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The "Highminded Pole" of Standish O'Grady's *Emigrant*: Nils von Schoultz and the Literary Construction of a Tragic Rebel

by Michele Holmgren

In the Irish-born Standish O'Grady's 1841 long poem, *The Emigrant*, he compares the execution of a nameless "highminded Pole" (1498) involved in the political unrest that swept Upper and Lower Canada in the late 1830s to the death of Robert Emmet, the United Irishman who was executed after leading a failed insurrection in Dublin in 1803. In a note to his poem, O'Grady explains that

> This highminded and misled patriot unwittingly embarked in the views of Papineau; he was taken in an engagement aiding the rebels and met his fate on the scaffold. He bequeathed of his property three hundred pounds to the widows and children of those who fell in action, and fought with such bravery against him; five hundred pounds to a lady, to whom he was fondly attached and to whom he was honourably engaged in matrimony; and many more sums for charitable purposes. ("Notes" 89)

"Since he is unnamed, O'Grady's note is the only source of information on this rebel," comments Brian Trehearne, who has done the most extensive research on O'Grady and his poem ("Explanatory Notes" 167). This is a reasonable conclusion, since the historical accounts of the Lower Canada rebellion of 1837 (which O'Grady may have personally witnessed) have not offered a plausible real-life counterpart. Nevertheless, the ambiguity of the phrase, "embarked in the views of Papineau" does not conclusively place the Pole in Quebec during the Lower Canada rebellion. However, if the historical context is expanded beyond Lower Canada and the events immediately concerning the Lower Canada rebellion led by Joseph-Louis Papineau, then one historical figure becomes an almost perfect match for O'Grady's man. Donald Creighton's *John A. Macdonald: The Young Politician* describes a similar rebel who, according to Creighton, became one of Macdonald's earliest legal clients and haunted him until the end of his life. Nearly a year after the Lower Canada rebellions, the area around

Kingston was disturbed by a little-recalled historical event, an invasion from America that was violently put down by the British Navy and Canadian militia. Creighton describes the captured men that Macdonald's Kingston contemporaries thronged to see being paraded down their streets in November, 1838:

> And then, between guarding rows of red-coats, a long, double file of prisoners began to wind its way down the dock to the street. A tall, well-formed, darkly handsome man strode at its head. His clothes hung in ribbons around him; his shirt had nearly been torn off his back. A great rope was knotted around his chest, and behind him plodded his followers, in two long silent rows. (62)

The "well-formed" leader of the failed invasion was General Nils Szoltevcky von Schoultz, reported to be a veteran of the Polish uprising against Russia. He and his followers were being marched through the streets of Kingston, having been taken, along with a handful of Canadian rebels and a large contingent of Americans, during what came to be called the Battle of the Windmill near Prescott, Ontario in November, 1838. "To the very last years of his life Macdonald remembered all the material details of the Pole's story with unfaded clarity," according to Creighton's memoir (68). Judging by the interest with which the Canadian and American press followed the story of Nils von Schoultz, Macdonald was not the only one upon whom he made a lasting impression. While he met his fate on a scaffold in Upper, not Lower Canada, von Schoultz is the most likely historical model for O'Grady's highminded Pole. Due to the ironies of his life, von Schoultz was, perhaps, a more apt symbol for O'Grady's themes, and O'Grady's own elusive identity, than the author could have imagined.

O'Grady's own identity has been equally difficult to establish. Also known as Standish O'Grady Bennett (Trehearne xv), he immigrated to Canada from Co. Cork in 1836, and is primarily known for having written the first Canadian long poem on the subject of emigration (Bentley 188). The poem also contains vaguely autobiographical allusions, which provide some of the few sources of information we have about O'Grady, sometimes leading the most authoritative sources, such as the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, and Brian Trehearne's introduction to the critical edition of *The Emigrant* (1989) to contradict each other. The least serious difficulty with which his biographers have had to contend is the plethora of Irish men named Standish O'Grady in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (in literature, there are at least two others, a historical novelist, and the author of *The History of Ireland: The Heroic Period*). O'Grady himself

adds to the confusion, since Trehearne speculates that he may not have published *The Emigrant* under his own name. O'Grady also claims to have a B.A. from Trinity College, Dublin, and to have been a classmate of Robert Emmet, but Stewart Wallace's Dictionary of Canadian Biography entry noted that no Standish O'Grady appears in the class lists during Emmet's time at Trinity ("Introduction" xii-xiii). A Standish Bennett did enter Trinity college in 1796, which would have made him Emmet's classmate. Moreover, an obituary for a Standish O'Grady Bennet appears in the Toronto papers in 1846 (Trehearne xv), around the time that the author of *The Emigrant* vanished from historical records. Trehearne admits that the main problem with his theory is that Standish Bennett attended Trinity but appears not to have taken a degree, whereas Standish O'Grady proudly announces himself as Standish O'Grady, Esq., B.A. T.C. D. on the title page of the 1842 edition of *The Emigrant.* As Trehearne notes, either the normally reliable *Alumni Dublinensis* is wrong, or O'Grady felt it necessary to embellish his academic record ("Introduction" xvi).

O'Grady presents a tantalizing biographical picture of an emigrant wishing to leave political and economic problems behind and start afresh in the New World. If he was indeed a friend of Robert Emmet, then he may have been an immediate witness to the events of 1798, which spurred Emmet's own failed rebellion a few years later. In his nationalist verse, the Romantic poet and Irish patriot Thomas Moore portrayed Emmet's views as consistent with Moore's own self-identity as a "radical Patriot" (Leersson 79). Likewise, in his poem, O'Grady admires Emmet, even though he is otherwise extremely distrustful of any political innovation that challenged the power of the Protestant ascendancy back in Ireland, or indeed any perceived abuse of power that leads to disaffection and rebellion. While conservative and anti-Republican, O'Grady, who mourns the demise of his idealized vision of Grattan's Irish parliament after the Act of Union in 1801, also appears to have espoused the values of the Irish Patriots (Holmgren 57-58). Nevertheless, his sympathy with Robert Emmet and the Patriots doesn't lessen O'Grady's horror of the United Irish Rebellion, or his grudging acceptance of the necessity of the Act of Union, which dissolved the Irish parliament. Like many Irish Patriots, O'Grady attributes rebellion and civil unrest to "bad government at home" (1766), and like Thomas Moore, presents his classmate Robert Emmet as a patriot pushed to rebellion only because Ireland's reasonable claims had been ignored.

As a reaction to the United Irish Uprising and fears of a French invasion, the Act of Union nevertheless failed to resolve Ireland's myriad political and economic disasters. Through the early nineteenth century, Ireland

was plagued by "the continuing agrarian unrest which formed the strongest point of continuity between pre-Union and post-Union Ireland: the spasmodic resistance of a pauperized, disenfranchised and semi-illiterate peasantry, loosely associated under names such as Whiteboys and venting their threats and grievances with anonymous letters signed by invented leaders like 'Captain Moonlight' or 'Captain Rock'" (Leerssen 79). O'Grady's decision to emigrate appears in part a desire to evade the reach of the "Rockite hand" (1755); he claims that "for deeds like these, bad government at home, /With stern disgust I left my stately dome" (1756-57).

Starting over again in the New World, however, becomes a problem for someone who so proudly identifies himself as Esquire, B.A. T.C.D. One of his most bitter observations about life in Lower Canada relates to how the democratic ethos makes such titles and letters meaningless. While fleeing his past, O'Grady was unprepared for the level of anonymity that immigration would bring:

> Tread not this soil where equal rights they scan
> And none in birth exceeds his fellow man;
> Here all is liberty and few scarce known
> Beyond that private circle of their own.
> (1142-45)

The anonymity he encountered in the New World leads O'Grady to reflect bitterly on the social and political unrest that pushed him out of Ireland. In a poem that is continually finding Canadian parallels to his Irish experience, O'Grady presents the doomed Polish rebel as a Canadian counterpart to Emmet, to illustrate his political observations in the poem. Rather than escape unrest at home, O'Grady found himself in the middle of political conflicts arising from the Canadian reaction to "bad government" (1756) that sparked both the Upper and Lower Canada rebellions, and their aftershocks, which lasted well into the 1840s. Towards the end of the poem, O'Grady describes "raging" rebels who are "[u]rged [on] by Mackenzie and vile Papineau" (2154-55): that is, by the leaders of the Upper and Lower Canada rebellions, William Lyon Mackenzie and Joseph-Louis Papineau, whose activism did not end with their defeat in the Upper and Lower Canada rebellions. The actual rebellions are dealt with fairly briefly in the poem; instead O'Grady dwells on a number of cross-border paramilitary activities that took place after the Upper and Lower Canadian rebellions were suppressed in 1837.

O'Grady ties all these events together under the theme of misguided rebels duped by unscrupulous demagogues, especially Papineau, the target

of O'Grady's bitterest insults, whose *Patriote* followers form an ironic contrast to what O'Grady believed were true Patriots in the Irish Parliament. He describes the immediate aftermath of skirmishes between *Patriotes* and the British army and Canadian militia that left scores of Papineau's followers dead:

> For him the bold, intrepid peasants bleed
> Or on the scaffold expiate the deed....
> For him the battle, fallen is the foe,
> Immersed, concealed in cataracts of snow;...
> Alike their bones all blanch upon the plains;
> The dimpled cheek, the rosy smile expressed
> The Patriot fire that warmed the valorous breast....
> All mingle here, and he who else might claim
> Recorded annals of his country's fame,
> Now rests unclaimed with scarce one pitying sigh.
> (1389-1415)

The sentiments O'Grady expresses in portraying the immediate aftermath of the Lower Canada rebellion could equally apply to other historical events that O'Grady alludes to in the poem. Upon suppression of their respective uprisings, both Mackenzie and Papineau escaped to the United States, and Papineau went from there to "Monarchic France" (an irony O'Grady couldn't resist commenting on) (1426). While Mackenzie is mentioned only once in the poem, his political agitation in the States inspired much of the damage and aggression that O'Grady attributes to "republican" values in the poem; many of the deluded followers that he and Papineau "urged on" were Americans, not Canadians. Mackenzie, though in constant danger of arrest while in the States, found a receptive and sympathetic audience there because Papineau's successor, Dr. Robert Nelson, had succeeded in establishing paramilitary secret societies called the Hunter Brotherhood, or *Freres Chausseurs*, whose headquarters were safely over the border in Vermont (Graves 52). The idea of creating well-funded secret armies dedicated to the overthrow of supposed British oppression in Canada caught fire, and similarly organized chapters of Hunter Patriots or Hunter Societies sprang up in towns along the American border, particularly in New York State. For a supposedly secret society, the Hunters were immensely successful: they influenced local politics in some towns, and claimed a membership that ranged from 20,000 to as many as 200,000 men (Graves 53). While many were romantic and naïve young men, and others unemployed and possibly drawn by the free food, and especially drink

served at pubs during meetings, some members were fairly influential and powerful (Graves 54). Accounts by refugees from the Upper and Lower Canada rebellions and speeches by Mackenzie himself convinced Hunter lodge members that it would take little encouragement for Canadians to throw off the yoke of British rule, and fall into battle beside their American would-be liberators. O'Grady was not the only writer who portrayed Von Schoultz as a man who succumbed to this rhetoric: In many newspaper accounts, he was recast as a tragic figure who had been misled into believing that Canadians laboured under the same conditions as the Polish peasants under Russian rule. The *Kingston Chronicle-Examiner* for 29 December 1838 copied a sympathetic American portrait that eulogized von Shoultz as "a Polish patriot—driven by the oppressor's rod from his native land.... The story of Canadian wrongs early found in him a sympathising listener. In fancy, he again saw the anguish of his own Poland, writhing under the despot's heel, and a stranger in a stranger land, he opened his bosom to the complaints of the oppressed" ("Oswego Sympathy"). In fact, the notion that many of the Hunters had been misled became a recurring theme in the Canadian press. One reporter described a wounded Hunter prisoner as "an intelligent young man who sadly laments the deceptions which induced himself and others to engage in a cause, the object of which now appears was to force republicanism on a people who detested the very name of it" ("The Result of the Expedition"). Like O'Grady, American newspapers also laid the blame squarely on the leaders. The editors of the Buffalo Commercial Advertiser wrote,

> [W]e would not stand in the shoes of Mackenzie and his coadjutors, by whose lying representations these unhappy young men were led to the slaughter. The mean, cowardly, skulking scoundrels, too, who on this side were so valiant, swaggering about in all the glory of general, colonels, &e., and slunk away to their hiding places when danger appeared, leaving the gallant Pole to fight the battle, if ever men deserved the gallows, they should swing on one as high as that which Haman erected. ("The Affair at Prescott")

Regardless of the supposedly honorable motives of the invaders, the Canadian governments in Upper and Lower Canada regarded the Hunters as a serious threat, even after the major invasion failed. Many of the actions in the poem that O'Grady claims were inspired by Papineau and Mackenzie match Hunter activities that took place from late 1837 into the early 1840s. O'Grady praises the actions of Sir Allan McNab, "proud valued veteran" (1463), and "Brave Drew," that is, naval officer Andrew Drew, who foiled Mackenzie's first attempt to invade Upper Canada and establish a Cana-

dian republic on Navy Island in the Niagara river in December 1837 following the failure of his Upper Canada rebellion. British ships chased the American steamship, the *Caroline,* which had transported paramilitaries across the American border, and burned it.The incident inspired many vivid, though inaccurate engravings of the burning ship going over the falls (Graves 39), and one of the more purple passages in *The Emigrant:*

> Propelled by steam, thus forced to navigate,
> Brave Drew first taught them, the sublime and great,
> How proud, majestic, awful was the sight,
> To see them veering o'er Niagara's height
> They mount the verge, precipitate they go,
> In frittered, fractured fragments, from the flow;
> The mighty ship on mighty rocks resounds
> The teeming engines ply from rock to rock,
> Ignite, explode, and shiver with the shock....
> (1451-1460)

The action outraged the American government and press, and prompted anonymous threats like the note directed to the Governor General, Lord Durham: "How do you like to have your steamboat burnt? Drew or McNab will get a Bowie in their damnd hart [sic] when they think of such a thing. God dam [sic] the Queen" (Graves 57).

O'Grady's gory depictions of "the bowknife [that] glitters in the rankling wound" (1434) reflects Canadians' horrified fascination with the Hunter weapon of choice, the Bowie knife, scores of which were taken from Hunter prisoners and displayed after the Battle of the Windmill (Graves 65, Creighton 63). Furthermore, when castigating Papineau, O'Grady mentions "the lone deserted hamlet [that] lies / A wasted ruin and sad sacrifice" (1391-92), which as aptly describes the bombed out and abandoned village of Newport, near Prescott, Ontario where the group of Hunters led by von Schoultz made their final stand, as it does any Lower Canadian battle site. His accounts of the activities of "vile assassins" who "stalk their midnight round" (1433) may refer to actual reprisals in the form of arson, murder, and bombings that were carried out after several Hunters were hung. In late 1838, Hunters targeted militia members and soldiers in their houses, and assassinated two of them in the middle of the night (Graves 171). There were also bombings and attempted bombings of public property, especially that which held symbolic significance; in a note to his poem, O'Grady excoriates the destruction of Brock's monument, which "lies at present shamefully injured by the daring hands of the dis-

loyal" ("Notes" 80), having been blown up by Hunters in 1840 (Graves 195). These events, as much as the Lower Canadian rebellion, seem to fire O'Grady's imagination and encourage his fear of "French-taught" republicanism, which he would have first encountered in Ireland in 1798, and viewed as alive and well in the United States.

Into this seething cauldron of political intrigue and cross-border terrorism plunged not only O'Grady, but also von Schoultz, himself a recent emigrant. A chemist hoping to make his fortune in the burgeoning salt works operations around Onondaga county, New York, von Schoultz met a prominent Hunter leader, Erasmus Stone, in 1838. Young, handsome, aristocratic, with a limited command of English, von Schoultz introduced himself to Stone as "a Polish cavalry officer" whose family had been torn apart during the 1831 Polish uprising against the Russians, in which von Schoultz had fought. He also spent time in the French Foreign legion, or so he claimed, but could not stomach French atrocities against Arab villagers (Graves 63). Stone initially sent him to recruit Polish immigrants to the cause, but he met with little success, for reasons that will become apparent. By November 1838, he was a member of the ill-planned invasion of Windmill Point, in the village of Newport, near Prescott. Deserted by their "General," John Ward Birge, and the majority of their followers, the remaining Hunters elected von Schoultz as their leader, believing that he had the most military experience. He was left with an invasion force of only 250 men, but they were confident that the Canadians would flock to their banner, and were consequently surprised to find themselves left alone to fight against the combined force of British and Canadian steamers, as well as 600 regular British troops and Canadian militia comprised mainly of angry Canadian townspeople and farmers defending their families and property. Remarkably, the Hunters were able to hold out for nearly 5 days, owing as much to the thick walls of the stone windmill they holed up in as to von Schoultz's military abilities. When they finally surrendered, at least 50 Hunters were dead, as well as 19 British and Canadian defenders, and one female civilian who was killed in a crossfire (Graves 240). What particularly outraged the Canadians was that a surgeon later testified that the corpse of one of the British officers had been mutilated in a particularly distasteful way involving "the excision of the penis…performed by a sharp instrument" (Graves 175). (Perhaps someone had found another use for his Bowie knife).

Upon giving themselves up, von Schoultz and his men were bound and marched through the streets of Prescott, where furious and frightened citizens stripped and beat them, and then they were shipped to Kingston.

Once secure in military prison, the combatants were treated relatively well, and von Schoultz became a bit of a celebrity. He was visited by Major John Richardson, who later became a Canadian novelist[1], as well as by Macdonald, and some British officers. Von Schoultz told Richardson "that he had been fully given to understand, before embarking in the expedition which had terminated so unfavorably to him, that the whole of the Canadian people were anxious for liberty and independence, and that he had fully expected, on landing and gaining a temporary position, to be joined by armed thousands in a few hours" (qtd. in Pipping 153).He also conducted himself becomingly at his court martial. His suicidal determination to plead guilty (against the advice of Macdonald) so that he could defend his honour against charges that he had mutilated the corpses of the slain increased his heroic image, but of course could not save him (Creighton 67). Von Schoultz's testimony emphasized his scrupulous conduct in the treatment of enemy dead and injured, while offering an even grimmer explanation for the mutilation of Captain Johnson:

> On Friday morning when Col. Fraser sent a Flag to remove the dead, I met him and told him that I would give up the British wounded as we had no means of taking care of them, and we had already given up all the bedding and every comfort we could for their accommodation. As regards the maltreatment of Captain Johnson's body, I tried to get away the body but the fire was such that I could not. Two men were wounded in the attempt. I put a sentinel to shoot the hogs that might approach the body—and he fired to keep them off. This may show that I had no concern in mutilating his body. ("Declaration of von Schoultz")

Upon being sentenced, he gave a speech announcing his desire to use his estate to compensate the families of the fallen, and to expiate his crime through a death sentence, with which the judges of the court martial obligingly furnished him. Unlike Emmet, the "mistaken man" (O'Grady 1527) to whom the "highminded Pole" is compared, von Schoultz acknowledged his errors shortly after being sentenced, asking that "no further blood be shed" because "all the stories that were told about the suffering of the Canadian people, were untrue" ("Execution of Nils Von Schoultz"). On Saturday, 8 December, 1838, the death sentence was carried out, but not before "von Schoultz made a short and eloquent speech which no one seems to have recorded" (Graves 182).

The popular accounts of von Schoultz's melancholy end may have coloured O'Grady's portrait of him in the poem, where he functions as an elaborate simile that ties together the rebels of the Lower and Upper Can-

ada rebellions, the invasion of Prescott late in 1838, and perhaps even the misguided Irish rebels of 1798.[2] O'Grady lists the casualties in an apostrophe to Papineau:

> How sad the landscape, self made exile say,
> Why urge a cause 'tis treason to obey?
> 'Tis death to conquer,—can the laws forgive
> A crime in victory and shame to live?
> A double torture to the feeling breast,
> Who fancied wrongs by thee too ill express'd
> Or rashly fought, as that highminded Pole,
> For whom in tears the fatherless condole,
> Who though by death bereft of gallant sires,
> Forgive and each his memory admires;
> The widow weeps her gallant hero dead,
> Who fought and conquered and who nobly bled,
> She sees the sacrifice he left his store,
> She feels his bounty and she grieves no more.
> (1492-1505)

In O'Grady's poem, the sympathy von Schoultz commanded in the press and popular imagination is shared even by the widows and orphans of the soldiers he killed, who simultaneously weep for both their husbands and fathers and the executed rebel (but whose tears seem to miraculously dry up at the prospect of von Schoultz's offer of compensation). His fiancée is less easily consoled (von Schoultz's New York fiancée was also mentioned in the will Macdonald drew up for him):

> The lonely Maid, deprived of love and all,
> Distracted sees his ignominious fall,
> She mats the ringlets of her clothed hair,
> With frantic looks and tortured bosom bare;
> As erst Medusa madd'ning visions glow,
> Or senseless sinks like Niobe in woe!
> (1510-15)

While O'Grady again cannot resist melodrama, in fact, the press reported that the wife of one of Schoultz's co-accused did lose her sanity when witnessing his execution: "It proved too much for 'her overwrought heart,' reason 'deserted her throne,' and she became a 'maniac'" (qtd. in Graves 183).

Von Schoultz's execution also raises the ghosts of a couple torn apart by an earlier, ill-conceived Irish rebellion, Robert Emmet, mourned by his fiancée Sarah Curran:

> …She feels her fate to melancholy known,
> Who loved that patriot Emmet of our own;
> …His talents still his countrymen may scan,
> And add to genius the *mistaken man*;
> Record the sentence which the court decreed,
> His firm response to palliate the deed.
> Let no man write my epitaph, let it
> And me repose till other times befit;
> Silence best adds her tribute of esteem,
> Till other times my character redeem.
> (1516-1533)

As with von Schoultz, Emmet's ill-starred, bloody, and ultimately senseless Dublin uprising is redeemed by his poise and eloquence in court, where, sentenced to hang, he defends not himself, but the principles that motivated his rebellion, using sentiments shared by O'Grady and by the Patriots. By including a versified form of Emmet's famous courtroom speech, O'Grady finds it in himself to love the rebel and hate the rebellion (Trehearne, "Explanatory Notes" 165).

Unlike Emmet, von Schoultz and his character were not redeemed by time. Whether O'Grady knew it or not, the rich cloak of myth spun by the press and von Schoultz himself was unraveling even as he composed his poem. Less than three weeks after von Schoultz's execution, the *Kingston Chronicle and Gazette* reported on December 29, 1838 that he was not a Pole at all, but a Swede. (Like O'Grady, von Schoultz may have added an old family name, Szoltevcky, to the one he was born with) (Pipping 128). Von Schoultz was outed, more or less accurately, as a

> native of Sweden…[who] served in the Polish revolutionary army, and afterwards with the French in Algiers. He is said to have married, at Florence, the daughter of Colonel Campbell of the East India Company's service…. For some unknown reason he left his wife at Cronstadt [sic] and emigrated to this country…. What could induce him to engage in the foolish and criminal expedition that cost him his life, is a mystery to those who knew him here; but the secret is to be found probably in a roving and unsettled disposition, a Quixotic passion for adventure, and that ardent love for liberty which led him to take up arms in Poland. ("Von Schoultz")

This information probably did not come as a surprise to the wary Poles he had unsuccessfully tried to recruit in bad Polish spoken with a Russian accent (Graves 64), but no doubt it would have to his fiancée in New York state (Stagg 779). Since his estate consisted merely of speculations on profits that were to come from a chemical process von Schoultz had hoped to have patented in America, and since he had left Sweden to escape massive debts as well as wife and children, there is no evidence that any of his beneficiaries saw a cent (Stagg 780).

While the unmasking of O'Grady's "highminded Pole" as a Swedish conman and attempted bigamist makes for a newly-ironic reading of the passage dramatizing his death, it still seems in keeping with the overall tenor of the poem, in which idealism gives way to corruption and cynicism in both politics and individual lives. Among the various disasters recounted in *The Emigrant,* the Irish parliament is "sold" by Lord Clare for "stipulated rank," and the proud symbol of Irish Ascendancy rule is converted into housing for the Bank of Ireland (430-31). The comic lovers Alfred and Sylvia, who furnish a romantic subplot in O'Grady's poem, elope so that Sylvia can escape an oppressive father and forced marriage, but instead of enjoying the usual happy ending, Sylvia finds herself a widow with seven children, and starving in a swamp. O'Grady hopes to make a fresh start in Canada, but ends up dependent on the charity of kindly and genteel neighbors in Sorel, and concludes in a note to the poem that "the exaggerated accounts from America are much to be censured. Those who write, seldom give a just detail, and for the most part delude the unfortunate population at home. This new world is a lottery, as in all human affairs there are blanks and prizes; and for the most part more of the former than the latter" ("Notes" 81). Equally exaggerated accounts of Canadian oppression, mixed with unrealistic hopes, and a desire to escape both political and personal turmoil at home, may have drawn von Schoultz to the New World, and ultimately to his death. America and Canada offered him the illusory opportunity to remake himself, even if, like O'Grady, he needed to change his name and fudge a few qualifications in order to do so. In the end, it is not the "highminded Pole" but the tarnished and all-too-human von Schoultz who is the best illustration of all the bitter undercurrents that lie beneath any romantic clichés in O'Grady's ultimately cynical and ironic poem.

Notes

I would like to thank the anonymous vetters for *Canadian Poetry* and Aida Patient for their helpful comments and advice on this paper.

1 In spite of von Schoultz's energetic attempts to disassociate himself with the mutilation of Johnson's corpse, Americans and barbaric practices in war had already been linked, at least in the Canadian literary imagination. In Richardson's long poem, *Tecumseh* (1828), the hero's corpse is scalped and flayed by American soldiers:

> Forth from a copse a hundred foemen spring,
> And pounce like vultures on the bleeding clay;
> Like famish'd blood-hounds to the corse they cling
> And bear the fallen hero's scalp away:
> The very covering from his nerves they wring,
> And gash his form, and glut them o'er their prey,
> Wild hell-fiends all—and reveling at his death,
> With bursting shrieks and pestilential breath.
> (*Tecumseh* 4: 329-336)

2 O'Grady was not the only conservative observer of the Canadian events of 1837-38 who linked them to the 1798 United Irish rebellions. The Scottish-born Bishop Alexander McDonell, who also signed himself as MacDonnell, (1762-1840) worked tirelessly to get government funding for Catholic priests and teachers in Upper Canada, partly in order to influence the Irish Catholic emigrants "whose 'turbulent disposition and want of control' would require careful handling by additional priests and teachers, preferably from Ireland" (Rea 547). He was in Ireland in 1798 as chaplain with the Glengarry Fencibles (Rea 544).

In a widely circulated address that the Kingston Chronicle Examiner published on 26 December 1838, shortly after the trial and executions of the American and Canadian invaders, McDonnell tried to reinforce the clergy's opposition to Papineau and Mackenzie, and vindicate the character of the Irish Catholics, whom he congratulated for their fidelity to Church and state, in contrast to their less temperate ancestors: "All the attempts and industry of the radicals, disaffected, and the whole host of the enemies of the revered constitution of your country, and of your Holy Religion, to alienate your minds from the Government, and make you rebels, have been completely frustrated....[C]onsider who were the promoters of the Irish rebellion....[It] was devised, planned, and concocted by Protestants. Napper Tandey [sic] was a Protestant; Hamilton Rowan was a Protestant...;and Lord Ed. Fitzgerald, who was selected as the main spring of action, was a Protestant" ("Bishop MacDonnell's Address" 3). The Catholics who followed them, the bishop argued, "allowed themselves to be deluded by cunning and designing men, who vainly thought to overturn the British Government in Ireland, and climb up to power and distinction by the sacrifice of the blood and lives of their countrymen. No sooner did those wicked men find their chimerical plans impracticable than they deserted the cause, and left their deluded followers to the mercy of a mercenary soldiery and a vindictive yeomanry" ("Bishop MacDonnell's Address" 3-4).

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