"Landscape Delitescent": Cultural Nationalism in Jon Whyte's *Homage, Henry Kelsey*

by Tim Heath

In his examination of Henry Kelsey's "Now Reader Read…," D.M.R. Bentley remarks that this early poem, probably written in 1693 or 1694, serves as a "pretext" for Jon Whyte's *Homage, Henry Kelsey*, published in 1981 ("Set Forth" 29 n.23). Bentley's observation quite literally applies to the version of *Homage* in Daniel Lenoski's anthology, *a/long prairie lines* (1989), in which Kelsey's poem appears as a preface instead of a postscript, as it had in the 1981 edition of *Homage*. Both arrangements link a pair of companion poems, but, even though Kelsey's "Reader" is the subject of several literary critical studies (one by Bentley and another by Germaine Warkentin), Whyte's poem has yet to receive an extended examination.[1] This neglect inspires the present study of *Homage* in relation to its "pretext."

For a variety of reasons, *Homage* is an elusive text. One interpretive obstacle involves its physical layout, which includes many double and triple columns of refractory syntactical fragments. The poem is also reasonably lengthy (some seventy pages), and its five parts—"List," "Etomomi," "Nivation," "Flensing," and "Arbor"— leap through various temporal settings, from late pleistocene Canada all the way to the present time of Whyte's composition, with no warning and with very little aid to the reader's comprehension.[2] *Homage* also demands that its reader possess detailed information about Henry Kelsey, for much of the poem's meaning lies in the deviations it makes from the facts, such as they are known, concerning the Hudson's Bay Company employee. Finally, in addition to placing the whole of Kelsey's poem at either the beginning or the end of *Homage*, Whyte also interlards smaller fragments of verse and prose from the commonplace book Kelsey kept throughout his years of service to the HBC. Specifically, Whyte draws from the field notes that Kelsey made during his journey north of Churchill River into the Barren Grounds from 17 June to 8 August, 1689. Although these borrowed words are nearly always identified by italics, Whyte does not consistently distinguish his writing from Kelsey's. Any analysis of *Homage*, then, would benefit from an interpretive guide and an organizational plan for discussion. Fortunately, Whyte provides both of these in the preface to a poem he published two years later, *The Fells of Brightness: Some Fittes and Starts* (1983). In these helpful remarks, he describes *Homage* as a poem incorporating "history, myth, landscape, [and] a literary past" (8). By discussing each of these terms, the present study will develop an exposition of the ways in which the British mercantilism and imperialism of

Kelsey's poem are restructured by Whyte's regional pride and his desire to secure a unique cultural origin and identity for western Canada.[3] This analysis will eventuate in a deliberation on the generical name, "'anatomical epic,'" that Whyte gives to *Homage* (*Fells* 8). It is the purpose of this final section to relate Whyte's anatomical epic to Kelsey's topographical journey poem in order to examine the ideological work that *Homage* effects.

As the honorific title of Whyte's poem indicates, its historical subject is Henry Kelsey (c. 1667-1724).[4] Kelsey's place in history arises chiefly from the inland journey he made between 1690 and 1692, from York Fort on Hudson Bay up the Hayes River into the grassland plains, reaching (perhaps) as far as the Touchwood Hills of Saskatchewan.[5] Although frequently acclaimed as an heroic voyage of exploration with many imputed discoveries—the first English accounts of bison and grizzly bear, as well as the land west of the Bay—Kelsey's mission was primarily mercantile, prompted by "Sallery" advanced to him by his HBC masters (HBC Governor Marleborough, *Hudson's Bay* 115).[6] George Geyer, the Governor of York Fort, identified the fiscal purpose of the expedition in a letter to the HBC Committee at London: "I sent up Henry Kelsey (who chearfully undertook the Journey) up into the Country of the *Assinae Poets*, with the Captain of that Nation, to call, encourage, and invite, the remoter *Indians* to a Trade with us (*Hudson's Bay* 115 n1)."[7] Geyer's phrase, "with the Captain of that Nation," reveals that Kelsey made no discoveries; rather, he travelled with Aboriginals on existing trade routes. Nevertheless, by returning to York Fort with a "*good fleet of Indians*," Kelsey fulfilled the duty laid on him by the Company (HBC Committee to Geyer, *Hudson's Bay* 187).[8]

In the poetic record of his journey, Kelsey's obligation to the HBC figures prominently:

> In sixteen hundred & ninet'th year
> I set forth as plainly may appear
> Through Gods assistance for to understand
> The natives language & to see their land
> And for my masters interest I did soon
> Sett from ye house ye twealth of June
>
> (*KP* 25-30)[9]

The motive behind Kelsey's journey—his "masters interest"—was the late seventeenth-century slump in fur prices that was exacerbated by continuous economic and territorial battles between the British and the French. Concerned about its thin profit margin at forts like Churchill and York, the HBC wanted to expand its interests beyond furs to mines, minerals, and drugs (Davies, ''Kelsey''

309).[10] Evidence connecting Kelsey's journey to HBC economics appears in a letter dated 21 May 1691 in which Governor Marleborough and the Committee at Hudson's Bay House wrote to Governor Geyer at York Fort:

> [Y]ou will doe well to consider the great Losses we have sustained & the extravigant Rate we pay for our Commodities, Every thing being dearer then formerly besides the extraordinary expence wee are at in sending you goods the charge being neare Treble, from whence you may urge to the natives the great difficulties wee undergoe to come to them, & Therefore ought to allow more Beavor in truck for our goods then heretofore, which we hope you will endeavour to your utmost to effect
>
> (*Hudson's Bay* 114).

In the intervening material, Governor Marleborough remarks that beaver is currently at a very low price. He continues:

> we Cannot but againe Recommend to you the searching out & discovery of all maner of drugs, Dying Commodities whether in Roote or floure Likewise all mineralls hopeing at last in that vast tract of ground, You may find by the Indians or your owne industry, something that may turne to accompt, & are glad, you prevailed with Henery Kelsey to undertake a Journey with the Indians to those Remote parts hopeing the Encouragemt. you have given him in the advance of his Sallery will Instigate other young men in the factory to follow his example
>
> (*Hudson's Bay* 115).

The Company correspondence that pertains to Kelsey's journey speaks the discourse of mercantilism: extravagant rates, extraordinary expenses, truck, goods, commodities, charges, quantity, prices, and wages—all are focused on that "vast tract of land" and the hope that "something may turne to accompt." Governor Marleborough's pleasure over Kelsey's departure verifies E.E. Rich's notice that between 1690 and 1692 the HBC was "most purposefully organised" to expand its trade inland and to resist French encroachment on the Bay (300). On one hand, this dual agenda was consistent with what Rich calls a "friendly and progressive Indian policy," and, on the other hand, it explains, at least in part, why this "friendly'' policy was so intent on claiming land, an imperial action that Kelsey's poem records (297).

At a spot that he named "deerings point," by estimation some six hundred miles from York Fort, Kelsey erected a cross in the name of his master, Sir Edward Dering, the Deputy Governor of the HBC, and secured the area for Company interests. The site where this event takes place is probably in the immediate area of The Pas, Manitoba:

Gott on ye borders of ye stone Indian Country

I took possession on ye tenth Instant July

And for my masters I speaking for y^m, all
This neck of land I deerings point did call

• • •

At deerings point after the frost
I set up their a Certain Cross
In token of my being their there

Cut out on it ye date of year
And Likewise for to veryfie the same
added to it my master sir Edward deerings name

So having not more to trouble you wth all I am

Sir your most obedient & faithful Servt. at Command
           HENRY KELSEY (*KP* 39-42, 83-90)

Bentley calls this cross "a palimpsest of indigenous materials and imported words—a Christian and commercial marker constructed of a local wood and overwritten with imperialistic information" ("Set Forth" 10). This kind of analysis, which might be even more pointed, was evidently not a part of Whyte's response to Kelsey's poem. Rather than examining the ideology at work when Kelsey "took possession" of the land, Whyte asks to what extent the land took possession of Kelsey. For this paradigmatic shift to occur, Whyte invokes a mythic understanding of Kelsey, one that has at least some documentary basis.

II

The so-called 'Kelsey legend' forms a significant part of *Homage*. Two of Kelsey's near contemporaries, Arthur Dobbs and James Robson, are identified with the myth. Dobbs, an Irish colonial administrator, economist, writer, and Governor of North Carolina from 1754 until 1765, attempted during most of the 1740s to subvert the HBC charter by arguing that the Company had not sufficiently ventured to discover a Northwest Passage. These allegations culminated in 1749, when a Committee of the House of Commons was struck to deliberate on the right of the HBC to hold its charter and monopoly. One of the key pieces of evidence entered in the defence of the charter was the journal in which Henry Kelsey documented his inland journey of 1690-92.[11] Although the Committee decided in favour of the HBC, and even though Dobbs appeared to let the matter drop, a book written by Robson in support of Dobbs's position was published in London in 1752. Robson's *Account of Six Years Residence in Hudson's Bay* contains two parts: a report of life on Hudson Bay and a collection of six appendices. Appendix I—"A Short Account of the

Discovery of Hudson's Bay; and of the Proceedings there Since the Grant of the Hudson's Bay Charter"—spends its sixty-four pages attacking the HBC and the veracity of Henry Kelsey's journal.

Although Robson claimed that his *Account* relied on firsthand experience and on verbal reports given to him by other HBC employees, Glyndwr Williams has demonstrated that, in all likelihood, Dobbs, not Robson, was the author of Appendix I, and that Dobbs also revised significant sections written by Robson ("Arthur Dobbs" 132-36). Williams points out that Dobbs was a "discredited authority" because of several failed attempts to find a Northwest Passage and because of several earlier efforts to undermine the HBC ("Arthur Dobbs" 135). According to Williams, Robson provided Dobbs with a cloak of respectability because the former had been in the Company's service as a surveyor and "supervisor of buildings" ("Arthur Dobbs" 133). In his *Account*, Robson (or, more accurately, Dobbs) says that Kelsey took "great delight in the Company of the natives, and in learning their language, for which, and some unlucky tricks that boys of spirit are always guilty of," his superior, Governor Geyer, had disciplined him severely on a number of occasions (72). As a result, Kelsey resented Geyer deeply, and, consequently, "being very intimate with the Indians, took the opportunity of running away along with them" (Robson, Appendix I: 20). After a year or two of absence, Kelsey supposedly returned to York Fort with an Assiniboine wife, with a letter written on birch bark asking for pardon for having run away, and with many tales about his travels. Among these stories was an incident in which Kelsey reportedly killed two grizzly bears, a feat which earned him the name "Miss-top-ashish" or "Little Giant" (72). Moreover, Robson heard that Kelsey had later made a vocabulary or dictionary of "Indian language" (72), but the Company suppressed this document.[12] According to the Dobbs-as-Robson account, Governor Geyer did not send Kelsey inland; after the fact, the Company simply "made a merit" of Kelsey's journey in order to conceal its own failure to explore the vast regions claimed by its charter (Robson, Appendix I:20). Following its appearance at the hearing as documentary proof, Kelsey's book disappeared, presumably into the keeping of the HBC; how it came into the possession of Arthur Dobbs, and why it sat in his library until its discovery in 1926, 161 years after his death, are questions that remain unanswered.[13] Nevertheless, three years after they were uncovered, *The Kelsey Papers* were published in 1929, and the more glamorous version of Kelsey's journey lost any credibility.[14]

Before 1929, accounts of Kelsey's journey rehearsed his heroism. For example, in 1926, Robert Watson describes Kelsey as a "high-spirited youngster" who ran away from York after he received a "thrashing" from the Governor of the fort. Watson writes that Kelsey returned to York Fort "dressed as an Indian brave, with an Assiniboine woman as his wife" (101). Over the course of his journey, the boy had become "a man, keen-eyed, strong, active and bronzed as any Indian"; Watson also notes that in an encounter with two grizzly bears, Kelsey had "almost lost his

life in defence of the Indians who had accompanied him" (101). Bentley's response to Kelsey's apocryphal exploits, "shades of Paul Bunyan, Daniel Boone, and others," suggests some of the allure behind this legendary Kelsey ("Set Forth" 27 n.9). Whyte certainly felt this attraction, for he makes sure that his hero, "Miss-Top-Ashish / Little Giant / Henry Kelsey," is untainted by the pecuniary motives of the HBC (*Homage* 15).

In spite of the fact that Arthur Doughty and Chester Martin call the Dobbs and Robson tradition "a curious instance of cumulative prejudice and inaccuracy" (xxviii), it supplies Whyte with a hero innocent of imperial designs because its Kelsey is both a self-made man and an innocent boy with only a remote connection to the HBC. All these qualities hold the promise of an autochthonous Kelsey, but his ostensible boyishness figures the most prominently in the myth that surrounds him and in *Homage*. In Robson's *Account* (written by Dobbs), the portrait of Kelsey as "a little boy" (72) marks a fair description, perhaps, of the youth indentured to the HBC 15 March 1684 (Davies, ''Kelsey'' 308).[15] The HBC uses the same sobriquet, "the Boy Henry Kelsey," in its correspondence concerning Kelsey's 1689 Churchill River trip (*Hudson's Bay* 18). However, the most reliable information available gives Kelsey's birth date as 1667, making him seventeen when he entered the service of the Company. Thus, Kelsey was twenty-one when he set out into the Barrens, and he was twenty-three when he departed York for the grasslands that he called "The Inland Country of Good report" (*KP* 35). Nevertheless, Whyte unproblematically writes of a Kelsey "who in boyish manner set out" on the journey of 1690 to 1692 (*Homage* 70). It is possible that Dobbs, the HBC, and Whyte are all of them shoddy arithmeticians, but it is more likely that for each the term "boy" is a discursive tic, a wished-for presence, an ideological structure representing innocence and futurity which enables imperialism by masking it behind youthful virtues of impetuosity, spontaneity, purity, strength, and even joy. These values certainly invest Whyte's account of Kelsey:

> Rarely it is given to a man to find
> a continent to which his homeland's blind,
> and wander in it freely two swift years
> of joy and awe and wonder, yet in fears
> he'll not return; and carefree yet, unheeding
> terror, disentangle what is needing:
> commerce, comfort, shelter, peace in the land,
> all of which the Indians little understand.
>   (24)

Admittedly, Whyte associates Kelsey with "commerce," but his paratactical enumeration of aspects of innocence "—joy and awe and wonder…and carefree"—extols "the Boy Henry Kelsey," a discursive boy, not an historical Kelsey.

Although contemporary reading practices for poems like *Homage* discourage

appeals to history, by 1684, the HBC had formed a regular policy of taking apprentices (so-called "Blue Coat Boys") for, as Rich notes, the HBC Committee had "realised that its success in future years would depend on training its own employees" (390). Kelsey was one of ten such apprentices listed in the Company records for 1684, and Rich's portrait of the ideal outcome of the apprenticeship system, "men who combined knowledge of the Bay with youthful vigour and some capacity for organization" (300), points toward Bentley's observation that Kelsey's dutiful qualities resemble those of the "mountie, the schoolteacher, and the (rail) road builder…the pioneer, the settler, the parson, and the circuit judge" (*Gay]Grey* 78). Of course, these figures are types, but their work—"taking (British) peace, order, and good government into the hinterland"—recalls the fact that all of Kelsey's writings and all the records of the HBC depict him as "devoted and obedient to his aristocratic masters" (Bentley, *Gay]Grey* 78). Nevertheless, by emphasizing the boyishness of Kelsey, Whyte ensures that his Kelsey is not merely a "transplanted Englishman"; rather, because he is a boy, Kelsey is, in John Locke's terms, a tabula rasa, one that can be overwritten and interpellated not by the imperialism of England or by the HBC, but by what Whyte calls the "spirit of the land" (Letter A). In terms of his identity, the Kelsey of *Homage* belongs to the land itself; he is Canadian.

III

To advance the idea that the landscape of Canada transforms Kelsey into what he boldly calls the "archetypal western Canadian" in one of his essays, Whyte relies heavily upon a species of environmental determinism ("Cosmos" 272). His term for Kelsey, "archetypal," also indicates that *Homage* adds a form of psychologism to its environmental determinism. Thus, even though Kelsey had some knowledge of the Cree language, and even though he travelled inland with the Assiniboine (a situation which *Homage* also depicts), Whyte's method of converting Kelsey from an HBC employee into the original Canadian does not involve the Self-Other binary that Terry Goldie uses in his study of "indigenization" (13). Rather, Whyte uses another method to effect change in Kelsey, one which Goldie's work just touches but does not unfold—the use of Carl Jung's ideas (142-43). Put as precisely as Whyte's loose adaptation of Jungian psychology allows, Kelsey does not exchange his identity; he reclaims an identity that is archetypal and timeless because he travels through a primal and timeless land; for this reason, the roles of land, landscape, and Jung in *Homage* are central and worthy of considerable attention.

Whyte's interest in Jung derives, apparently, from his Master's thesis (1967) which presents a Jungian reading of the anonymous medieval poem, *Pearl*. In his thesis, Whyte states that the effectiveness of Jung's ideas resides in their "universal and atemporal" qualities (1). These two attributes have special relevance to *Homage* because they reveal one of its central problematics. The first term identifies the logical consequence of making Kelsey the "archetypal western Canadian" ("Cosmos" 272): the archetype must be effectively universal, for it constitutes the pattern of all subsequent types. The second term implies time, and,

therefore, history; it displays the impossibility of creating the universal within a particular historical and spatial context. Nevertheless, Whyte builds *Homage* upon this very contradiction when he says: "Henry Kelsey…interested me…so I…let him become *Adam in a peopled Eden*" ("Cosmos" 272; emphasis mine). Obviously, an Adamic Kelsey, who is necessarily first, cannot be the prototypical person in a land already populated with First Peoples. Regardless, the reader of *Homage* is asked to overlook this impossibility and to celebrate a myth because it is presented in terms of pristine nature.

Put another way, the New World makes Kelsey a new man, and his journey has little to do with mercantile exploration and much to do with the gradual reclamation of a lost identity. Whyte's Kelsey begins this process even before he reaches the shores of Hudson Bay:

Insurgent wave, ocean journey, the hyperboreal strait

<div style="padding-left:2em">

       lost in time   in wilderness unending

        lost in world   in time expanding

         lost   becoming

                        something other

                      forgotten and reclaimed

                                              (30)

</div>

Chronologically, these lines represent the first phase of *Homage* because they mark Kelsey's voyage through Hudson Strait, the "hyperboreal strait," into Hudson Bay where the process of "becoming / something other" commences. This passage also displays Whyte's Jungian sensibilities because it demonstrates that Kelsey's "becoming / something other" occurs by means of memory; the memories, of course, are locationally and environmentally specific. Crucially, Kelsey does not exchange an identity, he uncovers what was "forgotten" in "wilderness unending."

Support for this interpretation appears in "Nivation," part three of *Homage*. While wintering inland, Kelsey falls into a something of a dream state, and he recalls a set of archetypal memories that belong to pleistocene Canada: "The ice plate wanes / and the mammoths and mastodons, tapirs and mylodons, / tigers and horses fall on the bier of time" (39). These lines refer to that epochal moment of glacial retreat when the grasslands of Canada became inhabitable, an event that John E. Storer dates at approximately 10,000 years before the present, when many animals such as tapirs, mammoths, and horses were becoming extinct on the grassland steppes (45-46). In effect, this time frame roots Kelsey within Canadian soil because it substitutes prehistory for history, and, by reaching into the origins of human life on the prairies to imbue his hero with archetypal memories, Whyte

incidentally, perhaps conveniently, skirts the issue of Kelsey's race.[16] Kelsey is thus no visitor; rather, he is an avatar of ageless firstness. This reading makes sense of the entire movement of "List," the poem's first part, where Canada or "here" is contrasted with England:

> England is an ungava
>
> and in the reek of spring's melting
>
> > in summer's florescence
> > in patch-spotted swathing
> > in maturing
> > here is not a land beyond the eye or
>
> memory
> > in winter's dim and still
> > beyond vision's rim
> > but   here
>
> (8)

In this passage, Whyte does not mean Ungava the place because earlier he writes "Ungava /not the land Ungava" (8); rather, as Lenoski notes, the word functions adverbially (60 n.8). Whyte thus enlists ungava to express the spatial, temporal, and imaginal disjunction between England and Canada—"ungava / in the eye's lee / until a moment grasps man by his imagination / stretching in yearning relaxing his thoughts." As a result, England fades from view and from mind, and Whyte dismisses the Englishness of Kelsey. In these lines, Whyte's characteristic repetition of one word or phrase (anaphora) is also noteworthy, for in this case the preposition "in" functions locatively to emplace Kelsey in Canada. Thematically, the use of anaphora augments the sense of this passage because the trope's meaning ("carrying back" in Greek) echoes the atavistic presupposition discussed above; namely, Kelsey is not as much going out on a voyage as he is returning home. Quite simply, "here" is where Kelsey belongs, and Whyte further emphasizes this point by typographically separating "England" from "here."

Thus, it is less surprising that the section's title word, "List," enjoins Kelsey to hearken to the voice of the land as it greets him speaking, in Cree no less, of spring:

> Seekwan
> seek wandering
>
> •   •   •
>
> seek wondering
>
> •   •   •

<div style="text-align: center">

seek wander
and be born again beyond
the sun setting lustwandering
no time for rest
stir, step, stride, walk, wander, follow, pursue,
sequent seekwan

(10-11)

</div>

In this portion of the poem "List" also echoes the imperative with which Kelsey begins his poem—"Now Reader Read." However, where Kelsey writes "Then up ye the River I with heavy heart / Did take my way & from all English part" (*KP* 31-32), Whyte sends him "lustwandering" (appropriate for the archaic meaning of "list" in its sense of craving) into another list (the catalogue of locomotive terms), as well as into the arena where a kind of contest (his journey) will take place. Within this imperative, enumerative, and spatial context, "seekwan," Cree for the season of spring, figures the reawakening of Kelsey now that he is beyond England. The homophonic pun that trades English sounds for Cree meaning makes "seekwan" percolate through Whyte's verse, and it enacts the kind of change or transformation posited in Kelsey as he enters the North American continent. The game that Whyte plays within the order of representation (no word or phrase can ever be reduced to a single signification) recalls Frank Davey's premise that so-called "documentary" poems like *Homage* question historical truth, particularly by offering up another version, or several, of the received history (135). Of course, Whyte reads and writes against the grain of history; where Bentley accurately describes Kelsey as the servant of a "residually feudal commercial enterprise" ("Set Forth" 10), Whyte has a chorus invite Kelsey to the land:

> Hail, Kelsey, come: the land is not barren,
> land of the little sticks, caribou lichen, musketers only;
> come to the land: the land is not barren,
>
> <div style="text-align: center">•   •   •</div>
>
> come, Kelsey, come to the land.

<div style="text-align: center">(12)</div>

This summons to the land occurs just after Whyte reconstructs one of Kelsey's most probable canoe routes inland, "by the south branch of the middle road…(by the Knee, Oxford, Walker, Cross, and Moose)" (11). These five lakes lie along the Hayes River route ("the middle road") from York Factory to Lake Winnipeg, and Kelsey's concise description of this leg of his journey, "From ye house six hundred miles southwest / Through Rivers wch run strong with falls / thirty three Carriages five lakes in all" (*KP* 44-46), invites this correlation. Whyte's source for this information is Eric Morse's *Fur Trade Routes of Canada*, from which he lifts the

phrase "the south branch of the middle road" (47). Surprisingly, Whyte modifies the route to include the Echimamish River which lies east and south of the middle track. Although the Echimamish is a significant component of one possible passage through Manitoba, it cannot be included in a route description comprised of "thirty three Carriages five lakes in all" because its use eliminates three of the lakes (the Walker, Cross, and Moose). Whyte's reasons for mentioning the Echimamish likely lie with the Cree meaning of the river's name, "river-that-flows-both-ways" (Morse 40).[17]

The Echimamish, of course, does not flow in two directions simultaneously; rather, its name refers to the fact that this river originates from an interfleuve which spills water east into the Hayes River and west into the Echimamish.[18] Because it arises from a divide the Echimamish provides Whyte with a ready metaphor that gives him seemingly unmediated access to Kelsey's historical context, a leap that these lines indicate:

> the Echimamish
> flows both ways
> West to the Nelson   East to the Hayes
> in time

> (11)

The last line of this passage transposes the Echimamish River into a quotidian link between the past and the present—between Whyte and Kelsey. Characteristically, however, Whyte's movement through time does not end when he reaches Kelsey. As the passage continues, Whyte conveys his reader and Kelsey into another primeval scene:

> dawnhunter in barrens
> hunter of mastadon, mammoth
> fear of the soft-stepping tiger
> the giant bear lording his domain
> at glacier's toe
> (12)

This modulation of time (and many others like it) makes Kelsey participate in a free-floating set of archetypal or ancestral memories that belong to the land that is now Canada. Of course, the topographically-minded reader of *Homage* must demur because Whyte's Kelsey reaches the past of Canada by means of a river that flows but one way. Moreover, Kelsey's route description, cryptic though it is, discourages any reconstruction of his itinerary that includes the Echimamish. Perhaps Whyte chose the Echimamish because its name is rich with poetic possibilities. Then again, it is possible that Whyte became disoriented in his attempts to find a path through the maze of lakes and rivers that lie between Hudson Bay and Lake Winnipeg

because he lacked the guidance that the Assiniboine provided Kelsey. In any event, within the world of *Homage*, the Echimamish brings Kelsey to the prairies.

The grasslands, "wide and trackless," effect a profound change in Kelsey:

prairie is	doubt
coursed	by rivers
shaped	by glaciers
asundered	by wind
till what is left	diminishes
is primacy	and rebegins
	(26)

These lines continue the monistic metaphor—"Mind is prairie"— with which Whyte begins this passage (26). Both metaphors equate mindset to landscape, and erosion, by water, ice, and wind, strips both topographies to their elemental form. Thus, according to Whyte, Kelsey's plain style verse originates not from the literary conventions of the late seventeenth century, but from the land itself:

atoms of	thought
irreducibility	conjoins
in	concept
plain	speech
force	utterance
what he feels	must express itself
prosaically	in poetry
	(26)

By its sheer span of blank paper between utterances, Whyte's double column lay-out, what he calls a "technical innovation," suggests the prairies themselves (81). The gap between columns also underscores the syntagmatic simplicity of Whyte's diction, and it invites the reader to regard the page as a picture-space or as a landscape; consequently, the reader is encouraged to proceed associatively down the page, through layers of meaning which can only be guessed once the syntactical flow of the columns is suspended. These two columns, by remaining visually and verbally rudimentary, reinforce Whyte's observation on the correspondence between Kelsey's plain style and the plains environment by reiterating a comparable plain style, a feature of *Homage* which Bentley calls "under-appreciated" (*Gay]Grey* 75). However, Whyte does not simply advance the idea that a stark habitat engenders a plain style; rather, he insists that the prairies strip away Kelsey's former mindset "till what is left diminishes / is primacy and rebegins" (26). The rebeginning, of course, reinforces an archetypal understanding of Kelsey, one in which his speech and his art originates with—"is primacy"—the land itself. Thus, Whyte adds his own strain of environmental determinism to the enduring belief that the unique topography of Canada produces a unique literature, and, by ensuring that Kelsey gives "utterance" to "poetry" while on the prairies, Whyte displays his own regionalist literary pride.[19]

However, in so far as Kelsey inaugurates literary production in Canada, Whyte predicates his definition of Canadian difference upon the idea of locale, with no changes to the notions of form or culture.

Whyte's emphasis on the prairies, and their effect on Kelsey, is most clearly evident in "Etomomi," part two of *Homage*. The Etomami River, which is spelled "Etomomi" in the 1981 edition, becomes a key device that Whyte uses to suspend historical time and transform the prairies into a mythical place:

> Etomomi, its two ways clear
> South to Assiniboine, north to Red Deer
> The river flows both ways
> where it reverses   unexplorably shifts
> great eddies wheeling
> capture flotsam
> suspend it at the torrents' edges
> an unstill point that stays
> borne in current by the current
> stilling time in motions' space
>   •   •   •
> Time vanishes   in the flow of metaphor
> Tone slows   lean in richness
>   (30)

The Etomami River, which Kelsey almost certainly travelled, recalls Whyte's previous use of the Echimamish. Located in Saskatchewan, the Etomami runs roughly parallel to Highway 9 between Usherville and Hudson Bay; like the Echimamish, the Etomami's name— "river-that-flows-both-ways"—comes from the Cree. As with the Echimamish River, there is no warrant for making the river that "flows both ways," into a stream that "reverses." Nevertheless, readers who encounter *Homage* in Lenoski's anthology are encouraged to accept Whyte's description of the Etomami as literal, for the editorial endnotes extend the meaning of this name to include the idea of a "reversing river" (61 n.19). This leap shifts the term's meaning considerably from the correct treatment that Allen Ronaghan gives it: "'downstream either way'"—"'divide'" (90). The Etomami, of course, originates from a divide or watershed that involves two lakes, Etomami Lake and Lillian Lake, which are separated by some 1600 metres of marshy ground. From this swampy area some water drains south to Lillian Lake, which empties into the Lillian River, which eventually joins the Assiniboine River, and water drains from the same divide north into Etomami Lake, which feeds the Etomami River.[20] Thus, two rivers originate from a single divide, each one entering different trenches of a valley running roughly north and south; the marshy divide between the Lillian and the Etomami is the only body of water that flows "both ways," but this piece of high wet ground is no river.

Whyte's topographical inexactitude seemingly stems from Jungian

considerations. That is, when he writes, "time vanishes in the flow of metaphor," Whyte refers to enantiodromia, a word that Lenoski comments on in his endnotes to the 1989 edition of *Homage* (60 n.15). This Heraclitean term, which belongs especially to Jung's lexicon, denotes simultaneous and contradictory flow in opposite directions and the process by which something becomes its opposite, as well as the subsequent interaction of the two.[21] With respect to *Homage*, the enantiodromical process involves transforming Kelsey from a wandering HBC employee into a rooted and flourishing native (in the botanical sense) of Canada.

In "Arbor," part five of *Homage*, Whyte stages this very transformation, and Kelsey reaches his apotheosis. Whyte's own words best explain this part of the poem:

> Kelsey disappears into the landscape and becomes what all Canadians secretly yearn to be: a tree. I take it as a fact we all wish to vanish and turn into part of the land: some of us to become drumlins and eskers, others to become sloughs and bogs, yet others to become mountain ranges and forests and arctic barrens. Americans rarely understand this, I believe ("Cosmos" 272).

This formulation of national identity builds itself around geography, which is entirely consistent with Whyte's focus on landscape throughout *Homage*. His cultural nationalism, with its emphasis on glacial topography, produces a northern nation predicated on desire that yearns for an organic connection to the land. In *Homage* this desire literally takes shape under the force of a boreal wind:

<div align="center">

The bent tree
reveals
the force of land
wind
the climate's aridity
the snow's depth
the height of the watertable
the lenten soil
roots scrabbling in the mossy
crack
</div>

Efflorescent the gathering prism,
the iris dilating
stares into the crescent tree:

<div align="center">

vascular
rooted
branched
skeletal
leaflorn
hydrotropic, heliotropic
</div>

<div align="center">

fixed, firm

still

Xylem, phloem, cambium, bark

(63-4)

</div>

When Whyte makes his Kelsey-tree speak of its identity: "If thou wouldst me define, / seek the blast that has thee bent, / seek the element in which thought grew, / seek the old supporting the new" (63), it displays the natural connections that Whyte wishes to establish between Kelsey and the land of Canada, as well as between our present and our historic, heroic past. It is also no accident that "Arbor" implies roots, which are, by definition, both radical and original; they anchor Kelsey into the land and secure his identity as the "archetypal western Canadian" ("Cosmos" 272). Yet, the visual quality of the tree passage also shows that Kelsey as landscape, although figured as a metamorphosed "primal, sincere, innocent" (but no longer "wandering") hero, cannot be without a subtending set of ideologies. Even shaped into a naturalized landscape, Kelsey cannot be so easily separated from the imperial ideology of the HBC. As W.J.T. Mitchell argues, "like money, landscape is a social hieroglyph that conceals the actual basis of its value. It does so by naturalizing its conventions and conventionalizing its nature" (5). Thus, there can be no innocent understanding of the linkage Whyte effects between Kelsey, the landscape, and Canada as nation or western Canada as region:

<div align="center">

landscape   delitescent

diminishing he becomes a giant

disappearing he dissolves in us

diverging from horizon

(69)

</div>

Although the typographic separation of "landscape" from "delitescent," once again suggests the vastness of the prairies into which Kelsey journeyed, the second term's meaning—to hide, lying hidden, obfuscated, latent, concealed—indicates the hieroglyphic quality of the tree. Moreover, the seemingly natural connection between Kelsey and "us" must be questioned. Indeed, Whyte's predilection for the Dobbs and Robson version of the Kelsey story makes the separation of "landscape" from "delitescent" less of a mimetic gap and more of an erasure of the great difference between Kelsey's historical context and that of contemporary western Canada.

<div align="center">

IV

</div>

Because Kelsey never recorded where or how he spent his winters inland (at least no such record survives), Whyte has ample room to invent a chapter in Canada's literary past. In particular, the third section of *Homage*, "Nivation," with its suggestions of sleep and growth, depicts Kelsey wintering and his development into a poet during that time. Whyte creates a meditative Kelsey who looks back, during the winter of 1691, to his Barrens trip of 1689:

> Summer and winter, river and wind:
> I am adrift on smoke;
> wind that between the nunatuks blew
> blows where the ice is gone.
>
> Here Oomingmuk persists the pale red dawn,
> raises the bearded one his hornwall head,
> blue eyes searching through the arctic smoke,
> for over the long night's gulf
> he hears the rising howl of a wolf.
>
> <div align="right">(38)</div>

In this passage, the Barren Grounds are "here," and "Oomingmuk" refers to the muskoxen that Kelsey encountered while there. Whyte takes a fragment from Kelsey's journal of 9 July 1689 and includes it in this portion of "Nivation" to provide a contextual anchor for his ebullient figure, "I am adrift on smoke":

> Setting forward good weather & going as it were on a Bowling green in y^e
>
> Evening spyed two Buffillo left our things & pursued y^m we Kill'd one they are ill shapen beast their Body being bigger than an ox.
>
> <div align="right">(*Homage* 39;</div>
> *KP* 16-17)

Homage shows this event from the perspective of the muskox; by way of zoomorphism it asks "what wolves are these, / striking and biting from unseen hills?" (40). The predators, of course, turn out to be Kelsey and his companion on the 1689 journey, Thomas Savage. Although he does not yet explain the significance of this hunt, in order to indicate that Kelsey has undergone a fundamental transformation during his Barrens sojourn, Whyte asks, "Who recognized the stranger returned?" (41).

For the moment, the question remains unanswered, and Kelsey, continuing his winter rumination, lights suddenly and unannounced upon his departure to the interior in 1690:

> Perhaps it should stand: "I ran away."
> It might as well as have been.
> Ran to the mystery the shore concealed,
> ran to the forest darkness, or from Geyer and his punishment,
> as some would say, upon some *Boyish misbehaviour* chastised, I fled
> and Geyer made a *Merit* of my *going up*
> which Geyer undertook it was his own idea.
>
> <div align="right">(42)</div>

The Kelsey of this passage obviously speaks from the present, but only with limited hindsight. Although Whyte plainly prefers the Kelsey legend, which is alluded to in these lines by the italicized words drawn from Dobbs's allegations against the HBC, it is clear that his Kelsey belies all the documentary evidence pertinent to the inland journey with his next utterance: "To him to whom the wind has sung orders mean little" (42). In other words, the wind and the hunt transform Kelsey:

> and England
> Kelsey, died
> in you when you
> beheld him
> and you *kill'd one*
>
> Oomingmuk lies
> unmoving in a puddle of blood
> oozing into tundra
> redder than lichen
> the lichens soaking
> a precious wetness
> (42-43)

By comparing the muskox hunt to another hunt from "Flensing," part four of the poem, the significance of the words, "and England…died," can be explained. In the second hunt, Kelsey kills and eats a deer:

Sweat flecks the tawny hide, urging
the ecstasy the buck dies in, surging
ecstasy, crumbling on its legs splaying,
slaughter's dreary darkness replacing
        the surgent rapture

        The larynx tightens; the word is drawn back;
        before utterance is thrown, the breath is drawn;
        the heart's cords and the hand's tendons tighten;
        song brims in the tension of silence.
                •   •   •
The blade scores the soft belly flesh
and the guts of the buck spill out;
                •   •   •
After winter's hunger slaked by small birds only,
                •   •   •
                summer seems good
                (48-49)

Whyte, in a letter to Wayne Tefs of Turnstone Press, explains the significance of this

passage as

> the myth of transference, the spirit of the landscape moving through the beast into the guts of man by his eating the beast seems totemically important for what is transforming in Kelsey, what is making him totemically a citizen of the new world rather than a transplanted Englishman (Letter A).

By way of the muskox and the deer, Whyte frees Kelsey from complicity in the imperial and mercantile motives of the HBC. Indeed, in the same letter to Turnstone, Whyte also says that as the animal is skinned, Kelsey's "hide-bound past" is peeled from him. In other words, Whyte's questing hero is not an HBC man; rather than participating in the mercantilistic ideology of seeking and claiming, he can wander the continent freely for "two swift years of joy and awe and wonder" (24). Free of imperial ideology, Whyte's Kelsey finds his poetic voice, an event which culminates his historical retrospection:

> I stand in the haggard wind of winter,
> turbulent air and colder times,
>
> •   •   •
>
> the muteness of my mouth where language fell away
> from me
> until my silence forced me to reach
> for any utterance, any speech
> my chafed hand might render:
> > Now Reader Read for I am well assur'd
> > Winter has forted us, and us immur'd
> > Thou dost not know the hardships I endur'd
> It is a beginning:
> the wind is singing
> fire is dying:
> the voice of the land is the wind,
> the wind is the voice of the land, and
> when you have heard the wind and its singing
> you shall have begun to understand.
>
> (43)

Archetypally, this passage is important because it figures forth a prescient Kelsey who sees his own poem, "Now Reader Read," as the "beginning" of a national poetry based upon the "voice of the land." Whyte's explanation of Kelsey's originative role bears out this reading. According to Whyte, Kelsey is

> [o]ur prologue, he talks to us all, foresees us. We people his dream; he becomes our dream–to become primal, sincere, innocent, wandering,

amiable and–important for me–be first English speaker to confront grizzly bear, musk ox, bison, and penetrate wilderness until it permeates him ("Cosmos" 272).

The seeming illogic of these words diminishes when they are read for their archetypal content. In Jungian theory, myth manifests itself in the collective unconscious, and, by means of *Homage,* Whyte argues that "our dream" in Canada is the mythic Henry Kelsey. Although Whyte presents this dream as a natural desire, it arises from a specific generical and historical context.

V

This discussion began by promising to consider the generical connection between Whyte's anatomical epic and Kelsey's topographical journey poem. In light of one strain of contemporary theory this emphasis on literary kind, and the type of analysis it signals, seems unavailing because the very concept of genre depends upon identifying traits, and, in the words of Jacques Derrida, the "trait that marks membership inevitably divides" (206). With his comment on division, Derrida indicates the tendency for genre studies to eventuate in little more than endless hairsplitting of a rather arbitrary kind. Yet, he also notes that generical traits are "absolutely necessary for and constitutive of what we call art, poetry, or literature" (211). This categorical ("absolutely necessary") and fundamental ("constitutive") statement indicates that even deconstructive theory cannot completely dispense with the idea of genre. In fact, as Mary Gerhart argues, the concept of genre is particularly useful when it is used diagnostically and heuristically to formulate hypotheses, not merely to classify, but to enable readers to recognize a text "for all that it is" (372). Accordingly, it is the goal of these closing paragraphs to propose a generical understanding of *Homage* that issues from one of Whyte's comments about Kelsey's historical importance: "since I still believe with some devotedness that he ought not be overlooked, my poem is an "'homage'''" (Letter A). That Whyte forges a causal link between "devotedness" and the genre of *Homage* explains why it is unlike many other contemporary Canadian poems of book length.

Notably, *Homage* differs considerably from Margaret Atwood's *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* and from Michael Ondaatje's *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, each published in 1970. This date is important because Stephen Scobie, working with Dorothy Livesay's terminology, claims that these two "definitive" poems "established" the documentary genre in Canadian poetry (120). Consequently, when Scobie includes *Homage* in a list of texts that follow the documentary "precedent" set by Atwood and Ondaatje (120-21), he implies that *Homage* is a derivative poem. However, even though there can be little doubt that he read both of the "precedent" poems, Whyte began *Homage* in 1968, before the two exemplars were published, before Livesay delivered her paper on the "documentary poem" in 1969 at the Learned Societies. In one of his letters, Whyte writes that the "earlier dates should be brought out" to show that *Homage* was

"more or less synchronous" with Atwood's *Susanna Moodie* (Letter B). These comments display an understandable proprietary urge that anticipates and attempts to forestall the kind of connection that Scobie advocates between *Homage* and the documentary poem.

Begun in 1968, *Homage* belongs very much to the escalation of national pride that marked Canada's centennial, which explains, at least in part, why it advances Kelsey's journey as an achievement central to the traditions and beliefs of western Canadian culture, one that defines the regional, if not national, present. That is, the poem aspires for epic status, but, as the historical context of its composition suggests, Whyte's poem is not epic in the broadest sense of the term. Rather, *Homage* recalls the English epic of the Renaissance, a genre that Lewis F. Ball characterizes as a combination of patriotic ambition, landscape description, and historical interest that works to provide ethical instruction and a "genealogy of the present race" (87). These characteristics accord with Whyte's description of *Homage* as a poem that "incorporates history, myth, landscape, [and] a literary past" (*Fells* 8). As well, Whyte presents this incorporation in genealogical terms, for his Kelsey is a hero who is "our prologue," who "talks to us all," who embodies our dream "to become primal, sincere, innocent, wandering, amiable," and who stands, finally, as the "archetypal western Canadian" ("Cosmos" 272).

Balanced against these correspondences between *Homage* and the Elizabethan epic are several observations by Smaro Kamboureli on Whyte's poem. She argues that *Homage* is "not epic except insofar as its tone is frequently lofty," and that "epic in this poem does not designate genre but proportion: the expansiveness of the prairie, Kelsey's awe of the New World, physical endurance" (61). These comments issue from a more traditional understanding of the epic and from Kamboureli's contention that *Homage* is a "deconstructed epic" (62). Her point takes Whyte's definition of his anatomical epic—a "'panoptic treatment of a single subject, or a singular point of view brought to bear on a multiplicity of subjects'" (*Fells* 9)—as another way of describing dialogical discourse, and she concludes that Whyte's poem belongs to "a genre in which monologism is continuously subverted" (62). However, the paradox that Whyte creates between "panoptic" and a "singular point of view" is more perspectival and less discursive.[22] Indeed, the elements of Whyte's definition all belong to the visual register, and the book itself relies heavily on pictorial patterning in its layout. The 1981 edition, of course, also interweaves eight ink drawings by Dennis Burton (executed in chin-chin and Pelikan India ink and Dr. P.H. Martin's water colours) into the poem (80); these prairie landscapes do not so much comprise a parallel text as they intensify the already highly visual quality of *Homage*. As illustrations, they help fulfill Whyte's commitment to a "panoptic" perspective, and, as much as they represent landscape, they underscore the fact that his poem envisions national identity as the outgrowth of Kelsey's interaction with the prairie environment.

That *Homage* proceeds by description no doubt derives from Kelsey's avowed

goal in travelling inland—"But still I was resolved this same Country for to see" (*KP* 14). Working from Kelsey's commitment to see the land, Whyte structures *Homage* according to a poetics of vision. He illustrates these in a passage that comments on and circumscribes the act of writing and reading *Homage*. In this portion of the poem, Whyte employs a geometrical trope that makes vision into a process that encompasses thought, perception, interpretation, and interaction:

Sphere: a way of thinking

Sphere: a manner of perception   location

Circle: a plane of intersection of two spheres
       a way of thinking, a mode of perception
Circle: the intersection of a sphere and plane
       the volumetric intersection of a pair of spheres: a lens
Sphere of the eye Sphere of the world
         together a lens each focussing
            the other

•   •   •

 Substitute in the above any of the following:

   your sphere, my sphere;
   your sphere, Kelsey's sphere;
   my sphere; Kelsey's sphere
                         (67)

This final set of appositions, which interlock thought and perception as vision into a "circle," extrapolate and juxtapose space and time. As the passage continues—"The spheres near each other / a pair of convex surfaces / diminishing the virtual we see a point of contact / the gap breached" (68)—Whyte, in effect, makes *Homage* the aperture through which he and his reader view Kelsey and the land he journeyed. Neither Kelsey nor the landscape of Canada, however, are presented as objects to be seen; rather, Kelsey and his poem invest *Homage* as a structure of consciousness with which the reader interacts on the basis of a shared environment.

   The shared environment is present because Whyte fills *Homage* with copious, sincerely descriptive passages of verse:

        Goldenrod, silverwood, water calla, dragonhead,
        bunchberry, ragwort, paintbrush, and sedge,
        Indian pipe, meadow rue, bur-weed, silverthread,
        hornwort; growing at the water's edge.
                      (59)

These catalogues of still life anatomize the prairies, and, by shifting attention from

Kelsey to the ground beneath his feet, they also broach the other portion of Whyte's paradoxical definition by offering "a singular point of view…on a multiplicity of subjects." This point of view is still guided by "devotedness," but by extending his poetic devotion to the non-human and the seemingly trivial, Whyte augments the epic tradition with that of loco-descriptive or topographical poetry.[23] His precedent for this modulation is not the documentary genre in itself, but, rather, the kind of documentation present in Kelsey's descriptions of his journey.

Kelsey's inventories deal with what Bentley calls the "commercially important aspects of his journey and the 'deerings point' area: the length and difficulty of the trade route, the availability of various and useful woods, and the presence of possible trading partners" ("Set Forth" 22). In his delineation of the land between York Fort and the grasslands Kelsey takes up the role of the topographer, a role which a near contemporary of Kelsey, Thomas Fuller (1608-61), defines as "*mincing* the world into particular pieces" (69, my emphasis). Fuller's participle of incision reflects the literal sense of anatomy (to cut), and it also indicates the ideological work figured in Kelsey's journey of claiming and naming.

Whyte's "anatomical epic" reiterates this very work, but, by means of the seemingly innocent, even transcendent, eye that breaches the gap between the imperial past and the patriotic present, it effaces the historical conditions of Kelsey's journey and renders Canada as Eden. This strangely neutral place is neither a theatre for Anglo-Franco wars, nor a resource to be plundered, nor a Native homeland invaded. Rather, the land that is north and west in Canada becomes a landscape that backdrops the appropriately solitary and heroic quest that Whyte's Kelsey undertakes.

Conceived of as a poem that uses landscape to achieve its ends, the generical work of *Homage* arises less from its kind and more from the medium it mobilizes. As Mitchell notes, landscape is a "cultural medium" that "naturalizes a cultural and social construction, representing an artificial world as if it were simply given and inevitable, and it also makes that representation operational by interpellating its beholder in some more or less determinate relation to its givenness as sight and site" (2). Put in terms of *Homage*, landscape appeals to the poem's reader by means of sight and the assumption that Canada is a shared site which guarantees a commonality in its subjects. Mitchell is worth citing again on this point when he says that landscape "always greets us as space, as environment, as that within which 'we' (figured as 'the figures' in the landscape) find—or lose—ourselves" (2). Whyte locates this national act in a paradox that he calls culturally specific—"we" Canadians find ourselves by disappearing into the landscape.

Of course, Whyte's own generical label works to subvert his mystical version of Canadian desire, for any epic that is "anatomical" invites analysis from an historical perspective. If Whyte's reader replaces myth with history and landscape with land, the poem's final line—"The story continues" (73)—becomes an invitation to follow

Kelsey not to his fibrous apotheosis, but to his death at East Greenwich, England, in 1724. After a lifetime of service to the HBC, Kelsey had earned some £2,500, little enough to cause his widow, Elizabeth Kelsey, to petition the Company in 1730 for help with the cost of apprenticing her son, John Kelsey, who was then seventeen (Davies, "Kelsey'' 314). This uncanny continuation of the Kelsey story is perhaps the least heroic, but, ironically, it is perhaps the most "Canadian" in that it displays the economics of indentured service to international capital. Certainly, these bleaker elements lie outside the poem; put another way, they comprise the "landscape delitescent" of the poem. Nevertheless, like Kelsey and his poem, in Whyte's words, they "ought not be overlooked" (Letter A).

Notes

1. Bentley attends primarily to the rhetorical and ideological effects of Kelsey's plain style; Warkentin examines some of the probable literary influences on Kelsey. Both Bentley and Warkentin take seriously the literary and historical elements of Kelsey's poem; geographical and historical studies, too numerous to discuss here, usually dismiss the poem because its verse is deemed crude and factually unreliable. [back]
2. All quotations from *Homage* are taken from the 1981 edition. [back]
3. Even though "Canada" is an anachronism in reference to the land that Kelsey travelled, the term is used throughout this paper for reasons of terminological simplicity. [back]
4. The date of Kelsey's death is certain; however, the year of his birth is a matter of some question. See Davies, ''Kelsey,'' 307-15 and Kenney, 37-71, for details of Kelsey's life. [back]
5. Allen Ronaghan, 89-94, provides a detailed discussion of Kelsey's route. York Fort or York Factory, established in 1684 by Governor Geyer of the Hudson's Bay Company, is the oldest permanent European settlement in Manitoba. This place was often called "Port Nelson" or "Hayes River" before it was resituated; not until the 1680s was it regularly called York Fort. "York Fort" or just "York" are used throughout this discussion for consistency and clarity. [back]
6. Lord John Churchill, created Earl of Marleborough in April 1689 and first duke in 1702, was governor of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1685 to 1691. The Churchill River, originating from Lac La Loche, Saskatchewan and emptying into Hudson Bay, bears his name, as does the town of Churchill, Manitoba. [back]
7. Kelsey, among other groups, also names the "Naywatame Poets," a still

unidentified people (*Kelsey Papers* 3). Dale Russell, in a concise discussion (74-88), evaluates some of the possible answers to this puzzle (Mandan, Assiniboine, Sioux, Snake, Atsina, and Blackfoot). He argues that the Naywatame were Hidatsa, a Siouan speaking group who were seasonal occupants of southeastern Saskatchewan (84). "*Poets*" is likely a rendering of the word, *pwat*, a term used by the Cree to designate the Sioux. Thus, the "Assinae Poets" are the people known today as the Assiniboine. In the HBC documents the Assiniboine are called the Stone Indians, Assinipoets, or just Poets (79). Terry Goldie mistakenly makes "poets" conform to his examination of European constructions of oral eloquence in the Native peoples of Canada (111). [back]

8. On 17 June 1693 the Company Committee wrote to Geyer saying "*we are glad that Henery Kelsey is safe returned & brought a good fleet of Indians downe with him and hope he has effected that wch. he was sent about in keeping the Indians from warring one with another, that they may have the more time to look after theire trade and bring larger quantity of Furrs and other trad with them to the factory*" (*Hudson's Bay* 187). Later in the letter they note of Kelsey, "[a]s for the Service Henery Kelsey has done us in travelling up into the Countery You being imediate Judges of his demerits we leave it to your discretion to gratifie him for the same" (*Hudson's Bay* 194). [back]

9. Unless noted otherwise, all quotations of Kelsey are taken from the 1994 Canadian Plains Research Center reprint of *The Kelsey Papers*, cited in the text as *KP*. I follow the conventions of the 1994 reprint by retaining Kelsey's use of the ampersand as well as his suprascript contractions; letters or words which are cancelled in Kelsey's manuscript are reproduced in strikeout characters. The oblique, used to denote the end of a line of verse and at the end of each page of Kelsey's manuscript, is not retained. See *KP*, xii-xiii, for a more detailed description of the contents of the manuscript and for a discussion of several variant manuscripts. [back]

10. The fall in the price of beaver became significant in 1686. For a discussion of the HBC's tenuous financial condition from 1688 to 1696 see Davies, Introduction xxxvi-lxii. The rivalry between the English and the French broke into open war in 1689; Davies also provides a concise treatment of the effects of war upon the HBC's trade and finance (Introduction, xiii-xxi). [back]

11. Kelsey's name appeared first before the Committee of the House of Commons on 24 April 1749 (Doughty and Martin xii). [back]

12. Wolfart and Pentland, 37-42, argue that the so-called "Bowrey Dictionary," a Cree vocabulary of "seven pages in folio" entitled *A Dictionary of the Hudson's Bay Indian Language*, was compiled by Kelsey (37). [back]

13. If, as Williams observes, the manuscript found in Castle Dobbs was in the hands of Dobbs before 1752, it says "little for his veracity, and much for his unscrupulousness" ("Kelsey" 22). [back]

14. It should be noted that in 1928 Charles Napier Bell presented an outline of *The Kelsey Papers*, as well as portions of its introduction, to the Manitoba Historical Society. A version of his paper, which included portions of Kelsey's

journal and the whole of "Reader," was published in 1928. [back]

15. John Warkentin gives Kelsey's age as seventeen (ix); Doughty and Martin, xxxvi, state that Kelsey entered the service of the HBC on 14 April, 1684 at the age of fourteen, which makes his birth date correspond, perhaps too fortuitously, with the year when the Hudson's Bay Charter was issued. [back]

16. In terms that would likely seem familiar to Whyte, Calvin Luther Martin avers that European desires for indigeneity are not a need for otherness; rather, these urges are manifestations of a deeper need to return to a set of universal palaeolithic roots that supposedly fix all peoples in their correct ecological and spiritual niche (10-20). [back]

17. See Robert W. Newbury's article, "The Painted Stone," for a discussion of the Echimamish and its importance to Natives and explorers seeking passage from Hudson Bay to the western interior. [back]

18. In his endnotes to *Homage*, Lenoski engenders a good deal of confusion over the Echimamish, for in error he says that it has a "characteristic of reversing its direction of flow" (60 n.15). He compounds this mistake by saying that the Echimamish connects the Nelson and Hayes Rivers; according to Lenoski, the Echimamish reverses flows either west or east to the Hayes "depending on which source course is higher" (60 n.15). In fact, the Echimamish flows into Hairy Lake, and the stream flowing west from the lake into the Nelson is called Blackwater Creek. The name "river-that-flows-both-ways" describes the normal watershed hydraulics of the marshy area from which the Echimamish originates; this interfleuve spills water east into the Hayes River and west into the Echimamish, but no reversal of current is involved. [back]

19. Leon Surrette's article on "topocentrism" provides an insightful examination of the environmental presuppositions at work in thematic Canadian literary criticism. [back]

20. See the mapsheet, *Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan* (edition 2, 63D, 1:250 000 scale in The National Topographic System), for a representation of the topography that determines the flow of the Etomami and Lillian Rivers. [back]

21. Jung uses the term enantiodromia throughout his writings. See his *Psychological Types*, 425-26, for a more detailed discussion of the term. [back]

22. On the matter of paradox and the anatomy see Rosalie Colie's *Paradoxia Epidemica*, 430-60, and her *Resources of Kind*, 76-102. Marjorie Perloff, 3, and Ralph Cohen, 11, both comment on the tendency in postmodernism, particularly when allied with poststructuralism, to consider genres as archaic categories which dissolve under parody or deconstruction. Cohen, in particular, argues that "critics who find postmodern writing non-generic because it is combinatory or reader oriented or discontinuous seem too unfamiliar with the available generic theories upon which they can draw" (15). Where he discusses the anatomy in his *Anatomy of Criticism*, Northrop Frye is concerned chiefly with prose; however, without suggesting that hybridization undoes the genre, he notes that the anatomy merges with many other forms (312). Whyte's "anatomical epic," then, does not subvert monologism, particularly when the

epic itself is an inclusionary genre; likewise, the topographical poem is equally capable of subsuming the epic, as Lewis Ball so convincingly argues. [back]

23. Robert Arnold Aubin says that the topographical journey poem is "seriously descriptive, opulent in details, seeking to impart information" (242). [back]

Works Cited

Aubin, Robert Arnold. *Topographical Poetry in XVIII-Century England*. 1936. New York: Kraus Reprint, 1966.

Ball, Lewis F. "The Background of the Minor English Renaissance Epics." *Journal of English Literary History* 1 (1934): 63-89.

Bell, Charles Napier. "The Journal of Henry Kelsey (1691-92)." *Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Transactions* (New Series) 4 (1928).

Bentley, D.M.R.'''Set Forth as Plainly as May Appear': the Verse Journal of Henry Kelsey." *Ariel* 21.4 (1990): 9-30.

——. *The Gay] Grey Moose: Essays on the Ecologies and Mythologies of Canadian Poetry 1690-1990*. Ottawa: U of Ottawa P, 1992.

Cohen, Ralph. "Do Postmodern Genres Exist?" In Perloff. 11-27.

Colie, Rosalie L. *Paradoxia Epidemica: the Renaissance Tradition of Paradox*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1966.

——. *The Resources of Kind: Genre-Theory in the Renaissance*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1973.

Davies, K.G. Introduction. *Hudson's Bay*. xiii-lxii.

——. "Kelsey, Henry." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Vol 2. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1969. 307-15.

Davey, Frank. "Recontextualization in the Long Poem." *Reading Canadian Reading*. Winnipeg: Turnstone, 1988. 123-36.

Derrida, Jacques. "The Law of Genre." Trans. Avital Ronell. *Glyph* 7 (1980): 202-32.

Doughty, Arthur G. and Chester Martin. Introduction. In Kelsey. xvii-x11vi.

Epp, Henry, ed. *Three Hundred Prairie Years: Henry Kelsey's "Inland Country of Good Report."* Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center U of Regina, 1993.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957.

Fuller, Thomas. *The Holy and the Profane State*. 1641. London: Thomas Teggs, 1841.

Gerhart, Mary. "The Dilemma of the Text: how to 'Belong' to a Genre." *Poetics* 18.4-5 (1989): 355-73.

Goldie, Terry. *Fear and Temptation: the Image of the Indigine in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures*. Kingston, Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1989.

Hudson's Bay Copy Booke of Letters Commissions Instructions Outward 1688-1696. Ed. E.E. Rich. London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1957. Vol. 20 of *The Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society*. 33 vols. to date. 1938-1981.

Jung, C.G. *Psychological Types*. 1921. Trans. H.G. Baynes, rev. by R.F.C. Hull. The Bollingen Series XX. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1971.

Kamboureli, Smaro. *On the Edge of Genre: the Contemporary Canadian Long Poem*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1991.

Kelsey, Henry. *The Kelsey Papers*. Ed. and Introd. Arthur G. Doughty and Chester Martin. Ottawa: PAC; Dublin: PRO of Northern Ireland, 1929. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center U of Regina, 1994.

Kenney, James F. "The Career of Henry Kelsey," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 3rd Series. 23(2) (1929): 37-71.

Lenoski, Daniel S., ed. *a/long prairie lines: an Anthology of Long Prairie Poems*. Winnipeg: Turnstone P, 1989.

Martin, Calvin Luther. *In the Spirit of the Earth: Rethinking History and Time*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1992.

Mitchell, W.J.T. *Landscape and Power*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994.

Morse, Eric W. *Fur Trade Routes: Then and Now*. 1969. [Ottawa]: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1979.

Newbury, Robert W. "The Painted Stone: Where Two Rivers Touch." *Nature Canada* (Jan. 1974): 12-19.

Perloff, Marjorie, ed. and intro. *Postmodern Genres*. Norman and London: U of Oklahoma P, 1988.

Rich. E.E. *The History of the Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870. Vol. 1: 1670-1763*. 2 vols. London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1958. Vol. 21 of *The Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society*. 33 vols. to date. 1938-81.

Robson, Joseph. *An Account of Six Years Residence in Hudson's Bay, From 1733 to 1736, and 1744 to 1747*. 1752. New York: Johnson Reprint, 1965.

Ronaghan, Allen. "Reconstructing Kelsey's Travels." In Epp. 89-94.

Russell, Dale. "The Puzzle of Henry Kelsey and His Journey to the West." In Epp. 74-88.

Scobie, Stephen. *Signature Event Cantext*. The Writer as Critic Series, vol. 2. Edmonton: NeWest P, 1989.

Storer, John E. "Life and Landscape: Origins and Prehistory." In Epp. 38-47.

Surette, Leon. "Here is Us: the Topocentricism of Canadian Literary Criticism." *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews* 10 (Spring/Summer 1982): 44-57.

Warkentin, Germaine. "'The Boy Henry Kelsey': Generic Disjunction in Henry Kelsey's Verse Journal." In *Literary Genres/ Les Genres Littéraires*. Ed. I.S. MacLaren and C. Potvin. Edmonton: Research Institute for Comparative Literature, U of Alberta, 1991. 99-114.

Warkentin, John. Introduction to the 1994 Edition. *The Kelsey Papers*. 1929. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center U of Regina, 1994. vii-xxvi.

Watson, Robert. "Henry Kelsey, H.B.C. Explorer." *The Beaver* 6.3 (June 1926): 100-01.

Whyte, Jon. "Cosmos: Order and Turning.'' *Trace: Prairie Writers on Writing*. Ed. Birk Sproxton. Winnipeg: Turnstone, 1986. 269-74.

——. *The Fells of Brightness: Some Fittes and Starts*. Edmonton: Longspoon, 1983.

——. *Homage, Henry Kelsey*. In *a/long prairie lines: an Anthology of Long Prairie Poems*. Ed. Daniel S. Lenoski. Winnipeg: Turnstone, 1989.

3-62.

——. *Homage, Henry Kelsey: a poem in five parts*. Winnipeg: Turnstone, 1981.

——. Letter A. Whyte to Turnstone Press. nd. Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Banff Alberta. Box 3.

——. Letter B. Unaddressed. nd. Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Banff Alberta. Box 3.

——. "*Pearl*: Study in Individuation." MA thesis; U of Alberta, 1967.

Williams, Glyndwr. "Arthur Dobbs and Joseph Robson: New Light on the Relationship between Two Early Critics of the Hudson's Bay Company." *Canadian Historical Review* 40 (1959): 132-36.

——. "Kelsey, Henday, and the Prairies." *The Beaver* (Autumn 1970): 21-27.

Wolfart, H. Christof and David H. Pentland. "The 'Bowrey' Dictionary of Henry Kelsey." In *Papers of the Tenth Algonquian Conference*. Ed. William Cowan. Ottawa: Carleton UP, 1979. 37-42.