historians (like Maria Tippet) become fiction writers; writing in and about the islands allows them to break free from the perhaps more prosaic forms in which they work and to indulge in works of imagination. Local histories, cruise narratives, and guidebooks dominate the genres in which the islands are written: all of these forms are conventionally considered sub-literary, and thus the legitimate territory of those with no more qualifications than enthusiasm. Local histories, especially, are usually self-published,<sup>24</sup> because they are often produced by untrained writers and because their appeal is limited to the place about which they are written. Many islanders have taken the trouble to establish their own presses in order to publish their work and the work of other islanders: New Society and Reflections on Gabriola; Apple Press on Hornby; Gulf Island Press on Mayne; and at least two presses--Horsdal & Schubart of Salt Spring and Extasis of Pender--that have since moved to urban centres near the islands. The number of local presses does not, however, improve the distribution of Gulf Island writing, most of which remains outside the machinery of large-scale publication, just as it lies outside canonical notions of literature. Like craft, Gulf Island writing is popular writing, populist and local. Since the idea of region is populist also, the means of production governing local writing reinforces the notion that the islands constitute a region.

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<sup>24</sup> Among self-published local histories of the Gulf Islands are Baikie, Borrodaile, Harrison, Hill et al., Kelsey, Mason, and Donald New.

The Gulf Islands participate not only in the conventional association of pastoral with husbandry, but extend into the natural landscape also, to the forest and to the beach. In his book Forests: The Shadow of Civilization (1992), Robert Pogue Harrison makes a case for the forest as a site of pastoral in nineteenth-century English and German literary romanticism (see Chapter Four: Forests of Nostalgia), while in the first chapter of Abroad (1980), Paul Fussell locates English literary pastoral between the wars on the tropical beach. Both of these currents of pastoral operate in the Gulf Islands, complicating the conventional identification of pastoral with settled, agricultural landscapes. They represent two widely-diverging trends of thought: in the first instance, nostalgia privileges a past, or imagined past, that makes the notion of history--specifically local history--the form or genre of pastoral lament. Unlike the forest, in which folk memory is preserved and can be experienced, the beach rather offers an absence of history, in that its version of pastoral emphasizes timelessness and forgetting.

The complex variants of pastoral codes that operate in the Gulf Islands may thus present ideological difficulties. Given that the Islands Trust rests on notions of pastoral nostalgia, these competing interpretations or codes of pastoral have the potential to create significant political conflict. For example, nearly all Gulf Island community plans use the idea of "rural" values to dictate the land-use patterns the plans endorse. In 1994, however, the Advisory Planning Commission to the Gabriola Trustees recommended that the word "rural" be removed from the Community Plan, on the grounds that the Commission could

not agree on a definition of rural.<sup>25</sup> A much more fundamental difficulty, however, lies in the identification of the Trust with the rural values that the pastoral connotes.

The name "Islands Trust" indicates not only the conservative nature of this level of government but also designates the Gulf Islands as a discrete region, a political entity. The Trust, however, rarely requests residents of the islands to consider the region as a whole (an exception being the Trust's solicitation of public comment on the entire region precipitated by the Minister of Municipal Affairs' request, upon her appointment in 1992, for a policy document covering the whole region). Rather than addressing its constituency as a region, the Islands Trust designates "the community" as the sphere of political activity.

By community, the Trust means a specific island, or rather one of the thirteen individual islands whose jurisdiction includes smaller islands nearby. The manner in which the Community Plans are written is intended to give each island's "community" the power to decide the island's character (bylaws that are not in keeping with the Community Plan cannot be enacted): the Community Plan process gives the impression that each island retains the ability to dictate its own future. Final decisions on both the Community Plan and bylaws, however, rest with the Trustees and, ultimately, the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Although the Trust would appear to be a triumph of enabling local control, the

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<sup>25</sup> The members of the Commission could not agree about whether "rural" can describe forest or whether it denotes purely agricultural land use. In the context of the debate, which centred upon the donation to the community, proposed by Weldwood of Canada, of the interior of the island in exchange for relaxed zoning requirements for waterfront land also owned by Weldwood, the distinction became critical. At least one commissioner resisted the exchange on the grounds that developing the interior of the island according to existing by-laws, which would result in twenty-acre parcels zoned for single-family use, would keep the island as rural as maintaining the forest. Under the existing zoning system used by the Trust, forest land and low-density land are both zoned R-3.

Trust is hampered in its mandate through lack of funding, lack of enforcement of bylaws, and conflicts with other government agencies: what concerns me here is how the Trust reflects the notion of region and how the structure and purpose of the Trust reflect and reinforce those pastoral values that operate in representations of the islands.

In Chapter Two I discuss how variously local histories of the Trust region constitute the Gulf Island region: what these histories really discuss, however, are communities. The ways in which the subject areas of individual local histories shift exactly parallel how notions of community change also: the local history, after all, is a profoundly local genre, depending as much upon memory as it does on verifiable fact. All history writing is necessarily selective: the local history is selective in that it tends to reflect the memories and personal associations that the local historian equates with the local place. The constellation of subjects--individuals, families, friends, businesses, landscapes--that the local history discusses will be idiosyncratic. This shifting geography of community is rather easier to recognize than slippage in local definitions of "community: for all the rhetoric in Gulf Islands politics that invokes the sacred icon of "community" as the final repository of wisdom and virtue, the concept is not defined.<sup>26</sup> If, as seems to be the case in Gulf Island

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<sup>26</sup> One of the few discussions of "community" on a Gulf Island that does not sentimentalize the notion is Jane Rule's essay "Stumps" (1981). The element of antagonism and clashing beliefs on Galiano does not alarm Rule: on the contrary, she says, it is the expectation of disagreement that frees people on the island to be individuals:

Most people have stayed or come here because of an appetite for solitude to avoid the interference government is allowed in larger communities, the allegiance required by groups with similar beliefs and aims. When we talk, we expect to disagree. All communities are, in fact, enemy territory for the individual, even those which profess concern for consensus, because none can accommodate comfortably all that anyone is. This community doesn't try. (187)

local histories before about 1990, community means a group of people personally acquainted with one another for much of their lives, an acquaintance strengthened by family connections and shared memory, that notion is increasingly under pressure from the rapidly-increasing population of the islands, and the degree to which that increase is the result of immigration.

The political process that Islands Trust embodies rests on a notion of "community" that assumes that decisions affecting each island can be reached by consensus. Consensus is likely, however, only when the group of people involved share common attitudes and desires: in the islands, this conformity of perspective is assumed to be the result of attachment to the local. Both ideas equate community with local space, with the intense identification of individuals with a specific place. Community is thus the repository of

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In the fifteen years since this essay was published, however, Galiano has been faced with the most expensive and divisive issue any Trust island has encountered to date: when MacMillan-Bloedel wanted to sell its forest land on the island (more than half of the island's area) in the late 1980s, the Galiano Conservancy and Trustees moved to pass bylaws that would prevent subdivision of the MacMillan-Bloedel lands for residential development. The forest company sued both the Conservancy and the Trustees (see Gibson and Klenman). In the aftermath of this crisis, Galiano opinion about disposition of the MacMillan-Bloedel lands remains divided, making Trust decisions on the matter extremely difficult. Whatever Rule's assessment about the Galiano community's social dynamics, the structure of the Trust demands political process by consensus.

On Gabriola, where collective belief in the consensus model of community government was strong at the beginning of the 1990s, that belief has been eroded by Gabriola's own attempts to negotiate with another forest company, Weldwood of Canada, which owns a significant portion of the island. Over the more than two years of negotiations to date, local newspapers (in 1992, Gabriola had three newspapers) have become the site not only of increasingly vitriolic personal attacks on individuals supporting both sides of the question (whether to permit the exchange of land for density that Weldwood proposes) but of repeated calls for "healing the community." The shock and sorrow over the antagonism with which the debate has been conducted stems not only from the conflict itself but from the degree to which that conflict disrupts the idea of the island as a place of pastoral sanctuary from social and political conflict.

authenticity, whose integrity rests on its connection to place. The islands themselves are thought to bestow upon immigrants the attitudes and desires that define the community: newcomers are naturalized into thinking like islanders, rather than bringing with them the attitudes and desires they developed in the place from which they came to the islands.

The influence of the physical environment on individual character and the community is an important component of the notion of "indigenoussness." In Audrey Thomas' Prospero on the Island (1971), for instance, Miranda notices that the largely elderly population is different from its urban counterpart:

The older people here are active, vigorous--one sees them out walking, bicycle riding, dressed upon the quay, waiting for the ferry to take them to Vancouver for a visit or down at Dionysio Harbor, waiting for the ferry to "town" . . . In other words, whatever their original motives for coming here . . . these people are not the flotsam and jetsam one often sees in the streets of Vancouver (or any big city) shuffling aimlessly along the indifferent pavements or mindlessly rocking on the front porch of a "rest home." They belong; they constitute a community; they live separately and yet not in isolation. Their days are regulated by something more rewarding than the gong which announces a meager communal breakfast, or a desperate devotion to the TV Guide. (102-03)

This description of elderly Gulf Islanders as "active," "vigorous," purposeful, focussed, independent, self-directed, and neighbourly, culminates in the statement that "they constitute a community." Thomas subscribes to the idea of a community based upon common characteristics, all related to the influence of place. Here, Thomas elaborates upon the model of Gulf Islands as a pastoral, health-giving environment.<sup>27</sup>

The conservative notion of community is a collection of people bound together by

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<sup>27</sup> The conviction that this elderly population is unusually healthy is ubiquitous in Gulf Island texts, but is perhaps not accurate: in many cases, once elderly islanders lose their health they move to larger centres, especially Victoria, in order to be closer to medical facilities.

ties of shared history, family relationships, and mutual responsibility: in such a group, each individual conforms to a role, dictated by community composition and needs, that has been assigned to that individual by birth or circumstance. In North American, late twentieth-century society, however, individuals are much more at liberty to choose their roles, and to discard those roles at will. The notion of community that can accommodate this liberty must be much looser, more tenuous, and thus subject to radical change or disintegration. The Gulf Islands seem to attract persons wanting to fulfill a romantic archetype, as if William and Dorothy Wordsworth were to leave the Lake District and move to the Gulf Islands. In this model, the islands represent the pastoral ideal, that there is one right way to live--the Gulf Island way--and failure on the part of an individual to be comfortable with that way of life is failure on the part of the individual, not the way of life. If one subscribes to the notion of a protean self, one can posit that there is a Gulf Island "role" that anyone can fill, even if only temporarily. If one then decides that this role does not fit the authentic self, one can move on: such an ongoing migration is constituted not as failure but as passage through phases of self-hood.<sup>28</sup> These opposing constructions of the relationship between identity and place require very different judgements of personalities perceived to characterize Gulf Island residents and also of those who are entitled to belong to and help define the "community." Another version of the authentic Gulf Island identity derives from Rousseau's notion that the natural landscape (or rather "nature" or "wilderness") produces a superior person, primitive (that is, unable to dissimulate) in social relations and self-reliant (without the need to establish social

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<sup>28</sup> This distinction, which can be described as a shift from conditions of pre-modernity to those of modernity, is elaborated by Lionel Trilling in Sincerity and Authenticity (1971).

hierarchies, which develop when people need others to fulfill their needs). Although Rousseauists think it possible (and sometimes attempt) to return to this desirable state, Rousseau himself thought it impossible: his opinion reintroduces the notion of pastoral lament and paradox. Primitive man is necessarily unaware of his felicitous state, since to be aware of it would be unprimitive and unnatural.

Very few people living in the islands have family roots in the region. The Gulf Island notion of "community," therefore, is much more artificially constructed than in other rural regions, where historically-continuous social relations are assumed to be the basis of community. Gulf Island texts blur the distinction between an indigenous (long-settled or established, rather than First Nations) community and a community composed of relatively recent immigrants. This blurring may simply reflect modern, generally urban patterns of migration and settlement (in which long-term social ties in a small geographic region have given way to "instant" communities). It also perhaps explains why experience of material concerning early pioneers has become so prevalent in Gulf Island texts: it is not necessary to be personally acquainted with the neighbours to belong to the community as long as one is "acquainted," in an artistic or literary sense, with the origins of the community, by absorbing community history and vocabulary through reading. Even better than reading such texts is writing them.

Gulf Islanders often invoke the talisman of "community" in order to establish authority and moral ownership of the land and to mount opposition to further development in the area. Any potential change is subjected to rigorous examination to determine whether any resident islander's quality of life will be affected. Community activism

originally organized against "big business," specifically large forestry firms and large-scale land development, is now directed against smaller operators and private landowners also. Community hearings and ad hoc meetings, letters to newspapers, private vendettas involving destruction of property and intimidation, and notoriously efficient island gossip ensure that resistance to development is loud and persistent. Such constant, unofficial surveillance on the part of private citizens enrages many of those who have bought land in the islands with the intention of developing or using the property in ways that contradict the conservationist ethos of the islands. The rhetoric of such disputes is becoming increasingly violent, involving exchanges of charges of fascism and totalitarianism.<sup>29</sup>

This emphasis on the needs and rights of the community is a departure from the usual tactics taken to criticize and oppose development of rural and/or semi-wilderness land, which tend to focus on some aspect of "nature" represented as threatened by such development. This anomaly is odd considering that the Gulf Islands are generally valued

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<sup>29</sup> Cliff Hunt's letter of June 6, 1991 ("A Challenge to Mr. Willingham") to The Island Times exemplifies this rhetoric while locating the conflict in the notion of "community:"

Who, for heaven's sake, has decreed that ownership of private property must be justified by its achievements as an effective means of meeting and serving the wants of the community?

Where is this community of saints which has not only the right but even the duty to "intervene," to "govern the use of property"? Would that community be, by chance, a handful of people wanting to use the property of others for their own private delectation?

Are we to believe that private property is not private despite the owner having paid for it with money earned, but rather, that the state has chosen to loan it out? Either property owners are suffering from the delusion that they purchased their property to meet and serve their own wants or Mr. Willingham is suffering from the delusion that he lives on a little island run by fascists.

The letter continues in the same vein.

not as a group of ideal communities but as a superbly beautiful and unique natural region.<sup>30</sup>

One explanation might be that islanders active in local politics use the notion of community as a metaphor for the ecological interdependence of elements in a given bioregion. Thus the ecological metaphor can represent the principle that what one person does on private property affects all members of the community, who therefore have the right to comment on and even interfere in private activities. Another possibility is that, as is suggested by the authors of Habits of the Heart (1985), in default of religious and familial foundations to communities, the adoption of common "causes," with attendant ideology and activism, has become an alternate basis for the building of community.

The variants on pastoral that operate in the Gulf Islands--the idea of nature, rural landscape values, individual authenticity, community, nostalgia, home, and craft--create further variants, connections, and contradictions. The visual perception of the islands as both settled and natural--pastoral, in short--initiates a network of connotations that pervade

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<sup>30</sup> This anomaly is also significant considering that some characteristics of the islands appear to make them appropriate settings for feminist constructions of region and experience. In her article "Women in the Wilderness," Heather Murray suggests that regions conforming to a notion of "pseudo-wilderness" (which she defines as a rural setting occupying a space between an urban environment and true wilderness, which nonetheless "stands for" wilderness), permits a woman to place herself alone in "nature" and to learn, especially about herself, from that environment. The Gulf Islands are an excellent example of pseudo-wilderness, but I have not yet found any examples of texts treating women's experience of the Gulf Islands this way. (In Intertidal Life, the work that arguably most intensely incorporates the natural world, Alice reads field guides rather than experiencing the actual natural world on Galiano.) Given the long tradition of women exploring, living in, and writing about nature on the British Columbia coast (Kathrene Pinkerton, Three's a Crew (1940); Margaret McIntyre, Place of Quiet Waters (1965); M. Wylie Blanchet, The Curve of Time (1968); Lyn Hancock, There's a Seal in My Sleeping Bag (1972); Gilean Douglas, The Protected Place (1979); Edith Iglauer, Fishing with John (1990)), the lack of a single Gulf Island example (when the geographical location and pastoral associations with the islands match so precisely Murray's "pseudo-wilderness") is puzzling.

all aspects of Gulf Island culture. This network constitutes the rhetorical strategies by which the Gulf Islands define themselves and acquire significance.

## Chapter Two

### An Indefinite Space: Gulf Island Histories

*Ecology is to a large extent the study of plant and animal succession.*

Joseph Meeker, The Comedy of Survival, 27

*A good steam engine is properly superseded by a better. But one lovely pastoral valley is not superseded by another, nor a statue of Praxiteles by a statue of Michael Angelo.*

Thomas de Quincey, "Literature of Knowledge and Literature of Power," 1848

*History may repeat, but sometimes things get turned around in the process.*

William Least Heat-Moon, Blue Highways, 177

A region is not simply a geographical entity but a concept defined by its historical coordinates: the geographical region cannot be separated from its historical existence. The Gulf Island region has changed size and shape since European settlement began; from one local history to another, the region's boundaries are fluid. The manner in which the region has been defined and represented in local histories depends on criteria for regional identity beyond the topographical. Until the end of the Second World War, the Gulf Islands were peripheral to regional (Pacific Northwest or British Columbia coast) and provincial histories that treated the Gulf Islands, if at all, as quaint and inconsequential. But with Margaret Shaw Walter's Early Days among the Gulf Islands of British Columbia (1946), the first full-length published account of European settlement on the islands, the Gulf Islands became the subject in themselves of a discrete text. The separate volume marks a

separateness of space and intention: the boundaries of the subject align with the spatial boundaries of the region. Local histories of the Gulf Islands define localness; they fix the historical coordinates of local space.

Walter's voyage across the Atlantic from England culminates in the moment in 1877 when her uncle takes the family off the steamer in Trincomali Channel: "so it was," she says, "from the deck of the 'Emma' that we first saw the Gulf Islands, names of which at least were to become so familiar later on" (6). Arrival scenes are pivotal moments in emigrant narratives, reflecting transition from old life to new: in memoirs such as Walter's, rather than diaries where arrival cannot be interpreted in light of subsequent events, the rhetoric of such moments encapsulates both emigrant desires and the life that follows.<sup>31</sup> For Walter, the significant moment, the point of origin, occurs at the family's first sight of the group of islands, not the specific island on which they settled. The preposition

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<sup>31</sup> In *Imperial Eyes*, Mary Louise Pratt describes arrival scenes as "a convention of almost every variety of travel writing," serving "as particularly potent sites for framing relations of contact and setting the terms of its representation" (78-79). In "Fieldwork in Common Places," she examines two common tropes for describing the arrival of the ethnographer in the contact zone: the "royal arrival" and "the old-fashioned castaway" (37-38). Pratt is concerned in these two examples with contact with indigenous peoples rather than specifically with landscape, and the tropes she describes initiate the ethnographer's narrative. Andrew Hassam, on the other hand, focusses on landscape representations in arrival scenes, and analyses how those scenes affect closure of travel narratives. He has found that ship-board descriptions of the Australian shoreline function as narrative climaxes in nineteenth-century emigrant diaries:

What is common to these descriptions . . . is a desire to end the narrative of the voyage on a suitably high note. The voyage along the coastline is the last stage of a long sea journey in which the description of static scenery has been largely impossible. . . . writing the coastline of Australia allows the narrative of the voyage to come to a successful close. From on board ship, the coastline becomes active, participating in the emigrants' desire to reach their destination, making the very act of emigration itself seem destined by providence. (205)

"among" in her title indicates a similar orientation: instead of more conventional usages ("in" a place or "on" an island), "among" suggests a network of conventions and living on water. Walter does not mention Galiano by name until well into a description of her family's first years on the island, where she identifies the island casually, only because the context requires that naming: "Later on I remember one of the older settlers on Salt Spring Island when coming across to see the new family he had heard of as being on Galiano, bringing with him a full bucket of milk 'for the children'" (6-7).

The lack of overt reference to Galiano makes sense, however, when Walter explains the scope of local space at the time:

Neighborhood in those days stood for quite an indefinite space. From Mayne Island, the nearest to ours southward, which forms with Galiano, the swift current of Active Pass; that of Pender, Saturna, and even to San Juan--for there were no tariff boundaries then, people travelling up the channel toward Nanaimo perhaps, would anchor sometimes in our little bay. (8)

Walter's use of the word "neighborhood" designates an intimate arrangement of space based primarily in social connections. The incident of the Salt Spring settler bringing milk to the Shaw children reinforces the notion of neighbourhood, being an act intended both as simple kindness and to establish social relations within local space. Walter's notion of the neighbourhood of her childhood transgresses even the international border: the boundary dispute about the route the border should take through the islands had been settled in 1872, five years before Walter's family arrived in the region, yet by her account, the formal division was irrelevant to island residents. San Juan Island, at least, was still part of the neighbourhood.

Walter outlines Gulf Island space in a sentence that lacks both geographical and

grammatical relationships. Her sentence has no predicate; commas interrupt subject and verb, verb and object; lists ignore parallelism; semi-colon and dash replace who-knows-what missing links between thoughts. Walter's confused syntax echoes the indefiniteness of local space: as a set of directions, her description of the local region lacks both prepositions and compass points that might indicate the spatial relationships between islands. She names the islands in order as they extend south and east of Galiano, but abruptly reverses direction with a gesture north, toward Nanaimo. The islands she names, however, reach no further north than Galiano. The defining sentence ends with the notion of travel, a concept that contradicts the notion of neighbourhood, which implies three-dimensional space, while the traveller's notion of space is a line, a direction: beyond Galiano, presumably, neighbourhood ("our little bay") gives way to the impersonal, foreign space, the proper sphere of travellers. It is impossible to map Walter's Gulf Islands from her own description; the boundaries of Gulf Island space must be assembled by inventing the absent relationships between the spatial and syntactical fragments of which her sentence is composed. That spatial indefiniteness is actually more pronounced even than Walter demonstrates here, for the geographical range she covers in her memoirs overlaps with, but is by no means identical to, the area she overtly maps as her "neighbourhood." The act of neighbourliness she cites crosses the boundary of her neighbourhood as she defines it directly, since Salt Spring is not part of the community she names. By her own account, Galiano is the northern limit of the Gulf Island community which stretches south and east to San Juan Island, but her stories include the area farther north. As would be logical for a resident of the north end of Galiano, Walter's personal mental map includes Valdes, Kuper,

Thetis, and Salt Spring Islands, all adjacent to Galiano to the north and west across the sheltered waters of Trincomali Channel. Walters thus moves between two alternate, even conflicting mental maps of the Gulf Islands. The definition she states directly is conventional, the shared opinion of the community centred in the outer islands. She submerges her own orientation toward local space beneath the received version of the boundaries of the region. This contradiction makes the two parts of Walter's disclaimer significant too: the region she knows is not the same as the region she believes in ("the names of which *at least* were to become so familiar"), the qualification (my emphasis) making familiarity the result of discourse rather than experience. For Walter, community discourse is as authoritative and reliable a source of knowledge as her own experience (or rather, she cannot separate community discourse from her own knowledge or experience). Spatial epistemology in the Gulf Islands means that an unseen region can be defined and known, a mental map of the islands drawn in discourse with other islanders.

Early Days belongs to the genre of memoir rather than that of history: in her foreword, Walter disclaims any authority based in scholarship and research, confining herself "strictly to what I know or believe to be true in every case." Rather than limiting the authority of her text, this statement of criteria establishes local conventions for defining the Gulf Island region during the late nineteenth century. Fifteen years after Walter published her reminiscences, the Gulf Islands Branch of the B.C. Historical Association produced A Gulf Islands Patchwork (1961), a collection of essays, poems, reminiscences, anecdotes, and photographs relating to settlement of the outer islands. The book is subtitled "Some Early Events on the Islands of Galiano, Mayne, Saturna, North and South

Pender," naming a Gulf Island region almost identical with Walter's conventional version (though no longer bridging the international border, a conceptual boundary that solidified in local discourse over the intervening eighty years). For the contributors, as for the early settlers they commemorate, "home" still means the entire group of islands: the collective mental map Walter describes having persisted for nearly a century. The metaphor of patchwork and the indefinite article in the main title signify a proximity rather than fusion of material, randomly assembled and stitched together. No discernible structure orders the entries, either geographically (grouping material about a specific island in one place), topically, or chronologically. No attempt is made to synthesize the history of the group of islands: the onus is on the reader to make connections between entries, to piece together narrative lines, to amalgamate single events into general trends. Like Walter's Foreword and the "early days" of her title, the editorial disclaimer "Some Early Events" signifies indeterminate beginnings: unconnected by the causal links that characterize formal historical narrative, "days" and "events" constitute antinarratives.

But five years later, Donald A. New published a booklet titled Voyage of Discovery: Gulf Island Names and Their Origins (1966), arranging his text chronologically and emphasizing a sequence of origins in the Gulf Island region. Like New's arrangement of the names into a historical narrative, Jean Lockwood's Foreword suggests that the geographical project takes second place to the historical one:

The purpose of this booklet is to tell the discoverer of today something of the history of the Gulf Islands, and how and where the names of their harbours, bays, points and mountains originated. (N.p.)

Voyage of Discovery is a history of allusions to discovery rather than about discovery

itself: unlike Early Days or A Gulf Islands Patchwork, New's book necessarily dwells less on settlement than on discovery, since most current place names in the islands date from the British naval survey of 1858 to 1863, rather than from European settlement.

The map in Voyages of Discovery marks a shift in emphasis from Walter's memoirs. Early Days does not include a map, which is not surprising given Walter's indeterminate definition of Gulf Island space and her intended audience: as her casualness about mentioning Galiano suggests, she assumes her readers know where she lives, and that the events she recounts are common knowledge, though in danger of being forgotten. A Gulf Islands Patchwork includes a fold-out map at the back of the book, tracing a smaller region than New's. The map in Patchwork uses a system of numbers locating entries given in lists of names above the map proper: each list pertains to an individual island, beginning with places on the coasts of the islands, and then moving on to names located more often in the interior of the islands, names associated with settlement rather than navigation. The lists thus move from officially-sanctioned names to vernacular names arising from local circumstances, most of which do not appear on government-produced maps of the same date. New, however, omits most of the settlement names, concentrating on the coastal names that match the official naval charts. The écriture of the two maps is almost identical, consisting of unadorned roughly hand-drawn outlines of the islands below lists of names, coded with numbers to numbered locations on the maps. But whereas Patchwork labels the islands and major bodies of water on the map itself where space permits, New labels only the islands and Nanaimo. All of the coastal names are his subject and are thus coded to the map and ordered in lists; Patchwork, however, treats major

coastal names as reference points only, as guides to locating sites of settlement. A Gulf Islands Patchwork thus treats its map as an adjunct to the mental map that it assumes its readers share, while New treats the map as a text complete in itself, of equal importance to the historical account of place names. New's definition of the Gulf Island region appears discursively as cartography rather than as exposition.

New's particular version of Gulf Island space does not use settlement as its defining trope as the two earlier histories do, but reverts to a notion of discovery--or more precisely naming--as the source of origins. At the end of the booklet, a short acknowledgement concedes that New has gleaned most of his material from Captain John F. Walbran's British Columbia Coast Names (1907). New adopts both Walbran's assumption that toponymy itself is history and his emphasis on the coastline of the region that is his subject. Except where elevation provides a navigational aid, the space behind the beach in the interior of the islands is irrelevant to New's version of the Gulf Island region. The resemblance of New's project to Walbran's indicates that New intended his booklet to define Gulf Island space. The information in Voyage of Discovery had been available in Walbran for half a century: in reprinting the information in a new format, New casts the boundaries of the region into relief. Walbran's title clearly creates or identifies a discrete region, "British Columbia Coast," against which New's selection and rearrangement of material (New is arranged chronologically, Walbran alphabetically) creates a geographical entity that had not before been mapped as a distinct region. Not surprisingly, New's Gulf Island region does not depend on a notion of neighbourhood and the collective mental mapping that neighbourhood implies. New's version expands the region from that defined in the two

earlier histories, stretching instead from Gabriola Island south through the outer islands and Salt Spring to include the small islands clustered around the Saanich Peninsula (though as in Patchwork the American border marks its southern boundary). This definition of the region derives from a marine perspective, from a traveller's passage through space rather than the local conventions that identify the region as home.

New's quasi-history of the Gulf Islands ends a distinct phase in history-writing of the region, even though that phase lasted only twenty years. Not until nearly a century after initial European settlement did the Gulf Islands appear as the discrete subject of historical treatment in separate volumes, rather than as part of historical accounts of a larger region. For a quarter century after New issued his pamphlet, published full-length accounts of Gulf Island history are strictly limited to histories of individual islands rather than of the region as a whole, however constituted. Three cover Hornby Island (Corrigall 1969, 1975; Smith 1988; and Fletcher 1989), two Mayne Island (Borrodaile 1971; Elliott 1984), two Denman (Isbister 1976; Baikie 1985), two Salt Spring (Hill et al. 1983; Hamilton 1984), and one each Lasqueti (Mason 1976), Bowen (Howard 1973), Gabriola (Harrison 1982), and Thetis (Kelsey 1993). Collective island history gave way to isolated histories of unconnected communities.

The only exception to this chronology of local history writing--the shift, that is, from multiple island histories to individual ones--is Eric Roberts' Salt Spring Saga (1962), which precedes the close of the multiple-island phase of historiography by three years. This anomaly is actually consistent with the versions of the Gulf Island region described by Walter and A Gulf Islands Patchwork, both of which omit Salt Spring from the

conventional, local definition of the Gulf Island region (or community). And Donald New echoes the Gulf Islands Patchwork map in labelling Salt Spring but leaving it otherwise blank, a space without distinguishing features or names, a barren coastline. According to local historiography, Salt Spring, now often considered emblematic of the Gulf Island region, was not part of the region from mid-nineteenth-century European settlement through the 1960s, despite its islandness and proximity to the outer islands. In versions of the region current before the 1960s and even later, the term "Gulf Islands" means the outer islands, the islands separated from Vancouver Island by the looming bulk of Salt Spring. The geography of Salt Spring, the shape of whose coastline mirrors the corresponding coast of Vancouver Island to the west and south and hugs the main island quite closely, has dictated that the island's history and culture be much more directly tied to that of adjacent communities on Vancouver Island than to those of the other islands. Transportation between Salt Spring and Vancouver Island has always been much easier than between the outer islands and those islands and Vancouver Island: by the 1960s, direct ferry service was available from both Vesuvius Bay and Fulford Harbour, neither of which serves any of the other islands. Salt Spring was the first island to be settled in any organized way and, being much larger than any of the other Gulf Islands, can support a larger population (with the more diverse and sophisticated services such a population requires) and command greater political clout than any other single island. Because of these differences, settlement and development have proceeded much more intensely and quickly on Salt Spring than on adjacent islands: it is hardly surprising that the outer islands, all relatively small and equally isolated from Vancouver Island, share an identity, and thus a history, that omits

Salt Spring.

The other anomaly among the histories of individual islands is the absence of individual histories of Galiano, North and South Pender, and Saturna. Together with Mayne, these islands constitute the "outer" Gulf Islands, which are generally considered to be the core group of the Gulf Island region. These are the islands that are beyond dispute, the ones that are always included in any version of the region. It is more difficult to explain this anomaly: one possibility is that with the publication of A Gulf Islands Patchwork, much of the ground had already been covered, especially since Marie Anne Elliott's 1984 history of Mayne includes the outer islands as is signalled by her book's title Mayne Island and the Outer Gulf Islands: A History. The outer group may be considered too well-known to merit further attention. Conversely, the histories of individual islands may be challenges to the notion that the outer islands are the "real" Gulf Islands, correctives to the attention that the outer group has received, both in historical writing and in all other texts. The most likely explanation, however, is that the outer islands are so inextricably bound up with one another's history that it would be impossible to isolate the early history of a single island in the group.

This sudden shift in focus from the region to individual islands in the writing of local history can be attributed to the increase in population: by the end of the 1960s, it was no longer necessary to look beyond one's own island for a sense of community. The key lies in Walter's use of the word "neighborhood" to describe the scope of her book: until populations increased to the point that a single island could constitute a community, at least in social terms (as opposed to legal or political), the watery divisions between islands

were roads rather than boundaries. The notion of a Gulf Islands community became irrelevant once the social need for a sense of connection with other islands had passed. Local histories describe patterns of interconnected lives, both of kinship and of long acquaintance. The Gulf Islands region can be said to have shrunk during this period of expanding population: the notion of the Gulf Islands group held little importance except as one's own island could be (and usually is) considered to be quintessentially Gulf Island.

But in another sense, Gulf Islands space expanded as distances and physical obstacles long considered inconsequential became significant barriers between islands. As the weekly steamship service gave way to much more frequent government ferry service (a consequence of population growth), the rowboat seemed too slow and dangerous a vehicle for travel between islands. But the vagaries of routes and schedules and fares made inter-island travel more difficult than convenient: coupled with the more immediate satisfaction of social desires possible on one island, this change in transportation habits created an estrangement between islands. The transition from neighbourhood to discontinuous region marked an increasing rather than diminishing remoteness, in contrast to the expanding urban area of Vancouver, for instance, which absorbed nearby settlements into itself as suburbs. The history of the region fractured into histories of individual islands.

In 1991, however, Peter Murray published Homesteads and Snug Harbours, a first attempt at a conventional history of the Gulf Island region, rather than an assemblage of documents of many kinds, by many hands. Unlike Margaret Walter, who refuses to supplement her reminiscences with research, or New, who relies on a single, not always reliable source, Murray lists a substantial bibliographic foundation. And unlike A Gulf

Islands Patchwork, Homesteads and Snug Harbours is the work of one writer, not himself an earlier settler or the descendant of early settlers, who thereby perhaps brings to his work a scholarly detachment and a synthesizing influence to produce a stronger narrative line than earlier versions of the region's history had done.

The shift back to the notion of the group of islands as a significant, coherent place indicates not a return to a strong sense of social cohesiveness between islands but rather a sense of political urgency. Twenty years of experimentation with the Islands Trust has produced few indications that the special status of the islands can be maintained or its special quality preserved. For the most part, Murray employs the Islands Trust definition of the region, but he also manipulates the Trust area's geographical boundaries. He includes Texada, for instance, which is not under the jurisdiction of the Trust, but eliminates the islands in Howe Sound and the Thormanby group along the Sunshine Coast. Just as cartography illuminates the discursive interpretations of the region in earlier histories, the maps that accompany Murray's text reveal an idiosyncratic definition of the Gulf Islands region.

Rather than using a single map of the entire region (admittedly an unwieldy element of Voyages of Discovery and A Gulf Islands Patchwork), Murray uses four separate maps that appear as a sequence before the discursive text (in the two earlier histories, the maps had been bound as part of the back covers, rather than as pages of the text). Murray's cartography thus divides the region into four parts, three of which, covering the outer islands, Salt Spring, and the islands off the Saanich Peninsula, overlap very slightly. The line of southern islands is thus redrawn as three squat rectangles. The fourth map includes

Denman and Hornby, Lasqueti and Texada: given that a rectangular map of the first three islands is almost impossible to draw without including Texada, one wonders whether Texada was included in the region (a chapter is devoted to Texada and Lasqueti) simply to satisfy the demands of straight-line cartography. A fifth, comprehensive map shows how the four detailed maps fit into the Strait of Georgia: here, the islands of Howe Sound and the Thormanbys are drawn but not labelled, unlike the San Juan Islands, which do not appear at all, the space they occupy being reduced to empty sea. Texada is as close to Lasqueti, a Trust island, as most of the southern islands are to one another, but those on the southeast side of the Strait lie separate from the rest. Such a pronounced revision of the Trust boundaries of the region suggests that some aspect of southeast-ness made the Thormanby and Howe Sound islands ineligible for Murray's notion of the Gulf Islands region: the only difference between these islands and those Murray does include is their proximity to Vancouver. The islands on the east side of the Strait are perhaps drawn too deeply into the Vancouver urban region, where their separate origins and history may be obscured by, or too heavily dependent on, the growth of Vancouver.<sup>32</sup>

In this proximity, the southeast islands challenge what Murray conceives to be the defining characteristic--separateness--of Gulf Islandness, which he states in the first sentence of the book: "There's no question--the Gulf Islands are different, special places"

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<sup>32</sup> Such a distinction based on geographical distances is not as logical as it appears in this region, since other factors--particularly the availability of ferry service--more immediately influence the degree to which individual islands attract urban interest. The boundaries of Murray's implied urban region are also questionable, since it has become common, among regional planners, to refer to the "Strait of Georgia Urban Region," a model that does not distinguish between islands on the basis of greater or lesser distance from Vancouver.

(1). Italicizing the verb to emphasize state of being makes the question of distinctness of place, of a claim to region, the central concern of the entire book. Murray's statement seems to refer to a challenge to which the book is a response, the latest installment, perhaps, in a continuing argument. Ironically, Murray's evidence for his statement consists mainly of a quotation in which John Fowles describes island utopias in general and the Scilly Isles in particular. Murray's claim to difference, then, rests on a definition of "island-ness" taken from an example half a world away, rather than in any attribute of local conditions.

The plural islands in Murray's declaration beg the question of whether it is the region that differs from surrounding areas or whether the islands are different from one another. As a regional history, the book is a generic anomaly: it recounts separate but simultaneous local histories, rather than synthesizing parallel elements in the histories of multiple islands. Murray may have set himself an impossible project: social and psychic investment in difference (between islands) defeats topographical similarity. Or perhaps the icon of amateur endeavour in representations of the Gulf Islands resists the rigours of scholarly or professional historical research and writing. In any case, Murray faces a problem of genre. His book attempts to make the local regional: the local history can no longer be used in the Gulf Islands, but the characteristics of the region resist the demands of a regional history. Such a history requires synthesis, supplementing anecdote with context, amalgamating personal stories into collective experience, creating a narrative or series of narratives that transcend yet include individual perspectives. Murray gestures toward synthesis, both in his title and in the focus of his first and last chapters. The phrase

"homesteads and snug harbours" defines the region by isolating its emblematic (common or unifying) landscapes, the topographical diversity between the two embracing all variations in between. The opening and closing chapters unify Gulf Island experience, the first through tracing broad outlines of emigration and settlement and the last in recounting the problems of travel across water, a defining characteristic of Gulf Island life. These two chapters--"The People" and "The Boats"--roughly parallel the two parts of the book's title, framing the condition of Gulf Island settlement within these two chapters. The chapters in between, however, fracture the region into its geographical parts. Consistent with subject areas of the earlier collective histories of the Gulf Islands group, Murray begins with the outer islands. From Mayne, Murray moves northwest to Galiano, southeast to Saturna, and south to Pender, then widens his scope to take in the small islands close to Sidney, moving north to Salt Spring and continuing north through Thetis, Kuper, and Reid, Gabriola and Valdes, Lasqueti and Texada, ending with Denman and Hornby. The route of Murray's history traces a spiral through the outer islands that loosens into a long, northward curve veering east to Lasqueti and then west to include Denman and Hornby at its end. But Murray's structure does not trace any narrative line. By fragmenting the region according to topographical boundaries, Murray defeats his aim of producing a regional history. The several maps in Homesteads and Snug Harbours underscore Murray's discursive fractures.

However unconsciously, Murray grasps that the genre in which he writes--the local history--is conventionally limited to accounts of settlement. Its ultimate aim is to validate and celebrate the state or stage of local settlement as it exists at the time of writing. But Murray feels uneasy enough about local developments in the genre to explain what he

perhaps considers omissions in his own work:

It is fashionable nowadays to begin histories such as this with a detailed account of the rumblings which created the geology and shapes of the landscape millions of years ago. Also mandatory, it seems, is an attempt to retell the story of the Indians. After all, as is invariably pointed out, they were here first. (4)

Murray resists trends in local history writing, on the British Columbia coast as elsewhere in previously colonial places, that attempt to acknowledge and perhaps redress the genre's overwhelming emphasis on European settlement. For him, post-colonial awareness of the discourse or narrative of priority ("they were here first") is irrelevant. In Homesteads and Snug Harbours, Murray clears the spatial slate of prior narratives of geology, Salish occupation and European discovery, mapping at the outset of his history an empty landscape that he can gradually fill with the co-ordinates of settlement. The book establishes the pastoral moment itself as the original moment, the moment at which the region is called into being and defined. By omitting the narrative of prehistoric landscape formation, Murray makes the landscape coincidental with the arrival of settlers. By ignoring Salish presence in the region, he also reiterates the notion of settlement as the point of origin of the historical region.

In his introduction, Murray gives two conflicting accounts of the book's purpose. He denies that his project is motivated by issues of development, although that preoccupation is implied by his conforming to the Trust notion of the region and the rhetoric of urgency the Trust employs, claiming instead: "[t]he attempt here is to invoke [sic] a sense of what it was like for the islands' first settlers" (3). The absence of an antecedent for "it" in this statement betrays an ambivalence of intention: is "it" life,

landscape, the experience of settlement itself? The final paragraph of the introduction suggests that the notion of origins is more complicated:

So this is an account, a celebration if you will, of settlement of the islands during the century between the 1850s and the 1950s. These are the stories of some remarkable people and their sometimes heroic endeavours to establish a way of life that has not yet been totally erased. It is good to be reminded of this past, to give us signposts to the future. We can't go back to those days, but it should be possible to retain something of their quality.  
(4)

In conjunction, these two accounts of the book's aim merge the experience (and claim) of being "first" ("the islands' first settlers") with an entire century of continuous or successive development. The circumstance of priority, therefore, repeats endlessly. Repetition does not, however, negate the notion of priority: the frequency and longevity of the invocation to priority proves its centrality to the notion of the Gulf Island region. Murray arbitrarily closes the period of settlement after a century of the process, which raises the speculation that Murray himself "discovered" the islands in the 1950s.

I use the word "invocation" deliberately, for Murray's solecism in using "invoke" rather than "evoke" reveals another level of intention: the text's function as both invocation and celebration is ritualistic, liturgical. Against his own protestations, Murray betrays a desire not simply to preserve (or "retain" as he says) the islands' special quality, but to recover its essence and the conditions of its production. In pastoral elegy, that enviable state has been lost, the elegiac viewpoint focussing not on the process of loss but on the nature of the loss itself. The elegiac mode permits, in itself, the recovery of the pastoral moment (for its own sake, the pleasure of memory). In writing Homesteads and Snug Harbours, Murray hedges against the as-yet partial erasure of that specialness. This local

history functions not merely as the repository of records, but as an archive of blueprints for settlement, in the future as much as in the past. The settlement to which Murray refers is not so much a matter of lot lines and building plans (though both of these texts--as discourses and mental maps--play a large part in other attempts at similar recovery) but of the condition of Gulf Islandness, of regional character.

That all the local histories of individual islands betray a nostalgia for the settlement era is hardly surprising given the nature of the genre. But Gulf Island local histories pass beyond the boundaries of nostalgia into elegy. In a very short space of time, roughly a quarter of a century, the mode of local history-writing in the islands shifts from the boosterism that usually informs the genre, which generally traces a trajectory of growth and establishment into the future, to elegiac romance, to a narrative of possession (as origin) followed by loss. Local histories look forward, establishing a narrative of dynamism that propels the locality into the future. Murray's reference to the Trust is ambivalent but so is his reference to "the pace of development." Murray's purpose is to fix, not to enable a narrative of change that extends beyond the book's conclusion into the present. Murray writes a non-sequential history: his structure enables him to begin again with each new chapter, rather than to follow a chronology, creating an impression not of development but of a single, enviable state into which change does not intrude.

**We Found An Archipelago of Many Low, Small Islands: Discovery**

*To be an explorer was to inhabit a world of potential objects with which one carried on an imaginary dialogue.*

Paul Carter, The Road to Botany Bay, 25

*Geographical class names created a difference that made a difference. They rendered the world visible, bringing it within the horizon of discourse.*

Carter, 51

*We may think, then, of the class elements in place names as the agent of a linguistic fifth column, infiltrating and dividing the space stealthily, as an outpost supplying a ramifying network of grammatical and syntactical connections.*

Carter, 58

*The coast is the metaphor of exploring, not of the explorer.*

Carter, 93

*Landscape painting is an arrangement of natural and man-made features in rough perspective; it organizes natural elements so that they provide an appropriate setting for human activity.*

Yi-Fu Tuan, Topophilia, 122

Peter Murray's refusal to consider geomorphology or the occupation of the Gulf Islands landscape by the Coast Salish necessary components of local history writing is surprising not because he rejects these elements but because he does not mention the much more common practice of beginning a British Columbia coast history with the moment of European discovery and exploration in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Unlike

the American Pacific Northwest, where Lewis' and Clark's overland journey dominates notions of discovery and hence origin, the trope of discovery and exploration by sea remains the defining metaphor or icon for both British Columbia as a whole and its coastal places. The persistence of that metaphor reflects the degree to which European history of the province originates by sea: the first place in British Columbia to acquire a European name still in use was the Strait of Juan de Fuca, named, according to John Walbran, "or rather re-named, by Captain Charles William Barkley of the fur trading ship Imperial Eagle, who was off the entrance to this inlet in July, 1787, and recognized it as the long lost strait of Juan de Fuca" after "the Greek pilot Juan de Fuca, who sailed up this strait in 1592" (British Columbia Coast Names, 274).<sup>33</sup> Alexander Mackenzie's overland arrival at the Pacific at Bentinck Arm in July 1793 thus postdated European arrival by sea by two hundred years (and Lieutenant Johnstone's charting of Dean Channel for Captain Vancouver by three weeks) (Ormsby 33). The incorporation of Victoria (the result of a

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<sup>33</sup> Donald New's pamphlet Voyage of Discovery: Gulf Island Names and Their Origins begins with the statement:

The oldest name in British Columbia is JUAN de FUCA, the wide strait leading in from the Pacific Ocean. This name was made official in 1787 by Capt. Charles William Barkley who was here collecting sea otter pelts in his good ship Imperial Eagle.

Barkley did not enter the straits but identified them as the opening claimed to have been discovered in 1592 by the Greek pilot Apostolos Valerianos, working for the Spaniards under the assumed name of Juan de Fuca, when he was sent to find the supposed North West Passage to the Atlantic.

De Fuca's story may have been doubted, but his name and the approximate location of his straits were shown on all maps and charts of the region before the authenticated discovery of Capt. Barkley 195 years later. (1)

Walbran's description of Juan de Fuca Strait as "long lost," and the Strait's role in the history of attempted discovery of the Northwest Passage, resonate with Vancouver's own project.

sea-based system of trade and transportation) preceded that of Vancouver by half a century, mirroring the lag in settlement of mainland British Columbia behind Vancouver Island. Thus the notion of discovery (and settlement) by sea is profoundly and logically identified with the idea of the region's origins.

The absence in Homesteads and Snug Harbours of the classic trope of origins in British Columbia coast history denies sighting, mapping, and naming as necessary activities preceding and enabling settlement. In Murray's narrative of the islands, the pastoral landscape does not evolve from dreams of settlement but is itself the original landscape. In repudiating the discovery and exploration phase as historiographical necessity in the Gulf Islands region, Murray incorporates, however inadvertently, a key aspect of Gulf Islands history. Both discovery and exploration are very qualified notions in the "history" of the Gulf Islands, of limited use in identifying discrete phases of post-contact historical narrative of the region. During the period of intense European scrutiny of the British Columbia coast in the 1790s (these being the particular journeys to which the local or regional tropes refer), both the Spanish and English expeditions largely ignored the islands. By the time Vancouver made his third and final voyage through the Pacific Northwest in 1792, he was certain that the Northwest Passage he had been sent to find did not exist. For Vancouver, the purpose of this last voyage was merely to confirm his expectation and map the coastline more accurately. In this sense, the third voyage engaged in verification and record-keeping; it functioned, therefore, more practically (whatever its rhetorical frame) as survey rather than as voyage of discovery.

Given Vancouver's emphasis on this last voyage on cartography rather than

discovery (as bolstering claims to empire and as precursor of settlement rather than as textual site of discovery), at least one aspect of the map (that is, the text, both cartographic and otherwise, in which the findings of the voyage culminate) that concludes the three voyages seems anomalous. The name "Gulf of Georgia" appears on Vancouver's 1792 chart of the southern British Columbia coast, but if by this point Vancouver had given up the hope of finding the Northwest Passage leading east into the continent, the word "gulf" is problematic. The geographical class name "gulf" denotes a wide bay (often wider than deep), so large that it can and often does contain the estuary of a very large river, navigable perhaps thousands of miles inland. Presumably, the entrance to the fabled Northwest Passage would be signalled geomorphically by a gulf into which the straits would open. The discovery of a gulf in the location of the Strait of Georgia would have been the essential prelude to the climax of a narrative describing discovery of the Northwest Passage. In an exploration journal, the term "gulf" would necessarily precede the discursive triumph of "passage." "Gulf" locates the focus of imperial desires, funnelling the explorers' gaze toward the all-important break in the coastline. Even though his ships had made the journey through the Inside Passage, proving that the "gulf" was actually a strait, Vancouver allowed the name "Gulf of Georgia" to stand.

On a voyage so dedicated to scientific discovery as was Vancouver's third visit to the northwest coast, with Archibald Menzies providing a constant, clearly irritating reminder of that emphasis, the uncorrected name is difficult to explain. The toponymic error is technical, breaching the conventions that govern the use of geographical class names. The misnaming alters the topography of the region named, referring to a desired

narrative rather than describing the formal attributes of the region. In 1791, Eliza had named the strait "Gran Canal de Nuestra Señora del Rosario La Marinera," a name that, unlike "Gulf of Georgia," accurately reflects the geomorphology of the region. Given the polite exchange of information between the Spanish and British expeditions in 1792, Vancouver must have been aware of the Spanish name and recognized its technical difference from his own. Perhaps Vancouver refused to change the name lest it appear that he was conceding Spanish cartographic superiority. Or perhaps he was unwilling to indicate quite so emphatically the failure to fulfill his mandate (to find the Northwest Passage) that the corrected name would imply. Perhaps he intended the name as an ironic allusion to that failure. Alternatively, the name "Strait of Georgia" might have recalled uncomfortably the Straits of Anian that he had not found. That Vancouver replaced a topographically-correct name with an erroneous one suggests that the English expedition competed with the Spanish for discursive possession of the region.

Vancouver's name for the Strait stood until 1865, when the Hydrographer of the Royal Navy confirmed Captain Richards' proposal, in 1858, that it be altered to the "Strait of Georgia." The name "Gulf of Georgia," however, persists in local usage: forty years on, Walbran (1906) notes that the strait "is today always locally spoken of as 'the Gulf'" (205) and in the last years of the twentieth century its echoes are found in vernacular usage by older local people.<sup>34</sup> The last remnant of its status as formal and authoritative, however-

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<sup>34</sup> In a short article, "About Place Names," in *More Tales of the Outer Gulf Islands*, Erl Campbell has this to say about the Strait of Georgia: "In 1792 Captain George Vancouver named this body of water 'Gulf of Georgia' in honour of His Majesty George III. In 1865 the name was changed officially but the new title didn't stick in local parlance" (145). Campbell's designation of the term "Strait of Georgia" as the "new title" in 1865 underscores the extraordinary longevity of "gulf" as an immutable, perhaps foundational

-its last cartographic presence--remains in the term "Gulf Islands."<sup>35</sup> The name "Gulf Islands" rarely appears on maps of the Pacific Northwest or the British Columbia coast produced by government agencies (except the tourism agencies), though it does appear in the Coast Pilot,<sup>36</sup> where it designates not so much a destination as a route, or waterway, or series of waterways. The region "Gulf Islands" thus remains unnamed: its name does not distinguish but rather dissolves. In the Coast Pilot, as in federal government navigational charts, the term "Gulf Islands" names not a specific place but a part of the coast as it relates geographically to surrounding areas--a region, in short. "Gulf Islands" functions as a generally locating title, in the same manner as "West Coast Vancouver Island," and is the only part of a chapter title ("Georgia Strait (SE part), Gulf Islands and adjacent channels") that names not a body of water but land. Among the straits, passages, inlets, sounds, passages, rivers, and harbours in the Pilot's first six chapter titles, the Gulf Islands take on by association the status not of land but of water: the place indicated is not the actual

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element of local language ("local parlance").

<sup>35</sup> In Islands in Trust, David Lott begins his entry on Salt Spring with the following account of the name "Gulf Islands," the source of which he identifies as Bea Hamilton's 1969 history Salt Spring Island:

It is the largest of the "Gulf Islands." Strictly speaking, there is no Gulf, only a Strait. In 1854, the nearby waters were called the Gulf of Georgia, but officials decided that as there was really no gulf, name should be changed to the Strait of Georgia. By then, it appears to have been too late to change the designation "Gulf Islands." In 1962, officialdom acquiesced and the term "Gulf Islands" is now official." (165)

<sup>36</sup> The vernacular term "Coast Pilot" refers locally to the federal government publication Sailing Directions: British Columbia Coast, which covers the coast in several volumes, updated periodically. Volume I, described as covering the "south portion" of the B.C. coast, includes the Gulf Islands.

islands but the marine spaces between them. In this instance, the term "Gulf Islands" replaces the gesturing, locating phrase "the islands in the gulf" rather than naming a discrete place.

The name makes the islands a toponymic anomaly, referring to a cartographic sign--the "gulf"--that was incorrect to begin with and whose currency is gradually fading. The term "Gulf Islands" is not a place name in the conventional sense: rather than using the usual binomial form combining geographical class name with a designation that particularises that individual topographical entity, "Gulf Islands" combines two geographical class names. In the process, the term "gulf" ceases to function as a geographical class name and becomes descriptive--but descriptive of what? Other class name binomials are formally recognized on the British Columbia coast: the Channel Islands off Salt Spring, Cove Cliff in Indian Arm, Island Harbour and Island Cove in the Broken Group and in Tofino Inlet respectively, and Harbour Island, in the entrance to Port Eliza (Esperanza Inlet on the West Coast of Vancouver Island) are some examples. None of these names appears in Walbran, which is not surprising since by their nature these are unlikely to be choices of explorers or surveyors, who lean toward more "distinctive" names, as Captain Parry puts it. This group of names speaks in an idiom of familiarity, of the intensely local: they depend upon having the horizon under one's eye, on immediate reference to the landscape, and therefore can have meaning only in local usage. The names themselves thus suggest the existence of a local people, since they depend on and emanate from the local knowledge of long-standing residents. The descriptors do not differentiate between specific topographies in a way that would have currency outside the extremely

local context. In effect, each of these names contracts a determining directional gesture, replacing definite articles and prepositions with syntactical proximity. The descriptor indicates the location of the feature named, but the syntactical relation between elements of a place name where both parts of the name are geographical class names cannot always be known, and the implied prepositional relationships sometimes slip their moorings. In the case of Island Cove and Island Harbour, the relation between the two names is ambiguous, since without local knowledge of the area, these names cannot distinguish between an island in a cove or harbour and a cove or harbour located on an island: the contraction blurs the gesture that the missing preposition would indicate. Contractions are a common feature of popular, familiar idioms in most languages, where the ellipses cause difficulties only for non-native speakers. Exactly the same phenomenon operates with these names as with the term "Gulf Islands" (a contraction of the phrase "the islands in the gulf"), the result not of an individual decision, at a precise moment, to assign a name to a place, but rather the product of repeated, collective experience, names that develop from or within a local vernacular.

Since the name "Gulf Islands" refers to the name used popularly but not officially for the region in which they lie--the "Gulf of Georgia"--that name reflects a relation to or experience of landscape and region more populist and less imperial than most other places in British Columbia or on the coast. The region "Gulf Islands" cannot be said to have been named in the imperial sense at all; the term does not appear in Walbran, an omission that usually indicates a name applied or regularised after Richards and Parry made their

surveys.<sup>37</sup> But in this case, why a name should come into local usage more than fifty years after its referent--the "Gulf of Georgia"--is no longer officially current is difficult to explain. It is more likely that Walbran was well aware of the term "Gulf Islands" but simply omitted it since, lacking an authoritative source for the name, its "origin and history," the subject of Walbran's book, could not be known. Alternatively, Walbran may have decided to omit it if the precise region named by the term was as ambiguous in 1906 as it has been since. In this sense, the name seems to emanate from the region itself rather than from imperial or individual intentions. The name is the result of settlement--of familiarity--not a precursor to it: it draws attention to the notion of region, itself a popular construction that refers to local experience. Rather than reaching beyond the region for its meaning, the Gulf Islands are named in the vernacular. Like the other geographical class name binomials on the coast, the term "Gulf Islands" floats free from the imperial project--despite its indirect origin in Vancouver's voyages--referring not to outsiders' desires for the region but to intimate experience of living locally, in the landscape. The place name thus signifies possession through familiarity, through the state or experience of being local.

The names of individual islands in the group also disrupt the identification of naming with discovery that obtains so comprehensively elsewhere on the British Columbia coast. Except for Anvil Island in Howe Sound (named by Vancouver) and Saturna (named by Narvaez), none of the current Gulf Islands names derives from the late eighteenth-

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<sup>37</sup> The two other standard authorities for toponyms on the British Columbia coast are Lyn Middleton's Place Names of the Pacific Northwest Coast (1969) and G.P.V. and Helen V. Akrigg's British Columbia Place Names (1986). Both depend heavily on Walbran: rarely does an entry in either of these later works include information on Gulf Islands names not mentioned in Walbran. Neither of these sources includes an entry on the Gulf Islands.

century voyages of discovery except indirectly (where islands were named on these voyages, no other names survive). In the case of Gabriola, the Spanish name has survived, but the Spanish seem not to have known that what they were naming was an island rather than part of Vancouver Island. With few exceptions, the islands were formally named by Captain George Henry Richards during his survey of the coast in the Plumper from 1857 to 1861 and in the Hecate from 1861 to 1863. Even though the precedent of discovery, considered as the crucial, foundational trope of imperial history that establishes precise moments and places of imperial presence and knowledge of the landscape to be claimed, is so fragmentary in the Gulf Islands region, Richards does his best to recreate the sequence of arrival, not only of English discoverers but of Spanish and even American also. The Spanish explorer Narvaez (under Eliza's command) had discovered and named Porlier Pass in 1791, and the following year Galiano and Valdés, forced to abandon English Bay to Vancouver's ships because of the wind, made a virtue of necessity by navigating the pass after being blown south across the Strait to the outer islands. To commemorate this event, Richards named Valdes and Galiano, the islands bordering the pass on the north and south, adding the names of their ships, Mexicana and Sutil, to the hills on both islands.

If, however, Richards had intended to acknowledge Spanish priority in the outer islands, he should have commemorated Narvaez and Eliza, whose 1791 charts of the west side of the Strait were used by Galiano and Valdés in 1792. This omission does not originate with Richards, however: the final, cumulative map the Spaniards made of their discoveries on the coast in 1791 and 1792 is labelled "Carta Esférica de los Reconocimientos hechos en la Costa N.O. de América en 1791. y 1792. por las Goletas

Sutil y Mexicana y otros Buques de S.M." The "otros buques" were, in the Strait at least, the Saturnina, under Eliza's command, and the San Carlos, under that of Narvaez. The Spanish chart itself does not commemorate the details of priority. As well as Mount Sutil and Mexicana Hill, Richards named a third hill, on Galiano, after Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, sent by the Viceroy at Mexico to restore the Spanish lands at Nootka Sound to the British Crown, in the person of Vancouver, in 1792. The geographical proximity of the third Spanish name to the others, and the topographical alignment of these three principal summits, suggest that the event Richards celebrates is not exploration and discovery (Quadra was never in the Strait) but rather contact with Captain Vancouver in 1792, the culmination of Vancouver's three voyages in the chart dated that year. Narvaez and Eliza arrived in the Strait a year too early to be commemorated in the names of Gulf Islands.

Since non-indigenous settlement began on a measurable scale on Salt Spring in 1858, and on most of the other large islands in the 1860s, naming the Gulf Islands region occurred simultaneously with--not prior to--settlement. According to Walbran, the names Richards gave the islands were his own choices rather than regularisations of names already in common use. Among the few exceptions (mainly in the islands clustered around the Sidney peninsula) is Salt Spring, which Walbran attributes to officers of the Hudson's Bay Company. Salt Spring is the only place where a name given by Richards could not gain currency, but had to give way to the earlier, popular name: at the same time, it is the only place where Richards ignored or superseded local conventions in names. Walbran attributes to Richards a deliberate strategy that explains his abandoning his own usual

practice of inventing new names only in the absence of local usage:

Regarding the name of Admiral Island, Captain Richards when surveying here evidently wished to associate the island with Rear Admiral Baynes, commanding at the time, 1857-1869, the Pacific station, his flagship, staff and offices &c. He therefore named the highest mountain, Baynes, and the island, Admiral; Ganges Harbour after the flagship; Fulford harbour after the captain; Burgoyne Bay after the commander; Southey point after the admiral's secretary; Mount Bruce after the previous Commander in Chief; and Cape Keppel after a friend of Admiral Baynes. (436-7)

Richards rarely uses names that refer to qualitative aspects of the landscape (as "Salt Spring" does) or to the passage itself. The names he assigns to Salt Spring Island refer to the naval hierarchy under whose aegis Richards makes the survey rather than to inherent properties of the topography. Richards seems to have intended Admiral Island to be a toponymic climax to his survey, choosing the largest island in the Strait to commemorate his superior officer in multiple ways.

The entry on Salt Spring Island is one of the few instances where Walbran disrupts his alphabetical arrangement of place names. Although the names of various topographical features on Salt Spring appear in their appointed places in the text, they also appear in this paragraph in the Salt Spring entry. This paragraph rearranges the island's place names, replacing alphabetical order with a sequence that echoes British naval hierarchy. In arranging the names in descending order of naval precedence, Walbran reiterates the hierarchy of topographical features that Richards implies through his toponymic relations. To have named one prominent feature--the island itself--after the principal rank on the Pacific Station and its most visually striking (because highest in altitude) element after the person holding that rank implies that topographical features can be arranged hierarchically. In drawing attention to the relations between Richards' place names for Salt Spring,

Walbran concurs with the notion that this hierarchy corresponds to a topographical hierarchy. The sequence of Walbran's account echoes that hierarchy yet again. In Walbran's sentence, the narrative prose he generally uses gives way to a list whose purely documentary nature he does not bother to camouflage with stylistic variation: the parallel structure of each item in the list reveals precisely the point--that the relations between parts is orderly. Walbran does break that structure slightly--by introducing the preposition "after"--following the island and highest mountain (syntactically echoing the necessary distance between the commanding officer on the station and all other elements of the fleet subordinate to him). The last three items, whose relations to the prevailing naval hierarchy are somewhat blurred, pose problems of precedence; hence Walbran separates them from the naval hierarchy proper, where relations between elements are clearly fixed by convention.

Most of Richards' names for individual Gulf Islands refer to the internally coherent world of the British fleet on the Pacific station. In naming Mayne, Pender, Denman, Mudge, de Courcey, Kuper, Pylades, Thetis, Samuel, Piers, Prevost, Moresby, Parker, Portland, and Knapp Islands, Richards commemorated the ships and officers on the station during the making of the survey and in the preceding decade. Richards thus used the circumstances of his immediate task to name the islands, the most prominent topographical features of the Strait. Rather than showing a lack of imagination or a sycophantic desire to flatter his immediate superiors, this toponymic strategy deliberately emphasizes the importance of Richards' survey to the imperial status of the region, specifically the islands themselves.

Once it became apparent that the Oregon Treaty ruling (1846) on the location of the international border between British Columbia and the United States was so vague as to be unusable, Richards was appointed Second Boundary Commissioner and given the task of making the survey of the Strait in order to bolster the British claim to the San Juan Islands.<sup>38</sup> The names he gave the islands--the topographical features that would define the boundary--establish British naval (that is, military) presence in the region both at the time of the dispute and previously, but also commemorate the role of his own ship--the act of making the survey--as testimony to a British claim to the islands, especially San Juan Island. Richards named the two islands closest to the dispute (other than Saturna, which had been named by Narvaez in 1791), for his own two most senior officers, and the body of water, south of Mayne and east of Pender, that leads into the area of contention, after his own vessel. By concentrating allusions to the survey in the precise location under dispute, Richards called attention to the imperial act of naming, which characterized this particular survey to the extent that it began to resemble initial discovery, the pre-eminent grounds, in the previous century, for claiming imperial possession.

By the mid-nineteenth century, however, British economic presence in the region had also become significant grounds for claiming possession. Richards named the largest channel in the outer islands, lying west of Pender, Swanson Channel: the Swanson in question was not a British naval officer but an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company.

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<sup>38</sup> Richards may have deliberately used the names of the Spanish explorers for three of the major islands (Gabriola, Valdes, and Galiano) in order that the idiom of Spanish names might make a linguistic link with the islands in Puget Sound that the Spanish mapped and named in 1791 and 1792 (as they had Saturna). Multiplying Spanish names across the Strait unites all the islands (which the British were claiming) into a single toponymic (and hence geographical) unit.

Richards also named Stuart Island (which became American territory) after an HBC officer. In departing from the navy in choosing these names, Richards actually bolstered the British claim to the region: Stuart had been for many years a powerful force in the region, before moving north to the company offices in Nanaimo, while Captain John Swanson, according to Walbran, "was a witness (evidence taken on commission, in 1871), in the San Juan boundary dispute, on behalf of the British government . . ." (480). In applying the Hudson's Bay officers' names to these places in the islands in 1859, Richards gestures towards an authority of settlement and trade--that is, of activity in the region--rather than the authority of discovery and naval presence. The few place names that Richards regularised during the survey were either names given by settlers or names created by officers of the Hudson's Bay Company. Swanson's role in the boundary dispute was to testify to the colloquial notions of boundaries shared by people who lived and traded in the area. Collective habits of thought carry an authority that can challenge the desires of imperial cartography: the presence of sufficient numbers of settlers in the region to affect naval toponymic practice underscores the degree to which settlement occurs concurrently with discovery in the Gulf Islands.

Across the Strait, Vancouver himself had named Howe Sound and had certainly penetrated to its northeast extremity, naming Anvil Island, quite small compared to its neighbours but occupying the crucial horizon in Vancouver's gaze toward a putative northwest passage. The descriptive name suggests that the islands were unimportant to Vancouver, objects merely of curiosity upon which whimsical names could be bestowed. In naming the other islands in the Sound, Richards followed not Vancouver's cue of

physical resemblance in the name of the island but rather his commemorative impulse in naming the Sound. Thus Richards' names turn back to the imperial centre, uniting the geographical nexus of European imperial conflict during Vancouver's voyage with the reason for Richards' own presence in the Strait--the boundary dispute with the United States whose questions of imperial possession would be settled not by naval conflict but by arbitration, for which his own survey was crucial evidence.

In 1792, Howe must have been very much on the minds of British naval officers in the Pacific Northwest. Already retired from the Admiralty and made an earl, Lord Howe in 1790 commanded the Channel Fleet in the "Spanish Armament" (the Nootka affair), which forced the Spanish to relinquish Nootka Sound to the British. In a manner of speaking, therefore, Howe Sound could be considered a local name, referring to events on Vancouver Island as much as to the navy itself. Two years after Vancouver used Howe's name, Howe again took command of the Channel fleet and won the battle of the "Glorious First of June." As Walbran notes with great approval,

Captain Richards, R.N., who made the survey of Howe Sound, 1859-1860, followed up Vancouver's name by giving to all the principal islands, points, passages, and mountains in and around the sound, the names of the ships and officers engaged in Lord Howe's celebrated victory of June 1, 1794. (256)

Richards' toponymic echo is for Walbran the single most felicitous decision in the naming of coastal topography, for Richards packed in references to the battle across the Sound. Each of Richards' place names in the Sound enables Walbran to tell the story of the battle again, detailing career histories and ship commissions and changing the narrative angle with each new entry to cover every aspect of the battle. The group of names in Howe

Sound extends the notion of toponymic pattern of commemoration applied to a discrete and confined space that Richards first used in naming Salt Spring Island and its principal features. Walbran's explanation of Richards' name change from Salt Spring to Admiral Island reveals not only the logic motivating Richards' rhetorical strategies in toponymy but the reason for Walbran's own encyclopedic thoroughness and passion for his subject.

Richards self-reflexively acknowledges the tradition he follows in this pattern of commemorative naming by calling a point on Gambier Island after Admiral Sir Charles Ekins, celebrated principally not for his success at sea but for writing "Naval Battles of Great Britain, from the Accession of the House of Hanover, reviewed" (1824). Richards thus refers as much to the convention of commemorating events in naval history as to the events themselves. Richards makes the Sound itself a historical text, a document recording a single complex event. The survey is the grammar that orders the elements of that text. It is fortunate for Richards that Vancouver associated this Sound with Howe, because the many islands in the Sound--multiple in themselves, further multiplying coastlines--give Richards a broad enough page on which to spread the details of that engagement. The Sound is small enough, however, that most of its parts can be contained within a single gaze: the relation of the parts to the whole is always apparent.

Just north of Howe Sound lies a group of islands which Richards named in quite another mood: the Thormanby group commemorates the winning of the Derby in 1860 by the racehorse of that name. Once again, Richards develops an extended allusion, expanding his gaze from the individual at the centre of the event (Thormanby, in this case; like Howe in the Sound) to a compendium of references to racing culture in England. The

larger islands are named for the horse, Merry Island after the horse's owner, Derby Point for the race, Epsom Point because the Derby is held on Epsom Downs, Tattenham Ledge for a famous corner on the Epsom course, Oaks Point for another race run on the Derby course, Surrey Islands for the county containing the Downs, and Buccaneer Bay after another race horse contemporary with Thormanby.<sup>39</sup> Whereas the Howe Sound names reflect a public preoccupation, the Thormanby group refers to private pleasures, commemorating a personal rather than imperial triumph; Welcome Pass was so named because the news of Thormanby's win was "welcome." Such news would presumably not have been welcome to many others with a vested interest in the race. The Derby win has an extremely unstable status as historical moment worth recording--can it possibly be compared to the First of June? The geographical proximity of the two groups of islands produces a disturbing discord; do the Thormanby names reflect ironically on those in Howe Sound? Was the naming of the Howe Sound group an unambiguous project in recollecting the more celebrated moments of British naval history? The Derby win was undoubtedly a victory for someone on the Plumper, perhaps Richards himself; given the legendary poor judgement of sailors when it comes to horses, the unusual event of a sailor succeeding in gambling on a horse was worth recording, a victory for the whole navy, perhaps.

The conventional commemoration of a victory informs both groups of names: the sudden shift in rhetorical distance from the solemnity of the Howe Sound names to the

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<sup>39</sup> In a rather weird repetition of Vancouver's apparent prescience in naming Howe Sound two years before the First of June, 1794, Richards used Buccaneer's name in 1860, when the horse's career was still undistinguished, while in 1861 Buccaneer won the Ascot Cup.

boisterous mood of the Thormanby group precludes identifying a single coherent strategy governing Richards' toponymic rhetoric in the Gulf Islands. In Howe Sound, Richards was nostalgic, but the precise object of his nostalgia is unclear. The obvious answer is that Richards regretted the passing of the actively combative phase in British imperial naval history, a phase that had ended decades earlier. But the Thormanby names, which refer to an event of personal significance, suggest that Richards lamented the loss of the phase of discovery also. Unlike Vancouver, who could easily ignore the "foreign" names that the Spaniards gave to the Strait (names that carried little if any rhetorical weight outside the culture to which they referred), Richards worked in the shadow of a predecessor whose toponymic presence precluded any illusion of priority on Richards' part. In the Thormanby group, Richards allows himself to appear indirectly, using names that refer to his own immediate circumstances. This apparent flippancy suggests a reaction against acting as amanuensis to Vancouver's dictation in Howe Sound. Richards may have wanted to refer to his own project, not in order to bolster his nation's claim to disputed territory (as in the southern islands), but simply for its own sake. In the sheer volume of names that Richards gave to the islands in the Strait, his survey acquires the scope of discovery, rather than the prosaic, mechanical drudgery of survey. Rhetorically, the act of surveying supplants, even becomes, the act of discovery: since Vancouver knew by 1792 that he would not find the Northwest Passage, he could not continue to conceive of his voyage as one of "discovery." At this point, exploration merges with survey, and it is not possible to differentiate between Vancouver's task and Richards' since, despite the gap of seventy years, their activities in the Strait were so similar. The two voyages seem to merge, even to change places in

conventional imperial chronology. Vancouver ignored whatever did not interest him, whereas Richards closed the gaps, making complete and accurate the fragmentary, inconclusive results of voyages of discovery and exploration that preceded his survey. The Gulf Islands region, therefore, inverts imperial chronology, placing both survey and settlement before discovery and exploration.

Richards uses several categories of names: references to the Spanish, names suggested by Vancouver, allusions to the fleet on the Pacific Station, the personal significance of the Thormanby group names, and scattered references to the presence of the Hudson's Bay Company and to settlement already in place at the time of the survey. These categories correspond roughly to discrete areas of the Gulf Islands region: except for Lasqueti (which the Spanish had clearly named in 1791), Spanish names are confined to the string of large islands from Gabriola to Saturna that line the southwest side of the Strait, the one part of the region in which the Spanish unquestionably had priority of presence, though they thought they were exploring the east coast of Vancouver Island; Vancouver's names and their echoes in Howe Sound and Richards' Thormanby references cover the whole of the region on the east side of the Strait (again except Lasqueti), while the Royal Navy Pacific station, settlement, and Hudson's Bay Company names fill the archipelago between the Spanish islands and Vancouver Island.

But just at the southwest edge of the region, at a place where the trope of discovery would seem to have least currency because of its proximity to Victoria, where population was concentrated and from which the survey originated, Richards scattered a small handful of names that further complicate his toponymic practice. Before being commissioned to

survey the Strait of Georgia, Richards had been involved in a project that brought him directly into contact with primary, original exploration and discovery. The object of the search with which Richards was associated was the northwest passage, as were Vancouver's voyages, but in this case the search moved west from the Atlantic. Richards was commander on the Arctic exploring vessel Assistance, which searched for Sir John Franklin in polar regions between 1852 and 1854. The Assistance (and other vessels engaged in the search) were abandoned in the ice, their crews returning to England in the North Star and the Phoenix in 1854. In naming Piers Island, just north of Sidney, Richards connects the earlier experience of exploration (even if at one remove, since Richards was part of the search for the explorer rather than part of the exploration *per se*) with surveying: Piers was surgeon of the Satellite on the Pacific Station from 1857 to 1860, when Richards was making the survey, but had also been surgeon on the Investigator when in 1850 Captain Robert M'Clure found the northwest passage for which Franklin was searching. Pym Island, also just north of Sidney, was named for Lieutenant Frederick Whiteford Pym, who was mate on the Assistance while Richards commanded her.<sup>40</sup> Walbran's notes on Richards

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<sup>40</sup> The names of these islands suggest that for Richards, exploration and discovery could be as much private activities as public or imperial. Piers and Pym Islands are not adjacent to one another, as Walbran implies, but separated by Knapp Island, all three of which Richards named in 1858. According to Walbran, Kempster Knapp was a naval instructor on the Pacific Station in 1845 and 1846, serving under Captain John Gordon (whose critical views of the Strait of Georgia region had such far-reaching consequences during the Oregon and San Juan boundary disputes). In 1857, according to Walbran, Knapp was appointed to the cadet training ship Britannia, stationed at Portsmouth. The impulse to try to account for Richards' commemorating Knapp at all, much less in this particular place, is overwhelming, given the ease with which a rationale for his other names can be deduced, but in this case the connection is not apparent. Knapp, as a naval instructor, can hardly have been important enough to commemorate, nor was he on the station when Richards was making the survey. One can only speculate that perhaps Knapp was involved in the Arctic activities when Richards was there, or that Knapp had played a

(whose own name marks no place on the coast but whom Walbran believes merits his own entry nonetheless) mention laconically that during the voyage on the Assistance, "Commander Richards made one of the most extraordinary sledging journeys on record" (421).<sup>41</sup> This expedition exposed Richards to a version of wilderness that defied both exploration and cartography. Was the subsequent commission in the Strait of Georgia an anti-climax or a welcome reprieve from a more gruelling command? The contrast between the intention of the two expeditions (the survey and the search for Franklin) and the natural landscapes (the Strait of Georgia and the far north) through which those expeditions travelled must have influenced Richards' attitude toward the Gulf Islands landscape. It would be logical for Richards to associate the idea of discovery with the northern landscape, and the relatively mundane business of survey with the southernmost British Columbia coastline.

Since so many of the names in the islands can be attributed to one man, Captain Richards, it is possible to reconstruct his sense of the region as text from the names he

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role in Richards' life analogous to those of Pym and Piers. The point is precisely that the connection is unclear: here Richards seems to be referring to private, personal history (as he did in naming the Thormanby group, though that pleasure was immediate) rather than to the imperial project.

<sup>41</sup> This arctic sojourn placed Richards at the forefront of imperial discovery and cartography: several symposium papers included in The Franklin Era in Canadian Arctic History 1845-1859 (1985) demonstrate that, as Patricia Sutherland, the book's editor, states, "the right of Britain, and eventually of Canada, to sovereignty over the Arctic archipelago was in large measure secured by the search for Franklin" (vi). The role of the ships on which Richards served is related in "The Search for Sir John Franklin in Alaska," by John R. Bockstoe, a paper included in this collection. The crucial role of sledging to this achievement is outlined in C.S. Mackinnon's paper "The British Man-Hauled Sledging Tradition," which also mentions both Captain Richards' achievements on sledging expeditions and his loathing for what Mackinnon calls the "brutalizing toil" of man-hauled sledging.

bestowed upon it. Richards's names divide the region into distinct, limited spaces according to the associations those names evoke, at least five separate areas emerging from these associations: Howe Sound, and the Glorious First of June; the Thormanby group; the islands lining the east coast of Vancouver Island, named for the Royal Navy on the Pacific Station between 1840 and 1860; the Spanish islands opening onto the Strait; and the tiny group north of Sidney recalling the Arctic expeditions. For Richards, therefore, the islands in the Strait did not form a unit: for him, the notion of a Gulf Islands region, defined strictly to include every island in the Gulf below the Inside Passage, would have made little sense. Nor did he perceive each individual island as separate from all the others. Instead, Richards' mental map discerned smaller groups of islands, each perhaps of a scope to function as a conceptual unit, as a landscape, in short.

Richards' charts of the Gulf Islands remained authoritative for more than forty years, until Captain John F. Parry resurveyed much of the Strait in 1904 and 1905. For the most part, Parry retained Richards' names, adding details rather than altering existing charts, but the changes Parry did make are significant. For example, on very rare occasions Richards chose names that referred to the character of the place named, that is, to its topography or local associations. Tellingly, he gave such names to three places on or near Kuper Island, the site of permanent Halkomelem settlements: he named the site of the village at the south end of the island "Village Bay," the dazzling clam shell beach spit at the north end "White Spit," and the small island adjacent to the spit and its village "Indian Island." Given that the island and its environs were so obviously occupied by indigenous people, Richards perhaps found it impossible to perceive that part of the archipelago as

picturesque landscape, empty enough (and European or familiar enough) to serve as blank page on which to arrange his own text. His choice of these particular names, so blankly and generically obvious, suggests that Coast Salish culture was so alien that only such broad gestures could carry any meaning for Europeans.

But Parry, fifty years later, found all three names inadequate, changing Village Bay to Lamalchi Bay (after the band living in the bay), White Spit to Penelakut Spit (similarly named for the people living there), and Indian Island to Norway Island. In all three cases, Parry's rationale for the change was the desirability of more "distinctive" names. Descriptive names such as Clam Bay and Indian Island proliferate as vernacular names across the multiple coastlines of the archipelago (as well as up and down the British Columbia coast). Such toponymic repetition, though not a problem to settlers, whose mental maps place such names in a very local context, raises some difficulties for navigation from one area of the coast to another. It is tempting to attribute to Parry recognition of Salish presence in the region and a sensitivity to Salish notions of space, but it is much more likely that Parry used indigenous names here simply to avoid the confusion generic names create: Norway Island is obviously not the Salish name for the island, but refers to the master of H.M.S. Trincomalee on the Pacific Station 1853 to 1856.

In most cases where a new name was required, as with Norway Island, Parry referred not to the circumstances of his own survey but to British naval presence in the region in the 1850s, drawing on the constellation of ships and officers on the station during Richards' commission, thereby reinforcing the relations between elements that Richards had established. But Parry paid as much attention to the logic of Richards' toponymic

arrangement as to the precise context from which Richards derived his English names, extending the network of Richards' allusions in elegant patterns across the Gulf Island topography. Parry reinforced the Spanish toponymic presence in the islands, for example, by multiplying Spanish allusions in the two passes between the three northernmost adjacent islands with Spanish names--Gabriola, Valdes, and Galiano. In Porlier Pass, Parry referred to Galiano and Valdés to name the principal points on the pass: Cayetano (Valdés' given name) and Vernaci (Valdés' first lieutenant) on Valdes, and Alcala and Dionisio (Galiano's given names) on Galiano. The arrangement of Richards' names is so logical, and its logic so complete in each area, that not only the logic but the notion of arrangement itself seems inevitable. Donald New goes so far as to regret that Richards (and Parry after him) could not complete the pattern of Spanish names Richards began on Galiano:

Com. Parry . . . added four names to Galiano Island, taken from the same source that Capt. Richards had used. He called the two points at the north end of Galiano after his two Christian names, DIONISIO POINT and ALCALA POINT. He called a point on the Gulf side near the south end of the island SALAMANCA POINT, after Galiano's second-in-command, Lieut. Secundino SALAMANCA. *It seems a pity he did not find a point for the name Secundino.* [my emphasis] (7)

Once New can make a statement like this, topography has clearly been superseded by the toponymic pattern itself. Here the landscape fails to provide for its discoverers the necessary arrangement of features.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Disappointment like New's, or the enthusiasm with which Walbran describes place names on Salt Spring, raise the question of whether either Walbran or New would have written their accounts of local place names had Richards not provided them with allusions and patterns that they obviously find so satisfying. Although both structure their accounts with notions of arrangement that disrupt the geography of the coast (a geography that presumably governed Richards' and Parry's own experience of naming), the notion of arrangement itself is clearly uppermost in their minds, since both proceed by rearranging, rather than by adopting Walbran's arrangement. The climactic points in their narratives

Richards' Gulf Island names give form to the landscape, simply in patterns of names that, by association, link one topographical feature with another. Whereas Richards' principles of toponymic allusion were solidly conventional (grounded in examples of imperial discovery in the previous century), the manner in which he arranged those allusions across the map was not. The single significant element of Richards' names in the Gulf Islands is this complex series of arrangements, and arrangement necessarily isolates the notion of relationships between parts. The relationships between the names Richards bestows on the topography draw attention to parallel relationships between the topographical features named. The circuitous route that Richards had to take in order to survey the multiple coastlines in the Strait means that the usual connotations of linear progression associated with "discovery" are replaced in Gulf Island names with clusters, multiple viewpoints, landscapes to be seen from many angles, rather than momentary, single encounters. For Richards, the islands offer vistas, both visual and conceptual, that can be satisfyingly ordered in three dimensions rather than simply as a line. By establishing the notion of relations between topographical features, Richards transforms the linear route of discovery through space into the three-dimensional substance of place. He alludes to the essentially contained nature of the islands in the Strait, and the Strait itself, making its space homelike by capitalizing on its scale and containment. And in emphasizing the notion of vistas in which topographical features are pleasantly and formally ordered, Richards sets a precedent for perceiving the islands as picturesque, from which the pastoral is a short step.

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refer not to the process of naming but to the events those names commemorate: both are seduced by the patterns that Richards established rather than by the geography itself.

The names of individual islands and their principal features attributed to Richards and Parry thus refer to eighteenth-century imperial voyages of discovery, both in choosing specific names relating to those voyages and in using the toponymic conventions those voyages established. But those names were not the direct result of the voyages of discovery but attempts to fill in the gaps those voyages left behind, gaps that obscured nearly all of the Gulf Islands. In creating a toponymic style of his own, however, Richards established a convention in the islands of focussing on patterns in the landscape, on relations between topographical parts, on perceiving the islands as elements in a tableau. In this, Richards' proper names, so specific and so genealogically verifiable, align with that unspecific, unverifiable term "Gulf Islands." Like Richards' constellations of names, the name "Gulf Islands" signifies a landscape, an arrangement of land and sea that orders disparate parts into a coherent whole.

In naming the principal points bordering Gabriola Passage, Parry echoed his own pattern of Spanish names in Porlier Pass, commemorating Josef Cardero, the draughtsman of the 1792 expedition under Galiano and Valdés, in Points Josef, Cardero, and Dibuxante (Spanish for draughtsman). This group of names, clustered around the most dangerous topographical feature of the islands (the only major pass still formally unnamed in 1905), celebrates the importance of Cardero's cartographic contribution to Spanish exploration and discovery in the Gulf Islands. Rather than the acts of discovery or naming, Parry here commemorates the act of representation, of translating experience into documents; maps, diaries, and drawings. In fact, Cardero's role in the voyage, both formal and practical, is ambiguous, though undoubtedly crucial. Among the crew of Malaspina's expedition,

according to John Kendrick, was,

a man named Joseph Cardero who was not an officer but who is accorded the honorific prefix of "Don" in the narrative. He had been assigned to the position of *dibuxante* during Malaspina's voyage. The primary job of the *dibuxante* was the preparation of maps, but often he was also an artist. (57)

Despite his position of responsibility, Cardero stood outside the strict hierarchy of the navy, Kendrick stating that Cardero's name did not appear on the Navy List until 1797, five years after the voyage through the Strait of Georgia, though he was working on the maps of the voyage in Spain in 1795 (59). The "narrative" to which Kendrick refers is the Relación del viage Hecho por las Goletas Sutil y Mexicana en al año de 1792, published in Madrid in 1802. The authorship of the journal is unknown, but some historians believe that it was written by Cardero, rather than Galiano or Valdés, the commanding officers of the expedition. The use of the honorific "Don" in the journal need not indicate that someone else wrote the journal, since Kendrick also notes that Cardero's name occurs in the journal only once, in the crew list, which would be logical were the first-person plural narrative written by Cardero himself.<sup>43</sup> Whether Parry knew of this possibility or not, the association

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<sup>43</sup> I limit my discussion of eighteenth-century Spanish reaction to the Gulf Islands to the Relación, despite the evidence that the Eliza and Narvaez expedition both explored and mapped a portion of the southern archipelago, including South Pender and Saturna. On 14 June 1791, Eliza sent the First Pilot of the San Carlos, Juan de Pantoja y Arriaga, in a longboat to explore Haro Strait. I focus on the later voyage because neither Pantoja's account of his movements in the area, nor Eliza's transcription of that account in his own journal, volunteers impressions of landscape or topography. The Relación, by contrast, is written in an engagingly personal, subjective mode, one in which visual impressions and states of mind feature as prominently as objective facts. The difference between the two accounts strengthens the likelihood that the Relación was written by Cardero: whereas both Pantoja and Eliza would probably have conformed closely to the conventions of ship's log writing that their naval roles would require, Cardero, having no such official role, would be less constrained by the protocol of naval records. See Henry Wagner, Spanish Exploration in the Strait of Juan de Fuca (1933) for translations of the relevant sections of Pantoja's and Eliza's journals, and an alternate translation of the Relación to compare with

of the Relación with Cardero simply by virtue of the conventional pairing of journal with map in representations of voyages of discovery would have been enough to justify Parry's use of Cardero's name in Gabriola Passage.

The most striking impression of the Gulf Island section of the Relación is the degree to which it contradicts the conventions of imperial discovery.<sup>44</sup> For example, the Spanish found their time among the islands anxious and uncertain, their movements controlled by currents and weather rather than by their own intentions: the Relación makes no attempt to give the impression of logical, deliberate action, recounted in an atmosphere of imperial solemnity and inevitability. It would appear from the Relación that the entire sojourn of the Sutil and the Mexicana on the east coast of Vancouver Island was anything but deliberate or decorous. This portion of the journal roughly divides into three separate episodes: passage across the Strait, exploration of Porlier Pass, and anchorage at Descanso Bay. The journal devotes considerable space to each of these episodes, narrating the emotional atmosphere of the various parts of the journey as thoroughly as it does the events taking place.

In the first place, the Spanish had no intention of exploring the islands. While trying to follow the English north around Point Grey and into Burrard Inlet in late June of 1792, the Spanish discovered that the current was taking them out into the Strait. Being

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Cecil Jane's.

<sup>44</sup> All references to the Relación are taken from Cecil Jane's translation, A Spanish Voyage to Vancouver and the Northwest Coast of America (1933). This is not the only available translation, but it is the best known locally, and thus the most influential on later representations of the islands. Audrey Thomas, for example, quotes from and discusses the journal in this translation in her novel Intertidal Life.

much smaller than the English ships, the Sutil and the Mexicana were forced to submit to circumstances:

We put out our oars, endeavouring with them to counteract the current, but as the efforts of the sailors proved to be vain, as they were very wearied with the exertions of the previous days, it was decided to cross to the south coast in search of an anchorage where we could pass the night. We steered so as to cut at right angles the line of the broken water, the wind being gentle and from the east, and when we had done this, we steered for the shore, where we arrived at nightfall. (45)

A description of some length follows, detailing the search for an anchorage and the technical characteristics of the safe moorage that was eventually found, concluding with the remark that "[t]o this secure mooring-place we gave the name 'the Anchorage.'" This naming constitutes a culminating, propitiatory act that demonstrates, in concluding the narrative, the degree to which the Spaniards were worried about their safety.

From this anchorage, Galiano and Valdéz move north, having sent Galiano's lieutenant to find a more northern anchorage, from which they intend to sail north to Boca de Porlier, mapped and named by Eliza and Narvaez the previous year. Anxiety mounts as the weather worsens and the launch is delayed, finally returning with the news that no better moorage can be found. Suddenly fortunes improve, however, as the Spanish find the Boca de Porlier and enter it easily, even without the launch having been sent ahead to reconnoitre. At this point, the Spanish have entered the Gulf Islands archipelago, their description being the first European representation of that space:

When we had made the entry, we found an archipelago of many low, small islands, and discovered that the channel divided into two chief mouths, one lying to the south-east and the other to the west. It was at once resolved to follow the former, in order to have always the help of the wind to get out of it if necessary. But when we had lost the shelter of the coast, the Mexicana experienced a sudden gust of wind from the direction of the channel, which

was so strong that she was in danger of capsizing. We immediately realised the danger in which we should be among these islands, the channels between which we did not know and which we had no interest in exploring. (46)

From having been a place of safety the previous night, while anchored in a bay on Galiano, the Gulf Islands region becomes a hazardous maze. Its interest or attractions are outweighed by its potential for danger; having manoeuvred through Porlier Pass, the Spaniards now recall that this region is at best peripheral to their real business. Exploring further would make it likely "that much time would be spent . . . to the prejudice of our main exploration of the mainland, and thus it seemed wise to put out to sea without delay" (46).<sup>45</sup>

Making the decision to return to the Strait is one thing, however, and accomplishing it something else. As the Relación continues,

the task of getting out of these channels was not so easy as we had hoped. The currents had gained such strength that we could not counteract them

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<sup>45</sup> This statement concludes an account of the contrary winds and currents in the archipelago which decide the Spanish against proceeding further:

The wind, forced to pass through the narrow space which divided two mountains, blew with extreme violence; the currents were strong and were driven to take different directions owing to the numerous islands which barred their way, and as we saw no beach, it was clear that there would be no suitable anchorage. We could not pass far into this entry, since it was likely that much time would be spent in doing so to the prejudice of our main exploration of the mainland, and it thus seemed to be wise to put out to sea without delay.

This account repeats what has already been said, in subject and structure, in the statement that precedes it: a description of sailing conditions, the general character of the landscape, and the negative conclusions the Spanish base on this information. This repetition and degree of explanation is unusual in the Relación; perhaps the circumstance of deciding to abandon the opportunity to explore territory not yet encountered by any European (especially not the English) requires a fuller account of the reasons for the voyage's direction than would be necessary elsewhere.

with our oars, the wind being light and soft. The result was that we had to spend two hours of great exertion and danger in order to get out of the channel. The Mexicana succeeded in passing to windward of the island at the entrance and very near the end of its reef in four fathoms, the rocks being visible at the bottom. The Sutil, however, which began to adopt the same course, preferred to change it in order to pass through the narrow channel which the islet forms with the coast, and she accomplished it easily. (46)

As forthcoming as it is about the episodes where the Spanish lose control over circumstances, here the journal does not mention that the Sutil passed stern first into the Strait, having been turned about by cross-currents in the pass (Kendrick 113).<sup>46</sup> Having achieved the Strait, however, the ships sailed north again, rounding the northeast corner of Gabriola and finding a sheltered anchorage not much further on:

We continued along the coast . . . until we found an anchorage a full mile from the point, and, as it appeared to be suitable, we steered for it. We named this anchorage Descanso Creek, on account of the need which we had for it and our delight at finding it then. It was now five days since we entered the strait, and in them we had merely rectified but had also increased the knowledge that had been gained in previous years, a fact which consoled us for our fatigue and labour, no less than did the hope of continuing to carry out our remaining tasks with equal success. (47)

Just as the journal concludes the unintended crossing of Georgia Strait with the achievement of safe moorage off Galiano, finding a safe anchorage off Gabriola becomes an opportunity to round out a section of narrative: the name Descanso Creek signifies the end of another difficult passage, a place where the voyagers can pause to gather their strength. It appears, from the Relación, that part of the act of gathering strength is the taking stock of accomplishments, the alignment of the experience of the actual voyage with

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<sup>46</sup> It is impossible to know whether this ignominious event actually occurred, but both Galiano and Valdés describe it not in the ship's log, but in sworn affidavits, which appear to be attempts after the fact to set the record straight, whereas first impulses might have been to gloss over its occurrence.

the mythic requirements of the voyage of discovery as trope or ideal. This mood of subdued self-congratulation attempts to minimize both the physical difficulties encountered in the Strait and the decision not to explore the Gulf Island archipelago.

Once safely anchored off Gabriola, the Spanish turn their attention to resting and acquiring wood and water, while the Relación describes encounters with the local bands of Coast Salish interspersed with extensive anthropological observations. But just before the end of the Gabriola section of the journal, another culminating moment occurs:

On the fifteenth and sixteenth [of June, 1792, though the English accounts contradict these dates], rain had been almost continuous, but on the seventeenth we had the most delightful springlike weather. Under a clear sky there was displayed to us an attractive country; the green, of varying tints and shining, of some woods and meadows, and the majestic rush of waters which fell from the heights at various places, entranced our senses, and was for us all the more pleasant because we had so recently passed through so many trials and labours. (50)

This statement is the first pastoral description of the Gulf Islands region. Coming as it does after the earlier accounts of danger and difficulty in the Strait and in the archipelago west of Porlier Pass, much of its rapture can perhaps be attributed to the change in the weather and several days' rest rather than to inherent properties in the landscape. But these subjective factors are precisely the point of the pastoral, which describes not so much actual topographies as mood and associations. Given the name "Cala del Descanso" that the Spanish gave to the bay in which they anchored, it seems appropriate that the author of the journal write an account of the place that supports and justifies the name. The term translates roughly to "small bay of rest or repose," signifying a pause in the business of discovery, a welcome respite in which to recover the strength and desire to continue.

Whereas Captain Richards' names for the Gulf Islands region refer to the

picturesque convention of topographical arrangement, the Spanish description of Gabriola makes a direct correlation between place name and landscape. Whether Cardero wrote the Relación or not, he certainly continued this direct reference to the picturesque in one of the three drawings he made during the stay in Descanso Bay.<sup>47</sup> Two of the drawings were of the chiefs of the bands at Nanaimo and Descanso Bay, part of the anthropological project in which the journal engages so extensively. The third, however, has no precedent or counterpart in the journal: it shows an unusual sandstone formation on the northwest coast of Gabriola Island, which has been eroded by wind and water into the shape of a breaking wave (Figure 2). The caption on the drawing identifies its subject as a "View of a Natural Gallery on the Northwest Coast of America" (Cutter 126). The term "natural gallery" in the caption signals the formation's attraction to the Spanish: whereas to twentieth-century eyes the formation's most striking feature is its resemblance to a petrified wave, the caption ignores this resemblance, focussing instead on its resemblance to a gallery, an artificial, architectural structure. The wonder of the formation lies in the fact that it is naturally occurring, the term "natural gallery" here becoming an oxymoron. Yet in the Mediterranean, where the gallery originates as an architectural form, it performs the important function of mediating between inside and outside, being built within a courtyard or against an outside wall of a house or other building. The gallery takes the form of a corridor covered with a roof, with at least one wall open to the outdoors, and functions not as a route from one place to another, but as a place of rest, of temporary withdrawal from the concerns of daily life. Cardero's drawing shows the gallery in profile, using human

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<sup>47</sup> Historians of the Spanish voyages on the coast generally agree that these drawings were made by Cardero. See Cutter 125-126.



*This unusual eroded rock formation on Gabriola Island is still known as Malaspina Gallery. Drawing perhaps by Fernando Brambila, from a sketch by José Cardero. (Museo de América 2.273; Palau 69, Sotos 555)*

**Fig. 2. Engraving of Malaspina Galleries, Gabriola Island**  
**From: Donald C. Cutter, Malaspina and Galiano (1991)**

figures to indicate its height and length.<sup>48</sup> The attitudes of these figures, sitting and standing at leisure, clearly engaged in conversation, convey the notion of a gallery as a place of leisure and of civilized, social congress.

The gallery reads as both open and enclosed, providing both shade from intense summer sun and shelter for taking the air in poor weather. The dramatic line that divides the shaded and unshaded portions of the gallery wall in the drawing recalls the chiaroscuro that visually predominates in a gallery in the Mediterranean. In describing this scene as a "view," Cardero gestures toward his identification of the Gulf Islands landscape (landscape being the proper subject of a view) with the familiar, domestic, civilized space represented by the gallery. The drawing signifies a recognition of home, both in the sense of resemblance to the Mediterranean landscape and in the sense that "nature" here is not threatening but itself the site of comfort and social order. Even the two Salish men in the foreground are drawn into the civilized space of the gallery, their foreignness neutralized by the context of the gallery.

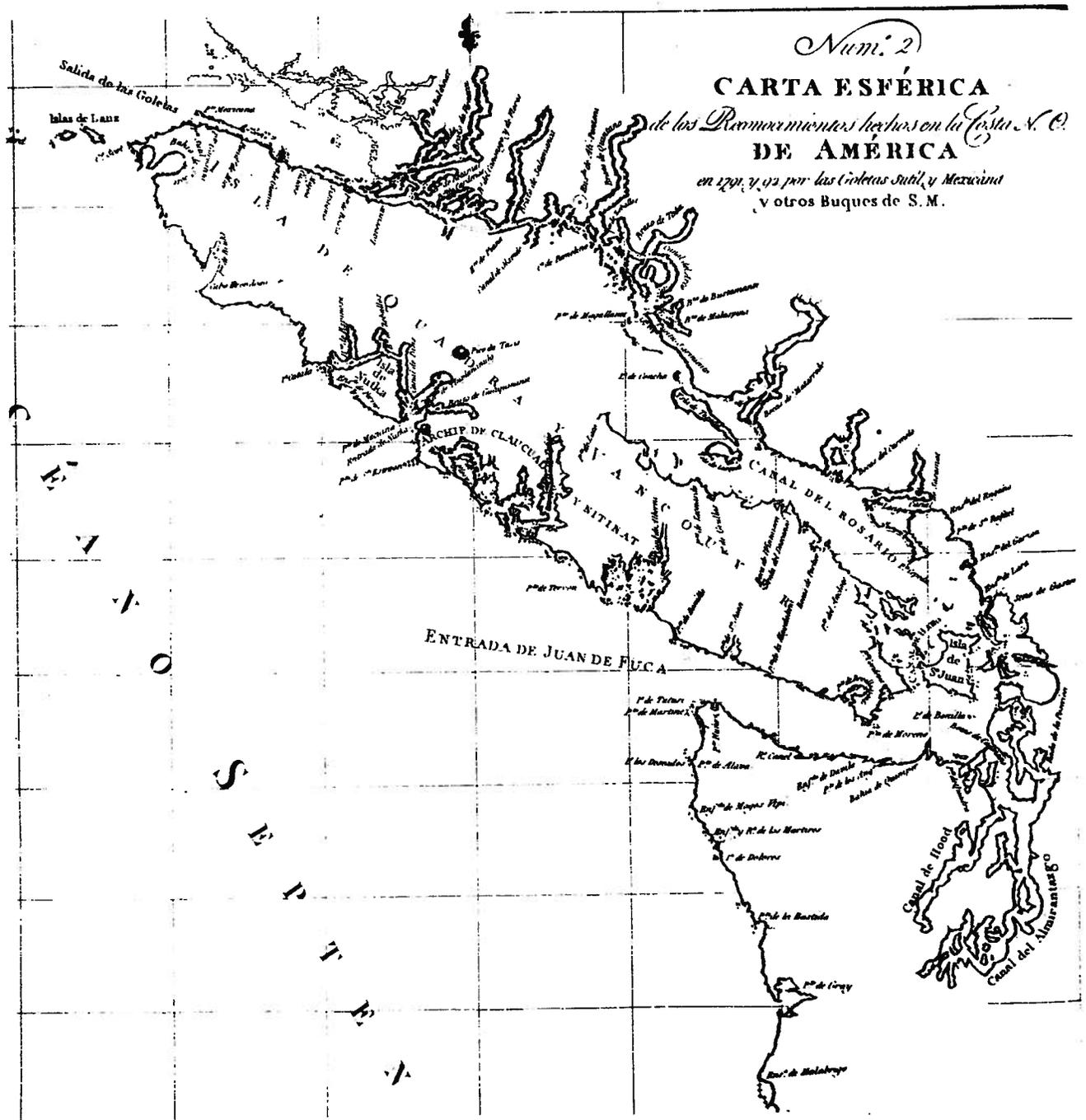
The suppression of documents connected with the voyage because of Malaspina's subsequent imprisonment in Spain (from 1794 to 1802), meant that the drawing's (or later engravings of it) rediscovery in Madrid in the nineteenth century generated an international

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<sup>48</sup> Donald Cutter finds fault with the dimensions of the gallery in the drawing, saying "in reality the gallery or corridor is not as impressive as in the drawing done by Cardero, and later finished for engraving by other hands" (126). The engraving certainly exaggerates the dimensions of the gallery, even allowing for the degree to which it has eroded in the two centuries since Cardero saw it. Photographs taken at the beginning of the twentieth-century show a more extensive overhang than can be seen in 1994. The engraving has many other possible implications, but I confine myself to comments on the gallery because the original drawing is no longer extant and I have no way of knowing how later versions of the image alter or embellish it.

debate about the gallery's location. The final identification of the formation on Gabriola with the gallery in Cardero's drawing was made by Archer Martin, Chief Justice of British Columbia, who responded to a request, by a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1903, to the Provincial Librarian, E.O. Scholefield, for information about the location of the gallery. According to the Colonist article of August 9, 1903 that raised the question, the description under the engraving of the drawing in the published account of the voyages read "View of a natural gallery one hundred feet long and ten wide, in the neighborhood of the Port of Descanso, on the Strait of Juan de Fuca." Given this fairly precise location (despite the erroneous siting of Descanso Bay in the Strait of Juan de Fuca), it seems puzzling, in hindsight, that finding the site should have been so difficult. Walbran lists several proofs that the Spanish name survived, including a Hudson's Bay Company map dated 1849 and Governor Douglas' map accompanying his "Report of a Canoe Expedition along the East Coast of Vancouver Island" (1854): Richards, however, named the bay "Rocky Bay" in 1862, and by 1903 the earlier name had presumably been forgotten. The gallery was identified, however, in time for Parry, who resurveyed that part of the Strait in 1904, to restore the Spanish name to the bay, and to commemorate Cardero in naming the three principal points of Gabriola Passage.

It is more remarkable that the name "Descanso Bay" survives than that Richards should have overlooked it, given that the Spanish left a confused account of where they had been in the Strait of Georgia. The map that accompanied the published account of the voyages of 1791 and 1792 (Figure 3) clearly shows that the "Cala del Descanso" lies nowhere near the "Entrada de Juan de Fuca," suggesting that whoever composed the



**Fig. 3. Chart from Malaspina and Galiano Expedition, 1792**  
**From: Donald C. Cutter, *Malaspina and Galiano* (1991)**

caption for the engraving of the gallery was not much convinced by the map's evidence. Both the map and the journal reveal that the Spanish had little notion of the distinction between the east coast of Vancouver Island and the islands that lie between that coast and the Strait of Georgia. The journal speaks several times of "the coast" when describing the voyage north from the place identified as "The Anchorage," which was a bay on Galiano, into and out of Porlier Pass, and around the northern end of Gabriola and beyond into Nanaimo harbour. The word "coast" here suggests that the Spanish thought they were following a seamless coastline, whose route was so irregular that it would have been difficult, even irresponsible, to try to establish it precisely. The term "Boca de Porlier" that Eliza and Narvaez gave Porlier Pass, which Galiano and Valdés adopted in turn, indicates that the Spanish thought the pass was merely the entrance ("boca" meaning mouth) to an inland sea, not the rupture in the coastline that a pass between islands would constitute.

The map echoes the journal: whereas the line tracing the eastern, mainland coast makes a solid, confident statement of a continuous coastline, the line indicating coast on the west side of the strait is fainter and frequently broken by empty space. The Gulf Islands nearly disappear into this fragmentation, fading imperceptibly into the equally indistinct coastline of Vancouver Island. Even Gabriola, the only island on which the Spanish landed, is only half drawn in, that half being the portion facing the Strait and Nanaimo harbour. Just as relations between parts of the region are difficult to discern from the journal (whose directions are vague when given at all), it is difficult to decide which islands are indicated by the fragments of coast that indicate the region on the map. The lacunae in the Spanish version of coastline obscure the more profound lacunae of the

islands in the Gulf Island archipelago. Given this partial and conditional account on the part of the Spanish and their solely involuntary presence in the islands in the first instance, the notion of discovery is qualified as a trope of Gulf Island experience. Never having been discovered in the conventional sense--at a precise moment, that is, that establishes priority in imperial chronology--the islands resist stable grounding of the region's history in the notion of discovery. In conceiving and representing his survey of the islands as original, as discovery, Captain Richards inaugurates a pattern endlessly repeated in later Gulf Islands texts.

**Back to the Slashing: Origins in Settlement**

*All these ways the world is a sea, but especially is it a sea in this respect, that the sea is no place of habitation, but a passage to our habitations.*

John Donne, Sermon LXXII, Folio of 1640

*When the furniture and other effects were unloaded, not much regard was give to the state of the tide. It was presently brought to mind when the voyagers heard a sound like an oven door opening and closing. They had forgotten to move the kitchen range higher up the beach, and the rising water was actuating the open oven door.*

A Gulf Islands Patchwork, 84

*I have sometimes thought that the formally patterned garden was evolved at a time when the outside world was mainly wild, unknown and incalculable; a garden pattern was reassuring, for it extended the limits of people's authority out towards the wild. In Europe the informal romantic "landscape" garden became fashionable as the exploration of the physical world began to be achieved and the encyclopaedists busily set themselves to catalogue the planet's geography as well as its flora and fauna. Large formal arrangements of flowers or roses or clipped parterres demand a maintenance so out of proportion to today's possibilities and so irrelevant to our way of life, that in the rare cases when such extravagances are possible, they will still appear inappropriate. I prefer to look back to an earlier form, the hortus inclusus, that small enclosed flowergarden of the Middle Ages in Europe, designed wholly for pleasure in a period when all that lay beyond the walls of castle or city was farmland, heath or forest.*

Russell Page, The Education of a Gardener, 126-7

*"Another thing we used to celebrate was the first day of May. We would pick a girl out of our room as our Queen. Her crown was always made of salal leaves. We could collect tiny sprigs of branches and there had to be a daisy chain on top of that and there had to be any of the other wild flowers, like violets; and she had long streamers of salal leaves down her back and daisies; and she was always dressed up so beautifully. This was our May Queen. That even died out before I was through school. I've never heard of it since, but can remember the first two or three years. To my young eyes,*

*this was just wonderful, it was just beautiful, but you don't hear of this anymore . . ."*

Georgina Dickinson, in Harrison, People of Gabriola, 112

*The sweet especial scene,  
Rural scene, a rural scene,  
Sweet especial rural scene.*

Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Binsey Poplars" (1918)

Local histories of the Gulf Islands establish Gulf Island space as primarily pastoral, a place where history consists solely and crucially of a narrative of settlement. Paradoxically, that narrative makes settlement a continuous, unaltering state rather than, as in conventional colonial sequential history, a phase preceding a more intense, industrial, eventually urban climax of imperial occupation and transformation of the land. This pastoral idyll creates a version of settlement in which the natural landscape is not so much the background from and against which "home" is created, but itself the site of home. In the Gulf Islands, the pastoral mode describes a process not of pushing back wild nature, as in the American narrative of the frontier, or building walls to exclude an encircling, hostile nature as in the Canadian garrison model, but of settling into nature. Both the frontier thesis and the garrison model (which, however inaccurately they represent patterns of pioneer settlement in North America, certainly inform the literature of those phases of North American history) use the notion of boundaries dividing unsettled nature from settled space. But the notion of the Gulf Islands region makes such boundaries irrelevant, impossible to recognize or imagine. The hard lines between nature and civilization, wilderness and home, inside and outside, are blurred. Even the most topographically-

intense boundary, that separating land and sea, is indistinct: the Gulf Islands region's defining border--the beach--lends to the whole region its ambiguous character of bridge and zone of transition between land and sea.

The beach, as margin between land and sea, is the metaphorical site of Gulf Islands settlement.<sup>49</sup> Peter Murray's title--Homesteads and Snug Harbours--alliteratively unites and equates the two emblematic sites of settlement on the islands: the proximity of the two sites, homestead and harbour, the overlap between the two, characterizes the region qua region. Unlike fisherman's houses, farmhouses in the Gulf Islands are often oriented toward the sea; in the last decade of the twentieth century, many farmhouses remain visible from the sea, particularly from the ferries. The cover photograph of the Murcheson farmhouse on Galiano reiterates the point of Murray's title: set in Whaler Bay, the only protected harbour on the east (open Strait) side of the island, on a point dividing two small coves, the house and land are surrounded in both foreground and background by water.

But Murray's title accomplishes something more: if harbours can be considered a metaphor for discovery and exploration, and homesteads a parallel metaphor for settlement, then the title, where homesteads precede harbours, inverts the usual pattern of succession in Pacific Northwest spatial history, or at least makes the two stages simultaneous. The snugness of Gulf Island harbours signifies the rearrangement of space on homesteads into

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<sup>49</sup> Paul Fussell bases his book Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars (1980) on the assertion that the First World War created a collective vocabulary, in both English and American culture, of "images of tropical repose" (7). Fussell argues that a generation familiar with the constriction, fear, and cold of trench warfare developed a desire for "unconstrained movement within a caressing warmth" (5). For Fussell, the terms of this tropical vision make the beach, the emblematic site of the tropics, a version of pastoral, precisely imagined to counteract the particular stresses of the war and memories of war.

increasingly domestic versions of natural space. And whereas a homestead is produced as much in action (in physical alteration of the landscape) as in mind, a harbour becomes a harbour by identification of its use value, not necessarily by any alteration of its physical features. The cover photograph of Whaler Bay, though the bay is not identified by name, thus inadvertently emphasizes the importance of use value: the name designates this topographical arrangement not simply as harbour but as a harbour with a specific use, not merely a geomorphological entity.

The image of the farmhouse surrounded by water is repeated in a passage from Will Dawson's novel *Ahoy There!* (1955), in which Dawson and his wife, aboard their sailboat moored in Ganges Harbour, waken one morning to find a floating house anchored nearby. In conversation with the family living in the house, Dawson hears the narrative of how the house was floated south through the Inside Passage and the Strait of Georgia. The cottage inverts the usual geographical direction of settlement in the coast region: it begins its journey in northern waters, which in coastal discourse signify relative wildness.<sup>50</sup> In their journey south, the house and family cross the boundary dividing one construction of nature from another, retreating from the wild back to the pastoral, rather than remaining stationary and being engulfed in the northward-moving wave of settlement. In this narrative, it is the house itself that moves, rather than the discursive boundary of the frontier.

The house's appearance dislocates Dawson's assumptions of the conventional separation of land and sea; he has difficulty accepting it as "a fact" rather than "a flight of fancy":

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<sup>50</sup> Coincidentally, the 1792 Spanish exploration through the Strait of Georgia under Galiano and Valdés also began north of the Gulf Islands, in Nootka Sound.

The cottage lay close enough for us to see its details clearly: a substantial frame building painted white and with a neat white picket fence around its broad wooden platform. On either side of the closed front door stood two tubs of what appeared to be geraniums. There were white curtains at the windows. A wisp of blue smoke rose up from the red brick chimney. We could see the anchor cable which secured the cottage to the sea-bed four fathoms down. It led from a post at the right-hand side of the porch. (149)

Dawson's choice of the word "cottage" to describe the structure connotes the rural: in a precisely English context, the word indicates a "labourer's or villager's dwelling," from which the word has come to mean any "small country or suburban house."<sup>51</sup> The term thus bridges the pastoral gulf between countryside and suburbia. The white picket fence carries a similar double significance, referring not only to the farmhouse, where the picket fence fulfills a necessary function in separating the house garden from the farm animals, but also to the suburban landscape in which, in the 1950s, the white picket fence gestured toward the nostalgia for pastoral topography. The picket fence marks the boundary separating domesticity from wild nature, which in this case is the sea. No intermediate zone of yard or garden or field mediates between home and wilderness.

The proximity of the wild (in the narrative of passage rather than at anchor in Ganges Harbour) focusses Dawson's attention on what he perceives to be its enormous contrast to the domestic space within the picket fence. The emphasis on whiteness (a colour that defies wildness because it requires so much work to maintain), on symmetry, trimness, and modest ornament in Dawson's description parallels his fascination with the

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<sup>51</sup> The Concise Oxford Dictionary. Etymologically, the word is closely related to "cote," signifying a small building for sheltering small animals: the word thus doubly emphasizes smallness, containment. It also bridges the gap between human habitation and structures for animal husbandry, so that the difference between the two becomes a matter of degree rather than kind.

orderliness of daily life within the house: "The routine of home life went on almost as if the house were firmly based ashore" (151). Dawson lists the phases of the diurnal round, which he punctuates with the variations possible because of the house's spatial context: swimming, life jackets, and boats approaching to pick up fresh baking. The greatest challenge to Dawson's conventional notions of appropriate home life is the children's ability to fish over the picket fence and with hand lines extended through the bedroom windows: "The shrill cries of excitement when a salmon struck, the urgency on a small face in the bedroom doorway seeking help from Mom or Granny or Dad to haul a salmon over the picket fence--and the illusion of normal life was soon shattered" (151-2). For Dawson, the hand line through the bedroom window transgresses the boundary between domestic, intimate, interior space and wild exterior space.

The lack of an intermediate space between the house and the sea makes Dawson uneasy: identifying the house as a "cottage," which makes the house itself a mediating space between domesticity and nature, does not reconcile him to its proximity to the wild. But in Canadian usage, the word "cottage" can indicate precisely this spatial relationship to the wild. "Cottage" has a localised regional application in Canada, being used in southern Ontario, particularly in the designation of Georgian Bay as "cottage country," to describe a secondary dwelling in (relatively) wild country, to be used as a vacation home. In northern Ontario, the word "cottage" has negative connotations of southern Ontario pretentiousness, and the word "camp" is used for exactly the same type of building used for exactly the same purpose. The relation between the two words reflects perceptions of relative degrees of civilization of the "wilderness" areas of the northern and southern parts of the province.

In British Columbia, however, these words are used rarely, the correct term in the regional idiom being "cabin": in B.C., "cottage" describes a small house in a context of village and old suburbs (especially those homes that retain some visual reference to English rural models; Victoria is full of cottages)<sup>52</sup> rather than being associated with leisure in a "natural" setting.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Vancouver has its share, too, especially to eyes unused to the local landscape: in *Cat's Eye* (1988), Margaret Atwood's protagonist finds the tendency toward "cottage"-style houses disconcerting: "I live in a house, with window curtains and a lawn, in British Columbia, which is as far away from Toronto as I could get without drowning. The unreality of the landscape there encourages me: the greeting-card mountains, of the sunset-and-sloppy-message variety, the cottage houses that look as if they were built by the Seven Dwarfs in the thirties . . ." (14).

<sup>53</sup> Although such regional variants do not appear in Canadian dictionaries, they certainly exist. West Coast residents are especially sensitive to the nuances of these words: in June 1994, the monthly magazine *Western Living* published an article ("Upcountry Comfort," by Carolann Rule) that described and photographed a large, elaborate, new recreational home on a lake in the Coast Mountains of British Columbia. In her article, which described only properties in British Columbia, Rule used the word "cottage" exclusively to refer to rural getaways. In the September issue of the same magazine, two angry letters corrected Rule's terminology. Bobbie Merilees of Vancouver found this word ubiquitous throughout the issue:

The word "cottage," which is used extensively in your June 1994 issue, is a dead give-away for an easterner. No self-respecting westerner uses the term, but instead says "cabin," "camp" or "the beach." If you really want *Western Living* to appeal to westerners, you should use our terminology.

I have never heard the word "camp" used in British Columbia as a noun meaning a recreational property, but I am not familiar with "the beach" used this way either, though it seems likely. The second letter, written by John King of Tsawwassen, elaborates on usage, but also identifies the political content of the article, which lies in Rule's dichotomy between two kinds of recreational homes in B.C.: as King accurately summarizes her position,

The "Chics" have cabins that are "real homes." These place look "pulled-together" with urban amenities, lofty standards and owners who just want to have fun. Meanwhile the "Diehards" [sic] cabins are "shabby," "trashable" and "hoseable" hovels.

Audrey Thomas, whose childhood experience of vacations in a relatively wild setting were sited in upstate New York, refers to this local convention in her description of Alice and Peter Hoyle's house on Galiano Island in Intertidal Life (1984):

Although they called it "the cabin," it was really a small, white clapboard house, or cottage, trimmed in red. The old man who had lived there and died there must have been extremely fond of red. The trim around the windows (and around each small square pane) was red; the crude benches on the porch were red; there was a strange old homemade lounger, mattress gone and metal springs covered in rust, set out under the apple trees; it too was painted red. After the new room had been added, the slope of its roof more or less the same as the slope on the other wing (which contained kitchen and utility room), it struck Alice how much the house looked like a broody white hen with a red comb. Later still, when they were given chickens, this just added to the image, for the chickens were Orpingtons, white, like the house, and with red combs. The house had no foundation; it sat low, directly over the rocky ground. The original structure was suffering

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King does not have to work very hard to associate this polarity of style and wealth with east/west differences, with the regionalist conflict between centre and periphery represented by ignorance of regional vocabulary:

Ms. Rule, please wake up and smell the true sea breeze of the west coast. First, west coasters call recreational houses cabins, not cottages. "Cottages" are in fairy tales and a term we've heard easterners use to describe cabins. Next, the vast majority, past and present, of cabin dwellers are diehards with "real homes" and occasional standards.

I suggest that author spend more time on the west coast than on a coffee house stool. That, or visit Ontario's cottage country.

Both of these writers assume, on the basis of language usage, that Rule and the magazine itself emanate from eastern Canada. Western Living's office address is listed as Vancouver, while Rule, the magazine's senior editor, writes extensively for local periodicals. But the evidence of language is hard to refute. Ironically, in the issue in which these letters appeared, Paula Brook's editorial was concerned entirely with the magazine's move from the "American-based Webster" dictionary to the Canadian Gage: describing herself as obsessed with culturally-sensitive spelling, Brooks ends her editorial by celebrating the inclusion, in Gage, of such Canadian terms as "herring choker," "skookum chuck," and "rinkrat." The only boundary Brooks perceives is the 49th parallel: she appears not to notice that the first two of these terms would mean nothing east of the Coast Mountains, while "rinkrat" pertains only east of the Rockies, where hockey plays a much greater part in local culture than it does in British Columbia.

from rot and there wasn't a straight line in the place. It was a little like living on a ship; parts of the floors tilted up, parts down. (18-19)

Even though Alice submits to the local vernacular in using "cabin," she appears to distrust the word, suggesting that "house" or "cottage" would be more accurate. Other than the ramshackle state in which the Hoyles find the house, Thomas' description strongly resembles Dawson's account of the sea-going cottage. Both are wooden frame houses, painted white, with accents of red (the geraniums and brick chimney in one case, an abundance of red paint trim in the other). Alice attributes the heavy use of red to the tastes of the house's previous owner, but it is just as likely that the old man was simply using the local idiom, many examples of which can still be seen in the Gulf Islands (often the arrangement of red and white consists of a strictly white building topped with a red asphalt shingle roof). In both cases, too, colour associations reinforce the pastoral conventions to which both houses refer, if indirectly. The geraniums<sup>54</sup> on either side of the front door of the floating home function as botanical icons both for agriculture in general and for a particularly domestic kind of agriculture. The plant, whose flower (other than hybrid variations) is so distinctive a red that the term "geranium" is sometimes used to indicate scarlet, appears most often in ornamental containers attached or adjacent to a house, in window boxes, hanging baskets, and pots framing doors, as in this example. Other than marigolds, geraniums are probably the annuals most widely cultivated by the home gardener who has a minimum of time or skill or interest in gardening. They are thus considered rather common flowers; cheerfully domestic, undemanding, rather brash in

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<sup>54</sup> Dawson is using this term familiarly; the correct name for the plant he mentions is not geranium (its popular name) but (genus) pelargonium.

colour, associated with the labouring classes and their cottage gardens rather than with more refined landscapes. The arrangement of red and white on the Galiano house, in combination with its amended profile, reminds Alice of chickens, a feature of the rural domestic landscape similarly associated with the farmyard or cottage enclosure. The act of keeping chickens reinforces these associations, bringing the pastoral appearance of the house back into alignment with the uses of its outside space.

Like Dawson, Alice concludes by describing the manner in which the cottage is anchored to the ground: in Ganges Harbour, an anchor cable substitutes for a foundation, suggesting a link to the land both more solid (because concentrated at one point, demanding attention) and less (it is a rope, after all); Alice's house also lacks a foundation--the formal, conventional point of transition between house and land--sitting directly on the ground, its roots in the landscape informal, prosaic. And whereas the symmetry and solidity of the sea-going cottage counteract its "shipness," the asymmetry and structural unsoundness of Alice's cabin makes it "a little like living on a ship." The two houses (or more precisely their descriptions) strive to cross the boundaries between ship and home, between sea and land.

The narrative of passage reaches a climax not in the cottage's arrival in Ganges harbour, but in Dawson's postscript in the final paragraph:

On Saltspring Island, where the land slopes gently down to a little bay near the head of Ganges Harbour, are several attractive homes. Among them is this sea-going home. With timbers and rollers under it, it was hauled up from the surface of the sea and jacked up. A cement foundation was built under it, more rooms were added, water, electricity, and telephone connected, and there it stands today, primly conventional . . . (152)

Dawson's narrative resurrects the hidden history of the house's relationship to the

landscape; he brings its past to the surface. What appears, from the "primly conventional" aspect of the home rooted in the landscape, to be the product of a conventional settlement narrative actually has a history that upsets those conventions. The house itself crosses the beach, changing its identity as its context changes. The cottage exchanges the topography of "north" and "sea" for "south" and "land," in the process abandoning wild nature to settle into pastoral nature. From functioning as an icon of frontier, the house becomes absorbed into the rhetoric of settlement. But in one sense the move across the beach is redundant, for once having arrived in Ganges Harbour, the house is already part of the pastoral landscape. In the sheltered waters of the Gulf Islands, especially in one of its harbours, land is not the antithesis of the sea, but merely its alternative. In this narrative, homesteads and snug harbours are synonymous.

In Three's A Crew (1940), Kathrene Pinkerton relates a similar experience of dislocation caused by the ambiguity of visual boundaries in the Gulf Island coastal landscape. Pinkerton conflates the seven years of yacht travel this book recounts into one narrative, but in the opening chapters, describing departure from Seattle, the transition to life afloat, and the cruise north through the San Juan and Gulf Islands, she emphasizes the novelty of the first voyage. The chapter that describes the Pinkerton's cruise in the Gulf Islands opens with the mock-serious ceremony of crossing the international boundary from American waters to Canadian. The hoisting of the red ensign makes the identification of Canadian landscape with colonial settlement much more automatic than in later years (when the Canadian flag was introduced). The Pinkertons clearly anticipate Britishness long before they approach the Gulf Islands. The Pinkertons' daughter Bobs takes on the

task of reminding her parents of yacht etiquette:

She was waiting to see if we would forget the formalities of becoming guests of the British Empire. But the skipper fooled her. He broke out the red ensign and attached it to the halyards. As we crossed the line the bo'sun ran it to the yard arm.

We were indeed "going foreign." (43)

Pinkerton herself perceives nothing odd in the juxtaposition of her appeal to "foreign-ness" and the intensely domestic landscape she finds in the islands:

Mr. Willis had warned us not to miss the Gulf Islands, which lay just beyond the border. They were as trim and manicured as he had promised. The Vancouver Island side of the archipelago was the stronghold of English county families, and they had brought the orderliness of the homeland with them. Small homes dotted the shores. All had a regulation equipment--house, gravel paths, flower garden, float with a white dinghy moored alongside, a sailboat at a buoy, and somewhere in the clearing a smooth green square for tennis. No wonder tennis teas figure so largely in English fiction! Neatly trimmed hedges rebuked pine forests and even the rocky shoreline looked tide washed and scoured. (43-44)

This is a foreign-ness of domesticity. Pinkerton establishes here the conventions of Gulf Island settlement, where observance of the settled landscape's strict conventionality is one of its defining characteristics. Like Dawson's narrative of the sea-going cottage, Pinkerton's description blurs the boundary between sea and land, marking a trail from house, paths, garden, float, dinghy, sailboat, and buoy that extends the picket fence across the beach into deep water and back to the tennis court. The term "regulation equipment" signifies a tradition of landscaping, but the combination of sites creates a radical departure from the English pastoral landscape Pinkerton perceives there, since the marine icons are extensions of the house, not separate from the domestic sphere.

The Pinkertons drop anchor in a sheltered cove, where Kathrene and Bobs discover "a magnificent natural bathtub," a depression in a rock outcropping (presumably sandstone),

filled with sun-warmed water. While bathing in this pool, the Pinkerton women are interrupted by "the startled and indignant faces of an Englishman and his sub-teen daughters" (44). Under the silent gaze of this family, the Pinkertons retreat, taking a last glance at "a frieze of British wrath and outrage" (45). Pinkerton makes what she intends to be an ironic reference to this confrontation as an "international incident," but her own reaction identifies this event as a conflict of colonial possession. Bobs and Kathrene are delighted with the "seclusion" of the cove, which allows them to use the pool for private, personal purposes. Like the salmon lines through the bedroom windows in "A Sea-Going Cottage," the bathtub in the open air, provided by nature, at the margin between sea and land, inverts the normal inside/outside relations of home and nature. In enclosing her description of the Gulf Island landscape between references to the personal *toilette*--"trim and manicured" and "washed and scoured"--Kathrene attributes to that landscape the quality of the innermost sanctum of the home, its most private space. Both the Pinkertons and the English family perceive each others' presence as trespass into a private, personal space, the Pinkertons sharing the sense of transgression that Kathrene ascribes to the English family:

The tide would carry out all traces of our Captain's soap but nothing short of a tidal wave could cleanse the cove of the pollution of our presence. Even the harbour might be spoiled for them so long as we lay at anchor. I became increasingly convinced of this. (45)

Though she does not say so explicitly, Kathrene herself resents the "pollution" of what had been a charming discovery and a private, pleasurable interlude. Given what follows, Pinkerton's perception that "neatly trimmed hedges rebuked pine forests" anticipates her response to the intensely domesticated Gulf Island shoreline: the word "rebuke" here exactly describes her own experience, and her sense of where she belongs in the dichotomy

between cultivated and natural aspects of the landscape. Despite the blurring of the natural and the settled in Kathrene's description, the Pinkertons seem not to have anticipated that a landscape so full of the icons of settlement would extend its domestic envelope to include the "natural" features of that landscape. Having filtered out topographical indications of settlement (seeing "pine forests" rather than "neatly trimmed hedges") the Pinkertons allow their expectations of "north" and "coast" to cancel out the visual evidence that counters those expectations.

The issue of prior claim to the landscape is very strong in Kathrene's rendering of this episode: she articulates the shock of discovering herself to be invader of a colonized landscape rather than discoverer of a natural one. At about the same time that the Pinkertons began their cruising holidays and encountered the "harbours" of Gulf Island space, Lukin Johnston published his account of a land-based tour of the "homestead" landscape of the islands in the opening chapters of Beyond the Rockies (1929). The book's title indicates that, like the Pinkertons, Johnston considered himself to be "going foreign," but Johnston, a British writer and journalist, found in the islands not foreign-ness but home, a landscape virtually indistinguishable from that of his own origins. The notion of the walking tour declares Johnston's English orientation toward landscape: the walking tour of relatively rural countryside is a particularly English idea of an appropriate way to spend a holiday. And Johnston explicitly betrays his topographical biases in the terms of his "recognition" of the Gulf Islands landscape:

In the ten days that followed, I wandered from one lovely island to another, walked for many happy miles through leafy country lanes, well gravelled, winding up and down dale, through thick forests of mighty fir and out again into the sunlight through fields where sheep and cattle browsed.

At every turn I was reminded of some rural scene in Devon or Kent. (62)<sup>55</sup>

The two phases of Johnston's observation--noting the natural characteristics of the landscape and using English analogues as descriptors--allow him to naturalize the elements of that landscape that do not fit his models. He perceives the roads on which he walks as "leafy country lanes," that is, untravelled, inconsequential, and picturesque, even as he notes that they are well-gravelled, main roads intended for speed and the automobile, rather than foot or horse traffic. He reconciles the "thick forests of mighty fir" with rural Devon and Kent, both landscapes where heavy tree cover was eliminated in the sixteenth century, and would not originally have been coniferous in any case. But what attracts Johnston is the repeated alternation between forest and farm landscapes: the rapid shift between natural or wild and domestic landscapes gives the Gulf Islands topography the status of belonging to both kinds of space.

For most of his journey, Johnston composes his itinerary according to the advice of island hotel and shop owners and the network of acquaintances among island residents. But on two occasions, the appearance of the settled landscape alone prompts Johnston to strike up a conversation. Setting out from Miner's Bay on Mayne Island, Johnston notices a horse and buggy passing him on the road: "Silly thing to record, I suppose, but it struck me as quaint to meet a buggy nowadays" (64). That Johnston mentions this incident against his better judgement suggests that in reacting to the landscape he is unaware of his own nostalgic desires. But Johnston inadvertently clarifies his pastoral ideals as he continues his journey:

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<sup>55</sup> Lukin Johnston, "An Island Eden," in Charles Lillard, ed., The Call of the Coast. This selection reprints the first two chapters of Johnston's book Beyond the Rockies (1929).

A few minutes' walking along the hilly, twisting lane, past little clearings and substantial farms--the woods all fresh and green, and everywhere the subtle odour of burning wood--and the charm of these lovely islands was full upon me. I had been told (by those who did not know) that the inhabitants hereabouts were often a little "queer"--for the reason, I suppose, that they choose to live the simple life far removed from jazz orchestras, the roar of street cars and the constant danger of swift death from some erratic motorist. When I came to a white farm gate, leading down to a barn with a comfortable old farmhouse set in an orchard full of sweet-scented blossoms, I decided to "check out" this inhabitant at least. (64)

In the last two sentences, Johnston contrasts the chaos of the modern world--jazz, streetcars, automobiles--that the placeless, disordered urban landscape represents (his association of ideas linking urban noise directly to death), with the order of the Gulf Islands landscape, through which he can trace a definite path by establishing specific landmarks. The emblem of the horse and buggy juxtaposes the pace of the island landscape with the pace of urban transit. For Johnston, much of the charm of the islands lies in their difference from a landscape he despises, a common element of pastoral desire.

At the end of his holiday, Johnston is again drawn to a familiar landscape:

Near the end of my walk I came to a spot where a rustic bridge crossed a babbling brook. Looking down a grassy bank, where woodland flowers poked their heads up to the sunshine, I saw a miniature spillway and a tiny pond. A few yards farther on, through an ivy-covered gateway, I caught a glimpse of a most lovely garden ablaze with flowers. I heard a voice calling the chickens to supper and so, entering the gate, I met John Carter Mollet, eighty-one years old in March last, and still in love with every flower in his garden. (78)

These two images of settled landscape frame Johnston's narrative in an Aristotelian unity, the first appearing early in the morning of the first day and the second in the evening of the last. In both cases, Johnston traces a rhetorical path through icons of settlement, specifically settlement completed and mature. In the first example, the path leads from the

gate to barn, farmhouse, orchard, and blossoms; latterly, the trail proceeds from bridge to brook, bank, wildflowers, sunshine, spillway, and pond, thence to the gateway, garden, and flowers. If the first scene presents the agricultural dream of English landscape in the twentieth century, the second conjures up the school of eighteenth-century landscape gardening popularised by Capability Brown, giving way at the gate to an even earlier version of English domestic landscape: the overtly-cultivated, enclosed flower garden (given a Canadian touch by the chickens, which Johnston ignores, perhaps as too mundane). In the latter version, the actual house is absent, perhaps therefore incidental or irrelevant to the landscape of settlement as a natural phenomenon. The same can be said of the earlier scene, where the path of Johnston's gaze leads not to the farmhouse but rather through it into the orchard and the "sweet-smelling blossoms" at its centre.

The floral emblems at the end of Johnston's Gulf Islands trail betray his English pastoral desires. In the second example, indigenous flowers cannot be the ultimate objects of Johnston's gaze: it is the domestic, ironically the foreign, unindigenous flowers, that satisfy him with a sense of home. Once again, the Gulf Islands turn the usual spatial relations of domestic interior and "natural" exterior inside out. The house, conventionally the focal point of settlement, either disappears or becomes part of the path leading to the most interior space, the more protected, private enclosure--the orchard and the flower garden. Johnston's icons of pioneer settlement are floral rather than arboreal. The characteristics of flowers--small, pretty, precious, quaint, in short--making them synecdoches for the islands themselves. The Gulf Islands landscape offers Johnston a limited horizon, the containment of the favoured landscape: paradoxically, the borders that

contain that favoured landscape are provisional, since pastoral nature also, in Johnston's version, occupies the space between home and wilderness, and represents both.

Johnston's rhetorical paths trail into nostalgia: he moves backward through the history of English landscape design, replacing twentieth-century pastoral notions with sixteenth-century versions. Johnston is drawn to anachronism, "recognizing" in the Gulf Islands landscape not so much the England of his youth (as the horse and buggy incident might suggest) but an idealized pre-modern England. The quaintness of the horse and buggy echoes the quaintness of the landscape--the "miniature spillway and tiny pond" encapsulate a complete, varied landscape but on a limited scale. Although herself American rather than English, Kathrene Pinkerton views the Gulf Islands through a similar lens, the sentence "No wonder tennis teas figure so largely in English fiction!" demonstrating that her expectations of the landscape are formed by what she "remembers," through reading, of a version of English life, emphasizing the leisured classes, that had long since vanished, if it ever existed to the extent that both Pinkerton and Johnston appear to believe.

Pinkerton and Johnston are both tourists, making their journeys solely for their own pleasure (though writing about them for profit--the Pinkertons were journalists too). But these late 1920s journeys fall well within the period of Gulf Islands settlement that Peter Murray locates between 1850 to 1950: in the islands, the period of settlement overlaps with post-settlement activity--leisure and tourism. The overlap is broadened by conflicting discourses of settlement that obtain in the region: one version, which will be familiar to readers of pioneer histories of North America and other colonies, describes the dislocation

and difficulties of emigrants in an unfamiliar land; the other version, peculiar to the Gulf Islands, describes settlement not as a progression of painfully-achieved establishment, but as a relatively static experience, characterized more by social life and leisure than by brutal labour and deprivation.

Johnston's landscape desires are identified with the settlers' viewpoint; like them, he gazes back toward the landscape of his origins rather than outward to the exotic and the foreign. As the traveller, however, Johnston sees the settled landscape as complete and integrated, at least visually, with the surrounding physical environment. But Johnston's view is undifferentiated, his Gulf Island iconography is broad and vague: he sees orchards, woodland flowers, and garden flowers but nowhere identifies a specific plant less obvious than the "mighty fir." Nor does Kathrene Pinkerton observe "nature" in her description of the Gulf Island landscape; her catalogue, like Johnston's, consists of generic elements. The one species identification she attempts is incorrect: what she describes as "pine forest" is almost certainly fir, pines being rare in the islands and generally occurring in groups no larger than groves.<sup>56</sup>

To the settlers themselves, familiarity with the natural landscape created an intimate acquaintance with the less imposing species of Gulf Island botany. In a poem called "The Mortgaged Farm" (1914), Sir Clive Phillips-Wolley's narrator uses such intimate knowledge to counter his interlocutor's impression of the "finished" farm, the natural element of the landscape. In the first two stanzas, the poem's narrator draws a pastoral portrait of a Gulf Island farm, then adds the specific circumstance occasioning the poem:

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<sup>56</sup> Of course, the Douglas fir itself is misnamed, being not a true fir but a species of spruce.

The orchards have come to bearing--In billows of rosy bloom  
 Nestles the Settlers homestead--The fringes of gorse and broom  
 Glow golden against the sapphire--The meadows that seaward sweep,  
 Tuneful with bells and drowsy with bleatings of full-fed sheep,  
 Are sweet with the clover's incense--Roses climb to the eaves--  
 Drunken with sweets, the sea winds sleep in the maple leaves.

And you have bought up the mortgage? Man, but that was not dear!  
 A dollar we'll say per acre, and twenty for every year  
 It took those two to clear it. That matters but little now,  
 She has the peace she longed for, and he has rest from the  
 plough.

And you? Being free from a mortgage, you'll make the old farm pay  
 Managed by modern methods, worked in a business way.

Phillips-Wolley creates a Gulf Island version of the English literary pastoral convention, especially in the images of fattened sheep and the orchard in bloom that promises a secure harvest. The colors and scents of flowering plants--fruit trees, gorse, broom, clover, and roses--identify the season as early summer, the moment between planting and harvest in which the farmer can rest. The enjambed lines at the beginning of the first stanza create a sense of lushness associated with flowering plants ("rosy bloom," "broom" that "glows golden"): the enjambment spills the description over the metrical borders, massing impressions of colour and scent.<sup>57</sup> Phillips-Wolley's vision conforms to English notions of bucolic felicity without sacrificing authenticity: he does not edit the landscape to fit the

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<sup>57</sup> Phillips-Wolley describes the floral perfume as intoxicating, an interesting variation on the convention that the pastoral landscape should be a place where worldly concerns can be forgotten. Whereas Phillips-Wolley associates settlement with the scent of flowers, Lukin Johnston notices "everywhere the subtle odour of burning wood," which immediately precedes his immersion in "the charm of these lovely islands." Whereas the smell of blossom indicates mature settlement, the scent of burning wood is the characteristic odour of the process of settlement, a smell that emanates directly from the slashing, where felled trees are set alight. While Johnston visually perceives a finished landscape, his sense of smell should tell him that landscape is still in the process of being converted to pastoral use.

model borrowed from the mother country, but incorporates gorse, broom, and sea into the domesticated pastoral landscape.

Phillips-Wolley includes gorse and especially broom as integral elements of the Gulf Islands pastoral aesthetic: the intense yellow of these blooms against a vividly blue mid-summer sea is stunning. Broom appealed to the artist's eye of another British expatriate in the islands, with ecologically disastrous long-term results. In his reminiscences of working for Colonel L.G. and Lady Constance Fawkes on Mayne Island, John Borrodaile begins his account of daily life at the old Point Comfort Hotel (renamed Culzean by the Fawkes, since demolished) with the statement that the Colonel, an amateur artist, sketched every day:

In early spring, he enjoyed sketching the masses of yellow broom which grew all over the island. I was told many years ago, that Canon Lock Paddon, the founder of the Mayne Island parish church, who had come from Ireland and settled on Mayne, was so delighted with the golden hue that when writing to friends all over the world, he would include a packet of broom seed in the letter; also, often on his trips to Victoria, while driving along Dallas Road, the Rev. Paddon would cast out the precious seed along the roadside. I wanted to make sure that this story was authentic, so phoned Mrs. Montague-Bruce, the late Canon's daughter, who assured me that the story is quite true. (18)

No doubt much of Canon Paddock's (and other British emigrants') fondness for broom was as much the result of familiarity as intrinsic beauty. The plant is itself an emigrant from Europe; as its common name--Scotch broom--suggests, it is native to the northern British Isles.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> The story John Borrodaile tells of Canon Paddon may indeed be authentic, but Paddon was not the first to encourage the spread of broom on the West Coast. The field guide Plants of Coastal British Columbia (1994) tells its local history more fully:

Broom is a very widespread and invasive shrub for such a recent

The second stanza of "The Mortgaged Farm" raises the issue of value, and makes this the basis of a lament, an unexpected development considering the unqualified harmony, in the continuous present tense (endless, because timeless, in the pastoral convention) of the first stanza. By shifting from the romantic, elegant, lush language of the first stanza to the laconic, slangy, modern idiom of the second, the narrator contrasts the lost past, which by implication he locates in conservative, non-monetary values, with the unwelcome present, which denies history. Phillips-Wolley thus sets up a version of pastoral contrast that varies slightly from Johnston's, but uses a parallel structure. The narrator uses the

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immigrant. It was introduced to Vancouver Island in 1850 by Captain Walter Colquhoun Grant (1822-1862), himself a recent immigrant from Scotland, from some seeds he had picked up in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) from the British consul, Mr. Wylie. Of the seeds he planted in Sooke, three germinated, and descendants of these three plants have subsequently colonized most of southern Vancouver Island. Broom has been so successful over much of its range that it has endangered much of our region's distinctive rainshadow flora. (83)

Broom is a leguminous plant--having the ability to absorb nitrogen from the air and fix it in the soil--and thus lowers soil acidity. In the Coastal Douglas fir zone, soil is generally very acid, and in some plant communities, such as that associated with the Garry oak, the presence of broom means that the oak's acid-loving companions can no longer grow under its drip-line. The oak itself is threatened, since seedlings cannot compete with the much faster-growing broom.

The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Wildflowers: Western Region is ambivalent about broom: it acknowledges the plant's impressive appearance ("when in full flower the plant is a mass of yellow"), but adds a rare qualitative remark: "This handsome ornamental, a native of Europe, has proven to be a pesty [sic] shrub, filling in many areas that were once open prairies and sparse woods." The species is an excellent example of what Alfred Crosby calls "portmanteau biota": broom's narrative is one of relentless colonization, and its place in the local landscape is likewise due entirely to human colonization. As Crosby explains, weeds such as broom "thrive on radical change, not stability" (170). In fact, the term "weed" describes a plant's behaviour in recently-disturbed soil such as is found in a newly-colonized place: "In modern botanical usage, the word refers to any plant that spreads rapidly and outcompetes others on disturbed soil. Before the advent of agriculture, there were relatively few of these plants representing any given species . . ." (149).

botanical landscape to illustrate to the buyer of the farm the otherwise invisible narrative of the settlers' lives in the next two stanzas:

Let us go back to the slashing where you heard the pheasant crow,  
 Where under the fallen giants the dog-tooth-violets grow,  
 Deers-foot and ladies slippers, the only flowers which grew  
 To deck my lady's parlour when that old house was new:  
 When he was digging "borders," and she, with mother's care,  
 Tending her "slips" from England, the planting of each a prayer  
 For a home like that home she came from--There is the fight he  
 won:  
 Here is the field he died on, the work that he left half done.

Can you not see them bending over the crosscut saw,  
 Love their only possession, labour their daily law:  
 The Douglas leaning slowly, its topmost limbs asway  
 To rush to earth a ruin, in clouds of woodland spray--  
 See them, close together, their own lives on the wane,  
 Counting the years her roses will take to her window pane,  
 See the dreams that they lived for, the pictures fancy drew  
 Of fields they never finished, of folds they never knew.

The imperative narrative voice leads the buyer of the farm (and the reader) into the foliage, "back into the slashing," to the margin, that is, between forest and farm, wild land and cleared land. Slashing refers both to recently cleared land and to the debris left behind by logging; on an old farm, where clearing was never complete, the slashing would in time be reclaimed by forest. To go back into the slashing is thus to move back in time, as is emphasized by the shift from the present to the past tense of "grow" in the final words of the second and third lines.<sup>59</sup>

Dog-tooth violet, deer's foot (also known as vanilla leaf), and lady's slipper (a confusion of the well-known mountain orchid with its coastal relative the fairy slipper),

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<sup>59</sup> This notion of a spatial representation of settlement chronology corresponds to Heather Murray's continuum of wilderness through pseudo-wilderness to civilization.

being woodland, shade-loving plants (the narrator finds them under the fallen trees) are all difficult to find, even ring their bloom phase in June--pale, delicate, fleetingly in bloom, and nearly impossible to cultivate. They are thus not garden flowers or flowers of meadow and hedgerow, pastoral zones bridging farm and garden, but belong to the forest and thus the wild. The retiring colours of the indigenous flowers contrast sharply with the brilliant palette of the late afternoon farm. The names of the indigenous plants belong to the local, indigenous idiom of this poem (the fir is referred to familiarly as "the Douglas"),<sup>60</sup> whereas the terms for flowers brought from England--*borders* and *slips*--are italicized, as if they are foreign words. These words belong to a conventional, imperial discourse of floral landscapes, a discourse that the colonized landscape (or at least its border in the slashing) continues to resist. "*Borders*" and "*slips*" refer to arrangement and propagation--the act of gardening, the conventions of the gardening process--rather than naming individual species. The indigenous flowers ignore the chronology of pioneer establishment, here represented by gardening; they reappear year after year in exactly the same state. The roses, however, need several years to mature, and thus they become the settlers' measure of their own narrative desires, of a completed farm. Phillips-Wolley goes so far as to make the act of establishing plants brought from England an act of prayer: planting the garden becomes a metaphor for transformation of the wild into the domestic. The reiterated "home" in the penultimate line of the third stanza represents the attempt to bring the new and old versions of familiar landscape into alignment through horticulture.

The roses have since reached maturity (they "climb to the eaves" in the first stanza),

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<sup>60</sup> In Chapter Three I discussed how contractions in and of place names are defining features of popular, local languages. The same principle holds for names of plants.

thus signifying the climax pastoral environment.<sup>61</sup> Since the farm in June looks as though it has always been there and has occurred naturally, the narrator turns to the woodland flowers in the slashing as evidence of a narrative of dreams and despair implicit in the farm's landscape. The last stanza explains the point of the whole dramatic monologue: attaching oral history, which can easily be forgotten or dismissed, to the recurrent visual, botanical mnemonics of seasonal change ensures that the settlers' narrative will not be lost:

Aye, you have bought a bargain with human lives thrown in,  
 Their fields to bear the harvests your reaper folk shall win,  
 But *the dream* which those folk fashioned has not been bought  
 or sold.

When Spring is most impassioned, when gorse is virgin gold,  
 When grass is living emerald and evening seas afire,  
 When pines are full of music as youth with love's desire,  
 You shall feel an unseen presence, shall hear a heart in tune

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<sup>61</sup> The rose meant something quite different to an Edwardian than it does in the last decade of the twentieth century: the fact that the roses in "The Mortgaged Farm" climb to the roof of the farmhouse indicates that they are an old variety. The term "old roses" carries political implications, since writers such as Vita Sackville-West complain that the hybrids that have replaced the old roses lack the pedigree that the old roses retain. As one might expect from Sackville-West, the parallels between roses and social class are deliberate, hybrid roses being deplorable because of their "common" attributes. In describing the conflict between those (the horticultural industry and "most of the population") who prefer hybrids and those who champion the old varieties, Michael Pollan says "The war of the roses is at bottom a class war," the bourgeois upstarts versus the conservative aristocrats. Old roses are hardier and more disease-resistant, subtler in colour (ranging between white and soft pink), more intensely scented, much more vigorous and shrub-like than the hybrids. For these reasons, I think of them as being more easily integrated into a gardening landscape than the newer roses, which demand that the rest of the garden serve as backdrop. Hybrid roses bloom all summer long, whereas old roses bloom all at once in June: the climbing rose in bloom therefore emphasizes the climactic moment the poem commemorates.

The role of roses in this poem illustrates the degree to which botanical associations, which seem, like nature itself, to be static, are historically-determined. Taking into account the history of roses, the climbers that Phillips-Wolley's settlers bring to the Gulf Islands actually bear more similarity to the woodland flowers rather to gaudy exotics carrying imperial associations. The imported rose replaces the local Nootka or briar rose, which shares many of the desirable attributes of the imported climbers.

With the glory of *her* roses, with the peace of early June--  
 You shall balance fact with fiction, their dream against your  
 dross.  
 The profits of your purchase, the requitals for their loss.

The reiterated "when" that begins three consecutive lines in this last stanza (anaphora) signifies that commemoration of the settler's narrative must be a cyclical, annual event.<sup>62</sup> the buyer of the farm must not forget that the farm itself is the result of a collective endeavour. The final couplet calls into question the relative value of these two linked narratives by employing a parallel structure that ambiguously connects fact and fiction with the settler's dreams and the buyer's dross: the ambiguity may be the result of Phillips-Wolley's lack of syntactical control, but it may also signify the slippage in this poem between wilderness and cultivated land as the repositories of narrative.<sup>63</sup> Phillips-Wolley implies that the pioneers, by living and working in a pre-pastoral state, in the process of settlement rather than its finished product, achieved a natural, original relationship with the landscape. In distinguishing so sharply between two opposing versions of settlement, Phillips-Wolley resists what might be called a neocolonial attitude to the land that ignores or effaces its previous inhabitants.

Whereas Lukin Johnston and Kathrene Pinkerton are visitors to the Gulf Island

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<sup>62</sup> Paradoxically, seasonal cycles in the English pastoral literary tradition signify a desirable absence of history. The narrator may also intend the annual cycle to serve as a *memento mori* to the buyer of the farm, suggesting that his narrative may be forgotten in turn.

<sup>63</sup> Phillips-Wolley's respect for local wildflowers does not contradict local attitudes among settlers: every agricultural fair in the Gulf Islands region has included, among the classes open for competition, categories devoted solely to the collection, identification, and display of indigenous plants, especially wildflowers. Wild nature is thus considered an appropriate subject for knowledge (these classes are usually open only to children) in the context of the one annual event intended to celebrate the achievements of settlement.

region, outsiders imposing on the landscape assumptions about how it should look and what it should mean that they have brought from elsewhere, Phillips-Wolley lived in the islands. His narrative stance is that of the local, as is demonstrated not only by his high moral tone, but by his shift into a vernacular idiom in the second stanza, and his familiarity with local wild plants: since local history is generally oral history, the dramatic monologue form is essential to this poem. The poem's speaker is the repository of history, paradoxically sharing that role with the particular transitional landscape--the slashing--in which he locates that history. Phillips-Wolley shifts the visitor's gaze from the buildings, fences, and fields that signify the pastoral to wild nature, the site of the initial encounter with the landscape as the original farmer and his wife would have seen it. Wild nature is not the enemy here, since it lies outside systems of monetary value that are the products of "civilization." The poem is thus a corrective to what was very possibly already a discursive habit, fifteen years before Johnston's walk and Pinkerton's cruise, of thinking of the Gulf Islands landscape as inherently and inevitably pastoral. Phillips-Wolley read the poem to the Royal Society of Canada in May 1914, just before the outbreak of war ended what had been a flurry of speculative real estate activity in the islands. Like many local histories of the islands, "The Mortgaged Farm" resists the neo-colonizing desires of successive waves of settlers.

The commemorative impulse that informs "The Mortgaged Farm" also informs the writing of local histories of the Gulf Islands, which focus almost exclusively on pioneer settlement. In the rhetoric of North American settlement, wilderness conventionally represents failure, a lack of history, since settlement itself is defined as the alteration and

subjugation of wild nature. But in the Gulf Islands, settlement is discursively naturalized into wild nature. Margery Corrigan uses wild nature to frame her history of Hornby Island. The book begins with three photographs on the pages that precede the prose text, one of which shows a ruined barn, while the other two images are of trees. The caption beneath the largest image, of a maple tree in leaf standing alone in the middle of a meadow, reads "Maple tree on the hill above Ford's Cove. At least seventy-five years old." The third photo, of two trees occupying a similarly open, flat, grassy space, is labelled "Old pine tree on Whaling Station Bay Point. Site where Indians used to drag whales to cut them up." On the following four pages, photographs narrate the history of Hornby settlement: the first two-page spread consists of many scenes of pioneer life (the school and church, harvesting oats and dogfish), the second shows modern homes and local industries (that is, pottery studios). The sequence narrates a shift from agriculture and resource-extraction industry to the notion of artisans, an alternative version of pastoral work.<sup>64</sup>

In the context of the other photos in the group, the two images of trees function as statements of origins. Each caption consists of two sentences, the first identifying the species and location of the tree, the second establishing the tree as an emblem of community history. The seventy-five year old maple is the oldest of the artifacts and sites that Corrigan mentions: it is contemporaneous with the first wave of settlers to Hornby and thus signifies early settlement. The pine functions as a mnemonic for an alternative

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<sup>64</sup> The shift from rural work being defined solely as work on the land to including traditional crafts and other work by hand originates locally in the back to the land movement of the 1970s. Since then, the notion of becoming an artisan has become directly identified with the idea of being a Gulf Islander.

notion of origins, since it marks the site of Pentlatch use of Hornby as a base for whaling. Both photographs are composed to refer to pre-settlement, since they lack both human figures and evidence of settlement (other than the open-ness of the ground on which the trees stand, an element that, being an absence rather than a presence, does not obviously signify settlement), but these features paradoxically link these photographs to the modern landscape aesthetic of pastoral nature. The narrative of community development that follows begins in these two arboreal images.

The printed text of The History of Hornby Island has little to do with nature, but at the close of the book, under the heading of "Odds and Ends," Corrigan returns to wild nature:

We cannot close this story without mentioning the beautiful flowers that may be found on Hornby Island. In the early spring the little island known as Flower Island (Flora Is. on the charts) off St. John's Point is a mass of wild flowers and people go from many places to view them. Here, besides the ordinary run of wild flowers may be seen many different varieties of cacti, their blooms covering the little island like a carpet. Some varieties of wild flowers found on Hornby itself are: Lady's Slipper, Indian Paint Brush, Columbine, Chocolate Lily (Snake Head), Camas, Dog's Tooth Violet, Trillium, Forgetmenot, Star Flower, Wild Honeysuckle, Shooting Star and many others. (62)

Like Phillips-Wolley, Corrigan draws the outsider's attention to indigenous wildflowers in the course of telling settlement history. She composes her account in the present tense, however, suggesting that wildflowers signify a lack of closure: the present tense indicates that she has brought her history both up to the present moment and back to ahistorical nature. Corrigan also gestures toward the gap between the local idiom (Flower Island; Snake Head) and formal names ("Flora Is. on the charts; Chocolate Lily). And like Dawson's sea-going cottage, Pinkerton's bathtub, and Johnston's interior gardens, Corrigan's

simile of a "carpet" of wildflowers covering Flora Islet merges interior, domestic space with wild nature.

The title of this section, "Odds and Ends," suggests that Corrigan has difficulty fitting uncultivated nature into her narrative of settlement, though she considers that narrative incomplete without it. After wandering through asides about animals and geological formations, Corrigan concludes with a final note about trees that resonates with the first photographs in the book: "Beside the cedar and fir trees we find the beautiful arbutus, the dogwood, fine maple trees and the rare Garry Oak, many of which have been here since the earliest times" (62). By "the earliest times," Corrigan seems to mean the point at which recorded (settlement) history began. By ending her book with this material she returns to the emblems of origins with which she began. The return to arboreal icons reintegrates nature into settlement at the same time that it naturalizes settlement, aligning settlement into a continuous balance with nature. Corrigan's pines and maples cross the boundary between prehistory and history, linking the chronology of settlement with arboreal life-cycles.

In most respects, The History of Hornby Island resembles any other local history, except that unlike Phillips-Wolley, Corrigan does not distinguish between early and late-coming residents of Hornby. She refers to residents of subdivisions simply as the most recent "settlers" of the island, not a word that is used much elsewhere to describe the relatively sudden increases in population on all the islands since about 1970.<sup>65</sup> Corrigan

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<sup>65</sup> In My Ain Folk: Denman Island 1875-1975, Winnifred Isbister describes a second wave of settlement from the end of the first world war to 1975 (the moment, that is, at which she is writing).

constructs her narrative as a seamless continuum, describing it as a "story," rather than perceiving pastoral dichotomies between an earlier, lost past and an undesirable present. Just as settlement has not been superseded by another historical phase in Corrigall's version of local history, nature has not been obliterated by the settled landscape. In the Gulf Islands, settlement is defined not as pushing back nature but as becoming naturalized, coming under the influence of wild nature, being absorbed into a still-natural topography. The disruption of conventional oppositions that define local settlement accounts in any genre--sea and land, inside and outside space, the civilized and the wild--shows how pervasive is the particular version of pastoral that constructs the Gulf Islands region as both home and nature.

## Trailing Narrative

*In a path is the beginning of narrative, that sure and welcoming sign of human presence.*

Michael Pollan, Second Nature, 302

*Canopy and Understory*

*Forests are distinguished from other types of terrestrial vegetation by their great height--a distinction that is not at all trivial, however obvious it may seem. They contain vertical space for the elaboration of vegetation layers other than the dominant trees.*

Stephen Whitney, Western Forests: The Audubon Society Nature Guide, 36

*The mockingbird took a single step into the air and dropped. . . . Just a breath before he would have dashed to the ground, he unfolded his wings with exact, deliberate care . . . and so floated onto the grass. I had just rounded a corner when his insouciant step caught my eye; there was no one else in sight. The fact of his free fall was like the old philosophical conundrum about the tree that falls in the forest. The answer must be, I think, that beauty and grace are performed whether or not we will or sense them. The least we can do is try to be there.*

Annie Dillard, Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, 8

*"I thought," I said to the zoologist . . . "that you didn't believe in personalizing animals."*

*"Well, not in the laboratory," he says, "But when they're in and out of the house with you . . ."*

Jean Howarth, Secrets the Island is Keeping, 64

*I remember quite well when Mother decided to bake a batch of bread and when it was ready took it out of the oven and put it on the kitchen table to cool. Then she went out either for a walk or to Galiano for the afternoon and there was nobody at home on Gossip except the goats. They smelled the bread, ate it all and then decided it was time for a little snooze, so they*

*went into Mother and Dad's bedroom and got on the bed and went to sleep. That's where Mother found them when she got home--no bread but very well-fed goats.*

Peter Denroche, "The Denroche Family of Gossip Island," 126

*Since this book is meant mainly to create a feeling of oneness and rapport with the life of our rocky shores rather than just for identification, the main part of the book is to be read more as you would a novel than as a scientific work for field observation. We suggest that you read pages 8 through 41 simply for the story and the mood first, letting the pictures give you the feel of the sea rather than being distracted by names and species identifications. Go down to the shore after this reading and, again, do not worry about naming what you see, but let the waves and the rocks and the life and the beauty flow into your inner being.*

Ernest Braun and Vinson Brown, Exploring Pacific Coast Tide Pools, 5

*The romantic metaphor offers us no role in nature except as an observer or worshipper: to act in nature is to stain it with culture.*

Michael Pollan, Second Nature, 218

*What I aim to do is not so much learn the names of the shreds of creation that flourish in this valley, but to keep myself open to their meanings, which is to try to impress myself at all times with the fullest possible force of their very reality.*

Annie Dillard, Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, 137

*And this our life, exempt from public haunt,  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.*

William Shakespeare, As You Like It, 2.1: 15-17

*. . . the theme of city corruption and rural virtue is popular enough to be classified as folklore.*

Yi-Fu Tuan, Topophilia, 108

*This metaphor of the world as text, absolutely crucial to the elaboration of all island discourses, is a negotiation of the privileging of empirical experience in the encounter between man and nature, a process in which seeing and knowing are finally equalised. To read the natural world, to decipher its codes, is also to achieve an annexation of its meaning and this is the primary significance of the supreme legibility of the literary island.*

Diana Loxley, Problematic Shores, 8

In colonial narratives--of which the local history form is a persistent example--the tropes of discovery and settlement function as frames for ordering and interpreting initial experience of a specific topography. Colonial rhetoric invokes both of these tropes to establish a narrative of origins, to invest encounters with a new land with epic significance. Discovery and settlement thus become foundational narratives as well as foundational tropes. In the Gulf Islands, however, where the sequence of British colonization departs radically from the conventions of colonial chronology (the marine survey replaces imperial discovery; settlement precedes the land survey; colonization does not develop past these two initial stages), those narratives cannot trace the process by which colonial culture and history transform themselves into indigenous culture and history, rooted in engagement with the landscape. Claims of presence and priority fall short: other evidence and other narratives are required.

Indigenous cultures have their own locally-based creation stories; an immigrant colonial culture lacks these stories--which narrate and locate a people's origins as much as those of a particular place (the place is a synecdoche for the world in these stories). Instead, a colonial culture must invent itself and its place: this is the point of the title of Jack Hodgins' novel of origins sited in mid-Vancouver Island: The Invention of the World

(1977). The word "invention" replaces the word "creation" in the conventional phrase "the creation of the world," which in turn generates the term "creation stories." The precise place about whose foundation narratives The Invention of the World speculates--the site of the Revelations Colony, which has become the Revelations Trailer Park--is geographically very close to the Gulf Islands: the chain of islands that stretches south from Gabriola begins only three miles offshore from Nanaimo, less than a hundred yards if Newcastle Island were to be defined as a Gulf Island (lying within Nanaimo's city limits, however, Newcastle is not part of the Islands Trust Area; neither is its near neighbour Protection Island). But The Invention of the World could not have been written in or about the islands: even in Hodgins' sense of local geography, the Gulf Islands are set apart, their character and function distinguishing them profoundly from Vancouver Island.<sup>66</sup> The

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<sup>66</sup> In The Invention of the World, Maggie Kyle tells Wade Powers she has signed up for a retreat, "a two-week thing, on this tiny island out in the strait." She hopes this retreat will result in a personal transformation:

"If I was rich, or American, I guess I'd be hauling myself off to a psychiatrist, or jumping into a pool full of naked people. Or if I was European I could go off on a pilgrimage, and walk barefoot up mountains, and starve myself and expect miracles that will transform me. But I'm not. This is the best I could find. I've signed up for this session on a tiny island where we'll live like medieval monks or Spartans or something and learn about ourselves." (166-67)

The self-mocking irony with which Maggie explains what she is about to do (Wade thinks to himself "It was the kind of thing she might joke about") reflects the way in which Vancouver Islanders--north of Victoria--think about the Gulf Islands. Wade describes the people who run these retreats as "a bunch of freaks and intellectuals": in contrast to real life on the big island, where the idea of a spirit quest or pilgrimage is foreign and laughable, the Gulf Islands permit a dangerous indulgence in lunacy.

Stephen Slemon uses The Invention of the World to illustrate how magic realism functions as a post-colonial discourse: he mentions that Keith Maillard's Two Strand River would work equally well (10). Maillard also posits the Gulf Islands as a place of transformation, in this case against urban Vancouver: the two protagonists, who do not

stories that invent northern Vancouver Island do not define the Gulf Islands.

Very few novels treat the Gulf Islands as the space central to the narratives they tell: Intertidal Life (1984), by Audrey Thomas, Bertrand Sinclair's Poor Man's Rock (1920), and two of Jane Rule's novels--The Young in One Another's Arms (1977) and After the Fire (1989)--are the sole examples. In each of these cases, the islands invariably function in opposition to another place--usually Vancouver--where part of the novel is set. In Munchmeyer and Prospero on the Island (1971), Thomas pairs two novellas in a single text: "Munchmeyer" describes a failed male Vancouver writer and is set in the city, while "Prospero on the Island" concerns the young woman who writes--and completes--"Munchmeyer" while living on Galiano. In Love and Salt Water (1956), Ethel Wilson makes the Galiano section of the book an interlude in a novel otherwise set mainly in Vancouver: although the narrative climax occurs on Galiano, the consequences of that moment of crisis, which are more important than the crisis itself, are played out in Vancouver. Despite its toponymically-precise title, Malcom Lowry's October Ferry to Gabriola (1970) also posits a Gulf Island in opposition to another place: Lowry imposes on landscape mythic structures he borrows from Dante, intending Gabriola to represent Paradiso in contrast to the Inferno he locates in the Mexico of Under the Volcano (1947).

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meet until the end of the novel, must undergo spirit quests, under the guidance of the medicine woman Mrs. Mackenzie, to free them from the conventions of gender that prevent them from living authentically. Both Leslie and Alan/Ellen must travel to a fictional place on northern Vancouver Island to fulfill their quests, but first Mrs. Mackenzie takes Alan/Ellen to Bowen Island for a sweat lodge ritual that initiates the process of transformation (153-63). Maillard thus makes a Gulf Island a place of retreat also, but in a vein of deep seriousness--Mrs. Mackenzie chastises Alan/Ellen for flippancy, explaining that they are both engaged in a struggle between good and evil as opposed to the rollicking playfulness of Hodgins' narrative.

In October Ferry, Gabriola exists only as an imagined place of sanctuary: the actual island does not materialize, since the novel ends as the ferry carrying the Llewellyns approaches Gabriola, the island unseen in the dark.

Rather than novels, fictional narratives of the Gulf Islands usually take the form of short stories.<sup>67</sup> In the middle of The Invention of the World, Hodgins places a "scrapbook," consisting of transcribed statements about the origins of the Revelations colony that Strabo Becker, amateur historian, has solicited and taped: Bill Richardson uses a similar device in a Gulf Island context in Bachelor Brothers' Bed & Breakfast (1993), suggesting that the individual stories in the book are entries in the bed and breakfast's guest book. In both cases, the emphasis on the "collected" nature of the stories suggests that their composition is contemporaneous with the origins of the local place: rather than being integrated into a single narrative, the stories in both books remain original documents--unmediated, close to their source, most authentic. Virgil (one of the twin bachelor brothers) writes his first entry in the island graveyard, a topographical landmark where settlement origins are recorded in the landscape. Virgil treats the headstones as mnemonics to local stories:

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<sup>67</sup> Both Rule and Thomas have written several short stories about the islands, which appear among collections of stories not all of which concern the islands. The title story in Rebecca Raglon's collection The Gridlock Mechanism (1992) complicates the Vancouver-Gulf Island dichotomy by adding a third pole of experience--Toronto--to the complex consequences that choosing place imposes on living particular kinds of lives. Margaret Hollingsworth's story "Cubbing" (1989) forces a father who has travelled to Galiano to help supervise his son's camping holiday to examine similar implications of identity and place, urban versus rural.

Two book-length collections of solely Gulf Island stories--Ruth Loomis, Small Stories of a Gentle Island (1986) and Maria Tippett, Breaking the Cycle (1989)--react against the construction of the islands as pastoral space by identifying the local with a harsher reality.

Looking around the cemetery at the various memorials and mausoleums, you can read a sort of pocket history of these hereabouts. The industrious winds and rains have made the etching on the earliest stone barely discernible.

Anthea Swystun  
1846-1869

There are no other facts of her short life and passing. Still, we who are native to this out-of-the-way place feel a sense of kinship with her. Anthea is part of local lore. We all grew up knowing that Anthea had been unable to withstand the awful rigours of childbirth. . . .

It is a simple grave, but mythic nonetheless. Anthea's role in the pageant of our history and the weather-worn evidence of her short time on earth have taken on a certain totemistic power. It has been a tradition for succeeding generations of women "in the family way" to come here and pay her their respects, to touch the snagged stones, and to ask their long-dead sister for her assistance during their impending travail. (8)

The "snagged stones" that mark the grave, the "mythic" character of the grave itself, its "totemistic power," its magic--all these elements bear a striking resemblance to the Irish origins of Keneally, the founder of the Revelations colony in The Invention of the World. The "sense of kinship" that "we who are native to this out-of-the-way place" feel for their earliest emigrant dead reinforces the bachelor brothers' indigenoussness (they were born, and have lived their whole lives, in the island valley).

The Invention of the World plays with the notion of "invention" and its significance to this particular post-colonial landscape: Hodgins complicates the telling of stories--and how stories become myths of origin--by raising the possibility of falsehood and of tall tales that the word "invention" connotes. Hodgins expresses these connotations of fabrication as magic realism, a literary mode that Stephen Slemon has described as a particularly post-colonial genre. Magic realism codifies the notion of a world invented through stories: the solidity and reliability of that invented world is always questionable. Hodgins invents myth of place. Bill Richardson also invents myth of place, but in his version the notion of

"invention" shifts subtly to a literary process, one that invokes one of the two founding tropes of the Gulf Islands region: the Shorter Oxford gives as the word's earliest meaning "[t]he action of coming upon or finding; discovery." A later, seventeenth-century definition gave "invention" a meaning specific to art and literature: "The devising of a subject, idea, or method of treatment, by exercise of the intellect of imagination." Not until much later did invention come to mean both "a fabrication, fiction, figment" and "an original contribution or device." Richardson's "invention" refers not to the fantastic, hyperbolic scale of mythmaking to which Hodgins alludes, but to the notion of a composition, limited in scope, that functions within a set framework. In the Gulf Islands, myth operates not on the level of epic, but on the level of the sketch.

The generic difference between Bachelor Brothers' Bed & Breakfast and The Invention of the World encapsulates the difference between the Gulf Islands and Vancouver Island, considered as literary regions. Whereas Hodgins brings together multiple narratives to create a myth of the north island region, Richardson groups multiple narratives in a commonplace book form, rather than anything so unified and weighty as a novel.<sup>68</sup> The stories Richardson relates retain their independence from one another: to the extent that Bachelor Brothers' functions as a single text or narrative, that narrative is profoundly episodic. The links between the stories are associative rather than integral: the bed & breakfast draws stories just as it draws people. Rather than being the site of those stories, the bed & breakfast provides an occasion for their being told. Among the guests' narratives and the fictions contained in the books those guests come to the bed & breakfast to read,

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<sup>68</sup> The term "invention" functions also on a metatextual level in The Invention of the World, referring to the novel itself as well as to the narratives it recounts.

however, Virgil and Hector intersperse their own narratives, the stories that root them to the place in which they were born. These are not autobiographical narratives but exemplary stories, examples of the kinds of events that happen locally, either at the bed & breakfast or in the island valley in which it is located. Despite the recurrence of main characters and references to earlier narratives, these stories remain anecdotes rather than elements in a sequence or chronology.

Bachelor Brothers' demonstrates that the anecdote form, rather than a particular plot or cluster of details, exemplifies Gulf Island narrative. Richardson's book participates in a convention of short story writing in the islands codified by Jean Howarth's "Treasure Island" stories. During the 1970s and 1980s, Howarth's stories appeared twice-weekly on the editorial pages of The Globe & Mail, Canada's Toronto-based, ostensibly national newspaper. Three collections of these stories--Treasure Island (1979), Secrets the Island is Keeping (1988), and Island Time (1988)--transform the ephemeral mode of newspaper publication (ephemeral because newspapers are discarded once read), with its concomitant stigma of "newspaper verse" (of which these stories are prose analogues) into a more lasting form. Both Howarth and Richardson, working in national media--newspaper and radio, respectively--while formulating their Gulf Island stories, shape those stories for a national, largely urban audience (Bachelor Brothers' developed from stories that Richardson broadcast on CBC radio): not surprisingly, given this urban context, both authors invoke the pastoral mode to construct the islands. Like Bachelor Brothers', Howarth's "Treasure Island" presents Gulf Island space as pastoral retreat from the pressing and depressing aspects of daily life in more "civilized" places: the first story in Treasure Island begins:

"What this country needs is a place to get away from itself. We have therefore decided to give you honorary admission to our island. It is off the coast and it is called Madronna"

(1). Like Richardson's unnamed island, the actual identity of Howarth's Madronna is deliberately unspecified: her editor, Richard Doyle, remarks in his Introduction to Secrets the Island is Keeping that "[m]any of her faithful readers . . . have written to ask the location of Madronna. They need not ask. Most of them, awake or asleep, have already been there themselves." By contrast, Richardson insists in his own introduction to Bachelor Brothers' that the bed & breakfast does exist: the difference is that anyone with access to local histories of the islands and a map of local topography can recognize in Madronna the attributes of Saturna Island, while Richardson's valley, and the island on which it is located, cannot be determined from comparing the book with other Gulf Island texts. The back-cover blurb on Howarth on Secrets and Island Time notes that she "divides her time between Toronto and Saturna Island, British Columbia": this overt identification of Madronna is beside the point, however, since Howarth's stories, like Richardson's, have more to do with what Doyle calls "living decently and dying decently" than with describing an actual place.

Ambiguity between reality and fantasy, however, is precisely the point of much writing about the Gulf Islands, especially as represented by the short short story form (Howarth's stories are never more than five or six hundred words): questions of appearance and reality give way to issues of authenticity. Howarth names her island for the topographical feature that most often denotes "Gulf Island," the arbutus, known south of

the international border as "madrona."<sup>69</sup> In misspelling madrona, Howarth echoes Richard Hugo's misspelled "Sydney": like the snatches of fragmentary definitions in Hugo's poem, Howarth's stories gesture toward a version of the "local" that speaks of a dreamed place rather than an actual geography. Yet Howarth explicitly connects nature and narrative in her stories of "Treasure Island": the pastoral mode she uses suggests that the stories she tells emanate directly from the island's natural topography. The titles of Howarth's books--all of which contain the word "island"--signal not only that the informing topography of the local is island-ness, but that the stories are rooted in topography. Howarth writes exemplary narratives that function as signposts to the landscape, which map the terrain of local experience.

Many of Howarth's stories describe patterns of movement through the Madronna Island landscape (as Hugo's poem describes movement through the archipelago), patterns that evolve from identification of the island as a natural space combining wilderness with a sense of home.<sup>70</sup> Howarth writes about the notion of "wildness," or rather how living in a

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<sup>69</sup> In naming her island after the arbutus, Howarth identifies the condition of Gulf Island with the range of that species: since the islands constitute the northernmost part of the arbutus' range, the tree signifies the warm, dry climate associated not with Canada but with the coast south of the international border as far as northern California. The zone to which the arbutus belongs is known as "Cool Mediterranean": the arbutus thus connotes benign, comfortable natural places in both the old world and the new. The tree thus connotes pastoral.

<sup>70</sup> In the late twentieth century, it is difficult to conceive of any of the Gulf Islands as predominantly wilderness, given the size of the permanent populations and easy ferry access for summer visitors. Like Hornby and Lasqueti, however, Saturna is somewhat more remote than other islands in the group because of relatively poor ferry connections. Reaching Hornby requires taking a ferry to Denman Island, driving across Denman, and taking another ferry to Hornby, while the Lasqueti ferry from French Creek (just north of Parksville) does not carry vehicles. Like Denman, Hornby, and Lasqueti, Saturna cannot be reached directly from the mainland, requiring a transfer either at Mayne Island or at

(however compromised) wild place constantly forces revision of assumptions about wildness and natural processes. Cutting greenery for florists is one of the few occupations Madronna can offer: working at home--on the island--thus means working in wilderness. And working in the wilderness means having the opportunity to fuse making a living with observing nature and, by extension, becoming "natural:"

What makes cutting greenery for the mainland florists a good job, if you like the wilds, is that it puts you right into them, almost makes you part of them.

It is hard work; but you can never tell when you will come across a doe nursing her fawn, or a young buck rubbing the velvet from his proud new horns, or--once--two bucks having it out in a bit of a forest clearing while a doe stood smugly by.

I got up a tree and watched the whole thing; and if you ask me, there was a lot of put-on about that fight. You could have set those bucks to ballet music. It was the oldest one that got the girl, at least I think so; he had the most horns. But I didn't see any blood on anybody.

Not that I would wish to give the impression that the nature I find on Madronna sets man an example of gentleness and conducts even its battles in a purely stylized fashion. Not much. (Treasure Island 27)

In describing the domestic arrangements of the deer, Howarth makes the wild home again: by making what might appear to be violence take on something of a ritual, even artistic, formula, she also invokes the pastoral again. The forest understory provides Howarth with anecdote, with nature to watch and a place--the tree--from which to watch it. Howarth's stories come closest to nature writing considered as a literary genre in that what she observes are not species as much as individuals belonging to various species. The anthropomorphism in her account of the fighting bucks thus indicates not a sentimental

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Swartz Bay. The length of time this transfer entails makes Saturna much less desirable for both permanent residents and summer visitors than the other outer islands. As a result, development on Saturna has lagged far behind that on other islands: it is common to hear Saturna spoken of as the last unspoiled Gulf Island.

attitude to animals but an assumption that they are residents of Madronna comparable to the humans who also live there.

Howarth does not claim that cutting greenery is an easy job: as she says, until one is in good shape, it is "back-breaking work." But by way of compensation, "[a]fter that--if you like green wilderness--it is like being paid to play" (23). The word "play" implies that work in the wilderness takes on the properties of a vacation, a getting away from the too familiar. For Howarth, much of the notion of wilderness is aligned with the potential for not knowing where one is: "It is easy to get lost. Twenty feet from a trail you can be in forest so deep and untouched, so littered with deadfalls, so obliterating of even the sky, that you can almost believe that no human ever passed that way before; and maybe none has" (23-24).<sup>71</sup> Yet this is the place where deer perform ballet, that most civilized, artistic mode of movement through space. Elsewhere, she counters this romantic view with the statement that "[i]n the field or in the garden . . . deer behave like very bad kids. They eat some and spoil the rest" (Secrets 71). Howarth erases the boundaries between inside and outside, perpetuating the confusion of domestic and wild space by opening her home to wild animals--raccoons, a deer, hornets, mice, a cougar kit, a grizzly cub--for as long as the animals want, or need, to stay. None of these visits from the wild are planned, but Howarth finds herself operating a bed & breakfast not only for refugees from urban centres but for wildlife that either needs care or just decides to move in.

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<sup>71</sup> The words "in" and "deep" to describe the forest on Madronna reflect the Gulf Island inversion of conventional spatial relations between wilderness and civilization. In North America, wilderness is conventionally something "out there," beyond the boundary that encloses civilized space: rather than depth, the spatial notion indicating true wilderness is distance from the settled centre. On the islands, however, peripheries--represented by the beach--are settled, while interiors remain wild and unknown.

Howarth finds herself giving house room to livestock as well as wildlife. In Secrets, she describes the difficulties of finding a home for a litter of goats:

We were sitting in my kitchen. Helen, the nanny goat, had just been batted away from Mrs. Carpenter's work basket, at which she had been quietly browsing on a half-finished doilie. Helen's four kids (one billy, three nannies, all black) had been bounding gracefully from floor to chairs to table to kitchen-stove warming oven to the back of the sofa for a nuzzle at our hair. (69)

Howarth has been given the goats to augment her family's diet, but wonders "am I equal to slaughtering a bright-eyed black kid that nuzzles my hair? Could I ask my children to eat their playmates?" The solution is to take the goats to live with the herd that occupies a house that had belonged to a hermit, a woman who lived alone among the wild goats at the top of one of Madronna's mountains: "the idea was to stay with them in the goat woman's empty shack while they gradually learned to be wild goats" (101). Teaching wild animals how to be wild is the heart-breaking aspect of raising them. Elsewhere, goats are considered domestic animals: on Madronna, they become feral by definition. Raccoons, on the other hand, become tame.

Part of the point to the story about cutting salal is that it is precisely while Howarth is working that she observes the deer's mating ritual. On Madronna, nature is the place and condition in which both people and animals go about the business of getting a living.<sup>72</sup> It

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<sup>72</sup> By the time Howarth was writing these stories, primary resource extraction in British Columbia had become associated with the idea of wilderness far removed geographically, as well as psychically, from urban centres. To identify, as Howarth does, occupations such as logging and fishing as the economic bases of the Gulf Islands is to move the islands farther away--in psychic terms--from those urban centres than they are geographically. Howarth is unusual as a Gulf Island writer for her treatment of what Leo Marx calls "the machine in the garden." Earth-moving equipment, vilified in most nature writing as what Edward Abbey referred to as "big yellow machines," is for Howarth and other Madronna Islanders simply a necessary tool for functioning in the wilderness. She has no difficulty

is because islanders do not go out into nature simply in order to be in nature that their experiences there are authentic, as are the stories in which they recount those experiences.

One story in Treasure Island concerns sightings of penguins in the waters around

Madronna:

Richard James and I saw one, sitting on a log in the middle of the channel. Richard, who is Madronna Island's resident freelance writer and believes he is a realist, swept on past. A hundred yards further on he made an abrupt U-turn for which I was prepared (Richard is in fact a romantic) and roared back. Just before we reached his log the little penguin dived, and Richard bent his propeller on the log.

"But it was a little penguin," he asserted, rowing home.

There have been reports from more reliable observers. Tugboat operators, log boomers, fishermen, Indians and the captain of a Japanese freighter have all reported little penguins. . . .

For every observer of a little penguin there has been a scoffer, usually armed with a bird book, who says that what we saw was a duck or a diver or a mudhen or some other feathered aquatic: Just look at this picture! The problem for sanity is that the picture never looks like what we saw, which was a little penguin.

It is the other problem for sanity that has engaged the attention of the mainland university ornithologist who often visits Madronna. We are well up in the northern hemisphere, where there are no penguins. (59-60)

The authenticity of this event--the sighting of the penguin--depends on the identity of the observers. Howarth describes the "more reliable observers" of the penguin not by name but by profession and race: "tugboat operators, log boomers, fishermen, Indians, and the Captain of a Japanese freighter." By describing these people as more reliable than the two islanders who observe the penguin, Howarth emphasizes that working in the wild--rather than simply moving into the wild purposely to observe nature--bestows authority on these

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reconciling bulldozers and backhoes with the vision of the wild garden. Many people in the islands perceive these machines as inherently destructive of the natural values that attracted them to the islands in the first place, not only in the changes they create in the landscape but in the increased pressures of population that inevitably follow in their wake.

witnesses: their stories are true stories because they encounter nature in their work rather than as a deliberate act for its own sake: they have no vested interest in making their experience significant. Neither do local people, islanders, make a deliberate effort to observe nature: they have no need to make an effort, since working in the wilds merely intensifies the islanders' identity as living in nature.

While academic scientists have a general knowledge of how animals behave, and describe animals by their typical rather than actual behaviour, this knowledge has little currency on Madronna (representing the local rather than the general), since individual animals tend not to behave according to the rules, according to scientific categories. The incontrovertible authority--the field guide--is brandished only by those who are not islanders; local exceptions to the field guide's rules make the field guide a less reliable guide to nature than living life as an islander. "Nature" in the abstract means nothing compared to local circumstances and events. In making this distinction between local knowledge and scholarly, place-less knowledge, Howarth extends the pastoral dichotomy between Madronna and the urban, civilized world--represented variously by Vancouver, Toronto, and "the rest of the country"--to separate epistemologies of nature into a pastoral polarity also. Madronna Islanders include in their category of experts who know nothing the environmentalists who visit the island and try to tell islanders how to change their behaviour to save the world. In Secrets, the islanders who receive Christmas cards from environmentalists who have visited Madronna the previous summer tell each other stories of that visit ("we sat around one evening remembering"):

"They were so careful," said Mr. Carpenter, "setting that fire on Bloom Island. Nice ring of rocks around it to keep it from spreading. Only they

didn't know they'd set it on peat which caught fire. It's burning still."

"And that time," said Mrs. Carpenter, "when they lectured us about eating rock cod, because they said rock cod was a threatened species."

"Which it is not," said Mr. Carpenter, "Thick as thieves off Madronna."

"Anyway," said Mrs. Carpenter, "what they were eating wasn't rock cod, it was dogfish shark."

"It isn't that I'm against environmentalists," said Elwy Danson, which it is. "But they don't get the facts. You know that piece of forest burn that crosses the Trans-Canada Highway, with the big signs at each end of burning cigarets, to show what it did. It's been there for years, all dead and black. 'And I'll have you know,' I told that environmentalist who was staying with you, 'that my cousin helps burn it off fresh every spring before the tourist season.' He didn't believe me."

"It's their cause," said Mrs. Carpenter. "You have to let people have their causes. They took good care of Mildred Stonehenge's wild flower garden."

"That was because they didn't know it was a garden. They thought it was wild," said Elwy. "Look what happened to that arbutus they tried to transplant."

"It would have worked," said Mr. Carpenter, "if they had yanked it up by the roots and tossed it down, and thrown rocks at it. You can't bed an arbutus in rich loam." (187-88)

While islanders do not generalize about the state of the world on the basis of local conditions, neither do they allow reports of conditions elsewhere to influence their understanding of the local environment. Madronna's understanding of environmentalists is summed up by Charlie Jo, a young First Nations Madronna resident, who "says that the trouble with environmentalists is that they come from cities and as occupants of them feel guilty at having despoiled the land, and therefore come out here to preach what they have not found it practical to practice at home" (*Island Time*, 116).

If nature is the defining characteristic of a Gulf Island, Howarth makes it clear that some criteria for the natural are authentic, while others are not. To be an islander is not only to be in nature, but to know nature in particular, authentically island ways. The failure of the field guide to account for natural phenomena on and around Madronna 176

parallels the failure of scholarly expertise: for Howarth, nature becomes an epistemological shibboleth separating islanders from outsiders. Howarth's stories about animals derive from the fact that at specific times and in particular places, animals sometimes behave inexplicably, counter to received knowledge. Viewing nature through the lens of the field guide cannot replace knowledge of individual members of species gained through long acquaintance: when the observer is not local, assumptions take the place of stories.

The trouble with encountering the wild, however, is that assumptions cannot account for the inexplicable things that individuals animals do. In situations where the point of an event involving wildlife cannot be known--where the significance of the narrative eludes the story--observers who are not familiar with the local wild cannot trust the evidence of their senses. Howarth's account of the debate over the little penguins demonstrates this failure of outsiders to suspend disbelief on the basis of what they have seen. Much more troubling are the events in which the reasons for particular wildlife behaviour are inexplicable: they can be speculated about, but never finally resolved. Madronna Islanders, however, can trust their own experience, even when it appears not to make sense. In the story about the wildlife she has encountered while cutting greenery Howarth includes an account of another event, in which "the gulls we saw trying to drown a deer were just bent on murder for fun":

There were four of us down on the shore collecting drift. Old Mildred Stonehenge doesn't cut greenery any more, but she likes to collect drift, although only the drift the sea has shaped into animals or birds. She has a drift zoo around her place up on the bluff which she intends to leave as a park to the Madronna Island Community Club when she dies. That will not be for some time. Mildred is only 91 and means to beat the island record, which is 106.

Anyway, there we were on the shore. A deer was swimming from

Madronna Point across Head Bay and was just about half-way to Head Point when a flock of gulls started to dive-bomb him. They were extraordinarily organized about it, coming down in squadron formation, one after the other, and hitting him on the head pushing his nose under water.

He was pretty well a goner, stopped still in the water and floundering and bleeding, when Mildred got her gun. She never travels without her gun. She picked off three of the gulls, one, two, three; and that was that. Demoralized the rest of the squadron, and the deer got underway again and the last we saw he was stumbling ashore at Head Point, looking beat.

Now why in the world would a bunch of gulls want to murder a deer?  
(27-8)

In precisely locating the site of this story by referring to local toponyms, Howarth provides the kind of detail that another islander hearing this story would appreciate, a device that not only implies that this event could only have happened in this very local place but authenticates the story. As her great age implies, Mildred Stonehenge is an original Madronna pioneer: her surname suggests not only a topographical icon but cultural roots in pre-history. Like Howarth's home, which she refers to as a zoo because of its variety of wild and domestic animals, the driftwood zoo brings to mind the pastoral's conventions of enclosed yet free animals. Mildred intends to leave her home as a park for the community: the original meaning of "park" was an enclosure for game animals, wild animals, that is, domesticated by containment. The residents of Mildred's zoo--the images of animals and birds that can be perceived in the wood--have been formed by the sea: here the sea becomes the agent of craft, another signifier of the Gulf Island pastoral. Before even beginning the narrative, therefore, Howarth participates in the island convention of establishing origins in the local landscape, reiterates the blurring between home and the wild that informs her representation of Madronna, and establishes her authority for the story she is about to tell: all four witnesses are islanders and all are on the beach--in the

wild--going about their business--collecting drift--when the incident takes place. The digression establishes the evidence for the authenticity of the story that follows.

Returning to her story, Howarth must position the human participants in the event all over again, not only because they are witnesses but because Mildred intervenes so decisively in the incident. Howarth, however, does not present Mildred's intervention as intervention at all: the gulls were clearly being malicious, rather than merely motivated by "instinct," while Mildred herself, being as indigenous to Madronna (by virtue of her pioneering past) as the gulls and deer, cannot unnaturally intervene between the gulls and the deer, since she participates in the natural-ness of Madronna. To perceive Mildred's part in the story as interference is erroneously to separate the wild from the human or domestic: on Madronna, such distinctions are meaningless. Howarth marks herself as natural in the diction she chooses to relate this incident: the local word "drift" for driftwood is only the first instance of local speaking to local in this story. The precise topographical location is another instance, but equally important are the terms "dive-bomb," "pretty well," "a goner," "picked off," "looking beat," "why in the world," and "a bunch of gulls." These colloquial expressions belong to a vocabulary not precisely of the local but certainly of the rural: they are the kind of pithy, colourful terms that lend rural stories drama and immediacy. By using these terms so often in this particular story, Howarth distances herself from urban, educated, standard forms of discourse and shows that she can speak the local as well as other islanders. This terminology permits Howarth and her readers to take a vacation from the demands of standard English, to lapse into vernacular, even slang: in this story, even Howarth's language denotes the pastoral, in that, like the digressions at the start of the

narrative, it approximates the unstudied, agrestic character of oral story-telling as an element of folk (local) culture. This story-telling comes "naturally," rather than being composed, premeditated, or revised.

Island identity resides as much in the stories Madronna tells of itself as in the island's "naturalness." Sitting around together of an evening, remembering, is the way Madronna creates and tells stories: it is a collective activity that catalogues community history. At the island's New Year's Eve party, described in Secrets the Island is Keeping, telling the community's stories of the past year is an annual event:

The raconteurs--Mr. Carpenter, Mildred Stonehenge, Elwy Danson, Thorn Robertson, Doc Filbert, Captain O'Grady--take over when the band is not playing for dancing. While the band drops down to a soft background, they recite the more memorable happenings of the past year.

Like the time Elinor fussed Irwin Hoffstater so much while he was installing her new toilet that he turned the bathtub over her--he wedged it with a chip so she could breathe.

(It's too bad, but the beavers up at our lake won't let her have any water for her new fixtures anyway.)

Like the time the children attended the nudist convention up the mountain (by hanging over it in a giant arbutus tree). The president wore a sun visor and the secretary wore the minutes book.

Like all the times last winter (prolonged applause) when the Yoste McMurtrys, who live unto themselves except when needed, left vegetables on all our doorsteps because they knew the deer had eaten our vegetable gardens during the summer.

Dozens of memories, interspersed with dancing, all lubricated with a punch based on Captain O'Grady's bootleg gin. (203-4)

None of these stories has much to do with animals, but they are emblematic stories of living in nature all the same: to set Madronna's stories about animals apart from the stories about the island's human residents would be to make a false distinction. Nature does not reside solely in animals, but suffuses Madronna life. Just as Howarth finds home and wilderness intermingling and exchanging places on Madronna, the stories she tells cross

those boundaries also: the stories thus define Madronna. These are the island's understories, the terrain that lies beneath the forest canopy, the trails that lead through the landscape. If it were not for the human presence in the landscape, which generates its pastoral, mediated character, the stories would not exist. The stories--in which in her own terms Howarth perceives both grace and beauty--require someone to be there.

The partial lists of stories--the collective memories of environmentalists and of a year's events in the community--constitute catalogues of incidents that signify, both individually and collectively, the local.<sup>73</sup> In piling up narratives in this way, recounting several episodes within the frame of a single very short story, Howarth compresses the local into a kind of short-hand narrative form. Howarth does not tell stories so much as relate anecdotes, reducing details to a minimum (without sacrificing clarity or immediacy), rather than developing an incident into a narrative of consequence. The community sums up a year in its history by assembling a collection of stories. Since the various islanders tell their tales over a musical backdrop, the event resembles the passage of local stories into folk culture: from this venue to the composition of ballads and other folk songs would be a short step. The anaphora "like the time" becomes a formulaic opening (bringing to mind the "once upon a time" beginnings of fairy tales), but also signals that these are

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<sup>73</sup> Madronna's New Year's Eve party resembles similar events in the Gulf Islands. On Gabriola, New Year's Eve was celebrated for several years in the 1980s with a party and dance that featured "Gabriola Follies", a series of sketches and songs that recounted the year's events in the Gabriola community (the celebration continues but in the mid-1990s has become modelled on the "First Night" entertainments held in Vancouver). The Salt Spring Hysterical Society bases its performances on local events also: travelling to other islands, the troupe absorbs each island's gossip, stories, political rivalries, scandals, and triumphs, loosely composing this material into a show tailored to each island's audience. Telling a community's stories to itself appears to be a pre-eminent form of Gulf Island entertainment.

exemplary stories, fragments of Madronna life that come to represent that life. That these stories are sketches rather than developed, literary texts indicates the local as much as do the subjects of the stories in two ways: not only does the unpremeditated, unmediated manner of delivery suggest a "natural" style of narrative, but in omitting explanations and descriptions unnecessary to the point of the story, Howarth gestures toward a memory shared with the reader rather than telling a story the reader has not heard before. The stories are the means by which Howarth invites the rest of the country to Madronna Island, the place where the country can "get away from itself." The country's "honorary admission" to Madronna means being treated as an islander: Howarth gives the impression that she is merely reminding readers of stories they already share, stories that in which author and reader can share the sense of being local.

Howarth's narrative strategy is thus as pastoral as the version of nature she describes on Madronna: in her familiar manner of address and her laconic narrative style, she offers to a national, urban audience the chance to relax, to adopt a casual, neighbourly level of discourse, to belong to a rural community, however briefly. Because the telling of stories is a collective act on Madronna, distinctions between story-teller and audience become blurred. To listen to a Madronna story (an act implied by Howarth's echoes of rural, oral syntax and vocabulary) by reading Howarth's work is thus to become one of the story-tellers, to become local.<sup>74</sup> In the Madronna Island version of pastoral, to be "away" is to

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<sup>74</sup> In The Sense of an Ending (1967), Frank Kermode explains that because it requires a shared understanding of conventions of the form, the parable can be understood only by those who have access to its codes of meaning. Kermode illustrates the point by stating that while Christ told stories that could be understood on many different levels, only the apostles--initiated into the discourse of parables--could grasp the explicitly Christian significance of the stories. To tell stories in the form of parables, therefore, implies that

listen to stories that emerge from landscape ("tongues in trees"). The means by which the rest of Canada crosses the beach to become native (to borrow Greg Dening's image) is the stories: the stories are the place, they are the vehicle for getting away, for becoming other-natural--for a time. Howarth defines Madronna Island as a local, distinct variation of pastoral, where islanders live in company with wild and domestic animals, in a self-reliant, self-contained community, physically separate from the rest of the country. She adapts the pastoral to suit her purposes, but in the process strengthens the case for defining local space as pastoral: she uses the ecological metaphor to create a version of pastoral that merges the human community with the wilderness, bypassing the agricultural phase of settlement with which the pastoral is usually associated. In eliminating the entire notion of settlement as a phase in a chronology, Howarth also eliminates the possibility of loss.<sup>75</sup> Madronna Island reflects the stability of a mature ecosystem, detached from time (as represented by imperial history) just as it is detached from the mainland.

In the Madronna Island version of pastoral, to be "away" is to listen to stories that

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story-teller and intended audience belong to a select group of insiders: the parable form requires a closed, tightly-knit community for whom the parable has meaning. By adopting a quasi-parable form, Howarth implies that her readers belong to the local community just as she does. The form of the stories signifies belonging to the local.

<sup>75</sup> In literature about nature, even when pastoral tropes are employed, a sense of loss often seems imminent, if it is not actually overt. In her preface to Tongues in Trees (1989), Kim Taplin explains that she had initially envisioned her book as a study of trees in English literature. Once she saw how massive a task such a study would be, she narrowed her focus to what she had discovered to be a strong thread through such literature, namely pastoral lament: "I realized that one topic was beginning to engage me in particular: the way in which writers had been affected by the advance of the modern world and the retreat of their primary and proper subject-matter--nature. For observing this, their writing about trees had proved a good litmus paper" (9). In light of Glen Love's remark about the disappearance of the "away" promised by pastoral, Taplin's focus throws into relief the stubborn persistence of the pastoral moment in Gulf Island writing.

emerge from landscape ("tongues in trees"). As You Like It disrupts the conventional chronology of pastoral by making the second act of the play (in which the Duke and his court have been expelled from the court and forced to take refuge in the forest) the pastoral moment, rather than--or as well as--the final scenes of the play. While expulsion from the court is a disaster in the opinion of the courtiers surrounding the old Duke, he perceives their exile as pastoral retreat into goodness. The wildness of the forest is blank to the courtiers, who cannot discern in it messages that mean anything to them: to the Duke, however, the forest is full of significance. In their brevity and reduction to essentials, Howarth's stories resemble fables, a form often associated with animal stories. It is sometimes difficult not to perceive human attributes in the behaviour of Madronna animals but, as she indicates in her qualification about the duelling bucks, Howarth does not "wish to give the impression that the nature [she finds] on Madronna sets man an example of gentleness and conducts even its battles in a purely stylized fashion." Howarth does not perceive her stories as morality tales, either by suggesting that the enclosed, communal life on Madronna promotes an ecological model for human relations, or in the sense of using animals as analogues to humans in order to illustrate how humans ought to behave. She undercuts two different frames conventionally used to frame narratives about animal behaviour: one is scientific, taking the attitude that animals behave in predictable ways because they are motivated by instincts common to their species; the other is romantic, suggesting that since animals belonging to certain species always share common personality traits (such as nobility in the eagle), stories about them can be used as paradigms for human behaviour. Howarth disrupts both the scientific and romantic versions of animal

narratives: if, as her stories demonstrate, animals are individuals, then they cannot be the subjects of morality tales, as animal stories conventionally are. Neither can individual animals be treated solely as paradigms of their own species. Stories of Madronna Island are rather parables of place: they are exemplary stories not because they describe ideal behaviour but because they exemplify the local.

**Is There a Text in this Chicken Coop?: Settlement**

*This house was built for us, from the beginning, except for the two chicken coops. We bought them and moved them here because we needed a roof quickly. They seemed like junk in the field, but we couldn't part with them. They're now the kitchen . . . and the weathered boards are from George's old barn.*

Ann Ngan, in Helliwell and McNamara, "Hand-Built Hornby," 472

*Those must have been interesting days for lads straight out from Scotland. Woods everywhere and in them game a-plenty! No barriers, only one old fence dividing the island in two where previously Mr. David Hope and Mr. Noah Buckley had run cattle. You went where you pleased, careful only to be able to find your way home through the dense underbrush.*

Mary Hamilton, in Freeman, A Gulf Islands Patchwork, 68

*B.C. is killer whales, seagulls, eagles, bears, mountains, water, trees, and salmon. All of these things are some of the strongest images of our westcoast lifestyle. They form the foundation of the westcoast visual language. First native artists, and then westerners have made stylized versions of these natural phenomena to form our own distinct coastal iconography.*

David van Berckel, "Who Will be Remembered?"  
The Artist Resource Newsletter, 32 (1991): 1

*We had been to Bowen Island several times on day trips and had always thought it might be a nice place to live. With its 20-minute ferry ride to West Vancouver, it seemed like a good compromise between island life and city life, and we liked the vacation-home atmosphere.*

Mike McConnell, "Hand-Built Housing," 117

*Social creation of a mythic home seeks consciously to play up the uniqueness of place by accenting small distinctions in the landscape, by modifying it idiosyncratically, or by instituting in it a code of local*

*signatures. All these actions imply communication within a larger social group and the existence of conventions making such communication possible.*

David E. Sopher, "The Landscape of Home," 138

*A consensus that a particular component of the landscape stands for a place--let us use the example of the San Francisco cable car--may develop through a complex interaction between the different views of insider and outsider. The proprietary sentiment and pride that make the feature a symbol of a home place may develop late, and may never acquire, for locals, the affective associations of home.*

Sopher, 139

*When I go I notice how picturesquely the ax has been thrust into the chopping block, how the chess game is always there on the stump. Stella seems more real than Trudl, but is she? Am I just jealous because they are both "dabblers" and I would like that luxury?*

Thomas, Intertidal Life, 68

*"They're both quite incredible. Have you seen the shack they're going to live in?"*

*"Not yet. Have you?"*

*"I walked up there the other day. It's right on the little bay. A beautiful location. But falling to bits. Harold intends to do a lot of fixing up and she's already scouting the Sally Ann. They've been getting some nice old weathered boards from a cabin that's fallen down somewhere. They plan to redo the inside."*

Thomas, Intertidal Life, 58

*The idea of belonging to a physical place, of genius loci, can be expressed in terms of natural homonymy and physical homonymy.*

Reima Pietila, Intermediate Zones in Modern Architecture, 19

*In gull terminology the word mantle means the upper surface of the wings and back.*

R.T. Peterson, A Field Guide to Western Birds, 95

*a web of interpersonal relationships produces and preserves the vernacular landscape, not a direct relationship with the environment itself.*

John Brinckerhoff Jackson, "The Vernacular Landscape," 75

*Most of the Gulf Islands once supported thriving farming communities. Today few self-supporting farms exist, but the old farms remain. Hay fields, surrounded by snake fences and the encroaching shrubbery, lie empty save for the odd horse, a few sheep, or the occasional small herd of beef cattle. It is not uncommon for passersby to glimpse a deer grazing unconcernedly among the domestic animals.*

*These old abandoned farms create an atmosphere of peace and a feeling of nostalgia that is beyond price. How does one place a value on a covey of quail exploding from a clump of brush or the sweep of swallows in and out of an abandoned barn? Truly there's a case for farming badly, a time for gathering cider apples from ancient, unpruned trees, and a justification for unpruned trees.*

Arthur Sweet, Islands in Trust, 49

*Both the occupants and their buildings attempt to harmonise with their natural surroundings. The self-builder interprets the relationship between site, climate and materials. The materials are usually taken from the surroundings, and the buildings progress slowly. The garden is not only an extension of the living space but also provides food. Nature and building function as a unit. In summer this relationship becomes very intense, as many families sleep outside on their decks.*

Gerald Blomeyer, "Savage Dreams," 27

*Fishermen do not build their houses where they have to look at the sea. Not, that is, unless their cove happens to be so unprotected that they have to keep an eye on their boat. In that case, the window facing the sea will be small--probably the one over the kitchen sink--and the big windows will face the meadows or the mountains.*

*"I'm going up and down all day long," explained one of Madronna's fishermen. "When I look out of my house I want the landscape to stay in place."*

*You don't plan your picture windows to look on your workplace.*

Jean Howarth, Island Time, 187

In his spatial history of Australia, Paul Carter finds his path through the historical textual landscape barred by a narrative ha-ha, an unexpected break in that landscape.

Attempting to trace the critical moment at which settlement succeeds travel as the site of landscape representation, Carter finds an absence of text:

here, on the threshold, as it were, of a sedentary history emerging, we encounter a difficulty. The very journals which have been so informative in describing the journey peter out. There is no end of settler diaries detailing the journey out. They have been equally informative about their ports of arrival, generations of settler writers recording their first impressions of the new country. Nor, even, do we run into any difficulties *once* the newcomers have settled down . . . But the intermediate period, when the settler is actually settling, this, it seems, is beyond description.

Relatively few contemporary records exist of that transitional moment where the home came into being. Where records of the first days of settling can be found, even the most scrupulous diarist and lettrist . . . seems to neglect his diary during that period of transition from traveller to settler. His silence may only last a matter of weeks or months. Or it may be a matter of years, even decades, before those first days are written up. But the records become *contemporary* accounts again only at some time after the act of settling. (149-50)

In explaining this silence, Carter rejects the view that the sheer pressure of work demanded by settlement prevents settlers from writing, claiming instead that the unsettled landscape is simply undecipherable, lacking the reference points permitting its articulation. The narration of settlement, he says, requires the development of a language of place.

That language originates in the act of drawing lines--physical or imaginary--on the land. The lines establish the terms of differentiation that in turn transform space into place: borders and boundaries enable the settler to distinguish the settled place--organized by the very act of this linear definition--from unsettled, chaotic space. As we know from Saussure and semiotics, language begins in the necessity to differentiate, while Judeo-

Christian creation stories describe the making of the world as the process of separating chaos into its constituent parts, of differentiating between kinds of matter. Developing a language of place requires perceiving difference.

The making of boundaries also begins the process by which nature is invoked as both means and result of definition. The idea of nature cannot function in a vacuum; it requires the notion of not-nature, however defined, in order to operate. In the settler's creation narrative, place does not replace chaos or wilderness but pushes it back, using undifferentiated, disorderly space outside the boundary to define its own existence or materiality. The act of definition--creating order out of chaos--carries a moral impetus that precedes and validates the material process of settlement. Yet the physical manipulation of landscape that the act of settlement entails is also a rhetorical practice.

The crucial signifier in the settler's material definition of place is the fence, which solidifies the boundary separating the settled place from unsettled nature. The fence makes any physical differences between the two polarities irrelevant: the settler's land may be visually indistinguishable from the wilderness on the other side of the fence, but the fact of the fence announces that the distinction has been made. The rhetorical force of the fence eliminates the need for further material alteration of the land to define its status as settled landscape. As the single essential visual code signifying settlement, the fence thus functions as a frame that transforms topography into landscape: the fence positions boundaries that group the features within its borders into a coherent arrangement.

The fence thus provides the critical coordinates that permit discourse in landscape, engendering the spatial language of inside/outside, and hence domestic/wild and a series of

variations and complications of these oppositions that permit the landscape to be spoken.

In Carter's view, "the essential function of the boundary is to facilitate communication":

It enables the settler to establish who and where he is. This is my clearing, that beyond is not. But this difference does not imply an exclusive opposition. You grasp the settler and the place that declares his presence by seeing them in relation to the surrounding bush. The settler himself takes advantage of this distinction to make his own position clear. The boundary is not a barrier to communication. Quite the opposite: it gives the settler something to talk about. (158-59)

Given the similarities between immigrant and settlement histories in Australia and British Columbia, it would seem logical that the fence should have the same rhetorical power in the Gulf Islands as in the examples Carter uses. But just as the words with which Carter describes the Australian settlement dichotomy--"clearing" vs. "bush"--have no currency in the Gulf Islands, neither does the fence play a parallel role in the discourse of settlement. The notion of the clearing as the site of settlement has little meaning in the islands, since the beach, the naturally open space between forest and sea, obviates the psychological need to create an opening in the forest through which the sun and sky can be seen. Nor does "bush," with its connotations of scrubby waste land, adequately describe Mary Hamilton's "dense underbrush" that inhibits movement through forest in the islands. These two landscape terms are irrelevant in the islands, where the idea of the fence plays a quite different role in the Gulf Island landscape.

Even in the islands, of course, fences and cross-fences are necessary to the agricultural landscape: not only must the cultivated landscape be separated from the uncultivated for practical reasons, but different elements of the cultivated landscape must be separated from one another--pasture from cropland, kitchen garden from fowl and hog

runs. Despite these functional necessities, however, the fence is perceived as a blight on the landscape, a bar to access to the natural by which the islands are defined. Two early Pender Island fences suggest that the purpose of settlement fences--to enclose--is deeply compromised in the Gulf Islands. The earliest pioneers on North Pender settled on 2,500 acres and built a fence that bisected the island from east to west. The entry on the Auchterlonie/Bradley house in Thomas Ovanin's Island Heritage Buildings (1984) states that "In roughly 1878 Noah Buckley and David Hope pre-empted the northern half of what is now North Pender Island, Buckley taking the part north of a line running from Otter Bay to near Hope Bay, and Hope the rest, south to Browning Harbour" (127). This description matches the memories of Mrs. Navy Neptune Grimmer in A Gulf Islands Patchwork (1962) (which Island Heritage Buildings lists as a source of information about the house), and clarifies the otherwise confusing distinction Mrs. Grimmer makes between the boundary separating the two properties and the boundary separating settled from unsettled land: "In 1887 [sic], the northern half of Pender Island was pre-empted by Noah Buckley and David Hope, their southern boundary running from Otter Bay to Browning Harbour. In dividing this area between them, Noah Buckley took the northern part and David Hope the rest, the boundary running from Otter Bay to near Hope Bay on Plumper Sound" (39). Neither of these accounts mentions the fence, but for Captain J.T. Hamilton (brother of Mary Hamilton, both the children of pioneers who pre-empted a quarter section of land at Browning Harbour in 1885), the fence is an important artifact, whose longevity as a landscape feature underscores its significance: "[r]emnants of this fence were in evidence on the Andrews property at Otter Bay, and on the Hugh Hamilton property at Browning

Harbour as late as 1916" (125). Captain Hamilton reports that the fence extended "from tidewater on Otter Bay to tidewater on Browning Harbour," and that one half the fenced island was used as a stock range. He also celebrates a later fence, running parallel a few miles south of the first, from the head of Bedwell Harbour to Swanson Channel, "thereby enclosing the whole of Wallace Point" (125). The enclosure was then used for running sheep.

But neither of these fences marked off wild from domestic space, despite having been built to enclose domestic animals. Captain Hamilton, for whom both fences prompt narratives, tells a story about a heifer who escaped the stock-loading operation at Otter Bay:

This animal, which apparently was as wild as a deer, was seen by the islanders at various times afterwards, and was considered fair game by anyone with a gun, but she lived to die in another manner.

On one occasion Hugh Hamilton and his friend John Liddle cornered the runaway on the point at Thieves Bay. Unfortunately the two men separated when approaching to within gunshot; the wily animal ran between them, making it too dangerous for either man to shoot--she escaped unscathed.

Years later, when clearing land at Browning Harbour, Hugh Hamilton came across the skeleton of a cow which had apparently been killed by a falling tree. As the escaped heifer had not been seen for some time, it was concluded that these were her bones, and this the manner of her demise. (125)

Even before her skeleton is found, the heifer acquires a ghost-like or mythic stature by escaping the bounds of mundane existence. Hamilton extends the simile "as wild as a deer" in describing the cow as "game"; she seems also to have exchanged bovine stupidity for wiliness, a kind of wild cunning for self-preservation. Just as the wild animals in Howarth's stores cross the conventional boundaries separating domestic from wild space--in that case, the doors and windows of Howarth's house--Hamilton's cow story describes a

reciprocal failure of domestic containment. Exchanging wild space with its domestic opposite, and vice versa, precipitates a profound change not only in how animals behave but in their very nature.

The sheep fence at Wallace Point is also for Hamilton the site of nostalgic landscape narrative: he relates at length the practice of driving the "semi-wild sheep" into corrals at the end of the point and the social ritual surrounding the drive. In both cases, therefore, these stock fences do not separate domestic animals from wilderness: the wildness that persists in domestic animals despite fences is the source of narrative for Hamilton. The animals inside the fence, or rather on that portion of the island designated "stock range," occupy a landscape essentially unaltered from original forest. The sheep and cattle are unaffected by the conceptual disjunction between wild and domestic space, while for islanders disjunction between naming and practice is pleasing rather than disturbing. In the islands, designations of inside and outside carried less weight in the local rhetoric of initial European settlement than in other colonies.

Peter Murray's account of the fence's location and purpose differs from the reminiscences of settlers' descendants: Buckley and Hope, says Murray, "split the property, with Hope taking the north end of the island and Buckley the south. A stock fence was built across the island from Shingle Bay to the head of Browning Harbour to divide their properties" (*Homesteads*, 61). Murray thus reverses the relative disposition of Buckley and Hope lands and locates the eastern terminus of the fence a few miles south of Otter Bay. Murray's version echoes the map accompanying *A Gulf Islands Patchwork*, which shows the fence starting at Shingle Bay despite the evidence in the text of the Otter Bay location.

Murray fails to grasp, however, that the fence was never intended to mark the boundary between properties: from the perspective of late twentieth-century emphasis on property lines, Murray assumes that the Buckley/Hope stock fence separated one man's stock and property from another's. Mary Hamilton, however, treats the fence ambiguously in her description of "one old fence dividing the island in two where previously Mr. David Hope and Mr. Noah Buckley had run cattle:" her vague direction "where" omits both the relative functions of the land on either side of the fence and the distinction between the two settlers' properties.

The original stock fence is the only boundary marked on the map of the entire outer Gulf Islands region in A Gulf Islands Patchwork that is not coastline, and the only artificial structure through the landscape (no roads appear on this map). On this map, as on all other maps in Gulf Island local histories, including those in Island Heritage Buildings (which locates section lines but not property lines), the locations of homesteads are shown but boundaries between properties are absent. Whatever the actual purpose of the Buckley/Hope fence, it functions rhetorically in the landscape much differently than fences built by settlers in Australia, or elsewhere in British Columbia. A fence that crosses an island, that begins and ends in the muck and weed of tidewater, that never bends or detours to outline a three-dimensional space, cannot be said to enclose--it merely traverses, at most separates. But what is separated is not clear. This fence does not designate a boundary between inside and outside, wild and domestic, natural and cultivated: the otherness it signifies defies precise definition. The stock fence completes the boundary that the sea begins; the sea itself more forcefully signifies enclosure. The beach deters disputes in

ownership of land, constituting a boundary that cannot be perceived as misplaced, as encroaching on another's land.<sup>76</sup>

The beach's function as principal marker of the bounds of European settlement introduces issue of scale of settlement into the spatial history of the Gulf Islands. During the late nineteenth-century period of colonial expansion in British Columbia, a homestead commonly consisted of several hundred acres, often more: in the islands, this scale of settlement would encompass all available land, arable or not, very quickly. By the standards of settlement practice in 1878, North Pender yielded only two homesteads; it was about the right size for two men to claim for pasture.<sup>77</sup> Given the unyielding barrier of the beach, further settlement required division of and subtraction from these two original homesteads, a process repeated on each of the Gulf Islands, rather than extension of

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<sup>76</sup> Not that the beach eliminates disputes over possession, however. In British Columbia, the shoreline below six feet above the high tide mark belongs to the Crown, but in the islands the issue of access to the beach is hotly contested. Instances of beach access signs being removed or destroyed by landowners whose waterfront properties border the access paths are legion. Beach walkers dislike waterfront property owners' ability to apply for the right to erect wharves and floats that impede progress along the beach. In addition, government agencies often grant foreshore leases for commercial harvesting of shellfish, a practice that infuriates islanders who feel such leases infringe on the public's right to harvest these species.

<sup>77</sup> In Land, Man, and the Law (1974), Robert Cail produces a table, based on the "Report of the Chief Commissioner of Lands . . . 1873," showing that the Buckley and Hope properties consisted, in 1873, of two parcels, registered in both names, of 4,100 and 1,400 acres. Also on Pender Island (at this point the canal had not yet been dug to separate North from South Pender), John Tod, Jr. had pre-empted two parcels, of 2,300 and 2,000 acres on what became South Pender. By contrast, Samuel Trueworthy had 940 acres on Saturna and partners Maxwell and Lumme 852 acres on Salt Spring. All of these parcels are described as "pastoral leases" in the Chief Commissioner's report. Note the discrepancy in dates: the local histories cite 1878 as the year Buckley and Hope began running sheep and cattle on Pender, while the Chief Commissioner's report suggests that the practice had begun five years earlier. Even by 1885, individuals were still able to claim title to huge acreages, in one case over 12,000 acres (Cail 37).

settlement farther afield. Because the beach circumscribes the available land base so drastically in the islands, local space must have meant something different to English colonists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than similarly colonized space on the mainland: the fundamental dream impelling colonial enterprise is always the vision of the land, a term that implies expansiveness in the colonial context. Being limited in scale by the encircling beach, expansiveness is one attribute the Gulf Island topography cannot offer.<sup>78</sup> This limited scale explains the pull of north that drew many island colonists north to the gold fields and the game territory of northern British Columbia, the territories, and Alaska.<sup>79</sup>

If the fence does not enclose, it cannot perform the conceptual task of clearing a

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<sup>78</sup> Just as the notion of "the land" is compromised in the islands, it is difficult to know whether English colonists in British Columbia were much influenced by the notion of "frontier" formally used to describe westward American expansion up to 1893, the idea of frontier by that time having become so entrenched in American topographical mythology that its ideological currency has scarcely diminished over the intervening century. Certainly much of the stormy history of land-use in the province stems from the government's early inability to perceive limits to the amount of agricultural land the province could offer (Cail 19). The topographical boundary presented by the beach must have interfered with the idea of "frontier" in the islands, however. Given that the frontier was conceived of as a moving line bisecting the continent roughly from north to south, the image cannot be applied to the islands, where the broad sweep of land provided by the apparently endless western continent is so obviously absent. If a single stock fence traversed an individual island from sea to sea, the line of the frontier could not find a foothold because its geometry could not measure a multiple coastline. In the islands, the spatial model of frontier settlement, represented by a linear succession with geographical as well as historical co-ordinates, offered settlers no context in which to place their own experience. The unctiguous region fractured the line of frontier settlement.

<sup>79</sup> In 1994, Peter Murray published a collective biography (Home from the Hill: Three Gentlemen Adventurers) of three Gulf Islands colonial settlers--Warburton Pike, Sir Clive Phillips-Wolley, and Martin Grainger (the latter did not live permanently in the islands, but he married and worked there). Despite his own interest in the Gulf Islands, Murray focusses in this book not on the Gulf Islands aspects of their lives but on their north country experiences.

space or making a place within which the settler can write. Rather than a precondition for writing, however, the fence itself is text. The silence Carter discerns at the moment of settlement in Australian colonial history occurs in the Gulf Islands also, but here at least the silence is not actually inarticulateness but simply a shift in medium. Whereas travellers use letters and diaries to write themselves into the land, and vice versa, the new settler exchanges the printed word for parallel but non-verbal statements of building in wood and wire and glass and stone. To continue to write while clearing land and building a homestead would thus be redundant. The new settler has no need to record in writing his presence in the landscape, his struggles with it, his failures and successes, his memories of prior landscapes or hopes for the future of that which he builds: the settler's narrative is inscribed in the settled landscape, especially in the landscape where settlement is not complete but still underway. The line of unfinished fence, the geometry of a burnt field dotted with stumps, the frame and roof of a unsided barn all narrate the process or sequence of settlement on the landscape itself. The marks that the land leaves on the settler are as apparent as the settler's marks on the landscape. Half-finished work bares the bones of its own narrative; ruins do the same.

Carter himself notes the parallel goals and methods of writing and settling: "it may be no coincidence," he muses, "that the phrase 'to set down' describes the essential characters of both settlement and writing" (157). But Carter veers away from the logical consequence, inherent in the homonymic variants on "to set down"--to settle in a place and to set down words on a page--that settlement, rather than constituting the mere subject of writing, is an activity equivalent to writing. Carter allows the lacuna of contemporary

accounts of settlement to stand: I choose rather to shift my gaze from writing the record of settlement to the practice of settling. Like Carter, I lack written records of the act of settlement; the evidence of that practice lies in the completed settled landscape and the ruins that record the failure to complete the imagined settled landscape and/or its reversion to a landscape reclaimed by wildlife, floral and faunal and avian. But the settled landscape itself perhaps offers a more authentic narrative of settlement than written records. The physical evidence, however fragmentary, is not subject to the revisionary influence of memory; its co-ordinates persist despite shifting dreams of the settled landscape.

The descriptions of the Gulf Island landscape I discuss in Chapter Four mainly reflect the views of visitors to the region, rather than residents, the latter having the opportunity to absorb the landscape in all its variations--climatic, seasonal, topographical, tidal. While visitors to the islands, from as early as the 1920s to the present, enjoy "recognizing" in the settled landscape analogues to the pastoral landscapes of old world traditions, residents must impose those dreams on the indigenous landscape. Carter calls settlement "a sedentary history" (149), emphasizing the profound rhetorical shift that accompanies the transition from traveller to settler, and develops an elegant model for the role settlement boundaries play in compensating the settler for the loss both of mobility and of the narrative inherent in travel:

one can say that the chief symbolic function of boundaries is . . . to incorporate the sensation of travelling into a static or near-static existence. Fences translate physical travel into literary travel, journeys into journals. Drama clusters about fences. Narratives begin and end there. They are places of exchange where the sensation of journeying is vicariously relieved. (155)

Once the traveller to the islands has achieved settlement and resumed writing, the role

Carter ascribes to fences may indeed operate. But in the meantime, during the actual practice of settlement, the former traveller does not need the symbolism of the fence to recapture "the sensation of travelling," which is the result of experiencing a constantly-changing landscape: the settler in the act of settlement changes the static landscape, making travel unnecessary, even redundant, to the generation of narrative.

Inevitably, this narrative calls upon a notion of nature that makes the frontier a meaningful concept in the islands after all: the degree to which the landscape demonstrates the settler's ability to manipulate it also underscores the opposition between the altered landscape, brought into the sphere of civilized life, and unaltered landscape that remains outside that sphere. To settlers on the Gulf Islands before the second world war (evidence of travellers' responses notwithstanding), the concept of the region as "natural" was at best meaningless, at worst insulting. The point of settlement, until the middle of the twentieth century, was to erect the houses and fences and barns and public buildings that mark successful control over nature. The structures themselves, however, show little conscious effort to illustrate the point: their mere presence narrates original settlement in the region, the transition, that is, from uninhabited to inhabited space. With a few exceptions, such as the characteristically west coast split rail fence and the west coast barn design of high central nave flanked by low wings ("Hand Built Hornby," 464), Gulf Island heritage structures reflect little regional style. Prior to the second world war, settlement in the islands had much more in common with settlement all over western Canada than it has had since: the physical structures that remain or have been photographed bear no greater resemblance to one another than to contemporary buildings of similar function across the

western provinces. Almost all are of wood frame construction, of one or two stories, sided with painted wood. Some use the two-story salt-box design common on the eastern seaboard, while others incorporate gables and wide verandahs on one, two, or three sides of the house. Only a very few early buildings are log or stackwall construction, or use unpainted shingle siding, techniques that use local materials in the simplest and least sophisticated ways, reflecting a need for shelter rather than the leisure or wealth to consider style or simply to mill timber into lumber. Given the rarity of these features in early buildings that still stand, they perhaps connote rusticity too directly, both in exposing the mechanisms of building and in employing rough, unfinished surfaces, to satisfy the tastes of settlers who could afford to build in a more urban or cosmopolitan style. The lack of regional references is deliberate, defying regional identification and "proximity to nature" as much as reproducing remembered old world landscapes (whether British, European, or--paradoxically--American). In their ability to transcend the merely functional without transgressing the boundaries of sense, these buildings articulate values of prosperity, progress, order, and community. At this stage of settlement in Canada, which depended heavily on immigration from Europe, communities and regions competed with one another using this vocabulary: the vernacular boosterism still in use in the islands in the late 1950s invokes such values to attract more settlement to the islands. If these buildings carried any pastoral associations for their builders and occupants, it was a pastoral of economics, prosperity and stability, of daily life rather than an imagined irrecoverable golden age. Paradoxically, as interest in island property has increased since the early 1960s, early settlers and their descendants have generally welcomed development, while prospective

settlers want the islands to remain rural, even to revert to what is imagined to be a previously more rural state.

The impulse to commemorate original settlement in the Gulf Islands, which generates the writing of local history after the second world war, includes recording the history of early island buildings. The celebration of "heritage" buildings is a common feature of the local history genre, not confined to the Gulf Islands, but by the time the Islands Trust published Island Heritage Buildings in 1984, the original settlement buildings that remained standing had acquired semantic currency beyond notions of "origins" or "ancestry" in which local history inevitably bases itself. The mandate of the Trust is "to preserve and protect the unique amenities and environment" in the Trust Area (Heritage Buildings, 7), and "unique amenities and environment" includes both "natural" features of island topography and elements of the built or otherwise modified landscape. The terms of that mandate thus merge nature and culture in a category of landscape value loosely called "rural," a term that has dominated debate over disposition of Gulf Island land since the early 1970s and one that locally connotes various notions of pastoral.

Given that European settlement in the islands began so recently, the Trust defines "heritage" as a structure more than fifty years old. In publishing Island Heritage Buildings, the Trust codifies "heritage" but does not directly explain its significance: description of these buildings' attributes is glaringly absent from the book. By implication, the Trust sites settlement origins, even indigenoussness, in these buildings, but the process by which this investment occurs is not clear: to the degree, however, that the buildings can be linked to the local histories that describe their builders' and owners' settlement narratives, the

buildings themselves participate in the nostalgic, commemorative rhetoric in which the local histories are written. Once these buildings acquire the status of "heritage," they also acquire the pastoral associations that invest them with aesthetic value. At this point, this previously place-less architecture acquires profoundly local significance. At the same moment, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, that the Gulf Islands region became perceived as a distinct and valued landscape, its original buildings, which allude to the act of settlement rather than to the local, became indicators of the local. These buildings now function as icons in the vocabulary of rural nostalgia that intensifies the islands' construction as pastoral landscape.<sup>80</sup>

The landscape memories that these buildings seem to articulate acquire regional distinctness through changes in landscape values outside the Gulf Islands region. The persistence of the immigrant mentality dictates not only this shift in interpretation of the existing, originally settled landscape, but has also, since the 1960s, prompted the single most obvious element of the vernacular Gulf Island landscape: the vacation home, whether a cabin in the woods or at the beach, or a mobile home. These structures reflect the opinion, commonly held outside the region, that the islands' primary function is, or should be, recreation. Even during the years of original settlement, the islands were often perceived as especially suited to the pursuit of leisure: Gossip Island, for example, a tiny

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<sup>80</sup> The degree to which these buildings have become part of the iconography of the Gulf Islands is demonstrated by tour guides of the Trust region: The Gulf Islands Explorer (1990), for example, includes photographs of many of these buildings among the plates of such "natural" attractions of the islands as beaches, cliffs, sandstone formations, eagles, seals, and arbutus. Through their textual proximity to these local icons of region, the heritage buildings acquire some of this quality of "nature" rather than being distinguished from the undisturbed topographies of the islands.

island of only a few acres just off the southeastern tip of Galiano, was originally "settled" as a leisure resort, rather than as a homestead. Among islanders, the notion of leisure was confined, of course, to those settlers, mainly English, whose financial circumstances upon arriving in the islands meant much more free time than those who depended on their own labour for survival. Reports such as Winnifred Grey's diary suggest that in the islands, English expatriates of middle- and upper-middle class backgrounds combined the leisure practices of country estate life--tennis, hunting, tea on the lawn--with those of the English seaside--bathing, boating (even regattas), and beach parties. Some of the architecture of heritage buildings gestures toward these activities, especially the wide verandahs and sprawling, cultivated grounds of many waterfront homes. Even to contemporary eyes, however, such properties were exceptional, and the vernacular landscape of leisure generally assumed a much lower profile.

The architecture of the holiday home is more easily readable than other types of vernacular building in the Gulf Islands, for such buildings, serving a highly specified function for a small portion of the year, participate in fewer of the complex discourses of class, wealth, ethnic background, and other ideologies than do permanent dwellings. Such homes are generally much smaller than the owner's permanent home, freedom from domestic space being one of the objectives of vacationing. Structures are geometrically simple, most often a wood frame, wood-sided rectangular box, whose interior is divided only between living and sleeping spaces. Complex interiors are not required since the summer months, most common for vacations, are in the islands pleasant enough (warm but not intensely hot, dry, relatively insect-free) that most activities, including those normally

confined to the home--even sleeping--can be moved outside. Some homes employ the vocabulary of the vacation retreat into nature borrowed from European models: the chalet of Austrian, German, and Swiss rural mountain settlement used by vacationing urban dwellers for holiday homes can be found in all over the islands. In some instances, the echoes include the multiple balconies and gingerbread trim of the originals, but more common is the A-frame simplification of the chalet style. The A-frame design was especially commonly built during the decades of rapid expansion in holiday properties in the islands (1960s and 1970s), because its construction eliminates the expensive and time-consuming separate exterior walls and roof of conventional designs. The footprint of the A-frame is no larger than other holiday home designs, but its height adds both light (because of the cathedral ceiling) and additional space (because a loft or partial loft can be added above the main floor).

In a second category of holiday homes, the mobile home or recreational vehicle, the clearing in the woods functions as parking space for the vacation home. Both mobile homes and recreational vehicles constitute temporary structures, much more so than wooden cabins, since they have been designed, not as integral parts of the local topography, but as inherently separate and self-contained. Given that they are used most during the summer, when shade is desirable, most holiday homes are sited among trees, the forest clearing prepared for them bringing to mind the minimal clearing of initial settlement. This limited site preparation betrays a nostalgia, paradoxically, for aspects of settlement that make heritage buildings and their surroundings congruent with the vacation landscape: what is echoed in the holiday home site is not the practice of settlement but the

moment of transition from traveller to settler, when only the essential first steps have been taken to make domestic life possible: all further steps are permanently arrested, precluding the responsibilities and complexities that make the successful practice of settlement resemble too closely the aspects of urban and suburban life that the vacationer comes to the islands to escape.

At this moment of transition, the "settler" or vacationer most intensely engages with the natural environment, the ostensibly uncultivated topography surrounding the holiday home. In most cases, the "natural" topography extends to the walls of the holiday home itself: landscaping, gardens, outbuildings (other than a pump house), exterior lights and other accessories to urban and suburban homes are generally absent from the "clearing." The forest floor may be replaced with grass, but this more often reads as meadow than as lawn as it would in a suburban context. Even the driveway usually remains unpaved or ungravelled, resembling logging roads and country lanes, both of which participate in local codes of "rural." Of course, holiday homes and their sites are deliberately altered, and codes of occupation can be discerned in the alterations: the most common way in which vacationers signify their connection to the natural environment is the ornamentation of their holiday homes and homesites with objects gleaned from "natural" island topography. By far the most common source of such objects is the beach (rather than forest or meadow), which yields collections of shells that commonly ornament windowsills, mantels, shelves, and other horizontal surfaces in holiday homes. The pebble beaches of the islands also yield collections, since such beaches are composed of a complex mix of mineral varieties. This interior ornamentation extends outside the holiday home also, especially in collections

of driftwood and in objects found while beachcombing, where such objects unambiguously signify ocean and beach environments (examples being fishing floats and nets, crab pots, and identification boards from fishing vessels). These objects are used to mark and decorate driveway entrances, deck and porch surfaces, and entrances to houses: their presence in these zones of passage may signify an attempt to mark an entrance into nature, to identify limnal and littoral thresholds between domestic and natural space. Inside the holiday home, the artifacts from the beach bring the beach into the home, making domestic space less domestic and more natural. The conventional boundaries between inside and outside, between objects and materials appropriate to the home and those appropriate to the wild, become blurred once again.<sup>81</sup>

Ornamentation with natural artifacts from the tidal zone makes holiday homes extensions of the beach: because this practice is repeated so often in the islands, all holiday homes, whatever architectural style they employ, collectively reflect a vernacular landscape of leisure and recreation in nature. Cabins and A-frames and recreational vehicles parked in wooded clearings do not interfere with, even contribute to, the reading of Gulf Island topography as essentially natural. Like the heritage homes that signify an earlier, agriculturally-based local culture, holiday homes that signify their "holiday-ness" reinforce the pastoral landscape in that they connote "not-city," and by extension, "natural." Decoration with shoreline objects is not confined to holiday homes in the vicinity of the

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<sup>81</sup> The converse may also be true: once taken from the beach and placed in a domestic setting, natural objects cease to be natural and become, by virtue of the shift in context, ornamental, participating in the order of interior, civilized space. By extension, the beach itself can become merely an adjunct to the holiday home, an amenity rather than a zone with its own integrity and logic.

beach: the actual location of the homesite, even miles from the water, does not affect the practice. In referring so directly to the beach, these objects suggest that what is being encoded as "natural" (or beyond or by way of the message "nature") is the condition of "island," the fundamental topography defined by the beach. Indigenous objects are enlisted to represent region.

In the act of removing shoreline objects from their natural context, the littoral landscape, and moving them to the site and interior of the home, visitors to the islands (both owners of recreational property and residents of the islands who have moved from somewhere else recently enough that the landscape still carries holiday associations) treat material elements of that landscape as souvenirs. All of these objects connote having been "brought back" from the beach, removed from their original context in order to recall that context elsewhere (even if "elsewhere" is a beach cabin just above the high tide line). The attempt to merge the littoral with inland zones, or to bestow upon the not-beach the qualities of the beach, ought to have the opposite effect, to make this ornamentation seem overt, alien, unnatural: the degree to which this practice has become conventional in the islands, however, makes it nearly invisible, even appear to be naturally-occurring. The "souvenir" element of such decoration lapses: the foreign-ness of the retrieved object relaxes into a semiotic code more pastoral than exotic. Even visitors want to make themselves indigenous here.

This shift in the "souvenir" aesthetic can be attributed at least partly to the character of the littoral landscape itself. The process of decorating the holiday home with objects found on the beach takes place over time, through repeated visits to the beach, a process

resembling the way in which those objects appear on the beach itself. Very few material objects found on the beach originate there: most have been washed ashore from elsewhere. The pebble beaches that make collecting pebbles a common Gulf Island pursuit are the result of glacial movement, which brought to the region fragments of geological topography from other places. The empty shells and carapaces of crabs found at the high tide line have been moved up the beach from the intertidal zone by wave action. Bull kelp and other seaweeds found on the shore have been torn from their roots or, in the case of kelp, from the seabed from which their roots too have been wrenched. The jetsam of rope, identification boards, floats, nets associated with the fishing industry, as well as the less picturesque refuse from pleasure boaters, is pushed to the beach from the surface of the sea by wind and tide. But by far the most distinctive element of Gulf Island tideline topography is driftwood: the huge amount of driftwood on the shores of the Strait of Georgia speaks both to the intensity with which the coastal region is logged and to the fact that the sea continues to be the means by which the felled, delimbed tree is moved to the mills. Of course, log booms are not the only source of driftwood: when in flood, the Fraser River carries whole trees and broken fragments of trees across the Strait and into Gulf Island waters. To a lesser extent, rivers on Vancouver Island carry timber into the sea, as does erosion on the islands themselves. Beaches also collect the waste of the logging industry, especially stumps. Driftwood thus signifies the local in overlapping ways: it emanates from the coastal region's primary industry, articulates the relation between its principal river and the strait into which that river empties, describes the annual precipitation cycle and its sometimes devastating effects, and illustrates that this regional

industry still depends on marine transport. Like the beach, driftwood merges the coastal topographies of forest and sea: at high tide, driftwood becomes the beach topography, to the point that walking the beach means walking the logs, walking the forest.

To the original nineteenth- and early twentieth-century island settlers, driftwood signified little beyond a source of fuel, ready to be burned as soon as gathered, being seasoned as it lies on the beach. But by the 1970s, driftwood had acquired aesthetic properties that give it value as material object. Because it is still essentially timber and arrives on the beach in the form of unmilled logs, driftwood can transcend the merely ornamental and be incorporated into the structure of island buildings. In most parts of the island region, building codes imposed by the various regional districts that include individual islands preclude the use of driftwood for anything other than fences, garden beds and outdoor furniture, gateposts and driveway markers, anything, in short, for which a building permit is required. But a few islands, notably Denman and Hornby, are not subject to building codes, the Comox Regional District having to date left the islands largely to their own devices. On these islands, especially Hornby, driftwood has been used as a building material for a quarter century in ways that make the act of settlement deliberately express the local.

In 1974, three recent arrivals on Hornby, who were each building houses on the island, formed an architectural partnership called Blue Sky Design, placing on a business footing the design principles with which many owner-builders on Hornby in the preceding

several years had made Hornby synonymous with a highly local articulated style.<sup>82</sup> Blue Sky, and the collective aesthetic in the Hornby community from which it evolved, both emerged simultaneously with and drew upon the woodbutcher movement in northern California, where in the 1960s intellectual refugees from business and academia turned their backs on establishment California (however oxymoronic such a term might sound to eastern North Americans) and retreated to the mountain country inland from the coastal urban centres.<sup>83</sup> The wooded landscape became the site of "hand-built" houses, designed and built by their owners, often on land they did not own, using immediately available materials, either salvage or indigenous wood, stone, and whatever else presented itself. The woodbutcher style combines skill in carpentering and other building techniques with the deliberate highlighting of the original materials, especially surface textures and anomalies of shape: it is as perfect an example of "craft" as one is likely to find. The desire to change the existing landscape as little as possible meant a minimum of site-clearing (in some cases, houses were built around and even in individual trees in the

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<sup>82</sup> Commentary in the 1978 issue of Architectural Digest, entitled "Hand-Built Hornby," devoted to this local style uses the terms "hand-built Hornby" and "Blue Sky Design" fairly interchangeably. I have followed this practice in not distinguishing between the two.

<sup>83</sup> The sequence of influence between one geographical area of "alternative" architecture and another is almost impossible to fix, especially since the values of that culture were embraced across the continent and beyond during the decade or so (the late 1960s and 1970s) identified with the counterculture. The resemblances between Hornby and northern California in matters of social culture and architectural style may not indicate a pattern of influence; such an influence is easily assumed, however, because the resemblances combine with similarities of landscape and climate to make Hornby reminiscent of California. Both Henry Elder and Tony Ward discuss Californian versions of the woodbutcher movement to place the hand-built houses on Hornby in a wider architectural and cultural context. For examples of the California woodbutcher style see Boericke and Shapiro (1973).

existing forest, while others perched above streams) and houses designed to blend with the unmodified, "natural" topography.

The resulting buildings defied establishment values by functioning both outside the conventional system of land ownership and building codes and outside mainstream aesthetics in house design. Although woodbutchering was a political movement as much as an aesthetic, the California houses attracted so much attention that the contemplative, rural life the style expressed disappeared. The islands on the British Columbia coast offered disenchanted woodbutchers the opportunity to start again (Elder 447; Ward 486). It also attracted Boh Helliwell and Michael McNamara, who had been working in the West Coast style under Arthur Erickson and George Massey in Vancouver. Together with Ed Colin, Helliwell and McNamara founded Blue Sky Design. As much as the "heritage" buildings identified by the Islands Trust, the hand-built houses on Hornby, including the Blue Sky buildings, reflect an imported style; unlike their predecessors a century before, however, the Blue Sky designers and builders, because of their practice of referring as directly as possible to the specifically local environment, created an intensely local style.

The "local" in the hand-built Hornby aesthetic refers much more to unmediated nature than it does to the act of settlement: in some ways, these buildings attempt to refute the notion of settlement altogether. The style makes the "quotation" of natural surroundings overt and legible in a collection of design principles--roof profiles, materials, heating and plumbing systems, structural support, site preparation and landscaping, finishing details--that cover most elements of architectural discourse. These principles all rest, literally and rhetorically, on driftwood, the almost invariable material used to support

the building's structure. In an issue of Architectural Digest devoted to the Hornby hand-built houses, owner-builders describe in letters their intense relationship with the beach as storehouse of driftwood:

After a few beach walks, your mind reels with wood dreams. You carry 'how-to?' problems in the back of your head; which is answered by 'we can do it this way' as you discover a timber, and then a few yards further on is another and 'we can do that, or maybe . . ."

Some choose timbers for a pure post and beam structure, and others build with fanciful shapes forming baroque spaces of sinewy curves and grotesque gnarls. Everyone is infected with their found timber treasures. The wood itself dictates the nature of the house. (453)

The phrase "beach log post and beam" appears so often in owners' descriptions of Hornby homes as to constitute a separate sub-genre of post and beam construction. Because it requires intensive labour and large timber, post and beam gave way in the nineteenth century in North America to frame construction, which uses narrow gauge lumber and is thus inexpensive, both in materials and labour, quick to erect, and suited to endless replication, as in a subdivision. For the back-to-the-land movement in the 1970s, of which the hand-built Hornby development was a part, post and beam offered both a nostalgic alternative to mass-building practices and a way of supporting a building that did not require commercial, that is, standardized, dimensions of lumber.

Some Hornby houses arrange beach logs in a fairly conventional manner for post and beam, massing rectangular geometries: others, however, abandon Euclidean geometry for more "organic" shapes. The Biggins house (Fig. 4) eliminates external supporting beams altogether, substituting one central vertical post to which horizontal beams have been bolted, stacked in a spiral radiating from the central post:

Essentially the house is one vertical beach log set assymmetrically to

generate the spiral, and 16 logs radiating from this pole to form the roof structure--sensational!

A crotch in the centre log acts as the bearing point for all the rafter logs to stack in. (456)

Biggins describes the arrangement of the horizontal spokes as "Logrhythmic" [sic], a mathematics that describes the structure of moonsnails and other shelled creatures (this principle might describe the "local," given that Oliva Fletcher describes the shape of Hornby itself, as seen from above, as a moonsnail). The roofline of the Burrows house, also made of "peeled poles & beach logs" (468), is described variously as "hyperbolic" and "amorphous": one end of the house consists of a triangle whose apex and structural post, at the point where two supporting beams cross, is a dead standing tree outside the house. As is most obvious in the leaf retreat, built by Lloyd House, driftwood contributes to the "organic" forms these posts and beams describe. As House remembers it,

The post was first. Six months before I started this house I wanted to use that post. I knew where all the good beach wood was. The beach is like a mill-yard and a supermarket to me--a temptress--as I walk along it says 'Take me'--and a bit further on, 'hey Lloyd, change your mind and use me' . . . and so on down the beach, through the wood.

This house is essentially a falling leaf, just settling in the forest. The ridge log had to be that shape, that curve. The log is the leaf's stem.

The ridge log turned up on the beach the morning it was needed . . . but I didn't accept that it was the one, and spent three days--three days of beach walking before I finally settled on that log. (478)

The beam and roof of this building all rest on the one post (Fig. 5), upon which the beam is balanced. Highly twisted, and so eroded internally as to be virtually hollow, the center post has a visual presence beyond sheer mass. The ridge beam has similar aesthetic integrity, which neither loses even as they are subsumed into the overarching statement of "leaf." The post assumes the same gentle curve and delicacy that the beam lends to the



**Figure 4: Biggins House: Beach Log Spiral**

leaf shape (see Fig. 14).

As with the leaf retreat, many Hornby houses gesture explicitly toward settling into the forest, rather than into a clearing in the forest, even when houses are built in open meadows rather than among trees. Driftwood is the link: while stacked and randomly crossed beams quote the arrangement of driftwood on the beach, the restoration of driftwood to the vertical--in the form of posts--quotes the tree's origins in the forest. Biggins refers to his home, with its exaggerated internal height, as a "tree house," while Burrows mixes driftwood beams with a post that is still rooted in its original place. The leaf retreat returns driftwood to the forest in a much more complicated way: the visually dissonant fragile leaf whose central "vein" consists of a beach log makes the building's recovery of forest origins a metaphorical, as well as literal, process.

The more irregular the driftwood, the more it reads as paradoxically both natural and highly constructed. Whereas the leaf retreat can be considered a direct reference to nature, other Blue Sky buildings refer to fantasy fiction, turning the natural deformities of driftwood into allusions to an entirely unrealistic mode of literary expression. In a structure diametrically opposed to the apparently aerial properties of the leaf retreat, the massive inverted trunk that forms the entrance to the community hall (Fig. 6) turns the pastoral properties of island driftwood literally upside down. This is one instance where



**Fig. 5. Leaf Retreat: Beach Log Post**

the Wacousta syndrome, as defined by Gaile McGregor, penetrates the otherwise seamlessly pastoral signifiers of the Gulf Islands region. This is not, however, a Canadian gothic, or a gothic that refers to Canadian nature: whereas Blue Sky generally looks south to California for its aesthetic codes, in this instance the driftwood entrance looks back to the English literary tradition in the work of J.R.R. Tolkien. The tree trunk framing the door set into it dwarfs both the door and the people who walk through it betrays Tolkien's



**Fig. 6. Community Hall: Main Entrance**

<sup>84</sup> The first two paragraphs of Tolkien's novel The Hobbit (1966) describe the home of Bilbo Baggins:

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

It had a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green, with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle. The door opened on to a tube-shaped hall like a tunnel: a very comfortable tunnel without smoke, with panelled walls, and floors tiled and carpeted, and lots and lots of pegs for hats and coats--the hobbit was fond of visitors. (10)

influence on the early 1970s.<sup>84</sup> The scale of this entrance dwarfs both the door recessed into it and the people who walk through that door.

Combined with the sod roof that abuts it above head height, the grotesquely gnarled root system in the trunk suggests a passage to an underground space (reminiscent of Tolkien's hobbit-holes) and into a gothic aesthetic (again echoing the phantasmagorical in Tolkien's description of a hobbit's home).

Conversely, the passage between

Wayne Ngan's house and studio is

described as "a fantastic totemic log structure" (Fig. 7), the word "totemic" bringing into the semiotic of driftwood a reference to poles as free-standing symbolic narratives. Against the uses of driftwood in semiotics of realistic nature or of the phantasmagorical nature parables of an Oxbridge don, this structure is a muted quotation of the coastal First Nations practice of bringing poles from the forest to the beach to face out to sea, and carving into them statements of origins, genealogy, and territory. The casualness of the reference may be a deliberate acknowledgement that totem poles are not a cultural practice of the Salish, the local indigenous peoples, but belong to the Haida and Kwakiutl nations farther north up the coast. In the Hornby context, these driftwood posts, whose surface irregularities are the result of knots and other flaws in the original wood combined with weathering and age rather than human intervention, appear to be readable rather than to make a discernible statement. Their drama derives from their vertical placement in the passageway between workshop and house: like the northern coastal poles to which they refer, the driftwood "totems" mark the thresholds separating different kinds of space.

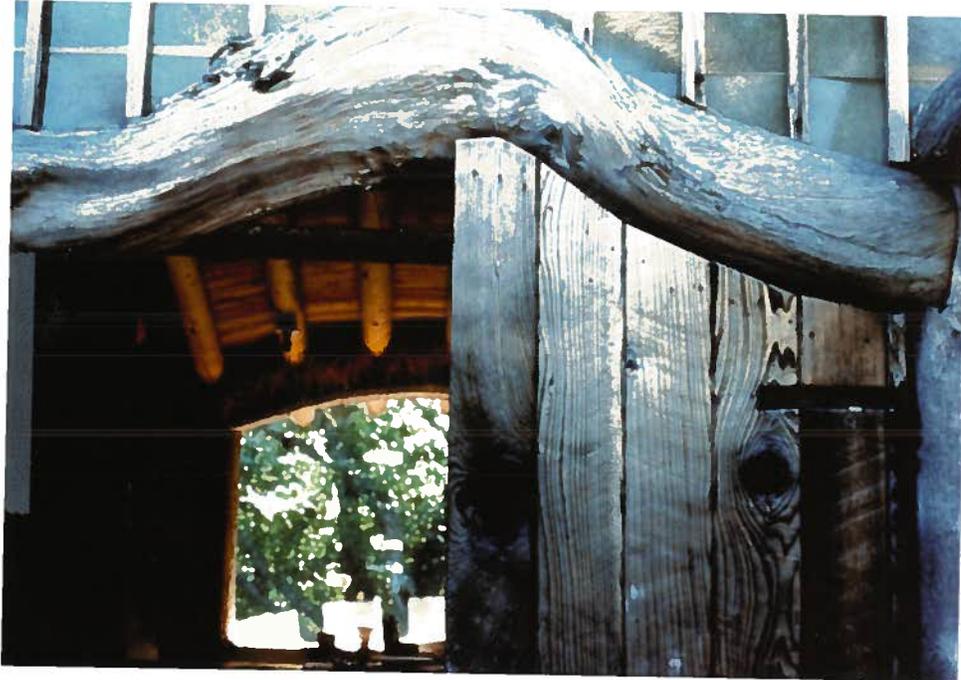
As in the main beam of the leaf retreat, the irregular driftwood arch that overhangs the door to the Ngan studio (Fig. 8) shapes the structure above and below it. The planks of the door have been shaped to fit into the angle of the beam, as have the glass panes of the transparent wall that rises above it. When the doors of the studio are open, the driftwood beam, as seen from the inside of the building, appears to float in the air: as in the leaf house, its aerial statement belies its mass. In both cases, the unexpected context in which the driftwood is used (as elevated supports for an apparently weightless structure) and its irregularity combine to foreground the driftwood beam's function as ornament as



**Fig. 7. Ngan House and Studio: Totems**

much as support. In cases where driftwood departs dramatically from the straight, fairly smooth pole, its irregularities make it generally read (not only in these buildings but in its use as mere ornamentation in the islands generally) as "sculpture," inherently complex and as deserving of attention as sculptural art shaped by human hands. In an example that detaches the driftwood "sculpture" from any structural or integral part in the building, a piece of driftwood hangs from the transparent external beams in front of the Co-op (Fig.

10). This piece consists of a tangle of roots radiating in an almost complete circle from its center: the manner in which it has been hung (centrally above the entrance) and the circle the ends of its broken roots describe transform the piece from driftwood to mandala, a religious symbol for the completeness of the universe in the form of a circle divided into sections by lines radiating from its centre. In the 1970s, when the hand-built style transformed so much of the landscape on Hornby, the mandala, like the meditation rooms often found in wood-butchered houses both in California and on Hornby, was a favourite



**Fig. 8. Ngan Studio: Driftwood Beam Entrance**

icon of alternative religious sensibilities, whose aesthetics were considered to offer detachment and serenity, constituting yet another variation on the pastoral retreat. In Intertidal Life (1975), Alice finds herself excluded from the mystical importance of the mandala that Alice's husband and Alice's friends are making:

Peter and Stella and Trudl had decided to paint a mandala. The original idea had been to give Peter only one twenty-eighth of the canvas because he only came to the island once a month. Later, as it became more serious, they each decided to take a third. (191)

The original intention of dividing the mandala according to time spent on the island implies that this mandala is intimately connected to local place. This particular mandala also requires a specific location where it can be, in a sense, performed. The secrecy of the precise place where the mandala is to be sited suggests that the mandala constitutes the vehicle for a deeply personal connection to the local, in a manner reminiscent of the First



**Fig. 9. Co-op: Main Entrance**

Nations spirit quest. The mandala thus appears to be a way to establish indigenoussness.

Unlike isolated pieces of driftwood highlighted against the regularity of their context, the handrail on the external steps of the community hall echoes the jumbled mass of mixed textures and angles in which driftwood lies on the beach. At the high-tide line, wave action ensures that driftwood lies generally parallel to the shoreline: on the handrail, too, driftwood is arranged to follow the curve of the steps (Fig. 11), but variations of shape and size from one piece to another randomly embellish that curve. The handrail thus quotes not only the material objects taken from the beach but their arrangement in the

beach landscape: here, the local reference includes topography. The stackwall construction of the rectangular parts of the hall (Figs. 6 and 11) similarly quotes arrangement of a local



**Fig. 10 Community Hall: Stackwall, Plaster, Driftwood**

landscape feature, even though that feature--the woodpile--is itself artificial, in the sense of being constructed by humans. Like post and beam construction, stackwall--which also obviates the need for framing--is a favourite technique of back-to-the-land owner-builders. It is much easier and cheaper to construct a building using stackwall than post and beam, since the structure proceeds from the foundation up to the roofline and uses short, easily-handled logs cemented into place with elementary plasterwork. In the temperate climate of the west coast, however, stackwall construction is rare, since the insulating qualities of walls between one and two feet thick are unnecessary, even undesirable here. The technique used in the community hall, however, departs radically from the east coast norm,

in that the logs have been so closely fitted together that plaster work, which usually forms up to half the surface of the wall, is here invisible if it is present at all. While the walls below the stackwall level have been finished entirely in plaster, the absence of visible plaster in the stackwall makes the logs appear to have been arranged by nature, or in the random manner of a dense woodpile. Since wood has always been the main source of fuel in the islands, for both Salish and white residents, the woodpile (admittedly a European idea) quotes a structure fundamental to local settlement practice and to settled Gulf Island topography.

The plaster portions of the community hall refer to settlement in a different way: as Wayne and Ann Ngan explain in reference to their own house, plaster appeals to them as being an element of peasant architecture in both their native environments (China and France) (Hand Built Hornby 472). The simplicity of plaster, its unpretentiousness, and its deliberately rough texture inside their home makes it a harmonious foil for driftwood supports that share these characteristics. Plaster proliferates both inside and outside Hornby buildings: since the lower outside walls of the community hall have been finished entirely in plaster, rather than interspersed between the logs of the stackwall above, the plaster offers an alternative rural or rustic practice to stackwall (see also Figs. 5 and 14). Sod roofs posit a third way of treating a peasant structure's external surfaces (see also Figs. 15 and 24): the roof thus functions as another horizontal layer referring to initial agricultural settlement. Like plaster and stackwall, sod roofs are not indigenous building techniques, but imported from other cultures by Blue Sky and its predecessors. Although the sod roof has a long history in European and non-European peasant cultures, in Canada it belongs

almost exclusively to the prairie context where, in the absence of other building materials, European settlers often built their first shelters--both walls and roofs--from sod. Like stackwall, sod's insulating properties make it suitable for climates with harsh winters and extremely hot summers, but on the coast, where winter rain can saturate a sod roof and make it not only dangerously heavy but also prone to leaks, the practice makes less practical sense (in the summer droughts on the islands, a tinder dry grass roof also makes a wood building vulnerable to fire). Similarly, plaster soon loses its bleached appearance on the coast, as it attracts and holds moisture.

Hornby hand-built houses borrow stackwall, plaster, and sod roofs from vernacular architectural traditions that originate and persist in places far outside the British Columbia coast. Given that these practices are not used locally except in the Blue Sky idiom, they signify differently in the islands than in their original environments: whereas such practices connote the profoundly local in their original contexts, when transported to the Gulf Islands they participate in a discourse of rurality rather than localness. They represent the local by virtue of referring to conventions of the rural found in the old world and in North America east of the Rocky Mountains: in the Hornby context, these practices commemorate the rural as a general principle rather than in its local manifestations. To the degree that Hornby hand-builders intend these practices to echo peasant architecture, their use also communicates nostalgia for settlement in its simplest, hence perhaps original, forms.

The fundamental difference between Blue Sky's use of peasant architecture and the way in which that architecture is used in its indigenous context is that Blue Sky's re-siting

of that vocabulary removes it from vernacular architectural discourse. On Hornby, peasant architectures borrowed from other places depart from the vernacular in appealing overtly to the notions of "local" and "indigene." Whereas vernacular architecture proceeds without conscious recognition of sign systems, Blue Sky buildings demand to be interpreted. Blue Sky thus quotes the local in ways that signal distance from the local as represented in vernacular architecture. Hornby's hand-built structures announce that they are encoded: they not only articulate but state their own articulateness. These buildings resemble Gulf Island writing in their overt intention to articulate indigenous identity. Commentary elucidating Blue Sky Design buildings in the issue of Architectural Digest devoted to Hornby differs from that describing pioneer buildings in Island Heritage Buildings in that while the latter is frustratingly spare, consisting only of the genealogy of construction and ownership, the issue of Architectural Digest includes not only essays on the woodbutcher style in general but interviews with and letters from owner-builders augmenting the analysis of individual structures. The sheer weight of words with which Hornby woodbutchers articulate their work underscores how profoundly these buildings operate within a verbal system of signification. If the act of settlement effaces the need for words, exchanging one medium for another, the degree to which Blue Sky buildings overtly express the ongoing act of initial settlement makes both the building style's codes and the owner/builder's commentary redundant. Island Heritage Buildings lacks commentary because for the first European pioneers, the act of building in the islands in itself articulated both arrival and the local: the buildings themselves were not required to reiterate these statements, nor did the pioneers feel compelled to provide a parallel verbal

commentary on the act of building.

The local pioneer vernacular does not satisfy Blue Sky desires because it so obviously reflects the financially-secure, well-educated British colonial society that first settled the Gulf Islands. The characteristics of local settlement buildings do not signify the qualities that Blue Sky interprets as indigenous. Sod roofs, plaster, and stackwall, on the other hand, all suggest building practices dictated by necessity rather than design or desire: they read, therefore, as rough, minimal, naive, fundamentally primitive. In being primitive, they link directly to the notion of peasant--"natural"--cultures and thus to a social simplicity uncomplicated by the sophisticated roles and necessary deceptions that Rousseau--ever the champion of the primitive--deplored in more highly organized social structures. The Gulf Islands define their own social culture as primitive in the sense of class-less (a canard, of course), largely unorganized, informal: furthermore, Gulf Island social life is considered to resemble that of European, especially English, rural villages (which Gulf Island romantics fail to recognize as extremely class-conscious, formally-structured, and rigid) in contrast to the alienated urban social relationships across the Strait. The notion of "community" defines the local to these romantics as much as natural topography: the Islands Trust is structured to rest on the idea that the "community" is the natural unit of social organization, though the characteristics of that community are never specified.

Sod roofs, plaster, and stackwall in the community hall on Hornby commemorate primitive settlement and thus celebrate the virtues of local community life by which Hornby at least partially defines itself. Like its borrowed external surface textures, the centerpiece of the community hall, the round room (Fig. 12), departs from local, vernacular

building practice in that its lower portion is built of stone. Despite the aesthetic appeal of local sandstone in cliffs and boulders, it is rarely used in the islands as a building material. Stone is difficult to work with and, given the abundance of timber and the absence of a need for stone's insulating qualities, not a sensible option in any case. Given that it is



**Fig.11. Community Hall: Round Room**

porous and friable, local sandstone would not be suitable for a load-bearing structure: rather than sandstone, the round room at the community hall uses stones deposited on the beach by glaciers. Having been gathered by hand on the island, the stones, like the beach poles that form the spokes of the circular roof, participate in the statement of the local: the roof material is cedar shakes, also the product of local labour in that they were split by hand (Hand Built Hornby 473). In this structure, both the materials and the process of the building's construction reflect the notion of "community" that the building is intended to

serve: such a labour-intensive project, using local materials, is necessarily a local, collective enterprise. Like the stackwall portion of the hall, the round room functions as a metaphor of settlement as much as of natural topography. The roof is supported by beach log rafters resting on beach log poles: the upper ends of the rafters rest in the rim of an old truck wheel at the roof's apex, while lower portions are held in place over the poles with a salvaged logging cable (473). Rather than making a visual reference as in the "woodpile" metaphor of the stackwalls, the wheel rim and logging cable incorporate relics of original European settlement as structural elements, invisible once the building is complete.

In nearly all the hand-built Hornby houses, however, the mechanics of the building, including--even especially--the structure's support, are deliberately left exposed. In the round room, for instance, the beach log rafters extend a couple of feet beyond the edge of the shake roof. The beach log spiral in the Biggins house and the single driftwood post and beam in the leaf retreat both extend outside from beneath the roof also (Figs. 13 and 14). Post and beams are invariably exposed inside hand-built buildings (Figs. 5, 9, and 17). The Fairburn house at Cape Gurney, despite its much more sophisticated design and finished surfaces, uses beams radiating several feet outside from the central half-circle sunroom (Fig. 15) to add drama to the house: in that case, beach logs have been replaced by split-cedar rails. Since the house is sited in an open meadow above the beach rather than in or near the forest, the rail beams echo the split-rail fences that are a local icon of original European settlement: viewed from the waterfront, the house rises above the ruins of an old split-rail fence separating meadow from beach.

A practice that in the Cape Gurney house amounts to an exaggerated design feature

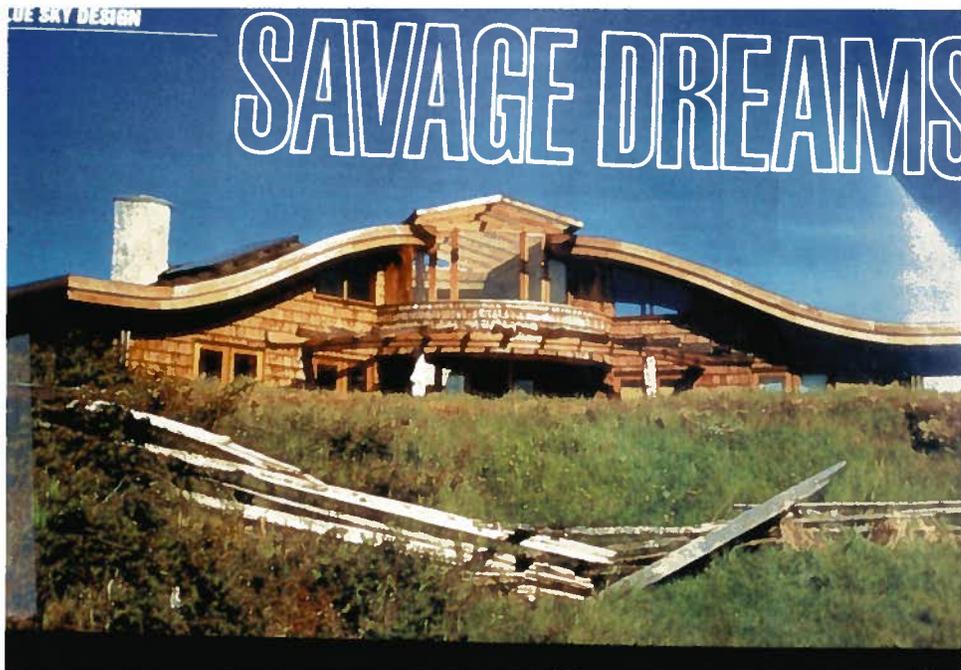


**Fig. 12. Biggins House: Exterior**

proceeds in earlier buildings from a tendency to delay, or simply omit altogether, trimming the edges of roof structures. Even on buildings where the roof has been trimmed, such as the Ngan house, the roof does not conceal the beam and rafters that support it (Fig. 16). Leaving beams hanging outside the house, like displaying the interior mechanics of the structure, participates in the practice of leaving surfaces unfinished. The commonest external surface on these hand-built buildings is cedar shakes, a material that merges external walls with roofs, where they are a common feature of the coastal vernacular. Cedar shakes are never finished with paint or stain or any other coating but are left to weather to the same silvery sheen that driftwood acquires after a season or two on the beach. The shakes thus merge visually with the driftwood structures they cover, giving the



**Fig. 13. Leaf Retreat: Exterior**



**Fig. 14. Cape Gurney House: View from Waterfront**



**Fig. 15. Ngan House: Roof Detail**

house the impression of being a single organism: random placement of shakes, together with their weathered colour, make them resemble bark, integral to the organism they protect rather than applied (Fig. 17). Internal surfaces are also intentionally rough: in the kitchen of the Burrow house (Fig. 18), the unfinished plywood floor and rough-planked wall and ceiling repeat the surface colour and texture of exposed driftwood posts and beams. Framing details (usually the most "finished" elements of a

conventionally constructed building) such as the sills and window frames also consist of rough cut wood: in the leaf house, even the table echoes basic building materials, its top being composed of three weathered 4 x 6 planks. The leaf retreat uses rough, unpainted plaster walls, both inside and outside (Figs. 5 and 14) to balance the heavy wood beam and post and thus visually lighten a building whose shape connotes weightlessness.

Weathered wood and plaster share the grey-scale palette of the coastal landscape in winter and its bleached summer hue also: none of these houses adds colour to its surfaces.



**Fig. 16. The Shire: Entrance**

A third material used for external walls is glass, which does not contribute colour to the house except as the interior of the house borrows chroma from the external landscape with the changing seasons. Glass is used more in the coastal vernacular than in other parts of the country because the temperate climate makes heat loss a less important consideration and because subdued winter light often makes coastal interiors uncomfortably dark. But in Blue Sky houses large expanses of glass cover not simply one dramatic wall, as in the west coast vernacular, but often extend from floor to ceiling along two abutting walls. Two glass surfaces at right angles to one another (Fig. 19) tend visually to eliminate the supporting post between them, muting, if not silencing, the vertical surface's statement of "wall." The continuous circle of glass in the community hall round room (Fig. 12) for example, is interrupted only by the fireplace at one end and the passageway to the rest of



**Fig. 17. Burrow House: Kitchen**

the hall at the other: otherwise, the glass walls are divided into vertical planes by cedar strips that made the cedar posts appear simply to be more strips (and thus become invisible) rather than load-bearing mass.

Because these expanses of glass are rarely single continuous panes but arrangements of salvaged windows, their surfaces are broken into rectangular geometries (Figs. 18 and 19). Among the randomly assorted vertical and horizontal lines, the corner post in the angle of adjoining walls becomes just one more line:

just as the eye tends to eliminate wood separating panes of glass in a multi-paned window, it eliminates the supporting posts also. Once the critical post that delineates the boundaries of the building disappears, the walls of glass dissolve, and the eye does not distinguish between the interior of the building and the view outside.

In a building style so dependent on and celebratory of wood--opaque, massive, dark--the emphasis on glass seems to belie woodbutcher principles, but Blue Sky uses both wood and glass to play with the notion of transparency. Just as glass above the driftwood



**Fig. 18. Leaf Retreat: Glass Walls**

arch in the Ngan studio makes a massive horizontal beam appear to be weightless, two more recent buildings replace central supporting roof beams with glass. The house boat in Fig. 20 appears to consist mainly of roof, but a continuous rectangle of glass surrounds the structure at its base, while the roof is split by narrow triangular skylights that widen to the apex of the structure. The long house quotation in the Sorenson house (Fig. 21), made explicit in the painting on the front door (though the image is not Salish but comes from farther up the coast), uses both the heavy central log posts and solid cedar planked walls of the coastal indigenous long house. The repeated frame of huge posts and heavy lintel at the front entrance recall the totemic entries of those houses, while the roof pitch exactly copies the long house also. The radical departure from the First Nations structure occurs at the apex of the roof, where a delicate framework of glass replaces the central beam through

the entire length of the house (Fig. 22).



**Fig. 19. House Boat: Gooseneck Barnacle**

The roof line of glass and cedar frame extends beyond the front door to the external lintel structure and then beyond that for several feet until it ends in mid-air (Fig. 21).

Like the radiating spokes of earlier Hornby buildings, this extension of the building's roof into space exposes the building's mechanics, but it also calls into question the conventionally distinct boundary between interior and exterior space. The complex arrangement of posts, beams, lintels, and repeated rooflines that rises above the deck at the co-op makes

the same statement (Fig. 10): given that so much material has been expended on a framework that supports nothing but air, the distinction between the deck area and the interior of the store--which share exactly the same structural geometries--becomes blurred. Given how multi-paned windows in earlier Hornby buildings create similarly complex patterns, the external structural geometry raises the expectation that the spaces it defines between its lines is--or ought to be--filled with glass, which would make the co-op deck



**Fig. 20. Sorenson House: Main Entrance**

interior space. It is difficult to identify the specific place where outside gives way to inside.

This liminal ambiguity is precisely the point of practically all the elements of hand-built Hornby buildings. Blue Sky attempts to build houses that fit into the landscape using a design language that culminates in the statement that the Hornby landscape is inherently natural. Design elements that refer to First Nations and initial European settlement are the exception rather than the rule: Hornby hand-built

usually bypasses the notion of settlement altogether, aspiring instead to quote the unmediated, natural landscape. Just as the materials tend to echo the natural, or merge with it, or disappear in favour of it, roofline profiles in these buildings also defer to surrounding topography. The continual process of building often dictates jumbled, "organic" profiles, as in the Shire and in the Biggins house (Figs. 13 and 17) while the Ngan house sits low to the ground, barely interrupting the surface of the meadow in which it stands (Fig. 23). Even in buildings that rise dramatically above the ground, the commonly-used

sod roof (which also pulls the Ngan house down into the meadow) visually unites ground cover with roof cover, making the distance between the two mere interruption rather than



**Fig. 21. Sorenson House: Central Aisle**

absolute rupture (Fig. 24).

As well as these literal attempts to merge settlement with natural topography, however, Blue Sky rooflines often function on a homonymic level. Like the leaf retreat, where the roof quotes the forest in which the house is sited in a direct visual pun, the smooth, curved roof in Fig. 20 makes the house boat look like a gooseneck barnacle stranded at high tide rather than a house. Similarly, the colour, texture, and pitch of the round room roof (Fig. 12) resembles a limpet (it is

hard to know whether these are intentional echoes or simply resonances that occur to me because of the idiom in which they participate). Other than the leaf retreat, the most overt reference to the local in a building profile is the "gull-wing" roof on the Cape Gurney house (Fig. 15). In these cases, the roof line does not blend into the surrounding landscape but verbally quotes selected elements of that landscape: puns and metaphors pertain to



**Fig. 22. Ngan House: View From Meadow**

word-play. Rather than merging seamlessly with the natural world, the drastic shift in scale from the original natural artifact being quoted (leaf, gull, barnacle, limpet) to the roof creates such an abrupt disjunction that the metaphor itself becomes the single statement that the house makes. All other references to the local are subsumed beneath the legibility of the roof line metaphor.

Rather than relying on implications of topography, these buildings aim for absolute equivalence. The process of communication represented by these roof lines represents an intense need to state indigenously. The leaf retreat, for example, relies on the assumption that a leaf belongs in the forest: by extension, the leaf retreat also belongs in the forest. Similarly, the gull-wing house, like the gull, is in its appropriate place hovering over the shore. These roof lines thus refer to the local through the same process as



**Fig. 23. Cape Gurney House:  
View From Meadow**

ornamentation with forest and, especially, beach objects, the difference being the inversion of scale and function. Whereas ornamentation with material objects brings the local topography to the house, quoting those objects in roof line profiles announces that the house itself reflects local topography.

Paradoxically, however, the practice of ornamentating the holiday home with local natural objects is so ubiquitous, not only in the Gulf Islands but across the continent and beyond, that it is a vernacular--that is, conventional--and hence largely

invisible, act. The process by which such ornamentation signals the local functions below the threshold of conscious recognition (as do the implications of such ornamentation to those who practice it): in Blue Sky buildings, however, references to local nature depart from the vernacular in that they are overt and both practised and meant to be read consciously. The roof line profiles that quote local nature belong to a group of gestures by which Blue Sky buildings play on the local intellectually and--crucially--verbally. Rather

than functioning synechdocally as does ornamentation with salvaged natural objects, those rooflines participate metaphorically in the discourse of the local. The degree to which this is a verbal practice, rather than solely a visual one, is demonstrated by Blue Sky's use of homonym: both the Biggins and Ellis houses play on the notion of "tree house," for example. The Biggins house, elevated ten feet above the meadow in which it sits on a series of posts, also exploits vertical scale inside to suggest the site of a tree house, while the central supporting post with its radiating poles suggests a tree trunk from which branches grow. Biggins treats the interior space of the house as if it were a forest canopy: "We like living here; it's a fun place, alive and growing. There are swings and slides; ropes and pulley; ladders and a giant log spiral to climb and lofty places to sit and watch the secret goings on of nature and man" (457). The Ellis house (Fig. 25), by contrast, is built into the forest just where it gives way to meadow: the section of the house to the left resembles the Biggins house in being elevated to a second-story level above supporting posts, so that its windows command a view through the upper branches of surrounding trees (note the ladder access) to the meadow beyond. From the opposite side of the house, cedar plank bridges lead through the forest to the trees,<sup>85</sup> and the house is not separated

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<sup>85</sup> The combination of these elevated wooden pathways with the lush swordfern understory associated with a mature cedar forest echoes the topography through the Clayoquot and Carmanah first-growth forests on the west coast of Vancouver Island, where similar pathways were built by protestors and other volunteers and subsequently destroyed by logging companies who own the timber rights to those areas. The forest aesthetic the pathways communicate at the Ellis site predates the building of the rainforest pathways by a decade: by the 1990s, however, images of these forest bridges have been so widely disseminated and so politicized that the Ellis walkway acquires some of the rhetoric of coastal forest politics, especially the notions of ecologically-sensitive experience of the forest (the elevated pathways protect the understory, vulnerable because saturated with water) and of community control of forest land.

from the forest understory by any intermediate zone of cleared land. The Biggins and Ellis houses thus pun on the expression "tree house" and its connotations.

The parallel notion of "boat house" provides more striking opportunities for word play even than "tree house": both of these expressions are inherently unstable because they require one noun to modify another even though the two are mutually exclusive. In the case of "tree house," the conventionally-understood meaning--a house built off the ground using trees as supports--is complicated by the homonymic quotation, in the Biggins house, of the interior space that an individual tree encloses or describes. The reference to Tolkien's hobbit houses in the massive tree root at the entrance to the community hall disturbs the notion of "tree house" further by suggesting that even the interior of the tree trunk can contain a house. In the case of "boat house," possibilities for rearranging the verbal are greater because of the equally common expression "house boat:" Blue Sky confuses the distinction between "house" and "boat" so thoroughly that both words--and the compound term as a grammatical construct--are called into question. The "gooseneck barnacle" (my term) floating house sits low on the water at its base but rises to a dramatic peak, defying the usually box-like shape of local house boats: the "barnacle" pun acquires complexity because barnacles are firmly rooted to the seabed, while the floating house is buoyant and mobile. This house thus simply extends the paradox of the floating house that contradicts the notion of settlement--represented by the icon of "home"--as something anchored in place, emanating from the land, literally rooted in the ground. Even more disruptive of conventional notions of "house boat" and "boat house" is a home that Lloyd



**Fig. 24. Ellis House: Tree House Room**



**Fig. 25. Lloyd House's Boat House**

House, a builder who arrived on Hornby in the late 1960s, created from an old fishing boat (Fig. 26). Its very location, at the forested threshold of littoral space, calls into question the idea of settlement: how settled can a house be that is sited at least partially in the indeterminate space of the beach? Given that in British Columbia all the shoreline below six feet above the high tide mark reverts to the Crown, the house crosses the line between land that can be staked and claimed (the place where settlement occurs) and that which cannot. (House was also in the habit, while living in this house, of moving it from one beach to another periodically.) The visual cues of the house itself translate these vaguely coded implications of site into a highly verbal pun. The place the house occupies is conventionally the site of the "boat house," a structure, that is, intended to house and protect a boat. At first glance, this house, resting just above the high tide line appears to be nothing more than an abandoned boat, washed ashore and up the beach by winter storms: like the "sea-going cottage" Will Dawson describes, this boat, its bow pressing into the forest, also crosses the seemingly unbridgeable boundary between sea and land. The boat thus appears to require its own shelter: instead, it has become shelter in turn. The shift in context wrenches the term "boat house" into a new grammatical construct: rather than indicating a house to shelter a boat, the term now refers to a house built within a boat.

In calling into play these overtly verbal codes, the hand-built houses on Hornby make reading a building an almost involuntary act: these structures define themselves as much by their very legibility as by the statements they are intended to convey. Here, semiotic codes replace building codes. The very notion of "word play" operates overtly



**Fig. 26. Burrow House: "TV Totem"**

here, as the whimsical character of much of this communication suggests. The Burrow house, built on a cliff perched over the beach, contains the most direct statements of the verbal nature of the communication. Like the boat house, this structure transgresses conventional settlement boundaries that dictate the siting of a home: a cliff above the beach is a notoriously unstable topography in the Gulf Islands, yet this house not only sits on and in the top of the cliff but extends out beyond the cliff edge, its

deck and front wall supported by posts anchored at a lower level of the cliff. The low roof profile and the unexpected site shed visual cues to settlement:

At first approach, this house is almost impossible to recognize as a house; its order is deceptive. One's first impression is anarchy as bushes have as much hold on the eye as roof forms. As one approaches, the house acts as a soft barrier between the site and sea. It draws you around its shoulder to the entrance and a spectacular view out over the sea.

It is right on the edge. Looking down the strait it gets full brunt of the south-east storm winds and the summer sun, and it deals with both by digging with a triangulated post and beam structure, covered with sod-roof mass. The only path from cliff-top to beach is through the house and so it draws you inside. (469)

By virtue of its site, the Burrow house, as well as employing most of the Blue Sky codes-- sod roof, amorphic roof line, unfinished surfaces, compound glass walls, driftwood post and beam, projecting roof poles--directly communicates a statement of the surrounding landscape. The combination of beach front location with vertical elevation makes the view the principal experience of this house's interior, while the fact that movement from meadow to beach must proceed through the house draws attention to the house itself as essential means of access--both literal and aesthetic--to the Gulf Island's defining topography. On the roof above the room that gives way to the deck, Burrow makes the house's primary role as communication explicit. The house's main supporting post, a corner of three of its four main spaces, extends upward above the roof line for ten or fifteen feet: at the top of this pole Burrow has mounted a television aerial. Given that this feature has earned the name "TV totem" (Fig. 27), it ironically juxtaposes two radically different notions of



**Fig. 27. Burrow House: Roof**

communication: the "totem," rather than embodying in itself the statement--local, primitive, indigenous--to be communicated, becomes instead merely the support for global, sophisticated, placeless communication. In an equally ironic gesture, non-verbal cues that function on a verbal level become literally verbal as cut lengths of metal pipe spell the word "WATER" in letters a couple of feet high at the roof's edge over the sea (Fig. 28). Seen from the house, the word becomes transparent, superimposed on the ocean behind it: the word play makes the literal statement utterly redundant, as the scope of the seascape overwhelms the scale of the house, filling the field of vision beyond the house's outline.

These buildings deliberately quote the local both in metaphor and synecdoche and in literal transcription that erases the verbal distinction between built structure and surrounding natural topography. For all its attempt to appear to be naturally-occurring and, by extension, indigenous, Blue Sky has nothing to do with the vernacular landscape: its consciousness of itself as text distances the Blue Sky style from the surrounding vernacular architecture. The buildings recorded in the Island Heritage Homes inventory are vernacular, however, but an anachronistic vernacular that makes them analogous, to the post-1960s observer, to the intensely regional, pastoral statements of the Blue Sky style. Part of this identification between two such radically different architectural statements lies in their shared articulation of the values of rootedness in the local landscape. Both kinds of architecture locate value in the act of settlement: homesteading in the early 1970s in North America carried as powerful an ideological momentum as it had during the years of rapid colonial expansion between 1860 and the first world war.

**The Green, of Varying Tints and Shining: Discovery**

*The haze ahead is broken by shadows, the shadows emerge as islands. We consult our clock, check again the tide tables for the hour of slack water at Porlier Pass which is the middle gateway from the Gulf to the island waters. We reduce sail if our arrival is too early, and try every trick we know with canvas and sheets if our arrival is late.*

*Among the islands we see again the miracle of spring, a miracle which gently admonishes us against too close contemplation of our own, and civilization's problems. Problems of a million yesterdays have gone like dead leaves blown off trees. Aspiring life, confident, beautiful, preaches its happy sermon from every shore and in the tenuous sound of wings as birds migrating north pass overhead or, in sweeping circles, settle on the sea. Wild flowers, those delicate whimsies of nature, nod tiny heads as we sail by, or spread their gay colours in the distance against the fresh-painted green of new grass. Birds sing among branches clothed in the green mist of new leaves; and even crows and seagulls on the beaches somehow manage to instil a jovial note into their raucous caws and screams, like pirates strangely but completely drunk on the spirit of good-fellowship.*

*One of the first things we do when we reach the Gulf Islands in spring is to go to work on our boat.*

Will Dawson, Ahoy There!, 28-29

*I am confronted by what is for me the best of all possible worlds. Today I can watch from my window the sea shifting from cobalt blue to dove grey. The cliché seagulls make little white sun reflectors out in the harbour; trees on the tiny Three Sisters islands are a cold, green resting place for the eyes. The ferries of Mr. Bennett's navy push on to Active Pass, moving whitely and stately through the Strait of Georgia. A study in blue, white, green, grey. And when the tide goes out I can gather oysters. C'est mon pays. It's my country.*

Phyllis Webb, "Phyllis Webb's Canada," 12-13

*Save the Strait: Keep the Colours Alive*

Save Georgia Strait Alliance, campaign slogan, 1990

Josef Cardero was the first European to characterize the Gulf Islands (or, more accurately, northwest Gabriola) as a pastoral landscape, defining that pastoral element as its offer of respite, of a temporary vacation from the rigours of the work at hand. The sudden appearance of "an attractive country, the green, of varying tints and shining, of some woods and meadows" results both from a change in the weather, from "almost continuous" rain to "the most delightful springlike weather," and from the mariners' having had the chance to rest: the scene, Cardero acknowledges, "was for us all the more pleasant because we had so recently passed through so many trials and labours."

Paradoxically, given that the pastoral usually privileges nature against civilization, Cardero defines this period of rest and recovery--and the landscape in which it occurs--by its contrast to the wilder environment which has frightened and exhausted the officers and crew of the Sutil and the Mexicana. The pastoral mode necessarily functions in opposition to some unpleasant situation or environment from which the pastoral offers an escape. In Cardero's case, that situation is not the stresses of urban life, against which the pastoral is conventionally posited as the desirable alternative in nature, but precisely the degree to which the topography resembles a peopled, mediated landscape. The "woods and meadows" resemble eighteenth-century European rural landscapes,<sup>86</sup> while the sandstone

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<sup>86</sup> As Arthur Sweet notes in Islands in Trust, these meadows demand aesthetic attention precisely because of the contrast they make with the forests in which they occur:

One of the distinctive and delightful features of the Trust Area is the existence of natural little grassed areas found in the most unexpected places throughout the islands. They are found deep in the forests or along the top of a cliff looking out to sea. They vary in size but are rarely very large. Surrounded by arbutus, Garry oaks, or broadleaf maple, they are oases of beauty that lend themselves readily to photography, nature study, or just plain visual delight. (18)

gallery connotes both domestic architecture and the social order with which that architecture is associated. For Cardero, Gabriola constitutes a reprieve from the disorderly, uncontrollable wilderness the Spanish had encountered in the Strait and among the islands: he can arrange Gabriola's landscape into orderly, familiar relationships that resurrect in turn the civilities that sustain Spanish society, keeping anarchy and barbarism at bay. In this instance, therefore, Cardero turns the pastoral back against nature, or rather, celebrates those elements in the natural order that recall social order, rather than, as the Romantic might, notions of freedom and individual experience. In Cardero's pastoral dichotomy, home and its inherent order is the site of relaxation and leisure, wild nature the place of unceasing labour and anxiety.

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Sweet's description echoes the element of alternation of forest and meadow that both Lukin Johnston and Ethel Wilson include in their representations of the Gulf Island landscape (I discuss the latter in Chapter Eight), Johnston from his perspective of walking the roads on foot and Wilson from a plane overhead. Sweet notes that the meadows are bordered, not by the conifers--hemlock, Douglas fir, Grand fir, and cedar--most common to the archipelago's forests, but by deciduous trees--arbutus, Garry oak, and broadleaf maple. These trees soften the contrast between forest and meadow, both visually and psychologically: because of them, the meadows even more seamlessly resemble the English rural version of pastoral, screening the dissonant, New World element of the coniferous forest from view. In using the word "oases" to describe the meadows, Sweet underscores the degree to which they provide relief from the surrounding forest: the clearing, the site of light and space, is of great importance in Canadian wilderness narratives. The word also connotes contrast between desert and irrigated landscapes: Sweet here inverts the usual pattern, making the dry, bright, open area the place of sanctuary and transforming the forest into ocean (the site of wilderness in the Gulf Islands). Sweet identifies the use value of these "oases of beauty" as representation (through photography, the most modern and easily accessible means), taxonomy ("nature study"), and aesthetic ecstasy ("just plain visual delight"): this list summarizes the function of the Gulf Islands as natural space; significantly, the activities he cites require no special skills, that are properly the sphere of the amateur. The last item resonates with Cardero's account of the entrancement of the senses the Spanish experience at Gabriola, and with the phrase "drunk with sweets" that Phillips-Wolley uses to describe the June landscape in "The Mortgaged Farm."

The change in the mood of the journal at this point, from fear, discomfort, and confusion to delight, optimism, and confidence is almost farcically abrupt and entire. But the effect of the change in the weather should not be underestimated, since such an alteration can, and does, profoundly change the appearance of the Gulf Islands landscape. The Strait of Georgia generally has only two seasons: a cool, wet winter and warm, dry summer. Fall and spring are difficult to distinguish as seasons in their own right, becoming instead long, almost imperceptible transitions between the two main seasons. Seasonal change in other parts of the country is most apparent in spring verdure and autumn foliage: urban and suburban landscapes in British Columbia, where indigenous plants are often replaced with species imported from elsewhere, reflect this four-season visual cycle. But in rural coastal places such as the islands, where the botanical landscape remains mostly indigenous even in the last years of the twentieth century, such variations in colour are rare and clearly foreign. Here foliage remains overwhelmingly evergreen throughout the year (even the arbutus--a deciduous tree--remains green; its glossy leaves (especially glossy in June, when the new season's leaves have just matured) may have contributed to the "shining" the Spaniards perceived). In botanical terms, a seasonal palette does not exist in the Gulf Islands; the ubiquitous green fades to monochrome for lack of contrast. Or, at least, it would do, were it not for the effects of the weather. Winters here are very much like winters up and down the entire British Columbia coast: very wet, the skies grey with sodden cloud even when rain is not falling, the whole frequently obscured by fog. In the islands, where most vistas include the sea, the effect of leaden surfaces is magnified by the marine reflection of the cloud cover. Such conditions of diffuse and

muted light drain intensity from every colour: sightlines across considerable distance--a feature common to the characteristic viewscape of mixed sea and island (and mountain) arrangements that recede into the distance--also dilute colour.

The monochromatic, neutral landscape that these conditions produce has an entirely different effect, both aesthetic and psychological, from the ostensibly monochromatic snowscapes that define winter across the country east of the Coast Mountains, and which symbolize Canadian-ness for the rest of the world. Once snow cover has been established, much of the winter is sunlit and clear. The snow provides a foil for a deep blue sky; snowlight penetrates into forest understories and building interiors, any available colour in the landscape being intensified by the light. The effect is open, exhilarating, bright. On the coast, however, the forest swallows light, the sky presses down, flattening the space--the land--between sky and sea, the sea turns sullen. As winter passes slowly through spring and into summer, however, this gloomy palette begins to alternate with, and is finally succeeded by, its summer counterpart. On the west coast, spring does not begin, as it does in the east, with many dismal weeks, even months, of grey, raw barrenness after the snow has retreated, before plant growth again lends colour to the landscape. The colour is always present on the coast: once touched by sunlight, the evergreen landscape loses its neutral, greyed, amorphous winter aspect and reveals itself as vibrant, variegated, and richly-textured. Seasonal change in light from winter to summer makes the green visible.

In 1792, the Spanish were clearly suffering through one of the coast's periodic wet

summers, though prolonged rain is not unusual even in June.<sup>87</sup> As soon as the weather clears, however, the Spanish see the landscape afresh, perhaps even see it clearly for the first time: "under a clear sky there was displayed to us an attractive country." The phrase "under a clear sky" emphasizes clarity of sight, while the passive construction of the next clause suggests revelation rather than active perception: once the veil of cloud is drawn aside, the true aspect of the landscape is revealed. Instead of the inhibiting, hostile environment of their passage across the Strait and along the archipelago, the Spaniards now recognize a familiar, comforting topographical arrangement. Cardero describes a moment of transformation, even epiphany, in which the Spanish are suddenly able to naturalize a previously foreign, alien prospect. Though the incident takes place in the middle of June (the English account would have it occurring toward the end of the month), Cardero records "a most delightful springlike weather." Spring in Spain corresponds to the summer conditions of the Cool Mediterranean Zone in which most of the islands lie.<sup>88</sup> Spanish associations of spring with pastoral would be even stronger than in England, given the harshness of the extreme summer climate in the Mediterranean: one wonders how far the

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<sup>87</sup> Muriel Blanchet makes this point in *The Curve of Time*: "June is an uncertain month for weather on the coast of British Columbia. It has not yet established any definite pattern" (166). Spring and fall coastal seasons do not produce their own distinctive weather: they alternate between winter and summer conditions until the season they precede prevails.

<sup>88</sup> Arthur Sweet explains that the Gulf Islands fall into two main bioclimatic zones:

The area is comprised of two main vegetative zones: a relatively "dry" or Mediterranean type zone and a "moist" zone typical of the West Coast. The Mediterranean or "dry" zone predominates in all of the islands in the Strait of Georgia and Haro Strait, while the "moist" zone is found on Bowen and Gambier, the two islands of the Trust that are located in Howe Sound and closer to the rain-producing Coast Mountains. (18)

impression of green-ness contributed to the Spanish assessment of the weather as "spring-like." Like the transitional zone of the gallery, which mediates between poles of inside and outside and tempers the extremes of climate, the "springlike weather" of the Gulf Islands in June also reveals to the mariners the beneficent, sheltering yet open face of the Gulf Island environment.

In perceiving Gabriola as "an attractive country," Cardero identifies the local landscape directly with the trope of vacation, a temporary reprieve from the work of discovery. In thus connecting the two ideas--discovery and vacation--even as polar opposites, Cardero initiates a pattern of association that, frequently repeated, becomes a Gulf Islands code. Cardero's abrupt shift in mood to a delighted, relaxed, confident, and optimistic perspective is inextricably connected to the change in the weather: both his aesthetic appreciation of the landscape and his renewed faith in the purpose of the voyage typify the summer atmosphere of the islands. Gulf Island cruising narratives are conventionally composed in the mode initiated by Cardero. By the early twentieth century, not only had the islands become popular as a place for holidays, but accounts of those holidays invoked the language and practice (as culturally transmitted over the intervening century) of eighteenth-century voyages of discovery. This very local convention for writing leisure narratives persists, and even proliferates, as the twentieth century draws to a close. As might be expected, the convention is most apparent in the cruising narratives, where travel in small boats seems to intensify the impulse to combine nautical motifs with quest imagery, which together signify the discovery trope.

Lukin Johnston and Kathrene Pinkerton treat the trope whimsically: the degree to

which they recognize the trope's icons and language as archaic emphasizes their distance from the original experience of European discovery in the region. The Pinkertons' mock formal observation of British naval etiquette signals their passage into "foreign"--that is, unknown--waters as they cross the international boundary into the Gulf Islands region: their cruises are made in the summer. Johnston also describes himself, in an only partly self-mocking manner, as discoverer and explorer when he begins his holiday in early summer. Though his walking tour is oriented toward the settled countryside rather than the sea (of which we hear almost nothing in his account, his passages from one island to the next being accomplished without comment), Johnston travels by steamer to Mayne, from which, he says, he "set forth to 'discover' this strange kingdom" (62). In *Active Pass*, he describes the Georgina Point lighthouse as "so close it seemed one could almost throw a biscuit to it": in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British naval vernacular, the "biscuit-toss" was a conventional, though colloquial, expression for close proximity of ship to shore, or of two ships at sea. In using a version of the expression, Johnston establishes a linguistic link to eighteenth-century voyages of discovery. Given that Johnston italicizes the word "discover," he may consider his own allusion in an ironic light; if so, he certainly does not extend the ironic frame any further into his narrative. If he is being ironic, the irony simply alludes to the convention of framing coastal vacation narratives with tropes of imperial discovery: it may already have been a convention in the 1920s. Ironic or not, the point is unaltered: Johnston, like the Pinkertons, begins his Gulf Islands sojourn with a reference to the age of discovery on the British Columbia coast.

For both Johnston and Pinkerton, the trope of "discovery" overcomes the discomfort

of being alien, of finding oneself in a place one does not know, and to which one does not belong. The trope automatically provides the visitor with an identity that both implies the appropriate mode within which to approach, observe, and record the new landscape, and explains the visitor's presence in that landscape. Discovery authenticates a viewpoint--the stranger's understanding of the local landscape--that otherwise lacks validity. For Johnston and Pinkerton, that role is even more precisely defined--or doubly authenticated--by their identity as journalists. In that role, the notion of "discovery" is reinforced by the subjugation of the experience to the account of that experience. As with Lawrence's Voyage of the Stella, the point of the voyage is to produce its narrative. The "discovery" trope allows these writers to make a virtue of their lack of acquaintance with their subject and to give the narrative a function beyond simply telling stories: they can present private experience in a public form; they can invite the replication of their experience--ostensibly personal, private, and singular--both through the reading of their accounts and in the implicit invitation to follow them physically; and they can present their own experience--naive, ill-ordered, unpredictable--as authentic to, even paradigmatic of, the local place. Gulf Islands writing that specifically devotes itself to explicating the local conforms to the guidebook convention that to write the experience of place is to gather information, and to search out, experience, and record subjective responses to the physical environment.

Although M. Wylie Blanchet has no interest in writing a guidebook, this process can be seen in her cruising narrative The Curve of Time (1968), which records several

summer cruises up the coast in the late 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>89</sup> The Blanchets cruised using two authorities as guides, one being the charts and Coast Pilot and the other an unspecified edition of Captain Vancouver's Journal, but they measure their own experience against the latter:

We were inextricably associated with Captain George Vancouver, R.N., in our summer-long trips up the coast. He explored, surveyed and charted the coast of British Columbia in 1792, and named practically every island, inlet and channel--names that are still used. Every bay we anchor in, every beach we land on--Vancouver or his lieutenants had been there first. (19)

Blanchet cites passages from Vancouver's account of exploring the east side of Georgia Strait north of Howe Sound, and on into the east-reaching inlets of the Inside Passage, using all of this quotation to introduce the Blanchets' own account of Princess Louisa Inlet, the entrance to which Vancouver and his party decided was merely a creek:

The youngsters were delighted that Vancouver had missed Princess Louisa Inlet--very scornful that he had thought the entrance shallow. "He didn't even try the right entrance, he was on the ledge," said Peter. "Well, he couldn't have got in anyway, with the tide running out," said Jan, defending him. (21)

In Vancouver's lapse, the family finds a welcome gap in the overwhelmingly authoritative document that precludes, in their eyes, the possibility that they can establish their own priority anywhere on the coast. Elsewhere, Blanchet mentions her "taste for the places where no one went" (149). The absence of a previous textual presence in Princess Louisa Inlet means that in this place at least the Blanchets can become local: in contrast to

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<sup>89</sup> Blanchet does not mention these dates specifically; indeed she deliberately blurs the chronological relation between voyages. But Edith Iglauer Daly supplies the chronology in her article on Blanchet in Raincoast Chronicles Six/Ten (1983). Daly states that Blanchet's husband was drowned in 1927, and that the cruises recounted in The Curve of Time began "the second summer after his death" (154).

Vancouver, they become "we who knew the way." The Blanchets are happy to receive and follow local advice about navigation, perhaps recognizing that people's willingness to tell them makes the Blanchets vicariously local, perhaps also realizing that local knowledge, being oral, is not available to everyone. Its transmission by mouth makes it necessarily local, and therefore preferable to printed directions: local knowledge liberates them from the routes dictated by the Coast Pilot, another coastal text against whose authority the Blanchets chafe. Their delight in finding Princess Louisa Inlet illustrates the extent to which the Pilot disciplines experience of the coastal landscape, since travellers and tourists--those who are not local--all have access to the Pilot, but not to local knowledge, except where it is offered. The Pilot is the final authority: being local means not having to resort to it.

Blanchet's taste for unvisited places makes her own local knowledge--of the Gulf Island waters around the Saanich Peninsula--irrelevant to her own desires: by the time of her voyages up the coast, the south coast of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands were well-travelled and long-settled. To be a discoverer, to compete with Vancouver, Blanchet requires these previously blank landscapes or places on the chart. Blanchet thus treats the trope of discovery seriously, though (or perhaps because) the trappings of the English eighteenth-century voyages of discovery (the Pinkertons' ceremony of crossing the international boundary, Johnston's "biscuit-toss") do not appear either in the way the Blanchet crew behaves or in the language of the narrative: the trope affects neither their actions nor the "frame" of the account. If Blanchet cannot be prior, she does not entertain herself or her children with imitations or illusions of priority by playing games with the

icons that represent that trope. One summer, however, after the children mention that they had seen a seahorse on a previous voyage, the Blanchets decide to spend a month cruising up the east coast of Vancouver Island to Denman Island, whose intertidal topography most closely matches the site at which they remember seeing the seahorse. Blanchet, for whom the prospect of cruising so close to home is tedious since the local waters offer her nothing to accomplish as a discoverer, turns her attention to Hakluyt's account of Juan de Fuca's voyage to the north Pacific coast at the end of the sixteenth century.

As filtered through Hakluyt and Michael Lok, who told Hakluyt the story, de Fuca's narrative is much more difficult to match to topography than the Relación of Galiano and Valdéz's travels in the Strait of Georgia. Unconvinced by what Vancouver perceived to be the route the narrative traces, Blanchet maps a revisionary reading of de Fuca's voyage, one that fundamentally contradicts the conventional explication that originates with Vancouver. She begins by tracing the account north of California:

Juan de Fuca continued up the coast until, Lok reports, "He came to a broad Inlet of the sea between 47 and 48 Lat. He entered there into, sayling therein for more than twenty days and found that land trending still sometimes N.W. and N.E. and N. and also E. and S.E. and a very much broader Sea than at the said entrance--and that he went by divers islands in that sayling."

If they had rowed and sailed along the north shore of that broad inlet and by divers islands for twenty days--where would they likely have got to? Vancouver with the Discovery and the Chatham, big ships compared to the caravel [Juan de Fuca's ship], had followed the south shore right into Puget Sound, landlocked by all the Puget Sound islands; and had continued north on the mainland side frantically trying to find a passage through the islands.

Juan de Fuca in his smaller ships would likely have followed the tides on the north shore and turned N.W. up by San Juan, "and other divers islands." Somewhere close to Nanaimo, he would have emerged "into a much broader sea than at the said entrance [Flattery]" and all of the Gulf of Georgia would suddenly have lain before him. (164)

The "divers islands" then are not solely the San Juan Islands but also the Gulf Islands, from Saturna to Gabriola: in Blanchet's account, the Greek preceded the Spanish in the archipelago by two hundred years.

Blanchet bolsters her argument by calculating that had de Fuca remained on the west side of the Strait and continued north, he would have found himself near Denman, facing Texada. She cites the Coast Pilot descriptions of Texada and its neighbour Lasqueti (which appear from the west to be one island) to suggest that Mount Trematon on Lasqueti, which the Pilot describes as "a singular turret-shaped summit 1,050' high," is the "exceedingly high pinnacle or spired rock" that the Greek saw on the northwest coast of the Strait--Georgia Strait, that is, rather than the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Conventional wisdom places this feature at Cape Flattery where, as Blanchet notes, the "island or headland" upon which Juan de Fuca locates this spired rock does not exist. Blanchet notes that the received assessment of Juan de Fuca's narrative originates with Vancouver, who, "since he couldn't find the turret or pinnacle . . . came to the conclusion that Juan had never been here at all." This slippage in the alignment of narrative with topography convinces Vancouver to dismiss the Greek's presence on the coast as fantasy. The Blanchets, however, have the evidence of their own eyes to counteract Vancouver's opinion: Mount Trematon, "is what we were looking at as we approached, and it is what Juan de Fuca and his men would have seen on the north-west side of the gulf at the entrance to the Straits" (165), by which Blanchet must mean Seymour Narrows and Johnstone Strait.

Since she has no opportunity on this cruise to search for places even Vancouver did

not find, Blanchet finds another way to challenge his authority on the coast. Not only does she show that Vancouver is wrong to conclude that Juan de Fuca had not reached the Strait of Georgia, but she establishes the Greek's priority in the Strait. Her rereading of de Fuca's narrative functions in exactly the same manner as her discovery of Princess Louisa Inlet: in both cases, Vancouver's authoritative status as pre-eminent discoverer shows cracks. In this process, Blanchet recuperates the Gulf Islands also: they serve a purpose by providing the topography upon which she can arrange de Fuca's narrative. By invoking Juan de Fuca to disrupt Vancouver's map, Blanchet detaches de Fuca's voyage from Vancouver's explication and resites the Greek's voyage in Georgia Strait. She traces a route of discovery northwest through the southern Gulf Islands to Gabriola, still further northwest to Denman, then east past Hornby to Lasqueti. Her version thus threads the Gulf Islands (with the exception of the Thormanbys and the Howe Sound islands) into a continuous sequence, a group, even a region, by assigning to them the contiguity of de Fuca's narrative. In Blanchet's version, Juan de Fuca's voyage functions as a syntax of Gulf Islands, the islands in turn becoming the paradigm for the British Columbia coast because of the degree to which origins of coast are defined locally by "discovery." At the same time as she locates a prior discovery narrative in the islands, however, she can treat the islands as undiscovered territory, undiscovered, that is, by Vancouver: unlike Vancouver, de Fuca's possible presence in the Strait leaves the coast uncluttered with toponymic reminders of European priority. The part of the coast that seems to offer nothing to the discoverer of the 1930s is restored to the coast proper, the place of potential discovery.

Blanchet uses the trope of discovery to recover the well-populated, domestic Gulf

Island archipelago as a place that can accommodate her own desire to travel an "empty" coastline. The log of another voyage, which took place fewer than thirty years before Blanchet began her cruises, resembles Juan de Fuca's in its lexical instability and in the amount of work explication of the text consequently requires. In late August 1904, nine young men and women sailed south from Kuper Island to cruise for two weeks among the southern islands. Their voyage, recorded in a document entitled "The Log Book of the Yacht Shamrock" (attributed by the Provincial Archives of British Columbia to Robert W. Roberts), also invokes the discovery trope in order to defamiliarize the settled, domestic Gulf Islands landscape, their home neighborhood, thereby making that landscape the appropriate site of a voyage.

The title of the Shamrock document seems inevitable, even invisible: it would seem by now that any British Columbia coastal voyage requires written narrative in the guise of a ship's log. But the text of this particular log resists the conventions that make the log book form readable and coherent. Some elements of the log book form, such as the title, do persist: the Shamrock log consists of dated daily entries arranged chronologically, each entry recording the day's activities, also in sequence, even including the precise times at which some events occur. In compliance with convention, the log begins with a crew list, arranged in descending order of rank in the British naval hierarchy. But the content of the log subverts all of these conventions, turning the narrative into an extended parody of the log book form. The point of the log, however, is not parody in and of itself but the use of the rigid conventions of the log form (conventions that reflect the serious, orderly naval life it relates) as a foil against which the events of the cruise can be

more hilariously displayed. Even the crew list introduces idiosyncratic elements--a clearly random and motley assortment of naval ranks, for example, accompanied by both proper names and nicknames. After the first entry, the log refers to the Shamrocks only by nickname or rank, and here rank functions as an alternative nickname rather than to allocate duties and indicate lines of command. The jettisoning of proper names--and perhaps also the identities that ordinary life attaches to those names--parallels the abandonment of literal sense in the log, whose style becomes increasingly antic and its language and allusions more obscure. The degree to which the log resists a literal reading demonstrates that rather than constituting a record whose purposes is to transmit information, the Shamrock log is intended as a souvenir, intelligible only to those who share the experiences it records. Both the cruise and the log book that narrates it look inward to a familiar world: understanding the log book, speaking its language, means belonging, just as "in jokes" always separate those inside an intimate circle from those outside it.

The Shamrocks are not sailing into foreign waters; they are profoundly at home throughout the cruise. The "Captain" and "First Mate" of the voyage are Robert C. Roberts and M.E. Roberts, "Robbie" and "Mollie" as they are referred to in the first day's entry. These were two of the children of the Reverend James W. Roberts, who ran a mission on Kuper Island at Lamalchi Bay. This mission was administered by, and located on land owned by, the New England Company, a missionary organization.<sup>90</sup> Robert Wilson and M. Evelyn Wilson were two of the ten children brought to Saltspring by their father E.F.

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<sup>90</sup> See Richard Nixon 193, Cummings 177.

Wilson (and his wife, their mother) in 1894. Wilson, the first Anglican clergyman on Salt Spring, emigrated from England to Ontario, where he became famous for developing residential schools for First Nations children as part of his mission work. Because of poor health, Wilson emigrated again to the west coast. According to his diaries, Wilson stayed with the Roberts when he first arrived in the Gulf Islands, using their home as a base from which to become acquainted with the area and find a suitable home for his family. Frank Halhed was the son of Richard Halhed, an immigration officer who settled with his wife and family in Chemainus in 1899. The Mainguy family, great friends of the Halheds, also lived in Chemainus, or rather in Westholme, somewhat south of the town on the Chemainus River: it is not surprising that two of the Mainguy children, Barbara and Richard, would take part in a cruise that included Halhed. J. Cathcart, a son of another Chemainus family, was also part of the Shamrock crew.<sup>91</sup> Since all four families had been settled locally for at least ten years at the time of the Shamrock voyage, for them a cruise

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<sup>91</sup> It is likely that H. ("Nellie") Newcombe was a daughter of the well-known Newcombe family of Victoria, which provided the British Columbia Provincial Museum with two directors, and members of which frequently cruised through the islands visiting friends. References to these cruises can be found in William Newcombe's correspondence with Francis Barrow held at the Provincial Archives of British Columbia. I have been unable to identify the remaining member of the crew, Malcolm Elliot, beyond establishing that he too lived in Chemainus and was a friend of Mainguy and Halhed families. An especially useful source of information about the identities of the Shamrock crew members is Linda Gustafson's Memoirs of the Chemainus Valley: A History of People (1978). Gustafson's definition of the Chemainus Valley includes Thetis and Kuper, separated from Vancouver Island by three miles of water. The fact that the families on Kuper and Salt Spring were so intimate with those in Chemainus and Westholme suggests that, as the progress of the log through the "neighbourhood" of the islands indicates, these distances over water were considered negligible for social purposes. Gustafson's book includes the text of another "ship's log," strikingly similar in style to the Shamrock log (although attributed to Malcolm Elliot, while the Shamrock log is attributed to Robbie Roberts), of an island cruise in 1907. Many of the Shamrocks took part in the later cruise.

through the southern archipelago constitutes a neighbourhood visit.

The Shamrocks, then, are in home waters: the trope of discovery carries quite different connotations in their account than it does in Blanchet's. In fact, their use of naval motifs resembles the Pinkertons', for whom the Gulf Islands are not local waters (hence their account of "going foreign" by crossing Boundary Pass), rather than linking them to the Blanchets, who share the Shamrocks' familiarity with Gulf Island waters. The Shamrocks treat naval references as an ongoing joke, the British navy constituting a highly-codified culture (of which the log form is an aspect) whose high seriousness makes their own chaotic, intensely playful account even more hilarious. The Shamrocks, however, are probably unconscious that they are parodying the naval trope: even if conscious of the parody, it is not deliberate but seems natural to them, given their cultural background. Entrenched by the mid-nineteenth century as the pre-eminent form of domestic vacation, the seaside holiday perhaps inevitably created a vogue for nautical associations: genteel English holiday-makers, for instance, often dressed their children, especially boys, in a form of sailor's attire. The first decade of the twentieth-century, furthermore, saw a rapid increase in imperial fervour, in Canada (on behalf of Britain) as in Europe. The particular version of naval culture that the Shamrocks imitate speaks more to the increasingly militaristic atmosphere of the decade before the First World War than to the late eighteenth-century preoccupation with discovery and exploration as exponents of imperial competition.

The first instance in which the Shamrocks act in this vein occurs before the evening meal on the fourth day of the log (the third of the cruise), following a log-walking

competition:

Saw strange craft, skipper ordered the crew on board (in uniform) to give chase. Mrs. Dooley jumped aboard at the last minute. Coxy came in contact with wet paint as we slipped our moorings and stood out to sea. Too late to overhaul the craft. Had short sail on account of Mr and Mrs Dooleys' altercations. Splicers spinnaker set with the aid of three men. All returned, with great appetites, to the sausage, which had suffered horribly.

The next day, the log's remark that "Coxy boarded the Pervis's flagship for butter" records not an encounter between boats but a trip to a farmhouse near the beach at Walker's Hook (Salt Spring), where the Shamrocks had established their camp the previous day. Two days later, the log mentions encounters with other ships in Active Pass: "Sighted Many craft, were mistaken for the German Emperor's private yacht and were saluted by the 'Miowera.'" The reference to the "German emperor's private yacht" is the most direct indication that the Shamrocks are influenced by events in Europe; the exchange of ships' salutes is another sphere in which imperial status between competing powers is acknowledged and reinforced. But to the Shamrocks such tensions in the outside world seem too distant to be taken seriously. Ten years later the German emperor would not be the subject for mirth that it is here. For that matter, everything to do with the navy itself seems the stuff of farce: as often as the Shamrocks indulge in boisterous imperialism, they narrate their experiences with allusions and puns on the popular songs of the day. The Shamrocks are addicted to their phonograph, to the extent of taking it with them on the yacht (with disastrous results for the machine, which breaks down on the third day). The log is as much a record of the songs the Shamrocks sing and of the people they visit as it is of their geographical

journey.<sup>92</sup>

The log combines a geographical precision or clarity with the obscuring language of the Shamrocks' private culture. The route that the Shamrocks trace is complex, especially since some passages from one island to another are made more than once. But the log always provides the geographical references that stabilize its otherwise resistant narrative. The route begins at Kuper and moves south to the west side of Salt Spring, then north again into Trincomali Channel and south-east to Montague Harbour on Galiano, through Active Pass to Burrill Point, also on Galiano. The Shamrocks cross the pass between the south shore of Galiano (Sturdies Bay) and Mayne (or more accurately between the Point Comfort Hotel just east of Georgina Point, and the Mayne Island Hotel at Miner's Bay) twice, before rounding Georgina Point and cruising south to Samuel Island. The Shamrocks negotiate Boat Pass (then called Canoe Pass) between Saturna and Samuel, then turn back to Active Pass, crossing the pass twice more between Galiano and Mayne. They leave Miner's Bay for Salt Spring, sailing to Ganges through Active Pass: from Ganges they make several short voyages, to Goat Island in Ganges Harbour and to the homes of Ganges settlers, before they start for home. Travelling north through Trincomali Channel, the Shamrocks stop for lunch at Penelakut Spit on Kuper (the other side of the island from Lamalchi Bay), then cross Clam Bay to the Nixon homestead on Thetis before returning to Lamalchi Bay. Unlike the Spanish account of the 1792 encounter with the islands slightly north of the Shamrocks' territory (Galiano to Gabriola with a brief look at Trincomali

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<sup>92</sup> Diana Loxley notes that nineteenth-century English emigrants considered themselves standard-bearers for civilization. The degree to which understanding the Shamrock log requires knowledge of late Victorian and Edwardian parlour songs demonstrates how much their language turns back to empire as much as springs from the local.

Channel through Porlier Pass) or Juan de Fuca's remotely possible presence here, the Shamrock log identifies landmarks so prolifically that its route is not in question. On the other hand, the log mentions these places laconically, to locate activities rather than to suggest that the achievement of these places is a goal in itself. Local places mean something more than topography or scenery to the Shamrocks: in almost every case (the exceptions being Montague Harbour and Goat Island), stops along the Shamrocks' route are made in order to visit people rather than places per se. Rather than focussing their attention on landscape, the Shamrocks trace a social topography through the Gulf Islands, visiting family and friends along the way and taking part in a continual round of dances, picnics, and musical and bridge evenings. The Shamrock log contains no landscape description.

The Shamrocks are part of a tightly-linked network of acquaintances and family connections. Their activities in Active Pass are augmented by Tom and Winnie Cayzer, children of Alfred and Mrs. Cayzer, who settled on Galiano in 1897, taking up land at the entrance to the Pass, just west of what is now Bellhouse Park. The Shamrock log refers to "Ruth and the Horn" as objects of great anticipation: Ruth was the daughter of Commander Eustace Maude and his wife: Commander Maude was a Royal Navy officer, who retired to Mayne in 1895, bought the Point Comfort Hotel, which the Maude's allowed to lapse as a business and which became solely their private home. The "horn" is the Georgina Point lighthouse, whose fog horn causes the Shamrocks some loss of sleep: the word "horn" is also a play on Cape Horn, since the lighthouse stands at the outer edge of the pass, where dangerous currents call to mind the perilous passage around the southern

cape. Point Comfort and the lighthouse lay directly across Active Pass from the Cayzer property on Galiano.

The Shamrocks make the trip down the east shore of Mayne to Samuel Island in order to visit Ralph Grey and his family (the only residents of the island at that time): Grey married Winnifred Higgs, the author of the diary, and by the time of the Shamrocks' visit they had several children. The log reports that the Shamrocks were shown the sights of Samuel by "Miss Higgins;" this was, of course, Mabel Higgs, who lived in her own small house on Samuel<sup>93</sup> before marrying Martin Grainger in 1908. As the Shamrocks negotiate Canoe Pass between Saturna and Samuel, the log reports that "1st mate cast sad and longing glances across the channel owing to 'pain passing' down to Victoria just before our arrival" (August 20). The italicized expression is a typically Shamrockian pun referring to one of the Payne brothers, who were homesteading on Saturna at the time. One hopes that the object of Mollie Roberts' affection was not Harold Payne, since he married Ruth Maude, or Gerald Payne, who married Elizabeth Finnerty, a San Francisco

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<sup>93</sup> The names of the houses the Higgs built speak to constructions of the local in an unexpectedly direct way. The house that Leonard and Em Higgs lived in on South Pender was called "Kloosh Illahee" by Salish living in the area, the term being Chinook for "good place." According to Robin Belitsky Endres, however, the word "illahee" means something more profoundly complex than merely place:

We are in exile in our own country. Our home is at once too familiar to be noticed, and so unfamiliar that it's exotic. The more we try to find it, the less successful we are. So home becomes the locus of spiritual desire. *Illahee* is the Chinook word for it: home, place, land, country. (265)

Mabel Higgs called her house on Samuel "The Loggia," a word bringing to mind the connotations of the Mediterranean and of an architecture that mediates between nature and civilization, inside and outside, that Cardero conjures up with his drawing of Malaspina Galleries.

woman. Whatever the romantic situation (which the Shamrocks could easily have invented as a joke), the Paynes were clearly part of the Shamrocks' social circle. Given the family and social connections between Saturna and Samuel and South Pender, knowing the Greys meant knowing half the residents of the outer islands.

The Shamrocks thus provide a guided tour of a generation of pioneering families, all British, all of roughly the same upper- and upper-middle class background. Their voyage of "discovery" is actually a voyage through settlement: the degree to which they are at home in the archipelago is demonstrated by how often they stop to visit. No single leg of the voyage lasts for more than half a day, since the settlers they consider their neighbours line the shores of their route. The Shamrocks clearly do not consider themselves to be in foreign waters; nonetheless they do find themselves literally in territory being mapped by their imperial government. During the summer of 1904 in which the Shamrocks took their cruise, Captain John F. Parry was resurveying the Gulf Islands in the Egeria, and the presence of the survey ship in their neighbourhood contributes to the excitement of the Shamrock expedition. On the third day, the Shamrocks lunch at Montague Harbour, then head south for Plumper (Active) Pass, seeing "many Egeria marks" along the way: these marks must have been surveying aids. The Shamrocks spend the afternoon of Sunday, August 21 compiling "The Commandments of the Shamrock Co.," the seventh of which reads "Thou shalt not sail too close to the stern of the Egeria [Nor thou; illegible] shalt ram her." The August 23 entry opens with the remark that,

Camp awakened by "R.P. Rithet" [an old steamship that served the southern islands on twice-weekly visits] blowing off steam in the "Small Hours." Schappie [a diminutive of chaperone; Evelyn Wilson] greatly excited sat up in bed shouting "The Egeria" at last." Three girls heard to murmur "S-c-h-

appie" as they went to sleep again.

The Shamrocks obvious consider the Egeria a crucial aspect of their cruise.

It is not until the penultimate day of the cruise, however, when the Shamrocks leave Salt Spring for Kuper and Thetis, that they finally meet the survey ship:

At the north end of Saltspring met HMS Egeria. Everybody held the break into the monotony with joy, except the Splicer, who was very green and stayed below. Baby climbed to the very highest point she could reach and waved her white shoes (perhaps her handkerchief was too dirty). Were saluted by the siren. The Captain (recognized by his bulk, thought it was a ventilator myself) waved something from the Bridge.

The tone of this encounter, especially the treatment of Captain Parry, suggests that the Shamrocks (or at least the Roberts') had some personal acquaintance with him. To a much greater degree than the Plumper fifty years earlier, the Egeria sailed through an settled Gulf Islands landscape. Whereas Captain Richards' presence in the islands can be found only in the toponymic traces he left behind, the Egeria's captain and crew are remembered also for their activities in the landscape. Even by 1863, the year that Richards concluded his survey in the islands, there would have been very few people to notice his passing. But the Egeria appears in at least two local histories--A Gulf Islands Patchwork and More Tales from the Outer Gulf Islands--not solely as a source of place names but as part of the settlement history of the islands. The Egeria thus forms part of the settlement narrative as much as it functions as a successor to the narrative of discovery that Richards established. Two episodes recounted in A Gulf Islands Patchwork connect the Egeria with settlers on South Pender Island:

In 1900 Gilbert Anslie [Ainslie in some accounts] sold his property on Saturna Island and purchased land on South Pender; he lived with G.F. Richardson until 1905. In this year H.M.S. "Egeria" was carrying out

hydrographic surveys in these waters; Anslie prevailed upon Captain John Parry to lend him men and equipment with which to dismantle his home on Saturna Island, bring it across the channel [Plumper Sound and Navy Channel] and re-assemble it on South Pender. This was achieved in record time, 36 hours. (38)

Captain Parry here ceases to be solely a detached, scientific observer but becomes a personality (as the Shamrock entry about him suggests) with a place in the social world of the southern islands, at least for the few years that the survey kept him in the archipelago.

The service that Parry extends to Gilbert Ainslie seems to exceed the mandate of a Royal Navy survey ship. The Egeria's role in a narration of settlement that exchanges one island for another, and that carries a home--emblem of settlement, of rootedness in landscape--across water, marks the ship and its activities as pertaining more to the life of a neighbourhood than to the mapping of a blank space, which is the usual function of a survey, laying out benchmarks upon which settlement can be founded. The second incident reinforces the Egeria's complex local role: in another article on South Pender, Beatrice Freeman describes the postal service at Bedwell Harbour:

The mail was received by A.R. Spalding [Freeman's father] with the help of his wife. In 1903, Spalding was appointed permanently as postmaster. It was his wife [Lilias Spalding], however, who filled the post, continuing to do so until she retired in 1943. The first sorting office was on the end of the wharf. In 1905, the postmaster fell heir to a cabin which had housed members of a hydrographic survey, carried out under the command of Captain John F. Parry, R.N., in H.M.S. "Egeria." The name "Egeria" is to be found carved into the rock face adjacent to where the cabin stood, at Bedwell Harbour. (170)

Another Spalding descendant, Arthur Pender, nephew to Mrs. Freeman, confirms this story in More Tales from the Outer Gulf Islands: "Granny's post office was the little guard house put up by the sailors from H.M.S. Egeria in 1905--of course, that's long gone now.

Boat days were always of a social nature . . ." (49). Pender's article is accompanied by a photograph of the post office shack, sitting on the grass just above the high tide mark of the white shell beach, at the base of the cliff that rises behind it. It can hardly have been built as a guard house, however, since its one tiny window would have been little use in observing the harbour, and against and for whom would the harbour be guarded? As Pender points out, steamer arrivals--that is, mail days--were the main occasions for islanders to see one another and exchange news: the Egeria, therefore, contributed to the southern outer islands the building that functioned as the centre of the neighbourhood, that signified neighbourhood itself.

These two incidents suggest that the "marks" of the Egeria on the Gulf Island landscape extend beyond navigational aids or hydrographic benchmarks to the physical landscape (in the ship's name carved in the cliff) and to the contemporary social landscape. This relationship of the survey vessel to the landscape surveyed mirrors a major difference between Parry's toponymic practice and Richards'. In only a very few cases were local European names so well established that Richards made them official rather than replacing them with names of his own choosing: Miner's Bay on Galiano (in Active Pass) is one example. But by the time Parry reviewed Richards' territory, European settlement was so advanced that European landscapes had proliferated along island coastlines. European presence along the coastlines prompted toponymic associations, even for a naval survey, that crossed the beach from the navy to the settlers above the high tide mark.

On two occasions, in Active Pass, Parry made this leap from sea to land, naming Collinson Point for an early Mayne settler and Matthews Point for an English family of

settlers on Galiano. Both acts of naming reveal conventions that constrained Parry's toponymic practice: the Matthews family lived near the point that carries their name, but the family had left Galiano by the time Parry named the point. As Walbran says, the name refers to "an English family of the name of Matthews residing for some years, just previous to that date, in the vicinity of Mary Anne Point" (325). The family does not appear in any of the local histories, and the name thus floats free from settlement history as it has become codified in those histories. It seems odd that Parry would commemorate settlement on Active Pass with the name of a family that had evidently decided that such settlement was either uncongenial or impossible. Perhaps Parry was copying Richards' practice of recording names of those who had preceded him on the Pacific station, naval appointments to particular places being generally temporary. On the other hand, Richards also used the names of his contemporaries, even his own ships and crew. But settlement is a fundamentally different act than discovery: to settle is to become rooted to land, to become identified with a particular place to the extent that the identity of the place merges with the identity of the land.

The other name Parry added to the pass was Collinson Point on Mayne, which honours William Tomkins Collinson. Unlike the Matthews family, Collinson has a prominent place in local histories: he settled at Miners Bay in 1858, the year of the gold rush that gave Miners Bay its name. Collinson was the first postmaster for the outer islands, being appointed in 1880, but he also provided other services to islanders: one Pender resident remembered disembarking from a steamer in Active Pass "into a rowboat operated between the islands by Tom Collinson of Mayne" (More Tales, 22), and the

Collinsons also operated a boarding house at the bay. Collinson's children remained in the islands: Naylor Bay on Active Pass is named for his son-in-law. In contrast to the Matthews family, Tom Collinson not only made his mark on Mayne Island but was still living, and serving as a Justice of the Peace, when Parry named the point in 1904. Furthermore, Collinson had a hand in Walbran's own work, being acknowledged as the source, by way of "personal reminiscence," of information Walbran included in his entry on Georgina Point.

The gist of Collinson's contribution is his tale of finding, in 1881, "under a stone on this point an English penny of 1784 and the remains of a seaman's knife." Walbran adds that "[t]he boat party under the personal direction of Captain Vancouver, when exploring from Birch Bay northward, stayed somewhere in the vicinity on the night of 12 June, 1792 (Vancouver, 8°, vol. II, p.8)" (Walbran, 205). Given Parry's care in commemorating Spanish exploration in the islands by bestowing references to Cardero on Gabriola Passage, and to Galiano and Valdéz on Porlier Pass, he must have found Collinson's story intriguing. Parry did not, however, try to commemorate Vancouver's presence by naming some part of the pass after some part of Vancouver's party, perhaps realizing, as Geoffrey Akrigg points out in his introduction to the 1971 reprint of British Columbia Coast Names, that Collinson's story must be a tall tale. But the story may nonetheless have played a part in Parry's decision to use Collinson's name when surveying Active Pass. Parry assigned Collinson's name not for a topographical feature in or near Miners Bay, or in the vicinity of Georgina Point, nor on Mayne Island at all, but for the point on Galiano that marks the northern shore of the western entrance to Active Pass. Parry had many un-named points

and bays to choose from in the eastern and central parts of the pass, so it is difficult to know why he did not choose a feature closer to Collinson's home: his shifting of names across the pass suggests that Parry shared the settlers' notion of the pass as neighbourhood, a feature that joins Mayne and Galiano rather than separates them.

What is remarkable about the Egeria's presence in Gulf Island waters at the same time as the Shamrocks is not that Parry bestowed these names but that he did not name many more features, especially on Active Pass, after the families who had settled along its shores. The Shamrock log records the transition by which surnames of settlers living in particular places gradually come to refer not so much (or at all) to the people as to the places with which they are associated in local mapping conventions. The Shamrocks, for example, have lunch on "Maude's beach;" by 1985, the Cummings are able to mark the bay at the head of which this beach lies as "Maude Bay."<sup>94</sup> The Shamrocks visit the Burrill brothers at their store on Galiano: the point on the west side of Sturdies Bay commemorates the brothers in Burrill Point. From the bay itself, the Shamrocks trek "for water first thing to Mrs. Sturdys" on the morning of August 19: provincial ferries now dock at Sturdies Bay. A week later, while waiting out the rain at the north end of Salt Spring, the Shamrocks are visited by Robert Shaw and Mr. Graham, who cross Trincomali Channel from what is marked on the map in A Gulf Islands Patchwork as "Shaw's Landing." Only the last of these names is no longer used: in the other cases, the place names the Shamrocks use as possessives of family names have, in succeeding decades,

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<sup>94</sup> The name "Maude Bay" does not appear in the 1979 Coast Pilot or Walbran, but other places on the coast are named for Commander Maude. He seems to have been toponymically significant as an officer of the Royal Navy, but not as a settler.

become established as place names. Why did Parry not take his cue from local usage (as demonstrated by the Shamrocks) and regularize these colloquial directions? One has to assume that Parry's toponymic impulses were primarily--even solely--commemorative. It would seem that for Parry, even more than for Richards, no name could be considered appropriate for a place until its referent had passed into history. Associations such as the Maude, Burrell, Sturdy, and Shaw family names would have been unacceptable because their usage referred in 1904, primarily to current conditions. The Matthews family's move away from Galiano was essential to Parry's adoption of their name for Matthews Point.

Active Pass is the confluence where two versions of discovery mediated by settlement--in the Shamrock's voyage and Parry's--meet and mingle in late August 1904. It is also the only place where the Shamrocks refer to local history. As they try to leave Miners Bay for Salt Spring, the Shamrocks find themselves trapped in the pass:

At 9.35 cheers for Mayne Island and we went out under full steam. Were hailed by old beach-comber to be told that we could not get out of the Pass. Engines not equal to the occasion. History repeats itself--Tom again to the fore--but only "Skookum Tom" (Kuper Indian) this time.

The cryptic final sentence makes sense only in the context of an event that occurred in the pass thirty years earlier. A Gulf Islands Patchwork recounts this event by quoting articles in The Daily British Colonist under the title "The Plumper Pass Vendetta" (Plumper Pass being an earlier name for Active Pass):

April 30th. Ever since Henry Georgeson, an old-time settler at Plumper Pass, gave evidence against "Indian Tom", who was executed for the murder of Clark, his life has been in constant danger from Tom's relatives who threaten Georgeson's life. . . .

For some time Georgeson has not dared to do any work on his ranch, fearing that he might be popped over by one of these prowling Indians. This is no romance--it is an un-exaggerated fact. . . (139)

The Shamrocks use Clark's murder and the vendetta it generated to give themselves a *frisson*: the general sense of crisis at the Shamrock's difficulties in the Pass may perhaps have associated it in their minds with danger of another kind. The Shamrocks are certainly accurate to mention Indian Tom here, however, for it was in this part of the Pass (the western arm) that Clark was murdered: Henry Georgeson was able to give evidence because his land on Galiano bordered the Pass at the place the murder occurred. Whereas the Colonist disclaims against "romance" in this episode, however, the Shamrocks recuperate the murder and its aftermath into romance.

In mentioning this event, the Shamrocks invoke a version of settlement history that belongs to a generation and more before their own. Given that the Shamrock cruise originated with the Roberts, children of a missionary to Salish people, the Shamrocks' relation to indigenous people is complicated, to say the least. The "Skookum Tom" they encounter in the pass, being a Kuper Islander, someone they would know as a matter of domestic routine, belongs to their home landscape. It is impossible to know whether this person was actually known as "Skookum Tom,"<sup>95</sup> but the name may have been made up on the spot: the construction of the name parallels "Indian Tom," its exchange of "Indian" for "Skookum" replaces race with language as signifier of race, and the Chinook word "Skookum," meaning good or strong, emphasizes the difference between this unthreatening ("only 'Skookum Tom'"), helpful neighbour and the hostile, alien murderer of thirty years earlier. The "only" may also suggest that the desires of romance find the present rather prosaic compared to early local history. The Shamrocks make contact in the Pass with a

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<sup>95</sup> See Francis Dickie, "Skookum Tom's feats led legends of the lusty" (1936).

powerful reminder of settlement as initial, dangerous encounter with nature, rather than the established neighbourhood of family and acquaintances their own voyage traverses.

The Shamrocks also encounter traces of initial discovery in the Pass, traces that reside in their use of the channel's earlier name, Plumper Pass. The history of the naming of Active Pass is difficult to fix precisely, since even Walbran does not mention the early name for the Pass in his entry "Active Pass." As Walbran explains, "In November 1857, the Active was engaged with the Plumper in Semiahmoo bay fixing the position of the 49th parallel in connection with the boundary question." This episode had a profound effect on the Gulf Islands for, as Walbran continues,

While lying here a white man named Macauley who had been illicitly supplying intoxicants to the surveying camps was made a prisoner by the Plumper's officers, and the Active conveyed him to Esquimault. On the way Macauley showed the crew of the Active a large quantity of gold dust which he had received in trade from the Fraser river Indians. The crew on arrival at San Francisco the following winter spread the news, and the rush to the Fraser river in 1858 was the result. (11-12)

The gold rush of 1858 made Active Pass suddenly extremely important: it became the crucial part of the route between Victoria (to which everyone from the United States arrived first) and the Fraser River. Furthermore, Miners Bay acquired its name at this juncture: it became the focus of all the travel through the Pass, since it was a convenient overnight stop before crossing the Strait. Thus the islands, especially those parts of Mayne and Galiano bordering the Pass, received a great influx of settlers who arrived in order to make a living providing services to the miners. Tom Collinson was one of these. The name "Miners Bay" was regularised by Captain Richards only one year later, in 1859.

But this act of naming becomes confused when it comes to the pass itself.

Strangely, Walbran begins his account with Parry, then returns to Richards:

The pass was resurveyed in 1904 by Commander John F. Parry, H.M.S. Egeria, when several names of points were added to the chart. Name adopted by Captain Richards, of the surveying vessel Plumper, on his hearing, from Captain Lewis, when the latter was piloting the Plumper through the pass in 1858, that the U.S.S. Active had in 1855 passed through previous to his vessel. (12)

In inverting the sequence of the two Royal Navy surveys of the pass, Walbran avoids having to mention that the pass was ever called anything but "Active Pass." This omission seems odd considering that the name "Plumper" occurs several times in Walbran's entry on Active Pass. The Shamrocks' use of the name "Plumper Pass" in 1904 suggests that Richards' act of naming was actually a renaming, one in which he relinquished the right of his own ship to attach its name to the pass in favour of the Active's right of precedence.<sup>96</sup> Walbran's treatment of this episode suggests that it affronts his imperial pride and that he wants to preserve Richards' authority. One wonders whether the image of Captain Lewis at the command of the Plumper did not wound Captain Walbran a great deal.

In recuperating the name "Active Pass," Parry must eliminate his toponymic predecessor, Captain Richards: Parry honours Richards' own choice for the pass, despite the long-established name "Plumper Pass" in local usage. The persistence of the vernacular name suggests that settlers along the pass recognized and honoured the notion of British "discovery" in their neighbourhood. In choosing the names "Collinson Point" and "Matthews Point" Parry returns the favour, bringing settlement across the beach into his marine survey. Parry not only commemorates settlement, however: he practises settlement

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<sup>96</sup> The name Plumper Pass also occurs in memoirs such as Winnifred Grey's diary: as it is transcribed in A Gulf Islands Patchwork, the diary's reference to Plumper Pass is amended with the parenthetical comment "now Active Pass."

too, by moving a settler's house from one island to another and by housing the South Pender post office. Representing, as marine surveyor, the notion of discovery, Parry nonetheless belongs to the neighbourhood. Like Blanchet's summer in the northern Gulf Islands, and the Shamrocks' cruise through the southern islands, Parry's passage through the islands, and his record of that passage in the names he chose, inverts settlement and discovery in the Gulf Islands region yet again.

## Cruising Narrative

*On the beach, where the sea wets the land, boundary disputes and ambiguities naturally pile up with bladderwrack and plastic bottles. The seaman looks anxiously to his depth sounder as he closes with the shore, for land is always dangerous to ships, while the landsman fears the water--the tide fanning out at speed over the level sands, the undertow, the deep. The law of the land gets into trouble when it reaches the ocean, often being hard put to it to say where the land is, or if the land is. Here on the Pacific Northwest coast, for instance, whose mixed diurnal and semidiurnal tides work in a lolloping daily rhythm of high-high-water, low-low-water, low-high-water, and high-low-water, the state of Washington holds title to the inshore seabed 'up to and including the line of ordinary high tide,' which would be a tidy definition, except that no such thing as an ordinary high tide has ever been witnessed in these parts.*

Jonathan Raban, "On the Waterfront," 37

*If you are squeamish*

*Don't prod the  
beach rubble.*

Sappho

*. . . the underlying horror which seems always to lurk somewhere beneath the flamboyant loveliness of a lonely English countryside in the height of summer, a presence of that mysterious dread, which the ancients called panic, had become startlingly apparent.*

Margery Allingham, Look to the Lady, 161

*Here you may come to discover that some places in the Gulf Islands have their very own resident freaky winds. They are swirly and squirrely. This means that the hook should be set well, with enough scope to allow for swinging in all directions. (You will read this warning in many places in the chapters to come. Take our advice. Don't count on what you might see at the moment--or the official weather forecast!)*

Al and Jo Cummings, Gunkholing in the Gulf Islands, 3

*It should be an invariable rule never to pass over kelp. In general, by keeping clear of kelp one keeps clear of danger, but this must not prevent attention to soundings as the rule sometimes fails. Kelp is always a sign of danger, and unless the spot where it grows has been carefully sounded, it is not safe for a vessel to pass through it.*

Government of Canada, Sailing Directions: British Columbia Coast (South Portion), 4

Kathrene Pinkerton's encounter with British colonial "possession" of the Gulf Island landscape precipitates a much more dangerous encounter with the actual topography, the final result of her inability to reconcile or overcome her conflicting constructions of the Gulf Islands as both settled, colonial space and foreign, empty space:

"We've got to get out of here," I said as we scrambled from the dinghy into the Yakima. "I washed my shirt in an Englishman's bathtub."

The skipper stared. He knew a single-track mind sometimes caused me to do odd things, but this demanded an explanation.

When he could stop laughing he began to scoff at my determination to leave the harbour. Neighbor trouble, he pointed out, didn't enter cruising life.

"Because it's so simple to change the neighborhood," I said.

In the end we did just that. We pulled up the hook and sailed away until we found a cove without a house on shore. It was dusk then, we were tired and dinner was late, and the skipper didn't think the incident so funny.

"Hope this gives you a good night's sleep," he said.

His speech was a cue to the news he broke soon after midnight when he shook me awake.

"We're aground, " he said. (45-46)

The Pinkertons spend the night on the beach, watching their boat settle with the ebbing tide and anticipating her slide into deep water should the cockpit fill as the tide rises.

Pinkerton's husband Robert explicitly connects the two events:

With first officer's tact, I had refrained from discussing causes. I suspected an incorrect computation of the tidal range. To me, a mathematical error would be as inevitable as any other act of God and should automatically absolve the skipper.

But Robert was apparently seeking some other explanation when he went

for a dinghy prowl in the first gray trace of daylight. When he returned I asked why we had gone aground.

"Because you washed your shirt in an Englishman's bathtub," he said.

"No," I said. "I mean really how did it happen?"

"I told you," he insisted. "When we finally found this harbor, I got careless and let out a lot of cable and misjudged the distance to the reef. When the breeze let up, we swung on to it. All on account of a shirt."

"And I didn't even get it clean," I mourned. (49)

The Pinkertons had set out from Seattle with an astounding lack of elementary marine knowledge: well aware of their ignorance, their passage through American waters is fraught with healthy fear. But the strategy that brings them through a gale in the San Juan islands--letting the boat ride at anchor with a great deal of cable--creates a very dangerous situation in calm conditions at their Gulf Island anchorage. As much as Robert Pinkerton attributes his error to the disruption of the afternoon, it is likely that the orderly appearance of the island shorelines leads the Pinkertons to assume that Gulf Island waters pose few dangers. Kathrene's annoyance with finding this orderly landscape already occupied necessitates the Pinkerton's search for a cove without a house, an uninhabited, natural landscape where the Pinkertons can be prior, discoverers. Kathrene's mistake is to perceive that order as inherent, a natural element of the landscape. Despite the absence of a house in the second anchorage, the Pinkertons continue to think of the island landscape as safe, even domestic space. Many years later, anchored in the islands for the winter while Bobs is at school in Victoria, Kathrene muses that "a boat at anchor furnishes the sea. A harbor without boats is not a harbor" (300). This notion of the boat as furniture makes the geographical space of harbour not natural topography but a room, the interior of a house (perhaps an extension of the boat as home). This impulse to describe landscape using metaphors that draw nature into the domestic sphere makes the topography of

"harbour" read to the Pinkertons as home, as protective enclosure, that is, for the boat and its occupants.

But the reef intrudes into the domestic order of the Yakima, creating chaos below decks. Once the Yakima has righted herself on the flood tide, the Pinkertons go aboard to assess the damage:

The galley showed what can happen when an improperly stowed boat moves quickly. The lesson was cheap at that, for it lasted through many years and probably saved much equipment when we hit heavy going. The dresser looked as though a giant with no food inhibitions had started to shake himself up a meal. A can of motor oil had merged with molasses to form a batter thickened with dried fruits, pickles, soap powders and condiments. A bottle of capers had been added as an afterthought. A jar of preserved eggs which had gone adrift had not helped the floor much, but they were now slowly dripping into the bilge. (51)

The grounding of the Yakima could have created narrative difficulties for Kathrene, since its potential danger abruptly interrupts the genre in which she writes, the light-hearted account of a pleasure cruise. Just as she veils her dismay at the bathtub incident behind the hyperbole of stereotype ("The man's ruddy coloring was turning purple in his rage, and even his sandy mustaches quivered. I feared an apoplectic stroke") and deflating similes ("Baggy black bathing suits had apparently bought for them to grow in, and white towels clasped to their bosoms, made them look like a row of enraged penguins"), Pinkerton alleviates the tension of the preceding narrative treating it as comic. She concludes with Bob's assessment of the appropriate response:

We three crowded into the companionway to look.

"What happens," the skipper asked our authority on ship etiquette, "after a disaster at sea?"

And Bobs, who had her own private stock of ginger beer, said promptly, "Break out the grog." (51)

With Bob's words, the chapter ends, and also begins, since its title is "Break Out the Grog." Pinkerton inverts the order of the statements in her paragraph describing the chaos in the cabin, beginning with the somber, reflective account of the practical results (a mess now prevents major damage later), leading into the ridiculous aspects of the mess itself. In yet another variation on the theme of domestic space and local natural topography, Pinkerton can confine the damage to the relatively unimportant area of household--specifically kitchen--order, and play with the notion of an extrahuman force, her "giant" representing the more abstract agents of tide and wind dabbling in a carnival-like inversion of human domesticity. Whereas the principles of expository prose demand that the consequences of the event follow the descriptive material, by placing them before the description, Pinkerton avoids ending her narrative on anything but an upbeat note. Bob's reference to grog deflects this episode, which might otherwise wreck Pinkerton's trajectory of amusing events, back into the narrative tide of the pleasure cruise log. The flow of narrative is back on an even keel before the next chapter opens.

The entire episode of the Pinkertons' time in the Gulf Islands threatens the conventions of cruising narratives on the British Columbia coast. Kathrene Pinkerton is forced to adopt devious rhetorical strategies in order to incorporate the Gulf Islands section of the first summer's cruise into the log. This transgression of the conventions is more profound for occurring in the Gulf Islands, since, in the received opinion of the coastal pleasure-boating community, the Gulf Islands are generally considered to be the quintessence of easy summer cruising grounds: undemanding, familiar, and close to home (meaning the urban sites of most departures). Pinkerton is betrayed not only by her

expectations of the cruise as a whole (that it will be an enjoyable adventure) but by her belief that the Gulf Islands will be the least demanding part of that cruise. For Pinkerton, as for many others, constructions of the Gulf Islands as pastoral, that is, natural yet orderly, landscapes, require narratives that conform to these expectations. The degree to which these assumptions obtain is demonstrated by the deep sense of shock and betrayal with which Pinkerton relates an experience of the Gulf Islands region that runs counter to the pastoral ideal. Whereas Chapter Five demonstrates that constructions of Gulf Island space as pastoral (in its many variants) generate a limited number of possible narratives and narrative modes, the current chapter examines how the stress of experience that challenges the pastoral model affects narratives. The misjudging of the Gulf Island landscape or topography (especially its marine element) that results from uncritical acceptance of pastoral constructions of its character can have catastrophic effects that are difficult to assimilate into Gulf Island narrative conventions.

Three's a Crew is one of a group of narratives that relate cruises along the British Columbia coast. Upcoast Summers (1985), by Beth Hill (based on Francis Barrow's diaries), and The Curve of Time (1968) by M. Wylie Blanchet also belong to this local, specialized genre, their similarity to Pinkerton's book making them useful points of comparison. Neither Blanchet nor Barrow mentions the islands except in the most cursory and tangential ways: in both of these books, the Gulf Islands region appears to be invisible, a nondescript space that must be traversed in order to reach more interesting waters and landscapes north of the Strait of Georgia. It would seem from the Pinkertons' attention to the advice of the Mr. Willis they meet in the San Juan Islands that their

original intention was either not to spend more time in the islands than necessary or to avoid the islands altogether. Small wonder then that the Pinkertons are knocked off balance, and Kathrene's narrative consequently threatened, by what happens to them there.

Even as the Pinkertons decide to take Mr. Willis' advice, for Kathrene the Gulf Islands are clearly separate from the main event: it is Mr. Willis' description of northern waters that captures her imagination:

He left us stirred and eager for farther waters, for white-capped mountains adorned by waterfalls and the jeweled blue of glaciers, for voyages up winding fiords flanked by bold cliffs and forested slopes. . . . That kindly man never knew it, but he had trimmed our sails for the north. (42)

R.D. Lawrence's Voyage of the Stella (1978) also belongs to the local, specialized genre of the British Columbia cruising narrative and, like the Pinkertons, he treats the Gulf Island archipelago as a corridor to the north coast rather than as an appropriate destination or as a landscape to be valued in its own right. Lawrence is particularly attracted to the emptiness of more remote coastal waters. Temperamentally, Lawrence differs both from the Pinkertons as a family and from Kathrene as narrator. He decides to make his cruise (as much a novice at the wheel of a cruiser as the Pinkertons) specifically as emotional therapy following the death of his wife; not surprisingly, his account shares little of the Pinkertons' cheerful exuberance. Whereas the Pinkertons sail "for health and pleasure," as Robert tells Customs in Nanaimo, Lawrence sails for emotional health and for science, his second aim being to "glean as much information as possible about the life forms that inhabit the tidal waters of the northwest coast of North America" (48). Writing in the role of naturalist rather than purely as pleasure boater, Lawrence conforms to the combination of autobiography, metaphysics, and science that conventionally defines nature-writing.

After leaving Victoria, Lawrence, like the Pinkertons, becomes accustomed to handling his boat while in American waters. By the time he returns to Victoria from delivering a friend to Astoria, the intricacies of tide and current, charts and navigation are no longer mysterious and Lawrence has developed a sense of identification with the Stella (he invariably uses the first person plural to describe his experiences in the boat). From Victoria, Lawrence heads north and drops anchor in the Gulf Islands, using the interlude of a calm afternoon and evening anchored in an unnamed bay at the south end of De Courcey Island to develop several expository digressions from his narrative. The sight of two harbour seals off Ruxton Island prompts a disquisition about the species, their appearance and fishing habits (44-45); the catching of a grilse for dinner releases Lawrence's ethical position on fishing (and hunting) (46-48); a preliminary search for small tidal creatures to study permits him to discuss the scientific aspect of his voyage.

Initially, therefore, Lawrence's sojourn in the Gulf Islands serves not as a narrative episode in its own right, but as a kind of anti-episode: the beautiful though undramatic landscape seems frozen into a snapshot or picturesque painting in the evening calm:

The day had been glorious, and although the sun was now low over the western side of Vancouver Island, it still highlighted much of the land and sea, creating uncountable reflections that sparkled with the intensity of crystal, a constantly changing display that contrasted dramatically with the heavy etchings observable among the trees and beyond the north faces of the rocks. The sky was mostly blue, but flotillas of white cloudlets scudded slowly southwards. Beyond the opening between De Courcey and Ruxton Islands, Pylades Channel looked as though it had been covered by a vast sheet of steel, presenting a seemingly solid surface which now and then produced brief glimmers of the sky; but the sea in our bay and beyond its mouth offered a true aquamarine tint, its waters calm and translucent except for occasional dimples made by the questing mouths of small fish, perhaps herrings. As I watched, a big salmon jumped, its graceful silver body clearly evident for a fraction of time, the splash made by its return to the

ocean magnified by the stillness that dominated the afternoon; the circles it left behind traveled slowly in ever-widening rings until they lost their momentum and were absorbed by the flat sea. (42)

Lawrence rarely uses this impressionistic mode of landscape description, sprinkling his account instead with quantities and measurements of time, duration, distance, wind speed and direction, the Stella's course and speed, and even her engine's revolutions per minute. Lawrence's talent lies in recounting intense action rather than describing landscape, but in this instance the very lack of movement or drama creates an effect worth recording. The dramatic intensity of this moment lies not in action or even in topography but rather in the chiaroscuro of "crystal" contrasted with "heavy etchings" of shadow. The momentary portrait of the leaping salmon, rather than breaking the effect, emphasizes the all-encompassing calm, as its disturbance is quickly absorbed into the stillness. The painterly effect of this description transforms the vital landscape into a static tableau. A sea that appears to be made of steel sheds the characteristics that separate it fundamentally from the land; rather than a changeable, unpredictable, and therefore potentially dangerous medium on which to travel, this sea seems a firm, stable element, belonging to the civilized, orderly world rather than to nature or wilderness.

After eating his supper, Lawrence returns to the deck "to sit for a time in quiet contemplation of the gathering darkness and the gradually appearing stars" (50). The evening coolness sends him below,

but just before seeking shelter in the cabin I paused for some moments to observe the land and the water, listening for night sounds and noting the reflection of the stars on the pellucid and calm surface. The ocean, as usual, was speaking, but in its quietest voice. It susurrated on the beach, whispered outside the bay, scolded the rocks that sought to interrupt its peaceful soliloquies. Somewhere near the western shoreline a sleepy duck

quacked softly; from the vicinity of Ruxton Island a hair seal barked, uttering a series of high, doglike yelps, and then was still. (51)

This portrait of the aural counterpart to the visual peace of his earlier description shifts the emphasis from picturesque effects toward a homelier cluster of references. The ocean becomes a soothing maternal influence, whispering and scolding softly, while wildlife is reduced to the sounds of a barnyard whose inhabitants are settling for the night. Absorbed into the vision of the landscape as pastoral, as often happens in Jean Howarth's stories, wildlife imitates domestic fowl and farm animals. Like the Pinkertons, Lawrence blurs land and sea into an essentially domestic space, producing a more explicitly pastoral version of that space than the Pinkertons do. The final phrase, "and then was still," effectively puts the entire scene to sleep. For Lawrence, as for the Pinkertons, the appearance of the Gulf Island landscape overcomes the element of "sea-ness" despite the perspective from the water. The quest for an uninhabited bay does not prevent the Pinkertons from thinking of the Gulf Islands as domestic space; their preoccupation with the appearance of the land deflects their attention from the inevitable potential danger of the land's proximity to the sea. Just as domestic concerns make Robert Pinkerton misjudge the distance between the Yakima and the reef, Lawrence also misjudges the landscape: he permits its appearance to override his knowledge (admittedly the product of reading rather than experience) of local weather, currents, and tides.

Four hours, and several pages of observation and description of intertidal life later, Lawrence takes to the dinghy again to return to the beach the specimens he has been examining, noting only the ebbing tide and the clear sky. At this point, Lawrence breaks his narrative with a gap of blank space, a device he (or his editor) commonly uses to

separate one episode or topic from another. Yet the gap represents not more than an hour or two of the same night, after which Lawrence awakens to rapidly increasing wind, and again--an hour later--to the realization that the bow anchor has dragged and that the ebbing tide has "revealed an array of vicious rocks that lay threatening in the eastern half of the bay" (57). What follows is an exhaustive and exhausting account of Lawrence's struggle to save the Stella from battering herself to pieces on the rocks and beach.

The gap in the text thus functions as an interval permitting the abrupt shifting of narrative gears. The change in narrative atmosphere parallels an abrupt shift in the nature of the topography; the "pellucid and calm surface" of the bay has given way to "vicious rocks." Lawrence never offers an opinion about why his anchor drags, but clearly the worsening situation, especially the winding of the second anchor rope around the propeller, develops from his inability to anticipate events, befuddled by sleep and the sheer unexpectedness of the situation. Lawrence deliberately overdetermines the peacefulness of Gulf Island space--which he treats as a narrative absence--where such a disruption cannot be anticipated, in order to increase the shock value of subsequent events. Certainly the narrative of his battle to save the boat, which includes an accumulating list of injuries (culminating in two broken ribs) requires little elaboration for its drama. Despite the much more violent intensity of this episode, however, in narrating it Lawrence does not face Kathrene Pinkerton's difficulties: in the context of his grief for his wife and the desire for physical challenge that grief has created, the episode at De Courcey merges smoothly with the rest of the narrative.

What is surprising is that the event occurs in the Gulf Islands, far to the south of

the coastal regions where such encounters are conventionally to be expected (the rapids of the Inside Passage or the open ocean in Hecate Strait, for example). For Lawrence as for the Pinkertons, the Gulf Islands seem to offer a safe, rather dull environment, clearly inferior to the wonders to be encountered farther up the coast. Like the Pinkertons, Lawrence is forced to reassess his notions of topography, as "the bay that sheltered us" (himself and the Stella) nearly becomes the site of his boat's sinking, the site of failure (he also shares the knowledge that this episode potentially marks the end of the voyage before it has properly begun). In this sense, Lawrence faces at least part of Kathrene Pinkerton's narrative problem: the near-sinking poses problems of timing and structure for the book as a whole because it occurs too far south and hence too early in the narrative.

Both Lawrence and the Pinkertons engage in an involuntary rite of passage in the Gulf Islands, a calamity of initiation that marks them as experienced sailors before they head north. But neither text makes any gesture toward such an interpretation of their voyage through the islands; instead, both parties treat their Gulf Island experiences with a certain embarrassment (which Lawrence perhaps tries to hide behind his manly determination to head north to Campbell River before having his broken ribs attended to and which prompts Kathrene Pinkerton's extreme annoyance at the weather that keeps the Yakima in Nanaimo harbour for a few days). Lawrence's two-part stay in the bay on De Courcey seems to have occurred in the wrong narrative sequence: had the calm, peaceful aspect of the islands appeared after the struggle to save the Stella, his assessment of the islands might have been quite different. Much farther north, and thus later in the narrative, Lawrence encounters a storm through which he runs across Millbanke Sound, after a sordid

and depressing incident in Bella Bella. The storm here provides him with the external challenge he needs to recover from his violent encounter with racism and he welcomes the increasingly difficult conditions: "The ocean attacked, and my being responded instantly to the challenges of survival. First came fear, then exhilaration, and fear again, and finally a determination to run this gauntlet of wind and sea" (107). After the storm, the calm also exhilarates Lawrence, prompting him to one of his rare landscape descriptions:

The tide was at dead low, and there were wavelets decorated by glassine crests, translucent, placid corrugations the color of emeralds and just as sparkling. The relatively humble mountains that predominate on the islands in this area showed apple green, except for an occasional one, taller than the rest, that still preserved a halo of crusted snow on its crown; evanescent strings of creamy spume played at the feet of a cluster of islets visible fine on the starboard bow, while some nine miles ahead, Cone Island showed as a darkly verdant hump. (109-110)

The composition differs little from Lawrence's account of his evening in the Gulf Islands; his terms are picturesque rather than sublime, the intense greens belonging more to the language of pastoral than of seascape. What is different from the Gulf Island description is the scene's effect on Lawrence:

I stood up, admiring the magnificent transformation, while my innermost self became regenerated, charged with excitement and a joie de vivre so powerful that goose bumps arose on my entire body. I reached for a notebook that I kept handy on the chart shelf and wrote in it: "This is what I came for. It's like the end of the rainbow and the road here, no matter how rough, was well worth the traveling." (110)<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> This is not the language of the sublime, which Lawrence himself finds inadequate farther up the coast, along British Columbia's border with Alaska: "Here lies a region of bigness and splendor, a corner of our continent so blessed with scenery that an observer is tempted to describe it in superlatives using words like *grandiose*, *magnificent*, *breathhtaking*. But although these terms apply, they cannot, either individually or collectively, do justice to the Alaska-British Columbia milieu" (208-09). The lack of appropriate language to describe the far north coast does not bother Lawrence, however, since he responds to that landscape much more abstractly: while he appreciates its beauty, it nonetheless remains

Despite his expectations about the increasing drama and intensity of northward movement, Lawrence responds less to latitude than to the combinations of weather and topography that determine the quality of his experience. The storm and its aftermath following his departure from Bella Bella together function as one of the culminating moments of the narrative, a point of climax precisely because of the sequence of intense physical struggle with the elements followed by psychic peace that echoes the benign aspect of sea and islands once the storm has passed. Without the preceding storm, it is unlikely that Lawrence would have described his view of Finlayson Channel, however attractive, with anything like the same enthusiasm. By contrast, the Gulf Island episode cannot be shaped into such a recognizably dramatic episode: the meaningful sequence of storm and calm at Millbanke Sound is inverted and thus loses its significance. Since it cannot be interpreted in a way that makes the narrative path seem inevitable and right, the earlier incident remains unassimilated into the ideology of quest and healing that informs the book's structure. Lawrence thus betrays a deeply conventional approach to the relationship between landscape and narrative. Bypassing the pastoral landscape as inadequate to his needs, Lawrence instead invests the wilder landscape farther north with the qualities that will re-establish his emotional health.

Lawrence's response to the north coast topography mirrors a similar engagement with its wildlife. Another climax of the Stella's voyage occurs when Lawrence encounters a killer whale in Green Inlet and, for a space of weeks, enjoys its almost daily visits. Believing that he has established a rapport with the whale (whom he names Klem in

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scenery, separate from the journey and the quest for emotional health.

honour of the Kwakiutl man at Klemtu who suggested he visit Green Inlet), Lawrence finally slips into the sea on four occasions to play with the whale. The experience marks the high point not only of this voyage, but of Lawrence's entire life:

Nothing I had ever done before that time, or have done since, can remotely compare to that first dive with a bull 'killer' whale under the waters of Green Inlet. . . . the experience is mine until I die. It is a sustaining memory that is always fresh, that often lulls me to sleep at times when I am restless. In the darkness of my bedroom I again see Klem, dive with him, experience the inexpressible joy of living some minutes in the world of the whale. (163)

When at last Lawrence leaves Green Inlet, he is "conscious of the fact that the man who departed on board the Stella had been unalterably changed by a whale called Klem" (163). The pathetic fallacy of the whale's having a name independent of Lawrence's construction of him suggests the degree to which Lawrence invests his surroundings with personal significance. Such an investment is not uncommon, but the mechanisms by which Lawrence develops such associations are highly visible in this text, particularly because of the narrative frame of loss and recovery within which he recounts the voyage.

Identification with the killer whale constitutes the moment at which Lawrence feels himself to have been transformed by the voyage, the moment therefore at which he achieves what he set out to achieve. Lawrence generally treats the wild animals, birds, and fish he encounters as extensions of the coastscape; their character and appearance, and his interaction with them, reflect or intensify his responses to the inanimate, more abstract configurations of light and colour. Just after he records his excitement at the transformed seascape following the storm in Millbanke Sound, Lawrence finds his exhilaration increasing at the sight of a school of Dall porpoises:

If I had felt excited before, I was ecstatic as I cut the Stella's speed down to minimum revs, tied the wheel, and hurried forward to scramble through the hatch and stand on the bow deck, feasting my gaze on these wonderful, friendly little mammals . . . (110)

One other incident raises equally dramatic feelings, when Lawrence comes face to face with a blue shark: here the excitement is generated solely by fear, whereas with Klem fear was tempered with delight and fellow-feeling, but Lawrence's experience of coastal wildlife culminates in these three incidents. Until sighting the Dall porpoises, Lawrence's observations of wildlife have been certainly interested, but lack the emotional intensity that he demonstrates here: the developing relationship with Klem is the most extended example of such emotional identification with his subject.

When these experiences are placed against Lawrence's naturalist activities in the Gulf Islands, the contrast between his reactions in the two environments is almost farcical. While anchored off De Courcey Island, Lawrence goes below decks to examine the creatures he has found that afternoon in the island's intertidal zone:

On my return to the Stella, I took stock of my finds: two chitons, one three-inch clingfish, a larval shrimp, one eelpout and two jellyfish. I had also collected some bladder-wrack seaweed and a bull-kelp float to which some two feet of stem adhered. (50)

Each specimen merits a page of observation and description, including material presumably gleaned from field guides. These descriptions use a detached, precise, highly impersonal style, scrupulously noting details but lacking any sense that these animals and plants are intrinsically compelling. The mammals that so captivate Lawrence in northern coastal waters occur in Gulf Island waters also, though in the interval between the Pinkertons' sight of orcas in Puget Sound in the 1920s and Lawrence's voyage in the 1970s sightings of

large marine mammals have certainly become rarer in southern waters. But whereas for Kathrene Pinkerton the notion of north conjures up purely topographical desires, Lawrence explicitly associates northern waters with the more spectacular species he wants to study. For him, the Gulf Islands are properly the zone of intertidal life, the littoral zone between land and sea that contains a decorous, domestic collection of small fish, shellfish, invertebrates, and plants. And whereas Lawrence, in examining these specimens, fulfills the biologist's responsibility to treat all species as equally important objects of scientific study, he responds to the large mammals and fishes with a much more than scientific interest. Lawrence's delight seems to stem from the responsiveness of these individuals to his presence: he is able to develop, for example, what he interprets to be a fairly elaborate game with the porpoises, thrilled at their instantaneous response to his changes in the Stella's course and speed. In the case of Klem, Lawrence is elated because the whale seems interested in him as an individual rather than simply as a member of an alien species, a foreign phenomenon. Even the shark considers Lawrence worth investigating. The intertidal specimens Lawrence finds in the Gulf Islands cannot satisfy him with a similar sense that he has been noticed, that his presence in the external environment can be naturalized by the benign interest the larger creatures take in him. In northern waters, science is revealed as merely the point of departure for his program of personal transformation.

The "magnificent transformation" of the ocean's aspect--from storm-tossed to verdantly welcoming--after Millbanke Sound offers Lawrence an objective correlative to his own desires: the aesthetics of weather and topography promise Lawrence a parallel

transformation of self, from grief to emotional health. For Lawrence, the Gulf Islands could never fulfill the narrative desires that inform his voyage and his account of it. The waters in the southern Strait of Georgia cannot function as the "end of the rainbow," as Lawrence calls the Millbanke Sound episode; the geographical imperative of north precludes epiphany in the bay off De Courcey. The reference to an image representing a powerfully conventional quest pattern indicates that the mere "southness" of the Gulf Islands, geographically so close to Lawrence's port of departure in Victoria, prevents their playing a climactic role in his narrative.

Lawrence's text resembles Pinkerton's in its manipulation of the genre of the ship's log: both books encompass not simply the trajectory of a voyage (or, in the case of the Pinkertons, variations on a repeated voyage) but the entire episode of voyaging by boat as a phase in their lives. Both Three's a Crew and The Voyage of the Stella begin with the dream of cruising up the British Columbia coast, progressing through a lengthy account of the purchase of the boats, the necessary improvements, the purchase and stowing of supplies, before the actual voyage begins. For Lawrence, as for the Pinkertons, the narrative of preparation thus constitutes a large portion of the complete text, an arguably disproportionate amount, unless the emotional investment that this preparation entails is taken into account. This preparation builds suspense, elevating the voyage north to the status of something more than simple travel. For this reason, the genre of the ship's log, on which both of these books are based, creates some difficulties in both texts. Every ship is required to keep a log, whose version of events has a legal and conventional status beyond the scope of mere journal-keeping. Like scientific discourse, the language of the

ship's log is conventionally impartial and detached, all events having equal weight, functioning simply as points of distinction between one day's cruising and the next. Similarly, each day's entry in the log is also of equal importance, the last few days before arriving back at home port as significant as the first days out. For the Pinkertons and Lawrence, however, narrative impetus requires that the voyage out carry far more significance than the return.

In part this imbalance is a function of the British Columbia coast's geography: other than the slight variations of route possible through the various island archipelagos along the coast, the voyage must adhere to a fixed path. The lure of north (or more accurately northwest) is not simply an idea, it is a geographical necessity; the notion of a circuit is not a possibility along this coast for small cruising vessels. In narrative terms, therefore, the apex of the voyage must occur at the most northerly point of the voyage, from which point the cruise must retrace its previous route. The second part of the voyage, therefore, risks seeming redundant: discovery (whether topographical or spiritual) is necessarily the province of the outward voyage, while return lacks any such climactic possibility. The Gulf Islands, lying at the end of the return journey, merit no further attention than they do at the start of the voyage.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Both Lawrence and the Pinkertons are writers by trade, their respective cruises serving as professional material-gathering as much as anything else. It is not until toward the end of *Three's a Crew*, however, that Kathrene Pinkerton overtly refers to her log-keeping as performing a deliberately intertextual function:

Office logging gave me a tremendous number of notes to write each morning. I would think we'd exhausted the subject of donkeys, logs and loggers' viewpoints when we'd uncover a new golden vein of information. I wrote until I had writer's cramp and then pre-empted the skipper's engine room studio. Notes from our summer voyages were beginning to fill several

In Love and Salt Water (1956), Ethel Wilson probes the potential menace

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books for we had gathered a vast amount of material, all invaluable fictional background.

Robert had suggested I write facts and figures indexed under different headings--fishing, logging, country, and boats. Finally when I became so fascinated by impressions which had no place under these headings or in the ship's log, I began a volume of my own. Robert jeered. He'd always maintained that a writer should carry the feel of a country and its people in his head and not in a notebook. (150)

The Pinkertons thus keep several concurrent logs, among which the issues of appropriate subject matter and organization pose problems. The version of events that Kathrene records in her own journal, which Robert mocks, proves to be most valuable, even in her husband's eyes:

One evening, in a carping spirit, he flipped over the pages of what I called my personal log. Then he settled himself more comfortably, adjusted the light and began to read. When I was ready for bed he was still reading.

"This is stuff you'll always be glad to have," he said. "It doesn't make any difference if you never use it. You've put the fun of two summers into words." (150)

In fact, of course, Kathrene's personal log, forming as it does the basis of Three's a Crew, had a greater value than the more ostensibly "useful" records they kept of their trip: this book alone among the several each wrote, to say nothing of their extensive articles and stories, remains in print. Kathrene herself wrote many juvenile novels set along the British Columbia-Alaska coast, using the material that she collected in her "office log." Robert too was a novelist, though his work seems to have been less successful than his wife's. In their search for "invaluable fictional background," both adult Pinkertons demonstrate a preoccupation with the relationship between landscape and narrative.

Lawrence also makes extensive notes of his experience, keeping a notebook handy in the chart room so as not to lose any of his observations. Like the Pinkertons, Lawrence published many other books about living in the wilderness, financing his solitary northern sojourns with the narratives he created out of them. Lawrence's metier is not fiction, however, but exactly the kind of autobiographical account of encounters with wildlife that distinguish the most lively sections of The Voyage of the Stella. For both parties, the intention of making narrative out of their experience must have been made nearly simultaneously with the decision to make the voyage in the first instance. Given that neither Lawrence nor the Pinkertons had cruised before, one wonders whether they had in mind specific intertexts on which to model their own work, or whether the conventions of ship's log writing provided a sufficiently distinct notion of a genre in which such cruises could be narrated.

latent beneath the pastel surfaces of the ocean, where once again the Gulf Islands function as the space in which the anticipated narrative, of pastoral relaxation and pleasure, is contravened. Like Lawrence, Ellen Cuppy and her father use ocean travel as therapy for their grief after the death of Ellen's mother. The voyage from Vancouver to Europe certainly has an effect: Frank Cuppy meets his second wife, and Ellen finds herself changed in undefined ways: "to Ellen the voyage was a shaking and transforming experience with which nothing in her future personal life was comparable . . . until she met George on the railway platform and for the duration of her life thereafter" (60). The third part of the novel, which culminates in that meeting at the train station, contains the most dramatically violent event in the book, which also takes place on the sea.

Ellen Cuppy volunteers to take her rather coddled nephew Johnny for a week's vacation at Aunt Maury's cabin on Galiano Island. The boy's imagination seizes on Ellen's promise of the sight of seals in Active Pass, without which, she gradually realizes, his visit will lack an essential experience. After several seal-less days, therefore, when Johnny suddenly shouts that he has seen seals in the pass, Ellen rushes to manoeuvre the rowboat to the right place. In her haste, she apparently forgets both the tidal rip in the pass and the steamer that is due at that moment: the combination of the rip and the steamer's wake overturns the boat, and Ellen barely manages to hold the boy until he is taken from her by a fisherman neighbour. For several minutes, the boy's life is uncertain, until finally Aunty Maury revives him. In the meantime, Ellen's face has been torn by the gunwale of the fisherman's boat, and the remainder of the novel turns on whether the scar that remains will wreck her intended marriage.

Before the accident occurs, Wilson describes the Gulf Island landscape at such a languorous pace (taking up all of Chapter Thirty-five) and in such pastoral language as to create a narrative environment where violent disruption of expectations seems unthinkable. At the end of Chapter Thirty-five, Wilson shifts perspective to compose a view of the islands as seen from the air:

On a flight from Vancouver to Victoria the traveller looks down on those innumerable tree-filled islands of dark green colour, and sees occasional clearings of soft green pastures or orchards, a white farm or outbuildings. The traveller thinks, down below me is a life which is idyllic, and so, from the air, it would seem. But life on ever so beautiful an island can cease to be an idyll when the island is storm-bound, or repairs cannot be made, or the baby is born, or the boat's engine breaks down incurably and one cannot afford a new one, or the dweller becomes bored. Nevertheless, life on these islands must be as nearly idyllic as life can be. There lie these jewelled islands on the ocean. The crooked shores are laced with a thin line of foam, of spume, as white as marble. Then comes a setting of translucent pale jade green where the ocean is shallow, and then the ocean on which you look down resumes its depth and solid blue, streaked with tides, flecked with wrinkled waves. There go the toy tugs, apparently immobile for all their going, and behind them are toy booms and rafts of logs which the airborne traveller will have to believe are gigantic. Away stream the vees which are the lines made in the water by the passage of the boats, great and small. Look intently at the jewelled islands; so short is the flight over the islands of the Gulf of Georgia to Victoria, and then they are gone.

This, then, was the place to which Gypsy [Ellen] and Johnny went; it was old to her and new to him. (137)

The shift in perspective from the narrative involving Ellen and Johnny to a generic traveller, viewing the islands from the detached position of a plane over the Strait in the eternal present, allows Wilson the distance necessary to describe the islands' appearance in terms very similar to those used by Pinkerton and Lawrence. Like Pinkerton, Wilson dwells on the apparent orderliness of the Gulf Island landscape, on the pastoral alternation of trees with "soft green pastures or orchards" dotted with white farmbuildings. She also

shares Lawrence's tendency to reduce that landscape, in combination with the surrounding ocean, to abstract chroma: against the two greens of forest and pasture, Wilson aligns the spume, "white as marble," at the shoreline, and the various shades of ocean beyond, from "translucent jade green" in the intertidal zone to the "solid blue" of the ocean too deep for its colour to be affected by light reflected from the seabed. Wilson's repeated references to the islands as "jewelled" also merges with both Lawrence's and Pinkerton's descriptions. Like Lawrence, Wilson uses the element of distance to make the ocean appear to be as solid and hard as the islands themselves, the "wrinkled waves" suggesting the texture of a firm, immobile surface rather than movement (like the tugs, "apparently immobile for all their going"). The distant, vertical perspective also allows her to reduce the islands to a scale almost inconceivable as pertaining to geography at all: the islands, like jewels, are so small that special attention must be paid to them on the flight lest they be missed altogether. Just as Pinkerton cannot take the islands' appearance seriously because of their orderliness, their intense domesticity, Wilson here relegates the islands, by metonymic association with the tugs that must negotiate them in the Strait, to the status of toys, as domestic an image as Pinkerton's "bathtub."

Wilson's narrator balances the idyllic appearance of the islands from the air-traveller's perspective with more concrete instances in which life in the islands is not idyllic at all. But buried as it is within a very long description that emphasizes this idyllic appearance, the single sentence that qualifies the description by suggesting that Gulf Island life is not seamlessly beneficent is easily overlooked. The descriptive paragraph ends in a manner strikingly like Lawrence's account of evening off De Courcey Island, the phrase

"and then they are gone" echoing Lawrence's final phrase "and then was still." Despite the quite different contexts in which these two phrases occur, their effect is the same--to round off, eliminate, dismiss the Gulf Islands as significant landscapes that demand attention. In both cases, the final phrase has the narrative effect of deflecting anxiety, of deferring expectations of narrative drama, to say nothing of violence, in the text that follows.

Against this detached, distant viewpoint of the Gulf Island landscape, the novel's events in Active Pass assume greater intensity. And once again, as in The Voyage of the Stella, attitudes toward wildlife prompt narrative consequences. For Johnny, the entire success of his encounter with the Gulf Island landscape depends on encountering seals. Whereas for Lawrence the harbour seal, commonly seen in the islands, is of scientific but not emotional or narrative significance, the species assumes a pivotal narrative importance in Love and Salt Water. Wilson prepares for the accident in Active Pass as soon as the possibility of the holiday on Galiano is broached to the boy. His delight at the idea is intimately concerned with seals:

Johnny said "Oh Aunty!" and over his face ran the little preludes and pulses and ripples of thought and feeling gathering for expression . . . the soft flush came and receded . . . the eyes opened, then crinkled. Hang it all, little John, she thought, you'd better have been tough. It's easier than all this ecstasy.

"Is that where you said there were seals?" (137)

Ellen's reply demonstrates a construction of Gulf Island wildlife that indicates a parallel attitude to landscape:

"Yes, there are often seals. They hunt for salmon and sometimes when they stop hunting under the water they come to the top and their heads rise out of the water with hardly a ripple and they look about them like nice dogs with round heads and big soft brown eyes and you'd really think they could talk and read. They are very inquisitive and when you're rowing

they'll follow you along, and go down, and come up again nearer the boat or farther away. They look at you, and all of a sudden they're gone . . ."

"Will they look at me?"

"Yes. I think I can promise you that a seal will pop up his head and look at you."

"Oh, what will he think I am?" (137-38)

Like the description of the Gulf Islands from the air, Ellen uses the continuous present to describe the seals, a form of discourse in which the notion of narrative loses meaning. In both cases, the continuous present underscores the association of timelessness with the Gulf Islands, an association that Wilson is at pains to develop: "The island tempo, the dreaming-on-a-wharf tempo, pervades and prevails" (164). Any suggestion of sequence in Ellen's account of the seals' behaviour is offset by her repeated use of the conjunction "and" rather than more precise prepositions. Like Lawrence, Ellen focusses her description on the seals' dog-like appearance, but she foreshortens the distance between wildlife and domesticity even further than Lawrence by ascribing to the seals the apparent ability to talk and read, to behave, in short, like humans.

Johnny seizes upon that which Lawrence would agree is the most important element of seal behaviour--their evident interest in human activity. The boy effortlessly makes the imaginative leap to wonder what effect his presence in the Gulf Island landscape might have on the wildlife of that landscape. Unlike the detached perspective of the air traveller, who can view the Gulf Islands without in any way being part of the "scene," the child's viewpoint assumes an interactive relationship with nature. Johnny's question startles Ellen into considering her own status in that landscape, one that is "old" to her, in which, as her family continually reassure themselves, she is at home:

"He might think you're a funny-looking Indian the wrong colour, because

he often sees Indians sitting in boats, and you'll be sitting in a boat, but you'll be a pink colour and the Indians are brown. The Indians go along the shore slowly in a canoe or a rowboat or they go further out in little fishboats with an engine. They sleep on the fishboat. I sometimes think it would be nice to be an Indian, Johnny, don't you?" And that started her asking herself, Do I really? If you are an Indian do you begin thinking from a totally different premise? Do you then see the world and people differently and differently conditioned? How can we understand? and how can we legislate? (138)

With this thought the chapter ends, and never again does the subject of indigenous peoples appear in the novel. Ellen's interior monologue might thus be considered a flaw in the book, since it appears to raise an issue that is never developed, much less resolved, certainly not incorporated into the novel's narrative flow. But the issue of place and placelessness has been present since the beginning of the book, even in Ellen's childhood nickname (which persists into adulthood) of "Gypsy." Since Ellen's great virtue is her only half-conscious desire for authenticity, it is not surprising that she alone in this novel considers the question of indigenoussness. Her description of the seals leads her, by a process of association rather than logic, to wonder at her own romantic desire to be Indian: since the conversation with Johnny has been about the seals' perspective toward humans, Ellen links seal-ness with Indian-ness, the seals' apparent human-ness creating a subtext of speculation about the Indians' apparent wildness. From identification with Indians (her comments implying that they are just like us, except brown rather than pink), Ellen suddenly realigns her categories of the landscape (humans on one side, wildlife on the other) to acknowledge the separateness of First Nations perspectives from her own European conventions.

Rather than being an incidental and charming though rather dull element of the Gulf

Island landscape (as Lawrence seems to consider them), the harbour seals in Love and Salt Water acquire a cluster of associations with the local landscape. And it is their overwhelming significance for Johnny that causes Ellen to forget the lessons of her familiarity with the islands, which Wilson metonymically signifies by Ellen's expertise in a rowboat. In her Afterword to the New Canadian Library edition of the novel, Anne Marriott questions the degree to which Ellen allows her sensitivity to Johnny's excitement to overcome her own common sense:

It is a little hard to believe that Nora, besotted by her child, would allow Ellen to take him to an aunt's cottage on Galiano Island, close by Active Pass, a famous danger spot on the British Columbia coast. . . . Harder still to credit that Ellen, an experienced coast-dweller, would forget about the rip tide in the Pass, not to mention the steamer which passes through it daily between Vancouver and Vancouver Island. But life, Wilson declared, sets traps for all, into which all of us fall. (175)

By implying that Wilson contrives Ellen's lapse, Marriott suggests that the Gulf Island section of the novel serves merely to create a moment of narrative intensity, whose effects are not resolved until the final scene of the novel.

The narrative drama of the accident in Active Pass surpasses even Lawrence's struggle to save his boat, not simply because the stakes are higher but because of the greater violence of Ellen's physical experience. The tension of Ellen's blind search for Johnny in the whirlpools of the pass seems to last forever. Yet in Love and Salt Water, as in the cruising narratives, the dramatic Gulf Island episode, heightened by contrast to the preceding mood of pastoral abandonment, functions not as a culminating moment but as the prelude to the real event. The scar that the accident leaves on Ellen's face is the central fact around which the final question of the novel revolves--the authenticity of her

engagement to George. In this novel, therefore, as in the cruising narratives, the Gulf Island sequence remains an episode, a narrative anomaly, somewhat separate from the text as a whole.

The waters of the Gulf Islands region prove unstable territory for those who assume that the apparent order of the region's domesticated, pastoral aspect reflects the character of the local sea. The islands offer a salutary lesson against the pathetic fallacy: on the sea, as in the forest, nature is not merely background to local narrative but the source of that narrative. The version of pastoral that Jean Howarth posits is not the conventionally beneficent, innocuous site of leisure but a much more radical blurring of the boundary between humans and the wild. On the sea, however, the Gulf Islands region makes that boundary absolute, despite visual cues to pastoral in the island coastscape. In the region's waters, the necessarily episodic character of cruising narratives aligns with the prevalent Gulf Island narrative form, a series of sketches, which, like the cruise narrative, produces a sequence of episodes rather than a larger narrative of which those stories might be integral parts. Were it not for the episodic nature of cruising narratives, events that violently contradict the pastoral conventions within which Gulf Island texts usually function could not be assimilated into those narratives. Crossing the beach from island to sea means encountering more complex, less predictable relations between landscape and narrative.

## Sites and Stories: Intertext and Indigene

*Islands are our neighbours wherever we sail on this west coast, and as almost every one has a story or incident of interest connected with it, we feel much at home with the land.*

Will Dawson, Ahoy There!, 88

*Rose: He's gonna be crazy about the beaches. I'd no idea it was this pretty. We tried to read up on it in the library. You never described it in your letters.*

*Muriel: I never wrote.*

Margaret Hollingsworth, Islands, 22

*Books led to boats and back again.*

Charles Lillard, The Call of the Coast, 161

The notion of "region" has demonstrably entered local collective consciousness once that region's writing has coalesced into a canon. To think in terms of a canon changes space to place. The canon's content is unimportant--key texts are always negotiable--since the crucial step is to acknowledge a regional canon can be identified. The Gulf Island texts mentioned in preceding chapters ignore each other: specifically Gulf Island intertextual references simply do not appear in Gulf Island writing. Refusing to acknowledge constructions of the islands in other works underscores the fundamental purpose of Gulf Island writing to date--to establish origins, or alternatives to origins, in order to claim place by claiming priority. Like Captain Richards, writers of Gulf Island-ness treat the

landscape--the state or condition of Gulf Island--as a topographical opportunity both to reflect personal preoccupations and to establish an imperial geography. Representation of the Gulf Islands remains, if not colonial, then certainly neo-colonial, the difference in the late twentieth century being that the Gulf Island landscape is claimed by an empire of self rather than of nation.

The sole instance of local speaking to local before the 1990s occurs in Wilson's Love and Salt Water (1956), when Ellen Cuppy's Aunt Maury introduces her to Walbran while she is staying on Galiano: Aunt Maury is a native of Nova Scotia, but given that salt water is salt water, embraces her new home whole-heartedly: "the British Columbia coast with its history was hers," to the extent that "[h]er first preference after her family is Captain George Vancouver" (143). This preference makes Walbran's British Columbia Coast Names a text of near-sacred importance to her:

The first night that Ellen and Johnny were at her cottage, and Johnny was asleep in his room, Aunt Maury under the light of the lamp said, "See this book? I've got it at last. I've been hunting for it for ages. It's out of print. It's just come. See? It's a *Walbran*" (what's a Walbran?), and under the lamplight in the dark cottage Aunt Maury, leaning over her book at the table, told Ellen about Captain George Vancouver sailing these indented and unknown shores from south to north, and charting and naming them (their names and charts remain to this day) "for us who have followed so easily after," she said. (169-70)

In Aunt Maury's eyes, Vancouver unqualifiedly conforms to the heroic model of the discoverer: the making of charts and the bestowing of names, ephemeral practices whose marks on the landscape cannot be seen, nonetheless smooth the way for settlement, transforming the unknown into the known. The naming alone signifies greatness to Aunt Maury:

"Except for some Spanish and Indian names," she said, "tapping the book with her fingers, "most of the names of channels and shoals and points and islands on our coast are names of English sailors of all ranks, or names of the English sailing ships, or names from their Home." And Aunt Maury said with scorn, "And I read some ignoramus scoffing at the Englishry of this west coast!" (144)

She continues in the same vein of indignant defense of Vancouver and of all the English crews on the coast, her polemic providing the context for the passages from Walbran that Aunt Maury reads to Ellen: "'Listen to the good plain rational seaman's English,' she said, 'how got they their education, these men, shipping to sea as little boys?'" (144). Aunt Maury begins to read from Walbran (British Columbia Coast Names 27) the account, from Vancouver's Journal, in which the discoverer describes his discovery and naming of Mount Baker. But Ellen, thinking only of her lover, does not listen, and Aunt Maury is left to mourn the lack of knowledge the locals have of their own coast: "Everyone calls that peak Mount Baker and no one cares why. Captain Vancouver was a very great seaman. He sailed back to his native land and died too soon and too young." (144). Wilson is unique in writing about the Gulf Islands by referring to and quoting a local text: through Aunt Maury, Wilson suggests that the region has forgotten its origins, origins that can be recovered by reading Walbran.

This short chapter (less than three pages long) stirs up complicated relationships between notions of discovery, English culture, the local, and the writing of history. Aunt Maury has no difficulty reconciling English-ness with the local, the British Columbia coast: in her view, the two are synonymous, English-ness being a defining characteristic of this new world space. Her reference to the book as "a Walbran," using italics and the indefinite article, makes it an icon, a relic in its own right (with its "shabby green covers"), difficult

to acquire, rather than merely a reference work, a repository of information. Paradoxically, however, Aunt Maury ignores the aspect of the text that is original to it--Walbran's own words--and turns instead to Walbran's transcription of parts of Vancouver's Journal. Despite her veneration of the concrete physical object, Aunty Maury treats the book's contents as the transparent vehicle for access directly to Vancouver: the degree to which Walbran himself uses "good plain rational seaman's English" escapes her. British Columbia Coast Names' status as a local intertext is compromised, since it commemorates English culture at least as much as local topography. But the clarity of naval discipline in Walbran's prose and his encyclopedic knowledge of the coast's toponymic history make British Columbia Coast Names a version of the local "discovery" narrative: if Captain Richard's arrangement of names in his survey characterizes discovery of the islands (the specifically local variation on imperial discovery), Walbran's own "arrangement" of those names must qualify him as another discoverer. Wilson's treatment of Walbran resembles Blanchet's use of Vancouver's Journal in A Curve of Time rather than a break with the coastal habit of avoiding reference to local intertexts. Once again, Vancouver as discoverer functions as the pre-eminent icon of the British Columbia coast, overshadowing all later coastal narratives.

Love and Salt Water is a novel rather than a coastal cruising narrative, a form which by local convention is generally non-fiction: by reaching outside fiction into local history and the guidebook form (since Walbran has a foot in both genres), Wilson marks

her novel as deliberately regional.<sup>99</sup> British Columbia Coast Names is local not only by virtue of its subject matter, but because it speaks to the local in a particular, coastal way. When using the book as a reference text, one soon discovers that Walbran is not completely reliable: his inaccuracies appear both in internal inconsistencies and in mistakes corrected in later works about coastal place names. But the book more than compensates for these deficiencies, not only by being far more comprehensive than its successors but by its charm: Walbran is nothing if not a storyteller. In his introduction to the re-issue of British Columbia Coast Names, Phillip Akrigg describes Walbran as "essentially a historian, a biographer, and an anecdotist." This last attribute makes Walbran a precisely local historian, rather than a mere recorder of facts, since in the British Columbia coast version of local history, the local is transmitted in anecdote:

The simple truth is that Walbran has more in common with the eighteenth than the twentieth century. He belongs in the old tradition of gentlemen antiquarians filling calf-bound folios with fascinating trivia. He is nearer in spirit to John Aubrey and his Brief Lives than to the U.S. Department of the Interior with its Dictionary of Alaska Place Names, by D.J. Orth. (xiii)

Walbran's status as an amateur historian makes him not only local (coastal history in British Columbia being almost exclusively the province of amateurs), but as credulous as Aubrey himself: "Indeed, sometimes John Walbran seems to be on the verge of becoming the John Aubrey of the Pacific Coast as when he carefully records that Captain William Brotchie's family believed he brought the first lot of potatoes to British Columbia (he almost certainly did not!)" or "dutifully records that in August 1881 an English penny of

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<sup>99</sup> At the end of her Afterword to the McClelland & Stewart edition of Love and Salt Water (1990), Anne Marriott describes the book as "the slightest of Wilson's novels" and adds, parenthetically, "her [Wilson's] own word for it was temperate." This word is revealing, since it also describes the coast's climate.

1784 was found under a stone on Mayne Island." Given how much coastal culture subscribes to the tall tale convention, it is not surprising that Walbran succumbs to the temptation to treat these stories as reliable: as Akrigg says, "Like Aubrey, Walbran is incapable of resisting a good story."

Walbran seems instinctively to have grasped the correlation between place and narrative, but like Aubrey, again, he is prone to digression: often the stories he tells have nothing to do with the local, referring instead to his other "home," the British navy. But the degree to which his own personality is apparent in British Columbia Coast Names makes Walbran himself the subject of his own stories, or rather his stories reflect his personality since, as Akrigg puts it, "Captain Walbran puts himself, his likings, his friendships, his code of values into his book": it is these similarities to Aubrey that make Aunt Maury's term "a Walbran" so intuitively acceptable. "In the end," says Akrigg, "Walbran's personality so permeates his book that the man becomes the book and the book the man, and one ends up using the term 'Walbran' indifferently for both."

Once this process of equating the man and the book has taken place, British Columbia Coast Names assumes something of the role and character of a Baedeker; in the absence of any other text more directly written in the genre (before the 1960s), Walbran's book becomes a guidebook to the coast. British Columbia Coast Names turns back to Vancouver's Journal, just as Blanchet does, but mediated through Walbran, the Journal functions differently for Aunt Maury than it does for Blanchet. Both women treat Vancouver's Journal as an imperial text, but to Aunt Maury its imperial character is a virtue, while to Blanchet this aspect of Vancouver's text threatens her own desires for

discovery. Aunt Maury reads Vancouver, via Walbran, at home on Galiano; Blanchet takes the book out into the region. Aunt Maury celebrates its literary merits, its lucidity and elegance of prose; Blanchet cares only for the accuracy of the observations it records. But for both women, Vancouver's Journal is a founding text of the local region. As Akrigg points out, British Columbia Coast Names itself is "the foundation work on the origin of our British Columbia coast place names": as a "foundation work," however, Walbran does not merely record place names but establishes characteristics of the local. In its grasp of narrative, its scope, and its encyclopedic detail, British Columbia Coast Names shares many of the characteristics that make Moby Dick a foundation text of another place and culture. What makes Walbran a foundational text is not, however, its intrinsic qualities but the echo of Walbran's project in Beth Hill's Seven-Knot Summers (1994), a field guide both to the coast and--importantly--to writing about the coast.

Beth Hill's name appears frequently in coastal writing and bibliographies: she has spent much of her life to acquiring and disseminating coastal culture, both First Nations and European. She and her husband Ray spent years finding and recording petroglyph sites up and down the coast for the Provincial Museum, publishing their results in Indian Petroglyphs of the Pacific Northwest (1974). She has written a book about Frances Barkley, the English sailor captured and held as a slave for several years by the Haida in the late eighteenth century, and many other books and articles. But one of the two or three best-known works of coastal literature is Upcoast Summers (1985), Hill's arrangement of the coastal diaries of Francis Barrow, who cruised the British Columbia coast with his wife Amy and their spaniels. Like Walbran's work for British Columbia Coast Names, Hill's

task was to piece together fragments of information into a coherent whole: the dramatic story she tells, of the Barrows' family friend May John pulling the diaries from the fire to which they had been consigned with all the couple's papers, illustrates the degree to which Hill must reconstruct the narrative that the diaries only partially recount.

For a woman who has spent so much of her life cruising the British Columbia coast, the urge to compare experiences, to expand and qualify and comment on the Barrow's version of the coast must have been overwhelming: as Hill admits, "It has been difficult for me to refrain from inserting into this account my own very strong responses to the tide-scoured passages and the places of the Inside coast." Writing Upcoast Summers required a coastal exegesis that omitted her own feelings: Seven-Knot Summers is Hill's opportunity to give full rein to those "very strong responses" and to add her own installment to the volumes of coastal cruising narratives. Seven-Knot Summers, however, differs from its predecessors in demonstrating awareness of those previous narratives, much less honouring them, and giving them the highly visible place in her own narrative that she does.

The second paragraph of the introduction signals this intertextual element at the outset:

Ray and I had drifted through a summer at sea while I wrote about the places and people. There were some destinations, of course: notes scribbled on charts, events and locations described in other people's books and articles. Sometimes old friends, or strangers, pointed us to sites and stories. (vi)

No other British Columbia coastal cruising narrative refers to "other people's books and articles" concerning the local coast other than--or as well as--the texts of an inherited, imperial culture applied to the local landscape. Despite being Hill's chance to make her

imprint, to present her own version of the coast, Seven-Knot Summers refers as much to the books that precede it as to Hill's own experience. At the end of the introduction, Hill explicates the image of the knot in her title, playing on the double nautical meanings of the knot as a unit of speed measured on a log-line and the knot as ganglion, a cluster of strands: "Many strands have been assembled and entangled here . . . . I have knotted a book" (viii). She has knotted more than a book: she has knotted previously isolated local texts into a canon of coastal literature, of as much importance to the Gulf Islands as to the rest of the British Columbia coast.

Like most other B.C. coastal cruising narratives, Seven-Knot Summers begins on southeast Vancouver Island, then proceeds north to Nanaimo and the Inside Passage. Unusually, however, Hill pauses in the Gulf Islands for the space of four entire chapters before setting out "upcoast": unlike her predecessors, Hill does not privilege the notion of "upcoast," tellingly absent from her title, to the exclusion of the Gulf Islands. In devoting the first chapter to the environs of Sidney and Tsehum Harbour, Hill can hardly be said to have departed at all, despite the psychological boundary crossed by unmooring there.<sup>100</sup> She begins the book by invoking her coastal muses: "Like M. Wylie 'Capi' Blanchet and Francis and Amy Barrow, we cast off our familiar life from Tsehum Harbour, near Sidney . . ." (1). Placing her predecessors before herself and her husband, Hill establishes at the outset that she considers her book as part of a tradition of coastal cruising literature, the acknowledgement of such a "tradition" being an innovation to the genre. Blanchet and the

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<sup>100</sup> The local coastal cruisers--the Hills, Barrows, and Blanchets--all begin their northward journeys from Sidney, while Richard Hugo's poem "The Anacortes-Sydney Run" makes Sidney the springboard to the north coast. In Hugo's version, Sidney is both destination and point of departure, though it is never reached.

Barrows precede the Hills on the coast; in the construction of the first sentence of her book, Hill establishes priority upon which rests the entire text that follows. The second paragraph establishes the textual priority also:

Having no faith in the fickle moon, we set off with a compass, a Loran, a depth sounder, a carton of charts, the two Cummings gunkholing books, the John Chappell guide, The Curve of Time, Upcoast Summers and a ragged Morris and Heath Marine Atlas from 1952.<sup>101</sup> (1)

As a compendium of navigational aids, this list does not follow chronological developments in navigational technology, though the compass certainly predates both the Loran and the depth sounder, but it might move from the technical and direct to the more subjective (a forty-year old atlas representing the imaginary as much as The Curve of Time); certainly it treats instruments first and then books. But the books are listed in reverse chronological order: the Cummings are newer than any of the other books she mentions, Chappell next oldest, then Blanchet, then the Barrows (dated according to the cruises rather than the publication of their narratives), ending with the 1952 atlas. Perhaps a 40-year-old atlas is such an anachronism that it counts as being even more ancient than the earliest cruising literature. In any case, Hill's list leads back to the founding texts of the coastal cruising genre, the sources of the literary region as a place to be perpetually discovered.

As guides to the region, the books are at least as important as the navigational equipment: "Thirty years ago Capi Blanchet's The Curve of Time was our first guidebook"

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<sup>101</sup> A Loran is a navigational device that uses signal impulses from radio transmitters, Loran being a contraction of "long-range navigation." The "John Chappel guide" is Cruising Beyond Desolation Sound (1979). The "two Cummings gunkholing books" are Gunkholing in the Gulf Islands (1986), which is discussed in the present study, and Gunkholing in Desolation Sound and Princess Louisa (1989), which is not. The earliest of the Cummings' cruise books, Gunkholing in the San Juans, would not interest the Hills, whose gaze turns north from Sidney.

(1), and it appears to be the pre-eminent one to Hill despite all that has been written about the coast in the meantime. Blanchet initiates not only the Hill's cruising history, but also each individual cruise:

We never met her. Three years before her death in 1961 at the age of 70, we first ventured to sea in a boat Ray had built in our city backyard. Her book changed our lives, for in 1965 we followed, in foolhardy ignorance, the track of the Caprice. Our experiences increased my respect for this remarkable woman who, in the year of her death, published this best of all books about our coast. No wonder we dip the flag to a certain bungalow at the end of Curteis Point, as we leave Tsehum Harbour in early summer, on that endless curve of time. (2)

Blanchet seems not to have wanted A Curve of Time to be used as a guidebook, quite the reverse: as I have mentioned, she suppresses the precise location of parts of her narrative, particularly the sites of First Nations villages. These abandoned villages, however, would be precisely the destinations of most interest to the Hills, as anthropologists and collectors not only of petroglyphs images but of all kinds of First Nations artifacts. How then, can a book that deliberately hides these sites be a guidebook for those who want to visit them? In the Hills' hands, A Curve of Time shifts genres: "this best of all books about the coast," originally intended to belong to no genre at all, initiates a new genre--British Columbia coastal literature.<sup>102</sup> It is not by any means the first book written about the coast, nor are the events it narrates the first coastal cruise experiences on the coast, but the genre was born nonetheless from the popularity--the local valance--of this one text. The paradox of a

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<sup>102</sup> In his introduction to The Call of the Coast, Charles Lillard addresses the notion of a "genre" of coastal cruising literature also. But his project in that book differs from Hill's: The Call of the Coast is a collection of "lost" coastal texts that Lillard has recovered and republished so that they can circulate again locally. Like Hill, Lillard thus adds more texture to the coastal canon: he does not, however, add his own coastal cruising narrative to that canon.

literary text functioning as a practical guidebook is a fundamental characteristic of coastal literature, and also an indication of a profound change in the nature of intertexts used to construct the coast region.

Before leaving Tsehum Harbour, the Hills also salute Francis and Amy Barrow, with whom Beth Hill is well-acquainted since she had to delve into their coastal lives in order to arrange and explicate Francis Barrow's diaries for Upcoast Summers. As Hill herself acknowledges, the Hills resemble the Barrows, both physically and in interests (particularly First Nations culture) and temperament. The textual parallels between Upcoast Summers and Seven-Knot Summers extend much further than the similarity in titles, which must be a deliberate echo intended to establish connections and acknowledge precedence. Hill's opening pages establish Blanchet and Barrow as the foundation texts of coastal literature: this textual "salute" parallels the physical gesture of dipping a flag. For Hill, coastal cruising and coastal literature alike begin in Tsehum Harbour.

That harbour opens into the cluster of small Gulf Islands surrounding the north end of the Saanich Peninsula. These islands are the subject of the remainder of Hill's first chapter, and here she establishes the book's pattern of self-consciously following the paths of former cruises, looking for traces of others' textual journeys. D'Arcy Island, for instance, prompts Hill to refer to a striking account of the peculiarly threatening atmosphere of the former leper colony in Philip Teece's collection of cruising stories A Dream of Islands (1988): perhaps thinking of Teece's companion volume Raincoast Macabre (1991), Hill tells her own "ghost story" about Portland Island. Like Blanchet, Hill is receptive to uncanny experiences of former coastal inhabitants, both European and First

Nations. In the following chapter, she relates another ghost story from Dolby Turner's When the Rains Come (1992) associated with Maple Bay, and retells a story about Tzouhalem that a Salish woman told B.M. Cryer (author of The Flying Canoe: Legends of the Cowichans (1949)) in her account of Cowichan Bay. Hill's entry for Vesuvius on Salt Spring consists almost entirely of stories and quotations from Joe Garner's memoirs, Never Fly Over an Eagle's Nest (1982). Chapter Three, which moves north to Gabriola and Nanaimo, is almost entirely devoted to petroglyphs, the Gabriola section taking up the bulk of the chapter. The only coastal intertext to which Hill refers in this chapter is Ted and Mary Bentley's Gabriola: Petroglyph Island (1981): the Bentley's book has so shaped the Hills' perception of the island that the Gabriola section of Seven-Knot Summers seems an unconscious echo of the Bentleys' preoccupation. The Bentleys' title effectively renames Gabriola, making the island synonymous with petroglyphs. In Chapter Four, Hill refers to Olivia Fletcher's geological local history of Hornby Island, Hammerstone: The Biography of an Island (1989).

The middle chapters of Seven-Knot Summers are devoted to the coast north of Quadra Island, but the last two return to the Gulf Islands:<sup>103</sup> her second take on the islands includes the individual islands that are most commonly understood as the Gulf Islands--Galiano, Mayne, Saturna, the Penders, and Salt Spring--and since the Hills lived in the islands for many years, both on Salt Spring and on Saturna, this area constitutes their

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<sup>103</sup> In devoting half her text (six chapters out of twelve) to the Gulf Islands region, and dividing these into the opening and concluding chapters of her text, Hill disrupts the practice, used by both Kathrene Pinkerton and R.D. Lawrence, of making the coastal cruise a two-dimensional, out and back journey. To Hill, the arrangement of the Gulf Islands across the Strait as well as up and down its length, makes the linear journey circular.

neighbourhood as much as, perhaps more than, Tsehum Harbour, which functions rhetorically and literally as their port of departure from Victoria. In these final chapters, Hill's references to local books multiply: as well as drawing on the anthropological work of Wilson Duff and Wayne Suttles, she refers to Margaret Shaw Walter's Early Days Among the Gulf Islands (1946); Lady of Culzean (1971), John Borrodaile's memoirs of Colonel and Lady Fawkes at what became the Point Comfort Hotel on Mayne; Marie Anne Elliott's history of Mayne and the other outer Gulf Islands (1984); several entries in A Gulf Islands Patchwork (1961); even Lukin Johnston's Beyond the Rockies (1929). But Hill treats these sources somewhat differently from those she mentions earlier in the book: she is at home in the southern islands, and she augments the evidence in these texts with her own memories and by talking to her friends about the events recorded in the books to which she refers. Among the southern islands, the texture both of Hill's book and of the coastal landscape becomes thicker: she pulls the strands of Gulf Island writing into a yet tighter knot.

Hill's cluster of intertexts thus functions specifically as a social arrangement: the texts, like the people she knows in the Gulf Islands neighbourhood, are her friends, voices made familiar and fond by long-acquaintance. If we consider the British Columbia coast cruising narratives that Beth Hill omits from her text, such as Kathrene Pinkerton's Three's a Crew and R.D. Lawrence's The Voyage of the Stella, the crucial criterion for belonging to the authentically local would appear to be this sense of neighbourliness. Both Lawrence and the Pinkertons were only temporary visitors to the coast: the four months Lawrence spent here were never intended to be anything but an interlude, while the Pinkertons

disappeared without trace once they ended their cruising life. Unlike the Barrows and the Blanchets, who lived much of their lives locally and whose homes remain literally visible on the coast, the Pinkertons arrived as visitors and left again without ever crossing the boundaries from visitor to emigrant to indigene. Hill considers the Blanchets and the Barrows her neighbours, the temporal separation being as irrelevant in this respect as Blanchet's image of "the curve of time" would make it: entering Tsehum Harbour at the end of a cruise and the end of the book, she wants to "tell the Blanchets and Barrows about our summer and thank them for their good company up the coast" (229).

Hill's varied use of local cruising narratives, as well as memoirs, local histories, anthropological work, and travel writing, makes Seven-Knot Summers the repository of a textual community that parallels her social connections up and down the coast, but most intensely in the Gulf Islands. For Hill, the genre "British Columbia coast literature" retains this informal, friendly, essentially local flavour: the condition of "coast" appears to signify for her the condition of "local." The region is on first-name terms with itself. The boundaries of the canon parallel the boundaries of the neighbourhood. Her treatment of local intertexts strengthens the impression of neighbourliness: unlike Blanchet, who challenges the dominance of Vancouver's Journal, Hill demonstrates no need to compete with other, prior versions of the coast. Nor does she invoke these texts to borrow authority from them. Instead, she places her own account beside the others she mentions: the image of the textual community makes priority a non-issue for the coastal cruiser, even if it retains significance for the text (priority is no longer important in practice, but it does establish a literary history as the genre becomes defined).

Hill does not produce anything so organized as a literary history: on the contrary, she conforms to the local practice of assembling a kind of scrapbook, interspersing summaries of local books with snippets of quotation, interspersed with her own stories and research, linking individual coastal texts, often idiosyncratically, with particular coastal places. In arranging associations with local geographies in this way, Hill's approach resembles Captain Richards' pattern of naming the islands in the Strait of Georgia: Hill's signifiers are aspects of local literature, while Richards refers to the local manifestations of the imperial project, but the principle of association is the same. Given that Seven-Knot Summers assembles the literary region of British Columbia coast, the texts Hill includes in her book implicitly define the genre "British Columbia coastal literature." The most striking aspect of the genre as she defines it is that it is limited to non-fiction, eliminating all imaginative literature. The only exceptions are a poem by Peter Trower about alders and Phyllis Webb's poem "Wilson's Bowl," both of which Hill quotes in her text. The two poems serve a purpose that could not perhaps be accomplished except in poetry: Trower's poem allows Hill to characterize her love of alders; as the stuff of poetry, these trees take on some of the quasi-mystical elements that she perceives in them. Similarly, rather than directly describing her feelings for her mentor, Wilson Duff, Hill expresses those feelings by referring to Duff's mystical relationship with Lilo Berliner (for whom Duff also was a mentor, and whom Hill describes but does not name) and to Webb's poem.<sup>104</sup>

Cruising literature is the real coast literature for Hill. Although she discusses other non-fiction genres--anthropology, local histories, memoirs--these books constitute

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<sup>104</sup> Webb describes the relationship between Duff and Berliner in "A Correspondence" (1982).

supporting rather than foundational texts, essential tools for exegesis of cruising narratives, but supplementary nonetheless.<sup>105</sup> The key to Hill's version of coastal literature lies in the list of the navigational aids she and her husband take with them when cruising the coast: she makes no distinction between the equipment, the charts, and the cruising narratives. Hill's inclusion of "a Loran" in this list strikingly echoes Ethel Wilson's reference to "a Walbran" in Love and Salt Water. The similar sounds and exactly parallel usage in the two terms establishes an equivalency between them: the book as material object and guide becomes interchangeable with the radio navigator. Hill's chapter titles refer not to events but to sections of coast, segments of a line traced by the cruise, and the titles of the sections into which the chapters are divided name points or places along that line. The chapter titles take the form of directions coupled with chart titles: "Northward, Cowichan Bay to De Courcy Island," "Southward, Pender Harbour to Gibsons," for example. This construction exactly parallels the section headings in the Coast Pilot (though there the directions are generally implied, or obvious from the sequence of places, since the pilot is

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<sup>105</sup> Hill's attitude toward local history--that it is a source of marginalia for people cruising through the region--appears to be shared by at least some Gulf Island local historians. In his Prologue to Salt Spring Saga (1962), for example, Eric Roberts describes a conversation with the editor of the Driftwood (one of the newspapers serving the outer islands and Salt Spring), who prodded Roberts into writing the book or pamphlet:

He said, "I feel that what is needed is something written which is not too serious and not too flippant . . . hazy and vague if you wish but having just enough meat in it to keep a guy awake while relaxing in a boat on one of our lakes [an option only on Salt Spring] or around our coastline . . . (n.p.)"

In her Foreword to Donald New's pamphlet of place names, Voyage of Discovery, Jean Lockwood describes the pamphlet's purpose as "to tell the discoverer of today something of the history of the Gulf Islands, and how and where the name of their harbours, bays, points and mountains originated." The "discoverer of today" is most likely to be the pleasure cruiser.

cued to the charts).

Hill transforms memoir into guidebook by making the sites of the memoir's stories into objects of interest in their own right. When cruising past Galiano, for example, the Hills make a special pilgrimage from Retreat Cove: "we bumped north in the dinghy to see where, exactly, the Shaws had landed in 1877, at the tiny cove locally known as Shaw's Landing" (196). Having been privately printed in 1946, Margaret Shaw Walter's Early Days Among the Gulf Islands is not widely known, so in using it here, Hill recovers one of the islands' foundational texts. In making such an effort to locate precisely the places associated with coastal literature (the word "exactly" suggests the importance of the project; so different from Blanchet's deliberate vagueness about locations), Hill establishes the appropriate mode of reading the genre of coastal literature as active engagement with the coast, rather than armchair travel. Hill makes the practice of cruising equivalent to the reading and writing of cruising narratives. The sites become the stories, and vice versa: Walbran foreshadows the orientation of the coastal canon.

Through this equivalency between text and practice, the local landscape itself becomes an intertext: again, sites acquire stories, stories acquire sites. Unlike other places where an effort has been made to map literary landscapes, the coast lacks the physical markers that anchor narrative to landscape: plaques do not indicate the sites that correspond to texts. But to make these signs would defeat the purpose of the literature. In Hill's view at least, that literature is precisely cruising literature: by implication, she connects the notion of cruising directly with the notion of coast itself. To cruise is to sail slowly, for pleasure, "making no particular destination or calling at [a] series of place,"

according to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary; to coast is both to sail along the coast and to progress without exertion. In Seven-Knot Summers, Hill establishes not only a coastal canon but an indigenous mode of reading. As the term "cruising literature" implies, reading coastal literature properly requires movement, the meditative, unhurried passage along (rather than merely through) the multiple shores of the British Columbia coast. To coast and to cruise become synonymous locally: to read requires a similar reciprocal response in writing. The act of searching for the exact location of Shaw's Landing suggests that for Hill, to read coastal literature requires mapping its coordinates. The Hills move from cruiser to dinghy to discover the place near Vesuvius on Salt Spring where Joe Garner, as he relates in Never Fly Over an Eagle's Nest (1980), sometimes saw whales rubbing barnacles from their skin: exchanging a small, slow boat for an even smaller and slower one, they become ever more intimate both with the sites they identify and explore and with the practice of movement over the sea, closer to the coast than they could ever come in their cruiser. And the dinghy also requires closer physical connections to coastal literature: the Hills board their dinghy at Vesuvius "with Joe's book . . . in hand" (21). The book must be taken from the cruiser's library or pilot house directly into the place it describes, the connection between text and site becoming actual in the process. The appropriate reading of coastal literature makes responses to landscape as intimate as responses to books.

To read the coast--to cruise--is to move out into the field (a pastoral image), which in turn means making coastal literature into field guides. The process by which The Curve of Time becomes the Hills' first "guidebook" governs their reading of all coastal literature:

just as "Walbran" locally comes to mean both the man and his book, local books become coastal pilots, "those familiar with the local conditions." Rather than destroying the illusion of "discovery" that the absence of reference to local literature enables in earlier texts, Hill's knot of books permits the trope to continue to define experience of local space. Although she describes her own experience of matching sites with stories, she does not do so in a way that excludes others from doing the same. Her book does not chart these correspondences, either geographically or verbally, but describes the process of discovery itself. The experience remains personal and endlessly repeatable. The strands of the knot can be loosened and tied again, in a different way, by those who cruise after.

**At Sea in the Woods: Authority and Authenticity**

*So in serenity and sunshine the days of my youth went past. I still maintained my character as a drone and a dreamer. I used my time tramping the moorland with a gun, shipping the foamy pools of the burn for trout, or reading voraciously in the library. Mostly I read books of travel, and especially did I relish the literature of Vagabondia. I had come under the spell of Stevenson. His name spelled Romance to me, and my fancy etched him in his lonely exile. Forthright I determined I too would seek these ultimate islands, and from that moment I was a changed being. I would be a frontiersman, a trail-breaker, a treasure-seeker. The virgin prairies called to me; the susurrus of the giant pines echoed in my heart; but most of all, I felt the spell of those gentle islands where care is a stranger, and all is sunshine, song and the glowing bloom of eternal summer.*

Robert W. Service, The Trail of Ninety-eight, 7

*Imbued with the thinking of various Scottish philosophers who held that objects were interesting because of their associations rather than because of any intrinsic element, [George William] Curtis demanded that landscapes, to be interesting, possess associations with literature, legend, or history--and this was indeed a difficult prescription for Americans to fill.*

Edward Halsey Foster, The Civilized Wilderness, 16

*. . . the makers of landscape imagery in the modern context are also often the makers of the landscape itself. Whether as purveyors or makers of landscape designation, real estate agents, brokers, and developers are often good sources for a biography of landscape designation. Just as they convey and perpetuate landscape intentions cast by others, so too do they create, manipulate, and designate the forms and meanings of places. Their hyperbole, as well as the shapes they give to places, literally mold places to convey a message which, presumably, they think is effective. That their designs and designations are reinforced by others goes almost without saying. Indeed, between real estate broker, developer, banker, insurance agent, and client often lies but a thin red line: the line of assigned or designated landscape value.*

Marwyn S. Samuels, "The Biography of Landscape," 76

*It is the glory of an island that you must approach from the water. The ferry churns the sea and the wind blows away the remnants of whatever you are leaving behind.*

*On a winter day four years ago, I had left behind a soulless life in an eastern city. Standing on the deck of a B.C. ferry, I watched Salt Spring Island emerge from the mist--a navy blue hump defined by a serrated edge of trees against an unsettled sky. The mist swirled and in my romantic rapture it was the Celtic isle of Avalon, the Island of the Blessed Souls. I no longer felt as if I were escaping. I was coming home.*

Carolyn Bateman, "Where Spring Has Already Sprung," 90

*"They are unique, these islands, in some weird way. The title of the movie comes from a poem by Tennyson about sailors who are shipwrecked on an island where the inhabitants live on lotus [sic] blossoms and spend their lives in a tranced dream state staring at nature, which is sort of what happens to you when you live in the Gulf Islands."*

Peggy Thompson, screenwriter, The Lotus Eaters  
in Peter Wilson, "Magic Reelism," C9

*This metaphor of world as text, absolutely crucial to the elaboration of all island discourses, is a negotiation of the privileging of empirical experience in the encounter between man and nature, a process in which seeing and knowing are finally equalised. To read the natural world, to decipher its codes, is also to achieve an annexation of its meaning and this is the primary significance of the supreme legibility of the literary island.*

Diana Loxley, Problematic Shores, 8

*Bill's book will do for B.C. what Anne did for P.E.I. I can't wait to see Virgil and Hector on the licence plates.*

Nancy White, back cover blurb, Bachelor Brothers' Bed & Breakfast

Beth Hill is drawn to local cruising narratives because they appeal to her romantic notion of place, a somewhat mystical yearning for coast. On the first page of her book,

she invokes a passage from The Continuum Concept (1977) in which Jean Liedloff describes experiencing, in a forest glade, a sense of intense enchantment and connection to the world: this epiphany in a specifically natural place represents for Hill the imaginative, ineffable moment of recognition that is for her a crucial, perhaps the crucial, coastal experience. Paradoxically, however, Hill does not include imaginative literature, including narrative fiction, in her account of coastal literature; the great wealth of fiction, poetry, and even drama about the British Columbia coast has no place in her notion of coastal writing.<sup>106</sup> But Hill invokes Conrad to make her point: "Joseph Conrad said that words were the greatest foes of reality."

This reference to Conrad is only one of several citations in Seven-Knot Summers taken from literature originating outside the coastal region, including passages from Samuel Butler's poem "Life After Death," Emily Dickinson's "There's a Certain Slant of Light," Matthew Arnold's "The Grand Chartreuse," three of Tennyson's poems, The Tempest, and The Golden Journey of Samarkand, by James E. Flecker. Despite her eagerness to quote and celebrate local cruising literature and the non-fictional genres with which she gives texture and context to those accounts, Hill cannot find in the narrowly local the words or texts that unlock for her the mystery of the local place. Just as the Shamrocks' mock ship's log, another cruise narrative, couches experience of the local landscape in songs and poetry

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<sup>106</sup> For example, although Hill alludes both to Philip Teece's A Dream of Islands and two magazine articles in her account of D'Arcy Island, she does not mention Marilyn Bowering's novel To All Appearances a Lady, in which D'Arcy and its unwilling residents play a crucial part. Hill also retells Saturna Island stories that Jean Howarth uses in her "Treasure Island" series of short stories, but Hill omits any mention of Howarth: in this case, Hill may deliberately exclude Howarth because, having lived on Saturna, these stories are her own as much as Howarth's.

that emanate from England, Hill looks to the classics of (especially English) literature to provide the words that elude her locally.

In 1993, Bill Richardson published Bachelor Brothers' Bed and Breakfast, a Gulf Island work that, like Hill's, departs from local conventions by celebrating the notion of multiple narratives rather than the individual voice that the discovery trope seems to require. Despite this innovation, Richardson's book uses some of the very local conventions of imaginative writing in the islands, especially an overtly pastoral context: the Prologue, fittingly titled "Getting There," describes an aimless wandering prompted by urban angst and the pressures of daily life, an undirected journey that ends at the Bachelor Brothers' establishment. The "bed and breakfast" motif provides a contemporary, realistic analogue to the homesteads of earlier Gulf Island dreams, retaining the central notion of home while representing the islands as a temporary place of respite, a place for vacations from home. The book resembles Hill's Seven-Knot Summers in the implications of its title for pastoral retreat and in its sense of division between mundane life in the city and blissful release of journeying on and toward coast.

Just as Hill creates her own variant on the episodic cruise narrative by referring to the voices of a coastal canon, Richardson adopts the form of the "guest book" to incorporate parallel but separate narratives into one text. Guests at the bed and breakfast are encouraged to record their own stories in the brothers' guest book, a conceit that informs the structure of the book as well as its content:

An unusual feature of Hector and Virgil's B & B is their guest book, which is in fact a large scrapbooklike album they call "Brief Lives," after Aubrey. Their guests are encouraged to write their own stories in it, brief biographical sketches. There are now over a dozen volumes of "Brief

Lives." I am grateful to the brothers for making a selection of these pieces and for editing them in order to shield identities and protect privacy. (3)

Except for the brothers' own contributions, the book recounts and refers to stories that come from other places. The "guest book" form dictates not only Bachelor Brothers' structure but also the kinds of narratives it contains: Richardson can make the fragmentary and unfinished character of so much Gulf Island writing a deliberate, essential aspect of the book. The guest book form enables him to tie together in one overarching narrative (another knot of the local),<sup>107</sup> both stories of settlement (the bachelor brothers themselves, and the other islanders they know) and stories of endlessly-recurring arrival (and often discovery) as told by their guests.

The startling aspect of the guest-book conceit, however, is that Richardson invokes Aubrey's Brief Lives as his model. John Aubrey was a late seventeenth-century antiquarian, now best known for his biographical sketches of his contemporaries, collected and published in popular editions such as Penguin's (1978). In the annals of biographical writing, Aubrey is much less prominent than James Boswell, but Aubrey was at least as responsible for twentieth-century conventions of life-writing as Boswell, or Johnson himself). Given that Boswell's Life of Johnson (1791) ceaselessly shapes the great man's life and personality into hagiography, for which Boswell sacrifices his own stature in order to enhance Johnson's, Aubrey more fully satisfies the modern notion of biography. Boswell's narrative stance as biographer becomes unfashionable in the twentieth-century, while Aubrey--irreverent, unconstrained by notions of propriety or decorum, not because

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<sup>107</sup> Significantly, this narrative traces the annual cycle of local nature from January to December, a common device of pastoral narratives.

his interest in people was prurient or sensational but because it was total--appeals to the modern taste in life-writing.<sup>108</sup> Aubrey's primarily antiquarian turn of mind meant that to him, biography was the collection of matters of interest, especially curiosities of personality and experience. Consequently, the narratives that make up Brief Lives are largely anecdotal.

This anecdotal impulse makes the portraits in Brief Lives sketches rather than fully-realized biographies, though the brevity of the lives results as much from his working methods as from his biographical style. Aubrey's interests were so catholic that despite intense labour over many years he rarely finished anything. His personal affairs were so involved that his livelihood was perpetually threatened: uncertainty and depression over poverty and his unhappy marriage interfered with his ability to work. Most important, however, was his relationship with his friend Anthony Wood, a fellow antiquarian and member of the Royal Society, for whom Aubrey collected most of his biographical material. The Brief Lives are incomplete, and carelessly written because they were never intended to be published as they stood but constituted working notes for Wood's massive Athenae Oxoniensis (1691). Unfortunately for Aubrey, the very elements of the Lives that satisfy twentieth-century readers deeply offended Wood, whose work was intended to be a laudatory and dignified celebration of the worthy, successful lives of Oxford graduates, Wood's alma mater: the two friends quarrelled about Aubrey's methods and material (Wood never giving Aubrey credit for the material that he did use in Athenae Oxoniensis) and were never reconciled. Most of Aubrey's biographical work was relatively unknown

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<sup>108</sup> Anthony Powell's biography of Aubrey, John Aubrey and His Friends (1948), illustrates the degree to which Aubrey's personality influenced his biographical methods.

until its publication in 1949.

Aubrey's work was resurrected because he had a gift for friendship, his huge circle of acquaintance including most of his contemporaries who were in any way celebrated for their scientific, literary, philosophical (he was a great friend of Thomas Hobbes, his life of Hobbes in Brief Lives being a highlight of the book), or purely social eminence, and because the style and material of Brief Lives appeals to twentieth-century notions of what is entertaining and significant in biographical writing. As Richardson's own gesture toward Aubrey demonstrates, the "sketch" aspect of the Brief Lives is now considered to be integral and deliberate. Aubrey's working papers, his notes and queries, have come to be thought of as a distinct form, a model. This transformation of his work from preliminary sketch to finished text, mediated only by changing conventions in biography as a literary genre, derives as much from Aubrey's ability to capture personality in a telling detail or anecdote as it does from shifts in biographical fashion.<sup>109</sup>

In making the unusual reference to Aubrey, a relatively obscure literary figure, Richardson signals the elements of the Brief Lives that his own novel echoes: Bachelor

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<sup>109</sup> Lytton Strachey's Eminent Victorians (1918) probably had most to do with the revival of interest in Aubrey, for in that book, Strachey combined the idea of the sketch, composed of carefully chosen anecdote and telling detail, with an irreverence for the great icons of the Victorian age--Cardinal Manning, Florence Nightingale, General Gordon, and Dr. Arnold--that caused a sensation when the book was published. These four sketches were the first of the debunking biographies that have now, in the late twentieth-century, become so common that they are themselves in turn decried as formulaic. Just as shocking as Strachey's deflating, even ridiculing biographical voice was his refusal to write biography on a grand scale: the wise biographer, Strachey says in his Preface to Eminent Victorians, will "row out over that great ocean of material, and lower down into it, here and there, a little bucket, which will bring to the light of day some characteristic specimen, from those far depths, to be examined with a careful curiosity." He will, furthermore, "preserve . . . a becoming brevity--a brevity which excludes everything that is redundant and nothing that is significant."

Brothers' Bed & Breakfast demonstrates the same humanity, the same interest in individual people and their stories, and the same knack for capturing the essence of a life and personality by telling an exemplary tale that characterize the Brief Lives. Aubrey's contemporaries, especially Wood, criticized him for what they perceived as his excessive credulity: he was all too prone to retelling as fact stories that they considered questionable at best. By referring to Aubrey and, indirectly, to the question of whether the stories he recorded were true, Richardson can use the "guest-book" conceit to straddle the line between fiction and fact in Bachelor Brothers'. The final paragraphs in the Preface, which immediately follow the discussion of the guest-book, address this question of credibility:

There are those who think that the Bachelor Brothers' Bed and Breakfast is simply a hallucination, or a fiction of my own devising. Let me say to all those doubting Virginias that, yes, there really is a Bachelor Brothers' Bed and Breakfast. It is a treasure and, like most treasures, hard to discover. But it is well worth the effort. When you find it, you will know it. And if you have adventures getting there, it will be all the more worthwhile. (3)

The resonance of "treasure" with Jean Howarth's "Treasure Island" seems too fortuitous to be coincidence: if Richardson is not referring directly to Howarth's stories, the trope of island treasure--the hidden place itself being the treasure rather than merely the place where treasure is hidden--that originates with Stevenson has simply revealed itself again to be so conventionally coded that the association of one with the other is by now automatic. The referent to the reiterated "it" in this sentence segues from the bed and breakfast to its character as "treasure" to something Richardson leaves indistinct: the object of the quest or quest structure that he invokes here in the phrase "hard to discover" is something personal and perhaps ineffable.

Like Jean Howarth, who carefully protects the identity of her Treasure Island,

offering it to Canada as an idea in which to take refuge rather than as an actual geographical destination, Richardson undercuts his own assurance that the bed and breakfast exists. The "Brief Lives" that are told in Hector and Virgil's guest book relate not so much lives as narratives of how the guest has arrived at the bed and breakfast. The stories thus narrate a quest whose destination is Hector and Virgil's establishment. Paradoxically, however, the object of the quest ultimately constitutes not a place but words, and lots of them. The bachelor brothers offer their establishment as a specific version of pastoral retreat: here the fruits of the pastoral are not the beneficence of nature and reprieve from civilization but books, particularly novels. Here pastoral escape is literary: the bachelor brothers overturn urban values by providing the atmosphere and opportunity for their guests to lose themselves in fiction. Richardson combines the literary, through which the outside world can be experienced, with the intensely local, a localness that has nothing to do with books, though perhaps it has something to do with narrative.

Bachelor Brothers' Bed & Breakfast breaks new ground in Gulf Island narrative fiction by making its principal characters people who have not only lived all their lives on a Gulf Island, but were born there. Virgil himself places the emphasis somewhat differently:

We have lived in our house, in this valley, on this island, all our lives. That we have never pulled anchor and moved on always engenders wide-eyed wonderment in strangers and first-time guests.

"How unusual! How very old world!" they exclaim. (5)

What is surprising, Virgil implies, is not that he and Hector were born here, but that they have never left. This is a version of connection to place unusual in Gulf Island writing in that it creates the possibility of leaving rather than focussing exclusively on arrival, but the

import of their staying is crucially pastoral, "very old world," the stuff of nostalgia. Even for Virgil, it is staying put that roots the brothers in their place: "By now," says Virgil, "I have lived here for so long, and have such a deep connection to this sod, that I can divine stories from the earth around me, like a dowser can find water" (the simile resonates in the semi-arid Gulf Islands).

Bachelor Brothers' Bed & Breakfast does not collect stories of the local earth, however; in fact, it has little to say about the immediate landscape. Local place occupies an indefinite space: despite referring directly to the Gulf Islands, the B & B being "located on one of the islands that populate the Strait of Georgia, between Vancouver Island and the mainland" (2), and despite participating in many of the conventions that operate in Gulf Islands writing, Bachelor Brothers' Bed & Breakfast almost entirely ignores the island as a geographical entity. As the unnamed narrator suggests in the Prologue, island-ness is an incidental aspect of the B & B's psychic isolation: "I had no intention when I left my home of getting on a ferry and going to an island, no intention of meandering around its back roads, no notion that I would wind up, at dusk, in a lost little valley, turning up the driveway of the Bachelor Brothers' Bed and Breakfast" (1). In his first entry (which immediately follows the Prologue), Virgil describes the cemetery's "beautiful and commanding view of the valley." This atavistic identification of the cemetery (repository of the community's origins) with the valley continues into Virgil's account of the brothers' conception and birth: their father, he says, was "an itinerant bookseller, who peddled his wares from the back of his truck" and who "passed through our valley." The man stopped in front of the family home, and the brothers were conceived under the truck which their

mother had been helping the man repair. Their father then "drove off in his newly healed truck, over the hills and far away." This story delineates the geography of origins just as the narrator's preface outlines a parallel geography of arrival: the ferry that initiates, rather than concludes, the narrator's journey is much less significant than the back roads, the valley, and finally the B & B itself that inscribe an escalating hierarchy of significance. The ferry (or whatever vessel brought the bookseller to the island) plays no part in the bachelor brothers' geography of their own origins. Having driven out of the valley, their father passes beyond the borders of their place, beyond their mental map of home: from a notion of "neighborhood" that encompasses half a dozen islands (or at least contiguous coastlines of islands) in Margaret Shaw Walters' memoirs, a single Gulf Island becomes too large a geographical entity to have personal meaning, a shift that drastically revises Gulf Island boundaries of belonging.

At the Bachelor Brothers' Bed and Breakfast, books supersede not only island geography but island landscape. The defining characteristic of the island--its shoreline--does not appear in the book. Neither does the natural world intrude much: some guests are birdwatchers, but the birds themselves do not appear in the text. One urbanized guest has a transcendent experience while reluctantly hugging a tree in the forest, the Gulf Island forest signifying a place of transformation and insight: the corporate quest that sends him into the forest becomes a personal quest, whose answer is upon him before he is aware he is looking for it. Another guest experiences a similar life-change after discovering blackberries in the city: this urban epiphany brings him to the B & B. But beyond these limited forays into the unknown, nature does not engage the attention of the guests at the B

& B, or that of the brothers themselves. What nature provides in this context is the absence of the distractions, interruptions, or responsibilities that interfere with serious, prolonged reading. The purpose of this particular bed and breakfast is to provide space for the great works of western literature to be read and reread, for their stories to be told again.

The absence in this book of the natural landscape that usually characterizes Gulf Island texts radically revises local conventions of pastoral. In Bachelor Brothers!, this corner of the Gulf Islands offers rather a retreat into what is most humane and gracious in a civilization that loses track of its values in an urban setting. Virgil and Hector provide their guests with a minimum of catering, but encourage the spontaneous use of their kitchen and dining room. In the process, the guests get to know one another since, as the narrator says, "This rather peculiar arrangement, which I have never seen elsewhere, fosters a happy sense of communality that nicely compliments [sic] the more solitary, introspective business of reading" (2-3). In the bookish atmosphere the brothers create, social connections are more easily established: rather than the primitive relations between humans that Rousseau envisions in the forest, the bed and breakfast fosters civilized relations free from the complications that inhibit authenticity in the city. Here, authenticity proceeds from literacy, not from nature.

Richardson's belief in the power of books constitutes a version of pastoral nostalgia that varies only slightly from its other manifestations in Gulf Island writing. He does not invest social encounters at the bed and breakfast with more significance than they can bear, but recovers a confidence in literature that recalls the school of literary criticism represented by The Great Tradition (1963). In that book, F.R. Leavis argues that literature

is important because of its power to improve people, thus advancing the best values of civilization, and he judges books by the degree to which they display moral seriousness. Rather than echoing Leavis's portentousness, Richardson makes reading fiction a leisure pastime, but the pastoral retreat that this corner of the islands offers the book-starved and harried reader makes Bachelor Brothers' an implicit invitation to restore reading to the status of a humane art.

The similarity between Richardson's position and Leavis's is the more telling since the books read at the B & B are almost exclusively narrative fiction, especially novels, and Leavis discusses only nineteenth-century English novels in The Great Tradition. The first two novels mentioned in Bachelor Brothers', Herman Melville's Moby Dick (1851) and Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island (1883), foundation texts borrowed from the two poles--English and American--of Canadian colonial culture, speak directly to the Gulf Island pastoral, not only in Richardson's book but in local culture generally. In the Prologue to Bachelor Brothers', the narrator arrives at the B & B without his dog-eared copy of Moby Dick, his inevitable companion when travelling, which he has never managed to read. The book's not having been taken on this journey suggests that the narrator's own quest for pastoral retreat takes precedence over Captain Ahab's quest for the great white whale. The book's literal absence functions as a distinct presence in Bachelor Brothers', since the quest motif, which so often frames the search for pastoral in the islands, here informs the yearning for a lost place (the "lost little valley") to which one can retreat from the world. The narrator says he hopes to return to the B & B with Melville; for him, the quest to read Moby Dick remains alive, its goal elusive but always potential.

Since Bachelor Brothers' consists of several simultaneous narratives attributed to different voices, the book can be said to begin at least three times: each new voice in the first three sections--the narrator's, Virgil's, and that of a guest named Helen--marks another starting point. Each beginning, furthermore, invokes a separate frame or idea as a source of origins. The idea of Moby Dick informs the first opening of the book, the narrator's prologue. In the second opening, Virgil uses the graveyard in which their mother and the community's forebears are buried to establish a frame for origins and myth. In the third opening, one of the "Brief Lives" written in the guest book, Helen describes how Treasure Island influenced the course of her life. For Helen, the book literally came to life: a library copy of the book that she had left on a streetcar as a young woman was returned to her by a young man named Jim Hawkins, the name of Treasure Island's protagonist. The coincidence initiated their romance: the day after their wedding, however, Jim Hawkins left for the Second World War and, presumed missing in action, never returned. Helen remarried, but returns to the B & B to remember: "every January, I come here, by myself. My husband understands. I read Treasure Island. I think about Jim, about how for a few years I shared his name. I remember who we were and the wonder of that time. I smile. I haven't cried for him for years" (13). With Treasure Island, nostalgia joins quest and origins as the founding pastoral principles for Bachelor Brothers'.

The influence of these nineteenth-century adventure fictions is literary, not local, since neither belongs to the Canadian literary corpus nor has anything to do with the Pacific coast of North America. Yet these two novels have come to be thought of as particularly applicable to the Gulf Islands, the best evidence of this convention being yet

another category of place names. Just before the Islands Trust was formed in 1975, the provincial government applied a blanket ten-acre freeze on the islands: this freeze was intended to halt real estate development that occurred in the islands on an unprecedented scale in the 1960s. Gabriola and North Pender were most affected by this rapid development: Wildwood Estates created a subdivision of several hundred lots on the northwest side of Gabriola, while Magic Lake Estates suddenly added more than two thousand small lots (each less than half an acre) to North Pender's property market. Developments of this size require systems of neighbourhood roads, all of which must be named. In the absence of local associations with these roads--pioneer family surnames being the usual source of road names in the islands--the developers in both cases used literary allusions to establish a sense of the local--which in this case means the condition of island-ness--for their properties. The names in Magic Lake Estates refer to sixteenth-century Spanish gold and the piratical marine culture it produced: Pirates Road, Buccaneers Road, Schooner Way, Privateers Road, Bosun Way, Galleon, Cutlass, Cannon, and Ketch Roads recover, through the mediating text of Treasure Island, an idealized past in which notions of free enterprise, fabulous wealth, social anarchy, and the romance of the sea all operate. These names do not celebrate the rigid hierarchy, discipline, and glorious history of the Royal Navy that inspired Captain Richards--quite the reverse. Pirates, buccaneers, and privateers functioned outside--often against--the official naval organization of any government in the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. These names subvert the imperial project: the Spanish gold was being transported in the first instance precisely to fund Spanish imperial expansion overseas. The words "buccaneer," "galleon," and

"schooner" reinforce this reference: "buccaneer" indicates a piracy pertaining particularly to the Spanish American coast, while "galleon" is used to denote both a ship of war, usually Spanish, and a large Spanish ship used in American trade. The word "schooner," although it does not belong to the Spanish context, originates in eighteenth-century New England (though not generally current until the mid-nineteenth century).

The anomaly of this last word, like the misspelling of "buccaneer," suggests that the arrangement of road names in Magic Lake Estates lacks the focus and deliberateness that Captain Richards brought to naming places in the islands. If the piracy motif was intended to refer strictly to the Spanish, the developer must be given credit for aligning these road names with Spanish place names in the region. Since neither North Pender nor any of its topographical features share this toponymic category, however, it is more likely that the Spanish element is coincidental. Of more importance may have been the local association of smuggling with the southwest coast of North Pender, which includes the waterfront section of Magic Lake Estates. Thieves Bay recalls this association: the Cummings note that Peter Cove, beyond the development at the south side of Trincomali Point,

was well known in the last century because it was the last hideout spot before crossing Boundary Pass to the U.S. On shore, there was nothing but sheep corrals. It became the favourite rendezvous of rumrunners who would transfer their contraband from Canadian boats to fast American launches for ports in the San Juans. Legend has it that there were frequent hijackings among the smugglers. (17)

Richard Hugo alludes both to sheep and to the easily-crossed international border when trying to describe the islands in "The Anacortes-Sydney Run." The Magic Lake names may refer to local legend in alluding to piratical behaviour: the Cummings also record the name "Smugglers Nook" for the small cove just east of Thieves Bay, a name that dates

from the development of the subdivision, the cove it names being developed for boat launching and moorage to serve the subdivision residents. It is consistent with the Gulf Island sense of region that these allusions to smuggling, to local associations with local space, are expressed not in names commemorating those acts of smuggling directly--with the names of smugglers or boats, as might be expected--but in references to literary accounts of smuggling.

Even though the road names at Magic Lake do not pertain directly to a specific text, their usage is certainly literary. The shift in emphasis in these names from Spanish exploration and discovery, the context that Richards and Parry used, to Spanish colonial desires and, especially, the vulnerable, fantastic wealth carried on Spanish ships betrays the mediating influence of Treasure Island. It could be argued that the words the developers chose as road names, being nouns rather than proper names such as Jim Hawkins or Long John Silver, show no direct connection to Treasure Island. But this book, like Robinson Crusoe, is one of the central intertexts for island-ness in the English literary canon: through Treasure Island, the notion of "island" acquires associations with sixteenth-century Spanish gold and the piratical culture it created. The references to this intertext are characteristically vague and even mistaken: just as the misspelling of "buccaneer" suggests a lack of acquaintance with the printed text of the book, the anomalous inclusion of the word "schooner," which refers to smuggling traditions on the eastern seaboard hundreds of years after Spanish colonial activity in the Americas had ceased, indicates that what is being commemorated here is not the actual text of Treasure Island but rather a conventional, even collective memory of it. Magic Lake road names record a version of

Treasure Island that has become detached from the text and entered into popular culture.

The other large-scale development in the islands to date is the Whalebone Beach subdivision created by Wildwood Estates on Gabriola. Like Smugglers Nook, the name Whalebone Beach has no genealogy in local history: both names appear simultaneously with the development of the land fronting on those beaches. Like the Treasure Island connotations in Magic Lakes, the road names on Gabriola orient the subdivision toward the sea: just as the Treasure Island names originate in Smugglers Nook, the Whalebone names turn the subdivision to face the beach. Marine associations in both places make the beaches, or more precisely the waterfront, the focus of associations. In the case of Whalebone Estates, the literary source of the road names is immediately apparent, rather than indirect as on North Pender. The Gabriola names are generally proper names, which makes their source both incontrovertible and immediately recognizable: Whalebone Drive leads to Captain Ahabs Terrace, Pequod Crescent, Tashtego Crescent, Queequeg Turnabout, Tye Drive, Starbuck Lane, Daggoo Place, Blue Whale, Spermwhale, and Killer Whale Lookouts, and finally, Moby Dicks Way.

This system of names borrowed from a novel sited on the east coast of the United States make a generic text, lacking spatial significance, out of what is an intensely local, culturally-specific narrative. Moby Dick commemorates a very local culture--the New England whaling industry--at a moment when that industry was beginning to lose the source of its wealth, the whales themselves. Melville's response to this impending sense of loss is to treat that culture with another version of pastoral nostalgia: the novel records every possible detail about that culture, its language, equipment, its superstitions, its

markets and industrial processes, and the biological processes that produce the whales. This encyclopedic completeness in itself is foreign to the Gulf Islands, where the sketch, in its various manifestations, offers the appropriate literary forms for representing the local. The epic scale of Melville's quest narrative is one reason that it has become one of the founding narratives of American culture. Another reason is that Moby Dick enshrines a version of American frontier idealism whose model for human interaction with nature pits the individual hero against wild animals and adverse conditions; the site of that battle is wilderness, which in Melville's version is the sea. The tragic narrative frame, the huge sprawl of material celebrating a rich, diverse industrial culture, the destructive effects of Ahab's obsession, and the inexorable momentum that propels the narrative toward disaster make this novel particularly American, and particularly a product of its New England, fundamentally Puritan culture. In the novel's local roots, Americans discern the elements that make Moby Dick a national myth also.

The Wildwood planners thus borrowed a powerful myth to authenticate the place they marked out of the forest (or rather the alder-swordfern swamp). In choosing Moby Dick for road names, the planners gestured toward the notion of Gulf Island space as particularly natural space, but the process of association between that novel and the Gulf Island local is complicated: the British Columbia coast, including the Strait of Georgia, certainly lies within the range of several species of whales, and specific places in the Gulf Islands--commemorated in the place names Whaler Bay on Galiano and Whaling Station Bay on Hornby--were at one time sites associated with the local whaling industry. But there is no particular evidence, certainly not in local collective memory, that Whalebone

Beach on Gabriola was ever similarly used by the industry. It seems likely, therefore, that the Wildwood planners were motivated by the generalised tendency on the British Columbia coast to use the killer whale as an icon for the region, rather than by these faint traces of the industry's past on other islands: the killer whale, the most visible, most sighted species, has no industrial value. Given the currency of the killer whale as an icon for the coast, as signifier, therefore, for the local, and the tendency for species identification to give way to the generic class in such icons, the logic of the assumption that since Moby Dick is about whales it can be used to describe local space can be understood. The attempt to speak the local fails: these road names present another instance in which the coins are wrong.

The ultimate end of this borrowing is to make the road names refer to an ersatz version of region: using names from Moby Dick to describe a Gulf Island space makes the place thus named less real.<sup>110</sup> This process participates in the globalization of images that

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<sup>110</sup> Kim Taplin makes a case for this process even when road names derive from the local natural landscape:

The . . . need to remember that we are part of nature, and to stay in touch with the rest of it, is pathetically, almost superstitiously, evinced by the many street names that commemorate trees long vanished or even suggest ones that never existed at all. Names such as Forest Hill or Beechwood Road contain a tiny drop of refreshment of real trees. (16)

On Gabriola, Wildwood also developed a subdivision on the southwest side of the island, referred to locally as Mussell Heights (a rather dislocating oxymoron). The street names in this neighbourhood--Clamshell, Starfish, Mussell, and Oyster--refer to the intertidal zone, arguably the topographical feature that most profoundly identifies Gulf Island-ness. Ironically, the shoreline the development overlooks is closed to shellfish harvesting because of pollution from the Harmac pulp mill a few miles northwest across False Narrows. These street names thus commemorate a version of local nature that no longer obtains: their rhetorical function is nostalgic rather than interpretive. One further street name in the development--Molly's Way--refers not to the local but to a fictional restaurant--Molly's

detaches significance from signifiers. The complex processes by which literature participates in the culture of place cannot operate when literary allusions are applied to a foreign place to create significance where none can otherwise be discerned by those who are not indigenous to the local place. The literature also suffers: such borrowings reduce the literary text to a cluster of popularly valent elements, the text becoming a metaphor, or series of metaphors, for generalized attributes that are imposed on a place, under the guise of their being recognised in that place. Such allusions are intended to give a place depth or texture, to create a context in which its important attributes can be isolated and the place defined.

Bill Richardson echoes these patterns of road names as attempts to locate or authenticate origins, since allusions to Melville and Stevenson precede and follow, respectively, Virgil's account of the cemetery at the beginning of Bachelor Brothers' Bed & Breakfast. Like the subdivision developers, Richardson invokes these two texts because for an outsider, as he admits that he is, Moby Dick and Treasure Island provide the romantic context whereby the place acquires meaning even for someone who encounters it for the first time. Richardson, or rather his narrator, describes the process of discovering the island retreat represented by the bed and breakfast as a profoundly unguided experience: he finds himself on the various paths that lead him to it, no more actively deliberate when

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Reach--that featured in The Beachcombers, a successful Canadian television series of the 1970s and early 1980s based on West Coast tidal culture. The series was filmed in Gibsons's Landing, north across the Strait from Gabriola. The name "Molly's Way" thus signifies British Columbia coast-ness rather than Gabriola history or culture. The intertidal names can also be considered to refer to coast-ness rather than to the local, since the one rare and visually stunning species that occurs on the shoreline below the development--the moonsnail--has not been included.

he boards the ferry than when he turns up the bachelor brothers' driveway. Lacking a guide, or even a map, his interpretive tool must be literature: his copy of Moby Dick, however, remains unread. For Richardson, as for the Gabriola real estate developer, Moby Dick is important not as literature but as the source of a guiding idea, which in Richardson's case is the quest.

The version of literary recognition in which the emigrant perceives in the new landscape the narrative and metaphorical topographies of imperial literature dominates Gulf Island writing from the mid-nineteenth century until at least the 1960s. It persists still: only in the last decade of the twentieth century has another, more local version of literary recognition emerged to compete with the imperial model. Bachelor Brothers' Bed & Breakfast, so remarkable a departure from previous Gulf Island writing in other ways (its shrinking topography, its structure, its avoidance of landscape, its locally-born principal characters), looks back to colonial strategies for creating and interpreting place in its foregrounding of the literary canon. Richardson scatters volumes of European, British, American, and Canadian literature both through the entries in the guest book and through Virgil's and Hector's narratives: he also compiles three annotated lists of recommended books--the B & B's top ten authors among guests, Virgil's suggested works for those "who are feeling low," and Hector's for reading in the bath. Bachelor Brothers' Bed & Breakfast is thus as much a field guide to reading as it is a collection of stories or an evocation of place. Just as the Roger Tory Peterson field guides to nature usually include a "life list" in the endpapers, an aid to "collecting" sightings of as many species as possible over a lifetime, Richardson's lists of books appeal to the sense of reading literature as a life's

work, or rather life's pleasure. This awareness of the limitations of a life-span prompts the brothers to open the B & B in the first instance:

Both brothers are avid, lifelong readers. They share the oppression felt by the gentle, sometimes confused people who are their paying guests; people who see that the ratio of books available to time available is terribly skewed. Hector and Virgil think of their B & B as a way of redressing that dreadful imbalance . . . (2)

Rather than describing the Gulf Islands directly as a natural landscape, Richardson imitates the conventional mode of interacting with nature through books--by using field guides when out in nature--to suggest a rather more complex relation between books, or reading, and experiencing nature first hand, in the field.

In Bachelor Brothers!, literature intersects with nature in the guest book entry contributed by Gordon, the urban corporate lawyer sent to the island on a wilderness retreat with his partners. Alone in the woods, Gordon is intensely uncomfortable:

I walked for about five minutes; directionless, overwhelmed by the sense of being an alien in this place. The natural world was utterly foreign to me. I couldn't name any of the plants or trees I saw around me, except to say: Conifer. Moss. Fern. The silence was unsettling. When had I last been alone with my thoughts? There was nothing to listen to but birdsong and the useless hum and rattle of my own brain. (44)

Acting on the instructions of the event facilitator, Gordon hugs a tree and asks it to speak to him: the tree's answer, "Get the hell out," propels Gordon through the woods at high speed until he collapses on the road and is found and revived by Hector.

Rather than finding himself, like Richard Hugo, gesturing and sweating without language, unable to speak locally, Gordon lacks the language to hear. And yet the two versions of silence are linked: part of the silence Gordon hears is the result of his being unable to name, except generically, the elements of Gulf Island space in which he finds

himself alone. The alienness of the "natural world," as Gordon defines this space, echoes the foreignness Hugo finds here: entering nature requires a deliberate moving within, deeper into Gulf Island space, rather than a movement out across geographical borders. Gordon himself recognizes the dissonance that Hugo finds in the experience of sailing through forests: "I was in the woods. But I felt completely at sea." Hugging the tree intensifies that dissonance, for he finds embracing the pillar of the forest "unexpectedly settling, like being anchored and buoyed at the same time." Hugo expresses his arboreal experience in nautical, marine similes. In the Gulf Islands, wilderness is found not in forests but at sea: Gordon's terms of reference, therefore, are exactly appropriate to the foreign-ness he encounters in the woods.

This foreign-ness makes it difficult for Gordon to decipher what the tree tells him: interpreting the tree's message as a hostile warning, he panics and runs: Hector, however, transposing an aural experience into a literary one, thinks it possible that Gordon has "misread the punch line." Hector's analogy is particularly apt, in that missing the punch line almost always results from a lack of common language between the listener and the person (or tree) telling the story. Gordon lacks the context for making sense, on the tree's terms, of what he is being told. At the bed and breakfast, Hector asks Virgil to suggest appropriate books for someone who has received the message Gordon has from a tree: Virgil's suggestion is "'Not Dante. But the Hardy Boys might be a good bet. And give him a whisky, quick" (46).

Both Hector and Virgil assume that the appropriate response to any trauma is to administer a literary antidote. In giving him Hardy Boys books to read, Virgil offers

Gordon a field guide to his particular experience of nature. This field guide does not merely name that experience, as Peterson might do, but erects for Gordon a context in which to interpret his encounter with a Gulf Island landscape. In one sense, the Hardy Boys permit Gordon to escape from his experience while he recuperates at the B & B:

I stayed on for four days, reading about the adventures of Frank and Joe in secret passages and hidden caves, in smugglers' coves and lost canyons. In my waking hours and in my dreams, I shared their perfect lives, their well-ordered and moral universe where nothing changed and trees were never known to talk. (46)

This literary escape is precisely the point: Virgil rejects Dante (one assumes he is thinking of The Inferno, which presumably occurs to him because of the reference to hell in the tree's message), and concentrates instead on escapism, on "getting out." The Hardy Boys are an apt choice because they appeal so directly to the adventure story element in Gordon's narrative: these books are American, twentieth-century successors to Treasure Island and the genre Stevenson's book created. The "smugglers' coves" and "hidden caves" bring Treasure Island directly to mind, while the other places Gordon mentions demonstrate how the Hardy Boys series, despite changing locations and details, nevertheless merely varies the plot of Treasure Island. In mentioning four distinct topographical features in which the Hardy Boys find their adventures, Gordon signals the fundamental link between landscape and narrative that Treasure Island underscores. By transposing Treasure Island from the nineteenth century to the twentieth and from England and the South Seas to North America, the Hardy Boys books offer Gordon a version of the desert island adventure story in which he can recognize his own experience.

The several versions of escapism that the Hardy Boys books suggest to Gordon,

however, make the status of the natural landscape ambiguous. The virtues that he perceives in these novels, especially the protagonists' "well-ordered and moral universe," makes these adventure stories, which ostensibly involve crossing boundaries into the wilderness, primarily pastoral. That universe, unchanging and predictable, insulates him against his having heard a tree speak to him until he is ready to interpret its message. Only in the last paragraph of his narrative does Gordon refer again to the phantasmagorical nature of that experience: "That's what happened to me. No one will believe any of it. Sometimes, life's like that" (47).

On the coast, people use literature as field guides, a practical strategy for any emigrant or visitor to a new place: in the absence of more precise cues to interpreting place, the newcomer relies on the familiar associations prompted by the particular topography of that place. That these associations should be primarily literary is hardly surprising: literary images, language, and narrative create concrete cultural "memories" of places that the reader has never seen. In the Gulf Islands, the literary texts that provide an interpretive context for English emigrants are the nineteenth-century English desert island adventure novels, of which Treasure Island is an excellent example: one characteristic of these novels is that the "place" that they invent is inevitably foreign to their readers, the stuff of fantasy. The influence of these texts is much greater than it would be if they described a familiar, experienced landscape: never having been seen, the islands of the adventure novels can easily be "recognized" in the Gulf Island landscape.

This process of literary "recognition" operates with other texts also, notably the classical allusions that are perhaps the foundation of conventions of epigraphs and

intertextual references so common in English literary tradition. To a certain extent, the notion of "literariness" proceeds as much from these allusions themselves, which indicate a well-read writer, as from intrinsic qualities in the literature itself. Richardson makes at least a gently ironic gesture toward this convention in the names he gives the bachelor brothers: the names Hector and Virgil, one a hero of The Iliad and the other the author of The Aeneid, allude to the foundational epics in which English literary tradition likes to locate its origins. But Richardson undercuts this reference by making the names an accident of their mother's alarm at finding herself delivered of twins: as Virgil explains,

Most people hearing our names suppose her to have been a classicist. This is not the case. We owe our historically resonant monikers to nothing more than a bizarre coincidence that erupted on the morning we first sucked air. That very day . . . twin bulls were born at a farm not far from here. . . . It seemed the farmer who oversaw the delivery had for years been courting the school's Latin teacher. He named the new arrivals Hector and Virgil in her honour. (4)

Reading this account in the local newspaper, the brothers' mother decides that "Hector and Virgil would suit us just as well as any of the other available handles" (5). The names, therefore, result from classical allusion skewed through local, even pastoral, events. This narrative of nominal origins demonstrates that classical allusions to the Gulf Island landscape may not be as straightforward as they appear.

In The Innocent Traveller (1946), Ethel Wilson even more thoroughly complicates the question of classical allusion in the chapter "The Innumerable Laughter," in which Topaz Edgeworth ("Aunty" for most of the book), her sister and her niece take a holiday at a nephew's cabin on Benbow Island, the name being a transposed version of Bowen. The chapter title translates a description of the sea attributed to Homer, sometimes also

translated as "the many-twinkling smile of ocean": both of these expressions spring to Topaz's lips as she catches sight of the sea on her first morning on the island. Enchanted by the pastoral appearance of the island landscape, Topaz resolves to sleep that night on the verandah, in the open air. Once settled for the night, however, Aunt Topaz gradually becomes alarmed. At first her uneasiness, like Gordon's, derives only from the unaccustomed silence: "Her own stillness and the dark cosmic and planetary silence outside the cabin really disturbed and deprived Aunty a good deal, but she determined to enjoy herself" (188). Soon, however, a group of deer moves into the clearing around the cabin and begins to eat the grass, heard but unseen by Topaz:

there were now, near her, sounds as of small footsteps, a little movement, a little rustling. Aunty raised herself cautiously on her elbow and peered. She could see nothing, nothing. These small sounds came from in front of the cottage, and from either end of the verandah. They were closing in. Crop, crop, crop. Rustle, chump, and a nipping of grasses. (190-191)

As the owls begin to cry, Topaz reflects that owls may precede mice, rats, even weasels, for "[t]his is, when all is said and done, a very wild country, and only newly inhabited. Truly the New World" (190). Her attempts to compose herself are interrupted by the cry of a great blue heron:

She did not know that a blue heron was protesting as it awoke, and was now beating its wings slowly against the adjacent air. She had never heard of a blue heron. The harsh and dreadful cry was repeated near at hand. "That is not human!" thought Aunty trembling, and, of course, it was not. What Aunty meant was that it was hellish, which it was. (191)

At last the wildlife moves away and the sound of the sea ceases, but at this point Topaz hears a voice: "A voice? Voices? Sweet, high, clear, and very faint. A dropping of semitones. A foreign tongue? A sound never heard before, followed by a light sigh, a

groan" (192). As she listens, Topaz remembers in an agony of fear her governess' explanation of the word "Panic," and is convinced that despite the advantages of a Christian upbringing, she is about to succumb to it. The deciding factor, she feels, is that the island resembles the Greece of the pre-Christian era, when, "*their world of rocks and trees was so new . . . and in its natural state . . . who can say . . . no, we cannot say . . . why, even Homer . . . Benbow Island is as new as Greece ever was, and newer, newer, much newer*" (193).<sup>111</sup> Panicking, like Gordon, at the idea of nature speaking to him, Topaz rushes into the cabin: like him, too, unfamiliar with the natural landscape of the Gulf Islands, she lacks the context for interpreting what she hears in it. The "voice" that terrifies her is the sound of "the faint regular musical rub of the boom log against the little wharf, wood against wood, wood against wood with the slow sway of the water . . . its clear petulant cry, its chime, its rhythmical sighing" (195). As in Gordon's narrative, the sea intrudes into the forest.

Aunt Topaz's responses to the natural landscape of the island are dictated by her classical education: her delight in the innumerable laughter and her fear of Panic both belong to a culture--the colonial culture that has appropriated ancient Greek culture as the origins of its own--that has no currency in the Gulf Island landscape. And yet, despite making Topaz a comic, ridiculous figure in this episode, Wilson nonetheless allows her to grasp an element of the natural landscape that escapes her companions: Topaz is right to recognize the newness of Benbow Island and to sense that something sentient, extrahuman,

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<sup>111</sup> One effect of Wilson's allusion to classical Greek antecedents to describe landscape and nature is to strengthen the correspondence, that Josef Cardero is the first to perceive, between the Gulf Islands landscape and the Mediterranean.

and powerful may obtain in the alien night world outside the walls of the cabin. The appearance of the sunny, daylight, pastoral world (the latter association being yet another concept of nature borrowed from the ancient Greeks) does not necessarily reflect all aspects of the Gulf Island landscape.

And yet Wilson too calls into question the seriousness of these classical allusions, undermining her own conventional literariness in a much more subtle manner than Richardson. For a reader familiar with Stevenson's Treasure Island, the name "Benbow Island" resonates much more immediately than the internal, obvious allusions to classical epic. The name of Jim Hawkins' family's pub, the site of the first part of the novel, is the "Admiral Benbow," the name itself alluding to the legends associated with piracy by the nineteenth century. Vice-admiral John Benbow (1653-1702) had spectacular success early in his career against pirates, particularly Algerian corsairs and Moors, and on the Spanish main. According to the Dictionary of National Biography (1975), however, Benbow's later career was conspicuously less successful, to the extent that "[t]he exact narration of Benbow's history may cause some wonder as to his high reputation" (133). A rough seaman (the son of a tanner), elevated to the rank of admiral by his influential friends as much as his own merits, Benbow lacked the skill to command a fleet and the tact to get on well with officers under his command to whom he was socially inferior. His legendary status, therefore, seems to derive from his popularity with the seamen before the mast: his association with the days of piracy on the Spanish main probably gained currency through the culture of the lower decks, however restrained official naval opinion might have been about his ability and accomplishments.

The coincidence of near-exact transposition between the names Bowen and Benbow gives Wilson, whose own literary education, being English, must have acquainted her with Stevenson's book, an opportunity to complicate the issue of literary allusion and the local in the central act of signifying place: toponymy. Allusions to Treasure Island proliferate in Gulf Islands texts. In To All Appearances a Lady (1989), for example, Marilyn Bowering doubly alludes to the book: her first-person Eurasian protagonist, Robert Lam, has been named for Robert Louis Stevenson, while his mother's husband, Robert Haack, met Stevenson in Monterey, where the poet gave him a holograph copy of one of the early poems. In the D'Arcy Island sequences of Bowering's book, furthermore, Treasure Island hovers as an ironic intertext, not only in the parallel theme of involuntary exile on a desert island (Ben Gunn and the three marooned pirates in Stevenson's book, the leper colony in Bowering's), but in its references to piracy: the stolen opium whose location is a mystery in To All Appearances a Lady is finally discovered on D'Arcy Island.

Haack's meeting with Stevenson is a key factor in his romance with India Thackeray, Robert Lam's mother, who is surprised at the kind of man this encounter reveals Haack to be: "she had tended to think of Stevenson as her own discovery." India Thackeray's surname suggests that allusion to nineteenth-century English novels plays a large part in Bowering's narrative; indeed, after she disappears, Haack, who is trying to find her, dreams that he makes a mistake in choosing which of Robert Louis Stevenson's texts can guide him to discover what has happened to her. In the dream, Haack chooses Kidnapped, when the book that would have led him to her is Treasure Island. Bowering thus gestures directly toward the issue of using imperial intertexts as guides to local,

colonial space.

In the absence of other sources of claims to local authority and authenticity, the Gulf Islands continue to generate the same use of borrowed literary allusions in the last years of the twentieth century as they have done for more than a century. The neo-colonial glance back over the shoulder to empire for validation of the local informs even the most intensely "regional" definitions of the islands. In the 1970s, Blue Sky Design consciously evoked the fantasy landscape of an Oxford don: references to Tolkien's hobbit culture exactly parallels toponymic references to American and English adventure novels, and with the ship's log form that gives shape and language to coastal cruising narratives.

*Vague space, and in the hush, Dawn's pencil drew  
On the damp clouds of darkness, line by line  
Peaks and vast headlands . . .*

Sir Clive Phillips-Wolley, "Autumn Salmon Run"

*Now John Ireland marked his place in his magazine carefully with a flattened twig of fir. He turned, with a familiar gesture, to regard a drawing nailed to the wall beside his library desk. Why not abandon hope here in Whatcom, retire to Madrone Island, and live out his days on a stone beach, watching the sun wheel?*

*It was the island that he loved, if he could be said to love at all; his life on the mainland he bore as a duty. The ink drawing showed a dark series of scratchy, poignant clouds, whose broken masses were the picture's subject. A frail line far below them divided the sea from the sky; a layer of lapped lines indicated islands on the horizon. The picture satisfied him only by evoking its occasion: he had sat on an island beach log, his bare feet in the cool gray sand, and studied the irradiating northern light. The light glowed in colors from the center of each cloud and fired its filaments down the spectrum, towards the blue; the light rendered his pen's precision absurd, but it gladdened the man and filled his lungs. The water had been slick that day, and marbled with calm. The skies were piled and complex. He looked at the picture often, to remind himself that the insubstantial vastness still and always obtained over the island and was ringing its colored changes unobserved, and to submit his ordinary concerns to its wide glance.*

Annie Dillard, The Living, 231

*When I go I notice how picturesquely the ax has been thrust into the chopping block, how the chess game is always there on the stump. Stella seems more real than Trudl, but is she? Am I just jealous because they are both "dabblers" and I would like that luxury?*

Thomas, Intertidal Life, 68

*These islands also possess an irresistible attraction for people of good education combined with some quirk that makes communal life difficult for them. In these favoured climes they can just let go and indulge their*

*eccentricities. Neighbours take a kindly interest in their latest antics, knowing very well the tranquillizing influence of these surroundings. Would-be industrial tycoons and ambitious authors alike fall victims to the prevailing languor. The factories remain unbuilt, the books are seldom written. The keel of the boat that was going to sail to Hawaii moulders in the salal. More important items like beach-combing, gardening, fishing, bridge, fencing, and sometimes feuding with the nearest neighbour, have taken possession.*

W.B. Woodward, "Enchanted Islands," 161

*Everything  
becomes island,  
  
huckleberry hides the forest floor,  
ferns to the water's edge,  
sheep running the rock ridges . . .*

Doug Beardsley, "Benchmarks"

When speaking of a space so recently colonized and a region as recently constituted as the Gulf Islands, it is difficult to avoid applying to the writing of that region the metaphors of growth and evolution that the local history genre conventionally embraces. In the chronology of imperial history, the tropes "discovery" and "settlement" initiate precisely this development model; the manner in which they are used in the Gulf Islands region, however, actively deflects these implications and the chronology they conventionally imply. The criticism of regional literature, like that applied to colonial literature, borrows the development model that supports imperial history: the writing practised in a newly-discovered, newly-settled land is implicitly considered to mirror the process of evolution in the colony itself. Similarly, as a place becomes recognized as a distinct region, its literature also gradually becomes identified as distinct. The metaphors of growth and

refinement that describe a colonial literature's transformation into a national literature appear to narrate the emergence of distinct regional literatures as well.

In the Gulf Islands, however, the tropes of "discovery" and "settlement" counteract this notion of development and thus preserve the islands' identity as natural space. Those tropes determine or influence the genres in which the local or regional experience can be written. The overwhelmingly persistent characteristic of Gulf Island writing is the sketch form, conventionally considered the mode of a colonial literature, the mark of a place that is too new (not a new geographical entity but a space peopled with immigrants who encounter difficulties articulating that space), too unformed to have developed more highly developed literary genres in which to write the new landscape. In the colonial context, the sketch precedes more complex and refined literary modes: the sketch represents a preliminary stage that will necessarily lead to developments from which the sketch will gradually disappear. Gulf Island writing, however, defeats expectations of evolution: rather than signifying a phase of colonial history, the sketch (whatever its content) functions locally as a direct representation of region. Since a defining characteristic of Gulf Island experience is the endlessly-repeated moment of arrival commemorated in "discovery" and "settlement," the sketch--which records initial impressions, dashed off at the moment of inspiration, unmediated by formal literary conventions--remains the appropriate mode of capturing and communicating experience of the local. In signifying unfinished, unintegrated, unpolished work, the sketch constitutes a central code of Gulf Island-ness.

The notion of the sketch conforms to the cult of the unfinished that permeates the

craft aesthetic so prevalent in the islands, and remains the fundamental principle dictating how the settled landscape properly expresses the local: the more a building alludes to its natural surroundings--both in materials used and in the degree of finishing--the more precisely indigenous to the Gulf Islands that structure is considered to be. Both landscape mediation and local writing express nature not simply through metaphor and synecdoche to but also by using or alluding to the sketch. The builders of hand-built structures on Hornby, in the 1970s at least, used what they describe as "holistic" principles for designing their buildings. These principles informed not only the building profiles but also the actual process of design: for the most part, "design" is a misleading term, since it describes the act of working out a building's attributes on paper before building begins. The Hornby houses erected in the 1970s were generally built without such preliminary work, their design emanating from available materials and from the process of building itself rather than from preconceived ideas of the structure's ultimate state. The drawings of floor plans and elevations that illustrate Hand-Built Hornby were made after the structures were built: they record the building as it has become part of the landscape rather than predicting or dictating how that building might come into being. This inverted chronology of schematic, or sketch, and finished structure makes the buildings themselves their own working drawings or sketches, especially since the principle of the "unfinished" refers not just to surfaces but to the buildings themselves. The woodbutcher aesthetic on Hornby refers to its structures as works in progress rather than as monolithic final statements: endlessly-deferred completion also makes these structures sketches, in the sense of preliminary to another phase of building. Since these continually-changing (or at least potentially-

changing) buildings make settlement a continuing process rather than a completed stage of colonial history, they align with the written sketch to resist the notion of development.

The statement that the hand-built Hornby houses make about the visual sketch form and its relation to landscape underscores the double significance of the verbal sketch as a neo-colonial genre: as well as being a form that precedes more sophisticated modes of literary expression, the sketch also constitutes a preliminary study for a specific work. In its roughness, brevity, and crucially its spontaneity, the sketch can be considered an inherently natural literary form: in the degree to which it does not conform to conventional standards of the literary--revision, embellishment, carefully-considered structure, complex deliberate relations between its parts--the sketch establishes its distance from the literary. The sketch is thus paradoxically a literary form that denies form altogether, that undermines its own aspirations to the literary. The sketch thus enables Gulf Island writing to overcome the great obstacle in representing the natural in language: since nature is unavoidably ineffable, one strategy for capturing a hint of its essence is to abandon conscious design, to work instead in the mode--the sketch--where deliberation is irrelevant, unnecessary, even counter-productive.

Given that the islands strive to represent themselves as a natural space, the complete absence of nature writing, as it is understood as a literary genre, presents a profound paradox that threatens to undermine the integrity of the region's self-definition. This is not to say that a great deal of Gulf Island writing is not devoted to observation of and reflection on nature, quite the reverse. But the amount of writing about nature simply emphasizes how odd it is that the specific genre devoted to this material is not used in the

Gulf Islands. The surrounding coast has spawned nature writing in many of the classic variants of the genre: Richard Nelson's account of wilderness on an island in the Queen Charlottes (The Island Within (1989)), for example, belongs to the late twentieth-century version of the genre represented by Annie Dillard and Barry Lopez. East across the Strait, Philip Croft describes the seasonal cycle of changes in the natural landscape of suburban West Vancouver in an amateur, hand-illustrated journal published as Nature Diary of a Quiet Pedestrian (1986). While the former example recalls the conventional pull of the northern coast for those seeking unmediated nature (wilderness), the latter suggests that the degree to which Gulf Island nature is tamed and settled does not account for the absence of the genre locally: the mediated nature that Dillard describes in Pilgrim at Tinker Creek also strongly resembles that in the Gulf Islands. Dillard and Croft show that wilderness is not a prerequisite for nature writing: other sites and conditions are available. South of the Gulf Islands region, Robert Michael Pyle faces the challenge of writing about nature in a region--the Willapa hills in western Washington--devastated by clear-cut forestry. In Wintergreen: Listening to the Land's Heart (1986), Pyle looks past the scars of the "ravaged" landscape, saying "[i]t is no wilderness, and yet it is wild and elusive" (29).<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Pyle finds in the Willapa Hills a tendency to avoid elite art, a tendency highly reminiscent of the Gulf Islands, and one that he notices accompanies an absence of nature writing there too: "on the whole, nature lovers ignore this seemingly dull and impoverished landscape," and continues:

Nor have these hills inspired much in the way of fine arts. I cannot speak for the other side of the Gray's River divide, but I suspect the overall artistic output of the Willapas has been much the same from one end to the other. Good local histories appear, in telephone books and elsewhere, and a scant handful of prose and verse writers have scribbled here. Yet there is scarcely a literature of this land. . . . The rain world of Willapa has yet to produce its Hardy or Kesey, Constable or Graves--and it probably never will. (15)

West of the islands, Roderick Haig-Brown wrote several books describing nature on Vancouver Island. Yet the place at the centre of all of this nature-writing activity--the Gulf Islands--seems resistant to the genre, despite the persistent ideology of nature that informs its rhetoric. The paradox emanates from the degree to which nature writing is a genre defined by its own set of literary conventions.

In the gap in the regional canon that might be occupied by nature writing, the Gulf Islands offer something much more radical, a literary form that imitates nature rather than discusses it. However unconsciously it might be chosen, the sketch signifies those aspects of the islands by which islanders define both this space and themselves as belonging to it. The sketch embodies the agrestic values that define the islands, especially the notion that writing, rather than being an art, as literary convention would characterize it, is a craft: the distinction means something more concrete in the islands than it might elsewhere, since the idea of "craft" plays a significant part in defining local identity. In the Gulf Islands, virtually every activity can be practised as a craft or, conversely, craft is the appropriate sphere of every Gulf Islander.

The notion of craft contributes to the region's subversion of the chronology and expectations of imperial history. In the imperial context, craft, like discovery and settlement, connotes the pre-urban, an initial or transitional state that anticipates more highly sophisticated systems of production. The reasons for the persistence of the sketch form and for the longevity of the craft aesthetic are the same: by expressing itself almost

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The great difference between the phenomenon Pyle notices and its counterpart in the Gulf Islands is that whereas the Willapas appear not to engage the interest of writers, the Gulf Islands abound with writers, who deliberately, however, embrace a modest genre in order to express the local.

exclusively in these modes, the Gulf Islands region excludes itself from imperial history. The notion that the region is "evolving" has no currency locally: the region defines itself precisely by exclusion from colonial development. The region's apparently undeveloped characteristics--economic, political, and aesthetic--are actually deliberate rhetorical strategies, direct allusions to the local. Just as land-use discourse in local space is neo-colonial, so are the literary forms in which that space is represented. The neo-colonial mode has defined experience of the islands since European settlement began in the mid-nineteenth century: the tropes of initial colonial experience of landscape--discovery and settlement--continue to dominate representations of Gulf Islands space, emanating from a version of colonialism that is constant and self-perpetuating. The writing of the islands thus also continues to use the forms, modes, and language of colonial representation, a pre-literary frame of reference.

In this respect, both Seven-Knot Summers and Bachelor Brothers' Bed & Breakfast conform to the conventions of the region's writing despite their innovations. Beth Hill cannot include local imaginative writing in her account of coastal space, even in the Gulf Islands, where she refers so often to local texts. The one exception to this absence is the poem "Uncle Henry and the Whale," published in A Gulf Islands Patchwork more than thirty years earlier, and Hill includes it in order to establish the authenticity of the story that ballad recounts (and thus her own authenticity) rather than on its merits as a piece of local literature. The sole exception in Bachelor Brothers' Bed & Breakfast is startlingly similar, consisting of Richardson's invention of a local poet--Solomon Solomon--whose work has become the academic subject not of a literary critic but of an anthropologist ("a

professor of folklore from an eastern university," 84). The folklorist, however, finds the poems valuable not for their folkloric content--the local--but for the degree to which their style shows influences from exactly those canonical literary texts that Bachelor Brothers' celebrates. One poem prompts this response: "'That's quite remarkable,' said the professor, after a few moments of respectful silence. 'You can see how he was influenced by the seventeenth-century metaphysical poets. As well as by Emily Dickinson'" (86-87). A ballad resembling "Uncle Henry and the Whale" excites the scholar even further: "'That's truly remarkable! Something of Poe, something of Longfellow, and a *soupeçon* of Browning, all blended together into something that is distinctly Solomon'" (93). The professor entirely ignores the element of the local, assessing rather the degree to which these poems participate in literary traditions inherited from other places. Colonial writing is usually assessed from this perspective, the course of critical enquiry assembling a genealogy of literary influences: the element of the local in the text, its subject or content rather than its form, is considered its ephemeral characteristic.

Yet the quality of ephemera pertains to form also. According to Hector, who narrates this section of Bachelor Brothers', the ephemeral aspect of Solomon Solomon's work is one of its defining characteristics, especially given that Solomon's poetry is literally newspaper verse:

It would never have occurred to any of us to attach the adjective "remarkable" either to him or to his *oeuvre*. . . . For us, Solomon Solomon and his prolific output were part of the ordinary landscape. We anticipated the newspaper appearances of his poetic musings with the same certainty we accorded the earth's spinning and the sun's rising. A measure of our genial regard is that no one ever thought to collect the poems or to publish a selection in a volume. Nor will such a thing be possible, given that Solomon Solomon himself saw his work as ephemeral and left no papers

behind. The elder J. MacDonald Bellweather, founder of the Rumour, was similarly unencumbered by an archival instinct and never preserved a complete run of his paper. (85)

This paragraph connects localness--"the ordinary landscape"--with the lack of an impulse to preserve literary texts, or any texts, given that the newspaper in which the poems are published is itself consigned to oblivion through neglect. The poems repose instead in Virgil's memory, and only his gift of total recall gives the visiting professor the material he needs. Despite the doubled allusion to Old Testament songs in the poet's name, Solomon Solomon's poems are foundational texts in that they have become orally transmitted rather than because they record the origins of a culture. Richardson makes Solomon's poems oral literature after they have appeared in print, rather than before: this inversion is a crucial, very local variant on the local history genre where the chronological disruption that informs imperial history here functions in literary production also. As their publication as newspaper verse suggests, the poems are nothing if not topical, but their topicality has temporal, as well as geographical, limits. As in British Columbia Coast Names, the anecdotist appears again, this time in verse: the amateur poet, like other writers in the Gulf Islands, concentrates on the intensely local.

The reversion from a highly-developed cultural mode--print--to a more primitive one echoes a curious set of parallel reversions in the Gulf Island landscape and community life that also defy the chronology of imperial history. In the late 1850s, businessmen in Victoria became concerned about the slow pace of settlement in the Vancouver Island colony: in A.F. Flucke's words, "the merchants and profession men of the town saw a retrogression to the former state of a mere trading-post unless there was immediately

established a permanent agricultural population to support the newly founded business and industrial enterprises" (164). One result of this concern was a scheme that brought several dozen settlers to Salt Spring in 1859, initiating a much faster rate of settlement than on the other islands. The pressure of services--especially roads--that such an increase in population required, however, split the island into competing factions rather than tying it together in pursuit of common goals. In an attempt to unify the island's isolated communities--the largest being Vesuvius, Ganges, Burgoyne Bay, Fulford, and Fernwood--Salt Spring was incorporated as a municipality on January 4, 1873. This step made Salt Spring settlement a legal reality and seemed to initiate a new stage in imperial chronology beyond mere settlement and into the more sophisticated realm of civic life. But it soon became apparent that the creation of a local level of government could not precipitate the island into greater identification of itself as a coherent community, and the political conflict that incorporation had been intended to resolve merely made it impossible for the municipality to function. On May 12, 1883, less than six months after incorporation, the municipality was dissolved.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> In Flucke's view, the dissolution of the municipality is an unfortunate setback in Salt Spring's colonial history:

Thus ended Saltspring Island's experiment in managing its own affairs. The time had not been ripe--communal unity on the island had not been sufficiently developed for such an enterprise to be successful. Lethargy, plus resentment of any local authority, on the one hand, and the overly ambitious designs of the Councillors with their impolitic disregard for the feelings of the settlers, on the other hand, had frustrated what might have been a creditable attempt at municipal independence. (199)

Flucke seems to imply that it should have been only a matter of time before another attempt at municipal control was successful. The pattern of settlement on Salt Spring dictated otherwise, however: rather than becoming an island community, Salt Spring has

In that act of dissolution, Salt Spring reverted from a municipality to an unorganized area, a place where settlement was still in progress rather than an achieved state. This reversion was a matter of rhetoric rather than reflecting any physical change in the island's settled landscape: in other cases in the islands, however, reversion has involved physical changes to the landscape. Much of the land that was cleared for farming and pasture during initial settlement has returned to forest: even in cases where trees have not re-established themselves, many fields have become so re-colonized by indigenous plant species that they are indistinguishable from wild meadows. The Gulf Islands once supported many industries--fish canneries, oil-extracting plants, a brick factory, a whaling station, shoreline quarries for millstones, even an explosives factory--that have disappeared from the island landscape. The demise of these industries results from economics and limited local resources, but since the Islands Trust perceives industry to be inappropriate in the islands, these enterprises will not be replaced by commercial ventures that intrude on the natural landscape. Needless to say, the continuation of large-scale logging on forest lands in the islands is extremely contentious.

As well as industrial presence in the landscape, many large, quasi-public buildings that once functioned as signs of corporate, collective organization no longer exist. Until it was pulled down in 1958, the Point Comfort Hotel on Mayne Island was an important local

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become politically divided between the business centre at Ganges and the rest of the island. For the purposes of the Islands Trust, Ganges is omitted from the Official Community Plan, an anomaly in the Trust Area that has arguably caused more conflict than it has deflected. In the late 1970s, for example, island politics were explosively divided on the issue of whether a sewer system should be built at Ganges, where pressure of population was causing great problems with sewage disposal. The Trust refused to become involved with the issue, which it accurately perceived as impossible to resolve to the "community's" satisfaction.

landmark. The disappearance of the hotel paralleled the passing both of a highly organized social life in the community of the outer islands and Salt Spring and of the English habit of retiring in large groups to summer resorts to which the social life of the city was simply transplanted. The late twentieth-century attitude that holidays in nature are properly solitary, anti-social retreats marks a great change from the extremely social atmosphere of summers in the islands even as late as the period between the wars.<sup>114</sup>

By contrast to the notion of settlement as communal social life that the Point Comfort Hotel represented, a building on Kuper Island suggested that settlement was a matter of controlling or "civilizing" (depending on one's point of view) the indigenous peoples displaced by that settlement. The residential school for First Nations children, a three-story brick structure, dominated the landscape at Telegraph Harbour from its completion in 1915 to its demolition in 1986. The school (or "the Schools," as it was known locally) was the center of civic life on both Thetis and Kuper (joined by a bridge which was subsequently dismantled); Thetis residents, for instance, collected their mail from the post office on Kuper. The removal of the bridge between the two islands severed the colonial connection between the white community on Thetis and the Halkomelem community on Kuper, now mainly reserve land (Nixon 195). The monolithic presence of the school building signified that settlement--which includes, in imperial chronology, the successful subjugation and integration of indigenous peoples--was in the islands a completed, unarguable fact: as a landscape statement, the school had no equal in connoting the institutional, corporate organization and civic responsibility that proceed from

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<sup>114</sup> In the 1930s, Galiano alone boasted nine resorts for summer visitors (More Tales 279).

completed settlement. The removal of the school building thus not only profoundly changed the local landscape but indicated a shift in the relationship between the communities on the two islands: no longer was Kuper dominated by a symbol of colonial suppression of indigenous people, a inevitable phase of colonial settlement in the chronology of imperial history.<sup>115</sup>

These changes in the Gulf Island landscape signify that local settlement history involves a reversion to nature rather than increasing distance from it: by closing the gap between nature and settlement, these landscape shifts profoundly disrupt a local narrative of development. Recent texts such as Bachelor Brothers' Bed & Breakfast, Seven-Knot Summers, and even Peter Murray's regional history Homesteads and Snug Harbours are local anomalies in that they attempt to take the broad view, to gather together disparate strands of Gulf Islands history and writing into a coherent whole. But these texts rest firmly in the local tradition in that none of them succeeds in this project. Without the progression from discovery through settlement and beyond that imperial history requires, the foundational texts of a colonized space cannot be written: synthesizing, encyclopedic, mythmaking fictions of origins like Moby Dick are unlikely to appear locally since the

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<sup>115</sup> For Al and Jo Cummings, who spend their summers cruising through the region, the demolition of the school marks a loss: in Gunkholing in the Gulf Islands, the Cummings include a photograph of the school with a caption that invites nostalgia: "Remember this old landmark school above the Kuper ferry landing?" (177). In the text, they reiterate the notion of a lost landmark:

For many years an imposing brick edifice stood on the shore behind the ferry dock. At one time it was an industrial school for Indians run by the Roman Catholic Church. Until recently it stood vacant, windows broken, unused, abused, then it was torn down after funding for the school was discontinued--a landmark gone. (178)

rhetoric of Gulf Islands experience requires that this progression not occur. Neo-colonial representation remains amateur, ephemeral, limited in scale: for its writing to "evolve" into something more sophisticated would alter the nature of the place.

In the title of his poem "North End, Spanish Hills" (subtitled "for Audrey Thomas"), Pierre Coupey locates the precise place at which Thomas is at home in the Gulf Islands (her cabin perches above the Spanish Hills store across the road at the north end of Galiano), while the first stanza describes how the search for myth in the islands is deflected into the natural landscape:

We asked for Valhalla  
but ended up  
among the trees, *Madrona*

Madrona (a Spanish word that resonates in this poem with the vernacular place name "Spanish Hills") is the American term for arbutus, the one feature of the local landscape that is used ubiquitously to signify "Gulf Island." The Gulf Islands mark the northernmost range of this tree, which is an indicator species of the Cool Mediterranean bioclimatic zone, the zone that links the islands to the homeland of the Spanish explorers who first paid attention to the islands. Rather than alluding to a mythology borrowed from an Old World culture, the local landscape forces attention back to nature, to the names and life cycles of indigenous plants.

In Intertidal Life, Thomas bridges the gap between the local version of natural literature--the sketch--and the conventional genre of nature writing, the proper sphere of those names and life cycles. In structure and form, the novel resembles a commonplace book: Thomas' protagonist, Alice Hoyle, begins a commonplace book near the beginning

of the novel, and the entries she makes are either the whole of the novel or those parts written in the first person (Thomas leaves this distinction ambiguous). Thomas' version, however, bears little resemblance to the commonplace book as it is understood in a literary sense: conventionally, the commonplace book consists of a collection of thoughts and quotations organized into categories; the term can also be applied to collections of literary works and/or extracts from literary works. In the Gulf Islands, however, where the sketch form predominates, the commonplace book has a more local resonance: the first local history of the outer islands--A Gulf Islands Patchwork--alludes in its title to the fact that the book is an arrangement of material, by several contributors, rather than the work of a single synthesizing writer or viewpoint. The title refers also to an actual quilt, a fund-raising venture to pay for the printing of the book, which depicts Gulf Island scenes in several squares. The metaphor of "patchwork" suggests both craft and homeliness: the patchwork quilt is made of scraps of material from different sources pieced together into a bedcovering. It is a hand-made artifact, the work of amateur artists, while the quilting of the pieced top layer to its filling and backing is often a collective, community endeavour, the occasion for the sharing of news and memories. This local history thus alludes to the commonplace book not only in its structure but in its narrative scale, its focus on the local, the common--shared--place. The second volume of this local history (More Tales of the Gulf Islands) does not repeat the word "patchwork" in its title, but its cover illustration uses those portions of the original Gulf Islands quilt that did not fit on the cover of A Gulf Islands Patchwork, and in another narrative of the local the introduction describes the creation, auction, and rediscovery of the quilt. The subtitle of More Tales describes its

content as "memories and anecdotes" of the islands, terms that align that book's narratives ("tales") with the "sketch" form of other Gulf Island texts.

Alice's commonplace book does not allude directly either to the literary sense of the term or to the local version but echoes both: she also treats it as a journal. The journal structure is a feature of much nature writing, which often traces the course of a single year, covering the changes that the annual cycle imposes on the landscape. Alice's year spans from September to August, an unusual way to mark off a year (which in nature writing tends to follow a calendar year or to refer to seasons rather than months) except for those whose lives are influenced by the annual school year or who live in a place, like the Gulf Islands, that is generally thought of, in another local version of pastoral, as a summer topography. To stay in the islands after the summer, to begin the story in September, means being local, not a summer visitor.

Despite the title Intertidal Life, which echoes field guide titles of the Gulf Islands' defining space--the littoral zone--Thomas does not treat Gulf Island nature directly. Alice is a writer, not a naturalist; her principal way of exploring the intertidal zone is to read about it in field guides rather than to encounter it physically. Similarly, Alice thinks about intertidal life not as something to be observed but as a source of metaphors for articulating the social relationships, including her own marriage, in which she takes part (or from which she is excluded) on Galiano. When Alice does visit the shore, she does so because "it soothes and pleases her" (269), a pastoral response to nature. As a intellectual stimulus, however, nature must be encountered through the medium of words before it can appeal to Alice's imagination: since the field guide provides her with homonymic associations,

Thomas fuses the field guide with the dictionary form:

Limpets do not go limp--would be no good at civil disobedience. Would not hang limp <sup>3</sup>flaccid, pliant, (2) from *lampen*, to hang loosely down<sup>2</sup> in policemen's arms. No, these little mollusks creep over rocks, feeding on algae, but always returning to the same spot. "The muscular foot is so powerful that limpets are found in wave-swept areas where few other forms of life can survive."

We could all learn a lesson from limpets, dear little conical creatures with Chinese hats. They really know how to hang on.

Which was not really what Alice was supposed to do--or was not really what she was supposed to do re: Peter, her husband, formerly Peter the Rock. None of that hanging on for dear life or limpet life. Rocks nipped with limpets above the pure, bright sea, where she and her daughters crouched, studying the creatures in the intertidal zone. (59-60)

Taxonomy of local nature provides Thomas with verbal structures for articulating experience: in the context of Intertidal Life, the term "nature writing" thus becomes less a literary genre and more a rhetorical strategy for referring, however indirectly, to the local.

In the Gulf Islands, the field guide and the sketch both gesture toward explicating the local: the gesture itself--in opposition to fully-realized, deeply observed representations--connotes local space. In "The Anacortes-Sydney Run," Richard Hugo makes declarative statements ("Two nations own these islands"; "The law protects the San Juans. No bilge here"; "You can buy an island") whose tone of authority resembles the authoritative voice of the field guide, yet all of these statements--like the field guides themselves--can only gesture (like the poet himself) toward the local. These statements, furthermore, are inevitably reductive--they sketch outlines but cannot dip below the surface of things. Finding the words to define island space is as difficult for the locals as it is for newcomers: in the Gulf Islands, that difficulty itself becomes a rhetorical strategy for

defining the local. Sir Clive Phillips-Wolley locates nature's sketch at East Point, Saturna Island, the place where the eastern limit of the Gulf Islands looks across Boundary Pass to the San Juan Islands. Annie Dillard sites her novel The Living in Bellingham Bay: the island to which John Ireland Sharpe yearns to return lies just across the international border from Saturna. For both Phillips-Wolley and Sharpe, the islands are drawn in clouds, insubstantial.

## ENVOI

*How Things Get Started*

*The hawk's eye sweeps over Active Pass,  
the sun overexposes each island  
and the sea keeps them apart.*

*Here there is no measurement, nothing to touch.  
The land reaches out as far as it can  
and fails, falling headfirst into the sea.*

*There's water out there and plenty of it;  
a horizon of hills and ochre-coloured clouds.  
Why are words so difficult? What's so special*

*about language at sundown on a ferry deck?  
Here the poem takes second place,  
departs from the truth of the life before me,  
the simple surety of it all.*

*The gulf grows between us. I love these islands.  
I am on my own now, naked and alone as Shakespeare's prince.  
Nothing I can do can stop the sun from sinking.*

*Doug Beardsley*

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