Horizons North

Horizons North:
Contact, Culture and Education in Canada

Edited by

Sue Matheson and John Anthony Butler

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For Elder John Martin

Hauling cargo to Flin Flon, circa 1928. SAM WALLER MUSEUM / P84.467.1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

JOHN BUTLER

The idea for this book arose from a conversation between the two editors about the possibility of making a collection of essays from *quint*, a journal founded by Dr. Matheson in 2007, which was originally conceived as a publication which could provide a platform for northern Canadian scholars, artists and writers. The North is still in many ways a frontier society, and the issues which were germane in the last two centuries still resonate, to a certain extent, with today's circumpolar cultures. All the articles in this book relate to the study of the North, and they have been published in *quint* over a number of years. A continuing interest elsewhere in Northern perspectives has enabled *quint* to develop into an international forum, which retains and values its Aboriginal and Northern roots. Since 2009 the journal has broadened its scope to become more polyglot, including contributions from Africa, India, China, Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe. Making a collection of papers on Aboriginal and Northern topics gave an opportunity for new knowledge of this subject to be disseminated in print and in one place rather than diffusely online.

It is the hope of the editors that this book will be a representative example of a good part of what *quint* is currently doing, and that the book form will serve as a more permanent record and reference-tool for scholars, students, and any others who may be interested in Aboriginal Studies, Northern Studies and Canadian Studies. Indigenous scholars, cultural critics, sociologists and historians will find ample scope for their interests in the essays presented here. The scope of the essays is wide, ranging from the literary, cinematographic and historical to the sociological, and the material involves contributors from a variety of locations with a corresponding scope of approaches to the subjects discussed, from the formal and scholarly to the personal and reflective. We have arranged the book under two headings: the historical and the ethnographical; and the educational. The topics discussed within these rubrics reflect both the history and the present of the North, demonstrating how the challenges of the past have become the issues of the present, with the difference now that voices may be heard from more than one side of

the spectrum. Above all, we hope that the papers included in this collection will encourage discussion and even some intellectual controversy, and that readers will find them not merely informative but thought-provoking and interesting as well.

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A Saulteaux Cree family wearing jackets with elaborate beadwork characteristic of Jackhead Indians. SAM WALLER MUSEUM / PP84.652.16

INTRODUCTION

SUE MATHESON

In *Culture Shock and Multiculturalism* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2012), Edward Dutton points out that the idea of culture shock was proposed by a thinker who experienced it. Canadian anthropologist Kalervo Oberg was raised in a Finnish Nationalist Utopian commune that was located in the backwoods of British Columbia. If Oberg is correct that encountering the norms of a host culture in a new country is disorienting, then every new Canadian has undergone culture shock. Considered an immigrant/emigrant experience, culture shock manifests itself in distinct stages: among them, one finds the honeymoon experience of living in a different culture; the phase during which living in the "New Country" is rejected while the traditions of the "Old Country" are idealized and romanticized; and the point at which the person experiencing cultural cringe has an epiphany that his or her host culture is another way of life.

Studying the immigrant/emigrant experience is a well-established field in the academy. On the other hand, critical considerations of First Nations' contact trauma have just begun. Best known are the issues generated by the First Nations' questioning of land claims and the Residential schooling of Aboriginal children. Charting the difficulties of displacement, social transition, and cultural cringe, the history of Canada's host culture is now beginning to be acknowledged as domestic diaspora. Not surprisingly, the Canadian experience, Aboriginal and the immigrant/emigrant, continues to be one rooted in social disorientation and trauma, and nearly one hundred and fifty years after Confederation Canadian culture remains a mosaic. Multiculturalism, touted federally as a state in which distinct cultures may co-exist comfortably, has become a Canadian credo, but the testimonies of Residential School survivors demonstrate that the idea of distinct societies harmoniously co-existing in Canada needs serious examination and re-evaluation.

To date, much critical attention has focused on the challenges of Canada's multicultural South, and the unique nature of Canada's Northern mosaic has remained largely unexplored. This book is one response to the

opportunities for study available to scholars interested in examining the Canadian experience located above the 53rd Parallel. Offering readers a variety of avenues by which this important terrain may begin to be mapped, *Horizons North: contact, culture, and education in Canada* does not attempt or claim to be a comprehensive work about the Canadian mosaic in the North, but puts forward original perspectives that may serve as rudimentary maps for others interested in further exploring these territories. Here it must be noted that the multidisciplinary collection of papers presented in this book reflects the University College of the North's commitment to the production and dissemination of new knowledge, and, in particular, the production and dissemination of new knowledge about Aboriginal and Northern issues. Over the past five years, the University College of the North's online journal, *the quint: an interdisciplinary quarterly from the north* has published a range of articles investigating Aboriginal and Northern themes. Academic and personal, analytic and discursive, these papers, now published here, display a variety of methods and approaches that demonstrate how our past has defined and then re-defined Aboriginal and Northern cultures. Each chapter is designed to generate conversations about Canadian society, transmit Canadians' social, political, and ethical concerns, and encourage scholars to continue researching in these areas. Gathering these diverse papers into their own forum, this book also celebrates the variety that is Canada's North.

Despite their different approaches and methods, questions raised by displacement frame the discussion of every paper in this volume. Engaged with pressing problems produced by contact, these authors' insights are at once topical and compelling—representative of the current trends of interest in Aboriginal and Northern Studies. The first section, "Historical and Social Interactions," begins with John Butler's challenge to the popular tendency to malign and marginalize colonial literature. Reminding readers that novelists and poets have always been ahead of the politicians, in some cases even the *vates* (prophets) of the resistance movements, "'Prairies pure and unspotted:' Sir William Butler, the Great Lone Land and the Imperial Vision," offers Lieutenant-General Sir William Francis Butler, G. C. B., as an example of a severely underrated and unappreciated writer whose authentic voice makes the makes the generalized experience of British imperialism much more complex and more interesting than so many post-colonial critical views suggest. Next, "The Pas, Manitoba and 'Greatest War in Our World's History' 1914-1919," Greg Stott's study examines the effect that the First World War had on The Pas, Manitoba, a town far removed from the fighting and marginal even in terms of Canada's own war effort, but buffeted and shaped to a surprising degree

by this European conflict. This is followed by David King's "Francophone Nationalism, Inuit and the Role of the Anglican Church: A Study of the Transfer of Northern Quebec from Federal to Provincial Jurisdiction and its Resistance by Inuit, 1960-1970," which examines the political game of "hot potato" that took place between the two levels of government during the transfer of Northern Quebec from federal to provincial jurisdiction, the part that the Inuit played, and the outstanding Inuit grievances that remain unresolved today.

Next, in "Ethnography: Telling Stories About the Other/Self(?)," Harvey Briggs considers important questions and problems of interpretation for the ethnographer that are raised by his or her contact experiences and concern the nature of understanding itself. In "'My Grandfather Is Not An Artifact': Repatriation and the Collecting of Native Bodies, Funerary Objects and Religious Paraphernalia," David King returns to discuss the troubled history and outstanding issues of repatriating Native human remains, objects and artifacts in the United States and Canada. In "Evolution," Harvey Briggs again steps forward to argue that the current deficiencies of a historically-based approach to policy documents which deal with Native Peoples should be addressed by a textual and evolutionary lens that could provide a desirable and useful understanding of Aboriginal cultures via the longer patterns of social organization. Then, John George Hansen's "Decolonizing Indigenous Restorative Justice is Possible" investigates Indigenous restorative justice in relation to the concept of decolonization; Hansen explores the idea that Indigenous people are moving toward decolonization of their inherent justice models in order to resolve conflicts and promote healing in the community, and, in doing so, create a foundation for the renaissance of restorative justice in Canada. In the final paper in this section, "South Meets North: Snow Comedy, W.C. Fields and the Northern Trapper," Sue Matheson examines the treatment of primitive masculinity in W.C. Fields' and Clyde Bruckman's "snow story," *The Fatal Glass of Beer* (1933) and concludes that such masculinity, a facet of Hollywood's fictional Northwood, is a cultural construct that is tested and found wanting.

The second section, entitled "Education and the North," opens with Brenda Firman's personal reflection, "Learning from Gifts," which transmits her own experience of the Aboriginal perspective that 'disabled' children are to be considered a gift from the Creator sent to teach the family and the community lessons of acceptance, understanding, and a new way of looking at the world. Paul Betts' "Hardness and Tension: A White researcher's story working with an Aboriginal community" charts his experience of the collision of Traditional and Western values and

teaching methods. These highly discursive papers are followed by Terralyn McKee's "Holistic Aboriginal Pedagogy: Transformative Learning and Restoration through Cultural Cognizance," which argues for a distinctive Aboriginal way of knowing by questioning the ability of the current Western pedagogical approach to accommodate Aboriginal contexts and culture. Carolyn Creed's "Charity Girls: The Northern Manitoban Response to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*" follows. Having taught English Literature courses for Brandon University's Northern Teacher Education Program for almost thirty years, Creed demonstrates how parallels drawn between Jane Eyre's boarding school experiences and the common story of Aboriginal Manitobans' experiences of residential schools deeply affected her students. Appropriately, John George Hansen and Rose Antsanen end this book by returning our attention to the importance that forgiveness holds for those experiencing the aftershocks of contact. In "The Pedagogy of Indigenous Restorative Justice," Hansen and Antsanen return to Omushkegowuk (Swampy Cree) holism and its emphasis on making reparations, restoring relationships, and healing from wrongful behavior to discuss the concept of restorative justice as it pertains to healing as they explain why traditional Indigenous ways of teaching are important in the North.

However different their subjects, approaches, and writing styles may seem, all the papers in this collection draw on their authors' own reactions to and experiences of the North—its land, its peoples, and its cultures. One may even say that this book is itself a mosaic, a reflection of the Canadian experience of living among many cultural horizons. The evolving, traumatic process of our national birth is far from being over in the frontier society of the North. In the North, I, for one, am looking forward to the discussions that this book will generate. I hope that many more conversations like them will take place to extend our knowledge of and appreciation for the communities and cultures of the boreal forest (and places more northerly) and that opportunities for such studies will be continue to be fostered and encouraged.

SECTION I:

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

President of The Pas Chamber of Commerce, Herman Premachuk buys furs from three men at the Trappers Festival, circa 1955. SAM WALLER MUSEUM / PP84.473.2

"Prairies Pure and Unspotted": Sir William Butler, the Great Lone Land and the Imperial Vision

John Butler

The phrase "post-colonial" has long been a familiar buzzword in the parlance of literary critics and scholars. Everyone was celebrating, so it seemed, some kind of liberation from the dominance of Anglo- American culture as they galloped away in all directions on horses of indiscriminate colours. In his collection of lectures, *Beyond the Provinces*, David Staines stated in a chapter, significantly entitled "The Old Countries Recede," that the old question which Canadian writers and writers about Canada used to ask themselves, namely, "What is here?" can no longer be asked. "It has faded," Staines declared. "into memory, a question no longer necessary, valid, or appropriate" (27). And of course, Professor Staines is right; Canadian writing, in the latter part of the twentieth century, found its *locus amoenus*, for it finally broke free from British cultural and political domination and is now in the process of staving off that of its neighbour, the United States. Indeed, it is in the works of Canadian authors rather than in the acts or deeds of its politicians that a true "Canadian" identity emerged. Yet it seems, at the same time, somehow regrettable that the here and now should *prevail*, because what is "here now" is irrevocably made up from what was "here then." And it is always salutary to remember what it was like when writers had to think about what was "here then."

Much of the literature produced in the colonial period, Canadian or otherwise, has been maligned for years by the great and good amongst the literary and scholarly community. Even if some of what they have said rang true, a warning note should be sounded to avoid miscarriage of justice; many readers interested in Commonwealth literature, for example, may recollect the eminent Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe's ill-conceived attack (1975) on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, which ultimately degenerated into little more than an *ad hominem* attack on Conrad himself, whom Achebe called "a bloody racist" (782) rather than addressing the shortcomings of the novella itself. Wilson Harris, an equally distinguished Caribbean novelist, defended Conrad in a spirited article which is often

overlooked as an antidote to Achebe's polemic, and demonstrated that Conrad was actually attacking the Belgian colonial administration of the Congo rather than perpetuating racial stereotyping. More recently, Salman Rushdie, in a miscellany entitled *Imaginary Homelands* (1994), launched an assault on the Booker Prize winner Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet* for what Rushdie saw as a faulty portrayal of Indian characters and accused Scott of numerous borrowings from E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. In Scott's defence one could argue that his books are not actually about Indians, but a study of the British in India, and that India is the backdrop to their stories. Furthermore, a reading of Scott's other "Indian" novel, *Staying On*, reveals that it is indeed his fellow-countrymen who are under scrutiny by Scott.

What is certain is that any writer creating a work from the point of view of Conrad, Scott, or anyone like them must be writing from a "Eurocentric" point of view, and from the "top" (the coloniser) rather than from the bottom (the colonised), but even from that particular vantage-point dissenting voices could be raised against those who touted colonial rule as the best thing that happened to the poor benighted natives. Conrad's book fits this description, as does a book like George Orwell's *Burmese Days*, which spares neither British nor Burmese, and hardly extols the virtues of colonial justice or seeks to make Florey, the rather ineffectual British dissenter, anything much of a hero. Even Lord Edward Cecil's autobiographical *Leisure of an Egyptian Official*, which has received its fair share of vituperation since its reprinting in the 1980's, is ironic and satirical, showing that the British administrators and their hangers-on who indirectly ruled Egypt during the latter years of the nineteenth century were just as ridiculous and incompetent in Cecil's eyes as were their Egyptian counterparts. Lord Edward may sometimes appear condescending to the politically-correct eyes of modern readers, but the man possessed a fine wit combined with considerable powers of observation, and kept his tongue firmly implanted in his cheek. How realistic or useful is it for critics to rail at his apparent insouciance or his thinly-veiled contempt for officialdom? Have modern readers forgotten that here they are listening to the voice of a late-Victorian aristocrat, the son of the Marquess of Salisbury (one of Queen Victoria's Prime Ministers), and that the manners and *mores* of such a person cannot be expected to correspond to those of our own times?

Many writers of the colonial period go far beyond Cecil and even, perhaps, beyond Conrad and Orwell in their criticism of colonialism. Some of them, such as Conrad himself (a Pole and an aristocrat), were actually victims of imperialism. Conrad's father Apollo Korzeniowski was a Polish

nationalist poet, translator of Shakespeare and political activist who was imprisoned by the Russians and then exiled for his politics with his whole family. Young Joseph Conrad grew up under the Russian yoke without a geographical location he could call his own; it would be absurd to suggest that such a man would align himself with the forces of oppression. Such voices as Conrad's and Orwell's were part of what Ashis Nandy calls "the marginalised reflective strain….that must be presumed to underlie every 'homogenous' culture that goes rabid" (49). This strain, Nandy maintains, played a significant part in the opposition to the excesses of imperialism from within, providing the impetus for native writers to begin the decolonisation of literature. In this sense, novelists and poets have always been ahead of the politicians, in some cases again becoming *vates* (prophets) of the resistance movements. They helped considerably, moreover, in the formation of what Edward Said calls "the cultural grounds on which both natives and Europeans lived and understood one another" (100). Along with ex-colonial officials such as Orwell and Leonard Woolf, whose novel about Ceylon, *The Village in the Jungle*, is severely underrated, we might list the poet Wilfred Scawen Blunt, who supported Egyptian nationalism, and the subject of this essay, Lieutenant-General Sir William Francis Butler, G. C. B., the author of *The Great Lone Land* (1872), *The Wild North Land* (1873), *Akim-Foo: The Story of a Failure* (1875) and *The Light of the West* (1909).

William Francis Butler (1838-1910) might at first sight seem a highly unlikely candidate for membership in Nandy's club of the "marginalised reflective strain." An Irishman with strong nationalistic feelings, Butler nevertheless served his Queen with unflinching loyalty for many years as a soldier in Canada, the Sudan, West Africa, and, finally in South Africa, where he briefly (1899) served as Commander-in-Chief of British forces against the Boers. He was one of a fabled group surrounding Sir Garnet Wolseley, he worked with Kitchener, and was the friend and erstwhile biographer of the ill-fated General Gordon. However, what concerns us here, besides his Canadian experiences, is Butler's last job. His biographer, Edward McCourt, commented that for Butler, this appointment was "the worst that could be made, particularly for Butler himself" (219). Sir Alfred Milner, Butler's superior at the War Office in London, found himself completely exasperated by this man who had been branded a "radical General" by the cartoonist 'Spy' in *Vanity Fair*, because, as Milner commented after Butler's resignation, "the general's sympathy is wholly with the other side" (McCourt 228). Butler had concluded that far from doing any good materially or spiritually, British imperialism was now merely an excuse for material gain and self-aggrandizement on the part of

people like Cecil Rhodes, whom Butler despised. "He regarded Rhodes and confederate magnates," J. L. Gavin stated in his *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, "as evil beings" (McCourt 219). In Butler's considered opinion, "the armies of the world were set in motion by human greed" (McCourt 216), particularly that of arms dealers, banks and large corporations, with individuals like Rhodes providing inspiration for the vulture-like hordes of fortune-seekers proliferating all over the Empire.

Butler's disgust with colonial abuses was not something he suddenly discovered after he had been hired to chastise the Boers. The reader of the manuscript of Butler's second Canadian book *The Wild North Land* had complained, as Butler related with some relish in the 1910 edition, that whilst Butler wrote good "descriptions of real experiences" he was not happy with the author's "theories" which he insisted on inserting in the text from time to time. These were, moreover, frequently expressed in clear and forceful language, and were usually at odds with the prevailing view of officialdom and of pro-imperialist readers. McCourt cites as an example the appendix to *The Great Lone Land*, "Lieutenant Butler's Report to the Hon. Adams G. Archibald, Lieutenant-Governor [of] Manitoba," which although it looks as though it might be a dull official report, was in fact, as McCourt states, "one of the greatest documents in the history of Western Canada" (80). It was Butler's first sustained expression of his "theories" for official eyes, and it pulled no punches, as will be seen later in this essay.

We have commented briefly that Butler espoused Irish nationalist sentiments. "Irishness," Ashis Nandy states, "was a common characteristic of a number of British writers and thinkers in the middle part of the nineteenth century" (36). The Irish, of course (like the Poles), had experienced colonialism first-hand for centuries, although the degrees of oppression varied from time to time. There may not have been, at least recently, examples of torture and mutilation as were perpetrated on people in the Congo by Leopold II's officials, but there had been massacres in the seventeenth century and the iron hand of Oliver Cromwell had never been forgotten. Irish culture and religion had been suppressed, and the Irish language had practically gone underground. Anglo-Irish landowners were often cruel or, at best indifferent, which had been seen with disastrous results in the Great Famine of 1854. Many Irish people had been forced off their land and only the lucky ones had emigrated to the United States.

Fig 1. Sir William Butler. Courtesy of Archives of Manitoba / N10492.

One famous example of an English sympathiser with the oppressed was Annie Besant, who rejected her cultural inheritance to make common cause with Indian nationalism rather than with the Irish, but, as Nandy says, her purpose and that of people like Butler was "searching for a new Utopia" (36), which Besant found in India and Butler in Canada, particularly the Canadian prairies. As Nandy writes of Besant's adoption of India, Butler saw the Canadian prairies as a place too vast in size and scope for anyone to "master;" its very nature transcended the political, and its people knew how to live with the land rather than off it. They did not express a primary interest in conquest and exploitation; as India for Annie Besant was "not just a model of dissent against [her] own society," so for William Butler the Canadian prairies provided "some protection for a search for new models of transcendence" (36).

If Butler's theories showed themselves from his first book with a Canadian subject, how then did his perceptions of the land differ from those of pro-imperialist writers? Mary Louise Pratt, writing about the way Victorian travellers and explorers described the places they visited through the language of their books, states that their views were characterised by "fantasies of dominance and possession" (214), which found their expression through a discourse designed to impose order on what they saw, often "aestheticising" it in terms of European conceptual modes. A typical comment might be that the land under scrutiny "had no history," or that it had little shape or form; the denial of history in particular is, for Pratt, a "dehumanizing western habit" (214), and as a reprehensible example she singles out a passage from Sir Richard Burton's *The Lake Regions of Central Africa* (1860), where the author, as she tells it, consistently uses adjectives "which tie the landscape to….[his] own culture." Burton does this, Pratt states, through what she calls "material referents," phrases such as "emerald green," "snowy foam" or "pearly white" (204); these dastardly phrases, Pratt goes on to explain, are descriptions which would be familiar to English readers and must therefore be "referents" of imperialism through which Burton's audience could somehow "take control" of the African landscape! My simplistic response is that as Burton wished his readers to understand and picture what he saw metaphorically (*ut pictura poesis*), so therefore the chosen metaphors would have to have been familiar to his English audience. What language could Burton have used which Pratt would *not* have considered "material referents" to his "home culture?" How would a Nigerian, for example, write home to describe his first experience of snow or minus thirty-degree weather in a letter home other than by using familiar metaphorical language in Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo or whatever his own language was? Is

there a "magic lexicon of otherness" that Burton could have accessed in order to maintain political correctness in his discourse?

None of the above is to deny that a "rhetoric of colonialism" could have and did, in fact, exist in some writers. In the seventeenth century, John Donne used such rhetoric in connection with sexual conquest, addressing a woman's body in "Elegy XIX: Going to Bed" as "O my America! My new-found land!/ My kingdom, safeliest when with one man mann'd." Pratt's assumption that rhetoric *may* be loaded is reasonable, but to claim that it is always so is way off-target. In Butler's *Great Lone Land*, for example, imagery and metaphors are usually non-specific, such as "night-shadowed," "quiet pools" or "quick-running streams" (200). He characterises the prairie as "the world as it had taken shape and form from the hands of the Creator" (200), which no doubt Pratt would ascribe to a direct reference to the Garden of Eden, but it need not be that at all, for "the Creator" is a non-denominational, indeed, non religion-specific phrase, and is a concept shared, for example, by the aboriginal inhabitants of the prairies. Butler simply wishes to make his beloved Canadian prairie landscape "transcend" any human works.

Let us compare Butler's attitude with that of Pratt's "model" explorer, Mary Kingsley, whom she uses primarily to advance the requisite feminist spin on her argument, which makes the claim that a woman explorer is less likely to use referents of imperialism than a man. In spite of the fact that Kingsley "did locate herself within the project of empire," as Pratt reluctantly admits, she was a vehement opponent of colonial administration, missionaries (a group, incidentally, for which Queen Victoria herself had little use, either), and corporations, for which Butler also expressed contempt. Mary Kingsley, Pratt argues, believed in the possibility of "expansion without domination and exploitation" (215), which was exactly the point put forward by Butler in his report to Archibald. As a woman, we are informed, Kingsley was also "decisively and rather fiercely rejecting the textual mechanisms that created value in the discourse of her male predecessors" (214), by which Pratt means that the comic irony readers find so attractive in Kingsley's writings, and which would be evidently unacceptable in, say, Lord Edward Cecil's book, the letters of General Gordon or in the writings of William Butler, "mocks the self-importance and possessiveness of her male counterparts" (215). Pratt then concludes that Kingsley's use of this irony is an implicit criticism of male explorers; this assumption is not borne out by anything that Kingsley says directly, but by Pratt's own wishful thinking. Wouldn't it be wonderful, she insinuates, if the ironic tone in Mary Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa* was a direct result of the author's desire to puncture the presumptuousness

of male (and perhaps one or two female) explorers who think that alien lands can somehow be "possessed" and "conquered" by discourse?

"Expansion without domination and exploitation," however, is something which can be found outside Mary Kingsley, for it might be easily seen in the expressions of sympathy with North American native peoples which permeates the discourse of some of the very settlers of the land. Butler's report is full of sympathy, and even from the pen of the intrepid but somewhat strait-laced Susanna Moodie we can find strong passages of compassion. In her well-known work *Roughing It In the Bush* (1852), Mrs. Moodie did not mince words. "It is deeply to be lamented," she wrote, "that the vicinity of European settlers has always produced a very demoralising effect upon the Indians" (287). Butler himself in his report stated that "knowledge of the Indian character has too long been synonymous with knowledge of how to cheat the Indian" (*GLL* 381). Noting some pages earlier that "ownership in any particular portion of the soil is altogether foreign to the Indian" (*GLL* 361), he went on to express misgivings about "that immense sea of human life which rolls unceasingly from Europe to America," hoping against hope, as he says, that the settlers "will have no idle prejudices to perpetuate" when they arrive (*GLL* 383). Butler returned to this theme in *The Wild North Land*, where he wrote that "in nearly all the dealings of the white man with the red, the mistake of judging Indians by European standards has been made" (73). Moodie, too, knows this; "the Indians are often made a prey of and cheated by the unscrupulous settlers, who think it no crime to overreach a red-skin" (298). Moodie's deliberately pejorative use of "red-skin," not her usual phrase, here underlines the dehumanisation of the natives by the whites. Later on we find her writing of "the ignorance of governments" and "the abundance of selfish men," whom, she says, "greedily avail themselves of this ignorance in order to promote their private interests" (497).

Let us pass, for a moment, over to the other side in order to see Butler's "difference" more clearly. A slightly later visitor to Canada (1913) than Butler, the young poet Rupert Brooke, perhaps typifies what we might call "unintentional Eurocentricity." Brooke himself was no imperialist; he had socialist leanings and was close friends with several members of the Fabian Society, many of whom later became leaders in the new Labour Party, and, like Butler and Moodie, demonstrates in his Canadian essays a marked sympathy with Canada's native people. At the same time, Brooke's poetic consciousness was deeply-rooted in his Victorian classical heritage, which emerges as a force imposing on his observations some of those qualities deplored by Pratt. Brooke deprives the land of its history, because in European terms it has none. It contains no associations with

those things which were nearest and dearest to Brooke's poetic temper and cultural-social inheritance. "The maple and the birch conceal no dryads," Brooke laments, "and Pan has never been heard amongst these reed-beds." Greece and Rome having evidently no place in Canada, Brooke turns to his English spirits, with equal failure. He sees no "white arm in the foam of the river-cataracts," and regrets that "there walk, as yet, no ghosts of lovers in Canadian lanes" (156). For Brooke, something is missing, but he is no jingoistic downgrader of the unfamiliar, for he puts his finger firmly on the fact that in these very absences lie "the secret of a European's discontent" (156) with the Canadian landscape. Brooke's voice is not really that of the imperialist trying to conquer by force of referents, but actually the opposite. There are no referents which can bring Canada "home," and it's Brooke himself who feels displaced, as he seems to realise; of course there are no dryads, Pan, or white arms emerging foam-flecked to offer him Excalibur, because this isn't Europe. It's Canada, and it cannot be Hellenised or connected with Arthurian myth, which is what, for Brooke, makes it alien and disquiets him so much. Rupert Brooke had a deep-seated need for that "corner of a foreign field/ That is forever England," as he wrote in 1915; he needed history, continuity, not "the grey freshness and brisk melancholy" that he found in Canadian scenes. Wistfully he decided that "it is possible, at a pinch, to do without gods, but one misses the dead" (155).

Earlier on Brooke had been rather more blatantly Eurocentric. Canadian lakes and hills, he complained, "have no tradition, no names even; they are pools of water and lumps of earth….dumbly awaiting their Wordsworth or their Acropolis to give them their individuality and a soul" (117-18). One wonders whether Brooke expressed these sentiments when he met and stayed with the Canadian poet Duncan Campbell Scott. Did he just not see the inherent contradiction here, labelling Canada with Greek and English cultural tags which would, if applied, actually deprive it of individuality? In Alberta we find Brooke writing that "A European can find nothing to satisfy the hunger of his heart" there, because "the immaterial soul of England is heavy and fertile with the decaying stuff of past seasons and generations" (153-54), whilst for him Canada has no "past seasons and generations." He does try and see it from the other side, imagining that Canadians "would suffer claustrophobia in an English countryside beneath the dreadful pressure of immortals" (154), but for Brooke Canada was, in spite of its great beauty, "an empty land. To love the country here….is like embracing a wraith" (153). We are reminded of David Staines's ironic observation that "nothing here" may have been "the possible origin of the

very word *Canada*….from the Portuguese words meaning 'nobody here'" (7)!

Sir William Butler, on the other hand, did not try to fill the prairies up with anything, nor did he attempt to reinvent them as Platonic forms or something else comfortably English. Whilst Brooke complained about being "perpetually a first-comer" (151), Butler revelled in it, showing none of what Pratt terms "the discourse of negation, domination and fear" (219), Eurocentric aspects that she finds even in the most modern of travel-accounts by people like the eminent Italian novelist Alberto Moravia and, perhaps surprisingly, the very urbane and well-travelled Paul Theroux, and whose prevalence she blames on nineteenth-century travellers such as Burton. In Brooke's case she has a point; for him the "first-comer" feeling implies that there was no habitation of the land, no history of human endeavour. Native peoples are forgotten at this point. For Brooke, the "past" was the key to all, and it meant that romanticised kinship with the Greeks or the ancient mythical British past that the Victorians felt so strongly about, the land of Alma-Tadema paintings and Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. He could not reconcile himself to the possibility that these things could, somewhere in this very world, be irrelevant. As a contrast, consider this passage from Butler's *Great Lone Land*:

> The great ocean itself does not possess more infinite variety than does the prairie-ocean of which we speak. In winter, a dazzling surface of purest snow; in early summer a vast expanse of grass and pale pink roses; in autumn too often a wild sea of raging fire. No ocean in the world can vie with its gorgeous sunsets; no solitude can equal the loneliness of a night-shadowed prairie. One feels the stillness and hears the silence, the wail of the prowling wolf makes the voice of solitude audible, the stars look down in infinite silence upon a silence almost as intense. This ocean has no past—time has been nought to it; and men have come and gone, leaving no vestige of their presence. Some French writer, speaking of these prairies, has said that the sense of utter negation of life, this complete absence of history, has struck him with a loneliness oppressive and sometimes terrible in its intensity. Perhaps so; but for my part, the prairies had nothing terrible in their aspect, nothing oppressive in their loneliness. One saw here the world as it had taken shape from the hands of the Creator. Nor did the scene look less beautiful because nature alone tilled the earth, and the unaided sun brought forth the flowers. (200)

There is no rhetoric of domination here, no fear of the unknown; Butler shows that such things have no place in his observations of the Canadian prairie. Nature, not man, created the beauty he saw, and indeed man, red or white, is an irrelevance here. The very negation of myth or history *as he knows it* is part of the attraction here, its "Edenic" quality, the lack of

human evil. Butler actually negates all human history; humanity does not matter here, people are incidental, they are not the conquering heroes of imperialism. Unlike the French writer to whom he alludes briefly, Butler sees no threat or melancholy in the solitude, desolation or quiet surrounding him as he lies flat on his back gazing up at the glimmering stars in the night-sky. These were the very characteristics Butler sought for his utopia, before whose context the whole imperial ethos would become jejune, rather like Conrad's unforgettable image in *Heart of Darkness* of the latest-model French gunboat firing its silly little shells into the vast, dark continent of Africa. Butler's imagery here carries no European referents; indeed, the "prowling wolf" and its wailing cry designate the scene as absolutely Canadian. Butler saw himself as part of the land, not its possessor; he has absolutely no fear of it at all and he is not the "monarch of all he surveys," having no intention of assuming that particular mantle because he knows how uneasy are heads which wear crowns. Nowhere in this passage does Butler engage in what Pratt calls "the triviality, dehumanization, and rejection" that she claims Western writers employ to keep the places they describe in rhetorical "subjugation" (219). Just as Mary Kingsley marvelled at "the band of stars and moonlit heavens that the walls of the mangrove allowed one to see" (Kingsley 338), so Butler looked up at the same stars in "their infinite silence," thus, like Kingsley, "keeping watch and savouring the solitude of [his] night-vigil" (Pratt 214).

Solitude, silence and loneliness, it seems, cannot be touched by the merely political. In the seventeenth century another eminent soldier, Sir Thomas Fairfax, retiring from the world's strife after the Parliamentary victory in the Civil War, observed in a poem, "O how I love these solitudes/ And places silent as the night" and Butler himself wrote that "he who has once tasted the unworded freedom of the Western wilds must ever feel a sense of constraint within the boundaries of civilised life" (*GLL* 351). His use of "unworded" is masterful—no word in *our* language could ever describe what he saw and felt; as Wittgenstein once famously observed, "what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence." Even Rupert Brooke had to acknowledge "that feeling of fresh loneliness that impresses itself before any detail *of* [Brooke's italics] the wild. The soul—or the personality—seems to have infinite room to expand" (117). Susanna Moodie, after roughing it in the bush for seven years, actually missed the loneliness. "I clung to my solitude," she wrote; "I did not like to be dragged from it to mingle in gay scenes" (501). What is more, Butler does not "estheticize" as Pratt claims Burton had done, which is to see the sight as if it were a painting, "with description ordered in terms of background, foreground, symmetries" (204), thus implying that the writer

is the painter and therefore the "master" of what he (and it's always *he*) is depicting, the one most qualified to relate it, evaluate it and make it conform to the terms of his own (European) cultural discourse. Butler, in the above passage, is reacting with awed delight to what he is observing, actually inspired by the reality of its "otherness" and avoiding the temptation to assimilate it to his own cultural nexus. In any case, what other words could he have used to describe the solitude and openness he so much loved?

Even if analyses such as Pratt's suggest new ways of looking at texts, they often become bogged down in political agendas which allow little room for any exceptions to the rules they are so keen to promote. There are, certainly, writers who do use imagery which suggests conquest, mastery or dominance, and they are not all male. Their tendency to see history as "a linear process sometimes with an implied cycle underlining it" (Nandy 57) is more the culprit than their maleness; it is this which leads to the unfortunate tendency to negate history, and indeed their Western patterns of organised thought may lead them to make assumptions or draw conclusions which suppose an order and purpose to the world which may or may not exist. Such an imposition leads to a degradation of the place for not being the way it "should" be; we in the West like order in our court, rigour in our scholarship, tidy rooms, and a goal in our lives. As Butler remarked in his preface to *The Wild North Land*, "people are supposed to have an object in every journey they undertake in the world" (v). His own object, he tells us, is best expressed by Tennyson's familiar lines from "Ulysses," in which the ageing hero declares "I cannot rest from travel. I will drink life to the lees."

In conclusion I would like to allude very briefly to Deleuze and Guattari, whose book on Kafka posits the idea of a "minor literature," which I believe should include the writings of Sir William Butler, as well as those of Orwell, Blunt, and even Conrad. They list three conditions for this category. First, its language should be "affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization," second, "everything….is political," and third, "everything takes on a collective value" (16-17). If Butler does belong to Nandy's group of marginal dissenting voices and his language is free from imperialistic discourse, then he is deterritorialised. True, he employs English, the "major" language, as Kafka employed German. But since Deleuze and Guattari note of Joyce and Beckett, "as Irishmen, both of them live within the genial conditions of a minor literature" (19), also employed English, as do many African and Indian writers, why not Butler, who was also an Irishman? His language is not that of Henty, Rider Haggard John Buchan or even Rudyard Kipling. Butler's theories are

certainly political, and his emphasis on trying to understand the native people as well as what we would now term his "ecologically-friendly" attitude to the land may also be described as broadly political. As for the last criterion, which Deleuze and Guattari define as an ability to foresee "another possible community" and to "forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility" (17), it can certainly be argued that Butler envisaged a community of co-operation and honesty rather than one of commercial exploitation and despoiling of land. He made some practical recommendations for the implementation of these ideals in his report, and he wanted to change the entrenched attitude of white people and their government towards the natives they now ruled over. Butler and others are authentic voices speaking out from the broader community to suggest alternatives, they are voices which make the generalised voice of British imperialism as expressed in literature much more complex and more interesting than the narrowness of so many post-colonial critical views would suggest. Those critics whose preset agenda is to attack any colonial-era writers as if they were by very definition supportive of the imperial system at its worst might take pains to read some of their writers more carefully.

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