

# ANGLICA

An International Journal of English Studies

27/1 2018

## EDITOR

Grażyna Bystydzieńska [g.bystydzienska@uw.edu.pl]

## ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Martin Löschnigg [martin.loeschnigg@uni-graz.at]

Jerzy Nykiel [jerzy.nykiel@uib.no]

Marzena Sokołowska-Paryż [m.a.sokolowska-paryz@uw.edu.pl]

Anna Wojtyś [a.wojtys@uw.edu.pl]

## ASSISTANT EDITORS

Magdalena Kizeweter [m.kizeweter@uw.edu.pl]

Katarzyna Kociołek [kkociolek@uw.edu.pl]

Przemysław Uściński [przemek.u@hotmail.com]

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITOR

Barry Keane [bkeane@uw.edu.pl]

## ADVISORY BOARD

Michael Bilynsky, University of Lviv

Andrzej Bogusławski, University of Warsaw

Mirosława Buchholtz, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń

Edwin Duncan, Towson University

Jacek Fabiszak, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

Jacek Fisiak, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

Elżbieta Foeller-Pituch, Northwestern University, Evanston-Chicago

Piotr Gąsiorowski, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

Keith Hanley, Lancaster University

Andrea Herrera, University of Colorado

Christopher Knight, University of Montana,

Marcin Krygier, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

Krystyna Kujawińska-Courtney, University of Łódź

Brian Lowrey, Université de Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens

Zbigniew Mazur, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin

Rafał Molencki, University of Silesia, Sosnowiec

John G. Newman, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Michał Jan Rozbicki, St. Louis University

Jerzy Rubach, University of Iowa

Piotr Ruszkiewicz, Pedagogical University, Cracow

Hans Sauer, University of Munich

Krystyna Stamirowska, Jagiellonian University, Cracow

Merja Stenroos, University of Stavanger

Jeremy Tambling, University of Manchester

Peter de Voogd, University of Utrecht

Anna Walczuk, Jagiellonian University, Cracow

Jean Ward, University of Gdańsk

Jerzy Welna, University of Warsaw

## GUEST REVIEWERS

Teresa Bela, Jagiellonian University, Cracow

Bartłomiej Błaszkievicz, University of Warsaw

Anna Branach-Kallas, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń

Małgorzata Grzegorzewska, University of Warsaw

Paweł Jędrzejko, University of Silesia, Sosnowiec

Janusz Kaźmierczak, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

Agnieszka Kotwasińska, American Studies Centre, University of Warsaw

Anna Krawczyk-Laskarzewska, University of Warmia and Mazury, Olsztyn

Zuzanna Ładyga-Michalska, University of Warsaw

Ewa Łuczak, University of Warsaw

Dominika Oramus, University of Warsaw

Marek Paryż, University of Warsaw

Wit Pietrzak, University of Łódź

Paweł Stachura, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

Mikołaj Wiśniewski, SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw



UNIVERSITY  
OF WARSAW

Shoshannah Ganz

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7905-2142>

Memorial University of Newfoundland

## Reading and Resituating Charles Sangster's *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay* as a Canadian Pilgrimage Poem

---

### Abstract

Developing on 150 years of reviews and scholarship of Charles Sangster's *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay*, this paper contends that Sangster's poem is not merely derivative of British and American Romantic poetry, or a vague tourist poem, but that Sangster employs the language and images of Christian pilgrimage to purposefully detail the pilgrimage of his soul.

---

Frank M. Tierney's 1984 revised edition of Charles Sangster's *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay and Other Poems* completed a project begun by Tierney in 1975. This project was to make all of Charles Sangster's work available. W. D. Hamilton in his biography of Sangster calls him "a pioneer among Canadian poets" and "the most important Canadian poet of his generation" (15). Tierney however suggests in his introduction to the complete works that the reader might rightly ask "why such fuss is being made about a minor poet in the history of Canadian literature?" (15). Tierney's answer is that "while Sangster is not a major figure he is one of the significant poets of the Colonial Period, the artist who perhaps published the best poetry prior to the emergence" (15) of the Confederation poets. While this may seem like faint praise and indeed begs continued questions as to why this poet is worthy of study, and particularly outside of Canada, I would like to suggest a few answers to this question before contributing to the larger and growing body of critical work around Charles Sangster. As Tierney rightly notes, prior to Charles Sangster there was very little of what could be considered a national literature. The reasons for this are partly to be revealed in Sangster's life and writing and contribute to a greater understanding of the social and artistic climate of pre-Confederation Canada. Further, as a solitary artist living in a colony of Britain, yet to be named Canada, Sangster is now considered one of the great grandfathers of Canadian literature and particularly poetry. While Tierney may seem to condemn him with his faint praise, it should be noted that Tierney was

writing at a time when Canadian literary scholars were still perhaps laboring under the colonial conditions that condemned all Canadian literature to a place of minor standing. Indeed, scholars such as Tierney, and others that follow, continue to hold up the yardstick of the British canon and measure Sangster's work by comparison. This scholarship itself then becomes an interesting and worthy subject of study showing the inherited sense of colonialism passed from poet to scholar well into the late twentieth century. Thus it is that by lifting up Sangster's work as exemplary poetry of early pre-Confederation Canada, literary scholars in the twenty first century can begin to shake off the colonial shackles that would condemn any Canadian poet of the nineteenth century to the status of minor and rather celebrate Charles Sangster as one of the first Canadian poets to honour Canada's magnificent and enduring landscape. In fact, it could be argued that he is the first Canadian writer to seduce the reader with the wild beauty of Canada's rivers and forests. Sangster is thus an exemplary early Canadian poet to export in part because of his relationship to the land and what it reveals about the historical situation of Canada and Canadians. Moreover, Charles Sangster from Dewart's anthology onwards (Hamilton 15) has been and will continue to be regularly anthologized in every collection of early Canadian poetry. Sangster is also regularly taught in Canadian literature classrooms across Canada. It is my hope that by introducing this poet to a European audience his work and its tribute to the Canadian landscape and early Canadian psyche will be further appreciated outside of Canada.

D. M. R. Bentley in his definitive introduction to the 1990 edition of Charles Sangster's *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay* (1856) traces "its biographical, religious, literary, and historical contexts" (xi). He likewise notes the poems "pilgrimage motif, its touristic component, and its Spenserian stanza form" (xxix). Bentley's nearly exhaustive introduction would suggest the possibility that there is little left to say about the context of *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay*. His thorough treatment of the "tourist component" accurately traces the sources of the poem's inlaid stories, historical sites, and geographical places to real events in the history and landscape of Canada. Further, he ties the accurateness of these depictions to "the experiential basis [...] in the boat trip [...] that Sangster undertook as Sub-Editor of *The British Whig*" (Bentley 97). Appendix I of Bentley's 1990 edition of the poem includes writing that he attributes to Sangster from this journey (97–131) as part of the evidence for the poem's indebtedness to the burgeoning tourist industry in mid-nineteenth-century Canada. However, evidence of Sangster's journey down the St. Lawrence and up the Saguenay while clearly linked to tourism can also lay the necessary groundwork for an examination of the poem as a poetic rendering of a pilgrimage journey. I contend that the pilgrimage characteristics of *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay* indicate that this is a pilgrimage poem and not, in the first place, a tourist poem.

While acknowledging the clearly touristic climate of the times and the topographical and tourist elements of the journey down the St. Lawrence and

up the Saguenay, I will rather emphasize the solitary and spiritual nature of the pilgrim and pilgrimage that culminates in the silent transformation at trinity rock. W. D. Hamilton contends that “[i]t was Sangster’s intention that the river journey symbolize his spirit’s search for the fount of poetic inspiration” (57), and Gordon Johnston, in his 1972 University of Toronto Press edition of *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay and Other Poems*, notes that “[t]his journey in the poems is a physical one, but it is also a journey of the soul” (xvii). Furthermore, Tierney, in his “Introduction” to his 1984 edition of *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay*, claims the following:

Understanding Sangster’s central theme in ‘The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay’ is assisted by tracing the voyage from its beginning on the St. Lawrence river to its completion at Trinity Rock fifty-five kilometers above the mouth of the Saguenay. His selection of places and people to highlight and discuss, and the general absence of major sites and significant historical events on and along the St. Lawrence and the Saguenay rivers, reveals much about the theme and removes the possibility that the poet is narrating a scenic-historical tour of this area as some critics have suggested. (23)

Bentley elaborates upon this point in his Introduction to the 1990 edition of the poem, suggesting that *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay* is “the most intriguing poem written in pre-Confederation Canada” (xi). He cites as his reasons “the revelation of God in the silent wilderness” and the “troubled and searching love relationship between the poet-speaker” and the shadowy maiden. Bentley further claims that this poem is “pregnant with allegorical possibilities,” citing its indebtedness to George Gordon Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* as the source for “its pilgrimage motif” (xxix). However, while these critics make mention of the allegorical and spiritual dimension of the poem, Tierney’s publication in 2000 of *The Journeys of Charles Sangster: A Biographical and Critical Investigation* is the first extended study of the spiritual aspects of the journey down the St. Lawrence and up the Saguenay. Employing David Adams Leeming’s eight-part structure of the heroic journey, Tierney demonstrates through his reading of the poem the similarities between the speaker’s journey and the “universal mythological pattern in the journey of heroes from their birth to the achievement of their goals” (11). Tierney further explores the archetypal imagery and the religious and spiritual significance of these symbols in the life and journey of the poet. However, while Bentley goes so far as to suggest the presence of the pilgrimage motif, not a single critic treats the poem according to these terms – that the poem is in fact a pilgrimage piece.

Sangster was writing the poem to detail the journey of his soul – that is, he was writing the poem to illustrate his personal pilgrimage with the hope that it would lead to rebirth for his “dead heart [...] like Lazarus from the tomb” (405). Morinis writes in the Introduction to *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*

that “[p]ilgrimage is inclined to vows and promises because the solutions to the seemingly insurmountable difficulties that motivate a sacred journey must come from a higher order of power” (27). Relying on the definitions and characteristics of the Christian pilgrimage journey advanced by scholars of pilgrimage, I will show how the physical journey through the Canadian landscape is, in fact, one of the first purposefully Canadian pilgrimage poems.

Many pilgrimage theorists such as Alan Morinis and Simon Coleman and James Elsner organize their studies around the particular religion of the participants and the location of the pilgrimage. James Harpur focuses his study particularly on Christian pilgrimage and John Wilkinson’s work centres around a geographical location considered sacred to a number of different world religions. Thus for the purposes of this paper, I will follow the lead of pilgrimage scholars in drawing attention to the characteristics of a broadly Christian pilgrimage and the particularly Canadian landscape of this pilgrimage. To this end, most, if not all, pilgrimages begin with some sort of originary call or command to make the pilgrimage, followed by a geographical and/or spiritual movement towards a sacred goal or with the hope and belief in a personal change or transformation as the result of the pilgrimage. The journey itself is most often fraught with difficulties and dangers and sometimes involves encounters with supernatural religious beings and miracles. In Canadian pilgrimages, the sacred site is often situated in the sublimity of nature. Like Geoffrey Chaucer’s pilgrims, during and following the journey, the pilgrims tell stories and sometimes sing hymns or spiritual psalms.

Much of the canon of early Canadian literature could be considered pilgrimage literature. Indeed this motif appears in various forms through much of the early Canadian poetry canon. I have argued elsewhere that this is the case with the first Canadian-born poet Oliver Goldsmith’s *The Rising Village* and the precursor modernist poet E. J. Pratt’s *Brébeuf and His Brethren*, among other poems. These poems can be read as nation building, but also be understood to belong to the tradition and emerging form of pilgrimage literature. With the growing leisure of industrialization and the resulting burgeoning of a national literature, Canadian writers of the twentieth and twenty first centuries take up and contribute to the now pervasive pilgrimage canon. I count, and have argued elsewhere, that writers as diverse as Timothy Findley, Margaret Atwood, L. Adams Beck, and Bharati Mukherjee employ the Canadian pilgrimage motif expanding on the earlier Canadian models through the lens and experience of world war, ecology, Buddhism, and Hinduism. While these later pilgrimage models enlarge the definition of Canadian pilgrimage, I will allow that the earlier model of Canadian pilgrimage in the nineteenth century was largely Christian and while concerned with nature could hardly be considered a precursor to the environmental concerns of the twenty first century. Thus this paper will focus on this early Canadian pilgrimage model and the characteristics associated with an emerging nation and national identity.

Considering the poet Charles Sangster is helpful in understanding Canadian literary pilgrimage in the nineteenth century.

As a preamble to the discussion of the poem, it is helpful to look at the background of the man who wrote the poem, arguably as a personal pilgrimage. Sangster's discussion of his life includes an admission of his inadequate education. He recounts that the only books he had through his teenage years were the *Bible* and *Citizen of the World* (Hamilton 23). The *Bible* is considered by scholars of pilgrimage as being the source of both the Christian pilgrimage motif and as the prime explanation in the archetypes of pilgrimage. From the historical and archetypal stories of the Israelites' journey from slavery to freedom and exile to the Promised Land to Christ's Via Delarosa, the *Bible* forms the basis of Judeo-Christian pilgrimage. Sangster's early reading was almost entirely formed by these stories and the Christian world view as informed by nineteenth-century (read Victorian) interpretations of the *Bible*. Hamilton, Sangster's biographer, noted the following: "[r]egardless of his subject or his mood, he is always both intensely serious and deeply religious. Here, one feels, is a man who keeps to the straight and narrow through faith in a personal God and strict adherence to moral principle" (29).

Sangster's other poetry, both before and after he wrote *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay*, is devoutly influenced by similar literary and religious concerns. *Hesperus and Other Poems and Lyrics* (1860) is, like *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay*, clearly influenced by John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, but less influenced by George Gordon Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Not surprisingly, *Hesperus* does not follow the pilgrimage motif but explores the angelic hosts before the fall. Sangster was clearly intending this poem to glorify God and God's omnipotent manifestations in nature. His devoutness influences lines such as the opening ones in the Prelude:

The Stars are heaven's ministers; / Right royally they teach / God's glory and Omnipotence, / In wondrous lowly speech. / All eloquent with music as / The tremblings of a lyre, / To him that hath an ear to hear / They speak in words of fire. (*Hesperus* 11)

Laced with biblical references from the Psalms of David – "The heavens declare the glory of our God / The firmament displays his handiwork abroad" (Psalm 19: 1–2) – to later exultations by Paul (Acts 2:3–4), this is a poet who is clearly re-working biblical writing. His religious conviction is never more evident than in a poem such as "My Prayer" and other "hymnlike pieces" which, according to Hamilton, belong with Sangster's best work (105). I draw attention to these pieces not for the quality of the poetry, but as evidence of Sangster's sincere Christian faith, which undergirds and calls or commands him to make a pilgrimage to awaken his faith and unite through love with his creator. Significantly, Sangster writes in "My Prayer": "O God! Forgive the erring thought, / The erring word

and deed, / And in thy mercy hear the Christ / Who comes to intercede. / My sins, like mountain-weights of lead, / Weigh heavy on my soul; / I'm bruised and broken in this strife, / But Thou canst make me whole" (*Hesperus* 110), This poem again echoes the lament of the psalmist when David describes himself as "bruised, benumbed and dying" as a result of his transgression against God.

Sangster's pilgrimage, then, as his poetry attests, was most certainly a Christian pilgrimage and a pilgrimage that was treated as both a physical movement down the St. Lawrence and up the Saguenay and as a metaphorical movement from spiritual death to rebirth. The movements of the poem are merely a portion of Sangster's longer pilgrimage through life in Canada in hope of the joy that would await him in heaven. As a Protestant believer, he would, indeed, have viewed life itself as a pilgrimage and the pilgrimage of his poem as an allegory for the greater pilgrimage of life on earth to life eternal in heaven.

According to Bentley, and first advanced by a reviewer in the *Toronto Colonist* (later to be reprinted in *The Weekly British Whig* in May 1856), three underlying structures of the poem derive from Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*: "its pilgrimage motif, its touristic component, and its Spenserian stanza form" (*The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay* xxix). As this review of 1856 notes, and as Bentley later elaborates upon, the form of the Spenserian stanza is particularly well suited for journeys and quests, for, as evinced in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* and Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, it allows for forward movement in the narrative, and, when adapted to the Canadian setting and the journey, allows for both the description of the narrator's movement and narration of the uniquely Canadian landscape. I would expand upon Bentley's comments on the appropriateness of the Spenserian stanza for journeys and quests and would acknowledge the adaptability of the form to the unique qualities of the pilgrimage journey. Like the tourist poem and the river poem, the pilgrimage poem in the early Canadian context involved a great deal of description of the natural setting. However, the description of the natural setting in *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay*, unlike the tourist poem or even the sister form of the journey poem, is for the purpose of highlighting the spiritual and physical struggles of the pilgrim and the manifestation of God's power and helping hand in the peregrination that eventually leads to spiritual transformation.

There are various direct mentions of pilgrimage in the poem and symbols of pilgrimage. These include symbols of spiritual transformation, such as the cross and the dove, and less obvious ones, such as the overwhelming presence of the water. Pilgrimages on or across bodies of water seem in a way less typical of pilgrimage or at least are less associated with the pilgrimage paradigm. Water is however an important motif in pilgrimage regardless of whether the entire journey takes place on the water or whether there is immersion in water, cleansing with water, or crossing over (or in some cases through) a body of water. Looking at archetypal pilgrimage stories such as that of the Israelites' pilgrimage from

slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land, the crossing of water and water itself were important aspects of the journey. The parting of the Red Sea in the Israelites' pilgrimage becomes both a miraculous intervention and a crossing over that could be discussed in Turnerian terms as the liminal phase; that is, a movement from the familiar and enslavement into wandering in the desert and striving towards the Promised Land. In the New Testament, the sign of the Covenant (the belonging to the group of earthly pilgrims called "believers") is marked by baptism with water and, at times, complete immersion in water. Michel Foucault goes so far as to suggest, that the "ships of fools, which haunted the imagination of the entire early Renaissance, were pilgrimage boats, highly symbolic cargoes of madmen in search of their reason" (9). He further elaborates on this image to suggest that the pilgrimages to various shrines were supported and organized by cities and hospitals as a way to empty their city of the insane. So while the typical pilgrimage might be one of arduous journey across deserts by a religious supplicant, water journeys are, likewise, and sometimes co-joined with madness, a part of this motif. In fact, there are pilgrims who are particularly associated with water pilgrimages. The story of Saint Brendan of Clonfert (c. 486–578) was a Medieval Latin best seller. According to Harpur, Brendan is, in fact, the archetypal pilgrim of the sea (42). Brendan sets out on a sea journey that takes seven years with seventeen monks. Along the way, there are miraculous acts witnessed on the various islands in their search for the "Island Promised to the Saints" (Harpur 38). The Western tradition has other sea pilgrims, none more famous than the Greek Odysseus's classical pilgrimage of journeying out into the world to fight various battles and, then, returning home to recount the stories. The pilgrimage, then, to a site on the water and the pilgrimage by water are both part of the pilgrimage paradigm, albeit one that has been examined less than those sacred landed sites in Europe.

According to Coleman and Elsner, in the early Christian era "the journey itself began to be seen as an act of worship" (*Pilgrimage* 88). Gregory of Nyssa in 1013 BC describes acts of piety that include singing psalms on the journey. There is a great deal of evidence in the poem for the singing of psalms with the clearly spiritual purpose of praising the Creator. The poem contains various hymns of praise, including the "Hymn to the Lightning" and "Twilight Hymn," both of which praise God for His control over nature. Both hymns begin by invoking the creator: "Oh! mighty, Oh! mysterious One! / Thou willest, and the lightnings fly" (ln 193–194) and "God of the early Morning light! / Whose Hand the Gates of Dawn unbars; / God of the Evening and the Night! / Who guides the chariots of the stars" (ln 302–305). The God the poet invokes has an active hand in the world and is praised for his daily acts of creation from the lightning to the dawn. God hears from his temple in heaven the music from "putrid lips of sin" (203) and the psalms sung from a "prayerful zone" (204). The poem as a whole is interlaced with the imagery of music and lyricism in nature and as part of the journey. There is "[p]salmody" (248), "music-haunted aisles" (249),



“[c]horuses [that] leap joyfully” (250), all of which are sung to a wholly “Lyric God” (255).

There are a number of embedded stories, as well as songs, in the pilgrimage down the St. Lawrence and up the Saguenay. Like the pilgrims of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* the stories on a pilgrimage offer a possible source of moral instruction, generate interest for the reader, and inform the pilgrims about the nature of their fellow pilgrims (and storytellers) and convey information about the nature of the journey itself. The first in-laid story in *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay* is in section IX. This is a story of local lore about a Maiden, and her outlaw father, inspired by “[t]hese Isles [that are] her home” (ln 104). The immediate inspiration for telling the story seems to be the place, but the actual historical source of the Canadian pirate Bill Johnston (1782–1870) and his daughter Kate Johnston (Bentley 58) are never fully developed (IX–X). There is merely “the Brigand Chief, / Her father, [...] an outlaw. Her soul’s pride / was ministering to his wants. In brief, / The wildest midnight she would cross the tide, / Full of daughter’s love, to hasten to his side” (ln 107–111). The pilgrim, while pausing at the landscape of her story, merely acknowledges the story as existing but never really tells the story, choosing rather to leave the story for what some other “Poet-Muse may yet hand down to fame” (114). Again, in section XIII, there is the gesture towards a historical story about the “early Voyageurs” (ln 139), but the story is merely mentioned and not developed. The same technique is employed again later with the mention of the “legendary lore” of the “Red Man” (ln 371, 373). These incomplete stories seem to suggest that the focus of this pilgrimage is not the telling of stories for entertainment, like the lusty pilgrims of Chaucer or Lord Byron do. Perhaps the poet is, in fact, mentioning these stories as illustrations of earthly distractions on pilgrimage. Stories, then, are like the other earthly pleasures and temptations that should be avoided. Sangster, therefore, overcomes the urge to tell the stories and leaves them for some “Poet-Muse” in the future. These abridged stories are a disappointment to the reader-pilgrim, who wants the lusty stories of pilgrims such as the Wife of Bath and a fulfillment of earthly passion for the pilgrim and his shadowy Maiden. There is, however, one in-laid story that is developed at length, and this is “The Whippoorwill.”

“The Whippoorwill” is a re-occurring symbol in early Canadian poetry and particularly in the early Canadian long poem. The “Whip-poor-Will” of *The Rising Village* “tells each night, to all the silent vale, / The hopeless sorrows of its mournful tale” (ln 477–478), the appended note to *The Rising Village* suggests that “the traveler listens with delight to the repeated tale of its sorrows” (216). A bird that also sounds its mournful story in Isabella Valancy Crawford’s *Malcolm’s Katie*, appears to be a bird that portends lost love or unfaithfulness (VI ln 30). Sangster, at first mention of the Whippoorwill, describes how she “Flingeth her solitary triple cry / Upon the busy lips of every breeze” (ln 523–524). The poet, then, associates the bird’s song with Ophelia’s spirit and lost souls, signaling both

madness and forsakenness as companions of this bird's song. "The Whippoorwill" story, however, takes a rather different pitch. The call of "Whip-poor-will" reminds the maiden, Jeannie, of the unfaithfulness of Willie, and so she questions the bird, "poor Willie?" (542). She continues, "He was false, and I was silly" (544). The story itself is something of a silly tale. Jeannie sighs that "Absent loves are all the fashion" (555) and when Willie comes back she "[holds] her mouth up like a flower, / That her bee might sip his fill" (579–580). At the least, this story is entertaining, and, at most, it is some sort of parody of the fashionable love stories of the time, stories that lack spiritual depth. Perhaps this story is meant to remind the pilgrim and the reader of how unfulfilling silly passions are and how necessary the seeking of truth and beauty is in holy love. The fact that the Whippoorwill is introduced in such a serious fashion suggests that the call of the bird should be a serious reminder for the unfaithful in love or those who are untrue in their pursuit of truth.

The incomplete nature of the pilgrimage stories signals, perhaps, the incomplete or always becoming aspect of storytelling itself and, more importantly the changing nature of stories from within the framework of pilgrimage. This telling, re-telling, and changing or revising of the telling of the pilgrimage is a part of the act of storytelling and a part of Charles Sangster's *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay*. Following the initial publication of *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay* in 1856, Sangster revised the poem for the remainder of his life. Many of the elements of pilgrimage are contained in the miscellaneous poems that were added by the poet in his reworking later in life. It seems important when looking at a poem that deals with travel, and certainly one that deals with a spiritual journey, to look in part at the later revised version. Tierney's 1984 Tecumseh press edition contains all of the miscellaneous poems with copious notes. Tierney comments that, while the criteria for Sangster's revisions are unknown, the revisions are improvements (36). The first major revision or addition to the poem follows stanza XIV in the form of eight stanzas that give geographical details and descriptions of Lake St. Francis. While these descriptions are important for developing an appreciation of Canadian scenery and setting the stage for the later storm, they more importantly allow the poet an interlude before the storm to discuss the nature of faith. In stanza 7,

The welcome lighthouse like an angel stands / Arrayed as with a glory, pointing to / Vast heights of promise, where the summer lands / Rise like great hopes upon man's spirit-view. It warns life's toiling pilgrim to eschew / The rocks and shoals on which to many wrecks / Of noble hearts, all searching for the true, / Have sunk in utter ruin. Man may vex / His thoughts to find out God; his searchings but / perplex. (60)

While the first six new stanzas add to the setting, I quote this stanza at length because it contributes significantly to the pilgrimage motif. The lighthouse stands as a beacon for the toiling pilgrim on life's journey. It warns the pilgrim of what

to avoid in his watery trials, and as a beacon of light and truth, reminds the pilgrim of the nature of his search. The poet seems to suggest that a certain type of thinking, perhaps even storytelling, can lead the pilgrim onto the wreck of doubt and ruin. This stanza also emphasizes the difficulties of the journey – both physical and mental. The dangers of the rocks and wreckage on the shoals are warnings of literal ruin for the vessel. As well, these lines emphasize the metaphorical implications of the mental danger brought on by searching for the truth and being led onto the rocks of doubt. The storm that follows is all the more dangerous and terrifying for its implications of spiritual as well as physical ruin.

Following the lull of the storm in stanza XXV, the additional revised stanzas nine through twelve further add to the dangers of the journey with images of “waves like white sea-monsters [that] plunge and roll” (65). The anguish of these lines further suggests the dangers of the journey which can plague the soul. At the same time they also emphasize the poet’s later life mental suffering: “Mighty, and grand, and wildly perilous, / It lives a life of torment. A mad soul / Seems shouting from each billow, and howl,” concluding with “Despair’s last shriek, when at the goal / Where all hope ends they tumble headlong with / A cry of anguish to the yawning gulf beneath” (65). The stanzas that follow include “Mad cries of horror,” “[a] wild, despairing, agonizing cry,” “[and] [a] laugh of demons torturing the slain” (65). Together these depictions conclude in the next stanza with “Thus the sardonic strife goes crashing by; / The nameless Terror rolls its burden up the sky” (65). The difficulties and dangers of the pilgrimage are again emphasized by the addition of these lines. In stanza eleven, the poet notes that this horror is not part of a story but, rather, is “[t]he true enchantment this, – no legend rare, / No wondrous tale by hoar tradition crowned” (66). Again, in the revised edition stanzas 13–16 and 17–20 focus on the struggles of the pilgrimage: “[Again the rush tumultuous – the bound – / The tossings to and fro – the surge – the swell; / The mighty uproar, and the crash profound; / That make the cedars a vast, watery hell” (70). What follows in stanza 14 again elaborates on the dangers characterized by, “The vast deeps heave with being; / these white crests / Like furies seem to rise as from the shades, / To wreak their urging Demon’s grim behests” (71). In stanzas 17–19, the pilgrims must “dare to tempt the narrow way, / Cutting a passage through the Gordian Knot / Of reefs and breakers,” the horrors of this dread place being described in language as terrible as the earlier storms. The terrors that haunt “the dread abysm” and pursue the pilgrims include “grand resistless Terror,” “Lucifer,” “Atilla,” “his Hun-like retinue,” “Reign of Terror,” and a “lost soul” amid the dangers of the “flying hosts of waves” (72). Stanza 20 brings the pilgrims through the troubles to “worship at thy feet” (73). But it is unclear from this stanza if the pilgrims are among the “untold legions [that] rush to bend [their] knee[s], / All victims to the Dragon.” Are these pilgrims part of the mass of “blinded fools embracing death by heaps”? Or, are the feet they worship at the feet of Him who even the waves obey? Stanza 20 concludes

with "The waves of two vast streams fall down to thee, / And worship at thy feet" (73). Regardless of the unclear outcome for the pilgrims, the dangers and very real threat of falling prey to the Dragon, Lucifer, or the Shadow is a part of the passage through the "reefs and breakers" (72). The other two major additions to the poem are addendums to storytelling passages undeveloped in the earlier edition. The first follows stanza XXXVIII and the viewing of Mount Royal and St. Helen's and develops on the stories of the French, Jacques Cartier, and the Hurons. The further addition comes both before and after stanza LI and adds pleasing detail to the historical story of Wolfe and Montcalm.

The difficulties of the pilgrimage journey are clear and necessary constituents of the pilgrimage paradigm (Wilkinson 15–28, Hunt 50–82). In fact, it seems that without difficulties the pilgrimage would be more of a tourist jaunt or a sightseeing tour. It is the arduous nature of the journey that contributes in part to the journey being a pilgrimage. The additions to *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay* over the course of Sangster's life seem to attest to his growing interest in portraying the very real difficulties and temptations of the journey. The difficulties of the journey, a necessary characteristic of the pilgrimage paradigm, are already present in the first edition, but in the revised version the difficulty and suffering associated with the pilgrimage seem to over shadow the already shadowy Maiden and the associated pilgrim's love story. Sangster himself was engaged to be married, the poem coming out a mere three months before this union. It is known that his Victorian sensibilities forbade the sensual expression of sexual love, but the temptations of the flesh are evident in these opening lines of the poem. The sexual imagery of the bee clinging to the flower as his hopes are clinging to his love could be exploited to suggest at least the 'unclean' thoughts of the poet. The flights of birds and the alighting of bees on flowers everywhere suggest the physical and natural elements of earthly love. However, birds and bees are used as mere metaphors for something that the poet expresses in rather ethereal terms as hope for the 'truth' and 'beauty' of his love. The poet's love for the Maiden remains physically unconsummated, metaphors aside, until the becoming one in God and nature, following what Bentley suggests is a marriage procession and ceremony in the poem. He elaborates on Sangster's "mortal fear of passion," giving examples from the poem of "Uncurbed Passion" and "sin's dread electricity" (xii). He further argues that the unity of the poem is, in fact, derived from the theme of "Human Love" (xv). Bentley suggests, rather convincingly, that "[w]ith the arrival of morning light comes the 'Paeon to the Dawn' that marks the beginning of what may be called the epithalamic movement of *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay*: the poem's enactment of a wedding procession and a marriage service in the cathedral of northern nature" (xxi). Sangster, poet and pilgrim, certainly devotes a great deal of his poem to thoughts of love and the maiden, but these are treated as both temptation and, I would suggest, the manifestation of a supernatural and perfect love.

These incarnations of ‘perfect love’ in pilgrimages usually come at points of extreme exhaustion or struggles of a physical or mental nature. The struggles and temptations of the flesh or earthly nature are common struggles of the pilgrim. It is at the points of extreme temptation that revelations of God, miracles, or supernatural beings often appear. Victor and Edith Turner, Simon Coleman and John Elsner, Alan Morinis and others have shown that most world religions, and particularly, Catholic pilgrimage, involve encounters with supernatural beings. In Catholic pilgrimage, the main figures of supernatural encounter are Mary, Christ, the cross, and prophets and apostles. It is possible in certain readings of the constellation of pilgrimage characteristics to figure the shadowy maiden as a supernatural being promising that after the hardships of pilgrimage there will be perfect love and the fulfillment of spiritual longing. The meditations or appearances of the maiden then become part of the pilgrimage paradigm and part of the act of worship significant to the journey itself and not merely an earthly distraction. It is possible even to read the Maiden of this poem as both the incarnation of the truth, beauty and love, and also the very real temptation to lust and earthly and sensual passion. There is mention in stanza XL of a girl he loved during his boyhood in Montreal, and it seems that either he forsook this earlier love or this earlier love matured into what in “Man becomes sublime” (ln 442). The poet/pilgrim continues in line 454 to say that “I worshipped her,” and, in the line that follows, “[w]ith [his] pure passion” and while his “lone spirit wander[s] through the throng / Of human hearts” he promises the Maiden that his “love is deep and strong” and seeks “a joy divine” (454–456, 458, 460). At various points in the poem, the Maiden appears as a “celestial spirit” and is part of what the poet/pilgrim drinks strength from in nature. The poet’s worship of “Truth and Beauty in [his] soul” (95) weds with the maiden as being part of the “Love [that] is immortal” (801).

Morinis writes that “[p]laces of pilgrimage are endowed with spiritual magnetism by association with (1) miraculous cures, (2) apparitions of supernatural beings, (3) sacred geography, (4) [and] difficulty of access” (33). The difficulty of the journey down the St. Lawrence and up the Saguenay is part of the “difficulty of access” to the site, but the physical trials of the journey are only a part of this “difficulty of access” (33). Part of the struggle to reach trinity rock is not just the rocky crags and storms on the river that threaten the physical vessel but the very real trials of the spirit and necessity of overcoming the temptations of the flesh to eventually achieve transformation of the spiritual vessel. The poet/speaker at the beginning of the pilgrimage meditates upon being guided by “love’s mysterious power” (ln 7) to make this pilgrimage and further claims to hope for the lifting up of his “dead heart [...] like Lazarus from the tomb” (ln 9), an image that repeats in the poem when “Pale Hesper smiles upon us through the gloom [...] / Like a chrysalis that has burst its tomb” (ln 284, 286). The incarnations of Love, Virtue, and Truth all become apparitional guides along with the Maiden that both steer the vessel/poet and are transcendental elements to be sought. Part of the

movement of the poem is spiritual, and, as such, there is a “spiritual magnetism” that draws the poet on towards the goal of transformation (Morinis 33). The first image of flight is the thoughts of the poet who makes a “dove-like passage” towards the Maiden/guide. This image of the dove is associated both with the incarnation of the Holy Spirit and the movement of the Holy Spirit. The images of flight include in the second stanza the mention of the actual mission or call of pilgrimage: “Plume my weak spirit for its chosen skies, / ‘T would falter in its mission without thee.” The poet further asks the maiden to “Conduct [his soul’s] flight” (ln 12–15). These images of flight lace their way through the poem and include a “proud young eagle [that] soars” (ln 47), a “blackbird’s wing” (ln 132), and “spirit wings” (ln 224). The images of the flight of spirit and bird alternate with the image of the vessel being drawn along the river by natural forces, also connected with the Maiden of the poem: “The bark leaps love-fraught from the land” (ln 19) and travels on the “amorous current” (ln 23); the bark “glides” (ln 122), “Cheerily leaps / Our fearless bark! – it loves to skim the sea” (ln 157–158). The images of flight and travel on water are both associated with the physical movement of the pilgrim, the movement and transformation of the spirit, and the physical environs of the pilgrim.

The “sacred geography” employed by the poet includes symbols from the natural world and iconography from literary and religious history (Morinis 33). The image of “Pale Hesper” (ln 284), “Like a chrysalis that has burst its tomb” (ln 286), is an image that harks back to the poet’s first call to raise his dead heart like Lazarus from the tomb. This image reminds the poet and the reader that the purpose or call to make this pilgrimage has to do with seeking spiritual rebirth. Interestingly, this is the stanza (XXVI) that also pairs the spiritual virtues with pilgrimage: “Even as our hearts’ deep virtues, love, unite, / Like meeting pilgrims at the set of sun / Grasping each other’s hands, their joyous labors done” (ln 290–292). The vessel continues to move bathed in love and prayer, passing a Holy mountain (ln 501), a “Pilgrim’s Cross” (ln 504), and churches and church spires (ln 721, ln 733, ln 777) on its journey towards “that trace / Of Eden” (ln 1081–1082). The poet employs a number of images while figuring spiritual transformation. These include the Keatsian “vale of soul-making” (*Selected Poems and Letters* 288), the vale figuring as the suffering on earth that must be passed through in order to enter the spiritual reality beyond (ln 807, ln 848). In stanza LXX, even as the narrator says “Our spirits are as one,” the poet/pilgrim and Maiden “Must seek beyond the veil what here can never be” (ln 799, ln 807).

In *Sacred Journeys* James J. Preston suggests that “pilgrimage sites are often found in the most dramatic locations on the globe and inspire lofty emotions and high spiritual values” (35). Cape Eternity and Trinity Bay are the destinations of the poet’s physical and spiritual pilgrimage down the St. Lawrence and up the Saguenay. Arriving at Cape Eternity, the poet employs language aspiring to describe the movement of the soul as a result of the sublimity of nature. Stanza

XCV describes the connection between God, nature, and man's communion with both thus: "Nature has here put on her royalist dress, / And CAPE ETERNITY looms grandly up, / Like a God reigning in the Wilderness / Holding communion with the distant cope" concluding with "Oh! for some special gift! To give full scope / To the soul's promptings" (ln 1119–1122, ln 1125–1126). Cape Eternity is further described as governing "[a] deep and overpowering solitude" in "[a] wilderness of beauty" that creates a "wild beauty and sublimity" (ln 1128, 1130, 1133). The poet goes on in the stanzas that follow to praise God for "All things come perfect from His Master-hand" (ln 1138). These include the nature that he has created which cause the poet's mind to "soar [...] God-ward" as a result of the "Cape's embrace" which fills the "soul with dreams that nevermore depart" (ln 1150, 1153, 1154). From here, the vessel moves into Trinity Bay and on toward Trinity Rock which, according to the poet's notes, is a "stupendous mass of granite" (ln 1185).

The spiritual transformation of the poem and poet occurs at Trinity Rock. The poet's response and the markers of this transformation are somewhat different, however, from what would be expected of such an orthodox and Victorian believer as the poet. The response of silence and an overflowing of tears have more in common with the Eastern tradition of Christianity, rendered in such medieval texts as *The Cloud of Unknowing*, than the tradition of Western Christianity, to which the poet belongs. The poet's "lips are mute. [He] cannot speak the thought," and silence "itself is ecstasy" (ln 1191, 1197). In the stanza that follows, there are "tears of Gladness," and truth is "made manifest" (ln 1200, 1208). The poet goes on to apply the love of God he has been transformed by to eulogize his earthly love and comparing the latter to Trinity Rock finally concludes: "[h]ow unutterably deep and strong is Human Love" (ln 1262). The poet also appears to be gesturing in his earthly spiritual rebirth towards the final and heavenly rebirth for which the pilgrimage poem is an allegory in the Protestant tradition. Life itself is the long pilgrimage with "lofty purpose struggling skyward to its goal" (ln 1253).

The "dead heart" of Lazarus and weak metaphors of bees and flowers in the opening lines have been transformed in the final stanzas of this poem into "Truth made manifest," walls of granite called the "Monarch of the Bluffs," and "Samson of the Saguenay" (ln 1208, 1185, 1187). The sad tones and "spirit's gloom" of the first stanza become in the final stanza "Gladness." The poet is "cheered," and his soul is "steadfast" (ln 8, 1200, 1250). The transformation, however, is not merely descriptive. The poetry itself in the final lines takes on a strength and vitality that mimics the emotions and thoughts of the poet who has been transformed spiritually by the power and sublimity of his pilgrimage through the natural environs of Canada.

Thus while the history, landscape, tourist climate, and literary influences on *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay* have been effectively demonstrated by Bentley, the argument for the poem as a pilgrimage is the only reading that

adequately demonstrates the overall continuous movement and unity of the poem. The pilgrimage motif while acknowledged by Bentley and others had not been previously developed into the basis for a full-length examination of the poem. This reading urges a more nuanced understanding of the characteristics of Canadian pilgrimage as a way to better understand *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay*, the man who made this pilgrimage, and the conditions and mindset of late nineteenth-century Canada more broadly.

## References

- Bentley, D. M. R. 1990. "Appendix I." *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay*. Ed. D. M. R. Bentley. London: Canadian Poetry Press. 97–98.
- . 1990. "Introduction." *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay*. Ed. D. M. R. Bentley. London: Canadian Poetry Press. xi–li.
- Coleman, Simon, and John Elsner., eds. 1995. *Pilgrimage Past and Present in the World Religions*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1965. *Madness and Civilization*. Trans. Richard Howard. London: Random House.
- Hamilton, W. D. 1971. *Charles Sangster*. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- Harpur, James. 2002. *Sacred Tracks: 2000 Years of Christian Pilgrimage*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hunt, E. D. 1982. *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Keats, John. 1958. *Selected Poems and Letters*. Ed. Douglas Bush. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Lighthall, William Douw. 1889. "Introduction." *Songs of the Great Dominion*. London: Scott. xxv–xxvi.
- Morgan, Henry J. 1867. "Charles Sangster." *Bibliotheca Canadensis*. Ottawa: Desbarats. 335–337.
- Morinis, Alan., ed. 1992. *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*. Contributions to the Study of Anthropology 7. London: Greenwood.
- Sangster, Charles. 1972. *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay and Other Poems*. Ed. Gordon Johnston. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- . 1984. *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay and Other Poems*. Ed. Frank M. Tierney. Ottawa: The Tecumseh Press.
- . 1990. *The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay*. Ed. D. M. R. Bentley. London: Canadian Poetry Press.
- Tierney, Frank. 2000. *The Journeys of Charles Sangster: A Biographical and Critical Investigation*. Ottawa: Tecumseh.
- Wilkinson, John. 1981. *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*. Warminster: Warminster.