“WE ARE MOST OURSELVES WHEN WE ARE CHANGING”: MICHAEL WINTER, LYNN COADY, LISA MOORE, AND THE LITERARY RECONFIGURATION OF ATLANTIC CANADIAN REGIONALISM

by

Susanne Marshall

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
August 2009

[Signature page – in paper copies]

[Copyright page – in paper copies]

Table of Contents

Abstract

In the works of writers Michael Winter, Lynn Coady and Lisa Moore, Atlantic Canada is a complex social space shaped by the interaction of established cultural practices with the everyday realities of globalized consumer culture. These representations challenge stereotypes that characterize the region as a locus of tradition and history apart from today's world. This dissertation examines the way these authors contribute to the transformation of our understanding of Atlantic Canada by highlighting the ways we produce social space and foregrounding the changing nature of regional contemporaneity.

This dissertation first assesses the dominant understandings of regionalism and Atlantic Canadian identity against which these authors write. Chapter one summarizes normative definitions of regionalism and examines theoretical approaches that inform a revitalized understanding of the term. Chapter two discusses antimodernism in key texts within nineteenth- and twentieth-century Atlantic Canadian literature. Chapter three argues that antimodernism continues to dominate regional literary production, reading the CBC *Canada Reads* contest's treatment of Frank Parker Day's *Rockbound* as an example of how essentialist interpretations of the Atlantic region contribute to a national narrative of identity that limits our normative conceptions of cultural and regional diversity.

The perseverance of this vision of Atlantic Canadian identity makes its destabilization by Winter, Coady and Moore significant. Chapter four considers Michael Winter's juxtapositions of wilderness and urban space, which suggest the ways in which urbanization permeates even the most remote aspects of existence in contemporary Newfoundland, while emphasizing the persistence of unknowable spaces within the fabric of contemporary life. Chapter five examines Lynn Coady's parodic treatment of the region's rurality, which foregrounds yearnings for authenticity while interrogating the limits of regional belonging. Chapter six assesses Lisa Moore's attention to the ordinariness and inevitability of the exchange between traditions and popular culture in urban and suburban Newfoundland. Moore articulates the tensions, uncertainties and freedoms that accompany the renegotiation of regional identity. Together, Winter, Coady and Moore question the deployment of a unified space or history as the basis for regional belonging. Instead, their visions of contemporary life in the region offer a shared sense of transformation.

Acknowledgements

Numerous people deserve thanks for their contributions to this project. Dr. Carrie Dawson, my supervisor, has been a marvellous resource, example, editor and coach. Her advice and critique have made this a better work, and her support and humour made the writing process much more enjoyable. My other committee members, Dr. Alexander MacLeod and Dr. Andrew Wainwright, added valuable suggestions and perspectives to final drafts of the manuscript. Dr. Herb Wyile, my external examiner, provided a careful and thorough reading. Dr. Bruce Greenfield, my internal examiner, also offered useful comments.

The English Department at Dalhousie has assisted me with teaching appointments; its members have contributed to my academic development and encouraged me through the "human" parts of the writing process. Dr. Christina Luckyj, Carole Poirier and Mary Beth MacIssac deserve special thanks. The Killam Foundation and SSHRC provided funding and recognition through the Killam Predoctoral Scholarship and the SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship.

I would also like to acknowledge the influence and support of the community of scholars in my field. Particularly, attending the "Surf's Up" conference on Atlantic literature at Acadia University in 2004 introduced me to a varied, rigorous, and exciting scholarly community. Of course, I owe a debt to Michael Winter, Lynn Coady, and Lisa Moore, whose works I have read with discovery and pleasure.

I have cherished and relied upon my family and friends throughout the course of this project. My compatriots in the doctoral program have shared office space, motivation, commiseration, advice, and insight, especially Heather Meek, El Jones, Corey Owen, Lesley Newhook, Sharon Creaser, and Connor Byrne. My parents, Sandy and Germaine Marshall, early nourished my love of books and discussion, and have encouraged me in countless ways since. Finally, thanks to Jason Savoy, my partner in ideas and life, for everything, every day. And particularly for fixing the slant of the floor under my desk.

Chapter 1

Introduction

"And most especially do we thank Thee, Lord, for the Gut of Canso, Thine own body of water, which separateth us from the sin and the wickedness on the other side thereof" (qtd. by A.R.M. Lower, Fraser 314).

In the above quotation, a nineteenth-century Presbyterian minister from Cape Breton indicates his resolute and fundamental understanding of the boundaries, and the value, of locality. The statement makes a virtue of insularity and a vice of difference. Separation, rather than connection, is the paradigm around which the minister structures his understanding of regional belonging. The division he identifies, though determined by the divine, is demarcated on earth by geography: the natural boundary of the strait which makes Cape Breton an island. Land is synonymous with culture here, and both are understood as unalterable facts. Clearly such naturalized definitions of regional identity and belonging are no longer applicable in an age when such certainty and insularity are hard to find. Or are they? How far have we moved beyond nineteenth-century understandings of region?

"Regional" remains a loaded word, as Raymond Williams recognized when he included it in his landmark collection of culturally central terms *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. A search through academic databases for articles on "regionalism" yields numerous results addressing a specific school of late-nineteenth century American regionalists: writers such as Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary Freeman or Bret Harte who, following William Dean Howells' precepts, sought to reflect their region's "truth" using techniques of literary realism that consciously

attempted to represent their subject as objective, ethnographically accurate fact. These "local colourist" writers, as they have often been called, focused principally upon the lives of ostensibly simple rural characters, and their writing has often been considered nostalgic, valued because it focuses upon a setting characterized principally by its distance from the changing world, rather than its participation in it.[1] This, for the majority of scholars and readers, is what literary "regionalism" still means: it is a word which refers to place, but which is also fixed in time – in a specific location in the past.

Yet regionalism persists: it is a concept that continues to shape our world. It wields considerable cultural power, particularly in Canada, a nation many consider to be more a collection of regions than a unified entity. It is important, then, to move the common understanding of the term away from its limitation to a specific nineteenth-century American regionalism, or an application of that limited understanding to works of the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries in which landscapes, aesthetics, and cultural milieux have changed and continue to change. We must grapple with the elusive concept of "regional contemporaneity" and make space within the discourse of regionalism for alternate understandings of its referents, aesthetics, and norms.

This dissertation considers how post/modernity affects the social space of regions, and the Atlantic region in particular. I examine the ways that selected Atlantic Canadian writers engage with their place, in their time. I assess their representation of region, place, and culture, and, simultaneously, attend to their

[1] This is somewhat ironic, given that Howells' objective was to draw together a post-Civil War America, to use regionalist writing as a tool for national education and unity, as Alexander MacLeod ("Between") and Everett Carter point out.

representational strategies, since how writers see is integral to what they see. I explore the social contexts in which Atlantic Canadian literature[2] is produced; in doing so, I consider how tropes of regional identity have been and are constructed and normalized in the popular imagination, focusing particularly on the relationship of identity and contemporaneity in the region's literature. Further, I study the ways in which various new works by Michael Winter, Lynn Coady and Lisa Moore propose flexible definitions of regional identity that incorporate external cultural influences, destabilizing common antimodern stereotypes.

In taking this approach, my work moves against a still-prevailing tide. The association of regionalism with antimodern stereotype is entrenched in the Atlantic region and elsewhere. An understanding of contemporaneity as a development of modernity, a "society… which unlike any preceding culture lives in the future rather than the past" (Giddens 94),[3] and which is dominated by globalized capitalism, presents a serious challenge to "regional" ways of structuring the world, as global technologies and communications enable mass cultural exchange and even a vast, swamping monocultural "McWorld," as Benjamin Barber has phrased it. Nicholas Entrikin, in *The Betweenness of Place: Towards a Geography of Modernity*, describes the possibility that place will cease to matter, that the end of isolation will lead to a

[2] My project assesses representations of the Atlantic region in literature. However, "Atlantic Canadian literature" as a general category does, and should, include literature that does not focus upon the region.

[3] Edward Soja comments, "I continue to see the present period primarily as another deep and broad restructuring of modernity rather than as a complete break and replacement of all progressive, post-Enlightenment thought, as some who call themselves postmodernists… proclaim" (*Postmodern Geographies* 5).

"decline in areal variation of ways of life" (28): the annihilation of difference, including regional difference.[4]

That said, globalization can intensify the belief in or desire for a regionalism that records and preserves the "authentic" truth of a region's social space against the incursions of the latest onslaught of contemporary life.[5] As such, regionalism has been associated with a profound antimodernism perpetuated by concerned denizens who, to use Stephen Harper's memorable phrase, attempt to "build a firewall"[6] around their regions. The traditional, long-developed notions of place they draw upon are often deeply embedded in our regional consciousness; as Entrikin further observes:

> Theories of modernization have often neglected what Clifford Geertz has referred to as a 'primordial attachment' that 'stems from the givens – or more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed givens – of social existence.' Such attachments remain despite change. More specifically, attachment to place and territory remain important in modern society despite (and possibly because of) the increased mobility of the population and the production of standardized landscapes. (41)

---

[4] To outline this position, Entrikin draws on David Harvey's *The Limits to Capital*, which suggests the reduction and remapping of regional diversity by the "uneven development" of capitalism:

> Ideas of local culture emerge only as residual effects of this dynamic of capital, and are to be understood only in reference to them. The mechanisms of capitalism create *types* of places and regions, to which culture adds 'local color.' (30, ital. orig.)

[5] Frank Davey, for example, discusses the rise of thematic and nostalgic Prairie regionalist work in response to alterations in provincial economies that stressed secondary and tertiary investment and development, rather than an agrarian economy ("Towards" 13-14).

[6] Harper et al. "The Alberta Agenda."

Thus, policy makers, artists, and intellectuals within Atlantic Canada often draw on established discourses of place to define themselves – limiting references to a globalized world that seems continually to provide more reasons to be skeptical of narratives of progress or change. We may be amused by egregious examples like the prayer of the nineteenth-century Presbyterian minister I quoted above. But such divisions can and do provide benefits to their advocates, whose regional consciousness organizes, critiques and modifies their worlds. Regionalism, as a marginal discourse, is always in tension with, and to some degree defined by, its dominant national obverse, and as a marginal position it can speak back to power (New, *Land* 117), literally providing the "ground" of an alternative worldview that questions the values and dominance of accepted extra-regional frameworks. As Deborah Keahey observes, "Taking possession of and revaluing stereotypes has long been a productive means of generating Prairie identity…a liberatory regionalism can also be produced by the nationalist forces that attempt to suppress it" (160).

A region's continued existence can depend, too, on its ability to sell itself, not merely voice itself. Thus Frank Davey reminds us: "For a regionalism to prosper and persist within a contemporary capitalist nation-state some commodification of that regionalism must occur" ("Toward" 12). A coherent regional identity is much more readily articulated and sold than one fractured by internal division. In the Atlantic region, the Confederation-period decline in manufacturing and subsequent declines in primary resource development have long meant the region derives a great deal of income from tourism, which depends on catching the attention of, and responding to

the expectations of, the "tourist gaze."[7] Accordingly, Newfoundland's tourism advertisements lure with grandmother's quilts airing by the edge of the cliff, while mobcapped Acadian dancers whirl in advertisements for Nova Scotia. Although Newfoundlanders roared their indignation when American Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News* drew on cliché to transform them into quaint background for the novel and subsequent movie, regional authors are often quick to capitalize on the same tropes. Briefly, for example, Kenneth Harvey's *The Town That Forgot How to Breathe* was panned by fellow-Newfoundlander and influential critic Lawrence Mathews who bemoaned its quaint, "simplistic" characters and called it a "well-designed page-turner that has the makings of a big-time movie" ("Northeast" 134).

Cumulatively, then, such representations and affective attachments to traditional definitions of place – the creation of ostensibly secure ground from which to speak back to dominant discourses of nationalism and globalization – shore up support for the default view of regionalism I outlined at the beginning of my discussion: regionalism as it is understood in relation to the nineteenth-century American "local colourists," an ethnographic approach that uses the techniques of realism to construct a "natural" relationship of culture and place that is static, and framed in opposition to a cosmopolitan perspective that would challenge the fixed categories and definitions of the character of a region.

Such uses of regionalism remain much in circulation today. When I first became interested in regionalism, at the end of the 1990s, I was struck by the power and persistence of understandings of Atlantic Canada as a quaint backwater.

---

[7] For a discussion of the "tourist gaze" see John Urry's *The Tourist Gaze*.

Representations of the region seemed to be everywhere: literary bestsellers like Anne-Marie Macdonald's *Fall on Your Knees* (1997), Alistair MacLeod's *No Great Mischief* (1999), and Donna Morrissey's *Kit's Law* (1999) dominated book lists; George Elliott Clarke's theatrical adaptation of *Whylah Falls*, and his opera *Beatrice Chancy*, were onstage; Great Big Sea and Ashley MacIssac led the "new wave" of East Coast Celtic/grunge music on the airwaves; and *The Hanging Garden* (1997) and *New Waterford Girl* (1999) were on the big screen, while the small screen was saturated, in springtime, by tourism advertisements for the region. In 1999, Atlantic Canadian culture was enjoying a period of national attention it had not experienced in years. But what kinds of messages about Atlantic Canada were being taken from these artists and these texts, and what did they have in common? With the exception of the films, what struck me first was their grounding in history: their adaptations of "traditional" musical and literary forms, and their subject matter, which tended to chronicle and celebrate the ordinary life of the region's past. While many of the texts popular at the time complicate and interrogate regional stereotypes and normative constructions of the region's history, they are often popularly understood to perpetuate such mythologies. Others do directly draw upon such myths.

From this interest arose the first part of my project: while my focus is literature produced in the past fifteen years, the first section considers the historical development of the literary and social climate of the region, and the influence of an established tradition on the regional, national, and international reception of Atlantic Canadian literature today. Chapter two examines key texts of Maritime fiction from the nineteenth- to mid-twentieth century – bearing in mind that Newfoundland did not

join Canada until 1949. It demonstrates the rapidity with which the region changed from a frontier wherein settlers were conscious of themselves as representatives of modernity, to a place where regional consciousness was characterized by its antimodernism, as historian Ian MacKay has established in *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia*. This antimodernism is a dominant theme in the region's well-known works, ebbing and flowing in response to regional sociopolitical and economic situations and their contexts in a larger world; particularly, a struggle with modernity is at the heart of the best-known Atlantic novels of the mid-twentieth century by Charles Bruce, Ernest Buckler, Frank Parker Day, Thomas H. Raddall, and Hugh MacLennan.

Chapter three discusses the persistence of essentialist regionalism in the fiction of contemporary Atlantic Canada. It argues that many Canadian writers and readers present and consume Atlantic Canada as a world that remains within the bounds of nineteenth-century mimetic realism, and often nineteenth-century social constructions as well. To explore the implications of these desires, I examine the victory of Frank Parker Day's 1928 novel *Rockbound* in the CBC *Canada Reads* contest of 2005, arguing that it illustrates the appeal of visions of Atlantic authenticity and antimodernism amidst national anxieties about modernity and globalization. Beyond that, I discuss the ways in which frameworks of publication, popular criticism, and prize and celebrity culture promote this vision.

In the second half of my project I turn to works by three well-established contemporary writers from the Atlantic region: Michael Winter, Lynn Coady, and Lisa Moore. I examine the ways their representations of urban, suburban, rural and

wild spaces suggest both continuities and transformations of regional cultural identity. Chapter four examines the ways in which Michael Winter recontextualizes wilderness symbolism to de-naturalize wilderness, challenging assumed relations of geography and its inhabitants, and questioning broader categories of "native" and "imported." Chapter five assesses Lynn Coady's portrayal of both the cultural resistance to, and an embrace of, conjunctions of rural and ex-urban space in Cape Breton. Chapter six investigates Lisa Moore's depiction of urban and suburban Newfoundland. I argue that Moore dwells on the interpenetration of the culturally "authentic" with both the exoticism and homogeneity of global influences, questioning the stability of such categorizations. My treatment of all three writers' contemporary works emphasizes the slippage between categories of urban and rural social space, and on these authors' renegotiations of Atlantic cultural identities during a time in which our embrace of the processes of globalization is both necessary and justifiably cautious.

My work, adding to the work of numerous others, highlights that while an essentialist regionalism continues to dominate the literary climate of Atlantic Canada, and remains a popular approach across the nation, increasingly literature is being produced that focuses upon the region's contemporary life; in doing so, it changes both our understanding of Atlantic Canada and the parameters of regionalism itself. Yet Herb Wyile suggests it may still be "optimistic" to see a postmodern approach to regionalism resulting in a "liberation of regionalism from a humanist hegemony" ("Ransom" 104) in Canada and beyond. This caution is certainly validated by the

continuing popularity of the essentialist approach to regional identity in various literary and critical treatments.

The critical history of regionalism in Canada has supported normative, essentialist understandings of the term. Although Canadian critic E.K. Brown famously considered regionalism a pervasive and pernicious trait that hindered the development of a unified national literature, the flowering of mythopoeic and thematic criticism throughout the 1960s and 1970s encouraged the construction of static regional identities in tandem with the development of essential national identity. This tendency to thematize – and reduce – regional identity was perhaps most pronounced in Prairie literature: texts like Laurence Ricou's *Vertical Man/Horizontal World: Man and Landscape in Canadian Prairie Fiction* and Dick Harrison's *Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction* took an environmentally deterministic approach that obscured other contributors to the social spaces of the texts they treated (Keahey 5).

Certainly critics and writers have rebelled against this flattening of region, yet they have often done so in ways that continue to draw upon essential definitions of place, instead of challenging the framing of the region itself. For example, Davey points out that revisionist historians of the Maritimes such as Ernest Forbes and P.A. Buckner, who rebut stereotypes of corruption, conservatism, timidity or laziness, counter them with other pervasive stereotypes of isolated community action and regional cohesiveness, "[replacing] one nostalgic mythology with another" ("Toward" 9-10).

In response to the predominance of nationally popular historical novels that represent rural, white, often Anglo-Scottish experience, a number of Atlantic Canadian novels confront popular conceptions of regional identity, particularly in racial terms – literally challenging the face that has been put on the region. George Elliott Clarke, for example, counters the "tartanization" of the Nova Scotia with vibrant representations of historical Black experience in Halifax, Fredericton, and in rural Nova Scotia. In major works like *Beatrice Chancy*, *Whylah Falls*, *Execution Poems*, and *George and Rue*, Clarke literally re-maps the region, creating an "Africadia" that exists alongside and in tension with official regional boundaries. This is a remarkable re-imagining of regional space[8] that demonstrates its inherent doubleness as *both* imagined world and documentary text while also establishing the history and vibrancy of the Black community in the region. In similar fashion, Ann-Marie Macdonald's *Fall on your Knees* reimagines industrial Cape Breton to acknowledge the diversity of the Jewish, Lebanese, and Caribbean communities brought together by the coal mines. She emphasizes not only their distinct cultural heritages but also the instability of all their cultural practices as they co-exist and intermarry, enmeshed in new local and national contexts.

These texts are very important in intervening in our sense of the regional imaginary because they confront and revise the region's sense of its past. But they still work within a prevailing regional paradigm that demands long residency and

[8] See Alexander MacLeod's "'The Little State of Africadia is a Community of Believers': Replacing the Regional and Remaking the Real in the Work of George Elliott Clarke" for a more sustained discussion of Clarke's reimagination of the region.

roots in the past:[9] to say "we were always here too" is exceptionally important, given the weight Atlantic Canadians place on historical roots. But it doesn't challenge that paradigm itself. Rather, it only enlarges the pool of communities and cultures "we" consider to be "us."

Increasingly, however, these essentializing approaches to regionalism have been interrogated by critics contemptuous of their romantic conservatism, their emphases on a regional authenticity and purity threatened by modernity, or what Renee Hulan, discussing the trope of Nordicity, calls "nostalgia for the separate, stable cultures of the ethnographic past" (181). Such critics regard with suspicion the continuance of this kind of regionalist discourse into today's array of critical tools.[10] Frank Davey insists that a region's internal differences "are usually effaced and recuperated by it as contributing to itself" ("Towards" 3-4), thus rendering region as potentially "oppressive" a category as the larger categories it seeks to resist (16).

Davey usefully compares regionalism with Fanon's assessment of postcolonial cultural development, equating regionalism with Fanon's second stage "desire for…originary grounding" (11). Wyile adds to this observation, also comparing a regionalist and postcolonial approach:

> Thus in a gesture which repeats English Canada's post-colonial act of differentiation from England, critical formulations of regionalism react to the

[9] Insofar as Clarke insists, both in his literary and in his critical works, on countering what he considers a widespread assumption in Canada that Black people are recent immigrants, he can be seen to contribute to prevailing stereotypes. As a result, Rinaldo Walcott criticizes Clarke as a "nativist" and argues that Clarke creates a hierarchy in which origins and length of residence are privileged.

[10] As an example, see Smaro Kamboureli's chastisement of Sharon Butala for her essentialist conflation of land and culture ("Culture of Nature").

> internal colonialism of such national formulas by stressing regional diversity within the nation, but at the expense of diversity within the region; ironically, they subscribe to the kinds of critical practice within which so-called regional writing has traditionally been marginalized. ("Regionalism, Post-Nationalism" 271)

Though American critic Roberto Dainotto also acknowledges the discourse's ostensible potential for parallels with postcolonialist or multiculturalist approaches, he suggests that "the way [regionalist] otherness is claimed" (492) is problematic, because its yearning for a regional "purity" too easily translates into a reclamation of "cultural and ethnic wholeness" that feels itself "threatened into 'marginality' by the existence of a multicultural presence" (505, 503). Dainotto suggests, then, that a regionalist discourse defined by claims to authenticity and purity can obscure racial and ethnic intolerance. Some Canadian critics concur, arguing that "region" in Canada acts as a metonym for white Anglo-European culture:

> the last forty years have seen a growing divide in Canada between its three metropolises (38 percent of the population in 1996), which are multiracial and multicultural, and the rest of the country, mostly White, mostly Christian, slightly multicultural, with few visible minorities. In reaction, the non-metropolises have felt a need to valorize local and regional cultures. What seems to be, culturally speaking, a good idea, supported by state television (CBC) with shows on regional cultures and historical events, is more problematic politically. It enhances political tensions between so-called heirs

> of the "true" (English) Canadian culture and representatives of the "new" multicultural culture. (Dupont and Lemarchand, 330)

These viewpoints raise important problems about regionalism's limitations but, as Alexander MacLeod points out, they still "[repeat] the standard, grossly over-simplified stereotypes of nineteenth-century regionalism, [and therefore the] critics assume that today's regionalist theory must also rely on realist aesthetics; that it must support a pseudo-nationalistic political ideology; and that it must "naturalize" all other forms of social difference beneath the supposedly apolitical rubric of 'place'" (*Between* 44).

Yet regionalism does not, after all, have to be limited in this manner. Increasingly, contemporary writers and critics are changing their approach to the representation, construction, and analysis of region, utilizing what can generally be termed postmodern approaches in their consideration of contemporary regional life. Broadly, these approaches bring together several aspects of postmodernity, including its philosophical challenge to absolute knowledge; its corresponding insistence on the subjective, positional self; the work of the "spatial" theorists in examining the roles of space and place in our ontology; and the emergence of a "postmodern" geography. All these aspects of postmodern thought inform a revised approach to regionalism that produces a more "accurate" regional modernity, one that better reflects the world we live in today. This belief underpins both my thesis and the methodologies of the writers I examine. Accordingly, though it is not the focus of my project, as such, it is useful to provide an overview of the intersection of postmodern thought and regionalism here.

Postmodernity is a broad term that attempts to describe the conditions and experience of contemporary life. Perhaps the most referenced definition of the philosophical position is articulated by Jean-François Lyotard in his work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, which defines postmodernity as "an incredulity toward metanarratives" (xxiv); Lyotard suggests that an attention to the plurality of interpretive strategies within language, combined with the explosion in technology and media in the twentieth century, has resulted in both our increasing awareness of the limitations of our knowledge, our systems of belief, *and* our awareness of our own involvement in the construction, through narrative, of these systems. Correspondingly, we are increasingly skeptical of received, totalizing systems that make transcendent claims to truth or value, such as patriarchy, organized religion, ethnicity, empire, or nation. Instead, we progressively subscribe to the idea that there are many, necessarily partial, aspects to any entity – including the self – and that its organization, and its being, is not given or static, but provisional and positional.

Accordingly, postmodernity is a profoundly anti-hierarchical movement, one that draws attention to the fragmentation and partiality of our beliefs, and which investigates the lacunae in our thinking, making room for uneasily co-existent contradictions. It is also, in this respect, an interrogative movement, a refusal to accept a given way of doing or thinking things. As a methodology of sorts, then, postmodernity is not, as some have argued, an entirely relativistic, endlessly ironic iteration, but instead has an applied function, as a questioning of categories and boundaries, a dismantling of borders, and an insistence on the subjectivity of

perspective – and here spatial metaphors seem unavoidable. For the purposes of theorizing regionalism, postmodernism is thus useful as a tonic to a popular, realist regionalism's boundedness, its excessive emphasis on "natural" relationships and the external, given fact of the land.

The "spatial turn" in critical theory has strengthened the relevance of postmodernism for regionalism by developing the relevance of a postmodern approach for the study of space and place. Applying its insights to the literary representation of the Canadian landscape, W.H. New concludes, "The *reading of the land* is less a fixed science, then, than a social process" (*Land* 10). A postmodern approach to the representation of land, then, reminds us we are "located," embedded, not objective viewers of our world, that the way we see is influenced by our social frameworks, and in turn we take the material fact of land and turn it into social space.

This attention to the role of space in shaping experience emerges from recent transformations to the study of geography, headed by theorists such as Derek Gregory and Edward Soja, who interrogate the assumptions and methodologies of the field, foregrounding the way geographical spaces are produced by, and understood through, discourses of power and knowledge, "*like all other practices of representation*" (Gregory, *Geographical* 7, italics orig.). The originator of much of this spatial theory is Henri Lefebvre, whose *The Production of Space* reminds us, firstly, that we are creatures of both space and time, and that the two cannot be separated, though Enlightenment thought has privileged temporality. Lefebvre emphasizes space is not an inert element through which we move in historical time, but is both shaped by and shapes its inhabitants, contributing to the structuring and experience of our world:

"*(Social) space is a (social) product"* of the economic, political, cultural, and historical paradigms through which we view it (26, italics orig.).[11]

This attention to the production of social space is followed by theorists' attention to the way spaces are layered within the social realm, as different groups use them for different things, and make them mean in different ways. Foucault suggests this with his concept of "heterotopias," multiple inscriptions of space which counter the framework of dominant "utopias" that seek to define and regulate places and people. Foucault argues that heterotopias "juxtapos[e] in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are themselves incompatible." (25). This layering concept is taken up by Lefebvre as well, when he points out:

> We are confronted not by one social space but by many – indeed, by an unlimited multiplicity or uncountable set of social spaces which we refer to generically as 'social space.' No space disappears in the course of growth and development: *the worldwide does not abolish the local.* (86, italics orig.)

---

[11] These human categories interact with the materiality of geography, producing the realm of social space. This is a careful and changeable balance, Lefebvre asserts, distinguishing between what he considers illusions of either "transparent" mental dominance of space by the viewer, or "opaque" dominance of the viewer by an inaccessible, real space (27-30). Both, separately, must be rejected, he suggests, in favour of a dialectical negotiation between the two, which produces "lived" or "social" space. Renowned theorist and planner Edward Soja, applying Lefebvre's insights to the "postmodern geographies" of North America, recasts Lefebvre's categories as the "firstspace" perception of space as wholly material, or real; the "secondspace" perception of space as wholly imagined or ideal; and the "thirdspace" where the two intersect simultaneously (*Thirdspace* 75-82) in what Soja has termed "realandimagined" space (11), the corollary of Lefebvre's "lived" space. As Alexander MacLeod points out, to date most understandings of regionalism have fallen into the fallacy of a "Firstspace" model of realism and a corresponding environmental determinism (*Between* 100), where people, and culture, are products of the land.

Accordingly, a postmodern approach to geography emphasizes the exchange between global and local and the way these spaces exist simultaneously in many spheres, with different social meanings attached to their different relationships. This simultaneity strips away the "illusion" of space as a unified, separate reality, as an essentialist regionalism would have it, but it does not negate the space. As Nigel Thrift observes, a new "globalized localism" emerges, in which attachment to place continues, but increasingly "mediated by the media (and incidentally providing a vital affective hum for the new manufactured contexts)" (224-25). A postmodern approach reminds us we have to pay attention both to the way these spaces are produced and the way they are experienced in diverse forms.

To summarize, then, this "spatialized" postmodernist perspective has significant implications for regionalism. It builds upon the general interrogation of region by a postmodern destabilization of categories of belonging; it gives us a clearer and more comprehensive apparatus for categorizing different approaches to region; and it clarifies the project of an expanded approach to regionalism: not to chart "the ways people live," as an ethnographic project, but to examine the ways in which the human geographies of regions are constructed, and to better understand their underlying values. For literary critics interested in regional contemporaneity, then, the logic of the representation of space, as well as the social space itself, is the subject for analysis.[12]

---

[12] Lefebvre calls attention to the "codifications" of space and affirms:

> An already produced space can be decoded, can be *read*. Such a space implies a process of signification. And even if there is no general code of space, inherent to language or to all languages, there may have existed specific codes, established at specific historical periods and varying in their effects. If

A postmodern approach to region also exhorts us to be attentive to the political frameworks and power dynamics underscoring this representation or codification of space. Edward Soja comments, "We must be insistently aware of how space can be made to hide consequences from us, how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies are filled with politics and ideology" (*Postmodern* 25). W.H. New, speaking specifically of the representation of regions, concurs:

> Our sensitivity to region may at one level make us aware of place and landscape, but a sensitivity to regional nuance – that is, to the literary structures and metaphors of regions – will make us aware of the link between language and political attitude…. At its most sensitive, regional criticism can usefully remind us that literary texts, for all their artifice, do not survive as sterile verbal forms; they emerge from social contexts, and they are charged with social meaning. ("Beyond" 17)

In recent years, then, more critics are taking up the project of reshaping regionalism, dismantling its realist, representational focus, and recognizing the "ideological and critical continuities and conflicts behind its various usages" (Wyile "Regionalism, Post-Nationalism" 274). Most of them have called for a "postmodern" engagement with region that "[makes] regionalism's borders – those paradoxical middle grounds – its referent" (Jordan 107). In Canada this theoretical redefinition includes key critical works such as Herb Wyile's mappings of the interarticulations of

---

> so, interested 'subjects,' as members of a particular society, would have acceded by this means at once to their space and to their status as 'subjects' acting within that space and (in the broadest sense of the word) comprehending it. (17)

regionalism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism, including "Ransom Revisited: The Aesthetic of Regionalism in a Globalized Age"; "Regionalism, Postcolonialism, and (Canadian) Writing: a Comparative Approach for Postnational Times"; and "Regionalism, Post-Nationalism, and Post-Colonialism: The Case of Canadian Literature(s)".[13] Also key are Alexander MacLeod's 2003 dissertation "Between a rock and a soft place: postmodern-regionalism in Canadian and American fiction"; Francesco Loriggio's "Regionalism and Theory"; Lisa Chalykoff's "Overcoming the Two Solitudes of Canadian Literary Regionalism"; W.H. New's *Land Sliding*; and David Jordan's work, including his study *New World Regionalism*, quoted above. Alison Calder and Robert Wardhaugh's "When is the Prairie?" and Ian MacKay's *The Quest of the Folk* are important for their consideration of the extent to which region is associated with a generalized notion of "the past." Deborah Keahey's *Making it Home* and Danielle Fuller's *Writing the Everyday* are important for their attentiveness to "strategic regionalisms" (Fuller 39) that articulate the intersection of place with other categories of belonging.

Other critics, such as Cheryl Herr, Douglas Powell, and José E. Limon, have preferred to use the term "critical regionalism." This term, originating in architectural criticism, is often used particularly to highlight the tension between locality and globalization, rather than stressing internal dissonances. Limon, for example, cites the impossibility of a return to an "utterly distinctive" regionalism "impervious to external influence" and poses critical regionalism as an alternative, "a renewal of regionalist thinking, not in any isolated sense, but rather *within* yet in *tension* with

[13] Wyile also co-edited *A Sense of Place: Re-evaluating Regionalism in Canadian and American Writing*.

globalization (166-67, italics orig.). Likewise, Cheryl Herr suggests that critical regionalism is defined by its "relationality" with external, global elements and processes and its "selectivity" in incorporating them (18). Limon, who works on US-Mexican border studies, draws further on this sense of relationality when he suggests critical regionalism is "an alternative to critical globalization" (166), a field defined by Appelbaum and Robinson's 2004 *Critical Globalization Studies*. This kind of comparison subtly positions critical regionalism against transnational studies, a contrast which deserves more study: a critical regionalism does much the same kind of interrogation of belonging as transnational approaches, but from both an inter- and intra-national perspective, yet has not received the same degree of scholarly interest. Richard Rodriguez, responding to Limon, suggests this may be "for fear of being read as provincial, outmoded, or lacking in theoretical sophistication" (185-86). Perhaps the lingering taint of an essentialist, realist "regionalism" discourages the development of the field.

Though all spaces are (unevenly, in/distinctly) postmodern in a postmodern world, some are more postmodern than others. This is the ingrained assumption of many who have charted "postmodern geographies," such as Frederic Jameson (*Postmodernism*) and Edward Soja, who has popularized the term. Soja's quintessence of such social space is the city of Los Angeles, a palimpsest forged by the forces of late capitalism. According to Soja, Los Angeles' "representations of spatiality and historicity are archetypes of vividness, simultaneity, and interconnection. They beckon inquiry at once into their telling uniqueness and, at the same time, into their assertive but cautionary generalizability" (*Postmodern*

Geographies 248). Such spaces, however, permeate the globe, existing throughout its regions; accordingly, Alexander MacLeod's discussion of a postmodern regionalism insists on the need to recognize the way "place" has changed, and the need to reconceive of regionalist literature in response: "By redesigning regionalist criticism to better represent the 'unrealistic' places that dominate today's cultural geography, we reinvent the genre" (*Between* 17).

Certainly, too little attention has been paid to the interarticulation of such "postmodern" and "regional" spaces. However, this doesn't mean that Atlantic Canadians, for example, have to search for Los Angeles in the middle of New Brunswick. There is abundant material for study in an ostensibly "rural" region's encounter with "postmodern" space. Less completely "postmodern" landscapes are already very much a part of the regional modernity of conventionally "rural" regions like Atlantic Canada: suburbs, big box stores and strip malls are a part of the lived spatiality of the people of Miramichi, St. John's, or Bridgewater,[14] as well as the countryside surrounding those centres. As such, they require attention by any serious regionalist study. Though such smaller sub/urban spaces less completely fulfill the ideal description of "postmodern" space, they are perhaps all the more interesting for that. Even the historic built environment does not remain stable, as businesses and homeowners modify their properties and landscapes to adapt to modern demands and desires: two-hundred year old homes wired with ethernet cables and "central vac" are not "historic," and yet are not new or conventionally "modern" edifices; they are in

[14] Almost half the population of the Atlantic provinces, considered still a predominantly rural region, lives in cities, suburbs, and large towns. As Ian MacKay points out, it has been a long time since the majority of the population were "fisherfolk" living in a cottage by the sea ("Among").

"between" states, and in that sense part of the circulating, increasingly atemporal condition of post/modernity. Of particular interest to rural regions are the border spaces being produced by new patterns of contemporary life: the intersection of rural and suburban spaces, a conjunction developing at a prodigious rate across North America. "Exurbs," as they are termed, merge the city and countryside, often ostensibly maintaining the character of rural spaces while nevertheless drawing them into intensified exchange with urban centres or decentralized "urban fields." This allows residents who see themselves as inhabiting either rural or suburban social spaces to feel themselves accommodated, in the same location.

Finally, drawing upon James Clifford's ethnographic insights, regions must be seen as "travelling cultures." Place, as Entrikin points out, is no longer a marker of isolation, as travel to and from regions is increasingly accessible and, further, as "travel," in the form of exposure to other cultures, is increasingly virtual: new technologies mean a home in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia or a village in Siberia – as long as they have high-speed internet – can access the nightly Al Jazeera broadcast or take in the latest YouTube sensation. While the space itself does not move, of course, it does change in meaning and appearance, in contact with "travelling" elements. It does not mean the same – even when people are trying to force it to do so. Accordingly, the presence of distinctively, recognizably "postmodern" space in a "regional" context should not result in the conclusion that they are separate worlds. Rather, such increasingly common exchanges emphasize the ways in which all spaces, both those immediately recognizable as "unreal" and those

appearing more "natural," are produced. As Lefebvre has stated, "the worldwide does not abolish the local" (86), but re-produces it in changed form.

It is this intersection of the global with the local that I assess in my work, as I've described it above. My work continues the long-established project of charting the literature produced in Atlantic Canada, and participates in the renewed interest in its contemporary literature, as it represents the region. Critical assessments of Atlantic Canadian literature in the past few decades unsurprisingly vary widely from the essentialist to the highly interrogative.[15] Gwen Davies' important critical and editorial works, *Studies in Maritime Literary History* and *Myth and Milieu: Atlantic Literature and Culture 1918-1939*, interrogate early Maritime writers in their cultural contexts.[16]

---

[15] Anthologies, too, provide us with evidence of changing approaches to the construction of the Atlantic Canada. Many recent anthologies are organized around loose definitions of regional or provincial belonging, or subgroup anthologies such as Black poetry, Mig'maw poetry, or women's poetry of the region. Despite the continued – perhaps inevitable – use of clever titles such as "Landmarks," ""Land, Sea and Time," Coastlines," "Atlantica" and so on, such collections increasingly reject geographically deterministic evocations of region and instead announce, as do the editors of *Coastlines: the Poetry of Atlantic Canada*, their engagement with "a dynamic and changing sense of regionalism…. [which] does not abandon the deep connection to the historical and local, [yet] reinterprets the local in the global context and enables a kinetic relationship with cultures and economies around the planet" (Compton 16). This kind of awareness is a turn away from what Martin Reinink has critiqued as a unifying determinism on the part of regional and ethnic collections in Canada, a "replicating [of] old rhetorical structures [of nationalism] that we now find questionable" (133). Lynn Coady's collection *Victory Meat: New Fiction from Atlantic Canada* announces its programmatic intention to modify stereotypes of regional belonging and regional writing, an effort I examine in the chapter I devote to her work.

[16] Reavley Gair's *A Literary and Linguistic History of New Brunswick*, a volume of surveys, also charts early writers of the region. Gair's collection is valuable as a documentary resource, an opening for further, more detailed scholarship on prose, poetry, theatre and fiction. Within it, Fred Cogswell's "English Prose Writing in New Brunswick: World War I to the Present" provides a useful overview of connections between genre and cultural climate, linking the dominance of romantic fiction to a regional conservatism.

In her influential statement "The Home Place in Modern Maritime Literature" Davies takes on what she sees as Ian MacKay's dismissal of the region's "literature of nostalgia" (196) with her own more nuanced assessment, which identifies a balance between pastoralism, nostalgia, realism and irony (195-96) in the region's literary history. Davies' analysis is more problematic when it turns to depictions of the "home place" in more recent writers like David Adams Richards and George Elliott Clarke. While she identifies the ways in which their "cultural shading… speak[s] of a zest in verbal tradition and invention, not stasis" (197), she principally praises them for the virtuosity of their representations of an essence of place which she believes underpins such changes:

> Being a Maritimer is something felt in the blood and the bone. It is knowing, as fiction writer Alistair MacLeod puts it in the title of his first book, the "salt" in "your blood." This is the romanticism that could substantiate Ian MacKay's remarks, but there is nothing forced about a sense of tradition… An 'intensified realization' of *self* is what the "home place" conveys in Maritime literature. (198-99)

Here, Davies clearly states the "reality" of the Maritimes is determined by an affective link to the land, and that an authentic Maritime "self" can be "realized" through the fiction – rather than being constructed. She not only charts the "generations of Maritime writers and readers who physically and imaginatively see in the 'home place' the essence of their Maritime identity" (199), but she subscribes to an essential regionalism herself. Patrick O'Flaherty makes a similar conflation: his survey *The Rock Observed: Studies in the Literature of Newfoundland* charts early

prose and fiction, critiquing the romanticism and primitivism he finds within various texts. Yet while he states that "any writer who summarily reduces the complexity of Newfoundland's past or present to a ready formula must be regarded with great suspicion" (186), his assessment concludes, like Davies, by affirming the primal influence of the land on an essentially static Newfoundland character:

> This [fear of mass culture] has been sounded as well by other observers, who worry about the loss of the Newfoundlander's distinctiveness, and hold out a future of assimilation. Yet these may be perceptions based on imperfect observations. To look closely at Newfoundland life as it is lived, rather than fancied, is to be struck with the force of continuity rather than change. Writers come and go; but whatever has changed, the elements of wind, tide, and crag remain; and the people may be already too irresistibly altered, the stamp of an old land too firmly implanted in them, to respond as readily as some think to new influences. (186-87)

Such essentialist and geographically deterministic assumptions of regional character in the midst of otherwise careful readings of texts are also to be found in Janice Kulyk Keefer's *Under Eastern Eyes: a critical reading of Maritime fiction* (1987). The study critically assesses the techniques and rationales for the romanticism of the texts she studies, acknowledges political and economic influences on region (23, 27), and identifies the need to "[shake] ourselves free of rigid schemas" (32). However, its thematic focus on the "rural garden" as a founding, explanatory trope of the regional character of the Maritimes, and its assertion of Maritime writers' "sense of shared community" (13), "natural openness" to nature (70) and "sense of the sea" (72) are, as

Creelman points out, "simplistic" and reductive (6). Such conflations of land and regional psychology persist in contemporary criticism: for example, Hans Bak's 2002 discussion of Wayne Johnston's *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* asserts that "[it] is the fate of being an islander, of being 'enisled' by sea and ice, of being locked into a 'hermitage,' which creates an elemental existential dilemma for Newfoundlanders: 'to leave or not to leave'" (220).

Many recent critical works, however, influenced by the invigoration and interrogation of regionalist discourse, have tended to turn their gaze not only to texts but inward, to examine the critical premises upon which their studies rest. *Setting in the East*, David Creelman's book-length study of twentieth-century Maritime literature, focuses upon realism not as a default "setting" but as a specific tool suited to communicating the cultural assumptions of the texts he studies. Accordingly, Creelman sees realism as an effective genre through which writers anxiously resist the destabilizations of modernity and yearn for a unified, stable regional culture: "The region is distinguished by its balance between hesitation about the future and its memory of the past and this fragile equilibrium is at the root of its distinct style of realist fiction" (14). Creelman carefully qualifies that these characteristics are the products of a distinct vision of regional culture (201), but they are not traits essential to the region. Similarly, Joan Strong's *Acts of Brief Authority: a critical assessment of selected twentieth-century Newfoundland novels* traces Newfoundland writers' resistant strategies, including the deployment of cultural and antimodern stereotypes, for surviving what they see as "geographic, cultural and personal domination" (14). Another significant book-length study, Danielle Fuller's *Writing the Everyday:*

Women's Textual Communities in Atlantic Canada, considers how Atlantic women authors' "strategic regionalisms" disrupt normative definitions of region, creating space for marginalized voices within the larger community. Fuller also examines the politics of the production, publication and reception of Atlantic writing, both in *Writing the Everyday* and several recent articles.

There has been, in fact, a significant increase in the number of articles devoted to recent Atlantic fiction, many of which engage with, and expand upon, a specifically postmodern regionalism. Critical collections like Hochbruck and Taylor's *Down East: Critical Essays on Contemporary Maritime Canadian Literature*, *Essays on Canadian Writing*'s special issue *The Literature of Newfoundland*, *Canadian Literature*'s special issue *The Literature of Atlantic Canada* and the recent special issue of *Studies in Canadian Literature*, *Surf's Up: The Rising Tide of Atlantic Canadian Literature*, arising from the 2004 conference of the same name at Acadia University, have gathered together diverse articles addressing Atlantic regional particularities. Such collections contain, and address, as the editors of *The Literature of Atlantic Canada*, Marta Dvorak and Coral Ann Howells, point out, "such a multiplicity of voices speaking from so many different angles and in such a variety of literary modes that what is produced amounts to far more than a mapping of region. It is more like an archaeology of region, which both comprehends and exceeds any definition of regional specificity" (6). Increasingly, the subject of such diverse voices is the Atlantic region's diversity, itself. Recent work by critics such as Tony Tremblay, Alexander MacLeod, Herb Wyile, Jeanette Lynes, Paul Chafe, Tracy Whalen, Danielle Fuller and Jennifer Andrews, to name some of the most prominent,

have made valuable contributions to the expansion of our ideas of regionalism in Atlantic Canada and our understanding of its literature. Such studies have been invaluable as resources for my own project, assembling the framework upon which I attach my own branch.

This thesis is, then, a response to the call to refocus regionalist studies, to engage with the ways in which regional culture constantly reinvents itself. I focus particularly on literary examinations of, and production of, social spaces in Atlantic Canada, highlighting contemporary writers' self-consciousness about this production of region as a space between the viewer and the viewed.

My choice of Atlantic Canada is, as I have already noted, one of some personal interest, as it is "where I'm from." I have also had a lifelong personal interest in the hierarchies of belonging that partition the region in various, often competing ways, stemming from my personal and family history, which descends within the region for many years: my father's ancestors, New England Planters, were granted land in Nova Scotia very close to the land my mother's ancestors were ejected from during the Acadian Expulsion. My own parents, with roots in the Annapolis Valley and Cape Breton, moved our family to Lunenburg when I was young, and by local determination we grew up as "come from awayers" in that close-knit town. I have always been both an outsider and an insider, belonging and yet not fitting available categories of belonging. As I became a student of regionalism I realized, further, that Atlantic Canada is a place where region "matters": with a long history of economic struggle and political marginality, resentments and affiliations have sunk deep into the fabric of social space.

My choice of Atlantic Canada as the location for such a study is already controversial from the moment of classification. The region is a layering of distinctive territories and terminologies: Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Labrador, Acadie, Africadia, New Scotland, Cape Breton, the Valley, the Peninsule, the Island, the Rock, the Shore. The foremost, general tension is between the two largest regions, the Atlantic, which encompasses all four eastern provinces of Canada, and the Maritimes, which encompasses Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, leaving Newfoundland and Labrador separate. Many within the region, particularly Newfoundlanders, dislike the grouping of Newfoundland with the other provinces.[17] I choose, with Herb Wyile and Jeanette Lynes ("Surf" 9-10), to join Choyce and countless others in considering the concept of an "Atlantic" region of sufficient coherence to warrant integrated literary study: to the geographical accident of their propinquity is added increasingly shared economic challenges, such as outmigration and general depopulation, the exploitation and collapse of the fishery,[18] and the economic boons of offshore oil and tourism. Further,

[17] For example Lawrence Mathews, a mentor and confederate of the Burning Rock group, begins a review of Lesley Choyce's anthology *Atlantica: Stories from the Maritimes and Newfoundland* by denouncing Choyce's organizational choice thus: "Lesley Choyce begins his introduction to Atlantica by advancing the proposition that the four Atlantic provinces constitute 'a literary nation unto itself.' Nonsense. For starters, Newfoundland is so different from the other three as to make such a claim untenable on its face" (119). Keefer begins her study with a similar, though less bombastic assertion (3), as does Creelman (3). Hochbruck and Taylor risk stirring up visceral intra- (inter-?) regional tension and prompting innumerable corrections by labelling their collection "Maritime" yet including Newfoundland in their purview.

[18] Further, specific subregions share a history of inter-provincial exchange. As a personal example, when I grew up in Lunenburg, NS, in the 1980s and 1990s, many residents of the town were in Newfoundland and many were from Newfoundland, owing to the industrial fishing fleet's operations between the two locations. A similar exchange based on industrial and commercial systems exists between Sydney, Cape

both Newfoundland and the Maritimes experience similar political, intra-national tensions with Ottawa, as well as official and unofficial intra-national tensions with the rest of the country; an increasingly shared international relation to the rest of the globe; comparative cultural milieux in terms of their rural-affiliated, yet increasingly urbanizing populations; and a shared deep attachment with place.

I have chosen to study the writing of Michael Winter, Lynn Coady and Lisa Moore because their works, in my opinion, best exemplify the challenges and conflicts of Atlantic regional contemporaneity. In 1976, Alistair MacLeod's first short story collection *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* announced the need to problematize the way regional identity was being constructed and understood, as a story like "The Boat" demonstrates. Since then, MacLeod and other acclaimed writers from the region like David Adams Richards and Wayne Johnston have received considerable critical attention that has charted the ways their works challenge stereotypical or static understandings of the region, while also emphasizing its distinctiveness and sense of place. Winter, Coady and Moore continue the work of these writers, but shift their focus to the changing ways we see and experience the physical and cultural landscape in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Some of these landscapes are, as I have discussed, visibly "postmodern." Such spaces' mass-produced, visibly "inauthentic" character combines in often unexpected ways with spaces interpreted as "authentically" regional or real, resulting in a destabilization of both categories: "inauthentic" postmodern space is made real, while the constructedness of "authentic" space is also apparent. The result is, as Edward

---

Breton, and St. John's NL and, on a larger scale, between the Atlantic provinces and Fort MacMurray, Alberta, today.

Soja terms it, a focus on Atlantic "thirdspaces" that cannot be statically classified in either category. Relatively few writers in Canada, particularly in the Atlantic region, are examining the ways these juxtapositions affect the practice of everyday life, to use de Certeau's term; even fewer examine the ways these different spaces, and their corresponding cultural values, overlap and conflict. Accordingly, Winter's, Coady's, and Moore's contemporary works offer an opportunity to think through critical changes in our regional space and culture.

Further, all three writers focus on the mobility of contemporary culture: they explore what happens to regional identity when it is stretched beyond its borders, either by constant interaction with global elements, or because its inhabitants literally move beyond its borders. For all three writers, mass culture and pop culture are ordinary, ubiquitous aspects of their fictional worlds, and contact with other specific regional cultures is likewise common, resulting in the uneven meshing of cultural frameworks. Moore, particularly, demonstrates what I've called a "cosmopolitan regionalism" in her work. Unsurprisingly, all three writers are "trans-regional" in their own lives: Moore lives in and travels from St. John's; Coady, originally from Cape Breton, has lived in Vancouver and now resides in Edmonton; Winter, born in the UK, lives between St. John's and Toronto. The literary response of all three writers to their "betweenness of place" has not been to yearn nostalgically for a stable, originary ground, but to focus on their changeability.

Another important reason why I've chosen to work on Coady, Winter and Moore has to do with their aesthetics, and the intersection of their aesthetics with their subject matter. Alexander MacLeod reminds us that postmodernity's aesthetics –

principally its technique of fragmentation – far from being detached from the "real world," are actually representative of new forms of spatiality, emphasizing the simultaneity of contemporary existence, which increasingly allows us to experience different places, and different worlds, at the same time. He draws on Frederic Jameson's observation that American postmodern strategies should "be read as peculiar new forms of realism (or at least of the mimesis of reality)" (49) and David Harvey's observation that postmodern aesthetics "ought to be looked at as mimetic of the social, economic, and political practices in society" (113). MacLeod concludes this "has profound consequences for the study and evaluation of regionalist fiction…. If regionalism's relationship with space is clearly not exclusively tied to the nineteenth century, then regionalist representational strategies should not be inextricably linked to the coherent world-view of realist aesthetics" (*Between* 111). Accordingly, for today's regional modernity, with its disorienting, unreal geographies, a postmodern, fragmented, self-reflexive aesthetic practice is a truer way to represent the world.

Certainly, all three writers' representative strategies problematize a transparent way of viewing region. The work of Moore and Winter most obviously plays with narrative techniques. Both are members of the Burning Rock writing collective, which embraces experimentation as a general principle, "avoiding the artificial constraint of thematic continuity…. [striving] for stories that [show] a love of language, a literary excellence, and new and interesting points of view" and encouraging readers to "feel free to create their own meanings" (Winter, "Introduction" xii). The flyleaf of *Extremities*, their first published collection,

playfully mocks literary didacticism and courts mis/interpretation by providing Directions for Use: "flambé at bedside." Moore's work consists of vivid, hyperdefined passages that emphasize sensory perceptions, interspersed with fragments of conversation and flashes of memory that cumulatively communicate a character's mood. Winter's work, at its most experimental, has been described as "linguistic pointillism" (Dinka in Smith): short passages with tangential connections that emphasize the aimlessness or happenstance of the world of Gabriel English, Winter's serial character. Winter's work further breaks the bounds of form in that it has often been autobiographical fiction:[19] Gabriel English has resonances with Michael Winter, further problematizing the boundaries of the real and the unreal. Both writers train their gaze upon the resolutely ordinary stuff of life, which in their disorienting treatment becomes wondrous, unstable, extraordinary.

Lynn Coady's work much more closely resembles realism: it is grounded in narrative and avoids fragmentation, though it does make use of conventional alterations in plot order. Yet Coady's voice is unsettlingly parodic, reflective of the contradictory positionings of her characters as they negotiate space and culture. If Coady's techniques are less obtrusive, their effect is nevertheless politically powerful: her blending of straightforward representation with elusive irony is analogous to the uneven transitions of regional contemporaneity, unable to establish cultural stability yet uncertain of the alternatives.

[19] According to Winter the character Gabriel English is autobiographical in *Creaking in Their Skins*, *One Last Good Look* and *This All Happened*, but not in *The Architects Are Here* (Smith). He does not appear in *The Big Why*, Winter's historical novel.

The contemporary works of Winter, Coady and Moore all challenge the association of regionalism with representational realism,[20] instead utilizing postmodern techniques that question the stability of the subjects they represent, gesture to the mechanics of the production of their subject, and draw attention to the subjectivity of their own vision. As we read them, we more clearly confront the destabilizations of social space with which their works engage. In this sense their works have both an ethical and ontological concern: they prompt us to ask questions about the quality of our world, about ways in which we navigate that world and our place in it.

[20] Their challenge to the link between realism and representations of social space and region also implicitly underlines that the continued use of realism to represent regional contemporaneity is not a naïve or transparent choice but a deliberate strategy that contains an underlying political message. Regionalism's aesthetics, then, should be read as a part of the representation of twenty-first century experience.

Chapter 2

A World Apart, or a Part of the World?
Antimodernism in Atlantic Canadian Literature, 1820-1960

In 1849 Thomas Haliburton, following the international success of his "Sam Slick" collections, published *The Old Judge*, a collection of Nova Scotian folk stories and fictions. At the heart of this collection appears Stephen Richardson, homespun Tory philosopher and raconteur extraordinaire. After much fireside storytelling and interjected wisdom, Richardson pronounces this judgement on Nova Scotian society:

> Hunting is done in these parts; there is only a few of us old-fashioned fellows that know anything about it. Folks are so 'tarnel lazy, they won't go anywhere without a horse to carry 'em; and so delicate and tender, they can't sleep anywhere but in a feather-bed. We do know how to raise calves, that's a fact; but, as for raising men, we've lost the knack. It's a melancholy thing to think of. The Irish do all our spade work; machinery all our thrashing, sowing, and husking; and gigs and waggons all our leg-work. The women are no good neither. They are all as soft as dough. There ain't a rael, hard, solid corn-fed gall, like Miss Lucy, in the country anywhere a'most. Mills do all their carding, and spinning, and weaving. They have no occupation left but to drink tea and gossip, and the men do nothing but lounge about with their hands in their trousers' pockets, and talk politics. What the Irish and machinery don't do for 'em, they expect legislators to do. (253-55)

Richardson systematically works his way through most aspects of rural Nova Scotian society, arguing that there has, since the golden age of his youth, been a fall from

grace in the forms of mechanization, decadence, loss of moral fibre, and responsible government. This seems, on reflection, more than a little strange. A look at the chronology of the situation indicates that Richardson, who was, like Haliburton, an older man in 1849, would have been young at the turn of the century. The "good old days" so mourned are, therefore, a mere few decades after the expulsion of the Acadians and the first arrival of settlers loyal to the British crown in the 1750s and 1760s. While Richardson looks back on a time of stable values and traditions, heroic frontier virtues, and established patterns of work and life, the historical record shows a period of growth, war, and change. Nova Scotian identity was just being created and was very much in transition. His ability to draw a distinction between what he considered the cultural stability of his youth and the cultural deterioration of his later years indicates an "invention of tradition," a reconfiguring of the past to suit the ideological requirements of the present.[21] These kinds of uses, definitions, and redefinitions of tradition in the Atlantic region are key to an understanding of the development of cultural identity in its life and literature.

A preoccupation with regional identity – forming it, challenging it, defending it, and placing it in relation to larger national and global contexts – has been a constant in the Atlantic region of Canada since at least the arrival of European

[21] Eric Hobsbawm's 1983 collection of essays *The Invention of Tradition* explores this phenomenon in detail. While Hobsbawm focuses upon the creation of new traditions through a renewed connection to existing historical fact and a repurposing of available ritual and symbolism, he also observes the complementary reshaping of the past for the purposes of the present, whether through a process of transformation or sheer invention (7).

settlers,[22] as illustrated in its central role in the major literary works of the region throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. This preoccupation with belonging should not be surprising given the region's colonial history – the anxiety of successive settler cultures to establish themselves as rightful claimants to the land they occupy while knowing themselves to be complicit in the displacement of others, and feeling keenly their contradictory ties to both sides of the colonial equation (Slemon 109).

What is perhaps more surprising is, as Haliburton's work demonstrates, the rapidity with which regional identity in Atlantic Canada changed from a frontier mentality in which settlers were very conscious of themselves as representatives of modernity, to a regional consciousness characterized by antimodernism.[23] While by no means total, this antimodernism has been a dominant theme in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Atlantic Canadian literature. In this chapter I consider how it inflects regional self-fashioning within selected texts in the Atlantic Canadian canon, developing a strong literary tradition which underpins and informs today's literary and cultural climate. My discussion begins with the two prominent satirists of the early nineteenth century, Haliburton and McCulloch, and moves through the

---

[22] There is some indication that this regional self-fashioning has taken place on a much more ancient scale as well. Mik'maw myths indicating ancient occupation of the region, going back thousands of years, co-exist with oral histories which indicate the Mik'maw arrived from the south (present-day New England) several hundred years before the arrival of Europeans and displaced the Mohawk who inhabited the area, driving them westward into the continent. (Whitehead 47-48)

[23] The travelling narrator of *The Old Judge* emphasizes Nova Scotia's age and development at the beginning of the text by concluding a brief description of the province with the following statement: "Although extensive clearings are made yearly in the interior, principally by children of old settlers, in which backwood life is to be seen in all its simplicity, yet the country has passed the period of youth, and may now be called an old colony" (4).

Victorian period to the continuing struggle with modernity at the heart of the most well-known Atlantic novels of the mid-twentieth century: Frank Parker Day's *Rockbound*, Thomas H. Raddall's *The Nymph and the Lamp*, Hugh MacLennan's *Barometer Rising,* Charles Bruce's *The Channel Shore*, and Ernest Buckler's *The Mountain and the Valley.*

There are several principal contributing factors that assist in making sense of the development of antimodernism in the Atlantic region. As settlers arrived,[24] a preoccupation with history was perhaps inevitable in a time and place in which history was so often characterized by its absence: with the important exception of the Acadians, settlers of the Atlantic region lived only a few generations before the acceleration of industrialization and technological advancement in the nineteenth century. Placing an emphasis on settler history and pre-settler connections helped counteract the enormity and pace of change in the new world; it acted to balance an overwhelming sense of newness. This groundwork for an identity founded in a sense of tradition and connection with the past expanded by the end of the nineteenth century, by which time the sparsely populated rural economy of the Atlantic region found itself continually in competition with the increasingly populous regions of New England and the Canadas, with their urban centres and manufacturing interests.

[24] Settlers from Britain, New England, and Huguenot populations from France and Germany arrived throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Several large waves of settlement occurred as well. Governments of the day encouraged the arrival of masses of settlers in the 1750s-80s to the Halifax, South Shore, and Annapolis Valley regions to counterbalance, and then replace, the Acadian populations expelled in 1755. Loyalists arrived in Nova Scotia and what became New Brunswick in large numbers as a result of the American War of Independence. Significant Scottish populations arrived in the northern parts of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton throughout the early 1800s.

Residents of the Atlantic region reacted by identifying themselves in opposition to these neighbouring regions, making virtues of austere necessities; this comparative self-definition continues today both within inter-regional tensions and on an international scale, as Canada defines itself against the United States.

Geography, as Northrop Frye infamously pointed out, has also played its part in shaping anxieties about Atlantic identities. While it is not true, as Frye wrote, that "Canada has, for all practical purposes, no Atlantic seaboard," it is true that the St. Lawrence River, that "inconceivably large whale" (336) that swallows the new arrival, allows easy access to the interior of the continent. This access diminished the economic importance of Atlantic ports as the continent developed, and allowed arrivals from Europe and beyond to bypass the region as the frontier swept westward. The logic of this westward thrust increased the East's sense of its own age and propensity to identify itself with tradition: comparatively, modernity was increasingly located further south and west, either in the swelling populations and growing industrial wealth of central Canada and the United States or in the developing colonies on the Prairies and the Pacific. Following the exodus of industry from the Maritimes to central Canada in the years after Confederation, and later the difficult years of the 1920s, many inhabitants of the eastern provinces left the region to seek their fortune elsewhere. This pattern of exile and return helped to make the Atlantic provinces "the old country," beloved, static, framed by perspectives of distance and nostalgia. It was a role the region took to its heart, and one that it continues to perform in countless tourism campaigns today.

Admittedly, these patterns were not yet entrenched as myths in the post-Napoleonic nineteenth century when Thomas McCulloch and Thomas Chandler Haliburton began to write their satirical sketches, but the tension between progressive and antimodern sentiment was already apparent in the region's literary production. In *Studies in Maritime Literary Historiography* Gwendolyn Davies recognizes "the forward-looking, progressive nature of the vision entertained by many writers of the mid-century period" (14), but she also confirms the considerable "degree to which the theme of concern with the pace and effects of rural change entered Maritime literature in even its earliest, most formative stages" (155). Davies sees both satirists as progressive, urging their fellow-citizens to embrace the potential for improvement that modern changes were bringing to their province (157). Although both writers demonstrate considerable ambiguity toward modernity in all its aspects, they both advocated "progress." For example, McCulloch's persona, Mephibosheth Stepsure, castigates the futility of what he calls the "old farming," a method in which cows have "the range of the whole province before them" and "it is a standing rule that the fences will do another year" (62). He advocates the need for improvement, study, and the application of efficient modern methods to farming, echoing the 1818 writings of Halifax essayist "Agricola."

Haliburton's creation, the fast-talking Yankee Sam Slick who first appeared in the pages of *The Novascotian* newspaper in 1835, works on a larger scale, not only exhorting the people to greater industriousness and modernization of their farming methods, but recommending a rapid exploitation of resources, development of industry and transport, and entrepreneurial spirit of the kind already in evidence in the

U.S.: "The old folks say the country is too young – the time will come, and so on; and in the mean time the young folks won't wait, *and run off to the States, where the maxim is 'youth is the time for improvement; a new country is never too young for exertion – push on – keep movin' – go ahead'*" (italics orig.,78). Here, Slick's discourse of youth and age indicates that though the province is "young," the mood of the province is anything but youthful. Instead, he suggests that it is characterized by an economic and cultural conservatism.

But while Slick advocates unfettered development and change, overall Haliburton's texts do not, as the above-quoted passage from *The Old Judge* indicates. Haliburton was a staunch Tory, and the play of satire in the *Clockmaker* series is intended to expose Nova Scotians' moral failings just as McCulloch's does with its deadpan assessments of Stepsure's neighbours. Both authors advocate classical agrarian values and bemoan their corruption and "softening" by the same influences of modernity – urbanization, increased trade and opportunities for consumption, a developing culture of leisure for the lower classes, more complex and egalitarian social structures, and the increasing presence of external cultural influences – whose economic benefits they extol. In this respect Haliburton's stance on modernity in *The Old Judge* is not a contradiction of the *Clockmaker's* will to progress, but is instead a logical extension of this underlying conservatism when, almost two decades later, he sees the changes to his society that modernity has wrought.

During the Victorian period this ambiguity toward modernity and the attraction of antimodern self-definition is evident in the best-known work of the Confederation poets, and New Brunswick's Charles G.D. Roberts in particular. Their

economic context perhaps makes this surprising. As the new nation of Canada altered political alignments and allegiances, the population grew and diversified, and the region profited from expanding resource industries. Not surprisingly, trade flourished during this "Golden Age of Sail," borne by the fleet of locally built ships that participated in an increasingly global economy: "Vessels built and owned in the Atlantic colonies could be found in ports all over the world, sometimes delivering products from home, more often carrying the world's freight at globally competitive prices" (Conrad 117).

At the same time, Roberts' celebrated poem turns away from this expanding world, leading Malcolm Ross to characterize it as "unashamedly regional" (ix). It is Roberts' characterization of region as a retreat from the new nation and the wider world, and as an embrace of the past, that is of interest here. "The Tantramar Revisited" (1886) celebrates rural stillness, contemplative peace in the "miles on miles of green" (24), and an unpopulated landscape the speaker surveys from a cautious distance. The poem is interesting in the respect that the speaker addresses the world external to his focus rather than have it be conspicuous in its absence. This engagement comes in the form of recurrent anxiety, a reluctance to name and look upon specific aspects of this invasion of modernity, and a cyclical longing to be immersed instead in a carefully edited, uninterrupted version of the past. At the very beginning of the poem the speaker, returning to look upon the Tantramar after an absence of some time, denounces the present:

> Hands of chance and change have marred, or moulded, or broken,
> Busy with spirit or flesh, all I most have adored;

Even the bosom of the Earth is strewn with heavier shadows –

Only in these green hills, aslant to the sea, no change! (5-8)

The speaker cannot tell whether or not any change has occurred in the landscape: as numerous critics of the poem have observed, the vividly described minutiae of the fishing sheds, nets, meadows and barns are coloured from memory, not observation, since the speaker maintains his panoramic vantage point throughout. There are no people to question him on what news he brings, no farming machinery and steam ships, only "grey masts" (28) and old nets put up for storage in a barn. He sees what he wishes to see and he admits to this:

Yet will I stay my steps and not go down to the marshland –

Muse and recall far off, rather remember than see –

Lest on too close sight I miss the darling illusion,

Spy at their task even here the hands of chance and change. (61-64)

As Tracy Ware points out, Roberts "writes a moving account of a universal nostalgic experience, while simultaneously retaining a critical perspective on nostalgia itself" (232). The speaker's characterization of his memories as "darling illusion" is a wry admission of his preference for the imagined past over the lived present; it is likewise an acknowledgement of the intentionality of his blindness, and the inevitable change that has occurred even in the seemingly static place he observes. The same tension with which he holds back the tides of the world is present even in his landscape, in the dykes that form the Tantramar marshes and hold back the persistent sea. Crucially, the speaker emphasizes an antimodern perspective: he finds the beauty and serenity of his remembered life on the Tantramar more than enough justification for

his choice to turn away from an engagement with the Tantramar as it now exists. As David Jackel indicates, the change is located within the speaker himself (50) as much or more than it is in the landscape, where no obvious change is observed. He turns away from himself as a modern man, using the location as a means of escape from the changes he has undergone. He performs, in this respect, a conscious act of mythologization, participating actively in a process of self-delusion as he forges a definite link between place and the past: the Tantramar, for him, is not only a point in space but also a point in time, and to visit it from "outside," as the speaker has done, is to move backward in time.

This trend toward idealization continues in twentieth-century literature, but the ideal presented is reworked to suit the growth of twentieth-century realism in the turbulent and disillusioned times after the Great War. This realism, no less bound by conventions than its predecessors, was replacing the Victorian "rose-pink" that critic Archibald MacMechan deplored when he surveyed the state of Canadian literature in 1928 (Davies, "Frank" 187). Its leitmotif, as historian Ian McKay assesses, was a new primitivism, a quest for "the Folk," who were "characterized by their own distinctive culture and isolated from the modern society around them" (*Quest* 9). Born under the influence of a rapidly developing tourism industry whose goal was to market the region as a haven in which to reclaim the simple life (33), the concept of the Folk also appealed to a local population hungry for history and ready-made authenticity. Accordingly, in the literary and artistic representation of the first half of the twentieth century, the Folk are no longer represented in sentimental terms but nevertheless are frequently sentimentalized as the repositories of rural life and rural values, this time

grittily and naturalistically pictured. They are positioned as the real heart of the region, unadulterated by the influence of modernity that pollutes those who act as their translators. The most well-known novels of this period – Frank Parker Day's *Rockbound*, Thomas H. Raddall's *The Nymph and the Lamp*, Hugh MacLennan's *Barometer Rising,* Ernest Buckler's *The Mountain and the Valley*, and Charles Bruce's *The Channel Shore* – all take as their primary focus the nature, merit, and viability of this world of the Folk. Their often contradictory representations, which valorize a primitive world apart even as they illustrate its shortcomings through protagonists who are unable to exist within it, demonstrate the continuing struggle for a balance between antimodernism and modernity in Atlantic Canadian literature.

Frank Parker Day's 1928 novel *Rockbound* demonstrates the uneven transition from a sentimental to a naturalistic antimodernism. The novel, which I discuss at greater length in the following chapter, is Day's celebration of the people of the South Shore of Nova Scotia, and the novel's realism is apparent in its integrations of actual places, people, buildings, and events (Davies, "Frank" 177-80). Likewise, the folk traditions of the region are reflected in the narrative, which contains ballads, ghost stories, and local tales. Here realism's borders are stretched, because these traditions play a significant part in the narrative not only as tales but as events, as when Gershom Born, the giant lighthouse keeper, drunkenly confers with the devil to gain his revenge on a rival (255). Further, in the interests of emphasizing what he saw as the timelessness and universality of the region, Day supplements established folk traditions with classical allusion, Chaucerian quotations, and fairy-tale idiom: the novel opens as David, the protagonist, goes to meet his Uncle Uriah, "the rich king of

Rockbound" (1), and the plot consists of the heroic labours David performs as he struggles to unseat the old king and gain his true love, Mary. Accordingly the text is a paradoxical combination of the process of documentation and of mythmaking, of casting the inhabitants of the real Ironbound island as a people removed from the quotidian life of Nova Scotia.

Yet while Day celebrates the culture and life of Rockbound, his idealized couple of David and Mary do not adhere to Rockbound's values: the text presents the greedy, hardworking, stalwart, manipulative people of the island for the reader's admiration and anthropological interest but uses them as foils for David and Mary, who conform to a more conventionally sentimental Victorian heroic mould – generous, sensitive, and pure of heart. This turn away from the "real" folk to the ideal folk is made quite clear in the novel's denouement. The alternative represented by the lovers is not a renewed embrace of modernity but a further and final retreat from realism into the embrace of myth: David leaves Rockbound to become lighthouse keeper on tiny Barren Island; he transforms the island into an isolated prelapsarian garden; and he welcomes his Eve, Mary, back into Eden. This retreat is ironically complicated by the island's paradoxical link with the world: David's posting is enabled by the infiltration of modernity into Rockbound, since the lighthouse is conferred upon its keeper by the government, which controls this convenience as an aid to ship traffic. David himself has been educated, and so transformed into an acceptable candidate for lighthouse keeper, and husband, by Mary. Accordingly, *Rockbound* is a product of the conflict between Day's urge to celebrate a rough, naturalistic and "authentic" folk life of the region and his own critique of its failure to

conform to a noble ideal of what the folk ought to be, which was rooted in the sentimental tradition Day was widely considered, in his time, to have rejected.

Like Day, Thomas H. Raddall presents the realm of myth as a dubious but compelling antimodern alternative to realism in his 1950 novel *The Nymph and the Lamp*. The novel is set in the early 1920s amidst the new order emerging after World War I. In this, it follows a template in which authors locate lost values, or at least suggest access to these values was still possible, several decades before their own time: Haliburton's Richardson does this in 1849, as does Day in 1928.[25] The size of this gap, importantly, is in proportion with the intensity of nostalgia experienced by the text's readership. The loss of the golden time is always acutely felt because it is so recent: the chimera is present in living memory, accessible, and yet just out of reach. For Raddall, the early 1920s seems to be the "last possible" time in which the two central figures in the text, Halifax typist Isabel Jardine and Matthew Carney, a radio operator on Marina, a remote and desolate island off the shore of Nova Scotia, can make their escape from a relentlessly modernizing world.[26]

At issue, as in Day's text, is the balance between a mythic rejection of the world and circuitous re-engagement with it. There is no question that *The Nymph and the Lamp* critiques the cultural changes in Nova Scotia after World War I. Modernity

---

[25] Although the novel is not set in a definite time, and most readers – the denizens of Ironbound Island among them – understood it to be contemporary, Day reacted to the chagrin of the Ironbounders by apologizing that the "story refers to a long time ago not to present-day conditions and I learned many of the stories when I was a little boy" (Davies, "Frank" 182). Certain details, like the common use of boat engines in the text, indicate that, at most, a "long time ago" could have been the time of Day's own youth.

[26] There is little question that Raddall based Marina on Sable Island, the infamous "graveyard of the Atlantic," with its dunes, lifesaving station, and population of wild ponies.

was, after its satirical treatment in the early-nineteenth century works of Haliburton and McCulloch, conspicuous by its absence, remaining a silent and shadowy behemoth defined by implication as the opposite of the virtuous or heroic rural life. This changed with the literary production of the mid-twentieth-century, which actively represented the contemporary world. As a result, these texts include a more complex engagement with modernity, an examination both of its virtues and the consequences of resistance to it.

This measured and cautious antimodernism is evident in Raddall's *The Nymph and the Lamp*. At the beginning of the novel Carney questions the "progress" (16) of the "new and frantic hurry" (15) he encounters as he emerges from the isolation of Marina and enters an utterly changed post-war Halifax that has gone from horse and buggy to automobile in a decade. On his brief vacation he moves through cities and provinces "like a somnambulist" (29), remembering little and arriving back in Halifax ready to return to Marina. Isabel's perspective, however, is more nuanced, and occupies most of the novel. Jackson Lears points out that conservative critiques of modernity typically characterize it as a feminization of culture, a softening or "over-civilization" that is in opposition to a "nostalgic idealization of worlds characterized by a primitivist and masculine, 'martial ideal' of physical action and honour" (Willmott, *Unreal* 2). Accordingly Carney, the avuncular hero who has stepped out of the old order (53), might be expected to turn away from the new and strange world he encounters, but Isabel has much to gain from a world in which, as Carney muses, women have changed from creatures "without legs, almost without feet, moving like

images on wheels, towed by invisible cords" (16) to creatures whose own two feet are literally and metaphorically visible and active.

Raddall ensures we see the ways in which Isabel benefits from the new era: though from an impoverished rural background, she works independently in the city, acquiring business skills unavailable to her when she performed the usual feminine labour of rural schoolteaching. These urban accomplishments later enable her to flourish as the trusted and indispensable assistant to a business magnate in the farming town of Knightsbridge, recently transformed by the "mighty hand" of modernity,[27] which "had seized the land and given it a shake, so that all the human contents changed places, trades, amusements, and ambitions" (247). Isabel critiques the older generation for their "smug" and intentional blindness to the way the world has changed, and she rebels against the moral strictures and conventional hypocrisies governing women's sexual behaviour (258). Moreover, Raddall makes small gestures that deflate belief in the superiority of rural life and its detachment from metropolitan networks: for example, when Isabel is in hospital the running joke of the ward is the elderly woman who savours "the difference!" in the taste of the water she has brought from her own well in the countryside, unaware that the nurses pour it down the sink and refill her supply with Halifax tap water (232).

Despite these illustrations of the advantages modernity has wrought, Raddall ultimately refuses Isabel happiness within its framework: she uses the freedom she

[27] Willmott calls this integration of urban life into the countryside the "invisible city"; he categorizes literature that acknowledges its presence and presents the "contestatory interaction" of the regional and metropolitan as a critical regionalism. Conversely, autonomous regionalism is that which regards the two to be in opposition, and which presents a region as an ideal, escapist world (*Unreal* 146).

has gained, as Peter Friesen observes (166), to align herself with Carney's heroically antimodern patriarchal ideal, paradoxically tearing up her marriage license while en route to Marina where she will serve as "a lamp for Carney" in his blindness (310). This desire to serve and be needed takes precedence over her own sexual longing for Greg Skane and the future he offers her in Montreal. Isabel's state of essential feminine submission is completed as she moves into an elemental union with the sea, where the ideal of separation from modernity becomes real, and the real recedes into illusion:

> As she moved the dim bulk of the land slipped away behind the rain like a shadow, an illusion after all. With it went all those other illusions: the scrabble for cash that could not buy security, the frantic pleasures that could not give content, the pulpit-thumpings that could not summon virtue, the Temperance Acts that killed temperance, the syncopated noise that was not music, the imbecile daubs that were not art, the lavatory scrawls that were not literature, the flickering Californications that were not drama, the fortunes that grew upon ticker-tapes, the statesmanship that was only politics, the peace that led only toward more bloody war, the whole brave new world of '21 that was only old evil with a mad new face. (321-22)

This jeremiad, which is at least as comprehensive as Haliburton's, differs significantly from it by connecting these new evils with eternal "old evils": modernity is envisioned not as a break from but as an intensification of the old corruptions. This provides a countercurrent to the completeness of Isabel and Carney's break with the mainland.

The countercurrent is strengthened by the conflicted meanings inherent in the resolution of the novel, which offers two possibilities for interpretation: the mythic, in which it is possible to escape modernity and enter a separate realm, and the realistic, in which the couple's isolation on Marina is, like Day's couple on Barren Island, ultimately dependent upon and generative of links to modernity. Mythically Isabel's return to Marina and Carney is, as Bruce MacDonald points out, an utter rejection of the world (168). Both characters refuse to participate in the future symbolized by the cities, and both, when they attempt to retrieve their pasts, find them vanished. The alternative of Marina is an embrace of death, emphasized by the symbolism of Carney's blindness, Marina's dangerous desert landscape, and the fable related by Captain O'Dell at the end of the novel:

> Ran, the sea goddess… had caves at the bottom of the ocean… where drowned sailors were entertained with food and drink and each found a nymph waiting for him shaped in the image of the woman he'd most desired on earth. … When the ship went down or the fight was lost, when there was no hope left, a man could let himself sink and feel that all would be well. (326-27)

This defeat is the preservation, in mythic terms, of the lost world of patriarchal ideals: Carney's allegorical drowning results in an otherworldly paradise. Isabel, too, dies in the sense that she ceases to be herself and becomes the nymph, the "image of a woman" who lives within Carney's illusion, forever a young and beautiful servant, as O'Dell comments at the novel's close (330).

Countering this antimodern mythic disengagement is the ever-present insistence on a realism that demonstrates an inevitable re-engagement with the world.

O'Dell's comments at the end of the text are those of an observer who laughingly concedes the attraction of Carney and Isabel's choice but focuses our attention upon its illusory nature. This recalls the other comments on illusion within the text, particularly Isabel's own condemnation of the cherished illusions of the elders of Knightsbridge. More importantly, Raddall complicates the mythic closure of the ending by emphasizing the irony that the couple's flight is made possible by modernity and will perpetuate it. Unlike Day, who leaves a similar situation present but unaddressed in *Rockbound*, Raddall emphasizes that Isabel will be the agent who will "civilize" Marina (317, 320) and so destroy its function as a frontier haven from the world. As Isabel arranges to become the island's schoolteacher, she comments, "For [the older people] it's an ideal existence. But I think the children ought to have a chance" (317). This is a reflection on the inadequacy of the antimodern ideal, her own motivations, and her own role as a transitional, contaminating figure who disrupts the ostensible purity of the place.

While antimodern sentiments are reiterated throughout the text and are confirmed in its mythic structure, these dissonances make the novel's final position on modernity ambiguous. Interpretations depend upon both the weight one places on the alternatives of myth and realism, and whether one considers "successful" the couple's resistance to interpellation into the society that surrounds them. There are three principal readings: the first is that of the text as a successful rejection of modernity. This places greatest emphasis on Isabel's transformation into nymph and lamp and considers the community on Marina to be an alternative to modernity. The novel can also be read as a defiant elegy for a culture and values which are

acknowledged to be passing. This reading takes into consideration the ironic subversion of the conservative ideal by Isabel's "civilizing" force. Finally, by placing most emphasis on this irony, the novel can be understood as a warning against the unreflective construction of either wholly modern or antimodern perspectives. In this reading, the text is poised metaphorically with Isabel in the ship at a point when both island and mainland are real and illusory. That the text produces this overdetermination of meaning finally indicates, I suspect, that though Raddall wishes Marina to be a world apart, he admits it finally to be a part of the world.

Where *Rockbound* and *The Nymph and the Lamp* present the withdrawal of their protagonists from the world, Hugh MacLennan's 1941 *Barometer Rising* offers the opposite scenario: in the midst of the Halifax Explosion of 1917, young Neil Macrae and Penny Wain forge a nascent Canadian identity that rejects an old, colonial mentality and embraces a new, internationalist vision in which Canada will be a bridge between Britain and America (201, 218). Surprisingly, however, there is little place within this vision for regional advancement. Instead MacLennan figures Nova Scotia, and the Atlantic region generally, as a lost world irretrievably enmeshed in the colonial order that must be left behind as the protagonists turn instead to a national paradigm as the appropriate locus for modernity. [28] If MacLennan does not urge antimodernism upon the region, he consigns the region to it: Halifax is a city that "had a genius for looking old … underneath all this [wartime progress] the old habits survived and the inhabitants did not alter" (6). Further, the city and by extension the region are deemed to have an eternal being chiefly characterized by passivity: "It

[28] Keefer also makes this point (220).

seemed willing to lie out in the wet forever, to take what other people and powers prepared for it; and no matter what happened… it could never change its nature" (49).

In the new world emerging out of the ashes of the explosion and the war, Neil and Penny symbolically take a train westward into their future, in what MacLennan suggests is an inevitable triumph of nation over region, centralization over diversity, dynamism over muddled sentimentality.[29] As Neil reflects, "Here in Nova Scotia… he felt rooted and at home. Yet it had been in Montreal that all the good things had happened. There were no fine memories to hold him here, nothing of beauty that had ever been his own, nothing at all but instinct" (44). Minor characters within the narrative confirm this ordered vision of the modernizing world: ex-soldier Alec Mackenzie is the clannish, "primitive" (208) representative of rural Nova Scotia who is content to remain in servitude to the colonial order he has always known (140). His death, MacLennan suggests, is overdue, as he "had lived on into an era he could not understand" (207). Angus Murray, Penny's older and unsuccessful suitor, is estranged from his rural past, content to remember the life of his youth, to witness Mackenzie's death and extract the essential information from him that assures Neil's freedom in the future (206). Murray, though a transitional figure who is "intellectually gripped by the new and emotionally held by the old, too restless to remain at peace on the land and too contemptuous of bourgeois values to feel at ease in any city" (208), gratefully relinquishes Penny in the end and, in this strictly

[29] This trajectory occurs in MacLennan's other works as well: Ainslie takes his new family away from Cape Breton in *Each Man's Son*; the old sea captain Yardley brings the memory of Halifax and a bygone age to the new generation in Quebec in *Two Solitudes*; and Jerome Martell moves from his New Brunswick youth to renown in Montreal and on the international stage in *The Watch that Ends the Night*.

dichotomous system, aligns himself with the "old" and the "land," putting himself out to pasture (212).

As a countercurrent against this seemingly unavoidable tide, Murray and Penny critique the modernity that overtakes them with a violence that is symbolic of the coming era. Both characters are partially successful but still disenfranchised within this emerging postwar world. Murray, in the aftermath of the explosion, dismisses as sentimental the veneration of his father's rural way of life, but mourns the sense of connection and community he found there: "death in a great city seemed to him much like death in the war, an atomic life extinguished finally by an enormous process which had always been its enemy" (207). Here modernity and urbanization are characterized as antithetical to human life in scale and meaning. Penny likewise reflects on the inhumanity of the mechanization she sees around her, and its opposition to the creative force she wields as a ship designer:

> She … examine[d] the details of these strange new craft which the builders knew would never last more than a few years but which could be made and launched inside a few months. The idea of building ships this way appalled her. The worst aspect of it was that the principle was sensible. What was the use of quality in a world like this? … It was the end of ships if they mass-produced them. A good ship could never be duplicated exactly. Vessels in crates, and the devil with quality; men like John and Neil reduced as the assembly line! It was coming. (52)

Penny resists this suppression of creativity and quality at the beginning of the novel, and symbolizes the possibility of an alternative modernity of gender and social

equality which is contrary to that finally assumed by the text. Yet, like Isabel in *The Nymph and the Lamp*, she acquiesces to her own annihilation at the novel's end. In a configuration much like Milton's dictum, Neil is for modernity alone, while Penny moves toward modernity through him, submerging her identity as Murray predicts: "A stubborn, imaginative, violent man like Neil Macrae would be just the sort to make her do whatever he wanted, make her forget to think, force her into the pattern of his own life without even knowing he was doing it" (193). She relinquishes all claims to professional creativity as well, crediting Neil for her ship designs (27), and channelling this creative urge into the biologically essentialized creativity of a reclaimed maternity, as she and Neil rescue their illegitimate daughter.

MacLennan uses gender to underline his critique of the past and vision of the present; this is most apparent in Penny's subjugation and the clear gendering of the protagonists' move into a new age of modernity. He is not alone: the works of Day and Raddall also move between gendered binaries of past and present, although they vary in which they assign as feminine. Inevitably, however, whichever binary is to be suppressed or criticised is aligned with the feminine. Willmott finds a feminization of history in Canadian modernism, which points to the struggle to suppress the other: "history as such, in the post-traditional world realized by a globally extensive capitalism and imperialism, becomes visible as a threat to social security and values, including… those of patriarchy" (Willmott, *Unreal* 105). In this instance modernity is gendered masculine, aligning patriarchy with progress and order. Conversely, critics like Jackson Lears and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (4-5) point out the widespread gendering of modernity as feminine; such categorization is often an

attempt to render powerless a threatening modernity which dwarfs human presence and flouts a patriarchal order by granting women unprecedented independence.

Unlike these gendered dichotomies, *Barometer Rising* presents the homosocial exchange and transition of a dysfunctional masculine colonial past for an uncertain masculine future: Penny's father, Colonel Wain, is succeeded by Neil Macrae, whose admirable qualities, Penny foresees, will in turn be eclipsed by a mechanized future in which everything is disposable. Neil is chiefly suited to this future because of his "survival value," his ability to live for the present, and his innate violence. The picture that emerges is that of a masculinized world that veers between hollow authority and chaotic destructiveness. In such a world, the cataclysm and worldwide disaster currently visited upon the characters is part of an eternal cycle, and the inevitable march of modernity must be feared. One cannot help but think that perhaps MacLennan was relieved to consign Nova Scotia to the past, if only to avoid envisioning the conditions of its future.

While *Rockbound, The Nymph and the Lamp*, and *Barometer Rising* largely demand the unequivocal acceptance or rejection of static, dichotomous alternatives of tradition or modernity for the Atlantic region, the two great novels of midcentury, Charles Bruce's *The Channel Shore* and Ernest Buckler's *The Mountain and the Valley*, are more nuanced in their treatment of the tension between antimodernism and modernity. Each text reluctantly accepts the continual advent of modernity and the evolution of cultures as given, and each investigates possible models for individuals' and communities' adaptation to this process. It is, admittedly, a tempered acceptance: both texts celebrate the isolated rural communities in which they are set.

These rural communities must be read as symbolic of the region, while cities follow the established regional pattern as distant presences positioned as oppositional in being and values from the rural heart of "place."

However, this relation of rural and urban is no longer entirely in an oppositional tension: while the paradigm is set up in both texts, it is called into question by the ease with which characters move between places, and by the ordinary interpenetration of goods, media, and events between the two supposedly separate spheres. The two texts differ significantly in the way they communicate this evolution of culture: Bruce's work dwells upon it, providing a pattern for the evolution of the community that stresses the fluidity of time, the connection of past, present and future. Buckler's work, by contrast, ultimately serves as a warning parable of the dangers of resisting such movement. Despite such divergent approaches, both texts exemplify the tension between antimodern feeling and engagement with modernity.

Critical attention to Bruce's *The Channel Shore* tends to emphasize its communal vision (Wainwright; Seaman; Keefer; and Creelman): Grant Marshall and his adopted son, Alan Marshall/Gordon, both of whom have less than straightforward paternal ties, successively shape a broadly place-based sense of identity and connection, "a kinship stronger than blood" (262). This spirit of social integration is enlarged by the protagonists' cyclical, almost eternal sense of time, chiefly manifested by their feelings of continuity with the past (61, 177, 243, 353, 380, 394-98), and an assurance of this continuity into the future (394, 396-98).

Less attention has been paid, however, to the limits of this communal vision. Despite the text's outward celebration of a model for community that stresses

flexibility and change, the extent to which this inclusivity extends beyond the Shore itself is uncertain: the text's problem is the location of a balance point at which an individual can assert independence without "smashing the patterns of custom altogether and abandoning continuity for the empty independence of a life without roots" (Seaman 166). This balance point does not extend as far as a willing engagement with the wider world; rather, it is very conservative. Erik Kristiansen's discussion of *The Channel Shore* considers the text's polyvocal critique of the incursions of capitalist modernity into rural communities; he concludes Bruce saw the process as one that would "disintegrat[e]" (230) rural life, and that "It is not only modernity's failure to support the Shore that Bruce criticizes, but modernity itself" (242). Though the people of the Shore concede the inevitability of change and the influence of modernity, they continue to locate their difference and communal identity in "patterns of custom" and tradition, as well as in a sense of place. Change is welcomed only as it can be integrated into these existing patterns and established values.

The careful maintenance of the boundaries of the Shore as a community largely follows the established duality of urban and rural in Atlantic fiction. Cities are briefly characterized as places of isolation, full of fruitless labour (174, 210, 287), devoid of humanity and value, as Stan Currie makes clear at the end of the novel:

> What [the settlers who arrived here] did, getting out, was pull off a kind of rebellion…. Then steam came, and a lot of other things, and it wouldn't work any more. A lot went to the States, and west… at last there was nowhere to go but cities. When you go to a city, Bill, unless you're good, in a profession or

> the arts, you put yourself under a boss. You're back where you were a hundred and fifty years ago. The sad thing is, you got there by following the same urge they followed when they rebelled against it….
>
> That's why I'm back… what could a man do, that had venture in it, and independence? I looked at what I'd got by leaving. Running water and central heat and something – oh, *cultivation*… Well, they seemed to me to be cancelled out by the pulling and hauling, the pressure to say 'Yes' when you wanted to say 'No'… *There was venture in coming back.*" (italics orig., 395)

This is a representation of the region as frontier, valuable because it is in opposition to modernity as it exists in cosmopolitan locales. Former residents of the Shore who inhabit these urban spaces are exiles: Hazel McKee identifies as an exile when she leaves to give birth in Toronto (210); in a different manner, Andrew Graham lives as an exile, successful in his Toronto academic career but clinging austerely to his loyalties to the old "home" that he belonged to "in blood and spirit" (396). Though interchange takes place between these dualities of home and exile, as when Andrew Graham's son Bill arrives in the Shore after twenty-seven years away, it is not really interchange, but return: not the admittance of the new, but a transient rediscovery of the old. The Shore's sense of community insists upon such dualities; there is no way to articulate a middle ground in which the Shore can be of lesser importance in one's loyalties, or one of many.

This division of the world into a binary of "the Shore" and others is demonstrated clearly by Bruce's representation of Anse Gordon, the one villain within the narrative. Anse is the only character who does not feel a primary

attachment to the Channel Shore. Not coincidentally, he is contemptuous, egocentric, and controlling, a caricature of the global traveller (317, 355) who, upon his return, reprehensibly fails to demonstrate a sense of homecoming. He stands in direct contrast to Dan Graham, who has also travelled the globe but, since his arrival home, "wouldn't go down-shore without letting them know where he was" (290). The latter is an attitude that the residents of the Shore understand and consider natural. In fact, as Creelman points out (470), specific references to other parts of the country or globe, and their events, occur rarely in the text.

The Channel Shore, then, is a social space that defines itself by a process of exclusion[30] and idealizes distance from modernity, demanding a high degree of conformity within its spatial and conceptual boundaries. At the same time, the residents' cyclical sense of social and temporal connection implies a greater degree of openness to change than this antimodern identity would suggest. Therefore it is worth examining the kinds of changes that are introduced to the Shore. Grant Marshall's foundation of a sawmill provides an alternative to the pattern of the young men's departure from the Shore (163); Grant considers it "something really new" (268-69) to build something from the "old" country. A generation later, Alan too resists the expectations that he will leave the Shore (205). These developments suggest the economic revitalization of the Shore, but at the same time the father-son structure, the primary resource industry, and even the social hierarchies maintained by the workers suggest that Grant's enterprise fits into existing patterns. In this it demonstrates a logic similar to that of Stan Currie's construction of place: modernization by

[30] Lefebvre suggests all social spaces are defined by a process of exclusion (73).

antimodern means, a newness that is a resistance to the new. Likewise, Lisa Chalykoff points out that social changes to the Shore actually preserve its normative social standards and gendered hierarchies because these changes are effected by admitting transgression and conforming to existing norms,[31] or because the agents of transgression hold positions of social authority that allow them a certain exceptionalism (156, 161). Overall, then, the change that occurs on the Shore is not integrative but exclusionary; the cycles of time that create the structure of the text denote not movement but stasis and a reluctance to engage with modernity and the world beyond the Shore.

If *The Channel Shore* endorses cultural stasis in the guise of continual movement, Ernest Buckler's *The Mountain and the Valley* advocates cultural adaptation and a cautious engagement with modernity by presenting a parable that outlines the dangers of stasis. The text is a portrait of prospective writer David Canaan as a young man growing up in an isolated rural community. It ends with his early death. Undoubtedly the psychologically detailed text celebrates the rural Maritimes: the ordered beauty of the bonds of family and shared culture and the sensuous pleasures of the region's geography. However, this celebration is sung as elegy: from its commencement the text, as Wainwright points out, is "replete with images of isolation, futility, and death" ("Fern Hill" 64). These remind the reader that

[31] After her illegitimate pregnancy and exile in Toronto, Hazel is accepted as a result of her redemptive marriage to Grant; this legitimation of her transgression stands in contrast to the continued shunning of Vangie Murphy, a poor unmarried mother and reputed local whore. Though siblings Alan and Margaret violate incest taboos with their romantic relationship, their new link is legitimated by the community's open recognition that he, the natural child of Hazel and Anse, is not related to Grant by blood.

the seemingly timeless existence of the people of the Valley is passing, making way for a new way of life. It is not this passing way of life that is the central problem of the text, but rather David's damaging response to it: his desire to counteract the passage of time by freezing it within language. The text presents this endeavour for the reader's critique: although David is somewhat sympathetic, his growing isolation and inability to act, which come to a crisis when he climbs the mountain at the novel's end, suggest the inadequacy of his response to modernity. His assurance leads only to failure in death; his quest has been the wrong one after all.

David's acute sensitivity to the world is accompanied by a tremendous self-consciousness and egocentricity that manifest themselves in a desire for control. In this he resembles Anse of *The Channel Shore*, although David is driven by an affection for his surroundings which is the opposite of Anse's disdain. David's sense of difference, his recognition of his isolation from his family and community because of his heightened sensitivity and gift for language, prompt him to attempt to forge a unity with them through writing – the very agent of his separation.[32] David wields language like a trap, believing, "There [is] only one way to possess anything: to say it exactly. Then it would be outside you, captured and conquered" (195). In the terms of poststructuralist feminist theory, this phallogocentric approach renders his engagement with life a constant struggle for mastery. David sees a pure and authentic being at the heart of everything that can be observed, separated from all contradictory interpretations, and fixed. His definitions of place, community, and belonging are an

[32] As Seaman notes, David "suffers from a fear of spiritual isolation and therefore clings to what spiritual ties he has…. Ironically, his clinging only precludes the possibility of forging new ties which might be more satisfying" ("Visions" 168).

extension of this general ontology. Although Young observes that the natural boundaries of his world "offer David a choice between the world of the Valley and the world beyond" (220), it is more accurate to say that David frames his world as a series of irreconcilable dichotomies between mountain and valley, city and country, region and world, modernity and his premodern farm of ox and plough. Ironically, the text suggests that David's perspective is a modern extension of that of his fellows, who, despite mutual affection, are "inarticulate" and often isolated, as Wainwright points out ("Fern").

Unfortunately for David, he is not only suspended between worlds but aware of their interpenetration. In some respects he belongs to modernity:[33] he reads books which encourage his individualism, chafes occasionally at the repetitious narrowness of rural life (162-63), and envisions a global audience for his writing, in which he plans to depict the essence of his people. This is, of course, a self-defeating and paradoxical purpose, as Ross (65) and Willmott (*Unreal* 160) point out. Representing his people to this global audience will shatter the fiction of their absolute difference, commodify them, and make plain the mutability of their culture. The knowledge that he does belong to this relativistic modernity, however, makes David loathe both it and himself (168, 171). He repeatedly critiques the shortcomings of the world beyond his community, pointing to an "artificial complexity" that is even more "narrow" (200) than the circumscribed rhythms of country life as he observes the steady interpenetration of modernity into the Valley:

[33] Kristiansen observes, "Buckler appears to be suggesting that David represents a changing sensibility that becomes increasingly common as modernity disrupts the rural countryside" (253).

> His neighbours had changed, as the village had changed. The road was paved now. There were cars and radios. A bus line passed the door. There was a railway line along the river. With this grafting from the outside world, the place itself seemed older; as the old who are not remembered are old.
>
> And the people lost their wholeness, the valid stamp of the indigenous. Their clothes were so accentuate a copy of the clothes outside they proclaimed themselves as copy, except to the wearers. In their speech (freckled with current phrases of jocularity copied from the radio), and finally in themselves, they became dilute. They were not transmuted from the imperfect thing into the real, but veined with the shaly amalgam of replica. (229)

In David's terms, the "outside" is an inauthentic world wherein everything is reduced to commodity and simulacra. He responds to its encroachment by withdrawing. When Toby, his friend and alter ego (177, 180, 253) from the city, departs for the last time on the train,[34] David's fit of anger as he blindly slashes parsnips in the field (274-78) demonstrates his loss and the irrevocability of his choice: it is a painful necessity, tolerable only because he considers the alternative intolerable. After the loss of this wider horizon, David withdraws even from his neighbours, who increasingly take on the accoutrements of modern life (229). His own ever-shrinking sphere of isolation ends in his death.

Although some critics see David's final vision of cosmic unity on the mountaintop and his subsequent death as a triumph (Young 224-25, Dvorak 36), most

[34] Toby goes to his death in the war, itself the consummate symbol of the destructiveness of modernity and the impersonal exchangeability of individuals within it.

consider it a Pyrrhic victory, an ironic commentary on David's efforts and values. Several critics see a residual commitment to the value of authenticity in the ending: Stephen Ross suggests that David "bears the ideological burden of modernity" (59) in his quest for exact representation and his desire for global recognition, and that Buckler "takes an anti-modern stance" by framing David's story with the figure of Ellen, the artisan whose hooked rugs integrate fragments of each story into an organic whole. Ellen's organizing paradigm is not realism but authenticity. Willmott does not understand the text to support a return to the authentic, but he argues that it "expresses a self-defeated nostalgia for the absolute value, not of life in the marginal country, finally, but of the life of the language he finds he has traded for it" (*Unreal* 162). Here, Willmott stresses Buckler's residual desire for an ontology that affirms authenticity as a viable concept upon which to construct cultural identity.

While these readings identify important aspects of the text, neither acknowledges the larger implications of David's failure. Ellen does serve as a reminder, as does Bruce's sailboat, of the continual integration of the outside world into the fabric of the local. But she remains a powerless and isolated figure at the end of the text; her isolation and death prevent her from being a figure of celebration, as Ross implies. Moreover, though the text undoubtedly conveys a nostalgic tone, David's demise is finally a comment upon the consequences of nostalgia, stasis, and an unwavering commitment to authenticity. Importantly, David's final word is "Stop!" (297), an attempt to halt not only voices, but that which they represent – the continuing progression of time and change. Part plea, part command, David's final word is a repression of the myriad voices of relativism, which he hears as the

"crushing screaming challenge of the infinite permutations of the possible" (297). This challenge confronts his silent assurance of his omnipotence (298, 299), his belief in "the single core of meaning" (298), and his confidence in his ability and right to represent "everything" in a totalizing, self-deifying, ultimate isolation. David's position is connected with death: not death triumphant but death ignored. Its moment of stillness is immediately followed by the passing whistle of the train, the falling of snow that erases David's body, and the flight of a partridge "down, swoopingly, directly, intensely, exactly down over the far side of the mountain" (301-02). These last images provide a humbling rebuttal to David's grandiosity. They also provide an alternate trajectory to his desire for the pinnacle, attuning the reader to noises which never lapsed into silence,[35] and directing the reader's gaze "down" into the world again. This final flight confirms David's death as the death of the dream of isolation, of an authentic self – or an authentic region, given the text's preoccupation with place and space – separate from the world and the continuing evolution of modernity.

These works suggest the strong current of antimodernism running through the literature and, correspondingly, the cultural identity of the Atlantic region from the nineteenth century onward. They also suggest the origins of antimodernism in an anxiety provoked by the challenges of an always-shifting modernity to the social, economic, and cultural norms of successive generations. Though specific to each era, and each work, this antimodernism typically appears within an emphasis on tradition;

[35] Van Rys assesses David's progressive silence and its ironic end through a Bakhtinian framework, commenting that "Buckler… acknowledges fully the polyphonic nature of existence and the limits of the novel's participation in that polyphony. *The Mountain and the Valley*, then, rejects the notion of a human power to grasp any Logocentric transcendence" (77).

in a self-definition that stresses the importance of a cultural purity and authenticity; and in a politics of exclusion that values stasis and isolation. This often takes the form of primitivism, evident in the frequent valorization of "the Folk" from the work of Haliburton to that of Bruce.

Antimodernism is certainly not an uncontested force, however; as many of these works demonstrate, its myths and conventions are countered by the realist inconsistencies, ill-fitting liminal figures, and quiet, contradictory polyphonies of change and modernity. Accordingly, the texts' varying resolutions demonstrate the tension and resistance inherent in the process of cultural change. The persistence of this history of struggle with modernity in Atlantic Canadian literature suggests such tensions are unlikely to be reconciled as the region confronts the cultural crises induced by the global scale, accelerating speed, and economic force of current cultural exchanges: antimodernism continues to shape our culture, sounding the note of scepticism toward threatening aspects of contemporary global life and weighing the position of the region as both a world apart and a part of the world.

Chapter 3

Pay Dirt: *Rockbound*, Regionalism, and the Cultural Politics of the Contemporary Atlantic Novel

"We live in an expanding culture, yet we spend much of our energy regretting the fact."

– Raymond Williams (*Culture* iv)

"The past becomes a place – a region about which we can make studies and write novels and that we can bring back, ideally, in our undesirable present as a moral prescription."

– Roberto Dainotto (493)

In 2005, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's *Canada Reads* contest was won by Frank Parker Day's *Rockbound*, a book published in 1928. *Rockbound*'s win was an act of literary exhumation: it had previously existed in the forgotten deeps of Canadian literature, having been plucked from total obscurity to mere academic obscurity in 1973 by the University of Toronto Press' *Literature of Canada: Poetry and Prose in Reprint* series. It was re-released in 1989 by University of Toronto Press with an afterword by Gwendolyn Davies. These editions were meant for a scholarly audience and existed primarily in university libraries. How, then, to explain the transformation of this forgotten novel into the popular bestseller, re-released in a glossy new paperback edition in 2005, that sold thousands of copies?

This enigma is interesting because it offers an extremely public, popular illustration of regional stereotyping in national discourse. More specifically, it illustrates how the trend of antimodernism within attitudes toward region, local culture, and identity I traced, in the previous chapter, within the most well-known and celebrated texts produced within the Atlantic provinces during the nineteenth to mid-

twentieth century continues to exert a considerable force upon the production and reception of texts about the region today. In order to identify the innovation and value of writers, such as Michael Winter, Lynn Coady, and Lisa Moore, who critically scrutinize that antimodernism and who also reflect and reshape contemporary life in Atlantic Canada within their works, it is helpful to survey the dominant understandings of the region that make their voices difficult to hear.

Attempting to explain regional stereotyping in the present requires an examination of current anxieties about the relation of the region and the nation to contemporaneity, and the effect of these anxieties on the reception of Atlantic writing in Canadian media and literary institutions. With this in mind, I suggest that today's urban middle class, perceiving current cultural change as cultural loss and worried by the spectre of global homogeneity, is eager to maintain a strong core of national unity. Despite Canada's official espousal of multiculturalism, this unity continues to be conceptualized in monolithic terms. In the quest to shore up this unity, history is mapped onto Canadian geography: regional cultures, and particularly Atlantic cultures, are framed as "authentic" remnants of an idealized primitivist past, accessible to the urban majority as repositories of conservative national values. *Rockbound*'s appeal for the public and for the CBC, as an influential arbiter of national culture and values, is its apparent compliance with this vision of regional authenticity and antimodernism, and its corresponding contribution to an ongoing national "invention of tradition," to use Hobsbawm and Ranger's well-known phrase. *Rockbound*'s textual oddities, as an amalgam of folklore, epic, romance, and, primarily, sentimentalist-realist fiction, go unrecognized because of this interpretive

rubric that stresses authenticity; so do the text's dissonances with the social context of its own time. The construction of the *Canada Reads* contest – its frameworks of publication and promotion, popular criticism, and prize and celebrity culture – assists in establishing this dominant understanding of the text.

This chapter examines the possible origins, constructions, and limitations of this interpretive and promotional framework as it surrounds *Rockbound*. By pinpointing some of the agendas in the formation and reception of the text I will address the cultural values at work in forming popular conceptions of Atlantic Canadian literature, and of the region as a whole. Of particular importance to this reception are the codes of Canadian national identity, which evince a tension between the drive to become as modern – increasingly as cosmopolitan – a nation as possible and a retreat from the problems this modernity poses for a definably national identity. Imre Szeman's concept of "belatedness" is insightful as a perspective for investigating this conflicted approach to national identity. Szeman suggests Canada, like Brazil, another postcolonial settler nation, suffers from the commonly held belief that our culture is inauthentic (187-88), a condition in which we sense ourselves to be compared with and derived from "authentic," original cultures, in contrast with which our hybrid culture is a pale and adulterated copy, belated in its arrival on the global scene.[36] Canadians have felt that we lack a satisfactorily unifying symbolic culture,

[36] Ernst Gellner reminds us that "nationalism – the principle of homogenous cultural units as the foundation of political life, and of the obligatory cultural unity of rules and ruled – is indeed prescribed neither in the nature of things, nor in the pre-conditions of social life in general, and the contention that it is so inscribed is a falsehood which nationalist doctrine has succeeded in presenting as self-evident" (125). However, at the time Canada was emerging as a nation this "contention" was established in the Western world and has remained its dominant political ideology

which is in nationalistic terms a necessity for legitimacy. In response to this sense of cultural belatedness and inauthenticity we have attempted to craft a pure, "genuine" national culture, a static concept which necessitates the reduction of dynamic and distinct cultural elements to narrow contributing roles in a larger whole, and which necessitates the suppression of cultural change.

Early articulations of national identity formed out of the tension between Canada's status as a British dependency, its political domination of formerly French Quebec, and its position as a neighbour of the United States. As countless historians of the emerging nation have pointed out, despite its political and economic exchange with these influences Canada historically defined its culture against them. The symbols that cohered in the early years of the twentieth century reflected the interests and images of the dominant cultural, economic and political force within the nation, central Canada, such as the paintings of the Group of Seven and the adoption of the maple leaf flag. Representations of nature and place have been central to Canadian articulations of nationhood and national identity. The translation of natural and geographical fact into symbolic identity played a particularly important role after mid-century, with the popularity of mythopoeic criticism: Warren Tallman's "Wolf in the Snow," Margaret Atwood's *Survival*, Gayle MacGregor's *Wacousta Syndrome* and, most famously, Northrop Frye's "garrison mentality" all explained Canadian identity in unifying psychological and mythic terms, focusing upon the role of place and geography in defining national identity. These approaches assume the importance of unity to the definition of nation: they use variations on one central theme to explain

---

until the very recent and not wholly successful challenge posed by the acceleration of globalization in the later twentieth century.

differences in national character. The impulse is integrative, collective – and hegemonic. To choose one symbol – or a narrow range of symbols – to represent a nation of course raises the question of its representativeness. Protest against the narrowness of such symbolic definitions has arisen from those relegated to their margins, who point out their inadequacy in a country as foundationally and progressively diverse as Canada, both in regional and cultural terms.

Certainly, Canada's national identity is not entirely monolithic: every nation envelops numerous cultural definitions of collective identity – regional, ethnic, linguistic – that compete for visibility and validation on the national level. Canada's regions, particularly, form the basis for deeply held identities that strain against the collectivizing pressure of definitions of national identity. Over the past several decades Canada has participated in a prolonged national dialogue about the tolerance of increased diversity within the nation, going so far as to claim it a national characteristic. It is not necessarily a given, however, that such debate has fundamentally shifted the public – cultural and political – sense of nation away from the more traditionally homogenous understanding of nation to which it aspired throughout much of its history. Despite the considerable attention that Canadian academic and public figures have paid to the incorporation of diversity within public discourse, national identity continues to be defined within a nationalistic, unifying discourse which works to marginalize difference. Our espousal of diversity has been something of an unwilling, shotgun affair in the minds of much of the populace.

In fact, national values have shifted only slightly to accommodate diversity, allowing for the establishment of "equality under the law," prohibiting overt

discrimination and a superficial public attitude of tolerance, while retaining a strong systemic predisposition for the same dominant categories of traditional national identity. David Chaney, conducting research on popular culture and cultural change, articulates this apparent paradox when he points out that today's increasingly diverse Western nations contain a "multicultural sweep of global broadcasting with its often explicit tolerance" yet "[ground] the discourse of public life in presuppositions of white, heterosexual, middle-class normality" (*Cultural* 136). Recent sociological research on national identity, cultural normativity and the defining boundaries of "dominant culture" in Canada explores this paradox in detail, confirming that, rather than offering a site for the free formation of hybrid identities of the sort envisioned by Bhabha and others, Canada's construct of the "multicultural" nation instead reinforces older identity discourses, limiting and subsuming cultural difference within an unchanged project of nation-building, and implicitly maintaining a hierarchy of cultures in which the national "common core" predominates, and the terms of the national are presupposed and unchanging.[37] As Dupont and Lemarchand conclude, "multiculturalism as an official state policy has left unchanged the structural organization of power in the cultural and political landscape. A virtuous discourse supporting a multicultural ideology hides that fact" (329). Difference, in these terms, can only ever be additional or extra- to national identity, not constitutive of it. Accordingly, Eva Mackey describes the perpetuation of an "authentic" "unmarked, non-ethnic, and usually-white '*Canadian*-Canadian' identity" (*House* 20) that, through its very invisibility or universality is able to define the terms of equality.

[37] See Budde; Mackey, *House*; Bannerji; Day, *Multiculturalism*; and Walcott.

These terms, she finds, are clear: individual difference, often described in terms of "flavour" and "colour," is considered positive and equal, indicating an internalization of multicultural tolerance based upon a superficial adherence to the concept of "equality" and the tenets of liberal democracy (156-62) that reduces equality to sameness, not pluralism, refusing to recognize regional, racial, gendered and economic differences and inequities that inhibit the operation of this ideal.[38]

To some extent this reluctance to expand the normative parameters of the idea of nation arises from genuinely difficult legal questions of how to balance an embrace of diversity with a widely supported and constitutionally-mandated insistence upon universal human rights. Political and economic dimensions also come into play. Szeman attributes the Canadian reluctance to embrace what he calls an "isochronic," timeless, cosmopolitan modernity to a recognition of the falsity of the idea of a globalized equivalency "in which the problems and contradictions produced by an earlier, imperialist capitalism are done away with" (191). Others, such as Timothy Brennan, have also pointed out that the globalized world is not a world of equal exchange but of tremendous and expanding economic disparity, in which nations continue to have a significant part to play in buffering their citizens from the

[38] Attempts to change the terms of equality, however, are looked upon with suspicion, ironically branding troublesome articulations of diversity as "special interest groups" (100-05) that threaten the collective definition of the nation. For example, Mackey describes the "Canada first" theme running through her interview subjects' assertions that difference is acceptable as long as it does not threaten the primacy of national belonging in the priorities of citizens. Such moves are considered threateningly "political," in contrast with the perceived apoliticality and "innocence" of the status quo (134). Several late twentieth-century popular and scholarly publications reflect this unquestioned support of normative "Canadianness," defining equality narrowly to mean equality within present values without questioning their inherent biases and systemic inequities (Bibby; Bissoondath; Gwyn).

exploitations of a transnational capitalism which does not recognize values other than those of the free market.

These concerns are valid and pressing; it makes sense to approach the claims of a wholly benevolent and beneficial globalization with considerable skepticism. However, if the rationales for resistance to globalization's unsavoury consequences are clearly understandable, the quality of this renewed nationalist discourse that is, in part, a response to them is less so, grounded as it is within an exclusive and increasingly outmoded discourse of national belonging. Attempts to maintain national sovereignty are manifested in the intensified search[39] for tangible, definite collective identity,[40] which in Canada as elsewhere has resulted in the visible deployment of a limited, traditional nationalist discourse to repair the erosion of a collective, normative understanding of ourselves.[41]

---

[39] Chaney explains this renewed nationalism "partly as a source of integrative inspiration and partly to resist encroaching cosmopolitanism" (129). I would add "popular" to cosmopolitan, following Collins who particularly notes the perception of popular cosmopolitanism as threat, compared with the unquestioned acceptance of the cosmopolitanism of the world's elites: "Elites have always experienced a transnational "high culture" for which they have occasionally incurred the opprobrium of nationalists who have anathematized them as cosmopolitans" (107).

[40] See Chaney, *Cultural*; Conboy; Billig; and Harvey for discussions of nations' intensified search for identity.

[41] Naturally, this shift does not affect the entire Canadian population uniformly; those who benefit from expanded parameters of normative Canadianness would predictably be unwilling to see them contracted, though exceptions focused on specific issues of state policy may occur. Those who already occupy the parameters of normative discourse, however, may be disinclined to extend their position of privilege to others, particularly if they understand these privileges to be at risk. Szeman, for example, locates the impetus of movements to renew Canada's traditional nationalist discourse in the political and economic considerations of the ruling classes. He suggests that the values of a traditionalist nationalism provide a ready-made political discourse that tempers the class-destabilizing possibilities of " 'modern' forms of citizenship, ideas of freedom, and concepts of political emancipation" with a positive, reassuring

The process of "selling" nationalist discourse as national identity is, like the identification of its rationale, a complicated one. Moreover, it is often difficult to identify; interested parties use methodologies that range from the overtly propagandistic to the nearly invisible. Billig offers some insights into how attitudes toward nation are "reproduced daily in a banally mundane way, for the world of nations is the everyday world, the familiar terrain of contemporary times" (6). He studies the ways a unifying nationalism is constituted in public discourse through minute linguistic practices such as the repetition of "our," "their," and "us," exploring the commonplace ways in which we come to take its parameters for granted and resist its expansion. This discourse of ordinariness, as Eva Mackey has suggested, frames the terms of national identity.[42]

Moreover, the constant reiteration of a shared normality creates it, as Judith Butler points out. In the case of a renewed nationalism, the explicit discourse of tolerance can be undermined by a re-entrenched definition of normality that implicitly distances itself from visible difference. Of course, the strengthening of discourses of "normality" is not always covert; today's public climate of increasing disregard for conventional grounds of legitimacy and authority has, while allowing opportunities

---

representation of "an earlier, less problematic, class hierarchy" (192-93), making authoritarianism appealing by naturalizing it and selling it as patriotism.

[42] Occasionally, when there is a significant attempt to shift this frame, its boundaries and dissonances become more visible. For example, a 2006 profile of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, aired on CBC's evening news program "The National," commented on Harper's careful control of official discourse, and drew attention to the deployment of the term "ordinary Canadians" in his speeches, stressing his effort to link "ordinariness" with chosen values and policies, such as an increase in military activity, as part of a "more individualistic, muscular Canadian nationalism" (*The National*, May 18 2006). Harper's goal, the profile suggests, is to counter and replace national issues like universal health care, around which the majority of Canadians have defined themselves in the past several decades.

for the articulation of minority and diverse identities, ironically also allowed more room in the public discourse for rebuttals of these new voices. Collins claims, "Canada is a new kind of community, [but it is] misrecognized by an old-style nationalism… the seductive prospect of a national domestic hearth, a national family, and walls to keep the warmth and family in and the cold and foreigners out" (22-23).

The continued circulation of such a concept of national identity is accompanied by the yearning for a past characterized by certainties of national and cultural belonging. Control of a cohesive narrative of national identity, particularly one centring itself around resistance to the influences of global cultural exchanges, depends greatly upon the control of a fixed narrative of history accounting for all of the elements that today make up our national mythos – a narrative that reconciles our dissonances. Immediately the challenge to this endeavour is that Canada's history does not provide a single, unified cultural narrative, creating, as Szeman has noted, underlying anxieties about the inauthenticity of our culture in nationalistic terms, our "belatedness" on the world scene (188) and, more specifically, our "lack" of history in comparison to the older cultures of our foundational peoples. The result is a fierce popular desire for a Canadian history which can naturalize and legitimate the current construction of the nation, reassuring us of the value, authenticity and correctness of our national identity. Accordingly, though Canada's past can in no way be considered unified according to the terms of ethnic unity presupposed by the genesis of the

nation-state, this need not be an obstacle, since the kind of history most useful to a such a project is not a problematized but a cohesive one.[43]

This is a highly scripted, idealized history delineated in only the most general terms: a nostalgic history whose chief characteristic and value is its disconnection from the present. Nostalgia bears, as Hutcheon has pointed out, a resemblance to parody in that it is double-edged: it indicates both a rebellion against and a complicity with the definitions and limitations of belonging; it is "an unexpected twin evocation of both affect and agency – or emotion and politics" ("Irony" 199). This doubling effect is useful. A nostalgic history can be embraced to assuage the desire for a cultural foundation contributing to a cumulative sense of national identity. It allows, as Svetlana Boym observes, the illusion of intimacy (251), slowness and selectivity, in reaction against complete, technologically-fuelled access (345).[44] Simultaneously, this intimate connection can be repudiated as an escapist fantasy which has no part in the nation's (postmodern) contemporary existence. Thus, as Susan Stewart points out, nostalgia is always self-aware, the desire for a "moment before knowledge and self-consciousness that itself lives on only in the self-consciousness of the nostalgic narrative. Nostalgia is the repetition that mourns the inauthenticity of all repetition and denies the repetition's capacity to form identity" (23). Accordingly, nostalgia enables us to desire and distance ourselves from our desires at once, accommodating

[43] For example, such an approach represents key national events such as Confederation or the building of the C.P.R as inevitable triumphs rather than bitterly contested struggles.

[44] Boym observes a diametrical opposition between nostalgia and technology in the nature of their mediation: "While nostalgia mourns distances and disjunctures between times and spaces, never bridging them, technology offers solutions and builds bridges, saving the time that the nostalgic wants to waste" (345).

and perpetuating the tension I have described in Canada between our wish to construct a stable national, nationalist (Modern) identity and to reject it in favour of engagement with a global, transnational (postmodern) contemporaneity. What is of paramount importance here is that it operates in the realm of emotion, of our desires and needs for reassurance, stability, superiority, and self-definition. Intrinsically it has little to do with facts, economics or politics, though it is influenced by and influences these spheres greatly, and often counter-intuitively.

Such is the case in the national imaginary, where nostalgic emotion and politics collide. The nostalgic, universalized historical "authenticity" I have described is often located – looked for – in regional life and regional writing, in a conflation of time and place that allows the historical to be accessible to a nostalgic nationalist consciousness. This conflation requires the maintenance of rigid parameters of regionality, since any dissonance between ideal and illustration raises the spectre that home has changed and is home no longer. It exposes the constructed-ness of authenticity, raising questions about the nature and value of our national identity. A circumscribed linkage of region and history preserves hierarchies of regional hinterland and centre, rural and urban, history and future. It also erases regional contemporaneity in the process. In my consideration of *Rockbound* and of the ways that *Canada Reads* read *Rockbound*, I wish particularly to focus on the association of history with the Atlantic region: it provides an accessible locus for the national desire for a past to help sustain a Canadian identity resistant to the transformational influences of global contemporaneity, and makes it doubly possible, in the terms of nationalist discourse, to relegate the region to the margins of national life.

Mapping history onto Canadian geography immediately confirms some of the axioms of contemporary Canadian life. While in earlier decades there may have been a certain amount of economic veracity in Northrop Frye's notorious pronouncement that Canada has no Atlantic seaboard, having instead a central garrison from which to peer out at the uncivilized surrounds, today the might of Alberta's petroleum patch means that, more than ever before, Canada's geographical narrative mimics that of the United States' founding mythology by conflating progress with westward expansion. Demographic movements in the country reinforce this perception of Canadian modernity's move westward: Donald Savoie's study of economic development in the Maritimes, *Visiting Grandchildren*, bemoans that so many urban and suburban grandchildren from the central and western stretches of the country spend summer vacations at the ancient homestead in the East (Savoie). As the "grandparent" of the nation, the Atlantic region performs the typecast role of benign, dependent elder and repository of culture,[45] conventional morality and memory. The "family vacation" metaphor is a useful one: the region as a location for an historical holiday is a place where no one actually dwells, only visits, and then leaves eager to return, recharged, to reality.

As I have suggested, these formulations of Canadian and Atlantic identity are created and perpetuated through networks of public discourse. The Canadian

[45] In this sense the Atlantic provinces, and especially the Maritimes, act as a cultural repository for Canadians of British origin; more specifically, as a preserve of those residual aspects of the culture of Canada's ruling class that can be considered folkloric. Accordingly, the static stereotyping of an always-historical Atlantic culture plays an overtly political role in the divide between normative and othered Canadian identities, acting to "enhance political tensions between the heirs of the "true" (English) Canadian culture and representatives of the "new" multicultural culture, in Dupont and Lemarchand's terms (330).

Broadcasting Corporation's contribution to them is considerable: although it reflects and shapes our cultural climate, including attitudes toward regionalism, its raison d'etre is the production of a national culture as a tool to maintain this political unity. The CBC is founded on the assumption that this linkage is natural and necessary; Collins notes "the belief that cultural sovereignty and political sovereignty are mutually dependent is the core assumption on which Canadian broadcasting policy has been based" (13). The CBC is quite literally what Louis Althusser has termed an "ideological state apparatus," a conduit for the perpetuation and naturalization of the values and perspectives of the state, and one particularly important in a country that came of age with the growth of mass communication and transportation, making a founding myth, for example, of the construction of a railroad. Accordingly, despite the official incorporation of multiculturalism into the foundational narrative of Canada, the CBC's concept of the nation as a unified entity remains. This results in the assimilation of new identities and loyalties, new ways of being a Canadian, into an unchanged hierarchy of local, ethnic, regional and national identities that insists upon the national as the most important, and cumulative, category. "Other" claims to identity continue to be considered of value in relation to their contribution to the whole, rather than of intrinsic value themselves; further, these other claims to identity become threatening to the fabric of the nation when they are given primacy.

As such, it is not surprising that despite calls for change, the CBC's message has remained resolutely and restrictively nationalist. The 1968 Broadcasting Act, the 1986 Caplan-Sauvageau Task Force on Broadcasting Policy and the 1996 Juneau Report on broadcasting and Canadian cultural policy all recommended increasing

attention to separate regional identities as a way of articulating the nation. In particular, the Caplan-Sauvageau Task Force noted a:

> widespread feeling that our broadcasting system, like so many other Canadian institutions, reflects reality largely as it is understood in Toronto and Montreal. Similarly, there is strong belief it also reflects the mainstream elite of central Canada. As a result, Westerners, Easterners, Northerners, women, natives, ethnic groups and minority groups in general feel that Canadian broadcasting neither belongs to them nor reflects them. (Kilgour 164-65)[46]

Representations of the regions have remained subordinate to coverage of central Canada. According to a 1989 report by the Fraser Institute's National Media Archive, the Atlantic provinces and Quebec, cumulatively, accounted for 1.4% of annual CBC coverage (Kilgour 163). Further, representations of the region continue to be predicated upon the expectations of the larger, national sphere. David Kilgour's survey of Canadian culture and communications recommends the CBC should "make an effort first to understand the [Atlantic] region better, including its potential, and then to minimize the number of insults broadcast about the region" (163). Harry Bruce tells the story of Jack McAndrew, the Atlantic region's Chief of Outside Broadcast for the CBC in the mid-1960s, who despaired that "The Maritime stories they wanted seemed always to be clichés, features about Anne of Green Gables, Highland games, national parks, and fishermen in slickers and rubber boots... They

[46] Barry Cooper and Lydia Miljan suggest this centrist focus is "conditioned by [a] fearful nationalism" (16) that finds expression in, among other things, a definite anti-American bias. Notwithstanding such critiques, Serra Tinic argues that recommendations for change have not appreciably translated into a reform of the CBC's policies, nor have regional managers been given greater power over regional production and programming (67-75).

wanted only the most stereotyped stories from down here. If you didn't have a seagull shittin' on the lens, they just didn't want it" (56).

If we think that times have changed, we have only to examine the CBC's treatment of *Rockbound*. By 2005, the *Canada Reads* contest was a significant national cultural event, run as a part of Shelagh Rogers' midmorning CBC Radio One program "Sounds Like Canada." The contestants' debate clearly indicates the place *Rockbound* occupies in the framework of the contest and CBC's larger nation-building project, pitting a reassuring vision of Canada's past and the authenticity of its cultural foundations against a troubling and uncertain future: *"Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood vs. *Rockbound* by Frank Parker Day. The lines are clear. It's a battle of new versus old, known versus unknown, of speculative fiction versus realism" (Debate 4). *Rockbound*, in these terms, is old, known, and real, defined by its supposed representational and historical accuracy. It is approached and valued as an artifact of an authentic culture, a relic of an important and "increasingly forgotten part of Canada's history," as Shelagh Rogers enthuses (Debate 5). Overwhelmingly, the approach taken by both the panelists and the promotional and explanatory material on the CBC *Canada Reads* website confirms this understanding of the text: the discussion of *Rockbound* centres on the text's descriptions of "bronzed, deep-chested fishermen," natural scenery and social milieu. When the qualities of the text itself are touched upon, the panelists' discussion avoids addressing the nature of Day's representation and instead centres on formal attributes such as its "allegorical qualities" (Sherraine MacKay, Debate 1), encouraging a universalized interpretive approach to the text's subject matter, rather than a nuanced examination of the

disjunctures between the text's content and its social context. Unanimously, then, the panelists of *Canada Reads* agree to interpret *Rockbound* as realist historical fiction, representative of a stereotyped Atlantic culture and region, proud, beautiful, ignorant, harsh, close to nature, socially conservative and antimodern. Although the panelists, all of whom have their own books to promote, do not immediately agree on whether or not *Rockbound* is "the one book Canadians should read this year" (Debate 1) they do, after some deliberation, crown Day's "predictable" (Debate 1) text the winner, a choice acclaimed as a vote "in favour of hope and humanity" (Debate 5).

Academic responses to *Rockbound* tend to confirm the stereotypes about the region. There are exceptions: Ian McKay's critique of the novel's antimodernism in *The Quest of the Folk*, and Andrew Seaman's examination of *Rockbound* via the themes and beliefs evident in Day's unpublished material, engage directly with Day's construction of the region. Otherwise, critical attention to the text and to Day has centred on historical context and cultural background, implicitly, if perhaps unintentionally, confirming Day's own focus on the "real." For example, Allan Bevan supplies biographical material and a description of the novel's plot and major themes in his introduction to the 1973 edition of the text, itself excerpted from his 1958 article. Davies' Afterword to the 1989 edition, reprinted in her 1991 collection, is an in-depth documentary of Day's background, research of local facts and sources, correspondence, writing, and the reception of the book in its time. Two undergraduate theses under Davies' direction examine Day's use of dialect (Stevens) and folkloric influences (Surette). John Stockdale meditates on the effects of a lingering Canadian puritanism on the disappearance of *Rockbound* from public attention. Janice Kulyk

Keefer examines the specifics of Day's realism and, in a mythopoeic departure from an otherwise critically engaged study, she praises Day's "intuitive" understanding of Maritime life (72). These critical approaches establish a pattern of engagement primarily interested in developing regional literature and scholarship. While this is important, the attention given to *Rockbound* by *Canada Reads* has altered and expanded the framework within which the book is known and understood, making critiques that examine the relation of the book to regional and national discourses of identity increasingly important.

It is not accidental that popular and academic approaches to *Rockbound* tend to cohere around discussions of realism and representativeness. This is an interpretation that *Rockbound* actually promotes, and another reason why it is so suited to the ideological program of the *Canada Reads* contest: Day's approach and aims and those of the CBC are actually quite similar. The nation's broadcaster utilizes nostalgia for an authentic past to ground its mandate of nation-building in a cultural climate increasingly characterized by a disconnected, fragmented global contemporaneity.[47] Such an approach to the past allows the CBC to maintain a carefully defined teleological narrative of idealized, conservative nationalism that emphasizes national and cultural unity. Day himself was also heavily invested in the idea of an authentic Atlantic culture, and he represented it to suit his purposes – namely, to combat what he saw at the time as the encroachment of a destructive

[47] Even works that challenge constructions of the nation have been read in such a way that this challenge goes unremarked, as Laura Moss has pointed out ("Canada"). For example, Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion* was chiefly praised by its champion, Steven Page, as "a beautiful book about the immigrant experience" (*Canada Reads* 2002).

modernity upon a disappearing way of life, and to hold up his idealized representation as a model for a countering set of values.

Day was a liminal "translator" figure, raised among various rural communities as the son of a peripatetic Methodist minister, but remaining a relatively privileged observer of those communities. As a Rhodes scholar and U.S. college professor and president, he had closer ties to a cosmopolitan world of international scholarship and culture than to the village life he represented in his novels. Despite or because of this, Day admired the heroic aspects of what he considered lives lived close to nature, and mourned the onslaught of modernity which was transforming them. This preservationist impulse led him to integrate actual places, people, buildings, labour conditions and events into the book, as Gwendolyn Davies has documented ("Frank" 177-80). Likewise, Day was interested in representing the folk traditions of the region: its superstitions, ballads, ghost stories, and customs.[48] He recorded the life, location and customs of the local fishing people during his research trips, which were also vacations, to the South Shore in the years preceding the release of the book (Davies "Afterword" 301). Day's interest was in the harshness and heroic possibility of the culture he wished to represent; consequently, he breaks from the prevailing Victorian sentimental tradition of overwrought verbiage and euphemized subject matter, emphasizing instead the plain speech and unique dialect of the inhabitants of the South Shore outports, and the dirt and toil which were often the conditions of their

[48] The documentary aspect of Day's work, its focus on the real, is echoed in the interest the "real" holds for Day's readers today. Danielle Fuller's work on Nova Scotia readers' reception of *Rockbound* indicates their discussions centred largely around the veracity of the dialect, the identification of local places and names the book had fictionalized, and personal reflections on the parallels between Day's representation of life in small communities and their own experiences ("Listening").

lives. For this he was praised by the critics of his day as an example of the new movements in literature: noted professor Archibald MacMechan stated, "Day has written a real Canadian story, without sugar and without rose-pink…. He has caught the life of Lunenburg. Absolutely. Enter Realism on the amateur stage of Canadian fiction" (Bevan, "Introduction" xviii). Day's reading public were happy to accept his representation of a rustic folk culture; he was favourably received in both the American and Canadian reviews, which often praised the text's realism and occasionally its epic qualities (Davies, "Afterword" 315-7).

Day's "realism," however, is a heavily adulterated product. His plot, in which a young man, David Jung, works to defeat the cruel "king" of the island of Rockbound, marry his true love, and live happily ever after on an even more remote island he has transformed from barren wilderness to fertile paradise partakes of the romance tradition and the sentimentalism MacMechan praised Day for avoiding, which sanitized and transformed the folk-tales it incorporated. Moreover, Day chose to focus on the most primitive and untouched aspects of the culture he represented – to exoticize it to the best of his ability, leaving out those aspects which had commerce with the modernity that was transforming the livelihoods of Nova Scotians in the years after World War I. He imagines the people of the real Ironbound island as removed from the quotidian life of Nova Scotia, symbolized literally by their geographical distance as an island kingdom beyond even "The Outposts," a larger island chain. There are a very few indications of contact with the world beyond these islands in the novel: the boats have engines as well as sails, and one of Uriah's sons has been to the prairies as harvest labour. These few examples serve best, however, to

indicate how tenuous those connections are. The most striking indication that Rockbound Island is meant to be viewed as a last frontier is that a good part of the novel chronicles the islanders' first encounter with the "civilizing" forces of education: the arrival of the schoolteacher, Mary. She is an agent of modernity, bringing literacy, different standards of behaviour, and the immediate moderation of the island's unique culture: politically, she ensures that the tribal rivalry between the houses of Jung and Kraus is put aside to construct and administer the school; linguistically, she works to bring the dialect spoken by the islanders closer to standard English, admonishing David "you and Fanny have got to stop saying 'wid' and 'dat'" (163). As Ian McKay points out, such portrayals demonstrate the sometimes indistinguishable line between admiration for difference and contempt (*Quest* 245).

Certainly, local reception of Day's *Rockbound* at the time of its publication was hostile to this perceived contempt. Though no public objections were raised in 2005 to the way in which *Rockbound* represented the region, the denizens of Ironbound Island in 1928 repudiated the way Day represented them, the county, and the province. They were incensed to be portrayed as "ignorant, immoral, and superstitious" (*Canada Reads* 2005, "Timeline, Contexts and Repercussions, 1929), as they declared in a letter to the editor of the Lunenburg *Progress-Enterprise* (Feb. 25 1929), defending their own modernity by countering that "Our Island can boast of three school teachers, and there isn't a child who cannot read and write" (C*anada Reads* 2005). The population's indignation at being represented as backward is clear: though they might cherish their way of life and their folk-life traditions they did not consider them evidence of removal from the world around them.

Their indignation was in part caused by the particulars of this clash between the morals of their modernity and those of Day's vision. The islanders' ire was most raised by the novel's suggestion of lax sexual morality, embodied in the generous sexuality of *Rockbound*'s Fanny the potato girl. Implicit in the islanders' defence is the idea that sexual freedom for women is backward, and chastity is modern. Day, conversely, idealized sexual freedom, an attitude which far outstripped the conventional morality of the day, placing him in the avant-garde. This is confirmed by a review of the book in the *New York Herald-Tribune* of Dec. 9 1928, which states "It is true that there are people of rabbit morals living on the outer islands of Maine and Canada" (Davies, "Afterword" 186). In retaliation the Ironbounders did their best to impugn Day's own character and morality, filling their letter with comparisons of Day, Judas Iscariot and Castelreigh, suggesting his associates shared his questionable morals, and concluding "none but an atheist would have written and given the public a book which is unfit for the reading of any one with pure thoughts and high ideas in life" (*Canada Reads* 2005). It is unclear whether Day was an atheist and the Ironbounders meant to scorn his beliefs or whether the term was meant as a general insult. In an attempt to mitigate the ire he raised Day apologized; his defence that "the story refers to a long time ago not to present-day conditions and I learned many of the stories when I was a little boy" (Davies, "Frank" 182) hardly washed given the amount of detail, even down to the thinly disguised names of contemporary shipwrecks contained within the text. His apology was apparently not accepted and ill-feeling lingered for years (Davies "Frank" 182).[49]

[49] More recently, the reception of *The Shipping News* in Newfoundland provides a

Day's resolutely antimodern representation of "The Outposts" causes inconsistencies within the text. For example, David must become literate and numerate in order to become the lighthouse keeper, the government position which allows him to leave Rockbound. However, the text frames his new position as a retreat into a mythic world, not an acceptance of the conventions and infrastructure of modernity. In this respect he becomes like Day: participating in his own time but ideologically opposed to it.

Such representation also veers into a mythology that departs significantly from the historical record. As represented by Day, the essential culture of the region is virtually unchanging, moving cautiously toward the influence of the world beyond "The Outposts." And yet, the mid-nineteenth century, in contrast with Day's own time, was the eastern seaboard's "golden age" of sail, during which local ships undertook global circumnavigations as a matter of course, returning with cargo that assured their crews considerable fortunes. It was a time of commercial success and sophisticated networks of trade and cultural exchange that permeated social life and structure; with the passing of the period and the Confederation of Canada, manufacturing industries, trade, and wealth moved out of the region, leaving it less connected than it had been throughout much of its history. For Day, however, such a

---

similar example of furore and backlash. Proulx's internationally award-winning, aesthetically focused novel contains numerous Newfoundland character types, beautifully bleak landscapes and quirky examples of local slang and dialect. Though response was mixed in Newfoundland and many pointed out the economic boost Proulx's novel and the movie that followed gave the province's tourism, the common reaction from Newfoundlanders was an outraged howl. Tracy Whalen suggests that the populace wished to set the record straight on the "true" Newfoundland ("Camping" 52), but that they did so within the same discourse of fixed culture and delimited belonging.

history did not fit well with the cultural narratives and wider, national imperatives of his own time, particularly the rise of nationalism following the Great War. As Ian McKay indicates:

> Canadian nationalism was developing its key myths and iconic landscapes. The local cultural producers were left to find things about their region that both fit into this nationalism and suggested at the same time the distinctive contribution that their region made to the supposed Canadian whole. (*Quest* 242)

In the context of this national myth-building, Day's historical-eternal fisherfolk were a much more suitable and "distinctive" symbol for the region than the merchants and shipbuilders of recent history, even though fishing employed only eight percent of the Nova Scotian workforce in Day's time (McKay, "Among" 242).

In this sense, it is important to consider the way Day's work reflects his present as much as it reflects the mythologized past he wishes to recapture. Andrew Seaman, considering Day's unpublished novels, argues a "19th century world of dreams and ideas, descended from the Romantics and coloured rose-pink by the Victorians was his true love." Seaman concludes that because of this idealism Day "never really became a twentieth-century man" ("Heroes" 145). Day's work presents a nostalgic golden world that is also a political comment on the twentieth-century world from which Day and his approving readers wished to turn. That golden world offers an alternative social model for his readership and, on a greater scale, for a nation that was experiencing a groundswell of national feeling, a sense of separate identity which required definition and direction. Day draws on Romantic and liberal-

radical traditions, creating a Herder-type "volk" made of strong, individualistic heroes, admirable, crafty villains, and loyal, sexually free women, all of whom resist civilization and change. Day means his text to establish a counter-narrative to modernity: though it is strongly linked to an idealized past, it is also a program for the future. The values Day promotes serve as national – and international, given Day's cross-border career – models. His "Folk" embody a spirit of community, simplicity, and primitivism which can be carried into the rest of the continent.

Day's model fits as well today into a national discourse which continues largely to construct Atlantic regional identity as contributive to a larger national identity; within this framework its contribution remains much as he envisioned it. The consequence of accepting and promoting Day's essentialist and idealized version of the South Shore as realism, which *Canada Reads* does, is that the stereotypes he presents must be taken at face value, reducing regional culture to a local-colour caricature that lauds "wooden ships and iron men"; links scenery and character in a mystic bond; and demonstrates that Nova Scotia is a world apart, untouched by modernity. It is this nostalgic stereotype that *Canada Reads* proclaims a choice "in favour of hope and humanity" (Debate 5), and a chance to connect with the nation's history.

As I have suggested, the *Canada Reads* panelists made much of the apparent authenticity of the text as an artifact of the particular culture of the South Shore outports in the early part of the twentieth century; for example, "Donna [Morrissey] chalks up *Rockbound's* appeal to our fascination with the overwhelming power of nature, and the vicarious thrill of following courageous fishermen who face death

each time they push off from shore" (Debate 4). Another panelist, Roch Carrier, calls the use of dialect "a strength" (Debate 2) that adds to the text's appeal. *Rockbound*, then, is appreciated for its local-colour realism that bespeaks a narrow mindset, a space of safety and tradition, an inattention to the modern problems that beset its subjects – as Day intended.

The appeal of this "realism" has its limits, however, and this shows throughout the debates and in the *Canada Reads* website's supporting material, where the subordinate place of realist regionalism within genre hierarchies becomes clear – so that the term "regional" itself is heard to echo "too regional" and admiration turns to contempt. Thus, Sherraine MacKay finds the text inaccessible and "wishes [the book] had come with a glossary" (Debate 1). Likewise, the text's close adherence to romanticized cultural stereotype, another convention of the genre, is elsewhere dubbed by MacKay and Olivia Chow, the text's primary critic throughout the contest, as "predictable, with a fairytale ending" (Debate 3). These assessments of the book point toward an understanding of the text's regionalist realism as genre fiction, enjoyable but not quite accessible to a "universal" readership and not quite up to the standard of "universal" fiction. To the credit of the contestants this supposition is confronted directly: "Olivia takes the opportunity to pitch her book as forward-looking and universal, as opposed to historical and regional. Before Donna can take a breath to respond, Roch intervenes and, with all the authority a former National Librarian can muster, cites the Bible and Shakespeare to remind the panel that all great literature is regional" (Debate 4).

However, despite this direct comment upon the place of regionalism within conventionally accepted genre hierarchies, the larger framework of the website's supporting material continues to draw on these conventional definitions and schemas. By way of example, the final question of the "Reader's Guide" asks the reader to consider the reasons why the book never "attained the status of a Canadian classic," and then leads into an answer, suggesting it may have offended some sensibilities but, more conclusively, that literary regionalism was at fault: "Was a novel set on a remote island in the North Atlantic simply too outré for central and western Canadian literary critics?" (*Canada Reads* 2005, "Reader's Guide" 13). While this question suggests conventional understandings of regionalism may be unfair, it continues to confine the text to its own separate regional category, citing the text's subject matter as an unbridgeable gulf between readers familiar and unfamiliar with it. Other evaluative criteria, for instance of the text's literary merit or the timing of its publication (in the year before the 1929 stock market crash) do not arise here. The "Student's Guide" is, characteristically, more blunt in its presentation of the issue: it asks students if the book should be considered "regionally specific" or, if not, "how does it transcend this possible criticism?" (*Canada Reads* 2005, "Student's Guide"). Here, the ambivalence of the term "regional" is made clear; while the addition of the word "possible" suggests that regionalism need not be considered a criticism, the question presumes that the term tends to have negative implications, and that students will centre their discussions on the ways in which the text's regionalism is "transcended" – connected to a more "universal" network of meaning. This terminology confirms the classic approach to regionalism as a stage to be worked

through in the formation of a national literature. Again, the implication is that regional literature must be understood as it contributes its own eccentricities to a larger national literary consciousness. This national coherence, in turn, is conceived as the necessary predicate to successful global cultural exchange, and resistance.

Serra Tinic argues that Canadians are attracted to a "common experience of marginality" (131) and that regionality, drawing as it does on geographical and social tropes that emphasize the concept of home, serves as a Canadian universal:

> Satires such as *[This Hour Has] 22 Minutes* resonate with people across the country because, rather than glossing over regional tensions through a veneer of centrally defined 'national culture,' this particular brand of Canadian comedy speaks directly to the sense of shared marginalization that pervades the Canadian experience both within and outside the nation's borders. (126-27)

While recognizing regional difference, this approach likewise sublimates it to a sense of national belonging; in this case, a shared alienation from a larger culture, where the relation of region to nation is transposed upon the relation of nation to global cultural exchange and, more acutely, to an Americanized western cultural dominance. At first glance this view seems to indicate a Canadian support for the regional and particular, and a resistance to cultural homogenization, but on closer inspection it participates in the same process it purports to resist: seeing regional difference not of value for itself but rather as an accessible symbol around which to build national belonging. In the process, regional identities are reduced to stereotypes and intra-national tensions are elided to establish a generalized, national position of alterity.

Conclusively, any insistence on enforcing certain definitions of regional and national identity, recognizing only a certain cultural moment as authentic, leads to a reductiveness that limits rather than increases social diversity and tolerance. This is the limitation of identity politics, as Judith Butler cautions: as long as a fixed cultural identity remains the central, unchallenged concept through which plurality is figured – and this is the model Canada has chosen for its multicultural society – then all political discourse must be structured around it ("Collected" 439) and consequently identity itself is depoliticized. Laura Moss has critiqued *Canada Reads* for just such a gap, a:

> disjuncture between the program's nation-building rhetoric and its depoliticization of the literary works… it celebrates the shortlisted novels rather than engaging critically with them. Or it damns them on spurious grounds. The novels are pawns in a game. With the watered-down aestheticism of the readings, most often it has been the politics of the novels that is lost in the commentary on the texts. The depoliticized discussions have effectively joined the "aesthetic/humanist and the national" ideologies that Frank Davey argues diverts readers, critics, and writers from the political dimensions of literature. (Moss 7)

Moss goes on to criticize the ways in which the *Canada Reads* discussions of various novels ignore the political and social critiques implicit or explicit in their narrative perspectives, such as, most egregiously, the ironic reconfiguration of Hubert Aquin's *Prochain Episode* as a "bridge between the literary solitudes of French and English Canadian literature." The imperative of the contest, as Moss concludes, is the

reduction of the merits of the listed novels to their representativeness of the "Canadian experience," which frequently is identified only as "multiculturalism" (Moss 10), without consideration of how cultural identities and national identity interpenetrate and oppose each other.

The various celebrity, prize, pedagogical and promotional cultures which are integral to *Canada Reads* assist in the construction of its unifying message, and diminish the danger of this message being overdetermined or questioned.[50] These networks of media and marketing enhance the appeal of the *Canada Reads* project to the public, smoothing the way for the cultural perspectives it transmits.

Firstly, the use of celebrities as the panelists serves a nation-building function. Celebrities are constructed discursively by, and transmit, the normative, popular tastes of their day. They act as sites for the reconciliation of competing principles – "personal identity with social identity, and individualism with conformity" (Chaney *Fictions* 145). Often compared with deities, they are icons of ordinariness which indicate what we value and reassure us of the veracity of our tastes and opinions. As this phrasing suggests, they operate upon us via our emotional sphere. Graeme Turner suggests they fill the void left by the "affective deficit" of modern life (*Understanding* 6); as traditional structures of communication and community disintegrate, they are used by the public to construct alternate, para-social

[50] Fuller notes the *Canada Reads* texts tend to be canonical Canadian texts which use, and are interpreted through, established discourses of national belonging ("Reading"). Likewise, most of the winners of the Thomas Head Raddall Atlantic Fiction Prize (1991-2008) reflect established regional associations with rurality and history, such as Don Hannah's *Ragged Islands*, Donna Morrissey's *Sylvanus Now* and *Downhill Chance*, Alistair MacLeod's *No Great Mischief*, Kenneth J. Harvey's *The Town that Forgot How to Breathe*, Michael Crummey's *River Thieves*, and Bernice Morgan's *Waiting for Time* (WFNS "Winners").

communities (Rojek 52) across distances. They are accessible, albeit exaggerated; their role is celebration and reassurance, not challenge or engagement.[51] Accordingly, *Canada Reads*' use of celebrities heightens the populist, anti-intellectual tone the contest fosters,[52] reinforcing the perceived divide between critical scholarship, which the contest aims to avoid, and spontaneous, unsubstantiated debate, which it encourages[53] in the hope of creating a sense of sharing, equality, and fellow-feeling in its listeners. Such an unthreatening atmosphere contributes to the successful reception, by readers, of the normative cultural codes the program transmits, and diminishes challenges to them. Thus, as Smaro Kamboureli observes, *Canada Reads*' use of celebrities assists in turning "national pedagogy into public spectacle" (46): their participation increases the attraction and effectiveness of the "cultural orthodoxies… of the state" (42).[54] The structure of the contest, bringing together

---

[51] Fuller elaborates that the primary goal of the *Canada Reads* contest, according to its producer, Talin Vartanian, is "escapism" and "fun," not engagement ("Listening" 17).

[52] The contest takes pains to reassure its listeners it will not include "academic" discussion of the texts, often calling up common stereotypes of academic discourse as "stuffy," "boring," or "lectures"; Danielle Fuller notes some of the ways the panelists have satirized academic reading practices ("Listening" 3), despite occasionally employing them. The deployment of this stereotyping creates a dichotomy between academic and popular engagement with the texts which periodically translates, unfortunately, into the dismissal of aesthetically rigorous or politically engaged arguments as "academic." Occasionally writers adhere to this dichotomy as well, as when Guy Vanderhaege, whose *The Last Crossing* won the contest in 2004, commented "it was a great pleasure to have the books debated in such a passionate, intelligent, and decidedly not sombre fashion" (Moss 7).

[53] This reflects larger trends in the public's engagement with culture. Chaney notes: "the relationship between a typical citizen and their public culture has been changing in two ways. First, by becoming more responsive and yet, secondly, also less challenging" (*Cultural* 127).

[54] Kamboureli quotes Emily Apter at length on her definition of the "imperium of affect" that characterizes the culture of celebrity: "It is what translates national pedagogy into public spectacle…. Produced as much through the collaboration of

officially sanctioned icons of Canadianness to discuss books also proclaimed to be icons of Canadianness, provides an interpretive rubric that heightens its message of cultural unity. All these considerations assist in forming an atmosphere to which *Rockbound* – consciously "folky," populist, non-intellectual, and simple – conforms.

This celebratory, canon-constructing work of the contest serves as a powerful tool for commercial as well as patriotic promotion. Now more than ever, it is impossible to separate books as art forms, contributors to the world of ideas, or discourses of belonging, from books as commodities for exchange within mass culture. As Danielle Fuller states, "If we ask 'what cultural work does *Canada Reads* perform – and for whom?' then one straightforward answer is simply this: the program sells books" ("Spectacle" 24). Fuller observes that 5000 books sold qualifies a book as a bestseller; in 2002 the two most popular books of the *Canada Reads* contest, Ondaatje's *In The Skin of a Lion* and Clarke's *Whylah Falls*, sold 90 000 and 10 000 books. These books are more than bestsellers; they demonstrate the success of the *Canada Reads* project to popularize literature which promotes national unity – or, at least, literature which the contest encourages readers to interpret as supportive of national unity.

---

different institutional structures as through various subliminal processes, it promotes formative narratives that hijack dissention and appropriate differences. Though it doesn't foster a unified aesthetics as such, it nevertheless advances a discourse of values which, more often than not, materialize the uneasy coexistence of modernity and postmodernity. Thus, though it is highly visible, and unabashedly posits itself as the self-evident best of what the nation has to offer, it remains loudly mute about the ideology of the knowledge it transmits, and strategically shies away from adopting a monologic aesthetic. It is through all these, and other, traits that the culture of celebrity executes what I take to be its fundamental function: the manufacturing of public memory… eliding certain parts of history while foregrounding others" (46).

This cloak of national representativeness, however, often obscures the global commercial interests behind these books, as Fuller points out: ironically, while the contest has benefited larger, mostly internationally owned, publishers through increased sales of books, smaller Canadian-run and -owned presses have not benefited to the same degree ("Spectacle" 22-25). Lorraine York suggests that at least part of the reason the nakedly commercial aspects of literary production and consumption in Canada are so often unacknowledged is what Bourdieu identifies as a "collective repression" of the economic, explainable by the public's desire to locate authority and value in the person of the author (York 98) and, I speculate, the public desire to maintain a distance between cultural and artistic versus economic value.

There is, of course, often significant overlap between commercial, cultural and nationalistic discourses, and this is apparent in the similarities between the terms in which *Rockbound* is described by *Canada Reads*' panelists and website, and the language used to market the book: both utilize the discourse of stereotype and hyperbole. For example, numerous short prefatory descriptions of the text, the "Student's Guide," "Reader's Guide," sections on dialect, the timeline, and the marketing blurbs all use pelagic puns to emphasize the text's connection with the ocean. Thus we read:

> Panelist Donna Morrissey *survived the tempest* of this year's *Canada Reads* and *brought* Rockbound *to shore*. Frank Parker Day's story about an isolated fishing community, and the *majesty and power of living by the sea*, is brought to life on Between the Covers in a reading by one of Canada's finest actors, Richard Donat. Look for the audio book, published by Goose Lane Editions.

and

> Find out about the novel that's been *hiding under a proverbial rock* since it was first published in 1928, about the author of the book, and about the *storm of protest* around *Rockbound* when it was first published! (*Canada Reads* 2005, italics mine)

The website's overtly pedagogical sections demonstrate no significant deviation from the reductively nationalist approach common to the debates and the additional website material. Upon consideration, this should not be surprising: pedagogy is the marketing of cultural systems, whether national, global or community-wide, literary, linguistic or rhetorical. As Cynthia Sugars reaffirms in the introduction to her collection of essays *Homework: Postcolonialism, Pedagogy, and Canadian Literature*, the teaching of literature has long been used as a tool to interpellate populations into the dominant national and imperial ideologies of their time, whether it be "civilizing" the Indian subcontinent through the teaching of English or reinforcing the boundaries of Canadian space, polity and identity via the establishment of a Canadian canon in the mid-to-late twentieth century (5). The pedagogical sections of the *Canada Reads* website's material on *Rockbound* are particularly interesting, therefore, because it is in these sections that the contest's machinery works most prescriptively to disseminate its own values and perspective on the text: what is implicit in the debates and promotional material is more explicit here.

The "Reader's Guide" and "Teacher's Guide" encourage their users' acceptance of the text's supposed realism, presenting the text as an anthropological

document whose veracity is not at issue. The "Reader's Guide" begins with a brief biography of Day that immediately demonstrates the problem with such an approach: "Fishing was a lifetime obsession for Frank Parker Day, so it's hardly surprising that it's a running theme in his writing… and he comes by it honestly. Day was a native son of Nova Scotia, 'Canada's ocean playground'" (1). In a masterpiece of unintentional self-subversion, the statement places importance on connections to real life and claims to "honest" insider status, but belies that value of the authentic by referencing the machinery of tourist promotion. After this slip, the questions recover their focus: the first manages, in a short space, to assert that the text is " 'realistic in detail, romantic in conception,' as a novel of the sea, a regional idyll, as a realistic account of life in a primitive South Shore fishing community" (2).

Further questions in both the "Reader's Guide" and the "Teacher's Guide" present the text as an authoritative source, asking the respondent to describe the text's presentation of cultural attributes such as religion, superstition, sexual morality, patriarchy, the role of the fishing industry, effect of geography, or attitudes toward money and wealth. Some questions are flagrantly leading; for example, the "Reader's Guide" states "[Day] used dialect to capture the distinctive flavour of the language spoken on Nova Scotia's South Shore" then asks, "Do you agree that the uniqueness of idiom adds authenticity and originality to the… story? Did you have trouble understanding it?" (10). This last query indicates that the creators of the "Reader's Guide" were doubtless aware that the vast majority of their audience could not possibly venture an informed opinion on the authenticity of the idiom, let alone whether its correct deployment might add authenticity to the "story" itself. Yet the

question anticipates agreement – because the information they have acquired from *Canada Reads* has already told them that the dialect, and more broadly the entire culture represented, are accurate and real. Elsewhere on the website, within a segment entitled "The Voice of *Rockbound*," Donna Morrissey, the book's representative within the contest, states, "the richness of the language, its uniqueness lends an authenticity to the story that would be sadly loss [sic] without it."

In addition to emphasizing realism, the "Teacher's Guide" also foregrounds authorial reliability, as when the guide suggests students should be asked the question: "What elements from the novel tell you that the author was a native of Nova Scotia with an intimate knowledge of the ocean, boats, and the life of island dwellers?" ("Teacher's Guide"). This crude link between author and subject implies the necessity of personal authorial experience for successful textual representation and relies upon the sanctity of "insider" knowledge of a culture. Less importantly, but nevertheless absurdly, it suggests Day's few nautical experiences in extreme youth contributed more to the crafting of his text than the rest of his experience as Rhodes scholar, English professor, writer and critic, all of which go unmentioned in the "Teacher's Guide." Nor does it mention Day's research into the subject matter of *Rockbound*, undertaken while on summer vacation from his professorship in New York state. [55]

[55] This research was undertaken during visits to Nova Scotia in the summers of 1926 and 1927. According to the *Canada Reads* timeline of Day's life, "During the summer, Day visits East Ironbound, Pearl Island, and the Tancooks; He [sic] takes copious notes on the people, ghost stories, island gossip and interesting expressions. He discovers the name Gershom at the Smith's Cove cemetery, makes a list of the Pearl Island light keeper's books and researches bird life on the offshore islands."

Undoubtedly the strangest question within the guides, and the one that makes explicit these otherwise-implied assumptions that the text is authentic and, further, that the reader is capable of assessing the authenticity of the text based upon the evaluative framework of the *Canada Reads* website and their own stereotypes of the region, is the following:

> Go to the Images Canada website. Locate three images of Ironbound Island, and Tancook Island taken around 1909 (the approximate era of the book.) These islands were the actual setting for the fictional islands. Frank Parker Day paints incredible word pictures of their physical geography. Use the pictures on the website to *judge whether he captured their essence* in *Rockbound* and provide your explanation ("Teacher's Guide," italics mine).

This question illustrates the set of assumptions made by *Canada Reads*: first, that the culture represented by the book has an essence; second, that the text's representation of that essence – the primitive, superstitious, hard- working, -drinking, and –fighting Nova Scotian – is accurate and authentic, and also, significantly, that the essence can be easily identified by the reader, based on the way the text has been framed for them directly by the website, and, more broadly, by the particular discourse of regionalism that it confirms.

Many of these claims to authenticity are accomplished through a conflation of Day as writer and *Rockbound* as text, a relation in which the writer becomes commodified, an integral part of the product bought and enjoyed by the consumer. John Cawelti describes that process as such: an author "gives us an interpretation of his work by telling us about himself, his hopes, his background, or his literary

intentions. Or by his own actions, he provides us with grounds for a more intense and immediate response to his work" (173). This conflation and the attendant anointing of the author as a public persona indicates the "increasing proximity between the entertainment and literary worlds," as Lorraine York points out (96). She elaborates that this process is "literary production… shaped as celebrity performance" (102). Her emphasis on performance indicates the interdependent roles of performer and audience, both of whom are required to produce meaning.[56] The targeting of this performance, and of advertising and reviews, to the attention of a particular audience is key to the success of this commodification (Pike 246), dependent upon the alignment of the author's persona with the conditions and discourses within which the text is intended to be interpreted.

Because of this synchronicity between authorial persona and text, *Rockbound*'s success in the *Canada Reads* contest was a stroke of fortune for Donna Morrissey, the author of novels set in Newfoundland.[57] As the champion of Day's text in the contest, Morrissey serves as a surrogate author and accrues some of the same benefits I have outlined. Like Day, her work focuses on harsh landscapes and harsh characters; all but one of her novels are set in mid-century outport Newfoundland; and all share Day's interest in the limitations and deprivations of an existence centred around the fishery and subsistence farming. The similarities extend

[56] York provides the example of Russell Smith, who after the publication of his downtown-Toronto focused *How Insensitive*, found himself much in demand to perform personality stunts, "prostituting things… that make me increasingly more famous and popular" (York 103).

[57] Morrissey's three historically-based novels are *Kit's Law, Downhill Chance,* and *Sylvanus Now*. Her most recent novel, *What They Wanted*, is set in the late twentieth century.

to Morrissey's choice to highlight a Newfoundland which is "bleaker – and certainly stranger – than most versions in circulation today," notes Dawn Rae Downton, another writer born in Newfoundland. According to Downton, Morrissey likes to "serve it up raw… dialect-heavy and conflict-lite," representing people whose overwhelming quality is "inertia" and places for which "the outside world doesn't exist at all" ("She owns" D5). In these terms Morrissey's project can be understood as a continuation of Day's, and thus as a perfect fit for *Canada Reads*' vision of Atlantic realist regionalism.

On the *Canada Reads* website Morrissey represents herself as an authentic cultural insider, describing her own origins and cultural background in romantic, bleak terms, and comparing that background with the setting of Day's text. In the section "The Voice of Rockbound," she emphasizes that her own Newfoundland linguistic patterns give her a "strong connection" to the text's dialect. Overlooking the extent to which the Newfoundland and Lunenburg Deutsch accents and dialects differ, Morrissey stresses similarities, thus allowing the contest to commodify her as the quintessence of regional stereotype. Doing so also helped to promote the sales of her own books, which are explicitly pitched within the web material: **"**Prize winning writer Donna Morrissey has high hopes that her soon-to-be-published third novel, *Sylvanus Now*, will grace the tables of Indigo/Chapters as one of 'Heather's Picks'" (Debate 1 and Panelist biography).

This compliance with normative discourses of regional identity and the exploitation of them to considerable literary success is nothing new. As I outlined in the previous chapter, the sentimentalist-realist historical novel has long been

understood as the default genre of Atlantic writing. From Haliburton's *Old Judge* in the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, many of the most popular and best-known texts of the region –*The Nymph and the Lamp*, *Barometer Rising*, *The Mountain and the Valley*, and *The Channel Shore* – work within the genre. These texts all share a nostalgic idealization of the region. All are set in a recent past that is accessible through memory and story, but is at odds with the relative modernity of their own age. All, to various extents, locate an authentic regional culture within this past. All understand modernity as a phenomenon that occurs outside of the region, whether the narrative requires its protagonists leave to pursue it westward into the continent, as in *Barometer Rising*, or gladly swear off it by retreating further into an abstracted Atlantic, as in *Rockbound* or *The Nymph and the Lamp*.

This nostalgic approach, of course, is always current itself: it is prompted by agents of change rather than springing from any well of pure identity. Such an approach requires the enactment of a self-conscious, deliberate alterity, stripped of any evidence of the dominant cultures it defines itself against; it is a process of exoticization and fetishization. In *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class,* Dean MacCannell terms the production of nostalgic visions a "staged authenticity" which dramatizes subordinate status for the benefit of a majority audience, resulting in the confinement of regional culture within a "living museum" (99). Graham Huggan, carrying this concept to an interrogation of postcolonialism, investigates what he terms a "staged marginality" in which "resistance to nostalgia is reversed… recuperated by an 'otherness industry' that banks its profits on exotic myths" (xiii). This resistance depends rhetorically upon the maintenance of alterity (Kahn 61), upon

the continued opposition of regionality and contemporary life, even as its reactive relationship belies such distance.

What is being exoticized, in the case of Atlantic regionalism, is a specific, mythologized vision of cultural simplicity, of ordinariness.[58] Joel Kahn explains the modern fascination with simplicity in terms of the discourse of "peasantism," which arose following the French Revolution. Peasantism is a discourse which posed the peasant as alien to the capitalist structures that predicate modernity (54); the peasant occupies instead "a world outside modernity where culture rather than money… governs everyday life; where community guards against the alienating, one-off social encounters of modern society" (56). In these terms, the peasant is, conceptually, a "rich amalgam of exoticism and universalism, translatability and untranslatability, otherness and sameness," and in this very paradoxical flexibility becomes the "supreme critic" of modernity (60). Culture is, in this paradigm, not one of many aspects of differentiation but the imperative one, which explains its primacy in articulations of Atlantic regionalism.

Today, peasantism, or primitivism, continues to be popular and is perpetuated by accelerated cultural commodification, as Ian McKay and James Overton have observed in their critiques of popular constructions of the Maritimes and Newfoundland. They suggest Atlantic culture is ordinarily understood as those folkloric practices we have inherited from the past. For example, in the summer of 2005, the same year *Rockbound* triumphed in *Canada Reads*, the tourism

[58] Tracey Whalen's article on Bernice Morgan's novels considers the attraction of this search for simplicity; it does not, however, extend the discussion of stylization to include exoticization, though this is relevant to a study of Morgan's work.

advertisements for Nova Scotia were considered innovative for their inclusion of a very few images of urban Halifax amongst the consciously historical Gaelic songs, untouched landscapes, and images of people in period dress.

This strategy has been enormously successful for the tourism industry and for Atlantic literature. Today's urban middle class, influenced by the promotion of these "authentic" regional stereotypes and perceiving current cultural change as cultural loss, is eager to escape into texts which conflate the region with its past, valorizing poverty and primitivism, a condition in which anxiety about living in a state of inauthenticity is not an issue (MacCannell 93). Accordingly, many contemporary Atlantic Canadian novels from the region satisfy this market, subscribing to its constructions of regional identity to the extent that the ostensible uniqueness of the region is obscured within a schema scripted by its national reception. *Rockbound*'s double status as both regionally particular tale and nationally accessible history lesson is one example. Another is a 2001 review of Carol Bruneau's *Purple for Sky*, a novel set in Cape Breton and grounded in place, history, and dialect. The review begins by proposing that Bruneau's novel is guaranteed success because of the sheer number of popular themes and tropes it contains:

> If one were to compile a… list of motifs for the stereotypical crowd-pleasing Canadian novel, one night well end up with a synopsis that sounds much like *Purple for Sky*…. One might begin with three generations of strong-minded women in a small town. Add a dominant motif of needlework…. Include the discovery of an eighty-year-old journal in a shopkeeper's ledger…. For good measure, toss in a feisty old woman, a mining disaster, a vaguely remembered

> incident of sexual abuse, a stillborn infant, infidelity, and the repressive forces of parochial small-town mentality, and one has what seems to be the typical Canadian novel, sure to please cottage readers, book clubs, and introductory CanLit and Women's Studies classes alike. (Salem-Wiseman, "How to make" 167)

Here, the regional novel is explicitly considered the default Canadian novel – or at least the "crowd-pleasing Canadian novel," a category which is increasingly influential within the Canadian publishing world. Unlike Hutcheon's "historiographic metafictions" and the "speculative fictions" Herb Wyile has identified that cultivate a "dialogic view of the past" (*Speculative* 254-55), these kinds of texts do not provide historical critique; their object instead is confirmation. The consumption of this historical sentimental-realist fiction is an active, though conservative and escapist, attempt on the part of "a more urbanized middle class… [to purchase] a history and culture containable in books but [their consumers feel] unreclaimable in the present" (78), as Ursula Kelly points out.

This strategy for dealing with perceived cultural loss is not entirely effective, as I have argued. For the producers of this vision of Atlantic regional cultures its motivation is understandable: to acquire power within the available discourse, rather than challenge it; to maintain dignity and community in the face of marginalization; to reverse and celebrate a disadvantaged position. Though momentarily empowering and reassuring, however, texts that embrace such essentialism remain contained by the tensions of an ambivalent present and supportive of a fixed sense of culture that

perpetuates their own production and consumption.[59] Huggan terms this "resistance as commodity" (83), the process by which anti-establishment tendencies are incorporated into the establishment, providing an outlet which is not a viable alternative to the mainstream but a powerless, yet glamourized, diversion. Accordingly, we escape into genre-bounded, normatively unchallenging texts and then "go home." While enjoyable and worthwhile on many levels, such texts reinforce rather than challenge current relations of the Atlantic region and the nation. Ursula Kelly, surveying current Newfoundland literature, concurs:

> As cultural forms, Newfoundland books… work discursively to produce and reproduce notions of history, culture, and subjectivity. At present, this work appears to support the status quo more effectively than to challenge relations of power either within the province or within the nation.
>
> …
>
> Newfoundland books, with their present preoccupation with a rural past, aid and abet the process of reproducing the status quo. Cultural nostalgia is not only weakening, it is also blinding. (77-79).[60]

---

[59] Leslie Sanders, discussing the politics of representing African Nova Scotian culture, states "modernity leaves us few options for their representation without romanticism, condescension, yearning and retreat." He locates these attitudes in George Elliott Clarke's *Whylah Falls* which, "enclosed in the romance form, the cyclical, the pastoral, suggests a kind of stasis, and the impossibility of change" (120).

[60] Despite the ideological weight and public acceptance of such cultural messages, responses to the idealization of the Atlantic region in texts have not, predictably, been uniform – especially within the region. Danielle Fuller, investigating readers' responses to *Canada Reads*, suggests readers resist as much as they adhere to the conclusions and reading practices employed by the contest ("Listening"). However, her research suggests that while their reading practices differ, tending more toward a non-academic, personal response to texts, they do not significantly question the

Rockbound's success as a twenty-first century bestseller, then, can be attributed to its fulfilment of this demand for a regional diversion, an escape from contemporary life. It works within a paradigm of cultural identity predicated on authenticity and singularity, rooted in a simplifying discourse which suppresses the contexts and counternarratives within regional literary works and restricts our definitions of what the regional is, often obscuring the articulation of a regional present. The *Canada Reads* contest's approbation of *Rockbound* signifies its agreement with this paradigm; it utilizes the vision of regional difference proclaimed by Day's text to fix Atlantic regional culture as an accessible national history, an idealized past. This provides the foundation for a narrative of national identity that limits and manages diversity, naturalizing a cultural unity resistant to the transformational influences of contemporary global life. By delineating some of these processes that make primitivist, nostalgic and static representations of the Atlantic region pay dirt for cultural producers, we can articulate and critique these normative cultural values and concepts of identity, working toward what Erin Manning calls an "interruption of nation" (111) and region, that provides the basis for a more reflective, nuanced attention to the processes of cultural change. This "interruption" of the tired clichés of the Atlantic region, and a focus on the uneven negotiations of change that are characteristic of the region's contemporary life, is clearly evident in the works of Michael Winter, Lynn Coady, and Lisa Moore, upon whom I focus in the second part of my dissertation.

---

ideological bases of the contest's engagement, nor the text's own social and political frameworks.

Chapter 4

Wilding the City, Siting the Wild: Reimagining Place, Wilderness and Urban Space in the Contemporary Fiction of Michael Winter

In this second part of my dissertation, I examine contemporary works of fiction by Michael Winter, Lynn Coady and Lisa Moore. These works exemplify a regional consciousness that challenges the default requirement that Atlantic cultures be static, unchanging, and, above all, predicated on an idealized Folk history that ultimately aligns them with the past. Instead, these three writers resolutely train their attention on the present, representing the pluralities and contradictions of contemporary life in Atlantic Canada. This is a recognizably postmodern regionalism, in everyday dialogue with a globalized world characterized by ubiquitous consumer culture; constant travel, whether virtual or actual; increasing urbanization; and ready access to various cultural and mass-cultural narratives.

Under these conditions, regional identity does not and cannot remain static, but neither does regional consciousness disappear. Winter, Coady and Moore reflect and shape a region that retains distinctive elements, yet constantly interrogates the terms upon which it defines itself, challenging the borders, boundaries, and possibilities of the "regional." To focus more clearly upon their contributions to an emerging regional postmodernity, I have chosen to discuss the ways in which they represent social spaces: Michael Winter's examination of the "natural" space of wilderness and his insistence on the mutability of wild and urban space; Lynn Coady's parodic treatment of rurality; and Lisa Moore's vision of Atlantic

cosmopolitanism, as it manifests in urban and suburban spaces. Throughout, the resonances between their works become clear.

Michael Winter's contemporary work reframes the Atlantic region, and specifically reimagines Newfoundland, by drawing attention to the mutability of its culture and cultural practices, focusing upon their transformations. Winter's direct representations of local history, and particularly of attempts to maintain historic places and practices which have irretrievably altered in the present, suggest his rejection of the grounding of regional identity in history; rather, he requires that we question the uses to which historical ties are put in the present. But Winter's analysis of regional identity is most interesting when he obliquely considers the construction of culture and the blurring of cultural borders. His work returns again and again to question assumptions of "natural" belonging and cultural authenticity: he trains his gaze on geography, the actual "stuff" of space and place, exploring continuities between the urban world, rurality and wilderness, their actual and symbolic conjunctions, to decipher how we use these spaces to identify ourselves. In doing so, he reminds us that the "natural" is always enculturated, and asks us to reconsider both the natural world, and regional culture, as entities constantly in process, affected by everyday, individual actions and practices. This destabilization of fundamental ideas and symbols of the authentic, pure, or untouched is significant. As a statement on regional culture, Winter's work insists on the importance of refusing to reduce culture to grand movements, to look rather for its irregularities, interfaces, and co-existing incompatibilities. As a statement on the natural world, it offers an ecocritical consciousness that refuses to separate wilderness from the world.

Most obviously, Winter contests the default association of history with rurality, and modernity with urbanity. He highlights the persistence of these assumptions, but challenges their veracity, asserting that traditions and behaviours are changing in both rural and urban communities, and that rural places and practices cannot be either dismissed or acclaimed as locations of a past way of life. The epigraph of *One Last Good Look*, his collection of linked short stories, is a quotation from Robert Hass: "All the new thinking is about loss. / In this it resembles all the old thinking." This enigmatic statement announces that though there is a continuity of interest in loss, there may be "new" and "old" approaches that, despite their linkages, diverge. Cultural loss, by implication, cannot be treated the "old" way in a "new" and changed world. Winter is less interested in feelings of loss – which are inevitable– than in the ways in which these feelings are expressed, and how they influence thinking about the present.

Nan Brennan, the grandmother of Gabriel's ex-girlfriend in *One Last Good Look*, exemplifies the transformation in understandings of community and local culture. She is a sympathetic minor character, a product of the outports, teasing and self-reliant. But in the story "Lustral," she emerges most clearly as a figure of the past, both personal and cultural: she is stranded in a snow bank, unable to get up after a minor heart attack, and ignored by passers-by. Gabriel's fortuitous passing saves Nan, but he fails to recognize her, and though he feels affection and an obligation to her, his encounter only affirms his disconnection from Doris, his local ex-girlfriend (58-59). Quite literally, Gabriel is now engaged with a wider world, represented by

his Dutch-Canadian girlfriend Femke. Here, Winter balances affection and responsibility with a clear sense of distance.

Winter further illustrates the inaccessibility of old ties in the figure of Boyd Coady in *This All Happened*. Boyd, who grew up in the outports, is a product of a closely-knit, co-dependent community. He is discovered to be the culprit behind a series of break-and-enters in which things not only disappear, but also appear or improve:

> We watch the edited surveillance tapes. We see a man enter Lydia's porch door with a full garbage bag. We cut to the kitchen. He empties the bag into the washer and starts it up. He opens the fridge door and helps himself to a can of apple juice. (234)
>
> …
>
> Boyd Coady used seven houses in the neighbourhood. He'd break in, find a spare key, make a copy, and then study the patterns of the people who lived there. When he knew they were gone, he'd go in.
>
> He left the television at Lydia's because she didn't have one, and he liked to watch TV while his laundry was on. (241)

Boyd's habits echo the practices of a communal outport life with shared resources and mutual assistance. But here, in a reverse of community, he interacts not with people but only with their things. His attempt at a refigured communal life is aberrant and criminal in this context, and he cannot steal it back.

Unlike the figures of Nan Brennan and Boyd Coady, who represent the impossibility of accessing a past way of life, Winter's representations of rural places

and people generally emphasize their participation in contemporary life, rather than their separateness from it. In *This All Happened*, Gabriel looks to the lives and relationships of the local boys of Heart's Desire, an outport where he rents a house, for demonstrations of authentic, old community ties as he gathers material for a historical novel – conflating the historical with the rural. But working against Gabriel's apparent naïve sincerity, the narrative highlights his anthropological studies, ironizing his pursuits and showing not the outpost's difference but rather Gabriel's easy exchange with it. Lisa Salem-Wiseman suggests that Winter depicts Heart's Desire as a suburb "devoid of specific regional identity" and available as a bland retreat for self-isolation ("Divided" 159), but this is not precisely the case. Rather, Winter insists the reader see that Gabriel uses Heart's Desire as a rural place, expecting it to contain the inspiration he requires. Instead, Gabriel finds a rurality in which specific regional character exists – but it seems to resemble the distracting social life he lives in St. John's. What is interesting is not so much the semantics of an "authoritative" classification of rurality as the way in which different groups understand themselves to be functioning.

Similarly, the Hurley family in *The Architects Are Here* belies any attempt to classify them as simplistically "rural." They are in one sense the "rural family gothic," living on their lakeside multigenerational compound, which has been partially destroyed by a hydro dam, vengeful and resentful of city dwellers Dave and Arthur Twombly. This is how Arthur Twombly and his young girlfriend Nell see them after their Audi is towed off the compound by Gerard Hurley's four-by-four: "Nell felt it. Like they'd left an ancient time and were heading for civilization" (42).

But Winter complicates this view, exposing its partiality and naivety, by presenting Nell's desire for Joe Hurley, Gerard's brother, earlier in the text, when she meets him at a party at Arthur's home. There, she sees Joe as a figure of alluring sophistication far exceeding Nell's own, a rising communications scholar sharing summer workshops in Madrid with his professors, calling them by their given names (26-28). Joe exists in both worlds, perhaps as an extreme illustration of the possibility of multiple modernities, but all the Hurleys do as well. They are very much a part of the lives of other characters, not separate from them; this is emphasized by their parallel roles in various tragedies and their mutual links to Anthony Hurley, their adopted son and brother, who is biologically the child of Nell and Arthur. Winter signals that actual differences between history and the present, or their oft-deployed spatial analogues, rural and urban life, are less important and often less marked than the ways in which such differences are perceived and felt, and become real through use. Moreover, his work suggests the fallacy of codifying such boundaries, and constantly draws our attention to the ways in which cultural divisions are traversed, mocking those who rely on their beliefs of separate spheres.

In addition to investigating cultural constructions of rural space, Winter questions assumptions of regional cultural authenticity through his extended use of symbolism. Winter's contemporary works participate in the increasing tendency to question traditional constructions of identity, to "explode the category of 'the natural,'" (*Introduction* 6) in Graeme Turner's often-quoted phrase. Accordingly, their representations of that most "natural" thing of all, wilderness, often work against established regional tropes, recontextualizing them in a way that compromises the

symbolic work they are able to perform, calling into question the assumed relation of a geography and its inhabitants, and questioning broader categories of native and imported. These texts also re-present wilderness within new symbolic frameworks and for new purposes, emphasizing the instability of the category of wilderness. Moreover, they emphasize the ways in which wilderness is contained by contemporaneity, both physically and conceptually, in that it is defined to accommodate the demands of today's societies. Contrastingly, Winter's texts also highlight the ways in which wilderness permeates and disrupts contemporaneity, exposing paradoxes and inadequacies in our constructions of the world.

Challenging established relationships between land and regional identity, as Winter does, requires considerable effort because of the strength of these associations, as I discussed earlier; it is worth first reviewing their development and their underlying assumptions. Most immediately and simply, according to the way in which the term is understood, regions are defined by geography: the space they inhabit, and the land they encompass. This leads to an implicit connection of the geography and its inhabitants, a link of the physical and cultural geography: Newfoundlanders call their home "the Rock," while Cape Breton's unofficial anthem proclaims "we are an island, a rock in a stream."[61] This association of communal identity and geography becomes a kind of shorthand that expresses the practices and ideologies that constitute the culture as a whole. As Eva Mackey points out, "In nationalist mythology the nation is often represented as if embodied in the landscape

[61] Kenzie MacNeil, "The Island."

itself" ("Death" 125). The same can be said for regionalist mythologies; it is this culturally infused sense of region that we imply when we use the term "place."

Accordingly, the geography and topography of a given place become the basis for complex metaphorical systems that elucidate aspects of a culture; reading a text that concerns itself with regional identity, we can identify the ways in which the natural environment is "made to mean." It is not necessary, however, to restrict such a reading to geographical features that carry explicitly symbolic freight within the context of that culture. In addition to such self-conscious, mythologizing associations, all representations of the natural environment are socially determined. As Terry Gifford argues, "in literature, nature is culture" (176):[62]

> there can be no 'innocent' reference to nature in a poem. Any reference will implicitly or explicitly express a notion of nature that relates to culturally developed assumptions about metaphysics, aesthetics, politics, and status – that is, in many cases, ideologies. (176)

Any understanding we can have of nature, as Gifford asserts here, is a function of our interpellation into the structures of our society. Although one might argue that other subjects also provide such insights, nature is particularly revelatory because by popular definition it is the category of the non-human, thus providing the locus for negative self-definition.

---

[62] This statement should be read in the context of its place in ecocritical debates of the last two decades, which challenge the tendency to see nature as culturally produced, to reduce it to its perception. Gifford avoids this implication here by stressing that his point relates to the representation of nature "in literature"; however, it is meant to be applied more broadly, as William Cronon insists, to all modes of representation, meaning all human language and understanding. This does not, as Cronon further elaborates, solipsistically negate the a priori existence of the natural world itself ("Introduction" 20).

To explore the nuances of representations of nature in contemporary Atlantic texts, it is first necessary to enlarge the context in which these representations are formulated. I wish particularly to focus on the trope of "wilderness," which intensifies the meanings we associate with "nature" and "the natural world" and suggests more explicitly a dichotomous framework in which wilderness exists in tension with its contraries: civilization, culture, the realm of the human. As William Cronon argues in his groundbreaking essay "The Trouble With Wilderness," the significance of this dichotomy has changed with the movement of Western culture into what we consider to be modernity. Several centuries ago, according to Christian tradition, wilderness was a place of sin and error, desolate and hostile, by definition outside of the human sphere. By the twentieth century "wilderness" had come to signify the sacred: spirituality, purity, and authenticity, an outward mirror for the inner, essential and ineffable being of the individual soul.

This transition in the definition and value of wilderness was accomplished, Cronon suggests, through the rise in importance of the cultural constructs of the sublime and the frontier ("Trouble" 72). Both are rooted in the Enlightenment's emphasis on the irreducibility and importance of the individual, the stable self. Further, both reflect an evolving disillusionment with the Enlightenment project. The concept of the sublime, born in the Romantic backlash against the strictures of eighteenth-century neoclassical tradition, privileges the anti-social in a radical critique of the corruptions of civilization, instead valorizing social alienation, the supernatural, sensation, and emotion. "Wilderness," rather than being waste, is reconfigured as the site of this anti-social transcendence. Thus, it becomes "the

natural, unfallen antithesis of an unnatural civilization that has lost its soul... the place of freedom in which we can recover our true selves… the ultimate landscape of authenticity" (80). Here, the divine "true self" is in conflict with the social self, which becomes constructed as a hypocritical collaborator forced to bow to the demands of a corrupted system; further, by implication, the "true self" must be diminished by the need to compromise in any fashion.

In contrast, this desire for an escape from the confines of civilization also, by mid-eighteenth century, fuelled the creation of the myth of the frontier, realized perhaps most recognizably in the Americas, though contributing to colonial efforts worldwide. The sublime's valorization of the wild and turn away from civilization are reworked in the frontier-myth, with its rejection of "soft" civilization, valuing of radical individualism and emphasis on a nostalgic primitivism. The frontier accommodates human occupation of the wilderness: here, a virile mastery of the wild and identification with it go hand in hand, reconfiguring a Christian, paradisal perspective that links domination of the landscape and union with it.

Both of these concepts – nature as an analogue to cultural purity, and the mastery of nature as a sign of cultural strength – contribute to Canadian mythologies which link national identity and character with a hostile and unknowable wilderness. This has been exhaustively identified in various iterations: most famously as Northrop Frye's "garrison mentality," but also by Warren Tallman and Margaret Atwood, as I noted earlier. Rob Shields has pointed out the utility of the reconfigured wilderness myth of the "True North Strong and Free" as a way of distancing the

nation from its own increasing urbanization (190), and, specifically, from the "continentalism projected by the United States" (196).

Regional mythologies of land and wilderness in the Atlantic region draw upon these national associations, but also modify them. In the Maritimes, the threat and hostility of wilderness is counterbalanced by its ability to be tamed: there is an early tradition of "A(r)cadian" writing that draws on European associations of land with status, class, and power to configure the land as paradisal resource.[63] Works from the twentieth century, as I discuss in my second chapter, maintain this strong association of land with use, rather than escape or threat. Such characterizations emphasize the ability of land to sustain independent living, bolstering the mythology of the self-reliant Maritimer which Ian McKay has identified as a position antithetical to modernity, obscuring ties to national and international movements of capital and culture (*Quest*). Newfoundland's geographical mythologies draw heavily upon this same metaphorical ground, proudly emphasizing the barren land's ability to sustain the simplicity of outport life. Many of today's writers preserve and perpetuate the geographical mythologies of the region, striving to capture a "feeling of place" that associates the land with antimodernism and establishes a definition of authentic culture. While this is important in that it gives voice to individuals and communities who define themselves similarly, such associations are polarizing: they thwart exchanges with larger national, regional and global cultural trends and influences, and they contribute to a "museumization" of regional culture that is increasingly at odds with the ordinary cultural practices and increasing cultural diversity of the region.

[63] For example, see the poetry of Goldsmith and Howe, and the works of Haliburton and McCulloch.

> Michael Winter rejects such essentializing or mythopoeic representations of nature and wilderness in his writing; nevertheless, his best contemporary works – his collection of linked stories *One Last Good Look*, his novel/ fictional autobiography *This All Happened,* and his most recent novel *The Architects Are Here* – engage powerfully with the place of wilderness in a changing symbolic framework. Winter's protagonist in all these texts is Gabriel English; the first collection is, loosely, a bildungsroman; the second charts the course of Gabriel's life and relationship with Lydia Murphy during a year in St. John's; and the third follows Gabriel as he moves between Newfoundland and Toronto. Winter carefully juxtaposes wilderness with the technology and rhythms of contemporary life, drawing attention to the shifting borders between the two. At the same time, and particularly in *This All Happened*, Winter conversely explores the ways in which wilderness, in both its physical and symbolic aspects, suffuses urban space and urban life.

This relation of wilderness to technology and the increasingly urbanized culture of contemporary life is personalized through the contrast of Gabriel English and his older brother, Junior. In the stories "The Ground That Owns You," "Archibald the Arctic," "Second Heart," and "Deep in My Brother," Junior, who is described by Gabriel as "pure Newfoundlander" (*One* 47), is representative of the problem of identification with wilderness. Winter stresses that Junior's ability to identify with the wild is made possible through the use and manipulation of the trappings of contemporary life Junior wishes to escape. Junior is characterized as emotional, impulsive, with an animal simplicity:

> My father has cried twice – once when a German shepherd we had ran from his knee and was crushed by a snow plough, the other when Junior left to work in the tar sands. … Crying is an irrational act and should never be resented. I know Junior's life is a riskier thing… There will be greater love attached to wilder men. (*One* 48)

Here, however, there is a distinction between the "wild" and the "wilder": the use of the latter, not an absolute but a comparative term that has its immediate opposite in the more "civilized" figure of Gabriel himself, indicates the comparative category of wilderness. It is opposed in this passage to technology: as the snow plough hits the dog, so the vast industrial complex of the tar sands may engulf and destroy the man as his father knows him. However, the opposition is not absolute. Later in the text Junior is again aligned with a dog, Trapper, a stray he found in Florida. Junior comments that "his origins are wild but he has a pet for a mother. So, fifty animal and fifty pet" (*One* 175).

Junior, too, is domesticated: the ways in which he wishes to engage with the wilderness tie him to a larger technological and legal framework of which he is not fully conscious. Junior desires what he sees as the simplicity, independence, authenticity and excitement of a life spent in close contact with the woods of Newfoundland. After spending years working in Florida, Atlantic City, Fort McMurray and other destinations typical of the unemployment-induced Atlantic diaspora, Junior visits home and declares to Gabriel his intention to build a cabin in the relatively uninhabited interior of the province:

> Eventually I want to build a little cabin with twelve-volt lighting in Mount Moriah. I want to occupy the land and I don't care what happens. I'm gonna keep the land the way I like it and have a son who can take it over…. Look up the rules on building codes and old Newfoundland laws on occupying land. If you could get some books on it or show me where it's to. (*One* 102)

Here Junior, who throughout the stories racks up speeding tickets and bad loans, poaches, and dreams of robbing a bank, articulates the various congruencies and divergences between his own set of laws and the official legal system. While Junior conceives of his cabin as a place beyond the law, a place he can build with stolen lumber and gravel, he still requires the building codes and provisions for squatting that Gabriel is able to access, presumably because of his education and residence in Newfoundland.

The construction of the cabin, and Junior's access to it, also demonstrates the close but ambivalent relationship of wilderness and technology that Junior embodies. On the one hand, Junior articulates a romantic antimodernism:

> I got a cabin now in the Yellow Marsh and the train is gone, so I walk in. A lot of people are on all-terrain vehicles, Gabe. Well, I'll walk, thank you very much. That's what Old Phonse did before the Bullet [train] and that's what I'll do. Train used to kill five hundred moose a year, Gabe. I got no time for trikes – what I wouldn't mind getting is a pony. Though I'd have to grow hay then. But yes, next year it might be a pony, a brown one. (*One* 179)

This repudiation of modern technology is qualified by Junior's use of the remnants of earlier technologies: although the train tracks are torn up, their path remains to allow

easy travel to the interior; as well, the pony, though animal itself, is an earlier version of the "trikes" Junior so dislikes. Further, Junior is more than inconsistent in this romantic antimodernism, as he is actually closely associated with things mechanical: he is, by trade, a mechanic, and in fact builds the cabin "with a garage door and a stone floor so I can drive my [truck] Pocahontas right to the centre, under the beam. I'll have a hook I can put a winch and haul the engine right out of her" (*One* 184). The cabin is actually configured like a suburban tract home, all garage on the first floor, purpose-built to accommodate vehicles in a way that emphasizes their centrality. In a related image, Junior's friend Brad has a cabin at which the two skidoo, and where Brad keeps his Goldwing motorcycle over the winter, so that he can sit on it and play the stereo while he drinks (*One* 51). Far from being out of place, the mechanical meets the wild within Junior's physical and cultural territory.

What is interesting is that technology is not conceived of as contaminating the wilderness but instead is selectively imported into it: his preferred tools become "naturalized" and vice versa, as when he refers to the woods as "the warehouse" (*One* 180) or considers that his car "was terminally ill… and we had to put it out if its misery" (*One* 54). In a particularly comic episode, Junior's weather forecasting demonstrates his blend of the timeless and the current:

> The best way to know what weather's coming is to dart outside just as it's getting dark and look west or whichever way the wind is, take a good look at the cloud formation and then at 8:20 on the Weather Network you get the satellite picture. Ignore what buddy is telling you, just stare at the pattern of cloud… and you can figure out weather for the next three days. (*One* 185)

Here, Winter plays with our expectations, as we successively expect to read authentic "old-timer" advice, then read its reversal as Junior suggests it is best just to turn on the television, and finally see Junior's method as a selective integration of information from both spheres.

Similarly, the ways in which Winter indigenizes Junior call into question the authenticity of "native" belonging. Junior intends to fence off his property in the woods, which seems odd in one who wishes to inhabit the wilderness; we later discover that the Beothuk also built fences in the woods (*This* 157). More obviously, Junior's truck is named Pocahontas, for the Pocahontas Indian he "bought it off in Florida" – but Junior "traded him a Honda Civic" (*One* 188). Here, the "native" is, in disparate ways, more modern than Junior.

Despite this contextualization, which emphasizes that the boundaries of Junior's wilderness are mutable, it is clear that he nevertheless represents a concept of wilderness based on the tradition of frontier dominance and identification discussed earlier. Junior is a man who "loved the northern explorers – [stories] of men eating their dogs, and then each other" (*One* 46). He is the obvious heir to Old Phonse, the sly trapper the brothers have known since childhood, whose only enunciation in the story is a comic litany of horrific bigotry (*One* 188-89). Though of a different generation and opinion than Phonse, Junior exemplifies the material exploitation that typifies this next generation: "Junior English, he said. You're leaving some tops in the woods. I said to Old Phonse, You got a problem with my tops? Old Phonse: No, June, just it's a waste" (*One* 183). For Junior, waste is not a problem. His desire to represent the wilderness takes quite a different form than Gabriel's, as well: finding

even in the interior of Newfoundland that urban life encroaches upon him, Junior dreams of moving to Labrador, where he "wants to be the member for the region" (*This* 214). He dreams of speaking for the region, wielding power over it, though he has never been there. Junior's version of "back to nature" may be a repudiation of urban life, but it is not a repudiation of contemporary life – quite the opposite, in fact.

In contrast with Junior, Gabriel has an intentionally self-conscious and limited relationship to wilderness. Though Gabriel has grown up hunting and camping with his father and brothers, he hardly has an instinctive knowledge of the wild – he even has to ask his mother if the columbine seeds from her garden are the same as those bought in packets (*One* 182). Gabriel's history is one in which "ties" to the land are sometimes forced. Junior remembers:

> Like when we took you in on the train in summer. Me, Dad, Bruce, and you, picking berries and shooting grouse and bagging a caribou. Thought you were too good for all that. Your little hands giving out from carrying. Had to tie your wrists to the meat. I can tell you exactly where there's a moose right now, Gabe. On the Yellow Marsh. I could lead you right to him. (*One* 179)

Gabriel does not get very far in the woods; instead, he likes tamer boat excursions, picnics, and canoe trips, and even then shelters in cabins rather than camping (*This* 159). Taking a few steps from a friend's cabin he thinks, "I do love solitude. I am a simple man when it comes to being satisfied by the natural world. The sun poking through in patches, lighting up a knoll here, a dip there. Tinker [the dog] begins to bawl when he's had enough. I can still see the roof of the house" (*This* 22). As this passage indicates, it is the mental encounter with wilderness, the idea of it, that draws

him. He is wryly aware that he remains wholly within civilization – within sight of the house – even as he enjoys the illusion of being momentarily outside it.

Gabriel's ambivalent relationship to wilderness, both connected and detached, is not wholly celebrated; it is rather a source of confusion to him, as we see when he snares a grouse:

> Its long neck rubbed down to a red hose, brass wire wrapped several times around the branch. Feathers in the moss. Lifeless. A struggle, a large, long battle to get free. But now lifeless. His chest flattened a little to the moss. I set the snare again instinctively. I set the snare even as I feel shame.
>
> …
>
> I've never cleaned a bird before. Cutting off the head and feet and wings. Beautiful plumage. Prying the beak open to see its perfect mouth. The feathers peel off like a pelt. Coiled black entrails flop out and stink. The heart solid and big, the fresh liver. The chunky flesh of the breast.
>
> Tomorrow I'm taking those snares up. (*This* 19)

Gabriel's inherited, "instinctive" physical skill and attitude of dominance is also a source of shame. His close observation, and his fascination with detail, result in admiration for the life of the bird, identification, disgust at his actions, and resistance to the regional cultural heritage of trapping. While he does not wish to be other than he is, he mourns the practical ability and approach of his father, who introduced him to the wilderness:

> He understands the physical world: electricity, plumbing, capillary action. He has built all the furniture in the house, and the copper ornaments contain his

> planishing. He has opinion and decisive comment whereas I am hampered by the acceptance of multiple views. I have learned no trail through the world. If I could show him batts of insulation. (*This* 214)

Here, Gabriel connects his in/capacity with his loss of certainty, and mourns this distance from his father, a relationship which works as an analogue to Junior's altered inheritance from Old Phonse. For Gabriel, the world is a wilderness of a different sort, trackless and "hampered" by his potential directions. Wilderness, for Gabriel, is both physically and conceptually unknowable, "unnatural" in its incommensurability, not a known other but one with a thousand unexpected faces.

Beyond the representative work the two brothers carry out, Winter's texts continually examine the category of the "natural." Winter's use of juxtaposition and perspective, both implied and self-conscious, exposes gaps in our thinking about metaphorical and actual wildernesses. Particularly, I wish to look at Winter's challenging of traditional conceptions of "ties to the land"; his focus on the cyclical, not linear, nature of technologies; and the ways in which his work draws attention to the act of observation, and its effects on the known.

Throughout all three texts, Winter examines the truth of received wisdom, testing out all sorts of axioms – of relationships, etiquette, weather – for their relevance to his own situation. With regard to wilderness, the representation of Junior is, as described above, an extended assessment of the usefulness of his way of conceiving of and relating to wilderness. Winter continues, presenting several instances where ties to the land, connections to the earth, are, quite literally,

disturbed. In "The Ground That Owns You," Gabriel mulls over the truth of the titular phrase, as it relates to his uncle, a bush pilot in Labrador:

> Uncle Lou a busher. Dad said to us when Lou went missing that at some time you have to return to the ground that owns you. But he hasn't come down yet. It's twelve years and he's still up there, hovering in the present. They haven't found him, so up there he is and I figure he doesn't mind it one bit. When a plane flies by Junior will say, there goes Lou. (*One* 13-14)

In a case that echoes that of Schrödinger's cat, Uncle Lou hasn't come "back to the ground" at all: he's still in the air in the minds of all who know him, because his body has not been located.[64] In a reversal of this idea of groundlessness, Winter presents Nan Brennan, Gabriel's girlfriend's grandmother, who insists that her bones be returned to the earth (*One* 63). Gabriel's eye takes in the unnaturalness of the burial process, the very thing Nan had wished to avoid in her insistence that she not be cremated: he describes the "strips of yellowed, torn plastic… put down to keep the frost out. Under a clear tarp is a pneumatic drill and a generator. The backhoe can't get it. Needs to have its wheels on grass" (*One* 69-70). The series of machines needed to deliver Nan to her desired ground rebuts any semblance of the "natural," as does the plastic that encases her. Further, the ground itself seems alien in the immensity of its geologic time: "The hole cuts through three feet of dense shale, through several ages of accumulation. It is as if they are putting Nan back into her own time," Gabriel thinks (*One* 70). Nan rests not in familiarity but in a prehistoric age, floating in time. Her certainty that she belonged there is, Winter suggests, equally incomprehensible.

---

[64] The same situation is revisited in *The Architects Are Here*, when Nell Tarkington's parents disappear in a bush plane.

In an echo of this scene, the burial of Lydia's dog, Tinker Bumbo, at the end of *This All Happened* also provokes questions about the sort of natural state to which the dog is being returned. Though he spent his life in town as a house pet, with Lydia, her family decide he should be buried on "the barrens on the highway" (279) and find him a spot under trees, where they imagine there will be grouse. Gabriel's eye, however, focuses on the burial as an intrusion on the wilderness of the scene: the dog is towed on a plastic sled, laid on his blanket, and as a memorial Lydia's father suggests they paint the rock, emphasizing not integration with the land but the difference of its alteration by human forces.

Such integrations and dis-integrations of the wild and human worlds recur often in Winter's texts, usually as the instruments of civilization move into the wilderness. During an ill-fated camping trip Gabriel notices the wildlife all around them: "a moose and her calf cross the river. A horned owl blends into bark. A rabbit hunched in the undergrowth. And finally, Max's car shining by the embankment" (*This* 162). Here, Winter considers the contemporary condition of the "machine in the garden," as Leo Marx has termed it. While Marx delineates the history of industrialization as a "counterforce" to an American pastoral ideal (105), Winter's passage questions the possibility of separating the categories. Animals and machines seem, alike, at home in the wild here; human intrusion into the wild can be considered natural. To emphasize such juxtaposition, Winter follows it with Gabriel's observation that the mangoes they eat in celebration of the end of their trip are cut "like city blocks" (*This* 162). Yet the relativity of the machine and nature is not always, of course, so benign:"[we] discovered the [gyrfalcon's] claw on the stone

beach, tangled in a gill net laid out to dry. The claw looked vicious in its protracted clutch. the bird had seen a fish in the net, had plunged from a thousand metres, had been caught" (*One* 120). Here, the majesty and threat of such a "natural" predator is entangled and destroyed by the net that in turn was so effective that it killed the Newfoundland fishery, draining the outports and the province itself of life. Gabriel mulls on this as his own Toyota Tercel, named after just such a hawk, does his bidding.

Such gyres of history and progress, the evidence of wilderness reclaiming outdated technology, come up again in Winter's work, in the torn-up railroad tracks that used to cross the province (*One* 23) and the vacant outports: "We pass the whaling station on Merasheen…. Abandoned in the forties. A pasture to the south where the whaler's quarters were, now caribou graze there. Rusting boilers, a vat, and the sticks of a wharf. On the ocean floor we see the outline of a sunken whaler, its hull arcing through the green depths" (*This* 182). Winter reminds us of the indifference of wilderness to human desires, with sometimes fatal results, in a scene from "Two Families" within *Creaking in Their Skins* that is altered and expanded in *The Architects are Here*: a boat flips over in the force of the wind, its passengers thrown into the water, and one man drowns, eventually submerged by the weight of the anchor chain entangled around his leg (*Creaking* 28, *Architects* 8).

If there is evidence of wilderness reclaiming what was once "civilized," there is much more evidence for the reverse in these texts, and none more so than Winter's treatment of what is perhaps the totem of the Newfoundland wilderness, the moose. These towering, unpredictable animals have come, through sheer size and the threat

of collision, to embody the resistant power of wilderness in Newfoundland. As Jane Desmond argues, humans tend to see animals, and particularly mammals, as literal embodiments of wilderness: their otherness, their "physical difference from humans" (149) encourages us to understand them as "exemplars" of wilderness who represent the "idea of nature as one of the last bastions of idealized authenticity" in our postmodern era (148).[65] Winter's representation of moose is ambivalent, acknowledging this symbolic power but often challenging it, instead emphasizing that moose in Newfoundland were born under, and have adapted to, increasing human intrusion – that they are a part of civilization, instead of authentically separate from it. In turn, Winter traces how attitudes toward them have changed. For example, in *This All Happened* Gabriel stops on the highway to allow a moose to pass:

> There is a moose on the highway. I wake up Tinker Bumbo [the dog] and a youthful transformation slips over his frame. He sniffs at the lip of the window. The cow stares at me in the snow, waiting, patient. And then a grown calf emerges from the woods. They trot off together, wedge open the spruce, and are gone. (*This* 12)

Here, the moose have the power to "transform" the dog, to awaken his instincts, and their mystery and inaccessibility, the distance between themselves and the realm of the human, is accentuated by their imperviousness to the highway's compulsion to

[65] John Berger traces a link between the commodification of animals and their increasing marginalization in daily life. He argues that since the eighteenth century, as human labour became increasingly separated from the use of animals, they have been regarded nostalgically (2). That the moose, never a native of Newfoundland, was imported there from New Brunswick at the turn of the twentieth century ("Moose," McGrath) suggests its use to satisfy human desires for an amplified "wilderness."

movement and the ease with which they "are gone" into the wall of the trees. However, in the same scene, presented in *One Last Good Look*, the significance of the scene is reversed:

> There is a moose on the highway…. It stares at me from the slush, tall like a camel, waiting, patient. Then a grown calf emerges from the woods, they talk for a moment, catch up, and trot off together behind a corrugated building. I stop into a Foodland and find red peppers at a dollar ninety a pound. (*One* 139)

The moose in this version of the scene are aligned with the amenities of modern life and are even anthropomorphized. They turn around corners as easily as Gabriel does, apparently adapting to the neighbourly rhythms of small-town life. Two pages later, to emphasize this connection to the domestic sphere, Gabriel telephones Lydia and "tell[s] her about the moose, of roasting ten red peppers" (*One* 141). Winter's decision to use the same scene twice gives even greater significance to the importance of the details framing the encounter, shows how meaning is created and altered. A few lines later, a neighbouring teenager in Heart's Desire brings over some moose steaks for Gabriel, "Plastic-wrapped, frozen, on styrofoam trays" (*One* 139). The moose themselves are consumed, here, in the same way as the peppers, an exotic oddity packaged in the uniformity of the supermarket, as if they were bred in captivity.

This swing from wilderness god to domestic commodity re-occurs throughout the text: in one comic moment, Gabriel's friend Max has a bodiless leg of moose plunge, "deus ex moosina," through his windshield; the moose was blown apart by its

encounter with a passing transport truck (*This* 101). Max takes the leg home and eats it. Winter reprises the scene in *The Architects Are Here*: the moose appears suddenly as disembodied parts, a "set of legs," a "body," before Gabriel reverts to domestic – or fittingly peripatetic – comparisons: "it was like someone had thrown a bunch of heavy luggage on us" (61). In *This All Happened*, a moose climbs on Gabriel's car, threatening him in defence of her calf, and leaves craters on the roof "like the punches superheroes put in metal" (216), while looking absurdly "like a hood ornament." The abundance of moose in the province contributes to this dual fascination and ordinariness, as Winter outlines in a passage that seems like a farcical version of Alden Nowlan's poem "The Bull Moose":

> While they are gone [to look at the moose trapped in the snow outside of town] Max calls to say there's a bull moose standing in Bannerman Park. I drive over. The moose is gobbling the pussy willows and frozen ruffage. Helmut returns disappointed. Iris: The moose got free before we arrived. I tell them about the moose they missed in the park. (*This* 91)

In Nowlan's poem the mysterious and inaccessible power of the animal reasserts itself despite human attempts to tame, ridicule, or control it; the human response to this power is to interpret it as a threat, and destroy it.[66] Here, the excitement of confrontation is deflated; while the moose thwarts human attempts to use it for

[66] …But just as the sun dropped in the river
the bull moose gathered his strength
like a scaffolded king, straightened and lifted his horns
so that even the wardens backed away as they raised their rifles.
When he roared, people ran to their cars. All the young men
leaned on their automobile horns as he toppled. (29-34)

pleasure or entertainment, it does not need to be destroyed because it has become normalized.

More oppressive is Winter's presentation of the moose hunt in "Second Heart," where the symbolic association of animal and wilderness is suppressed by the hunt's relentless mechanization. The excursion seems less a hunt than a domestic slaughter that happens to occur in the woods, as Gabriel describes all the ways in which their endeavour is made more comfortable: the land on which Gabriel, Junior, and their father hunt is not a trackless area, but just off "Lady Slipper Road," and "they hunt with the truck, cab lifting over potholes. Because the father's feet are bad" (*One* 93). Later, the butchery of the animal itself is paralleled with the engine repair of the truck, as they "haul out the works" (101). Even the pond is "the shape of a knife," the vinyl and guns are carefully noted, and the father's primary consideration is the legality, the regulated nature, of the hunt. The moose meat is juxtaposed with the excess of food packed by their mother: meat pie, sausage rolls, and roast chicken (94). They hardly even move from the place they park the truck before seeing and killing a moose, and while waiting for the animal's blood to drain they contemplate not its life but the quality of the logging road (96) that is their lifeblood, their connection with the town. The animal's dismemberment is particularly notable: "The scrotum to identify the sex. You keep that in the freezer for if the police come. The jawbone for Wildlife" (99). This is the legal animal, so to speak, dis-embodied by human frameworks of meaning: "Wildlife" here is a government department, not the animal world. This disturbing sense of the power not only of the hunters but of their modern technologies and methods is exacerbated and tainted by Junior's success in

poaching another moose: he subverts even the mechanisms of legal control and betrays not only his father's good intentions, within this legal system, but also the ethical imperative against waste, which has already, demonstrably, been violated by the excessive consumption catalogued in the processes of the hunt itself. Here, the model of stewardship of the wilderness fails thoroughly.

Gabriel's scepticism of such networks of control and power is evident in his subjection of the "laws of nature" to interrogation. He works to demonstrate that there is nothing "natural," meaning nothing obvious and unchanging, about nature; rather, as "wilderness" it subverts those expectations. For instance, Gabriel mocks efforts at categorization: "There is one weed beside us, and I guess it. Plantain. I had found it in my wildflower book: seaside plantain. And here I am, beside the sea. This is how the world is ordered. The categories were working" (*This* 206). Gabriel's wry tone here suggests the fiction of order is somewhat ridiculous, dependent upon fortuitous circumstance. Similarly, another character, whose mental problems provide a particularly political context for his comments, "hated how the idea of evolution had garnered an air of intentionality around it, as if species were thrusting themselves forwards on purpose. His mouth would turn bitter at these soft, confidently written, published sentences" (*One* 113).

In a passage that alludes more generally to the gap between representation and the real, and the tension between surveillance, social control, and disorder, Gabriel recalls:

> Dad says there is a map of the world larger than the world itself. It exists in a computer, an enlarged model of the earth's skin at a thousand to one. It

> meshes real photos from the space shuttle with a satellite geography of the earth's surface. There are people frozen in the act of crossing a street, he says. Sunbathing, fixing television antennas. You can zoom in on spring chives punching through crisp brown leaves. The migration of land mammals. The carving out of rainforests. It took six days to collect all the pictures, but they can make it appear as one day. As if you could nail down a day, he says. (*One* 17-18)

Here, the most modern surveillance techniques, computing power and photographic imaging combine in their quest to document the earth and create something that is, even so, inadequate, suggesting the infinitely larger project that would have to be undertaken to produce a "truer" picture. The domination of space, Winter suggests, is impossible without a domination of time – as Gabriel's father states scornfully, "As if you could nail down a day" (18). The two are inseparable. Instead, Gabriel pursues this very mutability as a mirror for personal, emotional, physical change: "As time curves on its belly and touches back on itself. There are wormholes in space that connect, but one must be searching for these holes. The corridors through which one can transport" (*One* 72). His conclusion – of the order of fiction, not the fiction of order – is revealing:

> In nature you only see half of a thing at a glance. But in writing you patch together bits and sides. More than is natural. It's a full map of the world, but in two dimensions. A flat map is not the globe. Something is lost in seeing it whole. Or too much seen gives the wrong impression. Nothing is as grand or foul. (*This* 191)

These salutary reminders of the paradoxical truth in the partial – the plural wholeness to be gained through a limited approach – are central to Winter's texts. Often, Winter highlights issues of semantics and interpretation, as when Gabriel and Femke, his girlfriend, differ over the designation of a stream:

> You caught that fish in a ditch, she says.
>
> It was a river.
>
> You could jump across it.
>
> It's called Virginia River. (*One* 78)

The differing terms here depend upon conflicting methods of evaluation: authority, habit, use, or physical comparison. These, demonstrably, have consequences, as their definitions of the stream influence their reactions to the fish: Femke is revolted by the prospect of eating a fish "caught in a ditch."

The struggle over terminology draws attention to the act of perception itself, both its inevitable confinement and the larger truth in its acknowledgement of limitation, its space for fissure and wilderness. Winter's texts frequently highlight the act of observation and its effects, stressing the significance of the subject and focusing the gaze on the observer; the act of choice; the editing process; and the material outside the contextual frame. In this, he draws attention to the selectivity of our constructions, whether environmental or cultural, and gestures to all that lies outside them. In "The Pallbearer's Gloves," Gabriel describes an old family movie:

> We watch a videotape that I took with Bruce on the ice of the pond. The audio was broken on the camera so it's just pictures. Bruce and Helen walk out on the ice, about halfway out, their backs slightly bent, testing its strength. They

> do an impromptu dance…. Or perhaps the camera prompts it. Or maybe it's Martin urging them. … The next frame jerks to black and then it's me and Bruce on the ice. We stand looking at each other, our feet, still. Our breath in steady puffs. Martin, you can tell, is telling us to dance. But we box… And Helen loses interest in us as she finds a juniper bare of needles covered in silver thaw. You can see the camera's indecision and then choice. The camera pans off the boxers to study that dormant, glittering juniper. And you know that Martin is somewhere below, some place screaming for the men to dance, grabbing at their bare hands. (*One* 42)

Here, Winter disentangles several competing narratives: he draws attention to the subjectivity of the gaze, as Helen resists the demands of her family – the mugging husband, the symbolic violence, the tugging child – and instead selects the frozen tree, still and "glittering" with the promise of aesthetic escape. But Gabriel's narrative also contradicts Helen's, reinserting those things she has edited out, as well as allowing space for the possibility of other things Gabriel cannot remember and those things we cannot hear because of the missing audio track. Additionally, Winter indicates the way the objects of the camera's scrutiny respond to its presence, as Bruce and Gabriel perform and then resist "dancing for the camera," fighting instead.

This layering of perspectives – as we interpret the textual narrative that in turn encompasses certain aspects of the film's narrative and subjects outside that film – ultimately brings the focus not only back to Gabriel's own subjectivity, which is in any case accentuated throughout the text, but to our own role as readers. Gabriel turns this heightened awareness of the process of seeing to the landscape itself: "We drive

to Helen's. Over the moonscape of rock near Avondale. The sun punches through and lights up a knoll here, a valley there. The burgundy blueberry bushes, small bowls of grey ponds. If I were to make a film, I'd have a scene here"(*One* 32). The last line makes us re-examine Gabriel's description of the landscape, not only reading his metaphors more subjectively, and with an eye to the conventions of film, but also recalling the importance of his initial lens, the car window: Gabriel's presence is accidental and transitory. Gabriel, like the sunlight he describes, illuminates only selective parts of the scene, albeit not as indifferently as the sun.

Thus far, I've discussed the ways in which Winter has interrogated common constructions of "wilderness" by contrasting Gabriel and Junior. I've also considered how he uses shifts in perspective to examine interactions between the mechanical and the natural. In doing so, I have tried to suggest that Winter's larger imperative is to re-evaluate the category of the "natural," questioning the assumed divide between the earth and its inhabitants, and twenty-first century contemporary life. This re-evaluation of the natural not only links the human and non-human worlds but has hermeneutic implications: Winter's work demonstrates a postmodern consciousness of the way perspective forms knowledge, and suggests that this consciousness of limitation provides for a larger, more complete and plural view of the world. This sense of limitation assumes that there will always be knowledge and being in excess of what is known: mystery, something that might also be termed wilderness. John Tomlinson suggests we live in a world in which "there are no others," due to the limited resources of the planet and the need to commit to "belonging in the world as a whole" (186). Yet Winter's work emphasizes that otherness remains: that the world is

not stripped bare for our gaze. Rather, otherness remains a mutable and resistant category.

It is this dual wilderness, both the (non-human) thing itself and its revised symbolic implications, that, Winter suggests, moves within the boundaries of the urban, demonstrating the continuity between an urban world and wilderness. This continuity appears in the form of urban wildlife; in Gabriel's metaphoric description of the city; in the parallels between the city and the human body; and in Gabriel's emotional state.

The earlier discussion of the interplay between categories of mechanical and natural focused largely on situations within *One Last Good Look* in which Winter situated technology, as a representative for contemporaneity, within what might ordinarily be considered wilderness. In *This All Happened* and *The Architects are Here*, the reverse happens. The question of the "proper" location, the space, of wilderness is an important one. While the city is tremendously important to these texts, the question of what the city *is* remains central. In an essay comparing the aims and parallels of ecocritical and postcolonial criticism, Susie O'Brien suggests why this is:

> The reasons for postcolonialism's urban outlook extend… to the political and cultural possibilities represented by the city. As a model of multicultural diversity, generally progressive politics and cultural activity, the world-class city functions metonymically and symbolically as a microcosm of a newly decolonized world. As a synthetic creation, both in the sense of its artificiality, and of its simultaneous promise of community and heterogeneity, the city…

> refuses the kind of claims to "natural" belonging that are seen to smack dangerously of colonialist forms of essentialism. … postcolonialism… emphasize[s] the provisionality and the constructedness of our relations to place. (142)

As O'Brien argues, the "artificiality" of urban space accompanies its heterogeneity and diversity, and is itself an indicator of anti-essentialism. Yet while urban space can be considered more artificial than rural and wild spaces, it is by no means completely so. Michael Winter's presentation of "what a city is" emphasizes the participation of wilderness in its sphere, exemplifying the dismantling of dualistic thinking about wilderness for which William Cronon calls:

> Our challenge is to stop thinking of such things according to a set of bipolar moral scales in which the human and the non-human, the unnatural and the natural, the fallen and the unfallen, serve as our conceptual map for understanding and valuing the world. Instead, we need to embrace the full continuum of a natural landscape that is also cultural, in which the city, the suburb, the pastoral, and the wild each has its proper place…. We need to honor the Other within and the Other next door as much as we do the exotic Other that lives far away…. In particular, we need to discover a common middle ground in which all of these things, from the city to the wilderness, can somehow be encompassed in the word "home." ("Trouble" 89)

In *The Architects are Here* Gabriel announces his fascination with things within the city that challenge assumptions of urbanity: "I was looking for rural things within the city, romantic things"(102) he states, both sincere and sarcastic. His presentation of

Corner Brook emphasizes the co-existence of urbanized space and wilderness: Nell moves easily between wooded trap lines and cul-de-sacs on her skis.

Likewise, *This All Happened* is replete with close observation of the workings of wilderness, usually in the form of wildlife, within the urban space of downtown St. John's. Winter's detailed consideration of the minute and the quotidian assists in providing this focus, but the objects of his attention are particularly revealing. For example, Gabriel observes:

> A wasp crawls over my bare foot as I'm on the phone. It's a yellowjacket. They are licking up the aphids off my chilli-pepper plants. I watch one bite chunks out of the flesh of a cantaloupe rind in the compost heap. Black currants are still ripe on the bushes. (*This* 220)

The insects remind us that there are worlds within worlds, small ecosystems functioning in the billions which are usually invisible. The wasps exist in Gabriel's bushes and his waste-heap, thriving on what he discards. Additionally, Winter highlights their adaptability to the more exotic offerings of the city: they are as happy with imported pepper plants and cantaloupe as native berry bushes. Birds, too, perform this same function in the text; in fact, they recur so constantly that they function as an urban analogue to the totemic status of the moose in Newfoundland's wilder spaces. The birds are everywhere, adapting to the conditions of the city: gulls in the harbour, flocking to the warmth of the raw sewage (*This* 30); crows on telephone poles (70); sparrows in the yards and trees (240); blue jays sharing the trees with cats (265); ducks in the parks (235); "a kingfisher on the phone line in the rain" (223). Birds are so integrated that, as Gabriel's friend Max remarks, "Daphne told me

you can find pheasant in Sobeys and I imagined them hiding in behind the boxes of Cheerios, wild pheasant nesting in the rafters" (*This* 272).[67]

Gabriel himself frames the existence of wild elements in urban space with the symbolic continuities he sees between the past and present of such elements. In October, he forages for berries in the middle of the city:

> I pick partridgeberries and blueberries above Shawnadithit's monument and below the Irving oil-tank farm. But I end up collecting colours. Alders, berry bushes. The sun is lower and the leaves are like tiny red ears aflame. I segregate patches of colour by looking through my curled hand. How Helmut used to direct his camera lens at the small areas of caribou moss and rock pools. Looking for the particular. (*This* 235-36)

Here, Gabriel seems a partially indigenized figure, but he remains in context. His implicit comparison of himself with Shawnadithit, the last of the Beothuk, highlights how he finds himself simultaneously in two worlds – foraging on a barrens yet in the midst of growing industrial infrastructure. His quest for "the particular" might aestheticize the berry bushes, but his focus includes these representative reminders of the violence and exploitation that helped to create, and still maintain, the city. In a similar manner, when Gabriel studies the telephone pole in his yard, he sees "twenty-two wires converge and disrupt the hill in a random graph of thin crescents of colour.

---

[67] Further, a robin family that takes up residence nearby is thought of by Gabriel as a neighbouring family itself, one to envy and with whom to compare his own desires:

> On Lydia's deck I can hear a delicate cheep from the neighbour's soffit…. I lean over the rail. I can distinguish three distinct bird voices. A family has begun. A little family of three. I had told Max again how I want to get married, how Lydia is hesitant. …
> Two deep cheeps and a little high cheep. (*This* 120)

This pole is leaning a little, carrying the weight of electricity and communication. A thirty-foot timber cut from the Gander region" (*This* 231-2). The pole "disrupts" the hill, symbolizing the city's change of the landscape as well as literally and symbolically carrying the weight of contemporary infrastructure. The alteration it stands for, however, remains insistently connected in Winter's text to its history, its former existence as a tree. Such connections sometimes take on a touch of the magical, emphasizing the strangeness and wonder to be had from a shift in perspective: "If I closed one eye I could make a flaming maple come out of Boyd's head. And the man by the car could have a deep green oak. How an orange tree is so much more festive, and summery. Yet the green tree is summer and it stands to the left of the flaming maple" (*This* 204). At the same time, however, the residual, past existences of objects that are now incorporated into urban life can provide a counterpoint to their present use that is sometimes uncomfortable, as when Max blanches and roasts an entire seal: "We all stare at the beast. Even Daphne. The seal's massive, coffee-brown, steaming torso dominates the table. It's daunting to approach it with a knife" (*This* 85). Even cooked, the whole seal is still a "beast" and resistant to desecration; this despite Gabriel's observance of all Max's sealing implements, recalling the history of sealing in Newfoundland.

In addition to the palpable presence of actual wildlife, Winter uses the vocabulary of wilderness to describe and so transform the city. At the swimming pool Gabriel sees an elderly swimmer who "barely hauls herself out. A large savannah mammal" (*This* 37). On the street he is accosted by some kids: "One walks past, yelling like a mongrel, and I grab him at the collar, take him down." When more

show up he runs and "they, of course, run after me. Running is a bad idea, I realize. Running obliges them to catch me" (*This* 98). Gabriel realizes he is prey, chased down by a pack, demonstrating the occasionally thin veneer between the wild and the civilized – the workings of wilderness in human behaviour at a deeper level than the metaphorical.

This overt connection of human and wild responses and structures recurs as well in extended comparisons that connect land and body:

> Lydia's cousin… has shown me a series of maps that shave plates of rock off the island, as though it were an anatomy lesson, revealing pockets of magma and oil and natural gas, seams of coal. A network of veins stripped away to expose muscle groups, then these lifted to display the skeletal structure. You understand, from the rock, that the island is chunks of three continents fused together. (*This* 27-28)

Here, both the human body and the landscape are dissected into their constituent parts, mapped and explained, origins exposed. This totalizing perspective is somewhat balanced by the focus at the end of the passage on the origin of the island, which in turn suggests growth and change. In a reversal of this passage, Gabriel then catalogues the body of his beloved using the metaphors of geography: "I love Lydia. I love all her harbours and coastlines and high tides and contour lines and all four compass points of her body and the interior landscape of her brain and how the trail blazes through her…" (*This* 73). Again, this essentialist discourse of possession, mapping, and charting is modified, a few pages later, by Gabriel's implication that the "territory" of Lydia is mutable, requiring constant re-mapping: "What I love of Lydia

is that her head is full of new, unfinished thought. No complete ideas, always renovating opinion" (*This* 78). These images are echoed, later in the text, by the inevitable link of human life and water:

> We listen to the pull and suck of the water's ebb, remembering our mother's bellies…. We are all remembering gentler times as the tide claws at stones. We all want, for a moment, to return to some simpler existence, when we were all together. Or perhaps before we were all together. (*This* 89)

Like the previous passages, this smacks of essentialism on first reading, but the effect is diminished and deconstructed by the modifiers and language used: the "gentleness" of the liquid time before birth contrasts with the way the tide "claws" at the stones, raising the question of accuracy; the wish for return is acknowledged to be momentary; and then even the idea of a "we," a unified social body that echoes the union with the mother, is countered in an oblique return to the present, an acknowledgement of the friction within the relationships of those sitting on the beach.

Perhaps even more strongly than in its metaphoric connections with the body, wilderness is a presence in the city within the emotional lives of its denizens, in both the states it produces and the terms in which it is understood. Gabriel's friend Max, characteristically blunt, states "Love is a savage thing…. Love is all to do with head, heart, and animal" (*This* 277). Gabriel's craving for Lydia is expressed in similar terms, closely associated with the animal: he desires a deep love "that we are all desperately craving and searching, smelling, listening for" (*This* 49), using predatory terminology. Later, Gabe expands on the kinds of people he values, calling up a

picture of elemental, essential beings whose most vital attributes have nothing to do with learned behaviour, or with the trappings of contemporary life:

> people who… are silly and childish and unsophisticated and warm and generous and loving and full of toughness too and original and sexy and rough and animalish and playful and have guts and a red red tender heart bursting crying at small wonderful irrational things at moments at hot moments that steam and penetrate our brains and sizzle like a branding iron into the marrow and make us horny… that is all that life is is moments…. (*This* 58)

Immediately, the stream of consciousness and loss of syntax in the writing, the additive clauses, and the haste and tumble of the tone combine with the rough intensity of both the "branding" desire and the things desired here to present an impression of elemental being, a wilderness of emotion. Here again, however, this immediate impression of the surfacing of this elemental being at "hot moments" that escape the implied confines of the "civilized" world is brought into tension with the context of the passage, in which Gabriel rails, deliberately temperamental, against Lydia's cool evaluative control. Such an eruption, then, is not a loss of balance but a regaining of it, even a release that enables Gabriel to become happy with Lydia again.

Winter's various strategies for bringing together city and wilderness, nature and contemporary life, do not merely draw attention to the mutability of the two categories. His work's emphasis on the ways in which urban consciousness and urban living increasingly permeate even the most rural or remote aspects of existence in twenty-first century Newfoundland is underscored by decidedly ethical and political imperatives. Winter's careful observation and celebration of the particular, and his

insistence on a heterogenous truth to be gained through a dialogue of numerous, limited ways of knowing – that "something is lost in seeing it whole" (*This* 191) – combine to produce a vision of the world that both cultivates an awareness of wilderness in our lives and constantly reminds us of our responsibility toward it, that advocates humility and dialogue. To paraphrase William Cronon, he gets us back to the "right" wilderness, one that is connected to the human instead of being separate from it. In this sense, his work contains an ecocritical consciousness, returning us to a material consideration of our actions in the world, observing the effects of small actions on a small planet. As a metaphorical consideration, and negation, of the possibility of remaining culturally pure, apart from the influences of the continual cultural shifts of global postmodernity, Winter's work reminds us that cultural "authenticity" is a matter of perspective, performed and continually reconstructed daily rather than formed in the past, and that culture is produced in relations with a larger world, not in representations of a lost one.

Chapter 5

Parodic Regionalism:
Rurality and Small Town Life in the Work of Lynn Coady.

Atlantic Canada has come to be associated with the rhythms of rural and small-town life in the popular imagination of the nation. Further, the rural images cherished by the nation, and perpetuated within the region's literature, tend to be idealized and nostalgic, encouraging a sense of connection with a reassuring past and promoting the fantasy that this history can be accessed in the region's present.

Like that of Michael Winter, the work of Lynn Coady has done much to confound this vision of the region. Coady positions herself as a representative and supporter of a "new" kind of writing that resists popular rural stereotypes of the region, and of Cape Breton in particular. In her introduction to the 2003 short story collection *Victory Meat*, Coady writes:

> The problem is, whenever a distinctive culture, like that of Atlantic Canada, is taken note of by a larger culture, like Canada, two things happen simultaneously. On the one hand, the distinctive culture gets marginalized… [and on the other] the culture gets fetishized. …. Yet this experience of fetishization is a tango, a dance that requires two. (1-2)

She goes on to chart what she calls the "maturation" of the region's literature, arguing that Atlantic Canadians' desire to self-fetishize, to play to stereotype, is followed by resentment, self-contempt, and annoyance at difference: "You make fun of the accent, so to speak, as if it's not genuine, but some kind of folksy contrivance affected to score personality points" (3). Coady, conversely, embraces such markers of

difference, but cautions, "We also use email, collect Air Miles, and have the entire third season of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* on DVD" (3). As the title of her Introduction indicates, she champions "books that say arse," that represent the quotidian reality of the region with its shifting blend of cultural particularity and globalism. For Coady, this "truer" depiction of the region represents the grittiness of life in small-town industrial Cape Breton at the end of the twentieth century. It highlights the expectations that are brought to the region and interrogates the desires and assumptions behind them. Herb Wyile agrees, arguing that Coady's first novel, *Strange Heaven*, "turns [the] gaze back on the observer in a fashion that foregrounds the cultural politics between centre and periphery. In the process, the novel provides a good example of Atlantic Canadian literature's increasing and subversive self-consciousness, foregrounding and deconstructing the way in which Canada's eastern edge tends to be framed from outside" ("As For Me" 85).[68]

However, little attention has been paid to the extent that Coady's work continues to mythologize and celebrate her own iteration of an authentic Cape Breton, even as she critiques it. Coady herself is aware of this ambivalence:

> The whole idea of blood ties or a 'blood-soil' is part and parcel with the idealized view of Cape Breton as a region, or the Maritimes as a region, and I don't know that I buy it. And yet, I will admit that there is something – human beings have feelings for places and for people – but I don't necessarily buy that they are endemic or encoded into our genes. I don't have an alternative

[68] Rachel Steeves, in a recent interview with Coady, extends this assessment of Coady's work; attentive to Coady's own understanding that "the tango is a dance that requires two" – that the region is also framed from the inside – Steeves suggests Coady's work resists framing "from without and from within" (231).

> for you. I don't know why we have these feelings that we do, but it's a question that has always interested me and I think that I have addressed it – maybe not overtly – but as a part of the subtext in my writing.[69] (Steeves 233-34)

Despite her acknowledged skepticism toward any idea of ingrained, inborn belonging, Coady's writing work satisfies a desire for an updated picture of a still-authentic people. This inherent contradiction is evident even in "Books that Say Arse," which I have quoted above. After proclaiming her desire for a new literature that avoids "nostalgia and quaintness" (4), Coady considers the title of her collection, *Victory Meat*, explaining the metaphor behind it in a manner that bears scrutiny:

> [Fredericton] has a place called the Victory Meat Market, which has a neon sign that looks as if it's from another era – not the era that defines downtown Fredericton's overall aesthetic, which is quaint, turn-of-the-century Atlantic Canadian gothic (meaning not too gothic but gothic enough to be picturesque). The Victory Meat Market is of a more recent vintage, with an impertinent, gritty sort of toughness that has yet to be buffed over by the well-meaning architects of nostalgia and sentiment who have always wielded such power in the Atlantic provinces. Victory Meat takes no shit. It's there to sell meat, damnit, not postcards, miniature province-of-New-Brunswick beer mugs, designer jams, or hooked rugs. At the same time there's a post-war, can-do

[69] Coady announces her exploration of residual blood-ties in the epigraph to her book of short stories, *Play the Monster Blind*, which is a quotation from René Char: "When the ship sinks, its sails survive, within us. They are hoisted on the mast of our blood. Their fresh impatience draws itself up for other obstinate voyages. It's you, isn't it, who is blind on the sea?"

> sort of pugnacity about the place. We're gonna sell the hell out of this meat and who's to say otherwise?
>
> The Victory Meat Market is both out of, and in keeping with, the character of Fredericton – and, by extension, the Atlantic provinces – all at once. Which in some ways makes it typical – if that makes any sense. (5-6)

While Coady represents the commodification of nostalgia for clearly historic, "turn-of-the-century" times as egregious, she expresses nostalgia for the plain "can-do" aesthetics and ethics of midcentury, as she conflates the vintage symbol of Victory Meat with the writing of the present day. Its "impertinent, gritty sort of toughness" is supposedly real, avoiding postcard-selling simulacra. Yet by using it symbolically, Coady tacitly acknowledges the host of meanings that attach to it – meanings different from the quaintness she reviles, but just as deep-seated and effective in establishing a new mythology of authenticity. Coady's symbolic choice is both sincere and playful; she touts its simplicity and directness, but it cannot have escaped her notice that the shop is, after all, a meat market, not only a shop in which to sell product, but also a colloquialism for any gathering at which people explicitly try to sell themselves.

Coady's double-edged pursuit of "the real" is paradoxical and inconsistent. But it is also productive. Her work is "both out of, and in keeping with" the character of the Atlantic provinces, not because it is gritty or tough, but because of its contradictoriness, its simultaneously sincere and cynical performativity. It is, after all, hard if not impossible to distinguish between the ways in which we "are" and the

ways in which we perform ourselves; as many interpreters of Judith Butler's work suggest, our reality is crafted by the repetition of performance.[70]

My point, then, is that Coady's work is parodic. As Margaret Rose defines the term, parody is an art form which "first imitat[es] and then chang[es] either, and sometimes both, the 'form' and 'content', or style and subject-matter, or syntax and meaning of another work" (45); further, while parody often contains a "comic discrepancy or incongruity between the original work and its 'imitation' and transformation" (37), both classical and postmodern theorists consider its chief characteristic to be its ambivalence, its "apparent empathy with and distance from the text imitated" (49). Linda Hutcheon defines it more simply as "repetition with difference," a way "for modern artists to come to terms with the past – through ironic recoding or… 'trans-contextualizing'" (*Theory* 101). Though these definitions focus upon the metafictional there is a clear relevance, and precedent, for defining as parodic those works which refer to, and refigure, styles and subject-matters taken from an actual place and time. Discussing parodic structures in recent English-Canadian historical novels, Martin Kuester comments that the "integration of 'real' [non-fictional] elements into the fictional universe… leads to new metafictional, or rather metahistorical, questions about the quality of 'realism' in these novels" (148). The same can be said of contemporary novels: parodic treatment of a real referent causes us to re-examine the material and 'fact' of the present, to question the

[70] Not all reviewers give sufficient attention to this performative aspect of Coady's work; some miss it altogether, such as Katherine Sutherland, who enthuses, "Her work leaves behind the standard late-twentieth century concerns with the human condition as performance, repetition, representation, and so on, because her characters generally have few illusions about their dystopic existences" (129).

motivations, methods, and effects of a given cultural norm. Certainly Coady's parodies of cultural life insist that the real is performed and crafted as well as felt and believed.

While parody is political, focusing as it does upon doublings and disjunctures in our practices and performances of life, it is not necessarily subversive. It is, as Hutcheon points out, often conservative (*Theory* 101), as it enacts and reproduces even that which it examines. Rose, distinguishing between satire and parody, comments:

> the satirist may be concerned with attacking either that which is considered normative or distortions of the norms which they wish to protect, but… the parodist may also recreate or imitate certain norms and their distortions in order to attack or defend them in the parody text. If the perspective of some parodists may seem to be anti-normative and distortive, much parody has served to renew norms by recreating them in a new context before making them the subject of a new critique or analysis. (82)

Despite this inclusion of conservative elements, however, parody ultimately retains its critical potential. Although parody enacts both a norm and its transgression, the accretion of its contradicting contents leads to a position that is ultimately skeptical of any of the original texts or positions.[71] Accordingly, any yearning toward authenticity

[71] Rose explains Hebdige's postmodern approach to parody to make this point:

> In parody, pastiche, allegory and simulation what tends to get celebrated is the *accretion* of texts and meanings, the *proliferation* of sources and readings rather than the isolation, and deconstruction of the single text or utterance. None of these favoured tropes (parody etc.) offers the artist a way of speaking from an "authentic" (that is [after Barthes, Derrida and Foucault] imaginary) point of pure presence (romanticism). Nor do they offer the critic a way of

within a parody has to be understood as an important part of its constellation of divergent concepts and feelings. At the same time, such yearning cannot be the final or dominant expression. Instead, ambivalence and critical distance remain the concluding attitudes.

Coady's work exemplifies this kind of parodic ambivalence toward her "text," which is the cultural life of contemporary small town Cape Breton. Her novels and short stories both examine and are complicit with a kind of regional culturalism whose appeal lies largely in its representation of the specific culture and community of industrial Cape Breton today and of the recent past. It satisfies readers' desires for the most recent nostalgic iteration of the same old regional "reality," a stereotyped vision of a closely interconnected, family-centred, rooted community that has been updated to valorize a kind of "real" grit and chaos. At the same time, though, Coady's characters problematize the enactment of commodified, scripted regional identities; they deploy or knowingly cast off stereotypes to confound the expectations and assumptions of friends and enemies from home and "away."

Coady's work also displays the ways in which these networks of community are being dismantled and superseded by other ways of connecting and belonging made possible by today's mass access to intra- and inter-national contact. This parodic regionalism fits well within what Danielle Fuller calls a "resistant regional sensibility, one that is ideologically opposed to regionalisms that represent social and cultural coherence where there is none" (*Writing* 39), but it should be stressed that its

---

> uncovering the "real" or intended meaning or meanings buried in a text or a "phenomenon" (hermeneutics). (226, italics and parentheses orig.)

resistance is not pure, that Coady's intentionally incoherent regionalism includes both continued investment in and resistance to these regional ideals.

Consequently, close attention to the ambivalence of Coady's tone is key to any assessment of her work. Most noticeably, Coady uses a range of voices that play against each other, resulting in situations of dramatic irony as the reader pieces together a larger understanding from various partial perspectives, such as in "Play the Monster Blind." Sometimes these polyphonies emerge from the same person: in *Strange Heaven*, Alan ironically appropriates the "voice of the media" to study Bridget Murphy. He at once mocks the idea of detached reportage and yet internalizes it in his obliviously contemptuous attitude toward the region.

Verbal irony is a constant barrage in Coady's work; often, rather than simply using one meaning to convey an opposite meaning, phrases must be understood in both possible senses – as serious and mocking, defense and joke, as when Bess shouts that she is married to her cousin Cookie in "A Great Man's Passing" to defend him, and yet also to ridicule such a possibility (*Play* 120), as I discuss later.

The obverse of such frequently chaotic double-coding is silence, which is just as important in Coady's representations of layered ambivalence and incoherence. In "Play the Monster Blind" John's "brief intake of air" when he sees his father as a "blind monstrosity" on the beach" (23) is perhaps an expression of pity, shame, sorrow, or exasperation, as well as an indication he will not allow himself to be disturbed, or allow his girlfriend to witness his emotion. Coady's protagonists – *Strange Heaven*'s Bridget Murphy, *Saints of Big Harbour*'s Guy Boucher, and *Mean Boy*'s Larry Campbell – are all characterized by their incoherent noises and silences,

as well as their combination of sensitivity, ironic detachment and helpless naiveté. Alienated, Guy has no one with whom to speak. Larry is, we are told, fearsomely articulate in his school assignments, but unable to marshal his thoughts into speech, instead keeping a running commentary of his failures within his head. Bridget is pathologically silent, unable to express her fear, disgust and despair with her limited circumstances: her thoughts are often unavailable to the reader, as well as to other characters, and her attempts to break her silence are cryptic and often humourous. When she calls Alan in the middle of the night she can only joke about her pain (189), rather than admitting to it, and perhaps her most emphatic statement to her menacing ex-boyfriend is her vomit (196). But in "Look, and Pass On" her silence changes to strength, as she refuses to speak when Alan wants to express opinions and sexual preferences that will allow him to believe he knows her and to therefore confirm his sense of superiority, as I will discuss later. This is perhaps Coady's most effective use of silence – as a tool to deliberately frustrate understanding on the part of her characters and her readers, demonstrating that our interpretations will always be partial, unable to grasp the full reality and depth of another's experience.

Parody, with this aim of defending and yet engaging with otherness, is central to Coady's representation of Atlantic Canada and, more specifically, of industrial Cape Breton. Her work performs a balancing act of regional pride and scathingly ironic derogation. It panders to a nostalgic and somewhat stereotypical understanding of rural and small-town life in Atlantic Canada, while it also acknowledges the self-identifying rurality of a certain segment of that population, demonstrating the extent to which the region clings to and depends upon cherished definitions of itself. At the

same time it frames this insularity with an analytical approach to the culture being performed, seeing its values and definitions as partial, constructed, and often ridiculously incompatible with the entirety of lived experience in the region.[72]

Accordingly, Coady does not break from the "tradition" of literary representations of Atlantic Canada as entirely as she suggests, or as others suggest. Ex-New Brunswicker and cultural critic R.M. Vaughan lauds Coady as "the anti-Alistair MacLeod… [who] smartly leaves that nonsense [of familiar regional stereotype] to the lighthouse-haunting romantics" (Vaughan). Though Vaughan fails to do justice to MacLeod, whose name he uses as a byword for romance, a comparison of the two authors is illustrative. Certainly MacLeod dwells on the value of Cape Breton's Celtic inheritance and elegizes its loss.[73] But, as with Coady, the best of his work critically examines the meaning of "home," and the cultural transformation of the region and its people under the influence of globalization. Moreover, it documents the loss of clannish village life with a clear-eyed emphasis on the harshness of that life in working-class, mid-century Cape Breton, as Creelman points out (130). In "The Boat," first published in 1968, the protagonist's mother's strident rejection of outsiders who are not "our people" (*Island* 10) is presented sympathetically, and the beauty and depth of the cultural inheritance of the community is emphasized in the effect of the father's songs floating over the village

---

[72] Coady's work is not always entirely successful – any parody depends upon a careful balance of elements – and it sometimes falls into predictable patterns, or falls short of executing a complete critique. But its unevenness and occasional shortcomings may contribute to the value and veracity of its vision; as Rachel Steeves argues, it has a "flawed splendour" which represents the conflicted feelings, identities and values that comprise the region today, and accentuates denizens' painful awareness of those contradictions.

[73] Tanya Butler and David Creelman discuss elegy in MacLeod.

(13-14).[74] But MacLeod emphasizes that the community cannot be separated from the wider world: the songs are being sung because they are being performed for tourists and the daughters of the house enrage their mother by marrying young men from "outside." Likewise, in "The Tuning of Perfection" Archibald witnesses what he believes to be the diminishment of his culture, his people, his land, and his way of life. Yet, he finds a strange continuity in the "closeness and fierceness" of the young men who perform the ancient songs without knowing their words (*Island* 309). In turn, they appreciate his loss, assuring him, "We know. We know. We *really* know" (309). Despite the "total inappropriateness" (309) of their gift of liquor, Archibald sees the depth of their tribute, because it represents their own way of expressing value.

MacLeod's representations of the region are hardly simple nostalgia, but are rather an acknowledgement of the inevitability and difficulty of cultural upheaval, and an insistence upon the value of a past way of life, what Walter Benjamin has called a "historical materialist" approach that examines and values the difference of

---

[74] "His voice boomed down the hill and bounced off the surface of the harbour… and was then reflected to the wharf and the fishing shanties, where it was absorbed amidst the men who were baiting lines for the next day's haul.
…
He sang all the old sea chanteys that had come across from the old world and by which men like him had pulled ropes for generations, and he sang the East Coast sea songs that celebrated the sealing vessels of Northumberland Strait and the long liners of the Grand Banks, and of Anticosti, Sable Island, Grand Manan, Boston Harbour, Nantucket and Block Island. Gradually he shifted to the seemingly unending Gaelic drinking songs… [and] the laments and the wild and haunting Gaelic war songs of those spattered Highland ancestors he had never seen, and when his voice ceased, the savage melancholy of three hundred years seemed to hang over the peaceful harbour and the quiet boats and the men leaning in the doorways of their shanties with their cigarettes glowing in the dusk and the women looking to the sea from their open windows with their children in their arms." (*Island* 13-14)

the past from the present, rather than valuing the past as a conduit – economic, ideological, or otherwise – to the present. As David L. Eng and David Kazanjian have pointed out, loss can be productive when it calls forth a critique of what remains: "if loss is known only by what remains of it, then the politics and ethics of mourning lie in the interpretation of what remains – how remains are produced and animated, how they are read and sustained" (ix).

MacLeod tends to depict contemporary life as bland, paltry and unheroic compared with the vigour of the life of the past. It is worth noting that he links the contemporary life of the region with death in both *No Great Mischief* and "The Road to Rankin's Point." In the former the protagonist, Alexander MacDonald, brings his brother Calum home to die in a final, bittersweet union with Cape Breton: where before their grandfather "would get an erection as soon as his feet hit Cape Breton," it is now the place to which Alexander "ferr[ies] the dead" (*Mischief* 282, 283). Another Calum, the young protagonist of "The Road to Rankin's Point," also returns, like "the diseased and polluted salmon," to Cape Breton to die, joining his ancestors (*Island* 165). Accordingly, the death of the region's past overshadows and dominates the present. This is evident, too, in "The Boat": the academic success the protagonist has achieved outside of the region is diminished by his inability to feel ease and comfort; instead, many mornings he is awakened by dreams of his past life at home, the life he has rejected. He observes, "the grey corpses on the overflowing ashtray beside my bed bear witness to the extinction of the latest spark and silently await the crushing out of the most recent of their fellows" (*Island* 1). The cigarettes represent his father's entrapment within the region in the past; his own entrapment if he were to take up his

father's work in the present; and his continuing entrapment by guilt for having abandoned the narrowness of the fishing life that his mother desires him to continue. Contemporaneity, then, is an end for his characters, who are, to paraphrase Yeats, changed utterly, but without any compensatory "terrible beauty."

By keeping in mind MacLeod's focus on the problems of contemporary regional existence we can see Coady as his heir. She shares MacLeod's interest in chronicling the transformation of Cape Breton and examining the variances in how it is understood and valued, both by residents and visitors. But unlike Macleod, Coady finds a terrible beauty in the region's present.

My primary interest is in how Coady represents small town and rural Cape Breton and how she interrogates various meanings of rurality. Coady's first three works are set in fictional towns that resemble her own hometown of Port Hawkesbury, population three thousand, and its rural environs. This focus on rural and small town life follows a weighty tradition that locates the "true" heart of the region in its hinterlands, rather than its urban centres, as I have previously explored. But Coady shows this rurality in encounter with its exterior and interpenetrating regions and consciousnesses – rural, urban, and global. This is a significant change for rural writing in Canada, and especially for rural writing in Atlantic Canada: the rural conceived of not in opposition to the urban but in exchange with it, and increasingly as an extension of it. Coady's work assesses the varieties and qualities of cultural transformation and resistance that take place in these exchanges. While the recent rise of the "new" urban Canadian writing – with its emphasis on globalization, youth culture, suburban existence, mass culture, and consumerism – has been much-

touted as a necessary antidote to Canada's overwhelming literary presentation of itself as a rural nation, Coady's work reminds us that such "urban" concerns, habits, and transformations arise in rural milieux just as surely as they do in major cities.

Glenn Willmott's idea of the "invisible city" is useful here. Assessing modern Atlantic Canadian regionalism using Ernest Buckler's classic 1952 work *The Mountain and the Valley*, Willmott identifies the presence of an "invisible city" amidst Buckler's resolutely rural setting and charts its influence over rural culture. Essentially, he considers the ways in which the "lives and concerns engendered by modernity" (*Unreal* 146) are present, if not visible, in rural space. In Coady's work the once invisible city is clearly visible in the countryside and in small towns: where Buckler's protagonist David struggles for rural purity and escape, and finally reveals his dream of an idealized separate rural sphere to be an unattainable and fatal trap, Coady's characters live in a time and place where such dreams are laughable, where the presence of "the city" is constant, and where imported and mass cultural influences, concerns and norms often prove more influential and important to their everyday lives than does a traditional cultural inheritance.

Geographical and social studies have addressed these transformations of rural and urban space and culture in recent years, and their findings help shed light on the qualities of the world upon which Coady trains her gaze. In 1986 American urban planner Hans Blumenthal predicted that by the year 2000 America would "be transformed into a mosaic of contiguous metropolitan orbits, [ending] the age-old

distinction between urban and rural forms of settlement" (Meeker 59).[75] The term "ex-urb" has become common to describe areas beyond suburbs that were formerly rural, and still appear rural but increasingly function as suburban space. Geographers and urban planners have noted that the old influx into the inner cities has been complicated by changing commuting patterns and increased density. The literal re-mapping of this relationship between city and countryside demonstrates the veracity of Arjun Appadurai's argument that the "flows" of information, cultures, and values are intrinsic to the flow of goods, services, and people: rural spaces are being incorporated into extended urbanized areas, intensifying class tensions and competing ideas of appropriate values, behaviour, land use, and property appearance. [76] The attractions of rural life, both for original residents and for newcomers to the region, may increasingly be conceptual rather than actual, as rural and urban spaces grow to resemble each other more closely. [77]

---

[75] These metropolitan areas are "regional cities," as Russwurm terms them, characterized by an inner core, outer fringes and suburbs, urban shadows, and rural hinterlands. Coppack, Russwurm and Bryant modify these definitions, characterizing these overlapping metropolitan areas as "urban fields," regions comprised of a core city, an arrangement of other urban clusters, and the surrounding space, which extends beyond the commuting zone to include weekend and seasonally-accessed space, stretching hundreds of kilometers.

[76] Though Appadurai speaks directly of global flows, his work recognizes the immense importance and transformative power of flows between adjoining countries or regions, on a smaller scale than that of the "macro" global.

[77] Such is the appeal of our ideals of rurality that even academic approaches to rural and urban spheres have often been swayed by a "sentimentality of the discipline," influenced by social perspectives and values which are inherently protectionist and conservative:

> The heritage of rural and urban fringe studies in Canadian geography is largely agricultural, with roots in the conservation of the countryside as a scenic resource characterized by the presence of family farms. Research interests incorporate environmental protection, values which are overtly pro-rural and pro-farm, analyses which address questions about disappearing land,

Regardless of the ways in which rurality is changing, the idea of rurality still matters intensely. Coady's representations of residents' ideas of what it means to live a rural and small town life acknowledge this, sincerely complying with ideas of rural separateness and recognizing the difficulty of transformation. Although her work alternates between defense and exposé, I would like to first be attentive to the strain of Coady's work that is sincere, the voice that speaks without tongue planted firmly in cheek.

The characters who inhabit the authentic industrial Cape Breton Coady presents bear little resemblance to MacLeod's typically noble characters. For Coady, their authenticity lies not in their inherited traditions, but in their present lives, which are characterized chiefly by a chaotic dysfunctionality. Coady's work is at the forefront of the increasing popularity of "grit lit" in Atlantic-Canadian literature, along with that of Kenneth J. Harvey, Joel Hynes, Leo McKay, and David Adams Richards.[78] This is anti-pastoral literature that reinterprets many of the characteristics

---

> dying villages, and the demise of a countryside once known. Considerable discussion, mostly of an informal nature, has developed over questions about the reality of the contemporary countryside as a social, economic, and political entity, and the merits of research which functions within a nostalgic glow of some past, not even necessarily well-remembered, time. … It is, perhaps, time for a detinting of lenses. (Beesley 11-12)

[78] A comparison of Coady and David Adams Richards, whom Coady credits as an influence, is useful. Both defend rurality, to an extent. Frances MacDonald observes Richards' interest in the "division between those who have retained a rural perception of the world, and those who have acquired an urban perception of the world" (19), and sees in Richards a "firm defender of rural life against the metropolitan disdain that permits and fosters the mentality of the plantation" (21). Coady's approach differs in that she sees the divide between urban and rural consciousness as permeable and more complex, if no less hostile. While Coady combats metropolitan disdain, she does not hold up a traditional rurality as an alternative to cosmopolitanism and does not see the two as polar opposites. Richards, conversely, has disengaged from

of late-nineteenth century literary naturalism: working-class settings that are deliberately unremarkable; plots that chart characters' decline or degeneration; flawed protagonists; squalid subject matter focused upon instincts, drives, and appetites. Grit lit is best-known as a:

> subgenre of Southern fiction… a direct response to the work of William Faulkner, a close cousin to Erskine Caldwell's tales of rural poverty and Flannery O'Connor's grotesque fantasies of alienation. The best grit lit is filled with ornery, deranged, and desperate characters who are fuelled by violence, sex, and alcohol. (Hellman and Pearl 260)

That grit lit appears frequently in Atlantic literature is not surprising. Its appeal is in its deliberate turn from middle-class aesthetics and standards, its distance from the sanitized, careful norms of middle-class Canada, its shock and impulse. As James Overton comments in his discussion of the aesthetics of grit and garbage, it is a refusal of the tourist gaze, and as such is directed at its own community but aware of the aesthetics and surveillance of others ("Dirt").[79]

Yet innocence, strangely, remains grit lit's charm, at least on a superficial level: an uncomplicated grit lit presentation of the culture depends upon the sense that its inhabitants are "simple people," sincere in their violent passions, indifferent to the

---

explorations of the regional present in his recent works, choosing instead to set his works in a heroic, troubled past.

[79] Allan Hepburn condemns the genre in a review of *Saints of Big Harbour,* referring to Coady's work as "addiction realism" and deploring its "tribalism" and its tone, which he terms "unremittingly grim while pretending to be funny" (123). Herb Wyile notes such grit lit stereotypes are the "obverse of [McKay's] paradigm of Folk innocence: pervasive constructions of the East Coast as Canada's social, economic, and cultural basket case, populated by alcoholic deadbeats, welfare mothers, and rockbound trailer trash" ("As For Me" 94).

perspectives of a wider world. Their appeal is that they can be read as escapees from the age of irony. Perhaps with this in mind, Coady includes some affectionate stereotypes within her work: she venerates cathartic brawling and romanticizes the physical presence and corresponding personality of the "big man" – incoherent, gentle until provoked, and often bewildered by nuance. As well, she makes an occasional gesture toward the "real" rural people, such as the capable, fecund country cousins of "A Great Man's Passing." This is a hellish innocence, but a kind of innocence nevertheless. Coady depicts it so effectively that its grit sometimes distracts reviewers from noticing the sophisticated interplay of voices in her work. After all, such apparent simplicity holds great appeal, as I have suggested in chapter three, and Coady cannot help but be aware that some of her audience consumes the "grit lit" she offers as a variety of, not a counterpoint to, nostalgia: a more sophisticated nostalgia for a readership who can no longer swallow an idealized, sunny regionalism but who still desire exotic difference, a rough, authentic poverty far from the consumerism of the globalized middle class. Such an interpretation of Coady's "grit" is evident in Allan Hepburn's derisive review of *Saints of Big Harbour*:

> Coady's characters are oblivious to what happens around them…. The diction of *Saints of Big Harbour* hardly rises above the monosyllabic…. This historical moment at which the novel is set… supplies references... all external to Nova Scotia, [which] strangely demonstrate the imperviousness of provincial culture to foreign influences. Big Harbour remains a tiresome, small place. (123)

Hepburn is immune to Coady's humour and he misses the sophisticated interplay of evaluative and ironic voices, which together present a nuanced examination of the region.

An important aspect of the appeal of Coady's sincere evocation of place is her depiction of the reassuring, if claustrophobic, familiarity of her locale. Her work is rife with references to "everyone's" opinions, as in the story "Jesus Christ, Murdeena." In "Batter My Heart" the protagonist complains of the ubiquity of Martin Carlyle, the town drunk: "After you've been around for a while, Martin seems to turn up everywhere. He's the town drunk, is why, and the town is small" (*Play* 55). These references communicate a sense of unity of the place; while it can be oppressive, it also generates the pleasures of recognition in readers, as they too are immersed in its world and so participate in its references and even its mockery. Coady's texts contribute to this sense of recognition as they overlap and echo each other, using some of the same families and characters across stories and novels. We see, for example, Hugh in both "Play the Monster Blind" and *Saints of Big Harbour*; Alan and Bridget in *Strange Heaven* and "Look, and Pass On"; Gerald and the narrator in "Big Dog Rage" and "Run Every Day"; and Meg and Bess in both "A Great Man's Passing" and "Nice Place to Visit." These interconnections encourage familiarity in the reader, but they also reveal the instability of assumed familiarity: such intertextual doublings ensure the messages we retain from each text are destabilized as we confront the same character or situation from a different perspective in which the behaviours and power relationships are reversed.

Coady's characters sometimes feel compelled to defend their locale and this defense is sincerely felt, yet coloured by her characters' own misgivings about their place and role in it. In these instances we see Coady's investigation of the transformation of rural to exurban space and culture, and of the difficulty of this change. Cultural transformation is not, after all, a seamless and regular process, but an emotionally resonant battleground on the deepest, most personal level. Coady's characters chafe between traditionalism and contemporaneity, belonging and estrangement in their self-definitions; the shifting ground of their imagined community causes resentment, distress and uncertainty. In *Strange Heaven*, after an encounter with some of Bridget's former friends, Bridget recalls:

> Funniest was the thing Alan said once they were gone, having no idea about anything: "I see even the Maritimes has white trash,"
>
> You have more or less just pissed on my flag, she might have said to him then. (92, punctuation orig.)

Here, Bridget feels detached amusement and hurt at the same time; with the phrase "pissed on my flag" she indicates her contempt for the "white trash" parameters of her friends' lives, but she also acknowledges that she is being condemned along with her friends, and continues to feel an allegiance with them. Similarly, in "A Great Man's Passing" Bess both mocks and claims her cousin Cookie: she defends him to her father, who considers him a backward troublemaker, and later implicitly to her snobbish cousin, Maureen, by embracing Cookie and introducing him as "my husband… Red Angus John Dougal Sloane McFelly… they call him that because his great-uncle once had an Irish setter" (*Play* 120). Bess' hyperbolic mockery of

Maureen's stereotypes is compromised by her awareness of her own distance from Cookie, a "sprite" with an earthy "innocence" (109); she finds her father's fears they may pair up ridiculous, and so her ironic announcement of him as her husband is directed at both Maureen and herself. When Cookie considers the matter seriously, Bess's response is a laughter that demonstrates her amusement at his naiveté.

Coady's most extensive examination of this doubled experience of simultaneous belonging and estrangement comes in the story "Run Every Day," which stresses unreliable constructions of memory and identity. Coady's female protagonist returns to the family home to help her mother move and is startled and angered to find her mother transformed: she no longer fits her impatient daughter's classifications of stereotypical narrow-minded villager, newspaper complainant, and disengaged but nagging parent. Coady places the mother's transformation against the foil of the protagonist's childhood friend Madonna MacLeod, who symbolically slows and stalls the prodigal returnee as she attempts her jogging circuit, literally drawing her back into a tangled forest thicket, location of childhood memories and the endless cycle of gossip: "There is no change. There's only 'news'" (200), says Madonna. The protagonist enjoys her bored superiority over Madonna, but is disconcerted by her mother's alterations, which Coady describes as a shift between spaces, a move from the "quaint little two-storey structure built by shippers at the turn of the century… into a mature person's apartment complex on the outskirts of Halifax" (190). When the mother "tosses" the artefacts of her old life and replaces them with Swedish modern furniture, Coady's protagonist realizes the extent to which she has defined herself against what she perceived to be her mother's static

traditionalism. Like her mother, she had adhered to static assumptions about people, place, and culture, even though she had constructed herself in opposition to them. The upheaval of her mother's change throws everything into turmoil, as she is reminded when her mother says, "You don't know what I hate. You don't know what I like. You don't know a darn thing about your old mother" (195).

Neither, the protagonist realizes, does she know enough about herself. She questions her own identity and place in the world. Here, Coady uses running as an apt metaphor for the exhilarating but exhausting performativity of her life, fraudulent and true at the same time: the protagonist is an aspiring but sporadic runner who feels the inadequacy of her "terrible, painful" (197) practice, full of gasps and stops, yet pretends she's "been running for years" (196) to those who don't know her. She dreams of running into an ex-boyfriend: "He would see that I am a runner, that I live a healthy, productive lifestyle…. I really can't tell you how gratifying it is. To bestride the earth, fully in command of yourself, utterly at ease. Healthy, of sound mind and body. Secure with your place in the world" (201). This flight of physical and mental elation is intentionally facile, and is ironized by a near-miss with a pulp truck.

Coady's character remains ambivalent about the future: she is uncomfortable with her mother's embrace of consumption, seen in her mother's acquisition of goods characterized as "cheap" and lacking in "interesting detail"(193), and by her enrollment in the local craft co-op, which "peddle[s] their wares to some of the tourist shops around town" (194). In an act of wishful vengeance, she steals and hides her mother's hormone pills, signifiers in the protagonist's eyes of an unnatural

youthfulness, hoping to reverse her trajectory, to have her "[play] up to the old script, the one I always despised" (193). This act emphasizes the self-destructive reliance on tired personal and cultural narratives that often counterbalances attempts to critique their power. The protagonist is aware of such narratives as simplistic "script," and aware of the impossibility of such retreat, such as when she mockingly recalls her ex-boyfriend's "demeanour as if he wanted to pull in his lanky limbs and regenerate into a fetus and disappear" (202). Yet she continues to rely on her own scripts. The story offers a bleak evaluation of the ambivalence of cultural transformation, as it suggests that neither the continually misremembered past, her mother's ironically sterile progress, nor her own precariously constructed and performed contemporaneity can provide the "secure" uncomplicated ideal she craves. Instead she must struggle, "running to stand still" as the axiom goes, uncertain of her direction.[80]

Accordingly, while Coady demonstrates her affection for and (at least partial) solidarity with the cultural norms and assumptions of small town industrial Cape Breton, she also subjects them to deflating scrutiny. The most common character type in Coady's work is that of the "insider-outsider," the alienated local figure who is familiar with the local sphere and yet comes to it with a changed perspective, illuminating it through their own difference, or even translating culture for the reader in an ethnographic sense. This translation of rural and small town culture is

[80] Here, Coady balances each instance of a desire for, and defense of, an essential regional culture outside of contemporaneity with an awareness of its impossibility. This approach is a process of demythologizing, even as it recognizes the power and pervasiveness of myth. Ian McKay has termed this kind of artistic production today one that sees "the Folk under conditions of postmodernity" (*Quest* 274), in which representations of essential cultures are produced and evaluated in a self-aware manner, taking into consideration the influences of perspectives outside of themselves.

increasingly necessary for Canadian readers, as rurality becomes removed from ordinary experience and urbanity becomes the norm.[81] As Justin Edwards and Douglas Ivison comment, "Most Canadians… live within cityspace, even those who consciously situate themselves as being outside of it" (10). This last observation is significant to Coady's work because she reminds "rural-ites" of the extent of urban and global patterns in their lives.

The subversive class critiques implicit in this approach are evident also in Coady's treatment of these transitional figures. They are not above reproach; the lacunae in their perspectives and their everyday hypocrisies are as much the subject of Coady's comment as those who attempt to perform essentialisms. While it is their voices that often observe the failings of other characters, the reader stands as witness to the failings of Coady's transitional figures: we see Bess' solidarity and complicity in "A Great Man's Passing," as I have pointed out, and we catch the protagonist's unreasoned evasion in "Run Every Day" as she steals her mother's pills: "There is approximately nothing going on in my head as I perform these actions, and yet for some reason I bounce down the stairs giggling like a teeny-bopper on her way to the formal" (204). The deliberate blindness of her act reveals her adolescent need for both security and rebellion, her blithe disregard of the consequences of her actions, and her unwillingness to examine her need to feel superior to her mother.[82] No one in

[81] The 2006 census asserts that over eighty percent of Canadians live in urbanized areas, making it one of the most urbanized countries in the world. This statistic is complicated by a look at Statistics Canada's definition of "urban" space, which is defined as any community of over 3000 people.

[82] In similar fashion, Coady skewers Meg's unreflective power dynamics in "Nice Place to Visit:" Vancouverite Meg condescends to Bess, her visitor from Cape Breton

Coady's work is exempt from an examination of the contradictions in their performance of cultural affiliations, regardless of the empathy with which their positions may be portrayed, or the insightful perspectives they provide.

Coady's assessment of the dangers of accepting the kind of "traditionalism" that has become naturalized in Atlantic Canada is one of the primary aspects of her work; it counterbalances her affectionate celebration of regional tropes. Like Alistair MacLeod, one of the ways in which Coady characterizes tradition is by associating it with the elderly, death and dying. In "Jesus Christ, Murdeena" the residents of the local nursing home cannot be reached by Murdeena's tragicomic attempt to assert her difference and importance, despite their gentle pretence of tolerance:

> The seniors greet the blasphemy [of Murdeena's announcement she is the Christian saviour] with more good humour than anyone else in town. Born in farmhouses, raised up on hills or in remote valleys, where to come across another human being, no matter who they were or what they had to say, was a deep and unexpected pleasure – therefore humble, charitable, and polite – the old folks listen, lined up side by side in front of the piano. … Sunday after Sunday, now, she pleads with them until dark.
>
> And they're good about it. They let her talk and hold out her hands to them. They don't complain or interrupt. They smile with their kind and patient old faces and refuse to let themselves be touched. (79)

Here, the seniors' bond with an older way of life has created a superficial generosity which nevertheless refuses connection with the young, except on their own terms.

(*Play* 214-15), while remaining a subservient and dependent creature in her own relationship, revelling in her victimhood.

While theirs is a benign refusal, it is nevertheless alienating. Coady's association of tradition and the elderly takes on another aspect in *Strange Heaven*, which reinterprets the trope of the wise, tradition-bearing ancestor through the figure of Bridget's grandmother Margaret P., who suffers from Alzheimer's. For her, history is lost, always scrambled, and repetition of it leads merely to circuitous madness. The only lessons she can impart to Bridget – and they are important ones – come not from her collected experience, which has disappeared, but from her rage and her sheer endurance, in which Bridget finds a model for surviving her own crisis (198). Bridget redeploys her grandmother's repetitive scream "eat your own shit" (195) to finally strike back against her oppressive ex-boyfriend as "she felt it was the most powerful thing she could say" (195). David Creelman sees this inherited rage as the basis for Bridget's new identity (191-92); while this is perhaps optimistic, at least such rage is a reminder to engage with the present, and to turn back the expectations being thrust upon her.

Strong divisions of experience along the lines of gender are the norm in traditional, residually patriarchal rural and small town life in Atlantic Canada, as Danielle Fuller has pointed out (*Writing*); certainly, Coady's critiques of insularity can be divided along gendered lines. Unlike the example of Margaret P., the women who personify a limited rural consciousness in the small towns Coady examines are often passive and despairing. The local girls of *Saints of Big Harbour* are satirized as shallow, cruel, and clannish in their loyalty to Corinne Fortune's delusions. Likewise, in "Batter My Heart" the aimless protagonist is denounced by her drunken history teacher. She recalls, "the last thing he said was that you would never make it in the

big world. You could only agree, pliant. You still agree" (*Play* 48). This quiet acceptance and lassitude is modified into a circular, existential despair in "Play the Monster Blind" when Ann, in the grip of a self-loathing, drink-resultant nausea, groans, "Did you ever dream that you were *where you were*?" (*Play* 14). Here Coady humourously makes the point that dreams, like reality, are defined and circumscribed by location. While Coady's work generally presents these trapped women with some sympathy, their evasiveness and even nihilism are implicitly critiqued by their juxtaposition with other characters who refuse to acquiesce to the roles they have been given, or whose varying perspectives present moderately accessible alternatives.

In contrast with the feminine face of rural and small-town insularity and traditionalism, the masculine aspect is, as one would expect under patriarchal conditions, aggressive, even tyrannical, yet sentimental in its attempt to cloak the violence of power relations with the gloss of consent and approval. The paterfamilias in "Play the Monster Blind" is the titular monster: Coady presents his traditionalist expectations of authority and his ideals of order as pitiably powerless, an aberration in a changed world. He is "just an old boxer," fighting physically and metaphorically in a hostile world in which he is always the underdog, proud of the battering he is able to take: his personal, talismanic myth is of a local boxing legend who heroically withstood abuse in the ring, but was unable to cope with the world outside it (*Play* 18-20). Likewise, the father demands admiration from his bullied and dominated family, who have adopted his patterns of senseless fighting, and he extends this losing fight to the world, "blustering [at a restaurant] about incompetence… and teenager girls with earrings in their noses instead of their ears where God intended them" (13).

Coady illustrates his confinement within his role, and the defensive, violent confusion with which he faces the world, using the metaphor from which the story and the collection take their names, one of the most overt parodies in her work:

> On the path back to the cabin, they saw the father coming towards them. The sun had set moments before and their eyes were used to the dark, but the father's weren't. They saw him first, walking with great clomps, his arms stretched in front of him like Boris Karloff in *Frankenstein*. Bethany remembered hearing that, in *Frankenstein*, Boris Karloff had stretched out his arms before him like that because the filmmaker had at first wanted to have the monster be blind. They never followed up that aspect of the story, but they kept the footage of Lugosi playing the monster blind anyway, and that was why the enduring image of *Frankenstein* ended up being this clomping creature with his arms stuck out in front of him. The problem was that this was what John's father looked like, coming towards them – a frightened, blind monstrosity. (22-23)

As his old world disappears, the father finds himself unable to adapt to new behaviours and expectations – he sneers at his son John, calling him the family "dip-lo-mat" because of his ability to manage conflicts with words rather than blows. He has become a relic, ill-fitting and reanimated in a changed set of circumstances, "blind" because he cannot reach beyond himself. And yet, ironically, he can see just enough of his own inadequacy and growing powerlessness; in this sense, his blindness is "played," maintained because, in the absence of other possible roles, he upholds his own set of values. Trapped and typecast, he chooses to caricature himself,

to exaggerate his own monstrosity and helplessness as a kind of protest although it damages him and frustrates and saddens his son.

In contrast with this sympathetic portrait of a monstrous, masculine traditionalism that is both real and performed, the figure of Uncle Isadore in *Saints of Big Harbour* personifies a masculine monstrosity as a dangerous psychopathy, self-pitying, self-deluded and removed from contemporary relevance or use, but still threatening to the present. Isadore is the charismatic bully who haunts and manipulates Guy Boucher's family – significantly not the father, who has disappeared – and eventually the entire community. Isadore uses discourses of patriarchal tradition and family allegiance to insinuate himself into what he considers to be his rightful place, sponging off his destitute sister and her children as they try to make a life for themselves. Isadore destroys their security, their lives, and even the traditions he claims to uphold; for example, Isadore drunkenly smashes all the Aucoin family china while lecturing Marianne, his sister: "she was raising her children without the proper respect, he said. He was the only male influence in their lives and she thwarted and undermined him at every turn. Made him look foolish. Made him feel unwelcome. Turned his own flesh and blood against him" (107-08).

Isadore aligns himself generally with discourses of power and authority: he references nationalism when he hangs and salutes a limp national flag (14), and positions himself as the arbiter of heteronormative masculinity when he insists his nephew Guy is an effeminate "faggot" who must be toughened up by Isadore's favourite pastime, boxing, or find himself "at the mercy of the world" (84). Most significantly, Isadore comes to define himself through discourses of rural

traditionalism and folk heroism, encouraged by his captivated audience, the American teacher Alison Mason. This forms the central romance of the novel, as Isadore transforms himself into Alison's ideal of the authentic man: "Isadore knew Alison loved to hear such stories [and he] liked the idea of his own life and world as a fairy tale in contrast with the cold, urban, inauthentic America that Alison bemoaned" (213).[83]

Throughout the text Isadore is possessed of a sense of self-regard and self-righteousness that makes him impervious to criticism; his own failures can be blamed upon the forces that oppose his natural dominance, such as, variously, women, his family, his friends, American mass culture, and government programs. Isadore's defeat begins when Alison Mason finally recognizes his own alcoholic destruction is imminent if he continues to act as Isadore's "minion"; Alison punctures Isadore's self-delusions by assessing his advantages, leaving the implication that Isadore's failures are his own fault:

> Keeping his eyes closed, Alison spoke a truth he would never have dared speak to Isadore in any other circumstance.
>
> "Yes, you could," he agreed. "You could have been anything you wanted. You're physically bigger than anyone I've ever met. You're stronger… healthy… good-looking… charismatic….
>
> Isadore's face went through a number of transformations. There was a moment of sheer childlike glee at hearing what he had always believed about

[83] This relationship parallels and reflects Guy's failed romance with Corinne Fortune, who transforms Guy, through gossip, into a dangerous stalker. This fiction becomes real – has real consequences – when Corinne's brother assaults Guy.

> himself articulated so unequivocally. On its heels came grown-up suspicion…. Then a weird nobility came over Isadore's features….
>
> But the look was fleeting. It changed again to suspicion, dipped into anger, then took a nose dive and settled into perhaps the first honest expression Alison had ever beheld on that face. This was when he had to look away.
>
> "Fuck you, Yankee man." (240-41)

Isadore's response to this indication of his own culpability is to retreat back into a violently aggressive regional essentialism, yet he has been affected: in a symbolic departing gesture he flips on all the lights in Alison Mason's house, perhaps suggesting a wry enlightenment on the part of both men. Isadore's power diminishes from this point in the novel as other options to his domination, other networks of family, friends, and "behavioural environment" appear to Alison, Guy, his sister and his mother. Isadore is left behind, still incoherently sobbing the discourse of family unity (401) and thus illustrating what Coady herself has remarked of him:

> It's so dangerous to idealize anything, or anyone, or any place, because it gives that thing or person or place a kind of permission to not have to change, and not have to evolve. It encourages us to bury our heads in the sand, or in values that are really morally neutral but that we pretend are moral goods: tradition, community, and family for example. That's definitely the case with Isadore. (Steeves 235)

These representations of a static, dystopic patriarchal tradition suggest that tradition must remain relevant to the world of the present, that it cannot be used as a separate

sphere from which to berate contemporaneity.[84] Coady clearly suggests that attempts to immerse or cloak oneself in authenticity are as much a function of the present as any other way of organizing one's values and behaviours, and so the ways in which tradition is deployed must be carefully considered for their meanings and consequences.

As Coady interrogates the set of behaviours and values that are the inherited tradition and continuing influences on rural and small town life in Cape Breton, she also interrogates the idea of culture itself. She trains a knowing eye on the alienation of "culture" from ordinary life, on its treatment as a separate category of behaviour rather than everyday practice. This separation occurs only in conditions of modernity, when there is a paradigm shift from a historical local culture to the new practices of the local culture, influenced by and blended with intra-national and global elements, and sufficiently normalized as to be taken for granted. The omnipresence of television and increased access to a range of global cultural possibilities has accelerated this process immeasurably, making comparative cultural analysis an everyday practice. Dona Lee Davis'[85] study of cultural transformations in Newfoundland outports,

---

[84] Coady's controlling, traditionalist figures tend to be older men; in younger men the same tendencies are not permitted to blossom so completely into failure, but are rather stunted early by the increased agency and opposition of the women in their lives, taking advantage of transforming cultural norms. In *Strange Heaven*, Bridget's stalker ex-boyfriend Mark attempts to assume the mantle of destructive, patriarchal dominance, to be a father-figure and exert paternal control over his unborn child, but Bridget refuses to allow him this, going to Halifax to give up her baby and ending the relationship.

[85] Davis' 1990 and 1993 studies on perceived cultural identity surveyed 57 respondents in Grey Rock Harbour (a pseudonym); 14 of these were unmarried young people aged 16-24, whose responses she describes as being significantly different from older respondents.

though admittedly addressing unique communities far more remote than Cape Breton, has a resonance with Coady's interests. Davis observes that

> cable television… had a significant impact on delocalizing village culture. Through television, teenagers and young adults were developing a sense of themselves as being part of the wider North American working or middle class culture. Consumption of material goods, tastes in clothing and music, and general lifestyle goals became progressively dominated by national and international trends displacing local more traditional values. (182)

Davis charts the ways in which "culture" has come to mean those things her characters' ancestors took for granted: fiddle music, square dances, community feasts, and a village mentality of common interest and habits, for example. She observes that for the youth of today Newfoundland culture is something learned in social studies classes at school, through government campaigns, and through external media:

> Friendly, hospitable, and helpful were offered as character traits. All were traits that dominated the contemporary tourism literature… with teenagers this question about Newfoundland identity did not seem to register in the same way it did for the older generations. It was difficult to pin down my younger informants on just what they meant by 'dress,' 'customs,' and 'roots.' Some would refer to books they had read at school. There was some evidence to suggest that education designed to enhance local pride and self-respect could have had just the opposite effect. (184-85).

Coady pinpoints this local awareness of an idealized contempt on the part of external observers, owing to the reductiveness of their conflation of historical culture with

contemporary local culture, in her portrayal of the visits of family cousins from the exile of privileged urbanity in "A Great Man's Passing:"

> Uncle Roddie's children… had all grown up in Ontario and visited as children in the summers….
>
> Most of Roddie's kids were in the civil service, but one had gone to art school and now worked in the Museum of Civilization. They were still the way they had been, independent and open-minded, arguing with Daddy about the French. Whenever they visited, they would do things like buy a case of Alexander Keith's and go to square dances and Judique on the Floor Days and all the other festivals. They would come back to the house and sit in the kitchen with their Keith's and start all their sentences with "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph," and "Lord t'undering Jesus." They would play their Rankin Family and Rita MacNeil tapes. (*Play* 115-16)

While superficially descriptive, Coady's tone here is scathingly mocking of the way Bess' cousins seek a historic, authentic Folk, as McKay terms it, during their vacation tours of "home." The list of their activities emphasizes their nostalgia for elements of historic local culture that are available to them in museumized and commodified form, performed as the essential Cape Breton. C. Park and Philip Coppack note the importance of cloaking the production process in ersatz historicity to appeal to the "romantic sensibility" (163) of the visitor to the countryside, whose consumption is inspired by, and supported by, the psychological appeal of the atmosphere framing the goods produced: "What the consumer purchases, therefore, is not simply a quilt,

for example, but the knowledge that the quilt, which reflects local heritage, was purchased in a pleasing environment reminiscent of a bygone era" (Bryant et al. 350).

Coady instead exposes and emphasizes the conditions of production. For example, in "Run Every Day" the protagonist's mother attends a craft co-op, at which "all these ladies get together and make quilts, hook rugs, weave baskets, crochet pillowcases, and then peddle their wares to some of the tourist shops" (*Play* 194). This is a part of her new life, not her old life,[86] in which she scorned such pastimes. Wyile discusses another excellent example of Coady's attention to the slippage between authenticity and commodification: Robert's folk art production in *Strange Heaven*. Robert's golf balls with faces are "individualized creations crafted out of massproduced objects," while his duck decoys are "handcrafted originals that appear mass-produced" because of their perfect, bland sameness. This, Wyile observes, "playfully confound[s] Benjamin's argument that the 'whole sphere of authenticity is outside technical… reproduction.'" ("As For Me" 99). Coady's work reminds us that both are "authentic" as products of their time and place; further, the obvious artifice of the carved golf balls does not take away from their authenticity in contemporary cultural terms but rather confirms a revised understanding of authenticity that is culturally inclusive rather than essentialist.

Vilashini Cooppan comments that kitsch "disrupts both the possibility of the unmediated return to the native land and the broader cultural politics of authenticity within which the dialectic of exile and return operates," moving instead to "a

[86] Mitchell calls this "creative destruction," in which "the creation of a new landscape of commodified tradition ultimately will result in the destruction of the old, idyllic rural landscape upon which development initially was based" (274).

precarious politics of cultural representation that does not seek to restore loss so much as to turn loss into a kind of aesthetic, in which artifice triumphs over authenticity" (252). Kitsch, then, challenges a resistant regionalist subjectivity founded on authenticity. Coady's celebration of kitsch, as far as it goes, signals her resistance to a stereotyped regional reality, and her shift to an understanding of culture grounded in the everyday, not (only) in historical repetition.

Coady also reminds us, however, that the consumption of nostalgia is not limited to external observers and tourists, but also appeals to local residents. In *Strange Heaven* she emphasizes the way in which the murder of Bridget's acquaintance Jennifer MacDonnell is sentimentalized and commodified. Coady highlights the links between detached consumer interest in the event and the desire for an easy sentiment that veils the reality of Jennifer MacDonnell's existence. Bridget first hears of the murder in the context of the media frenzy it produced:

> vans and cars from the CBC and other local stations were parked out front for the first couple of days, distracting everybody. Bridget supposed that if you managed to position yourself just so in the main hall or out front, you might have seen yourself on the news that evening. Or heard yourself on the radio saying that it was just terrible. (9)

Bridget's detachment – "it was still like a thing on a screen" (10) – is followed by Coady's satire of the deliberately vague nature of the media attention that frames the murder in documentaries on "Killer Kids" and "violence in our schools, even though it happened outside of a donut shop" (11). This vagueness has its corollary in local sentiment that likewise alters the conditions of Jenny's life: Coady presents us with

the eventual production and popularity of "The Ballad of Jenny Mac," written by a West Bay fiddler to the tune of "The Wild Colonial Boy" and released on CD single. The woman killed is obscured within these layers: "Jennifer MacDonnell, who had never been called Jenny in her life, had sunk entirely beneath the horizon. Something else being erected in her place. She was queen of the prom, on her parent's [sic] mantelpiece forever, now" (162-63). While this sanitized Jennifer is of consolation to her mother and the community at large, Coady obliquely reminds us of the complexity now missing from her memory via the parallels between Jennifer and Bridget herself, who feels their similarities as she moves through places that remind her of Jennifer (164).

In Coady's works local culture is a vibrant, conflicted, polyvocal entity that satirizes the essentialist perspectives of which it is also composed. That culture is, of course, also constituted of a range of influences from across the continent and around the world, responding to and incorporating them at will. Across the globe, as Arjun Appadurai has pointed out, external ideas, art forms, styles, and expectations are not passively digested, but are integrated and re-produced in a local context. In *Strange Heaven* the donut shop becomes associated ever after with Jennifer MacDonnell; Pink Floyd comes to mind as Bridget contemplates her incarceration in Halifax; and golf balls find new life as overpriced tourist lures for the amusement of Bridget's father. Being constantly aware of these processes of surveillance and integration, many of Coady's characters deploy different discourses as their contexts alter, performing a parodic locality. An example is Hugh, one of the brothers of "Play the Monster Blind." He chooses to perform an exaggerated stereotype of local culture that draws

heavily on a general North American rural "hick" stereotype. This renders his intelligence and college career unthreatening to his friends:

> Hugh himself was a strange one, because, although he had gone to university, he spoke with an insanely nuanced accent that was nothing like the rest of the family's, and every second thing he said had something or other to do with his hole, and he wore an Expos cap just perched on the top of his head, but when she asked him what he did for a living, he replied that when he was not "partying his hole out," he worked with computers. Bethany asked John about it later on and he said "Oh, yah. He's the brain. Straight A's. Could have done anything he wanted." What he chose to do was teach courses at the vocational school and help people around town with their systems. He didn't go anywhere after university because, he said, all his friends were here. 'Friends're a pack of retards,' John once remarked. (*Play* 9)

Hugh has had a range of experiences that span educational and class definitions, but he chooses not to "go anywhere," in Bethany's snobbish estimation, because he prefers the life he has in his hometown. It is possible to see in Hugh a kind of informed, defensive retreat from the engagement with extra-regional norms that counters his brother John's literal engagement to Bethany. Hugh's interactions with his brother during Bethany's visit consist of an avoidance of conversation and repeated attempts to place his brother in "paralyser" wrestling holds which are "not supposed to hurt – they just immobilize" (6). In this sense, Hugh can be read as metaphorically stalled in his life, and interested in constraining and immobilizing his brother in the known and the familiar.

Just as Hugh is aware of the stereotypes he deploys, his brother John displays a nuanced awareness of the normative perspectives of his family and Bethany, his fiancée. Though he acts as Bethany's guide here, an informed insider, he is actually a transitional figure who moves between worlds, more aware than either side of the merits and idiocies of each, and occasionally embarrassed and betrayed by his position between them. We see his ability to switch discourses when John smoothes over his father's aggressive behaviour at a restaurant:

> The [waitress] was being charmed by him and the manager was being charmed by him in a different manner. … He could take your head between those two hands and pop it like a zit, but he was decent enough not to do that, not to even remind you that he could. He smiled, instead, and cajoled. He had no interest in bullying you – the easiest thing in the world for him to do. Everything about his demeanour said: *I am just a great big guy with a drunk dad and a new fiancée and nobody wants to feel like this, so let's not.* It was brave of him.
>
> …
>
> 'A little thing out there called PR,' he said to his pink, smirking father. (italics orig., 13)

After this apology, he soothes his father's continued bluster and indignation: " 'Boy, boy,' said John. 'Jeez, eh?' He went on making inarticulate noises of comfort and reprimand" (13). John is familiar with the techniques for consoling both groups. For these chameleonlike abilities he is sneered at by his father. Yet his father grudgingly

admits John's skills are necessary: "We'd get kicked outta where-all we went if the dip-lo-mat wasn't around" (16).

John mediates between his family and Bethany, sometimes awkwardly, as when his sister admires Bethany's luggage and effuses embarrassingly; "John intuited this and kept making jokes that some people had moved beyond Glad bags and cardboard" (8). This can be read as a reprimand but also a defense, a joking cover of his sister's lack of cosmopolitanism, betrayed by her own excessive admiration of what is normal and invisible to Bethany. He acts as a translator, dropping bottles in Bethany's purse so she doesn't feel she must politely drink them in the car (7), and briefing her before their drive around the Cabot Trail: "John told her that doing it was important to him and she would have to have fun. She was surprised he would put it this way, because she was looking forward to seeing the island" (7). Bethany's touristic assumptions are at the fore here: since she expects to feel aesthetic enjoyment, she is bewildered when John warns her to perform enjoyment. John does so because he knows, as she does not, that the aesthetics of place cannot be separated from the cultural context of the place. This connection is made clear when, after a moment in which Bethany uneasily wonders "if this was beautiful or not" at one of the lookoffs, "John suddenly moved past her and jumped up onto the wooden railing, framing himself against [the mountains]" (17). Here, his presence distracts her from the view and reminds her that what is important is that he is at the centre of her experience on this visit, not that she evaluate the landscape apart from him. John's acuity is useful to him, but it also makes him vulnerable, painfully aware of others' limitations and the conflicts in their perspectives, which are frequently less generous

than his own. Coady's transitional figures struggle to move between cultural groups, and find themselves imperfectly at home in all of them because of it.

Coady's representations of urban outsiders are, like her representations of cultural insiders, multifaceted. Her approach encompasses a critique of externally imposed stereotypes; a refutation of the tourist gaze; an examination of the nature of that gaze; and yet an appreciation for the extent to which these "outsiders" are a part of her characters' worlds. Accordingly, she emphasizes the friction that arises when characters' understanding of their own and others' identities comes into conflict with competing definitions.

Coady's exploration of urbanity and cities first takes in the extent to which urban life is a routine presence in the lives of its supposed opposite. This is immediately apparent in *Strange Heaven*, which announces its interest in this routine exchange when it opens in the psychiatric ward in Halifax and spends approximately its first hundred pages there, despite its focus on Cape Bretoners. In "Play the Monster Blind," the first story in the eponymous collection, the narrative unfolds through the perspective of Bethany, visiting Cape Breton from out of province. Coady pays significant attention to these interchanges of rural and urban spaces and cultural perspectives not because they are anomalous but because they happen so frequently that they have transformed the two spheres into one "urban field," as I have discussed. At the same time, Coady gestures to the way this integration has changed the topography and behaviour of small towns: most of the stories within *Play the Monster Blind* describe the physical suburbanization of streets and cul-de-sacs filled with a mix of modern bungalows and older homes. Likewise, "Jesus Christ,

Murdeena" presents the adoption of suburban driving culture within the small town. Murdeena's mother immediately believes she is asking for a drive when she announces her intention to walk: " 'Who goes for walks?' points out Margaret-Ann. She's right, too. Nobody goes for walks. The only people who go for walks are old women and men who have been told by their doctors that they have to get more exercise" (*Play* 63-64).

Coady's presentation of the normalcy of urban and suburban goods and behaviours within the parameters of small-town life rebuts any uncomplicated assumption of "separate spheres," and often deflates notions of urban superiority. *Strange Heaven's* city is represented primarily by its psychiatric ward, a haven that is really no haven at all, and by the home of Bridget's aunt and uncle, comfortingly similar to her own home. In *Saints of Big Harbour*, the glamour that the larger town of Big Harbour offers to Guy is a delusion: not only does the hoped-for transformation of his life fail to materialize, but he finds familiar cruelty in the teenagers of Big Harbour. In *Mean Boy*, naïve protagonist Larry Campbell's assumptions that an immersion in high culture, particularly as it is represented by the faraway poetry scene in Toronto, must transform its participants into sophisticated artists, are disillusioned by visiting poet Dermot Schofield's statement that the scene resembles high school, which was excruciatingly painful for Larry. Idealizing urban life, Coady reminds us, is as fruitless as idealizing rurality.

Troublingly, however, the only sustained representation of a large city Coady offers in her work characterizes cities as alienating, soulless places chosen by their inhabitants for their very soullessness – as an escape from the clinging messiness and

intrusion of small town life. Within "In Disguise as the Sky" the protagonist flees to a West Coast city to escape the smothering attention and need of her family, but feels the city is a "disappointment" because though it offers the freedom from intimacy she craves, it extends this to a crushing indifference toward human life. She observes this indifference in pedestrians' ingrained avoidance of a howling homeless man (*Play* 160), and in the failure of all but herself to notice the anguish of a man in the park, compulsively eating ice cream and completely dressed in blue, "in disguise as the sky." In response, the protagonist ambiguously comments, "It was unthinkable. It was unspeakable" (*Play* 162). Coady leaves the reader to interpret her protagonist's thoughts, but presumably it is her pity and compassion for his solitude that leave her aching, sweating and still, observing him (162). Though Coady displays a fine-tuned awareness of the ways in which urban perspectives can misrepresent and inaccurately distance the rural, she does not offer much beyond a generalized, hostile look at cities.

Coady's treatment of the cultural outsiders who visit small town Cape Breton is more extended, though it too is frequently critical. While these outsiders are complex characters who are explored in considerable depth by Coady, they are also, to some extent, allegories of region and nation that are used to comment on the cultural hierarchies linking the East Coast within Canada. Like Lisa Moore, Coady uses interpersonal relationships to explore inter-regional relationships, looking incisively at relations of dependency and power. In both the individual and allegorical aspects of her approach, she critiques the ethnographic gaze these characters bring to the region, making clear the condescension of its presumption of one-sided scrutiny.

Coady's local characters often respond with acute awareness of the perspectives of the observers, altering their behaviours in response, as I have discussed with reference to Hugh in "Play the Monster Blind" and Isadore in *Saints of Big Harbour*.

With this in mind, I wish to assess Coady's treatment of three of her work's cultural outsiders: Bethany, in "Play the Monster Blind," offers Coady an opportunity to examine a complex linkage of love and contempt between Bethany and John, whose Cape Breton home they visit; Alan, whose reappearance in "Look, and Pass On" after his significant role within *Strange Heaven* offers Bridget a chance to invalidate his assumptions; and Alison Mason, who transforms throughout *Saints of Big Harbour* to offer a positive transition to its protagonist, Guy Boucher.

In "Play the Monster Blind," Coady's representation of her protagonist, Bethany, is unflattering in its construction of her naivety and her misuse of power. From the beginning, it is clear that Bethany is quick to judge; she desires labels, glad of the foreknowledge that her fiancé's uncle is "Mentally Handicapped," because "It was good to have a label, something her mind could scrutinize. It was good to have an idea what to expect" (*Play* 9). She draws quick conclusions about her fiancé, John, from the beginning of their relationship: "she learned where he was from and imagined they must all dress like that, that it must be a very welcoming place, rustic and simple and safe" (4). Bethany's expectation of rural simplicity is typically idealized, adhering to what Robert Meeker describes as urbanites' "romantic nostalgia for rural village life, free from ethnic and class friction" (64). As Coady confirms, this nostalgia is largely the product of optimistic ignorance. Bethany,

personifying John Urry's "tourist gaze," continues to expect a rustic welcome from the Folk, with comic results:

> She went into one of [the country stores] to get lemonade and ice-cream bars for everybody, and the woman behind the counter was not nearly as friendly as Bethany had been expecting. …
>
> "You've got a lovely place here," said Bethany, and the woman regarded her with terror. She thought Bethany was talking about the store, and not the island, and therefore must be insane. She added, "This is my first visit," to make it more clear. The woman looked down at the little girl, as if hoping to find her trespassing again so that she could yell at her and ignore Bethany. But the girl was being good, so the woman ignored Bethany anyway, a confused and queasy look taking over her ruddy, mean face. (20-21)

Bethany, of course, does not make anything more clear, and her expectations are foiled. The ambiguity of the narrative voice within this passage is interesting: it is uncertain whether the narrator tells us the cashier's thoughts or Bethany's approximations of the cashier's thoughts. Either way, Bethany's expectation of agreement with her judgements of the landscape's pleasing aesthetics, and her condemnation of the built environment, is met with an uncooperative silence: the woman behind the counter refuses to engage with the visitor who has categorized her store as ugly and her face as "mean."

Bethany is defied as well by the landscape, at least in relation to her expectations of it. It is worth returning in more detail to the story's lookout scene:

> They stopped at a lookout point, and Bethany climbed out before the rest. In every direction she turned, she could see nothing but dark, fuzzy mountains. The ever-present ocean was nowhere in sight, and it disoriented her. She didn't know if this was beautiful or not. The green mounds sloped upward uninsistantly, and then came together in dark, obscene valleys that reminded her of the creases in a woman's flesh – her own. Reminded her of sitting naked and looking down at the spot where her stomach protruded slightly over her thighs. (16-17)

The callowness of Bethany's aesthetic inability to evaluate the landscape is evident in her puzzled thought, "she didn't know if this was beautiful or not." Its beauty is outside her touristic understanding. Without a reference point from which to construct a sense of superiority, she is powerless. This is made clear as Bethany's thoughts turn back on herself in a classic instance of Frye's garrison mentality or MacGregor's Wacousta syndrome: the dense trees, without long vistas, provoke a feeling of threat, forcing her into too close a contemplation of herself and her inadequacies, expressed here through her distantly disgusted thoughts of her most private body. When John enters her viewplane, she fears he will "disappear into one of the dark creases" (17), which suggests she sees Cape Breton, his home and family, as a rival for his loyalties, a mythical vagina dentata that could consume him.

The limitations of Bethany's understanding are clear at the end of the story. Told of John's father's alcoholism, she quickly affixes the customary label: "He's an alcoholic," said Bethany, epiphanic. They were walking along the beach when he told her this. 'Oh Christ,' John said then, letting go of her hand. 'You don't know much'"

(22). Bethany's inability to gauge the social contexts for his father's drinking, which are conveyed to the reader throughout the story by Bethany's own oblivious comments, cause John finally to become impatient with her. In return, she begins to exercise her power over him, withholding her forgiveness after she is accidentally injured in one of the siblings' play-brawls. She chooses to perform outrage and offense instead of being ostentatiously tolerant as before: "Bethany wiggled her tooth and felt pleasure at the sudden bit of power. She smiled involuntarily, separating her bottom split lip and receiving a thread of pain. Perhaps she would be mad. Refuse to say another word. Keep him up all night with worry, her very need for him in question" (25). Bethany's pain and power are interlinked, creating a cycle in which she acts in revenge for her fear of losing him. This cycle depends upon Bethany's ability to divide his allegiance from his family and cause him to cling to her, and he does: even knowing her simplistic judgement, he places himself under her power and submits his existence, connections, identity, and past to her perspective.

Another sustained examination of a cultural outsider eventually reverses this form of power relationship: Alan Voorland, who appears in *Strange Heaven* and "Look, and Pass On," is shaken by the realization that Bridget is far less dependent on him than he believes. Alan and Bridget's friendship in *Strange Heaven* is assessed at length by Herb Wyile, who observes they are drawn together by a "mutual attraction… grounded in an exoticism born of both regional and class disparities" ("As For Me" 95) that allows each to act as an escape from the other's regional norms. Yet the hierarchies between them remain. Alan's playfully ethnographic approach to the town and to Bridget superficially demonstrates his respect of their

differences, but is revealed for the condescension it is: at the end of *Strange Heaven* he brushes her off, lightly "trying to make her feel special one last time" by calling her "my strange and wonderful Bridget Murphy" (191). She is his, but he isn't hers, as his girlfriend waits in the background for him to get off the telephone. The text uses Alan to condemn the assumption of sophistication and superiority on the part of cultural outsiders; Wyile concludes that "Coady's portrait of Alan rebuffs the paternalistic gaze of a central Canadian and his self-fulfilling, derogatory stereotypes of the East" ("As For Me" 97). Alan, however, never realizes his own limitations.

This is redressed in *Play the Monster Blind*'s "Look, and Pass On," a sequel of sorts to *Strange Heaven* in which Alan, now the protagonist, is shaken by the strength of Bridget's passive resistance to him, and realizes that she may find him inadequate. The story begins by emphasizing Alan's belief in his superior wealth and sophistication, but it then satirizes his sophomoric intellect: "He could talk to her about whatever came to mind. Books he'd read. Music she should listen to. Interesting ideas he sometimes had about things – what he liked to call his 'little philosophies'" (85). She also skewers the egotism inherent in his presumption of Bridget's admiration of him: he recalls "she'd looked up [when they met] as if he had introduced himself as an angel of the Lord" (86). These representations sketch Alan as a caricature of central Canadian liberalism, "greeting every [CBC] announcer by name" (88), believing in his own noblesse oblige as he stoops to help Bridget, to whom he refers, at least in his mind, as "The Thing" (83).

Alan slowly comes to recognize his inadequacy and shallowness through the course of their long drive to central Canada. His intellectual superiority is punctured

by Bridget's reaction to his facile comment about Dante's *Inferno*, that he never worries about going to hell now because "it tells you how to get out" (89). Bridget knows better: "I wouldn't think they'd just let you out" (89), she reflects, and Alan is forced to recall that "Dante had only been visiting…. Hell is not for tourists" (89-90). Although Alan attributes her insight to Catholicism, comparisons of their lives provide clearer lessons: Alan met Bridget while slumming at the pulp mill, visiting what was at times her hell, and, like Dante, casually returned to his life in Ontario. Bridget has dwelt in torment; her transformation of hell into a "strange heaven," and her bridging of class and regional boundaries now, as she travels to university, make her exceptional in a way he has never been.

More troubling to Alan is Bridget's failure to behave toward him in ways that allow him to feel his privilege: she is not grateful, but passively accepting in a way that indicates a fatalistic tolerance of him. He reflects on her laconic response of "Ach" to his patronizing concern about her solitude at school, saying that it is "a wonderful word. The retch of it embodying pure disdain. Complete dismissal" (88). Its wonder is dimmed, however, when such indifferent dismissal is turned on him. Coady explores this reversal in their power relationship using their sexual relationship. Bridget refuses objectification in the form of thong underpants, insisting with some dignity upon her grandmother's drawers, and responds to his attempts to cajole her by exposing and playing up the inferiority he has implicitly assigned to her, as a strategy of avoidance and resistance: "She was doing the big hick-voice now because she did it whenever they discussed her body" (87). Further, Bridget's refusal of sexual pleasure frustrates Alan's desire to help her with what he considers her

problem of frigidity. He wishes to be the prince who will wake her up, even while he hedges "I'm not saying I'm in love with you" (93). Instead his lack of appeal and importance is exposed by his inability to give her sexual satisfaction (93). Coady's fragmented presentation of Bridget's thoughts and past history suggests that she has taken back her body after its possession by her unwanted baby and its attempted possession by her ex-boyfriend. She regains a sense of self through her refusal to respond, denying him gratitude and the pleasure of having pleased her, or of knowing what she desires. Again, as both an exploration of sexual dynamics and as an analogue for regional power relations, this refusal of access is important. Alan wishes for the dominance of complete knowledge, to believe that "nothing is a mystery to him" (91); he cannot understand how Bridget feels about her pregnancy and her recovery, and that her pleasure is now in refusing to contest the territory of her body, in insisting on her unknowable otherness.

Alan's uncomfortable realization of his own powerlessness exposes the inadequacy of his assumptions and behaviour. At the end of the story he reflects that he "used to feel impervious with knowledge, 'existentially at ease,' he used to tell his friends – when he wasn't being pretentious about Dante…. Now he felt like a fraud. But he did not feel like a fraud. He felt like a dupe" (94). Yet Alan's epiphany is only partial. Coady traces the continued limitations of his perspective as he reacts to this realization with anger and condemnation, locating the "nastiness" of Bridget's indifference in a "culture of defeat," to paraphrase Stephen Harper's famous epithet:[87]

[87] Harper's quotation is "I think in Atlantic Canada, because of what happened in the decades following Confederation, there is a culture of defeat that we have to overcome... Atlantic Canada's culture of defeat will be hard to overcome as long as

> He… thought that all she ever did was wait for everything to be over. It was grotesque…. Impervious. Contagious. Dangerous to have this kind of realization on a highway in the middle of Canada. He had wanted to drive them into an oncoming truck, and the thing, he knew, would not have spoken as he did. (94)

Here Coady characterizes the resentment of the cultural observer denied in his wish to possess and fetishize an Atlantic Canadian consciousness. Alan confuses her indifference to him with an indifference to the world in general; he diagnoses her passivity and condemns her for it, distancing her as "grotesque" and implicitly characterizing her as less than human, as his chilling uncapitalized use of "the thing" at the end of the story suggests. Alan retreats into arrogance, but Coady suggests the falsity of his perspective by providing a levelling counterpoint to his horror in Bridget's own last words within the story: "I just wanna get to school" (93). Far from being the victim he believes her to be, she remains an enigma, but one with far more agency and strength than she has been credited with. Coady's goal in "Look, and Pass On" is clear: in "talking back" to Alan she does not succeed in producing inter-regional harmony, but she seriously disrupts the normalized discourses of regional disparity, exposing its shortcomings and suggesting a far more complex and equitable relation.

Coady explores the potential for a more equitable exchange between regional and extra-regional cultural perspectives through her characterization of the alcoholic

---

Atlantic Canada is actually physically trailing the rest of the country" (*"Harper Calls"*).

American teacher Alison Mason in *Saints of Big Harbour*. Alison's vision of regional identity and potential in small town Cape Breton develops throughout the novel. To begin, Alison's liberal romanticism and desire to escape his troubled background lead him to valorize Isadore:

> Isadore simply struck Alison as being more tuned in than he was, as having a more fundamental, primal connection to the world around him.
>
> …
>
> A voice spoke up in Alison as well. *Maybe,* it said*, maybe you are wrong about Isadore. Maybe Isadore is nothing but an ugly-minded, dirt-ignorant hick and you have been kidding yourself all along.* This voice had spoken up before, but Alison refused to give it credence. It reminded him of his parents and all their hypocritical, half-assed snobbery. He couldn't be wrong about Isadore, because Isadore had somehow evolved into Alison's single ethical foothold in the world. (217-18, italics orig.)

Alison's veneration of Isadore as "fundamental" and "primal" fits well with McKay's description of the antimodernism espoused by the American back-to-the-landers who came to Nova Scotia throughout the 1970s: "the Folk imagined by the neo-pioneers were happy-go-lucky, hedonistic… rather like them…. Full of the raucous, vulgar, Rabelaisian vitality that is the stuff of real life" (285-87). Alison finally wearies of both his own alcoholism and Isadore's bullying delusions; he weans himself from dependency as he reconsiders his ideas of friendship, ethics, place and local culture. He is hardly heroic, but he strives to understand and participate in the complexity of the social relations around him, rather than acquiescing to Isadore's ideals.

Coady brings Alison and young protagonist Guy Boucher together at the end of the novel, juxtaposing their struggles to transform themselves, and examining the way they assist each other. She uses the discourse of rehabilitation: they both "have been through a lot" and are "on the buddy system… like in the program" (387). When a constable visits, Alison is able to offer his educated, outsider's perspective in Guy's service:

> "Constable MacLellan," said Alison, "do your superiors know you're here?" MacLellan folded his arms and turned slowly back to Alison. "Mr. Mason," he enunciated. "you're from… where exactly? You're not a local fella, now, are you?"
>
> …
>
> "I'm wondering what your point is."
>
> "Here is my point," said MacLellan. "I have known Fred Fortune my whole life. And I have known Isadore Aucoin my whole life and this is my community. I don't know what it is to you, but this is where I was born." MacLellan stood there. Apparently this was all there was to his point. …
>
> "Be that as it may," [Alison] said, concentrating on the linoleum floor. "I am not from around here, that's true, and I'm no lawyer either, but it strikes me that what you've been doing, and what you're attempting to do now, is illegal. So I don't think I am going to let you harass this boy any further." He looked up from the linoleum and smiled apologetically…. "This is nonsense." (392)

Here Alison disrupts the bullying entitlement and unquestioning loyalty that are some of the unappealing, dystopic aspects of cultural essentialism. Further, Alison refuses MacLellan's definition of cultural belonging and the constable's insistence on Alison's powerlessness as someone who is outside the culture. Coady insists that Alison matters, that he changes the nature and behaviour of his community. He breaks down dichotomous systems for Guy, ushering him to a world in which "simple answers" are "retarded" (412); his answer to Guy's insistence upon "yes or no" questions is instead "Aren't there any other choices?" (412). Alison transforms through the novel from a man whom everyone, including himself, considers an outsider to a vital part of Guy's changed sense of family and community, which depends not on "blood soil," as Coady refers to it, but on a wider range of relationships that are intentionally crafted and maintained.

These kinds of transformations, whether conscious on the part of characters or ironically indicated by the narrative, must be at the heart of a consideration of the implications of Coady's work. The regional identity she represents remains profoundly uneven: it is permanently changed by the pervasiveness of globalized influences that challenge any attempt to maintain a regional essentialism, yet it yearns for an identifiable face, for stability, tradition, and roots. Coady suggests that identity is best located within this conflict, in an unsparing examination of the collision of these desires as they are performed every day in the region. Accordingly, her parodic regionalism ultimately denies the possibility of essentialist retreat, whether generated from within the region or imposed from outside of it, but such a view of the region contains elements of essentialism and acknowledges its continued power, and its

possibilities for cultural resistance. Tradition and difference can, Coady insists, be ground on which to stand and defend "books that say arse" to the world, but only if those qualities are understood to be constantly renewed and shaped by the realities of the inhabitants of the region today: at the end of *Saints of Big Harbour*, the ramshackle old house in which Isadore had terrorized the family is renovated by Guy's sister Louise and Dan C., her Gaelic-muttering new husband, who installs cupboards with "lumber so fresh, it might have been cut the day before" (411). Though wary of discourses of progress and improvement, Coady insists upon renewal and movement: she resists static definitions of culture, and proclaims the value of cultural instability and contradiction, exhilarating and difficult as they are.

Chapter 6

"As if there were just the two choices:" Lisa Moore Redefines the Atlantic Canadian City

Lisa Moore's novel *Alligator* (2005), and her two collections of short stories, *Open* (2002) and *Degrees of Nakedness* (1995), have received considerable notice: for example, *Open* was nominated for both the Giller Prize, an award of national and international significance, and the Winterset Award for Excellence in Newfoundland Writing, a regional distinction. This is fitting because, like Winter and Coady, Moore presents the inseparability of the regional and the global: her work explores and redefines what is commonly understood to be regional literature – that is, literature that emphasizes what are considered to be a region's cultural attributes: a distinct sense of place, a shared social and economic history, a common sense of tradition, and a shared dialect. As Lawrence Mathews indicates in the introduction to *Essays on Canadian Writing*'s special issue on the literature of Newfoundland, the generation of writers who have gained recent prominence do not foreground the cohesion of a Newfoundland identity and psyche; rather, they treat identity quite differently, either questioning and "map[ping] the complexities and ironies that attend the question of Newfoundland identity" ("Report" 9), as Mathews says of Wayne Johnston, or "demonstrat[ing] the extent to which Newfoundland fiction has moved beyond such concerns" (10), as he remarks of Lisa Moore and Paul Bowdring.

Moore does emphatically move away from a cohesive model of identity, but her work is, nevertheless, intimately concerned with the construction of contemporary regional identity. It offers a detailed examination of what Glenn Willmott terms the

"contestatory interaction" and "copenetration" of regional and cosmopolitan worlds (*Unreal* 146); it draws attention to the very instability of Newfoundland's cultural attributes and suggests a conception of regional identity founded in the state of constant "flux," to use Moore's word, produced by the dialogue of Newfoundland's particularities both with other cultures and with a globalized Western culture. Where Michael Winter's work moves between city and wilderness, and Lynn Coady focuses upon small town life, Moore's work explores the urbanity, and suburbanity, of the region. It traces the intricacies of individual relationships amongst middle and upper-class Newfoundlanders, for whom both physical travel and at-home encounters with other cultural influences are commonplace: the distinction between what is and what is not a home place is increasingly blurred, dependent not only on topography but on human connection – and disconnection. Significantly, Moore's fiction investigates the results of this instability, functioning not merely as a catalogue of "the new Newfoundland," but drawing our attention to the ways in which such negotiations of regional identity and global influences are played out in the minute actions of our everyday lives, infusing them with political import and responsibility.

Ironically, because of continued popular perceptions of the Atlantic region as rural, isolated, and antimodern, Moore's work is often not considered to be regional, or at least to be unengaged with issues of place and region. Reviews of her work tend to highlight its formal qualities, urban settings, and telescopically close focus on individuals and moments in time, qualities which often are treated as a separate,

"apolitical" realm (deCook 75), at least in non-academic literary circles.[88] Moore's revisioning of Newfoundland goes unremarked.

Public perceptions of Moore's treatment of St. John's tend to fall into two opposing categories, either urban fiction or Newfoundland fiction. In the former St. John's is treated as a city removed from its regional context, while in the latter urbanity is removed from the city, as when Brian Bethune groups St. John's with other novelistic settings which are "still rooted in the past, in smaller communities and dominant cultures" (84). Following the release of *Alligator* in November 2005, a CBC interview by Shelagh Rogers likewise falls into this dichotomy: drawing on a highly typed vision of the region, Rogers was briefly incredulous that Valentin, the Russian in *Alligator*, should dislike St. John's – and then dropped the subject. Moore's use of Valentin to train an intentionally disruptive, hostile gaze on the city and expose some of its less quaint and charming aspects went undiscussed.[89]

Academic treatments of Moore's work, like popular responses and reviews, have thus far spent little time examining Moore's treatment of regionality. Lawrence Mathews, one of Moore's mentors in the Burning Rock writing collective, argues

---

[88] Articles profiling Moore when her collection *Open* was nominated for the Giller highlighted such matters. For an example, see Bethune.

[89] The remaining part of the interview serves as a good example of the tendency to conflate author and text, as the discussion revolved around the text's representations of "reality" – specifically how Moore's own life, habits, children, and travels influence and figure in her work. Insistent on foregrounding the personal, Rogers responded to Moore's comment that she was interested in creating a story around an alligator by insisting that the novel "has a very documentary feel to it." Rogers, in a piece of situational irony, extended this deliberate insistence on factual representation by insisting Moore is trying to write the "great Newfoundland novel," naively comparing Moore to her character Madeleine without noting that Madeleine's search for regional representativeness is called into question throughout *Alligator*, as I will discuss.

Moore has "[no] interest in developing an overview of Newfoundland identity," and that her treatment implies these issues have "been settled or become irrelevant" ("Report" 12). He goes on to qualify that Moore does implicitly illustrate a sense of place, but he does this by invoking a duality of past and present writing, contrasting her characters' concerns with the " 'island-wide inferiority complex' of the fictional figures who belong to earlier generations" (14). Mathews' comments suggest a view of regional writing that assumes a text must either, positively or negatively depending on one's tastes, focus wholly on illustrating an authentic regional identity located in the past, or ignore region altogether in favour of immersion in a non-regional present. If these in fact are the choices, Moore's work has not been considered regional, and for this it has been celebrated.

Although Moore has been lauded for her representations of urban life, her work is not often recognized for its counterbalancing of urban and regional tropes. This is odd, because Moore's fiction chiefly examines the urban consciousness of a city that is the dwelling places of a significant and growing part of the region's population.[90] The quality of this balance of urban and regional, in a region characterized by rurality, is the focus of this chapter. The kinds of urbanity Moore highlights are important: in contrast to a strong trend in Canadian urban fiction to posit the city as the heart of a truly contemporary culture, Moore's cities – and

[90] Even in the Maritime region, where a greater percentage of the population remains rural than in the rest of the country, approximately half of the populace now make their homes in cities (Statscan, Isin 112). The 1991 census indicates 1,182,986 of the Maritime region's total population of 2,322,081 live in urban areas, defined as areas with a population density of more than 1,000 persons per square mile. This is a much lower percentage than the national total, where almost 21 of 27.3 million live in urban areas.

especially her portrayal of St. John's – are characterized by their juxtaposition of a traditional, picturesque inner city, which works as the urban analogue of rural authenticity, with its surrounding and interpenetrating suburban alter ego, characterized by a globalized, homogenous mass culture. Moore's presentation of the globalization of the regional city disrupts common assumptions about both the nature of Atlantic regionality and Canadian urbanity; it not only highlights the processes of cultural change but emphasizes their ordinariness, undercutting attempts to frame either the local or global as exotic.

The nature of urban life has been one of the most common and most critically respected themes in international fiction of the past century; the Modernists raised urban fiction to the apex of their hierarchy of genres and themes, seeing in it the formation of a new way of being in the world. The development of Canadian fiction over the last century, however, has followed a significantly different trajectory: it has been dominated by the hinterlands and the harsh climate of the country, and by depictions of the people most affected by its challenge: rural and small-town dwellers.[91] As Justin Edwards and Douglas Ivison lament in the introduction to *Downtown Canada: Writing Canadian Cities*, "discussions of Canadian literature have failed to engage actively with the country's urban experience" (ii).

Such literary perspectives that seek to locate an authentic Canadianness outside of the ordinary experience of most Canadians actually resemble a well-

[91] As noted earlier, mythopoeic critics of the sixties and seventies attempted to capture the consciousness of the Canadian psyche and literature using such tropes as "Survival" (Atwood) the "garrison mentality" (Frye), or the "Wolf in the Snow" (Tallman); more recently, John Ralston Saul has characterized Canada by its "nordicity."

developed trend in urban development in the twentieth century. In reaction to the popularly articulated cultural ideal of the domestic suburban retreat, the inner city defined itself as a repository of authentic culture, capitalizing on and promoting both its high-cultural attributes and its counter-cultural credibility. David Ley, examining the gentrification of Canadian inner cities, describes this ideal:

> [Gentrifiers'] selection of the central city is also about the enlargement of identity, the consummation of desire (Caulfield 1989). That desire has shown some evolution through time. The origins of gentrification around 1970 coincided with the demographic bulge of the baby boom entering the housing market, and there is considerable evidence that an inner city address represented a counter-cultural act, or at least an expression of an alternative cultural politics, for a particular fragment of the new class…. The perception of this cultural new class counterposed the world of the conformist suburbs unfavourably against the more diverse opportunities of the inner city. The diversity, community, and non-conformist nature of the old urban neighbourhoods were highly valued in contrast to… the inauthenticity of modern urban landscapes. (25)

As Paul Milton points out, such a perspective also has the potential to be a "displaced attack on middle-class philistinism that ignore[s] the lived experience of suburban dwellers" (170) and pours contempt on them while claiming a moral and cultural superiority.

This rebuttal of trope with counter-trope lends itself to the mythologization of the city, especially those cities and the parts of cities that we readily recognize as

being urban: the architecture- and population-dense, nineteenth-century (or older) inner cities. To focus on this idea of the city is to recognize certain transformations of time and heterogeneities of population and culture, but also to maintain a definition of "urbanity" that is allied to specific understandings of cultural authenticity. This ideal has its blindnesses. Ley notes that the critical stance he describes has itself long been commodified and aestheticized; the quality of life such arguments rehearse is as much promoted as lived, as municipalities strive to create a "convivial city" whose attributes of arts, sports, historic sites and tourist amenities are above all sound economic policy (29). In such conditions the authenticity and difference of the inner city is revealed to be a powerful myth.

The desire to construct an "authentic" inner city is particularly strong in regional centres, which are often expected to epitomize the urban face of a defined regional identity. This vision of the city as a bastion of an authentic regional-urban culture and character, an uneasy amalgam of the local and the cosmopolitan, is inherently paradoxical and yet immensely appealing, positing the regional city as a bridge between local and global.[92] It depends upon the deployment of urban cultural heterogeneity, yoked with the cultural particularity of the regional, as a site of resistance to mass-market monoculture. Here, then, the regional city resists homogeneity with the transformative power of its own unique, multifaceted cultural particularity; the city, as it has long been, remains a place where one can "be oneself,"

[92] Soja notes the increasing internationalization of economic relations, which involves a "reaching out from the urban to the global and a reaching in from the global to the urban locale" (*Postmodern* 188), and results in the increasing importance of "world cities."

can be real. In this sense, the city is as resistant to change, as "provincial," as Lucy Lippard notes, as any rural region.

This idea of the regional city, however, can be maintained only by rigidly policed borders, by the determined submergence of what we might consider to be the "global ordinary." Both urban locality and urban globality here are defined by their exoticism and difference, which are posited as authentic. What is missing is an acknowledgement that the commonplaces of global and intercultural life coexist with the extra-ordinariness of both regional particularity and global exoticism, or foreignness. Instead, within many constructions of the regional city we see a denial of the ordinary, which is as much or more a part of globalized culture as any exoticism. This translates into a determined lack of attention to the suburbs. Lisa Moore's work is important because of the way she rebuts this vision of the "authentic" regional city, and foregrounds the dailiness of global elements in the contemporary life of the region.

To investigate Moore's interarticulation of the regional and the cosmopolitan, I want to look first at the use to which she puts Newfoundland's physical geography in her stories – namely, in reinforcing in her readers' minds that, as she remarks in an interview with the *Globe and Mail*, "St. John's [is] an international port -- and Newfoundlanders travel. They travel for work. So in some ways, though it's a small place, though it's isolated, it's pretty cosmopolitan. My characters reflect that" (Ruth). The way her characters inhabit space, in connection with the way they organize their lives, and the way they function as twenty-first century consumers, is quite different from the historically rural, outport stereotype of Newfoundland landscape. Moore's

characters inhabit busy streets, back yards, bars and chain stores which both are and are not discernibly local. Immediately, this deliberate contestation of the "place" that defines region indicates Moore's work engages with a postmodern regionalism; she challenges the accepted geographical and cultural boundaries of the region, "mak[ing] regionalism's borders – those paradoxical middle grounds" – [her] referent" (107), to paraphrase David Jordan.

Accordingly, Moore's work emphasizes Newfoundland's conversation with exterior perceptions and influences. In the story "Carmen Has Gonorrhoea" we follow the sound of Carmen's name as it moves through the streets of St. John's, "thunders up the hills of downtown, raises the hairs of the leaves of geraniums in the windows of Gower Street, makes the light turn green at Rawlins Cross, grows softer, ticklish, near our split-level behind the Avalon Mall" (*Degrees* 67). The narrative mapping of the city reduces the mythologizing of such storied spots as Rawlins Cross to their functionality in the daily lives of inhabitants, and connects such places, literally, to the suburban ordinariness of malls, cement trucks, and cul de sacs. In the same fashion Moore demythologizes Signal Hill, reclaiming it in several stories as a site for private interaction and everyday use: making love (*Degrees* 128), getting drunk (*Open* 215), walking in the fog (*Degrees* 63). However, such treatment is inevitably variable, especially as Moore uses Signal Hill for the final scene in the text of her collection *Open*: it remains an iconic, touristic "signal" of Newfoundland at the same time as it performs a private role in individuals' stories and lives. In another story, "Azalea," Moore shifts to the opposite end of the symbolic spectrum, examining the more unprepossessing aspects of the city's geography: she lingers on "the stoplight

near Don Cherry's Sport's Grill" (*Open* 113) as a place her characters "might be, right now." Here, Moore draws generic infrastructure, with its correspondingly generic chain store (national overtones acknowledged), into the fabric of the city, acknowledging it as place, not merely conduit. Similarly, a recurring landmark in Moore's stories is a corner store called the Fountain Spray: it is referred to several times by a character who decides, deliberately, to continue calling it that "Though it hasn't had that name for years. Needs, it's called now. Needs" (*Open* 93). Even a quotidian corner store, part of a large North American brand, becomes a place of significance and is revealed to have a layered history that emerges over the course of several stories.

In this manner, Moore recognizes the place of the global in local contexts, highlighting the literal "location" of anonymous, standardized, and multinational entities within the web of existence in St. John's, seeing them as more than a monolithic, encroaching force of destruction. As such, Moore directs attention to the continuous modification of local cultures, their dialectic with, and adaptation of, what is "outside" themselves. Her work makes clear that globalization must be approached, as Arjun Appadurai proposes, not as a process of uniform, one-sided homogenization, but rather by taking into account the ways in which global influences are indigenized within specific cultures, and in turn the ways in which specific cultures contribute to this network of "global flows." Thus cultural globalization is a profoundly uneven, contextual process, and one that is, moreover, inevitable:

> This is not to say that there are no relatively stable communities and networks of kinship, friendship, work, and leisure, as well as of birth, residence, and

other filial forms. But it is to say that the warp of these stabilities is everywhere shot through with the woof of human motion. (33)

"Human motion," here, can be understood not only to encompass the actual travel of human beings but also the "flows" of companies, commodities, architectures, and methods of social and spatial organization. Moore's works emphasize both her characters' literal motion and their continual engagement with the goods and ideas that continually arrive in Newfoundland, by material or virtual means.

Just as Moore's stories highlight the integration of globalized elements into the fabric of the regional city, her novel *Alligator* more directly challenges an unquestioning idealization and authentication of traditional folk-culture and working class aspects of St. John's. Instead Moore focuses on the difficulty and deprivation in the life of Frank, a young hot-dog seller whose perspectives and class background challenge the values of the other parallel lives in the novel. Frank's poverty is far from idealized: his leaking rooming house, memories of foster homes, and the ease with which he is financially exploited and ruined by thugs all jar with the comfort and security against which the middle-class characters chafe. Frank aspires to this comfort and dreams of a suburban lifestyle: in Sears, he is diverted by the retail clerk's suggestion of a wet bar and imagines it as a signifier of "potential" (128).[93] Similarly,

[93] Engin Isin describes the ways in which class affiliations and occupations have changed within urban areas, affecting the spatial and social relations of city and suburb. He observes that the transition from an industrial to a postindustrial economy dominated by service and knowledge workers has altered the nature of class conflict:

> while [the metropolis] started the century as an arena of class conflict between the industrial bourgeoisie and the working class, it became the site of conflict between the new managerial and professional classes employed in knowledge industries with global linkages, accumulating cultural as well as economic capital, and the new working classes employed in service and support

Frank's desire for Colleen, a middle-class teenager, is linked to his desire for the life she easily and unconsciously inhabits.[94] While Frank's whole being focuses on earning enough to buy a hot dog cart, other characters easily finance film projects or international travel, sometimes through dishonest means. Frank's transience is forced, while for other characters transience is chosen.

As a symbol of present-day urban poverty in St. John's, he counters the nostalgic vision of the affluent filmmaker Madeleine: she envisions a culturally authentic, historic regional poverty, outports with "bells clanging in the grey sodden skies" and "wan-faced children in rags watching wide-eyed as the archbishop ranted from the pulpit" (300). Madeleine, whose condo looking over the city, and mind full of European memories, indicate her separation from any simplistic vision of traditional Newfoundland, is nevertheless as desperate to access it as Frank is to escape it. She struggles to pursue this vision in her film, yet finds its falsity is revealed in the process of attempting to illuminate it. Madeleine's reflection on the

---

> industries. … When critical research focuses on class and its effects on the city, it must take into account this significant class shift and the new role of cultural capital. The transformation of the metropolis from a strong core city surrounded by peripheral suburbs to a polycentric urban region with multiple and conflicting nodes of residential, industrial, and commercial growth must be seen against the background of this class shift. (121-22)

[94] "She was from a comfortable home where, Frank bet, she had never needed anything. She'd never been in a welfare office. She had never had to get a brown paper bag from the breakfast program at school. She'd never been evicted from an apartment because her mother was three months behind in the rent. She had never eaten Kraft dinner for supper unless she wanted to. She had never worn a windbreaker, one of three hundred, donated by a sports store to a shelter for battered women and distributed throughout the city to needy families, a windbreaker that became an immediately identifiable mark of poverty, but had to be worn anyway because at all costs it was important to pretend to one's mother that one loved the windbreaker….
Yet she had taken his money, and that's the way of it.
That is the way of money" (*Alligator* 225).

process of immersion is telling: remembering her immersion in Stanislavsky method acting in her youth, she admits, "She wasn't willing to live like that herself, but she wanted it to endure" (297).

Dispassionately, Frank sees the mechanics of the performance of culture and history that Madeleine wishes to obscure in a fantasy of belief. He looks out his bed-sit window at a crowd of tourists:

> A man leading them wore a pirate hat and a cape. The man held a torch and he raised his arm and pointed roughly in the direction of Frank's window. All the people turned and were quiet and the guide began to lecture. He had tones, this guy, sonorous tones.
>
> It was the Haunted Walk, all the sites of violent murder through the ages in old St. John's, tourists from the cruise ship, and the guy charged five bucks and Frank wished he had thought of it first. He could never make out what the guide was saying.
>
> Someone had been buried in the basement of one of these houses, slowly poisoned and hacked to pieces, a hundred years ago. (159)

Frank's concern here is the economic currency of the culture he inhabits; further, Moore makes ironically apparent that while historic cruelty can be commodified and viewed without a call for change, Frank, as the present inhabitant of the building, is haunted both by poverty and the very real threat of violent murder by Valentin, a newly arrived Russian criminal; though he is more than a display for tourists' consumption, his presence does not disrupt their idyll, because he is invisible to them.

Moore's attention to the paradoxical representation of history that obscures the conditions of the present is further developed by the juxtaposition of Frank and Valentin. Frank, gazing around his hot dog cart, sees the deployment of history to authenticate and promote the downtown bar scene: "The city had done up George Street to look like drinking was a Newfoundland tradition. But the old fashioned street lights were brand new. Valentin was taking all this in, this Old World look" (136). Valentin himself is a representative of an aspect of the "Old World" very much removed from that which the street planners wish to capture, an old world which itself has moved into the present. His amoral, reptilian intelligence is a cruel face of globalization, unable to engage with others without dominating, exploiting, and destroying them. His presence indicates Moore's insistence on revealing both the benign and the problematic faces of cultural change in the regional city.

As consummate examples of the conjunction of location and dislocation, suburbs are given considerable attention in Moore's stories. The appeal of suburbs has had much to do with the drive to the uniformity of mass culture: although the history of suburban development in Canada shows the variability of such discrete constructions of urban, rural, and suburban space and culture, the pervasiveness of such perceived divides remains. In over a century of the interdependence of these spaces, there has nevertheless been a conceptual polarization of the urban and the suburban; in fact, this polarization is built into the development of the suburban as a concept.

Robert Fishman locates the birth of the suburb as a "bourgeois utopia" in London of the late 1700s, as a growing middle class created new patterns for living

which separated their work and leisure, permitting a country-styled domestic retreat away from their work in the city. This pattern was consolidated by the familial, cultural, and economic structures of a growing Anglo-American middle-class in the late nineteenth century: the rapid urbanization of populations, the cultural emphasis on the nuclear family unit, the desire for class-based enclaves segregated from the city centre, the popular desire for privacy, for larger and more "natural" homes in "garden cities" (Machor), and the domination of the economy by interests vested in the development of rural land into built space (Hayden 18)[95] all contributed to the eventual establishment of a distinctly Anglo-American model of suburbia (Fishman 9-12). Further, the demand for workers in industrial zones outside the cities (Linteau 260) and the quantity of inexpensive land available for building meant that suburbia's benefits were accessible to the entire middle class.

A rush to the suburbs occurred in all major Canadian cities in the early years of the twentieth century (McCann 116). After World War II the sudden influx of economically able veterans precipitated the explosion of suburbs across the continent. In both countries significant government programs supported this expansion: the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in the US and the Dominion Housing Act of 1935 in Canada (Belec), as well as the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, established in 1946, provided mortgages for individuals whose demand for housing far outstripped the supply of available homes.

---

[95] Jackson repeats an anonymous English jungle from the 1870s:
The richest crop for any field,
Is a crop of bricks for it to yield.
The richest crop that it can grow,
Is a crop of houses in a row. (305)

These entities and regulations also shaped the communities they supported, assisting in the transformation from often heterogenous communities on the margins of urban areas (McCann 120) to more homogenous communities often segregated by income, class, and race.[96] In Canada, municipal regulations were implemented throughout the 1920s and 1930s to promote controlled development and maintain property values; these restrictions and zoning bylaws had the effect of gradually restricting access to the suburbs by lower-income groups (McCann 130-31, Belec 62).[97]

While S.D. Clark's landmark 1966 study of Canadian suburbs suggests the myth of suburban homogeneity is well-established but prone to exaggeration, it also clearly identifies class stratification in the suburbs, and notes the overwhelmingly

---

[96] Hayden notes that the American FHA, established by Hoover in 1934, rejected or discouraged applications for houses built in regional or modern architectural styles. It also instituted low-quality subdivisions and for years it evaluated neighbourhoods based on their racial constitution, approving only applications in segregated neighbourhoods and giving preferential ranking to homes in all-white, Protestant neighbourhoods (123-25). Thus, it perpetuated the phenomenon of "white flight" as middle-class white inner-city dwellers moved to the suburbs. After the war Sen. William McCarthy led the charge to oppose the development of public housing projects and planned towns as "un-American," and promote government subsidies for private housing development. The FHA enabled loans for ten million new homes between 1946 and 1953; the industry rapidly passed into the hands of large developers (130-32).

[97] While the majority of suburbs continued to be developed along simple grids, experiments like the garden suburb redevelopment of the Hydrostone area of Halifax after the 1917 explosion displaced the working-class residents of the area because of the higher costs of development (McCann 129).

This displacement was offset by major public initiatives like the government's crown corporation, Wartime Housing Limited, which built forty thousand rental units between 1941-47 (McCann 132). The end of the war saw the government and large-scale private developers cooperate to answer the demand for housing and produce the standardized tract suburbs we so often associate with suburbs today (Bettison 110), which accelerated segregation through the uniformity of their contents and their zoning.

middle-class (100), white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant background of the major Canadian suburbs surveyed (99, 102, 107); Clark concludes that the selection of the invisible hand of capitalism was by no means random: "there was no ready admission of sensitivity to ethnic or class values… But this very creed of social equality and tolerance provided assurance that only the 'right people' would locate in such an area… people able to fit easily and comfortably into such relationships [were] most prepared to take up residence there" (104).[98]

This "creeping conformity," as Richard Harris condemned it, developed amidst a larger cultural change. As Clark identifies it, Canadians' move to the suburbs resulted in social deprivation on the part of its new denizens: "what the new suburban resident brought with him in the way of money, ties of friendship or community, ethnic, class or associational attachments, or interests of a cultural sort, he largely lost in the struggle to establish himself in his new place of residence" (111). Clark links this cultural rupture with a growing desire for anonymity and a withdrawal into family units and "social apathy" (161). At the very least, it produced the compensatory growth of the suburban dream: a new social vision of material wealth and independence that was the bright side of isolation and the competition of an increasing consumer culture.

Despite some variations in class and ethnic makeup of suburban neighbourhoods, and the professed satisfaction of many suburban dwellers for their

[98] Until 1951, when they were overthrown by the Supreme Court, residential covenants that commonly included race criteria (Strong-Boag 486) often enforced this unspoken persuasion.

cultural milieu,[99] subjects on which scholarship has increased in the last twenty years, correcting the impression of an all-encompassing homogeneity, there remains little doubt that the social and economic forces at work successfully fostered and promoted a "landscape that presumed that lives could be reduced to a single ideal" (Strong-Boag 504), linking space and symbol, the physical and the mythological.[100]

Suburbs, then, have long provided an escape from older, closer communities with distinct locales, histories, architectures, and cultures. As Mark Clapson notes:

> Millions of people experienced [city centres] as overcrowded, insanitary, peopled with undesirables and lacking in both privacy and wide open spaces. Furthermore, most people did not want to live right next to their workplace. Nor did people particularly want to live cheek by jowl with family and friends within the ostensibly close networks of urban communities…. For the majority of suburbanites, the social tone of the neighbourhood was inextricably related to the quality of the residential environment. People

[99] See Kelly and Strong-Boag.

[100]The Atlantic region differs from this suburban evolution in large centres because the suburbs have not been as pervasive a presence in the region throughout the twentieth century; the transition from older suburban structures to postindustrial edge nodes and polycentric urban regions has been less noticeable because in many respects Atlantic cities have made only one major leap, from a city/country dyad immediately to a diffuse urban region. While unserviced, poor fringe settlements existed around Halifax and St. John's (McCann, Strong-Boag), few middle-class suburbs developed in the region, and on a more modest scale than in other parts of the country. Strong-Boag cites a 1969 Atlantic Development Board report which records that Atlantic Canadians, poorer on average than in other regions, were less likely to qualify for federal mortgage help from the CMHC (485). Such a lag meant that established regional cultural tropes, as well as built environments, retained a very strong hold over the imagination and identity of the region, even despite growing diversity. Suburban life has continued to seem more foreign to the region than elsewhere in the country.

> wanted to live with people of similar social class and social consciousness to themselves. (51-52)

Clapson does not assess the draw of suburbs to those living in predominately rural areas, but many of the same reasons apply: both the old city centre of St. John's and Newfoundland's small outports, for example, offered the same communal closeness and mixed-class living that suburbanites sought to avoid. Clapson's analysis indicates that as suburbs grew during the mid-twentieth century, suburbanites' conceptions of community changed: as they rejected older models of community, and devalued traditionally important interpersonal connections based on family and location, they simultaneously desired a new form of community based on class identification or, as Clapson points out, aspiration. Seeking to redefine themselves, then, suburbanites turn not to old foundations of identity but newer ones supplied by the accelerated material culture of twentieth-century America.

Lisa Moore's assessment of suburban life in Newfoundland juxtaposes the utopic ideal of this exclusionary, yet mass culture with its opposite, the utopic ideal of an exclusionary, yet communal regional identity. She examines Newfoundlanders' sometimes simultaneous desires for each, and exposes the consequences of adhering to either. For example, in "Carmen Has Gonorrhoea," Moore presents a dystopic suburban Newfoundland that nevertheless clings to the promise of a better life. She uses cement trucks as the presiding spirits of the story, symbols of transformation of the landscape and growing suburban sprawl. Comically, these offer hope and possibility to the protagonist as she wills them to run down a romantic rival, but in a serious sense the trucks gesture metaphorically to her aspirations for status, measured

on a material level, and her desire for the erasure, the smoothing over, of her husband's past. Significantly, the contest between the protagonist and her rival, Carmen, is presented in terms that explicitly contrast suburban with rural space and lifestyles. In a moment of proud, feverish anger, the protagonist surveys her territory: "The lawns of all the houses between my house and the mall spread out before me. New frost stiffens them. Beyond is the mall parking lot" (*Degrees* 67). Here, her position both in and above this suburban landscape marks her affiliation with its associated ideals of individual ownership, materialism, "newness," and "stiff" correctness.

In contrast Carmen, the castanet-tapping Bossa Nova singer at Bar Baric, the fetish bar situated at the bottom of the hill, is an outlandish distortion of rural values and attributes -- physical beauty, superstition, musicality, and earthy energy -- whose disembodied siren-like voice infiltrates suburbia and threatens the protagonist's fiercely imagined and defended idyll. Further, Carmen is associated with the protagonist's mother-in-law, in whose guise traditional family connections become claustrophobic and critical. Both the protagonist and her rival are caricatures. They are disturbing in their malice and in the voraciousness of their desires; the text suggests the reductiveness of their typecast performances of location and identity.

In "Natural Parents," Moore again presents a close examination of suburban space for the purposes of highlighting the interpenetration of mass and regional culture, and the sterility of either scripted extreme. The central character, Lyle, recalls that his girlfriend Rachel's house was "somewhere in Mount Pearl" and had "a real estate guide in the mailbox" (*Open* 76): here, Moore's description emphasizes

anonymity and impermanence, and highlights place as commodity. To counter this, however, Lyle remembers the "crackling hope of the new subdivision" (*Open* 77) that he feels as he moves inside Rachel's house. In a later scene, the kitchen is described as blindingly impervious to human presence: against the "super-modern, reflective black" (*Open* 78) appliances and fluorescent lighting, Lyle and Rachel's nakedness "boing[s] forward" as an oddity. Moore refuses to allow the reader to imagine another more "natural" space, however, by presenting as an impossible alternative the fetishistic innocence of a Norman Rockwell cookie tin, whose scene of a "a little girl with a pink bow in her hair and her drawers lowered for a spanking" (*Open* 79) is in ironic contrast to the postcoital nudity of Rachel, the house's "little girl." We are left unsettled, unable to retreat into nostalgic definitions of home, neighbourhood, and space, having to become familiar with our discomfort.

As Moore's stories focus on the urban and suburban landscape, the wilderness of Newfoundland, the geography that so often serves as shorthand for the "essence" of place, is rarely in evidence. When woods, animals, and even the earth itself are presented, they are either inaccessible and foreign to the point of incomprehensibility or are mediated by the sub/urban. For instance, in the story "Melody," the protagonist attempts to connect with her dead husband by lying on the earth of his grave (*Open* 18). The connection isn't possible: earth here is connected with an unassuageable longing for the past. In "Wisdom Teeth," a character is almost run over by a moose in her yard, and pushes herself into a fir tree to avoid it, "branches all over her face" (*Degrees* 41). Again, this random and sudden immersion in wilderness carries with it associations of death; however, it is mitigated by the

frame of its consequences – a few spilled Campbell's Soup tins, icons of pop culture. Wilderness here remains a momentous but momentary interruption, with little meaning for Moore's characters, especially when compared with the tangible, comprehensible framework of the popular culture that defines their lives.

In "Natural Parents" wilderness is defined and permeated by the urban: Archibald Falls, site of childhood getaways, is a day trip from the protagonist's summer home and is suffused with both the "smell of wild roses, and when the wind shifted, a sweet, poisonous smoke from a dump far off in the hills" (*Open* 72). Going further, the story "Sea Urchin" dispenses with wilderness altogether and "replaces" it with technology, in the form of "a Styrofoam painting of autumn leaves on a plywood tree" (*Degrees* 22). *Alligator*'s naïve young environmentalist, Colleen, finding Newfoundland's woodlands the province of clear-cutting machines, and having to face the consequences of her sabotage, flees beyond Newfoundland to a Florida swamp in search of an untouched space where she can escape her life (218, 252). Read together, these encounters with wilderness work to establish its marginality, to refute the traditional emphasis on its importance in Newfoundlanders' lives.

In addition to her vivid representations of social and physical space in Newfoundland, Moore makes it clear that the land Newfoundlanders inhabit does not necessarily have to be Newfoundland – that location is not commensurate with culture. Certainly, many of the characters inhabiting the stories Moore sets in Newfoundland originate from beyond its borders: French, Russian, Algerian, Austrian, and Nigerian citizens turn up as a matter of course. Likewise, Moore's Newfoundlanders are often seemingly without borders: in the story "Mouths, Open"

we encounter a Newfoundland couple in Cuba, and a sex worker who flies regularly to Halifax from St. John's for work (*Open* 25).

In both short story collections and Moore's novel, characters travel. "Meet Me in Sidi Ifni" describes a the riotous setting that is a deliberate combination of the exotic and the familiar, as it demonstrates the extent of the narrator's intimate acquaintance with the town. Often, too, travel means permanent relocation: in "If You're There" Moore's presentation of three friends, all Newfoundlanders living in Toronto, raises questions about the relationship of belonging to dwelling. James Clifford contends that the emphasis on the study of cultures as they "dwell" is an essentialist bias that seeks an idealized authenticity, thus obscuring the interactions of cultures within a global modernity; accordingly, a more complete picture is possible through a "focus on any culture's farthest range of travel" (25) – bearing in mind both that travel is generally a privilege of the upper classes and that "travel" can be extended to include all manner of contact with other cultures, physical and virtual. This contact results in interconnections between cultures that constitute what he calls "discrepant cosmopolitanisms" (36). As a counter to the concept of cultural stability, then, Clifford proposes a model of culture that is always in transition, redefining cosmopolitanism not as a universalizing discourse but as a continuous process of cultural exchange.

Moore presents these opposing views of the "located-ness" of culture in the short story "Grace." Eleanor, the central figure, considers the desirability of embarking on an affair with Glenn Marshall, a friend she runs into at a wedding, by

considering his interest in her anecdote about visiting the Taj Mahal and being asked to appear in a Bollywood movie:

> But Glenn loves Newfoundland. He doesn't like heat, prefers cool weather. He wouldn't want to be on top of the Pink Palace with lithe monkeys. She has told him before, she suddenly remembers. She has told him that story before, about the Bollywood movie. Glenn Marshall had been mildly interested. He had listened, but he shook his head and said he'd never go there. Why would he? He loves Newfoundland. As if there were just the two choices: the Taj or Little Island Cove. He loves being in the woods by himself, he has a cabin, can build a lean-to, set snares; he does some ice fishing, he likes the quiet.
>
> Who is she kidding, she could never love Glenn Marshall. But… things can change overnight. The entire city of Stockholm… driving on the other side of the road as though they always had. (*Open* 170-71)

Here, Moore presents us with a tangle of attitudes about cultural purity and exchange, assessed through the discourse of location and travel. Glenn is, perhaps of all Moore's characters, the one most representative of the traditional cultural identity of Newfoundlanders: he is associated with wilderness, self-sufficiency, with outports and withdrawal from the world, with a perspective that divides the world into the two choices of here and everywhere else. Eleanor rejects such dichotomous thinking; she is representative of both the "everywhere else" Glenn refuses and the space between, the constant exchanges between Newfoundland and the world – as when she is literally imported into the Bollywood movie, itself a hybrid of Indian and Hollywood film.

Eleanor's position, however, involves a kind of loss that is implied in her reference to Stockholm driving standards: her versatility is presented as a move toward global standardization. Her reflection that "things can change overnight," ostensibly an admission that she could change her mind and move toward Glenn, toward an embrace of the tradition he personifies, indicates such a move would not be possible, that she is moving away from him: the metaphor she immediately grasps for this change is Stockholm, indicative of a certain cosmopolitan familiarity and exchange with the world. This is confirmed for the reader because the reference to Stockholm is an echo of an earlier conversation in which Eleanor's husband holds forth in a discussion that is literally about globalization and the pace of change (*Open* 168).

Just as Moore deploys references to land and location to subvert stereotypes and suggest a changing sense of regional identity in close conversation with global forces, other aspects of Newfoundland's culture are also examined to the same end. In the story "The Lonely Goatherd" Anita and a German traveller, Hans, "discussed what was scenic, the hospitable Newfoundlander, and Jigg's dinner, briefly" (*Degrees* 128). Here, Moore offers a crisp summation of the clichéd tropes of Newfoundland life, as defined by touristic expectations – what John Urry has termed the "tourist gaze," a "socially organized and systematized" (1) set of assumptions framed by the tourist's desire for novelty and difference. Frequently, too, in the case of destinations which capitalize upon their reputation as "unspoiled," rural, or historic, the demand for the production of "reality" and authenticity can be quite removed from modern Newfoundland life (MacCannell, Urry 9) or erase certain unattractive attributes of

modernity (Urry 88). Hans and Anita acknowledge these tropes and move on to what really interests them, sleeping together. However, Moore recognizes that such clichés are deeply ingrained within both tourist and local populations, and recur almost unconsciously, even when patently ridiculous. Thus she presents a reversal of the tourist gaze upon the traveller; after Hans leaves, Anita "could only imagine him in a hat with a little red feather, shorts with straps, and a walking stick, Julie Andrews' voice echoing off the Alps" (*Degrees* 130).

In the story "Grace," Moore also overtly addresses the seductiveness and the limitations of cliché: Eleanor's screenplay is rejected at first by a team of international producers because her plot, of "*a big record producer from the mainland sweeping a girl off her feet* was a cliché" (ital orig. *Open* 184-5). In this assessment Moore points out that, for the purposes of commodification, overdetermined representations of culture have their limitations: even while global forces continue to demand a quick, conventional sketch of regional cultures, that very stereotype has to evolve to reflect an increasing engagement with global forces to remain believable and marketable. The version of Eleanor's screenplay that is accepted is a fated romance between a girl and a naked skydiver who lands in a field, combining attractively predictable romantic tropes with a literal embodiment of randomness, which can be read to signify the close, changeable, and instant relationships with the extra-regional which are characteristic of our increasingly globalized time.

This interjection of external randomness typifies Moore's approach to the representation of Newfoundland identity. Gone is the paradigm of self-sufficiency

described by a taxi driver in "Grace" when, he says, "I had a wife who could make a meal out of nothing. You had your moose, you had your garden. I got a different wife now, different altogether" (*Open* 155). Not only a different wife, but a different life: the everyday lives of Moore's characters are filled with encounters with other cultures, themselves also in states of translation, such as the sudden memory of a man in Morocco wearing an Adidas jacket under a djellaba (*Degrees* 62). Although these encounters demonstrate the incompleteness of such translations, they are evidence of the increasing availability of global commodities, as when, in "If You're There," the protagonist remarks, "For a long time you couldn't get shiitake mushrooms in St. John's. Lemongrass we have" (*Open* 122). Foreign goods do not remain foreign, however, but are incorporated into the existing culture and made familiar: in the same story, a South Asian fruit reminds the protagonist of the beach at Cow Head because of its vibrant colour (*Open* 133). This process of familiarization, Moore reminds us, is always political as well as personal, indicative of relations of global trade, exploitation and power. This is made more overt when, in "Mouths, Open," the items of exchange are not benign, literally consumable fruits and spices but a Cuban prostitute and HIV (*Open* 31).

Moore's characters' experiences of history, like those of place and culture, are personal and fragmented, dependent more on memory and its arbitrary revisions than on a shared sense of past, which for them has dulled to a vague mythology. For example, the opening of the story "Haloes" is narrated in a fairy-tale tone that demonstrates that regional history seems to have faded into legend: "Once the fish in the harbour of St. John's were so thick and silver they slowed sailing vessels. The

great fire of 1892 razed the city when it became imperfect" (*Degrees* 133). Likewise, for the women in "Grace," the pace of cultural change has been so rapid in Newfoundland that their own childhoods seem inaccessible:

> Constance grew up around the bay, an only child, raised by her grandmother. She says she was bathed in the kitchen in a big galvanized tub in front of a wood stove. Can this be true? She remembers when television arrived in Newfoundland. They all gathered in one house to watch. She's a chef with a Master's in Religious Studies. Medieval witches. (*Open* 157-58)

Here, ironically, ancient practices like witchcraft are of more interest, and are more available as objects of study in the lives of these women than their own recent local history. In this respect, Moore not only illustrates but also draws attention to the effects of postmodern life on the perception of history. As Stuart Hall observes:

> The more social life becomes mediated by the global marketing of styles, places, and images, by international travel, and by globally networked media images and communications systems, the more identities become detached – disembedded – from specific times, places, histories, and traditions, and appear "free-floating. ("Question" 622)

Overwhelmingly, the history represented by Moore is personal history, not global, national, or even regional history. This relentless individuation seems to hinder her characters in their interactions with others: they are often reluctant to discuss their pasts; they seem impenetrable or mysterious to other characters; and their fragmentary memories, though explored in the narrative, are rarely articulated to others. This is notable, since a significant portion of Moore's texts is taken up by

these flashes of memory, often layered within each other. For example, in "Grace" Eleanor remembers her meeting with film producers, in which she drifted into a memory of the first time she read pornography (*Open* 199). Consistently, Moore emphasizes the ways in which history, on a subjective, individual level, can be a barrier to human interaction rather than common ground.

Moore's characters' continued, or at times residual, connections to place can occasionally be located in metaphors that return to specific cultural practices and places, and in expressions that reflect a distinct dialect. However, as often as not, these culture-specific phrases and images are deployed to place local difference in the context of others' linguistic differences or expectations, or to self-reflexively highlight the attention paid to differences in dialect. As Cesare Poppi comments in a discussion of the interconnections of local and global, it is often "because all other cultural traits have become widely homologated to the wider context that the language issue is stressed as the defining marker of difference" (291). Aware of this iconic status of linguistic difference, Moore plays deliberately with her readers' expectations of difference in language and metaphor. Accordingly her texts are, for the most part, written without drawing attention to accent or dialect, making the few times she does so more apparent. In only one story, "Wisdom Teeth," are there a few phrases that stand out as being part of a discernibly local dialect: someone falls "arse over kettle" (*Degrees* 41) and someone else declares, "That's some long life together" (*Degrees* 40). Such phrases are subtly deployed in the text, not meant to stand out as being especially colourful but rather to be understood as ordinary talk. They contrast, in the same story, with the egregiously transliterated drawl of a

Toronto building superintendent: "Youse don't have no pets, youse don't have no parking, youse pay heat, weese pay hydro" (*Degrees* 33). Perhaps because the Newfoundland accent has been the focus of so many stereotypes, Moore contrasts it with a phrase calculated to make her readers smirk with its repetitiousness and heavily adulterated vernacular.

Moore's local metaphors and similes work in the same way as her deployment of accent. For example, in "Natural Parents" Lyle thinks that the feeling of ice cubes on his chest is "like flankers spat from a fire" (*Open* 78). There is no attempt to explain the term, although it is vaguely discernible from its context. As Marjorie Pryse observes of dialect, the result is a signalling of familiarity between regionalist narrators and readers (32). In the same story, however, Lyle observes that reading Heidegger is "like someone copying pans of ice, desperate to cover distance, grasping a difficult phrase only long enough to leap to the next" (*Open* 74). Here, there is more explicit context, to signal to uncomprehending readers the meaning of "copying"; Moore's usage is intended to accommodate both regional and extra-regional readers.

Apart from these rare instances, however, Moore's more prominent metaphoric vehicles do not reference dialect or local cultural knowledge, but signify place in an extremely broad sense – they recall fish. In various stories, characters comment, "his tongue in my ear sounds like a pot of mussels boiling, the shells opening" (*Degrees* 52); they compare a noise to "lobsters dropped in boiling water" (*Degrees* 71); or observe that "trays of food float through the party like a school of capelin" (*Open* 199). Moore also uses dolphins, crabs, phosphorescence, and whales. This is all the more noticeable because, while Moore's writing is intensely imagistic,

she actually uses few metaphors, relying instead on close description of sensuous detail. I suspect, therefore, that Moore's closely affiliated marine metaphors are working on two levels. On the one hand, they can be read straight. Like the metaphors I've mentioned previously, they denote a regional community of readers, and simultaneously mark their difference from others. Beyond this, I suspect Moore's overdetermination of seafood can be read as a wink at the extra-regional reader's consumption of such exoticisms, the delight in their tang of authenticity. Moore steers even closer to sheer camp in a torrent of metaphor at the end of the final story in *Open*, "Grace." Eleanor indulges in the drunken fantasy of steering the ship of her life, and the party that she attends, from the helm of the bathroom sink: "She won't abandon her post, even in the face of this brick shithouse of a wave"; she is "at sea" (*Open* 204-06). This section of the story is a recital of clichéd melodrama, full of both pain and parody. Such double-edged writing celebrates linguistic difference but mocks the fetishizing of it, in she same way Moore treats cultural difference on the whole.

Moore's picture of Newfoundland as a cosmopolitan region or "travelling culture" is not unproblematically positive. Frequently her characters react to both the overt and underlying changes in their circumstances with panic and a sense of loss: they resist and are yet caught up in change; it is liberating and dangerous. Perhaps the most compelling way Moore explores this, in many of her works, is through her depictions of the breakdowns of marriages. In *Alligator*, Beverley's grief for her dead husband is paralleled by her move to the suburbs and her yearning for her old house in the downtown. In "Close Your Eyes" Maureen contemplates her partner's demand

that they have an open marriage: “Maybe I could enjoy it, she says. She holds her cigarette under the tap. I can see a tremor in her hand. Freedom, she says” (*Open* 103). Here, Moore evokes the pain of this supposed freedom; the sense of dislocation it can create. Similarly, in “If You’re There” the protagonist reflects on her growing estrangement from a friend: “I want to tell Jeremy this: We come apart. But that’s no newsflash. Everybody knows we come apart. That’s why we cling so desperately” (*Open* 129). Here, the banality of change is in stark contrast to the tremendous emotion it induces, and Moore acknowledges the validity of the impulses that lead people to draw back, to resist change when it feels like “coming apart.”

Accordingly, Moore presents examples of hesitation in the face of change. These seem rooted in a more closed, traditional conception of community and identity. They are, nonetheless, placed in larger contexts that suggest they do not offer real solutions to the problems characters face. In “Azalea,” Sara’s mother-in-law Bethany has a “list of things that matter in life,” a litany of comfort that harks back to an older way of being: “boiled wool, fresh sheets, doeskin gloves, ironed shirts, old-fashioned beans, table butter, the farmer’s market” (*Open* 113). Sara, trying to decide whether to accompany her husband to a new job in Montreal, is drawn to Bethany’s assurance and to James, an older man at the farmer’s market who embodies the earthy pleasure, sensuousness, and community spirit she values in her present life (*Open* 119). Sara remains in limbo, unwilling to choose either leaving her husband or her city, having to make a choice. Similarly, one of the final images of *Open*, in “Grace,” is a weaving, embracing circle of friends at a wedding: this is another tempting vision of coherence and community, and Moore expands it with the return home of

Eleanor's errant husband Philip; his recitation of a night spent visiting local landmarks; his fall into bed, intimate signifier of belonging and home; and his sleepy request to her, "Stay here" (*Open* 215). We must, however, be dubious of this concluding request: though it gestures toward both personal reconciliation and the harmony of local identity and community, Philip is, after all, a man who is writing a book on globalization, and who *is* betraying Eleanor by having an affair.

At the same time Moore asks us to critically assess Eleanor, who deftly negotiates through various contradictory positionings of global and local identity as they play to her advantage in her relationships with other characters. She dismisses Glenn Marshall, as I discussed earlier, for his adherence to a stereotyped Newfoundland culture. Yet the passage also satirizes Eleanor, who self-consciously constructs herself against him, name-dropping exotic places in her cocktail conversation, using cosmopolitanism as a commodity to enhance her own social status. In doing so she reveals a rather touristic naiveté, an approach to others that speaks to cultural distance, not exchange. Similarly, Eleanor condemns her rival for Philip's affections, the young ecofeminist scholar Amelia Kerby, for the same arsenal of global engagement Eleanor herself deploys: Amelia's Parisian couture and bungee-jumping, her aromatherapy and her Webcam are matched against Eleanor's adventures in south-east Asia. Eleanor and her friends belittle Amelia as a "yahoo" (*Open* 209), an unsuccessful competitor in a contest of worldliness, and yet try to marshal the forces of community and locality to Eleanor's own defense. Here, Moore demonstrates both the nuance and versatility of such boundary-shifting and its exploitative uses in Eleanor's web of criticism and claiming.

Like Eleanor, the teenage Colleen in *Alligator* has multiple ways of belonging to the world, which are presented both for our sympathy and our scrutiny. As a representative of the current face of Newfoundland, Colleen is as transnational and transient as she is grounded in region: she is a creature of airport restaurants, suburbs, and faceless dance clubs. The novel opens through her eyes, which are trained not on her city, her region, or her own life, but on films and internet videos of decapitations:

> … I watch because how lonely to die so far from home with nobody in attendance.
>
> I'm attending.
>
> I stop watching before they commit the act, not because I'm afraid to but out of respect. This is in a bedroom painted pink and a pink canopy over the bed in a house in the suburbs of St. John's, up behind the Village Mall. (3)

Here, death from across the world instantly arrives in Colleen's superficially predictable "pink" suburban world. Her own access to the final moments of the victims' lives evokes within her a sense of global community; though far removed from traditional regional models of belonging, Colleen feels a sense of responsibility, and a desire to stand witness to these horrors in her world. Her concern for the victims' alienation from "home" indicates her own desire for belonging and place; at the same time, the juxtaposition of her loose description of her location with her nightly outreach to the victims demonstrates the simultaneity of her social space: she is "attending" the beheading, while at the same time she is alone at her computer. Her community is one of shared solitude and loneliness. Moore also draws our attention to its partiality and unevenness: Colleen's melancholy sense of connection is abruptly

ended by the change of focus, mid-paragraph, from decapitation to bedroom. For Colleen, it has been a choice to watch, while the victims have no such luxury.

Throughout *Alligator*, Moore's sympathy for personal dislocation and the longing for security is counterbalanced by the text's relentless demonstration of the futility of such urges, whether for its characters or for the region itself. Moore's depiction of Madeleine, a filmmaker attempting to create the great Newfoundland movie, contextualizes the desire to locate and represent the "real" Newfoundland within the contemporary conditions of its production. Madeleine's film is a historical picture involving a "claustrophobic community," a controlling archbishop, two young men on an escapade, "a girl on a cliff," white horses, a violent landscape, and "church bells rippling through the icy darkness" (36). It is all based on "facts," of course. But the facts keep getting in Madeleine's way, revealed for the produced effects they are, while Madeleine's personal life continually combines with them. Moore juxtaposes the intended atmosphere of the film against the process of wining and dining a potential lead actress in Toronto, the tourists, truffles and balsamic vinegar contrasting with the subject of the conversation: "I want bleak, Madeleine said. What year are we talking? 1834. You want turnip soup and fish flakes and scurvy" (174). As the characters' conversation blends together on the page so does the distinction between the soap opera that is the actress' other option and Madeleine's "real" film. At the same time, the contrast in the food consumed emphasizes their distance from this "reality" in any case. At another meal with the premier, Madeleine recognizes the interdependence of history and perspective, reflecting on "how she'd captured the history of Newfoundland in this film, real because she was inventing it" (196). She

realizes that eventually it "will contain everything" (251), not only the script she wrote and the truth it was supposed to portray.

Fittingly, both Madeleine's private life and her professional efforts place her film's quest for identity in context. Madeleine's refusal to confine her personal identity to "wife and mother" and her continued love for and daily contact with her ex-husband frame her struggle to define regional identity. Further, the text associates Madeleine's increasing determination to produce an "authentic" film with her impending death. As she clings to her vision, which intends to excise the details of its production that fill the narrative of *Alligator*, such order and separation become increasingly impossible as she senses the approach of death, a final loss of personal, narrative, and cultural control. History and present, production and product, reality, fiction, and hallucination come together as Madeleine's filmic characters and symbols invade and end her life: the domineering archbishop squats in the living room corner, and while horses arrive by helicopter through a blizzard Madeleine's heart stops (170, 302-03). This event works as both demonstration and warning; it is a metaphor for the impossibility of "freezing" time and for the force, value and damage of cultural as well as personal change. In these terms, *Alligator* acknowledges Madeleine's desire for a "true Newfoundland" but contains and questions it, framing it within the context of a developing and changing culture, a fluid and connective process.

Numerous writers and critics today question whether it is possible to sustain a sense of place, a regional identity, within an increasingly globalized world; they often remain skeptical of the potential of the postmodern for regional literature. While this questioning is essential, it is often framed within a discourse of threat and extinction.

Moore's texts, conversely, point to the ordinariness and inevitability of the adaptation of local cultures to global influences; to the always-shifting borders between the two, for good and ill; and to the need to be mindful of the uses to which we put these boundaries. Accordingly, her works exhibit a skepticism toward both avowals of regional authenticity and the wholehearted embrace of global influences; it is rather the conflicted effects of their combinations on which Moore trains her eye. Her engagement, in this sense, is always political, mindful of the interpenetrating effects of global and local spheres upon each other, and the similarly interpenetrating spheres of culture and commerce. Her stories, with their unsparing focus on the celebrations, negotiations, and betrayals of the daily lives of Newfoundlanders, draw attention to our complicity with the processes and politics of historical and current global and regional change, our contamination by them (141), and, therefore, the weight of our responsibilities within that participation. While Moore's characters might approach change reluctantly, and experience it painfully, they also acknowledge that "we are most ourselves when we are changing" (*Open* 31); that we have no choice but, as her title suggests, to remain open.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

"Why go beyond the Folk?" (McKay 295)

Ian McKay, whose work was an integral motivation for this project, answers his question with the statement that "Folk" constructions of the region always "[exclude] at the outset a critical dialogue with the past and a realistic grasp of the present" (295). While my project asserts that a static, essentialist regionalism has been the dominant approach to reading and representing Atlantic Canada, increasingly our literature does engage critically with its cultural inheritance and explores what McKay calls "the complex life" (306) of contemporary regional existence, which participates in a globalized, hyper-mediated world.

Lynn Coady's uncollected story "Wireless," published in the April 2005 issue of *The Walrus*, exemplifies the kind of transformation in literary and cultural approaches to the Atlantic region for which McKay calls. "Wireless" reminds us that the complexity of cultural exchanges across regional boundaries is not new and offers a searing critique of continued attempts to reduce the Atlantic region to a quaint anachronism. Coady uses metaphors of addiction and dependency to explore the need of her protagonist, the alcoholic travel-writer Jane, for the escapism of a stereotyped, "frozen" vision of the region, literally symbolized by the icebergs that prompt her visit to St. John's and that subsequently enthrall and soothe her. When Jane arrives in Newfoundland she is secure in her armour as a bored, contemporary cosmopolitan, but this is revealed to be a façade, consciously constructed to distract herself from an

acute sense of weltschmertz. She is rootless, "wireless," detached, an occupant of airports and hotels, places in between the usual permanencies of life; further, she is suspicious of connection, which she categorizes as weakness, even as she is attracted to it. Refusing to engage fully with people and places, Jane instead moves from one object of obsession to another, seeking a state of "comfort" yet remaining embarrassed by the "pathetic psychology of it" (1). Even this degree of connection to an object is, Jane announces at the opening of the story, "to find yourself foolishly situated in the world" (1).

Accordingly, Jane is both drawn to and contemptuous of Newfoundland, home of the icebergs that are her most recent object of obsessive interest, and to Ned, her lover. Both Newfoundland and Ned are deliberately reduced to regional caricatures posed in counterpoint to Jane's shallow superiority. Her view of St. John's is a cynical rehearsal of the genre expectations of travel writing, as she sneers at the quiet night streets (8) and promises her boss that her article will parrot both the representations of a recent Hollywood movie about Newfoundland and the expectations of the "tourists, buying up the books, sweaters, CDs, and partridgeberry jam like it's going out of style, which of course it is" (4). At the same time, she nurses a private need to connect with the icebergs as a sacred symbol, and her sense that "it would be wrong to describe them" in the travel article (6). Jane's view of Ned likewise relies on stereotype: "His accent was a giveaway from the start. His quaint, alien accent, the way he can't pronounce 'th,' it's twee, she finds its cute. You're not supposed to find Newfoundlanders cute, they bristle at that…. But his name is Ned, he's burly, has a beard and is a fiddler. I mean come on" (2).

Coady's story highlights the collision of Jane's desires for a familiar and static idea of Newfoundland that she can manipulate, and the more complex reality of a place and people that actively engage with and manipulate her in their turn. Ned, unsurprisingly, is not as simple or foolish as Jane believes him to be. He identifies with his place and culture – his social space – while remaining acutely aware of the ways it is consumed and commodified, refusing or deploying such perspectives as suits his own aims. He "bemoans" the distortion of his culture, the stereotypes of clothes, accents, and incest that permeate the recent film representation of Newfoundland (4), and he refuses the publicity a profile in Jane's touristic article would bring his band (9). Yet, in hopes of seducing her, he plays on Jane's expectations of his folksy music, deadpanning, "We are a colourful people" (2). His "signals" are varied and layered, a tangle of messages Jane begins to intuit when she climbs Signal Hill with Ned and encounters a display charting the work of Guglielmo Marconi, the Italian technological pioneer who sent the first transatlantic wireless signal from there in 1901. Marconi's achievement, his "world-changing wire-thing" and "breadth of vision" (7) rebut Jane's own "wireless" assessment of the narrowness and provincialism of Newfoundland, historical or contemporary.

The end of the story amplifies this reversal of Jane's expectations, as Jane perceives the ways in which she, as well as Marconi, has been "framed." In Ned's brother's boat-charter office, she finds photographs of icebergs and reprints of old Marconi images for sale, "Quality reproductions in deliberately rough, wooden frames" (13). Here, Jane is confronted with the degree to which Newfoundland is being selectively packaged, framed in "rough" images to appeal to a touristic taste for

authentic folk culture. Surveying the photographs and their context, Jane cannot help but become aware of the selectivity of these images, as both Marconi and Dave's brother demonstrate the existence of another Newfoundland, one which has always been a part of contemporary life, the "wireless" world. Dave's brother, casually surfing the internet while waiting for tourists to buy his photographs or his iceberg tours, makes his living from these images but does not live within them.

Jane is misled and misrepresented, tangled in the "wire-mess" (14) of regional politics. In conversation with Dave and his daughter, she becomes aware that Ned has distorted the tale of his family's involvement in boating and fishing to erase their business interests, making them appear folksier to accord with Jane's image of him. Moreover, Ned has manipulated Jane's image to his family, representing her as aloof in order to monopolize her time. She finds herself received by Dave as a stereotype: "West Coasters Big for Britches, As Suspected All Along" (14). Confronted with the inadequacy and naivety of her expectations, which she has always known but chosen, like the icebergs, to submerge, "to comprehend and yet ignore" (1), Jane is forced to apologize to an obviously contemporary Newfoundlander, squirming to know that his impression of her is equally unflattering. Like the various images of Marconi on Signal Hill, these representations are "Different vantages of the same scenario" (14), true and false at the same time, each inadequate without the others to make them a panorama of the whole. Coady, like Marconi, speaks back across a perceived divide to demonstrate the transformation of regional identity in response to the tourism industry's expectations, but also to emphasize that the encounter of regional cultures with globalization is not, and has never been, a one-way process. Here, Coady does

not draw boundaries between authentic and inauthentic culture, but instead investigates our motivations for shaping the world into these categories, looking at strategies of belonging as they operate in the contemporary world.

I would like to reflect further on this acute awareness of mutability in the work of Michael Winter, Lynn Coady, and Lisa Moore, reviewing my argument and indicating what I believe to be the directions and value of their de/constructions of contemporary regional culture.

In the first section of my dissertation, I explore the theoretical approaches to regionalism that inform a revitalized understanding of the term. In doing so, I suggest how bringing the "placelessness" of postmodernity and its skepticism toward the real together with conventionally understood regionalism challenges the logic of both paradigms, resulting in a critical, postmodern regionalism. This reformulation of regionalism gives us a way to interrogate older constructions of the Atlantic region that present the conflation of land and cultural character as natural and unproblematic. Overturning – or even questioning – such constructions remains difficult, however, given the long history of predominantly essential and antimodern understandings of regional identity in Atlantic Canada, and the perpetuation of such approaches in the present.

In my second chapter I chart the historical development and strength of antimodernism in Atlantic Canada: while not total, antimodernism has been a dominant theme in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Atlantic Canadian literature, ebbing and flowing in response to regional sociopolitical and economic situations and their contexts in a larger world. A look at the major literary works from the region –

from some of the earliest works through to the 1950's – demonstrates the persistence of this tendency to idealize a past existence and criticize the cultural diminishment of the present.

My third chapter assesses the extent to which implicitly antimodern fiction continues to dominate the region's literary production today, particularly in the popular genre of historical fiction: I suggest, through my reading of the CBC *Canada Reads* contest's evaluation of Frank Parker Day's *Rockbound*, that essentialist interpretations of the Atlantic region serve not only to stabilize identity internally, but also serve larger national interests in their conflation of time and place. As "the country of the past," the Atlantic region answers the desire for a stable, idealized national past, providing the foundation for a national narrative of identity that implicitly limits our normative conception of cultural diversity and naturalizes a Canadian cultural unity resistant to the transformational influences of global contemporaneity.

Before enlarging upon the second section of my project, it is worth elaborating on the causes and rationales for the continued popularity of nostalgic characterizations of the Atlantic region. A look at commentaries on the analogous structure of nationalism provides some answers. Benedict Anderson usefully distinguishes between nationalism and national identity, the former being in his terms a political strategy implemented to maintain loyalty to the state and preserve state boundaries, while the latter is cultural, a shared social self-consciousness of a people in relation to others (6). In these terms, nationalism is deployed to shore up national

identities battered by both internal and global influences. Jean Pickering and Suzanne Kehde expand upon this idea in *Narratives of Nostalgia, Gender, and Nationalism:*

> In times of change or crisis, nations look to the past and infer a narrative that erases all confusion and contradiction, which is not presented as history but as a figuration of essential Britishness, Americanness, Germanness, Indianness, as the case may be – a mythic national identity that, Platonic fashion, has presumably always existed. While the simplistic versions of these narratives may be rejected by serious writers, the traces of an essential national character may be figured in their texts; in especially serious national crises, artists may knowingly forward these mythic narratives. (3)

Certainly, the recent economic, political, and social challenges to the Atlantic region have been sufficiently daunting to warrant such artistic responses as Pickering and Kehde outline. These responses resonate with Creelman's description of the "nostalgia and hesitation" (201) informing Maritime realist fiction, the dominant genre of the region.[101]

Taking a different but relevant approach, Eng and Kazanjian's *Loss: The Politics of Mourning* examines this reliance upon an idealized past from a psychological and political perspective that seeks to understand the function of feelings of loss: "When unattained ideals emerge as always already lost, political work can lose track of possibilities, trapping ideals in a desperate attempt to restore the ruins of an imagined past" (14). We can, they suggest, lose sight of how to

[101] Ursula Kelly's survey of Newfoundland fiction concurs with Creelman.

reclaim, or create, the conditions we value within the present, locating them only in the past.

Whether nostalgia will continue to be the dominant response of the region, as Creelman predicts (218), remains to be seen. Cultural producers both resist and reflect such narratives; as Pickering and Kehde observe, while "nations refurbish outworn nationalisms when a crisis arises[,] culture – serious writers, popular novelists, and the electronic media alike – assiduously promotes new narratives to negotiate the gap between the old construction of *nation* and the one that current events are calling into being" (5). The manner and ideological approaches of Atlantic Canadian artists' "negotiation of the gap" are of great importance to the way the region will be understood, internally, nationally, and globally.

My project addresses this need to re-orient our dominant literary representations of regional identity, focusing on the complexities of the present rather than submerging them within reductive evocations of the past.[102] It takes up McKay's aforementioned call for a critical response to constructions of regional identity, asserting the desirability of engagement, not escapism, as a response to the challenges the region faces, and to the changed conditions of its regional contemporaneity. Such engagement does not require a turn away from history, but a different approach to it. In her Afterword to Eng and Kazanjian's *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, Judith

[102] I do not mean to imply that all historical fiction is reductive. There is a growing body of historical fiction from the region's writers that might be termed "speculative fiction," pace Herb Wyile. These works examine the making of history, and the counternarratives layered within its larger movements. They are valuable for their interrogation of history, and as they return us to a critical awareness of our present and assist us in our attempts to shape the future of the region.

Butler suggests that the "loss of loss," an acknowledgement that the past cannot be recovered, results in a "melancholic agency":

> What results is a melancholic agency [that] cannot know its history as the past, cannot capture its history through chronology, and does not know who it is except as the survival, the persistence of a certain unavowability that haunts the present. Places are lost – destroyed, vacated, buried, but then there is some new place, and it is not the first, can never be the first. And so there is an impossibility housed at the site of this new place. What is new, newness itself, is founded upon the loss of original place (eden?) and so it is a newness that has within it a sense of belatedness, of coming after, and of being thus fundamentally determined by a past that continues to inform it. And so this past is not actually past in the sense of 'over,' since it continues as an animating presence in the presence, one that makes itself known precisely in and through the survival of anachronism itself. (468)

This elusive new relationship, Butler suggests, continues to recognize the operation of the past in the present, but does not, cannot, live within it. Loss can be productive as the condition for a renewed sense of community which "survives" to reformulate itself, so as to respond to the changed conditions of its existence. Butler's observations provide a useful context from which to understand contemporary Atlantic fiction: while mourning for the past remains and influences the region's identity in the present, the most relevant literary works assess the changing uses of history, the ways in which we "lose" and rediscover it, and the function of

"anachronism" and historical consciousness in the present to comment on the challenges of life today.

This renewed interest in assessing and articulating the conditions of contemporary regional life is the focus of the second section of my project, which examines work by Michael Winter, Lynn Coady and Lisa Moore. Their works move the region forward: they draw attention to the ways in which regional identity is used, destabilized, and reconstructed in exchange with popular culture from within and beyond the region. Instead of presenting a unified, antimodern regionalism that locates regional identity in the past, their works encourage Atlantic Canadians to look critically at themselves; they present to readers the million inexplicable facets of "the now" in their beauty and discomfort. Part of the importance of these representations of Atlantic regional life is their emphasis on the co-existence of competing visions of identity: as these interact, the assumptions of each position are scrutinized. Accordingly, my chapters on Winter, Coady and Moore focus upon the different ways in which they articulate this critical and complex regionalism.

My fourth chapter examines Michael Winter's vision of contemporary regional life by focusing upon his ecocritical consciousness: I argue that his juxtapositions of nature and human life, wilderness and city subvert the dichotomies within which we normally frame them. Not only does this highlight the ways in which urban consciousness and urban living increasingly permeate even the most rural or remote aspects of existence in twenty-first century Newfoundland, but it also directs our attention to the continued existence of "wild" or unknowable spaces within the fabric of modern life. Winter further develops this through his attention to

randomness in the lives of his characters, through his celebration of particularity, and his constant insistence on the limitations of both our individual and collective ways of knowing. In the world of Winter's texts, it is impossible to remain static or authentic (either individually or communally); likewise, it is impossible to be set apart from the influence of the continual cultural shifts of a globalized contemporaneity.

My fifth chapter assesses Lynn Coady's representations of rural and small town life. Coady's parodic treatment of the region foregrounds yearnings for an identifiable face, for tradition, roots, and stability, but it also interrogates the limits of this sense of belonging. As suggested in my analysis of "Wireless," her characters critique the commodification of scripted regional identities to satisfy the tourism industry, and they deploy or cast off stereotypes as required to confound the expectations and assumptions of friends and enemies from home and "away." Coady also displays the ways in which networks of community are being dismantled and superseded by the pervasiveness of globalized technologies and cultural influences that challenge any attempt to maintain regional stasis. Such stasis, she suggests, is neither a possibility nor ultimately desirable.

The work of Lisa Moore, the subject of my sixth chapter, likewise dwells upon the increasing volatility of categories of belonging, whether interpersonal or regional, as she trains her eye upon urban and suburban life in Newfoundland. Like those of Coady and Winter, Moore's texts stress the ordinariness and inevitability of the adaptation of local cultures to global influences. Moore's characters belong to a cosmopolitan, transnational, and "transregional" world in which Newfoundland's historical contributions to regional culture are balanced by the continual stream of

popular culture in an urban and suburban existence. Moore focuses upon the ways these global and mass-cultural elements of regional social space are "grounded" by repeated individual use, and also the ways ostensibly traditional cultural elements are repurposed and transformed by their modern contexts. Her works centre, to use de Certeau's phrase, on Newfoundlanders' "practice of everyday life": while her characters must cope with situations and changes often beyond their making, Moore emphasizes their agency as they negotiate their social space. Michael Crummey, a fellow Newfoundland writer and compatriot of Moore's, observes, "I've always been struck with Lisa [Moore] and Michael Winter's books…. They're not saying, 'How can I write Newfoundland into a book,' they're writing their lives and the lives of their friends. What you get is a more honest and penetrating view of the world than that deliberate attempt to set a place down" (Dyer). As Crummey notes, their explorations, as with those of Coady, represent regional contemporaneity perhaps more "realistically" because of their refusal to objectively survey their social space: their deliberately subjective texts unsettle the possibility of personal or regional coherence, turning a resolute attention to the process of becoming.

These new directions are important not only for their own sake but because of their confrontation with the conditions of regional existence. This focus, I believe, makes Winter, Coady and Moore among the most politically relevant writers of the Atlantic region; they might be said to reshape a regional sense of belonging. The region reflected in their works is one reliant – oftentimes uncomfortably, but as a matter of course – on everyday interaction with an uneven global contemporaneity, rather than in opposition to it. Conceptually and aesthetically, their works question

the deployment of an imagined, unified space or history as the basis for regional belonging. Instead, they explore the fissures and contradictions in attempts to construct a stable culture.[103] Winter and Moore, particularly, present identity as positional, contextual, and continually revised. Their characters encounter personal and regional history as it is perpetually mediated and limited by the lens of the present, with attendant misunderstandings, failed expectations, and disconnections.

This sense of "flux," as Moore names it, does not erase the past or the physical reality of the region, but contextualizes their use and importance in today's cultural imaginary, placing more emphasis on the vexed question of where we are going. Cheryl Herr observes that critical regionalist cultural studies offers the potential to produce a "more sensitive, environmentally attentive, dialectical, historically challenging, hegemony-resistant cultural studies" (17-18). As literary practitioners of a critical regionalism, the authors I have examined likewise insist on the always-already apparent heterogeneity of their region and are particularly attentive to the ways this shapes our understanding of the region's present and future. As they call our attention to the borders of tradition and contemporaneity, city and wilderness, rural and urban, insider and outsider, global and local, their goal is to represent the irreducible reality of the region's complexity.

While Coady, Winter and Moore are among the most notable, recognized, and accomplished of the writers whose works, both conceptually and aesthetically, are changing our assumptions about the region, they are part of a growing movement.

---

[103] In this sense, their work has resonances with "post-colonial" and "post-national" writers like Fred Wah or Dionne Brand, who trouble racial and national categories of normalcy and belonging. Herb Wyile expands on this comparison of regional and postcolonial categories in Canada ("Regionalism, Postcolonialism").

Robert Kroetsch observed that Canadian literature "evolved directly from Victorian into Postmodern" (2), but this has clearly not been the case in the Atlantic region, where realism and romance have continued to shape the region's normative literary modes. Yet some of those writers most invested in upholding the mythologies of Atlantic Canada indicate in their most recent works a turn to the problems of the present: Donna Morrissey's recent novel *What They Wanted* confronts outport family networks with today's inter-regional realities as new generations flee for the Alberta oil patch; in this sense, it reprises Donald Shebib's iconic 1970 film *Goin' Down the Road*, charting the aspirations and failures of the continued diaspora of Atlantic Canadians throughout the country. The novel's conclusion, which suggests death or return are the ends of such forays beyond regional boundaries, bleakly questions whether anything has changed since Shebib's work. While the novel continues to mythologize Newfoundland tropes of community bonds, belonging and connection to place, its engagement with competing values and social constructions marks a departure for Morrissey: nostalgia, though still a dominant tone of her work, is tempered by a sometimes critical approach to regional life that acknowledges its connections to the world beyond.

Michael Crummey, who likewise has largely used essentialist constructions of history and landscape to celebrate Newfoundland's distinctiveness in his short story collection *Flesh and Blood* (1998) and novels *River Thieves* (2001) and *The Wreckage* (2005), comments on his altering perspective on regional continuity and change in an interview with *Quill and Quire*:

> The joke was, when I returned [from fourteen years away from Newfoundland] I was going to write a book set on the mainland, because while I was away all I wrote about was Newfoundland…. I had a sense of the real Newfoundland as being something in the past, that contemporary Newfoundland was a shadow of its former self…. Whatever washes up on the beach gets cobbled in together with everything else. Newfoundland is changing at a much faster rate, but changing in the same way it always has. Not less itself, but richer and deeper. It's exciting. (Dyer)

Today, there are an increasing number of relatively new writers in the region who share Crummey's sense of regional transformation, and whose works represent contemporary regional life as a negotiation of continuity and change. Many of these have received very little critical attention to date, though their works merit such study, particularly for their representations of the changing relationship between rural and urban social space. For example, Joel Hynes demonstrates the extent to which mass culture has overtaken the isolation of outport culture; his work joins that of Ramona Dearing, Paul Bowdring and Edward Riche in presenting the vibrant urban life of Newfoundland. Riche, especially, is important for his ironic rebuttals of the tourist gaze in *Rare Birds* and *The Nine Planets*. Christy Ann Conlin's *Heave*, while perpetuating some essentialist tropes of regional belonging, also insists upon the region's "inheritance" of change. Jean MacNeil and Douglas Arthur Brown, similarly, offer explorations of transnational and transregional identity. France Daigle, a francophone writer from Moncton, is particularly interesting: her five works available in translation highlight Daigle's challenge of the linguistic divide, as they

are written in Chiac, the Moncton-Shediac dialect which radically combines French and English. In both the French and English versions, her novels include a strong presence of the "other" language, emphasizing the exchanges between the two. Further, Daigle's work is often highly experimental in form, drawing on postmodern representational strategies of fragmentation, layering, and polyphony to examine the challenges and commonplaces of a contemporary Acadian life.

The works of these authors, like those of Winter, Coady, and Moore, lay bare the contradictions of our present moment; while they attend to the disturbance and difficulty of personal or global transformations, they nevertheless identify the necessity of examining and taking responsibility for the choices we make to construct our world, to either reinforce or destabilize the region's cultural paradigms. As artistic visions, their detailed examinations of the ways we reshape our world suggest the inevitable and exciting openness of contemporary regional life.

Bibliography

Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." *Critical Theory Since 1965*. Eds. Adams, Hazard and Leroy Searle. Tallahassee: UP of Florida, 1986. 239-50.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London, NY: Verso, 1991.

Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Atwood, Margaret. *Survival*: *A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature.* Toronto: Anansi, 1972.

Bak, Hans. "Writing Newfoundland, Writing Canada: Wayne Johnston's *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*." *The Rhetoric of Canadian Writing*. Ed. Conny Steenman-Marcusse. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Rodopi, 2002. 217-36.

Bannerji, Himani. *The Dark Side of the Nation*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2000.

Barber, Benjamin R. *Jihad vs McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World.* NY: Ballantine Books, 1996.

Baudrillard, Jean. "The Orders of Simulacra." Trans. Philip Beitchman. *Simulations*. Trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman. NY: Semiotext(e), Inc., 1983. 83-159.

Beesley, Kenneth B. "Rural and Urban Fringe Studies in Canada: Retrospect and Prospect." *Rural and Urban Fringe Studies in Canada*. Ed. Kenneth B. Beesley. Toronto: York U Geographical Monographs, 1991. 1-44.

Belec, John. "The Dominion Housing Act." *Urban History Review*. 25.2 (1997): 53-62.

Benjamin, Walter. "Theses on the Philosophy of History." *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader.* Eds. Stephen Bronner and Douglas Kellner. NY: Routledge, 1989. 255-63.

Berger, John. "Why Look at Animals?" *About Looking*. New York: Pantheon, 1980. 1-26.

Bethune, Brian. "Unforgotten Country." Rev. of *Crow Lake*, by Mary Lawson, *Open*, by Lisa Moore, *Dead Girls*, by Nancy Lee, and *Saints of Big Harbour*, by Lynn Coady. *Maclean's* 1 July 2002: 84-86.

Bettison, David. *The Politics of Canadian Urban Development*. Vol 1. Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 1975.

Bevan, Allan. Introduction. *Rockbound*. By Frank Parker Day. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1973. vii-xxvii.

---. "*Rockbound* Revisited: a Reappraisal of Frank Parker Day's Novel." *Dalhousie Review* 38 (1958): 336-47.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Bibby, Reginald. *Mosaic Madness: the Poverty and Potential of Life in Canada.* Toronto: Stoddart, 1990.

Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage, 1995.

Bissoondath, Neil. *Selling Illusions: the Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada*. Toronto: Penguin, 1994.

Blumenthal, Hans. "Metropolis Extended." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 52. 3 (Summer 1986): 348-67.

Bowdring, Paul. *The Night Season.* St. John's, NL: Killick Press, 1997.

---. *The Roncesvalles Pass.* St. John's, NL: Breakwater Books, 1989.

Bowles, Roy T. and Kenneth B. Beesley. "Quality of Life, Migration to the Countryside and Rural Community Growth." *Rural and Urban Fringe Studies in Canada*. Ed. Kenneth B. Beesley. Toronto: York U Geographical Monographs, 1991. 45-66.

Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. NY: Basic Books, 2001.

Brodie, Janine. *The Political Economy of Canadian Regionalism.* Toronto: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1990.

Brown, Douglas Arthur. *Quintet.* Toronto: Key Porter, 2008.

Brown, E.K. "The Problem of a Canadian Literature." *Responses and Evaluations: Essays on Canada*. Ed. David Staines. Toronto: McClelland 1977. 1-21.

Bruce, Charles. *The Channel Shore*. Toronto: M&S (NCL), 1987.

Bruce, Harry. *Down Home*. Toronto: Key Porter, 1988.

Bryant, C.R., L.H. Russwurm and A.G. McLellan. *The City's Countryside*. London: Longman, 1982.

Bryant, C.R., P.M. Coppack and C.J.A. Mitchell. "The City's Countryside." *Canadian Cities in Transition: The Twenty-first Century*. Second Edition. Eds. Trudi Bunting and Pierre Filion. Toronto: Oxford UP, 2000. 333-54.

Buckler, Ernest. *The Mountain and the Valley*. Toronto: M&S (NCL), 1970.

Buckner, Philip A., "Introduction." Ed. *Teaching Maritime Studies*. Ed. P.A. Buckner. Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1986**.** 1-16.

Budde, Robert. "Codes of Canadian Racism: Anglocentric and Assimilationist Cultural Rhetoric." *Home-Work: Postcolonialism, Pedagogy and Canadian Literature*. Ed. Cynthia Sugars. Ottawa: U Ottawa P, 2004. 245-56.

Butler, Judith. "Afterword: After Loss, What Then?" *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*. Eds. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian. Berkeley: U of California P, 2003. 467-74.

---. "Collected and Fractured: Response to Identities." *Identities.* Ed. K.A. Appiah and H.L. Gates Jr.. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1995. 439-48.

---. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. NY: Routledge, 2006.

Butler, Tanya. "This Place is History: The Short Fiction of Alistair MacLeod." Diss. Queen's University, 2006

Byron, Reginald. "Introduction." *Retrenchment and Regeneration in Rural Newfoundland.* Ed. Reginald Byron. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2003. 3-13.

Calder, Alison. "Reassessing Prairie Regionalism." *A Sense of Place: Re-Evaluating Regionalism in Canadian and American Writing*. Eds. Christian Riegel, Herb Wyile, Karen Overbye, and Don Perkins. Edmonton: U Alberta P, 1998. 51-60.

--- and Robert Wardhaugh. "Introduction: When is the Prairie?" *History, Literature, and the Writing of the Canadian Prairies*. Eds. Alison Calder and Robert Wardhaugh. Winnipeg: U of Manitoba P, 2005. 3-24.

Canada Reads 2005. CBC.ca. 14 Oct. 2007. <http://www.cbc.ca/canadareads/2005>.

Carter, Everett. *Howells and the Age of Realism.* Harden, CT: Archon Books, 1966.

Cawelti, John G. "The Writer as Celebrity: Some Aspects of Literature as Popular Culture." *Studies in American Fiction* 5 (1977): 161-74.

Chalykoff, Lisa. "No Place for a Girl: Place and Gender-Identity in *The Channel Shore*." *Mosaic* 36.3 (2003): 147-63.

---. "Overcoming the Two Solitudes of Canadian Literary Regionalism." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 23.1 (1998): 160-77.

Chaney, David. *Cultural Change and Everyday Life*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2002.

---. *Fictions of Collective Life: Public Drama in Late Modern Culture*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Clapson, Mark. *Suburban Century: Social Change and Urban Growth in England and the USA*. NY: Berg, 2003.

Clarke, George Elliott. *Beatrice Chancy*. Victoria: Polestar, 1999.

---. *Execution Poems*. Wolfville, NS: Gaspereau Press, 2001.

---. *George and Rue*. Toronto: HarperCollins, 2005.

---. *Whylah Falls*. Victoria: Polestar, 2000.

Clifford, James. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1997.

Coady, Lynn. "Introduction: Books that say Arse." *Victory Meat*. Ed. Lynn Coady. Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2003. 1-6.

---. *Mean Boy*. Toronto: Doubleday, 2006.

---. *Play the Monster Blind: Stories.* Toronto: Doubleday, 2000.

---. *Saints of Big Harbour*. Toronto: Doubleday, 2002.

---. *Strange Heaven*. Fredericton: Goose Lane, 1998.

---. "Wireless." *The Walrus*. April 2005. *Walrusmagazine.com*. Online. 5 April 2009. <http://www.walrusmagazine.com/articles/2005.04-fiction-lynn-coady/>

Cogswell, Fred. "English Prose Writing in New Brunswick: World War I to the Present." *A Literary and Linguistic History of New Brunswick*. Ed. Reavley Gair. Fredericton, NB: Fiddlehead and Goose Lane, 1985. 229-44.

Collins, Richard. *Culture, Communication, and National Identity: The Case of Canadian Television.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1990.

Compton, Anne, Laurence Hutchman, Ross Leckie and Robin McGrath. Introduction. *Coastlines: The Poetry of Atlantic Canada*. Eds. Anne Compton et al. Fredericton, NB: Goose Lane, 2002. 15-18.

Conboy, Martin. *The Press and Popular Culture*. London: Sage, 2002.

Conlin, Christy Ann. *Heave: a Novel.* Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2002.

Conrad, Margaret R. and James K. Hiller. *Atlantic Canada: A Region in the Making*. Toronto: Oxford UP, 2001.

Cooppan, Vilashini. "Mourning Becomes Kitsch: The Aesthetics of Loss in Severo Sarduy's *Cobra*." *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*. Eds. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian. Berkeley: U of California Press, 2003. 251-77.

Coppack, P.M., L.H. Russwurm and C.R. Bryant, eds. *Essays in Canadian Urban Process and Form III: The Urban Field*. Waterloo: University of Waterloo Dept. of Geography Publication Series No. 30, 1988.

Creelman, David. *Setting in the East: Maritime Realist Fiction.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 2003.

Cronon, William. "Introduction: In Search of Nature" *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature.* Ed. William Cronon. NY: Norton, 1996. 23-56.

---. "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature.* Ed. William Cronon. NY: Norton, 1996. 69-90.

Crummey, Michael. *Flesh and Blood.* Vancouver: Beach Holme Pub.,1998.

---. *River Thieves.* Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2001.

---. *The Wreckage: A Novel.* Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2005.

Dahms, Fred and Barry Hallmann. "Population Change, Economic Activity and Amenity Landscapes at the Outer Edge of the Urban Fringe." *Rural and Urban Fringe Studies in Canada* Ed. Kenneth B. Beesley. Toronto: York U Geographical Monographs, 1991. 67-90.

Daigle, France. *1953: Chronicle of a Birth Foretold: a Novel*. Trans. Robert Majzels. Concord, ON: Anansi, 1997.

---. *A Fine Passage: a Novel*. Trans. Robert Majzels. Toronto: Anansi, 2002.

---. *Just Fine: A Novel*. Trans. Robert Majzels. Toronto: Anansi, 1999.

---. *Life's Little Difficulties: a Novel*. Trans. Robert Majzels.. Toronto: Anansi, 2004.

---. *Real Life: a Novel*. Trans. Robert Sally Ross. Concord, ON: Anansi, 1995.

Dainotto, Roberto Maria. " 'All the Regions Do Smilingly Revolt': The Literature of Place and Region." *Critical Inquiry* 22.3 (Spring 1996): 486-505.

Davey, Frank. "Surviving the Paraphrase." *Canadian Literature* 70 (1976): 5-13.

---. "Toward the Ends of Regionalism." *A Sense of Place: Re-Evaluating Regionalism in Canadian and American Writing*. Eds. Christian Riegel, Herb Wyile, Karen Overbye, and Don Perkins. Edmonton: U Alberta P, 1998. 1-18.

Davies, Gwendolyn. Afterword. *Rockbound*, by Frank Parker Day. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1989.

---. "The 'Home Place' in Modern Maritime Literature." *Studies in Maritime Literary History 1760-1930*. Ed. Gwendolyn Davies. Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis, 1991. 192-99.

---. "Frank Parker Day's Rockbound." *Studies in Maritime Literary History 1760-1930*. Ed. Gwendolyn Davies. Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis, 1991. 174-91.

---, ed. *Myth and Milieu: Atlantic Literature and Culture 1918-1939.* Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis,1993.

Davis, Dona Lee. "In the Beginning: Region, Crisis and Occupational Choice among Newfoundland's Youth." *Retrenchment and Regeneration in Rural Newfoundland*. Ed. Reginald Byron. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2003. 177-97.

Day, Frank Parker. *Rockbound*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1973.

---. *Rockbound*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1989.

---. *Rockbound*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2005.

Day, Richard. *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2000.

Dearing, Ramona. *So Beautiful.* Erin, ON: Porcupine's Quill, 2004.

de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Randall. Berkeley: U of California P, 1984.

Desmond, Jane C. "Looking at Animals: The Consumption of Radical Bodily Difference." *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World.* Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1999.144-52.

Downton, Dawn Rae. "She Owns a Piece of the Rock." Rev. of *Sylvanus Now* by Donna Morrissey. *Globe and Mail*. 14 May 2005. D5.

Dupont, Louis and Nathalie Lemarchand. "Official Multiculturalism in Canada: Between Virtue and Politics." *Global Multiculturalism: Comparative Perspectives on Ethnicity, Race, and Nation.* Eds. Grant H. Cornwell and Eve Walsh Stoddard. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001. 309-35.

Dvorak, Marta. "Ernest Buckler's *The Mountain and the Valley*: Broader Than Space, Faster Than Time." *Etudes Canadiennes / Canadian Studies* 36 (1994): 25-36.

--- and Coral Ann Howells. "The Literature of Atlantic Canada." *The Literature of Atlantic Canada.* Eds. Marta Dvorak and Coral Ann Howells. *Canadian Literature*189 (Summer 2006): 6-10.

Dyer, Alison. "Two Faces of the Rock: Lisa Moore and Michael Crummey showcase different visions of their shared corner of the world." *Quill & Quire.* 1 August 2005. *Quillandquire.com*. Online. 23 Jan. 2008. <http://www.quillandquire.com/omni/article.cfm?article_id=6807>.

Edwards, Justin T. and Douglas Ivison. "Introduction: Writing Canadian Cities." *Downtown Canada: Writing Canadian Cities*. Eds. Edwards and Ivison. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2005. 3-13.

Eng, David L and David Kazanjian. "Introduction: Mourning Remains." *Loss: the Politics of Mourning.* Eds. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian. Berkeley: U of California P, 2003. 1-25.

Fishman, Robert. *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia.* NY: Basic Books, 1987.

Forbes, Ernest R., Ed. *Challenging the Regional Stereotype: Essays on the 20th Century Maritimes.* Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis, 1989.

Foucault, Michel. "Of other spaces." *Diacritics* 16 (1986): 22-27.

Fraser, Blair. *The Search for Identity: Canada Postwar to Present.* Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1967.

Friesen, Peter. "Jane Eyre's Conservative Canadian Cousin: *The Nymph and the Lamp*." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 15.2 (1990): 160-73.

Frye, Northrop. *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination*. Toronto: Anansi, 1971.

---. "Conclusion." *The Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English.* Ed. Carl Klinck. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1965.

Fuller, Danielle. "Listening to the Readers of *Canada Reads*." *Canadian Literature* 193 (Summer 2007): 11-34.

---. "Living in hopes – Atlantic realities and realisms" *Canadian Literature* 170-71 (Autumn 2001): 199-204.

---. *Writing the Everyday: Women's Textual Communities in Atlantic Canada.* Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 2004.

--- and DeNel Rehberg Sedo. "A Reading Spectacle for the Nation: The CBC and '*Canada Reads*'." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40.1 (Winter 2006): 5-36.

Gair, Reavley, ed. *A Literary and Linguistic History of New Brunswick*. Fredericton, NB: Fiddlehead and Goose Lane, 1985.

Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell UP,1983.

Giddens, Anthony. *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1998.

Gifford, Terry. "The Social Construction of Nature." *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*. Ed. Laurence Coupe. London & NY: Routledge, 2000. 173-76.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century.* New Haven: Yale UP, 1989.

Goin' Down the Road. Screenplay by William Fruet. Dir. Donald Shebib. Perf. Doug McGrath, Paul Bradley, Jayne Eastwood, and Cayle Chernin. Edvon Films, 1970.

Gregory, Derek. *Geographical Imaginations.* Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994.

---. "Spatial Structure." *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. Eds. R.J. Johnston et al. Second edition. London: Paladin, 1986. 450-51.

Gwyn, Richard. *Nationalism Without Walls: the Unbearable Lightness of Being Canadian.* Toronto: M&S, 1995.

Haliburton, Thomas Chandler. *The Clockmaker: The Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville*. Toronto: M&S (NCL), 1993.

---. *The Old Judge*; *or, Life in a Colony*. Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1978.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. 222-37.

---. "The Question of Cultural Identity." *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*. Eds. Hall et al. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996. 595-634.

Harper, Stephen. Qtd. in "Harper Calls Canada a Nation of Defeatists, Defends Remark about Easterners." By Louise Elliott. *Canadian Press*. 29 May 2002.

---. Profile. *The National*. CBC TV. 18 May 2006.

---. et al. "The Alberta Agenda." Open letter to Alberta Premier Ralph Klein. *National Post*. 26 Jan. 2001. A14.

Harris, Richard and Peter Larkham. "Introduction: Suburban Foundation, Form and Function." *Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form, and Function*. Eds. Richard Harris and Peter J. Larkham. NY: Routledge, 1999. 1-30.

Harris, Richard. *Creeping Conformity*: *How Canada Became Suburban, 1900-1960*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2004.

Harrison, Dick. *Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction*. Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 1977.

Harvey, David. "Between space and time; reflections on the geographical imagination." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80 (1990): 418-34.

Hayden, Dolores. *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000*. NY: Pantheon, 2003.

Hellman, David and Nancy Pearl. "Mud, Blood and Beer: Grit Lit Classics." Rev. of *Feast of Snakes*, by Harry Crews, *Geronimo Rex*, by Barry Hannah, *Fay*, by Larry Brown, *Bastard out of Carolina*, by Dorothy Allison, and *Cruddy: an Illustrated Novel*, by Lynda Barry. *Library Journal* 126.10 (2001): 260.

Hepburn, Allan. "Ordure and Ornament" Rev. of *Saints of Big Harbour* by Lynn Coady. *Canadian Literature* 180 (Spring 2004): 122-24.

Herr, Cheryl. *Critical Regionalism and Cultural Studies: From Ireland to the American Midwest*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1996.

Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1983.

Hochbruck, Wolfgang and James O.Taylor. *Down East: Critical Essays on Contemporary Maritime Canadian Literature.* Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 1996.

Hochman, Jhan. "Green Cultural Studies" *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*. Ed. Laurence Coupe. London & NY: Routledge, 2000. 187-92.

Huggan, Graham. *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Hulan, Renee. *Northern Experience and the Myths of Canadian Culture*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 2002.

Hutcheon, Linda. "Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern." *Methods for the Study of Literature as Cultural Memory*. Eds. Raymond Vervliet and Annemarie Estor. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000.189-207.

---. *The Canadian Postmodern: a Study of Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction.* Toronto: Oxford UP, 1988.

---. *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms.* NY: Methuen, 1985.

Hynes, Joel. *Down to the Dirt.* Toronto: HarperCollins, 2004.

---. *Right Away Monday.* Toronto: HarperCollins, 2007.

Isin, Engin. "Metropolis Unbound: Legislators and Interpreters of Urban Form." *City Lives and City Forms: Critical Research & Canadian Urbanism*. Eds. Jon Caulfield and Linda Peake. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1996. 98-127.

Jackel, David. "Roberts' 'Tantramar Revisited': Another View." *Canadian Poetry* 5 (1979): 41-56.

Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States.* NY: Oxford UP,1985.

Jameson, Frederic. *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke UP, 1991.

Jordan, David M. *New World Regionalism: Literature in the Americas.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1994.

Kahn, Joel. *Culture, Multiculture, Postculture*. London: Sage, 1995.

Kamboureli, Smaro. "The Culture of Celebrity and National Pedagogy." *Home-Work: Postcolonialism, Pedagogy and Canadian Literature*. Ed. Cynthia Sugars. Ottawa: U of Ottawa P, 2004. 35-56.

---. "The Culture of Nature and the Logic of Modernity: Sharon Butala's *The Perfection of the Morning: An Apprenticeship in Nature*." *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*. Special Issue: *Border Zones: North American Literature and Cultures at the Century's End*. 43 (November 2001): 37-58.

Keahey, Deborah. *Making it Home: Place in Canadian Prairie Literature*. Winnipeg: U of Manitoba P, 1998.

Keefer, Janice Kulyk. *Under Eastern Eyes: a critical reading of Maritime fiction*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1987.

Kelly, Ursula. *Marketing Place: Cultural Politics, Regionalism and Reading*. Halifax: Fernwood, 1993.

Kilgour, David. *Inside Outer Canada*. Edmonton: Lone Pine, 1990.

Kinnane, Gary. "Shopping At Last!: History, Fiction, and the Anti-Suburban Tradition." *Australian Literary Studies*. 18.4 (1998): 41-55.

Kristiansen, Erik. "Time, Memory and Rural Transformation: Rereading History in the Fiction of Charles Bruce and Ernest Buckler." *Contested Countryside: Rural Workers and Modern Society in Atlantic Canada, 1800-1950.* Ed. Daniel Samson. Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis, 1994. 225-56.

Kroetsch, Robert. "A Canadian Issue." *Boundary 2: A Journal of Postmodern Literature* 3.1 (Fall 1974): 1-2.

Kuester, Martin. *Framing Truths: Parodic Structures in Contemporary English-Canadian Historical Novels.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1992.

Lears, T.J. Jackson. *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-1920*. New York: Pantheon, 1981.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991.

Ley, David. "The New Middle Class in Central Canadian Cities." *City Lives and City Forms: Critical Research & Canadian Urbanism*. Eds. Jon Caulfield and Linda Peake. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1996. 15-32.

Limon, Jose E. "Border Literary Histories, Globalization, and Critical Regionalism." *American Literary History* 20.1-2 (Spring 2008):160-82.

Linteau, Paul-Andre. "Canadian Suburbanization in a North American Context: Does the Border Make a Difference?" *Journal of Urban History* 13.3 (1987): 252-74.

Lippard, Lucy. *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentred Society*. NY: New Press, 1997.

Loriggio, Francesco. "Regionalism and Theory." *Regionalism Reconsidered: New Approaches to the Field.* Ed. David Jordan. NY: Garland, 1994. 3-27.

Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge.* Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984.

MacCannell, Dean. "Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings." *American Sociological Review* 79 (1973): 589-603.

Macdonald, Ann-Marie. *Fall On Your Knees*. Toronto: Knopf, 1996.

MacDonald, Bruce. "Living On the Edge: Life and the Way Out in Thomas Raddall's Novels." *Time and Place: The Life and Works of Thomas H. Raddall*. Ed. Alan Young. Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis, 1991. 165-73.

MacDonald, Frances. “War of the Worlds: David Adams Richards and Modern Times.” *Antigonish Review* 104 (Winter 1996): 17-24.

MacGregor, Gayle. *The Wacousta Syndrome*: *Explorations in the Canadian Langscape.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1985.

Machor, James L. *Pastoral Cities: Urban Ideals and the Symbolic Landscape of America.* Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1987.

Mackey, Eva. “Death by Landscape: Race, Nature, and Gender in Canadian Nationalist Mythology.” *Canadian Woman Studies* 20.2 (Summer 2000): 125-30.

---. *The House of Difference. Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2002.

MacLennan, Hugh. *Barometer Rising*. Toronto: M&S (NCL), 1969.

---. *Each Man’s Son*. Toronto: Stoddart, 1997.

---. *The Watch That Ends the Night*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1959.

MacLeod, Alexander. “Between a Rock and a Soft Place : Postmodern-Regionalism in Canadian and American Fiction.” Diss. McGill University, 2003.

---. “ ‘The Little State of Africadia is a Community of Believers’: Replacing the Regional and Remaking the Real in the Work of George Elliott Clarke.” *Surf's Up! The Rising Tide of Atlantic-Canadian Literature.* Eds. Herb Wyile and Jeanette Lynes. *Studies in Canadian Literature* 33.2 (2008): 96-114.

MacLeod, Alistair. *No Great Mischief*. Toronto: M&S, 1999.

---. “The Boat.” *Island: The Collected Stories.* Toronto: M&S, 2000. 1-25.

---. *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood*. Toronto: M&S, 1976.

---. “The Road to Rankin’s Point.” *Island: The Collected Stories.* Toronto: M&S, 2000. 143-79.

---. “The Tuning of Perfection.” *Island: The Collected Stories.* Toronto: M&S, 2000. 271-309.

MacNeil, Jean. *Hunting Down Home*. London: Phoenix House, 1996.

---. *The Interpreter of Silences*. Toronto: McArthur, 2006.

---. *Nights in a Foreign Country*. London: Phoenix House, 2001.

---. *Private View*. London: Phoenix House, 2002.

Mahoney, Jill. "Suburban Myths Demolished." *Globe and Mail*. 31 July 2006. *theglobeandmail.com*. Online. 10 August 2006.

Manning, Erin. *Ephemeral Territories: Representing Nation, Home, and Identity in Canada.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003.

Marx, Leo. "The Machine in the Garden." *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*. Ed. Laurence Coupe. London & NY: Routledge, 2000. 104-08.

Mathews, Lawrence. "Atlantic Myths." Rev. of *Atlantica*, ed. Lesley Choyce, *Alistair MacLeod, Essays on His Work,* ed. Irene Guilford. *Canadian Literature* 180 (Spring 2004): 119-20.

---. "Northeast of King." Rev. of *The Town that Forgot How to Breathe*, by Kenneth J. Harvey. *Canadian Literature* 184 (Spring 2005): 134-35.

---. "Report from the Country of No Country." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 82 (Spring 2004): 1-20.

McCann, Larry. "Suburbs of Desire: The Suburban Landscape of Canadian Cities, c.1900-1950." *Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form, and Function*. Eds. Richard Harris and Peter J. Larkham. London: E&FN Spon, 1999. 111-45.

McCulloch, Thomas. *The Stepsure Letters*. Toronto: M&S (NCL), 1960.

McGrath, Darrin. *Moose Country: the Story of the Moose in Newfoundland*. St. John's, NF: DRC Publishing, 2008.

McKay, Ian. "Among the Fisherfolk: J.F.B. Lindsay and the Invention of Peggy's Cove." *Journal of Canadian Studies*. 23.1-2 (1988): 23-45.

---. *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia.* Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1994.

Meeker, Robert T. "A More Urban Fabric for Emerging Urban Villages." *Suburbia Re-examined*. Ed. Barbara Kelly. NY: Greenwood, 1989. 59-67.

Milton, Paul. "Rewriting White Flight: Suburbia in Gerald Lynch's *Troutstream* and Joan Barfoot's *Dancing in the Dark*." *Downtown Canada: Writing Canadian Cities*. Eds. Justin T. Edwards and Douglas Ivison. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2005. 166-82.

Mitchell, Clare J.A. "Entrepreneurialism, Commodification and Creative Destruction: a Model of Post-modern Community Development." *Journal of Rural Studies* 14.3 (1998): 273-86.

Moore, Lisa. *Alligator*. Toronto: Anansi, 2005.

---. *Degrees of Nakedness.* Toronto: Anansi, 1995.

---. "Hard Rock and Water." Dir. Barbara Doran. Morag Productions. *The Passionate Eye*. CBC Newsworld. 13 June 2005.

---. *Open: Stories*. Toronto: Anansi, 2002.

"Moose." Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Environment and Conservation. Salmonier Nature Park. June 20 2009. <http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/snp/Animals/moose.htm.>

Morrissey, Donna. *Downhill Chance*. Toronto: Penguin, 2002.

---. *Kit's Law*. Toronto: Viking, 1999.

---. *Sylvanus Now*. Toronto: Penguin, 2005.

---. *What They Wanted.* Toronto: Viking, 2008.

Moss, Laura "*Canada Reads*." *Canadian Literature* 182 (Autumn 2004): 6-11.

New, W.H. "Beyond Nationalism: On Regionalism." *World Literature Written in English*, 23.1 (Winter 1984): 12-18.

---. *Land Sliding: Imagining Space, Presence, and Power in Canadian Writing*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1997.

Nowlan, Alden. "The Bull Moose." *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English*. Ed. Margaret Atwood. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1983. 299.

O'Brien, Susie. "'Articulating a World of Difference:' Ecocriticism, Postcolonialism, and Globalization." *Canadian Literature* 170.1 (2001): 140-58.

O'Flaherty, Patrick. *The Rock Observed: Studies in the Literature of Newfoundland*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1979.

Overton, James. "Dirt and Danger, Development and Decency in Newfoundland." *Making A World of Difference: Essays on Tourism, Culture and Development in Newfoundland.* St. John's, NF: ISER, 1996. 81-98.

Park, C. and Philip Coppack. "The Role of Rural Sentiment and Vernacular Landscapes in Contriving Sense of Place in the City's Countryside." *Geografiska Annaler* 76B,3 (1994): 162-72.

Pickering, Jean and Suzanne Kehde. Introduction. *Narratives of Nostalgia, Gender, and Nationalism*. Ed. Jean Pickering and Suzanne Kehde. NY: NYU Press, 1997. 1-8.

Pike, E. Holly. "Mass Marketing, Popular Culture, and the Canadian Celebrity Author." *Making Avonlea: L.M. Montgomery and Popular Culture*. Ed. Irene Gammel. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2002. 238-51.

Poppi, Cesare. "Wider Horizons with Larger Details: Subjectivity, Ethnicity, and Globalization." *The Limits of Globalization*. Ed. Alan Scott. NY: Routledge, 1997. 284-97.

Powell, Douglas Reichert. *Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American Landscape*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2007.

Pryse, Marjorie. "Writing Out of the Gap: Regionalism, Resistance, and Relational Reading." *A Sense of Place: Re-Evaluating Regionalism in Canadian and American Writing*. Eds. Christian Riegel, Herb Wyile, Karen Overbye, and Don Perkins. Edmonton: U Alberta P, 1998. 19-34.

Raddall, Thomas H. *The Nymph and the Lamp*. Toronto: M&S (NCL), 1963.

Reinink, Martin. "The Rhetoric of Emerging Literatures." *The Rhetoric of Canadian Writing*. Ed. Conny Steenman-Marcusse. Amsterdam: Rodopi 2002. 125-35.

Riche, Edward. *The Nine Planets.* Toronto: Viking, 2004.

---. *Rare Birds.* Toronto: Doubleday, 1997.

Ricou, Laurence. *Vertical Man/Horizontal World: Man and Landscape in Canadian Prairie Fiction.* Vancouver: U British Columbia Press, 1973.

Roberts, Charles G.D. "The Tantramar Revisited." *Poets of the Confederation*. Ed. M. Ross. Toronto: M&S NCL, 1984. 3-5.

Rodriguez, Richard T. "Glocal Matters: A Response to Jose E. Limon." *American Literary History* 20.1-2 (Spring 2008): 183-86.

Rogers, Sheila. Interview with Lisa Moore. *Sounds Like Canada*. CBC Radio 1. 15 November 2005.

Rojek, Chris. *Celebrity*. London: Reaktion, 2001.

Rose, Margaret. *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-modern*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP,1993.

Ross, Malcolm. Introduction. *Poets of the Confederation*. Ed. M. Ross. Toronto: M&S NCL, 1984 (1960). vii-xii.

Ross, Stephen. "Authenticity and its Discontents: *The Mountain and the Valley*." *Canadian Literature* 165 (2000): 59-75.

Russwurm, L.H. *The Surroundings of Our Cities*. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977.

Ruth, Elizabeth. "Hot From the Rock." *Globe and Mail*. 11 May 2002. *theglobeandmail.com*. Online. 24 Sept. 2004.

Salem-Wiseman, Lisa. "Divided Cities, Divided Selves: Portraits of the Artist as Ambivalent Urban Hipster." *Downtown Canada: Writing Canadian Cities*. Eds. Justin T. Edwards and Douglas Ivison. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2005. 142-65.

---. "How to make a Canadian Quilt." Rev. of *Purple for Sky* by Carol Bruneau. *Essays on Canadian Writing* 74 (Fall 2001): 167-74.

Sanders, Leslie. "Anti/Modern Spaces: African Canadians in Nova Scotia." *Floating the Borders: New Contexts in Canadian Criticism.* Ed. Nurjehan Aziz. Toronto: TSAR, 1999. 106-21.

Saul, John Ralston. *Reflections of a Siamese Twin: Canada at the end of the twentieth century*. Toronto: Viking, 1997.

Savoie, Donald. *Visiting Grandchildren: Economic Development in the Maritimes*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2006.

Seaman, Andrew. "Heroes, Heroines and the Lost Kingdom in the Unpublished Novels of Frank Parker Day." *Myth and Milieu: Atlantic Literature and Culture 1918-1939*. Ed. Gwendolyn Davies. Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis, 1993. 136-46.

---. "Visions of Fulfilment in Ernest Buckler and Charles Bruce." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 31 (1985): 158-74.

Shields, Rob. "The True North Strong and Free." *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity*. London: Routledge, 1991. 162-98.

Short, John Rennie. *Imagined Country: Society, Culture and Environment*. NY: Routledge, 1991.

Slemon, Stephen. "Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World." *The Post-colonial Studies Reader.* Eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. NY: Routledge, 1995. 104-10.

Smith, Shaun. "Change is Good: Penguin bets big on Michael Winter." *Quill & Quire.* July 2007. *Quillandquire.com*. Online. 16 April 2009. <http://www.quillandquire.com/authors/profile.cfm?article_id=7904>

Soja, Edward W. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory.* London, NY: Verso, 1989.

---. *Thirdspace*: *Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places.* Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996.

Steeves, Rachel. " 'Flawed Splendour': A Conversation with Lynn Coady." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 32.1 (2007): 231-38.

Stevens, Kirsten Allegra. "Speech in Selected Works of Three Maritime Authors." BA thesis. Mount Allison University, 1981

Stewart, Susan. *On Longing*. Durham: Duke UP, 1993.

Stockdale, John. "Frank Parker Day's Rockbound: Personal Ruminations on a Long Conspiracy of Silence." *Myth and Milieu: Atlantic Literature and Culture 1918-1939*. Ed. Gwendolyn Davies. Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis, 1993. 147-52.

Strong, Joan. *Acts of Brief Authority: a Critical Assessment of Selected Twentieth-Century Newfoundland Novels.* St. John's, NF: Breakwater, 1994.

Strong-Boag, Veronica. "Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945-60." *Canadian Historical Review* 72.4 (1991): 471-504.

Sugars, Cynthia. "Introduction: Postcolonial Pedagogy and the Impossibility of Teaching: Outside in the (Canadian Literature) Classroom." *Home-Work: Postcolonialism, Pedagogy and Canadian Literature*. Ed. Cynthia Sugars. Ottawa: U Ottawa P, 2004. 1-33.

Surrette, Debra A. "Folklore in *Rockbound* and *John Paul's Rock*." BA thesis. Mount Allison University, 1981.

Sutherland, Katherine. "To Plot or Not." Rev. of *Play The Monster Blind,* by Lynn Coady, *Marrow and Other Stories*, by Nora Gold, and *Oxygen*, by Annabel Lyon. *Canadian Literature* 173 (Summer 2002): 127-30.

Szeman, Imre. "Belated or Isochronic? Canadian Writing, Time, and Globalization." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 71 (Fall 2000): 186-94.

Tallman, Warren. "Wolf in the Snow. Part One: Four Windows on to Landscapes." *Canadian Literature* 5 (1960): 7-20.

Thomson, L. and C.J.A. Mitchell. "Residents of the urban field: a case study of Wilmot Township, Ontario, Canada." *Journal of Rural Studies* 14.2 (1998): 185-201.

Thrift, Nigel. "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Region." *Human Geography: Society, Space and Social Science.* Eds. Derek Gregory et al. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1994. 200-31.

Tinic, Serra. *On Location: Canada's Television Industry in a Global Market*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2005.

Tomlinson, John. *Globalization and Culture.* Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1999.

Turner, Graeme. *Introduction to British Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge, 1990.

---. *Understanding Celebrity*. London: Sage, 2004.

Urry, John. *The Tourist Gaze*. Second edition. London: Sage, 2002.

Van Rys, John C. "Diminishing Voice in Buckler's *The Mountain and the Valley*." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 20.1 (1995): 65-79.

Vaughan, R.M. "To the lighthouse." Rev. of *Mean Boy*, by Lynn Coady. *National Post.* 18 March 2006. *rmvaughanink.blogspot.com.* Online. 2 June 2008. <http://rmvaughanink.blogspot.com/2006/03/type-cast-9.html>

Wainwright, J. Andrew. "Days of Future Past: Time in the Fiction of Charles Bruce." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 8.2 (1983): 238-47.

---. "Fern Hill Revisited: Isolation and Death in *The Mountain and the Valley*." *Studies in Canadian Literature* 7.1 (1982): 63-89.

Walker, Gerald. "Social Space and Imagined Community: Examples from the Toronto Countryside." *Rural and Urban Fringe Studies in Canada.* Ed. Kenneth B. Beesley. Toronto: York U Geographical Monographs, 1991. 161-81.

Wallcott, Rinaldo. *Black Like Who?* Toronto: Insomniac Press, 1997.

Ware, Tracy. "Remembering It All Well: 'The Tantramar Revisisted.'" *Studies in Canadian Literature* 8.2 (1983): 221-39.

Whalen, Tracy. "Camping with Annie Proulx: *The Shipping News* and Tourist Desire." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 82 (Spring 2004): 51-70.

---. "Stylizing the Mundane: Bernice Morgan's *Random Passage*." *Ethnologies* 23.1 (2001): 23-43.

Whitehead, Ruth Holmes, ed. *The Old Man Told Us: Excerpts from Micmac History 1500-1950.* Halifax: Nimbus, 1991.

Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society, 1780-1950.* NY: Columbia UP, 1993.

---. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society.* NY: Oxford UP, 1976

Willmott, Glenn. "The Frontier beyond empire: East of Everything in Thomas Raddall's *The Nymph and the Lamp*." *Canadian Literature* 157 (1998): 56-78.

---. *Unreal Country: Modernity in the Canadian Novel in English*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 2002.

Winter, Michael. *The Architects Are Here*. Toronto: Viking, 2007.

---. *Creaking in Their Skins*. Kingston, ON: Quarry Press, 1994.

---. "Introduction." *Extremities: Fiction From the Burning Rock*. Ed. Michael Winter. St. John's, NF: Killick Press, 1994. xi-xii

---. *One Last Good Look*. Toronto: Anansi, 1999.

---. *This All Happened.* Toronto: Anansi, 2000.

Writer's Federation of Nova Scotia. "Winners of WFNS Competitions for Published Works." WFNS website. Online. 5 Jul. 2009. <http://www.writers.ns.ca/winners.html>

Wyile, Herb. "All Over the Canvas: An Interview with Lisa Moore." *Antigonish Review* 152 (Winter 2008): 107-23.

---. "As For Me and Me Arse: Strategic Regionalism and the Home Place in Lynn Coady's *Strange Heaven*." *Canadian Literature* 189 (Summer 2006): 85-103.

---. "Ransom Revisited: The Aesthetic of Regionalism in a Globalized Age." *Canadian Review of American Studies* 28.2 (1998): 99-117.

---. "Regionalism, Postcolonialism, and (Canadian) Writing: a Comparative Approach for Postnational Times." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 63 (Spring 1998): 139-61.

---. "Regionalism, Post-Nationalism, and Post-Colonialism: The Case of Canadian Literature(s)." *Literature of Region and Nation: Proceedings of the 6th International Literature of Region and Nation Conference*, 2-7 August 1996 Ed. Winnifred M Bogaards. Saint John, NB: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada with UNBSJ, 1998. 267-76.

---. *Speculative Fictions*: *Contemporary Canadian Novelists and the Writing of History*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 2002.

--- and Jeanette Lynes. "Surf's Up! The Rising Tide of Atlantic-Canadian Literature." *Surf's Up! The Rising Tide of Atlantic-Canadian Literature.* Eds. Herb Wyile and Jeanette Lynes. *Studies in Canadian Literature* 33.2 (2008): 5-22.

--- and Christian Riegel, Karen Overbye, and Don Perkins, eds. *A Sense of Place: Re-Evaluating Regionalism in Canadian and American Writing*. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta P, 1998.

Yeats, W.B. "Easter 1916." *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry*. Second edition. Eds. Richard Ellmann and Robert O'Clair. NY: Norton, 1988. 156-57.

York, Lorraine. "He Should Do Well on the American Talk Shows: Celebrity, Publishing, and the Future of Canadian Literature." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 71 (Fall 2000): 96-105.

Young, Alan R. "The Pastoral Vision of Ernest Buckler." *Dalhousie Review* 53 (1973): 219-26.