“Just a little like an explorer”: Mina Hubbard and the Making of *A Woman’s Way*¹

Lisa LaFramboise²

On 13 July 1905, Mina Hubbard’s expedition reached the portage that led to Seal Lake, the first major landmark on her journey into central Labrador. Hubbard recorded the arrival in her field notes in terms that signal not only the accomplishment of the journey’s first stage but also a sense of personal transformation, as she began to become, psychologically as well as literally, a wilderness traveller: “To-day feel something of what I think must be an approach to the right thrill as we came up to the hilltops and prepare to leave our river to cross to Seal L.... Now begin to feel just a little like an explorer.”³ Mina Hubbard was neither an experienced wilderness traveller nor a geographer; she had undertaken her exploration as a vindication of her husband’s reputation, after his own expedition ended with his death in the Labrador wilderness two years earlier in 1903. Yet, as this passage reveals, her experience was informed by a complex understanding of what it was to be an explorer at the turn of the twentieth century. Despite her awareness that, as a woman who lacked wilderness experience, she hardly fit the generic convention of

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2 Lisa LaFramboise teaches English at the University of Alberta. She researches early women’s travel writing in Canada and has co-edited with I.S. MacLaren C.C. Vyvyan’s *The Ladies, the Gwich’in, and the Rat*.

3 Mrs. Leonidas [Mina Benson] Hubbard, “Diary of Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard, 1905. Account of a Journey in Labrador,” Mina Hubbard Collection, Coll. 241, 3.02, Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, Memorial University Library. The National Archives of Canada also holds a microfilm copy as part of the Hubbard Family Diaries (MG30, B30). I refer to Mina Hubbard’s and George Elson’s daily records of the 1905 journey as “field notes” in order to retain the sense of their origin as observations of travel recorded in the wilderness.

Figure 1 – Portrait of Mina Hubbard by J. Syddall, held in the Mina Hubbard Papers at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies (Coll. 241; 8.01.001), and published in *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador*.

the wilderness hero, she knew she could feel "the right thrill" that was part of being an explorer.

This paper compares Mina Hubbard's self-representation in her accounts of her Labrador experiences in the field notes she kept during the journey and in the book that she later published, entitled *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* (London: John Murray, 1908). This comparison reveals the tensions between femininity and exploration in Hubbard's construction of a woman explorer for a public audience: the persona of the woman explorer draws upon both her identity as the widow of Leonidas Hubbard, Labrador explorer, and also upon her authority as leader of the second Hubbard expedition. These two identities each rest upon the potentially conflicting discourses of civilized femininity and of wilderness exploration. As the immediate context of her writing shifts from wilderness hinterland to the metropolitan centre that is the cultural location of publication, the evolution of Mina Hubbard's narrative reveals her negotiation of these twin imperatives of femininity and of authority. The published exploration narrative is the representation of one woman's wilderness trip, but it is also a product of generic and cultural expectations that originate not in the wilderness experience, but in the process of making exploration public.

Mina Hubbard did not grow up with ambitions to become an explorer or a wilderness traveller.⁴ She was born Mina Benson, and grew up on a farm near Bewdley, Ontario. She trained as a nurse in Brooklyn and New York, and was assistant superintendent at the S.R. Smith Infirmary at Staten Island when she met Leonidas Hubbard, Jr., a young journalist then recovering from typhoid fever. They were married in 1901, and two years later, at the age of 31, he undertook his exploration of central Labrador. As the assistant editor of *Outing Magazine*, a New York serial of outdoor sport and adventure, Leonidas Hubbard had experience in recreational canoeing, fishing, and hunting, including a winter trip to Quebec and three weeks in Northern Ontario. In 1903, motivated by what appears to have been a combination of romanticism and ambition, he undertook to explore an unmapped area of the Labrador plateau from North West River to Ungava Bay; his companions on the first Hubbard expedition were Dillon Wallace, a New York lawyer, and George

4 Biographical material on Mina Benson Hubbard was drawn from Henry James Morgan, ed., *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 2nd edition (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912) 373-74, and Stephanie Hunt, "Mina Benson Hubbard (1870-1956)," *Arctic* 36 (Oct. 1983): 384-85.

Elson, a Scots-Cree guide from Moose River, on James Bay. Lacking sufficient food, local knowledge of the country, and (except for Elson) experience in living off the land, the first Hubbard expedition took the wrong river almost from the outset, and became lost among the lakes and swamps of the Labrador plateau west of North West River. Hubbard died of exposure and starvation on 18 October 1903; Wallace was rescued by local trappers who were alerted to the expedition's plight by Elson, who alone was able to return to North West River for help.

Following his final promise to Leonidas Hubbard, Wallace wrote the story of the expedition, which was published under the title *The Lure of the Labrador Wild: The Story of the Exploring Expedition Conducted by Leonidas Hubbard, Jr.* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1905). However, Mina Hubbard read Wallace's book as an attempt to place the responsibility for the expedition's failure on her husband. Criticism of Leonidas Hubbard's failure to prepare properly for the journey he undertook had appeared shortly after the news of his death arrived from Labrador; the most detailed criticism came from *Forest and Stream*, *Outing's* rival.⁵ Mina Hubbard also read hints of her husband's culpability in Wallace's book.⁶ When Wallace planned a second trip to fulfil Leonidas Hubbard's ambitions himself, Mina Hubbard decided to mount her own expedition to Labrador, in order to vindicate her husband's name. She had some recreational camping and canoeing experience, and she enlisted the help of George Elson as chief guide. With him and three other canoemen—Joe Iserhoff and Job Chapies of Missinabi, and Gilbert Blake of Labrador—she left North West River on 27 June “1905”. Dillon Wallace's party had left a day earlier.

The second Hubbard expedition proceeded by way of North West River into Grand Lake, then entered the Naskaupi River at the north end of Grand Lake.⁷ They travelled up the Naskaupi River,

5 See “‘Unexplored’ Labrador,” *Forest and Stream*, 9 Apr. 1904, 289; and Robert T. Morris, “Mr. Hubbard's Death in Labrador,” Letter to the editor, *Forest and Stream*, 2 Apr. 1904: 270.

6 James West Davidson and John Rugge, *Great Heart: The History of a Labrador Adventure* (Kingston: “McGill-Queen's UP” 1997) 375-76.

7 For convenience, I will refer to the place names used in 1905. The features of Labrador have changed since the building of the Churchill dam, however. Grand River is now known as the Churchill River, and a much larger Michikamau Lake appears on maps as the Smallwood Reservoir. Indian House Lake is Lac de la Hutte Sauvage and George River is now Rivière George. The town at Ungava Bay, Kangiqsualujjuak, is a few miles from the site of the George River Post.

Figure 2 – Map of Labrador by James West Davidson, reprinted by permission from *Great Heart: The History of a Labrador Adventure*, by James West Davidson and John Rugge (Montreal: McGill-Queen's U P, 1997).

paddling where they could, and tracking and poling the canoes through or portaging around the long stretches of rough water where they could not paddle. On 17 July, they reached Seal Lake, paddled nineteen miles across the lake and into the Naskaupi River where it enters the north side of Seal Lake, and continued up the river, paddling, tracking and poling, or portaging, until, on 2 August, they reached Michikamau Lake (presently the Smallwood Reservoir). They then paddled to the northern end of Michikamau and poled up a short stretch of rapids into Michikamats Lake. They were wind bound on Michikamats for three days, before following the flow of water upriver from the north end of Michikamats, in search of the height of land. On 10 August, they finally reached northward flowing water and the head of the George River. They were able to paddle north down the George River all the way to the Hudson's Bay Company's (HBC) George River Post, on Ungava Bay, which they reached on 27 August, only two months after leaving North West River. Dillon Wallace, with only one companion (he sent three men back from Michikamau Lake, the halfway point), arrived nearly 2 months later on 16 October. Both Hubbard and Wallace published narratives of the journey: Hubbard's *Woman's Way* appeared two years after Wallace's *The Long Labrador Trail* (New York: Outing, 1907).⁸ Although neither book mentions the existence of the other party, the whereabouts of Wallace's expedition are a repeated concern in Mina Hubbard's field notes, and that anxiety, although not the reason for it, makes its way into the published book.

However, the rivalry between Hubbard and Wallace is only one of the constitutive elements informing Mina Hubbard's inscription of her exploration in Labrador. More important to her production of a successful exploration is her textual negotiation in her self-representation as a female explorer. The role of explorer was not a common one for women at the turn of the century. Although women were writing English-language travel books in ever-larger

8 Their rivalry no doubt fuelled interest in both books. Mina Hubbard's book was certainly read by reviewers in the context of the rivalry and Wallace's narratives; more than one American reviewer took her to task for her depreciation of Wallace's efforts. See, for example, Munson Aldrich Havens, "A Woman in Unknown Labrador," review of *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador*, *Dial* 1 Nov. 1908: 286-89; Review of *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador*, *A.L.A. Booklist* 4.9 (Dec. 1908): 290; and "A Woman Explorer," review of *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador*, *Spectator* (Supplement) 3 Oct. 1908: 472-73.

numbers, often laying claim to 'unbeaten' paths, 'unknown' territories, and 'darkest' geographies, European women almost never travelled into truly 'unknown' regions to do the preliminary survey and mapping work that laid claim to a region in the knowledge-making systems of European geography. As Dea Birkett has shown, the scientific value of women's work was often ambiguously acknowledged, even by themselves. In many travel narratives, scientific fieldwork is both proffered as justification for what would otherwise be self-indulgent wanderings, and at the same time marginalized within the narrative; when the woman writer simultaneously produces both travel narratives and scientific writings, the narrator's gender in the latter writings is frequently concealed (behind initials, for instance).⁹ The ambivalence with which women's contributions to geographic knowledge were received is nowhere clearer than in women's treatment by geographical and professional societies. Women had long been accepted as members of the Scottish Geographical Society and many other scientific societies in England.¹⁰ However, the 1892-93 debate among Royal Geographical Society members over women's admission to that society expressed concerns over their qualifications and the possible trivializing of the prestigious letters "F.R.G.S."—Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society—should that title be claimed by women. At the height of the debate, George Curzon wrote to the London *Times*:

We contest *in toto* the general capability of women to contribute to scientific geographical knowledge. Their sex and training render them equally unfitted for exploration; and the genus of professional female globetrotters with which America has lately familiarized us is one of the horrors of the latter end of the 19th century.¹¹

When Mina Hubbard spoke before it on 6 January 1908, the RGS had still not admitted women as members, although they were invited as speakers and a few had published in its *Geographical Journal*.¹²

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- 9 Dea Birkett, *Spinsters Abroad: Victorian Lady Explorers* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1991) 171-77.
 - 10 Alison Blunt, *Travel, Gender and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa* (New York: Guilford P, 1994) 158.
 - 11 George Nathaniel Curzon, Letter to the editor, *Times* [London] 31 May 1893: 11.
 - 12 Mina Hubbard applied for membership in the RGS on 23 September 1927; she was elected on 21 November 1927 (Letter to the author from Anne Hart, Head of the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, 11 Sept. 1996).

This mixed reception of women's contributions to scientific knowledge and of women's validity as travellers did not deter individual women from travelling. However, institutional reluctance to give official support to women's endeavours did have the effect of limiting women's access to certain regions and their participation in some travel subgenres. Exploration required both travelling in regions undocumented by Euro-North American geography and also bringing back scientific information (narratives, maps, measurements, facts). It was an undertaking that demanded not only capital investment, but also the right institutional backing, as the mixed reception by the Royal Navy and British geographers of Samuel Hearne's exploration of the Coppermine River (sponsored by the HBC) reveals.¹³ Mina Hubbard thus had not only to complete the journey successfully, but also to bring back observations, measurements, and figures documenting "unknown Labrador"; and she then had to gain public and institutional recognition for the accomplishment.

Publication was essential, then, if Hubbard were to achieve her goal "that [her] husband's name should reap the fruits of service which had cost him so much."¹⁴ From the beginning, Mina Hubbard intended to produce a book which would rival the success of Wallace's *Lure of the Labrador Wild*,¹⁵ and her field notes record her early struggles with the writing process throughout the two-months' wait for the supply ship at Ungava Bay. During the years that followed her journey, Mina Hubbard also gave public lectures, at first in the

13 Hearne, working for the HBC (1764-1772), succeeded in reaching the Coppermine River on his third attempt, travelling only with Native companions. Richard Glover reads Hearne's narrative, *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort, in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean* (London, 1795; Toronto: Macmillan, 1958) as a defense of his geographical observations against the doubts of theoretical geographers in England, such as Dalrymple. Later explorers, including the Royal Navy's Sir John Richardson and Sir George Back, expressed the Royal Navy's 'objective' scepticism about the 'interested' travels of a mere merchant.

14 Mrs. Leonidas [Mina Benson] Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador: An Account of the Exploration of the Nascauppee and George Rivers*, introd. William Cabot (London: John Murray; Toronto: William Briggs, 1908) 50.

15 Wallace's book went through four printings in 1905 alone, and more than forty printings overall; it remains in print to this day, and has been taught in the schools of Newfoundland and Labrador. See Eric Norman, *Bared Boughs and Grieving Winds: A Guide to the Lure of the Labrador Wild; A Source Book for Teachers and Students* (St. John's: Breakwater, 1987).

United States, and then in Britain as part of her 1908 book tour, during the course of which she met her second husband, Harold Ellis.¹⁶ In total, she produced six different texts based on her 1905 expedition across Labrador. First, her field notes were written in a commercially produced blank book during the journey itself; the original, along with the 1903 diary kept by Leonidas Hubbard, Jr., and the 1905 field notes kept by Elson, is in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial University. She then published four articles about her journey: these appeared between May 1906 and April 1908 in *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, *The Englishwoman's Review*, *The Windsor Magazine*, and the *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* (AGS). The latter included a map of the interior of Labrador, prepared by the AGS from her observations. This article was reprinted by the *Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society*. Hubbard's sixth text about the journey, her book, appeared in May 1908 (two years after *Outing* serialized Wallace's account of his 1905 expedition); *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* was published by John Murray in London, England, a house with a reputation for producing the official exploration narratives of British Admiralty expeditions during the nineteenth century, as well as the books of the famous traveller Isabella Bird Bishop.¹⁷ An identical edition appeared under the imprint of William Briggs of Toronto. The book included the map prepared for Hubbard by the AGS, as well as the photographs she had taken en route and, in appendices, Leonidas Hubbard's

16 She records giving "my first public address to the Ministers Club" on 18 December 1905 and lecturing at her church on 20 December ("Diary"). She gave lectures about her trip in both Canada and the United States (Morgan 373), and British publications record a number of engagements in England. On 6 August 1907 she spoke about her "Traverse of Two Unexplored Rivers of Labrador" before the British Association ("Geography at the British Association," *Geographical Journal*, 30, no. 4 [Oct. 1907]: 421-25). On 7 January 1908, the *London Times* reported her lecture, entitled "Journeys through Lonely Labrador," before the Royal Geographical Society ("A Lady's Travels in Labrador," 10f); see also the *Geographical Journal* 31, no. 2 (Feb. 1908): 228. On 27 February she was a guest of the New Vagabond Club ("Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard," *Times* [London], 3 Feb. 1908, 10d).

17 Mina Hubbard's book was reviewed in the Royal Geographical Society's *Geographical Journal* 32, no. 6 (Dec. 1908): 614, and the *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 41 (1909): 57, providing further institutional recognition of the value of her work.

Figure 3 – Front cover, first edition of *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* (London: John Murray, 1908).

diary¹⁸ and George Elson's retrospective journal documenting the 1903 expedition; it is clear that she meant to put on public record other versions of the first Hubbard expedition other than Wallace's. In September 1908 the McClure Company (New York) released an American edition. The McClure edition was re-typeset and photographs reduced to half-page size; the index and William Cabot's introduction appear only in the Murray/Briggs edition, but aside from these details there are no substantive differences between the 1908 texts. Doubleday released another imprint in 1909, after taking over McClure's book publishing division.¹⁹ These many reinscriptions of the Hubbard expeditions form a rich archive for analysis. For the purposes of this paper, I am interested in what the narrative's evolution from field notes to published book reveals about Mina Hubbard's production of *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador*, and, by extension, what this evolution suggests about the cultural production of women as travellers in the discourse of exploration and adventure in the early twentieth century.

As I.S. MacLaren has noted in his article on "Exploration/Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Author," changes taking place between the recording of notes in the field and the publication of a travel narrative are caused by many factors, including the key one of audience. The field note is made in the context of a day's events in the wilderness, written for the primary audience of the future self; among its many functions are those of memory aid and emotional outlet. The published narrative, however, is re-shaped *as* narrative in the context of the trip's survival and completion, and the primary audience is a public one; changes are made not just at the author's whim, but also in answer to editors and marketing demands, public ignorance of the subject, readers' sensibilities, and generic

18 In her 1906 article, "Labrador, from Lake Melville to Ungava Bay," Mina Hubbard distinguishes between her husband's diary, which was returned to her, and "Mr. Hubbard's note-book, containing his maps and other records, [which] I have not had access to"; see *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 38, no. 9 (1906): 531. Davidson and Rugge state that Dillon Wallace refused to relinquish Hubbard's "field book or photographs" to his widow (*Great Heart*, 183).

19 *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* was reprinted in 1981 by Breakwater Books of St. John's, Newfoundland; all references to the book in this paper will refer to the 1908 John Murray edition, unless otherwise indicated in the text.

conventions.²⁰ The alterations made between Mina Hubbard's field notes and *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* thus serve the purposes of generic restructuring and market expectation, and are also inflected by her gender and the necessity of negotiating its public representation. While many of these changes involve the inevitable reduction of repetition and of elements superfluous to the progress of the narrative and the journey, their net result is a narrative which uses the discourse of widowhood to appropriate Leonidas Hubbard's sanction for Mina Hubbard's journey, while displacing him from the actual exploration. The narrator's femininity is uncompromised by her travel through the wilderness, while her authority as an explorer and the leader of an expedition is heightened. In order to create this balance, the changes made to the text reduce the overall representation of Hubbard's crew and her interaction with them and with the wilderness. At the same time, the narrator appropriates the authority that the crew's wilderness skills lend to the expedition as a whole. The published text's omissions and alterations thus reveal a careful textual negotiation of the discourses of exploration, femininity, and race, in order to produce and maintain the authority of the expedition's leader.

One of the key elements in this negotiation of the tension between femininity and exploration is the way in which Leonidas Hubbard's continual presence in the field notes is reshaped into a framing mechanism in the published version. The book is structured around the wilderness trip: the passage from Halifax to North West River (16-22 June in the field notes) is drastically foreshortened, and the two-month wait at George River Post and return by ship to New York is reduced to thirteen lines at the end of the book. This is typical of much travel literature of the North, where the narrative's interest lies in the space of the wilderness adventure, and not in the mundane details of how one gets there or gets home. In this case, however, the atypical presence of the woman as explorer/hero requires a framing mechanism. First, William Cabot's introduction (in the Murray/Briggs editions) begins by alerting readers to a new kind of journey:

The long-time traveller of the north must adjust his eyes to a new horizon before seeing as it is this latest picture. The embarkation

²⁰ I.S. MacLaren, "Exploration/Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Author," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 5 (Spring 1992): 41-42.

of a woman, slight, young, with her four Indians, the journey through the ill-omened wastes where her husband's march had ended ... these are not the commonplaces of summer trips.²¹

This introduction is followed by Mina Hubbard's first chapter, a hagiographic account of her husband's journey and death. The field notes' descriptions of gradual arrival and preparation, which focus our attention on Mina Hubbard's plans and activities, are thus replaced by a frame that presents the exploration's beginning in a history of Labrador exploration (described by Cabot) and the fateful precedent of Mina Hubbard's husband. Similarly, the let-down of the final arrival scene at George River Post is ascribed in the field notes to the end of the glorious adventure and the re-imposition of the social separation between Hubbard and her men, but in the book the final chapter, summing up her expedition's accomplishments, stresses Mina Hubbard's failure to measure up to her husband's generosity of spirit.²² The activities—writing, kayaking, and hiking—that occupy Mina Hubbard in her field notes for nearly two months, while she waits for the ship to arrive at Ungava, disappear in the truncated published version. With Leonidas Hubbard's and George Elson's versions of the 1903 expedition appearing in appendices at the end of the book, *A Woman's Way* is framed by its significance within the life of Leonidas Hubbard, and Mina Hubbard's achievement diminished to "one of those lesser purposes by which he planned to build up a whole";²³ this is also true of Mina Hubbard's articles, which preface her expedition with the story of her husband's.²⁴

In thus restructuring her narrative so that Leonidas Hubbard's presence as inspiration and spiritual mentor is displaced into a framing mechanism, Mina Hubbard accomplishes her stated goal of fulfilling one of the "lesser purposes" of her husband's life; her journey has been read by some critics as a process of coping with her

21 William Cabot, introduction to *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador* 28.

22 *A Woman's Way* 234-35.

23 *A Woman's Way* 237.

24 See "Exploring Inner Labrador," *Windsor Magazine* 27 (Dec.-Jan. 1907-08): 554-61; "Labrador, From Lake Melville to Ungava Bay," *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 38, no. 9 (1906): 529-39; "My Explorations in Unknown Labrador," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 112 (May 1906): 813-23; "Through Lonely Labrador," *Englishwoman's Review* ns. 278 (15 Apr. 1908): 82-88; "A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador," *Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society* 23, no. 4 (1907): 169-82.

grief.²⁵ However, this change has the additional effect of appropriating her husband's protective sanction to her potentially transgressive enterprise, by positioning Hubbard within the discourse of late Victorian widowhood; the change also removes her husband's presence from the actual events of the exploration, thus leaving the textual authority more firmly in the voice of the narrating Mina Hubbard. These effects become more clear when the field notes' references to Leonidas Hubbard are closely examined.

Most of the field notes' references fall into two patterns: one group of references invokes a sense of sorrow and loss, and undercuts Mina Hubbard's accomplishments by subordinating them to her husband. The other group of references underwrites Mina Hubbard's achievements with the authority of her husband's approval. The first pattern of references, which constantly positions Hubbard's wilderness experience in relation to her husband, has largely disappeared from the published book. For example, on 21 June, news of the death of a child she had met during her last visit to Labrador reminds her of her husband's own death. Her enjoyment of the trip is repeatedly qualified by her husband's superior love for the wilderness, and her various triumphs and achievements, from daily admiration of the grand landscapes she has 'discovered' to the final triumph of the trip's success, are contained by thoughts of "the one who so much more deserved it and who could have so much more appreciated the privilege." Thus, eight days into her journey, she sums up the expedition's progress with considerable satisfaction and then remembers that "Two years ago this morning we said 'Goodbye.'" Two days later, at their first rainy camp, she notes, "Had a fine fire and I thought of Laddie's proverb 'On a wet day build a big fire.'" ²⁶

25 Mina Hubbard had, since her husband's death, voiced her grief in letters to him; for instance, her field note entry at George River Post on 18 October 1905, the anniversary of his death, begins, "Dea— Was just going to write Dearest Laddie." Lisa Dempsey reads the book as a working-through of that grief, and suggests that Hubbard reinscribes exploration from an imperialist practice into a highly personal one; see Dempsey, "Gender, Ethnicity, and the Narrative Persona in Early Canadian Travel Writing" (master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1993), 22-24. While the text certainly inscribes the fulfilment and closure of Mina Hubbard's relationship with her husband, this does not distance it from the imperialist connotations of the act of exploration. As Sara Mills asserts, "one of the major problems in the analysis of women's travel writing is that of assuming that the texts are autobiographical" and not also ideological; see Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (New York: Routledge, 1993) 36.

26 "Diary," 16, 5, and 7 July 1905.

The field notes evoke the pain of Leonidas Hubbard's loss and the uncertainty of living up to his example whenever the woman traveller shows signs of becoming comfortable in the wilderness or content with her accomplishments. The field notes thus avoid threatening the unique position of the 'real' explorer, her transcendent husband, with the woman explorer's own satisfaction. With the relocation of Leonidas Hubbard's story to the book's introduction, first chapter, and appendix, these references vanish from the body of the published narrative. As a result, the book's version of the story reduces the constant subordination of Hubbard's perspective to that of her husband, and foregrounds her own position as the leader of the expedition.

The second pattern represented in the field notes' references to Leonidas Hubbard is one in which his textual presence is invoked in order to authorize Mina Hubbard's undertaking—and many of these references remain in the published narrative. Her crew's behaviour, abilities, and treatment of her are validated by her expression of the certainty of her husband's approval of them: for instance, Elson, who leads the men, is introduced as the one who "had loyally served Mr Hubbard ... and who, with rare skill and rarer devotion, had recovered Mr Hubbard's body"; Gilbert Blake's part in the latter task is also noted.²⁷ Their service to her becomes part of their loyal service to her husband. Thus on 10 July, she notes in her field notes that "no one, except Laddie, was ever more thoughtful and kind to me than they have been." As Karen R. Lawrence has recognized, "the female traveller's particular baggage includes the historical link between female wandering and promiscuity"; by laying claim to Leonidas Hubbard's agenda, both field notes and published book control the reading of Mina Hubbard's travels, not as "unrestrained circulation"²⁸ but as legitimate exploration, a journey for a specific purpose, following and completing a route planned by her husband. Any doubts about Mina Hubbard's reputation, after she has spent two months alone in the wilderness with her four guides, are thus allayed in the published narrative by the text's positioning of the guides' relationship to her husband and by the reiteration of his tacit approval. Her very presence on the trip is in the service of his name (all of her publications, for instance, are run over the name of "Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard").

²⁷ *A Woman's Way* 51-52.

²⁸ Karen R. Lawrence, *Penelope Voyages* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994) 16.

Figure 4 – George Elson, chief guide, 1905.

Figure 5 – Gilbert Blake, guide, 1905

Although many of the references to her husband position Mina Hubbard's achievements in terms of his ambitions, these references also validate her choice to undertake the exploration in the first place, and to push on in the face of uncertainty and their initially slow progress: her husband would approve. As the expedition proceeds farther north, the references to Leonidas Hubbard confirm Mina Hubbard's experiences as valuable ones, and many of these references are repeated in the book from corresponding field note entries: when they shoot their first caribou, Hubbard notes that she feels more at home in the wilderness than she has anywhere since her husband's death;²⁹ when they arrive at Lookout Mountain, from which they can see the western terminus of his journey, she thinks of him;³⁰ and when they reach Indian House Lake and meet the Naskapi, which he had hoped to do, she notes "what a day for Laddie" and "what a privilege he would have thought it."³¹ The references emphasize that she has not only fulfilled her husband's dreams, but has accomplished what he could not. Her journey thus takes place under the auspices of her husband's desire. As one reviewer of *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* commented, "she leaves us with the impression of a charming and plucky little woman, whose devotion to her husband and his dreams is pure and true. All men approve of that kind of woman, and wish her and her book every success."³² Whatever readers might think of the idea of a woman explorer, it was difficult to disapprove of wifely devotion to a dead hero. Like a formulaic apologia, Hubbard's self-subordination before her husband's spirit forestalls inevitable criticism of her gender, her qualifications, and her abilities.

Thus the near-sanctification of Leonidas Hubbard's memory in the opening chapter of the book serves both to frame Mina Hubbard's travels in a socially acceptable context and to remove many of these references to her husband from the narrative proper. The palpable pain and personal details of the field notes' laments for "Laddie" become more formal allusions to "my husband" or "Mr. Hubbard" in the book.³³ At other points, her pain is simply omitted, as when,

29 *A Woman's Way* 113-14; "Diary," 23 July 1905.

30 *A Woman's Way* 133, 139; "Diary," 29 July, 1 Aug. 1905.

31 *A Woman's Way* 200; "Diary," 20 Aug. 1905.

32 J. G. Millais, "Through the Heart of Labrador," *Nature* 79 (4 Feb. 1909): 402-03.

33 "Diary," 21 June; 5, 7, 10, 14, 15, 23, 26, 29 July; 10, 20, 23, 25 Aug. 1905; *A Woman's Way* 95, 114, 136, 139, 200.

after the first mention of his love of fishing, the reiterated grief attached to that activity in the field notes becomes, in the published text, merely the fact that they are travelling too fast to fish.³⁴ Often, her overt grief is parlayed into pathetic fallacy, as when the published text laments the light's disappearance as a storm comes up: "It was very wild and beautiful, but as an exquisite, loved form from which the spirit has fled. The sense of life, of mystery, and magic seemed gone, and I wondered if the time could come when beauty would cease to give me pain."³⁵ Compared to the intimate grief expressed in the field notes, the book's references to Leonidas Hubbard are often curiously flat, almost formulaic, despite his implicit presence throughout. The public grief is a more formal one, downplayed and contained in the service of a modest propriety; demonstrating the importance of this containment, one reviewer commented approvingly, "no morbid wailing creeps into the narrative."³⁶ By evoking Leonidas Hubbard's memory through this more formal, public reference, the narrative hints at his widow's great loss but does not dramatize it. The focus of the travel narrative is not the distraught widow's grief, but the way that she channels her sorrow, in the public realm, in service to her husband's memory. However, in that service, the oblique performance of a public grief also authorizes the woman explorer.³⁷

34 "Diary," 12 Aug. 1905; *A Woman's Way* 137, 179.

35 *A Woman's Way* 95.

36 Jean Graham, "The Woman Explorer," *Canadian Magazine* 31 (Sept. 1908): 486-71.

37 The only publication in which Hubbard actually does represent herself grieving deeply is in the article "Through Lonely Labrador," published in the *Englishwoman's Review* (ns. 278 [15 Apr. 1908]: 82-88):

I was sitting at my writing-table that day, feeling very, very helpless and sad. I suppose no one will ever quite know with what a sickening sense of limitation I longed to be a man, so that I might go away and do the work to which my husband had given his life, and which his death left unfinished. But I was a woman, and it did not occur to me that I could do anything till that January day, when, as I sat looking out of the window, aching with a sense of my own littleness and impotence, suddenly something thrilled through my whole being.

With that, she decides to go to Labrador. It may be that, in a publication whose audience was primarily women, foregrounding her pain seemed more appropriate than in the book. Hubbard's overt acknowledgement that she is taking on a conventionally masculine role does not appear in any of her other articles, and in her book such desires appear only as an impossibility, as when she wishes she were a man so she could climb a tree to photograph an osprey nest (*A Woman's Way* 87).

In the tradition of Lady Jane Franklin, then, the role of widow facilitates Mina Hubbard's involvement in a largely masculine arena;³⁸ the corollary to this, however, is that in using the discourse of widowhood to gain access to both the wilderness experience and to the institutional dissemination of her travels, she must not, within the narrative, overtly challenge the conventions of femininity upon which that discourse rests. Mina Hubbard's narrative carefully negotiates an appropriate femininity in the textual shifts between the field notes and the book. As a result, many of the less formal episodes in the field notes are omitted from the published version. The omissions include much of the joking between her and the men, and aspects of the close relationship between her and Elson. Such elements are not entirely absent from the public version, but any hint of overly personal familiarity, which might suggest impropriety to some readers, disappears from the published narrative. References to physical contact are omitted, as when Elson drags her up a steep hill, or holds her hand to steady her as they chase caribou across the hills; and mention is omitted of the flowers Elson gives her, although the dandelion given to her by Gilbert Blake (referred to as a boy throughout) remains.³⁹ The racial distance between Mina Hubbard and all the men is strictly maintained and emphasized: the published narrative omits her attempts to learn Cree, many of the stories Elson tells her about his boyhood, and her suggestion that he write his own stories.⁴⁰ As well, the men's references to train travel and playing cards, and the encounter en route of bottles of tooth powder and sugar on indigenous graves are omitted;⁴¹ these incidents would acknowledge that both the men of the crew and the indigenous people of Labrador, despite their isolation, have positions within the economic relations of the early twentieth century. Instead, the published book emphasizes the instinctive skills of the crew as "Children of the Bush" and the indigenous soul's essential link with natural beauty, stressing a picturesque primitivism.⁴² In Mina

38 One review of *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador* made this connection explicit; see *Literary Digest* 7 Nov. 1908: 673.

39 "Diary," 2 and 8 Aug. 19 July 1905.

40 "Diary," 14 July, 6 Aug., 19-20 July, 6 Aug.; 20 July 1905.

41 "Diary," 1 July, 18 July, 8 Aug. 1905.

42 *A Woman's Way* 141, 159. The phrase "Children of the Bush" was also used by Leonidas Hubbard, Jr., as the title of an account of winter trapping in Quebec ("The Children of the Bush," *Outing Magazine* 41, no. 5 [Feb. 1903]: 529-40). Except for Job Chapies, who was Cree, all of Hubbard's crew were of mixed European and Native descent: Elson was Scots-Cree; Joseph Iserhoff was Russian and Cree, and Gilbert Blake was of Inuit and European descent.

Hubbard's narratives, the crew's indigeneity is emphasized, and Job Chapies, in particular, appears as a type of the 'noble savage.' Mina Hubbard's admiration of her crew's skills and characters cannot be doubted; however, whatever their basis in fact, these depictions conform almost seamlessly to a long-established tradition of European representation of 'the indigene.'⁴³ Thus the published narrative emphasizes the racial difference between Mina Hubbard and her crew, and contains in her proper widowhood any transgressive threat in her venturing into "unknown Labrador" with four indigenous men.

The published book's emphasis on the crew's race serves a further purpose in validating the exploration itself, and thus the worth of Hubbard's project. As Paul Fussell notes in *Abroad* (1980), in the discourse of travel 'real' travellers (as opposed to mere tourists) have to work hard: "Etymologically a traveller is one who suffers *travail*."⁴⁴ This requirement is particularly true of exploration and wilderness travel, and especially travel in the North, a region which, by 1905, had been represented for centuries as a proving ground for British and European manhood. Even in the absence of scientific or territorial gains, an expedition which could produce a narrative of adventure was at least a commercial success. Leonidas Hubbard, recording in his diary his decision to turn back before reaching Michikamau, writes:

If we turn back we must stop and get grub then cross our long portage, then hunt more grub, and finally freeze up preparatory to a sled dash for Northwest River. That will make us late for boat, but we can snowshoe to the St. Lawrence. All this, with what we have done so far, will make a bully story.⁴⁵

43 Terry Goldie has demonstrated that this identification of the indigene with primitivism is one of a series of characteristics of the representation of indigenous peoples in English-Canadian literature; as Margery Fee has shown, this pattern of representation has been formative in the construction of Canadian identity in literature and culture, as it is here. See Terry Goldie, *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1989); Margery Fee, "Romantic Nationalism and the Image of Native People in Contemporary English-Canadian Literature," in *The Native in Literature*, ed. Thomas King, Cheryl Calver and Helen Hoy (Oakville: ECW, 1987).

44 Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980) 39.

45 Leonidas Hubbard, Jr., "Diary of Leonidas Hubbard, 1903," 15 September 1903, Mina Hubbard Collection, Coll. 241, Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, Memorial University Library.

Having failed to reach Lake Michikamau, the natives of the Labrador interior, or the migrating caribou, Leonidas Hubbard determines to make a story out of hardship, endurance, and the party's brush with starvation and death. In 1905, however, none of these elements is available to Mina Hubbard: not only must she successfully complete her journey in order to vindicate her husband from criticism, but she must also protect herself from charges of irresponsibility, which could conceivably be brought against a woman venturing into an arena about which she knew nothing. Rugged endurance of wintry starvation would in a woman signify not a heroic and valiant fortitude but foolhardiness and a loss of decorum—proof that a woman could not be an explorer, and proof that any woman who did venture into the wilderness could not, by definition, be a lady. It is this tension, between the need to maintain her public identity as a 'lady,' the loyal wife of the dead explorer, and the need to convey her authority over a valid expedition of exploration, that characterizes the narrative.

Thus, in order to maintain the party's qualifications for the journey, the value of the exploration itself, and the dramatic tension of the narrative, the wilderness expertise of Hubbard's crew, rather than that of the leader, is emphasized throughout the book. She must have a skilled crew if the terrain is to be believably rigorous and the exploration accordingly difficult and thus valuable. Jokes she plays on Elson and mistakes he makes in the route to Michikamau are omitted from the published version; the challenge they pose to his expertise would reflect poorly on her expedition. Since her access to the wilderness is not due to her own qualifications (she stands in for her husband), the published narrative omits several of her field notes' statements of personal triumph in that regard. In part, this omission results from the foreshortening of the narrative's beginning and end, since it is at North West River before they leave that she describes in her field notes surprising Elson with her paddling skills, and it is at George River Post after their journey that she experiments with kayaking alone, tries out a dog whip, and spends an evening alone on the hills.⁴⁶ However, even on the journey itself, the published narrative walks a careful line. By emphasizing her fragility and delicacy (her hot water bottle and air mattress appear in most published

⁴⁶ "Diary," 27 June, 30 Sept., 18 Sept., 11 Oct. 1905.

versions of the trip),⁴⁷ as well as by continually reiterating the skill and strength with which her crewmen conduct her through the wilderness, and the personal and racial distance between her and the crew, the narrative is able to negotiate a careful representation that is neither incompetent nor overly robust, neither improper nor unfeminine.

For Mina Hubbard not only lacks wilderness skills herself, but must be *seen* to lack them, in order to remain appropriately 'civilized' in the face of wilderness. Her role as widow only provisionally contains the threat to conventional femininity posed by leaving the domestic space for the unknown in the company of four non-white, lower-class men to whom she is not related.⁴⁸ Mina Hubbard travelled beyond the established infrastructure of modern transportation systems and beyond the immediate reach of direct institutional

47 See "Through Lonely Labrador" 84-85; "My Explorations in Unknown Labrador" 815; and "Exploring Inner Labrador" 556; the London *Times* also mentions the hot-water bottle with amusement ("Lady's Travels" 10f). The fact that the description of Hubbard's campbed, including the hot-water bottle, is not mentioned in the *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* ("Labrador, From Lake Melville to Ungava Bay"), but does appear in considerable detail in the article published in *The Englishwoman's Review* ("Through Lonely Labrador" 84), suggests that while comfort is extraneous to the discourse of exploration, it is essential to the discourse of femininity.

48 Evidence that some members of the expedition were concerned about the possible imputation of immoral behaviour among the group can be found in the diaries kept by Elson and Mina Hubbard. At the end of Elson's field notes, Mina Hubbard has written:

I, Mina B. Hubbard, do hereby declare and solemnly avow that during the trip across Labrador, leaving Northwest River Post June 27th 1905, reaching George River Post August 27th 1905, on which George Elson accompanied me, he at all times treated me with respect and as an honorable Christian man. I also record my promise that I will never by word or look or sign lead any human being to believe that he ever otherwise treated me and that if I should ever in any way intimate that he otherwise treated me I hereby declare it to be a lie.

[signed] Mina B. Hubbard.

A similar document, signed by all members of the crew, appears at the end of Mina Hubbard's field notes. Both documents are dated 16 September 1905. See Mina Hubbard, "Diary" and George Elson, "Diary of Mr. George Elson, 1905 (Chief Indian Guide): An Account of a Journey in Labrador," Mina Hubbard Collection, Coll. 241, 3.03, Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives, Memorial University Library. At the time of the trip, Hubbard was 35 years old; George Elson was about 29.

surveillance.⁴⁹ Once she left North West River, she was alone with her four guides. She could not appear to be changed by her encounter with the wilderness, lest such a change challenge her construction of the journey as a loyal service to her husband.

However, while the book never relinquishes its careful representation of Hubbard's femininity, she must as leader of the expedition and explorer/narrator also have the textual authority to speak her travels. The narrative struggles to maintain a hierarchical relation between her, as white leader, and the men, as her indigenous crew. The book emphasizes the crew's wilderness skills and the fact that they do all the hard work, and it omits the field notes' record of Hubbard's day-to-day tasks of mapmaking, latitudinal and geographical observations, and meteorological measurements. Because the field notes record this material, they constantly foreground the work of exploration Hubbard is doing; the relative absence of Hubbard's work from the published narrative would threaten to displace her from the head of the expedition and turn her into a mere passenger, but the rhetorical shifts between the field notes and the narrative serve both to include her in the work being done and to emphasize that even when she is not physically doing the work, it is being done at her behest.

The book's representation of Mina Hubbard's authority, then, does not rest upon her own abilities as a wilderness traveller—strength, stamina, woodcraft, hunting prowess—but rather upon the combination of middle-class femininity and overall responsibility for the expedition. It is true that the book does in part mobilize the traditional theme of the tenderfoot's gradual adaptation to wilderness

49 There was considerable pressure on her men to look after her. Her field notes record that, on the outbound voyage to Labrador, the captain "gave George some good advice and [was] trying to scare the other men a little as to what may happen if they do not bring me safely back" ("Diary," 17 June). This episode does not appear in the book, although Elson's exaggerated care for her and his anger and fear when she heads off alone do. Elson and Chapies would later guide Stephen and Florence Tasker, who travelled by canoe and steamer from Missanabie to Fort Chimo; see Bruce W. Hodgins and Gwyneth Hoyle, *Canoeing North into the Unknown: A Record of River Travel: 1874-1974* (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History, 1994), 217-18; and Florence A. Tasker, "A Woman through Husky-Land," *Field and Stream*, Feb. 1908: 823-28; Mar. 1908: 937-43). Future employment for Elson and Chapies depended on maintaining a reputation as reliable guides. Certainly, having already lost one Hubbard in the Labrador wilderness, it would have done Elson no good to lose another.

life. Hubbard's attempt to cook over a fire, her "maiden attempt to follow a trail" alone, and the fish she cleans herself do survive in the published version, as does a considerable amount of teasing by the men during the first half of the narrative;⁵⁰ these elements help to stress the distance between her inexperience and the vastly superior wilderness adaptation of the crew. However, the traditional comic elements of the tenderfoot theme for the most part do not appear in the published narrative, nor do the jokes the men play on her.⁵¹ Episodes omitted include incidents of forgetfulness and irresponsibility which, while amusing in the field notes, in the published text would undermine Hubbard's tenuous authority as leader of the expedition and reliable narrator. The book records her admiration of the men's hard work and wilderness skills, but not her constantly reiterated regret that she cannot help. Leaving behind a pocket knife, leaving the portage trail alone and getting lost, and scaring Elson by going off scouting alone without telling him do not appear in the published narrative;⁵² she might be inexperienced and physically weaker than the men, as befits the discourse of turn-of-the-century womanhood, but never incompetent or irresponsible. Events that might challenge the delicacy expected of a lady are also omitted: she does not publish the fact that she ate caribou gut "and found it very very good,"⁵³ and details in the field notes about killing and butchering caribou and other game are omitted, although the published version does include her happily blazing away at a bear which is too far away to hit. Girlish enthusiasm in the chase is acceptable, but tender-hearted femininity avoids explicit bloodshed.

The only escapade that remains in the published version is that detailed in Chapter 8, entitled "Scaring the Guides"; this episode is a key moment in Hubbard's construction of her leadership over the expedition. Having obtained Elson's permission to spend an afternoon alone on a hilltop (which they have already climbed) while the men carry the gear forward, Hubbard decides not to follow their advice to take a rain jacket. When it starts to rain, she realizes that the men have not come to meet her, but are remaining warm and dry by the fire under the canoes: "I was to have a lesson in taking good advice when I could get it."⁵⁴ She uses the opportunity to go farther afield,

50 *A Woman's Way* 71, 73, 144.

51 "Diary," 24 July, 27 July 1905.

52 "Diary," 27 July, 12-13 July 1905.

53 "Diary," 12 Aug. 1905.

54 *A Woman's Way* 125.

and when the men realize that she isn't waiting in the miserable wet for them to come and meet her, they panic for fear she is lost. By the time they finally find her (the page's running heading is "Recaptured"),⁵⁵ she has given the men a good scare, and has also learned the depth of their responsibility for bringing her safely out of the wilderness: "And what would we do if you got lost or fell in that rapid?" Elson demands. "Just think what *could* we do? Why, I could never go back again. How could any of us go back without you?"⁵⁶

This episode, taking up one day's entry in the field notes, is expanded into a chapter in the published narrative; dialogue not existing in the notes is invented to dramatize the men's dismay, and the episode is figured as a mischievous child's prank. It becomes the joke she plays on the men, for unlike some of the omitted episodes, this incident does not really involve her being lost or in danger. Rather, she knows both where she is and where the men are at all times; she is in control. Even in the field notes, at the end of the episode the men must be fortified with medicinal brandy, for they "looked really sick and their hands trembled visibly. I needed no bracer, for I was very very hungry and I had 'one good time.'"⁵⁷ Four days later, in the field notes, she discovers that the men have drunk all the brandy:

When Geo. brought out the flask to-night, he has been having my medicine bag in his dunnage bag, and we were to have brandy sauce for our rice pudding there was just a few oz perhaps 3 oz in it. Said "Guess we won't have any for our pudding. Keep that for medicine." A few things are making me uncomfortable though perhaps my unrest is needless.⁵⁸

In the book, the discovery and recovery are immediate, as she ends the chapter at the day of the episode, "Again the joke was on me. They drank it all!"⁵⁹ It is a joke—on her, she states, but one which contains and limits, with its humorous deprecation, any suggestion that she is not in complete control of her chivalrous but subordinate crew: in two lines, the sexual anxieties embedded in the mixture of alcohol, gender, and race are disposed of as if non-existent. For

⁵⁵ *A Woman's Way* 129.

⁵⁶ *A Woman's Way* 131.

⁵⁷ "Diary," 28 July 1905.

⁵⁸ "Diary," 1 Aug. 1905.

⁵⁹ *A Woman's Way* 132.

nothing, in this chapter, must threaten the representation of Hubbard's leadership.

This escapade becomes the climax of the subtext of Hubbard's rebellion against her men's care for her and against the limitations that her femininity places on her in the wilderness, but the rebellion is always qualified, in the book, by her repeated reiteration of the men's care and sense of responsibility, and by her own good-humoured toleration of their restrictions: "George's tone of authority was sometimes amusing. Sometimes I did as I was told, and then again I did not. This time I did."⁶⁰ The times when she does not do as she is told never make it into the published narrative. In the book, after "Scaring the Guides," she offers Elson a bargain: "If I can have some one to go with me whenever I want to climb a mountain, or do anything else that I think it is necessary to do in my work, without any fuss about it, I promise not to go away alone again."⁶¹ Having resolved the question of who is in control of the expedition, the narrative ceases to stress the limitations placed on her by her gender: she longs impatiently to go scouting for the headwaters of the George River, when they achieve the height of land, but the men discover nothing on that afternoon anyway;⁶² the description of Elson's reluctance to take her to the Montagnais camp in the field notes⁶³ disappears from the published narrative, and when they encounter the Naskapi she walks away from the canoes up to their camp despite Elson's evident unease.⁶⁴ The men's care for her and their skills are constantly reiterated, but direct confrontations over her freedom of movement, and her own comments on the limitations femininity places on her, give way, from this point on in the published narrative, to Hubbard's concerns as leader.

The importance of these shifts in self-representation to the construction of an explorer's authority is particularly evident at the main geographical features of the journey—the places that mark the achievement of stages of the trip. One important site/sight is reached when, having followed the Naskaupi River to the northern inlet of Michikamau Lake, the party crosses the height of land between the Naskaupi and George River systems, and finds the beginning of the

⁶⁰ *A Woman's Way* 88.

⁶¹ *A Woman's Way* 130.

⁶² *A Woman's Way* 171-72.

⁶³ "Diary," 17 Aug. 1905.

⁶⁴ *A Woman's Way* 208.

river that will lead them to Ungava Bay. Comparison of this passage in the field notes and the published narrative reveals the complex work of re-shaping involved when the woman traveller must become the generic explorer-hero of the narrative.

First, in the field notes, Hubbard describes with her usual enthusiastic admiration the men's work to find the headwaters of the George River. Written in the context of the wilderness, Hubbard's field note is characterized by her wonder at the men's skills and by her delight at having achieved with them one of her husband's goals. As the passage opens, Hubbard is positioned as an observer, watching the men accomplish the work of exploration:⁶⁵

It was bewildering to me. Points and islands cut off the views of the lake and it was like being on a river you were so anxious to see round the next pt for something new was always developing. It was wonderful the way Job picked out the way. Only once since we started has he failed at going right straight to the right point and that was to-day when we were in this second of the two beautiful lakes. We came through before reaching the height of land, and this time we did not go out of our way more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. We had come to the northern part of the lake when round a pt a deep bay stretched away to the eastward. Down the bay about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a m it looked as if a little stream flowed in from the N. We paddled to it but but [sic] found it not a stream. Turning back we came along the N. shore and 2 m further west a little stream flowed in from still another lake above. It was too small to admit of attempting to take the canoe up and by this time Joe & Gil had found the portage trail just a little west of the stream. There were the remains of a fire there, some goose bones stuck up on a long pole, feathers lying about and from the quills the men thought that whoever had passed would not have been more than 2 weeks ahead of us. The boughs were still green. The por. was a short one 100 yds and led to a little lake 1 m long and 200-250 yds wide and here we found ourselves at last at the very head of the Nascaupsee [sic].⁶⁶

Evidence of others on the trail is alarming at this point, since Hubbard still does not know that Wallace's party is well behind her. Is her party the first to reach the height of land?

⁶⁵ Due to the field notes' limited availability at the present time, and the nature of the close textual reading I am giving these passages, I am quoting at length.

⁶⁶ "Diary," 10 Aug. 1905.

North from the lake lay a marsh 200 yards wide and this was the height of land. There was no mistaking it. Though I found myself this morning with only 2 rolls each for my kodaks I squandered 2 exposures on the height of land. On the other side we knew or believed we should find ourselves on waters that flowed to Ungava Bay. We were not disappointed. At 5 P.M. we embarked on a beautiful lake beyond it and at 6 we were at the head of a stream flowing N. The men were as much excited as I. When our little canoe touched shore just at the head of the stream, Job jumped out and ran down a piece to make really sure which direction the water was flowing and came back shouting "Ha ha Jordan seepee". It was such a beautiful evening too and all hearts glad that we had come so far in safety. We are now north of 55 [degrees latitude] and yet it has never seemed to me, and the men say the same, as if we were far from the world. Just far enough to be nice. I wish I need never go back. I suppose I shall never again be taken care of in the gentle *careful* way I have been since we left N.W.R. I came away expecting to have all sorts of hardships to endure and have had none. The weather has mostly been very beautiful. Labrador skies have so far been kind to us. Oh if they had only been as kind two years ago. How different might have been the outcome. Over and over again we speak of it and say that this surely *cannot be Labrador* for the skies are so bright and sunshiny. Geo. marvels at it every day almost.⁶⁷

The field note entry continues at length, marvelling over the beauty of the land, the calmness of the weather, and the relative lack of mosquitoes. Despite the uncertainty and hard work described in preceding entries, the triumph of reaching the height of land casts the achievement as a relatively easy one and Labrador as a welcoming land—Mina Hubbard's sense of wonder at this is understandable, given the privation and struggle experienced by her husband only two summers earlier, and is also a testament to the achievement of George Elson, her chief guide.⁶⁸ Hubbard finishes the day's field

⁶⁷ "Diary," 10 Aug. 1905; emphasis in original.

⁶⁸ Elson's own description, in his field note of 10 August 1905, of the party's arrival at the height of land forms an interesting contrast:

Nice beautiful day. Portage to two small lakes then in to big lakes runs N.west. Then again after noon 2 small portages. Found the water run the other side to North. Lots of deer all around. Camped along a little stream. Swampy, an old stage just or near our camp. Rice pudding for supper as we had said some time ago we would have when we get to the Head waters of the George R. Lakes run North west. When we seen this little stream

note entry with a description of the party's celebration, and a retrospective evaluation of her own abilities and accomplishments, invoking once more her husband as the final judge of the work:

We had our rice pudding and I put on my Sunday waist and took a clean handkerchief and put on my red tuque Laddie got me in Quebec. The men were greatly pleased. It has been a wonderfully interesting day for me. It has interested me in a way I did not suppose I should ever be interested again and in my heart tonight is a touch of gladness that our work has prospered so far. It has not been perfectly done. I have felt my lack of training and preparation very deeply and keenly and not until we reached Michikamats could I feel that my observations for latitude were correct. Yet even so we have opened the way and have led in it and I can bring a tribute to the memory of my husband which he at least would think worth while. If I could only hear the dear human voice speak his "Well done" and see his face; for whatever others may say that is what he would say. Camp in a bog tonight. Soon after camp up heard deer calling just a little way from camp. Saw many this morn around N. end of Michikamats. Not so many since. Men shot at crow this morn, first & only one seen on trip. An old stage not far from camp. Can see fresh cuttings & blaze on east side of stream, about 300 yds, on farther side other channel. Men think portage trail there.⁶⁹

The comparison with the published text is enlightening. Writing on the Labrador plateau in the context of her crew's work that day and the party's triumph, Hubbard in her field note takes the role of bewildered observer, eagerly watching the experts at work, and detailing each false trail, each stage of the process of searching out

wondring how it run. North or south. Job went to see he came to the canoes and said George's river as George's river boys. All glad to know the water runs north. Nice moon light.

The men had been calling the George River "George's River" for some time at this point (it was, after all, Elson's second attempt to reach it), so it is particularly interesting that Mina Hubbard's field note should transcribe Chapies' identification of the river as "Ha ha Jordan seepee," relocating the river's significance from its importance to the men of the crew (who would now be paddling downstream with a tail wind) in the context of George Elson's life, the journey and their work, to an importance highlighted by biblical allusion. The latter is not irrelevant to the men's own lives and cultures, but Mina Hubbard's version of Job Chapies' cry emphasizes the fact that, even in her field notes, she situates the importance of the journey into the context of *her* life and belief system.

69 "Diary," 10 Aug. 1905.

the height of land. Once they make the discovery, it gains its meaning in the context of the whole party's communal enterprise and the duty Hubbard owes to her husband's memory. The location is significant because of its relationship to the rest of the journey: they now know that they are on the right route, and, moreover, will be headed downstream from here on. The delight at having arrived at the height of land manifests itself in terms of fine weather and freedom from insects, but also expresses the whole team's relief at leaving behind the achingly slow, back-breaking work of upstream travel and the uncertainties about their route and whether they will be able to do the whole trip before winter. And, finally, having achieved the height of land, Hubbard is moved to an accounting of the trip so far, evaluating the limitations of her work.

In the published version, however, the event is one of Discovery: it is given significance by Hubbard's presence as the representative of the white race, and fixed in time at the moment when *she* disembarks, rather than being attenuated, as in the field notes, between the 5 p.m. embarkation on the lake and the 6 p.m. discovery (by her native crewman, announced in Cree) of its north-flowing outlet. The men's work, carefully detailed in the field notes according to exactly who accomplished each task, is recuperated into a collective "we" in the book, and the explorer-hero is no longer eager observer and participant, but Leader and Visionary, for whose sight alone the site renders up its significance:

That afternoon our journey carried us north-west through beautiful Lake Adelaide, where long wooded points and islands cutting off the view ahead, kept me in a constant state of suspense as to what was to come next. About 4 p.m. we reached the northern extremity of the lake, where the way seemed closed; but a little searching discovered a tiny stream coming in from the north and west of this the well-marked Indian trail. What a glad and reassuring discovery it was, for it meant that we were on the Indian highway from Lake Michikamau to George River. Perhaps our task would not be so difficult after all.

The portage led north one hundred yards to a little lake one mile long and less than one quarter wide, and here we found ourselves at the very head of the Nascaupsee River. There was no inlet to the lake, and north of it lay a bog two hundred yards wide which I knew must be the Height of Land, for beyond it stretched a body of water which had none of the appearance of a still water lake, and I felt sure we should find its waters flowing north.

It was just 5 p.m. when, three hundred miles of my journey into the great, silent wilderness passed, I stepped out of the canoe to stand at last on the summit of the Divide—the first of the white race to trace the Nascaupsee River to its source.

I had a strange feeling of being at the summit of the world. The country was flat and very sparsely wooded, but I could not see far. It seemed to fall away on every hand, but especially to north and south. The line of the horizon was unnaturally near, and there was more than the usual realising sense of the great space between the earth and the sky. This was enhanced by the lifting of a far distant hill-top above the line as if in an attempt to look across the Divide.

That morning I had found myself with only a few films left, for the fascination of taking the first photographs of the region traversed had betrayed me into using my material more lavishly than I should; but now I squandered two films in celebration of the achievement, taking one picture looking out over the waters flowing south to Lake Melville and the Atlantic, and facing about, but without otherwise changing my position, one over the waters which I felt sure we should find flowing north to Ungava Bay.

In a wonderfully short time the outfit had been portaged across, and we were again in the canoes, the quest now being, not for the inlet but for the outlet of the lake, a much less difficult task. Less than an hour's paddling carried us to the point where the George River, as a tiny stream, steals away from its source in Lake Hubbard, as if trying to hide in its rocky bed among the willows, to grow in force and volume in its three hundred mile journey to Ungava, till at its discharge there it is a great river three miles in width.

Here at its beginning on the boggy margin of the stream we went into camp. Here I saw the sun set and rise again, and as I lay in my tent at dawn, with its wall lifted so that I could look out into the changing red and gold of the eastern sky, I heard a splashing of water near, and looking up saw a little company of caribou cross at the head of the stream and disappear towards the sunrise.⁷⁰

Comparison of these two documents reveals many of the shifting rhetorical strategies used in the published version to reinforce the narrator's authority as an explorer: no longer faced with the "bewildering" and unnamed landscape of the field notes, the book's narrator is merely in "a constant state of suspense" which is constantly

70 *A Woman's Way* 174-76.

reassured as much by the "well-marked Indian trail" as by the landscape which, it seems, has always already borne the names she gives it. The field notes' revelation that the portage has been recently used disappears in the book, for the trail is no longer scouted by the men, but "discovered." The men's work is erased from the published version by the use of plural pronouns and the passive mode: "we," rather than Joe Iserhoff and Gilbert Blake, find the portage; "our journey carried us" and "an hour's paddling carried us," rather than Mina Hubbard being carried by the men's work. The experience of the height of land is no longer a communal one, attenuated between 5 and 6 o'clock and verified by Job Chapies, but frozen by the racial significance of *her* 5 p.m. disembarkation; she is "the first of the white race" to arrive "at the summit of the world." The place is recognized by her statement, "I knew," as the significant site: on the flat, swampy Labrador plateau, the height-of-land nonetheless allows the world to fall away around her. The field notes' communal celebration of their arrival, with its domestic note in her preparation of rice pudding and the "Sunday waist" worn for the men's pleasure, is reduced to the lonely triumph of the single, solitary "I" communing with the wilderness. Not only is the possible threat to propriety from the crew's pleasure at her dressing up omitted from the narrative, but so is the reference to her husband. The effects of the transformation are to elide leader and crew—to appropriate to her their labour, skills, and presence in the wilderness, particularly important for an explorer who lacks wilderness expertise—and also to emphasize her own unique and separate subjectivity, as the one who, embodying in her race the significance of the accomplishment, gives meaning to sunset and dawn, splashing water and disappearing caribou, and names to the "unknown" land.

Mary Louise Pratt has analyzed what she terms the "monarch-of-all-I-survey" trope as it was enacted in Victorian exploration literature in Africa.⁷¹ Although she suggests that women explorers "do not spend a lot of time on promontories," and that "the masculine heroic discourse of discovery is not readily available to women," Pratt does acknowledge that women constructed their own discourses of mastery over the terrain they travelled, often self-consciously playing with and transforming the patterns more common to male writers.⁷² However, in contrast to the sophisticated and self-ironic

71 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 201, 205-06.

72 Pratt 213.

"monarchic female voice" that Pratt finds in Mary Kingsley's writing.⁷³ Mina Hubbard's mobilization, at this point in her narrative, of the heroic discourse of discovery is fairly straightforward. Just as reaching the hills around the portage to Seal Lake allows her to achieve "the right thrill" in the passage from the field notes cited at the beginning of this paper, so the arrival at the height of land permits Hubbard's transcendent transformation into explorer.

Having established herself as Discoverer, Hubbard opens the book's next chapter by describing the burdens of leadership, her responsibility for her crew, and her hopes for the future of the expedition. In the published narrative, this responsibility is rarely shared with her chief guide. Like her unease over the brandy's disappearance and her concern over whether Wallace's party is ahead or behind them,⁷⁴ neither her disputes with Elson over the projected return route should the expedition be forced to retreat, nor her worries about whether the men are working hard enough,⁷⁵ remain in the published text. In the context of the book, any value these episodes might offer in providing dramatic tension is offset by their immediate context (she wishes to return by way of the Naskaupi River in order to verify latitudinal observations she has missed; mention of this would throw the scientific value of the narrative into doubt) as well as by the challenge they offer her authority as expedition leader. As she admits to Elson in the field notes, "Now if you refuse to take me back I cannot compell you to do it."⁷⁶

The field notes are thus pervaded by an emotional tension and uncertainty rooted in Hubbard's sense of tenuous control over the expedition; in the published narrative, however, this uncertainty is channelled entirely into the dramatic tension of the leader's responsibility for finding the right route and reaching Ungava Bay before the last week in August, in time to catch the only ship leaving northern Labrador before winter. Once they have passed the height of land, time is growing short, and the difference over choice of route which separates Hubbard and her crew in the field notes becomes, in the book, a distinction of responsibility:

Could we make the post by the last week in August? The men appeared confident; but for me the days which followed held

⁷³ Pratt 213-16.

⁷⁴ "Diary," 28 July, 21 July, 6 Aug. 1905.

⁷⁵ "Diary," 6 Aug., 14 Aug. 1905; 6, 11, 25, 26 July, 4 Aug. 1905.

⁷⁶ "Diary," 17 Aug. 1905.

anxious hours, and the nights sleepless ones as I tried to make my decision whether, in case it should become evident we could not reach Ungava in time, I should turn back, leaving the work uncompleted, or push on, accepting the consequent long winter journey back across Labrador, or round the coast, and the responsibility of providing for my four guides for perhaps a full year.⁷⁷

The published text admits no question of her final authority as leader; it also emphasizes her separation from the crew and ultimate responsibility for the expedition. Rather than struggling as she does in the field notes for the power to make the decisions, Hubbard suffers valiantly, in the book, under the ultimate burden of leadership, while her stereotypically happy-go-lucky indigenous crew cheerfully perform their duty.

Mina Hubbard's authority, in her published book, thus rests in a careful representation of delicate femininity and ultimate responsibility for the mission's success or failure, and this latter element surfaces more and more once the expedition has crossed the height of land. Even her men's fears about encountering the Naskapi of northern Labrador are answered by the valiant mission leader: "What do you think I shall be doing while they are killing you? You do not need to suppose that because I will not kill rabbits, or ptarmigan, or caribou, I should have any objection to killing a Nascaupie Indian [sic] if it were necessary."⁷⁸ This threat is never put into practice and, in fact, appears only in the published narrative; by the time it is written, the first Hubbard expedition has been welcomed by both Montagnais and Naskapi communities⁷⁹ and has successfully reached the George River Post with surplus provisions (150 lbs, if the supplies left with the Naskapi two days before reaching the post are included in the reckoning) and two months to spare

⁷⁷ *A Woman's Way* 178.

⁷⁸ *A Woman's Way* 183.

⁷⁹ According to Adrian Tanner, the groups designated Montagnais and Naskapi by European accounts belong to the same culture; they call themselves Innu. "Montagnais" is of French origin; the origin of "Naskapi" is uncertain, but both date back to seventeenth-century missionary sources. By the late nineteenth century, "Naskapi" had acquired the sense of a northern, non-Christianized people, while "Montagnais" referred to groups living in the forested area nearer to the St. Lawrence. This is how Mina Hubbard uses the terms, and I have chosen to preserve her division in order to distinguish between the two communities she visits. See *Canadian Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Montagnais-Naskapi."

Figure 7 – Mina Hubbard in Labrador.

before the ship arrives. But the threat serves notice that the protected has become protector, and that Hubbard has, somewhere between North West River and John Murray's publishing house, become an explorer-hero.

Analysis of the alterations made to Mina Hubbard's narrative between the field notes and the published book reveals the tension between femininity and exploration, the two discourses that underlie the authority of this woman explorer; the book negotiates this tension by positioning the narrator in relation to her husband and her guides. This textual strategy results in a narrative persona who is alternately characterized by the qualities of widow, lady, and explorer. The making of Hubbard's published narrative was thus a careful negotiation of her public representation at an intersection of the discourses of race, femininity, and exploration. This public self-representation was a key strategy in Hubbard's project to vindicate her husband's memory, a strategy that required that her exploration be recognized and validated by the geographical authorities, and that the potentially transgressive threat of a woman's wilderness journey be contained, in order not only to preserve her own reputation but also to avoid distracting readers from the significance of her husband's project. The context of Hubbard's published writing was not her journey through the Labrador wilderness under the authority of George Elson, Job Chapies, Joe Iserhoff, and Gilbert Blake, but the North American and British friends, relatives, readers, and reviewers who would judge her and her work. The changes taking place in Hubbard's story, between field notes and published book, are a result of the process of publication itself, with the understanding that that process includes both the influence of the publishing industry and the writer's advisors,⁸⁰ as well as the woman traveller's own decisions about public self-representation and feedback from lectures and interim publications. It is not that the field notes are more 'true'

80 Anne Hart states that Ellis family tradition suggests that Hubbard was helped by John Ellis, her future father-in-law, when preparing her book; however, no archival materials relating to the composition of the book have yet been found (personal communication, 24 July 1996). The purpose of this paper is not to attribute to any specific editor responsibility for the choices made in revising Mina Hubbard's narrative for publication. More important than identifying individual editorial villains in the transmission of exploration narratives is to recognize that shifts between field notes and published narrative result from the context of the writing and the audience, which constitute a far more complex set of determinants than any one influence.

to the real woman's writings, so much as that the changes in Hubbard's story result from the act of return from the wilderness to the metropolitan centre, and the reproduction of her exploration in the context of metropolitan audiences, for whom "woman" and "explorer" were often contradictory terms.

RÉSUMÉ

A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador (1908) de Mina Hubbard est basé sur plusieurs textes qu'elle a rédigés sur son voyage d'exploration au Labrador en 1905. Dans l'évolution de ses notes de voyage en livre publié, nous observons comment Mina Hubbard négocie les discours de la fémininité, du veuvage et de l'aventure. Elle crée le personnage de la femme explorateur et construit une hiérarchie des races, dans laquelle elle se distancie de ses guides métis en soulignant leur origine amérindienne et leur capacité de survivre dans la nature. Mina Hubbard façonne sa crédibilité en tant qu'explorateur en s'attribuant les talents de ses guides et en insistant sur sa propre identité comme chef d'expédition blanc.