

**“To Train a Wild Bird”: E. F. Wilson, Hegemony, and Native Industrial Education at the Shingwauk and Wawanosh Residential Schools, 1873-1893**

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The Indians, I believe, *must have time*. These changes that we think so good for him, must not be forced upon him too suddenly. Surely, if we would be successful in our dealings with these aboriginal peoples, we must lead them on slowly and kindly to see that these great and radical changes which civilization necessarily brings in its train, are really for their good.

“Fair Play [E.F. Wilson],” May 1891.<sup>1</sup>

As the story of Canadian history is now told, “slowly” and “kindly” are not words generally associated with the delivery of education to aboriginal peoples. For many, the residential school experience, in particular, has come to epitomize the coercive nature of Canadian Indian policy over the last hundred odd years. In his 1999 study, prominent Native studies scholar, John S. Milloy, refers to the entire project as “a national crime.”<sup>2</sup> Other scholarly studies of the schools which examine official policy, the role of the churches, and the response of Native people themselves certainly lend credence to this view.<sup>3</sup> Recent testimony of former students also provides vivid detail of the physical, emotional, and sexual coercion that was apparently all too common at the schools.<sup>4</sup>

If the Canadian public is now more or less agreed that residential schooling represents one of the tragic moments in the history of Native–white relations, within the scholarly literature, one missionary and school principal has been characterized as a more benign colonial figure than most. It has been argued that E. F. Wilson, founder of the Shingwauk and Wawanosh residential schools near Sault Ste. Marie, came to question the assimilationist project and eventually advocated a less invasive “cultural synthesis” of Native and Euro-Canadian traditions. In the words of David Nock, originator of this argument, cultural synthesis should be understood as a strategy which encourages “voluntary borrowing...by the weaker cultural system” and in which components of each are “combined in ways that make sense to the borrowing society.”<sup>5</sup> Nock distinguishes this concept from that of “cultural replacement” – essentially assimilation – a process in which massive technological, social, and ideological change is more or less imposed on one cultural system by another and in which little thought is given to the consequences of this enormous cultural

shift. In the case of Wilson Nock demonstrates how, in the later years of his principalship, Wilson became openly critical of federal Indian policy and, at the same time, increasingly interested in the anthropological preservation of Native culture. From this evidence, he argues that this missionary-educator began to have great doubts concerning the policy of cultural replacement originally implemented at his schools. Wilson began “preaching plans of social change almost completely at variance with his own previous career, and with the policies of both church and government.”<sup>6</sup>

My reading of the evidence leads to different conclusions. In this article I reassess E. F. Wilson and his place in the history of aboriginal education. Wilson does not neatly fit the now popular stereotype of brutal coercion that many have come to identify (perhaps too simplistically)<sup>7</sup> with the residential experience. The real difference between Wilson and his contemporaries was one of strategy, not substance. His philosophical ruminations on the tactics of assimilation, quoted above, capture the essence of his twenty-year project at the Shingwauk and Wawanosh schools and reveal his enduring belief in a “kinder, gentler” approach to assimilation. Throughout his years as principal, it was the too-ready use of coercion and *not* the policy of assimilation itself which Wilson rejected. To illustrate this fact, I will consider, first, Wilson’s initial approach to Native education and, second, his apparent transformation in the 1880’s and 90’s. I will also discuss aboriginal responses to industrial education at the Shingwauk and Wawanosh schools. Each of these issues is intelligible within the context of Gramscian hegemony theory.

Antonio Gramsci maintained that the state, particularly in its modern capitalist form, relies on much more than a monopoly of the legitimate means of violence to sustain itself. He also stressed that consciousness is shaped not merely by the material, economic realm but also by cultural and ideological norms. As he once put it, “a popular conviction often has the same energy as a material force.”<sup>8</sup> With this understanding, Gramsci asserted that the state takes a particular set of values and beliefs and works to “naturalize” them, to make them appear as common sense, or simply as “the way things are.”<sup>9</sup> Inspired by Gramscian theory, historians Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, have pointed out that this process is always two-sided: “Out of the vast range of human social capacities – possible ways in which social life could be lived – state activities more or less forcibly ‘encourage’ some whilst suppressing, marginalizing, eroding, undermining others.... Certain forms of activity are given the official seal of approval, others are situated beyond the pale.”<sup>10</sup>

From a Gramscian perspective, it is precisely this ability to obtain the passive consent of those ruled, rather than the use of force that is pivotal in the retention of power in strong states. Though policies of coercion and those of acquiring consent are not regarded as diametrically opposed strategies, but rather as two sides of the same coin, within this conception it is generally the

latter strategy which is favoured as the first line of action. The frequent use of force draws attention, far too graphically, to the existence of those ruling. Never relinquishing its right to the use of violence, “if necessary,” the state nevertheless attempts to see to its interests with a minimum of coercion. This sometimes means that concessions, at times nominal, at times substantial, must be made in the favour of subaltern classes. These, in turn, can lead to the creation of spaces which are governed by values other than those of the ruling classes. To minimize such possibilities, the state places a high value on reducing the potential for conflict with any subaltern group. Education – far more than teaching basic literacy or providing simple skills training – is viewed as a prime tool for achieving this task. While Gramsci asserted that “every relationship of ‘hegemony’ is necessarily an educational relationship,” he recognized the state-run educational system as one of the primary sites in which the consent of subaltern classes is organized.<sup>11</sup> According to Gramsci, in the pre-industrial context “the individual consciousness of the overwhelming majority of children reflects social and cultural relations which are different from and antagonistic to those which are represented in the school curricula.”<sup>12</sup> The modern school thus functions to replace the child’s “traditional” conception of the world with a liberal and materialistic outlook.

The Gramscian theory of hegemony was not restricted to this negative view of the state’s power. Gramsci envisioned and spent his whole life working towards the creation of a positive counter-hegemony, to be fashioned by the people, under the guidance of a workers’ party. His own political activism was grounded in the belief that hegemony was not a one-sided affair with a pre-determined outcome, that sub-altern groups had the capacity to fashion their own alternate common sense and to make their social/political vision hegemonic in turn. “The socialist state already exists potentially,” he confidently declared, “in the institutions of social life characteristic of the exploited working class. To link these institutions... is to create a genuine workers’ democracy here and now – a workers’ democracy in effective and active opposition to the bourgeois state, and prepared to replace it here and now in all its essential functions.”<sup>13</sup>

This model can be usefully applied to Native experiences with residential schools. Take first Gramsci’s analysis of state-run education. Scholars widely agree that the students at residential schools were meant to learn far more than to read and write. Educators routinely banned the use of Native languages, immersed children in the time-work discipline of industrial capitalism, and inculcated students with the beliefs and practices of their particular brand of Christianity. It is for these reasons that the institutions themselves now stand as one of the most potent symbols of the state’s assimilationist project. In the case of the Shingwauk and Wawanosh schools, all evidence suggests that their principal was in fundamental agreement with these goals. Again, it was Wilson’s

strategy in reaching these goals that distinguishes him. From the outset of his venture, Wilson favoured the tactics of hegemony – of balancing coercion and consent – rather than those of simple domination. During his twenty-year principalship, Wilson encouraged students to become “masters of themselves,” to identify with their school and, ultimately, with the values and beliefs of the dominant culture. As we shall see, these measures always co-existed – as in Gramsci’s conception of state formation – with the threat of coercion as a necessary, if distasteful, last resort.

Gramsci’s model is further applicable where it allows for on-going struggle and the possibility of sub-altern resistance to the dominant hegemony. Among many Native bands in the nineteenth century, an alternative common-sense, a distinctly different way of organizing social life and values, still held broad sway. When Native groups provided support for education, this typically flowed from their own unique cultural objectives. Residential schooling represented a pivotal front in this battle of hegemonies; from the Native perspective, a chance to acquire the practical skills needed to compete in a white-dominated society while retaining economic and cultural autonomy, from the missionary perspective, the opportunity to shape the next generation before the common sense of their parents could become their own. This battle was also one which, as we shall see, did not always end with the missionary as undisputed victor.

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With the support of the Garden River Ojibwa (indeed, partly at their behest), Edward Frances Wilson, evangelical Anglican minister and recent English émigré, established the Shingwauk and Wawanosh Homes, for boys and girls respectively, near Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario in 1873. He thereafter served as their principal for the next twenty years. While aboriginal support helped set the project on its feet, Wilson was in control of the day-to-day administration of the schools. In keeping with the goal of securing consent of the Native community, Wilson continually made efforts to foster a benign image of the educational enterprise. His use of Ojibwa names – Shingwauk and Wawanosh – was likely meant to appeal to Native parents, but also was to emphasize the reality of indigenous support for the initial project. At the same time, the choice of the word “home” was certain to appeal to Victorian middle-class Canadians, who vested considerable emotional meaning in the term and on whose charitable donations Wilson was, in part, dependent. At the opening of his Elkhorn school in later years, Wilson clarified his own use of the word. It was to “impl[y] that these little Indian children were to be taken in, and cared for and loved, besides being educated.”<sup>14</sup> Wilson’s reiteration of this image, however, may well have been designed to persuade Native parents unconvinced of his good intentions. In 1882, when there was particular trouble with run-aways and children failing to return after the summer holidays, he clearly

sought to convince parents and children alike. “Mr Wilson wishes all the Indian boys who come to the Shingwauk Home to look upon it as their home,” a statement from the school proclaimed, “to which they can come back again and be welcomed. He wishes them to look upon him as their father, who will always be ready to receive them.”<sup>15</sup>

In keeping with this domestic imagery, Wilson showed a fatherly preference for the use of positive incentives rather than the harsh hand of discipline. He took a permissive approach in the banning of Native languages: rather than impose strict punishments, he encouraged children to self-regulate their language habits. As he explained, he depended on all students to “keep a check on each other” as a way to enforce the language rule. By 1884 he was boasting to the Indian Department that “[n]ot a word of Indian is heard from our...boys after six months in the institution. All their talk amongst themselves while at play, is in English.”<sup>16</sup> To achieve this success Wilson used a system in which each child received a certain number of buttons. If any heard another speaking their native tongue, they were to demand a button. At week’s end, buttons were turned in to Wilson in exchange for nuts. Preference for a “soft” approach was also seen in efforts to cultivate student loyalty at the schools. To this end, Wilson organized the first brass band and baseball team at the Shingwauk in 1889. The latter was particularly favoured as a tool of social integration, with Native boys frequently competing with local white teams. An attempt was also made – with the use of treats, special dinners, and small gifts – to create a sense of anticipation and excitement with respect to the celebration of Christian holidays.<sup>17</sup>

Efforts to implicate pupils in his own system of regulation are also evident in Wilson’s use of the monitor system. Here, Wilson likely drew on his own experience of English public schooling where educators were well aware of the advantages of using monitors to distance authorities from direct overseeing and punishment of their students.<sup>18</sup> At Shingwauk and Wawanosh, monitors or “officers,” consisted of a “captain,” “steward,” and two “sub-alterns.” Their responsibilities were numerous: “[K]eep order while boys are getting up. See that the boys wash properly. Call silence for prayers. Report bad conduct of the boys or talking Indian to Mr. Blackford [schoolmaster].”<sup>19</sup> (Apparently the button system was not fully effective!)

Religious instruction, and particularly the evangelical emphasis on personal salvation, was another useful tool in encouraging “voluntary” assimilation. Children were not forced to convert, but rather were “encouraged” in this direction by the pervasiveness of religion and religious practices at the schools. Each day began with prayers, Bible studies were held two evenings a week and every evening before bed children were made to spend an hour kneeling in silent prayer. The Sabbath may have been regarded as a day of rest, but – with its steady diet of prayers, morning and afternoon services, Sunday school, and

evening Bible study – it was hardly a day of inactivity. Part of this religious education involved learning the importance of Christian charity. From Wilson's descriptions, efforts to encourage "donations" were not without their success. "Most of the children of the Homes have been going without syrup and some without meat," he boasted during the period of Lent in 1884. "We give them tickets to the value of what they deny themselves and those tickets they present at the offertory. The result has been collection of \$5 and upwards every Sunday."<sup>20</sup> On other occasions Wilson explained that "[t]he pupils vote how to dispose of [the money]."<sup>21</sup> Voting, in fact, seems to have been a favoured practice at the Shingwauk and Wawanosh schools. In this way, children were given a sense of personal power within a system in which, in truth, their power was greatly constrained.<sup>22</sup>

Closely linked to the cultural and religious aspects of assimilation were efforts to create a sense of specifically Canadian identity. To this end, Wilson openly expressed his hope that students be "ushered into the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship," that he might "make Canadians of them."<sup>23</sup> Shows of nationalistic fervour were especially prevalent at the schools' public ceremonies. At the opening of the first Shingwauk Home Wilson described the "hoisting of flags, ringing of church bells, and firing of guns."<sup>24</sup> This was accompanied by a good deal of marching and flag-waving on the part of students and speech-making on the part of municipal and parliamentary representatives. The Victoria Day picnic in 1890 was greeted with similar patriotic displays:

[B]y 8 a.m. the Union Jack was flying, the drive was decorated from the gate to the house with small flags, the boys were all in uniform...and the band was playing "God Save the Queen" just in front of the house....At eleven all the girls and boys had lunch, and a little before one o'clock they all collected, formed a long procession (all carrying flags) and marched off with the band at their head.<sup>25</sup>

The strands of nationalism and religion were, in fact, tightly interwoven. For Victorian social reformers the child's internalization of religious beliefs and morality, on the one hand, and national identity on the other, were parallel processes. Attempts to encourage these twin processes were most evident at the Shingwauk's "Onward and Upward Club." Here, political socialization, initiation into the democratic process and religious instruction were combined and presented in an entertaining atmosphere. Explaining the club's purpose, Wilson remarked: "The idea is 'onward' towards civilization, education, general improvement and success in life; 'upward' towards heaven and God."<sup>26</sup> The group's stated goals reflected this dual aim. They included the attainment of

“general knowledge” (of world issues and Native peoples in particular), an “acquaintance with useful literature,” “the art of elocution” and debate, and “earnest study of God’s word.” When outside the confines of the club, boys were urged to read their Bibles, give aid to the poor, protect younger students from immoral influences and to avoid drinking, swearing, and gambling.<sup>27</sup>

This paternalistic approach was the norm at the schools however, stricter measures also had their place. Certain aspects of the residential experience were more reminiscent of military or prison life than of domestic tranquillity. At Shingwauk the hours of each day were strictly regimented, with the ringing of bells announcing everything from morning wake-up and meals to the exact moment for bed-making. Weekly inspections for cleanliness and careful work were random and unannounced, while the daily schedule included a time slot for the “dispensing of justice.” (The logic of self-regulation, however, determined that “[n]one are allowed to report each others’ misconduct, only their own.”<sup>28</sup>) At night children were locked in their dormitories to prevent escapes. Interestingly, this coercive edge also manifested itself in linguistic terms. In jarring contrast to the rhetoric of home, Wilson’s narrative of school life also included images of “squads” of students on “work detail,” “arm[ies] of our uniformed boys” and depictions of the children as “lazy inmates.”<sup>29</sup>

If such images hint at a harsher side to the educational project, more tangible evidence can also be found. When routinized forms of obtaining consent or exercising coercion were not successful, Wilson did not hesitate to take a sterner approach. Punishments for errant pupils included everything from splitting wood and other chores on Saturday afternoons (one of the rare play times in the week) to whipping and isolation. On one occasion, it was thought best to deal with two misbehaving students by, “shutting them up each by herself alone for several days.”<sup>30</sup> This was apparently not an unusual practice. In fact, Wilson made no attempt to hide the fact that children were routinely placed in the “lock-up.” One boy explained in a published letter, “Everything is going very well at the Shingwauk Home. Except P. is in the jail yet – Shingwauk jail, and I am the jailer.”<sup>31</sup> Lack of adequate staff likely influenced Wilson’s choice of students as rule-enforcers, other incidents suggest he was aware of the hegemonic value of distancing himself from the dispensing of justice. In 1888 he described to the Indian department his system for putting an end to “petty thieving and wanton destruction of property”:

Last autumn...I instituted a court of trial and appointed three of our senior boys as constables. Any boy suspected now of thieving is arrested by a constable armed with a warrant from some member of my staff acting as magistrate, and is placed in the lock-up. As soon after as convenient he is brought before me for trial, a jury of six boys listen to the evidence,

give their verdict and recommend the punishment. A great change for the better is observable since this plan was instituted.<sup>32</sup>

Of another trial involving runaways, Wilson wrote, “judges and jury are by the boys; no white people to be present.”<sup>33</sup> In extreme cases, usually involving damaged or stolen property, it was not beyond Wilson to make full use of the law to punish wayward pupils.<sup>34</sup>

Over the years, Wilson carefully attempted to balance the scales of coercion and consent. This often meant abandoning coercive measures when they were not in the best interest of his project. In 1882, he decided it was not “advisable” to insist that parents sign the five-year agreement to leave their children at school. It was agreed that children would be permitted to leave, if unhappy, at the end of the six- and twelve-month marks.<sup>35</sup> Just over a year later, as Wilson recognized the danger in ignoring parental concerns, the rules were further relaxed. Without further elaborating, he stated: “Once or twice we have compelled scholars to remain contrary to their parents’ wishes or have fined parents for removing the children contrary to agreement, but it has had an ill effect, and it does not seem advisable to repeat it.”<sup>36</sup> While this points to the impact Native responses had on school policy, it also reveals Wilson’s profound, if intuitive, understanding of the workings of hegemony. His subtle calculations and years of experience are evident in his philosophical advice on such matters in 1883:

The best way to train a wild bird is to let it go in and out of a cage at will rather than keeping it always shut up and sighing for freedom. We are relaxing our rules a little, not having the school hours quite so long, and if a boy runs away we are not now forcing him to return. Yes we must be patient with them, as patient as was Moses with the children of Israel.<sup>37</sup>

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While the foregoing paints a picture of Wilson in the years before 1885, to what extent was this picture reconfigured after that date? One of the reasons Wilson is elsewhere construed as increasingly critical of assimilationist policies is that around this time he had a growing interest in the study of aboriginal culture and history. Upon receipt of a government grant, he took up several offers with the British Association for the Advancement of Science to observe and report on the Prairie Indians. He also began corresponding with Horatio Hale, a prominent American-born anthropologist residing in Canada. In their frequent correspondence, Wilson shared with Hale his dream of seeing a published “treatise” on the various groups of Canadian Indians and his hope that he might provide the background research for such a project. The American



Indians also interested Wilson and, in 1888, he travelled extensively throughout the U.S., visiting Native schools and bands as far north as Washington and as far south as New Mexico.<sup>38</sup>

Wilson's observations and changing evaluation of Native cultures are documented in two journals which he edited during this period: *Our Forest Children* (1887-90) and *The Canadian Indian* (1890-91). Besides detailing current events at his own and other residential schools, these journals provided him with the first audience for his amateur anthropological writings. His foray into Native cultural anthropology was conducted from a clearly paternalistic standpoint, as the title of *Our Forest Children* makes plain. Wilson was exceptional for his time where he recognized that, "Most white people seem to think that the Indians are all one; it will be our work to shew that they belong to a number of distinct nations, and to endeavour to trace up their origin and early history."<sup>39</sup> His writings during this period also reveal an attitude of responsibility towards aboriginal people and a clear sense that their problems were the direct result of colonial interference with their culture. "The hunting grounds of Shingwauk and his ancestry had become the white man's fields," he wrote in a later issue of *Our Forest Children*. "[W]here smoke used to curl from the wigwams of the Ottawas, stand now the houses of Canadian Parliament...by the strange process known among Europeans as claiming in the name of the Sovereign, the red man had been utterly dispossessed of his forefathers' lands."<sup>40</sup> With the same critical tone Wilson analysed the 1885 uprisings in the North West. Unlike most of his contemporaries, he acknowledged that Native outrage had a valid basis: that the "invasion" of white settlers and the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway were together contributing to the disappearance of the aboriginal means of subsistence, the buffalo.<sup>41</sup>

The occasion of the Riel Rebellions coincided with his own developing interest in anthropology and led Wilson to further critique the state. This critique found its most forceful expression in the later pages of *The Canadian Indian*. In 1891 a series of articles appeared under the name of "Fair Play," a pseudonym that David Nock convincingly argues to be Wilson's.<sup>42</sup> Under the protection of relative anonymity, Wilson suggested it was high time the "Indian question" was looked at from the "Indian" perspective. In his attempt to do so, he seemed to question the very assumptions which formed the basis of industrial schooling. "Are they not to be allowed to hold and to foster national sentiment as well as ourselves?" Fair Play demanded. "Is it right or just or fair, to deprive them of their language, to blot out all their old associations and traditions and to force them to be white men against their will? What nation is there on earth that would submit to this?"<sup>43</sup> In a final, damning evaluation of federal policy, Fair Play advocated the abolition of the reserve system, the payment of annuities, and ultimately the entire Indian Department. Arguing that aboriginal people did not want to become Canadians, he asked: "Would it be any menace

to the peace of our country if the civilized Indians of Ontario were permitted their own centre of Government – their own Ottawa, so to speak, their own Lieutenant Governor and their own Parliament?”<sup>44</sup> Finally, in more open fashion elsewhere in the journal, Wilson proposed an “Indian conference” to obtain the views of aboriginal people themselves on questions regarding their future; on its own micro-level, an experiment with the tools of self-government.<sup>45</sup>

Evidence such as this supports the conclusions advanced by other historians that Wilson was critical of the assimilationist vision and, ultimately, was an advocate of cultural synthesis. And yet, these seemingly radical suggestions also reveal the limits of his transformation. Wilson only supported self-government for “the civilized Indians.” In effect, his praise of Native people extended so far as they conformed to his own liberal standards of civilization. Of all aboriginal groups, it was the American Cherokee nation – recent converts to representative government and formal education – for whom Wilson reserved the highest praise. Passing through their territory, Wilson commented that one “would scarcely believe that he was in Indian country at all.” He hastened to add, however, that there were few “full-blooded Indians” among them, hinting perhaps that their apparent progress might be due to the elevating influence of “white blood.”<sup>46</sup> Wilson’s notions of progress had altered little since the early days of his educational work. That the same could be said for his conception of race is confirmed by comments he made as late as 1889 in which he continued to define the generic “Indian” in stereotypical terms:

[He has] the same animal instincts and animal proclivities, the same curious mixture of rude courtesy on the one hand and utter oblivion to the rules of civilized society on the other...the same cleverness and ingenuity in providing the necessities of life out of the rudest material; the same lack of ambition and indisposition to continued effort; the same love for a wild life, the same deeply rooted communistic principle.<sup>47</sup>

This sort of time-worn noble-savage imagery is evident elsewhere in Wilson’s anthropological papers. Discussions of “tribal violence,” for example, seemed calculated to shock the Euro-Canadian reader. Here Wilson was no anomaly. On the contrary, rather than setting him apart from the norm, his work reflected the prevailing prejudice of his contemporaries, which ensured that even the most progressive anthropologists continued to draw sharp distinctions between “advanced” and “primitive” cultures.<sup>48</sup>

A closer look at his proposal for an Indian conference confirms that Wilson’s priorities remained unchanged. The primary aim of the conference was to obtain Native advice on how best to further the educational and mis-

sionary project, not to challenge the project itself. In outlining his objectives, Wilson was careful to distance the event from any critique of state policies: "The object...will be not to listen to any grievances, or to deal with any matter that may seem to encroach upon the affairs of the Indian Department; but rather to draw out from the most intelligent and advanced of your people their views as to how Education, Civilization, and Christian teaching may be best promoted in your midst."<sup>49</sup> From the outset, he recognized that there was some "suspicion" among Native bands that the gathering might be "a mere ruse on the part of the government." However, when the event failed because Native groups simply refused to attend, Wilson was less than understanding. He warned Native leaders that whites would not be inclined to look favourably on those unresponsive to such offers of aid. He also reiterated his long-held belief in the value of self help, reminding them that, "unless you put your shoulder to the wheel you cannot expect the wagon to move."<sup>50</sup> Wilson's outlook had not moved far beyond the liberal paradigm. In fact, if Fair Play presented any challenge to state policy it was in his suggestion that the Department had been – not too harsh – but too lenient with Native peoples. In his attack on the Indian Department he implied that the state had been insufficiently zealous in promoting its ethic of liberal individualism:

It can surely never be thought that the Indian Department as it at present exists...is to continue for ever. It cannot be that the wild Indians of the North are for ever to receive the weekly rations of beef and flour, or that the more civilized Indians of Ontario are to be kept penned up on reserves, receive annuities, and be treated as children. Sooner or later this system must either come to an end, or it must at least undergo some great modification. These Indians, who are at present kept under tutelage as the wards of the government, have either to arrive at maturity and must be recognized as men and women, or else they must be improved off the face of the earth and cease to exist.<sup>51</sup>

In the end, though *The Canadian Indian* promoted somewhat more positive views of aboriginal traditions and history, it also reinforced notions of the inexorable flow of progress. Such theories demanded that Native groups assimilate on terms dictated by colonial authorities or die out in their efforts to retain autonomous cultures.

*The Canadian Indian's* clear commitment to the assimilationist project paralleled Wilson's own devotion to industrial schooling throughout his last years at the Sault. This on-going commitment provides the strongest basis for questioning the extent of his purported change of heart. At the same time that

Wilson, state critic, was making radical suggestions concerning aboriginal self-government, Wilson, school principal, made it clear that he was not denouncing the methods of industrial education: "Far from it," he declared. As late as October 1891 he was adamant in his defence of the residential project:

Education is to be the medium through which the rising generation of Indians is to be brought into harmonious relationship with their white fellow citizens, and to enjoy home, social intercourse, literature, and the solace afforded by true religion....When Indian children shall have acquired a taste for study, and a love for work, the day of their redemption shall be at hand. All the appointments and employments of the school should be such as to render the children familiar with the forms and usages of civilized life.<sup>52</sup>

If anything, Wilson's travels inspired him to carry on with and expand this educational vision, starting with his trip to the North West in July 1885. The shocking events of the Riel Rebellion clearly provided the impetus for the trip. While Wilson sympathized with aboriginal and Metis grievances, he also openly declared Riel a "traitor" and characterized armed resistance as "retrogression": "Why this raising of the war whoop and uncovering of the tomahawk and scalping knife which we hoped were buried?"<sup>53</sup> he now queried. His subsequent interpretation of events drew heavily on his belief that swift and outright domination of the aboriginal peoples was not the best pathway to their assimilation. The fundamental *need* for this assimilation, however, he never disputed, as apparent in his critique of the state's handling of its North West acquisition. "Would it not have been better to have been less eager about the immediate possession of those vast hunting grounds," he wondered. "[W]ould it not have been better gradually to have drawn those 50,000 roaming Indians within the coils of civilization instead of shutting them up so suddenly in Reserved lands like prison houses?"<sup>54</sup>

Wilson concluded his analysis by reaffirming his preferred solution to aboriginal problems: industrial education. Writing to the Department in 1885, he explained that he intended "to make use of the present crisis" to extend his educational work to aboriginals in the North West.<sup>55</sup> By the following year Wilson reported to the Department that he had seven new students; six Sioux boys and one Ojibwa, all from North Western reserves. Far from disillusioned, Wilson began his yearly report with considerable enthusiasm. "At no time, perhaps in the history of our Homes," he boasted, "have we had more reason to feel encouraged than at the present time."<sup>56</sup> Buoyed by his success in admitting two Blackfoot students to the Shingwauk,<sup>57</sup> Wilson began devising a plan to establish several "branch" schools in Manitoba, and, he hoped, further west. Trips to

the North West and to several American industrial schools in the late 1880's only fuelled his vision of a greatly enlarged Shingwauk and "a chain of Protestant institutions from [the Sault] to the Rockies."<sup>58</sup> This dream was partly realized with the establishment of the Washakada Home in Elkhorn in 1888.<sup>59</sup>

If, then, Wilson's commitment to Native schooling and to the assimilationist project deepened in later years, how does one make sense of his call for Native self-government and the retention of Native nationality, his criticism of white arrogance, and his attempt to view matters from the aboriginal perspective? If Wilson was truly dedicated to the colonial project why did he attack Indian policy and espouse the need for integrating Native views on such questions? Gramscian hegemony theory can help to shed light on Wilson's seeming change of heart. In fact his apparent reversals of opinion and policy might well have been the concessions deemed necessary to bring Native people on board, so to speak, to more surely secure their consent to the educational project. By no means does this mean that such concessions were always given willingly. In certain cases, Wilson's need to make adjustments in the management of his schools or in his attitude to government policy could be read as responses to the very real power (what he saw as the intransigence) of aboriginal bands. Indeed, Wilson faced this power on a daily basis as he attempted to make his project a success. As scholars increasingly recognize, Native peoples were not simply blank slates upon which white colonizers wrote their "civilizing" message. They had both their own reasons for supporting residential schooling as well as the capacity to, at times, resist that education when it clearly ran contrary to their needs. By briefly analyzing both aboriginal support and resistance at Shingwauk and Wawanosh, we shall see that students and their parents were a vital factor influencing Wilson's strategic approach.

Before turning to some of the difficulties Wilson had with Native bands, a brief elaboration of the nature of aboriginal support is in order. Broadly speaking, the practice of fostering strong linkages with state and missionary officials as well as adopting Anglican religion had a long tradition among aboriginal bands in the Garden River area where the Shingwauk and Wawanosh schools were located. In scholar Janet Chute's eyes these linkages should be seen not as the collaborationist actions of a disenfranchised social group, but rather as the resourceful strategies of local Ojibwa leaders intent on finding creative solutions to meet changing social realities.<sup>60</sup> As far as education was concerned, as early as the 1830's and again in the 1870's the Garden River band sought the right to formal schooling that would ensure their economic survival in a settler-dominated society.<sup>61</sup> In fact, Wilson himself frequently retold the story of his involvement with Chief Augustine Shingwauk and his brother, Buhkwujjenene, both of whom were early supporters of the schools.<sup>62</sup> Whatever the potential advantages of these re-tellings as Wilson saw it, these stories pointed to an

essential truth: that the Garden River band had its own reasons for seeking out industrial education. Indeed, in 1871, of his own accord, Chief Shingwauk followed Wilson to Toronto to ask the “Great Black-Coat” (Bishop) for a missionary/teacher to be permanently stationed on his reserve. When Wilson discovered Shingwauk’s reason for coming, he convinced the elderly chief to accompany him to numerous fund-raising meetings across Ontario. A year later, his brother, Buhkwujjenene, was willing to don traditional clothing – what Wilson referred to as his “uncivilized attire”- and accompany the ambitious educator on a fund-raising tour of England.<sup>63</sup> Once financing of the school was assured, the Garden River band voluntarily agreed to a land transfer of approximately 200 acres for the project.<sup>64</sup> In a general show of support and acceptance for Wilson and his mission the band also ceremoniously bestowed Ojibwa names on the missionary couple.<sup>65</sup> In the same spirit of good will perhaps, Wilson returned the favour by naming his schools in honour of Shingwauk and another local Sarnia chief, Wawanosh. Over the years, individual parents showed their support in various ways: by sending contributions of food, attending prize-giving ceremonies, and, above all, by agreeing to enrol their children. On several occasions during his principalship, Wilson was proud to declare that the schools were receiving more applications than they could accommodate.<sup>66</sup>

This support translated, to a certain extent, into the kind of results Wilson sought. Recent efforts to recognize Native agency and to point out resistance to residential schooling should not eclipse the fact that, at least within its own terms, the assimilationist project had a share of success. In July of 1882 Wilson was proud to report that students were gradually losing their Native tongue and provided the following illustration as a glowing example: “[T]he other day after telling the boys some new rules in English, Mr. Wilson asked one of the senior boys to explain what he had said in Indian, in case any of them should not have understood; the senior boy failed at his interpretation, being at a loss for Indian [sic] words, and sat down amid the laughter of his companions.”<sup>67</sup> Wilson was also successful instilling Christian concepts of guilt and repentance in subtler ways. The combination of young impressionable minds and the closed atmosphere of the schools translated into more than a few tearful conversions and admissions of wrong-doing.<sup>68</sup> One particularly striking incident, related by Wilson, illustrates the degree of psychological control he was capable of attaining:

While I was away travelling a month ago 18 of them got into a bad scrape – I induced them all one after another to confess to me and tell me what they had done wrong. And we prayed and asked God to forgive them. Then I said to them – Every one of you boys deserves a good thrashing but I will not

thrash you because each of you confessed...but if any one of you feel that you ought to be punished and wish me to punish you, come up to me and I will beat you. Out of those 18 boys – 17 of them came up of their own accord and had a hard beating.<sup>69</sup>

On another occasion, students themselves defended Wilson against parental accusations of ill-treatment. “The letter you wrote we think it is not right,” they admonished one father, “all this is given you for nothing you don’t have to pay anything.”<sup>70</sup> There were also students who wished to return to the schools despite their parents’ wishes and others, like the following boy, who looked back with some disgust on his own upbringing. “Nine years ago I was been place called Beulah in Manitoba. On that time I was not cut my hair, so I am like a girl. I was painted my face with red, blue, black, yellow and white. I was wear blanket every day too.”<sup>71</sup> And then after his decision to cut his hair: “My mother she did said, ‘Who did cut your hair?’ I said Indian agent. Oh! She was very angry and scoled me and whiped me hard as she could. This is the way I beginning to be like white man. I hope I never been like girl again or painted my face.”<sup>72</sup>

In claiming the viability of his venture over the years, Wilson made continual reference to a select group of star pupils. These were all boys, generally the top students, who also showed a healthy deference to authority and a willingness to embrace Christianity and the trappings of a Euro-Canadian lifestyle. William S., an orphan from Walpole Island, was a particular favourite of Wilson’s. In 1877, in his early teens, William converted to Christianity and thereafter showed a keen interest in all things spiritual. As captain of the school he was entrusted with special responsibilities and, during one of Wilson’s attacks of illness, was the only student entrusted with his care.<sup>73</sup> The boy’s untimely death in 1881 revealed the extent to which Wilson drew encouragement from his young protégé. “I have not experienced such a wrench since our dear mother was taken from us,” Wilson wrote to his sister. “I hardly feel that I can keep up my work now that my dear boy is dead – but may God give me grace.”<sup>74</sup>

Wilson did, however, carry on with his project and found his work a success when it came to other prize pupils. Always ready for a new challenge, in 1886 he sent his first student, David O., to Trinity College, Port Hope, where his own sons attended.<sup>75</sup> There, the young graduate lived up to Wilson’s expectations and, shortly thereafter, accepted a job as clerk in the Indian Affairs Department.<sup>76</sup> Years of residential schooling had apparently left their mark on David; his description of working life bears an uncanny resemblance to the routine and orderliness of the Shingwauk:

I get up about 7 o'clock and dress myself, and then take up a book, such as English literature, philosophy, etc. and study till 8:30 and go to breakfast. After breakfast I work on Algebra or Arithmetic. About 9:30 I start to the office and work till 1 o'clock, and then go to lunch. At 1:30 I start to work again and stop at 4 o'clock. I then go home and have a bath, and go to dinner. Dinner over, I take a walk around the city for a while, and then come in and read or study till 10 o'clock and then go to bed.<sup>77</sup>

Other prize graduates took up teaching positions at Indian reserve schools and at least one set out to become a missionary in turn.<sup>78</sup> One pupil reportedly made a concerted effort after leaving Shingwauk to "separate himself entirely for a time from intercourse with his own people."<sup>79</sup> Instead, David M. studied from morning "till one or two o'clock at night", declaring confidently, "this is the only way to get on."<sup>80</sup> Other graduates, though perhaps not star quality, also gave Wilson cause for encouragement. Some stayed on as hired hands, others kept up a personal correspondence with their principal and yet others helped recruit new students from the reserves or from among their own children.<sup>81</sup>

If, as one scholar has put it, certain students "*made a kind of peace with the schools*,"<sup>82</sup> others were not easily reconciled to the residential experience. Indeed, examples of aboriginal support for industrial education must be balanced against those of disillusionment and outright resistance. Wilson freely admitted that, not infrequently, students' sense of dislocation upon arrival at school meant that they "began to pine under a sense of captivity. Some of them, when homesick, seemed to lose all control over themselves and made an unearthly noise; others would watch their opportunity and run away."<sup>83</sup> In fact, during the first fifteen years of Wilson's principalship there were a total of thirty-nine escapes; fourteen per cent of male students and two per cent of female students.<sup>84</sup> Wilson often took up the chase, but soon learned that retrieving his Native students was no easy task. In one particular case, after five days of searching Wilson and his party found escaped students eighty miles from the school.<sup>85</sup> On another occasion he complained that runaways "[could] live on berries in the woods and find their way home like a cat or dog,... it is almost useless to track and follow them."<sup>86</sup>

Although opportunities to challenge the system directly (that is, to escape) did occasionally present themselves, the tools of everyday resistance – what James Scott calls "weapons of the weak" – were more readily available.<sup>87</sup> Arson, which seems to have been common at residential schools,<sup>88</sup> offered one form of resistance that allowed for anonymity. Six days after the Shingwauk's opening in 1873 the school and all surrounding buildings burned to the ground. When later describing the incident, Wilson stated that he rang the bell but



nobody came. When local band members did arrive, he complained that they “were standing around doing nothing.” He later frankly admitted, “We suspected incendiaryism.”<sup>89</sup> At least one scholar agrees that arson was likely the cause, a reflection of the split in the Garden River community over the desirability of residential education.<sup>90</sup> Over the years, fires were certainly more common than Wilson would have hoped, enough so that a boys’ fire brigade was organized and pails of water stood always in wait for the next catastrophe. In 1889 another serious fire broke out, this one traced back to a boy who had been in the “lock-up.”<sup>91</sup> Other problems which drew comment included the use of alcohol as well as “petty thieving and wanton destruction of property.”<sup>92</sup> Explaining the expulsion of one Shingwauk student in 1878, Wilson stated: “During the time he was home for his holiday...he got along with bad women and, I am sorry to say, was dismissed for drinking and swearing.”<sup>93</sup> As other scholars of residential education have found, these actions, while not involving open confrontations with authority, point to a strong undercurrent of resistance among children at the schools.<sup>94</sup>

What provided Wilson with great cause for concern was that significant resistance came from long-attending students, some of whom were considered to be prize pupils.<sup>95</sup> In May of 1878 when several boys (including his favourite, William) failed to return after a month’s holidays Wilson was particularly upset. “I cannot understand,” he admitted candidly, “about the other boys not coming back....They were all wearing the Institution’s uniform and were all sent as ‘trusted boys’....I am especially troubled about William...I cannot believe until I hear more definitely that he can have thought of deserting us as I have always regarded him as a most trustworthy boy.”<sup>96</sup> On another occasion Wilson explained that, “We have had keys taken out of doors and cupboards broken open, and several things broken.” Of one of the boys he thought to be “mixed up” in this he remarked, “[N]ow [that] he has been five years with us he ought to be a better boy...”<sup>97</sup> Significantly, the resistance of so-called trustworthy students (and others) escalated during Wilson’s absences.<sup>98</sup> Wilson, however, was slow to recognize the fragility of his presumed successes. “I do not know what could have made them run away,” he admitted after more escapes in 1881, “as they were all well treated and seemed quite happy – I suppose they were homesick.”<sup>99</sup> And four years later in 1885: “It is extraordinary that they should have run away as they were well treated and made no complaint to anyone about anything. It seems just to have been a wild freak.”<sup>100</sup> Frequently, in such situations, Wilson singled out and expelled certain “ring-leaders” who, it was assumed, had used their “influence” over otherwise well-meaning pupils.<sup>101</sup> Outside the school walls, however, Wilson had little recourse. Perhaps most discouraging of all were the lapses of star pupils upon graduation. Wilson experienced reports of drinking, sexual immorality, conversions to Roman Catholicism, and the inability to carry on their trades, by those who had shown such promise, as

grim and unexpected failures.<sup>102</sup>

Individual acts of rebellion on the part of students were grounded in a wider culture of aboriginal resistance. Parents, in fact, could play crucial roles in making or breaking the success of industrial schooling. As at other residential institutions, education didn't always meet with the satisfaction of parents and local bands. In addition to those steadfastly opposed to residential schooling, initially sympathetic parents could go cold if they felt that mission-run education was departing from what they conceived as its true purpose. As several scholars have argued, Native support for schooling should not be read as a full endorsement of the manner in which education unfolded on the ground since this often departed from aboriginal intention.<sup>103</sup> In such cases, J. R. Miller has pointed out, parents could be quick to register their disapproval which could mean everything from removing children from the classroom to (in perhaps rare cases) negotiating the terms of the education delivered.<sup>104</sup> Clearly, if there was Native support for residential education, missionaries also had to tread lightly if that support was to be retained.

As at other schools, then, Native parents could not be ignored by those running the Shingwauk and Wawanosh Homes. Though publicly he made much of parental backing of his project, privately Wilson bemoaned the fact that the majority of local bands were not easily won over to his cause. Wilson's efforts to make a particular worldview hegemonic were frequently contested by those he sought to persuade.<sup>105</sup> Writing to an ex-pupil in October 1884, he commented with discouragement on this state of affairs. "With most of them it is as if I was still a stranger," he lamented. "Even the Garden River Indians send very few children. I wish you would take the matter up and try to influence the Indians in other places. I would gladly pay you any expense, but if I do that the Indians will say I am paying you to get their children."<sup>106</sup> Even those parents willing to send their children did not, thereafter, relinquish all control. When parents felt that a school departed from what they saw as its intended mission, it was not unknown for them to retrieve their children from the school. Discovery of poor conditions could be one basis for such action.<sup>107</sup> There is also evidence, however, that parents objected to fundamental aspects of mission-run education. The emphasis on manual labour, for instance, drew objections from more than one parent, as Wilson recounted in 1883. "Often a message has come that the child must not work – only learn lessons," he explained. "[W]hen they hear that the boys have to wash dishes, cut wood, carry water, help on the farm, etc, or that the girls are doing house or laundry work, they are often displeased – think that we are profiting from their children's work and so take them away."<sup>108</sup>

Illness and deaths at the schools were even more prominent factors in the decisions to remove children. Although the Shingwauk and Wawanosh schools did not hold the worst record on this score when compared with other residen-

tial institutions,<sup>109</sup> over an eighteen-year period there were still twenty-one deaths, representing close to five percent of the total student population.<sup>110</sup> As at other schools, overcrowding, poor diet, and unsanitary conditions led to pulmonary diseases such as tuberculosis and typhoid and various digestive disorders.<sup>111</sup> Despite the frequency of illness, concern to limit expenses meant that professional help was called for only in rare cases. Usually children took turns staying up to watch the sick at night.<sup>112</sup> As Mary-Ellen Kelm documented, parental reaction to outbreaks of illness in residential schools could be swift and unequivocal.<sup>113</sup> One father, initially agreeable to sending a child to Shingwauk, completely reversed his position after the death of his son while at school. "I learn that my poor boy is dead and so our talk is dead," he wrote Wilson in May 1879, "for I will not send any more of my children to the home... After what has happened I don't think any of the Indians at Neepigon will let their children go to the Home."<sup>114</sup> After the winter of 1882, during which five children died and many more fell ill, Wilson took special precautions to avert a scandal. Besides obtaining a doctor's report attesting to the school's "entirely favourable sanitary conditions," Wilson arranged a "consultation" between the Indian agent, the doctor, and the Garden River chiefs.<sup>115</sup> Shortly afterwards, a notice from (the illiterate) Chief Shingwauk was made public, assuring parents that sick children were well-cared for at the schools.<sup>116</sup> These efforts notwithstanding, parental confidence was clearly shaken. The response from Native communities was non-confrontational but clear. The following year, the student population fell by more than half. Understanding the need for a cautious approach after such an episode Wilson concluded it was "best not to press the matter under the circumstances."<sup>117</sup>

Whether due to parental dissatisfaction with the curriculum, outbreaks of illness or other factors, Wilson had difficulty in keeping students for the full length of his five-year program. The typical pattern was that, each September, a worrying number of previously enrolled students would fail to return, leading Wilson himself to seek out the offenders.<sup>118</sup> During the schools' first fifteen years the average length of stay was less than two and a half years.<sup>119</sup> As early as 1883, Wilson claimed it was "next to impossible" to carry out his work when parents would not agree to leave their children for the stipulated five years.<sup>120</sup> By 1885 he was calling the system "hopeless" in the face of parental resistance. "It is eleven years since I have had the Shingwauk Home in operation," he informed Indian Affairs, "and yet there appears to be scarcely any practical result, the reason simply being that we have no control over the Indian parents – the children come and go as they please; agreements signed by the parents...are so much wasted paper, the Indians will not be bound by them and we have no way of compelling them to do so."<sup>121</sup>

Not quite ready to concede defeat, Wilson responded with his own solutions for the problem, solutions which reveal, once again, his willingness to

adopt more coercive measures when obtaining consent was an up-hill and largely futile battle. In correspondence with the Indian Department, he suggested that parents' annuity cheques be withheld under three conditions: if their children could not pass tests appropriate to their level; if those aged between 13 and 16 could not write a letter or speak "intelligible English"; and if older boys had not learned a trade. These unallotted funds could then be used either by the remaining (compliant) members of the band or to further the "improvement" of the schools.<sup>122</sup> To Wilson's disappointment, the Department was unwilling to act on his suggestions and he consequently took matters into his own hands. In the "New Regulations of 1886" he began a system of collecting a \$10 deposit upon student enrolment, not to be refunded if children escaped or were kept at home in the future.<sup>123</sup>

Wilson's creative shifts between tactics of consent and those of outright coercion, should not obscure that his attempt to transform Native children through education – to make a new worldview hegemonic – was contested at many turns. With parents willing to interrupt and even terminate the schooling process at any point, the chances of effectively assimilating children were, not surprisingly, limited. Behind the "public transcripts"<sup>124</sup> of a handful of prize pupils lay the reality of a still resistant Native culture. After Wilson's first decade of work, statistics for the Shingwauk school spoke for themselves:

Of [133 boys] 13 boys completed their term of 4 or 5 years and turned out well, either becoming teachers or turning to some trade; 6 boys left before their time on account of sickness, 9 boys died at the Institution; 61 boys left before their time being either removed by their parents or failing to return after holidays; 5 ran away; 3 expelled; 8 completed their term, but nothing been heard of since; 9 are known to have deserted the trade they were taught....<sup>125</sup>

Statistics for Wawanosh were equally discouraging. Of seventy-eight girls received by 1883, only one stayed as long as five years; nine (or 11.5 per cent) either left due to illness or died at the school or later at home.<sup>126</sup> The majority of both boys and girls simply returned to the reserves which, as Wilson saw it, meant the undoing of all his educational efforts. The white settler community seemed to concur and over the years Wilson faced a steady stream of accusations that the schools had little impact changing the Indian way of life. Though expending a great deal of energy defending his work, Wilson admitted in 1886: "Some success we have had. Much success we have not had."<sup>127</sup> Ultimately, it was the reality of this resistance that shaped both Wilson's decision to tread lightly in his administrative approach as well as his willingness to countenance coercive measures.

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The Gramscian concept of hegemony sheds new light on the administration of the Shingwauk and Wawanosh schools, however, it is also true that theoretical models must take into account the cultural particularities of any given context. Theory cannot be unthinkingly imposed on real-life situations; other strains in late-Victorian North American culture are instructive. The tendency to adjust school policy in light of aboriginal response and even, as we shall see, to offer shows of “respect” for Native culture had roots not only in an understanding of the benefits of obtaining the consent of Native peoples, it also linked to colonizers’ own doubts concerning the merits of the “civilization” they sought to extend. These doubts manifested in North America as Victorian antimodernism and suggest that those who extend a certain hegemonic worldview are rarely completely conscious of their role. Precisely because they harbour doubts as to the cultural trajectory of their own society, they can remain relatively innocent of their role in extending that culture to sub-altern groups.

E. F. Wilson, if not a thorough-going antimodernist, from time-to-time displayed distinctly antimodern tendencies. The same young man who set out “to improve and civilize the Indians as a people” explained his own escape from England in terms of his desire for “a wild free life away from the restraints of civilization.”<sup>128</sup> The Algoma area – densely forested and largely untouched by technological advances of the day – in many ways presented him with the perfect opportunity to live out his antimodern fantasy. Roads were poor and railways non-existent. Travel into the region was by steamship or boat in summer and by snow-shoe or dog-train in winter. The church itself stipulated that aspiring Algoma clergy should be men as yet unspoiled by modern living; “men who can eat anything or sleep anywhere – men of ready resource, who can use an axe, or wear a snowshoe, or groom and harness and drive or ride a horse.”<sup>129</sup> Apparently this rough and ready masculine image appealed to Wilson, who declared in the early years of his missionary work: “We want none of the comforts and luxuries of city life.”<sup>130</sup> Accompanying this rural idealization was a persistent cynicism regarding city life and technological change. On a visit to New York City in the 1880’s, while praising the “excellent system” which lay behind the city’s growth, he also deplored the fact that “just as much noise as it is possible to make is made in New York.”<sup>131</sup> This was more than simple anti-Americanism, Wilson clearly recognized that technological change did not respect national borders. In a vividly antimodernist passage, he lamented the global transformation wrought by industrialism and technology:

[T]his world of ours which in days gone by [we] thought so large is a prison house, a cage whose walls are closing in upon us, even already is there a sense of suffocation, eighty days, eighty days only does it take to go round our prison

yard...yet a little time and we expect to speak to one another, to hear one another's voices thousands of miles apart; the walls of our cage are drawing in upon us and we cannot escape.<sup>132</sup>

This experience of modernity as a form of suffocation, of confinement or imprisonment was a common one for antimodernists of many stripes. As Jackson Lears has argued in the American context, "For the educated bourgeoisie...life seemed increasingly confined to the airless parlour of material comfort and moral complacency. Many yearned to smash the glass and breathe freely."<sup>133</sup>

For many of the antimodernist bent, aboriginal peoples represented one of the few groups who still managed to "breathe freely" outside the confining limits of modernity's grasp.<sup>134</sup> Wilson himself, whose self-appointed task was to corral Native peoples inside the "coils of civilization," was not untouched by this nostalgic regard for aboriginal culture. "There is no mistake about Indian land," one of his southern travel writings explained. "The change is noticeable directly a stranger enters it. The train goes rattling along as before but there is a quiet, a peace, a calm, an absence of rush and bustle...the soil is unbroken, it is one great unfenced field, a few trees here and there, a solitary rider perhaps cantering along in a quiet satisfied manner on his pony."<sup>135</sup> Observing the American Cherokee, he remarked: "With the whites everyone is scrambling to live, yet [the Cherokee] have no paupers, none suffering from the oppression of the rich."<sup>136</sup> On a broader level, antimodern influences could help explain not only Wilson's interest but also broader academic developments in anthropology at this time. Wilson's dream of establishing a "sort of Smithsonian Institute on a small scale"<sup>137</sup> – to include a library of Native grammars and dictionaries and a small holding of artefacts and "curiosities" – in fact, reflected the "museum-mania" of his day. Like anthropology itself, this mania was premised on the widespread belief that, sadly enough, Indians were a disappearing race. In Canada, as elsewhere, this translated into a scramble for artefacts and the eventual development of the Victoria Memorial Museum, forerunner to the Canadian Museum of Civilization. As Daniel Francis so astutely commented, "Having first of all destroyed many aspects of Native culture, white society now turned around and admired its own recreations of what it had destroyed."<sup>138</sup> On different scales then, Wilson and the state were involved in essentially similar projects to set Native culture "under glass" for consumption by whites, while simultaneously stamping out living traditions among aboriginal people themselves.

Antimodern influences also help to explain Wilson's efforts to imbue his schools with something of an "Indian flavour," helping him appear to have renounced the assimilationist approach. In early years Wilson boasted that

boys' uniforms included a bright scarlet sash to be tied around the waist "in true Indian fashion." Potentially more significant in terms of Ojibway cultural continuity was the approach sometimes taken to language. Like other missionaries of his day,<sup>139</sup> Wilson was proud of his knowledge of Native languages (mainly Ojibwa) and, on occasion, would preach partly in Ojibwa. Ojibwa hymns were also sung and the Shingwauk's chapel decorated with Ojibwa versions of the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments.<sup>140</sup> In addition to constructing a "wigwam style" dormitory<sup>141</sup> at Shingwauk in 1886, Wilson also capitalized on public curiosity about Native culture during fund-raising tours. In 1890 he was accompanied by two Shingwauk boys dressed in a cultural pastiche of blue serge suits and beaded moccasins. To impress his audience Wilson had the students demonstrate the extent of their cultural transformation, while to entertain them and to indulge the popular fascination with "the Indian" he gave a tip of the hat to their aboriginal background. "[They] repeated some texts of scripture, sang a hymn and recited a dialogue and were loudly applauded," a report of the event explained. On the other hand, it added that, "The boys also gave several words and sentences in their own language."<sup>142</sup>

As with Wilson's anthropological forays, such gestures did not constitute major concessions to aboriginal culture and can hardly be seen as attempts at cultural "synthesis," if, by that label, one assumes a degree of control on the part of both cultures. The adoption of wigwam-style buildings could hardly counter a child's physical sense of separation from his parents' home; the occasional sermon in Ojibwa was not likely to outweigh the effects of English-only policies enforced during the regular school day. Both were ultimately token, not substantive, integrations of aboriginal cultures<sup>143</sup> or, put another way, they encouraged only the expressive and not the functional side of aboriginal cultures.<sup>144</sup> The token nature of Wilson's "cultural synthesis" is, in fact, graphically illustrated in the following passage. "Will their love for a wild life ever be eradicated?" the principal wondered of his aboriginal pupils:

Perhaps not. Why should it? Our boys, all of them, thoroughly enjoy a "camp out," such as we have sometimes in the summer, but scarcely one of them would wish to go back and spend his whole life in this manner. They know that a life depending on hunting and fishing means poverty, dirt, and ignorance....We don't wish to un-Indianize them altogether, we would not overcurb their free spirit; we would not pluck the feather from their cap or the sash from their waist or the moccasin from their foot....But in the matter of procuring a livelihood let us, for their own good, induce them to lay aside the bow and fish-spear, and...put their hand to the plough, or make them wield the tool of the mechanic.<sup>145</sup>

Whatever Wilson's nostalgia for a pre-modern Eden and his occasional critique of modernizing society, this abiding determination to "modernize" Native peoples, to ensure that never would they seek to "spend their whole life" in their previous manner, reflects not a break from, but a fundamental continuity with his previous career. Similarly, his on-going commitment to residential schooling – to, essentially, a plan of cultural transformation directed almost wholly from outside aboriginal communities – suggests that he remained wedded to a vision that is more appropriately regarded as assimilationist than as a benign "synthesis" of cultures. If Wilson felt antimodern angst with certain aspects of his own civilization he continued in later years to affirm its superiority over aboriginal cultures. In 1891 he publicly declared:

This civilization of ours is not even the best possible; it is full of blunders and imperfections; perhaps in some respects radically wrong; but it is a little better and a hundred times more complicated and burdensome than their own, and they must inevitably accept it or cease to exist. To "civilize" [the Indians] is, in some points, to do them a wrong; yet it is the only practical service we can render.<sup>146</sup>

In keeping, with his on-going commitment to the "civilizing" mission, Wilson continued to criticise the state, in this case not for its over-zealousness, but for its leniency when it came to assimilating Native peoples. "We have pursued, for the most part, a wrong method," he concluded. "The idea has been to keep the Indian an Indian. What we need to do, is to have him cease to be an Indian as soon as possible. It may not involve always a change of skin, but it must involve a change of life and habit."<sup>147</sup>

If we stop to consider what options faced aboriginal bands in the late nineteenth century, it seems nonsensical to argue that they could have remained unaffected by the colonial influences or resisted wholly any change in "life and habit." Indeed, it is an open question as to what degree of cultural change is categorized as "assimilation" and what degree "adaptation" or cultural "synthesis." What is established here is that one particular missionary, Edward Frances Wilson, had private misgivings and grave disillusionment at his very limited success with industrial education, but he never truly abandoned or seriously questioned the assimilationist project. His studies of Native culture and history after 1885 gave him a new appreciation of the complexities of aboriginal societies, but this did not lead to a rejection of cultural assimilation as a worthy goal. Ultimately, his actions are still intelligible within a Gramscian paradigm. Softening his approach to assimilation was a sign that Wilson was refining, but never rejecting, a strategy which carefully balanced coercion and consent in the hopes of gaining legitimacy in the eyes of aboriginal peoples. The



latter were anything but compliant subjects when it came to missionary efforts to re-orient their cultural compass. Wilson's unconscious understanding of the merits of the hegemonic approach and his antimodernist tendencies worked to reinforce each other, to invoke a certain limited "respect" for aboriginal culture and to produce the particular style of administration favoured at the Shingwauk and Wawanosh schools. In a broader sense, the case of E. F. Wilson serves as a reminder to historians of Native-white relations of the need for extreme caution when assessing seemingly progressive attitudes to Victorian Indian policy. These should not necessarily be read as attacks on the policy of assimilation. Rather, as Wilson's case suggests, shifts in policy could have as much to do with matters of strategy and with the private antimodern fears of white middle-class society as with concern over the aboriginal plight.

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#### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Fair Play, "Paper No. 3," *The Canadian Indian*, 1 (May 1891) reprinted in David Nock, *A Victorian Missionary and Canadian Indian Policy: Cultural Synthesis vs. Cultural Replacement* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988), 172.

<sup>2</sup> John S. Milloy, *"A National Crime": The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> On Canadian state policy and residential schools see Milloy, *"A National Crime"*; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Looking Forward, Looking Back* Vol. 1 of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Ottawa 1996); Brian E. Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986); Kenneth Coates, "Best Left as Indians: The Federal Government and the Indians of the Yukon, 1894-1950," in Robin Fisher and Kenneth Coates, eds., *Out of the Background: Readings in Canadian Native History* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1988), 236-255. On the role of the churches see John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984); Kenneth Coates, "Betwixt and Between: The Anglican Church and the Children of the Carcross (Chootla) Residential School, 1911-1954,"

*BC Studies*, 64 (Winter 1984-85), 27-47; Eric Porter, "The Anglican Church and Native Education: Residential Schools and Assimilation," PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1981. On Native resistance at the schools see Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* (Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1988); Jacqueline Gresko "White Rites and Indian Rites: Indian Education and Native Responses in the West, 1870-1910," in Anthony Rasporich ed., *Western Canada Past and Present* (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975), 163-181; Jennifer Petit, "We Only Came to Learn," unpublished paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association Conference, 8 June 1997; James Redford, "Attendance at Indian Residential Schools in British Columbia, 1890-1920," *BC Studies*, 44 (Winter 1979-80), 41-56. For studies which address a broad range of issues in relation to residential schooling see David W. Adams, "Before Canada: Toward an Ethnohistory of Indian Education," *History of Education Quarterly*, 28 (Spring 1988), 95-105; Jean Barman, et al., eds., *Indian Education in Canada: Volume 1: The Legacy* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986); and especially the extensively researched monograph study by J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> Increasingly, studies which focus in particular on the Native experience of residential schooling – many undertaken by ex-students – reveal countless stories of mistreatment and abuse. See Agnes Grant, *No End of Grief: Indian Residential Schools in Canada* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publishing, 1996); Isabelle Knockwood (with Gillian Thomas), *Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi'kmaw Children at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia* (Lockport: Roseway, 1992); Cariboo Tribal Council, "Faith Misplaced: The Lasting Effects of Abuse in a First Nations Community," *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 18, 2 (1991); Basil Johnston, *Indian School Days* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> Nock, *A Victorian Missionary*, 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. More recently, Nock's point of view has been reiterated by other scholars of Native-white relations. Jean Manore states that in later years, Wilson "revised much of his thinking about the assimilationist policies of church and state." Jean L. Manore, "A Vision of Trust: The Legal, Moral and Spiritual Foundations of Shingwauk Hall," *Native Studies Review* 9, 2 (1993-94), 9. See also Janet E. Chute, *The Legacy of Shingwauk: A Century of Native Leadership* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 210.

<sup>7</sup> According to J.R. Miller, historical understanding of residential schooling as of 1996 was still "at best...two dimensional." Among other factors, he suggests that highly publicized accounts of abuse at residential schools have tended to eclipse the possibility of exploring less tragic, perhaps even positive, experiences at these institutions. J.R. Miller, "Reading Photographs, Reading Voices:

Documenting the History of Native Residential Schools,” in Jennifer S.H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert, eds., *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1996). While I would in no way wish to question the validity of (often first-person) accounts of abuse, I agree that historians must remain open to the possibility that residential schooling was not experienced as uniformly oppressive. Indeed, without downplaying its connection to the colonial project, Paige Raibmon has demonstrated in the case of the Coqualeetza school in Sardis British Columbia, another example of a less coercive and repressive residential school setting. Paige Raibmon, “‘A New Understanding of Things Indian’: George Raley’s Negotiation of the Residential School Experience,” *BC Studies* 110 (Summer 1996), 69-96.

<sup>8</sup> David Forgacs, ed., *An Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935* (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), 200. There are many more compilations of Gramsci’s writings, including David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, eds., *Selections From Cultural Writings: Antonio Gramsci* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1985); Quintin Hoare, ed./trans., *Selections From Political Writings (1921-1926)* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1978).

<sup>9</sup> For an elaboration of Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, see Walter L. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci’s Political and Cultural Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

<sup>10</sup> Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Gramsci Reader*, 348; For an elaboration on Gramsci’s view of formal education, see *ibid.*, “Observations on the School: In search of the Educational Principle,” 311-322. In drawing on hegemony theory, I distinguish sharply between this Gramscian notion and any simplistic concept of “social control.” Although wisely countering liberal accounts of reform efforts as mere reflections of progress, social control theorists tend towards their own pitfalls. The theory itself fosters a top-down approach in which the state and ruling elites become all-powerful players in history who unproblematically maintain social order.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 313.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>14</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 3 (September 1889), 62.

<sup>15</sup> *Algoma Missionary News and Shingwauk Journal*, 5 (July 1882), 35. For one of the most insightful analyses of the link between domesticity and middle-class culture see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, “The Nursery of Virtue: Domestic Ideology and the Middle Class,” chap. in *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

<sup>16</sup> Where the word “Indian” was used in the original documents it was retained in the text. Likewise, original spellings and punctuation were kept to preserve

the voices of Native and non-Native speakers in the past. Department of Indian Affairs [hereafter DIA], *Annual Report*, 1884, 24.

<sup>17</sup> E. F. Wilson, *Missionary Work Among the Ojibway Indians* (London: Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge 1886), 165; *Our Forest Children* 3 (July 1889), 29; *Ibid.*, 3 (February 1890), 143.

<sup>18</sup> The development of the monitor system in English public schools was a result of the Rugby reforms of the 1830's. The latter were initiated by Thomas Arnold, headmaster at Rugby, from 1828-1842. According to Harry Judge, an integral part of the reformed system which sought "a tighter, although...more humane discipline," was a "dedication to...the development of older boys as prefects with moral and disciplinary responsibility for their juniors." Harry G. Judge, "The English Public School: History and Society," *History of Education Quarterly* 22 (Winter 1992), 515.

<sup>19</sup> E. F. Wilson to [?], 1 October 1881, Shingwauk Home Principal's Letterbooks (hereafter Shingwauk Letterbooks), Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO), MS212. Other duties for monitors included superintending their classmates at chores, setting out uniforms for Sundays, collecting and returning laundry to each child, and, on occasion, teaching classes of junior students. *Our Indian Homes – Tenth Annual Report*, 1884, 9; *Shingwauk Home – Second Annual Report*, 1876, 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Algoma Missionary News*, 7 (May 1884), 28.

<sup>21</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 4 (May 1890), 179.

<sup>22</sup> *Algoma Missionary News and Shingwauk Journal*, 6 (September 1883), 48; *Ibid.*, 7 (October 1884), 54; *Ibid.*, 5 (May 1882), 27.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 (June 1890), 207; Wilson, *Missionary Work*, 172.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson, *Missionary Work*, 126.

<sup>25</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 4 (July 1890), 209.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 (March 1889), 2.

<sup>27</sup> DIA, *Annual Report*, 1889, 22-27. Wilson also found other ways that play time could be put to useful ends. "Playing school" was, in fact, officially encouraged. "At certain hours of the day when school is out," Wilson explained in a personal letter, "a boy of the senior class takes charge of the schoolroom – and awaits his scholars. None need come unless they like – but if they come in they are obliged to stay and behave themselves – the teacher may teach whatever he pleases...and when finished enters in a book – number of scholars present – how they behaved – subject taught, etc." E. F. Wilson to Dr. [G]ivens, 13 April 1887, Shingwauk Letterbooks.

<sup>28</sup> E. F. Wilson, quoted in Nock, *A Victorian Missionary*, 82.

<sup>29</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 4 (July 1890), 209; 3 (June 1889), 6; 4 (Sept. 1890), 241.

<sup>30</sup> E. F. Wilson to Miss Browne, 20 May 1879, Shingwauk Letterbooks.

<sup>31</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 3 (January 1890), 120.

- <sup>32</sup> DIA, *Annual Report*, 1888, 23.
- <sup>33</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 4 (July 1890), 210.
- <sup>34</sup> "Rules at Shingwauk," November 1885, Shingwauk Letterbooks; E. F. Wilson to Miss Browne, 20 May 1879, Shingwauk Letterbooks; E. F. Wilson to A. McKelvey, 20 October 1885, Shingwauk Letterbooks.
- <sup>35</sup> *Algoma Missionary News and Shingwauk Journal*, 5 (July 1882), 35.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 (October 1883), 52.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> Unlike most of his contemporaries, Horatio Hale considered language the only true test of race, and has been described by Bruce Trigger as playing "a significant role in purging American anthropology of its racist and evolutionary predilections." Bruce G. Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's Heroic Age Reconsidered* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), 43; Wilson's travels are described in the column, "My Wife and I" in *Our Forest Children*, 3-4 (1889-90).
- <sup>39</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 3 (June 1889), 1.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 (July 1890), 220.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 (January 1887), 1. According to Daniel Francis, popular opinion in 1885 suggested there were no legitimate reasons for aboriginal discontent. "Unlike whites," Francis explains, "who apparently only waged war for sensible reasons, Indians were seen to engage in war as a kind of vicious sport to satisfy an instinctual love of violence." Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), 65.
- <sup>42</sup> For a convincing argument that "Fair Play" was indeed E. F. Wilson see Nock, "Wilson and the Fair Play Papers," chap. in *A Victorian Missionary*, 135-150.
- <sup>43</sup> Fair Play, "Paper No. 2," *The Canadian Indian*, 1 (April 1891) reprinted in Nock, *A Victorian Missionary*, 170.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, "Paper No. 4," *The Canadian Indian*, 1 (June 1891) reprinted in Nock, *A Victorian Missionary*, 175.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.
- <sup>46</sup> "The Cherokee Indians," *Our Forest Children*, 3 (July 1889), 17-19. Wilson went on to remark, with some disappointment, that, "It would have been more satisfactory to have found a veritable Indian community, unmixed with white blood, casting off voluntarily...the old Indian way of life." *Ibid.*, 3 (November 1889), 88.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 (Aug. 1889), 42.
- <sup>48</sup> Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers*, 48.
- <sup>49</sup> "Letter to Indian Chiefs," *The Canadian Indian* 1 (April 1891), 214.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 (June 1891), 271; *Ibid.*, 1 (Sept. 1891), 354.
- <sup>51</sup> Fair Play, "Paper no. 4," *The Canadian Indian* 1 (June 1891) reprinted in

Nock, *A Victorian Missionary*, 174.

<sup>52</sup> *The Canadian Indian*, 1 (October 1890), 6.

<sup>53</sup> E. F. Wilson to *The Mail*, 17 April 1885, Shingwauk Letterbooks.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> DIA, *Annual Report*, 1885, 24. In fact, Wilson himself was permitted the privilege of visiting Big Bear in prison. This he used to extract a promise of receiving the Cree chief's son at the Shingwauk in the event that the chief were sentenced to a prison term. *Algoma Missionary News*, 8 (September 1885), 102.

<sup>56</sup> DIA, *Annual Report*, 1886, 19.

<sup>57</sup> E. F. Wilson to Mr. Lindsay, 17 June 1887, Shingwauk Letterbooks. Wilson was especially pleased with this achievement as the Blackfoot were seen as a still hostile and war-like people, among whom missionaries, both Protestant and Catholic, had yet to make inroads. Interestingly, he was cautious with his new Blackfoot students. In outlining the methods by which he hoped to influence them, he reiterated his aversion to use of excessive force. "I am allowing the boys to keep their hair long," he explained, "as it would offend both them and their people very much if it were cut off; I am also allowing them, for the present, to smoke. They must be let down gradually and not be frightened by any too sudden changes." *Our Forest Children*, 1 (June 1887), 1.

<sup>58</sup> E. F. Wilson to Mrs. Sunday, 11 December 1886, Shingwauk Letterbooks. In particular, Wilson was impressed by Captain Richard Henry Pratt's school in Pennsylvania. As a soldier turned educator, Pratt was himself seemingly well aware of the relative merits of coercion and consent. After more than a decade attempting to subdue Native peoples by force, Pratt's reassignment to a Florida prison for Native peoples convinced him of the possibility of transforming "wild Indians...into peaceful, enlightened citizens." He spent the rest of his life devoted to the expansion of Indian education. Richard Henry Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).

<sup>59</sup> E. F. Wilson to Minister of the Interior, 20 October 1887, Shingwauk Letterbooks; E. F. Wilson to J. Markle, 2 August 1888, Shingwauk Letterbooks. Two boys and two girls were brought from the Sault to form an "embryo institution." As this last suggests, there was no substantial change in the way the schools were run; rather the Shingwauk served as the example and its students, as models for new children to emulate.

<sup>60</sup> Chute, *Legacy of Shingaukonse*.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 192-194; Manore, "A Vision of Trust."

<sup>62</sup> Augustine Shingwauk, "Little Pine's Journal: The Appeal of a Christian Chippeway Chief on Behalf of his People," trans. E. F. Wilson (Toronto 1872) reprinted in *From Teaching Wigwam to Shingwauk University* (Sault Ste. Marie: Algoma University College, 1992), 1-20.

<sup>63</sup> *Our Indian Homes: Tenth Annual Report*, 1884, 2.

- <sup>64</sup> NAC, RG10, Vol 6211, file 469-1, pt. 1, Reel C-7941, E. F. Wilson to Superintendent General, I.A., 26 September 1872.
- <sup>65</sup> E. F. Wilson, "Autobiography and Family History, 1844-1893," AO, MS24.
- <sup>66</sup> E. F. Wilson to *Dominion Churchman*, ? September 1878; E. F. Wilson to Minister of Interior, 26 November 1879; E. F. Wilson to [?], 9 September 1878, all Shingwauk Letterbooks.
- <sup>67</sup> *Algoma Missionary News and Shingwauk Journal*, 5 (July 1882), 40.
- <sup>68</sup> E. F. Wilson to C.C.C.S., 6 April 1877; E. F. Wilson to Mrs. [H]arke, January 20, 1880, Shingwauk Letterbooks.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, E. F. Wilson to Thomas L. Sloane, 4 July 1887. Emphasis in original.
- <sup>70</sup> *Algoma Missionary News and Shingwauk Journal*, 1 (July 1876), 3.
- <sup>71</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 1 (1887), 4.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>73</sup> Wilson, *Missionary Work*, 230-238.
- <sup>74</sup> E. F. Wilson to sister "Lois," 18 May 1882, Shingwauk Letterbooks.
- <sup>75</sup> DIA, *Annual Report*, 1887, 28.
- <sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 1889, 21.
- <sup>77</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 3 (Nov. 1889), 94.
- <sup>78</sup> Wilson, *Missionary Work*, 219; *Our Forest Children*, 3 (Aug. 1889), 45.
- <sup>79</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 2 (March 1888), 3.
- <sup>80</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 4 (May 1890), 179.
- <sup>81</sup> *Algoma Missionary News*, 7 (Sept. 1884), 47; E. F. Wilson to "Charlie", 23 January 1884; E. F. Wilson to Adam K., 12 September 1884; E. F. Wilson to Miss [Rowe], 24 November 1885, Shingwauk Letterbooks.
- <sup>82</sup> Emphasis in original. Coleman, "Responses of American Indian Children," 491. While recognizing the reality of resistance at the schools, Coleman also argues that responses to education were diverse. He notes that besides "swelling with pride" when receiving top grades, some children were also openly affectionate with their teachers and others apparently "delighted in their new school uniforms."
- <sup>83</sup> Wilson, *Missionary Work*, 164.
- <sup>84</sup> Nock, *A Victorian Missionary*, 87. The discrepancy in rates by gender is an interesting fact, if difficult to explain with certainty. On the one hand, it could suggest that gender socialization at the schools, a point which I discuss more fully elsewhere, was having some effect. On the other hand, since students who escaped were often recently arrived, this might suggest aboriginal children were already socialized differently by gender in their Native communities. For more on gender socialization at the schools see Sharon Wall, "Eradicating 'Idleness' and 'Worthless Man- and Womanhood': The Convergence of Class and Gender," Ch 2 in "'To Train a Wild Bird': Hegemony, Moral Regulation and the Project of Native Industrial Education at the Shingwauk and Wawanosh Residential Schools, 1873-1893" (M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1994).

<sup>85</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 4 (July 1890), 210.

<sup>86</sup> *Algoma Missionary News and Shingwauk Journal*, 6 (Sept. 1883), 45.

<sup>87</sup> James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). Eugene Genovese found a similar type of resistance in his study of slave culture in the U.S. South. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974). Curiously, Scott himself is critical of Gramscian hegemony theory, which, I would argue, he associated too readily with theories of social control which allow little room for the possibility of sub-altern resistance. For Scott's critique, see Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 70-107.

<sup>88</sup> According to John Webster Grant, "school burnings were more common than mere accident would explain." Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 179.

<sup>89</sup> Wilson, *Missionary Work*, 131-133.

<sup>90</sup> Manore, "A Vision of Trust," 18, n. 30.

<sup>91</sup> "Wilson Autobiography," 47. While those who helped put out the fire were given "a holiday and a small gratuity," the guilty boy was later sent to serve a one year sentence at the Penetanguishene reformatory. *Our Forest Children*, 3 (Oct. 1889), 78.

<sup>92</sup> DIA, *Annual Report*, 1888, 22.

<sup>93</sup> E. F. Wilson to Mr. Jamieson, 3 September 1878, Shingwauk Letterbooks.

<sup>94</sup> Celia Haig-Brown's work makes this point most forcefully. She asserts that, at the Kamloops residential school, unbeknownst to those in charge, a counter-culture sprang up amongst the students which allowed them to express their opposition to those in authority. This consisted of anything from silently reviewing the words of their own languages and private name-calling of the nuns, to stealing and sexual experimentation. Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal*, 88-103.

<sup>95</sup> E. F. Wilson to Rev'd A. Jamieson, 20 July 1877; E. F. Wilson to Alex McKelvey Esq., 25 November 1885, Shingwauk Letterbooks.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, E. F. Wilson to Mr. Jamieson, 30 May 1878.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, E. F. Wilson to Augustine B., 26 August 1887.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, E. F. Wilson to William Waukay, 29 August 1885; E. F. Wilson to A. McKelvey Esq., [2?] October 1885.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, E. F. Wilson to "Jacobs," 16 July 1881.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, E. F. Wilson to A. McKelvey Esq., 13 November 1885. The tendency of children who had made no apparent complaint to run off is more understandable in light of Celia Haig-Brown's findings. Haig-Brown relates that some students attempted to maintain "dignity through silence. Often interpreted as passivity by the more vocal Euro-Canadians, silence, for many Natives, is a sign of strength." Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal*, 92.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, E. F. Wilson to Mr. Phipps, 16 October 1883; E. F. Wilson to Rev'd.



W. Shepherd, 7 September 1885; E. F. Wilson to Alex McKelvey Esq., 13 April 1887.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., E. F. Wilson to Mr. Renison, 1 July 1882; E. F. Wilson to Bishop Sullivan, 30 January 1885; E. F. Wilson to [?], 22 January 1886; E. F. Wilson to Joseph E., 17 July 1886.

<sup>103</sup> In fact, Jean Manore argues that aboriginal support for the Shingwauk school fell after its forced re-building (due to fire) in 1873. Planning and fundraising for the new building were, according to Manore, entirely out of aboriginal hands, while the institution itself was re-located off the reserve further from parental view. Manore, "A Vision of Trust," 7-8. J.R. Miller and Janet Chute also comment on the fact that Shingwauk's vision of education and the reality of schooling that E. F. Wilson delivered were very much at odds. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision*, 3-11; 406-438; Chute, *Legacy of Shingaukonse*, 194.

<sup>104</sup> Miller, "Owen Glendower, Hotspur, and Canadian Indian Policy," in J.R. Miller, ed., *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 336-340.

<sup>105</sup> While Chief Augustine Shingwauk and some members of the Garden River band were apparently supportive of formal education for their children, they were not passive in the face of white encroachment on their land. On several occasions during the 1870's and early 1880's Shingwauk filed grievances with the department concerning whites trespassing and surveying on the reserve, fishing rights being leased by the Indian agent without payment to the band, and game being destroyed by white settlement. NAC, RG10, Vol. 1940, file 3940, Reel C-11,116, William Van Abbot to Minister of the Interior, 5 October 1874; Vol. 2092, file 15,434, C-11,155, "Petition from Augustine Shingwauk and band members," 23 July 1881. For more on Garden River struggles to retain access to resources, see Chute, Chapter Seven in *Legacy of Shingaukonse*.

<sup>106</sup> E. F. Wilson to Adam K. 16 October 1884, Shingwauk Letterbooks.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., E. F. Wilson to J.W. Jer[man], 22 August 1887; *Our Forest Children*, 3 (Feb. 1890), 141.

<sup>108</sup> *Algoma Missionary News and Shingwauk Journal*, 6 (Oct. 1883), 52.

<sup>109</sup> According to a government report conducted into ten schools in the West, the average death toll between 1883 and 1898 was fourteen per cent. Of these, three schools reported rates under ten per cent and four, more than nineteen per cent. NAC, RG10, Vol. 3964, file 149,874, Reel C-10,168, "Deaths in Indian Schools, 1883-1898". In 1907 Dr. Peter H. Bryce conducted a national investigation into the health of children at industrial and boarding schools. Bryce found that children were often admitted even when showing signs of infectious diseases. He also confirmed that unsanitary conditions at the schools and lack of proper ventilation encouraged the spread of disease. Bryce's report was widely circulated and caused a scandal for the Indian Department. Titley, *A Narrow Vision*, 83-85.

<sup>110</sup> Besides Shingwauk and Wawanosh students, this figure includes approximately 60-80 students who attended the Elkhorn school in Manitoba where there were two deaths during Wilson's time. While the figure of five per cent may appear relatively low in comparison to other schools, one must bear in mind that Wilson often sent very sick children home where it is likely that some died. E. F. Wilson to G. Gilmore, 7 April 1884; E. F. Wilson to Mr. English, 6 April 1885, Shingwauk Letterbooks; NAC, RG10, Vol. 6211, file 469-1, pt. 1, Reel C-7941, "Extract for Indian agents from Regulations of the Shingwauk Home," March 1886.

<sup>111</sup> DIA, *Annual Report*, 1889-1892; *Our Forest Children*, 3 (Oct. 1889), 76; 4 (July 1890), 206, 211; 3 (June 1889), 7; E. F. Wilson to W.A. Elias, 1 April 1885; E. F. Wilson to "Jacobs," 4 May 1885; E. F. Wilson to "McKelvey, 11 March 1887; E. F. Wilson to Bishop Sullivan, 21 March 1888, Shingwauk Letterbooks.

<sup>112</sup> *Algoma Missionary News* 7 (Jan. 1885), 69. The six-person "hospital" set up in later years seems merely to have allowed for segregation of the sick who were attended by a "nurse" in one case, a recent graduate of the Wawanosh and, in another, an unpaid "lady volunteer" from the community. DIA, *Annual Report*, 1884, 1889.

<sup>113</sup> Kelm's perceptive study reveals the degree to which the rhetoric of health reformation at the schools clashed with the reality of disease and death all too common in the actual school setting. Mary-Ellen Kelm, Chapter Four in *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-50* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998). For more on health and medical services at Native educational institutions, see Maureen K. Lux, Chapter Three in *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2001).

<sup>114</sup> Wilson, *Missionary Work*, 218.

<sup>115</sup> E. F. Wilson to sister "Lucy," 30 January 1882, Shingwauk Letterbooks.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, "Notice from Chief Shingwauk," 25 January 1882.

<sup>117</sup> *Algoma Missionary News and Shingwauk Journal*, 5 (Dec. 1882), 65.

<sup>118</sup> Donald Wilson, "No Blanket to be Worn in School," 80. This picture fits with that of other studies. See Redford, "Attendance at Indian Residential Schools," 41-56, and Gresko, "White Rites and Indian Rites". While Marilyn Millward has questioned the extent to which parents understood the terms to which they were agreeing, if this was so at Wilson's schools, parents' actions in retrieving and refusing to send back their children suggest they did not remain victims of this for long. Millward, "Clean Behind the Ears?," 8, 12.

<sup>119</sup> Nock, *A Victorian Missionary*, 86.

<sup>120</sup> NAC, RG10, Vol. 6211, file 469-1, Reel C-7941, E. F. Wilson to Superintendent General of I.A., 9 February 1883.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, E. F. Wilson to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 25

November 1885.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., E. F. Wilson to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 3 October 1883.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., E. F. Wilson "New Regulations for 1886," 1886.

<sup>124</sup> I borrow this term from, again, James Scott. In his more recent study of forms of resistance, he argues that scholars must distinguish between the way sub-altern groups speak or perform "in the earshot of powerholders" – their "public transcript" – and the way they do so amongst themselves – their "private transcript." Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*.

<sup>125</sup> *Algoma Missionary News and Shingwauk Journal*, 6 (May 1883), 27.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> *Algoma Missionary News*, 9 (January 1886), 1.

<sup>128</sup> E. F. Wilson to Superintendent General Indian Affairs, 25 November 1873, National Archives of Canada (NAC), RG10, Vol. 6211, file 469-1, pt. 1, Reel C-7941; Wilson, *Missionary Work*, 13.

<sup>129</sup> *Algoma Missionary News and Shingwauk Journal*, 6 (January 1883), 1.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 2 (April 1879), 23. On one occasion, Wilson admitted he was willing to give up even his institutional enterprise to work among the "wild Indians" of the West, but added, with some regret, that the responsibilities of providing for a large family precluded such possibilities. E. F. Wilson to Daniel Wilson, 4 September 1878, Shingwauk Letterbooks.

<sup>131</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 3 (July 1889), 23-24.

<sup>132</sup> E. F. Wilson to *The Mail*, ? April 1878, Shingwauk Letterbooks.

<sup>133</sup> T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture* ((Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press New York, 1981), 5.

<sup>134</sup> Taking a nostalgic view of aboriginal life became increasingly popular at the turn of the century and beyond. Ernest Thompson Seton and Archie Belaney (better known as Grey Owl) are just two among many who were fascinated and enthralled with aboriginal culture. Both claimed that whites had much to learn from Native peoples, whose purportedly fundamental altruism and knowledge of outdoor life were well worth emulating. To this end, Seton founded the League of Woodcraft Indians for urban boys, while Belaney himself "played at being Indian" and successfully fooled the public into believing him until the truth of his English origins was discovered upon his death in 1938. For a discussion of both in the context of romanticization of "the Indian" see Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*, 154. For other discussions of the phenomenon of Whites "playing Indian," see Rayna Green, "The Tribe Called Wannabee" *Folklore* 99 (July 1988); Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998); Shari Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2001).

<sup>135</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 3 (October 1889), 73.

<sup>136</sup> "The Cherokee Indians," *Our Forest Children*, 3 (July 1889), 17.

<sup>137</sup> E. F. Wilson to Minister of the Interior, 20 October 1887, Shingwauk Letterbooks.

<sup>138</sup> Francis, *Imaginary Indian*, 23, 36, 103-104.

<sup>139</sup> See J.R. Miller, "Owen Glendower," 334-335 for a discussion of some persistence of Native languages at residential school. Miller argues this may have been partly due to the efforts of missionaries, who, not uncommonly, attained a certain mastery of Native languages and occasionally used them in their preaching.

<sup>140</sup> E. F. Wilson to the C.C.C.S., 6 April 1877, Shingwauk Letterbooks; Wilson, *Missionary Work*, 248.

<sup>141</sup> *Our Indian Homes: Twelfth Annual Report*, 1886, 6-7. The irony of using this symbol of nomadic aboriginal culture when one of the central aims of industrial schooling was to encourage permanent settlement of Native peoples is obvious. As Lears noted of antimodernists in general, "[they] invoked tradition while they subtly (and often unintentionally) undermined it." Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 302.

<sup>142</sup> E. F. Wilson, *Our Indians in a New Light* (Halifax: Holloway Bros., 1890), 8.

<sup>143</sup> On the contrary, I would suggest they formed part of what Mary Louise Pratt has called a narrative of "anti-conquest" by which colonizers attempt to obscure the true nature of their actions. Through token displays of cultural sensitivity which do nothing significantly to alter the nature of power relations between the two groups, members of the dominant culture create the illusion of reciprocity between themselves and those of the subordinate culture. Mary Louise Pratt, "Anti-conquest II: The Mystique of Reciprocity," chap. in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>144</sup> These terms are drawn from Brian Bullivant's analysis of multiculturalism in twentieth-century Canada. Bullivant, "Multiculturalism – Pluralist Orthodoxy or Ethnic Hegemony," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, XIII, 2 (1981), 1-21.

<sup>145</sup> Wilson, *Missionary Work*, 244.

<sup>146</sup> *The Canadian Indian*, 1 (September 1891), 350.

<sup>147</sup> *Our Forest Children*, 4 (July 1890), 207.