

**Toward Decolonized Conceptions of Space and Literature of Place in Ecocritical
Analysis: The Process and Production of Landscape in William Bartram's *Travels*
and Samuel Hearne's *A Journey to the Northern Ocean***

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Abstract

The tendency to stage appreciation for and attention to nature as a passive, guiltless enterprise was necessary for eighteenth-century colonial claims to space, but it also remains a very deeply entrenched aspect of environmentalist attitudes today. Indeed, innovations that shaped the technological interpretation and inscription of *place* in the latter eighteenth century have strongly situated contemporary North American environmental discourses.

This thesis explores the methods of spatial representation in Samuel Hearne's *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort, in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean* (1795) and William Bartram's *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, The Cherokee Country, The Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Choctaws* (1792). Both ecocritical and postcolonial methods underlay an analysis of the discourses and rhetorics of space exhibited in the North American travel writing of these two late-eighteenth-century writers. A first move monitors how landscape accrues not only as a product of descriptive techniques, frames, and screens, but also as a process whereby narrative identity is formed against and within a represented landscape. A second move locates these texts as versions of Mary Louise Pratt's "anti-conquest," in which the hero-explorer of colonial encounter is staged as both passive and innocent.

Two primary results from this research into the relationship between literature and environment are reported. First, according to conventions of ecocritical analysis, Hearne and Bartram implement two very different modes of spatial representation in travel narratives from the same period; in the broadest strokes, Hearne's text is deeply

anthropocentric and only partially engages in eighteenth-century vogues of natural history, while Bartram's is compellingly and precociously ecocentric as well as deeply invested in the commerce of Linnaean systemizations of nature that revolutionized natural history in the period. Second, this disparity in representational method is correlated not only with variances in the ecological (or green) sensibilities of the authors, but also with distinctions in the colonial functionality of the texts, verifying that literature of place, despite the putative object of description, always already maintains significant valencies in social registers.

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Introduction

This thesis investigates the production of landscapes and the process of creating, legitimating, and limiting identity and authority through representations of land in colonial space as it occurred in the travel writing genre of the late eighteenth century. As early instances of inscribing land with accoutrements of European literary, economic, and scientific culture, I explore Samuel Hearne's *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort, in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean* (1795) and William Bartram's *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, The Cherokee Country, The Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Choctaws* (1792). I elaborate on each author's methods of representation and delimit some discursive formations of colonialism at work in these texts.

This research into the relationship between literature and environment has yielded two primary results. First, according to conventions of ecocritical analysis, Hearne and Bartram implement two very different modes of spatial representation in travel narratives from the same period; in the broadest strokes, Hearne's text is deeply anthropocentric and only partially engages in eighteenth-century vogues of natural history, while Bartram's is compellingly and precociously ecocentric as well as deeply invested in the commerce of Linnaean systemizations of nature. And second, this disparity in representational method can be correlated not only with variances in the ecological (or green) sensitivities, sensibilities, or philosophies of the authors, but also with distinctions in the colonial functionality of the texts, verifying that literature of place, despite the putative object of description, always already maintains significant valencies in social registers.

Locating myself in the Land

I was a child of American small towns and suburbs. I am a product of what James Howard Kunstler has called the “geography of nowhere.” A sense of place, as it is knocked about these days, is something that I have struggled with or dealt without. My family moved often. My first few years were spent in rural towns of northern Alabama and Mississippi. My parents drifted from Birmingham, where I was born, to Oteonta in the outskirts, then to Tishomingo, Mississippi, while my Dad worked at a Wrangler Jeans textile plant in nearby Belmont. We rented a small farm house. There wasn’t anybody around except the people who owned the farm and built a newer home down the road. I remember them. Ola Mae would fix me chicken and dumplings if I hung around her backporch long enough. I would help her husband feed the cows sometimes. Then we moved back to Alabama, to Russellville just across the Tennessee River from Florence. I went to Kindergarten at St. Joseph’s where my mother was teaching. Someone killed a big rattlesnake down the dirt road from our house in a new, underdeveloped sub-division. When I was about seven years old we moved up to McGaheysville, Virginia, right close to the Skyline Drive, on the edge of the Shenandoah Valley. Black bears ate out of our garbage a few times, and once one climbed up the stairs to our front door, standing on its hind legs to look in through the small window. We spent a few years in Rocky Mount, North Carolina before packing up and heading down to Davie, Florida, a suburb of Fort Lauderdale. There were gar and sometimes alligators swimming in the canals that separated the suburban neighborhoods. My parents didn’t have work for a time and we stayed in my Aunt and Uncle’s cabin in the mountains of Georgia, in a town called Blue Ridge where they had made a lake by damming a river. I killed a warbler with a BB gun

there and felt bad about it. Though I didn't know it then, I'm pretty sure it was a pine warbler. I was thirteen years old in Worthington, Ohio, a suburb of Columbus. We played basketball all the time. I went to Coffee County High School in South Georgia for four years in a town called Douglas between the Satilla and Ocmulgee Rivers – Rivers whose riparia I have since spent countless hours naturalizing as William Bartram did over 200 years ago. Not including the intermediary stays in hotels (and more recently on couches and in tents), I figure I have lived in twenty-six different houses, apartments, or dormitories in my twenty-seven years on this earth.

According to many books about nature writing and environmentalism, I would be lacking in that nebulous category of human experience referred to as home, a sense of place, or dwelling. The spaces in which I have lived mostly retained a feeling of newness for me until I departed; I maintained a kind of familiar unfamiliarity with my surroundings throughout my childhood. The set of lived situations that made it so that I was more familiar with the arrangements of video rental venders, gas stations, fast food restaurant chains, and grocery stores than any single ecosystem or watershed is often cited as a form of socialization that renders us as subjects unlikely to live sustainably. As such, according to a proposition frequently characteristic of ecocritical and, more broadly, environmentalist debates, I suffer from the cultural pathology—a lack of connection to nature—that has fomented the environmental crisis that we all face today.

I don't divulge all of this to insinuate that growing up disconnected was particularly traumatic as a means of privileging my voice, but rather as a foreground, by means of comparison and contradiction, to the discussion this thesis develops about *place*, literary productions of it, and the processes of identity formation that occur within

it. I tend to agree with critics who posit that a sense of place cannot be discussed with any ontological stability. This thesis maintains that *place* and *space* are at once media in which knowledge, discourse, and identity exist, as well as themselves constructions subject to the mediating cultural deployments of these very same knowledges, discourses, and identities. But before delving too deeply into this theoretical discussion, let us first look to an example of ecocritical work that does make essentialist and normative claims about place.

Whose Roots, Whose Land?

The introduction of an essay from a recent collection of Canadian views on ecology and the environment, *Every Grain of Sand*, exhibits the tendency of environmentalist rhetoricians to make normative claims about the interconnections between identity, a sense of place, and environmental ethics:

For the first seventeen years of my life, I lived on a farm in Saskatchewan. Although I have since spent more than this length of time in urban centres of Canada, growing up on a prairie farm has indelibly shaped my life and my attitude toward the environment. I developed an appreciation for the natural world, and a deeply rooted love for the prairie. Now working in urbanized southern Ontario, I continue to long for my childhood experience of living in daily communion with the land and the sky.... Tracing the major developments in my evolution of understanding about agrarian life and the formation of environmental consciousness has led me to some ideas about how to recover the positive connection between agrarian lifestyles and environmental consciousness. (Krug 35)

In this introduction to “Growing Roots in Nature,” Karen Krug implicitly relies upon a dualism between city and country that designates “urbanized” lifestyles as disconnected from the natural world, whereas rural life is encoded as a state of “communion with the

land and the sky.” Krug later elaborates, “My experience confirms that long-term tenure provides the opportunity for development of a deeply rooted sense of place” (36).

According to Krug’s discussion—and I would agree—my own sense of place is not “deeply rooted,” although, to complicate matters, I have spent a significant portion of my adult life studying ecosystems first hand: from mapping the territories of songbirds by ear in the Southeastern United States and developing ethological capacities in order to find the nests of songbirds for conservation biologists in Tennessee, to surveying avian populations on a remote island in the Gulf of Alaska for the United States Geological Survey; from co-founding and organizing an independent project to assess the ecological status of Georgia’s rivers through intensive surveys while traveling the rivers lengths by canoe, to living in a tent for more than a year in total over four seasons of ecological fieldwork. These experiences have given me an almost fetishistic sense of place for a few very specific locales: the Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge and Middleton Island, Alaska; and along five specific landforms or ecotopes: the Satilla, Flint, Ocmulgee, Oconee, and Altamaha rivers of Georgia.

Again this biographic appeal is not meant to privilege my own voice, but to suggest that we need to ask what kinds of claims we can make based on length of “tenure” in a given ecosystem about a person’s tendencies for environmental ethics; consumption practices and propensities; and general regard for nature? Have not my own practices of natural history and studies of local ecologies been a means of communion, despite the nomadic dimension of my spatial relations? How much communion does it take to grow deep roots? And is there some universal transcendence that comes from proximity *to* and duration *in* whatever this thing called *nature* may be, a transcendence

that will save us from ecological catastrophe? And particularly, to point toward another dimension of the analysis that follows, what does it mean for environmentalists to grow deep roots in colonized land, in a colonial state?

The argument of “Growing Roots in Nature” develops a thesis that ecological conservation and sustainable practice will only be achieved through the “humbleness that comes with daily reminders of one’s dependence upon the natural world, combined with the ability to delight at the unexpected beauty or pleasures of nature,” which, Krug continues, “seems missing from the lives of those who have grown up less directly connected to nature and with ready access to human-constructed goods,” implying, I suppose, city-folk (37). While it would be ridiculous to assert that growing up on a farm did not “indelibly shape” Krug’s attitude towards the environment, it is necessary to probe more deeply—more theoretically than the mere assertion of ecological connection as distance or proximity to the categories of urban and rural, or civilized and wild—the relationship between society, culture, and space if we are to attenuate the disastrous practices of environmental destruction that underwrite our societies.

As an environmental activist, a naturalist, and a freelance ecological technician, I have been intrigued by academic and popular discussions of place as it relates to ecology, identity, ideology, and political activity. In this thesis I frame the analysis of two eighteenth-century narrative productions of North American space as a small instance of research into the root of material and discursive problems in the relationship between the English Diaspora and the environment. I initially approached this research with an eye toward what Lynn White, Jr. has called “the historical roots of our ecological crisis” (White 4). William Bartram’s *Travels* has recently been celebrated for its early

representation of ecological networks and for its nuanced portrayal of the natural world in terms that are consistent with contemporary environmentalist attitudes, incorporating both a form of proto-ecological description and non-utilitarian forms of valuation. Samuel Hearne's *A Journey*, on the other hand, is a narrative that has neither received much attention or acclaim from ecocritical scholarship. His text is riddled with anthropocentric, use-oriented description and lacks the qualities of contemporary land ethics.

However, the confluence of my research in ecocritical methods and practice with readings into post-colonialism prompted by immersion in the strongly contested colonial space of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan led to an alternative hypothesis: the strong connections between literature of place and mechanisms of imperial expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries worked together to naturalize and legitimize colonial appropriations of land and resources. As Edward Said discusses in *Culture and Imperialism*, the power to narrate European agency and intellectual authority in indigenous space along with the power to displace other narratives were eventually as important as the power to physically conquer lands (9-14). Particularly, the tendency to stage appreciation for and attention to nature as a passive, guiltless enterprise (as was necessary for eighteenth-century colonial claims to space) remains a very deeply entrenched aspect of environmentalist attitudes today. Indeed, it seems that innovations that occurred in the technological interpretation and inscription of *place* in the latter eighteenth century have strongly situated contemporary North American nature writing, environmental literatures, and broader environmental discourses. The relationship between imperial and bourgeois claims *to* space and ecologically damaging practices *in*

space must, in my view, be exposed and understood if we are to transcend the (hi)stories that allow and even compel us to abuse our environments to their devastation. And this is especially true if environmentalists and ecocritics also desire to intervene in the continuing imperialist subjugation of peoples under Euro-American hegemony. While this hypothesis is beyond the scope of this project, it is in this direction that I hope my readings of William Bartram and Samuel Hearne shall point.

Theoretical Approach

In order to understand the multiple dimensions in which a sense of place and discourses about place operate it is necessary to develop a broader conception of the terms *landscape* and *space*. Debates about the cultural categories of *nature*, *environment*, and *wilderness* abound. Most recently these discussions have taken on a pragmatic, and often moralizing, tone that seeks to challenge prevailing relations between society and ecosystems (of which these relations are elements) through an interrogation of cultural discourses on the environment and our place in it. Writers like Karen Krug appeal to contemporary versions of the georgic in which ecological damage is precipitated by citified, consumer attitudes marked by their distance from agricultural production, the solution to which is often deployed under the moniker of “permaculture” and characterized by an enthusiasm for local economies.

Krug’s rhetoric exhibits one of many extant grand narratives of eco-socio relations. While some of these teleologies resist the turn toward other cultural theories, others take their cues directly from them. To dreadfully oversimplify, eco-feminists have argued that patriarchy is the underlying and guiding pathos that bleeds into and overwrites our unsustainable environmental practices. Social ecologists argue that

capitalism is the root cause of much human destruction including that of the natural world. Deep Ecologists insist that human-centered philosophy and ethics are the fundamental problems. In what follows, the intention is to underline the need for post-colonial understandings of land, land use, and landscape in any attempt to challenge or undermine the discourses that enable us to create and exacerbate Jeremiad scenarios—ecosystem collapse and global climate change—that we face today. Rather than a “universalizing ecocriticism,” what is needed is a critical movement willing to ask questions that previous movements such as the feminist and labour movements have already faced (Mazel 2). As David Mazel has argued:

Ecocriticism should help us realize that our environmental concerns are not exclusively of the order of, Shall this forest be preserved? Or, Shall this river be damned? – important as such questions are – but also of the order of, What has counted as the environment, and what *may* count? Who marks of its conceptual boundaries, and under what authority, and for what reasons? Have those boundaries and that authority been contested, and if so, by whom? With what success, and by virtue of what strategies of resistance?
(2)

Resisting the tendency to ground analysis in white, Euro-American, and often androcentric presumptions, I have used frameworks to define space that reside partially outside and, indeed, partially in opposition to or in critique of many ecocritical positions. Rather than framing notions of landscape and environment as static and ontologically *a priori*—something opposed to civilization as its Other—I have instead focused on the manner in which space is constructed by discourses and spatial practices that at the same time constitute the subjects who are *enviored*.

My spatial paradigm is strongly influenced by that of Rob Shields whose work, *Places on the Margin*, foregrounds a discussion of space and place with a reading of

theorizations of space primarily from Bourdieu, Foucault, and Lefebvre. According to Shields, a simple opposition between the human and the natural world fails to recognize that “there is a tremendous complicity between the body and the environment and the two interpenetrate each other” (Shields 14). Any study of nature writing must acknowledge, then, the “paradox whereby the spatial is both a socially-constructed arrangement of divisions and territories and the ontic medium of all such arrangements” (Shields 8). While “environments are not [simply] analogues to images” we need to retain a working understanding which allows that “environments are participated in, being both an object of reason and a container of the thinking subject who does not so much ‘interact with the whole environment’ as participate in and depend on it” (Shields 14). In this manner we see the short-sightedness of attempts to manage and narrate how a sense of place functions with any generality, being that “the meaning of particular places is a compendium of intersubjective and cultural interpretations over time” (Shields 25).

Even if environmentalists spend most of their time trying to convince people that environmental issues pose real and present dangers, cultural scholars with environmentalist agendas must also acknowledge Bourdieu’s basic notion of how the “‘objective world’ is constructed through the imposition of cultural categories on reality”(Shields 32) . That is, despite the necessity for a teleological arc that places environmental crisis in the realm of agreed upon truth, ecocritical work should be self-confident enough to admit that, indeed, “perception ...takes place through a mediating value-framework which differentiates the facticity of the environment in which one lives” (Shields 32).

Many essays in ecocriticism seem to be organized as interventions in the discourse of the environment that purport to claim what the environment actually *is*, what it *means*, and why it *matters*. These interventions are often grounded in privileged conceptions of the world, in notions of the essential qualities of *wilderness* and *environment* that depend upon, reify, and legitimize claims to space that in turn secure and situate those social relations of power, control, and privilege. In political practice, yes, as William Cronon notes, perhaps the time for mounting barricades has already come given the severity of environmental issues we face. Strategic essentialism is always necessary for direct action. In the realm of academic scholarship, however, if we are afraid of asking hard questions about the essence of *environment* and of problematizing the construction of things like *wilderness* and *nature*, “it will be hard to know which barricades to mount, and harder still to persuade large numbers of people to mount them with us” (Cronon 22).

The ecocritical position that I maintain is not that any particular conception of environment should trump all others, but rather that an interrogation of space, the discourses that construct it and are constructed within it, and the broad relations between society and ecosystems that constitute places will be at least as nightmarishly complex and contested as are interrogations of history. Again following Shields:

rather than constructing a new discourse about place and space, the interest here is in the pre-constructed cultural discourses about sites....how they came into those relationships and under what authority, and by which groups, raising questions of power that lie behind conventions. (31)

At least as important as the attitudes toward nature and the relationship between humans and nature presented in the nature writing of Hearne and Bartram is the manner in which

their texts make a place for colonials in a “new world.” The surveillance and representation of spaces organized in these narratives can be assessed on the basis of ecocritical assertions of ecological imbalance and its causes, but this analysis cannot overlook the manner in which these texts provide the first European and colonial inscriptions of particular spaces, the spatial discourses of which have ultimately manifested in genocide, cultural dislocation, the reserve system, residential schools, and capitalization on resource extraction, most often, without aboriginal benefit or consent. The constructions of nature provided in these texts are grossly oversimplified if they are extracted from their situation as initial deployments of European spatial discourses in specific spaces of native-newcomer contact.

Talking about the construction of nature in circles with ecologists certainly opens one’s criticism up to being located within what has been “deemed a postmodern pathology infecting the academy”—deconstruction and post-structuralism. In order to specify these contentious positions, I offer some definitions of the term *landscape* as it has been used throughout the analysis that follows (Mazel xiv). Not only can “places become ‘labeled,’ much like deviant individuals” (Shields 8), but, importantly, the same place is typically inscribed and made to bear a range of meanings:

Beautiful places that people go to for a vacation become signs of the condition which allows one to travel to such a place....The same place, at one and the same time, can be made to *symbolize* a whole variety of social statuses, personal conditions, and social attitudes. (Shields 22)

A principal mechanism for inscribing these meanings is *landscape*. In conversation outside the disciplines of cultural studies, *landscape* is typically understood as the visible, or viewable, aspects of geography in a given place. Alison Byerly’s essay, “The Uses of

Landscape: The Picturesque Aesthetic and the National Park System,” demonstrates how some of the most apparently “authentic” and “wild” landscapes are in fact aesthetically organized objects of consumption and, thereby, function as “elitist appropriation[s] of environment” (53). Byerly demonstrates that the experience of appreciating nature most often practiced by the hiking-and-camping classes of North America is free from both evidence of historical and contemporary indigenous occupancy and free from contemporary forms of labour and land-use. Thus, *landscape* becomes a tableaux organized by practices of composition, production, and (conspicuous) consumption reserved for those with the privileges that afford such practice.

Indeed the production and maintenance of particular landscapes have been formalized in national parks through conservation biology’s discourses of ecosystem management and health combined with practices of surveillance and discipline on the one hand, but also with the production and purveyance of the myth of *terra nullius* on the other hand. As Rebecca Solnit has explained, much of our idea of wilderness depends upon the ability “to imagine this continent as uninhabited and untouched, as nature made apart from man” (295). For many in the environmental and ecocritical movement the preservation and idealization of wilderness are never problematized or contested by the facts of aboriginal history and presence, so that wild nature stands as something pure and untouched to be set-off against an impure civilization:

The implication is either very hostile – that native peoples don’t constitute a human presence – or very idolizing – that they lived in such utter harmony they had no effect on their surroundings at all, but either way they don’t count. The other implication is that if nature is only itself before it’s touched, if it’s a place where we don’t belong, then we can only experience it as it’s disappearing, and our presence alone is enough to make it something else (the Wilderness

Act of 1964 describes wilderness as a 'place where man is a visitor'). (Solnit 295-6)

These examples of other scholarship that problematize the stability and generality of normative and hegemonic versions of landscape are intended to provide some verification of the necessity for deconstruction in this regard, without having to repeat the length and breadth of these arguments.

This deconstruction begs the question, if landscape isn't simply what we see, then what is it? Importantly, "landscape is divided up in the image of its inhabitants" (Shields 11). But also, as W.J.T. Mitchell has observed, landscape should be changed "from a noun to a verb." Landscape should not merely be understood as "an object to be seen or a text to be read, but as a process by which social and subjective identities are formed," and discourses of space and environment therefore have significant constitutive effects on both socialization and subjectification (Mitchell 1). This nuance has guided my analysis of landscape as both process and production in *A Journey* and *Travels*. I also maintain the apparent contradiction posited by Mitchell in which "landscape is a medium found in all cultures" while it is also "a particular historical formation associated with European imperialism" (Mitchell 5). The texts analyzed here are certainly located within this latter category, and ecocritical analysis that avoids this fact retains its own privileged position within this particular historical formation as well.

Primary Texts and Authors

I have focused on two North American travel narratives from the late eighteenth century: William Bartram's *Travels* (1792) and Samuel Hearne's *A Journey to the Northern Ocean* (1795). Both of these texts are at once natural histories, narratives of exploration and inter-cultural encounter, and journalistic records of the formation and

deformation of the European subject within contested colonial spaces. Temporally the narrated journeys of each explorer-author take place almost contemporaneously, and similarly the publication of their texts is not until more than fifteen years later. Aside from their temporal symmetries these authors are working from different biographical and material contexts and at spatially opposite ends of British colonial practice (expansion) in North America: Hearne at the northern margin, and Bartram at the southern.

Samuel Hearne was born in London in 1745. At the age of twelve he went to work at sea, spending six years on board Royal Navy frigates involved in the Seven Years War. By 1766 he had joined the Hudson's Bay Company and began working on board a whaling ship out of the Prince of Wales's Fort at the mouth of the Churchill River on the western coast of the Hudson's Bay, where he lived for near three years before heading north, by foot (sometimes with the aid of a canoe), in search of the Coppermine River and the northwest passage. This journey of discovery for the Hudson's Bay Company was completed after three separate attempts, each with little break between, from early November 1769 until the end of June 1772 (Glover vii-xiii). After completing the expedition, Hearne remained in the area the British called Rupert's lands. In 1774 Hearne founded the first settlement west of the Red River, Cumberland House, which was critical for the Hudson's Bay Company's program of inland expansion. In 1782 Hearne surrendered the Prince of Wales's Fort to the French, which occasioned him an undesired return to Europe. The fort was destroyed and he and the other men taken prisoner were permitted to sail back to England. However, in June 1783 he quickly returned to Hudson's Bay and lived there until retirement. Unwell, in 1787 Hearne finally

returned to London. He spent the next five years revising his *Journey to the Northern Ocean* for press in failing health (McGoogan 239-45). Since leaving on a ship at age twelve Hearne had spent only about six of thirty-five years in England, and for the majority of his adult life he inhabited and traveled through the northern reaches of the Hudson's Bay watershed, on the territories of Dene, Cree, Chipewyan, and Inuit peoples. These experiences situate him as one of the earliest Anglophone writers based in the experience of actually living his adult life in North America.

Native to the colonies, William Bartram of Philadelphia was born in 1739 to Quaker parents, his father John a preeminent botanist in North America and friend of Benjamin Franklin. William Bartram was trained in botany, natural history, and visual arts rather than seamanship. But like Hearne, and just one year after Hearne's journey to the Arctic was completed, Bartram traveled by foot and canoe in the yet unsettled regions of North America "for the discovery of rare and useful productions of nature, chiefly of the vegetable kingdom" (Bartram 27). In a series of voyages out, Bartram traveled extensively through the lands inhabited by and belonging to the Creek, Cherokee, Seminole, and Choctaw, as far West as the Mississippi River, south into what is now Florida, and throughout the expanding colonies of Georgia and the Carolinas. Bartram also spent years revising a narrative of his travels, which were first published in Philadelphia in 1791, and then in England in 1792.

Common to both authors' descriptions is primarily their role as reporters from the frontier, as travelers for a period of roughly four years in the "contact zone," as Mary Louise Pratt terms the edges of colonial expansion, with a simultaneous duty and privileged authority to report back to the centers (which were changing significantly

during their travels) observations on cultures and geographies rarely, if ever before, encountered by Europeans. For the most part, neither text takes an ostensible interest in matters outside the circumstances of their journeys. On the surface of these narratives at least, the authors' interests in the human world are limited to their own means of travel and survival and also to ethnographical sketches of indigenous peoples.¹ Both authors include dedicated ethnological chapters towards the end of their books. Neither author contributes in their descriptions as egregiously as other similar texts from the period to the project of *deterritorializing* indigenous peoples, to the fantasy of *terra nullius*. However, for both authors, observing indigenous people was a part of observing landscape. And this conflation of the racialized human with the natural problematically relegates aboriginal peoples to an order within a European-conceived hierarchy.

The material result is two narratives of exploration into the interiors of continents that produced versions of landscape composed of an admixture of natural history, geology, and also ethnography for both European and colonial audiences. The authors not only traveled in the “contact zone,” but lived in them and depended on the guidance and hospitality of indigenous peoples of these regions. The “contact zone” is the space of colonial encounters, “the space in which 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” (Pratt 7). Thus, the “interactive, improvisational dimensions” of these contact narratives demonstrate the “ways in which the periphery determines the metropolis” and “the

¹ Whereas Crèvecoeur's and Jefferson's contemporaneous texts discuss specifically the quality and ways of life in European settlements in detail, Bartram and Hearne are noticeably detached from this discussion – Bartram to a degree that could be characterized as avoidance, Hearne more out of a sincere isolation it seems. See Douglas Anderson's “Bartram's *Travels* and the Politics of Nature” for a discussion of this difference.

latter's obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself" (Pratt 6-7). In this framework, then, the composition of landscape becomes a version of contact narration, although the contact may be represented as primarily between a naturalist's gaze and his objects of description, and the inscription of meanings *in* space through the narrative representation of places visited by Europeans becomes a primary mechanism and manifestation of colonial claims *to* space.

A Thesis Map

The final organization of this research has resulted in a thesis in two parts. The first part, Chapters one to three, explores the methods of representation—the rhetorics and discourses of space—used by each author in his narrative production and process of landscape. The second part, Chapter four, locates these texts within Mary Louise Pratt's versions of "anti-conquest."

Part I: Landscape

The first chapter discusses the process of identity formation and the methods of landscape production presented in Samuel Hearne's *A Journey*. The second chapter discusses the significance of innovations in the practices of natural history that occurred with the ascendance through the mid-eighteenth century of Carl von Linne's systemization. The third chapter treats Bartram's *Travels* to the same analysis of landscape as both production and process. The broadest aim in these sections is to explore the myriad rhetorical techniques that are at work in the natural description of these texts. But following the theoretical discussion above, I have maintained a watchful concern for how the narrative voice (the authorial identity) is formed, and also deformed, through the deployment of these descriptive methods in a colonial setting, while at the

same time the landscape itself is subject to these fluctuations in the narrative-self as these agents of colonial institutions experience and inscribe the contradictions inherent to their practice.

A major element of Bartram's characterization of landscape stems from his intellectual training as a botanist and zoologist, which included both a serious study of Linnaean methodology and of painting and drawing from nature. This education was begun in his youth. William's father, John Bartram, was one of the most preeminent botanists in the British colonies in North America. In fact, John was deemed "the greatest natural botanist in the world" by Linnaeus himself (qtd. in Bayers 39). The Linnaean gaze that characterizes much of the natural description in *Travels* connects Bartram's mode of description to ideological and economic discourses of colonialism and expansion. *Travels* is richly devoted to the Linnaean system of itemizing plants and animals according to a binomial nomenclature and a reductive schema that made it possible to describe a plant uniquely, and, thereby, to include it in a universal or "planetary" catalogue of known species, even if the botanist himself or herself was not aware of every other element in that system. In part, William's allegiance to this system was material: his travels were commissioned by a wealthy "Dr. Fothergill of London ... for the discovery of rare and useful productions of nature, chiefly of the vegetable kingdom" (*Travels* 27). By the late eighteenth century this form of information technology for describing nature had become sufficiently developed and entrenched to a degree which necessitated European botanists' use of the system; that is, if they hoped to be read, comprehended, and celebrated by European audiences. Bartram's text is interesting in that, although he uses the methods of Linnaeus in order to communicate his descriptions of nature at the margins back to cities

at the centers, his narrative betrays an underlying uneasiness about the limits of this mode of description.

Travels wavers between a maintenance of intelligibility and authority through the extension of this systemized reduction of natural phenomena and an attempt to express the author's own sense of the limitations of this method, which is registered in a number of rhetorics including, but not limited to: 1) allegorical commentary on revolutionary and colonial politics through imperial anthropomorphisms, in which natural representation provides both a model and a critique of social formations, 2) religious effusion in response to natural complexity and diversity as an atypical invocation of the Burkean sublime, and 3) an early form of ecological description—that is, a representation of dynamic networks among biota. The text weaves and warps from one to another of these tropes while at the same time sustaining technical descriptions and itemizations of the soil, flora, and fauna.

Yet one element of Bartram's perspective that does not waver is his steadfast devotion to observation. He is at all times in his narrative self-fashioning figured as fascinated, attuned, focused, and diligently studious in the seemingly pure (and innocent) roles of observation and description. His tale is not one of survival, though he does survive. The attainment of the next destination or the next meal is usually and principally portrayed as an occasion for the observation of natural phenomena. In his narrative, desires and actions are represented as almost entirely devoted to observations of place. Subsistence and survival merely happen at the same time and seemingly without effort. The author's own body (except for an ever swelling eye) all but vanishes from the text.

Samuel Hearne's text has a much different approach to characterizing the landscape through which he traveled. His is mostly a survival tale, and the descriptions of place his narrative affords are largely connected to hardship and the overcoming of these hardships through human lifeways such as trapping, hunting, and navigating. But Hearne's text wavers as well. Although he did not have training in natural sciences like Bartram before his excursions, when he returned to London and finished composing *A Journey*, he compared his own knowledge of species living around the Hudson's Bay and those he encountered on his journey with that of Linnaean-styled natural histories, such as Pennant's *Arctic Zoology*. Hearne desires the authority doled-out to botanical and zoological experts on colonial geographies and he finds a method for achieving it by engaging these universalizing texts polemically, by attempting to recast his local botanical and zoological knowledge in the newly modified discourse of a global natural history. As Janet Browne has described in a chapter of *Cultures of Natural History*:

Many such government-sponsored travelers, particularly those associated with the British army or navy, were consequently recognized as 'experts' upon their return – if not in modern terms, at least in the eyes of their contemporaries. To accompany a voyage of exploration provided an opportunity for becoming an authority on a particular group of organisms... The advantages offered by an intimate acquaintance with nature outside Europe, perhaps even a practical monopoly on certain key topics, supported by a large collection of specimens, therefore went a long way towards helping professional men who were also enthusiasts for natural history join the community of savants on their own terms. (310-311)

In Hearne's case, however, this desire to "join the community of savants" is mitigated by a greater desire to demonstrate the narrator's harrowing experience as well as his allegiance to the Hudson's Bay Company and his conformance to their orders. The text

vies for natural-history-expert status, while at the same time making excuses for the narrator's participation in such erudite diversions.

Ecocritical Canons

The summary above indicates some of the tensions and troubles explored in the first three chapters of this thesis as part of an attempt to isolate not only the specific tropes and tendencies at work in each author's production of landscape, but also the sort of narrative identity that accrues as a result of these landscape processes. But I also aimed for another, more succinct point in the first three chapters, which point connects this first part of the thesis with the second part on "anti-conquest." Hearne's description of land is more human- and experience- centered than is Bartram's. There is little language that could be characterized as natural appreciation. Rather, the description of species and geographical features are mostly coded as resource valuation and colonial speculation. Bartram, however, conveys an understanding of the interrelation of species in habitat-specific networks demonstrating a precocious form of ecological understanding, staking out a proto-ecocentric position that also condemns the destructive capacities of human, particularly European, economic and agricultural activity.

An analysis of this distinction between anthropocentric and ecocentric nature writing would fit easily into ecocriticism-proper. Ecocritical scholarship often deploys an implicit theoretical framework based in the tenets of Deep Ecology (Garrard 20). The conclusions reached by the end of the first three chapters demonstrate that according to the criteria of eco- or bio-centrism and Deep Ecology, William Bartram's *Travels* deserves a significant placement within contemporary canons of nature writing alongside such figures as John Clare, Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Rachel

Carson. This kind of celebratory move frames re-evaluation of and increased attention to “good nature writing” as a possible means of undermining environmentally destructive practices and furthering green politics. The second part of this thesis destabilizes the efficacy of this approach by demonstrating the capacity for nature writing—even apparently ecocentric (or on-side) nature writing—to fulfill identifiable discursive functions in social conflicts such as, in this case, colonialism.

Part II: Anti-Conquest

Broadly, this thesis points to contradictions in the type of ecocritical approach described above by means of juxtaposition with the fourth and final chapter examining subtleties in the colonial function of the texts. Particularly, the fourth chapter demonstrates how these texts are instances of Mary Louise Pratt’s “anti-conquest.” *Travels* is of the genre categorized by Pratt as “scientific anti-conquest,” while *A Journey* is shown to fit Pratt’s typology for the “sentimental anti-conquest.” Both versions of anti-conquest work to veil the transgressive and transformative aspects of colonial agents’ journeys into the contact zone behind a narrative superstructure that overwhelmingly points toward those agents’ passivity and vulnerability. This final chapter demonstrates that even at the level of grammatical arrangement of sentences these discourses shaped the representations of space put forward by each author.

Bringing this post-colonial reading into focus alongside an analysis of the production and processes of landscape in each text provides juxtaposition that, if there were space and time enough, I would argue, throws light upon the tendency of environmentalists and ecocritics to fall into a trap isometric to that of white, bourgeois feminists in the United States prior to the critical modifications of what has commonly

been described as the Third Wave. That is, to subsume or elide all other political exigencies, relations of power, and oppressions to the benefit of a necessary, but limited cause, and thereby, to reinscribe those problematics.

If the ecological sustainability we desire and strive toward in an era facing increasingly extreme and global ramifications of anthropogenic environmental incursion is both imagined and advocated in an idiom genealogically akin to the natural idiom of writers like Bartram, we may be setting ourselves up for a dystopian version of what Eugene Odum refers to as “spaceship earth” in *Fundamentals of Ecology*. While the metaphor is apt in its presentation of a container for ecological life with limited resource availability and carrying capacity, it also lends itself to the fantasy of a totalitarian management of ecological relations.² In such a scenario, those with the wealth and resources to develop ecologically sustainable communities and economies may very well be pitted against those who haven’t the same capabilities. As American hegemony continues to wield its power around the globe under a thinly veiled rhetoric of stability and democracy, and as resources such as freshwater and oil become increasingly scarce, the last thing our societies need is a totalizing schema based in globalized environmental science that justifies those who have built up unjust and brutal regimes of power in their use of harsher and harsher measures, tighter and tighter means of control, and more and more elaborate mechanisms of punishment. As members of a progressive political movement, environmentalist and ecocritics alike must work to ensure that their agenda is not eventually co-opted by a totalitarian system that grants itself license in the larger protection of our life support system, the biosphere. And what’s more, the environmental

² My friend and colleague Scott Eustis pointed me to this metaphor and to the ideological consequences in conversation on the banks of the Oconee River. See Zimmerman for a discussion of *ecofascism* and Heideggerian connections.

movement can broaden its prospective base and make productive ties with other political movements by decolonizing its rhetoric and outlook (not to mention undermining its patriarchal and class-based, privileged assumptions).

Although the politico-theoretical dimension of my project may be seen as caviling and ultimately slowing-down the urgent work that must be done, I hope that this research can instead point to ways in which North American environmentalism can destabilize its marginality as well as to ways in which we can avoid the crisis that looms in the offing between first world environmentalism and third world poverty. The fight to protect the environment, most of the worst threats to which are a direct result of first world consumption, should never justify versions of collateral damage in the increasingly likely event of global environmental catastrophe.

Chapter 1: Samuel Hearne's Anthropocentric Landscape

The land that stretches between Churchill, Manitoba and the Great Slave Lake of the Northwest Territories, and the land north from there to the Arctic Ocean is remote and isolated from most of the population of Canada and from the economic centers. This area has various layers of significance for Canadian history and identity, as well as for popular and academic conceptions of Canada around the world. Literary merits aside, Samuel Hearne's *A Journey to the Northern Ocean* is an important text in that it is one of the first representations of this contested terrain attributable to a European. The processes of colonization and national narration that have since taken root in these spaces have at their headwaters Samuel Hearne's at once discursively constituted and improvisationally innovative narrative inscription of the land. This chapter critically explores these processes and productions of landscape.

Do As You Are Told

A Journey to the Northern Ocean is a narrative organized around Hearne's three attempts to complete an exploratory task for the Hudson's Bay Company – "an expedition by Land towards the Latitude 70° North, in order to gain a Knowledge of the Northern Indians Country" (Hearne lxvi). The trek was specifically intended to "discover" the mouth of a river "represented by the Indians to abound with copper ore" (Hearne lxviii). The "Neetha-san-san-dazey, or the Far Off Metal River" was hoped to be a profitable source of copper, but the journey was also aimed at determining "whether there is a passage through this continent" (Hearne lxix). In the journalistic narrative accounting of these journeys, Hearne continuously locates his position as distance from Prince of Wales's Fort and in the context of his determination to reach the mouth of the

Neetha-san-san-dazey (Venema, "Mapping" 12). As Kevin Hutchings and Bruce Greenfield have pointed out, Hearne's text exhibits a preoccupation with representing himself as a dutiful and capable employee of the Hudson's Bay Company despite marked deviances and anxieties about that role that arise throughout the text. For the most part, Hearne's descriptions of landscape are consistent with the performance of his duty and articulated as evidence of such performance. His instructions advise him to

Be careful to observe what mines are near the river, what water there is at the river's mouth, how far the woods are from the seaside, the course of the river, the nature of the soil, and the productions of it (Hearne lxvii).

The landscape produced by Hearne in his *Journey* is mostly consistent with fulfilling the goals stated in these instructions and it is presented such that it demonstrates that he "was anxious to fulfill the role of discoverer in such a way as to win the approval of his contemporaries" and consistent with his mission (Greenfield 191). But landscape also takes on a level of primacy in the text for other, more subtle reasons.

For example, producing landscape can work as a cover for discursively unwieldy aspects of Hearne's experience. A point of controversy arises in *A Journey* in exactly what it means to be a discoverer. Hearne finally makes it to the mouth of the Coppermine River not as a result of epic feats of heroism and conquest (or of other typically masculine forms of authority and agency signified through displays of domination and control), but, rather, as a result of his ability to submit to the will of another man, his aboriginal guide, Matonabee. Kathleen Venema has argued that Hearne's acquiescence to the will of Matonabee for the purposes of completing his mission effectively relegates the explorer-narrator to the status of wife (Venema, "Principal Man" 163). This inversion of gender is reinforced by the parallel inversion of power relations between native and

newcomer as Hearne admits in his record the conditions of his travels in aboriginal territories—disoriented, unable to assert his will, dependant, and in need of protection.

Partly because of these inversions, which will be discussed as aspects of “anti-conquest” in Chapter 4, and partly because of what Kevin Hutchings describes as Hearne’s “incompatible reflections 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,” Hearne’s characterization of the landscape can be more smoothly narrated than his relationship with the aboriginal peoples who make his journey possible, particularly, in a way that does not pose conflicts of allegiance, but instead reifies his authority and competence (Hutchings 73). In this way, the description of place, the production and process of landscape, provides a narrative refuge for the explorer-narrator whose masculine, Anglo-European identity is challenged variously through interaction with other cultures in the “contact zone.”

Emptiness and Barren Grounds

By focusing on the “barrenness” and inhospitable conditions of what he calls the “Barren Ground” while simultaneously demonstrating his knowledge of species and geography, Hearne is able to highlight both the difficulty of his task, thereby increasing the magnitude of his accomplishment, and the improbability of success in future settlement and exploration of this terrain—a question he was sent to answer. Indeed, in the introduction Hearne lays out a summary of his descriptions of flora and soil, which he essentially repeats in a rather monotonous manner along with equally repetitive descriptions of the weather throughout the narrative:

With regard to that part of my Instructions which directs me to observe the nature of the soil, the productions

thereof, etc., it must be observed, that during the whole time of my absence from the Fort, I was invariably confined to stony hills and barren plains all the Summer, and before we approached the woods in the Fall of the year, the ground was always covered with snow to a considerable depth; so that I never had an opportunity of seeing any of the small plants and shrubs to the Westward. But from appearances, and the slow and dwarfy growth of the woods, etc. (except in the Athapuscow country), there is undoubtedly a greater scarcity of vegetable productions than at the Company's most Northern Settlement; and to the Eastward of the woods, on the barren grounds, whether hills or vallies, there is a total want of herbage except moss, on which the deer feed; a few dwarf willows creep among the moss; some wish-a-cuppa and a little grass may be seen here and there, but the latter is scarcely sufficient to serve the geese and other birds of passage during their short stay in those parts, though they are always in a state of migration. (Hearne lxxi)

Phrases in this passage such as “slow and dwarfy growth,” “total want,” “greater scarcity,” and “scarcely sufficient” work to exaggerate an absence, and to emphasize the difficulties Hearne experienced on his adventure. Hearne limns the land by way of negation. For example, the “birds of passage” are not figured as a significant aspect of biological diversity and production in the region, but rather are used to accentuate the motif of scarcity and as a means of naturalizing the author's own situation. The bleak emptiness of the land described in this summary seems to convey the sentiments of someone who had felt the pangs of its scarcity. And the invocation of a permanent “state of migration” in a land that is “scarcely sufficient” for subsistence echoes Hearne's own situation during his travels in what seems more an instance of pathetic fallacy than of naturalistic rigor.

The scarcity of scenery made available through description is frequently connected with the scarcity of food available for Hearne, his companions, and his guides.

And, unlike many of the European expeditions during the period with more heavily weighted natural history imperatives (such as Bartram's), Hearne's digressions into natural description are usually occasioned by the opportunity to acquire food and other provisions. On the thirteenth day of Hearne's first excursion, the "small stock of English provisions all expended, and not the least thing to be got on the bleak hills we had for some time been walking on," the party had to deviate from its course in order to find food. Steering towards "the looming of woods to the South West," Hearne encounters some elements of landscape he finds to be worth noting. In the "low scrubby woods, where [they] saw the tracks of several deer, and killed a few partridges" the party stopped for a few days, "the women caught a few fish in a small lake" and a few "deer," by which he refers to the Barren Ground Caribou (*Rangifer arcticus*), were killed and eaten (Hearne 2). After gaining a little sustenance the journey is recommenced "through low scrubby pines, intermixed with some dwarf larch, which is commonly called juniper in Hudson's Bay" (Hearne 3). The cataloguing of these species of trees is afforded only because the party had to leave the barren track to find food, and the description of the trees does as much to reinforce the harshness of the climate by showing how the cold has blighted their growth, as it does to locate specific flora within that landscape. While mammals and birds are attended with more descriptive detail, the cataloguing of trees is especially sparse, and it is frequently used to signal the severity of the climate.

In the final chapter of *A Journey*, which is dedicated to species by species descriptions of mammals and birds, the trees of the region are lumped into one category, a single paragraph, which is also the sharp conclusion to the entire narrative:

The Forest Trees that grow on this inhospitable spot are very few indeed: Pine, Juniper, small scraggy Poplar,

Creeping Birch, and Dwarf Willows, compose the whole catalogue. Farther Westward the Birch tree is very plentiful; and in the Athapuscow country, the Pines, Larch, Poplar, and Birch, grow to a great size; the Alder is also found there. (294)

Part of the reason for the cursory effort here is that Hearne's natural description is primarily focused on utilizable aspects of landscape. So much so that he seems to ignore the trees, which are so infrequent and unhelpful that the company often "thought [themselves] well off if [they] could scrape together as many shrubs as would make a fire" (Hearne 3).

No Time for Beauty

Hearne is steadfastly unaesthetic, implacably impassive, in his descriptions and clearly conceived of his narrative matter-of-factly, diminishing the role of sentiments and feelings in regards to the land—aside from the general inscription of bleakness—to a few very measured instances. At times the checking of emotional or aesthetic responses to the land is tangibly apparent in the account. In 1771 Hearne's party spent Christmas Eve on the banks of the Great Slave Lake in what is now administered under the title Northwest Territories. In a passage describing this area Hearne nearly waltzes into an aesthetic mode but then quickly retreats:

the days were so short, that the Sun only took a circuit of a few points of the compass above the horizon, and did not, at its greatest altitude, rise half-way up the trees. The brilliancy of the *Aurora Borealis*, however, and of the Stars, even without the assistance of the Moon, made some amends for that deficiency; for it was frequently so light all night, that I could see to read a very small print. The Indians make no difference between night and day when they are hunting of beaver; but those *nocturnal* lights are always found insufficient for the purpose of hunting deer or moose. (144)

The northern lights are mentioned only twice in the narrative, and in the other instance it is a footnote on how the Dene explained the phenomena to him. As Hearne begins this passage it seems that the “brilliance” of the *Aurora Borealis* is being read as a possibility for recompense during the long, cold winter on the short days near the solstice. But even before the sentence is completed, Hearne assures the reader that he has not dallied in such a thing as beauty by pointing out in an extra clause that he had used the heavenly lights for reading. Perhaps realizing that he may have betrayed some non-utilitarian response, Hearne goes on to diminish the strength of his appreciation by noting the inefficacy of these lights for the purposes of hunting.

In a similar moment Hearne says of the “Herbridal Sandpiper” that “they may, in fact, be called beautiful birds, though not gay in their plumage” (274). Again he turns on the compliment and the aesthetic mode of interpretation even before the sentence is finished. He continues, shifting again to the higher principal of utility, “they are usually very fat, but even when first killed they smell and taste so much like train-oil as to render them by no means pleasing to the palate” (274). In contrast to works usually granted the appellation, “nature writing,” Hearne purposefully curbs aesthetic valuations, presenting his relationship with the land through which he traveled as strictly utilitarian.

Reticent Description

As some of the previously quoted passages indicate, the majority of scenery described in passing as the narrative progresses lacks specificity and highlights hardship, but occasionally the narrative is punctuated with in-depth natural history as it was more and more consistently practiced in the latter half of the eighteenth century. While in the “scrubby” and “dwarfed” woods securing food as described at the beginning of the first

expedition, Hearne introduces the European reader to a new (for them) species, the musk-ox: “we frequently saw the tracks of deer, and many musk-oxen, as they are called there; but none of my companions were so fortunate as to kill any of them” (Hearne 3). Prior to Hearne’s description of the musk-ox, the species was poorly accounted for: “known only from a hearsay French report” (Glover xxix). Yet in this instance and in Hearne’s fuller description that occurs later in the text (when they *are* fortunate enough to kill a musk-ox), the account is that of a hunter describing a possible prey. In this passage, Hearne attempts to describe the species in a general context for a readership with little knowledge of the animal.

The musk-ox description is an example of Hearne’s tendency to treat a narrative digression into natural history as an emergent occasion rather than as a steadfast practice. Following a brief summary of the activities and weather on July 7, 1771, he begins the long description: “This was the first time we had seen any of the musk-oxen since we left the Factory” (Hearne 87). This introductory remark treats the description as an occasion arising in the narrative naturally, as something that just happened to occur during his travels. However, Hearne quickly moves to mark his own shift to the abstract discourse of natural history with references to vague authorities who passively observe:

It has been observed that we saw a great number of [musk-ox] in my first unsuccessful attempt, before I had got an hundred miles from the Factory; and indeed I once perceived the tracks of two of those animals within nine miles of Prince of Wales’s Fort. (87)

Continuing in this tone he gives account of the species’ numbers in different regions, its behavior and diet, as well as phenotypic characteristics. Even though this description constituted a significant contribution to the fields of natural history and zoology at the

time, Hearne eagerly returns from the trope of systematic classification to matters of use, noting “that the Esquimaux make their musketto wigs” (88) from the long hair extending from the animal’s throat, and concluding with a discussion of the animal’s palatability:

The flesh of the musk-ox noways resembles that of the Western buffalo, but is more like that of the moose or elk; and the fat is of a clear white, slightly tinged with a light azure. The calves and young heifers are good eating; but the flesh of the bulls both smells and tastes so strong of musk, as to render it very disagreeable: even the knife that cuts the flesh of an old bull will smell so strong of musk, that nothing but scouring the blade quite bright can remove it, and the handle will retain the scent for a long time. Though no part of the bull is free from this smell, yet the parts of generation, particularly the *urethra*, are by far the most strongly impregnated. The urine itself must contain the scent in a very great degree; for the sheath’s of the bull’s penis are corroded with a brown gummy substance, which is nearly as high-scented with musk as that said to be produced by the civet cat; and after having been kept for several years, seems not to lose any of its quality. (89)

While Hearne is a competent naturalist, reporting both his own observations and indigenous knowledge about ecosystems to the north and west of Hudson’s Bay with clarity and detail, he usually prefers to discuss biota and, generally, geography in terms of human economies. In almost every other mention of the musk-ox in *A Journey*, the context is specifically to do with hunting or eating, and particularly, there are a few passages of lamentation about the disgust and revulsion experienced when the only thing to eat was raw, wet musk-ox. The pattern established in his description of the musk-ox is representative of Hearne’s over(t)ly practical and anthropocentric natural history.

The most frequently occurring species in the narrative is the caribou, which Hearne calls a deer. And although Hearne documents the species’ visible characteristics and habit, even marking regional variations or subspecies delineations, again, the

majority of the description is reserved for the animal's relevance to human lifeways. He gives particular attention to the methods used by his guides in fashioning clothing from the animal and to various hunting techniques used in pursuit of the animal. But as with the musk-ox, the most enthusiastic description is saved for the animal's flavor:

But though I own that the flesh of the large Southern deer is very good, I must at the same time confess that the flesh of the small Northern deer, whether buck or doe, in the proper season, is by far more delicious and the best I have ever eaten, either in this country or any other; and is of that peculiar quality, that it never cloyes. (146)

Again and again, landscape description turns away from a general representation in accordance with systemizing trends in eighteenth-century natural history, and towards an explanation of how to get by, how to catch or hunt a given species, and whether it is even worth the getting. While Hearne privileges his authorship with appeals to both, the authority he claims from his survival and subsistence experience in the narrative trumps the authority he claims from knowledge of natural history in the abstract formulae of the emergent discourse.

Tropes of Land

In a limited way Hearne implements versions of the British picturesque and sublime in his landscape production as I.S. MacLaren has demonstrated. Given "the demands being made on travel literature by the British readers of ...Hearne's day", MacLaren argues that "a book publisher could not afford to bring out a book of travel which ignored the prevailing expectations of treatments of nature in terms of the Sublime and the Picturesque" ("Landscapes of Discovery" 27). *A Journey* does not typically inflect natural description with a sense of awe or constructions of the sublime: "Hearne's narrative recounts little that resembles ...[a] sense of wonder, unless it is Hearne's

occasional terror at the indifference of the Northern lands and peoples to him and his goals” (Greenfield 192). The narrator is almost never overcome emotionally by some terror in the landscape. The fierceness of cold, wind, and hunger are focused on as significant hardships, but at the same time are treated in a sort of banal tone of practicability – as in a government or scientific report. This is fundamentally different from the Burkean descriptions of places like Mont Blanc and Niagara Falls that are characterized as instances of a sublime, wilderness aesthetic. Though the description of land does work to frame the “predicament of an innocent, vulnerable character”—a fundamental aspect of the sublime outlined in Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*—Hearne’s description of the Barren Ground functions only “to reverse Coleridge’s definition of the Sublime” and instead offers “a boundless or endless nothingness” without the typical vertical structure of looming precipice or unfathomable abyss (MacLaren, “Landscapes of Discovery” 29). MacLaren’s argument is that a British readership would read the sublime in Hearne’s landscape even if he presented it in ways contrary to typical deployments of the trope. I argue, instead, that Hearne’s narrative is innovative and, indeed, initially encodes aspects of a landscape topos distinct from the British picturesque and sublime—one of harshness and inhospitality, but also of purity, and one that has become distinctly Canadian over time.

On the whole Hearne’s landscape production is easily distinguishable from concerted sublime deployments though aspects of his productions do take similar cues and harness a partially sublime vocabulary, but one passage in particular is shaped in the sublime aesthetic. When Hearne and his guiding party finally reach the Coppermine

River he finds it disappointingly problematic for navigation and also that there is little wood except “so crooked and dwarfish a growth as to render it of little use for any purpose but firewood” (Hearne 95). Upon espying a party of “Esquimaux” farther downstream, Hearne’s party puts the Hudson’s Bay mission aside and instead takes up a “bloody design” as they begin “planning the best method of attack, and how they might steal upon the poor Esquimaux the ensuing night, and kill them all while asleep” (96). The description of the ambush that follows is wrought with gothic language, the sympathetic development of innocent and powerless victims, and the graphic inscription of cruel, grotesque violence. Hearne calls it a “bloody massacre” (99), he describes the “shrieks and groans of the poor expiring wretches” (99), and he self-dramatizes “the terror of [his] mind at beholding this butchery” (100). Hearne also develops the young sexualized heroine typical of gothic novels (Venema, “Principal Man” 179) in this most memorable and most discussed scene of the narrative:

Seeing a young girl, seemingly about eighteen years of age, killed so near me, that when the first spear was stuck into her side she fell down at my feet, and *twisted round my legs*, so that it was with difficulty that I could disengage myself from her *dying grasps*. As two Indian men pursued this *unfortunate victim*, I solicited very hard for her life; but the murderers made no reply till they had stuck both their *spears through her body*, and *transfixed* her to the ground. They then looked me sternly in the face, and began to ridicule me, by asking if I wanted an Esquimaux wife; and paid not the smallest regard to the *shrieks* and *agony* of the poor wretch, who was twining round their spears *like an eel!* (Hearne 99-100, my emphasis)

The gothic inflection of terror and awe continue throughout this description of inter-tribal warfare until, finally, another body stuck with more than twenty spears is compared to a “cullender” (Hearne 102) and an old woman who seems partially deaf is “butchered ... in

the most savage manner,” tortured as Hearne’s companions “poked out her eyes” and “stabbed her in many parts very remote from those which are vital” (Hearne 103).

As Kathleen Venema and others have pointed out, the murders at the waterfalls on the Coppermine, to which Hearne applies the appellation “Bloody Falls,” provide a sublime and even gothic centerpiece and climax for the journey (Venema, “Principal Man” 176-9). However, this narrative flourish, the authorship of which has been questioned given the possibility of Grub Street influence, does not constitute a sublime landscape aesthetic on Hearne’s part (MacLaren, “Bibliographical Perspective” 24-25). At most the gothic episode at Bloody Falls uses the bleakness of the landscape produced throughout the rest of the text as a cold, nearly barren (empty) backdrop upon which to inscribe a frightening human drama more starkly. Immediately following the description of the warfare, the party feasts on fresh salmon and Hearne states, “I instantly set about commencing my survey, and pursued it to the mouth of the river” (105). MacLaren demonstrates how some of the gothic and sublime language of the murder descriptions bleeds into this natural description. Hearne writes, “the channel of the river has been caused by some terrible convulsion of nature” (107). Of the natural description of the site of the massacre, MacLaren explains that the “roaring cataract” is “wild” and “vertically-structured,” while the most prevalent terrain described are seemingly unending “desolate tracts” of “barren hills and wide-open marshes” (“Landscapes of Discovery” 32-33). While MacLaren argues that the most common terrain description works in contrast to typical literary deployments of the sublime, “for the English reader” this scene along with the “acts of barbarity” work to “provide a sublime landscape proper” (“Landscapes of Discovery” 32).

On the whole, Hearne's characterization is set apart from tendencies towards sublime engagements with natural settings deployed in Europe and its peripheries at the time. The survival tale from an icily remote region easily informed and complimented these popular aesthetics of the sublime, even without Hearne's conscious narrative organization of such necessarily. MacLaren also discusses a few instances in which Hearne composes a picturesque landscape. But like the deployment of the sublime these are exceptions to the norm. MacLaren's larger thesis that hinges on these exceptional pieces of evidence is over-determined:

While his narrative displays several unique instances of landscape description which combine and adapt aspects of the Sublime and the Picturesque in order to picture thoroughly unique natural scenes, it remains clear that his geographical awareness is generally controlled by the modes of perceiving nature which he shared with his age. ("Landscapes of Discovery" 28)

The argument could also be stated that despite a text that overwhelmingly denies aesthetic valuations and modes of description to its production of landscape, there are nonetheless instances in which such mediating discourses find inroads.

Nordicity

Besides tracing the partial manipulation and deployment of British modes of perception and representation, we can also focus on Hearne's early contribution to what Rob Shields calls the "space-myth" of the "True North Strong and Free" that serves Canadian identity and nationalism a symbol "which, although not completely hegemonic, attempts to reconcile regional viewpoints" (162). Hearne's *A Journey* presents one of the first European images of that part of Canada referred to as "the North," or "the True North." In contemporary contexts "definitions of the North oscillate between the poles of

frozen wilderness hinterland and hotly-defended cultural heartland” and this tension situates a myth that attributes to the North a “truth or honesty to an autochthonous spirit of the land, a ‘strength’ that defies human incursion, and freedom from conquest by those with imperial ambitions” (Shields 164). Despite the fact that “most Canadians rarely if ever visit the far North,” space-myths that are partially dependant upon the fashioning of more specific place-images, like Hearne’s representation of the Barren Grounds, have very significant ramifications for political, ideological, and cultural motifs today (Shields 173, 167).

Very important to the prevailing space-myth of the Canadian North are place-images fixated on the North’s inhospitable attributes, and Hearne’s description which confirms that “he saw little beauty in the environment he struggled through” (Shields 172) and further that he had a very hard time even being there represents an important first step towards reifying one half of the tension that situates the space-myth, which in the end “provides the possibility of setting a ‘Canadian nature’ (The ‘True North’) off against ‘American mass culture’ entirely originating, or so we are asked to believe, south of the border” (Shields 163). In this way, instead of reading, as MacLaren does, Hearne’s landscape as merely subject to and conditioned by British discourses of space, we can also position his representation of northern space at the genealogical genesis of another prominent discourse.

Eurocentrism

The final two chapters of *A Journey* diverge from the rest of the narrative. Rather than focusing on his own journey and survival, these chapters are organized almost as appendices, which constitute Hearne’s attempt to demonstrate his knowledge of the

culture and geography of the people he traveled among. Chapter IX, “A Short Description of the Northern Indians, also a farther Account of their Country, Manufactures, Customs, &c”, is a robust display of Eurocentric and racist claims, from which it is difficult to discern many ethnographic details free from obvious biases. Hearne notes of “the females” that “their skins are soft, smooth, and polished; and when they are dressed in clean clothing, they are as free from an offensive smell as any of the human race” (197). In another moment of misogynist racism, Hearne claims, “They differ so much from the rest of mankind, that harsh uncourteous usage seems to agree better with the generality of them . . . for if the least respect be shown them, it makes them intolerably insolent” (199). Hearne ends this ethnographic chapter with praise for Matonabee, but the severity of Eurocentric racism persists as Matonabee is accredited with “talents equal to the greatest task that could possibly be expected from an Indian” (225).

Some critics have argued that Hearne actually represents a very mixed-up version of Eurocentrism—that he acknowledges a division between his duty to the company and a duty to his friends and fellow humans. Kevin Hutchings’s essay, “Writing Culture and Cultural Progress,” argues that exposed contradictions in the narrative demonstrate an

early manifestation of critical *self-reflexivity*, that anti-monological impulse which, if continually ‘improved’ upon by intercultural discussion and debate, can help to provide the basis for sound cultural criticism, intercultural negotiation, and productive sociocultural transformation.
(73)

This argument takes the position that contradictions in performance and narration arising from colonial practices are exceptional and even recuperative instead of inherent and even discursively practical, which I find dangerously misguided. But, in the context of

these discussions, one can see a basis for an argument that the racist claims that permeate especially the general statements in this chapter on the “Northern Indians,” are more likely appeals to the readership for whom Hearne was writing, than articulations of his own beliefs. It is a very self-conscious production. And given the strength of Hearne’s defense of Matonabee in the ethnographic chapter it may have been necessary, in his (or his publisher’s) estimation, to reassure readers that he had not, in fact, “gone native.” But aside from explicit discussion of ethnology, which this thesis is spread too thin to cover, Hearne is also Eurocentric as he moves toward a newer rendition of the story about a European in non-European space via a direct engagement with the burgeoning forms of botanical and zoological description after Linnaeus, which displaced his local and contextualized knowledge as he himself dissociates it from the indigenous people and cultures that granted him such knowledge.

The final chapter similarly reveals in its representation of space the anxieties about authority and identity that situate Hearne’s entire narrative. Here, Hearne counters the trend that I have described in the rest of the narrative, in which an ethos of survival is preferred to one of observation. In Hearne’s fashioning of an “appendix” we see a move away from the discourse in which a European narrates a process of going into and returning from the “contact zone” and unknown regions, thereby naturalizing the power, agency, and authority of the explorer figure (and thus of Europeans) over the land and people encountered. And this is constituted by a move towards the systematic practice of natural history that emerged in the later half of the eighteenth century based on the work of Linnaeus. The chapter is organized as a list, first of the mammals, then on to a few sea creatures, the fish, then the birds, and finally the vegetable production. Each element of

the list includes a brief description, sometimes engaging in Linnaean forms of description, and at other times relying upon overtly anthropocentric metrics.

He begins the relatively abstract chapter, which he spent his later years researching in London, polemically, as if he is reticent to discuss the matters but does so “in order to rectify a mistake, which, from wrong information, has crept into Mr. Pennant’s *Arctic Zoology*” (230). As Richard Glover acknowledges in his Introduction, the concluding chapter of *A Journey* was strongly influenced by Hearne’s “valuable acquaintance” with Thomas Pennant, “a zoologist of some standing” at the time. Pennant’s *Arctic Zoology*, published in London in 1784 compiled Linnaean classifications of species described less systematically by explorers like Hearne. As Glover explains, while “Hearne had none of this systematic learning, Pennant had none of Hearne’s first-hand experience of creatures in the field, and the meeting of the two men was valuable to both” (xxxviii). Indeed, *Arctic Zoology* “provide(d) the framework of the final chapter of Hearne’s book” and “it gave him English names for animals he had hitherto known only by Indian names” (Glover xxxix). That is, it provided him the means of dislocating this knowledge from indigenous space by disassociating it from indigenous culture and knowledge.

The inclusion of this chapter at the conclusion of the narrative and the defensive posture with which Hearne begins the discussion are indicative of his position on the trailing edge of a major discursive shift in the production and projection of European hegemony during the processes of colonial expansion. Hearne’s somewhat amateur attempt at recuperating the discourse of natural history with this appendix demonstrates

the felt necessity of authors publishing travel tales from the margins of European expansionary efforts to deploy Linnaean discursive practice.

Anthropocentrism

On the whole, Hearne's is a deeply anthropocentric means of characterizing the land. It is anthropocentric in that Hearne is reticent to discuss any element or aspect of the landscape outside of the contexts of survival or the Hudson's Bay Company's resource speculation. Hearne's description works to answer specific mercantilist and imperialist questions. How could colonial outposts survive, subsist, and even profit in this place? The answer provided by Hearne's landscape production is that such settlement will be difficult at best, and most likely impossible.

The emergent discourse of natural history discussed in the next chapter (or interlude) asks a different set of questions all together. It is not simply, are these lands conquerable and can we appropriate them for trade and other forms of economic production? Will I survive this contact? Rather, descriptions of landscape in travel narratives moving into the interior of continents towards the end of the eighteenth century shifted towards the production of an intellectual and cultural authority manifested in a particular gaze and a particular way of knowing – “the construction of global-scale meaning through the descriptive apparatuses of natural history” (Pratt 16). Hearne's systematic naturalizing at the end of *A Journey* vacillates between an attempt to represent his knowledge of species in an abstract and systemized method, and a return to the characterization of species on the basis of their palatability as well as the relative ease or difficulty in hunting. This tension is between describing land and biota in the explicit context of their use, which knowledge was strongly enmeshed in the indigenous culture

he depended on throughout his travels, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a description of species in terms of a generalized and systematic pursuit of “useful knowledge.” This latter descriptive technique is marked by little, if any, explicit discussion of particularities of species’ usefulnesses, and, instead, a tacit understanding that abstract natural histories were both economically and ideologically necessary and profitable for imperial economics, as long as they could be disassociated from the indigenous cultures and lands from which they were expropriated.

A general trend that characterizes much ecocriticism to date is outlined in Glen Love’s essay “Revaluing Nature” as Western societies’ “limited humanistic vision, our narrowly anthropocentric view of what is consequential in life” (229). Because Western literature, art, philosophy, and ethics have denied the significance of anything save human culture for so long we tend to destroy the ecosystems in which we live and on which we depend. For Love, as well as many other ecocritics, “nature-oriented literature offers a needed corrective, for one very important aspect of this literature is its regard—implicit or stated—for the non-human” (230). This line of argument attempts to insert *place* alongside other academic key-terms such as *race*, *class*, and *gender*:

Just as we now deal with issues of racism or sexism in our pedagogy and our theory, in the books which we canonize, so must it happen that our critical and aesthetic faculties will come to reassess those texts – literary and critical – which ignore any values save for an earth-denying and ultimately destructive anthropocentrism. (Love 235)

In this way, ecocriticism metes out a critique of humanism for its normative claims and their relation to power and hierarchy that parallels the criticism it faces by many post-colonial scholars.

However, aside from revaluing literature of place generally, there is also a move to judge nature writing and environmentalist positions in terms of their degrees of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. This move is associated with the Deep Ecology movement, which dissociates itself from “‘shallow’ approaches [which] take an instrumental approach to nature, arguing for preservation of natural resources only for the sake of humans” (Garrard 21). This radical offshoot of environmentalist politics is often the implicit basis of ecocritical literary analyses and particularly the differentiation of these works (and positions) is frequently according to a principal articulated by Arne Naess in George Sessions’s *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century*:

The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent worth). These values are independent of the usefulness on the non-human world for human purposes.
(68)

As argued above, Hearne’s *A Journey* does not articulate anything other than an anthropocentric view of the spaces through which he traveled. On the other hand, as shall be argued in a later chapter, William Bartram’s narrative does significantly develop an intrinsic valuation of the natural world. This differentiation of two productions of landscape, each with significant and similar colonial functions, on this simple dualism of anthropocentric and ecocentric problematically reduces both the problem of landscape (particularly in colonial space) and the field of interrogation for analyses of representations of space. In some sense,

Every literary attempt to listen to voices in the landscape or to “read the book of nature” is necessarily anthropocentric. It’s our language after all, that we’re using, and we inevitably put our values into the representation.
(McDowell 372)

Whether or not an author narrowly discusses species and geography in overt terms of human use, both the process of observation and apprehension as well as the medium of representation effectively *Other* the elements of landscape, centering human perception within some panoptical gaze. So in the end, a discussion of anthropo- and eco-centrism needs must be a matter of degrees, and, particularly there are at least three separate issues that may be interrogated along these lines. First, is the subject of the text natural or steadfastly cultural? This coincides with the argument by Love, that our discipline is hampered by a self-centered humanism. Second, is there an intrinsic valuation of the natural world aside from resource valuation and speculation? Of course a given text may harbor a diverse range of aesthetic, economic, and mythical valuations of natural phenomena. Finally, does the representation of space recognize the performative and transformative dimensions of the naturalist's gaze, the implicit anthropocentrism of the practice?

Rather than simply diagnosing Hearne's narrative as deeply anthropocentric on all but the first line of interrogation – a reductive kind of thesis that is frequently purveyed in ecocritical scholarship – I conclude this chapter with a more subtle outlook that points toward the possible concomitance of a veiled anthropocentrism in natural description and the rise of Linnaean systemizations of natural knowledge. Broadly in this thesis, I hope to suggest that this concomitance is primarily and profoundly a colonial discursive maneuver, one which retains its power today principally in the discourses and politics of nature and environment.

I have shown that Hearne is reluctant to engage in aesthetic or formal descriptions of the territory through which he traveled that are not explicitly utilitarian. This

reluctance is also at work when Hearne deviates from his survival-centered narrative development to the abstract discourse of natural history. He makes excuses for delving into this discussion and tries to naturalize the practice as something arising out of his exploration experience, rather than as a purposeful and meaningful practice in its own right.

Returning to the final chapter of *A Journey* that attempts to engage in the popular mode of natural history that was becoming more and more prevalent in exploration narratives, we can see that nearly every individual description returns specifically to matters of edibility and use despite the attempted abstract discourse. In the subsection titled “*Of the Vegetable Productions,*” Hearne describes the Blue-berry (*Vaccinium uliginosum*) with some of the emphasis on size, habit, and fruitification that are characteristic of Linnaean systemizations of botanic description:

The BLUE-BERRY is about the size of a Hurtleberry, and grows on bushes which rise to eighteen inches or two feet, but in general are much lower. They are seldom ripe till September, at which time the leaves turn to a beautiful red; and the fruit, though small, have as fine a bloom as any plum, and are much esteemed for the pleasantness of their flavour. (292)

Nearly every entry in this chapter concludes, as this one does, with a discussion of palatability. Of the Partridgeberry, Hearne follows a fairly specific, though admittedly not very technical, description,

I never knew this Berry eaten but by a frolicksome Indian girl; and as it had no ill effect, it is a proof it is not unwholesome, though exceedingly unpleasant to the palate, and not much less so to the smell. (292)

Here, even though the berry is only useful in this very limited way, the description still concludes with such information about its utility for humans.

This simultaneous participation in and retreat from the abstract systems of classification that transformed natural history during the eighteenth century indicates that Hearne is suspicious, disdainful, or incapable of the somewhat high-minded practice. One possible explanation is that, while composing his narrative,³ he realized the significance of contributions to globalized knowledge of plants and animals—both for imperial economies of Europe and for his own recognition and status—, whereas in the field the emphasis was on surviving, and this was his primary way of knowing and his guides primary way of teaching. In his effort to compose a modernized natural history record at the conclusion of his book, Hearne is unable to simply leave these practical, explicitly use-oriented ways of knowing and describing behind and instead tries to retain them at least partially in the Pennant-styled natural description.

Hearne makes some innovative compromises in this regard, developing his own classificatory metrics that are themselves overtly anthropocentric, that is, human task- or use- oriented. In describing the avifauna of the region he not only concludes more technical description with discussion of palatability, but he deploys a systematic metric not based on observable aspects of the birds' behavior, shape, size, color, and other phenotypic attributes, but instead on how many of the birds could be killed with a single shot. He says of the Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*),

They sometimes fly in such large flocks, that I have killed upwards of twenty at one shot, and have known others who have killed double that number. (269)

Similarly, Rock Partridges “fly in such numbers that I have seen twelve of them killed at one shot” (268). Additionally, Hearne adds to his natural history endeavor information he has gathered from keeping some of these animals as pets or captives, as well as from their

³ Presumably under significant editorial direction. See MacLaren, “Bibliographical Perspective.”

behavior in regards to traps and other hunting methods, often embellishing with anthropomorphisms. The porcupine is described as “the most forlorn animal I know” (245), and the wolverine is “too cunning to take either trap or gun himself” but its “mischievous disposition” and “sagacity” allows it to make meals of other animals caught or killed in these ways by humans (239).

A Journey represents and produces a landscape that is most significant or meaningful in that it works to constitute the subjectivity of a narrator—a European man in the contact zone. It is a landscape marked by absences: absences that create a great deal of hardship such as scarcity of food, shelter, and fire wood, but also absences of rhetorical techniques in the composition of the landscape. I have shown how the text’s aesthetically limited descriptions work to reify the author’s authority by figuring him as a man on a difficult mission without time for such matters. It have also shown how fuller descriptions highlighting the limited resource availability in the spaces of travel work toward the same end. In this way the landscape of Hearne’s narrative is both a product of British mercantile expansion and colonization, and a process through which the identity of an agent of that expansion undergoes destabilization and reformation in the contact zone, which subjectification is determined by the spaces through which he traveled and, ultimately, largely determines the tenor and scope of the representation of those spaces.

Hearne’s resistance to forthright participation in the abstract discourse of natural history following the trends emerging from the Linnaean methodology is manifested through an insistence on overt and explicit focuses on utility in natural description. This results in highly anthropocentric landscape production. But the drastically distinct ecocentrism of William Bartram’s *Travels* is perhaps enabled or facilitated by, and at the

least genealogically kin to, the transformations in natural description that occurred as a result of the technological innovations in identification and classification set forth by Linnaeus and his disciples in the latter half of the eighteenth century. A text like Bartram's could be highly useful to colonial practice and imperial expansion without ever explicitly demarcating those uses. The spatial practice of surveillance through natural history and the ease with which it could be incorporated into global systems of knowledge became at once obviously and inherently utilitarian for processes of colonization and imperialism, while the explicit narrative framing of that utility became not only unnecessary, but, as we shall see in the final chapter, discursively obsolete.

The simplification or reduction of discourses on places and their representation to anthropo- and eco-centric debates elides the significance of transformative technological and cultural innovations (or discursive modifications) that strongly shape and limit spatial representations, the way we know a place, as well as the possibility for and ramifications of developing an ecologically sustainable sense of place in colonized, commodified, and contested land. The next chapter will dwell for a bit on the significance of the Linnaean methodology in this context.

Chapter 2: Hearne, Bartram, and their Places in the Cult(ure) of Eighteenth-Century Natural History

In William Bartram's introduction to *Travels* it is clear that he is much more steadfast, focused, and unashamed in his attention to the abstract discourse of natural history than is Samuel Hearne in *A Journey*. Bartram begins his narrative:

The attention of a traveler should be particularly turned, in the first place, to the various works of Nature, to mark the distinctions of the climates he may explore, and to offer such useful observations on the different productions as may occur...It is hoped that his labours will present new as well as useful information to the botanist and zoologist.
(13)

Here he states a philosophy of travel and description that points to the heightened significance of the role of natural history in this kind of writing. But whereas Hearne only appeals to this emergent significance occasionally in the text and almost reticently after-the-fact by way of an appendix, Bartram's narrative is founded upon and immersed in the discourse. Indeed, only three paragraphs into the introduction Bartram turns unabatedly to his primary method for constructing place, for restricting to a narrative the vast array of elements that comprise an encounter with an ecosystem—namely, listing species in botanical Latin:

The more luxurious scenes of splendour, as Myrtus communis, Myrt. Pimento, Caryophyllus aromaticus, Laurus cinnam. Laurus camphor. Laurus Persica, Nux mosch. Illicium, Camellia, Punica, Cactus melo-cactus, Cactus grandiflora, Gloriosa superba, Theobroma, Adansonia digitata, Nycanthes, Psidium, Musa paradisiaca, Musa sapientum, Garcinia mangostana, Cocos nucifera, Citrus, Citrus aurantium, Cucurbita citrullus, Hyacinthus, Amarillis, Narcissus, Poinciana pulcherrima, Crinium, Cactus cochinellifer. (13-14)

Such lists continue intermittently throughout the introduction, and indeed, throughout the text, providing significant hurdles for the unfamiliar or uninterested reader.

Despite the unabashed and at times overwhelming insistence on technical natural description, criticism of *Travels* typically diminishes the significance of this aspect of the text. In Charles Adams's 1994 essay on Bartram's *Travels*, "Reading Ecologically," he explains that given the frequency and meticulousness of lists such as the one above and the persistent intrusion of other science-centered descriptions "many of Bartram's best readers skip his passages of 'scientific objectivity' to focus on those few sections in which he seems determined to turn the American wilderness into a stage on which are performed European fantasies of primitive beauty and terror" (66). While Adams goes on to explain that these "best" readers avoid the mistake of understanding Bartram's practice as "artlessly spilling his natural observations on the page," the larger point, he argues, is still often missed:

Bartram and his fellow nature writers insist that humanity's relationship with nature is fundamentally a matter of articulated consciousness – fundamentally, that is, a matter of language.... Language, not nature, is the real subject of nature writing like Bartram's, although the best writers of the genre strive for a rhetoric that mirrors the characteristics of the natural world they value: possibility, contingency, openness, relation. (67)

For Adams, Bartram desires to convey a "sense of the dynamism and organicism in nature that the Linnaean system, through which [his] science demanded that he see the world, was only marginally adequate to describe" (69). Thus, it is argued, Bartram compensates his narrative by employing a range of other discourses (religious allegory, romantic primitivism, Burkean aesthetics, irony, moralizing, metaphor, and anthropomorphism)

which comprise, “in effect, a rhetorical ecology” that is “analogous to Bakhtinian polyphony, a rhetorical pluralism in which no single discourse can represent the full range of nature’s meanings” (Adams 72). The reading implies that in 1791 we have textual evidence of a fully post-modern colonial rambling about on the margins, playing games on the centers.

I find Adams’s reading tenuous, at best, in that he locates the principal subject and meaning-making for Bartram’s text in the ironic play of discourses which frame and interact with the central trope of the discourse, the Linnaean method. According to Adams’s interpretation, Bartram becomes a figure who offers a liberating vision of the natural world and our place in it, who uses natural description to precociously demonstrate the failure of any totalizing, monological discourse. This critical maneuver re-centers the discussion on Bartram’s peripheral anxieties without adequately considering the root of those anxieties and by doing so obscures and ignores the degree to which *Travels* contributes to the literature of European colonial expansion. The recuperation of *Travels* by critics like Adams demonstrates a point made by Thomas Hallock; Bartram self-consciously fashions a “kind of text for which scholars would want to offer apologies” (110). Apologies of this kind do not dwell enough upon Bartram’s primary way of understanding and describing Southeastern environments. Hearne makes sense of the chaotic dynamics of and complex range of meanings suggested by a new geography principally by surviving in it. Bartram attempts to do so using a sophisticated, totalizing global system which was an integral cultural apparatus of Europeans as they expanded into other peoples’ lands and seemingly sought to answer the question “If this is your land, where are your stories?” (Chamberlin).

In 1791, the same year *Travels* was initially published, Benjamin Rush purveyed a thesis that Adams and other recent critics glide past in their sometimes over-generous criticism: “knowledge of the names and qualities of the beings in nature was not only the basis of the American’s control over his environment, but might also be, in some sense, the foundation of the collective life of the new nation of which he was a member” (Looby 252). From the perspective of national history, narratives largely construed around knowledge of natural history and geography provided integral strength and support to larger narrative architectures of national identity and independence. But from a post-colonial perspective, the appropriation of land and resources through brutal processes of colonization were also, in part, dependent on the ability to supplant local and traditional knowledge with the appropriators’ own versions of expertise and orientation. And, presumably, the popularized versions of natural history and geography in travel narratives worked sympathetically to patch-up settler’s dislocated and disoriented senses of place.

Even if, as Charles Adams argues, Bartram interweaves anxieties about imperialism and about the totalizing schema of the Linnaean system, it remains the central trope in his narrative. And therefore, it remains necessary to understand the historic, generic, and disciplinary dimensions of a document wrought with “useful knowledge” of yet uncolonized territory as a colonialist deployment of this Linnaean system.

Similarly, light can be shed on the reading of Hearne’s *A Journey* in the first chapter through consideration of the ramifications of the contradictory modes of natural history and geography between which his travel writing vacillates. To this end I will dwell for a bit on the history of eighteenth-century literary naturalizing as a segue to the

discussion of Bartram's landscape in chapter three. What are the moves that contributed to the rising discursive preeminence of natural history constituting a mode of colonial writing upon which generic structure Hearne is on the cusp and Bartram is more fully integrated? What was the discursive climate that situated an audience for these contact narratives? And what were the discursive structures that enabled Bartram and Hearne to "impose meaning and formal coherence on the chaos" of North American spaces (Linda Hutcheon 231-32).

Linnaeus and the Colonizer's Environment

Scientific travel writing as a genre emerged in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* argues that the emergence of this genre had very strong political, economic, and cultural valencies which were intimately connected, and indeed essential, to processes of colonization. Her study describes "scientific and sentimental travel writing...as bourgeois forms of authority that displace older traditions of survival literature" (Pratt 5). The final chapter of *A Journey* marks the move in a single text that had already begun for "many traveler-writers [who] disassociated themselves from such traditions as survival literature, civic description, or navigational narrative, for they were to be engaged by the new knowledge-building project of natural history" (Pratt 24). A more fully immersed Bartram, as we have seen above, expounds on these generic principles and his philosophical allegiance to the new project from the outset.

A new way of looking: Globalized Knowledge/Global Conquest:

As Pratt demonstrates, European conceptions of the world rapidly changed during the late eighteenth century owing at least in part to the publication near the middle of the century of texts by Linnaeus, Buffon, and others that established and popularized global

taxonomic systems for plants and animals. With the publication of two major texts, *Systema naturae* (1735) and *Philosophica botanica* (1751), Carl Linnaeus rose to international fame and significantly changed the method of natural history practiced by Europeans. His books were impressive and influential not for scientific discoveries based on an empirical method, but rather for the systematic classification schemes they presented. He developed a sexual system of botanical identification and a binomial nomenclature for flora and fauna, both of which are still integral to practices of biology, ecology, and natural history today.

These methodical systemizations for organizing the vast and exponentially growing catalogues of known plants and animals had two revolutionary consequences: 1) to “democratize” the study of botany and zoology, making it possible for nearly anyone, not just aristocrats with access to gardens and collections, to study and contribute to a catalogue of uniquely identified and described biota; and 2) to facilitate the extension of a mechanized and systemized view of the natural world over the entire globe in an age when exploration and discovery were primary national interests throughout Europe (Koerner, *Linnaeus* 15). Lisbet Koerner emphasizes the extent to which Linnaeus was conscious of the economic significance of his system in her essay “Carl Linnaeus in his time and place.” “Linnaeus was a typical enlightenment improver,” she argues, and “he spoke of his science as serving the state’s economic needs” (Koerner, “Carl Linnaeus in his time and place” 151). The methodical naming and classifying of plants by Linnaeus’ students who began accompanying most European exploratory missions to other continents was necessary if their findings were to be useful:

Nature has arranged itself in such a way, that each country produces something especially useful; the task of

economics is to collect [plants] from other places and cultivate such things that don't want to grow [at home] but will grow [there]. (Linnaeus qtd. in Koerner, "Carl Linnaeus in his time and place" 151)

Many studies have demonstrated powerful relationships between imperial expansion and the rise of natural history in the eighteenth century, and although these relations are most likely more complex and subtly interwoven than acknowledged here by Linnaeus, his consideration of the symbiosis of his method with imperial economics, even as it was conceived, lends greatly to the credibility of these arguments.

Michel Foucault, Edward Said, and, more recently, Mary Louise Pratt have all argued that the rapid development of the science of natural history after about 1750 is highly correlated with a shift in imperial ideological production—a shift from an emphasis on representations of physical conquest to “the construction of global-scale meaning through the descriptive apparatuses of natural history” (Pratt 15). This shift is in part a manifestation of the Linnaean method, but many other connected and interdependent factors contributed to the “systemizing of nature” and the development of a “planetary consciousness” by Europeans (Pratt 29). Pratt’s historical foregrounding emphasizes the role of international collaborations in descriptive natural sciences. A critical example of this knowledge-building cooperation, she points out, was the French led La Condamine expedition of 1735, which sought to determine the actual shape of the earth. Pratt’s argument establishes that geography and natural history were fundamentals of “one of Europe’s proudest most conspicuous instruments of expansion, the international scientific expedition” (Pratt 23).

The instruments were both materially and discursively powerful for colonization. A systematic botany made new-found plants useful just as mapping of continents made

exploration and exploitation of continents, their people and resources, effective. But at the same time, and most importantly, “knowing” these faraway lands reinforced the colonial claim to them. Presenting itself as an intellectual authority over exotic landscapes by means of scientific exploration, the empire reified the perception that the colonies could be controlled and settled, while simultaneously “naturalizing” that authority.

Foucault on the Discourse of Natural History

This was a new way of looking, and a conspicuously colonial way at that. Importantly, the Linnaean gaze and its systematic arrangement of nature were neither natural nor passive. Pratt drives this point home, suggesting that by the end of the eighteenth century “natural history asserted an urban, lettered, male authority over the whole of the planet; it elaborated a rationalizing, extractive, dissociative understanding which overlaid functional, experiential relations among people, plants, and animals” (38). In this argument Pratt partially parallels Michel Foucault whose *The Order of Things* works to show that the new methods of natural history developed in the eighteenth century did not “enlighten” views of nature, but rather reduced them to a set of abstractions. Touch, smell, and color were restricted from this field of observation leaving only an attenuated set of (useful) characteristics:

The area of visibility in which observation is able to assume its powers is thus only what is left after these exclusions: a visibility freed from all other sensory burdens and restricted, moreover, to black and white....[this] defines natural history’s condition of possibility, and the appearance of its screened objects: lines, surfaces, forms, reliefs. (*The Order of Things* 145)

Representation according to modern taxonomy, Foucault argues, is reduced to the things which make the system complete and nothing else—number, shape, proportion, and geometric relation. This reduction made a great global systemization possible, which in turn made it possible for European intellectual agents to contribute to knowledge at the center from widely disparate peripheries. Interestingly, the screening of a gaze was necessary before it could be coherently deployed in the territories subjected to European “control, surveillance, prohibition, and constraint” (Foucault, *language, counter-memory, practice* 213).

Why call the movement Enlightenment when it drastically limits the field of visibility to a set of amplified abstractions? In *The Order of Things*, Foucault emphasizes the power held in a limited but consistent gaze:

Thus arranged and understood, natural history has as a condition of its possibility the common affinity of things and language with representation; but it exists as a task only in so far as things and language happen to be separate. It must therefore reduce this distance between them so as to bring language as close as possible to the observing gaze, and the things observed as close as possible to words. Natural history is nothing more than the nomination of the visible...a new field of visibility being constituted in all its destiny. (144)

Foucault goes on to explain how through this reductive gaze, something of a perfect grammar can be constructed, connecting names to things in way that, using the language of set theory, is both one-to-one and on-to. This desire for a totalized taxonomy similarly reshaped other aspects of philosophy and thought, etc. This was a dialogic reshaping: not only did the “new field of visibility” offered by natural history give shape (meaning) to a culture of colonialism by organizing knowledge about colonial spaces into discursively cogent texts/sights/sites, but the naturalist’s gaze which provided this view was itself

considerably warped by and cultivated in the imperial ideologies it attended on missions of “discovery” and expansion. Indeed, as the foundations laid in the eighteenth century were built upon throughout the 1800s, Janet Browne argues, imperialism and natural history became increasingly enmeshed:

The study of plant and animal geography in nineteenth-century Britain was one of the most obviously imperial sciences in an age of increasing imperialism. At that time, when concepts of ‘empire’ and ‘imperialism’ were being dramatically forged on the anvil of colonization, the conceptual framework, methodologies and practical techniques developed to deal with foreign animals and plants took their tone directly from those used in national expansion. (305)

The simple though ingenious cataloguing techniques standardized by Linnaeus functioned at once as a bureaucratic modification of natural history achieving an alignment with national economic imperatives as well as a metaphor for the global enterprise of colonialism itself. Controlling knowledge through a global system of surveillance meant controlling space.

Any reading of the landscape productions and processes narrated in *A Journey and Travels* needs to account for the primacy of this discursive and technological trend. Without a working knowledge of the dimensions in which natural history operated as both a field of knowledge and as a discursive paradigm, interrogations of spatial representations will mistakenly take their cues from less central elements of the cultural productions. Indeed, though I do not have the space to engage with them all, it seems that many readings of Hearne and Bartram have accepted the “enlightened” condition in which these systems of knowledge have become so entrenched as to seem nearly invisible, or natural. In the next chapter I attempt to *denaturalize* the naturalist’s gaze in a

critical examination of Bartram's landscape by maintaining a fixed eye on the Linnaean gaze and addressing the means by which the narrative incorporates and at times resists this technology and its implications alongside other, more peripheral, tropes.

Chapter 3: William Bartram's Ecocentric Landscape

Linnaean-styled representations of space are a very significant aspect of William Bartram's narrative. Not only does *Travels* primarily characterize natural scenes through catalogue and enumeration using these tools as scaffolding that organizes narrative travel through space, but the deployment of the Linnaean gaze is also critically important to the subjectification of the narrator in the contested spaces of the contact zone. The return to a Linnaean gaze—going back to nature—works to temper potential sights of violence and danger in the narrative and also provides subject matter besides the traveler's own situation of vulnerability and disorientation. Countering the monotonous cataloguing with its fixedness in reason and order, Bartram implements "tempests," both climatic and figurative, as a leitmotif which constitutes an atypical sublime aesthetic particularly in its relation to the principal natural descriptions inflected in the Linnaean system. Ultimately these tempests do not disrupt the rational, ordering colonial functions of surveillance and representation as some critics have argued, but instead provide a script that verifies the power of systemized observation to calm the disorienting storms that frequently threaten Europeans in the contact zone.

As in the chapter on Hearne's rhetorical production of and process through landscape, I investigate *Travels* using conventional ecocritical avenues of interrogation. Bartram is shown to present non-utilitarian valuations of environment ranging from aesthetic to religious. Further reasons for including *Travels* in ecocritical canons of nature writing are the text's proto-ecological methods of description which highlight interconnection and interdependence in natural communities, and which include human activities in these networks. However, I conclude by problematizing these limited criteria

of analysis by showing how Bartram's celebrated innovations in natural description are also connected with, richly operating within, and indeed providing further innovation for Eurocentric colonialist discourse, even if these correspondences are both oblique and unintentional.

Linnaean Inflections

What exactly did this Linnaean system do for Bartram's descriptions? "Natural history called upon human intervention (intellectual, mostly) to compose an order," and, according to Pratt, this order allowed Bartram to produce a readable (or meaningful) landscape for readers separated from the described ecosystems themselves by hundreds and thousands of miles (31). Primarily, it allowed him to communicate efficiently with proprietors of a global collection of botanic knowledge. As seen in the following descriptions from an island in "the little ocean of Lake George" in Florida, Bartram could use a system of referents, vocabulary, and agreed upon classifications to position species under surveillance alongside increasingly innumerable species gathered on expansionary missions from around the world:

There grow on this island many curious shrubs, particularly a beautiful species of lantana (perhaps *lant. Camerara*, Lin. Syst. Veget. P.473). It grows in coppices in old fields, about five or six feet high, the branches adorned with rough serrated leaves, which sit opposite, and the twigs terminated with umbelliferous tufts of orange coloured blossoms, which are succeeded by a cluster of small blue berries: the flowers are of various colours, on the same plant, and even in the same cluster, as crimson, scarlet, orange and golden yellow: the whole plant is of a most agreeable scent. The orange-flowered shrub *Hibiscus* is also conspicuously beautiful (perhaps *Hibisc. spinifex* of Linn.) It grows five or six feet high, and subramous. The branches are divergent, and furnished with cordated leaves, which are crenated. The flowers are of a moderate size, and of a deep splendid yellow. The pericarpium are spiny. I also

saw a new and beautiful palmated leaved convolvus. This vine rambles about on the ground; its leaves are elegantly sinuated, of a deep grass green, and sit on long petioles. The flowers are very large, infundibuliform, of a pale incarnate colour, having a deep crimson eye. (102-104)

Though Bartram drew, painted, and made extensive collections of natural specimens, much of his botanical description in *Travels* comes in the form of these brief notes. The notes can be brief because he files plants in relation to a genera already listed in Linnaeus's vast catalogue and includes important, and hopefully, unique characteristics of its fructification bodies (calyx, corolla, pericarp, pistil, seed, stamen, and receptacle); its leaves' shape, number, and relation; in addition to a few other characteristics that may or may not be useful for identification, but which he finds interesting nonetheless.

Because Linnaeus had created and popularly implemented "one global classificatory tree encompassing all life on earth, and divided into five levels of generality: class, order, genus, species, and variety" in which, particularly, "plant genera [were] divided according to the number, size, placement, and shape of stamen and pistils", Bartram could rest assured these descriptions would adequately identify his specimens without the time-consuming process of full and painstaking description (Koerner, "Carl Linnaeus in his time and place" 146-47).

As we are prompted to journey through Southeastern ecosystems with Bartram, similar to the texts analyzed by Pratt, "one by one...life forms [are] drawn out of the tangled threads of their life surroundings and rewoven into European-based patterns of global unity and order" (Pratt 31). Given the methodologies set in motion by Linnaeus, anyone with an eye trained like Bartram's "could familiarize ('naturalize') new sites/sights immediately upon contact, by incorporating them into the language of the

system” (Pratt 31). And so Bartram renders ecosystems among the “head branches of the Great Ogeche” drawing out first from the “loose rich soil”:

... a species of Ipomea (Ipomea, caule erecto, ramoso, tripedali, fol. Radicalibus, pinnatifidis, linearibus, humistratus, florib. Incarnates intus maculis coccineis adperso). It grows erect, three feet high, with a strong stem, which is decorated with plumed or pinnatifid linear leaves, somewhat resembling those of the Delphinium or Ipomea quamoclit; from about one half its length upwards, it sends out on all sides, ascendant branches which divide again and again... (306)

To the extent that Bartram is able to recognize and interpret species and their relations as he travels through new environs, observational science provides an orienting method and narrative scaffold that attend the colonial agent (or traveler) as well as the reader in a setting typified by natural and cultural disorientation. In this passage and frequently in *Travels*, Bartram’s botanic observations stand as markers connecting one place to another. About the species of *Ipomea*, Bartram recollects that he “saw a species of this plant, if not the very same, growing on the sea coast islands near St. Augustine,” and that at the site discussed above, Flat Rock, “the blue flowered Malva and Delphinium were its associates” (306). Though in rare instances he acknowledges the contested and shifting status of the terrain in terms of its inter-cultural associations and conflicts, Bartram more often locates himself within botanical communities of “associates” when navigating the contact zone. In the next section we will see how the return to natural description often works to temper and diminish sites of violence or danger that appear in the narrative.

Back to Nature (or, Natural Description as Pacific Device)

One of the instances in which Bartram discusses the possibility of dangerous inter-cultural contact also occurs at Flat Rock in north-central Georgia, a common

stopping point and landmark on the “great trading path from Augusta to the Creek Nation” (305). In the area around Flat Rock Bartram notes that “the soil, situation and productions of these parts...differ very little from the Northern districts of Georgia already recited” previously in his narrative, and so, already familiarized to the site/sight he draws out a single and unfamiliar species, the Morning Glory-like herbaceous vine (description quoted above). Here he inscribes his intellectual authority in a space where he has very little power otherwise. The group of traders he is traveling with are near to the very contested ground known as Cherokee Corner, which was the barely-agreed-upon point marking the boundary of the Cherokee and Creek Nations at a location on the western edge of British occupied territory (Scurry). Bartram is relieved that his party had met up with other traders at Flat Rock who were carrying on in the same direction because it made the party more secure:

Our caravan consisting of about twenty men and sixty horses, we made a formidable appearance, having now little to apprehend from predatory bands or outlaws. (307)

While Bartram demonstrates concern about his safety in these brief lines, the threat of “predatory bands” is relatively diminished in the text—relegated to these brief lines—, while the author’s powers of identification, description, and classification are amplified as he re-focuses his attention on the flower.

Reading this passage against the climactic passage in Hearne’s *Journey*, in which he and his guides meet violently with the party of Inuit, demonstrates clearly that Bartram is operating in a mode distinct from Hearne’s. Like *A Journey, Travels* cultivates the authority and the capacity of a lone European man in the thick of the “contact zone”, but it rests this authority on the power of the scientific gaze and the ability to organize

knowledge around it, while de-emphasizing the threats to the protagonist's survival, understating the fact that he lived to tell the tale. Hearne makes excuses for engaging in abstract discussions of natural history and instead focuses on hardships and difficulties that threaten his survival and identity. Through a constant return to these abstract discourses—natural contemplation and observation—Bartram, on the other hand, attenuates narrative presentation of threats to his corporeal body, and indeed reifies his identity in the practice of nature-gazing.

Again, contrasting Hearne, Bartram repeatedly portrays himself as “wholly engaged in the contemplation of the unlimited, varied, and truly astonishing native wild scenes of landscape and perspective” (169). The narrative rarely departs for very long from natural description. No sooner does he arrive at a new location, than, at least according to the narrative he has produced, he instantly begins an imposition of order on the chaotic diversity of the ecosystem in view. The observational gaze is only briefly distracted even in the face of considerable threats and hardships the narrator endures at and between described sites.

Near the beginning of his travels he demonstrates this tendency on the banks of the St. Mary's river. Upon crossing the St. Ille River, Bartram remarks that “It may be proper to observe, that I had now passed the utmost frontier of the white settlements on that border” (43). Having entered this borderland with its “fragrant pines” and “endless green savannas, chequered with coppices of fragrant shrubs”, Bartram encounters an angry aboriginal man on horseback and “armed with a rifle”. Bartram explains, “I never before this was afraid at the sight of an Indian, but at this time, I must own that my spirits were very much agitated” (43). After a moment of hostile silence, Bartram offers his

hand and the man accepts “with dignity in his look and action.” Bartram writes, speaking for the Other:

Possibly the silent language of his soul, during the moment of suspense (for I believe his design was to kill me when he first came up) was after this manner: “White man, thou art my enemy, and thou and thy brethren may have killed mine; yet it may not be so, and even were that the case, thou art now alone, and in my power. Live; the Great Spirit forbids me to touch thy life; go to thy brethren, tell them thou sawest an Indian in the forests, who knew how to be humane and compassionate.” (44)

These lines are consistent with Bartram’s advocacy for aboriginal rights; recognition and measured articulation of their equality (humanity); and attempts to dispel myths of savagery, that have been noted by several readers. This episode demonstrates these unusually respectful tendencies, but it also shows how undeterred the narrator is in surveying and describing natural scenes. He later learns that, indeed, according to the “chief” of a nearby town, the man in the forest was “one of the greatest villains on earth, a noted murderer, and outlawed by his countrymen” (44). Seemingly unfazed, Bartram returns to his objective from this dangerous and terrifying encounter without hesitation, as he calmly begins the next paragraph:

The land on, and adjacent to, this river, notwithstanding its arenaceous surface, appears naturally fertile. The peach trees are large healthy and fruitful; and Indian corn, rice, cotton and indigo, thrive exceedingly. This sandy surface, one would suppose, from its loose texture, would possess a percolating quality, and suffer the rainwaters quickly to drain off ... this kind of earth admits more freely of a transpiration of vapours, arising from intestine watery canals to the surface; and probably these vapours are impregnated with saline or nitrous principles, friendly and nutritive to vegetables. ... The savannas about St. Mary’s, at this season, display a very charming appearance of flowers and verdure; their more elevated borders are varied with beds of violets, lupins, *Amaryllis atamasco*, and plants

of a new and very beautiful species of *Mimosa sensitiva*...
(45)

This “*Mimosa sensitiva*” is described at nearly the same length as the angry man he had met in the forest, and Bartram continues at even more length describing the riparian flora of the area as if entirely unshaken by the experience:

Magnolia glauca, *Itea Clethra*, *Chionanthus*, *Gordonia lasianthus*, *Ilex angustifolium*, *Olea Americana*, *Hopea tinctoria*, &c. are seated in detached groves or clumps, round about the ponds or little lakes, at the lower end of the savannas. I observed, growing on the banks of this sequestered river, the following trees and shrubs: *Quercus sempervirens*, *Q. aquatica*, *Q. Phillos*, *Q. dentate*, *Nyssa aquatica*, *N. sylvatica*, *N. ogeeche*, *si. Coccinea*, *Cupressus disticha*, *Fraxinus aquatica*, *Rhamnus frangula*, *Prunus laurocerasa*, *Cyrilla racemiflora*, *Myrica cerifera*, *Andromeda ferruginia*, *Andr. Nitida*, and the great evergreen *Andromeda* of Florida, called Pipe-stem Wood, to which I gave the name of *Andromeda fimosissima*, as it far exceeds in beauty every one of this family. (46)

In this way we see the authority of the intellect as a refuge from and recompense for the vulnerability of the colonist, alone in the “contact zone”. Not only, apparently, as Pratt has described, did generic frames in the later eighteenth-century travel narratives tend away from accounts of the violence of aboriginal-newcomer contact, and towards a more calm articulation of scientific knowledge, but here in Bartram’s text we see that the author himself uses the droning catalogue of botanic Latin as a pacific narrative device to calm the tempests arising in his experience and his text.

Bartram’s production of landscape is strongly organized by and inflected in Linnaean discourse. But it is also true that the process of the narrator through natural environments and indigenous land resolves emerging discontinuities through the author’s meticulous practice of this kind of natural history. In this way Linnaean methodology

operates as both a productive tool and a subjective frame, and we see the manifestation of landscape as both product and process.

Religious effusion

The catalogue, along with other descriptive deployments of the Linnaean method, works in a parallel way with another trope that Bartram sometimes uses to render hermeneutically navigable landscape—religious effusion. Just as the nearly violent episode of contact with the armed outlaw in the forest is quickly calmed and diluted by the intellectual management of riparian plants, so too are Bartram’s own self-generated responses to the “ineluctable modality of the ineluctable visuality” of the ‘new world’—often episodes of emotional excitement or religious ecstasy inflected with awe—tempered by the cooling effects of systemizing the flora, fauna, and geology (Joyce 48).

In March of 1774, according to his narrative, William Bartram arrived at Frederica on St. Simons Island in Georgia where he “had time to explore the island” (Bartram 69). Part II, Chapter 1 of his *Travels* produces a Linnaean inflected portrait of the area with the relative ease accommodated by the new methods of natural history described by Pratt. After visiting with some settlers who had colonized the lush barrier islands, Bartram had the opportunity to “reconnoiter” the area’s

ridges of sand-hills, mixed with sea shells, and covered by almost impenetrable thickets, constituting of Live Oaks, Sweet-bay (*L. Borbonia*), *Myrica*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Rhamnus frangula*, Cassine, *Sideroxylon*, *Ptelea*, *Halesia*, *Callicarpa*, *Carpinus*, entangled with *Smilax psuedochina*, and other species, *Bignonia sempervirens*, *B. crucigera*, *Rhamnus volubilis*, &c. (70)

This catalogue of plants and technical description of the soil, like many others, is immediately followed by a moment of religious effusion: “O thou Creator supreme,

almighty! how infinite and incomprehensible thy works! most perfect, and every way astonishing!” (71). Indeed, to someone untrained in botany and geology newly arrived from another climate, another continent, the lush vegetation of St. Simon’s Island would seem almost “infinite” in its diversity and any attempt to describe the botanic productions alone, much less the geology and zoology, would seem “incomprehensible.” But Bartram has just finished identifying and enumerating, if it was mostly summary. Demonstrated here is Bartram’s tendency to deploy a version of the eighteenth-century literary sublime. This is not a typical deployment of the sublime. The “astonishment”, that which “robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning” according to Edmund Burke’s *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (320), is not ascribed to any particular object in the landscape—a precipice, an abyss, a vastness—but instead arises as a result of the observers’ own attempts to impose order on the island’s natural productions.

Another occasion of spiritual outburst follows a few pages later, in which Bartram again registers feelings of incomprehensibility and inexpressibility:

If then the visible, the mechanical part of the animal creation, the mere material part, is so admirably beautiful, harmonious, and incomprehensible, what must be the intellectual system? That inexpressibly more essential principle, which secretly operates within? That which animates the inimitable machines, which gives them motion, impowers them to act, speak, and perform, this must be divine and immortal?” (19)

The rhetorical move to locate the divine within the natural is not unusual, but Bartram explains his occupation as an avenue into a greater understanding of the supernatural, and even as a means of proving the divinity of creation. Bartram implies that the Linnaean inspection of nature’s “vesture” allows him to better understand and appreciate the

boundlessness and infinite complexity of creation, and indeed invokes responses to the sublime even in the mundane itemizations of a botanist (Bartram 15). A nomination of the visible fosters an awe for the invisible.

These passages occur as religious and emotional outbursts set against a typically placid exercise of enumeration and classification. But, as Thomas Hallock notes, Bartram often “bursts into religious euphoria” (113) almost in response to his own enumerative cataloguing. The relationship between the systemized methodology of natural surveillance on the one hand, and the invocation of awe and reverence on the other, remains an obscure and complex dimension of the composition.

How do we read the Tempests?

When Bartram departs from observational practice and interjects religious effusion, critics claim that it raises some questions about Bartram’s conception of the systemization and classification that comprised natural history in his time. These bouts of emotional over-excitement arise, according to Douglas Anderson, “when his science and his natural piety collide” (3). Charles Adams and Thomas Hallock have read these collisions as evidence that Bartram harbors a certain degree of distrust for his methods of natural history, that he believes Linnaeus’ system cannot accurately account for and represent the natural diversity of and the author’s response to nature, and these disruptions give notice that something is inappropriate or irreverent about the method. In this line of argument the narrative outbursts serve as acknowledgement of the limited and, perhaps, corrupting aspects of the Linnaean gaze. For both Adams and Hallock this acknowledgement ultimately plays out as a subversion of the colonial, imperial, and hegemonic functions of this gaze as it is theorized by Foucault and Pratt.

But, as I have shown above, the contradictions, dangers, and anxieties that attend the explorer-narrator's move into the contact zone are frequently assuaged by the (global) rationalizing capacities of systematic natural history. Bartram experiences moments of bewilderment and disorientation in the contact zone—sometimes because of frightening encounters with the Other (the armed outlaw), sometimes as a result of being overcome by the complexity of the natural world that he is attempting to describe. And, at times, the two are conflated:

The attention is quickly drawn off, and wholly engaged in the contemplation of the unlimited, varied, and truly astonishing native wild scenes of landscape and perspective, there exhibited: how is the mind agitated and bewildered, at being thus, as it were, placed on the borders of a new world! In the first view of such an amazing display of the wisdom and power of the supreme author of nature, the mind for a moment seems suspended, and impressed with awe. (169)

Bartram retreats quickly from the story about the armed outlaw in the forest, returning to the halcyon calm of natural description as if nothing has happened. In this case though, it is the natural world itself that interrupts the calm of his description, his deployment of the Linnaean gaze. The “astonishing wild scenes” originally to blame for the interruption are then equated with the experience of being “placed on the borders of a new world”, indicating a sympathy between the two forms of dislocation or disorientation—social and environmental.

The suspension of the mind is only momentary, however. Despite the halting irruption of these emotional appeals, Bartram always ultimately continues in his methodical description, reaffirming his authority, his identity, and his location in hasty narrative returns to the intellectual system that connects his own liminal status to the

center(s)—for him, both Philadelphia and London. And in this way, rather than calling the Linnaean gaze into question as Hallock and Adams suggest, these passages demonstrate a method for overcoming the disorienting and contradiction-laden experiences that necessarily attend colonizing activities. The lesson then becomes: tempests will certainly arise, but can be calmed through practices of intellectual management. In the final chapter we will see how this management is presented as non-violent and non-transformative—pacifying the tempests with one’s own passivity.

The deployments of Burkean aesthetics of the sublime described above occur themselves as tempests in the otherwise measured studiousness of the narrative. But Bartram also figures quite a few naturally occurring tempests and hurricanes in the narrative. In these set-pieces, the rise of a tempest and the calm that returns afterwards mirror the interruptions of sublime responses to the practices of enumeration and classification and the returns to the description that follow. In this way, tempests like the one described in the following passage from the introduction, become a central leitmotif to the narrative production of landscape:

There are few objects out at sea to attract the notice of the sailor, but what are sublime, awful, and majestic: the seas themselves, in a tempest, exhibit a tremendous scene, where the winds assert their power, and, in furious conflict seem to set the ocean on fire. (28)

The tumultuous language of this and other similar passages serve to enliven an often tediously specific prose. But the calm that follows quickly stifles emergent energies: “the lately agitated bosom of the deep has again become calm and pacific” (Bartram 28).

The interplay of intellectual control (as implemented in the Linnaean method) and emotional and intellectual destabilization arising out of natural complexity, cultural

dislocation, and even the weather (tempests) is not simply resolved into a didactic lesson in the narrative no matter the critical attempts to assert as much. Rather than centering these exposed contradictions as evidence of radical or precocial politics, I would argue that these tempestuous interruptions and reactions to the stodginess of the Linnaean discourse instead point to the significant mythic and discursive dimensions of representations of space in staking and defending new-comer claims to indigenous space. It was not enough to simply stage a Linnaean emissary capable of cataloguing and nominating space. A viable narrative claim by settlers to indigenous space must also clear a path, so to speak, through the disorienting experiences of the contact zone by dramatizing not only the disorientation itself, but also the means of assuaging that disorientation.

Non-Utilitarian Valuation

The play of a religious veneration of nature against a functional, systematic, surveillance of natural production is quite complicated in Bartram's text as well as in critical discussions of it. However, one conclusion that we can easily draw from these putatively contradictory modes is that Bartram's study of nature tended more towards veneration than commodification in his own understanding. This understanding certainly stood "in sharp contrast to the utilitarian, scientific temperament of European Enlightenment" (John Seelye qtd. in Pramod Mishra, 245) held by William's father, John, and by the American Philosophical Society which Ben Franklin founded with John. Pramod Mishra's post-colonial reading of Bartram's *Travels* makes a point of recognizing the economic incentives that attended natural history in the eighteenth century. As discussed above, "natural history—collecting, naming, classifying,

displaying, studying, bringing the world under the sovereignty of the taxonomizing European gaze—was involved as an indispensable practice of European imperialism” (Mishra 250). Mishra opposes Bartram’s motives for naturalizing – those of the “pure nature lover”—with the motives of Fothergill, his patron, and with those of

the community of collectors [that] provided a world of funding, assessment, competition, and circulation of discourses, [as well as] the official Societies... [that] provided the official and institutional sites for the recognition and celebration of knowledge about and acquisition of specimens from the colonies. (Mishra 251)

For many natural historians in colonial geographies the practice of naturalizing “always had behind it the commercial interest” (Mishra 251). Despite Bartram’s “prolific capability” as a naturalist, he spent life following his travels “vegetating on his brother’s farm for almost thirty years”, apparently uninterested in pursuing this lucrative career (Mishra 246).

Aside from this biographical argument, textual evidence of Bartram’s non-commercial appreciation abounds. In the introduction he exclaims:

This world, as a glorious apartment of the boundless palace of the sovereign Creator, is furnished with an infinite variety of animated scenes, inexpressibly beautiful and pleasing, equally free to the inspection and enjoyment of all his creatures. (13)

His study or “inspection” of nature thus becomes an occasion for a sort of religious worship, quite apart from the economically lucrative practice of natural history described by Mishra. Further, the notion of the natural world as “equally free” for the “enjoyment of all” expressed in this passage parallels the coupling of wilderness and recreation in the conception and management of National Parks and other nature preserves that institutionalize non-commercial forms of land-use.

Bartram more explicitly delineates his hierarchy of motivations later in the narrative, discussing the religious aspect of his travels, not in the explosive outbursts of seeming epiphany, but in a more meditative, reflective mood. Bartram enjoys the company of a fellow traveler on his way to St. Johns and he characterizes the young man's motives as "totally opposite" his own, self-consciously demonstrating his ethical position in relation to nature as divine creation:

He, a young mechanic on his adventures, seemed to be actuated by no other motives, than either to establish himself in some well inhabited part of the country, where, by following his occupation, he might be enabled to procure, without much toil and danger, the necessaries and conveniencies of life; or by industry and frugality, perhaps establish his fortune. (81)

Bartram figures his own motivations quite differently, acknowledging, as Mishra does, the economic benefits that often came from his type of occupation, but categorizing them as secondary possibilities that may occur as a result of following his true passion:

I, continually impelled by a restless spirit of curiosity, in pursuit of new productions of nature, my chief happiness consisted in tracing and admiring the infinite power, majesty, and perfection of the great Almighty Creator, and in the contemplation, that through divine aid and permission, I might be instrumental in discovering, and introducing into my native country, some original productions of nature, which might become useful to society. (81)

Here we see Bartram's resistance to an entirely utilitarian understanding of nature. This kind of passage leads critics to see the author and the narrator as "a retiring man whose only passion is to glorify God by describing and drawing as precisely as possible the infinite variety of His creation" (Adams 66). Thomas Hallock describes passages like this

as evidence of Bartram's "deep biocentrism that set him at the borders of literature" (114).

Bartram's Christian biocentrism is deployed in a pastoral-idyllic idiom. The elation, pleasure, joy, and inspiration that Bartram frequently describes as compensation for his naturalizing attention occur in the text as introductions and conclusions to the technical representations of specific places. These frames work to create a sense of the observer's aesthetic and emotional relationship to his pastime and are not marked by any of the climatic or psycho-somatic tempests discussed above:

My mind yet elate with the various scenes of rural nature, which as a lively animated picture had been presented to my view; the deeply engraven impression, a pleasing flattering contemplation, gave strength and agility to my steps, anxiously to press forward to the delightful fields and groves. (Bartram 187)

These moments of appreciation register Bartram's ethical and aesthetic valuation of nature apart from its utility, but they also stand in contrast to the outbursts of awe, bewilderment, and ecstasy described in the previous section that sometimes disturb the generally placid narrative surface.

Bartram also acknowledges regret about the ecological consequences of colonization and settlement in language that seems well ahead of its time. Bartram speaks of natural areas "yet unmodified by the hand of man" (64), and frequently suggests an "implicit value" (53) for nature, especially "unmodified nature" (294). At the beginning of Chapter VIII in Part II of the narrative, Bartram writes:

I have often been affected with extreme regret, at beholding the destruction and devastation which has been committed or indiscreetly exercised on those extensive fruitful Orange groves, on the banks of the St. Juan, by the new planters under the British government, some hundred acres of

which, at a single plantation have been entirely destroyed, to make room for the indigo, Cotton, Corn, Batatas, &c. or, as they say, to extirpate the mosquitoes, alledging that groves near the dwellings are haunts and shelters for those persecuting insects. (215)

Here Bartram not only expresses lament for destructive environmental practice, but also sets up a valuation of natural environments against the economic procedures of the “new planters” and the state, largely pre-figuring environmental debates in which we are embroiled today. Not only does Bartram recognize the conflict between economic and agricultural practices and the maintenance of natural environments, but he tentatively sketches an ethic of conservation even more akin to popular environmentalist movements today. As the passage continues Bartram demonstrates a prescient capacity—a proto-ecological understanding that has been the subject of recent scholarly work on Bartram:

Some plantations have not a single tree standing; and where any have been left, it is only a small coppice or clump, nakedly exposed and destitute; perhaps fifty or an hundred trees standing near the dwelling-house, having no lofty cool grove of expansive Live Oaks, Laurel Magnolias, and Palms, to shade and protect them, exhibiting a mournful, sallow countenance; their native perfectly formed and glossy green foliage as if violated, defaced and torn to pieces by the bleak winds, scorched by the burning sun-beams in summer, and chilled by the winter frosts. (215)

Here Bartram moves beyond simple lists of species, rendering a representation of a forest in the coastal plain of Southeastern North America that points towards the manner in which multitudinous species dwell together in various forms of interdependence and symbiosis. This passage explains that a clump of fifty or a hundred trees does not function in the same way as a forest. Further, it suggests that anthropogenic “violation” can render such a functioning interrelation of species devastated and destitute. These ideas are well-known ecological truisms today, but the language of biological

interconnection and interdependence was not developed at the time of Bartram's composition. The next section discusses this early form of ecological understanding and representation.

Bartram's Eco-approach and Deep Ecology

Matthew Silvis has recently described *Travels* as “one of the first serious studies of the American natural landscape” (57). The principal thrust of his essay establishes that Bartram's “descriptions of biological processes meant not to capture static portraits of the natural world, but to illuminate a living landscape – a landscape ripe with vigorous ecological communities” (57). Silvis notes that “As his narrative repeatedly indicates, Bartram was quite aware of ecological concepts even if he lacked the terms currently used to discuss them” (60). Focusing on aspects of interconnection and interdependence in Bartram's representation of natural scenes, Silvis recognizes a method of representation that develops notions of community despite its dependence on the often static and dislocating Linnaean system of cataloguing species. Silvis's conclusion is that Bartram's ecological communities “mark him as one of the first people to write about the natural world in terms of biotic communities, mutualism, and succession”, and thus, establish him as a forerunner to F.E. Clements and V.E. Shelford who are generally credited with creating the field of community ecology (60).

Silvis notices that “readers often overlook Bartram's recognition of a communal system within the natural world because he lacked a conventional terminology to relate such a concept. To compensate for this void, Bartram engaged in diverse rhetorics—such as those of botanical, theological, and economic thought—to mirror the complexly interwoven landscape of the Southeastern wilderness” (Silvis 60). There is not space to

repeat all of Silvis's arguments here, but I would like to add a couple of my own examples of Bartram's ecological understanding. The first demonstrates the kind of proto-ecological nuance that *Travels* frequently exhibits. In a description of St. Simons Island on the Georgia coast, Bartram notices that the "soil is made fertile and mellow by the admixture of seashells" (70). He then explains the tidal process which deposits the shells on the beach linking them with terrestrial and avian trophic networks, thus ecologically contextualizing his catalogue of shell-fish:

I observed a great variety of shell-fish, as Echinitis, Corallinus, Patella, Medusa, Buccina, Concha venereal, Auris marina, Cancer, Squilla, &c some alive, and others dead, having been cast upon the beach by the seas, in times of tempest, where they became a prey to sea fowl, and other maritime animals, or perished by the heat of the sun and burning sands. (71)

Silvis uses passages like this one to illustrate how "*Travels* represents a shift in biological thought from single-species studies to examinations of multiple species and their interactions within specific ecosystems" (58).

A central tenet of the Deep Ecology movement is the necessity for ecocentric perspectives and understandings, rather than anthropocentric ones. This move towards re-centering philosophy, ethics, and social relations is conceived under the guiding metaphor of an holistic worldview. A text edited by George Sessions, *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century* attempts to describe a theory and practice for this movement. In the text Fritjof Capra explains:

Shallow ecology is anthropocentric. It views humans as above or outside of nature, as the source of all value, and ascribes only instrumental, or use value to nature. Deep ecology does not separate humans from the natural environment, nor does it separate anything else from it. It does not see the world as a collection of isolated objects but

rather as a network of phenomena that are fundamentally interconnected and interdependent. Deep ecology recognizes the intrinsic values of all living beings and views humans as just one particular strand in the web of life. (20)

According to Greg Garrard, this set of radical environmental assumptions is “the most influential beyond academic circles” and is very often “the explicit or implicit perspective of ecocritics” (20).

Matthew Silvis is of the brand of ecocritics working from an implicit formulation of Deep Ecology. His reading of Bartram works to include *Travels* in the enlightened canon of those who transcend anthropocentric bias. Silvis and other “ecological critics” have argued that Bartram should be placed in the same nature writing tradition as Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Edward Abbey, Wallace Stegner, Rachael Carson, and Annie Dillard (Silvis 59). The ecological understanding of *Travels* demonstrated by Silvis lends credibility to the push for canonical inclusion. Indeed, according to Silvis, Bartram’s *Travels*, nearly one hundred years before the term “oecologie” was coined, has made a very early move from a predominantly anthropocentric to an ecocentric understanding and description of natural communities.

However, the reduction of ecologically-oriented and environmentalist literary criticism to a debate over who’s in (ecocentrists, Bartram) and who’s out (anthropocentrists, Hearne) is not only simplistic, but problematically obscures the social and cultural dimensions that always already attend any representations of space. My readings of the methods of landscape as production, representation, and process have tried to show how the formation of identity is often centrally connected to the description of place. By way of a final example of Bartram’s proto-ecology, I intend to transition into

a discussion of how spatial representations, whether they are ecocentric or not, always have direct socio-political consequences.

Useful in this regard is a second moment exhibiting proto-ecological understanding that is not explicitly mentioned in Silvis's article but which I find particularly important because it points toward how these ecological innovations were intimately related to colonial discourses at work in the text. In the Introduction to *Travels*, Bartram shows not only his knowledge of ecological relationships, but demonstrates the manner in which his curiosity and patient observation leads to such knowledge:

As I was gathering specimens of flowers from the shrubs, I was greatly surprised at the sudden appearance of a remarkably large spider on a leaf, of the genus *Araneus saliens*: at sight of me he boldly faced about, and raised himself up, as if ready to spring upon me; his body was about the size of a pigeon's egg, of a buff colour, which, with his legs, were covered with short silky hair; on the top of the abdomen was a round red spot or ocellé encircled with black. (22)

In this passage we see that Bartram combines ethological and phenotypic descriptive techniques, but as he continues aspects of the spider's relationship with other species become subjects of scrutiny:

I had surprised him on predatory attempts against the insect tribes. I was therefore determined to watch his proceedings. I soon noticed that the object of his wishes was a large fat bomble bee (*apis bombylicus*), that was visiting the flowers, and piercing their nectariferous tubes (22)

Acknowledging predator-prey relations is far from representing ecological communities, but Silvis's point is that the descriptions try to capture as much of the interrelation of species as possible. The spider is camouflaged by the "dense foliage" while the bumble bee is shown pollinating a flower, and Bartram suggests as a conclusion to this

description that “perhaps before night, [the spider] became himself the delicious evening repast of a bird or lizard” (23).

We see overtly colonial discourses arise as the ecologically sensitive passage continues. The spider’s behavior as it stalks the bumble bee is metaphorically compared to the hunting practices of one of the aboriginal peoples among which Bartram travels and whom he describes as themselves elements of the natural environment:

This cunning intrepid hunter conducted his subtil approaches with the circumspection and perseverance of a Siminole when hunting a deer, advancing with slow steps obliquely, or under cover of dense foliage, and behind the limbs . . . at the same time keeping a sharp eye upon me.
(22)

This type of comparison functions at once as imperial anthropomorphism and, colonial theriomorphism because the vehicle and tenor of the metaphor are possibly inverted in the field of political allegory. Silvis finds Bartram’s conflation of ethnography and ethology to be evidence of the fact that “he views humans as a part of the natural world, as members of an ecological community” (63). However, the reduction of cultural and social interaction to the category of *natural* in colonial discourses, a simplification that Silvis’s implicit Deep Ecology repeats, is most often evidence of a screening, eliding, and justifying of one social grouping’s oppression of another.

Imperial Anthropomorphisms and Colonial Theriomorphisms

A critical tension arises from the relationship between Bartram’s overt but secondary rebuttals of dehumanizing forms of Eurocentrism and his primary role as a colonial agent doing the work of territorial surveillance resulting in a spatial narrative that helped to displace indigenous ones: on the one hand there is a move to celebrate Bartram’s precociousness in terms of his overt advocacy for Native American societies

and their human rights,⁴ his implementation of a diverse set of natural rhetorics, and his early representation of ecological relations; on the other hand, the text retains imperial valencies that are, in fact, interconnected themselves, almost ecologically, with the celebrated aspects of the text. Some critics look to Bartram's conception of human relations as contained within natural ones (and not above or outside those) as a means of resolving this tension. I argue instead that this conflation of social and natural further antagonizes the tension for which there is no resolution.

Although Bartram develops ecologically inflected representations of the species itemized in his Linnaean catalogues, he nevertheless retains an anthropocentrism that describes the interconnections and relations of ecological communities in warlike, even imperial terms. Bartram uses anthropomorphic language to explain the interrelations between species, and this language often takes on a particularly imperial diction. The sustained anthropomorphizing begins in the introduction:

Birds are in general social and benevolent creatures; intelligent ingenious, volatile, active beings; and this order of animal creation consists of various nations, bands, or tribes, as may be observed from their different structure, manners, and languages, or voice; each nation or genus from which those tribes seem to have descended or separated. (23)

Here Bartram's use of the terms *nations*, *bands*, and *tribes* mirrors language used in ethnographic passages of the book. Building on this simple metaphor, the ecological relationships that Bartram is celebrated for recognizing and representing are often coded in language of human culture. In an example that resonates with current performances of American hegemony and its symbolism, vultures are "held in restraint and subordination by the bald eagle (*falco leucocephalus*)" (Bartram 176). This natural description encodes

⁴ See Anderson, Mishra, Hallock, and Adams.

typically human forms of hierarchy and oppression as the natural ecological interrelation of species.

As Douglas Anderson describes, for Bartram “the natural world ... is constantly at war” (6). Describing the predation of alligators on fish, Bartram compares them to the gar, a common, long-nosed species of fish, the nose of which looks like an alligator’s snout. Bartram says of the gar, that they are “a warlike and voracious creature, [and] they seem to be in league or confederacy together, to enslave and devour the numerous defenceless tribes” (180). This quotation is from a description of the Great Sink, a “fatal fountain,” where fish “being urged by pursuing bands of alligators and gar, and when entering the great bason or sink, are suddenly fallen upon by another army of the same devouring enemies, lying in wait for them” (181). The naturalizing of these human forms of hierarchy and bondage are more pertinent given that just a few pages later Bartram similarly describes aboriginal culture in the concluding paragraph of the chapter:

The Indians make war against, kill, and destroy their own species, and their motives spring from the same erroneous source as they do in all other nations of mankind And, they wage eternal war against deer and bear, to procure food and clothing, and other necessaries and conveniences; which is indeed carried to an unreasonable and perhaps criminal excess, since the white people have dazzled their senses with foreign superfluities. (186)

In this passage, aboriginal inter-tribal conflict is at first given the same level of legitimacy as the European version, but then these conflicts and warfare are naturalized as human lifeways are described in the same language of warfare, which is the same language Bartram uses to indicate predator-prey relationships in ecological networks. Later Bartram continues with a defense of aboriginal cultures. He denies myths of

savagery and resists discursive strictures which denied indigenous nations the history and complexity of social relations retained as a privileged aspect of European culture:

We see that war or the exercise of arms originates from the same motives, and operates in the spirits of the wild red men of America, as if formerly did with the renowned Greeks and Romans, or modern civilized nations, and not from a ferocious, capricious desire of shedding human blood as carnivorous savages... (320)

The imperial anthropomorphisms that occur earlier in the chapter have shifted direction though the vocabulary remains static, and the resultant theriomorphisms of cultural and political conflict, while overtly arguing for a humanization of aboriginal culture in European discourse, obliquely but ultimately provide an allegory that naturalizes the violence and injustice of colonial practices. Perhaps critics who cite these passages as evidence of Bartram's deeply critical resistance to colonial culture have never heard white University students respond to a lecture on some of the worst atrocities of colonization, "That was just survival of the fittest."

The narrative that grants people of all cultures humanity in that all humans are of the same species, that all species are elements of ecological communities, and therefore all social conflicts are governed simply and naturally by ecological and evolutionary models of resource competition and natural selection cannot stand uncontested. But most importantly, a reading of William Bartram's landscape production and process in *Travels* cannot avoid discussing the text's relevance to processes of European colonization in North America. The next chapter demonstrates in greater detail how the capacity to narrate colonial agency as passive and innocent through techniques of spatial representation was discursively central to the travel writing genre during the period. If, as Matthew Silvis has argued, Bartram's nature writing is the first to acknowledge

ecological communities, I suggest this discourse which situates humans as *environed* within ecological networks is problematically related to the colonial innovation of “anti-conquest” in its naissance. Instead of using evidence of Bartram’s desire to critically undermine European claims to superiority as a means of avoiding discussions of the colonial valencies of his text and of the kind of nature writing and natural gaze he deploys, ecocritics can instead undermine the possibility for this discourse to continue by exposing the manner in which it operates (and helps to subjugate) even without the author’s intention.

Chapter 4: Anti-conquest as Narrative Device

In the previous chapters I have shown how Bartram and Hearne attempted to represent spots of wilderness in their narratives of exploration. Here I will show how integral these kinds of narratives were to the project of British imperialism and particularly what discursive structures organized this function, or, to put it differently, to what particular colonizing discourses these narratives of spatial representation contributed no matter how unwittingly or obliquely. This will be achieved by exploring how Pratt's "anti-conquest," which she traces throughout travel writings of Europeans in South America and Africa, works just as well in these North American specimens.

Mary Louise Pratt's Anti-Conquest

In *Imperial Eyes*, Mary Louise Pratt traces patterns in the "vast, discontinuous, and overdetermined history of imperial meaning-making" implementing both interdisciplinary methodologies and evidence from a wide reading of generic texts (4). A strong, discursively-shaped tendency demonstrated by her analysis is the displacement of "older traditions of survival literature" by "scientific and sentimental travel writing" making use of the "anti-conquest" as narrative device. Indeed, as Thomas Hallock and others have discussed, William Bartram's *Travels* is a "specimen model" (109) of Pratt's "'anti-conquest', in which the naturalist naturalizes the bourgeois European's own global presence and authority" while simultaneously developing a posture of innocence (Pratt 28). Like Anders Sparrman and William Paterson, "Linnaean emissaries" whose travel narratives describe the Cape of Good Hope in Southern Africa, Bartram's "narrative of travel is organized by the cumulative, observational enterprise of documenting geography, flora, and fauna" (Pratt 51). This kind of narrative organization was new to

the late eighteenth century, as earlier narratives of inland travel contained little of the “differentiating, classificatory impulse” in their “treatment of land and space” (Pratt 45).

As discussed above, Pratt argues that the systemizing of nature according to the Linnaean gaze provided a means of shifting from “overt imperial articulations of conquest, conversion, territorial appropriation, and enslavement” to a “utopian, innocent vision of European global authority.” The itemizations of flora and fauna in Bartram’s narrative, in which he often himself describes these activities as “reconnoitering,” are a means of “territorial surveillance” (Pratt 39). But the story runs a little deeper than that. The formation of this kind of observation and narration as innocent and passive can be recognized in a number of rhetorical moves that typified later-eighteenth-century scientific travel writing according to Pratt. One of these is the disappearance of the narrator within the landscape he describes even as he travels through it, except as the implicit “landscanning eye” that beholds the space (Pratt 52). Another dislocates the presence of indigenous populations from the landscape under observation and in production. This is often achieved by removing ethnographic discussions from the narration of travel, and instead placing them in separate appendices or chapters dedicated to a form of static anthropological information, universally true independent of time and not limited to the occasion of contact as a result of travel. The attenuation of human presence also takes on grammatical formations as the narrator rarely “does” anything, but merely “sees”, with the implication being that no transformative action has taken place by the colonial agent.

Bartram’s *Travels* certainly fits into the typology of scientific “anti-conquest” that Pratt develops in *Imperial Eyes*. It is easy to discern that “the encounter with nature, and

its conversion into natural history, forms the narrative scaffolding” of Bartram’s text (Pratt 51). Similarly, as I have mentioned above briefly, his itemizations and classifications of ecological spaces according to a Linnaean model often take precedence over discussion of and concerns about his own situation and other human dramas, such that these non-observational, active issues and episodes quickly recede from the narrative whenever they do appear.

In a number of instances, however, Bartram’s narration deviates from the model set up by Pratt, particularly in regards to his narration of contact with aboriginal people(s). Unlike the scientific anti-conquest narratives Pratt discusses, Bartram often includes moments of inter-cultural exchange and reciprocity, effectively locating aboriginal society, government, and history within and alongside his technical descriptions of place. However, just as Pratt prescribes, Bartram also concludes his narrative with a static ethnographic section separated from the narrative of travel in Part IV, which develops six chapters giving

An Account of the Persons, Manners, Customs, and
Government, of the Muscogulges, or Creeks, Cherokees,
Chactaws, &c. Aborigines of the Continent of North
America. (386)

This is a typical version of Bartram’s simultaneous resistance to and imbrication in colonial discourses (Mishra 241). But despite marked deviations that directly interfere with and contradict imperial ambitions and their discursive articulation, Bartram’s broad structures and principal means of narration fit strongly into Pratt’s discursive typology.

These deviations are often the subject of critical discussions of *Travels* that situate Bartram literally and figuratively as a border figure who resists or at least regrets the violence of colonization and his position in colonial expansion and cultural production. I

will take up discussion of these instances below under the general premise that Bartram's desire for innocence—an aspect of the colonial discourse at the time—pushes the discursive limits of the anti-conquest to a degree that nearly disrupts the colonial functionality that Pratt proposes, but that nonetheless remains consistent with the desire to obviate the guilt of colonization and to develop a passive stance in the “new world.” In this way his spatial representations still functioned strongly to reify European colonial claims to North American spaces and to displace others.

Imperial Eyes delineates a second form of “anti-conquest” that describes the narrative structure of Hearne's *A Journey* with surprising consistency. The previous chapters distinguished Hearne's production of landscape from Bartram's most significantly in that there is almost “no landscape description at all” (Pratt 76) except when natural detail “is textually relevant (has value) in so far as it bears upon the speaker-traveler and his quest” (Pratt 77). So for the most part, Hearne's landscape was produced as “emblematic or composite” (Pratt 51) against which the narrative is arranged around his “personal experience and adventure” (Pratt 75). Though Hearne “is composed of a whole body rather than a disembodied eye” in his story, like Bartram, the narrator-explorer “is constructed as a non-interventionist European presence” in the contact zone: “He, too, is the non-hero of an anti-conquest” (Pratt 78). “Things happen to him and he endures and survives,” but most importantly Hearne remains passive and innocent (Pratt 78). Pratt's analysis locates this kind of “sentimental” travel writing as a compliment to the scientific narratives of inland travel in colonial geographies of the eighteenth century. Crucially for Pratt, despite the drastic differences in approach to the land, these two kinds

of travel narration share a capacity to sanitize and mystify European expansion even as they contribute to it.

While it is easy to schematically oppose *Travels* and *A Journey* according to Pratt's two forms of anti-conquest, the scientific and the sentimental, it is also worthwhile to note that these narrative modes are actually intermixed in each text. In some instances Bartram incorporates techniques attributed by Pratt to the sentimental genre. Similarly, Hearne's narrative wanders away at times from the model set-up by Pratt. It is important not to dismiss the relevance of this analysis because of complications, but to instead locate the multiple discursive correspondences of narrative postures of innocence and passivity in these North American texts alongside the examples from Africa that make up Pratt's example set. This will give more robustness to the understanding of the anti-conquest as a colonial discursive mechanism, but it will also help to sort out some difficulties faced by critics of Hearne and Bartram in positioning them within their colonial cultures.

Why the Emphasis on Innocence and Passivity?

I have suggested above, following the arguments of Rob Shields and Edward Said, that a significant portion of the claim to a space rests in a population's ability to articulate its claim in culturally viable motifs such as story. This is true of travel tales in that a working knowledge of an ecological and geographical space is necessary to survive within it and for imperial economies to thrive upon it, but storied landscapes are also necessary as a part of identity formation, be it indigenous, colonial, national, or even postmodern. In imperial or colonial situations these cultural productions travel back along the reaches of empire to a center, which then defines itself against the *others* on its

colonial frontiers. Broadly, it is this kind of discourse in which the production of travel tales participated in the eighteenth century.

In the period under discussion colonial practices were facing a growing host of challenges both at home and in the settlements themselves. The rather desperate attempt to send a man by foot to find a Northwest Passage and the successful American Revolution that occurred while Bartram quietly pursued his “sylvan pilgrimage” were both signs of trouble for the British expansionist regime in North America. And in other parts of the colonial world slave rebellions and independence movements were beginning to make things increasingly difficult in general. The rising popularity of the abolition movement in Europe and its colonies also began to undermine colonial and imperial fantasies. In such a situation, Pratt argues,

Euroimperialism faced a legitimation crisis. The histories of broken treaties, genocides, mass displacements and enslavements became less and less acceptable as rationalist and humanitarian ideologies took hold. Particularly after the French Revolution, contradictions between egalitarian, democratic ideologies at home and ruthless structures of domination and extermination abroad became more acute.
(74)

The discursive shifts that facilitated the rise of the anti-conquest in colonial narratives were prompted by this crisis of legitimation. Even if the physical battles for land had not been finally won, and were increasingly being lost, the “power to narrate” the land—to “block other narratives from forming and emerging”—had to be developed, enriched, and maintained (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* xiii).

Both *A Journey* and *Travels* help to recuperate colonial practice in its own discourses by offering examples of Europeans (or first generation settlers) venturing out of the colonies and into the frontier, establishing a corporeal and intellectual authority,

and, most significantly, doing so in a way that assured their own innocence—and that of the empire:

the conspicuous innocence of the naturalist...acquires meaning in relation to an assumed guilt of conquest, a guilt the naturalist figure eternally tries to escape, and eventually invokes, if only to distance himself from it once again. Even though the travelers were witnessing the daily realities of contact zone, even though the institutions of expansionism made their travels possible, the *discourse* of travel that natural history produces, and is produced by, turns on a great longing: for a way of taking possession without subjugation. (Pratt 57)

In this context it is important to realize that contrary to earlier Eurocentric claims, humanist sentiments that acknowledged indigenous culture and humanity were to be increasingly tolerated and acceptable in colonial discourse as a means of re-syncing colonial practice with prevailing sentiments. Therefore we should not be surprised to find contradictory positions in texts like *A Journey and Travels*, and we should instead expect to see these critiques alongside more obliquely functional discursive strategies. The desire for innocence is apparent in the landscape productions and processes that accrue in the narratives of Hearne and Bartram. Particularly, criticism of Bartram's proto-ecological nature writing needs to recognize this discursive dimension of the text even as it gains canonical status within literary discussions in environmental studies. To the extent that environmentalism and ecocriticism may still embody this "great longing" for innocence and for an obviation of bourgeois, First World guilt—the simultaneous guilts of conspicuous consumption and imperial entitlement—the enthusiastic celebration of proto-ecological nature writing like Bartram's needs to be curtailed by an acknowledgement of and attendance to the subjugative facility of a postured innocence behind a natural gaze.

An Eye for an “I”

One aspect that Pratt highlights as characteristic of the scientific anti-conquest in travel writing is that “the travelers are chiefly present as a kind of collective moving eye on which the sights/sites register” (59). Bartram constructs himself throughout his narrative as “wholly engaged in the contemplation of this magnificent landscape” (Bartram 276). The narrator rarely mentions hardships or toil. He must eat, but we do not hear much about it. And even when his life is in great jeopardy, as in the passage in which he is accosted by “the intrepid Siminole,” an armed and vengeful outlaw, Bartram returns quickly but calmly to the practice of observation.

The strongly visual language Bartram uses to narrate this contact implies the passivity of his enterprise, but also inadvertently suggests the power of viewing. His contemplation of the “gaily attired plants”—as if vegetation is some natural version of fashion—is interrupted “when, on a sudden, an Indian *appeared*.” Bartram emphasizes the moment of *seeing* by returning again to this instant image in his account of their interaction. He says, “the first *sight* of him startled me,” which he contextualizes with, “I never before this was afraid at the *sight* of an Indian.” And then his description shifts to the returned gaze of the Siminole man even though Bartram has “endeavoured to elude his *sight*” (Bartram 43, all italics mine). Having failed to remain an invisible “I”/eye—one who gazes but is not gazed upon—as is the (discursive) role of the anti-hero of the scientific anti-conquest—, Bartram admits, “I was in his power.” In this “moment of suspense” (Bartram 44) Bartram has “resigned [himself] entirely to the will of the Almighty,” dramatizing the power of the gaze and its narrative reversal as the principal narrator-observer himself is now “silently *viewed*” (Bartram 43, italics mine).

In the texts that Pratt analyzes, this kind of overt reversal of the gaze is generally not allowed. The rule is that “European protagonists absent themselves from their own story” (Pratt 59). For much of Bartram’s narrative this is true. The “I” is always the observer and rarely an actor. Even his progress across space is frequently described as “ascension”, a decidedly more passive inflection than “trudging through swamps” or “marching through the forest”, and a term that is suggestive of innocence and sacrifice in its correspondences with Christian mythology. In this deviation from the anti-conquest rule, in which Bartram’s identity and body are beheld by the gaze of the *other* (and thereby, the reader), there is a fetishistic emphasis on the power of the gaze that parallels Pratt’s critical line of sight.

Is this a self-conscious subversion of the supposedly passive gaze and stance of the colonial natural historian as it has been narrated in travel literature? Or is it a betrayal within the narration of the transformative power behind the gaze of a putatively passive traveler—a kind of slip? This kind of question riddles the critical discussion of *Travels*. According to a contrapuntal reading strategy that is the touchstone of much postcolonial criticism, the latter would be more likely. Partially recuperative readers of *Travels*—Mishra and Hallock—point to this kind of overt contradiction as evidence of Bartram’s resistance to the strictures of discourse, though they ultimately situate him as “imbricated” within that discourse (Mishra 241). However, the preponderance of readings—Adams, Anderson, Silver, Silvis—formidably recuperate and celebrate Bartram and his text on the basis of moments like these of what they deem self-reflexive exposure or contradiction. Most often the evidence for these positions comes not from

such subtle inversions and slippages, but rather from Bartram's overt articulations on behalf of indigenous peoples.

Indeed, the most significant topographical feature in the landscape of Bartram scholarship seems to rest upon a tension between a reading of *Travels* as determined or pre-scripted by the strictures of a generic colonial discourse, on the one hand, and a reading which acknowledges (or exposes) contradictions within the text as evidence of self-reflection and subversion encoded in the author's work, on the other. Resolution of this tension must acknowledge that the elision of colonial violence and justification of colonial practice occasioned via the narrative replacement of individual colonial agency by a passive gaze is not necessarily contested, and may in fact be strengthened, by the outright admission of indigenous rights and by overt bouts of colonial critique. Discursive prescriptions are never algebraically complete, and, indeed, as power becomes more diffusely hegemonic, it also becomes more permissive of deviance and critique so long as these are contained within and alongside functioning discursive strategies.

Aside from this instance of a gaze-inversion and a few other brief moments in *Travels*, Bartram's narration across space depicts himself as moving almost effortlessly from site to sight to site—"I ascended the steep banks, where stood a venerable oak" (Bartram 64)—and these sites are treated as opportunities for a long series of observational experiences, not destinations for any other purpose. In Chapter IV, Part I, Bartram narrates a journey from Savannah to Augusta, Georgia on horesback, a distance he recollects as "at least an hundred and fifty miles" (49). The structure of this passage is an extreme example of the observational enterprise dominating the narrative framework. He introduces his account of the journey thus:

As nothing very material occurred on the road, I shall proceed to give a summary account of the observations I made concerning the soil, situation, and natural productions of the country. (49)

Given this brief reasoning, the travelers, as bodies and agents, drop out of the text almost entirely. Yet it is an account of their journey—movements of bodies across space—, and so the progress from sight to sight must reflect the progress of the party. The first person pronouns in “we rise gradually” (49), “we find ourselves” (50), and “we ascend” (50) are the only references to the travelers in a few pages of detailed observation, and otherwise the movement is narrated through progress of visual details and the systemization of these. Progress is indicated by the unfolding of scenes before the narrator’s and the reader’s gazes.

And as the “I” (or “we” in this case) recedes, giving way to the immanence of the sovereign “eye”, the land follows suit and “*presents itself* to the invisible European” as one would before a monarch (Pratt 60, italics hers). The whole narrative of 150-miles travel is rendered a courtly drama. Or, as Pratt describes it in John Barrow’s account: the “language seems to suggest the fantasy of dominance and appropriation that is built into this otherwise passive, open stance” (Pratt 60). See, for example, Bartram’s metaphoric anthropomorphism which dramatizes spring growth as a flirtatious action performed for the viewer: “Vegetation, in perfection, appeared with all her charms, breathing fragrance everywhere” (Bartram 53). In these lines, not only is the gaze sovereign, but the act of gazing is strongly sexualized. Similarly, throughout *Travels*, the land(scape) performs for the observer as the “high forest of pines...admitted an ample view” (35); “the savannas...display a very charming appearance of flowers and verdure”(45); and, in general, “the scene opens and discloses to view” (Bartram 55). In the following passage

we see the sympathetic correspondences of Bartram's anti-heroic Linnaean gaze and a typically masculine one:

The arbustive hills, gay lawns, and green meadows...had already received my frequent visits; and although here much delighted with the new beauties in the vegetable kingdom, and many eminent ones have their sequestered residence near this place, yet as I was never long satisfied with present possession, however endowed with every possible charm to attract the sight, or intrinsic value to engage and fix the esteem, I was restless to be searching for more, my curiosity being insatiable. (53)

While many ecological critics might first notice in this passage what I have called Bartram's proto-environmentalism in the suggestion that nature has "intrinsic value," the most striking aspect of this extended metaphor is the narrator's construction of the landscape as a set of sexualized objects, the role of which is to charm him, and which he "possess[es]" through his observation. Pratt discusses a similar seemingly paradoxical moment in Barrow's account in which the language of desire—"restless," "insatiable"—is confluent with an insistence on passivity.

Overwhelmingly in *Travels*, from the level of narrative structure down to the syntactic, the posture in visual decipherment is pointedly passive, but in a few instances Bartram does allow himself something of an active role in these sexualized encounters of observation: "after penetrating a thick grove of oaks, suddenly a very extensive and beautiful savanna opened to view" (Bartram 69). However, in these dramatized sightings, the active-transgression of the gaze is translated into a passive acceptance of a sexualized offer. Persistently the land is the subject of the verbs in sentences that document the narrator's observational gaze, while the observer is only an implicit object: "The winding

banks of the river, and the high projecting promontories, unfolded fresh scenes of grandeur and sublimity” (Bartram 63-4).

Consistent with scientific travel writing from the latter eighteenth century, colonial agency disappears along with the narrator’s corporeal body as the landscape is overtly construed as in charge of Bartram’s travels: “I accidentally discovered” (59); “I resigned my bark to the friendly current” (63); “My progress was rendered delightful” (63). Not only is Bartram compelled by a desire to view, an unquenchable curiosity to see nature’s charms, but he dramatizes moments when these actions are purportedly controlled by the environment, at which point the environment (or landscape) takes on the ability to “render.”

The multiplicity of tropes Bartram uses in his landscape production as well as the unusually strong challenges Bartram’s narrative purveys against racist stereotypes makes this reading of his text’s discursive functionality as anti-conquest difficult to defend at a superficial level. As Thomas Hallock has put it, “Bartram wavers between so many positions that the search for perspective becomes its own theme” (112). One position seems to be wariness if not critique of Euroamerican settlement and governance. This is tied up with the admirable advocacy for the rights of indigenous peoples in the region, which was highly unusual for the period. In Part IV of *Travels*, Bartram gives a description that is both admiring and self-consciously polemic with prevailing European views of indigenous North Americans, although this contestation is itself located in the patently Eurocentric format of static ethnographic *othering*. He writes,

If we consider them with respect to their private character or in a moral view, they must, I think, claim our approbation, if we divest ourselves of prejudice and think

freely. As moral men they certainly stand in no need of European civilization. (391)

The critique of colonial expansion and the American project is even sharper when Bartram describes a canoe trip up the Altamaha river: “I ascended this beautiful river, on whose fruitful banks the generous and true sons of liberty securely dwell, fifty miles above the white settlements” (Bartram 63). Here Bartram locates the ironic situation of the American Revolution in which, a nation supposedly founded for the pursuit of liberty, actually manifests through processes of undermining the freedom of indigenous peoples—genocide, displacement, subjugation.

Douglas Anderson makes a case that, in addition to waging on behalf of Native Americans, Bartram uses his narrative to provide a cautionary tale for the emerging nation. *Travels* totally lacks any discussion of the events of the American Revolution, although his travels take place during the height of political turmoil. This silence, Anderson contends, is purposeful and would not have gone unnoticed by contemporary readers. According to Anderson, Bartram uses a series of rhetorical “set pieces” in which readings of nature alongside an ostensible silence about revolutionary politics function as an allegorical warning against a too-enthusiastic project of nation-building. Anderson claims that Bartram “makes it apparent ... in the *Travels* that he means to chasten the exuberance of political life in the postrevolutionary United States with a vision of life’s limits and of its obligations” (10). But the allegorical critique of the birthing nation cuts more than one way as

Bartram in fact discovers that the American Revolution is taking place on a continent accustomed to revolution, to the succession of one form of civilization and the disappearance of another. Men are quite capable of the same acts of cruelty and destruction that Bartram finds so

prevalent among animals, and white men are, perhaps, more culpable in this regard than Indians. (Anderson 9)

Anderson describes the text's allegory as disrupting European denials of aboriginal history as well as claims to its own privilege and superiority, but he does not mention the manner in which this *naturalizing* of political violence could also function as a legitimation for colonial violence even as Bartram challenges earlier versions of justification.

In the end, Bartram's narrative has multiple valencies. On the one hand, the eighteenth-century methods of systemizing nature and the posture of gentle "flower hunter" affected by Bartram exemplify a strategy for veiling European authority even as it expanded around the globe, consistently reified by the sciences of geography and natural history (Bartram 165). But on the other hand, Bartram self-consciously goes beyond a posture of innocence and into the role of activist on behalf of *nature*—both the *natural* beauty of the southern wilderness and what he describes as the *natural* harmony of indigenous communities. As Thomas Hallock has argued, Bartram "regrets expansion while paradoxically contributing to the literature of expansion" (129). Fully elucidating how "anti-conquest" works efficaciously in *Travels* as a colonialist narrative device, however, points to the manner in which this very paradox actually contributes to the discursive inscription of innocence and passivity while still allowing the representation of space (primarily, through an engagement with Linnaean systemizations) to displace other narrative claims to those spaces, thereby legitimating colonial ones.

Samuel Hearne and Sentimental Anti-conquest

Where the anti-hero of scientific anti-conquest disappears himself from the narrative, the narrator of sentimental anti-conquest has a dogged determination to locate

himself in the events reported. His feelings, hardships, responses, considerations, interactions, and, most importantly, his actions dominate the field. Although, this kind of travel writing was based on experiences in the contact zone that were explicitly a part of European expansionist enterprise, the narrator of the sentimental travel tale portrays these relations as fundamentally passive. In Hearne's *A Journey* "human agents abound", and unlike Bartram's primarily natural and observation-oriented narration, "there is a predominance of active verbal constructs" in the text (Pratt 76). Pratt argues that the objectivist detachment that authorizes the narrative reliability of scientific travel writing, is opposed with the narrative process of sentimental writing which "explicitly anchors what is being expressed in the sensory experience, judgment, agency, or desires of the human subjects" (Pratt 76). Where Bartram dramatizes the "unfolding," self-presentation of landscape in a way that is self-effacing, Hearne is self-dramatizing because his authority primarily rests in the authenticity of his experience. While this European presence in the contact zone is much more pronounced, the anti-hero of sentimental travel writing remains innocent and non-interventionist as he constructs himself with "submissiveness and vulnerability, or the *display* of self-effacement" (Pratt 78, italics hers).

I have already documented how Hearne's description of the natural world is deeply anthropocentric. The insistence on describing landscape occasionally with a focus on deprivation—hunger, cold, emptiness—and the manner in which Hearne often focuses on issues of palatability are evidence of his deployment of a self-centered anti-conquest. By affixing his landscape production to his own situation, the traveler body maintains its position on center stage. But Hearne's body-centered account not only constantly

demonstrates his vulnerabilities in the harsh ecosystems through which he traveled, but it is also highlights his submission to Matonabee, his guide. As Kathleen Venema describes, “On Matonabee’s arrival, Hearne readily relinquishes his ostensible leadership in favour of the protection and survival that Matonabee provides” (“Principal Man” 168). Hearne reiterates again and again how the success of his mission was entirely dependent on the leadership abilities and cultural know how of Matonabee, always diminishing the significance of his own performativity.

A crucial example of Hearne’s position as protected guest with very little power of his own is demonstrated in the rising action before the gothic climax of the narrative, in which the Chipewyan group he travels with murders a large camp of Inuit in their sleep. In this passage, Hearne tries to not only distance himself from the acts of atrocity that occurred at “Bloody Falls,” but he also assures the reader that he tried, in whatever limited agency he yet maintained this far into the contact zone, to deter his group from their violent intentions:

When I was acquainted with the intentions of my companions, and saw the warlike preparations that were carrying on, I endeavoured as much as possible to persuade them from putting their inhuman design into execution...it was concluded that I was actuated by cowardice; and they told me, with great marks of derision, that I was afraid of the Esquimaux. (74)

Not only does Hearne represent himself as powerless, in need of protection, and willing to accept a passive role for the duration of his travels, but in a moment when he desperately tries to enact his will he ultimately fails and is made to look like a coward.

The inscription of innocence and passivity into *A Journey* is, thus, much more overt than in Bartram’s scientific anti-conquest where it is the concentration on

observation and not the display of powerlessness that elides colonial agency. In some passages however, Hearne's erasure of the violence of colonial activity comes in overt forms that dramatize reciprocity and attempt to attribute a willingness to be colonized to aboriginal peoples:

I smoked my calumet of peace with the principal of the Copper Indians, who seemed highly pleased on the occasion; and, from a conversation held on the subject of my journey, I found they were delighted with the hopes of having an European settlement in their neighbourhood, and seemed to have no idea that any impediment could prevent such a scheme from being carried into execution. (77)

As Hearne's narrative translates his role from active agent on a colonial frontier to passive innocent under the care of aboriginal hosts, this passage encodes a passive naiveté into the aboriginal experience and engagement with colonial power.

The most obvious display of the narrator's vulnerabilities in *A Journey* is Hearne's position as ward under the care of Matanobbee, his guide, but the bodily, self-centered *display* of self-effacement is apparent right from the beginning of Hearne's published account. The dedication addressed to the "Honourable Hudson's Bay Company" repeats the statement also noticed in the lengthy title page, that the journey "was undertaken at [the Hudson's Bay Company's] Request and Expense" (Hearne xlv). And he signs the dedicatory letter, "Your most obedient, and / most obliged humble Servant" (Hearne xlv). Centered in Hearne's "Introduction" to the narrative is the lengthy reproduction of the letter from the Governor of the Prince of Wales's Fort, Moses Norton, titled "Orders and Instructions for Mr. Samuel Hearne..." (Hearne lxvi). There is not the least tinge of grandiosity or heroism in Hearne's acceptance of the orders—"I did not hesitate to comply with the request of the Company"—and instead of engaging in a self-

representation that characterizes his journey as heroic adventure, he presents himself as humble and submissive—just following orders. According to the introduction, Hearne is not so much a fearless adventure-seeker, but more an obedient (and expendable) underling. One cannot tell if Hearne is even interested or enthusiastic about his assignment from the tenor of these justifications. He further postures this obedience, and therefore passivity, with an obsessive discussion of “proving how far those orders have been complied with” (Hearne lxvi) in the introduction and throughout the narrative, as well as by including a second letter of orders and instructions before beginning his third and final attempt, which again transfers the agency of the colonial and specifically mercantilist dimensions of his travel in the contact zone to the Fort and the bureaucratic administration of the Hudson’s Bay Company (Hearne 40).

These inclusions of official texts within the narrative, along with references to other travel narratives and, particularly, to Pennant’s *Arctic Zoology*, work to compose Hearne’s “representative body” as an agent from “HBC’s Prince of Wales’s Fort, which functions as the symbolic centre to which everything and everyone [in *A Journey*] is assumed to be in relation” (Venema, “Mapping” 13). “Pressed by the conflicting exigencies of contact,” Venema argues that Hearne’s narrative deals with crisis arising out of the conflicting material and representative bodies of the traveler in the contact zone. This ‘double-body’ of exploration in Hearne’s case is composed of an abstracted body of “institutionalized mercantilism and the corporeal body of visceral contact” (Venema, “Mapping” 21).

A reading of Pratt and Venema in tandem equates the narrative deployment of a corporeal body of visceral contact with the anti-hero of a Prattian anti-conquest, while the

representational body—that which represents and transmits European authority, power, and control in a colonial context—undergoes a typical diminution. The center (the Fort) in Venema’s reading is that which provides an underlying justification for the cultural biases and assumptions of European superiority that plague Hearne’s ethnographic renditions of aboriginal peoples and indigenous lifeways. In these instances, Hearne deploys, as Kevin Hutchings argues, the four-stages theory of social development in ethnography that characterizes Chipewyan people as indolent, indulgent, grotesque, inhuman, violent, and cannibalistic in various instances (Hutchings 54).

However, except as justification for racist claims, the Fort itself is marked by its “textual absence” which corresponds with the anti-conquest’s absenting of colonial power (Venema, “Mapping” 16). Well, the fort is almost absent: “The Fort as a lived space is almost completely absent from the text,” but at the beginning of the narrative the official orders and the seven cannon salute that signals the start of the journey both work to register the Fort’s authority (as a center) and also to distinguish Hearne’s personal agency from that authority (Venema, “Mapping” 16). This process of erasure is necessary if Hearne is to manifest his passivity. He is a colonial agent, but cannot be seen as guilty of the violence inherent to that role in his narrative according to the discursive provisions of the anti-conquest, and therefore the narrator must distinguish himself from the signs of that authority—in this case, the fort.

Despite the issuance from the canons at the beginning of the first chapter, Hearne’s treatment of the departure is very matter of fact and unceremonious. The first paragraph of the first chapter is a single sentence, and that is all that is mentioned of his embarkation on what would seem an epic journey:

Having made every necessary arrangement for my departure on the sixth of November, I took leave of the Governor, and my other friends, at Prince of Wales's Fort, and began my journey, under the salute of seven cannon.
(1)

In the following two pages Hearne is already twenty days into his first attempt to reach the Arctic, and he is particularly engaged in recounting the severity of his hardships. In fact, the first two pages of the narrative establish Hearne's dependence on and harsh treatment from his first guide, whom he calls "Captain Chawchinahaw," much more strongly than the significance of his relationship with the Fort.

On Hearne's second departure following the first failed attempt, the ceremony is even further diminished:

The snow at this time was so deep on the top of the ramparts, that few of the cannon were to be seen, otherwise the Governor would have saluted me at my departure, as before; but as those honours could not possibly be of any service to my expedition, I readily relinquished everything of the kind; and in lieu of it, the Governor, officers, and people, insisted on giving me three cheers. (10)

Not only does Hearne include these humble beginnings, diminishing his heroic status, but he further elaborates that he has "readily relinquished everything of the kind", forgone all notions of grandeur (10). The fort and its authorities are seen as only moderately interested in seeing Hearne off. And Hearne emphasizes his capacity and desire to subvert these kinds of attention in what Pratt calls a typical *display* of self-effacement.

By his third departure, there is no mention of any ceremony whatsoever, and, in fact, Governor Norton is at first too busy "trading with a large body of Indians" to provide Hearne provisions for the trip. Standing in for a grandiose departure that might be typical of earlier forms of exploration narrative is a scene that is marked by a rift in the

relationship between Hearne and his superior, Moses Norton, in the text's central site of colonial authority, the fort:

It may not be improper to observe, that he again wanted to force some of his home-guard Indians (who were his own relations) into our company, merely with a view that they might engross all the credit of taking care of me during the journey; but I had found them of so little use in my two former attempts, that I absolutely refused them; and by so doing, offended Mr. Norton to such a degree, that neither time nor absence could ever afterwards eradicate his dislike of me; so that at my return he used every means in his power to treat, and to render my life unhappy. (39-40)

Mr. Norton is described in the passage as forceful and powerful, whereas Hearne portrays himself as needing to be taken care of. The hero is not only denied a heroic send-off, but the site of the fort within the text actually works in the narrative to diminish his power and agency as an explorer. Hearne writes himself not so much as an extension of the fort's power, an emissary venturing into the contact zone, but as a subject under the fort's power himself, a subject to the whims of a North American Kurtz, someone who cannot fend for himself.

These few passages that locate Hearne within the literal boundaries of the Hudson's Bay Company fort increasingly understate Hearne's perceived significance to the mercantile and colonial institution, as if his mission is of little importance to the authorities therein. Simultaneously, the departure scenes not only initiate the narrative move which figures the protagonist as vulnerable, receptive, and dependant instead of actively heroic, but they also dramatize the transference of Hearne's care from the Governor to Matonabee his guide for the third and successful attempt to reach the mouth of the Coppermine.

Although, Venema does not articulate it as such, her essay on *A Journey* that describes Hearne's relationship to Matonabee as one of feminized dependence and subordination provides a very convincing reading of Hearne's narrative as inscribed with the attributes of anti-conquest. Venema takes the title for her essay from Hearne's outright articulation of his relationship with Matonabee as one which types the guide as a masculine, empowered agent, and the narrator as a feminine, vulnerable ward: "but as I was under the protection of a principal man, no one offered to molest me, nor can I say they were very clamorous for anything I had" (Hearne 63). The protagonist of this sentimental anti-conquest does not disappear from the text, though his agency does; it is transferred from the official texts and directives of the Hudson's Bay Company as an extension of an imperial economy, to the power of his guide within an aboriginal economy. Given the severe treatment Hearne had received at the hands of his previous guides and others he encountered on his first ventures, he "readily relinquishes his ostensible leadership in favour of the protection and survival that Matonabee offers" (Venema, "Principal Man" 168). Just as the prerogative, control, and desire for the mission's completion is firmly placed within the official edicts of the company, the successful completion of the journey is narratively allocated to the power, agency, and desire of Matonabee, such that Hearne is seen at all points as either merely following orders, or surviving under the leadership of his guide.

Although Pratt discusses the operation of anti-conquest in Mungo Park's feminized position in instances of "aggressive voyeurism" via the indigenous "female gaze" recorded in his *Travels in the Interior of Africa*, the extent to which Hearne is transformed from masculine agent to feminine protectorate is remarkable. As Bruce

Greenfield describes, Hearne is primarily a “passive dependent on the strangers he is investigating” in the ethnographic portions of his book, and instead of heroic adventurer, “his actual role was that of an observer being led to his destination” (197). But interestingly, this passivity translates into an “almost domestic tone” in the narrative (Greenfield 202). Venema takes this reading even farther, arguing that “after delegating heroism to Matonabee, Hearne positions himself culturally as one of Matonabee’s many wives” (Venema, “Principal Man” 171). Corroborating this claim, Venema demonstrates that the narrative harbours an “unexpected ... focus on Matonabee’s wives” (168), and, in fact, “much of what the text actually records specifically concerns Matonabee’s wives, his relationship to his wives and his behaviour toward them, and the women’s indirect but powerful effect on the journey’s advancement and success” (170). All of this attention she calls “an inadvertent expression of his survival strategy in the cultural space” of contact (171).

The contradictions in *A Journey* between Hearne’s functionary role as agent of mercantile expansion and his visceral experience of contact, in which the “truth-claims of [his] originating culture” are called into question, inadvertently result in “records of the literal and symbolic slippages” such as the narrator’s feminization (Venema “Mapping” 19). According to Pratt the same seeming slippages arise in order to perform a discursive function during a crisis of legitimation (74). The two discussions are not contradictory. Venema seems to be concerned with how the space of contact necessitated these slippages. Pratt establishes the manner in which these slippages, whether arising necessarily out of contact or not, retain and, in fact, build upon discourses that were necessary for the implementation and legitimation of colonial practice. Two sides of a

similar story. Most importantly, neither can coincide with a reading in which Hearne's slippages are

An early manifestation of critical *self-reflexivity*, that anti-monological impulse which, if continually "improved" upon by intercultural discussion and debate, can help to provide the basis for sound cultural criticism, intercultural negotiation, and productive sociocultural transformation. (Hutchings 73; italics his)

In this analysis, Hutchings parallels Charles Adams in particular, but also Matthew Silvis, Douglas Anderson, and other scholarship on Bartram's *Travels*. These forms of reading for contradiction take for granted that the canonical authors that produced these travel tales were capable of interrupting and subverting the ideological discourses in which their writing was framed, even if they still depended on those frames for hermeneutic navigability. Whereas, a reading familiar with colonial discourses should not only expect these disruptions and contradictions, but as Venema and Pratt demonstrate, should also interrogate the manner in which these heterogeneities are deployed as enactments of ideological and discursive transition, ultimately functioning with greater efficacy as a result of incorporating and narrating these very slippages and gaps.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored mechanisms of spatial representation in two late eighteenth-century travel tales by examining the ways in which the landscapes available therein are both constitutive of colonial identities and constructed by those identities as objects of a discourse that at once reifies and justifies colonial authority and power. I have also shown how an ecocritical examination of *A Journey and Travels* that implicitly rests upon tenets of Deep Ecology is highly problematic in light of a discursive analysis of Linnaean methodology and the narrative techniques of scientific and sentimental “anti-conquest”. Ultimately, using theorizations of *space* largely developed in the discipline of geography that destabilize essential categories of *nature* and *wilderness*, I have aimed to position this reading into the relationship between literature and environment within the larger project of deciphering historical uses of landscape and bringing that history to bear upon uses of landscape today (genealogically). This contributes to David Mazel’s project in *American Literary Environmentalism*, in which he attempts “to show how early constructions of the environment enabled and naturalized a position from which to *misunderstand* our relationships to the land and to each other, allowing literary environmentalism to serve not only a progressive ecological thinking but also a conservative social agenda” (157).

Bartram’s ecological innovations and his non-utilitarian valuation of the natural world make his text important for the emergent institutions of environmental studies in North America, whereas Hearne’s landscape could be seen as emblematic of deeply anthropocentric traditions that directly undermine ecological sustainability. But it is necessary to remember that the reliance upon categories such as *natural*, *wild*, *ecocentric*,

and *anthropocentric*, and the maintenance of traditional narratives of land and culture, have ideological consequences. Bartram's ecological innovations cannot be separated from the innovative deployment of "anti-conquest" that his *Travels* depends upon for organization and intelligibility. If contemporary environmentalists and scholars in environmental studies find aesthetic, ethical, and philosophical grounds for their enterprises in socially unexamined traditions of nature writing and the affectations of innocent postures like Bartram's—a gentle "flower-hunter" who is *one* with nature in as much as he is a passive observer who supposedly leaves no trace—environmentalists may find themselves the anti-heroes of their own anti-conquests.

It is easy enough to find such anti-heroes and their anti-conquests in contemporary nature writing and popular environmentalist culture. A recent article in the New York Times appeals to the expertise of one of the United State's most famous naturalists, "The nation's best known birder, David A. Sibley, whose book *The Sibley Guide to Birds* is a bible for field identification." James Gorman, the author of the story about the recent sighting of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker—a species previously thought to be extinct—refers to the eminent scholar and author in the introduction to the piece as "a soft-spoken, attention-avoiding writer and illustrator." While these attributes probably do characterize Sibley, the inclusion of these details in the introduction instead of a host of other accomplishments that would indicate Sibley's expertise points to the continuing and pervasive discursive functionality of naturalists assuming the posture of retiring, innocent passivity. Indeed, the expertise and identity of many naturalist and environmentalist figures alike is constituted by this very posture. In the occupational folklore I have witnessed in the often strange world of ecological fieldwork, frequent

jokes point to both the prevalence and accuracy of the stereotype of the soft-spoken, asexual, skinny-vegan type of birder-botanist.

While the connections between this discursive subjectification of ecological fieldworkers and anti-conquest may be benignly insignificant, a casual glance at contemporary environmental writing demonstrates a more malignant manifestation and persistence of anti-conquest devices. Sharon Butala's *The Garden of Eden*, for example, advocates a manner of absolving guilt and making amends for the ecological damage wreaked by breaking the land with plows and farming in southern Saskatchewan by "put[ting] the land back the way it was," by "seed[ing] it back to native prairie," and making "a deal with that nature organization" (332-33). When one character enquires about the "stone circles left by the Indians a long time ago" and then vaguely laments "that all that history got lost when people turned up the land," the main character defensively responds, "I made sure the one's that are left didn't get ploughed up, didn't I We drove them off their own land. They deserve at least a memorial" (101). Though the novel deals with themes of "genocide" (319) and contested uses of land in Ethiopia, these indications of regret and remorse for historical processes of colonization are the only mentions of aboriginal culture in the book. It was their place then, and it's ours now. This overtly environmentalist literature of place denies the existence of continued aboriginal occupancy and unsettled land claims in the area around East End, Saskatchewan where the novel is set. But it also implies in the final resolution that absolving oneself of ecological guilt through "prairie restoration" (334) can also absolve guilts of colonization. And Butala attempts to do so without actually problematizing the sense of place—"A knowledge of nature is the bedrock of all our lives out here"—that

has been developed as a consequence of settlement and displacement, or engaging in the sticky business of contesting racist attitudes and policies that prevail in the region (104).

My reading of Hearne and Bartram works to extend Pratt's analysis of Linnaean technological innovations and of "anti-conquest" into North American specimens of colonial travel writing, demonstrating not only the necessity for *decolonized* conceptions of *space* and *literature of place* in ecocritical analysis, but also the capacity for ecocriticism and environmentalism to reinscribe relationships to land that have historically developed as discursive justifications and manifestations of violence, subjugation, and appropriation. This later dimension of my analysis is limited in that I have only been able to interrogate this issue as it relates to these two eighteenth-century texts and the critical reception of them, but this brief discussion of Butala's novel demonstrates the fertile critical ground available should one trace this tendency in spatial representation forward into contemporary environmentalist literature and politics.

Another limitation of my research is that Hearne and Bartram traveled through such spatially and ecologically disparate geographies. The discursive, generic, and temporal parallels of the two texts warrants their comparison and has yielded conclusions that give insight into the criticism of each narrative, the discursive moment that framed them, and the ideological capacities of spatial representation that these narratives manifest. However, a similar analysis of landscape and spatial representations as both processes of subjectification and culturally mitigated productions that is fixed in a specific locale would provide more capacity for interdisciplinary correspondence and a clearer picture of how literary representations of space influence and respond to the

complex of subjective, social, material, and ecological relations that accrue in a particular place over time.

The most persistent claim I have heard from colleagues in the environmental movement about critical research like mine is that it just slows us down in a moment of crisis that demands, above all, urgency. My take is that we need urgency not only in protecting *the* environment as it is defined and reified by environmentalists, but more acutely in who is included in the global stand that will have to be taken in order to protect our ecological lives and relations. As prominent American environmentalists Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger have argued in an essay titled “The Death of Environmentalism”:

What stands out is how arbitrary environmental leaders are about what gets counted and what doesn't as “environmental.” Most of the movement's leading thinkers, funders and advocates do not question their most basic assumptions about who we are, what we stand for, and what it is that we should be doing.... The arrogance here is that environmentalists ask not what we can do for non-environmental constituencies but what non-environmental constituencies can do for environmentalists. As a result, while public support for action on global warming is wide it is also frighteningly shallow. The environmental movement's incuriosity about the interests of potential allies depends on it never challenging the most basic assumptions about what does and doesn't get counted as “environmental.” Because we define environmental problems so narrowly, environmental leaders come up with equally narrow solutions. (8-9)

Just as environmentalists need to broaden their thinking about what problems get counted as environmental and realize that there is no political position that can ignore issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality, ecocriticism needs to continue to broaden its field of interrogation to include considerations of social forces at work in literature of place if it is

to undermine its own capacity to reify relations of power and privilege, which includes, as my research has shown, undermining the postured innocence and putative benevolence behind our ecological gazes. If not, privileged movements for ecological sustainability in North America may inadvertently find themselves fighting against multitudes of resistance, rather than embracing and working with the diversity of peoples necessary to assuage current regimes of imperial and ecological violence.

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