

# OLIVER GOLDSMITH AND *THE RISING VILLAGE*

D.M.R. Bentley

After being virtually ignored for almost a century between its first publication in London, England in 1825 and its brief inclusion in the Canadian literary surveys of the nineteen twenties,<sup>1</sup> *The Rising Village* has gradually become since the Second World War the most anthologized and discussed of the longer poems from the Colonial period in Canada. The reasons for the rise in popularity of Goldsmith's poem in the decades after the War are not difficult to discover. Coherent enough in its vision to be teachable, but flawed enough in its execution to be patronised,<sup>2</sup> *The Rising Village* provided New Critics and Modern literary historians alike with an ideal early Canadian text: a poem comparable with, but inferior to, the more intelligent, better achieved, and, *of course*, less derivative work of the McGill Movement poets and their successors. An added advantage for Modernist and—strange bedfellows perhaps—nationalist critics is that at various points in *The Rising Village* Goldsmith himself actually looks forward to a better and brighter future for his region (the mainland Maritimes) and, by extension, Canada. Here was a pre-Victorian colonial with a thirst for the commercial and cultural progress that would lead to nationhood and cosmopolitanism.

In the decade or so since the first article-length studies of *The Rising Village* began to appear in *Canadian Poetry*, Goldsmith's poem has become something of a classic—a staple component of the Canadian literary canon that is consistently used as a pretext for the exercise of differing critical assumption and approaches. As hospitable to a Marxist-nationalist such as Kenneth J. Hughes<sup>3</sup> as to a cosmopolitan-conservative such as W.J. Keith,<sup>4</sup> *The Rising Village* can only prove a welcoming host to the biographical reading initially proposed here, a reading based on the work of Father Wilfrid Myatt, the scholar who, more than

any other, has been responsible for the reassessment of Goldsmith's poem in the post-War years. The untitled text that Myatt calls the *Autobiography of Oliver Goldsmith*<sup>5</sup> provides a point of entry to the executive circumstances and critical reception of *The Rising Village*. It also provides a window onto the poem's historical setting and, hence, its relation to such works as Thomas Chandler Haliburton's *General Description of Nova Scotia*, which contains, if not a precise and more authentic "prose counterpart" to *The Rising Village* (as Desmond Pacey suggests),<sup>6</sup> then certainly much that lies in the poem's background, including what Pacey may be right in seeing as its inciting moment: a quotation from *The Deserted Village* preceded by the remark that "[t]he origin and growth of a modern Colony affords much matter of curious speculation. To trace the difference between the state of man rising in the progress of years to civilization, and that of an enlightened people operating upon uncultivated nature, is at once an interesting and useful pursuit. What the sensations of these people were, when separated from their friends and homes by a thousand leagues of ocean, and first settled in the trackless forest of Nova Scotia, may be more easily conceived than described."<sup>7</sup>

## I

"[B]orn in the little Village of Saint Andrews," New Brunswick on July 6, 1794 (A 32), the author of *The Rising Village* was the third son of Henry Goldsmith, an Irish-born Loyalist who was himself the only son of the Rev. Henry Goldsmith, the brother to whom the first Oliver Goldsmith dedicated *The Traveller; or, a Prospect of Society*. (These convolutions are necessary to explain why *The Rising Village* is dedicated to the North American Goldsmith's own older brother Henry and why, like *The Traveller*, it begins with a celebration of fraternal friendship.)<sup>8</sup> At the time of Goldsmith's birth in New Brunswick, his father was employed in the Commissariat—the supply division—of the British Army, a somewhat ungentlemanly job to which he had gravitated after he had been deprived of the colonial dream of living in comfortable independence by "successive" and "irretrievable disasters," including the destruction of his house by fire and of his grist mills by water (A 32-33). No wild flight of psychoanalytical fancy is required to

perceive that Goldsmith's depiction of a difficult and dangerous but ultimately successful and prosperous pioneering venture in *The Rising Village* could well be a wishful revisioning of the unfortunate experiences of his father. Nor is it difficult to understand the poet's evidently ambivalent feeling for Henry Goldsmith, the man who almost simultaneously gave him life and denied him a privileged position in it.<sup>9</sup>

Before following his father into the Commissariat in 1810 (where he remained almost continuously for forty-five years, until his retirement in 1855), Goldsmith apparently had a number of unpleasant experiences of his own. The parallels between the accounts of these experiences in the *Autobiography* and certain passages in *The Rising Village* suggest that Goldsmith may have intended them to fulfill an authenticating function for his poem. When it was published in England in 1825 and subsequently in New Brunswick in 1834, *The Rising Village* was generally very well received; however, Goldsmith maintains that it was "torn to Shreds":

My effort was criticized with undue severity, abused, and condemned, and why? Because I did not produce a poem like the great Oliver. Alas! Who indeed could do so? Whatever merit possessed in itself was disowned, because the genius that wrote it did not equal that of his great predecessor. (A 43)

As Father Myatt's exhaustive research has shown, *The Rising Village* was actually faulted on two counts, one along the lines indicated by Goldsmith ("the English Oliver . . . touched the lyre with a pathetic skill which thrilled the heart, and few could emulate," wrote George R. Young in the *Novascotian* on August 25, 1825),<sup>10</sup> and the other reminiscent of the two most important critical fracas in nineteenth-century Canada, the charges of plagiarism levelled at Adam Kidd in 1830 and at the major Confederation poets in 1895.<sup>11</sup> "Opposite the line 'Oh, heav'n-born faith! sure solace of our woes'" in a copy of *The Rising Village* in the library at Dalhousie University, someone has written "Campbell Almost vertabim," a comment that Myatt sees as the tip of an iceberg of "verbal" rather than written "condemnations" of the poem and its author.<sup>12</sup> What better answer to the charges that *The Rising Village* lacks emotional substance and individuality than to reveal the poem's origins in intense, personal experience? It may even be that Goldsmith's

account of his father's misfortunes was partly intended for this authenticating purpose

The first of the "trials and adversities" (A 30) described in the *Autobiography* was a job in the "Dispensary and Surgery of the Naval Hospital at Halifax," a "Position" into which Goldsmith felt he was untimely thrust by his parents' desire "to have another Doctor Oliver in the family" (A 32). Among other things, his job of surgeon's helper involved being present at amputations, reading the Burial Service over men who had died in the Hospital, and witnessing the flogging of two sailors in the Hospital "Court Yard," an incident that crowned Goldsmith's "disgust" and "sicken[ed]" him with the "Profession" that he quite effectively (and, it now appears, feelingly) satirizes in *The Rising Village*:

The half-bred Doctor next then settles down,  
 And hopes the village soon will prove a town.  
 No rival here disputes his doubtful skill,  
 He cures, by chance, or ends each human ill;  
 By turns he physics, or his patient bleeds,  
 Uncertain in what case each best succeeds.

(217-22)

Pacey argues that in *The Rising Village* Goldsmith failed to pay sufficient attention to the problems of Nova Scotia and his day and, as a result, produced a poem of "vague benevolence" in which "all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds."<sup>13</sup> This view, which R.E. Rashley seconds with his assertion that "Goldsmith does not even reproduce the facts of colonial life of his time"<sup>14</sup> in *The Rising Village*, displays a surprising insensitivity both to the poem itself and to its social context, for clearly the passage concerning the "half-bred Doctor" addresses a very vexing problem or fact of contemporary Nova Scotia: a "Medical Profession" plagued by "quacks and unqualified intruders." As Haliburton states the matter in his *General Description*, "[a]ny person who thinks proper to style himself Surgeon or Doctor, which in . . . [Nova Scotia] are used as synonymous terms, may, without license or examination, commence his fraud upon the fears or ignorance of the community. The number of these wretched pretenders is very great, and the injury committed by them, often attended with serious consequences."<sup>15</sup>

After fleeing the profession that buries its mistakes, the young Goldsmith's "next step in civilization was as Boy in an Ironmonger's Shop," a job that he describes in terms loudly echoed by a note to *The Rising Village*:

Here I weighed out Nails of all Sorts, Pots and Pans,  
Swedes' Iron, and other ferruginous Articles which  
compose a Store. (A 34)

Compose the well-assorted country Store Every shop in  
America, whether in city or village, in which the most  
trifling articles are sold, is dignified with the title of a store.  
(*The Rising Village* 216n.)

Interestingly enough, the "description of the country store" is one of the very few passages in *The Rising Village* admired by Pacey, who feels that in this instance "Goldsmith write[s] as if his eye were really on the subject."<sup>16</sup> Also authenticating *The Rising Village* through first hand experience is Goldsmith's account of his sojourn at the Halifax Grammar School, where he claims to have been victimized by the "witless Instruction" of an emigrant Irish "Master" under whom he made "indifferent progress" in everything but "a knowledge of figures"—"Mathematics and Algebra" being "Branches of Instruction . . . confided to . . . [a] Second Master" (A 35). That Goldsmith's very negative "appreciation of the Reverend George Wright" (A 77 n. 64), the Trinity College (Dublin)-educated Headmaster of the Halifax Grammar School, does not accord with the high esteem in which he was held by others at the time certainly does nothing to contradict the suggestion that Wright is being used in the *Autobiography* to add authenticity to the depiction of the incompetent schoolmaster in *The Rising Village* and, indeed, to the call for educational reform in Nova Scotia in the 1825 version of the poem.

Aside from its being centred on a "Merchant" (A 35)—the title assumed by the "Wandering Pedlar" after he has settled in "the Rising Village" (RV [1834] 197-206)—the one happy experience of his youth that Goldsmith describes in his *Autobiography* is worth mentioning as an indication of what the poet valued in non-scholastic education. To the extent that it grounds the Tory norms of *The Rising Village* in personal experience, Goldsmith's account of his clerkship in a "Wholesale Business" in Boston in about 1808 (A 34 77 n. 64) could even be

said to further the aim of authenticating the poem: "Here I dealt in large Parcels only, was employed in various duties, was diligent, attentive, and gave satisfaction," writes Goldsmith of his Boston clerkship; "I dined at my Master's House every Sunday, and went to Church with his family. I was pleased and contented with my situation" (A 34). Hard work, familial community, religious observance, and a "situation" within a residually feudal group—these, for Goldsmith, are the constituents of contentment both in the individual and in society. When they are present, as they are during the happiest stages of the "progress" of both the young Goldsmith and the Rising Village towards "civilization," all is well; when they are absent, as they are from the poet's unhappy experiences and from his poem's anarchic school-house (more of which later), things go badly wrong. One of Goldsmith's major points in *The Rising Village* is that a society that mishandles its children and young people, whether in or out of school, by failing to impress them with Tory values is asking for trouble; its living future will either move away (Albert) or suffer irreparable damage (Flora). Not least in his recollections of the happy time that he spent in Boston and in his emphatic expressions of dismay at having to return to Halifax after his year away in England,<sup>17</sup> Goldsmith seems bent on showing in his *Autobiography* that he had direct experience of the issues addressed in his poem.

It was at the request of the Earl of Dalhousie, the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia from 1816 to 1820 (and thereafter, until 1828, Governor-in-Chief of British North America), that Goldsmith reluctantly returned to Halifax in 1818. Precisely because Dalhousie controlled his destiny in this way, Goldsmith refers to him twice in flattering terms in the 1825 edition of *The Rising Village*, praising him in his Dedication for exhibiting a "warm interest" in promoting the "prosperity . . . welfare and happiness" of Nova Scotia (27-33) and later in the body of the poem as a military and civilian hero—a participant in the defeat of France during the Napoleonic Wars (he was one of Wellington's Peninsula officers) and a leader in the movement to improve agriculture in the Maritimes in the period 1818-1826.<sup>18</sup> Goldsmith's deletion of all reference to Dalhousie from the 1834 edition of *The Rising Village* may well have been due, as Michael Gnarowski suggests, to the Earl's unpopularity in British North America by this time, coupled with the fact that, after his

removal in 1828, he "ceased to figure personally in the affairs of the country."<sup>19</sup> It may also be related to the fact that Dalhousie, since 1832 retired from colonial administration, had by 1834 ceased to figure personally in the affairs, not to say the "prosperity," "welfare," and "happiness," of Goldsmith himself. Like Thomas Cary before him, Goldsmith probably hoped that a fulsome tribute to the chief representative of "His Majesty" ([1825] Dedication 28) in the Colony might further his career. Like Cary, he may also have hoped to make a modest amount of money from sales of his poem; indeed, the Preface by John Inglis, the newly consecrated Bishop of Nova Scotia, in the 1825 edition of *The Rising Village* calls attention to Goldsmith's "aged and widowed mother . . . whose comfort it is his chief delight to promote" and observes that, if the poet's "talent and his pen can be made instrumental to such a purpose, they will engage his very earnest endeavors" (20-23). Not only did Goldsmith employ his poetry as a means to personal financial and professional ends but, as the very presence of Dalhousie, Inglis, and Sir James Kempt (Dalhousie's successor in both Nova Scotia [1820-1828] and Lower Canada [1828- 1830]) in the first edition of *The Rising Village* indicates, he was in 1825 quite cozily aligned with a colonial élite whose generally Tory and loyalist views accord with what can be deduced of his own.<sup>20</sup>

Another reason for Goldsmith's deletion in 1834 of his glowing references to Lord Dalhousie was that by that time their one obvious public and political purpose—support of the Agricultural Societies in Nova Scotia to which the Earl had given his "patronage" (thus "call[ing] fair science to the rustic's aid" [(1825) 535 and n.]—had all but ceased to exist. As a result of pressure from John Young ("Agricola") in a series of letters to the *Acadian Recorder* that began to appear shortly after Goldsmith's return to Halifax in 1818, a number of such Societies were founded in the Colony, including, in December, 1818, the Provincial Agricultural Society, with Dalhousie as its "permanent President during his administration . . . [and] Founder and Promoter," and the Annapolis Agricultural Society, with none other than Henry Goldsmith as its secretary and Treasurer.<sup>21</sup> (And this is probably the opportune moment to notice that the Inglis family estate was also in the Annapolis Valley.) "By 1825, 30 local [Agricultural] societies had been formed, 19 in the years 1818 to 1820."<sup>22</sup> For various reasons,

including the chicanery of Young, who, among other things, “tendered to supply manure to the Halifax garrison” (perhaps dealing directly with Goldsmith), “interest in agricultural affairs slackened after 1820” in Nova Scotia, and in 1826 the House of Assembly terminated support for the Central Board of Agriculture, which had been founded in 1819. The extent to which *The Rising Village* draws upon *The Letters of Agricola on the Principles of Vegetation and Tillage, written for Nova Scotia*, as Young’s letters were called when they were published in book form in Halifax in 1822, confirms what the circumstantial evidence strongly suggests: that Goldsmith’s poem is in part a literary rendering of Agricola’s argument that agricultural progress alone would bring commercial prosperity and a host of other benefits, including local pride and literary culture, to Nova Scotia. In due course, the debt of *The Rising Village* to the *Letters of Agricola* (which also, incidentally, lie centrally in the background of the Stepsure letters of Thomas McCulloch) will be discussed in some detail. For the present purpose of establishing Goldsmith in historical context, it is sufficient to observe that the most laudatory review of *The Rising Village* published in Nova Scotia came from the pen of Agricola’s son, George Renny Young.<sup>23</sup>

“How do you grow a poet?” asks Robert Kroetsch.<sup>24</sup> Not, according to his *Autobiography*, by putting a young person in either of the other two “situation[s]” in which Goldsmith found himself (en route) to the Commissariat—an apprentice in a “Bookseller’s Shop” and a clerk in a “Lawyer’s Office” (A 34). “[P]erhaps it was thought this could succeed in making me a Poet” Goldsmith says of his brief stint at “fold[ing] paper, stitch[ing] Pamphlets, and do[ing] a trifle in the Binding Line” (A 34). In the “Lawyer’s Office,” his working days were spent even less creatively “copying old Parchments, writing up Pleas, [and] filling up Writs” and his “leisure Hours”—the very “leisure Hours” that he would later devote to reading and writing poetry (A 41, 43)—were spent fruitlessly studying the legal textbooks of the day. Little wonder (the reader of the *Autobiography* is probably intended to think) that Goldsmith did not succeed in becoming a poet worthy of his name and ancestry. In the Tory view, however, breeding has a way of showing itself even in adverse circumstances, and so it was that, after his return to Halifax from England in 1818, a Goldsmith who had “always



possessed an ardent love of reading" set himself to "repair the defects" of his education by studying languages with "the aid of a Master" and reading "useful and practical Works" (A 41). In 1822, not long after thus entering "*con spirito* into the Regions of Poetry," Goldsmith became involved with the Halifax Garrison Theatre, for whom he wrote an inaugural address, a genre to which at least one other poet in Colonial Canada, Cary, also turned his hand.<sup>25</sup>

Despite being "as good as any other," Goldsmith's inaugural address was not accepted for delivery at the opening of the Halifax Garrison Theatre's season in 1822 (A 41); however, assisted by what Goldsmith regarded as a "curious circumstance"—his playing a leading role in the company's production of *She Stoops to Conquer*—it had "broken" the "ice" on what proved in his mind to be the frigid water of poetry. "I had made the plunge, and determined on a future effort," he writes; "[e]ncouraged by some friends [including Haliburton and John Young?] I wrote . . . The Rising Village." His point of departure was the work of his great-uncle, "[t]he celebrated Author of the 'Deserted Village' who had pathetically displayed the anguish of his Countrymen, on being forced from various causes, to quit their native plains, endeared to them by so many delightful recollections, and to seek a Refuge in regions at the time but little known." Goldsmith's self-appointed commission was the thoroughly Tory one of depicting the heroism of the pioneers in relation to the present state and—provided always that the best of the past is remembered forward—the bright future of the society that they founded. "In my humble poem, . . . I endeavoured to describe the sufferings they [the 'poor Exiles' of *The Deserted Village*] experienced in a new and uncultivated country, the Difficulties they surmounted, the Rise and progress of a Village, and the prospects which promised Happiness to its future possessors" (A 42-43). It almost goes without saying that *The Rising Village* is the most thorough and detailed Canadian response to *The Deserted Village* and, indeed, *The Traveller*; as such Goldsmith's poem crowns a series of responses to his great-uncle's depiction of life in North America that began in Canada with Cary's *Abram's Plains* and includes Mackay's *Quebec Hill*, Burwell's *Talbot Road*, and Kidd's *The Huron Chief*.

Although Goldsmith did not wake to find himself famous after any of the three printings of *The Rising Village* (between its

appearance in England in 1825 and, in revised form, in Saint John, New Brunswick in 1834, the poem was reprinted in *The Montreal Gazette* in February, 1826), he was treated as a colonial celebrity on one occasion at least. On his departure from Saint John for a posting with the Commissariat in Hong Kong, he was seen off by a crowd of "perhaps . . . two thousand persons who were drawn thither to witness the 'last of him whom the world has always spoken well of'" (*St. John Evening News*, qtd. in *A* 108 n. 176). Not until and not since Bliss Carman's tour of Canada in 1921-22 has a poet been greeted so enthusiastically by the general public of his native country. The fuss made of him on leaving Saint John even forced Goldsmith to abandon for a moment the pose of injured merit that he adopts elsewhere in his *Autobiography*. "My departure," he allows, "was accompanied by several flattering addresses, some pleasing testimonials, and with all those outward marks of public esteem and respect which are more commonly accorded to men of Rank and Station than to a humble Individual" (*A* 40). "Fame, the adrenalin: to be talked about . . . to be introduced as *The* " may not be a poet's ultimate reward, but it "has its attraction,"<sup>26</sup> and it did come in a limited way in 1844 to the man billed by the *St. John Morning News* as "OLIVER GOLDSMITH, the author of the *Rising Village*" (*A* 110 n. 176).

Between 1844 and his death in 1861, Goldsmith returned only briefly to the Maritimes in 1848 en route to a posting in Newfoundland (1848-1853), where, during years of great political and artistic turmoil in Europe, he cultivated a garden, attained the "Rank of Deputy Commissary General," and "assist[ed] in the Establishment of a Mechanics' Institute" (*A* 49), an association of considerable importance for the development of literary culture in Canada (as witness the links of Alexander McLachlan and Isabella Valancy Crawford with its Toronto branch, the library of which formed the basis for the present Metropolitan Toronto Public Library). The portion of Goldsmith's *Autobiography* that covers the period between his departure from Newfoundland in 1853 and his retirement from the Commissariat in 1855 (he lived out his days with his sister in Liverpool, England) is not entirely without interest for the present discussion. A little less obsessed than earlier in his life by "duty"<sup>27</sup>—a word that summarizes his Tory emphasis on hard work within an interdependent and God-fearing hierarchy—the

Goldsmith of the early 1850s took time away from the Commissariat to tour the British Isles, revealing as he did so an interest in *both* history and progress that is entirely consistent with the emphasis of *The Rising Village*. "The position of Edinburgh is very picturesque and animate," he observes of the Scottish Capital; "[o]n one side, you behold the hoary Head of Antiquity in the old Town, and on the other side, in the new Town, the vigour of youth in all its freshness and Beauty" (A 50). Of his visit to the Great Exhibition in Dublin in 1853 he writes: "I saw a Collection of magnificent Shops, and a long line of living Machinery, but my attention was devoted to the World of the Medieval age of Ireland, and the Gallery of Pictures" (A 51). In Wales, he first visited "those stupendous efforts of human skill and science, the "Menai [Suspension] Bridge" and the "Britannia Tubular Bridge" and then proceeded to "Carnarvon Castle" and the "Ruins of Dolbadarn Castle" (A 53-54). From Liverpool, he visited London frequently, but went out of his way "to see . . . [those] Seat[s] of Arts and Manufacturers," Manchester and Birmingham (A 56). In his obvious fascination with antiquity *and* technology, gothic ruins *and* modern marvels, Goldsmith shows that it was possible for an Augustan to become a Victorian. Or almost: the *Autobiography* concludes with a quotation from *The Deserted Village*: "'Oh blest Retirement friend of Life's decline'" (A 57).

## II

When Goldsmith's contemporaries accepted the invitation implicit in the title and dedicatory material of *The Rising Village* and compared it to *The Deserted Village* they by and large judged the Canadian poem to be a worthy successor to its famous predecessor, model, and point of departure. Many modern critics have been less charitable. While recognizing that *The Rising Village* echoes *The Deserted Village* for the purpose of emphasizing the differences between the Maritime present and the grim past both in Britain after the enclosures (the setting of the Anglo-Irish poem) and in Nova Scotia during the early days of its settlement, critics such as Desmond Pacey and W.J. Keith have found Goldsmith deficient in a variety of qualities exhibited by his great uncle, from "wit," "passion," "intellectual sharpness," and "social awareness" ("he seems to have forgotten

the attacks on commercial luxury and opulence at the centre of the argument in *The Deserted Village*," complains Keith) to his handling of "language," "metrical effects," and "personal voice."<sup>28</sup> Needless to say, there is an element of truth to these accusations—the Colonial poet does not have the intellectual and creative stature of his great uncle—by the concentrating on comparisons between the two Goldsmiths and, hence, on the shortcomings of *The Rising Village*, Pacey, Keith, and others have blinded themselves to many of the most engaging features of a poem which, as Kenneth J. Hughes was the first to demonstrate in detail, must be firmly located in the social, political, and literary context of the Maritimes in the eighteen twenties and thirties if it is to be properly understood, let alone fully appreciated.

In a seminal article on *The Rising Village* and in his recent edition of the two versions of the poem, Gerald Lynch has called attention to the coherent complexity of Goldsmith's vision and to his frequently quite creative handling of *various* poetic sources in addition to *The Deserted Village* and *The Traveller*, including Pope's *Windsor-Forest*, Thomson's *Seasons*, and Gray's "Elegy." Central to *The Rising Village*, in Lynch's view, is Goldsmith's concern with ordering and controlling nature, both external (the wilderness) and internal (the passions). "From beginning to end the poem describes cyclical movements wherein control is gained, the pioneer settlers relax, control is lost, regained and tenuously maintained." "*The Rising Village*," Lynch argues, "is the work of a poet who suspected encroaching chaos in physical nature and moral turpitude in his neighbours."<sup>29</sup> Read in this stark light, the poem is as successful and interesting in its own terms as its predecessor-model, *The Deserted Village*. Drawing into his discussion Hughes's astute recognition of the double valance of the words "prospect" and "culture" in *The Rising Village* (the former term refers both to a view of the landscape and to the expectation of prosperity, the latter both to [agri-] culture and to artistic culture),<sup>30</sup> Lynch succeeds very well in refuting Fred Cogswell's assertion in the *Literary History of Canada* that the "pathetic story of Flora and Albert" at the centre of the poem bears "little organic relation" either to the account of "the hardships of the early settlers" that precedes it or to the "illusory picture of contemporary Nova Scotian prosperity" that follows.<sup>31</sup> Perceiving that "a turning point" for Goldsmith's

theme of the “control of nature” is the failure of the village’s inadequate school-master to subdue the anarchic tendencies of its children, one of whom is Albert, Lynch reads the tale of an impetuous love that leads to “madness” (386, 419) at the centre of the poem as a cautionary fable. And certainly it is evident that if the climb of the village towards civilization is to continue on the trajectory begun by the pioneers’ ordering of savage, external nature, then continuous care must be taken to exercise control in the realm of internal, human nature. With advances in civilization come leisure—the time to enjoy the “simple” and “guileless pleasures” (265, 282) of the village green—and prosperity—the opportunity to purchase such things as “silks” and “shawls for young damsels” (214, 212) in the village store. But leisure and prosperity are mixed blessings because, unless they are carefully referred to the Christian values that ought to be taught in both the churches and the schools, they can prove fertile ground for the vice and luxury whose dangers were so well known to Goldsmith and his readers that they did not need the elaborate rehearsal seemingly desired by Keith and others. In the 1825 edition of *The Rising Village* two notes praising the educational activities of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts ([1825] 176n., 232n.) reinforce the religio-social thrust of the depiction of the benefits of religious observance and the failures of village education in both versions of the poem.

A proper understanding and full appreciation of *The Rising Village* must take into account the view of history assumed by the poem’s perception of civilization as a mixed blessing which, if not carefully monitored, could lead in Nova Scotia to the grievous social and personal ills described in *The Deserted Village*. The view of history in question is one that Ronald L. Meek traces to two independent progenitors in the 1750s, A.R.J. Turgot in France and Adam Smith in Scotland. What Meek calls the “four stages theory” of the development of civilizations from their rude beginnings to their refined maturity was “a very common and a very important ingredient of Enlightenment thought in the field of the social sciences during the whole of the period from 1750 to 1800”<sup>32</sup> and continues to be echoed in poetry on Canada and by Canadians until around the turn of the present century. It is implicit in statements of the development of civilization from Cary to Carman<sup>33</sup> and—much more to the present point—it is

assumed by both Young and Haliburton in their descriptions of the progress of culture in Nova Scotia.<sup>34</sup> Of particular relevance to *The Rising Village* are three tenets of the "four stages theory" that are expressed either by Smith himself in *The Wealth of Nations* and elsewhere or by various other writers who, evidence external and internal to the poem suggests, were known to Goldsmith: Sir William Blackstone, the legal authority whose *Commentaries on the Laws of England* the poet read during his brief stint in the "Lawyer's Office"<sup>35</sup> and Henry James Pye, the poet-Laureate (1790-1813) whose *Progress of Refinement: A Poem. In Three Parts* is repeatedly echoed in *The Rising Village*. Although he does not use the term, Ronald E. Tranquilla discusses aspects of the four stages theory in his recent article, "'Empires Rise and Sink': *The Rising Village* and the Cyclical View of History."<sup>36</sup>

The fundamental tenet of the "four stages theory," and the one of greatest importance to *The Rising Village*, is that all civilizations develop through four sequential stages, each defined by the mode of subsistence of its constituent members: (1) a savage stage based on hunting; (2) a pastoral stage based on herding; (3) an agricultural stage based on farming; and (4) a commercial stage based on trading. The two subsidiary tenets of the theory that are as obviously relevant to *The Rising Village* as the four stages themselves are (a) the tenet that the great leap forward from rudeness to refinement occurs with the agricultural stage (when self-sufficiency begins to give way to the superfluity that creates leisure, trade, and prosperity); and (b) the tenet, absent from Smith's theorizings but evident in the work of several of his more moralistic successors, that the commercial stage of a society's development brings with it, not merely such advantages as "ease," "convenience," civility, patriotism, and the arts, but also a variety of vices and evils that can lead to the ruination of individuals (especially women) within a society and, if not checked, to the decadence of an entire civilization or nation. Even a bare outline such as this of the relevant tenets of the four stages theory furnishes a new and enhancing frame in which to view *The Rising Village*; a more detailed examination of the theory will account for all but a very few of the poem's themes and attitudes.

(1) *The Savage Stage*. "[W]andering savages," "savage tribes," and "wandering Indian" (45, 81, 91): these three adjective-noun combinations from Goldsmith's account of the

initial "Difficulties . . . surmounted" by the settlers in Nova Scotia firmly place the Indians at the lowest of the four levels of social development. More dismissive in his assessment of Canada's native peoples than almost any other poet in Colonial Canada, Goldsmith presents the Indians of the Maritimes—the Micmacs and the Richibuctos—as nameless and faceless "aggressors" (107) who are little better than the "savage beasts" (95) with whom they share an epithet, a predatory instinct, and alternating "sway" in "Acadia's woods and wilds" (44-46). This view probably derives from Haliburton, who, in turn, follows the Scottish historian William Robertson in seeing North American Indian culture as the "rudest" and "least civilized"<sup>37</sup> that can be conceived: in "their" mode of life, "savages"—that is, "wandering tribes, who depend upon hunting and fishing for subsistence"—"nearly resemble . . . animals," says Haliburton; "[i]n the woods, [the Indians] are as much at home as the wild animals of the forest."<sup>38</sup> (These last quotations are taken from *A General Description of Nova Scotia* but they might as well have come from their source in Robertson's *The History of America*.)<sup>39</sup> Although Haliburton is quite capable of writing elegiacally about the Indians' loss of their hunting grounds and probable eventual extinction,<sup>40</sup> he furnishes several examples of the "great outrages" visited upon "the solitary and peaceable settlers" in the Maritimes by the "savage" and "ferocious" Micmacs and Richibuctos. In the vicinity of Halifax particularly, he writes, "[t]hese savages . . . defended with obstinacy a territory they held from nature, and it was not until after very great losses, that the English drove them out of their former hunting grounds."<sup>41</sup> "[H]ideous yells announce the murderous band, / Whose bloody footsteps desolate the land," run the equivalent lines in *The Rising Village*, "And now, behold! [the settler's] bold aggressors fly, / To seek their prey beneath some other sky; / Resign the haunts they can maintain no more" (85-86, 107-09).

Even with the rudimentary legal education that he received as a clerk in a "Lawyer's Office" in his teens, Goldsmith would have perceived the force of the phrase "territory . . . held from nature" in Haliburton's account of the Indians' obstinate defence of their hunting grounds in the Halifax area. In his discussion "Of Property, in General" in the second volume of his *Commentaries*, Blackstone draws a distinction between the primeval "natural right" of "wandering" peoples to the lands

that they use or need for subsistence and the Lockean "idea of a more permanent property in the soil" which, he says, was "introduced and established" through the "regular connexion and consequence" that came with "the art of agriculture."<sup>42</sup> Blackstone makes an explicit contrast between "the natural laws" under which "American [Indian] nations" and "the first Europeans" held "transient" rights to property and the post-agricultural notion of "permanent property," and he expresses deep misgivings about the practice of "sending colonies" into "countries already peopled, and driving out or massacring the innocent and defenseless natives." "[H]ow far such a conduct was consonant to nature, to reason, or to christianity," he writes, "deserved well to be considered by those, who have rendered their names immortal by thus civilizing mankind."<sup>43</sup> As Haliburton's concessive reference to "territory . . . held from nature" by the Micmacs in *A General Description* indicates, the question of the right of the emigrants to their land was still being "considered" in Nova Scotia in the eighteen twenties. So, too, was it in the United States, as witness the landmark case of *Johnson v. McIntosh*, which was decided in the same year (1823) as the publication of Haliburton's *General Description* and the writing of *The Rising Village*. In a decision that was controversial in its day, and which is still cited in American and, occasionally, Canadian land disputes involving native peoples, Chief Justice John Marshall held that, while "exclusive title" to a given area in North America had passed under the "fundamental principle" of "discovery" from its "original inhabitants" to the particular European nation that discovered it, the Indians remained "the rightful occupants of the soil, with a legal as well as just claim to retain possession of it, and to use it according to their own discretion."<sup>44</sup> As Chief Justice Dickson writes in the recent Supreme Court of Canada case of *Guerin v. The Queen* (which acknowledges the Indians' right to land), Marshall "was . . . of the opinion that the rights of Indians in the lands they traditionally occupied prior to European colonization both predated and survived the claims to sovereignty made by various European nations in the territories of the North American continent."<sup>45</sup>

Goldsmith's response to the vexed and vexing issue of Indian rights in the land in *The Rising Village* is a doubly reassuring one from the perspective of a European emigrant or



farmer. The site upon which the first "lonely settler" erected his "home" lay "amid a wilderness of trees . . . / Where not a voice upon his ear intrude[d]; / Where solemn silence all the waste pervade[d]" (60-62). "[S]o long as . . . [the right of migration, or sending colonies] was confined to the stocking and cultivation of desert uninhabited countries," states Blackstone, "it kept strictly within the limits of the law of nature."<sup>46</sup> The violators of natural law, the latecomers to "countries already peopled" in *The Rising Village*, are thus the "wandering savages" whose sentence of "death" on the "*white man*" (and notice the italics of amazement) is a grotesque perversion of justice (the other italics in the following quotation are added):

Behold the savage tribes in wildest strain,  
*Approach* with death and terror in their train;  
*No longer* silence o'er the forest reigns,  
*No longer* still now her power retains;  
But hideous yells *announce* the murderous band;  
Whose bloody footsteps desolate the land;  
He hears them oft in sternest mood maintain,  
*Their right* to rule the mountain and the plain;  
He hears them doom the *white man's* instant death,  
Shrinks from the sentence, while he gasps for breath,  
Then, rousing with one effort all his might,  
Darts from his hut, and saves himself by flight.

(81-92)

Not apparently content with the argument that the European settler has what Blackstone calls the right of "first taker"<sup>47</sup> to his property, Goldsmith proceeds to suggest with Locke (the relevant passage from the *Two Treatises on Government* is quoted in a note in Blackstone's *Commentaries*) that ownership of a thing such as land devolves to the man who "hath mixed his labour with [it] . . . joined to it something that is his own," and, thus, "remove[d] [it] out of the state that nature hath provided and left it in."<sup>48</sup> "By patient firmness and industrious toil, / . . . [the settler] still retains possession of the soil" (103-04) observes Goldsmith in the body of *The Rising Village*, adding in a note that "[t]he process of clearing land, though simple, is attended with a great deal of labour" (72n.). Of course, land was frequently granted to settlers in Canada on condition that improvements were made to it, but this is itself partly a reflection of the Lockean justification of ownership upon which Goldsmith draws

in addressing the "right" to "possess . . . the soil" in the early sections of *The Rising Village*.

(2) *The Pastoral Stage*. The departure of the "savage tribes" and the "savage beasts" to "safety in far distant wilds" (110) marks the end of Goldsmith's surprisingly legalistic treatment of the two classic phases of pioneer heroism: the establishment of a homestead in the "wilderness" and its successful defence from "bold aggressors." At the conclusion of the second of these two phases, the antagonistic Indians are replaced as a focus of interest in *The Rising Village* by the "friend[s]" whose "huts," "scattered" around the pioneer's "dwelling," begin the transformation of the farm into a village. Not only does the equivalent replacement of savage by domestic animals fail to occur in *The Rising Village*, but there is no mention whatsoever in the poem of sheep, cattle, or any other livestock. Indeed, there is no pastoral stage as such in the growth of Nova Scotia as Goldsmith recounts it; rather, the country goes directly, and with "surprising brevity,"<sup>49</sup> from wilderness to cultivation: "[a]nd where the forest once its foliage spread, / The golden corn triumphant waves its head" (71-72). Why? The answer lies in the role of *The Rising Village* in carrying forward Young's attack in *The Letters of Agricola* on the widely held "belief that Nova Scotia was destined for pasturage; and that all attempts to raise bread for the growing population must be fruitless and unavailing"<sup>50</sup> on account of poor soil, a harsh climate, and inadequate farming methods. All six of the initiatives of the Provincial Agricultural Society as announced on April 14, 1819 (and reprinted in *The Letters of Agricola* in 1822)<sup>51</sup> were directed towards enhancing the extent and efficiency of cultivation in Nova Scotia with a view to making the Province first self-sufficient in grain and other "'common . . . necessities of life'"<sup>52</sup> and then a net exporter of them. "Tillage is in its infancy in Nova Scotia"<sup>53</sup> declared Haliburton in 1823, but he went on to praise Agricola and the Agricultural Societies for the great changes that had occurred in this regard, from an increase in the amount of bread produced in the Province to the corresponding decrease in the quantities of grain and flour imported. It may be too far-fetched to see a residue of Young's emphasis on "Agricultural Chemistry" (fertilizers) in the almost "alchemical"<sup>54</sup> transformation of "forest" to "corn" in *The Rising Village*, but it is difficult to doubt that the "busy mill, / Whose clacking echoes o'er the distant hill"

(461-62) later in the poem, is one of the “[m]ills for grinding oats and shelling barley” that by 1823 had been erected “in several districts” in Nova Scotia as a result of Young’s efforts.<sup>55</sup>

In terms of the four stages theory, these efforts were aimed at taking Nova Scotia as quickly as possible from the savage to the agricultural stage. To Young, the pastoral stage was the equivalent of the European “middle ages,” a period of barbarism between the agricultural civilization created by the “patient industry” of the ancient Romans and the “improvements” in farming machinery and methods that began to appear during the Renaissance.<sup>56</sup> As the heir to these improvements, Nova Scotia was in a position to bypass quickly or entirely the “long” “childhood” of “error” and “superstition” which, in Goldsmith’s parallel analysis, “delayed” Britain’s progress from an “infant age” of “darkest ignorance” to the “splendour, science, power, and skill” of “manhood’s prime” (530-33, 551). The key to rapid progress in every aspect of life lay not in pasturage but in tillage. This point is made over and over again in *The Letters of Agricola* and, from Young’s agricentric perspective, which sees even poetry as a by-product of good husbandry (one form of cultivation leads to another), it is implicit in the very existence of *The Rising Village*. Nor is Young alone among the authors read by Goldsmith in assigning seminal importance to agriculture in the progress of civilization. In his *Commentaries*, Blackstone argues that, though “tillage” is itself the result of the need to secure “constant subsistence” for an increasingly “populous” world, it is nevertheless the origin of the right to “permanent property in the soil” from which advanced civilization flows:

Had not . . . a separate property in lands, as well as movables, been vested in some individuals, the world must have continued a forest, and men been mere animals of prey; which, according to some philosophers, is the genuine state of nature. Whereas now (so graciously has Providence interwoven our duty and our happiness together) the result of this very necessity has been the ennobling of the human species, by giving it opportunities of improving it’s [sic] *rational* faculties, as well as exerting it’s [sic] *natural*. Necessity begat property: and in order to insure that property, recourse was had to civil society, which brought along with it a long train of inseparable concomitants; states, government, laws, punishments, and the public exercise of religious duties. Thus connected together, it was found that a part only of society was sufficient to provide,

by their manual labour, for the necessary subsistence of all; and leisure was given to others to cultivate the human mind, to invent useful arts, and to lay the foundations of science.<sup>57</sup>

If Nova Scotia wishes to emulate Britain's high achievements in the "arts" and "science" (40, 535), if Acadia's "sons" wish to be worthy "[h]eirs" to Britannia's "laws . . . liberty . . . splendour, science, power, and skill" (550-51), then the sooner the soil is tilled and planted the better. No wonder Young envisages "the rising spirit of improvement" as sitting "'dovelike . . . incumbent' over the rude and undigested mass of . . . [Nova Scotia's] rural chaos."<sup>58</sup> No wonder the settler in *The Rising Village* looks from his "humble cot" and "rising crops" towards "Heaven" with "future joys in every thought" (114-20). In a field of grain lies the seed of a civilized world.

(3) *The Agricultural Stage*. It is probably already apparent that the two principal aims of *The Rising Village* are to celebrate Nova Scotia's achievement of the crucial agricultural stage of development and to provide the poem's readers with some glimpses of the future implied by this achievement. In less than "fifty Summers," a combination of "fertile soil," "labourer's toil," and "the peaceful arts of [agri-]culture" have moved "Happy Acadia" from savagery and poverty to tranquility and prosperity; where but a short time ago the "poor peasant" lived in terror of "savage tribes" and the "fearless beast of prey" and "[s]carce from the soil could wring his scanty fare," there now stands the "wide barn" replete with a "varied" and "bounteous store" of nature's "richest products" (485-16). Goldsmith does not explicitly state that "[agri-]culture's arts, a nation's Noblest friend" (517) provide the instigation for "civil society" and its "inseparable" and ensuing "concomitants"—"the public exercise of religious duties," "leisure . . . to cultivate the human mind," and so on—but he strongly implies such a progression in his account of the "[n]ew prospects [that] form a "neighborhood" around the settler's successful farm—first the "tavern," a "useful" building because it provides the "settlers" with positive "social pleasures"; then the "village church," the most obvious manifestation of positive community spirit in the poem ("in homespun dress, each sacred morn, / The old and young its hallowed seats adorn"); and, subsequently, the mixed and, increasingly, negative accretions of the "country store," the

doctor's office, and the "school-house" (129-248). It is sometime after agriculture has brought these manifestations of "social life," both good and bad, to Acadia that the settlers and their families are able to relax and enjoy the full range of leisure-time activities—"sportive pleasures," "festive dances," "[g]lambols and freaks" (249-84)—that signals their civilization's transcendence of rudeness (the savage and pastoral stages) in the direction of refinement (agriculture, commerce). But a mere juxtaposition of Blackstone's description of the uses of leisure—"to cultivate the human mind, to invent useful arts, and to lay the foundations of science"—suggests that the "sports" of the settlers and their families, however "[d]ear," "humble," and "guileless" (281-82), may not be the kinds of activities that will ensure Nova Scotia's continued ascent of the four-rungged ladder of civilization. Of course, Goldsmith's praise of the efforts of the S.P.G. and the Agricultural Societies in the 1825 version of *The Rising Village* are designed both to encourage such efforts and, in concert with the poem's own existence, allay fears that, certain appearances to the contrary, "human mind[s]," "useful arts," and "science" are in fact being cultivated in the wake of Nova Scotia's agrarian development.

*The Rising Village* does not agree with *The Letters of Agricola* on all points in its presentation of the benefits of agriculture (for example, the "icy chain" and "rude tempests" of "Winter" [485-88] in the poem belie Young's confidence that agriculture can ameliorate even the climate of "rude countries").<sup>59</sup> But Goldsmith does appear to take up Agricola's suggestion that only a country shaped by cultivation can inspire the emotional and imaginative responses that are requisite for poetry and patriotism. Uniting Addisonian aesthetics and Hartlean associationism in a manner reminiscent of earlier writers in Canada, Young argues that, whereas a "tract" of "uniform forest" exhibits a "sameness of prospect" which is neither visually nor emotionally stimulating, "hills" "diversified" by a picturesque combination of natural and man-made shapes have the power both "to surprise and delight" and to "become associated in the imagination with . . . memorable events of which they were the theatre." "[T]he sight" of such hills, he maintains, "gives rise to a train of ideas which carry us back to other times, and are allied to melancholy or pleasure." In a

passage that is worth quoting at length to establish its centrality for *The Rising Village*, Young suggests that:

[i]n Nova Scotia the emphatic and high-meaning words, "This is my dear, my native land," can never be uttered with appropriate glow and enthusiasm, till we can fully and uninterruptedly survey its general aspect, with its hills and dales, its ravines and glens, its rocks and caves, its springs and rills, its uplands and meadows, now hidden under an uninteresting mantle of foliage. The wilderness is a term of cheerless import, and involves whatever is repugnant to the human heart. When the lineaments of the country have become distinct and visible, it will win our affections, and fix and consolidate our patriotism. Its rivers will be rendered sacred in song; its lakes will acquire interest from youthful and amorous adventure; its mountains will assume befitting names. . . . And the imagination, thus connecting with particular spots the alternations of pleasure and pain, of hope and fear, of depression and transport, will improve these into an attachment to the soil.<sup>60</sup>

One of the few places in Nova Scotia that permits the uninterrupted view of an "extensive range of landscape" that Young sees as the source of patriotic feeling is the Annapolis Valley where, as he says in an earlier *Agricola* Letter, "some high points" allow a percipient "to descry [various] objects at a distance," including "the rich marshes below."<sup>61</sup>

A reading of *The Rising Village* in the light of the passages just quoted from Young predictably reveals that affection for Nova Scotia increases in direct proportion to the cultivation of the Province. "When, looking round, the lonely settler sees / His home amid a wilderness of trees," "his heart" "sinks" (59-61).<sup>62</sup> Later, his heart leaps up at the sight of his "golden corn" growing "where the forest once its foliage spread" (71-72). Later still, his "eyes" are "charm[ed]" by the various "charm[s] of rural life" that the "arts of [agri-]culture"—"the plastic hand of human application"<sup>63</sup>—have called into existence around him. After "the Rising Village claims a name" (197) as predicted by Young, it expands its "smiling charms" yet further until "rural beauties decorate the land" (251-52) and the scene is picturesquely set for the "youthful and amorous adventure[s]" that will add "interest" to "particular spots" and, it transpires, seasons and plants. Now come the "dances" and "sports" of "manly youth" and "gentle maid" on a "summer's evening" "[b]eneath some spreading tree's expanding shade" (261-66), for example, and—

at the other end of Young's pleasure-pain spectrum—the woeful and wintry interpolated tale of Flora and Albert (301-426). In his reading of this tale as a political allegory, Hughes aligns Albert with Britain and, less problematically, Flora with Nova Scotia,<sup>64</sup> an interpretation that should not obscure the Ovidian manner in which Goldsmith adds “interest” to the “May-flower,” a plant “indigenous to the wilds of Acadia” (316n., “America” [1825] 318n.), by “connecting” it to the qualities and adventures of his “hapless” heroine.<sup>65</sup> The association between woman and flower is clear enough in the body of the poem (“Flora was fair, and blooming as that flower / Which spreads its blossom to the April shower” [315-16]), but it becomes even clearer in a note that makes the flower an emblem of Flora's young and innocent sexuality: it is “in bloom from the middle of April to the end of May. Its leaves are white, faintly tinged with red, and it possesses a delightful fragrance” (316n.). As Al Purdy's “Arctic Rhododendrons” indicates, the age-old attempt to invest flowers with imaginative significance by associating them with “amorous adventure” has persisted in Canada until well into the present century among poets who wish to see more in external nature than what meets the eye.

Nowhere is the presence of Young's views on agricultural improvement as a prerequisite for local pride and local poetry more evident in *The Rising Village* than in two passages of landscape description that follow the Flora and Albert story. With their repeated emphasis on “[h]ow sweet” (443, 473, 475, 477) it is to experience the sights, sounds, and smells of rural Nova Scotia, both descriptions are almost cloying in their celebration of a landscape that is now sufficiently agricultural and anthropomorphic to command the “warmest affection”<sup>66</sup> of its inhabitants:

Dear lovely spot! Oh may . . .  
Sweet tranquil charms, that cannot fail to please,  
Forever reign around thee, and impart  
Joy, peace, and comfort to each native heart.  
(481-84)

The “charms” concerned are in the first instance those of the Annapolis Valley seen from one of the “high points” mentioned by Young:

. . . some easy hill's ascending height,  
Where all the landscape brightens with delight

And boundless prospects stretched on every side,  
 Proclaim the country's industry and pride.  
 (447-50)

Like other picturesque writers before him in Canada, Goldsmith employs the here/there convention and the decasyllabic couplet to reflect and enhance the ordered, "patchwork" landscape of which large areas of the Maritimes—for so the general nature of the description implies—are now comprised:

Here the broad marsh extends its open plain,  
 Until its limits touch the distant main;  
 There verdant meads along the upland spring,  
 And grateful odours to the breezes fling;  
 Here crops of grain in rich luxuriance rise,  
 And wave their golden riches to the skies;  
 There smiling orchards interrupt the scene,  
 Or gardens bounded by some fence of green;  
 The farmer's cottage, bosomed 'mong the trees,  
 Whose spreading branches shelter from the breeze;  
 The winding stream that turns the busy mill,  
 Whose clacking echoes o'er the distant hill;  
 The neat white church . . .

(451-63)

Nova Scotia has become lovable and loving ("grateful," "smiling," "bosomed") because humanized by agrarian development, and it inspires poetry because its shapes—the shapes of fields ("meads"), "orchards," "fenced gardens," "cottage," "mill," and "neat white church"—are bounded and rectilinear, like the neo-classical couplets that Goldsmith marshalls here in a regular sequence of commas and semi-colons to celebrate the creation of order through agriculture. (A notable irregularity in the passage is the expansion of its first line to six stresses in response to the centrifugal openness of the "broad marsh," a landscape fittingly reflected later by Charles G.D. Roberts in the long lines of "Tantramar Revisited.") In *Landscape and Ideology*, her superb study of the *English Rustic Tradition*, Anne Bermingham has shown that almost from its beginnings in Britain the picturesque aesthetic was predicated on the disjunction between the visually appealing and the economically viable, and thus stained with elegiac pessimism.<sup>67</sup> In Goldsmith's hands, and in early writing on Canada in general, quite the opposite is true: the picturesque aesthetic embodies the



optimism of a new land in which certain landscapes are visually appealing precisely *because* they are economically viable.

In the portion of *The Rising Village* under examination, the elegiac tone is reserved for those who did not live to see Nova Scotia's agricultural prosperity—the "sacred dead" in the "grass-clod hillocks" (464) beside the "neat white church"—and for the "Whip-poor-will," the subject of Goldsmith's second description of the emotionally affective landscape of rural Nova Scotia:

How sweet to wander round the wood-bound lake,  
Whose glassy stillness scarce the zephyrs wake;  
How sweet to hear the murmuring of the rill,  
As down it gurgles from the distant hill;  
The note of Whip-poor-will how sweet to hear,  
When sadly slow it breaks upon the ear,  
And tells each night, to all the silent vale,  
The hopeless sorrows of its mournful tale.

(473-80)

Once again a series of end-stopped couplets isolates and frames the shapes and sounds of a comfortably delineated and humanized world. Also noticeable in the techniques of the passage are lessons' learned from *An Essay on Criticism*, particularly Pope's examples of subjects requiring sibilance ("Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows, / And the smooth Stream in smoother number flows") and his illustrations of the mimetic effectiveness of "long Vowels" ("drags its slow length along"; "The line too labours, and the words move slow").<sup>68</sup> But to what purpose are these techniques directed? What is the message conveyed by the Whip-poor-will passage? Indeed, why, of all possible birds, the Whip-poor-will?

Not surely—to answer the last question first—because this particular bird suggests the "loneliness" of the settler, as Rashley argues,<sup>69</sup> but because, on the contrary, it indicates a triumph over that loneliness. Now that their Province has been humanized by agriculture, Nova Scotians can experience and enjoy the remnants of the "deep solitudes" and "wilderness of trees" (60-61) that fifty years earlier had made their ancestors' hearts sink. "[L]oneliness . . . saddens solitude," as Carman would later say, but "sweet speech"—community—"makes it durable,"<sup>70</sup> even desirable. Not only has "successful settlement"<sup>71</sup> made possible a "delight[ed]" (477n.) response to external nature but—as predicted by Young, intimated by the mere mention of Carman,

and confirmed by the extraordinary (for Goldsmith) lyricism of the Whip-poor-will passage, it has made possible in Acadia the kind of bitter-sweet response to external nature that is commonly found in post-Romantic lyrics. As darkling he listened in his imagination to the "sadly slow . . . mournful tale" of the Whip-poor-will, Goldsmith may have had in mind, as Lynch suggests, the Indian legend "that these birds, which are restless and utter their plaintive note at night, are the souls of their ancestors who died in battle" against "Europeans."<sup>72</sup> If so, then perhaps the elegiac tone of the Whip-poor-will passage is Goldsmith's belated and oblique expression of regret for the treatment of the Indians in Nova Scotia. Another possible source of the passage and the note that accompanies it is Isaac Weld's *Travels*, where the observation that many people imagine the "plaintive noise" of the usually invisible Whip-poor-will emanates "not . . . from a bird, but from a frog"<sup>73</sup> has the happy effect of indicating the position of Goldsmith's lyric moment on the continuum between the skylarks and nightingales of Romantic poetry and one of their almost inevitable Canadian equivalents, the tuneful frogs of Charles G.D. Roberts and Archibald Lampman.

In *A General Description of Nova Scotia*, Haliburton concludes his chapter on agriculture with the admission that the importance of the topic has made his discussion of it disproportionately long. The same rationale must be offered here, for, as has been seen, little of *The Rising Village* can be excluded from an account of the implications of agrarian development in the poem. One of those implications is, of course, trade—the "reciprocal exchange of commodities"<sup>74</sup>—that can only be an economically viable option for Nova Scotia when, Young and Haliburton argue, the Province produces a surplus of agricultural products. If Nova Scotians could generate wealth through grain exports, and then use that wealth to purchase items that they could not produce domestically, they would have within their grasp both prosperity and, from the perspective of the four stages theory, the highest or most "polished" level of civilization possible.

(4) *The Commercial Stage*. Since people must eat and, moreover, tend to enjoy the amenities of the countryside, this wealthy and sophisticated stage of social development does not so much replace the agricultural stage as exist beside and above it. Necessarily and desirably both mercantile and agrarian, both

urban and rural, the commercial stage is characterized by the rule of law and morality, and by glowing achievements in the arts and science (Blackstone, it will be recalled, saw agriculture as giving rise to, among other things, "government, laws . . . [and the] leisure . . . to *invent* useful arts, and *lay the foundations* of science" [emphasis added]). In *The Rising Village*, the exemplar of the commercial stage is, of course, Britain: "How chaste and splendid are the scenes that lie / Beneath the circle of Britannia's sky!" exclaims Goldsmith near the beginning of the poem from his distanced and idealizing colonial perspective:

What charming prospects there arrest the view,  
How bright, how varied, and how boundless too!  
Cities and plains extending far and wide,  
The merchant's glory, and the farmer's pride.  
Majestic palaces in pomp display  
The wealth and splendour of the regal sway;  
While the low hamlet and the shepherd's cot,  
In peace and freedom mark the peasant's lot.  
There nature's vernal bloom adorns the field,  
And Autumn's fruits their rich luxuriance yield.  
There men, in busy crowds, with men combine,  
That arts may flourish, and fair science shine;  
And thence, to distant climes their labours send,  
As o'er the world their widening views extend.

(27-42)

To fault these lines for not presenting a realistic depiction of Britain after the enclosures is to miss the point that Goldsmith's wealthy yet moral ("chaste"), sophisticated yet law-abiding "Britannia" represents the ideally balanced commercial/agricultural stage of social development towards which Acadia has in a few short years made gratifying strides. This surely is the thrust of the comparison that immediately follows the passage just quoted: "Compar'd with scenes like these, how lone and drear / Did *once* Acadia's woods and wilds appear" (43-44; emphasis added).

That Acadia has reached the agricultural/commercial stage that makes her worthy heir of Georgian Britain is made explicit in a passage near the end of *The Rising Village*:

Nor [agri-]culture's arts, a nation's noblest friend,  
Alone o'er Scotia's fields their power extend;  
From all her shores, with every gentle gale,  
Commerce expands her free and swelling sail;  
And all the land, luxuriant, rich, and gay,

Exulting owns the splendour of their sway.  
 These are thy blessings, Scotia, and for these,  
 For wealth, for freedom, happiness, and ease  
 Thy grateful thanks to Britain's care are due . . .  
 . . . . .  
 Then, may thy parent ever be thy pride!  
 (517-25, 528)

As innocent of the notion of oedipal rivalry as of the "inner incompatibility of empire and nation,"<sup>75</sup> Goldsmith merely wishes to see "Scotia" achieve commercial maturity within the material and mercantile system of which Britain is the centre. Such deference from the colony to the mother country makes exquisitely, if entropically, apt Goldsmith's echo in the above lines of Pye's celebration of the beneficial effects of cultural diffusion from Mesopotamia to Greece in ancient times in *The Progress of Refinement*. With the migration of the "arts," writes the poet-laureate of ancient Greek civilization, "Improvement spreads," as does "Industry," until "Down the steep cliff, and o'er the craggy brow / Strong Agriculture drives his laboring plow, / And to the currents of the rising gale / Adventurous commerce trusts her swelling sail."<sup>76</sup>

No more than Pye and many other writers was Goldsmith unaware of the moral dangers attendant upon the commercial stage of social development. Quiet hints of these dangers can be heard in the "pride" of the "farmer" and the "pomp" of the "palaces" in the description of Britain near the beginning of *The Rising Village*, and such hints become a little louder in Goldsmith's inventory of the items on sale in the village store. Among the items on the merchant's "spacious shelves" are at least a couple—"Shawls for young damsels" and "silks"—which suggest a drift towards "luxury" (a principal target of course in *The Deserted Village*) as a result of a still innocent ("chaste") commercial prosperity. The phrase "[a]ll useful things" that caps the inventory of the store's contents transforms the preceding couplets into a satirical catalogue in which the "silks" and even the "children's toys" appear ironically incongruous, like (though for opposite reasons), the "Bibles" among the "Puffs, Powders, Patches, . . . [and] Billet-doux"<sup>77</sup> on Belinda's vanity in *The Rape of the Lock*: "Woolcards and stockings, hats for men and boys, / Mill-saws and fenders, silks, and children's toys; / All useful things" (312-15). In the first of the so-called "Letters of

Mephibosheth Stepsure," which succeeded *The Letters of Agricola* in the *Acadian Recorder* beginning in December, 1821, Thomas McCulloch offers a description of a village store that parallels, and, indeed, may have inspired, Goldsmith's: "When a merchant lays in his goods he naturally consults the taste of his customers. Solomon's, accordingly, consisted chiefly of West Indian produce, gin, brandy, tobacco, and a few chests of tea. For the youngsters, he had provided an assortment of superfine broad cloths and fancy muslins, ready-made boots, whips, spurs and a variety of gumflowers and other articles which come under the general denomination of notions."<sup>78</sup> The desirable but by no means indispensable items in the stores of McCulloch and Goldsmith constitute tangible evidence of Acadia's success within the mercantile economy of the British Empire. But they are also the sign of a capacity for self-indulgence that can rapidly go from bad to worse:

As life's gay scenes in quick succession rise,  
To lure the heart and captivate the eyes;  
Soon vice steals on, in thoughtless pleasures' train,  
And spreads her miseries o'er the village plain.  
Her baneful arts some happy home invade,  
Some bashful lover, or some tender maid;  
Until, at length, repressed by no control,  
Thy sink, debase, and overwhelm the soil.

.....  
Oh, Virtue! that thy powerful charms could bind  
Each rising impulse of the erring mind.

(287-94, 299-300)

Unless Acadians are morally vigilant, their rise to commercial prosperity will be attended by a concomitant rise in the forces that threaten a society, not from without (as did the "savage tribes" and "savage beasts"), but from within—"thoughtless[ness]," disobedience, "heedless passions" (297) and the like.

The breeding ground for such anti-rational and anti-social forces in *The Rising Village* is, as Lynch has shown, the school-house. As well as being ignorant, and thus unable to "guide . . . aspiring mind[s]" through the "fields" of "art[s]" and "science" (233-34), the village school-master fails to exercise moral authority over his pupils:

No modest youths surround his awful chair,  
His frowns to deprecate, or smiles to share,

But all the terrors of his lawful sway  
 The proud despise, the fearless disobey;  
 The rugged urchins spurn at all control.  
 (241-45)

The incompetence of the school-master undermines nearly all the purposes of education as defined by Haliburton in his *General Description of Nova Scotia*: "To break the natural ferocity of human nature, to subdue the passions, to impress the principles of religion and morality upon the heart, and to give habits of obedience and subordination to paternal as well as political authority."<sup>79</sup> In failing to adhere to this Tory programme of education by modifying fallen human nature in the direction of reason and obedience, the school-house in the Rising Village ensures that young Acadians will succumb to the vices which, according to another of Goldsmith's principal sources, characterized those rural areas of North America in which the work ethic had been eroded by circumstances or prosperity. "The common people in this neighbourhood," writes Weld of a part of Virginia, "[f]rom being able . . . to produce the necessities of life upon very easy terms, . . . are rather of an indolent habit, and inclined to dissipation . . . [T]he females do not fall into the habit of intoxication like the men, but in other respects they are equally disposed to pleasure, and their morals are in like manner relaxed."<sup>80</sup> Later in his *Travels*, Weld observes that "every little town and village throughout the [Genesee] country [of New York] abound[s] with [land] speculators, and . . . in consequence, exhibit[s] a picture of idleness and dissipation."<sup>81</sup> Moreover, he reprints from a local American newspaper a letter by a father concerning his son's excursion into land speculation that may well have provided Goldsmith with the inspiration for Albert's sudden and, for Flora and his father, devastating departure from the Rising Village. The American father writes, "There is no managing my boy at home; these golden dreams [of fast money through land speculation] still beckon him back to Bath [New York], where, he says, no man need either work or starve." Just as Goldsmith introduces the "hapless tale" of Flora and Albert with a commentary on the inroads made by "vice" on "Virtue" in the Rising Village, so Weld's farmer prefaces his "sad" comments on his "son's disgrace" (304) with the reflection "that speculation has raged to such a degree of late, that honest industry, and all the humble virtues that walk in her train, are

discouraged and rendered unfashionable.” “It is to be lamented too,” he says, “that dissipation is sooner introduced in new settlements than industry and economy.”<sup>82</sup> It may be no coincidence that “silk stockings” are among the items that, according to his father, tempt the young American speculator away from work and the farm.

Since the education of girls in Goldsmith’s day was more often than not conducted in the home and confined to such “useful arts” as cooking and embroidery, Flora is unlikely to have attended the school in the Rising Village. This domestic education and lack of exposure to the incompetent school-master accounts for Flora’s “gentle manners,” “unstudied grace,” and “purity,” and for “the lovelier beauties of . . . [a] mind” ruled sufficiently by reason to admit only “at length” that she reciprocates Albert’s love for her (317-30). In contrast, Albert is a predictable product of the village schoolhouse—impetuous, passionate, and, it transpires, deceitful and treacherous in a manner linked by Goldsmith through allusion to Shakespeare’s Othello and Milton’s Satan.<sup>83</sup> When Albert abandons his “native plain” (363) and bride-to-be on the eve of his wedding, Flora is catapulted into a “frenzy” that nearly results in her death “amid the snow” (385, 398), a fate that would have made her fully parallel to the “Swain” who loses his way and dies in a snowstorm in Thomson’s “Winter.”<sup>84</sup> With the help of a kindly “peasant” and his “tender wife” (403, 405), Flora physically survives her wintry ordeal; however, Albert’s “unmanly arts” have left her with a “maddened brain” (416, 422) from which she never recovers to be the source of fecundity implied by her name and, indeed, required by the Rising Village if it is to continue growing socially, culturally, and economically. (In describing Flora as a “frenzied” woman from whom “reason [has] fled” [379-80], Goldsmith may have had in mind Blackstone’s comments on “phrenzies” and “deprivations of reason” as impediments to marriage.)<sup>85</sup> In *The Deserted Village*, “the land, by luxury betray’d,” is explicitly likened to a “fair female” (“Flora was fair” [315] repeats *The Rising Village*), and the Anglo-Irish poem also contains a “poor shivering female” who is undone personally by a male “betrayor” and generally by the “baneful arts” that “pamper luxury.”<sup>86</sup> Goldsmith would thus have had to read no further than his great-uncle’s poem to see the threat posed to an entire society and its constituent individuals by the

"vice [that] steals on, in thoughtless pleasure's train" (289). Both individually, as Flora, and allegorically, as Nova Scotia, Goldsmith's unfortunate heroine exemplifies the dangerous consequences of veering away from the values that built the Province, and which fortunately are still very much evident in the "care," patience, striving, "kind solicitude," "friendly efforts," and mutual purpose (402-12) of the "peasant" couple who nurse her back to what is left of her shattered life.

That a woman is the principal victim of an increasingly luxury- and pleasure-loving society in *The Rising Village* may simply be a contingency of Goldsmith's decision to combine romance and allegory in his interpolated tale. Like the victims of love, countries are more often envisaged as female than male. Nevertheless, it is worth suggesting that the ruination of a female specifically in *The Rising Village* is a reflection of the view expounded by John Millar, one of the most important exponents of the four stages theory in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,<sup>87</sup> that women were especially vulnerable to the "disorders" of advanced societies, including the "romantic and extravagant passions"<sup>88</sup> attached by such societies to human love. With material luxury comes a moral laxness that is not only "inconsistent with good order, and with the general interest of society," Millar argues in *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, but also a sign of a retreat from refinement to rudeness that can leave women no better off than they were at the savage stage of social development. (It may not be fortuitous that Flora's decline begins when a "ruder footstep" than Albert's brings his treacherous "letter to [her] door" [353-54].) To Millar, the "bad consequences" for the "rank and dignity . . . of women" that attend the "free intercourse of the sexes" in "luxurious nations" indicates that "there are . . . limits beyond which it is impossible to push the real improvements arising from wealth and opulence."<sup>89</sup> More concerned to encourage than dissuade "improvements," Goldsmith follows his excoriation of Albert for causing Flora's ruination with the assurance that such things rarely happen in Acadia. "Here virtue's charms" govern the "free intercourse of the sexes," and love almost invariably leads to enduring marriage:

Here modest youths, impressed in beauty's train,  
Or captive led by love's endearing chain,  
And fairest girls whom vows have ne'er betrayed,



Vows that are broken oft as soon as made,  
Unite their hopes, and join their lives in one,  
In bliss pursue them, as at first begun.  
Then, as life's current onward gently flows,  
With scarce one fault to ruffle its repose,  
With minds prepared, they sink in peace to rest,  
To meet on high the spirits of the blest.

(431-40)

The resemblance between these lines and Weld's account of the marital practices of the Moravians in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (which he visited after the notorious Bath) are probably not coincidental. "Hasty as . . . marriages [among the Moravians] are," Weld writes, "they are never known to be attended with unhappiness for being taught from their [*sic*] earliest infancy to keep those passions under controul, which occasion so much mischief amongst the mass of mankind; being inured to regular habits of industry, and to a quiet sober life; and being in their peaceable and retired settlements out of the reach of those temptations which persons are exposed to who launch forth into the busy world, and who mingle with the multitude, the parties meet with nought through life to interrupt their domestic repose."<sup>90</sup> Goldsmith was not a Moravian, but he may have found their attitudes to both education and marriage as expounded by Weld to be consistent enough with his own views to provide a pattern for at least one section of *The Rising Village*.<sup>91</sup>

At the stage of the Rising Village's development where the settlers were still doing battle with savagery, the "village church," with its fortress-like "turret," had been a physical manifestation of the "faith" in which refuge and "safety" could be sought when "dangers threaten[ed], or when fears invade[d]" (167-68, 175-76). An architectural token of the villagers' gratitude to the God of settlement, the "Great First Cause" (184) who ordered chaos and commanded man to "replenish" and "subdue" the earth in Genesis 1, the church also provided a focal point for the entire village community, both "old and young" (172) and thus, much more than the two other edifices in which the villagers meet in "groups," the tavern and the school-house, constitutes a microcosm of their society as a whole. In a reflection of that society's pre-commercial stage of development, the village church was once "unadorned" and the villagers themselves dressed in "homespun" (167-71), a fabric that is emblematic of pioneer virtue in *The Letters of Mephibosheth*

*Stepsure*.<sup>92</sup> Some fifty years later, as Nova Scotia is set to move from the agricultural to the commercial stage, the “neat white church” (463) still functions as a reflection and a focal point for society, past, present, and future. Within its walls are performed the marriages that ensure the virtue of the villagers and the future of the settlement. Beside its walls lie the graves of the founders and the builders of the village. And on the “rude cut stones or painted tablets” that mark the resting place of the “sacred dead” are epitaphs whose themes—“how youth and beauty fell; / How worth and hope were hurried to the grave, / And torn from those who had no power to save” (466-68)—echo aspects of *The Rising Village* itself, but whose crude form—“laboured verse” (466)—can only have been intended to contrast with the leisurely ease of Goldsmith’s style, and so throw once again into relief the great distance travelled by Nova Scotia society from its savage and arduous beginnings to its refined and polished present. To say this is, of course, to exaggerate the merit of *The Rising Village*, but not the aspirations of the man who was marginally less memorable to the inhabitants of Saint John, New Brunswick for “his pretensions to poetic rank” than for the “skill with which, by sweeping clean-cut curves upon the glassy ice [with his skates], he used to write, in large yet elegant letters, the words ‘Oliver Goldsmith’” (A 114). Less on and of his native land than either his orotund signature or the “laboured verse” on the actual grave markers that it describes, Goldsmith’s poem nevertheless addresses itself to local issues and a local audience and, for this reason, grounds itself in the life of its place and time.

### III

As a poet writing in and about the Maritimes in the 1820s, Goldsmith was no less a colonial than Cary had been some thirty years earlier in Lower Canada. But, perhaps for the same temperamental reasons that prompted him to emulate his great-uncle and then abandon poetry in disgust when *The Rising Village* was not universally acclaimed a worthy successor to *The Deserted Village*, Goldsmith exhibits more than Cary the twin hallmarks of the colonial: an extreme veneration of the mother country and a truculently defensive attitude to criticisms of life in the colony by condescending visitors from the imperial centre.

The former characteristic is abundantly evident towards the end of *The Rising Village*, where Goldsmith hails "Happy Britannia" as "[t]he first and brightest star of Europe's clime" and praises her for everything from possessing the "fairest forms and gentlest hearts" to preserving the earth from the tyrannical ambitions of Napoleon (539-46). The latter—a prickly offshoot of local pride—is barely evident in the poem without the recognition that in his depiction of the first public building erected in the Rising Village, the tavern, Goldsmith is addressing several sarcastic comments by Weld in his *Travels* on the tendency of the "lower and middling classes of people . . . in the country parts of Pennsylvania" and elsewhere in the United States to pester travellers with unwelcome questions. "On arriving amongst the Americans," remarks Weld at one point, "a stranger must tell where he came from, where he is going, what his name is, what his business is; and until he gratifies their curiosity on these points, and many others of equal importance, he is never suffered to remain quiet for a moment. In a tavern, he must satisfy every set that comes in, in the same manner, or involve himself in a quarrel"; and at another: "[a] traveller . . . may possibly imagine, that it is the desire of obtaining useful information which leads the people, wherever he stops, to accost him; and that particular enquiries . . . are made to prepare the way for questions of a more general nature . . . [W]hen it is found that these questions are asked merely through an idle and impertinent curiosity, and that by far the greater part of the people who ask them are ignorant, boorish fellows . . . the traveller . . . loses all patience with this disagreeable and prying disposition."<sup>93</sup> Goldsmith concedes that pointless questions are disconcerting to the "traveller" or "stranger," but puts them in the mouth, not of the settlers, but of the keeper of the tavern:

Here, oft the weary traveller at the close  
Of evening, finds a snug and safe repose.  
The passing stranger here, a welcome guest,  
From all his toil enjoys a peaceful rest;  
Unless the host, solicitous to please,  
With care officious mar his hope of ease,  
With flippant questions to no end confined,  
Exhaust his patience, and perplex his mind.

(133-40)

In their attack on Weld and their defence of the settlers, the ensuing lines recall the refutation in Cornwall Bayley's *Canada* of the same traveller's misconception of the French Canadians:

Yet, let no one condemn with thoughtless haste,  
 The hardy settler of the dreary waste,  
 Who, far removed from every busy throng,  
 And social pleasures that to life belong,  
 Whene'er a stranger comes within his reach,  
 Will sigh to learn whatever he can teach.  
 To this, must be ascribed in great degree,  
 That ceaseless, idle curiosity  
 Which over all the Western world prevails,  
 And every breast, or more or less, assails;  
 Till, by indulgence, so o'erpowering grown,  
 It seeks to know all business but its own.

(141-52)

With its repeated vowel and consonant sounds (notice particularly the recurrence of "ow" and "b") and its well-handled spondee in "to know all business but its own," the final couplet in this passage suggests the poet's own indignation at the behavior that he is attempting to defend. The resulting tension between sympathy and disapproval reflects in miniature Goldsmith's divided attitude to Acadia—his dismay at returning in 1818 to the land whose past achievements and future prospects he would nevertheless celebrate at length in *The Rising Village*. It also has clear reverberations in more recent writing on Canada, most notably Stephen Leacock's *Sunshine Sketches*, with its similarly ambivalent treatment of the inhabitants of a little town within a framework that assigns distinct priority to the perspective of the rural insider over that of the cosmopolitan outsider.

There are, in fact, many parallels of setting, theme, and tone between *The Rising Village* and *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*. Both works are set in a village that is fifty years old; both consign the native peoples to the darkness outside the history of European settlement; both present an assortment of more-or-less admirable village types; both are written from a Tory perspective that seeks to remember forward the best of the past as a bulwark against the morally dangerous aspects of an increasingly materialist present and future. Moreover, both works present a village or a little town from a perspective that is masculine in a curiously exclusive way. The setting in which Leacock places the

raconteur and listener in *Sunshine Sketches* is a men's club in a city (Toronto) at some remove from his little town (Orillia). The equivalent scene of story-telling in *The Rising Village* is the tavern:

Here, oft when winter dreary terrors reign,  
And cold, and snow, and storm, pervade the plain,  
Around the birch-wood blaze that settlers draw,  
"To tell of all they felt, and all they saw."  
When, thus in peace are met a happy few,  
Sweet are the social pleasures that ensue.  
What lively joy each honest bosom feels,  
As o'er the past events his memory steals,  
And to the listeners paints the dire distress,  
That marked his progress in the wilderness;  
The danger, trouble, hardship, toil, and strife,  
Which chased each effort of his struggling life.

(153-64)

"[H]is memory," "his progress," "his struggling life"—the world of the pioneer as envisaged and recounted by Goldsmith is a world of masculine effort, masculine achievement, and masculine reminiscence. If women are present in the tavern, they are the silent and inarticulate companions and servants of the male settlers, and are valued, to judge by the later descriptions of Flora and the peasant's wife, for the qualities—purity, beauty, fertility, kindness, and the like—that make them valuable as help-mates in a patriarchal culture. Not until Isabella Valancy Crawford's *Malcolm's Katie: A Love Story* are such assumptions about women seriously called into question in a poem about pioneering written in Canada. To say that in his treatment of women, as in so much else, Goldsmith was a progressive conservative is to point both to the core and to the limitations of a poem which, though it certainly cannot be all things to all people, nevertheless exhibits a consistency of purpose in relation to the time and place of its composition that will remain appealing to sympathetic readers.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Ray Palmer Baker, *A History of English-Canadian Literature to the Confederation* (1920; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1968): 153-55; J.D. Logan and Donald G. French, *Highways of Canadian Literature* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1924): 96; Archibald MacMechan, *Head-Waters of Canadian Literature* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1924): 24-25; and Lorne Pierce, *An Outline of Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1927): 62-63.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, R.E. Rashley, *Poetry in Canada: the First Three Steps* (1958, rpt. Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1979): 34. *The Rising Village* is "the first poetry which will repay analysis at all and, while it has slight poetic value, it is more interesting than is generally recognized."

<sup>3</sup> "Oliver Goldsmith's 'The Rising Village,'" *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews*, 1 (Fall / Winter, 1987): 27-43.

<sup>4</sup> "The Rising Village Again," *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews*, 3 (Fall / Winter, 1978): 1-13.

<sup>5</sup> *Autobiography of Oliver Goldsmith: A Chapter in Canada's Literary History*, 2nd ed. (1943; rpt. Hantsport, NS: Lancelot, 1985). Cited as A.

<sup>6</sup> *Creative Writing in Canada*, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1961): 13.

<sup>7</sup> *A General Description of Nova Scotia* (Halifax, NS: Royal Acadian School, 1823): 163.

<sup>8</sup> See Oliver Goldsmith, *The Rising Village*, ed. Gerald Lynch (London, Ont.: Canadian Poetry Press, 1989): 4-7 and 48n. to Dedication. All subsequent quotations from the 1825 and 1834 versions of *The Rising Village* are taken from the parallel texts in this edition. Unless designated 1825, quotations are from the 1834 text. References are to line numbers.

<sup>9</sup> See A 32f.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in A 99. Young wrote two pieces on *The Rising Village* in the *Novascotian* (24 Aug. 1825; 14 Sept. 1825). See note 23.

<sup>11</sup> See Adam Kidd, *The Huron Chief*, ed. D.M.R. Bentley and Charles R. Steele (London, Ont.: Canadian Poetry Press, 1987): 110-15 and Sandra J. Hurst, "The War Among the Poets: Introduction, Selected Documents, and Bibliography," diss., U of Western Ontario, 1987.

<sup>12</sup> A 98-99 n.153.

<sup>13</sup> *Creative Writing in Canada* 12.

<sup>14</sup> *Poetry in Canada* 30.

<sup>15</sup> *A General Description* 30-31.

<sup>16</sup> *Creative Writing in Canada* 12.

<sup>17</sup> See A 38.

<sup>18</sup> See [1825] II: 521-540 and the entry by Peter Borrowes on Lord Dalhousie (George Ramsay)—the source of this and subsequent information on the Earl—in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: U of Toronto, 1988) 722 (cited as DCB).

44. <sup>19</sup> The Rising Village of *Oliver Goldsmith*. New Ed. (Montreal: Delta, 1968): 44.
- <sup>20</sup> Hughes sees the poem as a manifestation of "the point of view of the ruling oligarchy in Halifax" (27f.).
- <sup>21</sup> See *The Letters of Agricola on the Principle of Vegetation and Tillage, Written for Nova Scotia, and Published First in the Acadian Recorder* (Halifax: Holland 1822): 195, 209, 213.
- <sup>22</sup> This and the subsequent quotation and information on John Young are taken from the entry on him by R.A. MacLean in *DCB* 7: 930-35.
- <sup>23</sup> The second and more positive of G.R. Young's two commentaries on *The Rising Village* (see note 10 and A 99-101) may have been prompted or written, in whole or in part, by his father, a possibility raised by similarities of theme and phrasing between the commentary and *The Letters of Agricola* (for example, "the plastic hand of cultivation" in the former and "the plastic hand of human application" in the latter [50]).
- <sup>24</sup> *Completed Field Notes* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989): 41-44.
- <sup>25</sup> See Michael Williams and Carolyn Quick, "A Second Poem by Thomas Cary," *Canadian Notes and Queries*, 36 (Autumn, 1986): 9-10.
- <sup>26</sup> *The Collected Poems of A.M. Klein*, comp. Miriam Waddington (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1974): 334.
- <sup>27</sup> A 55, and see Lynch xiii.
- <sup>28</sup> A 55; *Creative Writing in Canada* 12; *Canadian Literature in English*, Longman Literature in English Series (London: Longman, 1985): 27.
- <sup>29</sup> Introduction xiv.
- <sup>30</sup> Hughes 38-41.
- <sup>31</sup> "Literary Activity in the Maritime Provinces, 1815-1880," *Literary History of Canada*, gen. ed. Carl F. Klinck (1965; Toronto: U of Toronto, 1973): 120.
- <sup>32</sup> *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage*, Cambridge Studies in the History and Theory of Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1976): 230.
- <sup>33</sup> See Bliss Carman "The Purpose of Poetry," *The Poetry of Life* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1905): 16.
- <sup>34</sup> See *The Letters of Agricola* 50 and *A General Description* 56 for instances of the employment of the terms "rude" and "polished" to describe the opposite ends of the spectrum of social progress.
- <sup>35</sup> "I was directed to read and study three works, Blackstone's Commentaries, Coke upon Littleton and Tidd's practice" (A 34). Meek 177-79 and 209-11 alerted me to the possible importance of Blackstone and Pye for Goldsmith. My understanding and summary of the four stage theory is deeply indebted to Meek.
- <sup>36</sup> *Canadian Poetry: Studies, Documents, Reviews*, 23 (Fall / Winter, 1988): 47-61.
- <sup>37</sup> See Meek 141-43.
- <sup>38</sup> *A General Description* 46, 52.

<sup>39</sup> See *A General Description* (1825) 8 for Haliburton's inclusion of Robertson among the writers upon whom he has heavily relied.

<sup>40</sup> See *A General Description* 52.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 47.

<sup>42</sup> *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 15th ed. (London: Strahan, 1809): 2: 7.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in *Guerin v. The Queen* [1984] 2 S.C.R. 335, 378.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* 377-378.

<sup>46</sup> Blackstone 2: 7.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* 2: 9.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 2: 8n.

<sup>49</sup> Rashley 28.

<sup>50</sup> Young 123.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 373.

<sup>52</sup> Haliburton 117.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 105.

<sup>54</sup> Lynch xvi.

<sup>55</sup> Haliburton 107.

<sup>56</sup> Young 136.

<sup>57</sup> Blackstone 2: 7-8.

<sup>58</sup> Young 154.

<sup>59</sup> See *ibid.* 50, 60 and elsewhere.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* 403-04.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* 48.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Haliburton 163-65.

<sup>63</sup> Young 50.

<sup>64</sup> Hughes 34-35.

<sup>65</sup> Goldsmith's note echoes Haliburton 37, where the Mayflower under both its English and Latin names is included in a list of the plants found in Nova Scotia.

<sup>66</sup> Rashley 50.

<sup>67</sup> *Landscape and Ideology: the English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (Berkeley: U of California, 1986): 11-13, 66-70.

<sup>68</sup> *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (London: Methuen, 1963): 154-55.

<sup>69</sup> Rashley 48-49.

<sup>70</sup> *Sappho: One Hundred Lyrics* (1903; rpt. London: Chatto and Windus, 1930): 27.



71 Rashley 29.

72 *The Rising Village* 56 n.480.

73 *Travels through the States of North America, and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, During the Years 1795, 1796 and 1797*, 4th. ed. (London: John Stockdale, 1807): 1: 196-97. Haliburton mentions the Whip-poor-will in *A General Description* 31 but accords it no special prominence.

74 Young 63.

75 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso 1983): 88-89.

76 Henry James Pye, *The Progress of Refinement. A Poem. In Three Parts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1783): 1: 191-96.

77 *The Poems of Alexander Pope* 222.

78 *The Stepsure Letters*, intro. H. Northrop Frye, New Canadian Library 16 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1960): 12.

79 Haliburton 158.

80 Weld 1: 206.

81 *Ibid.* 2: 335-36.

82 *Ibid.* 2: 336-38.

83 See *The Rising Village*, line 308 and Lynch xxix n. 23.

84 See Lynch 54n. 389-98.

85 Blackstone 1: 438-39.

86 *The Deserted Village* 287-336 in *Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Arthur Friedman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966): 4: 298-300.

87 See Meek 161.

88 *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks: or, An Inquiry into the Circumstances that Give Rise to Influence and Authority, in the Different Members of Society*, 4th. ed. (London: Longman, 1806): 88-89.

89 *Ibid.* 101-02.

90 Weld 2: 356-57.

91 The passage from Weld may also lie behind *The Rising Village* 291-300.

92 See, for example Stepsure's final Letter (*Acadian Recorder* (11 May 1822; rpt. *The Stepsure Letters* 123-31): Saunders Scantocreech declares that "he would have applied a cudgel to their back and sent them home with their buttocks bare; and then, instead of junketing about the town, they would be glad to stay home and wear homespun, like other decent folk" (127).

93 Weld 1: 123-24, 135-36. It is worth noting that in his *Travels* Weld describes a recent and "charming little settlement in Lower Canada that somewhat resembles the Rising Village and, moreover, follows his description with some reflections on the increase in "wealth" and "prosperity" in Canada and the "proportionable greater demand for English manufactures." "[S]urely," he writes, the empire at large would be greatly benefitted by such a change in the state of Canada" (1: 421-27). Weld also comments on such matters as the clearing of land by settlers (1: 160, 422) and the contents of stores in new settlements (1: 54, 2: 363). See also, for the clearing of the land during "the beginnings of a new settlement, or as it is vulgarly called, . . . of making a farm" Young, 393f.