

Cartographic Lessons

Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* and Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*

As much as guns and warships, maps have been the weapons of imperialism.

J. B. HARLEY, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power" (282)

This essay investigates some of the mapping strategies that are employed in Canadian culture. The question it addresses is: How does Canadian culture colonize and then decolonize the Canadian landscape? I begin by attempting to define the relationship between cartography, the Canadian landscape, and colonial discourse, using mainly Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* to illustrate the connections. Then I examine Thomas King's treatment of land and maps in *Green Grass, Running Water* as part of his subversion of colonial discourse.

My analysis is intended to complement Graham Huggan's study of maps and mapping strategies in Canadian (and Australian) literature, the most substantial work that has been done in the area. Huggan does not treat any First Nations texts.¹ As well, his definition of Canadian literature, as "characterized by the gradual displacement/replacement of a 'cartography of exile' . . . by a 'cartography of difference'" (147), does not include First Nations literature. These omissions or exclusions may be either a cause or an effect of his categorization of European Canadian writers as "post-colonial":² that is as writers who "engage in a dialectical relationship with the colonial history of their respective countries" (xii-xiii). Huggan's analysis is part of a general tendency in European Canadian culture to see itself as the colonized and not as the colonizer. It is a viewpoint which discounts First Nations experience of colonialism. My essay tries to offer a different perspective.

In 1832, as part of a wave of emigration from Britain, prompted by the ending of the Napoleonic Wars and an economic recession, Susanna Moodie

and her husband J. W. Dunbar Moodie immigrated to Canada. Were the term “economic refugee” not so evidently racially coded, it might be applied to the Moodies, for they came to Canada with the hope, if not of making their fortune, then “of bettering [their] condition, and securing a sufficient competence to support [a] family” (Moodie 526). A half-pay officer in the British army, Dunbar Moodie had been given a military land grant of four hundred acres in Upper Canada as part of a land settlement scheme which, following the War of 1812, served as a way of keeping a military presence in Canada without the cost of maintaining a large army. In 1834, the Moodies settled on this land, which had been secured for them in Douro Township, about six miles north of Rice Lake, in what is now Peterborough County.

One day in the mid-to-late 1830s, Susanna Moodie was paid a visit by “our Indian friends,” as she calls them. The visit itself was not unusual, for the Moodies and the Mississauga were neighbours of a sort, part of the Moodies’ property having “originally been an Indian sugar-bush. Although the favourite spot had now passed into the hands of strangers, they still frequented the place, to make canoes and baskets, to fish and shoot, and occasionally to follow their old occupation.” What marks this particular visit in Susanna Moodie’s memory is the reaction of the callers to a certain object in the Moodies’ possession:

With a large map of Canada they were infinitely delighted. In a moment they recognised every bay and headland in Ontario, and almost screamed with delight when, following the course of the Trent with their fingers, they came to their own lake.

How eagerly each pointed out the spot to his fellows; how intently their black heads were bent down, and their dark eyes fixed upon the map! What strange, uncouth exclamations of surprise burst from their lips as they rapidly repeated the Indian names for every lake and river on this wonderful piece of paper!

The old chief, Peter Nogan, begged hard for the coveted treasure. He would give “Canoe, venison, duck, fish, for it; and more by-and-by.”

I felt sorry that I was unable to gratify his wishes; but the map had cost upwards of six dollars, and was daily consulted by my husband, in reference to the names and situations of localities in the neighbourhood. (280-81)

As the geographer J. B. Harley reminds us, maps are not accurate, objective or scientific representations, as we tend to think of them, but rather are “a socially constructed form of knowledge” which operate as “a political force in society.” They are like books: instruments of knowledge and of power (277-79). And since the main struggle in imperialism is over land, cartographic representation is, arguably, more crucial to the process of colonization than other forms of cultural representation.

The map scene in Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* actually features two maps, one of which conceals the other. The first is, of course, the Moodies' map of Canada, a palimpsest which over-writes an alternative and prior but also present mode of territorial representation: a Mississauga map of the same area. Testimony of the coexistence of the Mississauga map is provided in Moodie's narrative by the geographical discourse engaged in by her visitors: "they rapidly repeated the Indian names for every lake and river on this wonderful piece of paper." The difference between the Moodies' map and that of the Mississauga is not the degree of their correspondence with the real world, but rather their relative power in that world. The Moodies' map is more powerful because it accompanies European colonial expansion.

In its suppression of First Nations place names in favour of English ones, the Moodies' map already reveals colonial violence. Erasing First Nations geographical and cultural patterns from the Canadian landscape—denying First Nations past and presence—the map legitimates colonial territorial appropriation: the dispossession of First Nations people. Through its naming practices, the Moodies' map also traces a British cultural hegemony over the Canadian landscape, inscribing the same all-encompassing and homogenizing identity construction of the nation as Susanna Moodie's narrative, which, likewise, upholds the myth of national origin that the British are Canada's sole founding people: "Canada! . . . The offspring of Britain, thou must be great" (73).³

Moodie herself also actively participates in colonial naming practices. Invoking the myth of the (so-called) new world as a "second Eden" (36), a myth which removes all traces of First Nations from the Canadian landscape, she casts herself and her husband in the role of humankind's first progenitors and begins, in good cartographic fashion, to (re)name places:

The pure beauty of the Canadian water, the sombre but august grandeur of the vast forest that hemmed us in on every side and shut us out from the rest of the world, soon cast a magic spell upon our spirits, and we began to feel charmed with the freedom and solitude around us. . . . We felt as if we were the first discoverers of every beautiful flower and stately tree that attracted our attention, and we gave names to fantastic rocks and fairy isles, and raised imaginary houses and bridges on every picturesque spot which we floated past during our aquatic excursions. (278-79).⁴

As W. H. New shows, the language of starting over (as in Moodie's figuring of the Canadian landscape as a new world Garden of Eden) occurs repeatedly in European Canadian literature. And while, as with Moodie, it "suggests

the possibility of a reclaimed innocence,” it also “codes a set of ingrained attitudes” (23). In Moodie’s case, these include a view of land as private property and of the (already Edenic) Canadian landscape as requiring some upgrading: the imposition of British names and of marks of European occupancy on it.⁴

The Moodies’ map of Canada may have been the one of Upper Canada produced by the Canada Company in 1830.⁵ Or perhaps it was an 1833 map of the British North American Provinces.⁶ Both of these maps, as well as many others of the period, display the township grid. An apparatus of colonial power, the grid map served as a medium of appropriation of First Nations territories and also as an open declaration of the right to European settlement. With the grid marking townships into concessions and lots, it also gave further legitimacy to immigrants’ claims of land ownership, allowing them to make statements such as the following by Susanna Moodie: “It was mid-winter; the Indians had pitched their tent, or wigwam, *as usual, in our swamp*” (292, emphasis added)—in other words, authorizing them to say “This land is my land. Here are its boundaries.”

Douro Township had been surveyed in 1823 (Gentilcore and Donkin 52), which opened it up for European settlement. The magical transformatory powers of the grid survey are proudly conveyed by the authors of *Land Surveys of Southern Ontario*:

From an unmapped and unknown wilderness, the southern parts of [Ontario] were transformed into a landscape bearing the marks of a new occupancy, many of which were creatures of the survey: the checkerboard of rectangular fields, the alignment and spacing of farmsteads along the fronts of the concessions, the allowances for roads at regular intervals, even the shapes and forms of towns. (Gentilcore and Donkin 1)

Douro Township, and hence the land the Moodies settled on, had belonged to the Rice Lake Mississauga until 1818, when it was surrendered (Patterson 220).

The grid laid out by the rectangular land survey imposed a new space discipline on the land which had very concrete material effects on people’s bodies. In 1550, at the time of initial contact with Europeans, the First Nations population of what is now Southern Ontario is estimated to have been 65,000 (Trigger 41). In 1840, by which time well over half of Southern Ontario had been surveyed into townships, the First Nations population of the whole province was a mere 8000. In the meantime, immigrant population, which had been steadily increasing, had reached almost half a million

(Surtees, "Land" 112). The decline in First Nations population was owing to disease, famine, and "resettlement." The case is well illustrated by the situation of the Rice Lake Mississauga in 1818, at the time they ceded their land in return for "Cloathing in payment every year" (quoted in Surtees, "Land" 113). Nearly all of the surrounding land had been ceded much earlier, in 1784 and 1785 (Patterson 220), and much of it had been surveyed before the turn of the century (Gentilcore and Donkin 30-86). The desperate state of the Mississauga is indicated by the words of Chief Buckquaquet, spoken at the time of the surrender:

If I was to refuse what our Father has requested, our Women and Children would be more to be pitied. From our lands we receive scarcely anything and if your words are true we will get more by parting with them, than by keeping them—our hunting is destroyed and we must throw ourselves on the compassion of our Great Father and King. (quoted in Surtees, "Land" 113)

Thus the land of Susanna Moodie's "Indian friends" "passed into the hands of strangers."

In Moodie's analysis, "a mysterious destiny involves and hangs over [the Indians], pressing them back into the wilderness, and slowly and surely sweeping them from the earth" (299), the phrase "mysterious destiny" both mystifying and naturalizing the suffering and death of thousands of First Nations people brought about by European immigration to Canada. As Daniel Francis observes, the myth of the vanishing Indian was a very expedient notion: "[Indians] occupied land of value to farmers. In the minds of many Whites they presented a threat to the peaceful expansion of settlement. . . . It was convenient that they should simply disappear" (59). As Francis also points out, the image of the vanishing Indian persisted in immigrant culture well into the twentieth century, long after the decline in First Nations population was reversed in the 1920s.

"Population bomb ticking on reserves" warns a front-page headline in a recent *Globe and Mail* (Mitchell A-1).⁷ It would have been naive to think that a considerable increase in First Nations population would be a cause for national celebration. The horrified reaction of the mainstream media to Canada's changing demographics is the flip side of the lament for the vanishing Indian: an immigrant population's recurring nightmare of the return of the dispossessed. As Homi Bhabha describes the operations of power in another context, it denotes "the visibility of the subject as an object of surveillance, tabulation, enumeration, and, indeed, paranoia and fantasy" ("Other" 156).

Another population myth which has persisted in Canadian immigrant culture is the myth of the empty continent—a myth which is not unconnected to the township grid. An instrument of inclusion and exclusion, the grid is what marks off “civilization,” or the known, from the “wilderness,” or the unknown—that is land which is still beyond the control of European colonialism. Thus Susanna Moodie speaks of Dummer, a township which had not been completely surveyed until 1831 (Gentilcore and Donkin 53), as a “far western wilderness;” it is “this *terra incognita*” (439). The colonial task is to transform the “wilderness” into “civilization” by imposing European geometrical and cultivated order on it—by surveying, clearing, and settling it. Writing in 1871, about forty years after she first arrived in Canada, this is how Susanna Moodie measures the nation’s “progress:” “The rough has become smooth, the crooked has been made straight, the forests have been converted into fruitful fields, the rude log cabin of the woodsman has been replaced by the handsome, well appointed homestead, and large populous cities have pushed the small clap-boarded village into the shade” (529). As W. H. New observes, Moodie draws on the Bible in this passage (Isaiah 40.4), using it to convey her notion of progress as a European ordering of the landscape, “the result of surveyed edges and the cultivated replacement of the wilderness” (75).

On colonial maps of Canada, land which has not been surveyed appears as a blank, which is sometimes labelled “wilderness.”⁸ Such maps display the power of cartography to erase and dispossess, the blank spaces ignoring current occupancy and ownership of land and appearing ready and available for colonial possession and exploitation. A blank space is also a metaphor for the absence of history, thus supporting the conventional colonial claim, made repeatedly by Moodie, that the history of colonial territories began with the arrival of Europeans. And even when a blank is given a label, such as “Indian Territory” or “Chippawa Hunting Country” (as, for example, on the 1833 Map of the British North American Provinces), the inscription, as Harley argues, serves less as a recognition of territorial integrity than “as a signpost to future colonial expansion” (292). In the case of the huge tract of land described as “Indian Territory” on maps of the early 1830s, most of it was surrendered by the Chippewa in 1836 (Patterson 220).⁹

The myth of the empty continent is also a recurring feature of Canadian immigrant literature. Susanna Moodie inscribes it in her narrative every time she uses the term “wilderness.” Occasionally Moodie is more blunt and

speaks of the “unpeopled forest plains” (28) or “unpeopled wastes” (268) of Canada. Writing about a hundred years later, Stephen Leacock is equally straightforward: the title of the opening chapter of his *Canada: The Foundations of its Future* is “The Empty Continent.” Hugh MacLennan also erases First Nations from the Canadian landscape with his description in the famous opening passage of *Two Solitudes* of the Canadian north as empty tundra: “Nothing lives on it but a few prospectors and hard-rock miners and Mounted Policemen and animals and the flies that brood over the barrens in summer like haze” (2).

As Edward Said observes, colonial culture is remarkably cohesive. Group of Seven paintings depicting a pristine northern wilderness also perpetuate the myth of the empty continent. Nor has the practice been discontinued in the 1990s, a very recent example being the 1997 celebrations of John Cabot’s “discovery” of Canada. The *Maclean’s* article covering the event even features a map of Newfoundland, with Cabot standing beside it, Christ-like, on the water, his outstretched arms a (chilling) reminder of the colonial project. The map is a complete blank, thus anticipating, we might say, the extermination of the Beothuk which resulted from European immigration. In another act of erasure, the article barely mentions the objections raised by First Nations groups to the celebrations (Bergman 14-17).¹⁰

Like other forms of colonial discourse, the colonial map “seeks authorization for its strategies by the production of knowledges of colonizer and colonized which are stereotypical but antithetically evaluated. The objective . . . is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (Bhabha, “Other” 154). On colonial maps of Canada, the blank spaces are the signifiers of racial degeneracy, encoding First Nations as an absence or a lack: as savagery or barbarism. The township grid and English toponyms, on the other hand, represent the plenitude or full presence of colonial society: history, culture, civilization.

In her narrative, Moodie maps the identity of colonized and colonizer according to the same formula, while also clearly demonstrating Homi Bhabha’s claim that colour is “the key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype” (“Other” 165). In the map scene, the “black heads,” “dark eyes,” and “strange uncouth exclamations” of her Mississauga visitors are the main signifiers of their inferiority. In another scene Moodie celebrates the “racial purity” of her daughter: “Was she not purely British? Did

not her soft blue eyes, and sunny curls, and bright rosy cheeks for ever remind me of her Saxon origin. . . ?" (166). It may be tempting to think patronizingly of Moodie as a person of her own time. If so, it is probably worth considering Thomas King's statement that there are only three images of the Indian: "the dissipated savage, the barbarous savage, and the heroic savage"—that these "represent the full but limited range of Indian characters" in all Euro-North American literature, including contemporary Canadian literature (Introduction 8).¹¹

As Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson state, the colonial practice of conceptually depopulating the landscape—as in the myth of the empty continent or of the vanishing Indian—was a necessary act, for "only empty spaces can be settled" and settlers do not wish to see themselves as invaders (5). This analysis might initiate a reconsideration of the terminology employed in the fields of both "postcolonial" and Canadian literary studies, apparently to indicate the birthplace of writers but also, it would seem, to encode race or ethnicity—terms such as "settler writing," "immigrant writing," and "ethnic writing." While I have used the term "immigrant" to refer to Susanna Moodie, "settler" is the more usual designation, an unsatisfactory term on several counts. Aside from the fact that it is usually employed in an exclusionary manner to designate only European (and often only British) immigrants, it carries with it the implication that First Nations people were not "settled"—that is, were not utilizing the land or, perhaps, were not even present, thus perpetuating the myths of imperial culture.¹² However, the term "immigrant" is itself not entirely satisfactory, for, as "settler" also does, it masks the violence of colonialism. Though any and all terms will be problematic until relations between First Nations and other Canadians cease to be colonial, the term "invader" might be used occasionally as a reminder of Canada's colonial history.

While it continues to perpetuate colonial myths, Canadian immigrant/invader culture is unable to establish the basis for a decolonized society. At the very least, the process of decolonization requires a remembering of Canada's colonial history. Decolonization is a project which Susanna Moodie herself, writing in 1871, just four years after Confederation, urged her adopted country to undertake by developing, among other things, an autonomous literature (533-34). Caught up in the binaries of colonial culture, Moodie is unable to recognize the oral literatures by which she is surrounded. Nor does she presume a tradition of First Nations writing.

While the map episode in Moodie's narrative implies the triumph of colonial power, it also "inscribes a much more ambivalent text of authority" (Bhabha, "Signs" 168). The geographical discourse engaged in by Susanna Moodie's Mississauga visitors—once again: "they rapidly repeated the Indian names for every lake and river on this wonderful piece of paper"—is subversive in character, asserting First Nations presence in, as well as occupation and possession of, the land. It represents "Indian names" as a stake in what Foucault would call the "tactics and strategies of power" (77). Hybridized in the context of colonial culture, the colonial map's authoritative representation is undermined by the First Nations map, itself a symbol of First Nations resistance to colonial occupation. Thus, though Moodie's narrative does not admit the possibility of anti-colonial resistance, her Mississauga visitors, through their geographical discourse, establish "another specifically colonial space of power/knowledge" (Bhabha, "Signs" 179).

Susanna Moodie makes a cameo appearance in Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water*. She is on a trans-Canada bus tour, along with Pauline Johnson, John Richardson, and Archibald Belaney (aka Grey Owl). They are looking for "Indians" (158). Although they stop for dinner at a First Nations owned and operated restaurant, they do not realize that they have come to the end of their quest because the restaurant staff members do not fit any of the stereotypes of the Indian that Moodie and her travelling companions have done so much to define and perpetuate.

Green Grass, Running Water is about the representation of First Nations. It sets out to subvert the colonial discourse produced by writers such as Moodie—to expose and ridicule the discriminatory knowledges of colonial authority.¹³ King's tactic of displaying for ridicule the loaded oppositions used to establish colonialism's discursive field is particularly well-illustrated in the following exchange between two of his characters: Nasty (that is, Natty) Bumpo, the hero of one of the classic American novels of colonization, James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, and Old Woman, a figure from a number of First Nations narratives:

Indians can run fast. Indians can endure pain. Indians have quick reflexes. Indians don't talk much. Indians have good eyesight. Indians have agile bodies. These are all Indian gifts, says Nasty Bumpo.

Interesting, says Old Woman.

Whites are patient. Whites are spiritual. Whites are cognitive. Whites are

philosophical. Whites are sophisticated. Whites are sensitive. These are all white gifts, says Nasty Bumppo.

So, says Old Woman. Whites are superior, and Indians are inferior.

Exactly right, says Nasty Bumppo. Any questions? (393)

King also explores the relationship of cultural representation to identity in his narrative, showing how the psychologies of both populations have been shaped and continue to be shaped by the discriminatory knowledges of colonial culture. The novel is set in 1992, on a Blackfoot Reservation and in the nearby town of Blossom, Alberta. Its central character, Lionel Red Dog, whose fortieth birthday is celebrated in the narrative, has from childhood taken John Wayne as his model: "Not the actor, but the character. Not the man, but the hero. The John Wayne who cleaned up cattle towns and made them safe for decent folk. . . . The John Wayne who saved stage-coaches and wagon trains from Indian attacks" (241). As Homi Bhabha says is typical of the colonial subject, Lionel "desires not merely to be in the place of the white man but compulsively seeks to look back and down on himself from that position" (*Location* 60). Indeed, what Lionel compulsively seeks to do from that position is to shoot himself. Induced into a state of paralysis by his ambivalent identification, Lionel is unable to do anything about the dismal state of his personal and professional life. Thus, rather than going to university or finding work at home on the Reservation, he continues, year after year, to work at a minimum-wage, dead-end job as a clerk in Bill Bursum's Home Entertainment Barn. Another John Wayne *aficionado*, Bursum, too, "is caught in the ambivalence of paranoid identification, alternating between fantasies of megalomania and persecution" (Bhabha, *Location* 61).

King's major concern in *Green Grass, Running Water* is with the ways and means of resistance to the mechanisms of colonial power. As Laura E. Donaldson states, one of his chosen modes of resistance is a "contestatory intertextuality," through which he effects "a subversive reordering of relations in the dominant fields of imperialist, capitalist and masculinist power" (40). One of the stories King rewrites is the foundational narrative of Judeo-Christianity: the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In his rewriting, King makes the most of the theme of new beginnings—a theme, which, as we have already seen, features prominently in European Canadian literature—exposing it (as Moodie does inadvertently in her narrative) as masking the actual transference of "existing presumptions and

prejudices, changing locale, but not expectation” (New 24). Thus, in King’s version of the story, God (who, like Susanna Moodie, views land as private property) is cast in the imperial mode—“this is my world and this is my garden” he asserts repeatedly—while Eve is played by First Woman, from the Navajo narrative of origins. First Woman offers a stinging critique of the values of imperial culture by demonstrating an alternative mode of living: offering to share with God all the resources of the garden (which include fried chicken, hotdogs, and pizza, as well as apples) and remarking on his refusal to partake, “You are acting as if you have no relations” (68-69). Meanwhile, in a scene reminiscent of the map scene in Moodie’s narrative, Adam (“Ahdamn” in King’s version), a carbon copy of his creator, is busy colonizing the garden by “naming everything”:

You are a microwave oven, Ahdamn tells the Elk.
 Nope, says that Elk. Try again.
 You are a garage sale, Ahdamn tells the Bear.
 We got to get you some glasses, says the Bear.
 You are a telephone book, Ahdamn tells the Cedar Tree.
 You’re getting closer, says the Cedar Tree.
 You are a cheeseburger, Ahdamn tells Old Coyote.
 It must be time for lunch, says Old Coyote. (41)

In this hilarious parody of colonial (mis)naming practices, King highlights, as he does repeatedly in the novel, the values of imperial culture, values which are very similar to the ones Moodie’s narrative endorses: a belief in hierarchy, technology, exploitation, mastery over nature, progress, private property.

King also offers another rewriting of the Garden of Eden story, in this version, taking to its “logical” conclusion Moodie’s desire to improve the Canadian landscape by imposing the marks of British “civilization” on it. In this case the garden has been transformed into a mental institution. The director of the asylum is one Dr. Joe Hovaugh (“Jehovah” in case, like me, you didn’t get it on first reading), a man who, not incidentally, is obsessed with maps which he uses to locate Indians who have escaped from his control and surveillance.

Maps are everywhere in *Green Grass, Running Water*, implicit even in its title which refers to the treaties between First Nations and the colonial or Canadian government, with the latter obtaining title to the land and thereby making it available for European settlement, and establishing Indian reservations which were to last “as long as the grass is green and the

waters run" (267). The main plot of King's novel centres on a hydroelectric project which is being developed by the Canadian government on Blackfoot land. Once in operation, the dam will flood reserve land, including the house of Lionel's uncle, Eli Stands Alone—a house which Eli's mother had built all by herself, "log by log" (114). Having determined to try to save his ancestral land, he refuses to leave his mother's house and applies for an injunction to stop the project.

If the township grid was the hallmark of nineteenth-century Canadian "progress," the hydroelectric mega-dam is the great icon of twentieth century "development"—each being one of the most effective technologies "yet developed for the genocidal annihilation of Native cultures" (Donaldson 39). As James Waldram observes in his study of the effects of hydroelectric projects on First Nations communities, hydroelectric dam construction has generally not taken place near urban centres, but rather "in the vast hinterland"—those blank spaces on contemporary maps of Canada—which is where "Native communities . . . are inevitably located" (xi). And while "southern-based industries and consumers . . . have reaped the benefits of the development of relatively inexpensive power," the effects on "northern residents, who are mostly Native people," have been devastating (8): the flooding of reserve land, the loss of water resources, the destruction of livelihood, the relocation of entire communities. Nor has there ever been much consultation with the people who are to be affected. Thus, as Waldram states, there is remarkable historic continuity in the treatment of Native people in the process of hydroelectric development and their treatment in the last century in the negotiation of treaties:

It has been a century or more since most Native people in western Canada signed treaties or were given scrip to simultaneously acknowledge their aboriginal rights and surrender many of those rights. The treaties were to have lasted "as long as the rivers run." The hydroelectric era seems to represent both the symbolic termination of these agreements and the re-emergence of the treaty and scrip processes which once again have allowed governments to exploit Native resources for the "common good." New agreements have been signed. But the rivers no longer run. (xv)

King names the dam in his novel the "Grand Baleen" (112), that is the Great Whale, after the Great Whale project in northern Quebec, which was to have been the second phase of the James Bay project, thus specifically contextualizing his narrative in the ongoing conflict between First Nations and Canadian colonialism over the development of hydro power. In 1992,

Great Whale suffered a tremendous setback when New York state cancelled its contract to purchase power from Hydro Quebec, the result of a Quebec Cree campaign against further development. It is a victory which King implicitly celebrates in his novel. In 1994, the project was cancelled altogether.

In the struggle against the hydro project in King's novel, *Eli Stands Alone's* antagonist is the engineer in charge of the dam, one Clifford Sifton. Many, perhaps all, of King's characters are named after figures from literature or history, this being one of the many delights of this hilarious but deadly serious novel: discovering who the characters are named for. It is also another of King's strategies of resistance through which he effects a reordering of relations of power. From 1896 to 1905, Clifford Sifton was both Minister of the Interior and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in the Laurier government. He was thus an instrumental figure in the redrawing of the map of Canada which occurred in this period, culminating in the creation in 1905 of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta from the North-West Territories. As Minister of the Interior, Clifton was responsible for organizing "the settlement and development of the West," which, according to the immigration historian Freda Hawkins, "he proceeded to do with tremendous energy and dedication," recruiting tens of thousands of settlers from Britain, the United States, and central Europe. In Hawkins's view, "There is no figure like him in the history of Canadian immigration to the present day" (4-5). As Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Sifton was in charge of negotiations for Treaty 8, which involved the ceding of a huge tract of land: all of central and northern Alberta, part of northern Saskatchewan and British Columbia, the western portion of the North West Territories, and the eastern part of the Yukon. The main objective of the negotiations was, in his words, "to pacify and keep pacified the North-West Territories" and avoid "having an Indian trouble on our hands" (cited in Hall 273). Sifton also made a number of attempts to appropriate First Nations treaty land in order to make it available for European settlement (Hall 271).

In King's novel, the name "Clifford Sifton" is a reminder of Canada's colonial history, as well as an indication that relations between First Nations and immigrants/inlanders continue to be colonial. King also implies that racist views, such as Sifton's, of almost a century earlier, remain current in contemporary society. Indeed, King's Sifton expresses the same self-privileging value system of European colonization as the man he is named after,

believing that Native rights are “a barrel load of crap” (138) and wishing that the myth of the vanishing Indian had been a reality. “Who’d of guessed,” he says irritably, “that there would still be Indians kicking around in the twentieth century” (141).¹⁴

One of the people who is to benefit from the Grand Baleen hydro project is Bill Bursum, named, appropriately, for the Bursum Bill which was introduced into the U.S. Senate in 1921 by Senator Holm O. Bursum of New Mexico and which proposed the opening of Pueblo land to European American settlement. “Even before the dam had been started, before the contours of the lake were actually realized, Bursum had looked at the topographical map . . . and picked out the best piece of property on the lake” (266). Like the Moodies’ map of Canada, this topographical map overwrites an earlier, though in this case still colonial, map of the same area: one showing a river running through a Blackfoot reservation, rather than a lake obscuring its boundaries. Like the Moodies’ map of Canada, too, this map functions as a form of territorial appropriation, legitimating Bursum’s claim to lakefront property. In his view—a view evidently shared by the Canadian government—the phrase “green grass, running water” is a mere metaphor: “Treaties were hardly sacred documents. They were contracts, and no one signed a contract for eternity” (267).

Bursum is also the creator of “The Map,” as it is referred to in the novel. With the assistance of Lionel Red Dog, he has arranged the television sets in the wall display of his Home Entertainment Centre into the shape of a map of North America. Though Bursum is no literary theorist, he seems instinctively to know his Foucault: “The Map. Bursum loved the sound of it. There was a majesty to the name. He stepped back from the screens and looked at his creation. It was stupendous. It was more powerful than he had thought. It was like having the universe there on the wall, being able to see everything, being in control” (128). Then, having positioned himself so that he can both see each screen individually and take “in the panorama” (188), Bursum watches a video of his favourite movie, a Hollywood western, playing on all of the screens simultaneously. At the movie’s climax, the Indians are wiped right off The Map when they are shot and killed by John Wayne and his cohorts.

An act of cartographic imperialism, The Map justifies the colonization of North America—“our home on Natives’ land,” as King puts it in his witty (or devastating, depending on your perspective) rewriting of the Canadian

national anthem (270). By making *The Map* part of a complex television and video display, King highlights the function of maps as technologies of power. To the same end, King models this scene of *The Map* on the figure of the Panopticon, another instrument of power/knowledge, which, in Foucault's words, is "designed to solve the problems of surveillance" (148). Under the panoptic regime, the individual becomes an object of knowledge over whom power is exercised. And because observation is singular, self-operating, and continuous, the gaze of power is soon internalized and self-regulation replaces the need for external surveillance, thus assuring the automatic functioning of power. This is what Bursum represents in King's novel: the "dominating, overseeing gaze" of colonial power (152)—a gaze which not only sees everything but also seeks to cancel the returning gaze of the other.

There are, however, two more map scenes in *Green Grass, Running Water*, scenes in which "the strategic reversal of the process of domination. . . . turn[s] the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power" (Bhabha, "Signs" 173). These scenes involve First Woman, as well as three other ancient Indians who, having escaped from Dr. Hovaugh's asylum, set about, with the help of trickster Coyote, "to fix up the world" (123). One of the things they "fix" is Bill Bursum's Map. By reversing the end of his favourite John Wayne western, they transform a narrative of conquest and subjugation into one of victorious anti-colonial resistance and confront the triumphalist discourse of colonialism with its own savage violence. In the new version of the movie, it is the white men who are wiped off *The Map*, dying gruesomely, as the Indians do in the original version, "clutching their chests or their heads or their stomachs" (321). Bursum, who believes that the concepts of "[p]ower and control" are "outside the range of the Indian imagination" (128-29), goes ballistic.

The Indians and Coyote also fix the Grand Baleen Dam, destroying it with an earthquake. Once again Bursum is quite literally at the centre of the scene. In this case he is out admiring the view from his lake front property, a panoramic view of the North American landscape over which he casts his usual commanding gaze:

He could see the world from here. To the east was the dam. Bursum could just see the lip of the structure and the control tower. . . . Beyond that was the prairies, a wondrous landscape that ran all the way to Ontario.

To the west, beyond the lake and the trees, the mountains ran north to Banff and Jasper and south into Montana. (403)

But then the earthquake rearranges the geography, restoring the landscape to its pre-dam contours and obliterating Bursum's lake front property. Bursum runs frantically down the beach chasing after his disappearing shoreline. While the subsequent flood demolishes the Stands Alone house and kills Eli, the territorial integrity of the Blackfoot Reservation is restored, their land recovered. And Lionel, having rediscovered a sense of place, begins the process of remapping an identity and of locating a space of resistance and freedom. Thus at the end of the novel, he thinks that, once they have rebuilt the family house, he might "live in it for a while. You know, like Eli" (423).

The map scenes in Thomas King's novel are about colonial power and anti-colonial resistance. They are an attempt to reclaim First Nations territory through a strategic intervention in the long and bitter struggle over land between First Nations and successive Canadian governments. Effecting a radical reordering of relations of power/knowledge in these scenes, as he also does elsewhere in the narrative, King exposes and reverses the process whereby colonial maps, in order to justify the territorial dispossession of First Nations people, imposed and continue to impose their political authority on the Canadian landscape. King thus writes a text which not only "can answer colonialism back," but one which also "anticipates another condition beyond imperialism" (Perry 44).

The struggle continues. One of the current sites of conflict is Churchill Falls, Labrador, billed as the second largest hydro project in the world. The proposed development is right in the middle of Innu territory in Labrador and Quebec. Up to the time of the meeting between Premiers Bouchard and Tobin to publicly announce the project, the Innu had not been consulted, though they had formally requested to be included in the negotiations ("Power Play").

However, another lesson in cartography may well be in the offing—the result of the 1997 ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada on the *Delgamuukw* case, brought by the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en peoples of northern British Columbia. While the ruling "is specifically directed to treaty negotiations in British Columbia," it also "significantly changes the legal landscape in which Aboriginal title and rights litigation is adjudicated in Canada and in other colonial contexts world wide" (Culhane 369-70). The *Delgamuukw* ruling acknowledges the existence of Aboriginal title: the historic and legal right of First Nations people to the land of their ancestors.

It also stipulates what constitutes proof of title: evidence of continuous occupation of the land from before the Canadian government claimed sovereignty (Culhane 363-64).

Thanks to this historic court ruling, the Innu have the law on their side in the court case they have launched to force a negotiation of the conditions for developing the hydro project. As evidence of long-term occupation of the land, the Innu are submitting a map tracing the travel routes of the Innu over the past several generations (Gray A-4). It is a development which almost seems to be anticipated by the map scene in Moodie's narrative.

NOTES

- 1 Huggan claims that "the map topos" occurs relatively infrequently "in works by indigenous writers" (126). Given publishing dates, Thomas King's *Green Grass, Running Water* would have been "in press" when Huggan was working on his study. There are, however, some First Nations texts which would have been available and which feature "the map topos" as Huggan has defined it. These include Bill Reid's *The Raven Steals the Light* (1984), written in collaboration with Robert Bringhurst, and Lee Maracle's *Sundogs* (1992).
On a minor note, Huggan misses the map in *Roughing It in the Bush*, seeing Moodie as belonging to a pre-map phase in Canadian literature when Canadian writers "were mainly concerned with the discrepancy between conventional and observed landscapes" (40).
- 2 "Postcolonial" is a very problematic term. Jo-Ann Thom's critique of it, in her description of a course she teaches on First Nations literature, uncovers one of the functions of the term both in its application to First Nations and non-Native Canadian literature: its masking of colonial power relations between Canadian First Nations and other Canadians. "Contemporary Canadian Aboriginal Literature," Thom writes, "is often categorized as 'postcolonial' literature. Most Aboriginal writers find this amusing. 'When did the colonizers leave?' they ask." Thomas King also provides a critique of the term in "Godzilla vs. Post-Colonial."
- 3 As Benedict Anderson reminds us, maps, like books, played a crucial role in the invention of the colonial nation: "[Maps] profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion—the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry" (163-64).
- 4 Some places have, of course, escaped the renaming process and retained their First Nations names. To take a (for me) local example, in 1882, when Regina was first settled by Europeans, it was called "Wascana," a corruption of the Cree word *oscana* meaning "bones," apparently in reference to a large pile of buffalo bones found in the area. Not deemed dignified enough for a capital city, this name was cancelled and the city was renamed in honour of Queen Victoria. Nonetheless, the Cree-derived name has been conserved in a number of city facilities and businesses: Wascana Lake, Wascana Park, Wascana Country Club, Wascana Energy. Regina also stages an annual "Pile O' Bones" day as part of its civic celebrations. The survival of First Nations place names can be explained by the impossible desire of immigrants for indigenous status: in an attempt to claim a hereditary connection to the land, First Nations toponyms are adopted. As Edward Poitras states, "There's a long history in this country of using aboriginal words to name things.

If you take a people's name and use it for your own purpose, you diminish them" (Cited in Beatty E-4). As Poitras shows is the case with Regina, place names also tend to contain (in both senses of the word) another knowledge: the grim underside of the place's official history or founding myth. Thus the names "Wascana" and "Pile of Bones" point not only to the success of immigrants in establishing a settlement, but also to the collapse of First Nations economies, dependent on the buffalo, which was brought about by European immigration. Moreover, Poitras has found documentary evidence that the original "pile of bones" contained not only buffalo but also human bones, the remains of members of the Assiniboine Nation who died during a smallpox epidemic (Beatty E-4).

- 5 Reprinted in Thelma Coleman, *The Canada Company*, 84-85.
- 6 Reprinted in W. A. Langton, ed. *Early Days in Upper Canada: Letters of John Langton*, Frontispiece.
- 7 *Maclean's* expresses sentiments similar to those of the *Globe and Mail* in its use of the phrase "ominous demographic wave" (DeMont and Geddes 71).
- 8 See, for example, the 1800 map of Upper Canada, compiled by D. W. Smith, and reprinted in Ladell 107; and the 1811 map of Upper and Lower Canada, published by John Cary, and reprinted in Mika 109.
- 9 In at least this respect, late twentieth-century maps of Canada are no different from those of the 1830s: they too feature blank spaces. On some current provincial highway maps, for example, Indian Reservations appear as blanks, thus reiterating the notion that First Nations lack history and culture and inviting non-Native intervention and exploitation. Blank spaces also appear on contemporary maps of Canada in the northern areas of all of the provinces, except the Maritimes; in the northern part of Labrador; and in the Yukon and the North West Territories. Significantly, these are parts of Canada in which First Nations people account for a fairly high percentage of the population. The current conventions of mapping, which are biased in favour of densely populated urban areas, are to blame for this practice. The political function of these maps in Canada is to reinforce the view of the North as requiring southern development and settlement, thus helping to maintain the political and economic status quo of the North as an internal Canadian colony. (For an excellent discussion of the colonial status of the North in Canada, see Peter J. Usher.)
- 10 A commemorative stamp was also issued to mark the anniversary of Cabot's voyage. In a celebration of European hegemony, it features a period map of Europe superimposed over a world globe.
- 11 In Moodie's case, her stereotyped descriptions conform to all three of these images. Interestingly, in Robert Surtees' analysis, the birth of the modern reservation, which he dates as taking place in 1830, coincided with a change in the image of the Indian in colonial culture: "the 'noble savage', almost overnight, became a poor unfortunate, uncivilized barbarian who should be granted all the amenities of white civilization" ("Indian" 23). In its construction of colonial space, the reservation enforced geographical and economic separation, literally dividing, in the typical Manichean fashion of colonialism, the colonizers from the colonized (Fanon 37-43). It also made much more land available for the colonizers who continued to arrive in ever-increasing numbers—in the summer of 1832 alone, 50,000 would-be settlers (including the Moodies) arrived in Canada from Britain (Ladell 123)—the construction of First Nations as in need of civilization enabling and justifying their dispossession. And by physically delimiting the place of the Native, it also made surveillance and regulation of movement and behaviour much easier.

- 12 The “notwithstanding” clause, in the following passage by Graham Huggan, provides a particularly blatant example of the way in which European Canadian scholarship sometimes makes First Nations peoples and their histories invisible. Huggan is attempting to distinguish between “settler” and “non-settler” colonies:

there are large and obvious differences, for example, between the colonial histories of Africa and India, where those countries’ indigenous peoples were colonized on their own home ground, and the colonial histories of Canada and Australia, where—aboriginal groups notwithstanding—the settlers’ main task consisted not so much in imposing one culture upon another as in adapting the “parent” culture to the “new” land. (xiii, emphasis added).

- 13 There is another intertextual connection between Susanna Moodie and Thomas King on the subject of First Nations representations—what seems to be an unlikely coincidence. One of the final scenes of Thomas King’s *Green Grass, Running Water* takes place at a Sun Dance ceremony at which a white photographer is surreptitiously taking pictures. His film is destroyed by Eli and others and he is encouraged to leave the area because photographs of the Sun Dance ceremony are prohibited. Susanna Moodie’s granddaughter, Geraldine Moodie, was a professional photographer, who, in 1895, took pictures of a Sun Dance ceremony which was held in the Battleford area. In the fall of 1998, many of these pictures were placed on public display, at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina, as part of an exhibition on early photographers and filmmakers in western Canada. The pictures have also recently been published in Donny White’s *In Search of Geraldine Moodie*. White’s commentary on one of the photographs states that it “appears that many of the women do not approve of Geraldine’s presence or that they did not wish to have their picture taken as several have looked down or away from the camera” (20). The same could be said of several of the men and women in a number of the other photographs. But the issue of cultural appropriation is not only relevant to Geraldine Moodie’s taking of the photographs in the first place, but also to the current recirculation of her Sun Dance pictures in Canadian culture. What, for example, is the role of these photographs in White’s book, the overall function of which is to celebrate immigrant culture?
- 14 Such views are also frequently heard in contemporary Canadian culture. Peter C. Newman provides an example in a *Maclean’s* article in which he argues against the ratification of the Nisga’a Treaty. As Maurice Switzer points out in his response to the article, the Treaty is not a “form of restitution for past wrongs,” as Newman characterizes it, but rather “represents the long-overdue settlement of a legal obligation.” As Switzer also notes, Newman has the bad taste to mock “one of the most sacred of First Nations symbols, the eagle feather” (6). In the same article, Newman makes use of the colonial possessive pronoun, as in “our natives,” an expression which is not only patronizing and paternalistic, but which also assumes European Canadian superiority and ownership of the nation and all of its inhabitants.

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