

Can Fur Traders Have Feelings? Sentiment in Samuel Hearne's *Journey to the Northern Ocean* (1795)

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Article abstract

Samuel Hearne's lurid and sentimental recounting of the "Bloody Falls" massacre in *Journey to the Northern Ocean* (1795) has raised doubts as to whether the fur trader was, in fact, the account's author. However, historical documents indicate that Hearne was capable of writing at the level of complexity and correctness seen in this passage: Hearne's letters to the London directors of the HBC significantly differ stylistically from his post journals; Hearne's family, education, and interests are consistent with those of an aspiring writer; and most importantly, the account of the massacre is consistent with ideas, analogous incidents, emotional expressions, and the narrating persona found throughout the *Journey*, all of which suggest Hearne's familiarity and engagement with the influential sentimentalist thought of his time.

Can Fur Traders Have Feelings? Sentiment in Samuel Hearne's *Journey to the Northern Ocean* (1795)

BRUCE GREENFIELD

My situation and the terror of my mind at beholding this butchery, cannot easily be conceived, much less described; though I summed up all the fortitude I was master of on the occasion, it was with difficulty that I could refrain from tears; and I am confident that my features must have feelingly expressed how sincerely I was affected at the barbarous scene I then witnessed; even at this hour I cannot reflect on the transaction of that horrid day without shedding tears.

— Hearne (100)

ALMOST ALWAYS INCLUDED in any anthology selection, and often forming the focus of critical and scholarly commentary on Hearne's book, these lines, and the lurid details of the "Bloody Falls" massacre that precede them, have also raised doubts as to whether Hearne was, in fact, their author.¹ The horror and sympathy, the near recourse to tears, the reference to self as a site of emotional turmoil, ought not to surprise anyone familiar with the sentimental style, which had so profoundly affected literature, art, psychology, and politics throughout the decades of Hearne's life. For various reasons, however, what we acknowledge as normal expression in *The Man of Feeling* (1771) has, for some, seemed inappropriate for the likes of a Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) fur trader reporting travels that occurred during the same year that Henry Mackenzie's popular novel was published.

Several factors contribute to this reaction. Probably the most important is our generic expectations of voyage and travel narratives of this period, which are strongly associated with the burgeoning global aspirations of European science. For a century prior to Hearne's publication, institutions such as the Royal Society had been actively recruiting travelers as data gatherers, and these same travellers recognized the roles of collector and observer as means of access to metropolitan intellectual

circles (Parrish 8, 15-18, 107). Sober, empirical reportage appealed to a growing readership — including natural scientists but extending well into a larger pool of readers, motivated by commercial and political interests as well as by a broadly validated spirit of “curiosity” (Parrish 57). A second factor is the sketchiness of the fur traders’ biographies. What we know about figures such as Hearne often is derived from the HBC archives, where the records, not surprisingly, deal almost exclusively with the trade and with the writer’s commercial duties. Third, there is a tendency to presume that the spatial remoteness of the trader’s occupation implies his cultural isolation. How could anyone occupied for years with the pragmatics of trade in sub-arctic North America be aware of, and influenced by, artistic and intellectual trends in Europe? This paper argues that Samuel Hearne’s *Journey* challenges these assumptions, and that we best understand his book if we recognize in it the author’s participation in his era’s important intellectual and cultural movements. In addition to being a successful employee of the HBC, an intrepid and innovative traveller, an astute ethnographer, geographer, gatherer, and describer of wildlife, Hearne was also a writer whose ideas and style were partly a product of his engagement with the literary culture and fashionable ideas of his time.

Editors, readers, and critics almost since the time of Hearne’s death have questioned the extent to which Hearne himself was responsible for the printed book that anchors his place in history.² None of the surviving journals, reports, or narratives pertaining to his multi-year trek across the Arctic barrens is in Hearne’s hand. The manuscript submitted to the publisher seems not to have survived. The two modern editors of Hearne’s *Journey*, J.B. Tyrrell and Richard Glover, both raise questions about Hearne’s authorship, and both are equivocal about how much, if any, help Hearne received. Tyrrell writes that the manuscript was edited by “Dr. John Douglas, who is said to have drawn up the narrative, and to have finished the Introduction, though how much Hearne’s diction was altered by the editor is not known. It is probable, however, that the MS was published almost exactly as Hearne had written it” (19). Tyrrell’s last assertion — “that the MS was published almost exactly as Hearne had written it” — seems to undo what is implied by the first; if to “draw up” means “to put together in proper form; to frame, compile, compose” (OED def. 89g), this implies substantial interventions on the part of an editor, including writing part of the introduction.

Glover rejects the idea that Douglas edited the manuscript, asserting that the first thing to say about his book “is that Hearne wrote it himself” (xxx). Glover adds, however, that it is “certain indeed that someone did make corrections to Hearne’s MS,” citing Hearne’s letter to his publisher allowing payment for “the person that prepares the Work for the Press.” Glover posits a light, and incomplete, correcting of grammatical errors, punctuation, and spelling (xxxii). With respect to the process of creating his final manuscript for the book, Glover affirms that Hearne “took years writing [his book], that it embodies a lifetime’s knowledge and experience, and that it breaks down into a number of sections which were composed or revised at different periods of his career” (xxxii).

More recent scholars have challenged Glover’s relatively straightforward confidence in Hearne’s authority, focusing in particular on the climactic and controversial passage in which Hearne describes the massacre of a village of Inuit people by the Chipewyan men who have led him to the goal of his journey, the mouth of the Coppermine River on what is now Canada’s Arctic coast. The passage is a climax of Hearne’s narrative in the sense that, in addition to bringing Hearne to the planned destination of his journey, it also casts into strongest relief a tension that runs the length of his *Journey* — between Hearne’s authority and desires and those of the Chipewyan people who are his guides and means of support. In *Journey*, the massacre is recounted as occurring despite Hearne’s objections, leaving him a helpless witness. He attains his geographical goal at the same moment that the gulf between his sensibilities and those of his companions gapes alarmingly. The controversy concerns whether Hearne is, in fact, the author of the vivid description of, and emotional commentary on, this event, or whether passages embellishing the events and heightening Hearne’s emotional response were supplied by the person who prepared the manuscript for the press. If this is the most read and discussed part of Hearne’s *Journey*, it is also the passage seen by some as most likely to have been written by someone else.

As noted already, the manuscript of *Journey* submitted to the publisher is not known to have survived. The earliest stages of Hearne’s writing about his Arctic travels are represented in two transcriptions of what appears to have been an early report (in turn, presumed to have been prepared from, and to resemble closely, the missing field notes kept by Hearne as he travelled [Driscoll 204-05]). Four versions of a

later, more developed draft narrative, thought to have been written by Hearne around 1772 (Driscoll 234-35), also survive (none in Hearne's hand) — three in Andrew Graham's "Observations on Hudson's Bay" and the fourth in Edward Umfreville's *The Present State of Hudson's Bay* (1790) (Driscoll 197, 224-30, 240). This latter narrative recounts only the events on the Coppermine River, including the massacre, the section of Hearne's book that has continued to attract the most attention. One of the three versions of the narrative occurring in Graham's "Observations" includes some heightening of the horrors and emotions associated with the massacre scene, compared to the earlier report. Based on her analysis of all versions in Graham, in the context of her study of all the Hearne documents, Heather Rollason Driscoll concludes that this version (found in HCBA E.2/12) is the farthest from Hearne's own work and that Graham introduced words and phrases, some of which have the effect of augmenting the cruelty depicted in and emotional impact of the massacre story. Driscoll attributes these changes to Graham, rather than to a second draft narrative by Hearne, because most of them do not appear in the, later, published *Journey*. Driscoll also notes that it is the E.2/12 version, the one that differs most from what she construes to be Hearne's writing, that Glyndwyr Williams chose to include in his published selections from Graham's copious and repetitive "Observations" (Driscoll 231).³

Doubts about the capacity of fur-trade explorers to write about their experiences and discoveries are commonplace. For one thing, these traveller/writers themselves, as a convention, apologize for their lack of literary skill in the prefaces to their own works, preferring to trade on their first-hand experience rather than their style.⁴ Moreover, there are well-documented instances of travellers' work being substantially edited and expanded by a hired pen. Prominent examples contemporary with Hearne's life and writing include John Hawksworth's drawing up of the account of James Cook's first voyage, John Douglas's editorial work on Cook's second voyage (though Cook was himself actively involved in the writing), and Douglas and James King's drawing up of the account of the third voyage, Cook having died (Beaglehole 289-91, 460-63, 691). The accounts of all three voyages were based on the already impressive journals of Cook himself, along with those of other members of the voyages. There is good reason to believe that Alexander Mackenzie's *Voyages* owes some of its phrasing to the hand of William Combe. And

the contrast between the style of surviving journals in the traveller's hand and the prose of the published volume suggests strongly that Paul Kane's *Wanderings of an Artist* (1859) incorporated the labours of one or more editorial hands (MacLaren, "Samuel" 27).⁵ The progress from a field journal to a published account is typically a complex series of revisions, expansions, and rewritings undertaken by the traveller/author him/herself, along with varying degrees of editorial help. Motives for revision do not always stem from the desire to maximize strict accuracy. In the eighteenth century, certainly, the lucrative market for books of travel sometimes spurred publishers to refine their product, "to make it conform to what a readership was prepared to consume" (MacLaren, "Samuel" 26). But cross-fertilization among the conventions of romances, novels, and travel accounts predates Hearne by centuries and was the subject of extensive commentary, as well as artistic experimentation.⁶ Moreover, the motives for writing to please the perceived tastes of the time are similar, whether the traveller himself or an editor is undertaking the final preparation of the manuscript for publication.

Comparing the earliest surviving reports of Hearne's Coppermine experiences and the version published as Hearne's *Journey*, Ian MacLaren points to additions to the latter — more details of the massacre, as well as more explicit emotional responses from the witness/writer — as potential grounds to suspect a hand other than Hearne's at work. The Stowe MS report, the earliest and shortest surviving version of the massacre (what MacLaren calls the "field notes"), documents the main events, but it contains none of the lurid details and emotional expression of *Journey*. In the Stowe MS report, the Dene "lay some time to watch the motions of the Esquimaux but finding all asleep as they supposed by seeing nobody stir without they ran on the tent on a sudden & killed every soul before they had power to rise in the whole 21 persons" (MacLaren, "Samuel" 30).⁷ The Stowe MS includes a version of the debate as to where Hearne should position himself in order to remain safe while the attack takes place. The outcome is that "I accompanied them at least followed them close at their backs where I stood neuter & saw the cruel massacre which was soon accomplished, the inhabitants being all asleep" (31). This is the substance of the massacre as recounted in the Stowe MS. We see Hearne positioned as a witness, but his emotional response is limited to his characterizing the event as

a “cruel massacre,” and in the next sentence as a “cruel murder” (qtd. in MacLaren, “Samuel” 31).

The *Journey* version of the event includes graphic, disturbing detail: the massacre is much prolonged; adjectives colour actions; and Hearne’s feelings are conveyed, both as they occurred at the time and as he recalls events years later, while writing about them. In *Journey*, the Inuit do not die in their tents; rather “the poor unhappy victims . . . ran out of their tents stark naked, and endeavoured to make their escape. . . . [T]he shrieks and groans of the poor expiring wretches were truly dreadful” (99). Hearne is moved into the centre of the action, almost assaulted by what he witnesses: “my horror was much increased at seeing a young girl, . . . killed so near me, that when the first spear was stuck into her side she fell down at my feet, and twisted around my legs, so that it was with difficulty that I could disengage myself from her dying grasps” (99). The tormenting of this victim is prolonged, and it moves Hearne to his own suffering on behalf of “a fellow creature who was so cruelly wounded” (100). The height of Hearne’s expression of his emotions follows from this experience, resulting in the lines cited at the beginning of this article.

The lurid details and emotional language of the book are new embellishments, in comparison to the Stowe MS report, but as MacLaren points out, they are also apparent contradictions. In the Stowe MS, all the Inuit are killed in their beds — the Indians “ran on the tent on a sudden & killed every soul before they had power to rise” (qtd. in MacLaren, “Samuel” 30). *Journey*, on the other hand, individualizes the deaths of a young woman, an old man, and an old woman, in a gruesome manner that MacLaren thinks may be catering to contemporary tastes for the “sadism,” “horror,” and “pathos” of popular Gothic fiction (37). MacLaren’s analysis complicates the authority of the narrative voice in Hearne’s *Journey*, emphasizing the fictive element, raising questions about the identity of the *Journey* narrator and about the narration itself as a simple witnessing of events. MacLaren emphasizes the complexities of the transformation of what began as a succinct report addressed to Hearne’s HBC superiors into a much-expanded narrative, composed with publication in mind. Without ruling out the possibility that Hearne himself could have been responsible for such a transformation of his own early report, MacLaren wonders whether “this veteran seaman and trader” would present himself “in the manner of a Grand

Tourist,” and he counsells that we not be “too quick to credit where it is perhaps undeserved” (39).

Short of discovering the manuscript that Hearne delivered to the publisher, we are unlikely ever to establish precisely what is the product of Hearne’s pen and what level of editorial intervention the work received. There are good reasons, however, to be reasonably confident that Hearne was capable of writing at the level of complexity and correctness seen in *Journey*, that he was motivated to write for the public, and that he could well have thought and written the kinds of things that appear in the book. The same reasons that might have motivated a publisher to pay a ghost writer or editor to heighten action and emotion may well have moved Hearne to do likewise, even to the point of fictionalizing his own experience in some of its details. Contrariwise, the earlier reports, produced for readers within the HBC itself, surely reflect norms of in-house correspondence, where the author restricts his account primarily to those actions taken in the fulfillment of his orders.

Doubts as to whether Hearne was capable of writing at the level of style that appears in the published version of his journey narrative have been very substantially resolved by Heather Rollason Driscoll, who systematically assembles all known records of Hearne’s writing in order to construct “The Genesis of *Journey to the Northern Ocean*.” Driscoll undertakes a stylistic analysis of documents known to have been written by Hearne during the years between his famous journey and his retirement from the HBC in 1787, in order to determine whether he was capable of the style that we see in the final published narrative. The most important evidence lies in the letters that, as chief factor at Fort Churchill, Hearne wrote to the London directors of the company, as opposed to the routinely copied and forwarded (and Driscoll argues, little-read) post journals. Letters from chief factors summarized affairs and identified crucial concerns, and they were considered in detail and responded to point by point. Driscoll very convincingly argues that “chief factors, such as Samuel Hearne, would have chosen to include their reflections on their own past performances and future policy recommendations in their letters rather than in post journals” (156). “If Hearne,” she continues, “wanted his employers to perceive him as a capable and intelligent individual, worthy of reward and advancement, then it makes sense that he would have taken care to write legibly about

his concerns in a clear, coherent, and logical manner. He did just that” (157). On the basis of her analysis of Hearne’s letters, Driscoll concludes that Hearne would have been fully capable of writing at the level of competence that appears in the published narrative. In the manuscript that Hearne submitted to his publishers, according to Driscoll,

there would have been a few spelling errors, but nothing that compromised his intended meaning. . . . His text would have been well-organized, keeping his thoughts together in cohesive units (paragraphs). . . .

Thus when Andrew Strachan received Hearne’s manuscript, it is highly unlikely that he had to make substantial alterations to the text to conform with acceptable literary practices characteristic of this time. (186)

If, then, Hearne were capable of the level of style that we find in the published book, would he have chosen to say the kinds of things that appear there, in the manner in which they are rendered? In particular, would he have crafted violent, erotically tinged incidents? Would his narrator foreground his own emotional reactions to the events of the massacre, including fear for his safety, horror at the deliberate and bloody mistreatment of the victims, and sympathy with their suffering, which in combination bring the speaker to the brink of tears? And would Hearne portray himself reliving these overwhelming feelings years later as he writes? The account rendered in *Journey* positions Hearne as a man who is incapable of participating in such an atrocity, but one who can intellectually and emotionally bear witness to it, from a perspective that transcends the local enmities that propel the violence. I believe that there are good reasons to conclude that this stance captures the thinking of Hearne the writer and that the remarks that stem from it are essentially Hearne’s own, reflecting his own experiences during his Coppermine River journey, but also, and crucially, his subsequent reading and absorption of the general culture. There are three main sources of support for such a position, two contextual and one based on a complete reading of *Journey*.

Hearne’s family origins and the little we know of his life suggest that he was a relatively cultivated individual with an active mind, who in his later life had contact with well-known natural scientists. What is known of Samuel Hearne’s family, education, and interests is consistent with intellectual ambition and literary achievement. A brief biography pub-

lished five years after his death and two years after the publication of his travel narrative, presents him as the “author” of *Journey* and treats him as a respectable figure, from a family of middling rank, who, after early schooling, served as a midshipman under Captain, later Viscount, Hood (*European Magazine*). As Driscoll points out, Hearne was hired by the HBC because he could write (162). We know that Hearne read Voltaire: David Thompson, when a young apprentice under Hearne’s authority at Prince of Wales Fort, recounts that after reading a sermon at the customary Sunday service, Hearne “then took Voltaire’s Dictionary, and said to us, here is my belief, and I have no other” (Thompson 8). As to the sermon heard on this occasion, HBC records indicate that Hearne put in an order for “Dr Dodds Sermons” (Driscoll 163n47), and that a volume of Dodd’s sermons was sent to Prince of Wales Fort in 1778 (Payne and Thomas 44). This is almost certainly William Dodd, one of the best-known religious sentimentalists of the time, a popular preacher known, according to Horace Walpole, for his “‘haranguing . . . very eloquently and touchingly’ with the effect that his congregations ‘sobbed and cried from their souls’” (qtd. in Carter 115). We also know that in the decade prior to its submission to his publisher, Hearne’s manuscript impressed the likes of the French naval commander and eminent geographer Jean François de Galaup, comte de la Pérouse (Tyrrell 6; Driscoll 28-30); Dr. John Douglas, who helped James Cook with the narrative of his second voyage, and who prepared Cook’s journals of his third voyage for publication (Glover xxxviii); Thomas Pennant, the author of *Arctic Zoology* (1784-85), for whom Hearne collected specimens (Glover xxxix); and mathematician and astronomer William Wales, known to Hearne as a result of Wales’s stay at Prince of Wales Fort between August 1768 and September 1769, and who in the 1790s helped Hearne negotiate a contract with his publishers Strahan and Cadell (Glover xli-xlii).

In the preface to his *Journey*, Hearne demonstrates a clear sense of the different audiences for the different versions of his Coppermine journey account. He tells us that when he wrote the first report of his journey for his superiors at Prince of Wales Fort and London, his “ambition extended no farther than to give my employers such an account of my proceedings as might be satisfactory to them”; at the point of publishing, however, Hearne imagines himself writing “for the amusement of candid and indulgent readers, who may perhaps feel themselves in some measure gratified, by having the face of a country brought to

their view, which has hitherto been entirely unknown to every European except myself” (xlix). As Cheryl Cundell points out, the “country” that emerges in Hearne’s *Journey* is based on his complex, dialogic interactions with local peoples, more than on strictly navigational “observations” (109-111). Hearne’s purposes, as a traveller and as a writer, were not narrowly cartographic. Thus, his ideal readers are not those “critics in geography,” such as Alexander Dalrymple, who impugned the accuracy of Hearne’s maps (Hearne xlix-li), but rather those “candid” readers who will appreciate the broader, cultural geography of *Journey*.

Examples of roughly contemporary HBC traders and factors who read widely, who cultivated correspondences with scientists and intellectuals, and who wrote books, or book-length manuscripts, include James Isham, Andrew Graham, and David Thompson. (But note that only Hearne managed to sell a manuscript to a publisher.) One should not assume that the isolation and rigours of life in the HBC factories precluded literary and intellectual interests. Reading was an important pastime and a professional resource for the necessarily literate managerial employees, and several assembled impressive personal libraries, while the HBC developed libraries at its posts, and many HBC employees ordered books with their annual supplies.⁸ Thus, considering only what is known of Hearne’s personal history, intellectual influences, and fellow HBC factors, added to what Driscoll has shown of his writing style in the later years of his career, it seems possible that the ideas and style of *Journey* flow from Hearne’s own mind and pen.

Most important, however, is that the account of the massacre appearing in *Journey* is consistent with ideas, analogous incidents, emotional expressions, and the narrating persona present throughout Hearne’s published account of his two-and-a-half-year journey. At the mouth of the Coppermine, Hearne appears as a man of feeling, a man of liberal ideas, but the attitudes associated with this stance are evident throughout the book. And if these ideas are shaped by then fashionable sentimentalist thought, it is certainly possible that Hearne himself was the vessel in which the formation took place.

Sentimentalism, a mode of thought and a literary style, had profound effects on culture and politics during the later eighteenth century, and thus it should not be surprising that Hearne’s *Journey* manifests some of sentimentalism’s central ideas and tropes. William Reddy includes

among the features that mark the “emotional history” of the eighteenth century “a new optimism about human nature . . . based in part . . . on the belief that certain natural sentiments, sentiments that everyone was capable of feeling, were the foundation of virtue” (145). Sentimentalism saw feelings of “pity, benevolence, love, and gratitude . . . [as] one and the same natural sentiment, the root of morality and the foundation of all social bonds” (Reddy 164). One of sentimentalism’s most famous theorists, Rousseau, in the words of Fermon, regarded ““emotions as both the basis of human associations and antecedent to conceptions of human interest”” (qtd. in Reddy 155). In England, Shaftsbury argued that all people “were equipped with an ‘inward eye’ that enabled them to perceive the morally good. Moral perceptions became available to the mind via inborn sentiments” (Reddy 155). Thus sited in an inborn moral sense, strong feelings were not necessarily at odds with reason, and emotional outbursts were not mere expressions of unmanly weakness, selfish passion, or self-interest: “Because feelings were deemed natural, they united people rather than isolating them,” and therefore “public expression of intense feeling, rather than causing embarrassment, was a badge of generous sincerity and of social connectedness” (Reddy 164). In sentimental fiction, scenes of suffering and distress “provoke a sympathetic response from the protagonist who witnesses the scene,” and sentimental novels “privilege the visible, somatic expression of the sympathy evoked by their various spectacles” (Harkin 11). Tears testify to the authenticity of the feelings, as well as to the generous sensibility of the protagonist. Such susceptibility, though associated by some with feminine weakness, came to be accepted as a badge of masculine “humanity”: “David Hume’s stoic was compelled to act precisely because of his ‘sentiments of humanity’, while for Vicesimus Knox ‘the noblest distinction of human nature, is emphatically styled HUMANITY’” (Carter 104-05).

“Novels, plays, paintings, and operas” afforded sites for “models of human refuge,” where ideas about how shared feelings bespoke a common human nature could be expressed and shared; such refuges were often figured as “natural communities that were imagined to exist on tropical islands or in New World wildernesses” (Reddy 146). Viewed through the lens of sentimentalist theory, Hearne’s career in Rupert’s Land was conceivably a long experience, or experiment, in such a “refuge,” potentially affording many occasions to experience the “natural

sentiment” that lay at “the root of morality and the foundation of all social bonds” (Reddy 164). In fact, Hearne was by no means a naive devotee of “the noble savage”; his accounts of the peoples he got to know as a trader, traveller, and, eventually, chief factor are a pragmatic mixture of good and bad, offered from the point of view of someone whose own circumstances living in the HBC factories and sailing along the coast were not radically different from those of the Natives. Nonetheless, there is considerable evidence that Hearne, at least by the time he took to revising his Coppermine narrative for a wider readership, had taken to thinking in terms of a universal human nature that, in theory, enabled fellow feeling across cultural boundaries.

Given sentimentalism’s privileging of strong feelings of sympathy as indexes of common humanity, the passage expressing Hearne’s reaction to the massacre can be seen as enacting “the natural tenderness of the noble soul” that William F. Reddy cites as a fundamental character attribute of eighteenth-century sentimentalism, with Hearne serving as an icon of “humanity” in the face of barbarism. A postcolonial reading of Hearne’s account of the massacre would note the claim to moral superiority lodged in words like “barbarous,” with Hearne reasserting the authority he has lost in relation to his companions by positioning himself on a higher ethical plane.⁹ It is also interesting, however, and revealing of Hearne’s own understanding of his situation, to note how his “horror” as he witnesses his companions’ actions is coloured by his fear and disappointment; that they can think and behave in ways so at odds with the sentiments and understanding conveyed by phrases like “a fellow creature” betrays Hearne’s underlying desire that he and his Chipewyan companions indeed be “fellow creatures,” who recognize each other as such. Hearne’s *Journey* is replete with incidents where his idea of “humanity” goes unrecognized by his Chipewyan hosts, much to his chagrin. But these disappointments appear as such in reaction to Hearne’s expectation that sympathy transcends social, verbal, and ethnic divisions.

Hearne’s exposed situation as he travelled overland from Fort Churchill on the west coast of Hudson’s Bay to the mouth of the Coppermine River on the Arctic Ocean (at least 2,000 km each way) gives the idea of a common humanity an existential edge. Hearne made three such attempts, the third succeeding thanks to the prestige, authority, and competence of Matonabbee, a “Northern,” or Chipewyan, lead-

er who agreed to guide and sustain Hearne throughout the journey. Hearne tells us that carrying “even the most common article of clothing” is impossible, “so that the traveller is obliged to depend on the country he passes through, for that article, as well as for provisions.” Thus, Hearne continues, “I only took the shirt and clothes I then had on, one spare coat, a pair of drawers, and as much cloth as would make me two or three pair of Indian stockings, . . . together with a blanket” (lxxii). During the first two attempts, Hearne’s group included two European labourers from the factory, and several “Southern,” or Cree, Natives, but for the third, he set out alone, attaching himself to Matonabee and his entourage. When Hearne says that the traveller must “depend on the country” for food and clothing, he means, of course, that he must depend on the people who know the country and who possess the skills to find and prepare clothing and food. According to Hearne, Matonabee spoke “several words of English,” as well as fluent “Southern” Cree, the language of the Natives who frequented the HBC factories, as well as his own “Northern” Chipewyan tongue (33-34). Hearne probably knew some Cree when he set out, and he claims to have produced an extensive vocabulary of Chipewyan (lost), presumably much of which was acquired during his eighteen months alone with Matonabee and his people (lii). We should keep in mind Hearne’s integration with, and dependence on, his guides and hosts as we reflect on Hearne’s deployment of eighteenth-century ideas about universal human nature and the “natural sentiments . . . that everyone was capable of feeling” (Reddy 145); such language springs from a “sentimental narrative” that is one of the “cultural formations” of the period (Denby 240). For Hearne, moreover, during his travels, ideas of shared feelings and common humanity help to frame an experience of primitive vulnerability. The possibility that the people on whom his life depended might *not* recognize his “common humanity” was frightening. The massacre scene resounds not just with “sympathy” for Inuit “fellow creatures,” but also with fear that the witnessed absence of sympathy potentially threatens him as well.

There are numerous instances throughout the narrative where Hearne frames his own sense of vulnerability in terms of a universal human nature and the consequent presumption of sympathy. When the first journey collapses after less than a month, Hearne describes being abandoned by his first guide and his crew, who “packed up their

awls, and set out toward the South West, making the woods ring with their laughter, and left us to consider of our unhappy situation, near two hundred miles from Prince of Wales's fort, all heavily laden, and our strength and spirits greatly reduced by hunger and fatigue" (4). Reflecting on this and other incidents, Hearne notes the "clanship" that results in the "singular advantage which a native of this country has over an Englishman, when at such a distance from the Company's Factories as to depend entirely on them for subsistence" (6). From this distance, we might ask, well, what did you expect? No doubt his Chipewyan companions had their own priorities.¹⁰ But for our purposes, it is important to note that the word "clanship," deployed by Hearne as a pejorative, is an analogy drawn from British life and that it implies his contrary notion of a broader human community. Both as an eighteenth-century European who had read quite a bit, and as a lone Englishman dependent on his Native companions, Hearne has both intellectual and existential reasons to hope for a broad concept of "humanity" rather than narrower definitions of community.

Long periods of starvation that Hearne experienced during the second expedition prompt his long and thoughtful reflections about suffering and how we share it. "None of our natural wants, if we except thirst, are so distressing, or hard to endure, as hunger" (21), says Hearne, who goes on to note that his suffering was only one instance of "the distress which the natives of the country . . . frequently endure" (22). He claims that people are "frequently driven to the necessity of eating one another," and, in a long footnote, recounts a particular case of suspected cannibalism occasioned by starvation (22). What is notable here is that Hearne sympathizes with the accused man, a victim not only of extreme hunger and whatever actions he took to assuage it but also of a failure of sympathy on the part of his community. Hearne describes how in general such individuals "are not only shunned, but . . . universally detested by all who know them." As a result, he has known

several of these poor wretches who, . . . though they were persons much esteemed before hunger had driven them to this act, were afterward so universally despised and neglected, that a smile never graced their countenances: deep melancholy has been seated on their brows, while the eye most expressively spoke the dictates of the heart, and seemed to say, "Why do you despise me for my mis-

fortunes? the period is probably not far distant, when you may be driven to the like necessity!" (22)

Hearne recounts a particular instance at Cumberland House in 1775 when, "being a stranger, . . . [he] invited" the suspected man into the house. Meanwhile many of the Native men "cleaned and loaded their guns; . . . and even the women took possession of the hatchets to kill this poor inoffensive wretch." Hearne's sympathy is supported by "some principal Indians, whose liberality of sentiment was more extensive than that in the others" (22). "Liberality of sentiment" is Hearne's standard here, a value held across cultures, in this case by him and by "some principal Indians," though not universally present in every individual.

During the second expedition, which lasted nine months, Hearne again encounters neglectful behaviour among the people who have been charged with guiding and sustaining him. Their support for him, he recognizes, is contingent upon the degree to which they will be compensated. Having been relieved of much of his own stock of gun powder, which would enable Hearne and his European and Cree companions from Prince of Wales Fort to hunt for themselves, Hearne worries about what will become of them should they be abandoned:

The very uncourteous behaviour of the Northern Indians then in company, gave me little hopes of receiving assistance from them, any longer than I had wherewithal to reward them for their trouble and expense; for during the whole time I had been with them, not one of them had offered to give me the least morsel of victuals, without asking something in exchange. (27)

As he contemplates his vulnerability, and "how little [he] had to expect" if reduced to complete dependence, Hearne lays down to rest: but, he says,

sleep was a stranger to me that night. The following beautiful lines of Dr. Young I repeated above an hundred times:

"Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep;
He, like the world, his ready visit pays
Where fortune smiles; the wretched he forsakes:
Swift on his downy pinions flies from woe,
And lights on lids unsully'd with a tear." — Night Thoughts (28)

This moment of loneliness and vulnerability is occasioned by the priva-

tions he is experiencing, along with the lack of support from his travelling companions. Figuring himself repeating Edward Young's verse as he lies alone in the night distances him culturally from his Chipewyan companions and the Barren Grounds, resituating him with his imagined readers, many of whom would know this popular poem. But it is also the case that Young's poem as a whole, as well as these particular lines, bespeak a "Nature" that is universal and a "fortune" that commonly determines the course of all human lives. Characterized by his "religious sentimentalism," Young "was an early representative of the sentimentalism which was combined with a higher genius in his friend [Samuel] Richardson" (Stephen). Through his recourse to Young's poem Hearne assuages his particular suffering and loneliness by affiliating himself with the sentimental community of sympathy and fellow feeling.

Having decided to return to Prince of Wales's Fort a second time, Hearne continues to complain about his shabby treatment at the hands of his Native companions, always with reference to a universal standard of human behaviour. They will not make clothes for him,

because they were too well informed of my poverty to do any acts of generosity. . . . I never saw a set of people that possessed so little humanity, or that could view the distresses of their fellow-creatures with so little feeling and unconcern; for though they seem to have a great affection for their wives and children, yet they will laugh at and ridicule the distress of every other person who is not immediately related to them. (32-33)

It is important to note that throughout his three journeys Hearne carries his own kit and generally suffers and celebrates along with everyone else. In the passage quoted above, and in other places where he makes similar complaints, Hearne is not asking for special treatment. His point is that he is not afforded kindly treatment as a "fellow-creature" who has a claim on his companions' "humanity." Moreover, Hearne demonstrates a clear understanding of the assessment of interest that underlies his treatment. He is regarded, at times, as "a poor servant" of the HBC, not worth much trouble.

The "famous leader" Matonabee descends into this situation in a shower of admiring language, initially, at least, serving as a touchstone for the qualities and values that Hearne admires. Hearne is "struck very sensibly" by "the courteous behaviour of this stranger," who prepared a "grand feast for me in the Southern Indian style" (34). After

many hours of relaxed and informative conversation, Hearne dubs his “new acquaintance . . . the most sociable, kind, and sensible Indian I had every met with. He was a man well known, and, as an Indian, of universal knowledge, and generally respected” (35-36). The qualification “as an Indian” notwithstanding, Hearne’s portrait of Matonabbee is thoroughly admiring, and his confidence is such that he concludes a bargain with him to launch a third attempt at reaching the Coppermine organized completely on Matonabbee’s terms.

I then determined to engage Matonabbee to be my guide; to which he readily consented, and with a freedom of speech and correctness of language not commonly met with among Indians, not only pointed out the reasons which had occasioned all our misfortunes in my two former attempts, but described the plan he intended to pursue; which at the same time that it was highly satisfactory to me, did honour to his penetration and judgment; as it proved him to be a man of extensive observation with respect to times, seasons, and places; and well qualified to explain everything that could contribute either to facilitate or retard the ease or progress of travelling in those dreary parts of the world. (38-39)

Hearne continues to enlarge his admiring portrait of Matonabbee, drawing on the many months spent living with him and his family and entourage. Thus, when Hearne describes what appears to be Matonabbee’s attempted murder of a man who has made off with one of his wives, Hearne is “sorry to mention” the incident (66). Indeed, Matonabbee is “in every other respect, a man of such universal good sense, and, as an Indian, of such great humanity, that I am at a loss how to account for his having been guilty of such a crime” (70). Transcending cultural and linguistic boundaries, Hearne sees in Matonabbee abundant evidence of the universal “humanity” that underpins his world view. If anything, the friendship that Hearne depicts as emerging between him and Matonabbee is so idealized that one thinks of eighteenth-century sentimental friendships, the “models of emotional refuge” from the hurly-burly of politics and commerce, in this case, actually occurring among “natural communities . . . in New World wildernesses,” to return to Reddy’s language (146).

A final example of Hearne’s universalizing bent is his account of the clash of Chipewyan traditional economy with the fur-trade-induced innovations. Natives who opt to continue living in close association

with the caribou herds are compared to those who hunt fur-bearing animals in order to obtain merchandise from the HBC. The former construct a pound into which they can guide animals for easy slaughter. These people remain in one place throughout the winter and obtain “a plentiful subsistence” (49) in a way that is “wonderfully well adapted to the support of the aged and infirm”; they cannot, however, “be masters of anything for trade” (51). Those opting to trade with the HBC, by contrast, “generally procure furs enough during the Winter to purchase a sufficient supply of ammunition, and other European goods, to last them another year.” The former are called “indolent,” the latter “industrious,” but Hearne attributes these terms to those who hunt the furs, and who are thus “of most importance and value to the Hudson’s Bay Company.” Hearne himself judges the pound people to be the happiest: “The real wants of these people are few, and easily supplied; . . . those who endeavour to possess more, are always the most unhappy, and may, in fact, be said to be only slaves and carriers to the rest” (51). Those called “indolent . . . live generally in a state of plenty, without trouble or risque; and consequently must be the most happy, and, in truth, the most independent also. It must be allowed that they are by far the greatest philosophers, as they never give themselves the trouble to acquire what they can do well enough without” (52). The fur hunters, on the other hand, “frequently run great risques of being starved to death . . . and all they can get . . . seldom amounts to more than is sufficient to yield a bare subsistence.” Hearne claims that encouraging trade “has ever been the grand object of my attention,” but he also confesses “that such conduct is by no means for the real benefit of the poor Indians; it being well known that those who have the least intercourse with the Factories, are by far the happiest” (52). Hearne frames this example of how people in this part of the world chose against their own best interests as an instance of the general truth that “mankind was not created to enjoy happiness in this world” (51). And although Hearne insists that he always put his duty to encourage trade foremost, writing in later years he places the prosecution of the fur trade within an historical framework where its effects can be evaluated in relation to much more general values, such as the “real wants,” “real benefit,” and the “happiness” of those who are part of it. Thinking in these terms, Hearne aligns himself with the “philosophers” among the Chipewyans who have governed their lives according to their own wants and happiness.

It is with such thoughts about the nature of humankind in mind, as well as Hearne's own experiences of extreme privation during the course of his journey to the Coppermine River, and his hopes for a friendship with Matonabee, that we can assess whether the sentiments expressed as he witnesses the massacre at "Bloody Falls" are Hearne's own. My review of how Hearne characterizes his Chipewyan travelling companions has been intended to highlight the framework of assumptions about "common humanity" within which he presents particular instances. Departures from these norms call attention to the norms themselves, I argue, and it is important to note that even when Hearne describes "clannish" or "barbarous" behaviour, he does not therefore exclude the actors from the circle of the human. Rather, Hearne sees their actions as examples of clannishness and barbarism writ large. One further example is Hearne's explanation of why he desists from arguing against the Chipewyans' "inhuman design" of attacking the Inuit: "that it was the highest folly for an individual like me . . . to attempt to turn the current of a national prejudice which had subsisted between those two nations from the earliest periods" (75). These ideas are part of the texture of Hearne's thought and narration, and they prepare us for the way he represents his reaction to the massacre in his book. There is the raw horror of such an event, which is not likely to be forgotten during anyone's lifetime, but there is also a deep disappointment, and not a little fear, as Matonabee and his men carry out acts that register as gross violations of Hearne's more optimistic code of mutual recognition among "fellow creatures." In other words, what Hearne felt at this moment cannot be severed from the ideas that frame his understanding of himself and others; his feelings, which he says manifested themselves in visible tears, are part and parcel of his way of thinking about himself and the people with whom he has kept intimate company for many months.

If, in reading the passage in which Hearne depicts himself as a witness to the massacre, we keep in mind Hearne's commitment to the idea that common humanity implies shared feelings, we can see that his feelings here spring not just from the horrors he witnesses but also from the ideas that shape his expectations. William R. Reddy, along with others studying the changing attitudes toward feelings during the eighteenth century, has noted that strong feelings were not seen as necessarily at odds with reason. "Moral sentiments and affections," according to

Thomas Dixon, “were potentially rational as well as being warm and lively states of mind. The term ‘sentiment’ had the connotations then that it still has now, of being both a thought or opinion and a feeling” (64). Witnessing, and recalling, the Bloody Falls massacre, Hearne reacts emotionally to the murders he has witnessed in relation to his ideas about common humanity, including his own; the trauma stems, in part, from the challenge posed by the violent acts to his broad goal of shared feeling among “fellow creatures.” His outburst is an example of what Reddy calls an “emotive,” a form of speech act or performative utterance; as such, emotives “refer to themselves” and “actually do things in the world” (104). Hearne’s emotional reaction captures “horror,” his own fear, and the massacre’s conflict with his ideas or “goals”; it “performs” the momentary overwhelming of Hearne’s ideas of human community. Such an emotive was certainly a recognizable one for the readers Hearne imagined for his book, and it is probably one that could have been manufactured to order on that basis. But the impact of this scene is consistent with, indeed dependent on, Hearne’s account of his experiences and ideas up to this point. Hearne’s experiences resonate within a cognitive matrix that gives events their emotional valence. The “horror” of this act is Hearne’s alone, an emotion that takes its form and intensity because of Hearne’s ideas about an inclusive “humanity”; Matonabbee and his men, by contrast, are more than satisfied with their work:

They assembled on the top of an adjacent high hill, and standing all in a cluster, so as to form a solid circle, with their spears erect in the air, gave many shouts of victory, constantly clashing their spears against each other, and frequently calling out *tima! tima!* [meaning “what cheer”] by way of derision to the poor surviving Esquimaux [standing on a shoal in the river]. (101)¹¹

The force of this description stems, in part, from its being at odds with so much of what Hearne has up to this point written about Matonabbee, and with Hearne’s penchant for a world inhabited by “fellow creatures.” As they celebrate their “victory,” emphasizing their lack of fellowship with the “poor . . . Esquimaux,” surviving and dead, Matonabbee and his men also appear here physically removed from Hearne, in a way that correlates with Hearne’s sense of alienation from their actions and ideas. This climactic episode in Hearne’s narrative of his journey is memor-

able not because it is unique, but because it draws upon language and themes that are broadly present throughout Hearne's account, being here brought into focus by the action itself, as well as by Hearne's reaction.

Hearne's written expression of his feelings as a witness to the massacre is, thus, in keeping with his experiences throughout his journey and with his desire to participate in the literate culture of his era. The highlighting of his feelings in his writing suggests how, and by whom, he wished to be regarded as he returned to the metropolis. By writing a full account of his travels, Hearne could "confirm, or reinvent, himself as a gentleman, . . . full of integrity and sincerity" (Driscoll 285). Hearne's sentimental performance of his feelings signals his qualifications to speak in a worldly way to "candid and indulgent readers," persons who are curious about the world in a liberal, "philosophical" way. In his preface, Hearne tells us, "I have at my leisure hours recopied all my Journals into one book, and in some instances added to the remarks I had before made" (xlix). The word "leisure," and the idea of adding to what one has already written, both imply reflection, probably further reading, the ability to place one's experiences in a larger context. Whereas his field notes would have satisfied Hearne's obligation to account to the directors of the HBC for the time and treasure expended on his journey, his aspiration to publish a book betokens ambitions of a different order. Along with the chapters devoted to ethnography and natural science, Hearne's deployment of the ideas and style of the prevailing sentimentalism signals his wish to appeal to gentlemanly circles of natural science and public affairs, but in a discourse distinct from the plain style of empirical reportage — though one that would be familiar to those same readers of natural science. Such ambitions could rarely be achieved solely on the basis of exotic experience, nor simply by supplying accurate scientific data; in addition to these, Hearne's revisions and expansions of his original scanty notes signal a sensibility attuned to the contemporary cultural formation wherein "reason and sentiment" were no longer seen as "contradictory polarities" (Denby 240) — a formation wherein emotional openness signalled one's qualifications to participate in public discourses of the Enlightenment, including those of science. In other words, this fur trader traded even on his feelings. Therefore, instead of reacting to the emotionality of Hearne's expression as something super-

imposed by another hand, we should recognize that Hearne, like other contemporary HBC writers, had integrated the major cultural trends of his time into his own thinking and style, and that he wrote for the curious, the enlightened, and the sensible soul.

NOTES

¹ See Driscoll (104-05, 104n68, 104n69) for a review of commentary on this passage.

² See Driscoll (11n33) for a review of contributors to this debate.

³ For a complete account of the texts recounting the Coppermine massacre, see Driscoll (188-241), summarized on pp. 196-99.

⁴ Alexander Mackenzie expresses his “apprehension in presenting myself to the Public in the character of an Author, for which the course and occupations of my life have by no means qualified me, . . . being much better calculated to perform the voyages, arduous as they might have been, than to write an account of them” (iii-iv). John Long asks that “whatever defects may be found in the following work, the Public will look on them with candour; and will recollect that they are perusing . . . such observations as a commercial man flatters himself may be found acceptable to the merchant and the philosopher” (x).

⁵ On Mackenzie, see also MacLaren, “Alexander Mackenzie”; on Kane, see MacLaren, “I came to rite thare portraits”; both articles compare extant journals in the traveller’s hand with the published text.

⁶ A classic discussion is Percy G. Adams’s “The Truth-Lie Dichotomy” in his *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel*: “Since any writer of travels . . . must of course include secondhand information, personal adventures, reflections, interpretations, and emotions, he must often approach the boundary between the existent and the uncertain, between facts for facts and facts for pleasure” (97).

⁷ MacLaren cites pp. 26-29 of the Stowe MS, which I rely on here.

⁸ See Payne and Thomas (45-46); Black, “Beyond Boundaries” and “Books by Express Canoe”; Shirlee Anne Smith; Robert S. Allen; and William Moreau.

⁹ For example, see Bruce Greenfield (203-05).

¹⁰ See Driscoll (84-91) for an analysis of the first two guides’ behavior.

¹¹ See Driscoll (105-09) for an account of Matonabee’s motives for attacking the Inuit.

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