

“You Are My Wife!”
“Good-bye City Life!”:
Mrs. Philomena Orford and Mrs. Tom
Manning Journey North

Traditionally, a woman married to a professional man whose work entailed travel—diplomats, colonial officers, missionaries, explorers, and the like—found herself literally transported by the exigencies of her husband’s occupation. Once abroad, she was expected to perform supportive roles in public and in private, such as attending official functions, entertaining colleagues, providing domestic enclaves with emotional and sexual companionship, and/or participating directly in her husband’s work. As a version of what sociologist Hilary Callan classifies as the “incorporated wife,” her identity was “an intimate function of her husband’s occupational identity and culture” (9). The incorporated wife appears in a number of travel books by well-known Canadian women writers, including Margaret Laurence’s *The Prophet’s Camel Bell* (1963) and P.K. Page’s *Brazilian Journal* (1987). The travel writers and texts under consideration here, however, are now largely unknown. *Journey North* (1957) chronicles Philomena Orford’s 1936–1940 residency on Baffin Island with her husband and three daughters, while Mrs. Tom (Ella Wallace) Manning’s Arctic peregrinations with her husband during the 1930s are described in *Igloo for the Night* (1943; 1946). The authors of these well-written, humorous, and engaging narratives represent a small subgroup that has so far been neglected by the recent flurry of critical and historical analyses of narratives about the Canadian Arctic and sub-Arctic. Studies have concentrated on narratives by male explorers and adventurers (see Armitage; Belyea; Christopher; Greenfield; Harrison; Horne; Hunt; Krans; MacLaren; Venema; West) and,

more recently, female explorers and adventurers (see Grace; Laframboise; Smyth; Goldman). Arctic narratives by the incorporated wife offer alternative visions of self and place.

The primary scholarly rationale for this analysis of Orford's and Manning's narratives, as relatively early Arctic travel books by Canadian women, is their historical, biographical, and theoretical relevance to three interrelated areas: gender, genre, and geography. In journeying to the Canadian Arctic, Orford and Manning enter gendered geography, that is, a region historically perceived as fit for white male exploration and adventure but too harsh for white women to venture into. In writing Arctic travel books, Orford and Manning transgress into textually masculine terrain as well, and what results is an interesting departure from the masculine Arctic narrative. Orford and Manning, while being among the earliest Canadian white women to travel the furthest north, were not the first women to travel and write the Arctic, and so their works may partly be read in the context of their female predecessors, such as Canadians Agnes Deans Cameron and Mina Hubbard, Britain's Clara Vyvyan, and American Josephine Peary. Orford and Manning struggle, as did women before them, to find their place in the Arctic and in Arctic narrative. However, their role as incorporated wives brings a special inflection to this challenge. Both women, in writing about their journeys, offer insight into the creative, varied ways they conform to and contest their roles.

Part of the recent proliferation of books about the representation of the Canadian Arctic by adventurers, explorers, poets, novelists, film makers, and artists, John Moss's *Enduring Dreams: An Exploration of Arctic Landscape* blends lyricism with Arctic narrative and critical meta-narrative. From Moss's perspective, the Arctic functions as "a medium of desire" for non-Native writers (xii). For Arctic "outsiders," it is an elusive landscape that inevitably gets lost in the representation of it. Descriptions of the Arctic, he underlines throughout, are reflective of the writer's needs for a particular personal experience, an ideological or philosophical construct, or an aesthetic vision. The Arctic may function as a medium of desire for those who have never actually been there as much as for those who have. What results is an "imagined Arctic," a landscape almost purely of the mind and imagination that acquires its characteristics through the representations and desires of others who have been there and have attempted to "capture" it through various media (28-29).¹

Judging from the scarce biographical material available on Orford and

Manning and the opening sections of their books, these women had very different desired and imagined "Arctics." Orford's "Arctic" completes the migrant's stereotypical trajectory from Old World penury to New World riches. Marcus Robinson's brief "Life of the Month" obituary for Orford in the February 1997 issue of *Saturday Night* mentions that Orford (née McLauchlan) immigrated from Scotland to Canada with her family in 1925 at the age of seventeen after the family business collapsed (17). In Depression-era Ontario, she supported her parents by working as a stenographer and an accompanist at a silent movie house until marrying Thomas John Orford, a medical student at Queen's University (17). Little changed in Orford's economic situation after marriage. In the opening pages of *Journey North*, the scene is set in the 1930s, and the young couple is surviving the Depression in the rural community of Markham, Ontario, scraping by on farm produce bartered by impoverished locals for doctor's services rendered. Orford recounts her initial, naïve reaction to learning of her husband's new posting as medical officer for the small Inuit settlement of Panuk on Baffin Island. As her husband reads the perquisites of the job in Panuk, Orford becomes increasingly enthusiastic about the prospect of living rent-free with a year's supply of food, two Native servants, and monthly cheques deposited directly into a bank account. A financially stretched housewife and mother of two young girls, Orford finds the Arctic appeals to her desires for domestic comfort and economic security. She even goes so far as to envision herself in a lovely outfit made entirely of white fox, thus fashionably colour-coordinated with the Arctic landscape of her imagination.

There is certainly a dash of humorous self-irony in this imagined Arctic of movie-star glamour, 1930s style. However, Orford clearly views the Arctic as a welcome means of escape and temporary settlement at the expense of the Inuit and on Inuit land. Ever since Henry Hudson declared the Arctic "profitable to those that will adventure in it" (qtd. in Armitage 16), the sub-Arctic and Arctic regions have been the subject of dreams for various kinds of gain, initially, as S. D. Grant observes in "Myths of the North in the Canadian Ethos," as sources of fur, maritime, and mineral resources (19). The vision of the North as a fund of resources acquired additional vigour after Canadian Confederation in 1867, fuelled by nation builders who promoted expansion and settlement beyond the borders of the northern as well as the western frontiers (Grant 24-25).² Large-scale white settlement in the Arctic never flourished. As Orford recalls in *Journey North*, before departure

her friends celebrated her journey for “[p]ushing back the frontier of Empire.” After her first, disillusioning glimpse of Panuk, she remarks, “[w]hoever thought that one up had never seen the east coast of Baffin Island” (11), implying that the Arctic is a potential white settlement in imperial imagination only. Nevertheless, the Arctic Shangri-La that Orford conjures up before departure is the extension of such expansionist dreams.

A contemporary of Orford’s, Ella Wallace Manning (née Jackman) accompanied her husband on a two-year Arctic odyssey in the late 1930s. The opening sections of *Igloo for the Night*, the record of her icy adventure, convey Manning’s Arctic dreams and expectations, which form a marked contrast to Orford’s visions of domestic bliss. As in Orford’s case, only traces of biographical material about Manning are available, such as Joanne Strong’s 1984 article in the *Globe & Mail* that heralds Manning as one of Canada’s “unsung heroines” (L7). Strong notes that Manning, a Nova Scotian and graduate of Dalhousie University, was living and working in a Montreal office in 1938 when she received a most unconventional and irresistible marriage proposal via telegraph from Thomas Manning, the leader of a British Canadian-Arctic cartographic expedition. That proposal opens *Igloo for the Night*:

IF YOU WISH TO JOIN ME AT CAPE DORSET THIS SUMMER FOR TWO YEARS I SHALL BE PLEASED THINK WELL FOOLS RUSH IN CHARGE EXPENSES TO ME WITH THE HUDSON’S BAY COMPANY EXTRA CLOTHES ETC UNNECESSARY I SHALL NOT BE ABLE TO RECEIVE A REPLY. (11)

On a journey to England in 1935, Manning had met her future husband, a recent Oxford graduate who, in embarking on a career in Arctic exploration and natural science, had just returned from his first Arctic expedition (Strong L7).

In her travel book, Manning places her husband in a lineage of celebrated Arctic explorers, including Frobisher, Davis, Hudson, Bylot, Baffin, Monk, Fox, Middleton, and Parry, “all of whom added to the knowledge of the Arctic while continuing to search for the long-sought north-west passage” (30-31). Many of these men, she notes, visited and charted the south and south-east coasts of Baffin Island, leaving the west coast relatively unexplored and unmapped, an oversight her husband wished to amend (31). In extending an invitation for his fiancée to join him as a participant incorporated wife, that is, as fellow expeditionary, Thomas Manning offers her an opportunity long denied her sex, thus revealing that he is no “Doubting Thomas” in terms of women’s abilities to endure Arctic travel. Lisa Bloom

argues in *Gender on Ice: American Ideologies of Polar Expeditions*, her examination of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Arctic exploration narratives, that women conventionally remained considerably south, “living within the bounded spaces of everyday life, marriage, the workplace,” while the “explorer represented the epitome of manliness. Men such as these . . . were destined to rise to power and glory. They could not be held back. A woman might on occasion have dreamed of a life of heroism . . . but she would have abandoned her dreams by conforming to the role expected of her sex” (6).

The Arctic of Manning’s desires and imagination is a perilous frozen landscape traversed by heroic white male explorers and cartographers who are in the business of expanding the Empire’s knowledge of the world, and she longs to be among them. After reading the telegram, Manning’s initial disbelief at her luck is quickly supplanted by a fear that the *Nascopie*, the Hudson’s Bay Company ship en route to Cape Dorset, would sail without her. Not a moment is wasted in hesitation. Her elation over her imminent marriage appears inextricably bound with the prospect of Arctic adventure and exploration. Aboard the *Nascopie* en route to Cape Dorset, she is dismayed to find that the waters show “not a ripple in interest in the most important event of my life” (15), but whether the “event” is her marriage, her expedition, or a combination of the two is not clear. Within a month she is a twenty-nine-year-old newlywed crossing the largely uncharted western side of Baffin Island aboard a *komatik* (dogsled) and her husband’s small craft, the *Polecat*, roughing it in caribou skins and sealskin boots, dining on bannock and pemmican, and sleeping in tents and igloos.

In *Journey North*, Orford writes, “On paper, Baffin Island had been the Promised Land. In the flesh, it was something very different” (9). What she finds there is an Arctic resembling the formidable landscape anticipated by Manning. Orford’s romance of a tamed, domesticated Arctic is quickly supplanted by an alleged reality of the Arctic, but the latter is in fact another myth, one Sherrill Grace has summed up as the “anti-garden of snow, cold, and endless night” (“Articulating North” 69). Orford’s first impressions of Baffin Island gleaned from the *Nanook*, the ship on which she passes six stormy weeks, are of a fear-inspiring landscape that seems both predatory and surreal. In an effort to deal with a panorama she finds “bleak and sort of terrible,” Orford narrows her gaze on the towering mountains which rise thousands of feet, “splashing” against the sky like waves about to crash down on her. She forces her eye downwards, to where the tidal mountains

are mere reflections on the sea, but finds them even more threatening, “black and monstrous, lying still and in wait” (7).³ Orford’s dramatic landscape descriptions echo earlier conventional representations of the Arctic as darkly sublime. Nineteenth-century depictions of the far North were influenced by the romantic literary mode of the sublime, which “accentuated the mystery and grandeur of nature” (Grant 21-22). The vision of a forbidding, hostile, and mysterious Arctic gained momentum from 1845 onward, after the disappearance of the Franklin expedition, when members of search parties and other Arctic travellers “employed the ‘sublime’ to its outermost limits. Icebergs grew to gigantic proportions, spewing forth unimaginable colour and sparkle, as did the land and sea” (Grant 23). For some writers of the Arctic sublime, the landscape evoked wondrous awe, while others like Orford looked through a darker lens and experienced awe and dread.

An Arctic mysterious and dangerous in its grandeur proved most alluring to male explorers and adventurers for whom it was a new worthy opponent to accentuate the danger of their travels, and it no doubt reinforced belief that the Arctic was no place for white women. Some adventurous women, however, were making their way into Arctic and sub-Arctic regions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, taking advantage of infrastructures provided by Native guides, the Hudson’s Bay Company, the R.C.M.P., and Christian missions. Canadian Agnes Deans Cameron, for example, travelled the western Arctic in 1908 with her niece Jesse Cameron Brown, a journey recorded in Cameron’s travel book *The New North: An Account of a Woman’s 1908 Journey through Canada to the Arctic* (1909). Two adventurous British women, C.C. Vyvyan and Gwendolyn Dorrien Smith, also toured the western Canadian Arctic in 1926, a journey published as *Arctic Adventure* (1961). Some women were also entering uncharted territory, such as Canadian Mina Benson Hubbard, whose 1905 journey through Labrador to the mouth of the George River on Ungava Bay is narrated in *A Woman’s Way Through Unknown Labrador* (1908). American Josephine Peary joined her husband, famed polar explorer Robert Peary, on an expedition to Greenland in 1891-92, recorded in *My Arctic Journal: A Year Among Ice-Fields and Eskimos* (1893).

These Arctic narratives by women who preceded Orford and Manning will provide points of contrast and comparison. Orford’s domestic narrative, for example, offers a striking contrast to C.C. Vyvyan’s account. Heather Smyth suggests, in her recent essay on Vyvyan’s *Arctic Adventure*, that when a woman travels, she is escaping “the stranglehold of domestic-

ity” and “the gender expectations that deter women from becoming adventurers” (38). Smyth contends that Vyvyan, in constructing her adventuring traveller’s persona, consistently distances herself from domesticity (39-40), and I find the same could certainly be said for Agnes Deans Cameron. Distancing the self from domesticity is no doubt a strategy Vyvyan and Cameron use to legitimize their presence in the masculine Arctic and Arctic narrative. Orford, on the other hand, portrays herself as a domestic adventurer. While Vyvyan takes apparent pride in being the second white woman to journey up the Rat River (13), and Cameron proclaims she is the first white woman to “penetrate” Fort Rae (242), Orford, in conspicuous contrast, notes that she is the first white woman to give birth in Panuk (117).

In keeping with a narrative of domestic adventure, Orford’s impressions of the darkly sublime Arctic landscape as the ship approaches Panuk are the only passages of its kind in a text where landscape description is rare, a rarity uncommon in Arctic travel narratives. As the ship scuds closer to land, Orford glimpses the settlement of Panuk—“the most desolate sight I had ever seen in my life” (8)—which propels her back to her cabin amidships with the desire never to see Baffin Island again. A different sort of Arctic hero/ine, Orford disembarks from the ship, enters her new living quarters, and is seldom seen outdoors again. In exact counterpoint to the Arctic as “the ideal mythic site where men could show themselves as heroes capable of superhuman feats,” and Arctic narrative as a “rich source for the analysis of white masculinity” (Bloom 6), Orford’s “Arctic” is a site where she may show herself a heroine capable of superhuman feats, but her accomplishments are decidedly domestic and her resultant narrative is a rich source for the analysis of white femininity. Her domesticity tells us something about the dominant constructions of gender in Canada during the Depression, the decade of Orford’s travels, and the post-World War II years, when her travel book was written, based on her 1930s travel journals. In the reactionary 1930s and 50s, women were urged to forfeit their positions in the paid workforce to men. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the nineteenth-century ideology that allocated the roles of wife and mother to women and confined them to the home was revived according to national need (see Prentice et al. 156, 264, 349-350).

As a book of domestic travel adventure, Orford’s *Journey North* is more firmly entrenched in a tradition of travel writing by domestic incorporated wives than in the tradition of male Arctic narratives. Susan Morgan’s *Place Matters: Gendered Geography in Victorian Women’s Travel Books about*

Southeast Asia and Catherine Barnes Stevenson's *Victorian Women Travel Writers in Africa* identify British colonial wives whose travel books chronicle a domestic, homebound heroism. Some women minimize the extent of their trials, like Elizabeth Melleville, who prefaces *A Residence at Sierra Leone* (1849) with the claim that she is documenting the trivial matters of daily domestic life, which include a hurricane that destroys her home and fevers that ravage her family. Louisa Hutchinson's *In Tents in the Transvaal* (1877) portrays the experience of making a home away from home as domestic comedy, while others, like Lady M.A. Barker's aptly titled *A Year's Housekeeping in South Africa* (1877) or Emily Innes's *The Chersonese with the Gilding Off* (1885) are litanies of domestic woe.

Orford makes the most of her domestic trials in *Journey North*, making it clear that her hardships are anything but trivial, but she uses a form of domestic comedy to convey her message that satirically slices and dices like the sharpest knife. Domestic or housewife humour, as it evolved in Orford's era, was a middle-class comedic discourse featuring a harried, disgruntled housewife whose plaintive utterances ranged from light-hearted mockery to trenchant satire aimed at house, husband, and children (see Dresner 93, 99). Orford writes domestic humour of the forked-tongue variety, and the rhetoric and tone of *Journey North* suggest that she was evidently tuned into this North American comic convention that would eventually spawn writers like Erma Bombeck.⁴ In *Journey North*, her first object of ridicule is the medical residence in Panuk, a modest, square cabin. We learn that it harbours a huge coal range left behind, as she suspects, by a "prehistoric monster" as a "last gesture of defiance before moving out with the Ice Age" (16). When she inspects the bedroom, her taste in interior decorating is offended by headboards "generously ornamented with frenzied brass curlicues," which she christens "the brassmonger's delirium" (17). The family room is a "third chamber of horrors" (18).

In Orford's domestic comedy, the most frequent target of her gimlet eye is her husband. While she does mention his long hours at the hospital, describes his tireless commitment to reducing mortality rates among the Inuit, and occasionally expresses pride in his accomplishments, she often derides her husband at great length as an incompetent fool and herself a fool for marrying him. Orford's mockery of her husband begins innocuously enough. As they sort through the food supplies on day one in Panuk, he finds the precious butter "as if he was Freud discovering people" (27). Sarcasm soon evolves into pungent satire, but Orford's attacks on her hus-

band are usually mitigated by humorously ironic self-representation. She is frequently the butt of her own comedy, as when she describes the perplexed looks some Inuit hunters give her when she accidentally asks for *tingee* (female genitalia) rather than *tinga* (seal meat) for the evening's dinner (92). However, her satiric comedy reaches more complex peaks as we see in her depiction of a family camping trip several months into their residency. Her husband advises his family to keep warm but avoid excessive sweating at night by sleeping naked under fur blankets, and to sustain body heat by wrapping a towel around their heads. Her portrayal of him at bedtime is not flattering: "He was winding a scarf round his head by the time I was ready to lie down. With its fringes sticking out on either side of his face, his resemblance to a walrus in travail struck me as something more than remarkable" (146). The next morning, he tells Orford he could think of better things to do than spend the night with the "wet wash," referring to the nightgown she insisted on wearing to bed that was sweat-drenched by morning. Her rejoinder is that he is at liberty to spend the night with whomever he pleases from now on (147). She then passes the day alone in the tent immersed in a self-ironic melancholia enhanced by vague recollections of a Shakespearean sonnet:

"When to the sessions of sweet silent thought," I recited silently, "we summon up remembrance of the past." Lovely, beautiful words. Dear happy past when I could pick and choose; when I was sought after and cajoled. Those precious, dead-gone days of youth. Today I was approaching thirty and reminded my husband of the wet wash. A tear splashed on my hand. (148)

When her husband returns mid-day to "wolf" down lunch, she turns from him and dreamily returns to Shakespeare, "that other with the lovely voice" (149), who becomes a romantic symbol of all that her husband is not. Quoting from *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second*, she writes, "'Let us sit upon the ground . . . and tell sad stories of the death of kings.' But with the blindness of youth, I had chosen this illiterate, who because he could differentiate between one side of the human body and the other, was permitted a degree after his name" (149).

Clearly, Orford's domestic comedy is of the dark variety, and it is at its darkest during her hyperbolic expressions of desire to stab her husband with a nail (86), shoot him with a gun (135), or kill him by some other means (110). Orford never took her husband's life, and in fact their marriage, which survived her book and their lifetime together, was evidently a successful one (Robinson 15). Nevertheless, one cannot help but speculate

about the prick that sets off the wit, and seek the more serious subtext behind Orford's textual performance of dark domestic comedy. Orford's prominent travelling persona is that of the disgruntled wife, a woman who is grappling for a reason to be in and stay on Baffin Island. Orford arrives in Panuk and immediately enters the domestic realm, but the journey initially triggers a crisis in self-definition and purpose because her effort to find domestic occupation is frustrated. Upon arrival, she complains about the enormous domestic challenges she anticipates. On her first morning of residency, however, she awakens to find her daughters dressed and fed and the house tidied by her Inuit servant, Nukinga. The efficiency of her Inuit servants, Nukinga and Killeva, makes her expendable: "I sat down," she writes, "I might as well be comfortable. I might as well not be here at all, for that matter" (34).⁵

Scouting for something to do and a reason for being in Panuk, such as possibly assisting in her husband's work, Orford strolls to the small hospital and peeks through the windows, drawn by the buzz of activity inside. She confesses how she "longed to be a part of it all, be one of a lot of people, but Tom never liked me trespassing on his preserves, so I stayed put" (38). When her husband returns that evening, he rejects her request for any kind of employment at the hospital where she is not needed nor trained to work. Feeling that her husband is lording over the public sphere of the hospital, Orford responds by lording over the domestic sphere. A part of her gambit entails a make-work project in the form of major renovations to the medical residence. Her Native servants unfortunately bear the brunt of the burden as she designs a "Home Beautiful" (59), a separate domestic sphere where she will reign like an Arctic ice queen. Orford describes how she enlists Etonah, Nukinga's husband, to build an extra room, a staircase to the loft, cupboards, and a vanity table, while Nukinga dyes sheets with tea for curtains. Her other strategy is to reclaim domestic duties from her servants, such as organizing and making meals; the boxes of frozen food that must be sorted and stored in the loft become *her* Arctic "wilderness" (24).⁶ Above all, Orford wrests child-care responsibilities partially from her servants and entirely from her husband. She furthers her authority in this jurisdiction by becoming pregnant with her third daughter, Catherine. "Now that he knew that I was an expectant mother, I could assume my role as a woman completely in command," she writes as she orders him about the house (86).

Once Orford finds her niche, her attachment to her temporary home becomes consolidated, making her departure from her Arctic "desert of ice"

difficult (see note 3). After a four-year term in Panuk, she welcomes the incoming doctor and his wife by giving them a tour of her domain, feeling the twist of “a dozen knives” as the new doctor’s wife “touched and appraised” possessions that were now changing hands (189). As the ship departs from Baffin Island, Tom holds out a handkerchief to his wife, perhaps so she may dry the tears streaming down her face, perhaps as a white flag.⁷

Like Orford in *Journey North*, Manning in *Igloo for the Night* documents the domestic challenges specific to her new Arctic environment, but there are many disparities in their domestic narratives. First of all, Manning’s domestic challenges—as reflected in the title of her book—are considerably different since she lives away from the posts and settlements. Ostensibly, her challenges are much greater. Manning’s work entails cooking bannock and seal meat with an oil lamp, preparing caribou and seal skins, manufacturing skin clothing, and transforming the interior of igloos and tents into comfortable havens for the uninitiated non-Native. Nevertheless, her depiction of her experience as Arctic homemaker is bereft of the entertaining zest of Orford’s housewife humour. Rather, Manning plays down her domestic duties and performs them with minimal complaint. Near the commencement of the book, while Manning expresses appreciation for the way her husband tactfully nudges her into the domestic supportive role he expects her to fulfill by encouraging her to learn Inuit culinary arts, she embraces the work with as much curiosity as trepidation (33). Near the end of their trek, when the thrill of making bannock and sleeping in igloos has worn thin, the couple discovers an abandoned Royal North West Mounted Police barracks and settles in. In euphoric tones, Manning describes the domestic details of making this, her first matrimonial house, livable (219). Her compliance does wear thin, however, when two grizzly white trappers arrive claiming rights to the barracks by permission of the police. Sensing trouble, her husband is ready to strike a deal with these two motley characters, but first he haltingly checks with his wife since the burden falls on her back. She agrees to cook for the men in exchange for shelter, but grudgingly (221).

Manning, however, does not primarily inscribe herself in the domestic sphere as Orford does. As we have seen, the Arctic of her desires is a place where she might transcend gender limitations and test herself in a conventionally white male world of exploration and adventure. Granted, she does not distance herself from domesticity as Agnes Deans Cameron and Clara Vyvyan felt the need to do in the sub-Arctic (Smyth 39-40) because her

identity as incorporated wife who performs some domestic duties is her portal to the uncharted Arctic. It is unlikely that Manning, a Canadian woman in the 1930s, would have found the financial backing needed for solo Arctic exploration, nor is it likely that she would have conceived of a notion so distant from the narrow realm of female professional opportunity. The nature of her wifely incorporation is such that she participates in her husband's work and provides domestic necessities, but the former role provides the focus for her Arctic narrative.⁸ Manning sets out with the same fervent enthusiasm as one of her historical and literary precursors, Isabel Burton, the incorporated wife of Victorian explorer, scholar, and diplomat Sir Richard Burton. When Manning writes, "I joined the ranks of those who, to quote a fellow-traveller, 'pay, pack, and follow'" (8), she nods in the Burtons' direction by echoing the infamous dictum Richard Burton delivered to his wife when his consulship in Damascus was recalled and his peregrinations were resumed. Isabel Burton satiated her own potent hunger for adventure by marrying her nation's pre-eminent explorer, thereby providing herself with a virtual "passport to travel" (Blanch 11).⁹ Although Manning appears to regard her husband as infinitely more than a passport to adventurous travel, he did function as one.

Moreover, significant comparisons and contrasts might be made between Manning and another of her historical and literary precursors, American Josephine Peary, whose *My Arctic Journal* (1893) is an account of her 1891-92 journey to Greenland with husband Robert Peary. In an essay on *My Arctic Journal*, Linda Bergmann argues that Peary offers a "woman's version of an exploration narrative" (57), although I would add that it is an incorporated wife's version as well, for Peary's identity as wife significantly shaped her experience and her narrative. As incorporated wife on an expedition, Peary works variously as camp cook and as gun-toting expeditionary. She also shares a "leadership position" with her husband by virtue of marital privilege (Bergmann 58). Similarly, Manning accompanies her husband on arduous hunting and cartographic expeditions, assists in the construction of igloos, which involves the strenuous work of shovelling snow and cutting ice blocks, and supervises archaeological digs in Nuwata (36). Bergmann also suggests that Peary depicts her husband and his accomplishments in the best possible light because the journal functioned as a public document promoting polar exploration (58). One might detect similar propagandistic motives at work in Manning's text, which lavishes praise on her husband and his work.¹⁰ However, Manning's travel book significantly departs from

Peary's in terms of gender identification. Not wanting to ruffle feathers down south, Peary "clearly demonstrates that her adventures did not diminish her position as a nineteenth-century lady," and she represents herself "as her husband sees her, as a plucky but conventional American lady" (Bergmann 58). Manning depicts herself as a liberated twentieth-century woman willing to appear more than a little manly and quite unladylike.

In a feminist discourse of resistance, *Igloo for the Night* incorporates Manning's confrontation with a legion of doubters before her departure: men who voice their disapproval of her travel plans, which, because she is a woman, they find foolhardy and inappropriate. One Major Tweedsmuir, a colleague of her husband's who introduces Manning's text, writes, "Mrs. Manning achieved a very great feat, although she makes it all sound so simple." Her achievement is all the greater when one considers the many forces undermining her confidence. The Major is, in fact, one of the first doubters we encounter in *Igloo for the Night*. He admits he initially found the idea of a woman accompanying one of "the hardiest travellers alive" to be "monstrously absurd" and even "criminal" (Introduction). Manning relates her interaction with a male friend at a pre-departure dinner party, who sternly, endlessly admonishes her about women's special susceptibility to a form of madness called "Arctic hysteria" (13). Such doubters, however, only serve to strengthen her resolve, and she remains steadfast in her decision to travel. She finds the Hudson's Bay Company officials unanimous in their disapproval of her plans, which they attempt to foil by giving her the run-around as she attempts to book passage on the *Nascopie*. They also try various methods of dissuasion and intimidation, going so far as to fabricate a story about her husband's disappearance in the Arctic landscape. One particularly objectionable official provokes Manning's ire when he asks, "Do you really think you can travel with him as he does," meaning without "fresh supplies of face powder, nail polish and cosmetics generally?" (12). She looks down her nose at him and answers in the affirmative (12). On her first night aboard her husband's craft, the *Polecat*, as she contemplates the soiled deerskins that will be her bedding for some time to come, the official's voice returns, as does her defiance:

I shrugged mentally, and said good-bye to clean white sheets. After all, it wasn't the end of clean white sheets. There would still be sheets when we came Outside. That would be something to look forward to. And the voice of my official in Montreal once again whispered in my ear:

"Do you think you can travel as he does?"

"Yes."

I would, too. (24)

In writing of this rugged mode of travel, Manning details her masculine metamorphosis. Within a few weeks, her ladylike accoutrements disappear: she changes her skirt, city shoes, and long hair for a man's shirt, breeches and pullover, a pair of sealskin boots, a parka hooded with dog fur, and cropped hair. Her husband, who calls his wife "Jack" throughout the text, is the one to suggest the new sensible hairdo and clips off his wife's mane with inordinate delight. This nickname, originating from Manning's birth name Jackson (Peake, "Manning & Wife" 2), contributes to the gender ambiguity of this writer who identifies herself as Mrs. Tom Manning on its title page and as Jack within its covers. No doubt Manning's self-inscription as willing Arctic domestic is shaped by her subject position as incorporated wife, while Jack the hardy Arctic explorer is in part her answer to the legion of doubters she encounters. Manning's journey proves that, provided the opportunity, a white woman was capable of entering the conventionally masculine outdoor stumping grounds of the Arctic. Her account of the journey intimates that it is a "masculinizing" experience, albeit a temporary one. She also makes it clear that she will eventually return to her femininity and treasured clean sheets.

Together, Manning and her husband map the Inuit territory of West Coast Baffin Island and "discover" islands that they name after white friends. In so doing, Manning becomes one of Canada's first woman explorers (Strong L7) engaged in the imperialist activity of mapping and naming. However, Manning, while supporting her husband's work, has difficulty identifying herself as an explorer, and in fact persistently underrates her own accomplishments. In her essay on another early Canadian female explorer, Mina Benson Hubbard, Lisa Laframboise notes,

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 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. (12-13)

Hubbard, by virtue of her identity as the incorporated *widow*, led an expedition into uncharted Labrador in the wake of her husband's fatal attempt to do so. In writing her sub-Arctic journey for public and scientific con-

sumption, Hubbard negotiates the conflicting “twin imperatives of femininity and of authority” by presenting herself as unquestionably feminine and as the unquestionable leader of the successful expedition (Laframboise 9). Thirty years later, Manning struggles with similar imperatives, but it seems unlikely that her expressions of self-doubt and modesty are deliberate stagings of femininity. Rather, they strike me as a transparent response to the doubters, whose reservations she appears to internalize, and to being the wife of a seasoned explorer.¹¹

Both Mannings trek with a perilously light load, both travel a landscape as unknown to themselves as to the Inuit guide who accompanies them for the first few weeks, both endure subsistence living conditions because their base camp at Taverner’s Bay is about three hundred miles from the nearest Hudson’s Bay Company post, and both work on cartography. Nevertheless, Manning attributes the success of their venture to her husband: “Now,” she writes, “when I know how much my husband accomplished with the little he possessed, I am exceedingly proud of the results of his efforts” (31). She praises his fortitude at the expense of her own, often belittling herself as the tagalong member in an expedition of two. In “Selves in Hiding,” Patricia Meyer Spacks examines the twentieth-century autobiographies of five accomplished women, including Emmeline Pankhurst, Dorothy Day, Emma Goldman, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Golda Meir, and finds that “to a striking degree they fail to emphasize their *own* importance, though writing in a genre which implies self-assertion and self-display” (114). She adds, “They use autobiography, paradoxically, partly as a mode of self-denial” (132). To some extent, Manning uses the self-aggrandizing genre of Arctic exploration literature in this way as well, and by identifying herself as “Mrs. Tom Manning” or as “Jack,” the “self” known as Ella becomes obscured.

It becomes increasingly apparent in Manning’s text, however, that she is one of her husband’s most important resources and that her participation is instrumental to the success of the expedition. By referring to her husband’s many consultations about navigation with her, she makes it frequently known that he solicits and respects her opinions (64, 105, 161, 163, 188). Occasionally, she even acknowledges her own aptitude:

I pointed out the place [the elusive Nassauya Point] to my husband rather hesitantly; he is usually so much better at such things than I.

“Yes,” he replied slowly, “perhaps you are right. We’ll make for it any way.”

The little knob which marked my hypothetical entrance stayed small for so long.

It was not until after mug-up [lunch] that it began to assume any size. Actually it was Nassauya Point and my guess had been good. (155)

At the end of her text, Manning writes an encomium to Inuit dogs, claiming they are “the unsung heroes who make possible the many exploits of famous explorers” (232). Although she never explicitly makes the same claim for herself, or places herself among famous explorers, she occasionally sings her own praises, however faintly.

Taken together, Orford in her comic, frozen-food wilderness and Manning in her manifestation as cropped-haired Jack are fascinating, unfamiliar figures in the traditionally masculine textual landscape of Arctic travel narratives. The prominent “other” in much relational travel writing is ethnographic, but in travel writing by women struggling with the opportunities and challenges presented by wifely incorporation, the prominent “other” is frequently a husband as well as a self, a self seeking legitimacy as traveller in her own right

NOTES

- 1 Moss's book in part functions as a bibliography of representations of the Arctic by outsiders. Among the many works considered are the photographs of Fred Bruemmer and Mike Beedell; paintings by Lawren Harris, Toni Olney, A.Y. Jackson, and Doris McCarthy; films by Robert Flaherty; novels by Mary Shelley, Jules Verne, James Houston, Yves Thériault, and R.M. Ballantyne; poetry by Al Purdy, Jim Green, and Paulette Jiles; adventure narratives by Robert Peary, Farley Mowat, M.T. Kelly, and Will Steger; exploration narratives by Samuel Hearne, Alexander Mackenzie, Charles Tuttle, Martin Frobisher, Jens Monk, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and Robert Bartlett; and non-fictional histories, essays, and meditations by Rudy Wiebe, Farley Mowat, Barry Lopez, and Aritha van Herk.
- 2 As Grant observes,
The promotion of northern development was serious business, as seen in the 580-page, gilt-edged, leather-bound volume entitled *Our North Land*, written in 1885 by Charles Tuttle, a prominent member of the western expansionist movement. Based on his experience when he accompanied a government expedition to Hudson Bay, he described the region in minute detail, emphasizing the bountiful resources and the more positive aspects of Arctic topography, the climate, and the indigenous people. The concept of a “north-westerly course of civilization” emerges in the first chapter titled “Attraction of the North.” This theme is repeated and expanded to the point of arrogance. . . . (25)
- 3 Orford's introductory poem to *Journey North*, titled “Baffin Island 1936-1940,” prepares us for her ominous first impressions of Panuk:
Desert of ice, mystic solitude
Whence none return that once intrude
Or raise the veil to see behind.

Who gaze upon the violent beauty of your face
 Are lost
 And must forever wander
 Blind.

In Marcus Robinson's brief obituary mentioned earlier, in addition to learning that Orford spent her youth studying classical piano and reading English literature, we are informed that she apparently wrote short stories and poetry in her adulthood, publishing in *The Fiddlehead* (15). Unfortunately, I have not yet located any work by Orford in *The Fiddlehead*, nor have the editors. Thus, the only example I may offer in this essay is this introductory poem to *Journey North*. Significantly, however, Orford does not represent herself as a writer but as a housewife and mother.

- 4 One of Orford's literary precursors is undoubtedly American Betty Bard MacDonald, who wrote a phenomenally popular book titled *The Egg and I* (1945), a narrative of MacDonald's experience chicken farming in Washington's Olympic Mountains in the 1930s. MacDonald's book was made into a film by Universal Studios in 1947 (McCarthy 82), and has other echoes in popular culture, including the 1960s sitcom *Green Acres*, which has inspired the title of this essay.

In MacDonald's next book, *Anybody Can Do Anything* (1950), the author explains how she came to write *The Egg and I*. In the early 1940s, she met a publisher and informed him that she was going to write "a sort of rebuttal to all the recent successful I-love-life books by female good sports whose husbands had forced them to live in the country without lights and running water" (252); in contrast, she would give a "bad sport's account of life in the wilderness" (252). Orford gives a "bad sport's account" of homemaking in the Arctic, and she does so with the same sarcasm.

- 5 Catherine Barnes Stevenson refers to the complaints about inefficient Native servants that abound in women's travelogues as the "the housewife's burden" (17). In an interesting reversal of this rhetorical lament, Orford initially bemoans the *efficiency* of her Inuit servants.
- 6 Orford's domestic wilderness calls to mind some observations made by Margaret Atwood in *Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature*. According to Atwood, the clichéd image of the hostile north altered when white women began entering it in fact and fiction, and she divides these northern-bound women into two waves: "There is a huge difference between first and second waves: the women of the first wave were not in the North woods of their own volition. They were there because circumstances and fate—namely their husbands—had dragged them there" (95-96). In other words, Atwood's first-wavers were incorporated wives. Their husbands, argues Atwood, were frequently portrayed outdoors pitting their desires against a resistant landscape, whereas women remained inside with their family (97). Alluding to Alice Munro's *The Lives of Girls and Women*, Atwood portrays these first-wavers as builders of "linoleum caves" in the wilderness: domestic spaces that either provided precarious shelter from the brutal natural world without or transformed the wilderness into a kitchen (88), an apt description of Orford's journey north.
- 7 Although this departure from Baffin Island does not mark the end of Orford's experience as a travelling incorporated wife, *Journey North* is her only travel book. According to Robinson's obituary, her husband's medical practice took the family across the country, first to James Bay, then to Regina and Edmonton, and finally to Killam, Alberta in 1981 (15).

- 8 In Manning's second travel book, *A Summer on Hudson's Bay* (1949), a record of the summers of 1945 and 1946 spent with her husband conducting ground and aerial surveys for the Geodetic Service of Canada, Manning eschews the domestic narrative, an absence foreshadowed in her reaction to the radio broadcast she hears on her first flight in a Canso en route to the Hudson's Bay: "We had a short period of Strauss, fifteen minutes of household hints to which I turned a deaf ear, and then half an hour of Bach" (15). She was the first woman employed by the Geodetic Service of Canada.
- 9 In *The Wilder Shores of Love*, Leslie Blanch suggests that "[w]hat the Victorian woman could not achieve herself she sometimes achieved by proxy, by *loving*" (11).
- 10 Manning's flattering representation of her husband offers a striking contrast to Orford's satiric portrait of her husband, which is not, perhaps, surprising when we consider that Manning was on her honeymoon. Nevertheless, neither representation is a necessarily reliable indication or forecast of marital health and longevity. According to Michael Peake's "Manning and Wife," the Mannings divorced in 1960, but as mentioned earlier, the Orfords remained husband and wife until death. This knowledge reinforces the notion that representation of the spousal other may be determined by factors such as generic convention and anticipated readership.
- 11 The introduction to *Igloo for the Night*, by Major Tweedsmuir of the Canadian Army in England, gives us some sense of Thomas Manning's reputation and experience before his journey with his wife: "Tom Manning is an old friend from Oxford days. He has a reputation for being one of the 'hardest travellers' alive. A reputation which he gained in 1932, when he crossed Lapland in winter by reindeer sledge, with one companion." Michael Peake's obituary on Thomas Henry Manning (1911-1998), "Lone Wolf of the Arctic," which documents Manning's successful career, catalogues the honours he ultimately received, including the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographic Society, the Massey Medal of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, and the Order of Canada.

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