

# Mapping Culture onto Geography: 'Distance from the Fort' in Samuel Hearne's Journal

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ON 12 AUGUST 1770, likely on the plain west of Dubawnt Lake (Hearne 95n), a gust of wind smashed Samuel Hearne's quadrant onto stony ground and damaged it beyond repair. Hearne was forced, as a result, to give up his second attempt to reach the mouth of the Coppermine River and to return, reluctantly, for a second time, to the Prince of Wales's Fort. Four days before, on 8 August 1770, Hearne foreshadowed the accident in a journal entry memorable for its vitriolic criticism of his aboriginal companions, its expression of palpable personal fear, and its unselfconsciously privileged 'reading' of cross-cultural tensions. "The very uncourteous behaviour of the Northern Indians then in company," the lament begins, "gave me little hopes of receiving assistance from them, any longer than I had wherewithal to reward them for their trouble and expense" (Hearne 92-93). Reprinted in Appendix 1, the excerpt is noteworthy because it articulates, more extensively than any other single example, the contradictions of the colonial body travelling through geographical space and caught at the tense nexus of cross-cultural negotiation and economic exchange.

In its extended form, the excerpt demonstrates three significant ways in which movement through geographical space complicates the exchanges of exploration for Hearne. Specifically, movement through geographical space complicates i) the literal value of material exchange, ii) the cultural and symbolic assumptions underlying that exchange, and iii) the value of the representative and the visceral European body at the centre of the exchange. The excerpt identifies, for example, how the shifting ground of economic value benefitted native people to the detriment of Europeans at this distance from the Prince of Wales's Fort ("not one of them had offered to give me the least morsel ... without asking something in exchange, which, in general, was three times the value of what they could have got for the same articles, had they carried them to the Factory, though several hundred miles distant"); how cross-cultural frustration

increased as geographical movement shifted the implicit and explicit meanings of exchange (“it is scarcely possible to conceive any people so void of common understanding, as to think that the sole intent of my undertaking this fatiguing journey, was to carry a large assortment of useful and heavy implements, to give to all that stood in need of them”); and how both Hearne’s representative Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) body and his material body experienced increasing vulnerability with distance (“when they found I had nothing to spare ... they made no scruple of pronouncing me a ‘poor servant, nowadays like the Governor at the Factory ... . This unaccountable behaviour ... showed plainly how little I had to expect if I should, by any accident be reduced to the necessity of depending upon them for support; so that, though I laid me down to rest, sleep was a stranger to me that night”).

In a recent article, Kevin D. Hutchings analyzes extensively both Hearne’s stereotypes of Amerindian ‘savagery’ and his comments about the impact of the fur trade on Indigenous people. On the basis of his analysis, Hutchings argues that Hearne’s narrative inadvertently destabilizes the progressivist thrust of the ‘four-stages’ theory of cultural development, a theory central to Enlightenment social thought (54). “Samuel Hearne’s incompatible reflections,” Hutchings claims, “concerning, on the one hand, his unquestionable ‘duty’ to his employers and, on the other, the appalling effects on Indigenous populations of performing this duty, point to an irreconcilable doubleness inhabiting the writing Self” (73). Hutchings proposes that from a postcolonial perspective, Hearne’s “narrative perplexity” can be read as an “early manifestation of critical *self-reflexivity*” and, as such, a potential basis for “sound cultural criticism, intercultural negotiation, and productive sociocultural transformation” (73; emphasis in original). I argue, by contrast, that Hearne’s “narrative perplexity” fails, in dramatic ways, to function so ideally. By reading closely one of the excerpts that Hutchings identifies as central to his argument (68), I propose that Hearne in fact reconciles certain apparently incommensurable “disruptions of his cultural knowledge” (73) by means of what Daniel Clayton calls, in a slightly different context, “the physical and rhetorical demarcation of distance and difference between Europeans and Natives” (119). I argue specifically that the HBC’s Prince of Wales’s Fort functions as the symbolic, if absent, centre of Hearne’s text and that the text’s crucial symbolic classifications depend fundamentally on a shifting spatial value I will call ‘distance from the Fort.’

The paper that follows examines the separate spatial worlds of Hearne’s text, analyzes discursively the negotiation of the distance be-

tween those separate worlds, and theorizes the travelling European engaged in that negotiation. On the basis of my analysis, I argue that Hearne resolves critical ideological, social, political, and economic 'disruptions' by mapping culture onto geography. Despite his understanding of, and sympathy for, aboriginal values, Hearne responds to the possibility of traditional Indian lifeways encroaching on the symbolic centre of the HBC forts by reclassifying space in all the ways that his ideological, discursive, and bodily allegiance to a European economic worldview requires. Pressed by the conflicting exigencies of contact, Hearne's open, material body ultimately reprivilleges the values instituted by his representative body.

### Space, symbolic order, and distance

According to Homi K. Bhabha, colonial discourse depends crucially on the concept of 'fixity' in its ideological construction of otherness. "Fixity," says Bhabha,

as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition. Likewise the stereotype, which is its major discursive strategy, is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place,' already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated. (66)

In a provocative instantiation of Bhabha's terms, Hearne's discourse pivots around his representation of two distinct sites of ambivalent fixity. The first is the HBC's Prince of Wales's Fort, which functions as the symbolic centre to which everything and everyone is assumed to be in relation. The second is the 'world of the Indians,' which appears at the farthest symbolic reaches from the Fort. This second world, certainly as it is reported in the sanctioned terms of European ethnography, is a temporally static site of disorderly repetition, and the dynamism of cultural disruption and perplexity that Hutchings describes is, I argue, played out between these two very differently 'fixed' sites. The first section of my paper begins by examining the relationship between the two textual sites, with particular emphasis on the ways in which space and spatial divisions are simultaneously produced by, and reproduce, the categories and classifications of social and symbolic order (Giddens 117). The first section ends by examining how the travelling colonial body negotiates the literal

and symbolic distance between the sites and recoups social and symbolic categories destabilized by distance from the centre.

The 'world of the Fort' to which Hearne repeatedly refers almost never actually appears in the text. Except for his preparations for the first journey (58) and his brief sojourns there between attempts (70-71; 106-8), the Fort as a *lived* space is almost completely absent from the text. Like the monasteries, the fortresses, and the walled towns that Michel Foucault describes as disciplinary *enclosures*, the Fort is a space "heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself" (*Discipline* 141-42). I argue, in fact, that precisely the Fort's textual absence denotes how thoroughly it has been naturalized as a site of authority: the Fort, in Michel de Certeau's terminology, is the place of 'the proper' and therefore serves "as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it" (xix). Hearne, of course, receives his instructions at the textually absent but symbolically powerful Fort, instructions which officially demarcate the nature and scope of his exploratory journey, and establish his representative identity on that journey. "Whereas the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company have been informed," those instructions begin,

by the report from Indians, that there is a great probability of considerable advantages to be expected from a better knowledge of their country by us ... and as it is the Company's earnest desire to embrace every circumstance that may tend to the benefit of the said Company, or the Nation at large, they have requested you to conduct this Expedition; and ... you are hereby desired to proceed as soon as possible. (52)

At the Fort, operative social and economic distinctions are imagined as efficacious at a distance. "You are also," Hearne's instructions continue, "to persuade [such far-off Indians as you may meet with] ... to exert themselves in procuring furs and other articles for trade, and to assure them of good payment for them at the Company's Factory" (53).

The Fort's symbolic efficacy depends, however, on crucial spatial slippages, a point forcefully underscored by Hearne's indignation at the native people. "So inconsiderate were those people," he fumes, "that wherever they met me, they always expected that I had a great assortment of goods to relieve their necessities; as if I had brought the Company's warehouse with me" (93). From Hearne's perspective, the people he encounters assume, erroneously, that his representative body and his literal body are synonymous, and that the latter can 'stand in' for the meaning and the value and the material reality of exchange practices as they are per-



formed at the Fort. His resulting indignation inadvertently reveals that he himself operates according to a critical, if unarticulated, distinction between 'space' and 'distance'; according to this covert distinction, rules established at the centre of authority are allowed to shift as material bodies and representative selves move from the central site. Clearly, the resulting flux does not always benefit representatives of European economic exchange, though it is at least partly stabilized by the text's other ambivalently fixed site.

The 'world of the Indians' exists at the farthest symbolic reaches from the Fort and appears textually whenever Hearne launches into ethnographic descriptions of Indian life. Unlike the referential but absent Fort, the text's "Indian" interludes are immediately discernible, textually, by their marked dependence on passive constructions. Almost exactly one month into his second journey, Hearne records a description of how the Indians set fish nets under ice which precisely exemplifies this grammatical dependence. "It is first necessary to ascertain [the net's] exact length" (73), he explains to begin, and continues almost without variation: "a number of round holes are cut in the ice"; "[a] line is then passed under the ice"; "a long light pole ... is first introduced"; "this pole is easily conducted ... under the ice"; "the pole is then taken out"; "a large stone is tied to each of the lower corners." At each stage, Hearne describes the actions involved as if they occurred anonymously. According to Norman Fairclough, "the grammatical forms of a language code happenings or relationships in the world" (120). Grammatical expressions, that is, construct the *processes* and the *participants* represented by discourse: namely, the *kinds of action* and the specific *agents* responsible for those actions (120-25). In the net-setting excerpt, however, passive constructions reorder conventional subject/verb grammar so that the clause focuses on the action being performed to the exclusion of the agents responsible for those actions. Indeed, except when Hearne describes the net as being "made fast to one end of the line *by one person*, and hauled under the ice *by a second*," his constructions are not merely passive but agent-less; they not only obscure the agents responsible for the actions, they erase them entirely (Hodge and Kress 25).

Passive constructions and agent-less passives occur frequently in colonial and ethnographic discourse (Fabian 84-87), perhaps precisely because they so effectively obscure and erase the human agents responsible for the actions, the events, and the customs described. The net-setting excerpt described above exemplifies what JanMohamed calls colonial discourse's predisposition to dehistoricize and desocialize the world it encounters (87). In Hearne's ethnographic world, focus rarely wavers from the details of the desocialized activity under description. "To pitch an Indian's tent in win-

ter," he declares, for instance, "it is first necessary to search for a level piece of dry ground ... . When a convenient spot is found, the snow is then cleared away" (74). And when Hearne describes traditional women's work as virtually insignificant, the depersonalization borders on contempt. "To prepare meat in this manner," he condescends to report in a footnote, "it requires *no farther operation* than cutting the lean parts of the animal into thin slices, and drying it in the sun, or by a slow fire, till, *after beating it between two stones*, it is reduced to a coarse powder" (89; emphasis added). The net-setting excerpt is particularly striking because its final comparison relies on two direct-action constructions. "The Europeans settled in Hudson's Bay *proceed* much in the same manner," Hearne explains at the end of his description, "though they in general *take* much more pains" (73). Conventional subject/verb grammar in both constructions not only clearly identifies the agents of the action, but it identifies them as European subjects to whom the positive term of the comparison is ascribed. The excerpt concludes, tellingly, with the judgmental passive clause: "but the above method is found quite sufficient by the Indians." Unlike the European agents responsible for specific and valorized action in the two previous constructions, Indians' *methodology* takes the focus of the final, deprecating, evaluation.

In this and other ways, the 'world of the Indians' is regularly set in spatial and cultural opposition to the 'world of the Fort.' The two ambivalently fixed worlds, however, are not represented equally in the text, since the aboriginal world is consistently described *in terms of* the textually absent Fort, as if the values and the classifications naturalized at the Fort in fact applied everywhere. The textual 'world of the Indians' is thus, significantly, a world understood through the filtering lens of Hearne's gaze, a discursive creation that communicates Hearne's *orientation* to aboriginal lifeways under the guise of ethnographic truth. In much the contradictory way that Bhabha describes, 'the world of the Indians' functions textually and ideologically both to stabilize the fluctuating values of the Fort and to provide a dramatic alternative against which the Fort's values can be seen to be clearly superior.

According to Allan Pred, "the production of space — the emplacement of durable (and symbolic) artifacts, the establishment and transformation of (meaning-filled) settings — is both the medium and the outcome of human agency and social relations, both the medium and the outcomes of ... 'structuration processes' ... both the medium and outcome of ... structuring processes" (26). Pred follows Anthony Giddens explicitly, and, by extension, Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, and Edward Soja, who

argue for a greater awareness of space in political and cultural theory. By re-invoking Giddens's notion of the duality of structure (Giddens 122), Pred identifies space and spatial divisions as simultaneously determiners of, and determined by, symbolic order. Spatial divisions and classifications both embody and enable cultural distinctions, symbolic practices, and social relations, and, as such, are social acts. At the symbolic centre of Hearne's text, the Fort is not merely the static repository of European dividing practices but, in Pierre Bourdieu's terms, the site where *de facto* differences are transformed symbolically into spatial, social, and economic distinctions through which the authoritative version of the world is legitimized and enacted (238). As the textual, geographic, spatial, and symbolic centre of reference, the Fort is 'structured' by dividing practices and also attempts to 'structure' the worlds inside and outside its enclosure *according to* its dividing practices.

Hearne's story is not, however, a story about maintaining the proper distinctions between 'inside' and 'outside' by remaining stationary at the site of authority; Hearne's story is fundamentally about movement *between* sites and spaces. As such, it is profoundly concerned with how changes in geographical context modify the literal and the symbolic value of inherited classifications. According to Foucault, who traces the evolution of western notions of space, "the problem of the human site or living space is ... knowing what relations of propinquity, what type of storage, circulation, marking, and classification of human elements should be adopted in a given situation in order to achieve a given end. Our epoch is one in which space takes for us the form of relations among sites" ("Spaces" 23). Among many other things, Hearne's text records his peculiar version of the 'problem' that Foucault identifies. Despite the Fort's authority, values shift as 'location' is exchanged for distance and direction; as those values shift, Hearne himself, and all the other 'human elements' circulating between sites, are in constant need of reclassification.

Hearne relies spatially and textually on a quality I will call 'relative location' to represent his movement through unfamiliar space. By contrast with Alexander Mackenzie, for instance, who locates himself textually in foreign terrain by creating elaborate word-maps,<sup>1</sup> Hearne is far less likely to orient himself in terms of *where he is* than in terms of *where he is in relation to something else*. Three days into his first journey, for instance, on 9 November 1769, Hearne records the following attempt to locate himself in the country:

I asked ... Chawchinahaw *the distance, and probable time it would take, before we could reach the main woods*; which he assured me would

not exceed four or five days journey.... We continued our course between the West by North and North West, *in daily expectation of arriving at those woods.... After we had walked double the time here mentioned, no signs of woods were to be seen* in the direction we were then steering; but *we had frequently seen the looming of woods to the South West.* (62-63; emphasis added throughout)

Throughout his journal, similar phrases of relativity and comparison recur: “our lodging was *much more comfortable* than it had been for many nights before, *while we were on the barren grounds*” (63); “we ... set off with our new guide for his tent, which, *by a comparative distance*, he told us, was not about five miles from the place where we met him, but we found it to be nearer fifteen” (66); “My guide having ... determined to move toward the barren ground, this morning we took down our tent, packed up our luggage, and *proceeded to the Eastward*” (79).

On 30 November 1769, approximately three weeks into his first journey, Hearne’s text locates him for the first time at a geographical, symbolic, economic, cultural, and visceral distance from the Fort. Hearne has discovered that equipment and supplies have been stolen and confronts his guide, who denies knowledge of the theft but suggests that the journey be called off as a result of the loss. “It would not be prudent, he said, for us to proceed any farther,” Hearne writes,

adding, that *he and all the rest of his countrymen were going to strike off another way ... and after giving us a short account which way to steer our course for the nearest part of Seal River, which he said would be our best way homeward*, he and his crew ... set out *toward the South West ... and left us to consider of our unhappy situation, near two hundred miles from Prince of Wales’s Fort*, all heavily laden, and our strength and spirits greatly reduced by hunger and fatigue. (64-65)

Six days later, while struggling back to the Fort, Hearne encounters a group of Indians with whom he arranges to pay double the price for several joints of venison. When they decide to give the meat as a gift to one of his aboriginal companions instead, Hearne calls the decision “a sufficient proof of the singular advantage which a native of this country has over an Englishman, when at such a distance from the Company’s Factories as to depend entirely on them for subsistence” (67).

Ideally, Hearne’s text imagines that the values and the classifications of value at the absent, central Fort are efficacious even as far away as the ‘world of the Indians.’ Because the ‘world of the Indians’ is controlled textually by Hearne’s temporally static reporting practices, it functions

within this imaginative scheme as a kind of cultural place-holder, one that distinguishes, by negative contrast, the supremacy of European practices and modes of exchange. The scheme of values is interrupted, however, when the travelling body finds itself circulating through *the space of the distance* between the worlds. While Hearne's representative body enjoys the symbolic security of 'the world of the Fort,' his material body encounters 'the world of the Indians' with a kind of inevitable intimacy. The space of the distance between the worlds, and all the urgent demands in that space for symbolic, social, economic, and ideological reclassification, must be negotiated. Following Mary Louise Pratt, I will call the space under negotiation 'the contact zone.'

### Negotiating the space of distance: the contact zone

The Fort and the fixed difference of the 'world of the Indians' are linked, textually, by *the space of the distance* between them. That link, however, is not easily, clearly, or simply delineated. Hearne's account of a winter deer-pound, for instance, demonstrates i) how his discourse lurches stylistically when worlds necessarily separate within European cultural ideology violate one another's boundaries in the context of European economic exchange, and ii) how, by strategic textual slippages, his discourse maps cultural difference onto spatial distance and 'solves' the ideological, social, political, and economic dilemmas he has inadvertently set for himself.

Mary Louise Pratt uses the term 'contact zone' to refer to the space of colonial encounters in which, as she says, "peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (6). Pratt adapts the name from the linguistic term "contact language" (6); like contact languages, which evolve in the context of trade, contact zones are indelibly marked by cultural, economic, ideological, and discursive exchange. According to Pratt, her creation of the term 'contact zone' is "an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect," and it aims to foreground "the interactive, improvisational dimension of colonial encounters" (7). Pratt's reference to improvisation is peculiarly apt: the writers who account for the space of contact are always caught between the truth-claims of their originating culture and their own experiences of vast defamiliarization; their texts become, as a result, though inadvertently, records of the literal and symbolic slippages that occur as multiple

and deeply-held assumptions about exchange-practice are challenged, reversed, ignored, or denied.

Hearne, of course, experiences enormous pressure to account legitimately for the conflicts, the complications, the contradictions, and the incompatibilities of his journeys through the 'contact zone.' Hutchings's analysis identifies crucial points at which Hearne's text either betrays its uncertainty about the efficacy of received cultural beliefs or embraces cultural values incongruent with European expectations (57, 59, 59-60). By doing so, Hutchings identifies both how classification schemes determine the nature of exchange practice and, more potently, how the multiple pressures of the contact zone can provoke the *exchange of classification schemes*. Hutchings does not, however, consider the complex strategies that Hearne's text mobilizes at points of particular threat to maintain authoritative classification schemes in the face of contradiction, ambiguity, and unintelligibility. The excerpt examined in detail below exemplifies the textual ways in which ideological contradictions in the contact zone can be deflected, obscured, mutated, and, sometimes, erased entirely by the judicious, improvisational application of dominant spatializing divisions. In the analysis that follows, I trace how Hearne's classifications and reclassifications map culture onto geography in an anxious repetition of colonial stereotypes inflected by the exigencies of proximity and distance.

The excerpt in question begins about two-and-a-half months into Hearne's third journey, just after Matonabee, the group's Chipewyan leader, has proposed that they continue killing and eating the deer they encounter while they wait for better travelling weather (119). The journal excerpt begins when the party arrives at a camp of people surviving the winter on deer they have caught in their pound, proceeds to a detailed description of deer-pound construction, and evolves from there into an internally contradictory debate between the merits of traditional Indian lifeways and the trading activities that British-European interests require. The excerpt as a whole is particularly useful because it so explicitly invokes 'the world of the Indians,' 'the world of the Fort,' and the 'contact zone' between them.

Considered in grammatical terms, the excerpt is dominated throughout by passive constructions which focus on the action being described. As the discourse shifts, however, from the 'world of the Indians,' to the economic world of the 'contact zone' in which the Indians have been obliged to participate, to the hypothetical 'world of the Fort,' participants in the discourse shift correspondingly: from simple, often inanimate entities, to multiply modified phrases which identify groups of human be-

ings, to sparse but repetitive abstract concepts and nominalizations which obscure economic transactions.

"The *pound*," Hearne explains, for instance, in a typical example of the prose with which he describes the world of the Indians, "is built by making a *strong fence* with *brushy trees*, without observing any degree of *regularity*, and *the work* is continued to *any extent*.... The *door*, or *entrance of the pound*, is not larger than a *common gate*, and the *inside* is so crowded with small *counter-hedges* as very much to resemble a *maze*" (120). As in the net-setting excerpt, the human beings who have built the pound are discursively eliminated in favour of an exclusive focus on the inanimate objects under observation. Phrases like "These poles ... are ... placed at the distance of fifteen or twenty yards from each other ... growing gradually wider in proportion to the distance they extend from the entrance of the pound, which sometimes is not less than two or three miles" (121) sweepingly erase the human beings whose ingenuity and labour have provided the extraordinary construction that Hearne describes.

As Hearne's account shifts to speculate on the relative merit of different lifeways in the shared world of trade, specific groups of human beings do appear, though they consistently appear in constructions like the following: "it cannot be supposed that *those who indulge themselves in this indolent method of procuring food* can be masters of any thing for trade; whereas *those who do not get their livelihood at so easy a rate*, generally procure furs enough during the Winter to purchase a sufficient supply of ammunition" (122). By contrast with the apparently uninhabited 'world of the Indians,' human beings people the world of the contact zone, though they are naturalized there into one of only two existential realities: "the industrious" and "the indolent." The "industrious" are clearly those Indians who participate in the European fur trade, while "the indolent," "the miserable beings," and "the unambitious" are the Indians who survive the winter off the proceeds of the deer-pound. "*The more industrious among them*" Hearne explains, "of course, are of most importance and value to the Hudson's Bay Company, as it is from them the furs are procured which compose the greatest part of Churchill trade" (122). Significantly, the two categories of persons are not only patently imposed by a European economic worldview, but they are assumed to account adequately for all the Indians of the area.

In grammatical terms, classifications, like "the unambitious" (122), are labels that reduce participants to attributes (Hodge and Kress 103). Very similarly, nominalizations are processes which have been reduced grammatically into either a single noun or a multi-word compound noun

(Fairclough 124). The nominalization “Churchill trade” above, for instance, reduces to a single phrase all the details — the tense (past, present, future), modality (the truth-value, probability, obligation, or usualness of the event), participants (who is involved), processes (what activities occur), and forms of exchange (what goods are exchanged, how often, under whose control, and to whose benefit) — that might be included in the meaning. As Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress point out, nominalizations are a linguistic process which, with their resulting forms, “are the reflection in language of a particular habit of mind, which inclines to categorize and subcategorize an object of enquiry, dividing and subdividing it in a neat and orderly fashion. Such a cast of mind,” they claim, “is often associated with bureaucracies, and ... strongly represented in the language produced by administrators” (105).

The economic, administrative, and bureaucratic terms that covertly delimit the discussion surface discursively when the excerpt acknowledges the existence of European agents in a series of abstract constructions resolutely focused on commercial transaction. “It is undoubtedly *the duty* of every one of the Company’s servants to encourage *a spirit of industry* among the natives,” Hearne admonishes, for instance, “and to use *every means in their power to induce them to procure furs* and other commodities for trade, by assuring them of *a ready purchase and good payment* for every thing they bring to the Factory” (123-24). Here, formulaic constructions and the redundant pairing typical of legal discourse effectively increase the scope and the apparent potency of the abstractions: *scope*, because a phrase like, “every means in their power,” seems to cover all possible exigencies; *potency*, because the repetitive structure of a phrase like “a ready purchase and good payment” adds crucial emphasis. Importantly, too, one of the few non-passive constructions in the excerpt, the thoroughly abstracted clause “it is ... the duty ... to encourage ... and to use,” effectively separates specific European human beings from the particular activities to which their ‘duty’ ostensibly compels them.

The text’s discursive styles thus index a fundamental tension between levels: on one level, the timeless abstractions of the Europeans and the timeless dehistoricization of the Indians appear to be similar; on another level, however, abstraction and dehistoricization demonstrate dramatically different ideological and social effects. The timeless abstractions, for instance, that delineate the Fort’s imperative power and its bureaucratic authority also grant it an omniscient point of observation. At the other extreme, grammatical passivity so thoroughly dehistoricizes the world of the Indians that its subjects become mere objects of observation. How-



ever much Hearne might have intended to give fair hearing to the value of traditional forms of life, his text betrays the hierarchy of values he indeed assumes, in part by consistently obscuring the fact that European economic involvement happens because specific European agents act in specific ways, and in related part, by situating the economic tensions that destabilize the text's value-system in the world of the Indians. Expressions like "*those whom they call indolent and mean-spirited*" (123) and "*those who are called the annual traders*" (124), which are structured grammatically and positioned textually to suggest that the 'opposing' group of Indians is doing the naming, not only naturalize the economic distinctions within the world of the Indians, but invite the reader to imagine that the thematic 'conflict of lifeways' exists independently of European involvement.

The excerpt's final eighteen sentences are included in Appendix 2 to allow a direct reading of the text's 'solution' to the cultural and ideological dilemma it has inadvertently, but perhaps unavoidably (Greenfield 27), got itself into. Sentence 5 operates as the excerpt's pivot, the point at which the text's established values — the superiority of European over indigenous economic practices — are precisely reversed without any discernible motivation and to an end apparently incommensurable with the writer's assumed goals. At Sentence 5 ("And what do the more industrious gain by giving themselves all this additional trouble?"), the writer switches from a series of criticisms of 'deer-pounding' to what might be considered an extended encomium for exactly that traditional way of life. Not surprisingly, this contradiction eventually manifests itself as the 'textual crisis' of Sentence 12: "But I must at the same time confess, that such conduct is by no means for the real benefit of the poor Indians; it being well known that those who have the least intercourse with the Factories, are by far the happiest."

Close examination of discursive shifts is peculiarly appropriate to exploration texts, especially given Bhabha's invocation of the ambivalent slippage in colonial stereotypes and JanMohamed's cogent observations of the infinite substitutions and transformations by which colonial discourse renders and re-renders indigenous Others inferior (83, 87). Hearne's text generally, and this excerpt specifically, relies on the oppositional classifications, 'the values of the Indians,' and 'the values of the Hudson's Bay Company.' In the section reprinted in Appendix 2, however, the phrase, "the *real* wants of these people" (emphasis added) appears for the first time in Sentence 6 and dramatically signals the fact that the first of the two classifications is itself subdivided into 'the inauthentic needs of the Indians' and 'the real needs of the Indians.' Because HBC representatives are

obscured by abstract constructions, the text's primary participants have been, until now, the two carefully distinguished groups of Indians, and the debate has been able to focus on the conflict between the latter two sets of values as if it existed purely as a consequence of Indians' choices. The 'repressed' value returns, however, to create the crisis of Sentence 12, specifically, the first textual contact of 'the values of the Hudson's Bay Company,' and 'the *real* needs of the Indians.' The text responds to the crisis by promptly reasserting the dominant value system, specifically by victimizing Indians in terms of their proximity to the Fort.

Because "happiness" functions explicitly as the ultimate term of the comparison begun at Sentence 6, Sentence 12 is a potent expression of what could be called Hearne's covert *Inverse Rule of Geographical Distance*: 'Indians are better off the further they can stay from the Fort.' Because Sentence 12 immediately follows the excerpt's only clear expression of the Company's presence and intentions ("It is undoubtedly the duty of every one of the Company's servants"), however, it dramatically highlights the conflict that the text is attempting to mitigate. The textual crisis that results is therefore promptly succeeded by an efficient set of reclassifications: as "the poor Indians" of Sentence 12 are imagined in ever closer proximity to the Fort, they are transformed, first back into "people of this easy turn" (a powerful echo of the excerpt's second sentence, "those who indulge themselves in this indolent method") and people who "beg and steal" (Sentence 14), and ultimately into the previously unknown category, "a parcel of beggars" (Sentence 15). Threatened by the prospect of the people he calls "great philosophers" (Sentence 8) too near the sanctity of European space, Hearne's discourse invokes a rapid system of spatial reclassification designed to recoup the dangerous exchange of values in which he has himself indulged.

Discursive evidence of Hearne's cultural and ideological dilemma supports Hutchings's observation that Europeans typically belied the 'four-stages' theory's assertion that culturally 'inferior' people would improve through contact with 'superior' Europeans (68). Indeed, Hearne's stylistic conundrums reveal the potent colonial anxieties that attended and surrounded notions of progress and contact. The excerpt's final three sentences, for instance, provide an important coda of colonial 'overkill.' Having definitively established the undesirability of the deer-pound Indians at the Fort, Hearne elaborates a further justification based on the exceedingly low quality of the skins that the people at these distances would in fact be able to provide (Sentence 16). Not entirely satisfied that he has made his point, he argues additionally that, *even if the*

*skins were of a better quality*, precisely their extreme distance from the Fort would prevent the people in question from engaging directly in trade (Sentence 17). In this way, Hearne balances his incongruous early criticism of the people, for not bringing in furs because they live in an area that produces few furs (Sentence 4), with his final sally: even if furs of a sufficiently high quality could be procured, the exigencies of travel would deter the people from making the trip.

"The force of ambivalence," says Bhabha "gives the colonial stereotype its currency: ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures; informs its strategies of individuation and marginalization; produces that effect of probabilistic truth and predictability which, for the stereotype, must always be in *excess* of what can be empirically proved or logically construed" (66). Caught in a debate he cannot justly win, Hearne resorts to discursive stereotyping well in excess of the empirically provable in order to ensure that the incommensurable bodies of the contact zone will never meet at the Fort.

### **Making contact: bodies in space**

Arthur Frank describes the body as "constituted in the intersection of an equilateral triangle the points of which are *institutions, discourses, and corporeality*" (49), and, by doing so, provides a provocative perspective on the institutional, ideological, and material dilemmas that Hearne's body experiences in the contact zone. Hearne's account is notable for its evocative and only sometimes euphemized references to bodily exigencies in the contact zone's formidable geography. "None of our natural wants ... are so distressing," he laments, for instance, about four months into his second journey,

or hard to endure, as *hunger* ... it not only *enfeebles* the body, but *depresses* the spirits, in spite of every effort to prevent it. Besides, for want of action, *the stomach* so far *loses* its digestive powers, that after long fasting it *resumes* its office with pain and reluctance. During this journey I have ... more than once been reduced to so low a state by hunger and fatigue, that when providence threw any things in my way, *my stomach has scarcely been able to retain* more than two or three ounces, without *producing* the most oppressive pain. Another disagreeable circumstance of long fasting is, the extreme difficulty and pain attending the natural evacuations for the first time; and which is so dreadful, that of it none but those who have experienced can have an adequate idea. (84-85; emphasis added)

The abstract representative body that bureaucratic discourse assumes is radically displaced here by the urgent, material body, represented textually through concrete nouns and active verbs: “hunger ... enfeebles”; “the stomach ... loses and ... resumes”; “my stomach has scarcely been able to retain.” The non-deferable crises of the contact zone provoke the material body to intrude itself textually in unfamiliar and compelling ways. In an especially vivid description, for instance, Hearne describes the state of his feet on the journey back from the Coppermine River:

I had so little power to direct my feet when walking, that I frequently knocked them against the stones ... *The nails of my toes were bruised* to such a degree, that *several of them festered and dropped off*. To add to this mishap, *the skin was entirely chafed off* from the tops of both my feet, and between every toe; so that the sand and gravel ... irritated the raw parts so much, that for a whole day ... *I left the print of my feet in blood* almost at every step I took. (206)

As the body moves from the site of representative authority, urgent materiality is juxtaposed with both the Fort's administrative abstractions and objective ethnographic observation. Participants in this discourse are body parts (feet, toenails, skin, and bloody footprints), and they undergo processes of either direct action (feet are knocked, and nails fester and drop off) or visceral attribution (nails are bruised, and skin is chafed).

Dennis Denisoff proposes that the peculiar rhetorics sometimes evident in exploration journals articulate the liminal position the writers held, caught between their mercantile masters and the indigenous people with, and amongst whom, they travelled and traded (121). What Frank calls the discursive body can be thought of, then, as framed, in Hearne's case, by the ‘doubled-body’ of exploration: the body representative of institutionalized mercantilism and the corporeal body of visceral contact. Just as the categories and the classifications of the social and symbolic order exist in a dual relationship to space and spatial divisions, so too the institutional body of the Fort and the material body of the contact zone are inflected by spatial issues of proximity, location, distance, and difference. Hearne's description, for instance, of the various preparations he made in advance of his first journey provides one of the few textual evocations of the institutional body. The excerpt is remarkable for various related reasons, including its unselfconscious and literal reinscription of the ‘empty land’ trope (Hulme 156-58). “I drew a Map,” writes Hearne, “on a large skin of parchment ... and sketched all the West coast of the Bay on it, but left the interior parts blank, to be filled up during my Journey” (58). The excerpt also articulates

the distance between the representative self of the institutional centre and the corporeal body moving through space. "In consequence of my complying with the Company's request, and undertaking this Journey," Hearne recalls in a markedly passive and abstract formulation, "*it is natural to suppose that every necessary arrangement was made for the easier keeping of my reckoning, &c., under the many inconveniences I must be unavoidably obliged to labour in such an expedition*" (58; emphasis added). That distance between bodies is underscored by Hearne's extraordinarily diffident description of his personal preparations, which also crucially contradicts the notion of an 'empty' land. "As to myself," he explains, "little was required to be done, as the nature of travelling long journies in those countries will never admit of carrying even the most common article of clothing; so that the traveller is obliged to depend on the country he passes through, for that article, as well as for provision" (58-59).

Hearne's stated intention, too, to precisely describe his daily movements is significant and particularly evocative. "I also prepared detached pieces on a much larger scale for every degree of latitude and longitude contained in the large map," he explains, and adds, "On those detached pieces I pricked off my daily courses and distance" (58). In their ideal form, Hearne's pinpricks are potent markers of distance, location, and extension, potent markers of institutionally ascribed difference. Ideally, that is, Hearne's pinpricks are symbolic notation for an abstracted body's travel through space which has already been classified in magisterial and authoritative terms. Despite their efficacy at the centre, however, authoritative classifications can never entirely define or control the material body experiencing itself in space and through distance. In the institutional, mercantile terms of the Fort, the land is empty and thus mappable; the moving, corporeal body, however, can only survive if it can both find what it needs *in* the space, and meet the visceral demands *of* the space. Pinpricks on parchment cannot, finally, predict, prevent, or assuage bloody footprints in sand and gravel.

However carefully represented on the "general Map," moreover, Hearne's moving body is increasingly incapable of commanding the Fort's authority. The excerpt which introduced this paper precisely articulates Hearne's indignation when the people he encounters assume that his material body can perform exchange with the same meaning it would have at the Fort. "It is scarcely possible" he deplores, "to think that the sole intent of my undertaking this fatiguing journey, was to carry a large assortment of useful and heavy implements ... but many of them would ask me for what they wanted ... with the same hopes of success, as if they had been

at one of the Company's Factories" (93). Hearne's indignation not only reveals the contradictions inherent in European expectations of indigenous economic cooperation,<sup>2</sup> but it articulates the crucial if covert conviction that some 'shifts in bodily meaning' are both legitimate and imperative in the contact zone.

As Hearne's material body encounters the realities of Indian lifeways, he calls into question many of the symbolic, cultural, anthropophagic, and other dietary classifications which had until then defined his world (Hutchings 59-60, 66-67, and throughout). The body, simultaneously literal and symbolic, contingent and representative, complicates the economic and cultural negotiation of the contact zone. Especially in its evocation of the material body, Hearne's text can be seen as a record of the ways that culturally sanctioned classifications of exchange give way to improvised *exchanges of classification*. Close reading of the deer-pounding excerpt above, however, reveals that despite Hearne's understanding of and sympathy for aboriginal lifeways (Greenfield 28; MacLulich 81), incommensurabilities arise and are expressed discursively when his representative self imagines strange masses of bodies encroaching ever closer to the Fort. Hearne responds to the crisis of incommensurability by exchanging the flexible values of the contingent, material body for increasingly rigid reclassifications the closer the offending categories are imagined to the Fort. It may be that the contradictions and the instabilities of the contact zone are experienced as contradictions and instabilities precisely because their 'both/and' complexity bears down at the fragile 'join' between the body representative of European classification practices and the contingent, kinaesthetic body that moves, breathes, hungers, thirsts, wonders, persists, observes, fears, and survives.

"The progressivist thrust of the four-stages theory," says Hutchings, "influences Hearne's *general* assumptions regarding the cultural distance that separates ostensibly 'primitive' Indigenous societies from the 'developed' culture of English 'civilization'" (62; original emphasis). Particularly through improvisational classifications and reclassifications which simultaneously presuppose *difference*, and social, cultural, spatial, bodily, and/or geographic *distance*, the language of Hearne's journal records its shifting response to the peculiar pressures of shifting geographical locations. Ultimately, however, the differences of the contact zone pressure Hearne to reinvoke classifications whose categories of distinction buttress the social and symbolic meanings at the centre of authority. The visceral body survives the discursive terrors of no-man's land, but only by repositioning itself within the categories of its representative double.

## Conclusion

Ostensibly authorized by his symbolic role as representative of the Hudson's Bay Company's economic power (Greenfield 27), Hearne's movement through geographical space requires his intimate proximity with people whose lifeways directly contradict his assumptions of exchange practice. I have argued that it is precisely movement through space that complicates i) the literal terms of material exchange, ii) the cultural and symbolic assumptions underlying material exchange, and iii) the value and the vulnerability of the visceral and the representative European body at the centre of the exchange. Regularly confronted by activities, attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs vastly unlike his own, Hearne finds himself torn between his ideological allegiance to European ways and the positive value he ascribes to aboriginal cultural practices. When he encounters a group of people surviving the winter on the deer trapped in their pound, Hearne embarks on a debate with himself that, committed as he ultimately is to the primacy of a fixed cultural and mercantile centre, he cannot win. Just as the value of symbolic exchange shifts with movement through geographical space, distance from the Fort increases the exigencies pressing on the moving body. The evidence of Hearne's text suggests that improvisational attempts at recuperation cannot, ultimately, negotiate the fragile contradictions between the body representative of authoritative classification and the kinaesthetic body of movement, breath, wonder, and belief.

Despite his genuine sympathy for the internal logic of traditional indigenous practices, the possibility of those traditions encroaching on the symbolic centre of the HBC forts provokes Hearne to re-classify space in all the ways that his institutional, discursive, and bodily allegiance to a European economic worldview require. And it is precisely in the discursive style of the text that traces of cultural and ideological tension remain for posterity.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Almost exactly one month into his first journey, for instance, on 4 July 1789, Alexander Mackenzie 'locates' himself in the following way:

At five in the morning, the wind and weather having undergone no alteration from yesterday, we proceeded north-west by west twenty-two miles north-west six miles, north-west by north four miles and west-north-west five miles; we then passed the mouth of a small river from the north, and after doubling a point, south-west one mile, we passed the influx of another river from the south. We then continued our course north-north-west, with a mountain ahead, fifteen miles, when the opening of two rivers appeared opposite to each other; we then

proceeded west four miles, and north-west thirteen miles. At eight in the evening, we encamped on an island. (162)

<sup>2</sup> Ian MacLaren demonstrates how culturally untenable explorers' behaviour must often have seemed to the indigenous people they encountered in their journeys (48-49). European expectations of economic cooperation frequently required indigenous people to engage in activities utterly foreign to their traditional lifeways; with an ironic turn of the colonial screw, however, it was precisely because indigenous people did so engage that Europeans never entirely controlled the activities in question. Certainly, influential Europeans could never have maximized economic profit in North America if they had relied solely on their own geographic and cultural knowledge of the continent and its inhabitants.

## APPENDIX 1

The very uncourteous behaviour of the Northern Indians then in company, gave me little hopes of receiving assistance from them, any longer than I had wherewithal to reward them for their trouble and expense; for during the whole time I had been with them, not one of them had offered to give me the least morsel of victuals, without asking something in exchange, which, in general, was three times the value of what they could have got for the same articles, had they carried them to the Factory, though several hundred miles distant.

So inconsiderate were those people, that wherever they met me, they always expected that I had a great assortment of goods to relieve their necessities; as if I had brought the Company's warehouse with me. Some of them wanted guns; all wanted ammunition, iron-work, and tobacco; many were solicitous for medicine; and others pressed me for different articles of clothing: but when they found I had nothing to spare, except a few nick-nacks and gewgaws, they made no scruple of pronouncing me a "poor servant, noways like the Governor at the Factory, who, they said, they never saw, but he gave them something useful." It is scarcely possible to conceive any people so void of common understanding, as to think that the sole intent of my undertaking this fatiguing journey, was to carry a large assortment of useful and heavy implements, to give to all that stood in need of them; but many of them would ask me for what they wanted with the same freedom, and apparently with the same hopes of success, as if they had been at one of the Company's Factories. Others, with an air of more generosity, offered me furs to trade with at the same standard as at the Factory; without considering how unlikely it was that I should increase the enormous weight of my load with articles which could be of no more use to me in my present situation than they were to themselves.

This unaccountable behaviour of the Indians occasioned much serious reflection on my part; as it showed plainly how little I had to expect if I should, by any accident be reduced to the necessity of depending upon them for support; so that, though I laid me down to rest, sleep was a stranger to me that night. (92-94)

## APPENDIX 2

1. This method of hunting, if it deserves the name, is sometimes so successful, that many families subsist by it without having occasion to move their tents above once or twice during the course of a whole winter; and when the Spring advances, both the deer and Indians draw out to the Eastward, on the ground which is entirely barren, or at least what is so called in those parts, as it neither produces trees or shrubs of any kind, so that moss and some little grass is all the herbage which is to be found on it. 2. Such an easy way of procuring a comfortable maintenance in the Winter months, (which is by far the worst time of the year),



is wonderfully well adapted to the support of the aged and infirm, but is too apt to occasion a habitual indolence in the young and active, who frequently spend a whole Winter in this indolent manner: and as those parts of the country are almost destitute of every animal of the furr kind, it cannot be supposed that those who indulge themselves in this indolent method of procuring food can be masters of any thing for trade; whereas those who do not get their livelihood at so easy a rate, generally procure furs enough during the Winter to purchase a sufficient supply of ammunition, and other European goods, to last them another year. 3. This is nearly the language of the more industrious among them, who, of course are of most importance and value to the Hudson's Bay Company, as it is from them the furs are procured which compose the greatest part of Churchill trade. 4. But in my opinion, there cannot exist a stronger proof that mankind was not created to enjoy happiness in this world, than the conduct of the miserable beings who inhabit this wretched part of it; as none but the aged and infirm, the women and children, a few of the more indolent and unambitious of them, will submit to remain in the parts where food and clothing are procured in this easy manner, because no animals are produced there whose furs are valuable. 5. And what do the more industrious gain by giving themselves all this additional trouble? 6. The real wants of these people are few, and easily supplied; a hatchet, an ice-chissel, a file, and a knife, are all that is required to enable them with a little industry, to procure a comfortable livelihood; and those who endeavour to possess more, are always the most unhappy, and may in fact be said to be only slaves and carriers to the rest whose ambition never leads them to any thing beyond the means of procuring food and clothing. 7. It is true, the carriers pride themselves much on the respect which is shewn them at the Factory; to obtain which they frequently run great risques of being starved to death in their way thither and back; and all that they can possibly get there for the furs they procure after a year's toil, seldom amounts to more than is sufficient to yield a bare subsistence, and a few furs for the ensuing year's market; while those whom they call indolent and mean-spirited live generally in a state of plenty, without trouble or risque; and consequently must be the most happy, and, in truth, the most independent also. 8. It must be allowed that they are by far the greatest philosophers, as they never give themselves the trouble to acquire what they can do well enough without. 9. The deer they kill, furnishes them with food, and a variety of warm and comfortable clothing, either with or without the hair, according as the seasons require; and it must be very hard indeed, if they cannot get furs enough in the course of two or three years, to purchase a hatchet, and such other edge-tools as are necessary for their purpose. 10. Indeed, those who take no concern at all about procuring furs, have generally an opportunity of providing themselves with all their real wants from their more industrious countrymen, in exchange for provisions, and ready-dressed skins for clothing.

11. It is undoubtedly the duty of every one of the Company's servants to encourage a spirit of industry among the natives, and to use every means in their power to induce them to procure furs and other commodities for trade, by assuring them of a ready purchase and good payment for every thing they bring to the Factory: and I can truly say, that this has ever been the grand object of my attention. 12. But I must at the same time confess, that such conduct is by no means for the real benefit of the poor Indians; it being well known that those who have the least intercourse with the Factories, are by far the happiest. 13. As their whole aim is to procure a comfortable subsistence, they take the most prudent methods to accomplish it; and by always following the lead of the deer, they are seldom exposed to the gripping hand of famine, so frequently felt by those who are called the annual traders. 14. It is true, that there are few of the Indians, whose manner of life I have just described, but have once in their lives at least visited the Prince of Wales's Fort; and the hardships and dangers which most of them experienced on those occasions, have left such a lasting impression on their

minds that nothing can induce them to repeat their visits; nor is it, in fact, the interest of the Company that people of this easy turn, and who require only as much iron-work at a time as can be purchased with three or four beaver skins, and that only once in two or three years, should be invited to the Factories; because what they beg and steal while there, is worth, in the way of trade, three times the quantity of furs which they bring. 15. For this reason, it is much more for the interest of the Company that the annual traders should buy up all those small quantities of furs, and bring them in their own name, than that a parcel of beggars should be encouraged to come to the Factory with scarcely as many furs as will pay for the victuals they eat while they are on the plantation.

16. I have often heard it observed, that the Indians who attend the deer-pounds might, in the course of a Winter, collect a vast number of pelts, which would well deserve the attention of those who are called carriers or traders; but it is a truth, though unknown to those speculators, that the deer skins at that season are not only thin as a bladder, but are also full of warbles, which render them of little or no value. 17. Indeed, were they a more marketable commodity than they really are, the remote situation of those pounds from the Company's Factories, must for ever be an unsurmountable barrier to the Indians bringing any of those skins to trade. 18. The same observation may be made of all the other Northern Indians, whose chief support, the whole year round, is venison; but the want of heavy draught in Winter, and water-carriage in Summer, will not permit them to bring many deer skins to market, not even those that are in season, and for which there has always been great encouragement given. (122-25)

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