

"HER BLOOD IS MINGLED WITH HER ANCIENT FOES": THE CONCEPTS OF BLOOD, RACE AND 'MISCEGENATION' IN THE POETRY AND SHORT FICTION OF DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT

Lisa Salem

In a paper presented at the Duncan Campbell Scott Symposium which was held in April, 1979, at the University of Ottawa, Robert L. McDougall remarked that, in the life of Duncan Campbell Scott, "the Indian question is indeed a fascinating area where the claims of life and the claims of art are as neatly juxtaposed as one could wish."¹ The question of Duncan Campbell Scott's attitude toward Native people has recently become the focus of much speculation and argument. Over the last twenty years a number of critical appraisals of Scott's "Indian Poems" have appeared, yet few have attempted to examine the ideology which underlies both the poetry and the administrative career of Duncan Campbell Scott.²

The majority of critics who have addressed Scott's "Indian poems" in the past have concerned themselves with the apparent contradiction between Scott's treatment of Native people in his poetry and his advocacy of assimilation in his official capacity as the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.³ Writers such as A.J.M. Smith, Stanley Dragland, Melvin Dagg, Gerald Lynch, and Robert L. McDougall have suggested that Scott held one set of ideals for what McDougall refers to as his "inner life," which was expressed in his poetry, and a very different set of ideals for his "outer life" as an administrator of federal Indian policy. (135) As Stanley Dragland has remarked, "hindsight or no it is hard to reconcile the official Scott with the poet we know from the Indian poems."⁴

Depending on the individual writer, Scott emerges from

such appraisals as either a racist hypocrite or, as Melvin Dagg has maintained, a sensitive civil servant who was able to justify the assimilationist policies of his department only by sublimating his private feelings, which then surfaced in his poetry.⁵ It is generally agreed that Duncan Campbell Scott's administrative writing is characterized by what Gerald Lynch terms a "colonist's/ conqueror's stance,"⁶ while his poetry reveals a growing "understanding of and compassion for the Indians, and of what was being done to them in the process of assimilation."⁷ As Dagg writes, "If anything, we should expect these two distinctly different types of writing to reveal different, not similar, aspects of a single man."⁸ However, an examination of Scott's writing will reveal a consistency between his "outer" position as expressed in his non-fiction prose, and his "inner" attitude which is revealed in his artistic depictions of Native people.

Through his poetry, Duncan Campbell Scott was able to find imaginative expression for a colonialist ideology which, throughout his career within the Department of Indian Affairs, informed his administration of a government policy of systematic assimilation. His work includes several poems and stories in which he creates characters of a mixed blood heritage. Scott's treatment of the mixed-blood characters in his poetry and short fiction reveals a view of culture as an inherited quality which is defined by one's blood, and which can be altered in future generations through intermarriage and enforced through education in the ways of "civilization." In one of a series of three articles which he wrote for Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty's *Canada and its Provinces*, Scott expressed the belief that "the great forces of intermarriage and education will finally overcome the lingering traces of native culture and tradition."⁹

The policy which Duncan Campbell Scott, as the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in Canada, inherited and administered from 1913 until 1932 was based on the idea that the Native peoples possessed an essentially "savage" nature and therefore needed to be guided into civilization by the representatives of the British Empire. The goal of federal Indian policy during Scott's time was the eventual disappearance of Native peoples "as a separate and distinct race," and this was to be accomplished "not by race extinction but by gradual assimilation with their fellow citizens."¹⁰ Assimilation was the ideal, and it

was considered the duty of the federal government to oversee the transition of the Native peoples from "savagery" to "civilization."

Duncan Campbell Scott's advocacy of intermarriage as a solution to what was termed "the Indian problem" was rooted in a belief in the existence of innate qualities, transmitted through the blood, which determine the character of a race. This belief is evident in the poetry and short fiction which Scott wrote during the period in which he worked within the Department of Indian Affairs.

Intermarriage was considered to be an important element in the process of civilizing the Native peoples and assimilating them into the general population. According to the prevailing views of Scott's age, Native peoples possessed an innate savagery, transmitted to subsequent generations through the blood, which precluded their active participation in a progressive and civilized world. Intermarriage presented a solution; it was believed that the practice of "miscegenation" would succeed in diluting the undesirable elements in the blood of Native peoples, rendering them more receptive to the ways of civilization. Thus, Scott was able to write of the Wyandottes of Anderdon, ". . . one band has fully worked out its problem and become merged in the white population . . . By education and intermarriage they had become civilized."¹¹

The concept of a distinct Anglo-Saxon race which was superior to all others had been in existence in Europe since the sixteenth century, and in the nineteenth century various "scientific" methods were employed to find evidence of racial differences and to support the idea of Anglo-Saxon superiority.

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the myth of Anglo-Saxon superiority had been transformed into racial doctrine in North America as well as in Europe. Scientists were able to provide "an abundance of 'proofs' by which English and American Anglo-Saxons could explain their power, progress, governmental stability, and freedom,"¹² and therefore justify the colonial oppression of those races perceived as being inferior. As

Reginald Horsman writes in *Race and Manifest Destiny* (1981):

Whatever the specific methods used—and works on race ranged from impressionistic studies based on cultural dif-

ferences to those of supposed exact scientific measurement—there was in the first half of the nineteenth century a sharp increase in the number of racial theorists who were prepared to defend inherent, unchangeable differences between races.¹³

A central theme in the nineteenth century studies of race was the connection between physiological composition and mental, social and psychological characteristics. As Bruce Trigger writes in *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered* (1985):

The notion that darker colour implied inferiority had a long history in European thinking and had been reinforced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a result of conscious and unconscious efforts to justify the African slave trade by dehumanizing its victims.¹⁴

Thus, it was possible to provide biological justification for the subjugation of those races which were considered to be inferior. A culture's potential for survival and success in the modern era was believed to be inextricably linked to characteristics which were inherent in the blood of that race. A race which was considered to be inferior was doomed to remain inferior as long as the blood of that race remained pure and unmixed, and the characteristics which determined the inferiority of such a race could be altered "only genetically, or by intermarriage."¹⁵ As Trigger writes:

Hence nature itself decreed that Indians must give way to a superior order of human beings. Europeans thus believed that they were biologically justified in their efforts to subjugate and replace native people.¹⁶

During the late 1820s, an American physician named Charles Caldwell expressed the opinion that the North American Native peoples possessed "savage" blood and therefore belonged to an inferior race which was unfit for participation in the "civilized" world:

... when the wolf, the buffalo and the panther shall have been completely domesticated, like the dog, the cow, and the household cat, then, and not before, may we expect to see the *full-blooded* Indian civilized, like the white man.¹⁷

Dr. Caldwell, along with many of his contemporaries, believed that the sole hope for the Native peoples lay in intermarriage, as

any "advances among Indians . . . had been among half-breeds and the more white blood, the more civilization."¹⁸ Although there was some concern that intermarriage with Native peoples would lead to the degeneration of the "superior" race, many supported the idea that it would have positive effects. It was commonly believed that an intermingling of the blood was "the only sufficient scheme to civilize the Indians."¹⁹

Duncan Campbell Scott appears to have been influenced by such theories; his writing reveals a belief that specific cultural qualities are hereditary and are passed from one generation to the next through the blood. In an essay entitled "The Last of the Indian Treaties," which originally appeared in the December, 1906, issue of *Scribner's Magazine*, Scott identified an attitude of "intense alertness" which nonetheless betrayed "no outward manifestation of the slightest interest" to be a trait common to all Native peoples:

Nothing else is so characteristic of the Indian, because this mental constitution is rooted in physical conditions. A rude patience has been developed through long ages of his contact with nature which respects him no more than it does the beaver.²⁰

Scott interprets qualities such as "rude patience" as permanently transmitted traits; through "long ages" such a characteristic is changed from a necessary tool for survival in a harsh and disrespectful environment into a quality which is used by outsiders to define the character of the race.

Scott was not alone in his tendency to identify cultural characteristics as permanently transmitted traits. Bruce Trigger writes that towards the latter half of the nineteenth century in both Europe and North America "there was a growing preference for biologically based explanations of human behaviour." Trigger notes that "differences that had formerly been interpreted as reversible adaptations to specific climates or as insignificant historical accidents now tended to be viewed as immutable racial characteristics."²¹

In his experience with Native peoples, Scott showed a tendency to attribute all observed characteristics to the blood of the race. Therefore, through several generations of intermarriage the qualities which prevented Native peoples from becoming "civi-

lized" would eventually disappear and the two races would soon become indistinguishable.

Scott's view of culture as an inherited quality is evident in his poetry and short fiction, in which he consistently defines his characters by their blood. For the purpose of this essay, Scott's writings will be arranged thematically rather than chronologically. Although Gerald Lynch, in his essay "An Endless Flow: D. C. Scott's Indian Poems" (1982), suggested that Scott's "understanding of and compassion for the Indians . . . grew from poem to poem,"²² there is evidence, as this essay will reveal, that Scott's basic attitude toward the Native peoples remained the same. In his professional capacity, Scott considered himself to be responsible for urging the Native peoples toward "civilization" and ensuring that they did not return to "savage" ways. As a writer, although he often expressed sympathy for his Native characters, Scott revealed a belief that an individual's character was determined by his or her blood heritage and that an individual who possessed a significant amount of Native blood would be likely to exhibit "savage" behaviour.

In the story "Tête-Jaune," published in 1947 in the collection *The Circle of Affection*,²³ every action, thought and feeling of Bonhomme Laroche is attributed to either the Indian or the French strain of his mixed-blood heritage:

Père Dugas, who knew his friend well, could usually depend on him for an even level of good-humour, but at times could not account for the strength of his passions except by referring to that ancient blood heritage. (39)

When Bonhomme acts with uninhibited passion, it is understood to be a direct result of his Native heritage. However, when he is stirred to "action that seemed quixotic," such as accepting Désiré, the child of his wife and an unidentified white man, into his family, Père Dugas attributes it to his "good old French blood" and remarks that "there's no Indian in you when that old strain comes out" (38).

The character of Désiré is similarly explained by his blood heritage. He is distinguished from the rest of "the black-haired, brown-skinned, dark-eyed dwellers" in his community, not only by his "shining appearance" (36), but by the qualities of "great strength, courage, and resource" (40) which he possesses by vir-

tue of his predominantly white blood. Bonhomme, who typically "did not pay much attention to his children" (39), is enchanted by Désiré and becomes devoted to the "shining" child.

Désiré is contrasted with his half-brother Laus, who possesses more Native blood and is therefore characterized by "dark cunning" and "sinister moods" (40). The two become rivals, yet it is apparent that they are not equally matched:

There had always been rivalry between them, and Désiré's mastery was as constant as the struggle. Physically, Laus had been conquered in boyhood. Désiré could match Laus' dark cunning with bright open-air confidence, his sinister moods with laughter. (40)

In the character of Désiré, Scott sees the "incarnation of legend" (42). The child possesses "a physical beauty that to a civilized observer would have called up the typical Viking" (40), and thus it is his fate to be seduced by the "world-old witchery of the serpent woman" (42), embodied by Laus's wife Veronique. When Laus returns to the village, accompanied by his Native wife, Désiré is overcome with desire, and the two become lovers. Scott explains the attraction by referring to "the fascination of contrast" (42) which the young "Viking" inevitably must feel for the dark, mysterious "serpent woman." This attraction ultimately leads to the death of Désiré. Although Bonhomme attempts to put an end to the relationship, warning Désiré that "that girl's nothing but a bush fire" (42), Désiré does not heed the warning and falls prey to Laus's uncontrollable rage.

Although Désiré is killed, his blood survives through his own child, who at eight years old is "strongly built, with bright, determined face, and with a mass of fair hair falling over his forehead" (47). The qualities which determined Désiré's superiority to the other "half-breeds and Indians" (36) have been passed to his son, thus signifying the possibility that these characteristics will survive and be passed to future generations within the community. In "Tête-Jaune," Scott appears to have created the character of Désiré to represent the "desirable" qualities which he believed could only be introduced into a Native community through miscegenation.

In Scott's imagination, Native culture was already obsolete, existing in the present only as an innate "savage" quality which

had been carried to the present generation through the blood of their ancestors. Scott expected that education alone would not be sufficient to "civilize" the Native peoples and that through intermarriage this "savage" blood would eventually be diluted into nonexistence and Native culture would disappear.

In his poem "The Onondaga Madonna," which was published in his *Labor and the Angel* volume of 1898,²⁴ Scott anticipates the "waning" of the Indian race through the practice of intermarriage, or miscegenation. The title figure of this poem is no longer a member of a vital culture, but of a "weird and waning race" (l. 2) whose past days of savage glory live only through her blood, which still "thrills with war and wildness in her veins" (l. 6). Elements of this past glory have been passed down to her through the blood of her ancestors, and make themselves apparent in her face "where all her pagan passion burns and glows" (l. 4) and particularly in her "rebel lips" which are "dabbled with the stains/Of feuds and forays and her father's woes" (l. 7-8).

Scott uses the mother and child tableau in "The Onondaga Madonna" to represent, not the hope and promise of the Madonna and Christ-child of Christian iconography, but the impending death of the Indian race through miscegenation. The woman's blood, which carries the legacy of her cultural history, is "mingled with her ancient foes" (l. 5), and thus her child, who is of mixed blood and "paler than she" (l. 11), carries not the hope of new life but "the latest promise of her nation's doom" (l. 10). However, although the child's pale complexion represents the "waning" of his mother's race, evidence of his "pagan" (l. 4) blood remains in "the primal warrior gleaming from his eyes" (l. 12), suggesting that the inevitable transition from "savagery" to "civilization" will be neither immediately nor easily accomplished.

Scott observed that, for Native peoples, pain and conflict were the inevitable result of the contact between Native and non-Native cultures. In his role as Deputy Superintendent General, he considered it the duty of his department to ease the pain of contact. Because Scott believed in the necessity of the replacement of a "savage" culture with a "civilized" one, he was convinced that intermarriage was in the Native peoples' best interests. However, he recognized that it would take several generations before the process of civilization could be considered complete.

The majority of the Native characters who appear in Scott's

poetry are caught in the early stages of assimilation. Many of these characters are the products of intermarriage between Native women and white men and are experiencing personal trauma, due to the conflict between the two cultures. He perceived individuals of mixed blood to be caught in a particularly difficult situation; in his opinion, the coexistence of two different strains of blood in one body implied that an individual would feel equally strong yearnings toward two very different and seemingly contradictory cultures.

The poem "The Half-Breed Girl," which appears in *Via Borealis*,²⁵ a collection of seven poems which was published in 1906, portrays a young girl in a state of psychological paralysis which is directly related to her mixed blood heritage. She is caught between two cultures: although she lives a "savage life" (l. 3), the European half of her psyche has begun to make itself known, preventing her from achieving contentment in her accustomed way of life. As she "wakes in the stifling wigwam,/ Where the air is heavy and wild" (l. 29-30), she is disturbed by feelings of restlessness and "undiscovered" (l. 5) dreams of a different sort of life:

The reek of rock-built cities
Where her fathers dwelt of yore,
The gleam of loch and shealing,
The mist on the moor

(21-24)

Here, Scott writes about culture as an innate quality which makes itself felt through the blood. Although Scott's "half-breed girl" has never seen the homeland of her white ancestors and perhaps does not know of its existence, it is present in her blood and in her dreams, causing her to question her "savage life":

Her heart is shaken with longing
For the strange, still years,
For what she knows and knows not,
For the wells of ancient tears

(37-40)

However, Scott believed that the Native peoples needed contact with white society, as well as the benefits of a government-administered education, in order to "develop the great natural intelligence of the race and to fit the Indian for civilized life in his

own environment."²⁶ Thus the "half-breed girl" who, in spite of her European blood, continues to live a "savage" life is unable to make the transition from savagery to civilization and is torn apart by self-hatred:

She covers her face with her blanket,
Her fierce soul hates her breath,
As it cries with a sudden passion
For life or death
(45-48).

Similarly, in "At Gull Lake: August, 1810," which appeared in Scott's 1935 volume, *The Green Cloister*,²⁷ Scott's protagonist, Keejigo, is a woman of mixed blood who has become restless and "troubled by fugitive visions" (l. 32). She is drawn to the white trader Nairne, perhaps because her father, "Launay/ the Normandy hunter" (l. 29-30), was also of white blood. Keejigo is, like the "half-breed girl" of the previous poem, caught between two worlds and unable to find peace in either of them. As she sits in "the close dark of the teepee" (l. 34), she is haunted by "dreams of sounds unheard" (l. 39) and a vague longing for something other than the life to which she has become accustomed. When Nairne arrives, she feels an immediate attraction to him and senses that "now she had found her hero" (l. 52), the man who would take her away from her "savage" life.

However, Keejigo's husband, "Tabashaw Chief of the Saulteaux" (l. 14), is portrayed as a fierce and violent man, and Nairne, afraid of "the venom of Tabashaw" (l. 80), turns Keejigo away. When Tabashaw discovers Keejigo's longing for Nairne, he maims her in a fit of savage jealousy, and she is abandoned by her people and thrown over a bank "like a dead dog" (l. 108). Thus, Keejigo, with the blood of two races running through her veins, is unable to live in either world. Her longing for a life with the white trader, which Scott explains by revealing her possession of white blood, ultimately leads to her rejection by both the white and Native societies. For Keejigo, peace can be attained only in death, as her soul leaves her body and unites metaphorically with the moon:

She rose changing her dusky shade for the glow
Of the prairie lily, till free of all blemish of colour
She came to her zenith without a cloud or a star,

A lovely perfection, snow-pure in the heaven of midnight
(123-26).

In both "The Half-Breed Girl" and "At Gull Lake: August, 1810," Scott connects the traumatic experiences of his mixed-blood characters to the coexistence of two separate "strains" of blood inside one body. Thus, the protagonists of these poems are caught in a state of confusion and are struggling to make sense of their lives while two firmly established sets of cultural characteristics flow simultaneously yet separately within their veins.

It is clear that Scott distinguished between the "Indian race" and individual Native people. Although he was able to write sympathetically of the pain experienced by individuals of mixed blood, Scott believed that civilization was necessary and that intermarriage was a crucial part of the civilization process. However, he recognized that this process would involve a lengthy transitional phase:

... any forecast of Indian civilization which looks for final results in one generation or two is doomed to disappointment. Final results may be attained, say, in four centuries by the merging of the Indian race with the whites . . .²⁸

Scott believed that as the mingling of blood continued over several generations, the Native peoples would eventually "disappear as a separate and distinct people"²⁹ and the confusion which he believed to be a part of this transitional period would cease to exist.

Scott was convinced that, until several generations of intermarriage had passed, individuals of mixed blood would continue to feel the pull of two very different cultures. While the mixed-blood characters in "The Half-Breed Girl" and "At Gull Lake: August, 1810" experience an awakening of their white blood and feel themselves drawn toward white society, the stories "Clute Boulay" and "Spirit River" reveal Scott's concern that mixed-blood individuals may feel compelled by their Native blood to revert to "savage" ways. In Scott's fiction, such reversion invariably results in tragic or near-tragic consequences.

In the story "Clute Boulay," for instance, which was published in 1947 in *The Circle of Affection*,³⁰ the title figure is a white man who has left his wife and children and has "taken to himself a savage, in the manner of ancient, natural persons, a daughter of

Chief Peau de Chat, of the Chippewas, 'Woman at War' was her name" (23). Many years pass, and Clute Boulay returns from his life in "the bosom of paganism" (24) to live with his full-blooded white family. This angers the mixed-blood children of Boulay and Woman at War, especially Thomasine and Epinette, whose "heavy black hair, dark skin, and vivid black eyes, told that their Chippewa blood had triumphed" (19).

Scott portrays the children of Woman at War as "savages" in both appearance and spirit: they are "impulsive" and "defiant" (21) and are driven entirely by passion and instinct. Scott emphasizes the wild, uncivilized nature of the children by comparing their behaviour and movements to those of animals: Ambise is compared to a bear, Laus to a panther, and "the wild Epinette" (24) to an eagle. The children are depicted as wild creatures whose "keen sense of smell" (20) and "primeval instinct for defence" (26) serve them well in their "savage" existence.

The Peau de Chat children are portrayed as individuals whose rude and uncivilized lifestyle has allowed the "savage" qualities of their blood to triumph. The children abduct the unresisting Clute Boulay and bring him to their "rude shanty" (20), where they wait, "alert as a war party" (25), for someone to discover that Boulay is missing. In the meantime, Epinette "looked to his comfort in a rude way . . . gave him what he liked best of her primitive cookery" (25). Although these children possess both white and Native blood, they, unlike the characters of Keejigo and the "half-breed girl," feel no longings for the "civilized" world but are content with their "rude," "wild" and "primitive" lifestyle. Having been raised in a "non-civilized" environment, they live by their passion and instinct, which have been allowed to thrive, free of the restraints of civilization.

When the Boulays discover that the Peau de Chats have stolen their father, a vicious brawl ensues. During the fighting, the "savage" instincts of the mixed-blood children emerge:

Down swooped Epinette like a young eagle, frightened Agatha by a yell, and clawing Athanase, who clung to her father, finally overcame her by a blow upon the mouth which sent her home bleeding (26).

Scott seems to be suggesting that the violence triggers something in the blood of these mixed-blood children, and especially in that

of Epinette who "began to scream in a way to call for scalps and a general massacre" (27):

Her success had a strange effect on Epinette; she ran straight out into the open space before the house swinging her rifle about like a column of flame fanned by inner currents of passion. Her eyes glowed with furious lustre. (27)

As the blood begins to flow, the young girl is transformed into a "vision of savage beauty" (28), momentarily startling her opponent. Soon afterwards, Epinette is fatally wounded, and her brother Laus, overcome by a desire to avenge his sister's death, rushes at her attacker. Laus, whom Scott describes as a "savage" (28), is killed by his opponent, and eventually Thomasine alone remains alive.

In this story, Scott links the behaviour of the *Peau de Chats* to those elements of their mixed/blood heritage which they have received from their mother, *Woman at War*. Driven by a desire for revenge upon the *Boulay*s, whom they blame for the loss of their father, they become "wild with rage" (25) and are consumed by passion and a thirst for the blood of their enemies. During the battle with the *Boulay*s, these children seem to revert to a forgotten code of behaviour which has lain dormant in their blood. In his essay "The Last of the Indian Treaties," Scott wrote that "the Indian nature," before it was tamed by civilization, was once "full of force and heat" and was "ready to break out at any moment in savage dances, in wild and desperate orgies."³¹ In "Clute Boulay" Scott expresses his belief that this "Indian nature" had not been entirely overcome by civilization but had been kept alive in the blood of Native and mixed-blood individuals.

According to Scott, in addition to diluting the blood through miscegenation, such things as "treaties, teachers, missionaries and traders—with whatever benefits or injuries they bring in their train, aid in making an end."³² The presence of a civilizing influence in the form of teachers or missionaries would keep "savage" behaviour under control, allow the "civilized" elements of a mixed blood heritage to prevail, and thus prevent tragedies of the sort depicted in "Clute Boulay" and "Tête-Jaune."

The story "Spirit River," which appeared in the 1923 volume *The Witching of Elspie*,³³ takes place in "a little population of half-breed hunters and prospectors" (64) where the spirit of Father

Dugas, the beloved white priest, intervenes at the last moment to prevent a tragedy from occurring. In this story, Scott once again creates characters who "in blood and instinct were half Indian" (67) in order to illustrate the tragic consequences of allowing one's passionate nature to overwhelm one's capacity for reason. The mixed-blood protagonist, Petit Bonhomme, is described as a man of nature and instinct:

The old man was as uncouth as a bear, almost without facial expression, with strange little tufts of grey hair scattered on his rough face . . . He was unlearned in any of the world's methods, but in his massive head there was stored a subtle lore that was part instinct and part acquirement, a knowledge of the wilderness that had made him a supreme hunter among a race of hunters. (69)

Petit Bonhomme, untutored in the ways of the civilized world, is unable to control his own passions and depends instead upon the old priest, Father Dugas, to calm his rages with his words of friendship: "Well, well, Petit Bonhomme, let us smoke a pipe of peace!" (80). Left to himself, Petit Bonhomme is like "a thunderstorm that did not know how to vent its power" (69). When he feels that he has been humiliated by the new priest, Father Pascal, he allows his rage to build inside him, unable to express it in words. His anger leads him to direct his energy toward a plot of murder and revenge rather than his annual ritual of building the fire whose "prophetic flames" (97) would signify the arrival of spring.

In Scott's fictional community of Spirit River, the priest serves as a representative of civilization, and both Father Dugas and his successor Father Pascal are regarded with a great deal of awe and respect:

There was great, though rude, reverence in this little group of people . . . for the man who represented an authority which they did not comprehend fully but which they trusted and obeyed unquestioningly. (67)

Scott portrays the new priest, Father Pascal, as an insensitive individual whose arrival brings unrest to Petit Bonhomme and the other inhabitants of Spirit River. However, his "charges" respect his position and continue to regard him with reverence and to "defer to him with evident awe" (71).

When Amab Seriza, the son of Petit Bonhomme's former enemy, returns to Spirit River, Petit Bonhomme vows to kill him as a continuation of the feud between Petit Bonhomme and the elder Seriza. Scott's characterization of Petit Bonhomme as one "in whom revenge keeps warm a long time" (98) is consistent with the accounts of historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in which Native peoples were "depicted as living in sleepless suspicion of their neighbours, and portrayed as being dark and sinister in their retaliations."³⁴ As Petit Bonhomme allows his desire for revenge to dominate him, "suddenly his strength seemed to rush back upon him from the fountains of youth and with it an access of savagery" (98). As Petit Bonhomme reverts to savagery, he becomes increasingly animal-like: "his hearing was the hearing of a lynx" and "all his instinct for sounds and scents were as keen as those of a hunting wolf" (98).

As Petit Bonhomme "prowled through the night" toward Seriza's house, consumed by the desire for revenge, "there was never an error in his footsteps" (99), and his blindness disappears. As in the previous story, the enactment of a plot of revenge is shown to have a rejuvenating effect upon characters of mixed blood: Petit Bonhomme's decision to kill Seriza awakens the "savage" elements in his blood, and he walks once more with "the light impulsive step of a youth" (98). Scott considered jealousy, passion, and the desire for revenge to be qualities which were inherent in the blood of Native peoples. Thus, when his characters succumb to such feelings, their submission is accompanied by a total reversion to "savagery."

However, Petit Bonhomme's regression is prevented by a vision:

There had supervened between himself and Amab the shape of Father Dugas . . . What was he saying? Petit Bonhomme stood transfixed. Then understanding came to him. Father Dugas was feeling for his pipe. He was saying, "Well, well, Petit Bonhomme, come, let us smoke a pipe of peace!"

(99-100)

Although Father Dugas has died, it is his memory which ultimately prevents Petit Bonhomme from committing murder. Petit Bonhomme, although unimpressed by Father Pascal, continues to defer to the memory of Father Dugas, and, upon receiving a

vision of the priest, he immediately drops his gun and abandons his mission of revenge to build the fire which will show that spring has arrived. Even when consumed by his desire for the blood of his enemy, "Father Dugas's word was law for him" (100). The words of the white priest alone are able to lift Petit Bonhomme from his "savage" state.

Through his depiction of mixed blood characters who are both defined and limited by the contradictory sets of characteristics which are inherent in the two strains of blood which flow simultaneously through their veins, Scott's poetry and short fiction reveal a belief that the Native peoples possessed a "savage" nature which was determined by their blood and which could be altered only through miscegenation.

At the Duncan Campbell Scott symposium, Robert McDougall suggested that, although Scott's life contained "no surprises: no fabric of fiction such as Grove created for others about his own life; no Kate Waddell hiding in the wings; no Agatha Christie disappearance," his art continues to reveal a great deal. "If Kate Waddell is not hiding in the wings," suggested McDougall, "perhaps the Indians are."³⁵ The reader should realize that such a critical analysis of the writing of Duncan Campbell Scott is not intended to suggest that his writings are merely the expressions of a racist mind and are therefore dismissable, but rather it is meant to provide insight into the ideological context in which these works were created. It is important that future readers of Duncan Campbell Scott's poetry consider his attitude toward the Native people who figured so prominently in both his "outer" life at the Department of Indian Affairs and his more private "inner" life as expressed in his poetry and short fiction.

NOTES

¹ Robert L. McDougall, "D. C. Scott: A Trace of Documents and a Touch of Life," *The Duncan Campbell Scott Symposium* (Ottawa: Ottawa UP 1980) 140.

² Notable exceptions include E. Palmer Patterson's "The Poet and the Indian: Indian Themes in the Poetry of Duncan Campbell Scott and John Collier," *Ontario*

History LIX 2 (June 1967): 69-78, L.P. Weis's "D.C. Scott's View of History and the Indians," *Canadian Literature* 111 (winter 1986): 27-40, and "Chapter Nine: The Bureaucrat's Indian" in Daniel Francis's *The Imaginary Indian* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992).

³ For an examination of Scott's administrative career, see E. Brian Titley's *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 1986).

⁴ S.L. Dragland, ed. *Duncan Campbell Scott: A Book of Criticism*, ed. S.L. Dragland (Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1974) 180.

⁵ Melvin H. Dagg, "Scott and the Indians," *Duncan Campbell Scott: A Book of Criticism* 181-190.

⁶ Gerald Lynch, "An Endless Flow: D. C. Scott's Indian Poems," *Studies in Canadian Literature* 7.1 (1982): 29.

⁷ Lynch 28.

⁸ Dagg 181.

⁹ Duncan Campbell Scott, "Indian Affairs, 1867-1912," *Canada and its Provinces*, Vol. 7, ed. Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty (Toronto: Glasgow, Brook, 1914) 623.

¹⁰ Scott, *The Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1931) 27.

¹¹ Scott, "Indian Affairs, 1867-1912" 605.

¹² Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1981) 43.

¹³ Horsman 44.

¹⁴ Bruce G. Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1985) 15.

¹⁵ *Southern Quarterly Review* 5 (Jan. 1844), qtd. in Horsman, 146.

¹⁶ Trigger 15.

¹⁷ Dr. Charles Caldwell, qtd. in Horsman 118.

¹⁸ Horsman 118.

¹⁹ Dr. Charles Caldwell, qtd. in Horsman 118.

²⁰ Scott, "The Last of the Indian Treaties" (1906), *The Circle of Affection* (Toronto: McClelland, 1947) 114.

²¹ Trigger 15-16.

²² Lynch 28.

²³ Scott, *The Circle of Affection*, 36-48.

²⁴ Scott, *Labor and the Angel* (Boston: Copeland and Day, 1898) 15.

- ²⁵ Scott, *Via Borealis* (Toronto: William Tyrell, 1906) 12.
- ²⁶ Scott, "Indian Affairs, 1867-1912" 616.
- ²⁷ Scott, *The Green Cloister* (Toronto: McClelland, 1935) 54-58.
- ²⁸ Scott, "The Last of the Indian Treaties" 122.
- ²⁹ Scott, *The Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1931) 27.
- ³⁰ Scott, *The Circle of Affection* 19-30.
- ³¹ Scott, "The Last of the Indian Treaties" 110.
- ³² Scott, "The Last of the Indian Treaties" 122.
- ³³ Scott, *The Witching of Elspie* (1923) (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries 1972) 63-100.
- ³⁴ Trigger 35.
- ³⁵ McDougall 135.

WORKS CITED

Primary Sources:

- Scott, Duncan Campbell. *The Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada*. Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1931.
- . *The Circle of Affection*. Toronto: McClelland, 1947.
- . *The Green Cloister*. Toronto: McClelland, 1935.
- . "Indian Affairs, 1763-1841." *Canada and its Provinces*. Ed. Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty. Vol. 4. Toronto: Glasgow, Brook, 1914.
- . "Indian Affairs, 1840-1867." *Canada and its Provinces*. Ed. Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty. Vol. 5. Toronto: Glasgow, Brook, 1914.
- . "Indian Affairs, 1867-1912." *Canada and its Provinces*. Ed. Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty. Vol. 7. Toronto: Glasgow, Brook, 1914.
- . *Labor and the Angel*. Boston: Copeland and Day, 1898.
- . *Lundy's Lane and Other Poems*. Toronto: McClelland, 1916.
- . *New World Lyrics and Ballads*. Toronto: Morang, 1905.
- . *The Witching of Elspie*. 1923. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries, 1972.

———. *Via Borealis*. Toronto: William Tyrrell, 1906.

Archival Materials (Public Archives of Canada):

Duncan Campbell Scott Papers

Record Group 10, Records of the Department of Indian Affairs

Secondary Sources:

Dragland, Stanley Louis, ed. *Duncan Campbell Scott: A Book of Criticism*. Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1974.

Horsman, Reginald. *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1981.

Lynch, Gerald. "An Endless Flow: D.C. Scott's Indian Poems." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 7.1 (1982): 27-54.

Stich, K.P., ed. *The Duncan Campbell Scott Symposium*. Ottawa: U of Ottawa P, 1980.

Trigger, Bruce G. *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1985.

Weis, L.P. "D.C. Scott's View of History and the Indians." *Canadian Literature* 111 (Winter 1986): 27-40.