TRUE WAYFARING CHRISTIANS:

FORM AND MEANING IN THE

OVERLANDER NARRATIVES

by

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ABSTRACT

The basic contention of this thesis is that the journals and memoirs of a famous Canadian expedition--that of the "Overlanders" to the Cariboo gold fields in 1862--have literary as well as historical value. The accounts may be read as autobiographies, or as classic adventure stories (romances). The first chapter seeks to define the criteria by which we judge literary worth in these two forms, and indicate in general terms how the Overlander narratives fit into both genres.

The second chapter is concerned with dramatic structure in the narratives. The plot, reduced to its simplest form, is seen to be essentially that of the traditional folk tale ("naive" romance), in which heroes ride off in search of fabulous treasure, and on the way must overcome a variety of staggering difficulties. Although the outline of the plot in the Overlander accounts was supplied by actual events, the authors' ability to recognize the drama and reproduce it effectively is evidence of their creative power.

The third chapter examines the diction, sentence structure, and imagery of each of the narrators. Their artistry and originality is perhaps more apparent in their style than in any other aspect of their writing.

The fourth and fifth chapters concentrate on autobiographical meaning in the accounts. This meaning is developed

as the travellers are shown striving to maintain harmony among themselves, and struggling to make progress in a sometimes hostile wilderness. All the narrators were Christian believers. Their religious vision was reaffirmed in the course of the trek, and broadened and deepened by their experiences. This vision and the process of its expansion, re-created by the authors, provide unity and a sense of progression for their works.

In the final chapter, an attempt has been made to place the Overlander narratives in the context of the Canadian literary tradition. They belong to a large body of early travellers' and explorers' narratives which are full of fascinating details and curious anecdotes, and possess drama, poetry, and psychological interest, but which are just beginning to be recognized as genuine and valuable imaginative literature.

Even after the fairly extensive analysis which can be made in a study of this length, it does not seem possible to state exactly how much literary value exists in works which are as little known as these, especially since what is true of one or several may not be true of all the narratives. This examination does indicate, however, that these accounts taken as a whole possess both form and meaning and will give almost any reader pleasure on many levels.

HISTORICAL PREFACE

In the summer of 1862 a group of about two hundred Eastern Canadians set out by land for the Cariboo gold fields of British Columbia. The largest party, containing about 150 men, one woman and three children, was led by Thomas McMicking and travelled about two weeks ahead of a smaller group of about fifty organized by Stephen Redgrave.

Of McMicking's company, two men--Alexander Leslie Fortune and McMicking himself--left memoirs covering the events of the trip. Three others, Thomas McMicking's younger brother Robert, John Sellar, and John Hunniford kept diaries which still exist, and James Schubert left a brief reminiscence. Of Redgrave's party, Redgrave and Richard Henry Alexander left diaries. There are also a few letters still in existence: their authors include Dobson Prest, William Phillips, and Robert Harkness. The titles of all the accounts and the locations of the unpublished ones are given in the Bibliography at the end of this study.

Most of the Overlanders, as they came to be called, travelled across the prairie on foot, with their supplies packed in Red River carts pulled by oxen. At Edmonton the primitive carts were sold and supplies loaded on packhorses for the journey through the mountains. At Tête Jaune Cache, the McMicking company was dissolved. Most of the men built rafts or dugout canoes in which to travel down the Fraser

River in smaller groups. Thirty-six of the party agreed to take the animals overland to Kamloops through the dense bush along the North Thompson River, but this proved an impossible task, and after several days the animals were butchered and rafts built for travel on the river. Among all the Overlanders, six men were drowned in separate accidents in British Columbia. The Fraser River travellers reached Quesnel Mouth, fifty-five miles from Cariboo, in the first part of September, 1862. The Thompson River party, ragged and starving, did not get to Kamloops until October.

After all this effort, very few of the Easterners ever did any mining. Capital, which most of them did not possess, was required to get the equipment to make the Cariboo claims pay. Most Overlanders did not even see the diggings. Many returned by sea to their homes in the East before that first winter, and a number of others remained but took up other careers as farmers, businessmen, or public servants. Some became influential citizens of the province in its early years.

Excerpts from the first-hand accounts of the expedition were used by the historian Mark S. Wade in his fine history of the trek, The Overlanders of '62. Only three of the narratives have ever been published and of these only the one by Richard Alexander is at present generally available.

In reading the Overlanders' manuscripts I came to feel that they had considerable literary value and deserved to be better known. This thesis grew out of that conviction.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

THE OVERLANDER NARRATIVES AS ROMANCE AND AS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Late in 1862 Thomas McMicking composed for a newspaper audience this description of the high point of the four-month-long overland journey "from Canada to British Columbia" which he had completed earlier that year in company with a large party of Easterners:

> On Monday, the 21st day of July, at half-past 7 o'clock in the afternoon, we reached the crossing of the Saskatchewan at a point directly opposite to the Edmonton House, the sight of which was the signal for a hearty and tumultuous cheer, which was repeated again and again as the different parties came up, until the surrounding forrests [sic] re-echoed with the sound. During the preceding eleven days our clothing had never been dry, we had just passed through what we considered a pretty tough time, and the toil-worn, jaded, forlorn and tattered appearance of the company was in striking and amusing contrast with our appearance a few months before; so marked in[d]eed, was the change that our most intimate friends at home could scarcely have recognised us. But our courage was still unbroken, and, although we had been much longer on the road than we anticipated, we had yet full confidence in our ability to reach the El Dorado of our hopes.[1]

Even when this passage is read out of context, we are immediately aware that it forms part of an adventure story. The half-jocular, half-poignant reference to a still distant "El Dorado of our hopes" establishes the fact that the protagonists are on a journey, and that their goal is one of material wealth. They have apparently been passing through an uninhabited forest wilderness of enormous extent. Despite considerable suffering, which has so altered their appearance

(much as happened to Odysseus) that their loved ones would not be able to recognize them, there has been no slightest diminution of their cheerfulness and courage. These are constituents of the imaginative tale of action. At the same time as our recognition of this traditional form begins to crystallize, the writer's very particular attention to details of the exact date, time and place, as well as the fact that he writes in the first person, suggest that the account is to be accepted as history, based on personal experience.

A narration in which the "essential element of plot" is adventure, according to Northrop Frye, must possess some of the universal but only partly-understood appeal of the fairy-tale or folk-tale, and is definable as romance.[2] On the other hand, a work in which the author describes his own experiences in writing, without altering any factual details, is plainly some form of autobiography.

The journals and memoirs of Thomas McMicking, Alexander Fortune, and six of their companions, which are the only extant first-hand accounts of the Overlander expedition, can thus be regarded from two important different perspectives as literature. If they are considered primarily as adventure-stories, then we shall find that their dramatic structure is that of romance, and the idea of this form will provide a framework upon which they may be stretched and examined with special attention to such matters as plot,

setting, characterization and style. If, instead, they are studied as examples of autobiographical writing, then their content--the thought or meaning behind and within them--will be illuminated.

This point can be put in a slightly different way. If the "fictional" aspect of the narratives is felt to be the chief source of their charm, then as readers we will be just as interested in the writers' companions as we are in the writers themselves, and all will be seen as actors having equal potential for becoming the focus of dramatic interest in any single scene. In this case the action will absorb our attention. But if we concentrate on the "apology", the attempt by the autobiographer to justify or extract meaning from his life, then we shall be inclined to see the author as sole hero, and find ourselves more interested in his thought and subjective impressions than in the plot.

It may be helpful to consider the distinguishing features of romance and autobiography in more detail, or at least those of their characteristics which have particular applicability to the Overlander narratives.

The adventure which is the "essential element of plot" in romance revolves around the search--usually a prolonged and difficult search, a "quest"--for some ideal, substance, or person.[3] In the Overlander accounts, the fact that the ostensible object of the quest was gold in the ground, literally buried treasure, at once identifies the narratives as secular romances. The stretches of smiling prairie and the

wooded hills and streams of the early part of the trip, which so impressed each of the Overlander authors with their beauty, recall the traditional settings: the green forest or the garden which are actually lovely, or (in a fairy-tale) seem so because they are enchanted. When the spell is removed, or sometimes when it is cast, the garden and forest may be transformed into a hostile world of tangled roots and thorny branches, or treacherous swamps. Some of the ordeals of the later stages of the journey to Cariboo took place in just such a nightmare environment.

The treasure of the traditional folk-tale is often guarded, usually by giants or monsters, and there may be a labyrinth in which the hero is compelled to wander before finding the way, or a moat surrounding or ocean covering the wealth. In the narratives in question, the great mountains of the west had a forbidding and gigantic as well as a majestic aspect; and the forests and waters of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers possessed some of the confounding qualities of maze and moat. The rivers, indeed, exacted not one but several human sacrifices before the heroes were allowed to pass. Some of the courageous acts described by the Overlander authors, particularly those which took place in British Columbia, were feats of nearly superhuman persistence and hardihood. We are reminded that in the romantic mode, the actions of the hero are often marvellous, though he is identified as a human being and not a god: "prodigies of courage and endurance, unnatural to us, are natural to him."[4]

However much beyond average powers they may seem to us now, there is no doubt that all the actions described in the accounts really occurred, for there is remarkable agreement as to matters of fact among all the authors. Still, the narrators, especially McMicking and Fortune, demonstrated in many ways that they were aware that the real-life setting and action strongly suggested romance. They strove to avoid destroying the romantic "atmosphere".

Nothing makes this statement clearer than a consideration of the treatment of character in the works. There are hints, but they remain only hints, of the friction and pettinesses which must inevitably have arisen on a journey of the duration of the 1862 trek. Instead, the courage and chivalry of the men, and the purity and devotion of the one woman in the company were stressed. This idealized treatment is typical of the characterization of romance.

The question arises whether the writers deliberately distorted or suppressed some of their actual impressions of their companions' characters. The answer seems to be no, and for an important reason: the narrators, especially Fortune and McMicking, saw their whole lives, and not just the events of the 1862 trek, in romantic terms. They were men who placed great stress on the Christian virtues such as courage, faithfulness, and chastity, and these are romantic ideals also. The narrators wanted to see themselves and their comrades with whom they had shared so long and perilous an

undertaking in this favourable light. Moreover, as we shall discover, the circumstances of the journey tended to foster the development of these qualities. Since the real action, setting, and images so naturally presented themselves as romance in the re-creation of the trip, it must have seemed to the authors not just consistent and artistically necessary, but true, to draw themselves and their companions as they did. The idea of romance may thus be seen as a bridge between the actual events of the trip, and the coherent subjective meaning which the narrators felt impelled to extract from their experiences.

This last-mentioned impulse is widely accepted as the motivating force behind much, if not most, autobiography:

> If autobiography is to become typically...a meaningful art form...it must accept the responsibility not only of re-imagining a life, but of discovering within the life something greater than the sum total of incidents and observations....[the autobiographer must discover] a significant wholeness within the welter of jumbled memories...for each of his meaningful experiences a suitable organic function.[5]

Here Wayne Shumaker has described the autobiographer's major goal, but not his method. How does the autobiographer differ from the historian on the one hand, and from the novelist on the other?

The historian who aims at writing a simple chronicle can do without creative ability. He need only ensure completeness in his listing of events and accuracy with regard to places, names, and dates. The writer who attempts,

out of his own experience, to produce a narrative with literary quality begins with a similar body of facts, but must go on from there to discover a unity in his material through choice of perspective and through the judicious selection of interesting details of character and scene. He must arrange and emphasize episodes so as to produce a lively plot, and he must have in mind, and convey to the reader, a clear purpose for his work. His style and diction must be pleasing and appropriate to his theme. Unlike the novelist or dramatist, he cannot permit himself the luxury of fictionalization, for the main thing required of an autobiographer is that "his language and his design answer to the truth of his experience."[6] Out of the formless mass of remembered impressions, the author must bring order, and "the reduction of chaos to order is creation."[7] A discriminating power of selection, then, rather than an overflowing of fancy, marks the creative impulse in the autobiographer.

The Overlander accounts have been loosely referred to as autobiographical writing, but the exact genre--or subgenre--to which many of them belong is not easy to decide. Only Alexander Fortune's narrative fulfills most of the conditions necessary for formal autobiography. "If the author," writes Professor Shumaker, "wishes to be understood as writing of himself and as setting down (so far as is humanly possible) nothing that is not literally true, his work is autobiography, provided only that it has a considerable time span and is single and continuous."[8] The criterion

of literal truthfulness "excludes metaphorical and fictive analogues," and that of singleness and continuity "excludes letters, journals and diaries."[9] Paul Delany, in his book British Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century has also given a useful definition of autobiography. An autobiography is, he states, primarily written to give a coherent account of the author's life, or an extensive period or series of events in this life, and composed after a period of reflection and forming a unified narrative.[10] Delany further divides the genre into memoirs, or res gestae, which are concerned mainly with external events, and introspective and analytical life records. Fortune's account is plainly a memoir: it provides a coherent account of the period in his life when he left home in Lower Canada, crossed the continent and took up a new life in British Columbia, and it was composed after a "period of reflection" of over forty years.

There is really only one other "single and continuous" narrative of the expedition, and that is Thomas McMicking's serialized account from the pages of the British Columbian. It also gives a comprehensive, unified account of his and his companions' uprooting from home in Canada West, the journey and its end in disillusionment at Cariboo. The "period of reflection" was a rather short one: he arrived in British Columbia in September of 1862, and his narrative began to appear in the newspaper in November. It is also not as personal a record as Fortune's, although like Fortune and all

autobiographers, McMicking is "unconsciously revealing himself all along, merely by his way of telling things."[11] Fortune speaks freely and frequently of "I", McMicking's story is of "we", though on occasion, when he cannot escape reference to himself, he uses the third person: "T. McMicking, of the Queenston party, was the chosen captain." Yet McMicking's values, and not those of his companions, are the ones which are communicated to the reader, and it is his personality alone which shapes the style and tone of his work. In this his account remains a true autobiography.

A third narrative which is both single and continuous, and was composed after a period of reflection of no less than sixty-eight years, is James Schubert's Reminiscences. Schubert was only two years old at the time of the trek and therefore his "memories" are really those of his parents, a fact which he is careful to acknowledge. Schubert's short account covers the journey and his early years in British Columbia, but does so in a sometimes sketchy way. For this reason, and also because it is in part a second-hand report, it does not meet as many of the criteria for formal autobiography as do Fortune's and McMicking's memoirs.

Five of the Overlanders, Stephen Redgrave, Richard Alexander, John Sellar, Robert McMicking, and John Hunniford, kept diaries. These diaries display great differences in tone, content, and style. But in overall form, they are indisputably journals: entries, whether long or short,

reflective or laconic, are made daily and always include a summary of the progress made in the last twenty-four hours toward the goal, the gold fields of British Columbia.

Although, as we have seen, some critics exclude the diary from consideration in discussing autobiography because of its episodic structure and because the process of reflection is nearly eliminated in it, other writers are inclined to favour it above other kinds of life-writing. Lord Butler remarks in The Difficult Art of Autobiography, "As for the diarists it may with some justice be said, as I believe Yeats meant to say in one of his more cryptic passages, that life itself is episodic, and that therefore the diary form of autobiography keeps nearest to life."[12] Margaret Bottrall elaborates this argument when she states that "what principally differentiates an autobiography from a journal is the element of re-consideration," and that it may happen that "the less premeditated record is truer to facts than the planned review," which allows for "more deliberate choice of episodes...[and has] consequently greater scope for self-deception and for that slight degree of falsification which so often accompanies the ordering of materials for literary effect."[13] Not only is there less opportunity for the re-ordering of events in the diary, but there is also less time for the writer to bring his feelings under control. When the Overlander diarists recounted the exertions of the day, they were still exhausted, and when they described the

beauty of the wilderness, they looked out upon it and were still exhilarated. Strong emotion may at times disorder the creative process, but at others it helps focus the writer's energies and produces an immediacy which is a striking characteristic of many entries in the journals kept by these travellers. The diarist, then, may avoid dilution of emotion as well as distortion of events. The "truthfulness" of the imitation of life in a work has long been one of the most widely accepted criteria for judging literature. According to this standard, the diary may be seen as having special literary value.

Whatever the specific form in which the Overlander authors chose to set down their stories, they shared a basic assumption about the human personality, without which it is unlikely any of them would have felt able to write about his own experiences. This assumption was that of the unity of self--or soul, for they were all Christian believers--and this single self, as in all autobiography before the twentieth century, is the center of reflection in their narratives. The relationship between form in consciousness and form in autobiographical writing is described in these words by John N. Morris in his book, Versions of the Self:

> It may be objected that every readable autobiography, like any other sensible account of events, displays some continuity or it is nothing, and that is true. But the interesting fact is that in nineteenth-century autobiography, formal continuity is a principle of philosophic, not merely

narrative, coherence. It is in some sense the emblem of the real subject of the work, the gradual evolution of an always-identifiable self.[14]

The query with which Alexander Fortune opens his memoir, "Must I undertake to write my own history?" implies his sense of the solidity of an identifiable self, which has a history which might be written. It is, in fact, in Fortune's narrative that one feels most strongly the pressure of a will which was determined to make every thought and action conform to a consistent ideal. However, a similar tendency is evident in the other accounts.

The assumption of a more or less totally consistent and indivisible personality and the identification of this personality with a moral ideal, is a concept which is not as widely accepted today. It is a concept which when strongly held by an author probably tends to produce the "flatness" of characterization and straightforwardness of action which are typical of the romantic adventure story. When a writer espouses romantic ideals, it is not surprising if in relating the story of his life he turns it into a romance.

CHAPTER ONE

NOTES

[1]Thomas McMicking, "An Account of a Journey Overland from Canada to British Columbia During the Summer of 1862...," New Westminster British Columbian, January 28, 1863.

[2]Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, New Jersey, 1957), p.186.

[3]For this discussion of the characteristics of romance I am much indebted to Professor Frye's summary in Anatomy of Criticism, pp.151-153 and 186-195, and to a lesser extent to W. P. Ker's Epic and Romance (New York, 1957).

[4]Ibid., p.33.

[5]Wayne Shumaker, English Autobiography (Berkeley, 1954), p.112.

[6]John N. Morris, Versions of the Self (New York, 1966), p.213.

[7]Shumaker, p.112.

[8]Ibid., p.120.

[9]Ibid., p.106.

[10]Paul Delany, British Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century (London, 1969), p.1.

[11]Philip Gilbert Hamerton, quoted in Shumaker, p.49.

[12]Lord Butler, The Difficult Art of Autobiography (Oxford, 1969), p.9.

[13]Margaret Bottrall, Every Man a Phoenix (London, 1958), p.5.

[14]Morris, pp.11-12.

CHAPTER TWO

"THE DIFFICULTIES WE OVERCAME, THE DANGERS WE ESCAPED, AND THE LOSSES WE SUSTAINED": PLOT AND STRUCTURE IN THE NARRATIVES

It goes almost without saying that men capable of completing a journey like that undertaken by the Overlanders must have possessed a certain decisiveness, and have taken pleasure in physical activity. The remarkably active nature of all the narrators had an effect on structure in their accounts. Passages of meditation and reflection which arose naturally from the events and scenes of the journey are for the most part held to a minimum, and kept subordinate to the drama. This is a virtue when a writer wishes to entertain. As Margaret Bottrall reminds us, "the best story-tellers are not those introspective autobiographers who are perpetually interrupting their narrative to ponder and probe" but the ones "who delight in recalling and re-living the adventures and misadventures of the past."[1] Some "ponderings and probings" do, however, appear in the narratives, along with numerous expository passages which are essential to the sense. The dramtic character of these works, therefore, resembles that of the novel rather than the play.

Dean Ebner, in his book Autobiography in Seventeenth Century England, points out that historically novelists have often borrowed techniques from autobiographers. He asserts that the "episodic travel structure of such first-person novels as The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe and

Humphrey Clinker finds analogues in autobiographies of travel such as Captain John Smith's True Travels, Lady Fanshawe's Memoirs...and even Fox's journal," and finds that in each of these cases, "the dominance of an episodic structure does not represent a failure of talent on the part of the novelists but an attempt to introduce into fiction the life-like plot structure of autobiography."[2]

The Overlander authors describe in the opening sections of their works a series of adventures of more or less equal importance: the desertion of their first guide, the near-drownings and brave rescues of companions, the tortures of a whole day of hot, dusty travel without water. The equal weight given these episodes makes the narratives seem definitely autobiographical, but also suggests the picaresque novel. The diaries, of course, emphasize the episodic structure by fitting each incident into a more or less rigid daily format, whereas the memoirs follow the flow of the larger action more smoothly. But in all the accounts, the minor adventures of the first part of the journey culminate naturally in one major adventure towards the end.

A preliminary consideration in Chapter One of those aspects of the Overlander narratives which suggest the "naive" romance has indicated that it is during an analysis of plot that the idea of this form will be found most useful. Even here the concept has limitations, but a recapitulation of the stages of what Professor Frye calls the "complete form of the romance," which "is clearly the successful quest,"

does provide a starting-point. This form has three stages: "the stage of the perilous journey and the preliminary minor adventures; the crucial struggle, usually some kind of battle in which either the hero or his foe, or both, must die; and the exaltation of the hero."[3] It is this third stage which is lacking in most of the narratives under consideration, yet in Fortune's and Schubert's accounts, there exist important final sections in which the heroes, through persistence and courage, are raised to a higher--or at least happier and more secure--station in life.

All the Overlander authors were fortunate that their story had natural dramatic structure which closely paralleled the first two stages of the traditional tale of adventure. The journey had begun with a peaceful and optimistic period of planning in the East, followed almost immediately by active but orderly practical preparations at Fort Garry. This first stage of the undertaking--the "rising action," in dramatic terms--included the trip across the prairie to Fort Edmonton, with developing conflicts between human endurance and physical exhaustion, and clashes between personalities. The climax came when the travellers confronted the mountains and rivers of the far West, and the threat of personal annihilation, which materialized in the drownings of six companions (six of the many heroes in this saga) in separate accidents. If the mountain barrier and wild rivers had had to be faced at the beginning of the trip, and the

relatively less formidable prairie had followed, the story would not have had the "proper" plot.

It does not, of course, follow that because a narrator is able to recognize the dramatic inevitability with which a given train of events rises to a climax, he will be able to reproduce it effectively in writing. Creative skill is required, to draw special attention to those episodes which contribute to the drama, and subdue those which, however intrinsically interesting, add nothing necessary to the work. But instead of beginning with a preconceived plan, the Overlanders were able, to a greater extent than is usual in autobiography, to allow the events of the journey and the shape of the wilderness to help form their works. There is much to be said for this as an artistic method: almost inevitably, implausibility of plot and characterization is eliminated, and a fast pace in life tends to produce a fast-moving narrative. Those writers who, like Fortune and Redgrave, might in other circumstances have inclined to verbosity, found there was at moments of tension too much to get down, and trimmed their descriptions and digressions to a minimum which enhanced rather than diminished their tales.

There is even an epic dimension to the story. The vastness of the scene, the national significance and the arduousness of the journey, God's participation in the drama--these reverberate in the readers memory with something of the power of <u>The Odyssey</u>, or, to mention a work closer in

time and space, Towards The Last Spike, though the Overlander authors were not poets and most of the classical conventions are lacking in their narratives. They do, however, display a tendency to plunge into the middle of the action, and avoid descriptions of home and family and circumstances surrounding the decision to depart; and none of them ever find time to pause and pick up the thread of a former life, or reveal motivation in detail. The action constantly presses forward, with some of the urgency, "the ambitious and pushing spirit" in Fortune's phrase, which drove all the men onward, greedy for gold and fearful of the short season. Here, for example, is how Fortune, with unusual terseness, recorded his own departure from home:

> A. L. Fortune, Enderby P.O., Spallumcheen, B.C. parted with wife and friends and took train at Beaudette Station, Quebec, May 2, 1862. No steel rails for cars to roll over then. All iron rails and rough riding.[4]

A few days later, with the startling equanimity of many a folk-tale hero, the travellers witnessed the very threatening activities of some mounted Sioux and Chippewa warriors on the banks of the Red River from the deck of their steamer, the International. Their imperturbable confidence was captured by McMicking when he commented that "these demonstrations were interpreted by some as signals of welcome"[5]

The activities at Fort Garry form a grand opening

scene for the drama, beginning with an enthusiastic welcome for the Easterners:

> At 4 o'clock in the afternoon we sighted the fort, from which a salute was fired, as the boat entered the mouth of the Assiniboine, in honor of the arrival of the new steamer, and bidding a kindly welcome to the "overlanders". As the vessel neared her moorings the salute was answered by a volley from about 150 rifles on board the boat. It appeared as though all "Selkirk", by whom our arrival was expected, were there, in their holiday attire, to receive us; and it was an occasion that will long be remembered by them, as inaugurating a new era in the history of the colony.[6]

The "actors" were clothed and equipped by McMicking in "one good strong suit, from three to six changes of underclothing, a pair of knee boots and a pair of shoes, a rubber coat and a pair of blankets; and armed with a rifle, revolver, and bowie knife." The days at Fort Garry passed with consultations and final preparations for the journey. The only alarming note was contained in a description in several of the accounts of the drowning of an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Assiniboine River. Witnessed by many of the shocked travellers, this incident foreshadowed the malevolent threat of the river-crossings to come, and contributed to the emotion which was felt as the train of carts finally left this last outpost of civilization: "as we wound our way up the River," wrote Sellar, "there was many an eye filled with the tear that flowed from a full heart."[7] This warning note was to be sounded again, with more emphasis, at the departure from Fort Edmonton.

The country through which the party travelled for the

first weeks was described in detail by all the writers except Hunniford and R. B. McMicking, whose diaries are very sketchy. The other authors do a fine job of setting the scene day by day, and Fortune pays particularly loving attention to the natural environment:

> As we approached the high outer banks of the Assiniboin* river the landscape and scenery caused us to halt and admire the charming view. From side to side of the low valley we could trace the course of the ever bending river as it carried its waters south and eastward in hurried flow to discharge its surplus floods in the Red river at Fort Garry. The low valley of the river course was not wide, but looked kindly covered with grass and bounded on either side with high hills and benches partly timbered and partly grassy. We found the descent from the upland to the river bank long and steep....[8]

Here we see how, where the going is reasonably comfortable on the trek, the reader is not rushed along. There is always time to admire the view or digress to tell an amusing anecdote. The prose meanders like the cart-train, across the prairie, around hills and ponds and along valleys. The writers described with appreciation how evenings on the plains were sometimes whiled away with music, for there were "fiddles, flutes, cornets and other instruments" along, and a "Musical Association" was formed. These happy scenes provide a peaceful interlude, a moment of calm reflection for the

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*Sic. I have not added this note after any of the other numerous instances of erratic spelling, punctuation and grammar in quotations from the narratives. There are so many "errors" that to make a note of each one would have had the effect of chopping some of the cited passages up ridiculously. I felt that in most cases faithfulness to the original would be obvious.

reader as they must have done for the travellers. The music and the pleasant landscape impart an Arcadian quality to the world described by the writers in the first days of the trek. It is a world so completely fresh, both because it was spring and because it was new to the travellers, that it seems almost enchanted, truly "a world apart."

But an air of mild anxiety and foreboding soon settled over the party beginning with the desertion of their guide, an incident which aroused great resentment, expressed at length by the writers in McMicking's brigade. The departure of this "heartless villain," to use McMicking's uncharacteristically intemperate phrase, was the first in a series of setbacks and troubles which came oftener and lasted longer as the trip progressed. The wide trackless prairie made the men feel exposed, lonely, and unprotected: many of them entertained what in retrospect seem wild fears of Indian attack. An extra-vigilant watch was set and the military order was enforced with special strictness. McMicking claimed that "the whole train was in motion less than fifteen minutes after the order had been given, 'Every man to his ox'." As if to heighten the general anxiety, one man was nearly drowned at the crossing of the South Saskatchewan and another was hurt by his ox and cart. These incidents "cast a gloom over the whole company."

Comic relief was rare but not entirely absent. Even the desperate rush to get to the head of the train in the morning, after all too few hours of rest, was found amusing.

Sellar, who of all the writers was the most appreciative of this kind of broad comedy, recounted[5] how the sight of "a whole Battillion runing with cups of Tea, & Pan cakes in their hands, Eating as they went along...often set the whole company in such a fit of laughter that half lost their places, & then came a general consternation."[9] The frequent "rearing, tearing fits" of the oxen while being harnessed also provided "many a strange scean" and "a general laugh," in spite of the dismay of their owners and the delay caused by the damage to the carts and scattering of the loads.

Sometimes a humorous remark alleviated the heavy mood when the going was very difficult. After days and nights of torrential rain, McMicking reports how a wag momentarily lifted the gloom:

> Upon one occasion, when the water from one of these streams was spread to a great distance over the adjoining plain, and after we had waded for at least half a mile up to our waists, it became a question with some of the company whether it was really the Overland Route, that we were travelling, but all doubt upon the subject was at once removed by an assurance from Mr. Fannin that it was at least <u>three feet Overland</u> where he had tried it.[10]

It is impossible not to admire the cheerful exuberance which found expression in banter such as this, or even more amazing, in such diversions as the foot-races Stephen Redgrave describes, which took place on prairie evenings in camp. Apparently twenty-five miles of walking every day was not sufficient to exhaust all the energy of these marvellous young men. We are reminded of the horseplay, banter, and

contests which find a place in many folk-tales.

The travellers did eventually begin to grow bored with the long approach to the mountains, and the writers make much of everyone's relief when Edmonton was finally reached. It was the high point of the journey, and the travellers came upon the fort suddenly at the end of a particularly arduous day. The employees of the Bay "raised the Union Jack...& fired a salute with the Cannon's. We immediately raised the English standard which was carried by a party from Ottawa, & then fired 21 rounds with our Riffles."[11] A happy round of celebrations followed.

Both McMicking and Fortune have constructed their narratives so that the half-way point falls here. McMicking's summary of the company's achievement has already been quoted at the beginning of this study. Fortune was just as impressed with the spirit of his companions and the magnitude of their accomplishment:

> We had thus accomplished nearly a thousand miles travel by this primitive style, over an Indian country, where, at any or many points we might have been overpowered....We were thankful we had been saved from such a doom.[12]

But in spite of their elation, as the men prepared to leave Edmonton, hints of a growing anxiety began to appear in the accounts. Because time had run short, McMicking in consultation with the other leaders decided to take the more direct Yellowhead Pass route through the mountains, though it was represented as the most difficult by those familiar with

the country. Shortly after leaving the Fort, the travellers received a warning which served to focus and emphasize the half-conscious feeling of foreboding. William Phillips describes the incident:

> Our trip so far was a continuous delight, but our good time had now ended and trouble was ahead. It was fairly pleasant to St. Ann's mission but leaving this place in the morning I heard an Indian laugh and exclaim in French "They are on the road to Hell."[13]

The Indians, in their capacity as initiates of the secrets of the wilderness, and possessors of a kind of wisdom denied the white men, have a small part to play in the latter half of the narratives. It is almost the part of the oracle or soothsayer of romance and tragedy. Their words foreshadow the fate of some of the gold seekers, and are used, like those of a chorus, to comment upon the action.

The route after leaving Lac Ste. Anne was unbelievably difficult, obstructed by innumerable swamps and fallen timber so thick that the axes had to be used all day long. As the men followed the river-courses into the heart of the mountains, the wild icy streams had to be forded over and over again, on occasion as many as seven times in two hours. There was only one delightful surprise: the McMicking party's much-admired new guide, the Métis André Cardinal, contrived to keep the travellers following a trail where trees shut out the horizon, until they emerged abruptly on a flat of the river. Here they gained a first sudden,

unobstructed view of the towering snow-covered Rockies, which gleamed in the brilliant sunshine so that they seemed to float in the sky like clouds.

Now for days the company toiled slowly upward; the weather turned colder, provisions ran short, and the animals suffered for want of grass. The toll taken of physical reserves, as John Sellar put it, "made most of the boys wish themselves once more within the circle of civilization." At this stage of the trek, where the scene was being set for the "final crucial struggle" on the rivers of the new colony, a shift in tone which had commenced a few weeks earlier began to crystallize. The atmosphere changed from that appropriate to a rather pleasant pastoral to something more suited to a horror-story. At Tête Jaune Cache, where the McMicking brigade was formally dissolved and rafts and canoes built for travel down the Fraser, the Shuswap Indians camped there attempted without success to turn the foolhardy Easterners from their course. "And the hour came," noted Fortune, "when William Sellers gave orders, 'Let go that rope.'"[14] According to McMicking, "we committed ourselves to the mercy of the Fraser, amid the sorrowful exclamations of the Indians, '<u>Poor white men no more</u>.'"[15] The next day the Thompson River party, thirty-six souls including the Schubert family, set out overland with a Shuswap Indian as guide and Cardinal as interpreter.

The climactic events of the journey after the departure from the Cache appropriately occupy a section of the

narratives disproportionate to the time they consumed. This is especially evident in James Schubert's account, which is the only one describing the trials of the Thompson River Party. With about a hundred animals, the thirty-six travellers were forced to cut trail through a forest so dense that they made only five miles a day. They realized that at this rate they would not get to Kamloops before deep winter, and that they must trust themselves to the river. At "Slaughter Camp," they reluctantly butchered the animals and built rafts and canoes. The Schubert craft ran through rough water safely for a week, but then the family lost all their provisions when one of their dugouts drifted away in the night. Several other parties lost rafts and in one case a life, when a man named Strachan drowned trying to reach his companions stranded on a rock in the river, by swimming out with a line. Of this heroic deed only the bare facts are recorded, for no eyewitnesses left an account.

The two or three men with whom the Schuberts were travelling shared food with the family, but soon all were reduced to near-starvation. When the group caught sight of some Indian huts on the river bank, there was intense joy, which soon turned to horror:

> When the men went ashore they were horrified to find dead bodies lying about in the fields and huts, all dead of smallpox. If any of the band had escaped the disease they had fled and there were no provisions to be got. In one of the fields some potatoes were growing and they dug up as many of these as they could and tried to be satisfied, but potatoes without anything else are poor fare.[16]

Schubert's images are often reduced to outline only by the lapse of years and the weakness of second hand reconstruction, and his account sometimes lacks the colour and feeling found so consistently in some of the longer diaries. But he is able to convey the relief and lightening of mood when, starving and struggling, his party finally reached Fort Kamloops in the middle of October, and a tent was hastily thrown up for his mother, who was already in labour.

> An Indian woman from the fort attended mother and when the baby was born she stepped out into the open air with it, and held it up laughing and cried out "It is Cumloops, Cumloops." Father and Mother were at first inclined to give this name to the baby but later decided upon Rosa.[17]

There is some doubt that this joyful baptism actually occurred. But by including the legend, Schubert demonstrated his recognition that the birth of the baby was symbolic. It represented the triumph of courage over adversity, especially for his mother, and a promise of hope for the future. The incident inaugurates the final stage of Schubert's narrative, which records the family's toil-filled but successful early years in the province.

For the much larger group of men who followed the Fraser route, the river itself became their enemy, assuming a truly monstrous visage. In the "dreadfull whirls" and "desperate surges" of the gorges, Sellar reported that "things had a rather gloomy aspect, & upon the whole [it] appeared as though the Earth had just opened and was waiting

the appointed time when it would swallow us up."[18] As his raft rushed over a huge rock in Cottonwood Canyon, Fortune "got one sight" of another group of Indians watching from the shore "as they threw up their arms with a sad moan as if we were all gone." In this instance, as in earlier similar ones, the Indians seem to give expression to deep fears which (as befits heroes) the writers themselves are, perhaps, ashamed to acknowledge. The red men may be seen as incarnations of the dark "other", in Jung's term, the subconscious figure who appears in dreams to warn us of our destructive courses and who in fact represents unaccepted parts of our selves.

There was much in the boiling river to strike fear into the hardiest souls. In a touching passage, Fortune described the rescue of two companions and the loss of another:

> About ten A.M. our people noticed a bar like an Island, some distance down stream. We soon saw two men and a canoe on its shore....Captain Sellers and I took our canoe and went to the scene of trouble....We took the two men with us to the raft. Their sad tale was soon told. Mr. Robertson was a swimmer. They did not heed the danger and paddled into a small swell....These waves tossed their little canoes which filled with water and broke the ties holding them together. Mr. Robertson told Mr. Warren and their third man to hold onto the canoe strongly and he would swim to shore and come to their relief as soon as possible. We travelled up and down looking for Robertson....[19]

That evening, there was consternation and sorrow among the men:

> This first loss of a true friend and companion was a sad blow to us all....There was some serious meditation for several days following. What may become of us all? Who is the next to find a grave in the cold Fraser?

The tenacity of the enemy is revealed by Richard Alexander in his description of an incident in which he himself nearly lost his life. Alexander and his friend Carpenter had volunteered to take their party's big canoe down the first large canyon by water. The canoe filled and sank, and Carpenter was swept away. Alexander continues:

> I was carried for a long way under water...but I kept thinking it was not all up yet and resolutely kept my mouth shut till I would come to the surface and get another gulp of air and down I would go again....at last I got down out of the boiling surf...I then began...to swim for shore...I was so much exhausted I had to swim on my back and lay gasping for breath, but I was quite cool all the time (the water was remarkably cold)....At last after swimming a distance of about three quarters of a mile I made the shore but was so benumbed with the cold I could not hang onto it....[20]

When Alexander did eventually get out of the water he found to his horror that he was on the wrong bank: his companions stood opposite him. Stripping off his remaining clothes and "after running about to try and warm myself a little," he plunged in again and swam back: "I was so cold I could not close my fingers and had to swim with my hand open."

Fortune depicts in dramatic form the let-down and soul-searching which followed the prodigious effort to overcome the river. The scene opens with a conversation around the evening fire:

> Bah! Who talks of returning after all your privations and hardships. You will surely try and get some of Cariboo gold before you leave B. C. The married men and some with families, often thought that they should not have left. What is gold? What are riches to happiness?....Think of all the narrow escapes we have had! Look at the loss of our friend Robertson! What a grief to his friends and parents...and how many more will be lost before we get through. And what is gold or any kind of wealth in the esteem of Robertson's mourning sweetheart, or to Harry's wife if he is to drown? Some spoke that night as if they would soon return home.[21]

In terms of the three-stage concept of plot in romance, these first serious expressions of disillusionment mark the beginning of a severely truncated, or what might even be called an aborted, phase of falling action in all the narratives except Fortune's, and as we have seen, Schubert's. Contact with death appears to have had a profound sobering effect upon the men; they were, after all, real men, and under stress lost the insouciance of the heroes of legend. At this point too, the romantic atmosphere as well as the plot-structure began to break down. Instead of the enchantment of the first part of the journey, or the almost supernatural horror of the period of encounter with the rivers, a sober sense of reality overtook the travellers and began to pervade the narratives.

After a brief stop at the rather unprepossessing outpost of Fort George, the travellers at last debarked at Quesnel, the entrance to Cariboo. The contrast with their arrival at Edmonton is striking indeed. The writers mention no welcomes, no 21-round salutes, no greetings at all. A crowd of sour, ragged miners milled through the camp. From

some Chinese gold-panners near here, Sellar got reports of:

> thousands...coming down from Carriboo just starving so that we were left to conjecture nothing but misery in the worst degree for to be our lott....We concluded to sell our animals, picks and shovels...and rase enough to take us to some other country where we could afford to live as no person at Carriboo could pretend to live, they mearly stayed and starved.[22]

John Hunniford, on hearing the gloomy reports of the penniless hundreds who had spent the summer in Cariboo, "felt vexed at having come to the country" and "wished was home."

With dismay at this abrupt and disappointing dénouement, we read Sellar's laconic description of how he said goodbye to his companions just below Alexandria on the Fraser River:

> At 11 A.M. on the (17th) as Wm. Gage & myself thought that the remainder of the company was not traveling out as fast as they might & not half as fast as our circu[m]stances demanded, as it was costing us $4.50 pr day to live, we set off ahead, knowing well that two could get along much better than 25, besides saving 4 or 5 days time, which would be as good to us as money. We bid adue to the boys and left them in good spirits and the best of health & saw no more of them.[23]

We are reminded of what Roy Daniells has written in Alexander Mackenzie and the North West of the abrupt dismissal of the voyageurs in Mackenzie's narrative, where he compares it to the reader's "sense of shock experienced when, at the close of [Xenophon's Anabasis], the Greeks who have struggled with such painful endurance to reach the sea are now simply drafted into another army and go off to fight another war."[24]

The sudden scattering of the Overlanders marks the end

of the adventure in six of the eight narratives. Most of the men sold everything possible (as McMicking drily noted, "Our mining tools were the only articles that we found to be unnecessary") and worked their way down to the Coast without making any attempt to see the diggings. Those readers who are familiar with the Overlander saga only through second-hand accounts have been puzzled at this seeming failure of nerve and ambition at the last minute. But when we read the personal stories of these brave men, we share in their experience of dangers and privations, and understand that, for some of them, striking it rich could not compare in emotional impact with having won at a gamble with death. For these travellers, anything which followed could only be anti-climax.

A few of the Overlanders were, however, cast in a truly heroic mold. They included Fortune and Schubert's parents. For them, the arrival in British Columbia marked the beginning of the most rewarding part of their lives, and this era is described in some detail in their narratives. They remained in the province, and set to work to build a new and better home there. Both Fortune and Augustus Schubert spent several years mining, but eventually turned to farming in the Okanagan Valley. There, according to the memoirs, they found health, contentment, and personal fulfillment. Because this outcome has significance for an analysis of meaning in all the narratives, a more detailed consideration

of these two lengthy "epilogues" has been left for a later section of this study.

In summary, then, the Overlander authors utilize several techniques to point up the drama of the journey in their narratives. In the peaceful opening scenes, they employ a leisurely, sometimes rambling style, and describe their companions and the landscape, and the final preparations for the trip, at some length. As the going becomes more difficult, they concentrate on incidents which illustrate the nature of the problems and difficulties the trekkers encountered, and their own and their companions' hopes and fears for the outcome of the undertaking. At the climax of the story, along the rivers and among the forests and mountains of British Columbia, they omit extraneous observations, tighten their style, and use dialogue and brief, evocative descriptive phrases to present the dangers and the men's response to them; the narratives here are all action. By selecting from the mass of memories and impressions those events which combine to make a readable and exciting tale, they demonstrate their artistic power.

It is clear that the broad outline of plot in the Overlander narratives was suggested by the configuration of actual events. Dramatic structure is therefore basically the same in all the accounts. There is nevertheless much variety among the works, because they differ so greatly in style. This delightful variation forms the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

NOTES

[1]Margaret Bottrall, Every Man a Phoenix (London, 1958), p.149.

[2]Dean Ebner, Autobiography in Seventeenth Century England (The Hague, 1971), p.155.

[3]Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, New Jersey), p.187.

[4]Alexander Leslie Fortune, "Collection of Addresses and Narratives" (Typewritten Manuscript in the Library of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., [c.1911], p.5.

[5]Thomas McMicking, "An Account...," December 3, 1862.

[6]Ibid.

[7]John Sellar, "Overland to Cariboo" (Typewritten Manuscript in the Library of the University of British Columbia, n.d.), p.28.

[8]Fortune, p.29.

[9]Sellar, p.45.

[10]T. McMicking, December 24, 1862.

[11]Sellar, p.71.

[12]Fortune, p.38.

[13]William Phillips, "Autobiography" (Typewritten Manuscript in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, n.d.), [p.2].

[14]Fortune, p.53.

[15]T. McMicking, January 14, 1863.

[16]James Schubert, "Reminiscences" (Typewritten Manuscript in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, n.d.), p.9.

[17]Ibid., p.10.

[18]Sellar, p.105.

[19]Fortune, p.54.

[20]Richard Henry Alexander, The Diary and Narrative.... in a Journey Across the Rocky Mountains (Richmond, B.C., 1973), p.24.

[21]Fortune, p.59.

[22]Sellar, pp.108-109.

[23]Ibid., pp.109-110.

[24]Roy Daniells, Alexander Mackenzie and the Northwest (Toronto, 1971), p.54.

CHAPTER THREE

"THE SPEAKING VOICE": STYLE IN THE ACCOUNTS

Dorothy Livesay has written in a review of a book of short stories by West Coast Canadians, that in imaginative literature, "the mother tongue must be heard in all its variety. Fidelity to the speaking voice must come through clearly and unmistakably: not thought over, mulled over, chewed over language; nor its opposite, the pale, emasculated, matter-of-fact tone."[1] By these criteria, the diaries and memoirs of the Overlanders are literary triumphs. McMicking's soberness, Sellar's petulance, Fortune's uprightness and generosity, Hunniford's stolidity, Alexander's vitality, and Redgrave's melancholy stamp each page of their respective accounts. Their style reflects their education and background, as well as innate temperament, and serves to distinguish one narrative from another.

It is in the rhythm of their prose, their imagery and diction, that the creative power of the narrators is most strikingly displayed. There is perhaps a case to be made for the contention that this is true of most autobiographical writing, where the outline of the plot is always supplied by life, and therefore allows somewhat less scope for the free play of imagination.

McMicking's style is the most polished, his diction the most elevated, of all the writers:

> Since the rich discoveries of gold in this Country have invested every thing and every place near it with new interest, and have turned the attention of the Eastern World to consider the easiest, quickest and cheapest road for reaching it, a description of the Overland route, as we found it, may not be uninteresting to your readers here, and through your exchanges, to the people of the East.[2]

In this opening sentence of his narrative, we see the clarity of McMicking's prose, its smoothness and balance; and we gain an idea of his remarkable ability to pack many details into a small space. This compression of style was well-suited to encompass the long time span of the journey and its myriad details of scene and incident. Although the tremendous control which he was able to exercise over sentences of sometimes extraordinary length reflects the self-discipline which eliminated from his work many of the idiosyncrasies which delight us in the other accounts, McMicking certainly did not lack a sense of humour. Here is his masterful description of the crossing of the Pembina River near the Rockies:

> On the eastern side of the river a number of men might be seen dispatching our goods by these different modes of conveyance, and as many more on the opposite side busily engaged in receiving and re-arranging them in packs, while the river was full of animals going and returning, loaded or empty; here were a couple tugging away against the current with their canvas boat, while the luckless wights, up to their necks in water, held on behind; there a bewildered equestrian was making a vain attempt to guide his steed across the stream, while his nervous friend, to whom he had given a deck passage, held him firmly in his arms, and put forth many well directed efforts to repay his generosity by ducking them both; and yonder, another bold navigator astride of an ox, sometimes in the water and sometimes out, was boxing the compass in his ineffectual endeavours to persuade his boon companion to shape his course toward sundown.[3]

The consciously mock-heroic tone of this passage, as well as unusual words and phrases such as "equestrian", "luckless wight", "steed", and "ineffectual", indicate the quality of McMicking's education. He was a schoolteacher and had, like Fortune, been educated at Knox College in Toronto.

Controlled eloquence is the keynote of McMicking's style; charm is that of Fortune's. It is hard to imagine that anyone could fail to be entranced by the phrase Fortune employs to describe the disappointment of the would-be buffalo-hunters among the Overlanders: "sore at the heart at the sight of bones only"; or the characterization of a formerly "corpulent" companion as "now decently slim"; or that of an Indian acquaintance who "gloried in being a heathen." For Fortune, nature has a human as well as a divine face: light winds are "friendly", the prairie looks "encouraging" to settlers, and mountains form "a forbidding barrier to the foot of man." The imaginative turn of phrase in this author's work is a source of constant delight: excitement-loving Westerners "seem to require more wax on their dance-floors," and a pleasant locality is remarked with the hope that it would "yet be noted for more than mosquitoes."

The warmth of Fortune's personality shines through the tributes he pays to so many of the people named by him. André Cardinal is "our noble guide," William Sellers "our noble Captain"(of the Fraser River raft-party); there is "dear Mrs. Schubert," "my dear wife," and countless "kind", "generous", and "lovable" friends who "bring joy." He often

addresses the reader with endearing intimacy: "I would advise all to get the best fitting and best material for foot use; corns and other sores are like habits, they stick and sting." Like Polonius, this author possesses and draws upon a large store of counsels of conventional wisdom: "Keep on trying to make others happy and your own happiness will increase and give much charm to life."[4]

Fortune's prose has a particularly conversational quality. In the following passage, the voice of a born raconteur is heard:

> I worked in loving harmony with the good Roman Catholic Missionaries. I had the pleasure of knowing many of them and everyone proved good and greatly beloved by the Indians, Yea, and the thoughtful and good white men of all denominations treated them with respect. I only knew one man that shouted "To hell with the Pope" but that was when he was drunk and alone on his farm, which he called Protestant Hill.[5]

Words such as "lookout", "palaver", "bumming", "mad"(for angry), "grin", these impart a colloquial flavour to Fortune's prose, and identify it as North American, but what is surprising is the way they are crowded together with sophisticated words, often in the same sentence: "inducement", "esteem", "obstruct", "supplication". This juxtaposition re-creates the incongruity of life itself, its sublimity as well as its ridiculousness.

In the form of his sentences, Fortune tends to use repetition for effect. In contrast to McMicking, his style is marked by looseness rather than compression, and suggests a love of words and sounds for their own sake:

> We have had ups and downs, crosses and losses; crops of failure, crops of great yield; often no markets, sometimes fair prices; seasons of drought, others of damaging rain....We have been always grateful to God who did all things well.[6]

This looseness reproduces Fortune's keen appreciation of the variety and cyclical nature of life. As he himself put it, he "always thought that God would have us teach that he delighted in variety, for He puts a difference between the blades of grass; and the mountains differ."[7]

The total impression in Fortune's memoir is of a happy, generous and affectionate personality, a very alive human being whose pious Christianity was expressed not so much in rigid insistence on a moral system as in an exuberant love of God, of nature, and of his fellow creatures.

Like Fortune, Stephen Redgrave has a rambling, discursive style which amasses external details and meditative reflections and places them in lifelike juxtaposition:

> We had come through a very bad Bush & Country but when we got to the [North Saskatchewan] river it changed to a beautiful spot....There is a very large hill--all along the river--I was sitting on its banks, when thoughts of home and dear ones I left behind crossed my memory.* Little could they think where I then was or what I was doing. But as it wd not do to be melancholly I betook myself to the Valley below and...we ascended the Hill with our cattle (a good pull for them) & after passing through a pretty fair country (eating and plucking gooseberrys which were quite ripe), encamped for the night...about 11 miles from the river. At night we were troubled with mosquitoes and had to use a smoke Jack....[8]

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*I have added capitals at the beginning and punctuation at the end of a few sentences here, as in a small number of other quotations, to make the sense clear.

At times in his journal Redgrave bursts into rather bad poetry, not always appropriate to the scene which he is describing, but indicative of his persistently "melancholly" state of mind:

> Hark the Solemn bell which tolls
> Speaks the Departure of a Soul
> Let each one ask himself am I
> Prepared should I be called to die[9]

On rare occasions, as when the depredations of mosquitoes are also committed to verse, a lighter note is struck by this former Toronto policeman. But the general tenor of Redgrave's diary makes it clear that he was obsessed by the conviction that he was a great sinner, and would burn in Hell if he did not alter his conduct (another Overlander, Robert Harkness, hinted in a letter to his wife that Redgrave was a heavy drinker and an avid gambler).

An obvious influence on Redgrave's style is the language of the Bible. "It is rightly said, enter not into the paths of the wicked, for corruption is there...[our Maker will] lead us through the valley of the shadow of death."[10] Such quotations and paraphrases occur on almost every page, suggesting that concentration on spiritual matters so characteristic of Redgrave. As the journey progressed and his loneliness became more intense, Redgrave's meditative passages became more tortured and convoluted; he addressed himself in the manner of a stern judge:

> You are afraid to die not because you do not believe there is a God but that you know you have forsaken him & give your time to the world and its pleasures instead of your adoration to Him who made you and who if you will is ready to save you from everlasting punishment.[11]

Redgrave's style thus faithfully reproduces the torment of a mind to an extent disordered by the consciousness of sin, and admirably suits what Redgrave made clear was a didactic purpose: to teach by example the desirability of avoiding folly.

Turning to the other diarists, we find John Hunniford and John Sellar using the same colloquial diction as Fortune, but without the admixture of more elegant terms; and where Sellar is loquacious, Hunniford is terse. A further characteristic of Sellar's entries is the remarkable attention to number, weight, price, height and distance: "we came to an arangement with Mr. Webb of St. Pauls who is a forwarder to take 16 of us through to Red River a distance of 329 miles for the sum of 150 Dollars & take 3500^{lb} of freight through free."[12] A certain type of Upper Canadian is revealed in Sellar's prose, that of the practical pioneer who could turn his hand to either business or farming. According to Wade, Sellar was successful at both in later years, as were Fortune and many other Overlanders. The familiarity and ease with which these men use the language of commerce and agriculture proves that the reader may trust their frequent assessments of the land's potential.

The backwoods flavour of Sellar's speech is caught in

the words and phrases he habitually employs in his diary: a dinner eaten at St. Paul is "no grate shakes," a cabin in the wilderness is a "log shanty," sleep is vainly sought on "the soft side of a plank." The same homely turn of phrase is found in Hunniford's journal: packers "laugh fit to kill themselves" at the antics of their oxen, the weather is "rotten", a swelling in an ankle is "laid" by "Linniment". The paucity of Hunniford's vocabulary is felt in his fondness for a few words, used repeatedly: his health is never anything but "good", the scenery is never more than "beautiful". We get the feeling in reading his diary that the author was convinced that only concrete details were worth attention. This materialistic emphasis makes a rare passage such as the following all the more poignant:

> Sunday September 7th ran on a rock in strong rapids in the Frazer--thought of my quiet home that I left--regreted leaving my wife and children--was standing on a Broken raft on a rock with Deep Water on each side. Would have given all the money I possessed in the World had I been on shore with the cloths on my back.[13]

Better educated than Hunniford or Sellar, but with less of a writer's impulse than Fortune or McMicking, Richard Alexander reveals in the vigor of his style the athletic youth he was, and suggests by its lack of adornment the no-nonsense businessman which he became: "I have been in the saddle all day. I like the life very well. We dug up some Buffalo roots. These are very insipid."[14] Alexander's prose manner is particularly well-fitted to capture the excitement

and pace of real-life adventure. The very lack of "literary" embellishment, in the pejorative sense, makes it impossible for us to doubt the truth of some of the episodes Alexander recounts, in which the heroic extent of human endeavour is seen to be stranger than fiction.

The variety of style in the narratives is a source of pleasure for the reader, capturing as it so faithfully does the writers' differences of temperament. But in one respect the authors are very similar: they all pay strikingly close attention to details of physical and psychological reality. This particularization is, as Dean Ebner has shown, one of the techniques which novelists long ago borrowed from the autobiographer, and it is an important feature of all the Overlander narratives.[15] Fortune goes to such lengths as providing the name of a song from which the travellers derived a nickname for a lazy companion. Sellar does not consider the history of a hangnail beneath literary notice. Alexander repeats the exact wording of a drowned companion's last note to his wife; Redgrave paints a picture of an Indian mother removing and eating the lice from her child's head; McMicking captures the melody of a prairie bull-frog chorus after a long day of thirsty travel. These <u>minutiae</u>, and dozens more like them, are so interesting that we would feel rewarded for dipping into the narratives even if the authors displayed no other literary skills; creativity is here demonstrated in judicious selection of detail.

In all the accounts, but particularly in those of

Fortune and McMicking, a further refinement of artistic power is the authors' ability to vary their prose-style in response to the shifting moods and changing pace of the story. This flexibility is easiest to see in the descriptions of the confrontation with the Fraser. The prolix writers shorten their sentences and tighten up their style, while the laconic ones lengthen their line and search their imaginations for vivid phrases. In the following passage, Fortune's ability to substitute an almost staccato precipitousness for his customary loose, relaxed manner, enables him to catch the suddenly shifting danger of the running of the fearsome Grand Canyon above Fort George:

> The Captain was all earnestness about his work. Ho, boys, watch your sweeps, send raft to the right, quick and strong; now strong to the left. There were shallow bars and narrow channel with swifter currents. Alright, well done! Now we were borne along swifter and had to be watchful of the channel and draft of water. The excitement was increasing. Our speed was faster! The outlook shouted, danger ahead! The command was, hard to shore on left side![16]

In passing, it is interesting to note that Fortune was the only writer to use dialogue more or less consistently, to heighten the drama in numerous episodes. It is a device employed only at moments of high emotion, and represents a conscious artistry, because Fortune had not kept a diary in 1862 and, after forty years, could hardly have remembered the exact wording of the conversations he describes.

In contrast, McMicking did not employ much dialogue in his account, though he probably had kept a daily record. In

the first part of his description of the running of a similarly dangerous canyon on the upper Fraser, his diction suggests melodrama, and an unfavorable comparison with Fortune:

> Onward they swept like an arrow. They seemed to be rushing into the very jaws of death. Before them on the right rose a rocky reef, against which the furious flood was lashing itself into foam, threatening instant and unavoidable destruction, and on the other side a seething and eddying whirlpool was ready to engulf in its greedy vortex any mortal who might venture within its reach. With fearful velocity they were hurried along directly towards the fatal rock. Their ruin seemed inevitable.

But abruptly McMicking regains control of his material, and the rest of the passage pulls the reader irresistibly into the small circle of breathlessly anxious spectators on the bluffs above.

> It was a moment of painful suspense. Not a word was spoken except the necessary orders of the pilot, which were distinctly heard on shore, above the din and tumult of the scene. Now was the critical moment. Every one bent manfully to his oar. The raft shot closely past the rock, tearing away the stern row lock, and glided safely down into the eddy below. The agony was over. The gauntlet had been run, and all had survived. The issue of the ordeal was announced by an involuntary cheer from the brave hearts aboard the raft, which was heartily responded to by those on shore.[17]

Style, besides revealing creative power and reflecting, whether he wishes it or not, the writer's real personality, may also serve to establish the nature of his <u>persona</u>, the image of himself which he more or less consciously strives to create. If his work has a rhetorical aspect, the author will be concerned with the credibility and

appeal of his projected personality (ethos), which as Aristotle long ago noted is one of the means by which a poet persuades others. A writer may, of course, have no rhetorical purpose, and may wish only to provide entertainment. Entertainment was, as they themselves alleged, the primary purpose of most of the Overlanders, but several of them had a secondary didactic aim as well.

The fact that their major goal was entertainment in itself buttresses the claim that these accounts have literary value. As Northrop Frye has put it:

> In literature, what entertains is prior to what instructs, or, as we may say, the reality-principle is subordinate to the pleasure-principle. In assertive verbal structures the priority is reversed. Neither factor can, of course, ever be eliminated from any kind of writing.[18]

Fortune's memoir, subtitled "Account of Life Written for the B.C. Historical Association," makes it clear that there was a public demand for his autobiography: many acquaintances, including "a prominent servant and friend of B.C." had urged him to record his experiences.[19] At different points in his account, Fortune states the things that had made his life unusual: he had been a member of the overland expedition of 1862, and he was the first settler in the Spallumcheen District of the North Okanagan Valley. These were matters of general historical interest, and they obviously had the potential to be organized into a lively narrative. More important to Fortune personally, and he hoped ultimately to his readers, was the story of how he had

conducted his life in accordance with Christian principles. It is a common practice for Fortune to outline an ethically difficult situation, describe the wrong response to it, and detail what he did instead. Fortune speaks here of how the whites, under his leadership, had averted the threat of Indian uprisings:

> We had read and heard much about...how our strong Government had had to cut down the natives....We neither appealed to our Government for a license to destroy the tribes with whiskey, nor did we call for mounted police to hunt them into mountain canyons; we treated them kindly, doctored the sick, and fed the starving....And we used the Sword of the Spirit, which is God's word....[20]

He was obviously convinced that his had been a religiously exemplary life. His first purpose, to entertain, served his second one, to provide moral instruction: "some readers may be helped to make more of life because we give God and his word all credit."[21] As we have seen, Fortune's style conveys the clear impression of a warm, cheerful, exuberant character, that of a man who could indeed be trusted to give good advice on how to live one's life.

Like Fortune, Thomas McMicking had two expressed purposes in writing. The first was again entertainment. With his customary modesty, he notes in his first sentence that a description of the journey "may not be uninteresting" to the newspaper audience. His second purpose was to promote unification of the country:

> Although the journey was performed at considerable sacrifice of time, and unfortunately with loss of life also,

and is not likely to be attended with any direct personal advantage to those who survived it; yet, in a public and national sense, I think we may reasonably entertain a hope that it will not be without a practical and beneficial effect. It has at all events demonstrated the practicability of the route, not only for men but for horses and oxen also.. ..It will also serve to awaken public attention in Canada, the country that would be most directly benefited by the opening up and colonization of this territory, since every corner of Canada was represented in our company, numbers of which will convey to every neighborhood some goodly report of the land.

McMicking goes on to imagine the railway completed over the length of the "Overland Route," and rises to a height of poetically nationalistic fervour.

> Then our highly favoured country will take its place among the nations, and become one of the great highways for the commerce of the world. Then Canada, our home, with her golden fields, and Columbia, the land of our adoption, with her fields of gold, shall become one and the same country....[22]

Robert Harkness wrote in a letter to his wife that McMicking had "been a candidate for the representation of Niagara last election but was defeated."[23] McMicking's interest in political matters was therefore not new, but characteristic of the man. The rhythm, balance, and sobriety of McMicking's prose convey a clear impression of the steadfastness of his character, and its clarity and conciseness suggest his organizational ability. These qualities, together with his self-discipline and fine education, prove for the reader that he was a man of great competence and good judgement. We can well understand why he was elected leader of the expedition by his companions, and we are convinced as his intended

audience must have been that his opinions on the political questions to which he frequently addressed himself were worth serious consideration.

Among the diarists, Stephen Redgrave holds a section of his life up to review for the entertainment and moral edification of his friends and relatives. Unlike Fortune's, his account is not an exemplary but a cautionary tale. "If," he writes, "the few lines penned by me should drop into the hands of [my brother's] children it may be a benefit to them. I shall know they will at years of discretion have avoided many dangers and difficulties which through my improvidence I have been subjected to...."[24] A second unstated but obviously very important purpose of his diary, in view of his preoccupation with the question of personal salvation, was that he himself would learn to correct his future conduct by setting down his past errors. In this Redgrave seems to have been successful. His diary ended before the end of the 1862 journey, but when in 1873 he returned to British Columbia after an absence of some years, he took up a productive career in public service, clearly a stronger man.

The other writers, Schubert, Sellar, Hunniford, Robert McMicking and Alexander, seem to have been inspired mainly by the conviction that the trek they had undertaken was a once-in-a-lifetime event, something not many men had experienced up to that time, or would experience in the future. Their accounts often reveal the struggle of an unliterary man inspired by pride in his and his companions' achievement, and

wonder at the beauty of the wilderness, to try to capture these in artistic form, whether for his own personal satisfaction or that of a small circle of friends and relatives. Only two of the eight narrators, the diarists Robert McMicking and John Hunniford, apparently wrote for themselves alone. It is significant that their journals are the briefest, plainest in style, and sparsest in colour, detail, and feeling--in short, the least entertaining.

The three men who showed the most concern with the question of purpose in their accounts--Redgrave, Fortune, and Thomas McMicking--were at least a decade older than the other writers. The attention of the younger men seems to have been directed primarily to outward events; they were more active than reflective. There is thus an interesting correlation between the authors' maturity and the presence of rhetorical purpose in the narratives.

Entertainment and instruction are what might be called "public" purposes, in that they describe the effect the author wishes to have on his readers. A third aspect of purpose might more properly be termed private motivation--to do with the kind of personal satisfaction the writer hopes to get from his work. The possible therapeutic value of Redgrave's diary has already been mentioned. But the well-known concept of justification, or apology, suggests that autobiography may proceed from an even more profound impulse

in the writer's soul. This impulse may add an extra dimension to a work, and the following pages contain an attempt to establish the presence, and describe the nature of this dimension in the Overlander narratives.

CHAPTER THREE

NOTES

[1]Dorothy Livesay, Review of Klanak Islands, The Fiddlehead, no.43 (Winter, 1960), p.46.

[2]Thomas McMicking, "An Account...," November 29, 1862.

[3]Ibid., December 31, 1862.

[4]Alexander Fortune, "Collection of Addresses and Narratives," p.98.

[5]Ibid., p.12.

[6]Ibid., p.11.

[7]Ibid., p.73.

[8]Stephen Redgrave, "Journals and Sundry Papers," p.205.

[9]Ibid., p.268.

[10]Ibid., p.229.

[11]Ibid., p.221.

[12]John Sellar, "Overland to Cariboo," p.7.

[13]John Hunniford, "Journal and Observations...1862: Overland to British Columbia from Ontario" (Typewritten Manuscript in the Library of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., n.d.), p.19.

[14]Richard Alexander, Diary and Narrative, p.9.

[15]Dean Ebner, Autobiography in Seventeenth Century England, p.148.

[16]Fortune, p.55.

[17]T. McMicking, January 14, 1863.

[18]Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p.75.

[19]Fortune, p.4.

[20]Ibid., p.103.

[21]Ibid., p.5.

[22]T. McMicking, January 28, 1863.

[23]Robert Harkness, "Letter fragment" (Typewritten copy in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Victoria, B.C., n.d.).

[24]Redgrave, p.183.

CHAPTER FOUR

"A KINDLY MANNER OF REVERENCE FOR GOD AND GODLY THINGS": THE SOCIAL ORDER AMONG THE OVERLANDERS

Many of the Overlander authors, as has already been intimated, shared an awareness of spiritual as well as physical reality. They were not content merely to record facts, scenes, and events, nor even to relate an exciting tale of real-life adventure, but were concerned to find some significant meaning in all their experiences. This meaning was at once a product of the pattern which their cultural and religious ideals imposed on the universe, and an affirmation of it.

It is impossible to read these narratives without being struck by the remarkable (and evidently sincere) piety of most of the writers. Their essentially religious consciousness embraced three realms of man's experience: the world of nature, the world of human society, and the world of God. These realms were not seen as separate from each other, but as joined at every point, every creature, object and action emanating ultimately from one Creator.

The rough outline of this three-fold vision was that impressed by their early education, particularly their religious training, in the society of nineteenth-century English-speaking Canada. But the experiences of the long journey of 1862 led many of the Overlanders to a deeper understanding of the validity of that vision and the worth of some of its concomitant values. There was a kind of spiritual awakening,

varying in degree according to individual temperament, in all the narrators. It is in this sense that the arduous trip can be seen as a quest for greater knowledge--wisdom, or true wealth--and a voyage of self-discovery. The journey ultimately becomes a metaphor for the whole of a life, which if no transcendent meaning can be discovered in it, is often experienced as falling short of its promise. The same progression which provides meaning for a life must be recaptured in writing an autobiography, as many critics have been at pains to make clear. Roy Pascal has written:

> The life is represented in autobiography not as something established but as a process; it is not simply the narrative of a voyage, but the voyage itself. There must be in it a sense of discovery, and where this is wanting, and the autobiography appears as an exposition of something understood from the outset, we feel it a failure, a partial failure at any rate.[1]

The chief catalyst of growth and change in the Overlander narratives is seen to be the wilderness which formed so magnificent and intimidating a backdrop for the drama. Not only did the men have to pit their human strength against the forces of the natural world, but the privations produced by distance, terrain, and climate placed great stress upon the social order among the travellers. A conflict was produced between the men's cooperative and their competitive instincts and values. Paradoxically, the tension was exacerbated by the fact that both these opposing sets of values were vitally important for the success of the trip.

A resolution of the conflict was achieved by the subordination of the competitive to the humanitarian attitude, through the active reaffirmation--particularly by the elected leaders, who included Fortune and McMicking--of the Christian foundation of the group's beliefs. It was asserted that those virtues enjoined by their common religion, which encouraged the men to place the welfare of the group above their own private interests, should take precedence over those values which, though widely admired in secular society, tended to alienate the travellers from each other.

With one or two interesting exceptions, the conflict could not be presented in dramatic terms as a clash between personalities, because of the strong tendency to idealized characterization in most of the accounts. The authors' awareness that the circumstances of the journey suggested the plot-structure and atmosphere of romance was, possibly, one of the factors which led them to portray their companions in an idealized way. The other, doubtless, was the writers' personal adherence (at least in the case of Fortune and McMicking) to a high and somewhat rigid standard of moral conduct, which had much in common with the chivalric code, and which caused them to perceive character in black-and-white terms in real life. Much is made, for example, of the "manliness" of many of the heroes. After Robertson's death on the Fraser, McMicking warmly praised his "general intelligence, his kind and manly and generous deportment," and McMicking himself came in for praise from Schubert,

Fortune, and Harkness for his "excellent leadership" and just generally for being "one of the finest men I ever knew."[2]

The younger writers were particularly impressed with physical prowess as evidence of "manliness". Like the "noble André" and the "faithful, intelligent" Michel, the half-breed guides were often perceived in the guise of Noble Savages--competent, resourceful, and physically superior: Alexander described Sam Ballantyne, who joined the Redgrave party at Fort Carleton, as "a splendid fellow over six feet and a jolly chap too."[3] The lone heroine, Catherine Schubert, was portrayed as the very incarnation of feminine courage and maternal devotion--and her presence in the company was valued for the fact that it "helped to cultivate a kindly and more manly treatment of man to man."[4]

The tension between the two sets of values--both of which were often held by the same narrator--had in most cases to be presented by the writers in abstract terms, as the striving for a balance between almost equally worthwhile qualities. In the few instances where a clash was depicted, the incidents were described in more or less general phrases, and none of the participants was named.

The first, most important lesson which the experience of the wilderness brought home to the Overlanders, then, was that of the supreme value of the law of cooperation. Life in a society but recently emerged from pioneer days had helped to prepare the travellers in this as in many other important

ways for the exigencies of the journey: historians have often pointed to the barn-raising or land-clearing "bee", for example, as evidence of the emphasis on mutual aid in the backwoods of Canada.[5]

As the journey progressed and the terrain became ever more challenging, all the travellers were brought to feel their need of each other intensely. Fortune here describes one of the many difficult river crossings, with his customary emphasis on the Christian basis of his values:

> Here we had to help and be helped, giving another lesson of dependance on our neighbours. A journey of this kind helps wonderfully to root conceit out of the traveller. Good will and kindly manners count much in all conditions of life, --and especially when no family helps or connections are near us and we find strangers filling a brother's place are we reminded of Christ's lesson of the Good Samaritan.[6]

In a passage such as this, we see that the Overlanders themselves recognized something that has struck many about their story: their heroism was compounded more of endurance and patient, cooperative effort than of the numerous grand, lonely gestures which also have a place in the accounts. In this respect they fit well into the national mode of "collective hero" which Northrop Frye has identified in the builders of the C.P.R., or the fighters at Batoche, St. Julien, the Long Sault, or Dieppe. There is, possibly, something in the Canadian tradition which fosters the development of the cooperative rather than the competitive spirit, at least in the face of certain types of challenge.

Something of the intense comradely feeling which arises among soldiers in war-time can be sensed in the narratives towards the end of the trek. After a frightening trip down one of the Fraser canyons, the men of the Huntingdon group were moved to thank the captain of their raft, William Sellers. "Oh, boys," replied Sellers with feeling, "what could I have done alone, or what would be our fate if the men had been in any way wanting, who were working the sweeps....I only did the best I could and you all did the same."[7]

Another quality which operated in the social sphere, and was much in evidence among the Overlanders as time went on, was compassion. Fortune praised the St. Thomas men for taking on the care of a consumptive who regained his health on the journey: his friends were "true Christians" and "made no palaver of their kind offices." In a lighter vein, we are provided with a delightful picture by this same author of one of the few walking "burdens" among the company:

> There was a young Englishman named Merriat who came along bumming his way and looking to us all in turns to help him through. He could sing some songs, one of which was headed with the line "By studying of economy we live like a Lord." He was nicknamed Economy, and not only tolerated, but helped humanely although it was wrong, very wrong of him to impose upon others....[8]

Certain other dependent companions at first were "looking round for servants to attend them," but under the spur of the wilderness and with the help of "some Christian Samaritans... they soon learned the few routines of travelling duty and necessity and sought to please and make themselves useful and

worthy."[9] In this description, as in the preceding one, Fortune shows himself typically eager to emphasize the happy result of the conflict, and the "Samaritanism" of most of the men.

The kindness of the trekkers to Mrs. Schubert and her small children was also well documented by McMicking, Fortune, and Schubert. "I will here mention," wrote Fortune, "that we did not intend or expect to have any women or children along over the plains or the rougher journey across the mountains; but so it turned out and I have often thought it a wise providence that a lady with her husband and three children...overtook and travelled with us."[10] "The Shubert family were thoughtfully cared for by their kind hearted fellow travellers. A number of our party took much interest in their safety and well being. And great sympathy was manifested for the brave and devoted mother of those three children."[11] And according to James Schubert, on the family's desperate trip down the North Thompson River, the men in the party gave their last morsels of food to the starving infants. Mrs. Schubert's own self-sacrificing care for her offspring prompted this glowing tribute from McMicking:

> In performing this journey Mrs. Schubert has accomplished a task to which but few women are equal; and, with the additional care of three small children, one which but few men would have the courage to undertake. By her unceasing care for her children, by her unremitting and devoted attention to their every want, and by her never-failing solicitude about their welfare, she exemplified the nature

and power of that maternal affection which prompts a mother to neglect her own comfort for the wellbeing of her child, by which she rises superior to every difficulty, and which only glows with a brighter intensity as dangers deepen around her offspring.[12]

The humane and Christian attitudes of the party controlled their treatment of their animal companions as well. McMicking described how the needs of these came to determine --at considerable cost in comfort for the human beings--the order of the daily march. The hour of rising was advanced from 4 to 2:30 a.m. in order to give the horses and oxen more time to graze and rest in the heat of the day. The men also walked rather than rode at all times, except when ill. Some animals, including Fortune's ox, "faithful Brindle," and Mrs. Schubert's "good old horse, the big buckskin" whom she wept to part with, became beloved pets. Here, as in so many instances, the narrators illustrate how the lip service originally paid to certain important values was translated into effective action on the trip.

Working against the development of a harmonious, united effort was the strong, enterprising spirit of individual initiative which was so characteristic of the latter half of the nineteenth century in Canada. Roy Daniells has called it a "vigorous spirit of expansion" which "looked out on a magnificent, underdeveloped, and inviting terrain stretching into the boundless West."[13] "I knew," wrote Fortune of his thoughts on the train carrying him on the first stage of his journey, "that range after range for many miles deep

Ontario's habitable lands were occupied and that her sons would year after year follow me and others to the west not finding scope near home to satisfy their longings."[14] Fired with this expansionary fervour, many of the Overlanders were able to place the entire trip to Cariboo, with its strong overtones of chancy gamble and thrilling adventure, into the more acceptable context of duty. McMicking presented it as "alike the duty and interest" of Canadians to open the country to settlement. The great nation that resulted would be "indisolubly united by a common nationality, and cemented by a community of commercial interests--one of the strongest links in that chain which binds together the great brotherhood of nations."[15] "Duty" was also seen as a private obligation: when Fortune tells us that, after the drownings on the Fraser, the men could not refrain from wondering, "Are we in the path of duty ever running on the brink of danger throwing our life into a deadly snare as we did this day?" he seems to be referring to the responsibility felt by many of the gold-seekers to provide handsomely for their families at home in the East.[16]

This ambitious attitude, when carried to extremes, gave rise in some of the younger men to flashes of anger and arrogant impatience with the law of cooperation which had been established by the company. John Sellar's unit from Huntingdon, Canada East, several times flouted the rule that all parties should take turns at the head of the caravan,

notwithstanding the fact that there was then "always a regular strife." At one point, Sellar impatiently recounted how they "split off from the main body, & traveled ahead, the cause of the split being the delay of certain Parties, who know Nothing about Carts & Cattle or anything else save standing and looking at others working...."[17] Sellar justified this extreme discourtesy on the grounds that his party wished "to set an example to the other companies who were generally very slow," but on occasion their competitive zeal produced dissension among themselves, and it was only "after considerable jawing about who had done the most at places like this" that they could move ahead. However, when Sellar became ill with a minor but painful injury, he was forced to ask others to take over all his duties, and slurring references to the indolence of some of his companions disappear from his journal.

Despite the fact that Fortune was one of a group who, in an unnaturally violent mood at the beginning of the trip, had "made it publicly known that the first man that would start before [he] got orders from the Captain would have his ox shot before him," this author sought later to apologize for the impatience of certain members of the expedition--we imagine that Sellar was among them--without naming any of the offenders:

> The reasons were many excusing the ambitious and pushing spirit of the men who got ready first and were pushing ahead

....The summer season in Cariboo was short. In the long winter we could not earn money to keep the wolf from the door ....Our journey was long and our progress would be slow at best. These men laboured hard, laboured late and early and intelligently, and lost patience with those who had been detaining them....[18]

But far greater praise was reserved for those enlightened travellers who "in a thousand ways and every time showed great readiness to help any one in need and do even more than their share in any duties...which benefitted the whole company."[19]

Besides maintaining a state of harmonious interaction within their own party, the Overlanders had also to establish productive contact with the original inhabitants of the wilderness. The change in the Easterners' attitude, as depicted in the narratives, toward the Crees, Blackfeet, and Shuswaps whom they encountered, provides an especially good illustration of how certain beliefs were altered or strengthened, and how some of the men grew in maturity.

The first feeling expressed by the Overlanders toward the Indians they expected to meet on the plains was one of fear, ranging from mild trepidation to wild-eyed panic. McMicking described the threat from the Plains Indians in objective terms: "We were informed that should they make any demonstrations it would be more likely for the purpose of stealing our animals than with any design against our persons."[20] But Sellar foresaw possibilities that were more drastic indeed, on this journey "to the far North West, where the redmen of the forest goes prowling about at all hours,

waiting for an opportunity, when an inocent white may fall into their power, in order to shed his blood & feast on his flesh."[21] The Indians were regarded, in the imagination prior to the first encounter, with something of the same panic with which the wilderness was faced; and that was natural, for the red men knew the wilderness, accepted it, and considered themselves a part of it: they partook, in the minds of the writers, of some of its qualities. D. G. Jones has remarked that the world symbolized by the half-breed or Indian in Canadian literature "is not only the undigested raw material of Canadian experience but all that is primitive in nature and man."[22] The initial response to the "savages" was to build a garrison, either the stockaded Fort or the cart train drawn up in a circle. But the threat from the tribesmen did not materialize for the Overlanders, and so neither did the second response--the struggle to subdue and conquer them. By the time of the Overlanders' arrival at Tête Jaune Cache, where the Shuswaps who were camped there were able to give generously of their food to the famished Easterners in exchange for a few manufactured articles, the Indians had begun to emerge from the wild backdrop. They assumed a new place in the white men's consciousness as equals and brothers, who were capable of extending an unmistakably human helping hand.

Of all the narrators, Fortune, on his trip from Cariboo to Bella Coola during the last stage of the journey in the smallpox year of 1862, and during his later years in

British Columbia, had the longest and most intimate acquaintance with the native tribes. He was horrified at the destruction caused by alcohol among these. "O readers," he lamented on recalling it forty years later, "what a reward is awaiting us for the opportunity lost of not keeping our God given country always clean! We are our brother's keeper."[23]

Fortune was often called upon to mediate disputes between white settlers and Okanagan tribesmen. He admired much about the Indians, and in his dealings with them displayed great personal courage and a solid sense of justice, and was able to win their friendship and respect. Some of them found it possible to confide in him:

> Chief Williams when a young man shot his own brother in self-defence....[he] once visited me and confessed to the terrible deed and also declared that it had always been a great grief to him, although he still believed that he did it for the best, not only for his brother, but for the tribe, as the brother seemed to be like a mad man by spells.[24]

Fortune's strictures on the morals of the Indians seem repellent today. He showed little comprehension of, and no respect for, cultural differences when he made reference to sexual and marital customs. "An account of the degraded life and conduct of two of her daughters," he remarked of an Indian acquaintance in Spallumcheen, "would not bring credit to their memory. Their life was short."[25] At the first Christmas dinner which he gave for the neighbouring Indians in the Okanagan Valley, he noted rather smugly that, "I lectured the men severely for making slaves of their wives.

A few of the men parted kindly, others felt sore. The women showed no resentment, shook hands with us, and put their babies' hands in mine."[26]

Despite lapses such as these, it is possible to compare, with much credit to the Overlanders, their usual generosity and tolerance with that attitude more commonly adopted by even educated white men in nineteenth century North America. The respected American historian Francis Parkman, for example, who described his many months spent among the Plains Indians in The Oregon Trail, consistently saw his Sioux companions as ugly, depraved, and treacherous: "so alien to [a "civilized white man"] do they appear, that, after breathing the air of the prairie for a few months or weeks, he begins to look upon them as a troublesome and dangerous species of wild beasts."[27] In contrast, Fortune and McMicking came to perceive the red men as "our best friends" and "our brothers": the Indians, like the wilderness itself, were envisioned as at present included in God's creation, and in future to become part of ever-advancing civilization.

The narratives make clear that during the trek, the Overlanders used two devices to establish the social order among themselves and encourage the expression of those cooperative and benevolent impulses so necessary to the success of the undertaking. The first was the democratic election of a formal governing body, headed by McMicking, at Long Lake outside Fort Garry. The speed and ease with which this was

accomplished, at a point when most of the men were still strangers to one another, and the efficiency with which the organization operated throughout the trip, were undoubtedly partly a result of the political education which they had received in the East. McMicking, as we have seen, had formal political experience. The others, if they lacked this (which is by no means certain), could not but have helped absorb the right attitudes in the highly political atmosphere in which they had grown up. A looser organization would have allowed the group to fall apart, and a more autocratic government would have aroused rebellious feeling and destructive opposition. But without the sense of urgency and vulnerability which the wilderness fostered, there would no doubt have been more dissension and delay in the political process.

A second way in which the company provided for its own well-being was through the use of ceremonies and celebrations to cement the social order. Regular Sunday religious services were the most important of these rituals. Their function in restoring a feeling of community to the group was recognized and noted by all the writers. In a long passage McMicking describes the weekly problems of frayed tempers and fatigue, the "pleasurable anticipations" of the Sabbath to come, and the renewed good feeling that followed that day. These were "sufficient evidence to us that the law of the Sabbath is of phisical as well as of moral obligation."[28]

Music, too, at the Sunday meetings and on week nights after the caravan was settled, brought the group together.

At Fort Edmonton the talented ones gave a minstrel concert; so diverting it was that while watching, John Hunniford "forgot the time and place...and fancied I saw familiar faces."[29] At Fort Edmonton, too, the guide Michel "collected some Indians and other half-breeds and serenaded our company two nights by singing and drum beating...and showing us the exciting war-dance," as Fortune put it.[30] The ceremonies created on their arrival at all the Forts east of the Rockies, with gun salutes and welcoming flags, the regular committee meetings, the patriotic rituals on the occasion of the Queen's birthday, all helped to re-create familiar customs and remind the travellers of their cultural foundations. Such celebrations served to refocus and recharge the energies of the group, making a whole greater indeed than the sum of its individual parts, and helped to ensure that through all their trials, the travellers would come to prove that they fully deserved the high praise bestowed on them by Fortune: "The whole company were a fine lot of men, who showed a spirit of order where the law of the land could not punish."[31]

If conflict and its resolution, as has often and with much justification been asserted, "lie at the heart of literature," then the Overlander authors, in tracing the course and reconciliation of the tensions between social and individual values among the trekkers, treated a truly literary theme. The resolution of the conflict was accompanied by (and helped to bring about, and was also to an extent brought

about by) a "change of heart" in many of the men. In a number of narratives--Sellar's, for example--this change of heart is perceived by the reader simply as growth towards ordinary adulthood, that state of maturity which recognizes certain imperfections in oneself and certain virtues in others. But in some of the accounts, the alteration is seen as an advance from a lower to a higher dimension of consciousness, with progressively greater emphasis on the spiritual--what Fortune called "a kindly manner of reverence for God and Godly things in the most of our company."[32]

Not all the conflict portrayed in the works was generated within the social realm. The depiction of the even more dangerous confrontation between the physical and psychological resources of the men and the powers of the natural world was also attended by a broadening of vision in the narratives towards the end.

CHAPTER FOUR

NOTES

[1]Quoted in John N. Morris, Versions of the Self, p.32.

[2]Robert Harkness, "Letter fragment."

[3]Richard Alexander, Diary and Narrative, p.13.

[4]Alexander Fortune, "Collection of Addresses and Narratives," p.31.

[5]See F. G. Landon, Western Ontario and the American Frontier (Toronto, 1967), p.263.

[6]Fortune, p.37.

[7]Ibid., p.61.

[8]Ibid., p.33.

[9]Ibid., p.29.

[10]Ibid., p.31.

[11]Ibid., p.38.

[12]Thomas McMicking, "An Account of a Journey Overland," January 24, 1863.

[13]Roy Daniells, "Confederation to the First World War," Literary History of Canada, ed. Klinck (Toronto, 1965), p.199.

[14]Fortune., p.20.

[15]T. McMicking, January 28, 1863.

[16]Fortune, p.59.

[17]John Sellar, "Overland to Cariboo," p.40.

[18]Fortune, pp.28-29.

[19]Ibid., p.33.

[20]T. McMicking, December 13, 1862.

[21]Sellar, p.29.

[22]D. G. Jones, Butterfly on Rock: A Study of Themes and Images in Canadian Literature (Toronto, 1970), p.7.

[23]Fortune, p.96.

[24]Ibid., p.93.

[25]Ibid., p.89.

[26]Ibid., pp. 91-92.

[27]Francis Parkman, The Oregon Trail (New York, 1950), pp.205-206.

[28]T. McMicking, December 20, 1862.

[29]John Hunniford, "Journal and Observations," p.9.

[30]Fortune, p.38.

[31]Ibid., p.64.

[32]Ibid., p.30.

CHAPTER FIVE

"OUT OF SWAMPS AND FORESTS AND DIFFICULTY": THE IMAGE OF THE WILDERNESS IN THE ACCOUNTS

By taking steps to strengthen the social order among themselves, the Overlanders made a vitally important attempt to alleviate the feelings of fear and insecurity natural to such a difficult enterprise, in so remote a place. These apprehensive feelings could not, however, be completely dissipated within the social realm. The travellers discovered that they would have to confront the natural world directly, and in many instances, alone. At first they saw mainly the potential utility of the wilderness; later they came to realize that not all of it could be brought under man's control, but that it would continue under its Creator's dominion only. In compensation, they came to see that some of nature's strength might be drawn into them if they could open themselves to its forces, and above all, in the solitude they might be drawn closer to God. The initial problem, as in the world of human relationships, was one of alienation, of being separated from something with which it would feel comfortable and right to be united.

The Overlander authors, in their attempt to come to terms with the natural world, treated a theme which has occupied Canadian writers before and since 1862. Almost all the critics who have attempted to identify common images in our literature have picked out the wilderness as a central one. As Desmond Pacey has written:

> The Canadian imagination thus far is mainly a function of a landscape and a climate, and only secondarily of a society. When one thinks back over the history of Canadian art and literature, the images which come to mind are of great stretching plains, of brooding mountains and rocks, of swift, raging rivers, of stormy oceans and inland lakes, of acres of wind-heaped snow, of fiercely twisting trees--and amidst all this vastness and strength, man is but a dot, a temporary intruder, vulnerable but persistent.
>
> The landscape and climate of Canada are so inescapably impressive that it was inevitable that the first efforts of Canadian artists should be to come to terms with them.[1]

For Northrop Frye, the wilderness in Canadian art is infused with a spirit seemingly unalterably opposed to man. He asserts that the primary impression which nature makes upon the artist's mind in Canada is one of its "primeval lawlessness and moral nihilism, its indifference to the supreme value placed on life within human society, its faceless, mindless unconsciousness, which fosters life without benevolence and destroys it without malice."[2] In such a country, there is a tendency "for God to disappear behind the mask of nature." Because of this negative aspect of nature, for Margaret Atwood the central theme of Canadian poetry and prose has become 'Survival'. "Our stories are likely to be tales not of those who made it but of those who made it back, from the awful experience--the North, the snowstorm, the sinking ship...."[3] In these stories, Nature assumes the guise of 'Monster'.

Despite its indisputable illuminating power, it is misleading to call this portrait the dominant image of nature in Canadian literature. In the Overlander narratives, there is, it is true, an initial struggle with the forces of

the natural world, but the issue of this struggle is seen at the end to be not defeat, not success exactly--but growth. The men grow in physical and in psychic strength. They grow in perception of the need to establish, in some cases, and maintain, in others, proper relationships with nature itself, with their fellow men, and with God. For it is important to emphasize here what must already be partially evident, namely, that the different writers did not all start from the same point of personal maturity. The older men, Redgrave, McMicking, and Fortune, show themselves at the beginning of their accounts to be already aware of the importance of these concerns: progression in their works is from a position of relatively complacent acceptance of these truths to one of deep conviction. The diaries of the younger men, particularly Sellar and Alexander, reveal a far more abrupt transition from superficiality to seriousness.

Initially, these practical Canadians display greater eloquence when discussing natural resources than when describing natural beauty. They were plainly true sons of the early Eastern Canadian settlers, for whom, as one critic has noted, the "grandeur of lake and river was lost in a concern over floods, portages, sawmills and steamboats."[4] Words and phrases like "utility", "production", "resources", "fertility", "incalculable value", in reference to the land, abound in all the accounts. Over and over the writers record an assessment of the agricultural possibilities of the country through which they have passed, in what seems an

almost automatic response. Questions of soil quality, climate, possible crops, markets and the living conditions a settler might expect are all discussed in detail.

But soon the fatigue of coping with an unending succession of natural obstacles began to make the wilderness seem not quite so attractive a place. One of Sellar's entries captures this dampened mood:

> I think this was the most Miserable day I ever spent in my life, & no person can truely sympathize with me except a person who has experienced the misery of a fellon themselves, & then immagin themselves in my position, traveling day after day through a thick spruce woods, knee deep & more in water & mire, & tumbling in holes, & over logs, like a straw pile in a wind storm, & yet if I put out my hands to protect myself I only got worse, And then when night comes to sit out by a camp fire, or up & pace the wet ground just as the pain happened to rage. Such was my experience for about 4 days, but I do not recommend it as being very holesome.[5]

Here there is an almost uncanny echo of certain lines in Alexander McLachlan's poem "The Emigrant," which Ms. Atwood has used to support her thesis about the negative aspect of nature in Canadian literature:

> There we laid us down to rest,
> With the cold earth for our bed,
> And the green boughs overhead;
> And again at break of day,
> Started on our weary way;
> Through morasses, over bogs,
> Wading rivers, crossing logs,
> Scrambling over fallen trees,
> Wading pond holes to the knees;
> Sometimes wandering from the track;
> And to find it turning back;
> Scorning ills that would betide us,
> Stout hearts and the sun to guide us.[6]

If anything, Sellar's view of the wilderness in which he found himself is more jaundiced than McLachlan's. Sellar did not have energy in reserve to boast about "scorning ills" and "stout hearts"; but after all, Sellar got these lines down on the evening of the same day spent struggling through the bush. When we remember that, we can only admire his ability to evoke the frustration, discomfort, and fatigue he had so recently endured. There are many entries in all the diaries similar in detail and tone to this one by Sellar. Most of these display less self-pity in the face of such difficulties, but that all the writers at times perceived a hostile quality in the landscape is undeniable.

Yet when the travellers gathered at leisure, the only lasting effect of such experiences was an intensified "gratitude...manifested by our party....We had experienced God's mercy, His guidance and His protection."[7] Robert McMicking describes a Sunday Service near Edmonton: "text Acts 28 Chapter & the latter clause of the 15 verse, 'He thanked God & took courage' are the words which are very appropriate to the occasion."[8] If the expression of this increased sense of dependence is often cast in conventional religious terms, the emotion seems nonetheless intense, and in solid contrast to the complacency shown earlier: similar services at Fort Garry had been dismissed with the comment that they were "peculiarly interesting...and very acceptable."[9] Far from causing God to be "lost behind the mask of nature," the invariable effect of the worst trials

was to make the narrators more conscious of His presence, and of His grace in preserving rather than destroying their lives. Alexander's diary provides what is perhaps the most dramatic illustration of this. At the beginning of this journal there are very few pious references of any sort. After the author's near-drowning in the Fraser, there is an abrupt shift in tone and content:

> Oh I never knew what it was to be thankful to God before as when I tottered up that bank, and ever since in all our troubles and dangers I have been able to place more dependance on Him and leave it all to His good pleasure.[10]

After this entry, Alexander's journal is full of relief and gratitude for his narrow escape. "Thanks to Almighty God," "with God's help," "God grant," "thanks be to God"; in the entries belonging to the space of less than one week, all these exclamations appear. In a similar vein, in his instalment of January 24, 1863, McMicking describes the drownings of the six who didn't "make it back" and he sums up and accepts the fatalities in an eloquent paraphrase of "the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away." He uses the incidents to drive home a Christian lesson: "I trust that those of us who were exposed to the same accidents and who s[t]ill survive the same or like dangers, will not fail to acknowledge His goodness in the preservation of our lives, and to recognise His providential care over us through all the vicissitudes of life." Margaret Atwood mentions the gratitude that typifies the survivor in Canadian literature; here it is, in large

measure, and the Overlanders were in no doubt about whom to thank.

That a man must learn to fear God's power before learning to love Him is the concept which gives the terrifying aspect of the wilderness its positive value in a religious framework. Similarly, the concept of sublimity permits nature's fearsomeness to be perceived as esthetically pleasing. Desmond Pacey describes how one of the very first Canadian novelists grasped this. Frances Brooke, he has written, "seized upon what is the essence of the Canadian landscape, as contrasted with that of Europe: its magnitude of scale."

> "Sublimity," she writes, "is the characteristic of the western world; the loftiness of the mountains, the grandeur of the lakes and rivers, the majesty of the rocks shaded with a picturesque variety of beautiful trees and shrubs, and crowned with the noblest of the offspring of the forest.... are as much beyond the power of fancy as that of description."[11]

Since the sublime is necessarily associated with solitude, and hence with fear and terror, with pain and danger and with rugged and formidable terrain; and these things are indisputably to be found in the Canadian wilderness, where at times all might fairly be described as "dark, uncertain, confused, terrible, and sublime to the last degree," to quote Edmund Burke, it was natural that the Overlander authors should pick up this theme. As the travellers approached the Rockies, Fortune wrote of "grand and majestic slopes" and "a wild mountain stream roaring like a cataract." "if it be true,"

commented the leader of the expedition, "that 'wherever there is vastness, there dwells sublimity,' we were presented with a view at once sublimely grand and overpowering." As he gazed upon the "terrific grandeur" of a lightning storm near Roche Miette, McMicking's habitually orthodox piety gave way to a profounder "contemplation of that almighty and infinite Being, who makes all these powers subservient to His will, who spoke a world into [e]xistence, at whose sovereign fiat a universe was created."[12]

Nature in the wilderness is picturesque as well as sublime; the two concepts are linked by the idea of ruggedness and irregularity, as opposed to smooth and cultivated nature in an eighteenth-century garden. Fortune laments how "no pen picture is equal...to do the least justice" to the scene from opposite Jasper House, which would "cover a large canvas" and be "so grand a subject for a master painter." McMicking describes the Pembina River crossing as a "fit subject for 'our special artist.'"

In her book Survival, Ms. Atwood describes "the cult of the sublime and the picturesque, featuring views and inspirational scenery" as the "prevailing literary mode in Nature poetry in the late eighteenth century," but she seems to feel that this cult does not suit the Canadian landscape, and does not see the natural connection between the fearful aspect of nature in Canada, and the heightening of emotion, the sharpening of the senses, associated with the sublime.

It was a connection which the Overlanders could not overlook: "awe" is the apt word which even the unsophisticated Sellar finds to encompass his mixed and intensified feelings.

Nature has powers which are purely benevolent as well as those which operate through intimidation: the wilderness is able to preserve and exhilarate as well as destroy. All the accounts testify to its power to lift the spirits, to make the men feel like explorers and conquerors rather than homeless wanderers. On a "most beautiful Prairie, fairly spotted with swans & wolves both white as milk," the unliterary Sellar was moved to recall the compensations which existed for the original of Robinson Crusoe in his exile:

> As the morning was beautiful and clear, & the party all in good health and spirits, we took an early braekfast & started for the next station. That day put me in mind of Alexander Selkirk when on the Island of St. Jean Fernandez, he was Monarch of all he surveyed and his rights there was none to dispute. Because there...was none but ourselves.[13]

A number of the writers comment upon the improvement in their health afforded by the hard exercise and the healthy air. "The country was thickly wooded, the weather pleasant and bright, the air full of vigor to give a buoyancy to our spirits and nerves," writes Fortune, and even the consumptive companion "had now recruited greatly." It was all "calculated to make us fine & hardy, as we got any quantity of the fresh morning Air," notes Sellar. And Redgrave reports that, despite his homesickness, his health "was never

better in my life." "I used to be a bad walker but I can walk my 25 miles a day now--altho I feel tired after it which makes me sleep sound, a thing I never knew in Toronto."[14] The ultimate tribute to the healing power of the wilderness is given by Fortune, who asserts that he had been an invalid for ten years, more or less, before the journey (this was the reason he had to give up his studies for the ministry at Knox College). The 1862 expedition cured him completely, and he lived a physically active life into his eighties.

It is Fortune, too, who suggests one of the paradoxes of the wilderness: that nature herself is often the source of that strength and courage which is needed to go on contending with her. The passage is full of lyrical power:

> We had a splendid Keen appetite, and no need of tonics to eat our pemican and black cake....The sun had been shining all day brightly....Wild flowers and trailing vines beautified the glades of open land. Quantities of grass gave a carpet of soft touch for wearied feet. The great river bore its floods of melted snow fresh from the summits of the great rockies only a few miles south-west....Our lungs learned to expand. Our blood and lives, yes our very soul seemed out of swamps and forest and difficulty. What was future distress or danger when the present was so joyous and pleasing....[15]

Nothing aroused such gratitude for God's gifts in all the writers, as nature's smiling face, her fresh, previously unappreciated loveliness. For Redgrave, a reminder shines from Heaven quite as clearly on a beautiful prairie afternoon as among the "dreadful surges" of a Fraser River canyon.

Bright and beautiful the orb of day is shining. It seems to me it always shines brightest on a Sunday as if to hail that day & doubly warn us of our duty to God who has been so merciful during the present week to lay by our worldly cares and duty and seek communion with our Maker... for rest assured the eye of the Lord is on everyone....[16]

For Fortune, the real reward of the overland journey was not gold in Cariboo, but the discovery of a peaceful, surpassingly beautiful new home in the Okanagan Valley, in 1866. In that year, Fortune was still travelling, after having prospected unsuccessfully in different parts of the new province for many months. He and a companion had been investigating the shores of Mara Lake, and feeling more and more taken with the country--"all the hills and valleys were covered with God's planting of trees...the fir and pine, the cedar and larch, the cottonwood and spruce"--they drifted south into the Shuswap River.

Saturday, 14 June [18]66, we ascended this charming river whiles coasting on one side and then the other...the Ospra or fish hawk growled displeasure at our approach to their nests and home. The ducks with young foamed the river surface in their excited flight from the [pale]face. The eagle's chase to catch the Ospra flying with fish high in air was also entertaining; the birds among the trees sang their chorus to our song of the paddle. And when we ventured into the [shady] bends the mosquitoes in swarms gave us their unwelcome entertaining song of blood and battle.

The gray and cool waters of the river; the timbered mountain slopes and vale so full of sap life [which]gave all shades of green to rest the eye; the glory of the blue sky above us, and the bright warm sun touching all nature with his heat and life giving power made me feel "Verily God is near."

I cannot forget that first day in Spallumcheen Valley. We were so near to primitive conditions and quiet elements; so near to nature, where man's ambition never utilized nor wasted the wealth of God's arranging. To think of the centuries past and gone without the sound of ax nor saw being

heard over so vast a forest of many thousands of square miles. Verily I have ever looked back with gratitude to God for the privilege of being the first pioneer and settler of His guiding and planting in North Okanagan.[17]

Here Fortune, in delight and wonder, looked round him like a man returned to Eden. In A. M. Klein's words, he became "the nth Adam taking a green inventory /in world but scarcely uttered, naming, praising...."[18] All that he saw convinced him "that we had come to a land of great promise--one of God's many beautiful earthly gardens."[19]

Fortune's experience was not unusual among the Overlanders. Many found what they were seeking in the new land, a productive Paradise where, though work could not be eliminated, it would be rewarded. The Schuberts were as entranced with this same Valley, where they also eventually settled, as Fortune had been. James Schubert said of his mother, Catherine, that "she had no sooner moved there than she sent for young trees and put them in, apples, pears, plums and others, and from her first years...she maintained that the whole Okanagan Valley should be one orchard...."[20] In this beautiful place, the Easterners set to work--Fortune as a part-time missionary, Mrs. Schubert with her early "social work among her neighbors," as her son described it--to create a new community in the new land. These travellers, perhaps because most of them had been born in Canada, were able to come to accept and celebrate the reality of their new home, its particularity if we may use the word; they were not

"frustrated Loyalists, frustrated Scots, or frustrated Irish";[21] they were not even, except for a moment, frustrated gold-seekers. Their own words emphatically contradict D. G. Jones' view of Canadian literature as "an Old Testament world...a world of Adam separated from his Creator and cast out of Eden to wander in the wilderness...a world of the scattered tribes of Israel, in exile from the Old Kingdom and not yet restored to the New....a world in which life in all its fullness remains distinctly a promise rather than an actuality."[22] Dorothy Livesay has identified an idea that "occurs again and again in our poetry and fiction," and which can be seen to be much closer to the essence of the experience of some of the Overlanders. She calls it "a mythological pattern...of deep significance to Canadian literature."

> By deposing the old myths a new myth is asserted: the Canadian frontier, it is suggested, will create the conditions for a new Eden. Neither a Golden Age nor a millenium, neither a paradisal garden nor an apocalyptic city, but a harmonious community, here and now.[23]

For the Overlander narrators, it is undeniable that there is at times in the wilderness a feeling of deep loneliness and terror. There is death to be met, claiming certain "Victims", and there are mere "Survivors", those who are just glad to "make it back." The passages which portray this negative aspect of nature are dramatic. But in many lyrical descriptions, the authors make it clear that there is also a

power to heal the body and inspire the soul, and a renewed sense of fellowship with man and with God to be discovered on the plains and among the mountains; and for some at the end, still on the frontier, a new community to be built. The successful attempt to integrate the contradictory ways in which the natural world was perceived provides a sense of progression for these works, and a kind of unity which is profoundly important for all serious literature.

CHAPTER FIVE

NOTES

[1]Desmond Pacey, "The Canadian Imagination," Essays in Canadian Criticism 1938-1968 (Toronto, 1969), p.234.

[2]Northrop Frye, "The Narrative Tradition in English-Canadian Poetry," The Bush Garden: Essays in the Canadian Imagination (Toronto, 1971), p.146.

[3]Margaret Atwood, Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (Toronto, 1972), p.33.

[4]Alec Lucas, "Nature Writers and the Animal Story," Literary History of Canada, p.367.

[5]John Sellar, "Overland to Cariboo," p.81.

[6]Alexander McLachlan, "The Emigrant," The Book of Canadian Poetry, ed. A. J. M. Smith, rev.ed. (Toronto, 1953), p.99.

[7]Alexander Fortune, "Collection of Addresses and Narratives," p.38.

[8]Robert McMicking, "Journal of the Trip from Queenston, U.C., to British Columbia in 1862 " (Typewritten Manuscript in the Library of the University of British Columbia, 1918), p.16.

[9]Thomas McMicking, "An Account of a Journey Overland," December 10, 1862.

[10]Richard Alexander, Diary and Narrative, p.24.

[11]Pacey, "The First Canadian Novel," Essays in Canadian Criticism, p.34.

[12]T. McMicking, December 31, 1862.

[13]Sellar, p.13.

[14]Stephen Redgrave, "Journals and Sundry Papers," p.215.

[15]Fortune, p.46.

[16]Redgrave, p.238.

[17]Fortune, p.9.

[18]A.M. Klein, "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape," quoted in D. G. Jones, Butterfly on Rock, p.21.

[19]Fortune, p.101.

[20]James Schubert, "Reminiscences", p.14.

[21]Jones, p.28.

[22]Ibid., p.15.

[23]Dorothy Livesay, "The Documentary Poem: A Canadian Genre," Contexts of Canadian Criticism, ed. Eli Mandel (Chicago, 1971), p.274.

CHAPTER SIX

THE OVERLANDER NARRATIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF CANADIAN LITERATURE

The literary tradition of Canada is rich in examples of what might be called travel or exploration writing. Many of these works have only recently begun to receive serious attention from a few critics; but this attention has been sufficient to establish the value, as literature, of such journals and memoirs of travel in the Old West as those of David Thompson, Alexander Mackenzie, Simon Fraser, Paul Kane and Dr. Cheadle. These well-known accounts, and those of other explorers, surveyors, and missionaries, are autobiographical in nature and, like the Overlander narratives, deal with protracted and difficult journeys across the land-mass of what is now Canada, through the Rocky Mountain barrier, and down one of the dangerous rivers of British Columbia. It seems natural to compare them with those of the Overlanders, because the image of the Western wilderness looms so large in all of them.

Each of these explorers' narratives (for the sake of convenience Cheadle's and Kane's memoirs are included in this designation) is at first perceived, like the Overlanders', as a romantic adventure story. The goal of the journey which forms the basis of the plot varies: it may be commercial advantage (Mackenzie's and Fraser's search for a fur-trade route to the Pacific); scientific knowledge (Thompson's

explorations); artistic inspiration (Kane's "wanderings"); or simply "pleasure" (Cheadle's jaunt with Lord Milton). But whatever the exact nature of the "treasure" sought, its attractive power is proved by the courage and persistence of the hero-authors in the face of staggering privations and difficulties. Just as in the Overlander story, the wilderness plays a frustrating and sometimes deadly as well as a healing and inspiring role. The Overlander narratives have, however, a slight advantage in the unity of their action, for in them there is but one journey, and when the goal is reached, the story is broken off. In the explorers' accounts, the return trip occupies nearly as much space as the outward one, but has inevitably somewhat less dramatic interest.

In style, there is as great a range between what Simon Fraser rather too harshly described as his "exceedingly ill wrote, worse worded, and not well spelt" journals[1] and the dramatic power of David Thompson's Travels, as there is between the unvarnished naiveté of Hunniford's prose and the balanced elegance of McMicking's. But in every one of these narratives, regardless of the degree of their sophistication, a major characteristic of style is a truly remarkable attentiveness to detail. The fur-traders, of course, were trained to record the particularities of climate and terrain, as well as the habits and attitudes of the Indians on whom the trade depended. But in all the accounts, including

Kane's and Cheadle's, the authors' attention to interesting minutiae, often contained within one of their abundant fascinating anecdotes, seems to proceed from something more than a highly-developed sense of duty. It argues that inexhaustible curiosity which marks the successful imaginative writer.

Difficulties of social organization like those which confronted the Overlanders do not find so large a place in the explorers' works. One reason was that their groups of eight or ten were small compared to the one hundred and fifty men of McMicking's contingent; another was that in the fur-brigades there was only one recognized "boss", who made all decisions and had power to hire and fire the others. There was quite as much emphasis upon the importance of cooperation among the voyageurs, but the law was imposed from above and sometimes enforced rather harshly: Kane's description of the brutal punishment meted out by a Company agent to a boatman who attempted to desert on the Lower Columbia River illustrates this point.[2]

There is a more naturalistic tone in the explorers' narratives in the descriptions of the voyageurs, Indians, and other characters. Their good qualities are not neglected, but neither are they eulogized, and their unattractive traits are fully delineated.

An exception to this generalization is found in Thompson's work. It is interesting that, like Fortune,

Thompson was a deeply religious man who tried hard to live by the spirit of his faith. Like Fortune, Thompson pays warm tribute to his friends, both white and Indian. He displays an even greater understanding and sympathy for the culture of the red men, with reservations similar to Fortune's about their sexual mores. He has the same deep sensitivity to the beauty of the wilderness, and the same tendency to find evidence in nature of God's beneficence. In short, there is in Thompson's narrative that extra spiritual dimension, which has been identified in some of the Overlanders' accounts, and which is not as readily apparent in some of the other explorers' journals.

Dorothy Livesay has suggested that there exists a particularly Canadian genre, the documentary poem, "based on topical data but held together by descriptive, lyrical and didactic elements." The essence of the documentary form, according to Miss Livesay is "a conscious attempt to create a dialectic between the objective facts and the subjective feelings" of the artist.[3]

Here is an interesting lead, one which may prove productive for Canadian critics. The Thorndike Barnhart dictionary defines "documentary" in one of its senses as "presenting or recording factual information without fictionalizing but with dramatic interpretation." It suggests that the word applies especially to films, where the quality of immediacy is a distinguishing feature; and the documentary film has in fact been recognized as an art-form with which

Canadians are unusually successful. The personal documentary narrative, usually a memoir of travel or exploration in the wilderness, and full of the never-exhausted excitement of the classic tale of action, may be seen as another peculiarly Canadian art-form which has a long tradition, and of which there are a very large number of outstanding examples.

The documentary and the autobiographical forms are not clearly separable in all their features. In both, the artist begins with a given body of detail, and his initial problem is the "reduction of chaos to order" through selection rather than creation through "pure" imagination. In both, too, the artist must go on from there to find a way to make clear the transcendent meaning which has shaped itself in actual experience.

It is, then, possible for a work to be both autobiographical and documentary in form. The Overlander accounts, from the evidence already presented in the main body of this essay, may be seen to be such works. In their immediacy of physical and psychological detail, their "descriptive, lyrical, and didactic elements," their dramatic interpretation of events, in the "dialectic" between the objective features of the wilderness and the subjective feelings of the narrators, they fit all the criteria so far suggested for the documentary form. It is of course beyond the scope of this study to establish the existence of a new genre with all its theoretical underpinnings and the necessary close examination of numerous important works. But it seems

worthwhile to suggest that if such a new category could be established, many Canadian narratives whose form is at present perceived as somewhat anomalous would fit very easily into it.

When the Overlander accounts are compared to the many other Canadian travel and exploration narratives, it is apparent that the Overlanders are not superior writers, and that their tale is not inherently more interesting. But because one expedition has seldom had so many first-hand chroniclers, a special roundness is imparted to the reader's vision of the journey. This diversity of viewpoint gives the narratives, taken together, the variety and insight of a novel. When, for example, we see Sellar lamenting and Fortune exulting over the same stretch of countryside, we are reminded of how profoundly human experience is affected by character and outlook. The same themes, treated in a variety of ways by the different authors, are woven together into a tapestry of unusual richness.

Comparison between the Overlander narratives themselves is difficult for this reason. One is hesitant to recommend Thomas McMicking's concise accomplished account above the others, it it means that the youthful vitality of Alexander, the troubled meditations of Redgrave, or the charm and idiosyncrasy, the energy and human interest of Fortune will be ignored. If it is ever permissible to speak of "collective art," we have it here in the journals and memoirs

of the 1862 expedition. Any one of these narratives has more or less literary merit; when read together, they have value which is both the sum of the individual parts and something greater as well.

It is, perhaps, appropriate to mention here that at present the Overlander accounts are not in a state which permits their being read together. Most of them are available only in typescript, and are difficult to read. Except for McMicking's, Alexander's, and Fortune's published memoirs,[4] all the narratives could use extensive editing. But when we read the unretouched manuscripts, the very struggle which some of the writers obviously had to express themselves in terms which would do justice to the nature of their experiences adds a certain depth to our appreciation. We are moved at the amount of effort expended, especially when we keep in mind the conditions under which some of the men wrote.

A brief consideration of these narratives as foundation literature will help to round out our picture of them in the context of Canadian writing. The accounts have given rise to re-creations of the saga in a short story, a novel, and a television play.

In a book by Cliff Kopas called Bella Coola there is a chapter entitled "Overland to Bella Coola--1862."[5] According to Mr. Kopas, it is an account by one James Young of a trip taken by A. L. Fortune and the Wattie brothers, from Cariboo

out to the coast at Bella Coola over the Bentinck Arm route. Young's story is something of a mystery, for Young claims to have been the fourth member of the small party. But Fortune and the Watties in their accounts do not mention him, and make definite references to their party of three at different points: "We were now the only three of the overland party left in the upper country."[6] It is therefore unlikely that Young did accompany the group. Young must have come across the Wattie narratives and Fortune's memoir and realized that the possibilities for an interesting semi-fictionalized adventure story were too great to ignore. By making himself one of the participants, he may have felt that he added authenticity to the dialogue and to incidental observations which he makes on life among the Chilcotin Indians in 1862.

A comparison of Young's narrative with those of Fortune and the Watties is fascinating work (the Wattie manuscripts are known to us only through quotations in M. S. Wade's history of the expedition). In Young we find again the story of Fortune's ox, told in as much detail as the fond owner himself provides. As they set out for Williams Creek, Fortune describes the ox "leading after us like a pet, and well satisfied to be near us." Young discusses this famous animal at the same point in his story in very similar words: "We packed our supplies on his back and he followed along as steadily as a well-trained dog."[7] Young, in fact, includes in his work almost nothing we cannot trace to Fortune or the

Watties, while expanding every striking incident in their accounts, and he does it in such a way that the reader must feel he has seldom come across a story more interesting among early tales of British Columbia.

With a sure sense for the morbidly fascinating, Young describes the effects of the smallpox epidemic among the Chilcotins. As they approached one of these Indian villages "a nauseating smell assailed our nostrils. A breeze swept the offensive smell away, and then when it dropped we smelled it again...'We are approaching a village of the dead,' said Mr. Fortune."[8] Shortly after leaving this stricken place, they met a "horribly pockmarked" but recovered tribesman. With a knife in his hand, he rose to his feet and raged, "'Cultus white man,' he shouted, 'Cultus white man bring smallpox and kill all my people.'" There is much more in this vein, all of it touched upon by Fortune and the Watties, but brought vividly to life by Young.

There are numerous passages, however, where the men who were actually there have the advantage over the more sophisticated writer. At Bella Coola, where they stayed for twenty-one days, William Wattie described how dying Indians struggled to get close to the white trader's house; "as a result there was a great many dead Indians in the bush around our camp."

> The large gray wolves...would come down from the mountains....Their mission was to feed on them...so that any who died in the day would all be gone the next morning except some bones....[One day]Hearing a child crying and moaning

piteously we hunted around in the bush until we found it. There was a little baby about 6 months old in a little booth made of brush. It was dreadfully broken out with the smallpox and had been put out of the camp without food or anyone to care for it, and the wildbeasts would carry it away in the night. I never hear a child cry now but my mind goes back to that poor little Indian baby, dying alone in a little brush booth made by its mother.[9]

For heartbreaking immediacy, it would seem that Wattie's description could not be surpassed. The focussing power of strong emotion is illustrated here in the simplicity and tenderness of Wattie's narration. But Young attempts to improve upon Wattie's account.

We learned why the wolves were around, and so numerous. One day we were walking along a path when we heard a little child crying piteously. We followed the sound and found the child, a mere baby, in a little brush shelter. It was horribly broken out with smallpox and seemingly deserted. We hurried back to Peter White, [the trader at Bella Coola] who by this time had become our mentor as well as our host, and asked whether anything could be done about it. "Not a thing," he said tersely. "Unless you have enough vaccine to treat a whole tribe. Right now the only cure for smallpox is death. Tonight death will come to that poor little savage in the form of a yellow-eyed wolf."

We didn't sleep well that night. There seemed to be noises and rustling and the sound of crunching of bones outside the walls of the shack.[10]

Young's dramatization here, in the use of dialogue and the description of the insomnia that night, makes the episode more story-like, more readable in a sense, but it also serves to put distance between the reader and the narrative. The knowledge that Wattie, on the other hand, actually experienced what he is describing, and was himself deeply moved by it, adds emotional force to his words, and the fact

that the suffering of the Indian baby once really existed becomes a fact with which the reader has to deal at a deeper level.

Young has not been the only writer to attempt to re-create the drama of the Overlander saga. Vicky Metcalf told Catherine Schubert's story in a book called Journey Fantastic[11] published in 1970. Like Young, she added plausible and interesting dialogue, and took a novelists' license in describing Catherine's thoughts and feelings on the trip. But she did not depart in any way from the historical facts, relying heavily on Wade's book and the diaries and narratives of Alexander, Fortune, McMicking, Redgrave, and Sellar. (James Schubert's memoir does not seem to have come to Ms. Metcalf's notice.)

Although meant apparently for young people, the book is well enough written that an adult may read it with interest. But one feels there is much more to be said about a woman of Catherine's determination and adventurousness. There is little suggestion of the complexity of character of a woman who could perform such a journey in such a condition, alone among so many men, in the year 1862 in British North America. It is true that McMicking, Fortune and Schubert also suggest none of this complexity, but in compensation their admiration of Mrs. Schubert's achievement is phrased in terms which suit the romantic atmosphere of their narratives. Their poetically-described Catherine seems larger than life;

Ms. Metcalf's seems smaller, a flat, shadowy character, in a modern book where she might have become a prototype for that feminist portrait of "the Canadian woman as a young, free, passionate person" which is "still to come," in Elizabeth Waterston's phrase.[12]

The dramatic potential of the Overlander narratives was recognized by CBC television when a ten-part series based on the story was planned a few years ago. The serial form obviously was well suited to the depiction of the long journey, which falls naturally into episodes occurring between one geographical point and the next. But unfortunately, the many incidents and characters in the end were crowded into one short episode, which many viewers found confusing. Even more lamentable was the tampering of the producers with the original plot. In order apparently to add some contemporary spice, a second woman was included in the play, and conflict between some of the men over this fictitious companion was written in. This addition was not only unnecessary--the true events of the journey would seem to possess more than sufficient excitement for any normal viewer--but it was also obviously totally out of keeping with the portrait the narrators supply, of the upright, pious character of their companions and their orderly conduct throughout the trip.

The Overlander story will probably never be told better than the Overlanders themselves have done it. Yet

there is a way in which their accounts might be used as foundation literature by Canadian poets and novelists. Margaret Laurence and Margaret Atwood have in recent works (The Diviners and The Journals of Susanna Moodie) sought inspiration in the autobiographical writings of Catherine Parr Traill and Susanna Moodie respectively. John Newlove has made a similar borrowing in his beautiful poem, "Samuel Hearne in Wintertime." The experiences of the pioneers are intentionally filtered through the sensibilities of the modern artists. There is no attempt to improve upon what Mrs. Moodie, Mrs. Traill, or Samuel Hearne achieved in their writing; rather, the attempt is to explore the consciousness of modern Canadians by the light of works through which we apprehend what our countrymen once were. The Overlander accounts obviously have the same kind of potential.

In Canada, as Northrop Frye has pointed out, national legends must necessarily be based on historical events to a much larger extent than in older countries; but that does not mean that we therefore possess fewer legends than others. It is true that only a few of them have been used by our artists, but the process of discovery has in recent years been going on apace.

Desmond Pacey has praised those critics who in the Literary History of Canada have dealt with the literature of exploration: "They have opened up for us a whole new dimension of our writing, and extended by almost two centuries the

depth of our literary tradition."[13] It seems safe to predict an explosion of interest in this tradition, of which the Overlander narratives form a part, in the years to come.

To get back from their potential as foundation literature to the narratives as they stand, we find that in themselves they help us to know both our country and its people. At this point, I cannot forbear digressing a little, to draw attention to the remarks of one of the few critics to comment upon an Overlander artist; in this case the artist was not a writer, but a painter by the name of William G. R. Hind. Hind travelled with Redgrave's party, and left numerous sketches and paintings of scenes from the trip. In the introduction to a catalogue of an exhibition of Hind's work which appeared at the Willistead Gallery in Windsor, Ontario, in 1967, Kenneth Saltmarche recorded some observations which are as applicable to the art of the Overlander authors as they are to that of the painter:

> Almost entirely modest in scale, these pictures have as their first and most immediate appeal the attraction of the historical document. But one wonders if any pictorial records, certainly in this country, have ever come from a more sensitive and creative brush than this? In his coloration, in his very personal way of seeing and drawing, and in his alternately painstaking and free manner of applying paint, Hind declares himself to be an artist as well as a maker of records.[14]

These remarks remind the reader most of Fortune's style: modest in scale, but sensitive and creative; a very personal way of seeing; alternately painstaking and free. Another of

Hind's painterly qualities reminds us more of McMicking's clarity and control; Saltmarche praises his possession of "the most remarkable firmness and facility." In his landscapes Saltmarche remarks how "he sets down these views as if for the pure love of recording his own feelings for beauty," bringing to mind the way Fortune lingers over a lyrically lovely scene, and the diarists' struggle to record nature's grandeur in an unfamiliar medium. Summing up, Saltmarche asserts that Hind:

> ...was a man who worked at other jobs for much of his life, and never attempted the grandiose. The judgment of history will categorize him as a man who could superbly mirror the local scene, who had no great sophistication, and was a "primitive" in his approach. Yet he was a natural artist, filled with an inborn artistic sensibility, and this natural talent transforms his work into superbly attractive paintings.
>
> One must also remember that Hind, in his observant look at Canada, was very much a contemporary since Canadians generally were then looking at their own country with a new, realistic, keen and appraising eye. They saw Canada as it really was with all its potentialities for the future. As an artist who paints in out of the way corners, he reflects this expanding interest of Canadians in their own country.[15]

Something like this relatively modest yet admiring assessment of Hind's work will do for the Overlander diarists and memoirists as well. In a legend such as that which their narratives provide for us, we may as Canadians discern some of the sources of our values and character, our identity as a people. In their remarkable piety, in the cooperative nature of their achievement, in their industry and endurance and orderliness, the Overlanders reflect one

image which we have built for ourselves. In the fact that their ambitious enterprise with its considerable but intangible spiritual rewards was fired by a materialistic dream of personal gain, there is contained a paradox characteristic of many of our national achievements, from the opening of the country through the fur-trade to its union as a result of the building of the C.P.R.

W. H. New has suggested that it is at the interface of wilderness and civilization that something vital and essentially Canadian can be generated in literature: "When order somehow interacts with generation" and "the 'Eastern' forces of civilized restraint and the 'Western' ones of free growth meet."[16] In the Overlander narratives, as we have seen, there is tension at many levels, between the men's social instincts and their religious duty on the one hand, and their more primitive, anarchic impulses on the other; between fearful shrinking and courageous initiative; and above all between man and the wilderness, the conflict which brought all the others into the open. The Overlander authors tried to resolve these conflicts and bring all aspects of their experience into the circle of their vision of the world. The attempt was made in a legitimate literary form, in a journal or memoir, both of which are respectable relatives of autobiography, and well represented in early Canadian travel and exploration literature. These

narratives deserve a place in our literary tradition for all these reasons, and also because they capture the flavour of an heroic and nationally remarkable journey, and the likeness of the Canadian wilderness just before it became comfortably accessible, in a gripping adventure-story.

CHAPTER SIX

NOTES

[1]Simon Fraser, Letters and Journals, 1806-1808, ed. W. Kaye Lamb (Toronto, 1960), p.37.

[2]Paul Kane, Wanderings of an Artist Among the Indians of North America (Edmonton, 1968), p.181.

[3]Dorothy Livesay, "The Documentary Poem: A Canadian Genre," in Mandel, p.269.

[4]The reference here is to Fortune's "The Overlanders of 1862," which was introduced, and apparently edited, by G. D. Brown, Jr., and which appeared in the Kamloops, B.C., Sentinel in nine instalments between November 27, 1936 and December 24, 1936. This was a shortened version of the manuscript I have used in this study.

[5]Cliff Kopas, Bella Coola (Vancouver, B.C., 1970).

[6]William Wattie, quoted in M. S. Wade, The Overlanders of '62 (Victoria, B.C., 1931), p.146.

[7]James Young, "Overland to Bella Coola--1862," in Kopas, p.73.

[8]Ibid., p.81.

[9]Quoted in Wade, p.150.

[10]Young, p.86.

[11]Vicky Metcalf, Journey Fantastic: With the Overlanders to the Cariboo (Toronto, 1970).

[12]Elizabeth Waterston, Survey: A Short History of Canadian Literature (Toronto, 1973), p.13.

[13]Desmond Pacey, "The Outlook for Canadian Literature," Essays in Canadian Criticism (Toronto, 1973), p.71.

[14]Kenneth Saltmarche, *William G. R. Hind: A Confederation Painter in Canada* (Windsor, 1967), p.3.

[15]*Loc. cit.*

[16]W. H. New, *Articulating West* (Toronto, 1975), p.xxv.

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