Cloven Hoof:

HISTORICAL DRAMA AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF NARRATIVE THEOLOGY

A PROJECT/DISSERTATION

Presented to

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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

by

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To Shirley, Andrew, James, and Kathryn

who know a good story

when they hear one.

Abstract

Cloven Hoof: Historical Drama and the Construction of Narrative Theology is a Dissertation within the Work of Art category of the Doctor of Ministry program at St. Stephen's College. There are two parts to this project. The first is the historical drama, ***Cloven Hoof***. The plot of the drama revolves around the 1846 trial for sexual immorality of the Rev. James Evans, the first superintendent of the Wesleyan Methodist Society missionaries in the Hudson's Bay Company Territories. The play takes its title from a metaphor Donald Ross, the Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company fort at Norway House, used to describe James Evans' relationship with the Hudson's Bay Company. Evans, according to Ross, had "finally unmasked himself and shown the cloven foot."

The second part of the dissertation is a theological reflection on the structure of the play itself. I describe the development of the methodology that I used to write the play, and how that methodology leads to some illumination of the difference between the claims of historical and narrative truth, and the way the truth is told in historical drama.

The discussion then turns to the theology of ***Cloven Hoof,*** which I describe as "salvation through vindication." The biographers of James Evans incorporated this theology into their narratives, to rescue Evans' name from obscurity. I attempt to show how I used the same theology in ***Cloven Hoof*** to restore the names of those who stood against Evans in his conflicts with the Hudson's Bay Company and the members of his own missionary society. Finally, I attempt to show how the narrative elements of tone, atmosphere, plot, and character, are theological in and of themselves, and support the overt theology of the drama.

Acknowledgements

Many people have given freely of their interest and their expertise in throughout this project. Gerry and Miriam Hutchinson gave unstintingly of their knowledge of James Evans, and gave me the encouragement to take the story where it would go.

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Introduction

One of the first requirements I fulfilled in the pre-candidacy phase of the Doctor of Ministry program was a personal and professional self--assessment. This involved the development of questions about myself and my ministry to check for the congruence, or lack of it between my own perceptions of myself and the perceptions of those who were familiar with my work and way of being. I used the data I gathered in that exercise to complete the learning covenant which governed my progress through the doctoral program. When I finished my learning covenant I put the data away, and did not revisit it until I began my dissertation. Reviewing that initial data was an illuminating experience; others had seen things in me six years ago that have slowly but surely guiding me through the DMIN process, even though they came to consciousness much later in the process for me.

One of the questions I asked my informants was "What is your perception of my view of human nature?" There was one man in the congregation I used to serve whose judgment was sound and who knew me as well as anyone and better than most. He gave the question much thought before he answered "You'd say people are flawed, but there is a resilience within the human condition. You need to take life with a sense of humorous wonder about the way things are. You'd say they're a curious lot, people are. It's not voyeurism, but you do have a sense of living through other people's experience as a playwright, and asking, "how do they play out their parts?"[1]

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[1] Geoffrey Wilfong-Pritchard, "Personal and Professional Self--Assessment Research Notes", St. Stephen's College DMIN program, (June, 1993).

I did this assessment long before I had any idea of the shape my dissertation would take, or what its subject would be. But my informant saw in my perceptions of human nature the elements that form the basis of my research and my dissertation. I am, as it turns out, writing about a human nature that is deeply flawed and yet resilient. It is my sense of " humorous wonder about the ways things are," that has kept me digging deeper into my subject; and for the last four years I have in fact been living through other people's experience. There have been times when their experience, as best I can interpret it, has been living through me. And as for the question of "how do they play their parts?" This dissertation is the answer.

The people whom I have been living through (or I through them) are indeed wondrous and complex cast of historical characters who lived and worked one hundred and fifty years ago in what was then the Hudson's Bay Company's (HBC) Territories, an area that included all the land traversed by rivers flowing into Hudson Bay,[2] an area that stretched from Lake Superior in the east to the Pacific and Arctic Oceans in the north and west. These characters include George Simpson, the Governor of the HBC; Donald Ross, the Factor of the HBC post at Norway House located on the northern tip of Lake Winnipeg; his wife Mary Ross; Bernard, Donald Ross' aide-de camp; James Evans, the Canadian Methodist minister who was seconded to the Wesleyan Methodist Society (WMS) from Canada as the Superintendent of Missions for WMS missionaries in the HBC territories; Evans' wife, Mary, and daughter, Clarissa; William Mason, a WMS missionary originally posted to Lac La Pluie (Lake of the Woods) but who

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[2] The Canadian Encyclopedia: Second Edition, "s.v. Hudson's Bay Company."

eventually ended up in Norway House with James Evans; Maggie and Eliza, two of the native girls in the settlement of Rossville, the Indian village located just outside the gates of the Norway House post.

My involvement in their story is a story in itself. I first met James Evans when I was a child in the Sunday School of the United Church in the mid 1960's. The United Church of Canada had just produced a new church school curriculum that was heavy on history, and the Junior program of which I was part at that time told the story of the early missionaries in North America. James Evans, and the story of how he designed a printing press to publish the gospel in Cree Syllabics to enable the Indians to read the bible without learning English, was but one of the stories the curriculum contained.[3] I liked the curriculum but I can not say my first meeting with James Evans was a particularly auspicious one. I forgot all about him for another twenty one years or so. But we would meet again.

In 1988 I was ordained by the United Church of Canada and placed in the hands of the larger church to be assigned to my first pastoral charge. The church calls this Transfer and Settlement, and it is a process that is not without its own form of excitement. As an ordinand you either run the risk or welcome the opportunity, depending on your perspective, of being told you are needed anywhere from the Maritimes to Northern BC.

As it turned I was settled into the Pigeon Lake-Millet Pastoral Charge just to the south of Edmonton. I had completed my theological studies at Emmanuel College in Toronto, and it was there I received the news of my imminent move westward. I immediately set off down the hall to find someone with whom to

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[3] Peter Gordon White, ed, The Mystery Continues (Toronto: The United Church of Canada Publishing House, 1965).

share the news, and the first person I met was my ethics professor. When I told him the glad tidings he smiled an enigmatic smile, and said, "that's where my uncle lives. He'll be glad to see you." I didn't ask why, but in the years that have followed I have come to assume that Gerry Hutchinson, my professors' uncle was glad to see me. In any event I was glad to see him.

I spent much time with Gerry on the shore of Pigeon Lake that summer. As an urban person my definition of a rural pastoral charge was one where you had to take a bus to get to the subway. I needed his advice on how to make the transition from what I had known to what lay before me, and Gerry gave it freely. He also gave me something that at the time I didn't know I was looking for.

Gerry is one of the preeminent historians of the church in Western Canada. His enquiry into the origins of the name of Mission Beach on Pigeon Lake led to his discovery that Robert Rundle, one of missionaries of the WMS sent out with James Evans, had established a mission site there when he posted to Fort Edmonton.[4] That mission was the first Protestant mission established west of Red River. Yet until Gerry began his search for the origin of the name that part of our church history lay forgotten. The remarkable thing about Gerry's discovery was that he had made it not as an academic historian, but as a congregational minister in a rural multi-point pastoral charge, a situation similar to my own.

I learned a lot of history from Gerry. But I learned even more about ministry through Gerry's example. He was telling me, whether either one of us realized it or not at the time, that I could define my ministry as narrowly or as broadly as I chose to. I could "enter through the narrow door," define my ministry strictly in

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[4] Gerald Hutchinson, The Meeting Place (Edmonton: published by Rundle's Mission Conference Centre Incorporated, 1990).

terms of congregational life, and that would be fine if that is what I wanted to do. On the other hand, if I had the curiosity, the interest, and the determination there was nothing to stop me from defining a ministry that included historical research, not just as an avocation, but as an integral part of my contribution to the life of the church.

It was Gerry who reintroduced me to James Evans, and the rest of the cast of characters I mentioned previously. This second meeting showed much more promise of developing a more lasting relationship. There was more to James Evans than the story of the printing press. Gerry knew all about it, and he was glad to share it with me.

In February of 1846, William Mason informed Evans that stories about the superintendent's relationship with girls of the mission were circulating through the village. When Mason suggested to Evans that Evans make a public statement to clear his name, Evans refused to do so. Instead he demanded that Mason try him on charges of sexual immorality according to Methodist discipline. Church historians knew some things about the trial. John McLean who wrote the first biography of James Evans alluded to it in 1880[5]. Egerton Ryerson Young[6] embellished the story in 1889. But both biographers steadfastly maintained that Evans was innocent of the charges. They insisted that he was framed by the HBC officials, who wanted a reason to remove him from the territory because of his steadfast opposition to the trade practices of the company, including forcing HBC employees to travel on the Sabbath.

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[5] John McLean, James Evans, Inventor of the Syllabic System of the Cree Language (Toronto: Methodist Mission Rooms, 1890).
[6] Egerton Ryerson Young, The Apostle of the North (Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1899).

But Gerry knew more about the trial than these two authors. While researching the history of the Methodist missionaries in the HBC Gerry had discovered the transcripts that had been sent to London by William Mason after the trial, and sealed by the WMS. The trial documents, combined with the letters of Donald Ross and George Simpson which were archived here in Canada showed that Evans' relationship with the HBC was far more complicated than his biographers could have imagined. The charges brought against Evans were valid in and of themselves, and while he was found not guilty there was enough evidence to suggest that Evans was far from innocent.

I heard this story from Gerry in 1989, and it struck a personal chord for me. Three years earlier a United Church of Canada Minister had been tried and found guilty by the criminal court system of sexually abusing persons under his care. He had been a candidate for ministry from my congregation when I was a child, and I could imagine the hurt that his actions had caused his family and those that had supported him in his ministry. I had taken his willingness to minister in a remote part of the country as a sign of his extraordinary commitment to ministry. In the light of his conviction however, I had to consider the possibility what seemed like commitment was really an attempt to keep himself out of the public eye.

Another experience brought the Evans revelations close to home for me. Years earlier I had been the target, but not the victim of some unwanted advances by a member of the clergy who was loved and well respected by his community, and who had also spent the bulk of his ministry in remote areas. My personal experience made me wonder about James Evans. Had he deliberately sought out the wilderness for reasons other than he claimed?

I still considered the situations of which I had first hand knowledge isolated ones. But shortly after I heard the Evans' story the floodgates opened, as story after story of clergy sexual abuse came to light.[7] The systemic nature of those revelations made me realize that what I considered my own isolated experience was not so isolated after all. Yet the institutional church, far from confronting the situations of abuse it had known about had done nothing. That took me back to James Evans trial. Why, I wondered, had his biographers even mentioned his trial when so many more recent cases had been buried? The answer lay in a fluke of history. I say more about that in Chapter One, but suffice to say, that question intrigued me deeply.

These stories about Evans were swirling around me when I made the decision in 1993 to enter the Doctor of Ministry program at St. Stephen's College. I had no idea what I would do in the program, or where the program might lead me. After completing the first two collegiums in the program, I had no thesis proposal in mind. I brought a half--hearted proposal to the collegium in the summer of 1995, but it bore the marks of my own lack of enthusiasm. Then James Evans raised his head yet again. My spouse had been transcribing some of James Evans' archived letters and papers from manuscript to disk for Gerry while we had been at Pigeon Lake. Those documents had been sitting there in our computer for at least two years, and I had promised myself I would read them all when I had time. One afternoon I flipped open the file and read the first document. It contained a letter from James Evans to his brother Ephraim, who was also a

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[7] See, for example, Peter Rutter, Sex in the Forbidden Zone: When Men in Power-Therapists, Doctors, Clergy, Teachers, and Others-Betray Women's Trust (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1989).

Canadian Methodist minister. It read "Dear Brother; Send us word if you are alive."[8] In hindsight, it was then James Evans jumped across the generations and grabbed me by the throat. He has not let go yet.

The correspondence I read the more excited I became about channeling what I had learned about Evans from Gerry, and what I learned on my own, into a course of study in the Doctoral program. But I did not want to do a straight historical piece of research. I wanted to present it dramatically. My first thought was a screenplay. That decision needs some explaining.

I have moved around a lot since I left my parents' home in 1974 to go to university; from Ottawa to Kingston to Winnipeg to Victoria to Montreal to Toronto to Pigeon Lake to Edmonton. Whenever I moved I always felt I left bits of unfinished things behind me. One of my recurring dreams is that I discover that I am still paying rent on an apartment that I moved out of long ago, and it is still awaiting my return to clean it out. Writing was one of those things that I had left unfinished and packed away.

I had moved from Victoria to Montreal in 1980 to do post-graduate work in Communication Studies at Concordia University. While there I did a fair bit of work in screen-writing and film aesthetics. I had hoped to make a career out of it. Jobs were hard to find after graduation, but eventually I did get work in Toronto, not as a screenwriter, but rather doing freelance corporate communications and public relations. The work was challenging, there was some money to be made, but it was a woefully insecure profession, and at that time I was looking for more security that freelancing could provide. One of the companies that I had done

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[8] University of Western Ontario Archives, 4734.5. James Evans to Ephraim Evans, December 27, 1829.

some work for as a freelancer offered me a staff position writing technical manuals. I accepted the offer without hesitation. Writing is writing after all, is it not? It is not. It was a bad move. I did not fit with the material that I was supposed to be writing, and although I found a measure of redemption in seminar production for the same company, I would often kick myself for giving up what I wanted to do for what I felt I had to do.

I put the writing away for long time, until I went back to those letters of Evans. It has only been since I've reached the dissertation stage of the program that I have been able to interpret with any satisfaction the impact that the first letter from James to his brother had on me. "Send us word if you are alive," has become a bit of wake-up call to attend to those lessons that Gerry taught me when I was first developing my ministry. If I am going to have a broad sense of ministry that is going to pull together all those bits of my life that interest me, congregational life, history, drama, then now is the time to do it.

I need to say a little more about my choice of drama as a vehicle for my dissertation. There is the craft of writing, which I continue to learn and I hope will continually develop. But underneath the craft there is something that I have never formally learned. It is just there. My informant alluded to it when he described my perception of human nature-that I see life in terms of a playwright asking, "how do people play out their parts?" I have since discovered, thanks to Roberston Davies, that people like me have a name. I am a moralist.

> What is a moralist? It is not of course, somebody who preaches some system of morality which is supposed to make good people and a good world. A moralist is not an exponent of a creed. A moralist is somebody who observes life as carefully as he can, and draws conclusions from what he sees. He sees that fashionable enthusiasms about

> behaviour are short-lived, and that some things are so self-evident that it is no exaggeration to call them truths. They are not new. Truth does not deal in novelty, but in age long endurance. Because some of the truths the moralist observes have been given unforgettable expression in the bible, there are people who think that the moralist is an enthusiast for biblical morality. Not at all; there are portions of the bible that would make any sensitive person's skin creep, they are so cruel and unforgiving. The moralist is not a cheapjack follower of the Old Testament - or the New Testament, for that matter. He sees what he sees and records it. And what does see? Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.[9]

The decision to write a screenplay was easy, so visually arresting were the images in the material I was reading. One image in particular still stays with me.. In 1838, Evans made a late--fall trip along the north shore of Lake Superior. He was trapped in a sudden squall, and while trying to steer clear of the rocks on the shore, both his hands were frozen to the paddle he was employing. When he finally made shore his hands had to be chopped out of his mitts with an ax. Now there, thought I, was a perfect theological image for a Canadian story; a man frozen rather than nailed onto a piece of wood. As I said, the decision to write a screenplay was easy. The actual writing of it proved much harder. Whether I was not ready to write, or whether James Evans was not ready to be written about, I am not sure. But the screenplay foundered as badly as Evans' canoe did in that storm on Lake Superior.

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[9] Roberston Davies, The Merry Heart (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1997), p.172.

In the winter of 1996 I met with an old friend in Toronto, who coincidentally was also a United Church Minster and a playwright. I wanted to tell him about the story I was working on, the difficulties I was having, and get some honest feedback about whether the project was too big and my own talent was too small. We met in one of those bars decorated in the library motif, with old books that nobody reads lining the shelves behind the booths. My friend asked me what the story was about. Just as he asked, I noticed a copy of that United Church School Curriculum from days of old on the shelf behind his left shoulder. "I'll show you," I said, as I pulled the book off the shelf, and opened it to the Evans story. I took that coincidence as a sign that I should keep plugging away. After much discussion, my friend suggested I write a work for stage instead of screen. A stage play would give more chance to work with language, which is a strength of mine, rather than with image for which I seemed to have no perceptible talent at that time. I followed his advice, and the play you are about to read is the product of his encouragement.

The chapters that follow chart my course through the writing of ***Cloven Hoof***. In Chapter One I discuss the methodology that I used to write the play. I show how Evans' first biographers established certain conventions for the telling of the story, and how I adopted those conventions as my own. Chapter Two attempts to integrate ***Cloven Hoof*** with narrative theory, to show that there is a theological component embedded in the structure of the play itself. Chapter Three describes the evaluation methods that I used to ensure that ***Cloven Hoof*** met an acceptable standard as a work of art within the context of the DMIN program, and within the genre for which it was written. The Epilogue points to some future

directions that the research I have done on James Evans might take in, and the impact that this research has had on my own sense of ministry.

As I send you the reader off into the wilds of ***Cloven Hoof,*** this hope goes with you: that you might find in the reading some of the excitement I found in the writing. And keep your mittens dry. GWP.

Cloven Hoof

A drama in two acts

Written in partial completion of the requirements for Doctor of Ministry Degree, St. Stephen's College

CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

OLD BERNARD

JAMES EVANS

MARY ROSS

DONALD ROSS

YOUNG BERNARD

MARY EVANS

CLARISSA EVANS

FRASER

CHIPEWYAN CHIEF

WILLIAM MASON

JOHNNY

HENRY

MAGGIE

ELIZA

CHARLES

The curtain opens on a dark stage. A single light comes up on OLD BERNARD, who sits at a desk, alternately writing intently in a large bound ledger, and pausing for brief moments to collect his thoughts. Although he is in his mid-forties, he has the look of a much older man. He is dressed in the clothes a gentleman would wear circa 1860. As he writes, a light comes up on JAMES EVANS, centre stage. Evans is the same age as Bernard, dressed in the garb of a Methodist Clergyman circa 1840, complete with top hat. As Evans begins speaking, Bernard ignores him. As Evans continues, Bernard puts his left hand over his left ear while he continues writing, as though he is trying to shut out Evans' voice. Finally Bernard gives up. He puts down his quill, closes his eyes, leans back in his chair and listens.

Evans:
Now the loon had charge of the hearts of an old sorcerer and his wife. Zealously did loon guard those hearts. No one was able to exercise any evil influence over them. At length a sorcerer of great cunning came to the bank of the lake with a string of beads and endeavored to attract loon's attention. The heart keeper for some time resisted the temptation of the sorcerer but after many entreaties and several displays he ventured to the shore. The cunning sorcerer took the little bark box from the loon's neck (for that is where he kept his treasure of hearts) and gave loon in its place the string of beads. The sorcerer immediately broke open the bark box and obtained thereby the power to destroy the owners of the hearts. As a punishment the loon still bears the mark of perfidy. The hearts are found scattered on the back of the loon in white round spots to this day.

Bernard:
My opinion remains unchanged, Mr. Evans. You were the keeper of hearts.

Evans:
And yet it was you Bernard that took something that did not belong to you. And through your thievery you broke the hearts of the Indians. You sold them back into the slavery from which I so painstakingly delivered them. But it wasn't a string of beads you sold them for.

Bernard:
It wasn't like that.

Evans:
I've scrutinized the book of life for a glimpse of your name. It's not there, Bernard. Your name is not there.

Bernard:
Do you know what I'm writing, Mr. Evans?

Evans:
A confession, I hope. For your sake.

Bernard:
This is my last report as a factor of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company. And then I retire. I'm travelling light into my dotage, and I've no mind to take your hauntings with me.

Evans:
Then tell the truth, Bernard. It's the only way to save yourself.

Bernard:
Still haunting my imagination, eh Mr. Evans? You were the trickster in life, sir. I fear death has done nothing to change you. It's not my name that's missing from the book of life. It's yours. Isn't it?

Evans:
(He shrugs.)

Bernard:
Well, save yourself. I've work to do.

Evans:
I've thrown myself before the throne of grace on your behalf, Bernard. But there can be no mercy without repentance.

Bernard:
I'm an old man now, Mr. Evans. The same age you were when you quickly left us. My young man's fears died with you.

Evans:
Those would be?

Bernard:
The eternal fire. The darkness of the pit. Whatever else it was you used to threaten us with.

Evans:
Then tell me, Bernard. What does an old man fear?

Bernard:
How he shall be remembered. By mortals. Flesh and blood. That's all that matters.

Evans:
And me? How am I remembered?

Bernard:
Mr. Ross wished to consign your memory to the oblivion of the silent tomb. Your name is seldom spoken. Never with esteem.

Evans:
I had many enemies, Bernard. But I always counted you as a friend. And so I ask you as a friend. Tell the truth.

Bernard:
Hah! I'm no friend of yours, Mr. Evans. And you're no friend of mine. But I'll tell what happened.

Evans:
It'll do us both good to clear the air.

Bernard:
For my sake, not yours.

Evans:
Very good, lad. The truth, then.

Bernard:
I'm not a lad any more. And remember this. It's not for you to judge whether it's the truth I tell. Flesh and blood shall judge us both.

Evans:
Fair enough.

Bernard:
So let's put the question, shall we? Whose sin was greater? My thievery, or your deceit? And let's wait and see how flesh and blood responds. Do you have the patience for that, Mr. Evans?
(Lights fade down on Evans.)

From the beginning, then. Norway House 1840. Norway House? Norway House was the centre of our Company's self-created universe. The halfway point between Hudson's Bay to the north and Red River to the south. Everything came through Norway House in those days--supplies, furs, rumour, gossip, innuendo, missionaries....

Lights up on DONALD ROSS and THE YOUNG BERNARD, in Ross' office, centre stage. Ross dictates a letter under SFX: Cannon Shot: Immediately after SFX, MARY ROSS enters hurriedly.

Mary Ross:
Get the gravy off your waistcoat, Donald. The missionary's come at last. (*Mary and Donald arrange themselves. Bernard looks on smiling as if he is pleased to see his superior's anxiety. Mary finishes primping herself, and sees Bernard grinning at her.*)

Mary Ross:
Hey, snot nose! Your ignorant mug needs a wipe! *(Mary grabs at Bernard and wipes his face vigorously with the hem of her dress. Bernard struggles, but he is no match for Mary's strength. Ross is oblivious to the contest that goes on before him, preferring to straighten up his desk.)*

Bernard:
Yeoww! Mr. Ross?

(*JAMES, MARY, and CLARISSA EVANS enter the office, and are transfixed by the sight of Bernard in Mary's headlock.*)

Ross:
Save the lad some skin, Mary. It's just the missionary, after all.

Evans:
After all, indeed it is! (*Evans bounces over to Ross with outstretched hands.*) The Reverend James Evans at your service, Mr. Ross. (*He shakes Ross' hand. Mary Ross looks to Mary Evans and Clarissa with a startled expression. She sidles over to Donald.*)

Mary Ross:
(*In a loud whisper to Donald*) I can guess who he is. Who'd he bring with 'im?

Ross:
(In a loud whisper) Quiet, wife!

Evans:
And may I present my wife, Mary (*Mary walks confidently to Ross and offers her hand. Ross takes it, but is unsure what to do next. She has presented her hand as though she expects Ross to kiss it. He turns her hand over, looks at it, gives it a shake and drops it*) and my lovely daughter Clara. (*Clara curtsies shyly. Mary Evans holds out her hand to Mary Ross. Mary Ross nods curtly.*)

Mary Ross:
Two more women in the fort, eh Donald? And English to boot. You should've told me they were coming.

Bernard:
I'm sure Mr. Ross just wanted to surprise you Ma'am. With the prospect of some female companionship.

Mary Ross:
(*Laughs menacingly*) Well you can tell Mr. Ross I've got a surprise for him come lights out tonight.

Ross:
It was in the file, if you cared to know.

Mary Ross:
As if I care to read your files.

Evans:
Well there, Clarissa, I told you there'd be children your own age. You needn't have worried.

Ross:
She's a beautiful child, Mr. Evans.

Mary Evans:
Oh, she's the apple of her father's eye, to be sure. Tell me Mr. Ross, did our piano arrive safely? I only pray my felt parts have not perished through inactivity.

Bernard:
(*Tries to suppress laughter at Mrs. Evan's revelation, and pretends to cough and sneeze. Ross ignores him.*)

Mary Evans:
Music is so important. Especially in the wilderness. It's a tiny ray of light in the darkness. Do you play, Mrs. Ross?

Mary Ross:
(With emphasis) I work.

Mary Evans:
I'd be happy to give you instruction. With a little discipline we could probably get that shrillness out of your voice. James loves a choir. We could sing together. Such fun. Oh, and my telescope, Mr. Ross? Did it arrive safely? I'm so looking forward to seeing the Aurora Borealis. From this latitude they must be quite captivating. You've seen the Aurora, haven't you Mrs. Ross?

Mary Ross:
Aura what? What?

Mary Evans:
Perhaps you know them by their more common name. The Northern Lights.

Ross:
Your household effects, including the piano, arrived by the London supply ship. Now that you're here I will have them sent down from York Factory. In the meantime....

Mary Ross:
So tell me, there, Mrs. Evans. What do you do? I mean besides tinkling on the piano and gazing at the stars?

Mary Evans:
What I do, madam, is perhaps less important than who I am. I am the wife of the Reverend James Evans, Chief Superintendent of the missionaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Society in the Western Territories of the Hudson's Bay Company. In that capacity, I support my husband in all his endeavors. And what do you do ma'am? How do you spend your days?

Mary Ross:
I spend my days making sure everybody knows their place around here. Things run better then.

Mary Evans:
I'm sure they do. It's so important for working women to know their place. They so easily attract an air of self-importance when they leave the hearth.

Ross:
In the meantime, Mr. Evans, your duties as chaplain to the Company. Regular attendance at the mess of course, to lead the men in grace. Evening prayer service in the fort, Sunday service in the fort and also in the Indian Village at a time convenient to you. You have permission to establish a school should you desire to do so.

Evans:
And I do desire to do so. Immediately upon my return.

Ross:
Return? You've only just arrived. Where do you think you're going?

Evans:
Mr. Ross, the Wesleyan Methodist Society understands that I have come to the Western Territories to superintend the establishment of Christian missions to the Indians. I can hardly be expected to accomplish that task if I spend all my days saying grace at the Company mess table, now can I?

Ross:
There's lots of Indians right here at the fort.

Evans:
So, my plan. (*Evans pulls a map out of his coat pocket and traces his route for Ross.*) First, west to Fort Edmonton. Then north through the Chipewyan Country. Then southeast through Ille La Crosse, back to Norway House. And once back in Norway House, (*Evans hands the map to Mary Evans*) grace at the Company mess table. Perhaps Mrs. Ross would be good enough to help Mary and Clara get settled in my absence?

Mary Ross:
You bet I will, Reverend Sir. The commissary just got a shipment of lye soap. If that doesn't take the smell of that beaver piss right off your wifey there, nothing will.

Mary Evans:
Excuse me? That's lilac essence!

Mary Ross:
Maybe that's what it was in Montreal or wherever it was you came from, but now it smells like a beaver climbed right on top of your head and pissed all over you.

Mary Evans:
Ugh! (*She looks imploringly at her husband.*)

Evans:
(*Laughing*) I guess we all smell a little ripe, Mrs. Ross. We've been a long time in the boats. But we'll gladly take your lye soap. And whatever other comforts this fort might offer.

Ross:
And Bernard will be happy to acquaint you with them. Bernard? (*Bernard has had his eyes fixed on Clara, and has missed Ross' instruction.*) Bernard?

Bernard:
Sir?

Ross:
Show them out.

Bernard:
Very good, sir. (*He turns back toward Evans.*) If you'll just come this way.
(*Bernard positions himself so that he is beside Clara as they leave Ross' office.*)

Ross:
You could have had the courtesy to keep a civil tongue in your head.

Mary Ross:
And you could have had the guts to tell me you were bringing in a laaddy! Honestly, Donald! This is a fort. Not a Sunday school.

Lights down on centre stage. Lights up on Old Bernard at his desk.

Bernard:
We were a country unto ourselves, in those days. The factor and his wife were king and queen, and the governor, well Governor Simpson, he was God, wasn't he? The rest of us? Well the gentlemen of the Company, and those of us who aspired to be gentlemen, we were all like Jonah in the whale. The land swallowed us up. Oh we all were born somewhere else. Stromness, or Dublin, or Glasgow. But once we entered the territory of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company, remade! That's what we were. Remade by the law of the Company. That law? Well it was never written down was it? Because those who disobeyed it perished.

It was the law of vigilance. Never turn your back on anything, even for a second. Never turn your back on the sky. A squall could blow in like that *(Bernard snaps his fingers)* and freeze you within shouting distance of a fort. Never turn your back on your fellows. The man who cried while he read you a letter from his mother at the mess table one day could take an axe to you the next in a fit of bush fever. Never turn your back on the Indians. We needed them far more than they needed us. You never turned your back on yourself, either. As long as you knew that at any moment you were capable of the grossest kind of cruelty on your inferiors, there was a chance you wouldn't do it. Just a chance.

But vigilance alone couldn't save us. We'd stripped the country bare of beaver, you see, from the West Coast of Lake Superior down to Oregon. And we blamed everything else but ourselves for our declining fortunes. We blamed the weather. We blamed bad fortune. But mostly we blamed the Indians. They were growing lazy, we told ourselves. They lusted after a life of ease, we said around the mess table. Of course we all lusted after a life of ease. It was just that we were entitled to it. They weren't. We blamed them because we resented them. We resented having so much of our fate lying in their hands, when everybody knew that God had entrusted us, not them, with the advance of civilization. So we blamed everything on them. And you know it wasn't long before those stories we told looked like they were coming true.

For two hundred years nobody paid any attention at all to what we were doing with the three and a half million square miles under our jurisdiction. London just bought the furs and their pretty hats and coats, and they never asked how those furs got from us to them. But all of a sudden, there was a sudden outbreak of a

plague of conscience. It seemed that everyone who was buying furs got infected. Were the Indians being well treated? Were they getting a good price for their furs? Were they being overworked? Well, it's all relative isn't it? Our Indians were better off than the million or so orphans in the London workhouses were. I can tell you that from bitter experience. But try telling that to the Society for the Protection of Aboriginals. They were lobbying to legislate the fur trade unless the Company started doing more for the Indian. And I don't need to tell you, Governor Simpson hated any legislation that he didn't personally write, and any politician he hadn't paid for. By 1838, things were looking pretty bleak for our little enterprise. But Mr. Simpson, he had the knack all right. Other men would look at a forest and see trees. Mr. Simpson would look at a forest and see seven ways to make a pound, using someone else's 50p as start-up capital. It was his idea to bring in the missionaries. Not that Mr. Simpson could ever be accused of getting religion. He had his own (*Bernard holds up his hand, and rubs his thumb and forefinger together.*) But Mr. Simpson figured that bringing in the missionaries might solve our problems. If the Indians had their own missionaries, he reckoned, they'd be more likely to stay on the trap lines, and not drift down to Red River and get mixed up with the free traders. And secondly, Mr. Simpson could tell our critics in London that the missionaries were bringing the benefit of Christian civilization to the poor heathen, so the Society for the Protection of Aboriginals could stop their lobbying and do something more productive with their time. Like buy Company stock.

Now, if Mr. Ross, our esteemed factor got himself into trouble with the Governor because of Mr. Evans, well it was his own fault, wasn't it? He broke the law. He wasn't vigilant.

Lights down on Old Bernard. Lights up on Ross' office. Ross is at his desk, with Young Bernard close at hand. SFX knock on door.

•

Ross:
Go away. It's month end, don't you know.

(*The door opens, and FRASER enters.*)

Fraser:
And year end as well, don't you know. Close up the ledgers, Donald. Let's drink a dram to the New Year. May it be better than the old one.
Ross:
Fraser, my old mate! What a happy surprise! Last we heard you were moving freight out of the Chipewyan country. Bernard, the bottle. One finger, or two? (*He takes the bottle from Bernard.*) Ah, knowing you, it'll be three. (*Ross pours from the bottle and passes a tumbler to Fraser. He pours one for himself. Bernard looks on expectantly, but Ross ignores him.)* Well, Bernard, what are you waiting for? Put it away!

Fraser:
I'd gladly take four fingers from you Donald. And a thumb if you've one to spare. (*He holds out his left hand to show Ross a stump where his hand should be, while taking the drink with his right hand.*) Ass over teakettle we went north of Ille La Crosse. Mashed it between the rocks and the gunwale. Lucky we had a surgeon with us. He took it off there and then. I'm on my way down to Red River and then out for Canada.

Ross:
And the cargo? What happened to the cargo?

Fraser:
Twenty bales saved.

Ross:
Well all's not lost then, is it? Sit ye down. (*Fraser sits.*)

Fraser:
That may be the last twenty bales we see from the North. It's all gone, Donald. There's hardly a beaver left that makes trapping worthwhile.

Ross:
Oh it's a sad song you're singing Fraser. But I know the tune well. And every time I hear it sung I ask myself, what's really gone missing? Is it the beaver? Or is it the desire to find the beaver? Sometimes our Indian friends need a little (He *leans close to Fraser and grabs the empty air with his hand*) encouragement to persevere in their duties to the Company.

Fraser:
It's different this time, Donald. You can promise the Indians more. You can threaten them with less. But nought's going to bring the beaver back. Maybe this (He *holds out his stump*) is more blessing than curse. I'm getting out while there's still time.

Ross:
We've got lots of time Fraser. And I daresay lots more beaver yet to find.

Fraser:
Ah, you're whistling past the graveyard, Donald. Even that missionary you've let loose in the North Country has it figured out. He's got a plan or two up his sleeve for his Indian friends once the beaver are gone.

Ross:
Mr. Evans?

Fraser:
Aye, that's his name. Mr. Evans.

Ross:
Tell me, Fraser, what does Mr. Evans purport to know about the vagaries of the trade? Last I heard he was teaching the Indians to sing "Jesus the Lamb of God".

Fraser:
You'll wish that was all he was doing. He may be a singer, Donald, but I'd say agitation is his preferred occupation. You should hear him. (*Fraser stands and begins imitating Evans.*) "We have come a great way to see you...

Lights down on Ross, Bernard and Fraser. Lights up on Evans and a CHIPEWYAN CHIEF who stands beside Evans as he continues the speech.

Evans:
We are not come to trade with you. We do not want to get your furs, nor your lands, nor anything you have got. We have come to bring you something that is better than all these. You know that there is a Great Spirit who governs and can take care of all things. This Great Spirit used to greatly bless your fathers a great while ago before you saw the white man, and before they brought firewater among your people. Then your fathers were happy people and the sun shone very bright upon them, but the firewater and the wicked ways of many who have traded with you have made the Great Spirit hide his face from you as he does with all wicked people. You are now scattered abroad and you see all the white men everywhere clearing of the lumber and making fields and in a few years your children will have no hunting grounds and where you have lived they will hunger. Now we wish to seek out some good place where your land will grow good corn and potatoes and good wheat, where you can settle down there and try to cultivate your land and teach your children to get their living out of the earth and then as the white man settles he will see that he cannot have the land you live on because you have cleared it before him.

Chipewyan Chief:
My dear friends, I hope the Great Spirit will spare me to see better days before I die. Whenever our traders gave us any advice about worldly affairs for our profits we have always listened with good attention and used to exert ourselves to see who would get ahead. What we have gained by those exertions have not lasted. But this is good news, and worth our while to listen with utmost attention. The servant of the Great Spirit is to come among us to teach us and our children the way to everlasting life after this. Oh! May they come before we are all swept away from off the face of the earth!

Lights down on Evans. Lights up on Ross, Fraser, and the young Bernard.

Ross:
You heard him? You heard him tell the Indians to give up the trade for farming? You heard the Chief tell the Indians to listen to him?

Fraser:
I wasn't there, no. But Roderick, he heard from McLennan's country wife whose cousin was there. She swears it's all true.

Ross:
Bernard, what do we call information that we receive third hand, especially when country wives are involved?

Bernard:
Hearsay, Mr. Ross.

Ross:
At best, Bernard. At worst, gossip, and at the very worst, slander. And what do we do with such information, Bernard?

Bernard:
We disregard it in its entirety.

Ross:
Indeed we do, Bernard. You should know better than to bring me such tales, Fraser, and I should know better than to listen.

Fraser:
Aye, ignore them if you will, Donald. It's no matter to me. I'm a free man now. Its your head that goes on Mr. Simpson's chopping block when you have to tell him that he's got no profit. Especially when he finds the Indians are too busy farming to the tune of "Jesus the Lamb of God" to look for that last lonely beaver to trap.

Ross:
I've succeeded where other men have failed, Fraser, precisely because I have been able to keep my head on my shoulders at all times. I fully expect it to remain there, Mr. Evans or no. And now sir, if you've finished your liquor, and your idle chatter,
Ross:
there is still the month end to finish. Take care of yourself, Fraser. (*Fraser puts down his glass, stands up and makes ready to leave.*)

Fraser:
Goodbye, Donald, and good luck to you. You'll need it. You're in deep water now and there's white water ahead. (*Fraser reaches the door just as Mary Ross enters.*)

Mary Ross:
Fraser! What happened to you? Your country wife bite the hand that was feeding her? Well, be more careful where you put the other one. (*She laughs as Fraser exits.*) Hmmph! Wonder what's gotten into him? He used to be a pleasant sort of fellow.

Mary Ross:
Donald! Donald! Look at me! (*Donald glances up from his papers, but looks down again quickly.*) The sow wants more butter!

Ross:
Bernard, attend to Mrs. Ross. I've got these reports.

Bernard:
And I'll see that you get some, Mrs. Ross.

Mary Ross:
The ledger, Donald. (*Donald hands over the ledger to Mary. She takes it from Donald and whacks Bernard on the head with it.*) That's for your cheek, you little guttersnipe! It's not me that wants the butter. It's that sow Mary Evans. She's up at the stores again this very minute. (*Mimicking Mary Evans*) "Oh Mr. Harkness, can you spare the poor wife of a man in God's service another dollop of butter?" You know how many dollops for the Lord she's gone through since she's been here?

Ross:
I'd get to the stores report more quickly if you'd shut up and leave the lad and me in peace.

Mary Ross:
I'll tell you right now. FAR TOO MANY! Now listen. If you don't stop her, I will. And if you leave the job to me, it won't be a pretty sight. Ye ken?

Ross:
Stay out of it, wife.

Mary Ross:
Stay out of it? Stay out of it? Who else gets to eat like they do? You should have heard her nibs at the mess table lunch yesterday. (*Imitating Mary Evans*) "Oh dear, fish again. And not even a pinch of mustard to go with it." She should know by now. It's fish for dinner **every** day. Including Hogmanay. And mustard is reserved for the gentlemen. Wait a tick! (*Mary goes behind Donald's desk, and throws open one of the drawers.*) All right. Where is it?

Ross:
Get out of my desk! What in God's name...

Mary Ross:
Where is the mustard? For the gentlemen? She's got that away from you too, has she?

Ross:
A pinch now and then. To make her feel at home.

Mary Ross:
Well, she's pinched the whole lot, looks like. (*Mary slams the drawer closed in disgust.*) Listen Donald, if you want to make her feel at home, make her feel at home in the Indian village. Get her out of the fort. I mean it.

Ross:
Ask for the moon and stars while you're at it, why don't you. Governor Simpson says they live at the fort. Governor Simpson says when and if they will move. Not you. Not me.

Mary Ross:
Bernard, take a letter.

Bernard:
Right away, ma'am. (*Bernard gets his writing tablet.*)

Mary Ross:
Dear Governor Simpson: I humbly beseech and ever thus pray that in your infinite wisdom and great magnanimity that you suffer to get the butter gobbling Mrs. Evans, her fool of a daughter, and her reptilian husband out of my fort: Sincerely: Donald Ross. You want "Esquire" on the end of that, Donald?

Bernard:
Are there two B's in gobbling?

Mary Ross:
Put in three if you like. There. Was that so hard?

Ross: (*To Bernard*) Give me that! (*He grabs the tablet out of Bernard's hands and rips up the memo.*) Listen, wife, I've been Factor here these many years. And I've learned a thing or two in that time.

Mary Ross:
Oh you have, have you? Then why do I have this problem?

Ross:
What you ignore goes away by itself.

Mary Ross:
Well, I'm not going anywhere until you promise to get her out of the fort.

Ross:
I didn't mean you! I meant Mrs. Evans and the butter. She's here, and not going anywhere quickly, by the looks of it. So make the best of it. I'll suggest to Governor Simpson that he might adjust the Evans' accommodation. But in the meantime....

Mary Ross:
In the meantime what? It's easy for you to say, "make the best of it." You can hide away in this office of yours all day. It's me that's got to deal with that one-woman committee to restore the morals of Norway House. God, she makes me boke! (*Imitating Mary Evans)* I find vulgar language so degrades the feminine element of the fort, don't you, Mrs. Ross?"

Bernard:
And don't you, Mrs. Ross?

Mary Ross:
(*Ignoring Bernard)* "You bet I do, your highness", says I. "And by the way, there's butter dripping off your chin." Get rid of her, Donald. Move them out to the village. Move them to Red River for all I care. Or you can find a country wife to keep you warm. And if you do that, Mister, you'll soon be the late Donald Ross. I'll see to that! (*Mary storms out. Bernard stands in shocked silence. Ross continues with his reports.*)

Bernard:
I think there's only one "b" in gobbling. Like goblin. You know. The nasty little creatures with the shrill voices that make life so hard for mortals?

Ross:
Shut up Bernard, and leave me alone. I've got these reports to finish.

Bernard:
Yes, sir. Shall I make up a bed in the office for you tonight?

Ross:
You shall not. I'm still master of my castle, Mrs. Ross' opinions to the contrary.

Bernard:
Of course you are sir. (*He begins to exit.*)

Ross:
Don't leave empty-handed, Bernard. Take those letters with you. They need my signature.

Bernard:

(Lights down on Ross and Bernard. Lights up on Bernard.)

Bernard:
I was a boy when I came to Mr. Ross. Not yet fifteen years of age. Small, and weak. Dublin in 1837 had no place for small, weak boys whose parents had no money. But weak or no, I did have a gift for writing. My father sold me into service. And so I came to Norway House. And I wrote. I wrote bills of lading. I wrote reports. I wrote letters home for the gentlemen who couldn't write themselves. At night, when the work was done, if the work was done, I wrote a bit of poetry. It wasn't long before I could copy the hand of any gentlemen in the Company. Mr. Ross liked that. He could cut his work in half, double mine, and no one was the wiser.

That's how I got here. How Mr. Evans got here with all his kit and kaboodle is another story altogether. Mr. Ross was some angry that he had the whole Evans family to look after. But he didn't show it like Mrs. Ross did. He just reached for the bottle a little more often, and cursed the Governor under his whisky breath. There was a rumour floating around that Dr. Alder, he was Mr. Evans' boss in London, had beaten Governor Simpson rather handsomely at cards one night, and the Governor allowed Mr. Evans into the territory to settle his gambling debt. But to be honest, that doesn't sound like Governor Simpson, either. He never played a game he knew he couldn't win. So it came to pass that Mr. Evans was running around the North Country stirring up the Indians. Mrs. Evans was sitting at home, playing the piano, watching the Northern Lights and eating the Company's butter by the barrel. And Clara, poor lost soul, I don't know if she ever left the house.

Then there was Mrs. Ross, madder than, well madder than Mrs. Ross usually was, all because there was another woman in the fort. And Mr. Ross, awash in whisky, wishing they'd all go away. As for myself, I found something captivating about Mr. Bernard:
Evans, even with all the chaos he created. It wasn't just his genius, which was immense. Or his ability to outpaddle half the boatmen in the Company. There was something else about him.

Lights down on Bernard. Lights up on centre stage. Bernard and Evans walk towards each other, Bernard with his head down. He goes to walk right by Evans when....

Evans:
It's Bernard isn't it?

Bernard:
Sir?

Evans:
Mr. Ross' aide-de-camp, aren't you?

Bernard:
Maybe.

Evans:
I hear you've got the gift of the bard.

Bernard:
Excuse me?

Evans:
I hear you write poetry, lad.

Bernard:
Now and then. Mr. Ross keeps me very busy.

Evans:
I'm sure he does. I would too, if I had an intelligent lad like you in my employ. I write the odd poem myself. Could I favour you with a hearing?

Bernard:
I've work to do sir.

Evans:
There are not many poets in this part of the world, I've discovered. I'd so appreciate your honest evaluation of my work. It won't take a minute, lad. (*Evans thumbs through his diary.*) Ah! Here is one that especially pleases me. And best of all, it's short. It'll hardly keep you from your duties. (*Evans clears his throat.*) "The Garden." My garden near the Hudson's Bay/Produces far more toil than pay/ Potatoes thrive if they don't freeze/And sometimes grow as big as peas." There lad, now what do you think of that?

Bernard:
(*Stifling a laugh*) It's very good sir. I, I think you chose an appropriate meter to convey the sense of, of, gardenship.

Evans:
You know lad, I can always tell when people are lying, and when people are telling the truth. And you, lad, are lying when you tell me that this is a good poem.

Bernard:
No. Really.

Evans:
And there is no need to lie to me Bernard. It is a dreadful poem. And I know it. But you know what's important about that poem, Bernard?

Bernard:
What?

Evans:
I was happy when I wrote it. And it makes me happy to read it. So there I am. A happy man with a poor garden, who writes dreadful poetry. This poem proves all three propositions, doesn't it?

Bernard:
Put it that way, sir, I guess it does. *(Bernard looks quickly away.)*

Evans:
What, lad?

Bernard:
Sir?

Evans:
There's something about me that troubles you, isn't there? I can always tell when people are troubled. Don't be shy with me, Bernard.

Bernard:
I've never met a minister before. That's all.

Evans:
And?

Bernard:
You're not what I expected.

Evans:
And what did you expect?

Bernard:
Someone more, more ministerial, perhaps. I don't know.

Evans:
Oh, I see. Like this? (*Evans adopts stern pose.*) A reading from the book of Evans: Chapter 2. Verses 1-4. (*Evans begins to read the poem again in his preaching voice, all the time wagging his finger at Bernard.*) My garden near the Hudson's Bay/Produces far more toil than pay. Is that better?

Bernard:
(*Laughing)* No, sir.

Evans:
(He puts his hand on Bernard's shoulder, and begins walking with him.) I learned something long ago, lad. Ministers who point and wag, and are too full of themselves and are disapproving of others are very unhappy men. And you said it yourself. I am a happy man.

Bernard:
I said that?

Evans:
Indeed you did.

Bernard:
I guess I did.

Evans:
But it's not just me that's troubling you. There's something else, isn't there?

Bernard:
I guess.

Evans:
Tell me, lad.

Bernard:
I can't.

Evans:
Something about Mr. Ross?

Bernard:
Maybe.

Evans:
And you're afraid that if you say anything to me about Mr. Ross, you'll be betraying him. Isn't that true?

Bernard:
Yes.

Evans:
I'll keep in confidence anything you tell me. As Chaplain to the Company, I'm your minister. I want you to trust me, Bernard. Come lad. There's some trouble between you and Mr. Ross. Now tell me.

Bernard:
It's just that, that, oh I don't think I should tell you.

Evans:
Well, Bernard. You may not trust me. But I trust you. And if you say the time is not right to unburden yourself of the heavy load you are carrying regarding Mr. Ross, I trust you to know best. Maybe now's not the time. Although I hate to see you in such torment. But if you want to talk, you know where to find me. Good day to you now. (*Evans takes his hand off Bernard's shoulder and turns to walk away.*)

Bernard:
It's just that I don't think Mr. Ross is right about you.

Evans:
(*Turns slowly to face Bernard again.*) And what does Mr. Ross think of me?

Bernard:
He thinks you're an agitator, come to stir up the Indians against the Company. He says you're plotting evil against us.

Evans:
And what do you think, Bernard. Do I look evil to you? When I had my hand on your shoulder, did that feel like the touch of doom?

Bernard:
I'm confused, that's all.

Evans:
Then tell me more about Mr. Ross' feelings towards me.

Bernard:
He's heard stories about what you preached to the Chipewyans. That they should give up the trade and start clearing the land. Mr. Ross says that you want to destroy in one year what it's taken the Company two hundred years to build.

Evans:
I see. And Mr. Ross thinks that I can single-handedly destroy his Company?

Bernard:
I guess he does.

Evans:
And you Bernard? Does it look to you that I have such power? Or such a desire?

Bernard:
I don't know, sir.

Evans:
And you trust Mr. Ross, don't you? He's been like a father to you, hasn't he?

Bernard:
Yes, sir.

Evans:
And now I come along, asking for your trust as well. Well, I can see how that puts you in an awkward spot all right. Who's a young lad to trust? Especially in a place where trust is as hard to come by as a decent sized beaver pelt. You're a writer. You like stories, don't you lad?

Bernard:
Yes sir, I do.

Evans:
Well I've a story for you. It's a story about what happens when you don't trust the right people. Have you ever heard of Nanabush?

Bernard:
No, sir.

Evans:
Well, Nanabush is a trickster. (*Evans stops, and consults his pocket watch.*) Ah, but I'm afraid I'm keeping you from your duties. Perhaps another time would be better.

Bernard:
No, sir. Now's fine.

Evans:
Well then. One day Nanabush was very hungry, and he happened across a flock of ducks. And Nanabush thought they would be fine for his dinner. But how was he to catch them?

Bernard:
I don't know, sir.

Evans:
Well, Nanabush didn't have a bow and arrow, so he couldn't shoot them. And if he ran after them they would just fly away. So Nanabush did the only thing he could do to catch them.

Bernard:
What did he do?

Evans:
He began to dance in plain sight of the ducks. (*Evans begins to dance, flapping his arms like a duck.*) And the ducks said, "Look at Nanabush! What a silly dance he's doing. He means us no harm." Well, it wasn't long before the ducks wanted to join in the dance too. So Nanabush said, "Alright, you can come and dance with me. But there is one rule you must all obey." "What is it?" asked the ducks. "You must all close your eyes before you join the dance," said Nanabush. Well, the ducks all agreed, and they closed their eyes as tight as they could get them, and they began to dance. All except Nanabush. Do you know what he did?

Bernard:
No sir.

Evans:
Close your eyes, lad. *(Bernard closes his eyes.)*

Evans:
Very quietly he took the dancing ducks one by one (*Evans puts his hands around Bernard's neck*) and began to wring their necks. (*Bernard opens his eyes, and jumps back, startled.*) Exactly! But you see Nanabush moved so quickly that not one of the ducks was any the wiser. Anytime a duck squawked when Nanabush wrung its neck, Nanabush would say "Oh, that's a very good step!" to encourage the other ducks to keep dancing. But all of a sudden, one of the ducks, a sheldrake he was, opened his eyes. He saw what Nanabush was doing and he began to cry out, "Nanabush is killing us! Nanabush is killing us!" Well, all the ducks that Nanabush had not yet killed quickly stopped dancing and flew away.

Bernard:
What happened to the sheldrake?

Evans:
Alas, he was not so lucky. He was an old duck. The day was cold. And he could not take to the air quickly enough to escape the rage of Nanabush. Nanabush kicked him head first into the lake. That is why to this day, the legs of the sheldrake are so far back on its body.

Bernard:
That's a good story, sir.

Evans:
Do you understand it?

Bernard:
Well, it is a story about dancing ducks, that much I know. And that would be something to see. (*He laughs.*) I can't imagine a duck dancing though, especially with its eyes closed. Can you?

Evans:
It's a story about this place, Bernard.

Bernard:
Pardon?

Evans:
Your Mr. Ross is like Nanabush. The ducks are like the Indians. Mr. Ross has seduced the Indians into dancing to his steps. And he's got them dancing with their eyes closed. The Company has made them believe that what is best for it, is best for them as well. And the Company is killing them, Bernard. One by one.

Bernard:
Oh, I don't think so, sir.

Evans:
The big animals are all gone, Bernard. They've been hunted right out. The beaver, they're just about gone too. And look at the Indians. Plied with alcohol. Cheated on the price of their furs. Tell me again, Bernard. The Company is not killing the Indians? (*A pause*) I'm not sure what to think of your silence, Bernard.

Bernard:
I'm just thinking, sir.

Evans:
Well, think about this lad. What do you think the Honourable Company is going to do once the beaver are all gone?

Bernard:
I don't know.

Evans:
Well, I do. And so do Mr. Simpson and Mr. Ross. They'll sell the land for settlement. They'll just pack up and move out, take their cash, and set up some place else. And what will happen to the Indians then, Bernard?

Bernard:
Will they go too?

Evans:
There's no place for them to go.

Bernard:
I don't know then, sir.

Evans:
They'll die, Bernard. The settlers will move in, and take all the best land for farming. The Indians will get what's left, if there's any left. But the best of the land can't support them now Bernard. Can it?

Bernard:
No, sir. It's just that, well, I know Mr. Ross. He's a good man. He's proud that he has Indian friends. I can't believe he wants to hurt them.

Evans:
Mr. Ross is a good man, Bernard. You're a lucky lad to have him as you're employer. You could have done much worse, I can tell you. But he's got a fatal flaw.

Bernard:
Mr. Ross? A flaw? What?

Evans:
It's sad to say, but he's Presbyterian.

Bernard:
He's pressed by what, sir?

Evans:
I know, it's a big word. Let me explain it this way. Mr. Ross believes very strongly in fate. Do you what know that is?

Bernard:
That everything happens for a reason?

Evans:
Close enough.

Bernard:
I'm still not sure I understand.

Evans:
Well, then. You're a clever lad to admit it, aren't you? Mr. Ross believes that if the fur trade wipes out the Indians, there must be some divine purpose for it. And Mr. Ross is not one to question divine purpose. Is he?

Bernard:
How do you know so much about Mr. Ross? You hardly know him at all.

Evans:
I've met Mr. Ross many times in the past, Bernard.

Bernard:
You have? Mr. Ross is sure he's never met you before. Or anyone like you. At least that's what he keeps saying.

Evans:
Oh yes, Mr. Ross and I go back a long way. Sometimes he's gone by a different name. And sometimes a different occupation. But there's one thing about the Mr. Ross's of this world that never changes.

Bernard:
What's that, sir?

Evans:
Their rectitude, lad. Their certainty that God is on their side, and they're on God's side. And if innocent people get killed along the way, it's because they chose the wrong side to be on.

Bernard:
You make him sound like the devil.

Evans:
Well, Bernard. The devil doesn't go around with horns and cloven hooves any more, you know. You have to look more closely to see him.

Bernard:
You've seen the devil?

Evans:
It's a funny thing. Wherever I go he's always there waiting for me.

Bernard:
Really? What does he look like?

Evans:
His looks don't matter. What's inside him does.

Bernard:
What's inside him?

Evans:
An overweening sense of self--importance. A grand sense of moral purpose. Inability to laugh at himself. Those are the usual signs that the Father of Lies is hard at work in a body's soul. You know, lad. You should come to my house sometime. We could go out in the canoe. Have you ever been to the islands in the lake?

Bernard:
No, sir.

Evans:
They're a beautiful sight to see. And the soil there is just perfect for farming. I've a mind to set up a settlement there for the Indians. I could use the help of a bright lad like yourself to get things going.

Bernard:
So you're the sheldrake.

Evans:
Pardon, lad?

Bernard:
In the story. You're the sheldrake that squawked, "Nanabush is killing us."

Evans:
I hope it doesn't come to that.

Bernard:
But you're not an Indian.

Evans:
That's right, Bernard. I'm not. But I am a Christian. And when my Christian brothers and sisters suffer, regardless of their race, I suffer with them.

Bernard:
But Mr. Ross calls himself a Christian too.

Evans:
Indeed he does, lad. Indeed he does. But there is nothing more susceptible to corruption than religion. Mr. Ross would use religion to make a profit. I prefer to use it to make disciples. So what about it, lad? Will you come and visit me?

Bernard:
Are you not afraid, though?

Evans:
Afraid? Afraid of what?

Bernard:
In the story you told. About Nanabush? You said that Nanabush kicked the duck into the lake, and hurt his legs. What if Mr. Ross does the same to you?

Evans:
Bernard, when our Lord was facing his crucifixion to take away the sins of the world, do you think he was afraid?

Bernard:
I have no idea, sir. I've always thought he didn't have to be afraid.

Evans:
Why not?

Bernard:
Well, he knew everything, didn't he? So he knew everything was going to work out in the end.

Evans:
I believe he did know everything too. But it was knowing everything that made him afraid. Still, our Lord still did what the Father wanted him to do. And so shall I. (*He turns to Bernard, and looks him closely in the face.*) This Company is run on fear. Governor Simpson sees to that. Everyone is made to be afraid of something. Tell me Bernard. What are you afraid of?

Bernard:
Oh, I don't know sir. I guess being sent back to Dublin.

Evans:
And why might you be sent back to Dublin?

Bernard:
Insubordination. Malfeasance of duty. I've been given a list.

Evans:
Of course you have. Everyone employed by this Company has their own list of things to be afraid of. And so everyone stays in line. Just like the dancing ducks. But remember lad. There's something more powerful than fear of life in this world.

Bernard:
Mr. Ross!

Evans:
No, lad.

Bernard:
Mr. Ross is coming! He told me never to speak to you!

Evans:
Did he indeed? (*Ross approaches Evans and Bernard.*)

Evans:
Ah Mr. Ross. Good day to you!

Ross:
Bernard?

Evans:
I must apologize for keeping the young lad from his official duties. At my insistence he very kindly consented to explain the intricacies of the Company's accounting procedures to me. I'm afraid I'm quite at sea when it comes to such matters. And the lad has done me a great service.

Ross:
Has he indeed. Well, Mr. Evans. I'd appreciate it if from now on you would direct your accounting concerns to me, not Bernard. And I will direct my concerns to you. This, for example. (*Ross waves a piece of paper at him.)*

Evans:
That, sir?

Ross:
An invoice bearing your signature. For services rendered by the Indians. To cut cordwood for the church.

Evans:
Is it not in order, sir?

Ross:
It is **not** in order, sir!

Evans:
I'm afraid I don't understand. Given that the Company is paying the expenses of the mission, I thought it only proper that I submit the invoice to you.

Ross:
You billed the Company for enough wood to last until the Second Coming. And you offered the Indians a wage far above what the Company pays for such labour.

Evans:
I only offered them what I thought was fair, sir.

Ross:
Fair? I'll decide what is fair and what is not. And this invoice is most certainly unfair to the interests of the Company.

Evans:
I intended the Company no grief, Mr. Ross. Here. (*He plucks the invoice from Ross' hand.*) I'll just explain to the Indians that the Company is not in a position to pay its debts.

Ross:
(*Grabbing the invoice back*) You'll do no such thing, sir. No, The Indians shall be paid. But the payment shall come from the bonuses promised the gentlemen. And when they complain, as they surely must, I'll be glad to tell them the reason.

Evans:
And I will apologize to the gentlemen for my folly.

Ross:
They can't eat apologies, Mr. Evans. Now there's one more thing. From Mr. Simpson. (*He hands Evans a letter.*)

Evans:
My dear Mr. Evans: *(he reads silently, but then he reads out loud, his voice rising with incredulity)* I am clearly of the opinion...better able to promote the common views of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Wesleyan Missionary Society at the Indian village rather than Norway House...Mr. Ross...to erect ...buildings for your proper accommodation. Crowded state of the fort...more advantageously situated...Mr. Ross ...assiduous as ever in his efforts to serve you. (*Evans struggles to control his emotions. He knows he's finally been bested. He finally gets himself under control.)* Mr. Simpson must have a touch of the clairvoyant. I was about to make exactly the same suggestion to him when next I saw him.

Ross:
Were you.

Evans:
It is a far better use of my resources, not to mention the resources of the Company, which by your own admission are rather strained these days, to have us live in the Indian village.

Ross:
I'll get the Indians working on your house. At my wages. Come, Bernard.

Evans:
(*In a whisper to Bernard*) Come by the house some night. And bring your poems.

Bernard:
The correspondence you required is ready for the post, Mr. Ross. (*He walks beside Ross. Just before they exit stage right, Mary Evans enters stage left and approaches her husband.)*

Ross:
Damn! I didn't want him to take the news of the move that well.

Evans:
(*Waving Simpson's letter at her.)* Good news Mary! Mr. Ross has very kindly consented to build us a lovely new house. By the church is it, Mr. Ross? (*He looks over to Ross for confirmation. Ross nods yes.*)

Mary Evans:
Why how delightful! Thank you so much, Mr. Ross! (*She waves and then pauses as the news sinks in.*) One second, by the church, you said? Why, the church is in the Indian village. Oh God no! We're not leaving the fort, are we? No! No! No! (*Mary Evans exits sobbing, Evans goes after her.)*

Bernard:
Better, sir?

Ross:
Much, thank you for asking.

Lights down on mainstage. Lights up on Old Bernard:

Bernard:
Fraser had been right that Hogmanay when last we saw him. Mr. Ross was in fast water when it came to Mr. Evans. Mr. Evans missed no opportunity to employ the Indians for the work of his mission, and to get the Company to pay for it. I could see what he was doing; Working his way in between the Company and the Indians. Turning them away from the Company and toward the mission. You couldn't blame the Indians for listening to him. Mr. Evans was offering them something that the Company had taken away from them so gradually, they never knew it had gone missing. That something was hope.

Lights down on Bernard. Lights up on Evans, centre stage.

Evans:
You have heard something about the great religion that many of your people have taken hold of. Now this religion is very good, it comes from the Great Spirit, his son brought it to us, and in a great book he tells us what we are to do. We are come to tell you of this good way of life, that you and your children may be saved from sin, that you might know how to serve the Great Spirit and that you might be happy as many of your people are where we come from. He says that he pities the wicked white man, and he wishes to bless the poor Indians everywhere in the wilderness. The Great Spirit tells us to go and see you and to tell you that he had sent his son into the world and he came and lived 30 years on earth to teach us how to come back to God. You, the chiefs of this people, wish to see your people do well and be happy, and you know that if your young men and women were all sober they would seldom quarrel. If they had good religion they would never fight or kill each other, your children would not die through cold and hunger when your women are drinking and your chiefs would be able to govern better and be stronger than you can while drinking the firewater.

Lights down on Evans. Lights up on Old Bernard.

Bernard:
It suddenly dawned on me why Mr. Ross was making such a virtue out of doing nothing regarding Mr. Evans. You see, there wasn't much he could do. He'd just drive the Indians further into Mr. Evans' camp if he told Evans to tone down his preaching. And if he complained about Mr. Evans to Mr. Simpson, well, he'd be as good as admitting that Mr. Simpson had made a mistake by inviting Evans into the

Bernard:
territory. And there's not a religion I know that ever suggests its God makes mistakes. I began to see Mr. Ross in a new light. I guessed that he and Mr. Evans were about the same age. But suddenly Mr. Ross seemed likes an old man. An old king, fearful of losing his kingdom to a young pretender. And yes, I did go to Mr. Evans' house. Strictly against the orders of Mr. Ross, who wanted me to have nothing to do with the pretender to his throne. I didn't feel good about disobeying Mr. Ross. But on the other hand, I didn't feel bad enough not to do it.

Lights down on Old Bernard. Lights up on centre stage. Mary Evans is at the piano, with her back to the others playing a light hearted, simple tune. Clarissa, Maggie and Eliza (native girls), Evans and Bernard are playing blind man's buff. Clarissa is "it", and as she moves around the room she seems to be in pursuit of Bernard and Bernard alone. Finally Bernard allows himself to be caught and Clara embraces him around the waist. Bernard gently takes off the blindfold and a momentary glance of mutual attraction passes between the two.

Evans:
My turn! (*He snatches the blindfold from Bernard and puts it on himself.*)
Something southern, Mary!

(Mary begins playing what an English parson's wife might expect a fandango to sound like. Evans strikes a dashing pose, and begins to move around the room in an exaggerated fashion, as though he is searching for an invisible dance partner. Everyone is so excited by Evans' maneuvers that no one sees the entry of WILLIAM MASON. Mason is wearing his clerical garb, complete with top hat. One by one the participants in the game see him, freeze, and then stand aside, as though they have been caught doing something they shouldn't. Evans, still dancing his exaggerated dance approaches Mason, and grabs him. Mason puts up no resistance. Evans is clearly puzzled by his catch. He feels around Mason's body, moving up over his face until he reaches Mason's hat. Evans stands back and rips off his blindfold. Mason remains motionless.)
Evans:
And who might you be?

Mason:
William Mason. At your service, sir.

Evans:
Well, Mr. Mason. The last I'd heard you'd given up the mission work at Lac La Pluie for the fleshpots of Red River.

Mason:
It wasn't my choice to leave, sir. There was nothing for me to do in Lac La Pluie.

Evans:
It's a poor missionary who can't find something to do, Mr. Mason. So what shall I do with you?

Lights down on centre stage. Lights up on Old Bernard.

Bernard:
You could tell just by the way he said it that the last place Mr. Mason wanted to be was at Mr. Evans' service. I think Mr. Mason came out of his mother's womb smeared in disapproval, and it clung to him, like a bad smell. And there was much at Norway House for Mr. Mason to disapprove of. The main thing was, of course, that Mr. Evans had the native girls Maggie and Eliza living in the house with his family to help Mrs. Evans with chores. Mr. Mason didn't think that was proper at all. But that was just one item on Mr. Mason's disapproval list. Dancing? Mr. Mason was against it. Playing the piano for any reason other than the accompanying of hymns? Against it. Laughing at bad jokes? Against it. Telling good jokes? Against it. Mr. Evans, dancing to the accompaniment of the piano, laughing at bad jokes and telling good ones? Mr. Mason was absolutely against it. But I had to feel sorry for him. Mr. Mason had no choice but to be at Mr. Evans' service. There was just no other place for him to go. I guess the Missionary Society decided that when things didn't work out for him at Lac La Pluie that he needed to be placed under the wing of a more experienced man. The trouble was, Mr. Evans needed both his wings for flying. In fact Mr. Evans seemed to spend a good deal of his time finding ways to either get Mr. Mason away from the fort, or himself away from Mr. Mason.

Lights down on Bernard. Lights up on main stage, Ross' office. Ross is at his desk. Bernard is by Ross' side. Evans enters the office.

Ross:
Get out, Mr. Evans.

Evans:
And a good day to you too, Mr. Ross. It is always a good day when we get mail, isn't it?

Ross:
Not when the mail brings yet another commandment from the governor to keep our rapidly spirally costs under control. What is it Mr. Evans? Do you want a pump organ for your church? Or perhaps you would like the Company to build you another church altogether?

Evans:
None of those things. No, I merely wish to bring you more evidence of the inexhaustible providence of God.

Ross:
Really, Mr. Evans? And what providence has God decided to send by the Company post? I might have thought that He would choose a more direct means of communication.
(Bernard snickers at Ross' wit.)

Evans:
Laugh if you will. Laughter is also a sign of God's providence. Is it not, Bernard? *(Bernard goes silent very quickly.)* Well, then. The Almighty has favoured us with an invitation. The Chipewyan are begging for a missionary in their northern land. What better way to exercise the rather formidable, yet dare I say underutilized talents of Mr. Mason than to send him to them?

Ross:
Good day, Mr. Evans. We can't afford God's providence this year. Especially if it involves Company stores and provisions.

(Evans exits.) Lights down on main stage. Lights up on Bernard.

Bernard:
Evans never gave up, and Mr. Ross never backed down. Until one day....

Lights down on Bernard: Lights up on main stage as before.

Ross:
(*As Evans enters*) Go away, Mr. Evans:

Evans:
Very well. But Mr. Simpson won't be happy with the news.

Ross:
What news would that be, Mr. Evans?

Evans:
That you have single--handedly decided to turn the North Country over to the papists. The Governor and Dr. Alder of the Society are good friends, you know.

Ross:
Oh, what is this nonsense?

Evans:
(*Holding out a letter for Ross.*) Look here. That papist priest Thibodeau has turned up among the Chipewyan. He's turning them all Romish with his incense and bells. The Indians like that sort of thing you know. It so reminds them of the primitive worship I have encouraged them so diligently to put away.

Ross:
Go then.

Evans:
You've told me several times that there is no money to send Mason. I understand your position. But neither one of us can stand idly by and let the north fall to Rome. I'll go myself.

Ross:
Yes, by all means. Go.

Evans:
I implore you, sir. Don't be penny wise and pound--foolish. My reputation is at stake. Your reputation is at stake. The cause of true religion is at stake. I insist...

Ross:
Bernard?

Bernard:
Mr. Ross wants you to go, sir.

Ross:
Take Thomas Hassal as your guide. And go. Go north. Go, Mr. Evans. Go. Go and save us from the papists. Save us from Romish smells and bells. Go. By all means. Go.
(*Evans freezes in disbelief, then exits quickly. Ross resumes his work as though nothing has happened.*)

Bernard:
May I speak sir?

Ross:
By all means, Bernard.

Bernard:
I don't understand what just happened, sir.

Ross:
Really, Bernard. Well tell me, what did you see?

Bernard:
I saw you change your mind about Mr. Evans' request so quickly, it's as though you never held a contrary position.

Ross:
Very good, Bernard. And why would I do that?

Bernard:
I have no idea, sir.

Ross:
Remember what I've been telling you, Bernard. Sometimes if you leave problems alone, they just go away. Well, our problem is going away as fast as he possibly can. Good riddance, don't you think?

Bernard:
I'm not sure, sir.

Ross:
Why not?

Bernard:
Because of what Fraser said when he was here last Hogmanay. About how Mr. Evans was talking to the Indians. And you're going to let him go back?

Ross:
We agreed, Bernard, did we not, that Mr. Fraser reported hearsay?

Bernard:
Yes, sir.

Ross:
And have you heard anything since that would confirm Mr. Fraser's report?

Bernard:
Yes sir. I mean no sir.

Ross:
Which is it?

Bernard:
Yes sir, hearsay. No sir. No confirmation.

Ross:
Mark my word, Bernard. Mr. Evans will be so busy chasing the tail of Father Thibodeau that all his energy will be directed against the evils of the papists. I doubt that even Mr. Evans will have the energy to denounce the Company and the priest with the same breath.

Bernard:
I see your point, sir.

Ross:
That's not all Bernard. Thibodeau will be teaching the Indians that God is revealed in his wafer and cup. Mr. Evans will be teaching them that God is revealed in his book. By the time both of them have had at the Indians, the poor buggers will be so confused about whose doing things the right way, they might just give up religion altogether and get back to doing something more important.

Bernard:
Like trapping fur?

Ross:
Clever lad. In the meantime, we have Mr. Mason here with us. A pliable sort, he seems to me. Think of what we can do with Mr. Mason in a year Bernard. We can shape him. We can form him. We can mould him into the perfect model of what a missionary to the Indians should be. Make no mistake. We'll make him ours. And then, when Mr. Evans returns, a year hence, ready to retake the reins of power, do you think that Mr. Mason will give them over readily? Would, you, Bernard?

Lights down on Ross and Bernard. Lights up on Old Bernard:

Bernard:
I had to admit Mr. Ross wasn't beaten yet. His plan sounded like an excellent piece of strategy for disarming Mr. Evans. It only had one flaw. Mr. Ross' plan depended on the missionary doing what he said he was doing, and going where he said he was going. And that was something Mr. Evans rarely did. Mr. Ross had counted on having a full year to turn Mr. Mason into the kind of missionary that was fit for the Honourable Company. It turns out, all he got were twelve short days. On the thirteenth day of his journey Mr. Evans returned to Norway House. And a tragic story he told upon his return. Six days out from Norway House, Mr. Evans accidentally shot and killed his guide, Thomas Hassal. Mr. Ross convened an inquest, and the men travelling with Mr. Evans confirmed the events of the story as he had told them. They had been travelling at top speed to intercept the Roman priest, shooting ducks from the canoe as they went. The gun was in the stern of the canoe with Mr. Evans, and Tom called for it to bring down some ducks they had just surprised. Mr. Evans passed the gun forward, but for reasons only he knew, the piece was already loaded. It fired as Mr. Evans passed it to Tom, and it discharged a ball into Tom's head, killing him instantly.

Bernard:
Well, Mr. Evans was a changed man after that. There were no more poems, and the piano was quiet. It was like the accident sucked the life right out of him and

Bernard:
left the man with a centre of melancholia wrapped in a shell of anger and despair. Even his preaching was affected. From what I was told:

Lights down on Old Bernard. Lights up on Evans, centre stage. He is disheveled. His face is a mixture of exhaustion, grief, and anger.

Evans:
The Great Spirit sends us to tell you that very soon his son is coming to judge the world. All who are in their graves will arise from the earth. The sun will become dark, the moon will hide her face, the stars will fall, the earth will tremble, men's hearts will be very weak, the wicked will be much afraid, the thunder will roar in the sky, the seas will toss their waters. Fire from heaven will burn up this earth, and the son of God will be seen coming on a great white cloud and all the sky will be light around him, thousands of angels will be with him. And all men who have lived will be gathered and stand before him and he will say to those who listened to his words on earth, and who have forsaken them, begone into the fire of eternal damnation.

Lights down on centre stage. Lights up on Old Bernard.

Bernard:
I soon stopped visiting him, so painful was he to see. Though to be honest, I was glad to have a reason to stop. And gradually my loyalties shifted back to Mr. Ross. Life at the fort returned too normal. But not for long.

Lights down on Bernard. Lights up on Donald Ross at his desk as Bernard enters the office.

Ross:
Ah, Bernard. Sit ye down, lad. (*Bernard sits tentatively.)* What's the matter, lad? You look like you've eaten a bad bit of beaver nose.

Bernard:
You don't usually tell me to sit when I come in sir. Have I done something?

Ross:
As a matter of fact you have lad. And I'm afraid it's reached the ears of the governor himself.
(*Bernard puts his head in his hands. When he raises it, he is crying. Ross continues on unperturbed.*) You'll need to come with me to the council meeting in Red River this spring. And I'm afraid, son, you won't be coming back.)

Bernard:
I never meant to talk to him sir. He started talking to me. (*Sobbing*) I'll die before I go back to Dublin!

Ross:
What are you on about, lad? Lac La Pluie's nowhere near Dublin. Governor Simpson's been enquiring about your progress. And I had to tell him, you're the finest aide-de-camp I've had in my employ. You've been promoted lad. After the council meeting you'll head on to Lac La Pluie, as the new apprentice trader.

Bernard:
(*Puts his head back, still weeping.*) O God. Thank you sir. I'm eternally grateful.

Ross:
Stand up. Turn yourself around.

(*Bernard obeys. Ross reaches behind his desk and unfolds one of his own fur coats. He puts it on Bernard. Bernard is lost in the coat.)*

Bernard:
It'll take some altering before it fits, sir.

Ross:
Nay, lad. Wait. You'll grow into it. And when you're factor of your own fort, wear it with pride, and remember the pompous old fool who first saw your knack for the trade.

Bernard:
I don't know what to say, sir, except thank you.

Ross:
Thank you is more than enough, lad. I've said enough for both of us. Now to work!

(*SFX knock on door*)

Ross:
Door,

(Bernard goes to the edge of the light, and admits JOHNNY and HENRY, native boatmen.)

Johnny:
You wanted to see us, sir?

Ross:
Ah, so I did. The council meeting is in a fortnight. We leave as soon as the ice is off the lake. Good day to you. (*Both men stand still. Ross ignores them, waiting for them to leave. They don't)*

Ross:
I said good day, gentlemen.

Johnny:
We need to know one thing before we say we will go.

Ross:
Excuse me? Bernard? Have these men not already promised to crew me to Red River?

Johnny:
We said we might go, sir. But before we say yes, there's something we need to know.

Ross:
Oh, what now!

Henry:
Will we travel on the Sabbath?

Ross
I warn you Henry, and listen very carefully. If you refuse to go, nobody can help you. I travel on Sunday. You will too if you know what is good for you.

Johnny:
I can't go.

Ross:
I'm sorry to hear that. You're one of my best boatmen. But if you refuse to go to Red River, you'll never work for the Hudson's Bay Company again.

Johnny:
I can't break the laws of God.

Ross:
The laws of God? Is Mr. Evans behind your refusal?

Johnny:
No, sir. Mr. Evans has given me no counsel. I speak from my own conscience.

Ross:
Counsel? Conscience? Did Mr. Evans tell you to say that too?

Johnny:
Mr. Evans has been my teacher. He has opened my eyes to the demands, which the Lord places upon me. It is up to me to choose to obey them.

Ross:
Teacher! Opened your eyes! Up to you to choose? Listen, Johnny. (*Ross goes to the shelf behind his desk and gets his bible*) Here's our Lord Jesus speaking, "No man can serve two masters." Did the Reverend Evans no tell ye that?

Johnny:
I have never heard him say that, sir.

Ross:
And you, Henry? Has the Reverend Evans turned your mind against your duty too?

Henry:
I always obeyed you -- since I was a child, sir. I am still ready to obey you. But I can't break the Lord's day.

Ross:
You know that I cannot stop because it's Sunday. The council won't wait for me while we lounge around on the lake. Henry, you must take me.

Henry:
The people held a Pow wow. We decided not to make the Lord angry with us for breaking His day. I wish to keep the Sabbath with all the others.

Ross:
All the others? Is there not a boatman left who'll put the Company before his own misguided conscience? (*Johnny and Henry are silent.*)

Ross:
You want to save your souls. And so do I. But remember this. When Mr. Evans arrived here, he traveled on a Sunday. We have always been friends. But if you refuse me, you are forsaking us. We are not forsaking you.

Bernard:
(*Consulting his book*) Two skins each. That's what you owe the Company. How will you pay if you never get another voyage? Your families will suffer if you refuse.

Henry:
And they might suffer more if we tempt the Lord. You have asked me and I have refused. Good day to you, sirs. (*Johnny and Henry leave. Ross slams a ledger book on his desk in disgust.*)

Ross:
Goddamn it. A fortnight until the council meeting and I'm left with no crew. Why did you not tell me?

Bernard:
Honestly sir. I didn't know.

Ross:
You have been my aide these last two years. You have always heard things before they reached my ears. Out with it. What do you know?

Bernard:
I know of nothing as a fact, sir. Just the usual rumours and whispers.

Ross:
That conversation we just had was more than a rumour or a whisper. It is not a rumour that Johnny and Henry and all the rest "might" not accompany me to Red River. It's a fact, which seems to have been carefully concealed from me.

Bernard:
No, sir. It's not like that at all.

Ross:
It must be all over the country by now that Mr. Ross must respectfully send his regrets to the Governor and Council -- and why? Because the Factor cannot command his subordinates to obey. And you, Bernard, you have kept silent when you should have spoken.

Bernard:
But Mr. Ross. When Mr. Fraser was here two years ago Hogmanay you dismissed the stories he brought you as idle gossip. You chastised him for telling tales. I didn't want to make you mad at me by following his example.

Ross:
Then what should I have done? Admitted to Fraser that he was right? Admitted that there's not enough beaver to go around after all? And what would that have done for morale, Bernard? Or maybe you wanted me to admit that I was mistaken in sending Mr. Evans north? I've never admitted a mistake before to my inferiors. I bloody well wasn't going to start in front of him. The next thing you know it would

Ross:
be all over the country. The missionary's got the best of Mr. Ross. Not under my factorship, Bernard.

Bernard:
I'm sorry, sir. I thought you knew what you were doing.

Ross:
Don't cheek me boy. Now. Out with it. What do you know?

Bernard:
Very well. Mr. Evans has lost the trust of the Indians.

Ross:
What? From what we have heard today, he is their champion!

Bernard:
One thing I've learned here, sir. Things are rarely what they seem to be.

Ross:
True enough, lad. Go on.

Bernard:
Mr. Evans is deranged. Since he shot Tom Hassal he has been desperate with grief, and completely off kilter.

Ross:
As far as I'm concerned, he's always been off kilter. And now on top of that he's killed a man through carelessness. As stupid as he was, he's still entitled to his grief. C'mon, lad. You've told me nothing new.

Bernard:
That day you saw me talking with Mr. Evans?

Ross:
Mr. Evans said that he was talking to you.

Bernard:
Just before you arrived, Mr. Evans told me a story. About a talking duck.

Ross:
Had I known that he was filling your head with such nonsense, I wouldn't have been so worried about you.

Bernard:
Well, there's more to it than that. Have you ever read this? (*He fumbles through his coat for a book, finds it and places it before Ross.)*

Ross:
Annals of the Martyrs, eh? I'm Church of Scotland, lad. We don't put much stock in martyrs. Or saints for that matter. Only ministers who know their place. But what of it?

Bernard:
I think Mr. Evans had it in his head to be like one of the men in that book. He wants to be a martyr. That's why he's been stirring up the Indians. Because he knew that Mr. Simpson would do him in if he kept it up.

Ross:
Well he's right there, lad. What's your point?

Bernard:
He had the Indians on his side, sir. For a long time. But then he went and shot Tom Hassal. And everything changed for him. After that, the Indians didn't trust him anymore. His church was empty most Sundays.

Ross:
You mean it was all an act? The grief over shooting Tom? Saying that he'd thrown himself before the throne of grace to plead for mercy?

Bernard:
I don't know whether Mr. Evans himself knows when he is acting, and when he is not.

Ross:
But it makes no sense, Bernard. On one hand you say that he's lost the trust of the Indians. But I see with my own eyes, that they're still willing to do what he tells them. Which is it?

Bernard:
Both, sir.

Ross:
What?

Bernard:
It's all different now, you see? Before the accident, Mr. Evans was promising the Indians the kingdom here on earth. He was going to get them their own land. He

Bernard:
was going to make sure they got a decent price for their furs. And everybody was going to live happily ever after.

Ross:
I don't doubt for a minute that Evans might have made the Indians all kinds of promises he knew he couldn't keep. But what I do not understand is why they would willingly pay such a heavy cost. I said they would never get another voyage from the Company, and damn it, I mean it.

Bernard:
He changed the tune he's singing to the Indians. It's not the kingdom he's offering them if they comply with his wishes.

Ross:
What then?

Bernard:
He's threatening them with the eternal punishment of hellfire if they don't. They're not following him because they trust him. They're following him because they're afraid of what will happen if they don't. Oh, he's still promising land and decent prices and all that. But I know for a fact that Henry and Johnny refused to make the trip because Mr. Evans told them they'd go to hell if they obeyed you and not him.

Ross:
I would have thought they had more sense.

Bernard:
But you see, Mr. Ross, its not a matter of sense. Mr. Evans told me something else that day. He said that the Company was run on fear. That Mr. Simpson could get people to do anything he wanted them to because he first made them afraid. And Mr. Evans was right. But don't you see? Mr. Evans is running his mission by the same logic. But he also said there was something greater than fear of life.

Ross:
What was that?

Bernard:
He never had the chance to say. But I think I know.

Ross:
What, lad?

Bernard:
Fear of eternity, sir.

Lights down on centre stage. Lights up on Old Bernard and Evans.

Evans:
And that's the truth you wish to tell? Judas betrayed our Lord for thirty pieces of silver, and you betrayed me for a fur coat?

Bernard:
Oh no. There's more. Much more.

Lights up. End of Act I

Act 2

The stage is set as it was in Act 1. Lights up on Old Bernard at his desk.

Bernard:
So I left Mr. Ross to begin my new posting at Lac La Pluie. I moved on, but it seemed little bits of Norway House moved with me. Every so often there'd be another story, another bit of gossip, another rumour about what Mr. Evans was up to. And then, a year later, I found myself promoted to York Factory. You couldn't get there without going through Norway House first. If I could have sprouted wings and flown there myself, I gladly would have, but there was no way around it. I was going back to Norway House. To make matters worse we damaged one canoe and lost another outright on the trip. Our layover in Norway House was longer than expected. And longer than I wanted. I went to see Mr. Ross as soon as we disembarked. But of course whom should I see first but Mr. Evans.

Lights down on Old Bernard. Lights up centre stage. The young Bernard walks purposefully through the light when Evans grabs him from the shadows.

Evans:
Bernard! What a pleasant little surprise! Congratulations on your new appointment. You must be very proud of yourself.

Bernard:
How did you know about that?

Evans:
Well there's one thing about this place. Word certainly does get around. Doesn't it?

Bernard:
You'll have to excuse me. I'm going to see Mr. Ross.

Evans:
You haven't seen him yet? So much the better. A word to the wise, Bernard. You'll find him a changed man.

Bernard:
Everything's changed now. From what I hear.

Evans:
Just what have you heard?

Bernard:
I'm sure you know what I've heard, Mr. Evans. Accusations and trials. Now if you'll excuse me.

Evans:
There's something I want you to know, Bernard. Maggie and Eliza recanted their testimony against me. The trial was a sham. A deliberate attempt to discredit me. Did you hear that too?

Bernard:
I guess word doesn't travel as quickly as you'd like it to.

Evans:
I blame myself for the whole sorry mess. I never should have put Mr. Mason in charge of the trial. It was far more than he could handle with any measure of competence. He did incalculable damage to the cause of the mission by the way he handled my trial.

Bernard:
Let me get it straight. You get tried for sexual immorality, and yet Mr. Mason is the guilty one?

Evans:
Let me be honest with you, Bernard. There were nights, many nights, when I lay awake and wondered why Mr. Mason would want to destroy me. Some demonic lust for power perhaps? But no. That's not it. Mr. Mason was merely careless and quite stupid. And I know from my own experience. Carelessness and stupidity are not the calling cards of the Prince of Darkness, are they, Bernard? It grieves my heart that Mason must face the discipline of the Society for what he's done. But where would we be without discipline, eh Bernard?

Bernard:
I thought you were leaving Norway House. You're still here.

Evans:
My, word does travel, doesn't it? As a matter of fact, I was invited by the leaders of our society to go to London this spring. For consultations on the state of the missions. But when the Indians heard the news they refused to let me go. They want their own land and their own mission, independent of the Company. They're so serious about it, they've even decided to put aside a share of their meager earnings to finance it. Can I be less committed than they are? How could I refuse them? Besides, with the damage that Mr. Mason has done to our cause here, there is much healing to be done. As much as I long for a taste of civilization, my place must be here.

Bernard:
And what about Mr. Ross and Mr. Mason? Where's their place in your grand scheme of things?

Evans:
Such a shame about those two gentlemen. I keep them daily in my prayers. You should too, Bernard.

Bernard:
You didn't answer my question.

Evans:
It's not for me to say, Bernard. But I have no doubt that Mr. Mason will soon retire from the territory, for his own good. His errors in the conduct of my trial placed him in grave distress. His health, not to mention his spirit, is now broken. He's of no use to anyone, I'm afraid. As for Mr. Ross, I hate to speak unkindly of him in your presence. I know how much he meant to you.

Bernard:
He's not dead, Mr. Evans. What's going to happen to him?

Evans:
Mr. Ross was a man of great strength, Bernard. But like many men of great strength, he also had a great weakness.

Bernard:
You told me. Presbyterianism, wasn't it?

Evans:
Merely a symptom of a darker flaw. He thought his persecutions would keep my Indians from embracing the gospel. How wrong he was. The Indians turned away from the Company and walk in the light of our Lord Jesus. Mr. Ross, I fear, has fallen into a pit of eternal fire that he dug with his own moral conceit. He'll never get out. Governor Simpson will replace him in time. But that was his weakness, you see. He never believed he could fall. He believed his rectitude would save him. Yet fall he did. You'll be seeing them both, no doubt?

Bernard:
Let me be honest, Mr. Evans. I didn't want to come back here. And I can't wait until I go again. I have absolutely no desire to get myself mixed up between you and Mr. Mason. Or Mr. Ross.

Evans:
Involving you was the furthest thing from my mind. I only hope my observations have not unduly distressed you. Tell me lad, are you still writing poetry? You excelled in your writing as I remember.

Bernard:
I really must get going.

Evans:
I had to send for a new diary. I misplaced the old one. One poem, Bernard. For old times' sake.

Bernard:
(*Impatiently*) Oh, all right.

Evans:
It's not a happy one, I'm afraid. But this has not been a joyous season after all. Here it is.

To Clara
She's gone! I'll fare thee well
May heaven on thee smile
My love I need not tell
I would only time beguile
May he who holds thy heart
The same affection show
And never feel the smart
Which I was doomed to know
And when the fleeting years
Of life have passed away
Beyond these hopes and fears
Share with thee endless day

Well. (*Evans puts his book away.*)

Bernard:
I heard Clara got married. I didn't know she was dead.

Evans:
No, she's alive and well. But she's alive and well in Canada, not here. Such a season of loss for me, Bernard. First Clara, married and gone. Then this

Evans:
dreadful slander. Then Mr. Mason's inexcusable behaviour following the trial. I sometimes marvel at the capacity of the Almighty to keep me sane. That God has seen me through all these things is a testament to his graciousness.

Bernard:
Well, I liked the poem about the garden better.

Evans:
I was a different man when I wrote it.

Bernard:
I don't think so. You sound like the same man to me.

Evans:
Oh no, Bernard. This year I've walked through the valley of the shadow of death. How could I remain unaffected?

Bernard:
Your poetry gives you away. Whether you're happy or whether you're sad, you write the same thing.

Evans:
I knew you were a poet. I never dreamed you were a critic as well.

Bernard:
You never write about things as they are. You just write about how things affect you. Everything you write. It's all about you. Everything you say is all about you.

Evans:
(*Threateningly*) Bernard. You should know better than to talk to me like that. Listen to me.

Bernard:
No, Mr. Evans. You listen to me. You shot Tom Hassal two years ago. And still all you can talk about is how bloody bad you feel about it, and how gracious God is to give you the strength to carry on. Did you ever spare a thought for how Betsy feels? If God is so gracious, how come she's a widow?

Evans:
(*More threateningly*) Bernard! I'm warning you.

Bernard:
Mr. Mason takes his religion a little more seriously than you do, and you run him into the ground because of it. Because **he** threatens **you**. Mr. Ross believes that the trade and Christianity can live together, and you go against him because he won't give **you** what **you** want. Clara has the chance to get out of this hellhole, and all you can think about is **your** broken heart at losing your daughter.

Evans:
That's enough! (*Evans grabs Bernard by the throat as though he's going to shake him. Bernard offers no resistance. In a split second Evans realizes what he is doing, and releases Bernard. He speaks calmly.*) Really, Bernard. You shouldn't say such things. I'd hate to see you come to grief.

Bernard:
Like the sheldrake?

Evans:
Mr. Mason and Mr. Ross both stood against me this year. And look at what has happened to them. Mason is shattered. Ross is dead drunk. Both are useless. But understand this Bernard. I threatened them with nothing. They brought their afflictions upon themselves. This terrible season has taught me one truth, Bernard. Really and truly, God is not mocked. What ye sow, so shall ye reap.

Bernard:
But you're not God! Don't you understand? You're not God!

Evans:
You're right Bernard. I'm merely his humble agent. And yet I'm the closest thing to God this place has ever seen. Remember that Bernard. (A pause) It's a pity you turned against me. You know, I really could have used you.

Bernard:
Like you used Maggie and Eliza?

Evans:
Desist!

Bernard:
Like you used Mr. Ross and Mr. Mason?

Evans:
Good-bye, Bernard. And good luck to you in York Factory. Give Mr. Ross and Mr. Mason my best when see them. And Bernard?

Bernard:
What?

Evans:
Mind that silly tongue of yours. It'll get you into trouble some day. *(Evans exits.)*

Lights down on centre stage. Lights up on Old Bernard.

Bernard:
I'd heard that sometimes when you're facing death, your life passes before your eyes. I'd provoked Mr. Evans with my outburst to the point where I thought he might kill me. But in that instant it wasn't my life I saw. It was his. And when I looked up at him, it wasn't anger I saw. It was fear. He knew I'd seen his life too. And for the first time in my life, someone was afraid of me.

Lights down on Old Bernard. Lights up on centre stage, Ross' office. The office is a mess; papers and empty whisky bottles lie strewn about on the floor. Donald Ross lies in a restless sleep on a cot by the desk. He is as distressed as the rest of the office. A much older and sicker looking Mason sits by Ross' cot with his back to the door. Bernard knocks and enters.

Mason:
(*Turning around)* There's a familiar knock. Bernard? Bernard? What's brought you back?

Bernard:
Never mind me, Mr. Mason. I just ran into Mr. Evans. He says he's staying.

Mason:
Mr. Ross could tell you more about that. If he was conscious.

Bernard:
Then you tell me.

Mason:
You're right Bernard. He's not going. The secretaries called him home. For "consultations" they said. But Mr. Evans is convinced it's a plot to get him out of the territories.

Bernard:
How long can he last here? Without supplies?

Mason:
Mr. Evans is like the hydra, I'm afraid. Cut him off in one place and he grows twice as fast someplace else. The Company forbids him to travel in the Company craft, so the Indians take him. The Company limits his access to the stores, so he gets what he wants from the free traders.

Bernard:
And he uses everything that Mr. Ross does as proof that the Company's out to get him. And the Indians believe him. It makes me sick.

Mason:
It's a terrible thing Mr. Evans has done, Bernard. Not just to me and to Mr. Ross. But to the Indians. He's turned family against family, father against son. Some believe he's the new messiah. Others believe he's the devil incarnate. Of course I have my own opinion on the matter.

Bernard:
I can't believe that they listen to him.

Mason:
You listened to him, didn't you Bernard? (*Bernard does not respond.*) He's got them scared. He extorts by fear. If they don't give their earnings to him...

Bernard:
I know. The pit. Or is it the fire?

Mason:
Don't make light of it, Bernard. Mr. Evans' threats may not scare you. But the Indians are terrorised by him. So's Mr. Ross.

Bernard:
Mr. Ross? Afraid? I can't believe that

Mason:
When Mr. Evans gained control of the Indians, Mr. Ross drank himself into a stupor. He said he'd rather die drunk here in Norway House than lose his factorship. Welcome back to our happy fort, Bernard.

Bernard:
What happened at the trial, Mr. Mason?

Mason:
There's much to tell you, Bernard. But it will have to wait. Grace at the mess table is in fifteen minutes. Those little routines are the only bit of sanity for me in this place. But I'll come back after dinner. We'll talk. In the meantime, keep an eye on Mr. Ross. (*Mason unsteadily walks to the door.*)

Bernard:
Mr. Mason?

Mason:
What, Bernard?

Bernard:
About Clara. Does she know?

Mason:
Why do you care about Clara?

Bernard:
I have my reasons.

Mason:
She was gone from the territories before all this started.

Bernard:
And where's Mrs. Ross?

Mason:
The last I saw her she was headed over to the Evans' household. With an axe. She said that if the Evans were going to move to the island she was going to help Mrs. Evans get her piano out the door.

(*Mason exits. Bernard sits and fidgets. He gets up and looks at Ross who is fitfully tossing and turning. Bernard seems to be in a state of agitation, pacing, looking at Ross.)*

Bernard:
That bastard! That bastard! (*He sits down, pulls a well-worn diary from his pocket, and thumbs through it.*) What ye sow, so shall ye reap? How about this one, Mr. Evans. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. *(Bernard rips a page out of the diary and shreds it into little bits.*) This one is for what you did to Mr. Ross. *(Another page*) This one is for Mr. Mason. (*Another page*) This one is for Maggie. This one for Eliza. This one for Clara. And these five for me! (*He takes the shreds and throws them up in the air. As he sits under the paper shower, Maggie and Eliza enter.*)

Maggie:
You told, didn't you?

Eliza:
We asked you not to tell.

Bernard:
I didn't want to. She threatened me. I'm sorry I betrayed you.

Eliza:
No one believed us.

Maggie:
They thought we led him on. They threw us out of the church.

Eliza:
They stopped talking to us. Except for Mr. Ross.

Maggie and Eliza:
Mr. Ross was always our friend.

Bernard:
I want to make things better. But you've got to help me.

Maggie:
We helped you last time.

Eliza:
Look where it got us.

Bernard:
Remember Tom Hassal? Tell me about him again.

Maggie:
Why?

Bernard:
There may be a poem in it.

(Lights down on Bernard. Lights up on Old Bernard and Old Evans).

Evans:
Now we're getting somewhere. That was my diary you little weasel, wasn't it? Those were my writings you ripped up with your nasty little fingers. And that's

Evans:
why your name is not in the book of life. "If anyone takes away the words from the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life, and in the holy city."

Bernard:
There's a difference between the word of the Lord and the words in your diary. Even an old agnostic like me can tell you that.

Lights down on Evans. Lights remain on Bernard.

Bernard:
Mr. Mason did return after dinner. And he brought with him a sheaf of documents. "This is a copy," he said. "The original has already been sent to London. You'd better read it yourself. Otherwise, Mr. Evans will accuse me of spreading lies." He passed me the documents. And so I began to read. And what a strange tale it was.

(Bernard begins reading....)
To the secretaries of the Wesleyan Mission Society: Reverend and Honoured Fathers. A dark cloud hangs over us. Our hearts are distressed for the cause of God and the prosperity of our mission in this country. Jesus has been wounded in the house of his professed friends. This is the cause of our great affliction.

For several weeks reports of a very bad character have been circulating throughout the village. A member of our society said that he had heard of a bad affair. I asked him what it was. He replied, "They are saying bad things about Mr. Evans." I asked him if he thought it right to be saying bad things about Mr. Evans.

"I believe them to be true," he replied. "Females would not say such things about themselves if they were not true." I said that the best of men had bad things said about them, and we should not be reporting bad of anyone, true or not true, until the person has been accused, and his guilt clearly proven. I then referred to the case of Joseph and Potiphars' wife. But he still persisted in believing the evil reports, and suggested that everyone else believed them too. He then told me two girls, Maggie and Eliza who had been living at Mr. Evans, stated that Mr. Evans had tried to have unlawful connections with them. I said I do not believe it. I cannot for a moment entertain such an idea concerning Mr. Evans, and it is very wicked for persons to say such things. I then took the first opportunity to acquaint Mr. Evans of the reports. Upon hearing them he turned pale and said....

Lights down on Bernard. Lights up on Mason and Evans centre stage.

Evans:
Ruined! Mr. Mason, I'm ruined. It's likely gone to Red River, and soon it'll be all over the country.

Mason:
(Tentatively) Your conscience is clear in the matter?

Evans:
It's nothing but a parcel of lies, Mr. Mason. Nothing but lies. I am not guilty. But I have been very foolish. (*He begins to weep. Mason is thunderstruck. He doesn't know what to do.*)

Mason:
There's only one thing to do, Mr. Evans. Declare your innocence. Your conscience will support you under this burden of sorrow.

Evans:
Will it indeed, Mr. Mason? You've got a quick opinion on how things must go in this matter. Why is that? Have you had some time to think about it?

Mason:
What are you suggesting, Mr. Evans?

Evans:
Who could gain from these charges against me?

Mason:
No one. No one who has any love for the work of this mission could possibly gain anything, Mr. Evans.

Evans:
Yet you seem threatened by the question.

Mason:
If you're insinuating that somehow I or Mr. Ross have anything to do with this...

Evans:
Did I mention names? You're the one who said Mr. Ross and yourself might benefit from my distress.

Mason:
You're twisting what I said, sir.

Evans:
In any event, I couldn't help but notice. You were much quicker to jump to the defence of Mr. Ross and yourself than you were to my own.

Mason:
Well. I'll say no more then.

Evans:
Perhaps I was too hasty, Mr. Mason. Could it be that this affliction comes not from mortals, but from the Almighty? As a test of my righteousness?

Mason:
You decide, sir.

Evans:
I've decided already. First you must get statements from the girls. Eliza and Maggie, did you say?

Mason:
I didn't, sir.

Evans:
Well, who's accused me?

Mason:
You were right, sir. The charges come from Eliza and Maggie. But I never mentioned their names.

Evans:
Take their statements. See what they have to say about me.

Mason:
And then?

Evans:
What does the discipline say?

Mason:
The discipline?

Evans:
The discipline of our Society. What does it have to say about procedure for ministers accused of immorality?

Mason:
I have no idea, sir.

Evans:
Well, then. I'll tell you. If a preacher be accused of immorality, the preacher accused, and his accuser shall respectively choose two preachers of their district, and the chairman of the district shall, with the four preachers chosen above, try the accused preacher. Its on Page 41 of the discipline, should you wish to make its acquaintance.

Mason:
The discipline's not much help, is it? There are only four preachers in the whole of the territories. It might be a year before we could all gather.

Evans:
And that's far too long to wait, isn't it?

Mason:
I believe it is.

Evans:
Well there's only one thing to be done then, isn't there.

Mason:
There is?

Evans:
You said so yourself. You must try me.

Mason:
Me try you? I can't try you, sir. You're my superintendent.

Evans:
Well, you must do the best you can, Mr. Mason. And you have my word. I'll respect whatever verdict you render.

Mason:
That's easy for you to say now, sir. But what if I should...

Evans:
But should you find me guilty, I will of course reserve the right to appeal your verdict to the next meeting of the London Conference.

Mason:
I'm sure you will sir.

Evans:
Go. Talk to the girls. But Mason?

Mason:
Sir?

Evans:
I insist that you be gentle with them. I don't want the girls to suffer on my account. And one other thing.

Mason:
Sir?

Evans:
Pray for me, Mr. Mason.

Mason:
I'm praying for us both, sir.

Lights down on Evans and Mason. Lights up on Old Bernard.

Bernard:
Could you see what he was doing? The way he put words in Mr.Mason's mouth? The way he got Mason to agree that a year was too long to wait for a trial without ever suggesting that there might have been alternatives to a trial in the first place? Well Mr. Mason didn't catch on until it was too late. He took the bait, and Mr. Evans snapped the trap. No doubt about it. Mr. Evans wanted a trial. That bit of martyrdom was alive and well in him. But I wondered, as I read those documents. Who was really going to be on trial? Was Mr. Mason going to try Mr. Evans? Or was Mr. Evans going to try Mr. Mason?

Lights down on Old Bernard. Lights up centre stage, the interior of the church. Mason sits behind a desk. Evans sits beside him. Eliza and Maggie sit together on a bench in front of the desk.

Mason:
This court is convened according to the discipline of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, according to the provisions in that discipline for hearing accusations of immorality against preachers of the Society. The charges are as follows. That the Reverend James Evans committed an act of fornication against the person

Mason:
of Maggy Sinclair. And that the Reverend James Evans attempted fornication upon the person of Eliza Spence. The Reverend Evans pleads not guilty to both charges. Maggie? Please stand.

(*Maggie stands.*)

Mason:
Are the charges true, Maggie?

Maggie:
They're true. Yes.

Mason:
Where did it happen, Maggie?

Maggie:
In his study.

Mason:
What time was it?

Maggie:
In the morning.

Mason:
Did he know you more than once?

Maggie:
He know'd me ever since I got here.

Mason:
That's not what I meant, Maggie. I mean, did he ever have...carnal connections with you?

Maggie:

(*She looks helpless, not understanding the question. She looks to Eliza to interpret for her. Eliza gives her a hand signal.*) Yes. Many times.

Mason:
Were you by yourself?

Maggie:
Eliza was there. But she didn't hear Mr. Evans

Mason:
Why not?

Maggie:
She was asleep.

Mason:
When he wished to do it, did you want him to, or did you try and stop him?

Maggie:
I tried to stop him.

Mason:
How did you try to stop him? Did you cry out?

Maggie:
No.

Mason:
Did you try to awake Eliza?

Maggie:
No.

Mason:
Could you not wake Eliza?

Maggie:
Yes.

Mason:
Did Mr. Evans say anything to you? Did he promise you anything?

Maggie:
He said I'd never have a child.

Mason:
The first time he did it, did it hurt you?

Maggie:
Yes.

Mason:
Did he come to you often in the night?

Maggie:
Yes.

Mason:
Did you feel bad in your heart?

Maggie:
Yes.

Mason:
Did Mr. Evans ever tell you not to tell anybody?

Maggie:
Yes.

Mason:
Did he ever promise to give you anything for not telling?

Maggie:
Yes.

Mason:
Are you sure what you told us this morning was the perfect truth?

Maggie:
Yes.

Evans:
You're lying Maggie. And you're a wicked, bad girl.

Mason:
You may ask Maggie your questions now, Mr. Evans.

Evans:
Maggie, do you remember before the last mail ship left, you asked me to write a letter for you?

Maggie:
Yes.

Evans:
And what did you tell me then?

Maggie:
I told you that people were saying bad things about you.

Evans:
And what did you say to them in return? Did you not say to them that you knew Mr. Evans was a good man, and that they were telling lies? Did you not tell them that you had lived a long time with Mr. and Mrs. Evans and that you knew Mr. Evans was a good man and that he would never do what people said he did? Was that not what you told me?

Maggie:
Yes.

Evans:
Did I then tell you anything bad? Or did I tell you not to say anything then?

Maggie:
No.

Evans:
Did I not say to you that you were a good girl for telling me? Did I not say that to you?

Maggie:
Yes.

Mason:
Maggie, when you told the people who were telling tales about Mr. Evans that he was a good man, did you not remember that he had connections with you?

Maggie:
Yes.

Mason:
And that what you were telling Mr. Evans was not the truth?

Maggie:
Yes.

Evans:
Where did you live before you came to the village, Maggie?

Maggie:
Moose Lake.

Evans:
And did you live by yourself?

Maggie:
No. I lived with Jack Ballantyne.

Evans:
And did you not say that Mr. Ballantyne often left his bed and his wife and came and lay with you?

Maggie:
Yes.

Evans:
What do you think he wanted to do?

Maggie:
He told me what he wanted to do.

Evans:
Did you let him?

Maggie:
Yes.

Evans:
Was it ever known that this man was in the habit of coming to your bed?

Maggie:
Yes.

Evans:
That is all, Maggie.

Mason:
Thank you, Maggie. You may sit down now. Eliza, could you stand, please?

(*Eliza stands.*)

Mason:
Well now, Eliza. Would you tell us whether Mr. Evans came to you in the night?

Eliza:
Yes, he did. He would pull away my blanket and would play with me.

Mason:
Did he ever try to do bad to you?

Eliza:
I thought he might, but he never did.

Mason:
Did he ever say anything to you?

Eliza:
He said that when you get a man this is what he will do to you.

Mason:
And what did he do?

Eliza:
He put his arm around me.

Mason:
Did he do anything else?

Eliza:
I don't remember.

Mason:
Did he ever come for you with a candle in his hand?

Eliza:
Yes. But only once.

Mason:
That time he came to you, did he lift up your clothes?

Eliza:
Yes, he did. While he was lifting my clothes I awoke and drew myself up.

Mason:
You may ask your questions, Mr. Evans.

Evans:
Do you think that I have done bad to you anytime you have been in our house?

Eliza:
No.

Evans:
Did I do anything bad, or show you anything the time I put my arm around you?

Eliza:
No.

Evans:
Did you ever see me do bad with Maggie?

Eliza:
No.

Evans:
Did you always sleep with Maggie?

Eliza:
Yes.

Evans:
Where did you sleep? In the bunk bed, or elsewhere?

Eliza:
In the bunk bed.

Evans:
There were many nights when you could not sleep, Eliza?

Eliza:
Very many.

Evans:
Those nights when you could not sleep, did you ever see me or hear me come and sleep with Maggie?

Eliza:
No. Never.

Evans:
Do you think that bunk bed is so large that a man could come and sleep with Maggie and not know it?

Eliza:
No.

Evans:
I want to ask Maggie another question.

Mason:
Go ahead, Mr. Evans.

Evans:
Maggie, did you sleep with Eliza in the bunk bed?

Maggie:
Yes.

Evans:
Where was the bunk bed? What room in the house?

Maggie:
It was in the Indian room.

Mason:
Wait a minute, Maggie. You told us earlier that you slept in Mr. Evans' study. Was it in the study you slept with Eliza?

Maggie:
No.

Evans:
Maggie never slept in my study. She always slept in the Indian room.

Mason:
Maggie, you are telling us lies. First you said you slept in the study, now you say you slept in the bunk bed.

Evans:
Of course she's a liar, Mr. Mason. And judging by her relationship with Jack Ballantyne, she's a trollop as well. I'm done with Maggie. There's one more witness I want to examine. Where's Charles?

(*Charles, a young Indian, comes forward.*)

Evans:
Ah, there you are Charles. Now tell us. You used to live in our house when Maggie and Eliza were there. Did you not?

Charles:
I did.

Evans:
Did you ever see me in Maggie and Eliza's room?

Charles:
Yes, I did.

Evans:
What time of day was it?

Charles:
The middle of the night.

Evans:
Could it have been early in the morning?

Charles:
It could have been.

Evans:
How did you see me? Did you come to the door?

Charles:
No sir. I was asleep. A noise from their room woke me. I put my eye to the knothole between the rooms.

Evans:
And what did you see?

Charles:
I saw you with a candle in your hand by Eliza's bed.

Evans:
Did you see me take the blanket off Eliza?

Charles:
No.

Evans:
Did you see me do bad to Eliza?

Charles:
No, sir.

Evans:
While you were living in my house, did you not know me often to go in the mornings to awaken the girls and yourself?

Charles:
Yes sir, you often did that.

Evans:
So when you saw me through the knothole with the candle in my hand, could it be that it was early in the morning and I was going to awaken Eliza and Maggie?

Charles:
Yes, sir. That's possible.

Evans:
Did Eliza ever tell you that I had done bad to her?

Charles:
No, she did not.

Evans:
Thank you Charles. That is all I want to ask you. Do you have any questions for Charles, Mr. Mason? No? Well, then. You've heard the testimony. Although the good Maggie's word is to you is unclear to me. You called her a liar yourself. You've also heard from Charles that he saw me the morning that Eliza spoke of, and that he obviously saw me going to awaken the girls. Nothing more. Time for grace at the mess table. Shall we stand adjourned, Mr. Mason?

Mason:
Yes, we shall.

Evans:
And may I expect your verdict by tomorrow. Say at dinner?

Mason:
You'll get it when it is ready, Mr. Evans. Not before.

Evans:
Very good, then. And thank you all for coming.
(*Evans exits, Mason gathers up his papers. Eliza, Maggie, and Charles still sit waiting to be dismissed.*)

Mason:
Well go on, we're done here.

Lights down on centre stage. Lights up on Old Bernard.

Bernard:
My father took me to see an execution when I was a lad in Dublin. The accused was innocent, as it turned out. But he was caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. The judge wanted to make an example of him, and sentenced him to hang. They led him to the scaffold. The mob was cheering and jeering, and yet he paid them no attention. It was like he'd accepted his fate, as unjust as it was, and there was serenity about him. Just before the hangman put the cloth mask over his face, and strung the noose around his neck he looked right at me. And he smiled. I always remembered that smile. And when I finished reading the documents that Mr. Mason had placed before me, I looked up at him. Mr. Mason was smiling at me. I'd seen that smile before.

Lights down on Old Bernard. Lights up on Bernard and Mason in Ross' office.

Mason:
I found him not guilty, of course.

Bernard:
Was he?

Mason:
There's no doubt in my mind. Maggie's evidence wasn't as contradictory as it seemed. Eliza was right when she said that she and Maggie always slept in the bunk bed. But Maggie was on her own in the Evans' house for six months before Eliza arrived. So it was possible that Maggie slept in the Indian room and the bunk bed. And as for Charles' testimony. God knows what Mr. Evans promised him for what he said.

Bernard:
Well, you did your duty, then. You gave Mr. Evans what he wanted. What's the problem?

Mason:
It wasn't as simple as that. You see, the secretaries in London made it clear that we were never to be alone with young women, and to only talk to them about matters of religion. Mr. Evans scoffed at the directive, and made no bones about it. So I rebuked him for his conduct with the girls. I put the rebuke in writing, in the trial transcripts.

Bernard:
What happened then?

Mason:
I asked Mr. Evans what should be done with the transcripts. I thought they should be sent to the secretaries in London. "All right," says Mr. Evans. "Give them to me, and I'll make sure they go with the mission post."

Bernard:
But you didn't give them to Mr. Evans, did you?

Mason:
I had every intention. Honestly I did. I no more wanted those documents than I wanted the plague.

Bernard:
So why didn't you?

Mason:
I'd left the documents at my house. When I went to get them, there was a lad there from the fort. He said there was a special mail packet going overland through the states to London. Mr. Evans had sent him to pick up the trial documents to go that way.

Bernard:
And you gave him the documents.

Mason:
To my lasting regret, I did.

Bernard:
There was no special post, was there?

Mason:
Mr. Evans was furious with me when he found out what I had done. He swore up and down that he never authorised anyone to pick up the documents. He accused me of going behind his back to the secretaries.

Bernard:
You didn't take out the rebuke before the documents went to London.

Bernard:
You deserved better, Mr. Mason.

Mason:
We all did, Bernard. Maggie and Eliza especially. They're the ones who are suffering the most. Those that don't believe them think they've sinned against Mr. Evans. And even those who do believe them think that some how they must have led him on. In any event, I'm finished. If the secretaries find against me, I'll be recalled. If they don't, I'll be remembered as the missionary who tried to double-deal his superintendent. I didn't want any of this Bernard. All I wanted to do was be a missionary.

Bernard:
The lad who picked up the documents from you? Who was he?

Mason:
Never seen him before. Or since. There was a crew in from Red River that day. I suspect he was one of theirs. But who sent him, I have no idea. Mr. Evans first tried to blame Mr. Ross, but Mr. Ross was away from the fort that day. It couldn't have been him. But someone wanted them out of Norway House. That's all I can tell you.

Bernard:
Someone did, Mr. Mason. (*He reaches into his coat pocket, pulls out a parcel and puts it in front of Mason.*) They did indeed.

Mason:
You've got them? How on earth did you get them?

Bernard:
They came to me for safekeeping. Evans couldn't be trusted with them. Especially with your rebuke in them.

Mason:
Who sent them to you?

Bernard:
I can't tell you.

Mason:
Give them to me! Give them over! (*Mason makes a grab for the documents, but Bernard grabs them back.*) When Mr. Evans sees that they haven't gone to London he'll drop his charges against me.

Bernard:
You're too trusting still, Mr. Mason. Do you think Mr. Evans cares whether you're vindicated or not?

Mason:
Please Bernard. Give them to me.

Ross:
(*Wakes up groggily, retches over the side of his cot, and gives out a loud groan.*) O God.... (*He struggles to his feet as Bernard and Mason watch.*) O Christ! (*He sees Bernard.*) Bernard? Get your tablet, lad, and take a letter.

Bernard:
Just a minute, Mr. Ross.

Ross:
I'll be right here. (*Ross collapses back onto his cot.*)

Bernard:
I can't give you the documents. But I will give you this. (*He hands Mason the diary.*)

Mason:
Mr. Evans' diary! Where did you get this?

Bernard:
Never mind.

Mason:
I don't want it. (*He pushes it back.*)

Bernard:
Read it, Mr. Mason. Here. (*He opens the book and points to a page.)*

Mason:
More of Mr. Evans' dreadful poetry.

Bernard:
Look who it's about.

Mason:
(*He reads without comment. When he's done he pushes the book towards Bernard.)* I can't help but notice, Bernard. The ink isn't even a day old.

Bernard:
It'll look older tomorrow. That's when we need it. You've got to come with me tomorrow to see Mr. Evans. We've got to get Mr. Ross sobered up. We'll need him too.

Mason:
I'm sorry, Bernard. I can't.

Bernard:
You can't what? You don't even know what you're doing yet.

Mason:
It's an admirable thing you're doing, Bernard. And I know you're doing it with the best possible intentions. But there's just been too much. Too much trickery. Too much deceit. Too many lies told and half-truths concealed. I'm sick and I'm tired of it. I'd rather take my chances with the secretaries in London than deal any more with Mr. Evans.

Bernard:
(Exploding) You missionaries make me sick!

Mason:
Don't be angry, Bernard. It won't help.

Bernard:
You've told me how sorry you are about what Mr. Evans did to Mr. Ross. And how badly you feel that Mr. Evans turned the Indians against each other. And how sorry you are about what happened to Maggie and Eliza. And now you've got the chance to make things right with them all. And what do you do? You give me a platitude about how there's been too much of this and too much of that, and you don't want to play anymore. You know, Mason, when it comes right down to it, I think the person you feel the sorriest for is yourself. And that makes you worse than Mr. Evans. The only person he cares about is himself. But at least he's honest about it.

Mason:
I'm sorry, Bernard. I really am. I can't help you.

Bernard:
(A long pause) I think you can. You said you'd rather take your chances with the secretaries in London?

Mason:
What of it?

Bernard:
You told me yourself. You weren't supposed to be alone with girls. What about Clara?

Mason:
What about Clara?

Bernard:
You were alone with her.

Mason:
That was church business. She was helping me proof read translations.

Bernard:
Really.

Mason:
Really.

Bernard:
(stares intently at Mason. Mason drops his eyes.)

Mason:
What?

Bernard:
You were standing awfully close to her, weren't you, Mr. Mason?

Mason:
The light was poor.

Bernard:
Reading over her shoulder perhaps? She had the only candle? Then what?

Mason:
You seem to know so much. You tell me.

Bernard:
There was a piece of soot on the page she was holding. You leaned forward to remove it, and your lips just happened to accidentally touch her neck. Something like that?

Mason:
So now you accuse me?

Bernard:
She's a beautiful girl. I don't blame you.

Mason:
(*He puts his head in his hands.*) It wasn't like that. I swear.

Bernard:
Do you really want to have to swear to it? One way or the other?

Mason:
Removing Mr. Evans won't bring the mission back.

Bernard:
Have you not heard a word I've said? It's not the mission I care about. It's the people. It's Mr. Ross and Maggie and Eliza, and even you, Mr. Mason, if you'd have the brains to catch the rope I'm throwing you.

Mason:
(*Mason takes the diary.*) Mr. Evans once threw me a rope. There was an anvil attached to it.

Bernard:
Well, Mr. Mason. Maybe you were just born under an unlucky star.
(*Ross struggles to his feet. Bernard sees him and takes a piece of paper from the floor.*)

Bernard:
Here's your letter, sir. I'll stop in tomorrow.

Ross:
(*Slurred*) Be early. Month end, don't you know.

(*Bernard turns to leave just as Mary Ross enters with her axe.*)

Mary Ross:
I retuned the piano. Fixed up the telescope too. Glad you're up, Donald. Thanks for looking in on him Mr. Mason. Hey, Bernard? I hear you got promoted again. Dublin's looking a little further away, isn't it?

Bernard:
Further all the time, ma'am.

Mary Ross:
Good for you, you little brat. Now then, Mr. Mason's caught you up with the goings on around here?

Bernard:
He has, Mrs. Ross, and I'm deeply....

Mary Ross:
Good. Well you dug us into this. Let's see if you can dig us back out again. Or I'll have...

Bernard:
Me singing "In Dublin's Fair City" before I know it? I think not Mrs. Ross.

(*Bernard exits. Mrs. Ross looks stunned.*)

Mary Ross:
(*Admiringly*) Smart little bugger. He needs a cuff, that's what.

Lights down on centre stage. Lights up on Old Bernard.

Bernard:
We were a motley crew that assembled in Mr. Ross' office the next morning. A badly hung-over factor whose best days seemed to be behind him. His piano-smashing wife who had taken the wilderness into herself and never let it go. A formerly righteous and upstanding clergyman who now hung his head in shame after coming face to face with his own humanity. All led by a fifteen year old boy. Mr. Mason wanted to pray before we left, and Mr. Ross got down on his knees like he meant it. Then Mr. Mason wanted to sing a hymn. (*Bernard begins singing.*)
Fairest Lord Jesus
Ruler of all nature
O, thou of God
And Man the Son
Thee will I honour
Thee will I cherish
Thou my soul's glory, joy and crown.

Bernard:
I've never been much for singing, but the memory of that hymn has stayed with me all these years. We walked in silence to Mr. Evans' house. Each lost in our thoughts. But the closer we got, the lighter my heart felt. Sure Mr. Evans had brought out the worst in us all; Mr. Ross' drunkenness, Mrs. Ross' rage, Mr. Mason's weakness in the face of temptation, my own gullibility on one hand, and capacity for blackmail on the other. But he'd also brought out the best in us as well. I remembered what Mr. Ross had once said about Mr. Evans - that he wanted to destroy in a year what it had taken the Company two hundred to build. And in a backhanded way Mr. Evans had done just that. The Company was built on two hundred years of mistrust. Of factors mistrusting the

Bernard:
gentlemen, and gentlemen mistrusting everyone else. And yet in a year, Mr. Evans had brought us all together with all our weaknesses and failings. I felt positively carefree by the time we arrived at his door. Whatever was to happen, whether we succeeded or failed, what we were doing was right. And right then, that was more than enough. Oh yes that hymn that Mr. Mason had us sing? I looked it up when I got to York Factory. Funny thing. It was called the Crusader's Hymn.

Lights down on Old Bernard. Lights up centre stage, Evans' house. Donald and Mary Ross, Mason and Bernard all stand before Evans.

Evans:
I thought we'd said our goodbyes, Bernard.

Bernard:
You said goodbye to me Mr. Evans. Now I've come to say goodbye to you.

Evans:
Did I not make myself clear, Bernard? I'm staying. My place is with the Indians. Although you might want to take the time to bid farewell to the gang of heathens behind you. I have a feeling you won't be seeing them again in this life.

Mason:
Bernard's right, Mr. Evans. You must go.

Evans:
I thought I whipped the arrogance out of you at the trial, Mason. Did I not succeed? I might have thought you'd come to plead forgiveness. And what about you, Mr. Ross? No doubt you've come to lay the dismal failures of your

Evans:
administration on my shoulders. Spare yourselves, gentlemen. And spare me. I've a sermon to prepare.

Ross:
You've broken the law, Mr. Evans. You'll pay for it if you stay.

Evans:
On the contrary, Mr. Ross. I've lived the law. Not the law of your Company, I'll grant you, but the higher law of our Lord. I've treated the Indians with respect and dignity. I've given them something to hope for, and the promise of a place where their children can live without squalor and drunkenness. That could only be a crime in your eyes, sir.

Mason:
Tell that to Eliza and Maggie.

Evans:
And you, Mr. Mason. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Rounding up a band of slanderers to destroy me. Did you not think that God in his righteousness would preserve me? Who on earth did you think you were dealing with?

Ross:
You're a murderer, Mr. Evans. And God won't save you from that. Stay in my territory, and I'll have you sent to Red River to face charges. You've a choice. Go to London and face your secretaries, or go to Red River and face the magistrate.

Evans:
Now let's see. Who can you get to testify against me this time? The Indians are growing a little tired of appearing in your courts, gentlemen.

Ross:
You were sleeping with Tom Hassal's wife, weren't you?

Evans:
Does the slander never end?

Ross:
Tom confronted you on your trip to the Chipewyans.

Evans:
An amusing speculation.

Ross:
You argued, then you fought.

Evans:
Tom was a dwarf. It couldn't have been much of a struggle.

Ross:
But he got the drop on you didn't he? That's when you went for the rifle.

Evans:
Tom dropping me? Please!

Ross:
You only meant to hit him with the barrel. But it was loaded.

Evans:
Nearly finished?

Ross:
The rifle discharged, killing him instantly.

Evans:
(*Evans applauds mockingly.*) Did you find that story in the bottom of your bottle, Mr. Ross? You seem to forget, I have eyewitnesses who have given sworn testimony to the accidental nature of Tom's death. And besides that, you held the inquest. You found me innocent. There's not a person in the territories, Indian or white who will believe your rather dramatic recreation, or should I say fabrication?

Mason:
Mr. Ross didn't have to fabricate a thing, Mr. Evans. It's here in your diary. (*He begins reading.)*

For Betsy
Bright beamed Betsy
Thou child of the morning star
Who's shining countenance guides us
On our outward way
Dispels the gloom of night
And moves the heavy heart to play
When all impediments to love
Dissolve like early morning mist
Pure union truly shall we know
And eternal everlasting bliss

Evans:
That's not my poem! I'd never write such trash!

Bernard:
Really? It's written in your hand. And it's written in your book.

Evans:
You're a goddamned thief, Mason. And you, Bernard. Not only are you a spineless little guttersnipe, you're a forger as well. Aren't you? Answer me!

Bernard:
It's a funny thing about the written word, isn't it Mr. Evans? What's true gets written down. And what gets written down becomes truth. Who's to tell whether that's your writing or mine?

Ross:
Maggie and Eliza are prepared to testify that you bribed your eyewitnesses. We've found Betsy, and she'll testify that you were having an affair with her. Your poem, trash as it may be, is the last piece we need. Give it up, Mr. Evans. Go home. Leave us in peace.

Evans:
No, Mr. Ross. I will not leave you in peace. (*Evans holds out his wrists.*) Arrest me. Have me charged. Take me to trial. I can hardly wait to hear what the Society for the Protection of Aboriginals will say about this. (*Evans continues to move towards Ross with his hands out, wrists together. Everyone is frozen by the sight. Suddenly Evans makes a grab for the diary and knocks it out of Mason's hand. He quickly kneels to pick it up. Mary Ross stamps on the diary with her foot. Evans continues to try to pull it free. Mary Ross takes the hem of her skirt and raises it to ankle level. Evans, embarrassed by the sight, retreats from the diary. Mary Evans enters the room. She surveys the mayhem for a second, but her mind is obviously on something else.)*

Mary Evans:
(to Mary Ross) My telescope. You smashed my telescope. *(A pause)* I loved that telescope. I loved looking at the Northern Lights, and the constellations. They're so pure aren't they? So untouched by everything but God.

Mary Ross:
And maybe I did.

Mary Evans:
As long as I could look at things that were far away, I never had to look at things that were up close. Things that were happening right under my nose. But I can't do that any more. Can I?

Mary Ross:
Get your head out of the clouds, woman.

Mary Evans:
Thank you, Mary.

Mary Ross:
Huh? What're you thanking me for?

Mary Evans:
For helping me see. Mary, Mr. Ross, Mr. Mason, Bernard? Would you excuse Mr. Evans and me? I have to pack.

Evans:
We're not going anywhere Mary.

Mary Evans:
Maybe we're not. But I am James.

Evans:
You? Where do you think you're going?

Mary Evans:
London. To see the secretaries.

Evans:
You're place is here, Mary. With me.

Mary Evans:
That's what I can see now that my telescope is gone. You're place may be here, James. Not mine.

Evans:
You've always stood with me, Mary. Stand with me now! It's lies they're telling! All lies!

Mary Evans:
Have I? Have I always stood with you? I remember times I've stood behind you when you've been misunderstood by your inferiors. I remember times I've stood in front of you, to shield you from the consequences of your impulses. And I've lain alone and pretended to sleep when you got up to go to the girls. But have I stood with you? I don't remember.

Evans:
You said you believed me.

Mary Evans:
And what choice did I have, James? What else could I do? Say that I lay there and let you attack the girls? And then what? It's bad enough what's been said about me here without admitting to that. But I can't lie for you anymore.

Evans:
I'm sorry Mary, I really am.

Mary Evans:
Are you, James? What is it you're sorry for? By God I pity you, James.

Evans:
Don't tell Clara. Please.

Mary Evans:
It's not to Clara I'm going.

Evans:
Where, then?

Mary Evans:
Away.

Evans:
What'll you do?

Mary Evans:
I'll raise money for your defence, I suppose, if Mr. Ross commits you to trial. But I can't stay here. Not now. Not with you.

Mary Ross:
I never thought I'd say this about you, Mary. (*She pronounces the name hesitantly.*) You may not've stood by him before, but you're standing by him now. I'll give you credit. That's more than most would do.

Ross:
I'll sweeten the offer, Mr. Evans. You can take these with you.
(*Ross pulls out the trial documents and hands them to Evans.*) They never left the territory. Your secretaries know nothing about the trial. They never need to.

(*Evans reaches tentatively for the documents. Ross pulls them away at the last minute.*)

Ross:
On one condition.

Evans:
Name it.

Ross:
Mr. Mason went to considerable trouble to keep those documents from getting to London. He realized he'd been tricked into giving them up in the first place. He got them back to save your skin, Mr. Evans. So he stays in the territory, and you drop your misconduct charges against him.

Evans:
Done. (*He takes the documents from Ross and shreds them.*)

Mason:
I just have one question, Mr. Evans. Why did you do it? With the girls? I can't figure out why.

Evans:
Because, Mr. Mason. There was nothing to stop me.

Mason:
But the trial? Why didn't you just say you were innocent and be done with it?

Evans:
To prove there was nothing to stop me. Especially the likes of you, Mr. Mason. The canoes leave when, Mr. Ross?

Ross:
The express boats leave for Montreal the day after tomorrow.

Evans:
Very good. One thing before I go, Mason.

Mason:
Sir?

Evans:
I want you to reinstate Maggie and Eliza in the church. They were good girls. They only did what they were told. It might've been better for us all if they hadn't.

(*Evans and Mary Evans leave centre stage. The others remain in silence as if mesmerized by what they have just seen and heard.*)
Ross:
The bugger'd better be in that canoe.

Bernard:
I'll see to it, Mr. Ross. Besides. (*He pulls out another copy of the trial document and hands it to Ross.*)

Ross:
What's this, then?

Bernard:
Another copy of the trial transcripts.

Ross:
How many copies of those blasted transcripts are there?

Bernard:
As many as we need, Mr. Ross.

Ross:
Give them to me.(*Ross takes the rest of the documents and shreds them*)
That's the end of that.

Bernard:
Maybe not, sir.

Ross:
Bernard?

Bernard:
I took the liberty of sending a copy to his secretaries in London.

Lights down on centre stage. Lights up on Old Bernard stage left, and Old Evans, stage right.

Evans:
You're not finished, Bernard. My diary, remember. Tell the story of your proudest moment, you thief. *(The lights go down on Old Evans as Old Bernard begins.)*

Bernard:
Well there are some loose ends yet, aren't there. It was Eliza and Maggie who told me about the shooting of Tom Hassal. Did they tell the truth? I have no idea. But there were stories about Mr. Evans and Betsy Hassal after Tom got shot. Especially after Mr. Evans managed to get Betsy settled in the fort, at Company expense, of course. No one else got treatment like that, I can tell you. And people talked. I would like to say that I was behind the whole plot to get Mr. Evans out of the territories. That I had the courage to stand up to him. But that wouldn't be telling the truth. It was Mrs. Ross herself. She sent the lad down from the fort to get the trial documents from Mr. Mason. She knew that if they fell into Evans' hands, they'd never been seen again. So she wanted to get them out of Norway House as quickly as she could. It was Mary Ross who sent the documents to me for safekeeping. And it was Mrs. Ross who let the cat out of the bag about Mr. Evans' escapades with the girls. It all started with the council meeting in Red River, after Mr. Evans had got Mr. Ross' crew to mutiny. We were late for the meeting, and Governor Simpson was not pleased.

Lights down on Old Bernard. Lights up on centre stage, young Bernard and Mary Ross. Bernard is at a table packing books into a knapsack when Mary Ross enters. In the background we hear a great commotion. Factors are climbing on and off the mess tables, breaking the crockery, drinking, vomiting, shouting phrases like "hard a starboard", and generally carrying on.

Mary Ross:
What happened in council today?

Bernard:
You know I can't tell you, Mrs. Ross. That's confidential business.

Mary Ross:
The other gentlemen are up to their arses in liquor tonight. They're recreating Fraser's expedition to the Pacific. That's Mr. Ross' favourite booze up. But is he out there sailing on the mess tables with the others? He is not. He is locked in his room with his own bottle. Now what happened today?

Bernard:
I'm sorry. I can't tell.

Mary Ross:
Bernard, who do fear most in this world?

Bernard:
Governor Simpson.

Mary Ross:
Who do you fear most in this room?

Bernard:
I've been promoted, Mrs. Ross. I'm out of your husband's jurisdiction now. I'm sorry.

Mrs. Ross:
You may be out of **his** jurisdiction. But you're not out of **mine**, snot nose. I'm warning you, Bernard. I've got unofficial ways to make you wish you'd never been born. Now out with it.

Bernard:
Well, you've got me there, haven't you?

Mary Ross:
Quit stalling.

Bernard:
Very well. Mr. Ross suggested to the governor that Mr. Evans should be recalled to London. For the good of the trade.

Mrs. Ross:
And?

Bernard:
Governor Simpson agreed that changes were needed at Norway House. If Mr. Ross couldn't contain Mr. Evans, he'd find someone who could.

Mary Ross:
I knew it!

Bernard:
(*Trying to sound hopeful*) I don't think it's as bad as it sounds. I'm sure that Mr. Simpson will see the light and send Mr. Evans packing.

Mary Ross:
How would you know how it sounds? You're just starting in the trade. Not finishing. You know what's wrong with this world? There's no justice. Mr. Ross wanted Simpson to bring in the missionaries. Because Mr. Ross wanted the Indians to benefit. And look where his compassion got him.

Bernard:
I'm sure that Mr. Evans will go, and things will get back to normal.

Mary Ross:
I can see it now. Mr. Evans goes back to London and gets to be a hero for standing up to the Company. And meanwhile, Mr. Ross goes back to skinning furs? Forget it. I don't just want Evans gone. I want him disgraced. I want him ruined. Tell me something. When you look at Mr. Ross, what do you see?

Bernard:
Ummm.

Mary Ross:
I'll tell you what you see. You see a pompous old drunk who couldn't make a hard decision if his life depended on it, don't you? You see a man whose got his nose so far into his accounting books that he wouldn't know if the fort was burning down around him, don't you?

Bernard:
I wouldn't put it quite that way.

Mary Ross:
Well let me tell you what I see. I see a man who thinks everybody is as honourable as he is. And he gets himself stepped on when they aren't. I see a man who's given himself heart and soul to this company. And what has he asked in return? That his inferiors serve with the same dedication. He's got his faults. God, don't I know that after all these years. You may think he's finished, Bernard. Maybe he is. But he's not going down without a fight. And if he can't put them up *(Mary raises her fists)* you can bet I will. I'd take on the devil himself for that man.

Bernard:
That's very laudable, Mrs. Ross.

Mary Ross:
Glad you think so, Bernard. 'Cause you're coming with me. Like it or not. Now tell me. Who were the girls?

Bernard:
What girls?

Mary Ross:
Don't play the innocent with me. Evans had girls living in his house. Who were they?

Bernard:
I don't know. I never saw any girls.

Mary Ross:
Well that was stupid of you, you little brat.

Bernard:
What, Mrs. Ross?

Mary Ross:
You just admitted you were there! Mr. Ross told you never to go to Evans' house. That's insubordination. (*Mary Ross grabs Bernard and marches him to where a window should be.*)

Bernard:
What're you doing?

Mary Ross:
Take a look. Can you see Dublin from here? I can. Now give me their names.

Bernard:
(*Struggling free*) I can't!

Mary Ross:
You know what I can't figure out? I can't figure out who you're protecting. It sure isn't Mr. Ross. Mr. Evans? What's he ever done for you but drool over those awful rhymes of yours. So who is it Bernard?

Bernard:
I've said enough already.

Mary Ross:
I'll have you squealing like a piglet before we're through. (*Mary pauses and collects herself.*) We're having a wedding at the post. Did you hear? No? Well, I'm surprised. I thought you heard everything. Clara's marrying Mr. McLean.

Bernard:
What?

Mary Ross:
Mr. Evans found out that Clara was pleasuring one of the clerks in the post. He just about swallowed the keys on wifey's piano when he found out. "No daughter of mine makes time with swill," says he. So off he goes to find her a gentleman. Looks like McLean is the lucky man. That's why Evans came to the council meeting. He knew McLean would be here. But I guess Finlayson wasn't the only clerk she was pleasuring, eh boy? *(a pause)* So if it's Clara you want to protect, forget it. She's already taken. By a gentleman, Bernard.

Bernard:
It's a lie. Clara would have told me.

Mary Ross:
She might've told you. If she knew. But why would Mr. Evans tell her? He doesn't care about how she feels. Tell, me, Bernard. Were you going to ask Evans for his daughter's hand?

Bernard:
After my promotion came through.

Mary Ross:
Well that's something isn't it? You've saved yourself the embarrassment of having his highness laugh in your face. You still want to save him? After what he's done to you? Give him up, Bernard. Give me the names of the girls.

Bernard:
I thought he liked me.

Mary Ross:
He doesn't like anybody, boy. He just finds them useful. Or not.

Bernard:
(He pauses before speaking.) Eliza Spence. Maggy Sinclair.

Mary Ross:
That's a good start, Bernard. Now tell me. Why did they leave his house?

Bernard:
Mrs. Evans turned them out.

Mary Ross:
Why?

Bernard:
I don't know. I guess she didn't need that much help.

Mary Ross:
You don't know? Well let's put our noggins together, shall we? Why might a clergyman's wife object to having two young Indian girls living in a house with one bedroom? Whaddaya think Bernard? What did he do to them?

Bernard:
Nothing. They just left.

Mary Ross:
Bernard?

Bernard:
I promised them I'd never tell. It's their secret. They don't want to get Mr. Evans in trouble. And I don't want to be in trouble with Mr. Evans.

Mary Ross:
Well he's in trouble now, isn't he? And you're not out of it yet. I'm going to start counting, Bernard. And if you're not singing like a canary by the time I get to five you're going back. One. Two. Three. Four. *(A pause)* Fi.....

Bernard:
He used to play games with the girls.

Mary Ross:
Very good, lad.

Bernard:
Harmless games. Like blind man's bluff. We all used to play. But one night he said there was a new game he wanted to teach the girls. He told me to go home. And he told the girls to finish their tea and go over to the church to get some candlesnuffers. He needed them for the game. Then he left the house. The girls finished their tea, and then they went to the church like they had been told. I went with them and pretended to go on. But I ducked into the bushes to see what would happen. The girls opened the door to the church, but they didn't go in. I could hear them. They said there was someone in there and they were afraid.

Mary Ross:
What happened then?

Bernard:
Charles came by. He's an Indian boy who sometimes stayed with Mr. Evans. He wanted to know what the girls were doing. They told him they were playing a game with Mr. Evans. Charles asked them why they were playing with an old goat like Mr. Evans when they could play with him. He began kissing them. First Eliza, then Maggie. Then Mr. Evans came out of the church. He saw them and he was really mad. He sent all three of them back to his house. And he gave Charles a whipping.

Mary Ross:
Then what?

Bernard:
That's all I know.

Mary Ross:
Don't make me start counting again.

Bernard:
That night, Mr. Evans came to the girls in their bed. He told them they hadn't finished the game.

Mary Ross:
Well done, Bernard.

Bernard:
You're not going to tell anyone. *(Hopefully)* Are you?

Mary Ross:
Of course not, Bernard. I'm just going to keep all this to myself and let that lecher of a parson walk all over my husband. Of course I'm going to tell. As soon as I see Mr. Mason. And I'll suggest to him that Mr. Evans needs to be tried for immorality. I've got a thing or two on Mr. Mason as well. He'll do what I tell him if he knows what's good for him.

Bernard:
What about Mr. Mason?

Mary Ross:
He had his eye on Clara too. And more than his eye from what I hear. Dammit, if I had the chance I'd try them both myself.

Bernard:
O God. I wish I'd never got mixed up with Mr. Evans.

Mary Ross:
Well it's your own damn fault, isn't it? Mr. Ross told you not to go there. But you thought you knew better, didn't you? You never considered that Mr. Ross had your own good in mind when he told you to steer clear. He saw Evans trying to get his hooks into you.

Bernard:
I want something from you. A promise.

Mary Ross:
You're not exactly in the best position to be making demands, are you boy?

Bernard:
Do nothing until Clara's married and gone.

Mary Ross:
Maybe. But you do something for me.

Bernard:
Name it.

Mary Ross:
There are going to be some stories coming out about Mr. Evans and the girls. Nasty stories I'm afraid. But nobody's going to trace them back to me. Are they Bernard? Because if that ever happened, it would disgrace Mr. Ross. That won't happen. Will it Bernard?

Bernard:
My lips are sealed.

Mary Ross:
Good. Well that's business done. Finish your packing. And I'll keep in touch.

Bernard:
I wish you wouldn't, Mrs. Ross.

Mary Ross:
You're still afraid of me, aren't you Bernard.

Bernard:
With every fibre of my being.

Mary Ross:
Well that gladdens my heart. But here's something to remember. There's only one thing stronger than fear.

Bernard:
And that would be?

Mary Ross:
Love, you little brat. Don't ever get yourself in the way of my love for Donald Ross again.

Lights down on Mary Ross and Bernard. Lights up on Old Bernard.

Bernard:
And after Mrs. Ross left me that night, I went to Mr. Evans' room. That's when I stole his diary.

Lights up on Old Evans.

Evans:
I know when. I want to know why.

Bernard:
You stole Clara from me and you gave her away to the highest bidder. I wanted to steal the thing that was most precious to you. And what could be more precious to a man of words than the words of his own heart? That's why, Mr. Evans.

Evans:
She was yours for the having, Bernard.

Bernard:
Until McLean came along?

Evans:
How different your life might have been, Bernard. If you'd only have come with me.

Bernard:
What. You're telling me you'd have let Clara marry me?

Evans:
I went to my grave wondering what if, Bernard. You'll do no better than me, I'm afraid. Well, you've confessed. Do you repent?

Bernard:
Do you, Mr. Evans?

Evans:
Let me tell you a story, Bernard. Another time Nanabush stumbled on another flock of ducks. Once again he was hungry, and he had no way of catching them. This time he went to his grandmother, and she sewed him a fine big bag. Nanabush took the bag back to the lake where the ducks were swimming. He climbed the hill above the lake, got into the bag, and began rolling down the hill. He did this several times until he had the attention of the ducks. "That looks like good sport," they said. "Can we get in your bag and roll down the hill?" "It is far too dangerous a game for ducks to play," replied Nanabush, as he climbed the hill. But the ducks persisted and finally Nanabush relented. He helped all the ducks into the bag, and pulled the drawstring tight. But instead of rolling the bag down the hill, he threw it over his shoulder, and carried the ducks home to grandmother.

Grandmother was mighty pleased with the fine feast of ducks that Nanabush had brought her. But when she opened the bag to pull out the ducks, the ducks seized their opportunity. They flew out of the bag which such force that they carried grandmother, the bag, and indeed her whole camp into the sky. "You'll find," said the ducks as they flew away, "that it was easier to get us into the bag than it was to keep us there."

Bernard:
We were like the ducks in the bag weren't we, Mr. Evans? We saw in you what we wanted to see, not what was really there. And you held the bag open as we walked right into it.

Evans:
Tell me Bernard. What were you hoping to see in the bag I held out to you?

Bernard:
Mr. Ross wanted to see order and dignity. Mr. Mason wanted to see a light heart. And I wanted to see a father. But there was nothing in your bag. Except us.

Evans:
All the things you hoped to find in the bag, you had to find yourselves. Well, it's to your credit that you all got out again, isn't it? Even if you did blow my camp sky high.

Bernard:
You're not getting off that easily, Mr. Evans. Are you not sorry for what you did?

Evans:
Well, everything worked out in the end. Didn't it?

Bernard:
Don't you know?

Evans:
Perhaps you'd better tell me.

Bernard:
You became a hero in London. Just like Mrs. Ross said you would. People came from miles to hear you preach.

Evans:
I don't mind spiting her.

Bernard:
You died after preaching a particularly rousing sermon. In Hull, I think it was.

Evans:
My heart?

Bernard:
So they say.

Evans:
I'm not surprised. It was broken by having to leave the Indians. What about Clara?

Bernard:
She never knew.

Evans:
All the better. And my dear wife?

Bernard:
Penniless I'm afraid. Your secretaries refused her a pension upon your death.

Evans:
They never could be trusted. Poor Mary.

Evans:
What about the others?

Bernard:
Mason stayed in the territories. He joined the Church of England. And he learned to play the piano.

Evans:
He couldn't be trusted either.

Bernard:
Maggie and Eliza became class leaders in your Society.

Evans:
I knew they had it within them.

Bernard:
Mr. Ross gave up the drink.

Evans:
Good for him.

Bernard:
And you Mr. Evans. Are you not sorry for what you did?

Evans:
For what I gave, no. For what I took, yes.

Bernard:
Well you said it yourself. There's no salvation without repentance. I'm not a divine, Mr. Evans. But it sounds like you're halfway home. Now if you'll excuse me, there's work to be done. Month end, don't you know?

Lights down.

(Bernard stares into space as he contemplates all that has just transpired. He finally opens his ledgers, sharpens his quill with deliberation, and begins to write. Lights down.)

CHAPTER 1

CLOVEN HOOF: THE METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN WRITNG HISTORICAL DRAMA

Writing the play was the easier part of the dissertation process. The characters came and went, the plot unfolded more or less as it should, people have read it, heard it read, and on the whole, found it a worthwhile enterprise. The harder part remained; to place ***Cloven Hoof*** within a larger critical and personal context. Margaret Atwood suggests that "novelists begin with hints and images, and scenes and voices rather than with theories and schemes."[1] My own experience would tend to confirm that sentiment. There are however, "theories and schemes" that will render ***Cloven Hoof*** intelligible as a "Work of Art" within the Doctor of Ministry program. Before getting there however, there is the whole question of genre itself to contend with. Why did I bother to write a play as opposed to a more traditional historical research piece?

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[1] Margaret Atwood, In Search of Alias Grace (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1997), p.31.

A Word on Genre

A person who I had asked to read the script because of his knowledge of the fur trade gave me the following comment which started me thinking about my own motivations for writing in the genre of historical fiction.

> I have looked at this as "how would I have handled the story?" I think I would have made it a prose dissertation, but it would not have had the impact your drama had. ...The drama makes the characters "not a bunch of dead guys" as the kids would say, and they take the audience through the emotions that were played out in real life by these characters.[2]

It is really as simple and as complex as that. I wrote a play because I wanted to engage people at an emotional, as well as an intellectual level. I spent the better part of a year reading nothing but the reams of correspondence and reports that the characters portrayed in ***Cloven Hoof*** left behind them. The words that they left, the struggles they endured, the unbelievable sense of heartbreak contained within their letters and reports engaged me and moved me. There was James Evans himself. I was drawn to him, as I suppose many were, by his unswerving commitment to the Indians that he served, and his sense that their spiritual and material well--being could not be separated. I admired the way that he forced the issue of Sabbath travel with the HBC Officials, and I loved his sense of humour. But, on the other hand, there was this side of his character that was captured by Donald Ross:

> The conduct of Mr. Evans since the trial appears to me to be fully as discreditable, if not more so than any part of his previous course--his attempts by promises, by threats of temporal and eternal punishments, to make these unfortunate women retract their evidence and perjure

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[2] Evaluations of ***Cloven Hoof,*** December 12, 1998.

> themselves have been carried on by himself and his emissaries without intermission to this day, and will, I am satisfied, never cease till the poor creatures become wearied, frightened and disheartened, and say and do whatever he desires. His last two letters to me, together with other circumstances which need not be detailed at present, clearly proves to me that Mr. Evans is determined that he shall not fall alone--but if in his power, drag his colleague Mr. Mason into the mire also--that gentlemen is now in the Settlement where he has gone for the benefit of medical advice, and to escape the tormenting tyranny of the oppression of his spiritual superior.[3]

Evans' single--minded attempt to destroy William Mason when Mason rebuked him was frightening to read even one hundred and fifty years after the fact.

William Mason tried so hard to do the right thing because the right thing was the only thing to do. My sense of compassion for him deepened as the story went on. His anguish at having to try Evans in the first place and rebuke him in the second, yet doing it anyway out of his sense of duty, made him a strong character in my eyes. I felt outraged at the way he was treated by Evans' supporters in the years following Evans' death, and yet could not help but admire the way he never attempted to damage Evans' reputation.

Donald Ross showed a withering wit in describing Evans' behaviour to Governor Simpson. But later, when it became apparent that Evans was getting the best of Ross, I could hear a sense of desperation in Ross' written words as the empire that he had worked so hard to build seemed to be slipping away.

Mary Evans was devoted to her husband. In a letter to James when he was travelling in 1838, she poured out her her love and admiration for her husband the missionary.

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[3] HBCA D.5/14 #18, Ross to Simpson, May 21, 1845.

> When I think what a great distance we are from each other it makes me tremble and almost distruste (sic) our blessed and hevenly (sic) Father and think at times that we shall never meet each other on the shores of time but my dear James pray for me that I may have grace and fath (sic) to bear this tral (sic) for I sure you (sic) this is the seversist (sic) one I ever had pas throwe (sic) to be seprated (sic) from him that I love better than all earthly good. But when I think wear (sic) he as gon (sic) to call the poar parishing Pagans Indians (sic) to re patanc (sic) to cary (sic) the glad news of the blessed Gospel to them I am led wonder ans (sic) say the Lord's will be don....[4]

That Mary knew that Evans was abusing the girls in their household, and was forced to stand by him anyway because she had no other options was a sad and sobering realization for me, as I am sure it was for her.

Then there were the characters that left no written records themselves, but who were only written about. It is still hard to know precisely what Evans did with/to Maggie and Eliza before the trial. But his treatment of them afterwards was despicable. Their reactions however, go unrecorded, except for the observations of others like Donald Ross. Finally, there was Mary Ross. James Hargrave, the Factor of York Factory described her as "coarse in mind and natural taste, uneducated and unpolished."[5] How might that coarseness affected her response to the disintegration of her husband in the face of Evans' machinations, knowing full well that her well--being was intertwined with his?

My desire to write a drama was influenced by social as well as personal considerations. My reading of an interview of David Milch, the executive director

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[4] University of Western Ontario Archives, #72A, Mary Evans to James Evans, December 6, 1838.

[5] PAC Hargrave Correspondence, Vol. 22, Hargrave to D. Mactavish, May 18, 1838, quoted in Sylvia Van Kirk, Many Tender Ties: Women and Fur Trade Society (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer Publishing Co., 1980) p. 182.

of the 1980's police drama ***Hill Street Blues*** and the more recent series, ***NYPD Blue*** helped me articulate these motivations. Milch was asked, "What did you set out to do specifically to make ***NYPD Blue*** different from ***Hill Street Blues?***" He responds:

> Belker the Biter [one of the Hill Street Blues characters] was a kind of Jewish vaudeville version of a cop who would do whatever he needed to get a confession. The audience sort of intuitively got it. That's why they liked Belker. But in a sort of comic, funny face so that the audience didn't have to confront, in themselves, their willingness to make a devil's bargain. Which was, "Yeah, I don't care if the cop beats a guy nearly to death, as long as it protects me." Belker the Biter did what he had to do, but the audience said, "Oh, that's funny." I felt that was a little contemptible. .... I wanted to explore, as subject matter, that devil's bargain in the audience. A willingness to like a racist. A willingness to like a man who would deprive a suspect of his rights. A man who would say, "Give him his Miranda? If I give him his Miranda, he's going to get free. Fuck that! I'm not going to give him his Miranda". .... And the fact that the audience would respond to that now makes the audience culpable emotionally. And is that a good thing? To the extent that democracy is an ideal you try to live toward, what concessions are you going to make in the day to day conduct of your life or the stories that you appreciate? It's only half a story to realize, well, democracy isn't real. The tragedy then comes in how much you are willing to give up for the consolation of being protected?[6]

David Milch describes a policeman who is willing to take the law into his own hands to protect the innocence of the culture he serves. After reading the multitudinous documents related to the James Evans story, I have been left with the feeling that unintentionally or not, church historians have behaved in the same

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[6] Laura Schiff, "Maestro in Blue: Interview With David Milch" Creative Screenwriting (Winter, 1997), p.8.

way as that fictional policeman. They have protected the memory of James Evans, and preserved the innocence of the rest of us. But by so doing, they have allowed the name and reputation of William Mason to continue to be besmirched. Furthermore, by continuing to assert that it was James Evans, not William Mason who invented the Cree Syllabics, these historians have in effect silenced the voice of the Cree people. The Cree have claimed all along that they had the syllabics long before Evans arrived on the scene, and that it was the Cree who gave the syllabics to Evans to codify. By uncritically accepting the story that historians have told, we have all unwittingly made a "deal with the devil."

In the last few years The United Church of Canada has committed itself to involvement in the healing process of native people who were abused within the residential school system. Part of the healing process that the church might want to undertake on its own behalf would be to come to terms with the way that the "official story" of James Evans has been a distortion of the truth. ***Cloven Hoof*** is my contribution to that process.

The challenge that emerged for me was to somehow put all that emotion to work. As one of my practicum supervisors illustrated, that was not an easy task. I had originally conceived ***Cloven Hoof*** as a screenplay, and I spent another year trying to write a treatment, the step that precedes the actual script. My supervisor (very gently, I thought) noted that,

> I always found Geoff's treatment of the subject matter objective and removed and somehow lacking in visceral relevance. It never rang completely true from a human perspective. Maybe it was the fact that his resource materials were largely suspect and possibly slanted to serve the agendas of their writers. Perhaps dramatizing his own fight with the

> material and tapping into his own heart would help make the drama more immediate and more believable.[7]

In my trip back to the drawing board to begin yet another version, the letter from Donald Ross to George Simpson describing Mason's kiss of Clara Evans caught my attention:

> he [Evans] wanted to get rid of Mason, with whom he never agreed very well, and a few days previously they had both had a furious quarrel, which commenced about a calf or some wretched nonsense of that sort, and in the course of which he accused Mason of some rather unclerical and unmethodistical proceedings, among other things, that of kissing his daughter-- unluckily my young aide de camp Bernard was present, and I have no doubt will produce a heroic poem on the subject by and by.[8]

It was the presence of Bernard rather than the argument between the two missionaries that seized me. Why was Bernard present? Was he spying? If so, who was he spying for? Himself or Donald Ross? Could it have been that Evans and Mason knew he was there and argued in front of him anyway? If so, what did that say about Bernard's relationship to the missionaries? Was he invisible to them? Did they consider him to be of such little consequence that it did not matter what they did or said in front of him? What about Bernard? How would he have felt being party to the exchange? Would the argument have changed his perceptions of the missionaries, or would it have confirmed what he already believed? There are no answers to any of those questions in Donald Ross' letter. Bernard was there, and that was that. All Ross reveals about Bernard is that he is a poet with a sense of irony (a heroic poem about two missionaries arguing over a calf?)

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[7] Geoff LeBoutillier's Supervisor's Report, June 5, 1997. The entire report is contained within Chapter 3.

[8] HBCA, D.5/12 No. 12d., August 15, 1844, Ross to Simpson.

That one line is the only reference to Bernard in all the pages of correspondence between Ross and Simpson. The lack of references to him made Bernard all the more intriguing as a character. I began to wonder what it would it be like to be a fifteen--year old boy caught up in the power struggle between the HBC and the missionaries. How might Bernard relate to the other characters; Mason, Mary Ross and Mary Evans? What stake might Bernard have in the outcome of the struggle between Ross and Evans, and how might Bernard influence the outcome? There was "my fight with the material," which my supervisor suggested I needed to find. The play unfolded from there. And since Bernard is a part of every member of the audience, the question that Bernard asks them as well is "What would you have done"?

That question led me to reflect on the power relationships within the fort, and how power was distributed within those relationships. Not suprisingly, the men had all the official power, this being 1839. The women and children had none. The official powerlessness of Bernard and Mary Ross is shown in the fact that they left no written records behind. They were only written about. How then, would they have exerted influence? The only avenues open to them, I surmised, were the paths of subversion. And so, I wondered, what might have happened had Mary Ross and Bernard formed an alliance to rid the HBC of James Evans? The relationship between the two would still reflect the hierarchy of the fort culture. Bernard would and could never be Mary Ross' equal, as children were subordinate to adults. She would still exercise power over Bernard, and if she had any suspicions that Bernard had somehow contributed to Evans' ascendancy, she might exercise that power in a harsh manner. But even in that situation of social oppression, I hoped to show that those on the bottom can still be agents of their

own deliverance, even though the means by which they achieve their desires are not deemed acceptable by those in positions of official authority.

I was not entirely successful in this undertaking. Many of those who have read the play have felt Bernard was an authentic character. Many have also felt that Mary Ross was not, and that she appears more as a caricature than a character in her own right. That was far from my intention. I wished to portray her as a woman of power, given the constraints that the HBC culture of 1839 would have placed upon her. However the play is to be judged on outcomes rather than intentions, and so the character of May Ross needs substantial rewriting so that she becomes the full character that I intend her to be.

Methodological Considerations

I chose the genre of narrative to do this work for another reason that has to do with the peculiar nature of the James Evans story itself as it has been told and retold over the years. There is a thirty--six year gap between Evans' death and the appearance of the first Evans' biography. That gap is significant, and it is not accidental. Strong forces exerted by the WMS worked to keep anything about Evans from being written at all. That thirty--six year silence worked to shape the structure of the first biography of Evans, John Mclean's James Evans: Inventor of the Syllabic System of the Cree Language .[9] When McLean's story finally did emerge, it had much in common with what James Farris would identify as a

[9] John McLean, James Evans: Inventor of the Syllabic System of the Cree Language (Toronto: William Briggs, 1890).

"repressed narrative."[10] I will say more about that later. But I would suggest that McLeans' story was elevated from a "repressed narrative" to the status of myth, as Northrop Frye[11] and John Dominic Crossan[12] would use the term. Within this myth James Evans became an archetypal representation of the Christ. Lastly McLean's biography of Evans contains a strong salvific element in that salvation occurs through vindication. This pattern would be repeated in following biographies, Egerton Ryerson Young's, The Apostle of the North [13] and Nan Shipley's The James Evans Story .[14] In each biographical rendering Evans was portrayed as a brilliant and dedicated missionary who if he sought glory, sought it only on behalf of his God. The tragic part of the James Evans story, according to his biographers, had nothing to do with Evans' own conduct. Rather, he was brought down by those who feared him, or were jealous of him. In successive biographies, beginning with McLean, the story of this remarkable missionary was turned into a classic struggle of good versus evil--the good and noble missionary struggling against the forces of darkness, being temporarily overcome by them, but nevertheless triumphing over them in the end.

The more obvious this pattern became to me, the more I wanted to incorporate it into my own work to keep in continuity with those who had gone before me. However if they had written a "type" of story, I decided that my Evans

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[10] James Farris, "Annotations on Christian Narrative", in Theology and the End of Modernity ed. Mark Husbands (Toronto: Uof T Press, 1996), p. 60.
[11] Northrop Frye, Words With Power (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1990).
[12] John Dominic Crossan, The Dark Interval: Towards A Theology of Story (Sonoma, California: Polebridge Press, 1988).
[13] Egerton Ryerson Young, The Apostle of the North: Rev. James Evans (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900).
[14] Nan Shipley, The James Evans Story (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1966).

story would be an antitype. I take this form of classification from Northrop Frye who understands that biblical narrative contains stories that are "types". For every "type" there is an "antitype" or opposite.[15] Evans' biographers believed they were basing their stories on foundational truth; there was a basic truth in their story upon which all other truths were based. The antitype of foundational truth is holism, which suggests that truth, instead of being based on foundations, is revealed in webs of relationship.[16] I will say more about the difference between foundational and holist truth later in the chapter. It is enough to say here that ***Cloven Hoof*** presents a holist, rather than foundational approach, to truth. John McLean wrote a "repressed narrative" about James Evans that became a myth. The antitype of myth is parable.[17] I consider ***Cloven Hoof*** to be a parable in relation to the Evans myth that McLean began.

John McLean's Evans is based on the archetype of the suffering Christ. In writing ***Cloven Hoof*** I placed Evans within two archetypes: Nanabush, the mythic trickster figure of the Chippewan Indians, and the Greek God Pan. I will say more about these archetypes later in this chapter.

The chart on the following page compares the structural elements of the Evans biographies.

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[15] Northrop Frye, The Great Code (Canada: Academic Press 1982).
[16] Hauerwas, Murphey, and Nation (eds) Theology Without Foundations: Religious Practice and the Future of Theological Truth, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994) p.9.
[17] John Dominic Crossan, The Dark Interval, p.37.

Structure	*Type*	*Antitype*
Truth Claim	**Foundational**	**Holist**
Story Form	**Myth**	**Parable**
Archetype	**Christ**	**Nanabush**
		Pan

This methodological analysis has helped me come to terms with what Evans' biographers were writing and why they were writing it. By extension, it has also helped me understand what I have been writing, and why I have been writing it. Evans' biographers told their story in a way that led their readers to empathize with the sufferings that Evans underwent. I wanted to tell the story in a way that would lead the audience to empathize with all the characters because of the suffering that Evans caused them.

Evans' biographers were writing what we would now consider fiction, but they called it history. They used a narrative style to tell the story about James Evans. By so doing they also sought to engage their readers at an emotional level, to impart an appreciation for the suffering that James Evans went through on behalf of his missionary calling. By and large, they were successful. A casual reader, knowing nothing of the background of the James Evans story would no doubt readily believe that those who feared his righteousness in fact sabotaged Evans.

Looking back, it is easy to be critical of Evans' first biographers, McLean and Young, for the way they fashioned their stories, and for the way they entwined fact and fiction in their biographies. One critic has suggested that McLean and

Young were writing hagiography, rather than history.[18] In a way they were, in that they told their stories according to the narrative conventions, which governed the genre of their time. As William Close notes:

> Indeed, 19th century lives of Jesus followed a common story line: first the springtime of success, then the start of trouble, followed by tragic denouement. This is the classic tragic motif, repeated over and over by great figures of history. At the outset in the enthusiastic flush of success it is next to impossible to pay attention to the dark side of power which, once unleashed, guarantees the shattering of the most innocent of dreams. [19]

It is, however, a measure of the determination of the Canadian Methodists, that the story came into being at all. Before turning to the story a little more explanation of the terms I have used above is in order.

Foundational and Holist Truth Claims

Foundationalism is a theory of how claims to "know" can be justified. We justify one belief by basing it on another. If these other beliefs are called into question, then they too must be justified. Foundationalism insists that this chain of justifications must stop somewhere. It must not be circular nor can it constitute an infinite regress. Regresses must end in a foundation of beliefs that cannot themselves be called into question.[20] The metaphor that supports foundationalism

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[18] Frits Pannekoek, "The Rev. James Evans and the Social Antagonisms of the Fur Trade. Society 1840-46." Canadian Plains Studies 3, Canadian Plains Research Center, (1974) p.1.

[19] William J. Close "ISM Worship", St. Stephen's College, Edmonton AB, (Winter, 1996).

[20] Hauerwas, Murphey, and Nation (eds) Theology Without Foundations: Religious Practice and the Future of Theological Truth (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p.9.

is that of "knowledge as building." Upper storeys are built on lower storeys, but the whole thing falls without a solid foundation.[21]

Nancey Murphey notes that modern philosophy has been captivated by this architectural metaphor because of an historical human anxiety. After the chaos that followed the Thirty Years War in Europe, the humanists that were left alive to think about the human condition realized their most important task would be to find the philosophical basis for a system that might allow for universal agreement that would not be fractured by differences of religious belief. Science and religion became mutually exclusive paths to pure knowledge: the way of reason against the way of tradition. But if human reason was a faculty shared universally, then a new structure built on the deliverances of human reason needed to garner universal assent. From Descartes' time to our own, the ideal of human knowledge has focused on the general, the universal and the timeless, rather than the local, the timely and the practical.[22] Murphey notes however, the tradeoff implicit in foundationalism. "Whenever the foundations are suitably indubitable, they will turn out to be useless for justifying any interesting claims; when we do find beliefs that are useful for justifying the rest of the structure, they always turn out to be questionable."[23]

The corrective to foundationalism is holism, a philosophy most closely associated with Willard V.O Quine, who regarded knowledge as a web or a net rather than as a building with foundations. While for foundationalists, reasoning goes only in one direction (up), for holists there is no preferred direction, and the

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[21] Hauerwas, p.9.
[22] Hauerwas, p.11.
[23] Hauerwas, p.11.

kinds of connections among beliefs in the web are many; strict logical implication, arguments forward to further conclusions, arguments backwards to presuppositions. "In general," notes Murphey, "what holism means is that each belief is supported by its ties to its neighbouring beliefs, and ultimately to the whole; the criterion of truth is coherence."[24]

The difference between foundational and holist truth claims in theology finds a counterpoint in the difference between historical and narrative truth as understood by Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Narrative truth can be defined as the criterion we use to decide when a certain experience has been captured to our satisfaction; it depends on continuity and closure and the extent to which the fit of the piece takes on an aesthetic finality. Narrative truth is what we have in mind when we say that such--and-- such is a good story, that a given explanation carries conviction, that *one* solution to a mystery must be true."[25]

Historical truth, on the other hand:

> is time bound and is dedicated to the strict observance of correspondence rules; our aim is to come as close as possible to what really happened. Historical truth is not satisfied with coherence for its own sake; we must have some assurance that the pieces being fitted into the puzzle also belong to a certain time and place, and that this belonging can be corroborated in some systematic matter."[26]

The difference between historical truth and narrative truth reflects the difference in metaphor that organizes them both. The search for historical truth is an act of construction. The search for narrative truth on the other hand, is an act of reconstruction. Sigmund Freud believed that the power of psychoanalysis lay in

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[24] Hauerwas, p.13.
[25] Hauerwas, p. 31.
[26] Hauerwas, p. 32.

its capacity to construct the past of the analysand much the same way that the archeologist constructed the past of lost civilizations:

> But just as the archeologist builds up the walls of the building from the foundations that remain standing, determines the number and the position of the columns from depression in the floor and reconstructs the mural decorations and paintings from the remains found in the debris, so does the analyst proceed when he draws his inferences from the fragments of memories, from the associations, and from the behaviour of the subject of the analysis.[27]

Post--Freudians, however, have argued that psychoanalysis is more an act of reconstruction than construction. Viderman, for example, suggests that psychoanalysis "constructs the truth in the service of self coherence for the present and for the future, on the basis of mutual agreement between the patient and the analyst. In this model, the analyst functions more as a poet than an archeologist."[28]

There is a foundational truth upon which the story of Evans' innocence is based. But as Murphey suggests, it is a questionable one. After Evans was recalled to London and his sudden death there in November of 1846, the officials of both the HBC and the WMS wished to have nothing further to do with James Evans. In a letter written to William Mason after James Evans had been recalled to London, Donald Ross, Chief Factor of Norway House made the following observation:

> I would not deem it expedient to revert again in any shape to these disagreeable topics -- the recollection and discussion of which, should in my belief as soon as justice to the living will permit, be buried in the

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[27] Sigmund Freud, quoted in Donald Spence, Narrative Truth and Historical Truth: Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1982), p.160.

[28] Spence, p.164.

> oblivion of the silent tomb, with the talented but unhappy man that gave rise to them.[29]

In a similar fashion, the WMS would have been happy to lay the whole matter of Evans' conduct in the HBC territories to rest with his body. Evans, it seems, became a folk hero in the eyes of British Christians when he returned to London. They were thrilled by his preaching about life in the relentless wilds even though no one knew the real reason why he was in London and not still in the HBC territories.[30] When he died in November 1846, the secretaries of the WMS were still investigating the charges that had been laid against him in Norway House. It seems ironic that while this investigation was proceeding, Evans might have been the best ambassador the WMS had for its mission work. The WMS was content to leave that public image of Evans untouched.

Privately, however, the secretaries had much different feelings about the man. Faced with the evidence of the guilt of James Evans from the trial transcripts that Mason had sent from Norway House, even Dr. Alder, Evans' supervisor, had to admit that Evans had hurt the cause of religion by his conduct while he was with the HBC. Even so, Alder did what damage control he could before he made that admission.

In a letter to George Simpson concerning Evans' conduct, Alder discredited both the process by which Evans was tried and the witnesses who testified against Evans.

> How could we believe on the evidence of such a person that when she went on one occasion to light a fire in Mr. Evans' Bed Room, he left his bed, and in an undressed state acted with such indecency towards her that she cried out and that he repeated this conduct and went even further the following

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[29] BCA, AE.R7#.R736, Ross to Mason: April 20, 1847.

[30] John McLean, James Evans. The chapter "Home at Last" describes Evans' reception in London.

> morning, and all this we are required to believe was done while Mrs. Evans was in bed in the same room, and a quiet spectator of her husband's infidelity. ... It would be a difficult thing to persuade persons in this country that an English woman, and a woman of spirit too as is Mrs. Evans would have remained quietly in her bed during these proceedings.[31]

But ultimately even Alder had to concede that Evans' conduct with native girls in the mission was "unseemly and improper in itself, ... and was almost sure to lead to evil surmisings on the part of others...to injure his reputation and to lessen that esteem in which it is so desirable that a Christian Minister should be held by the people under his care."[32]

Perhaps the truest feelings of the WMS secretaries concerning Evans were revealed in the way they treated "that woman of spirit," Mary Evans, after her husband's death. Ephraim Evans, the younger brother of James, sought financial compensation on behalf of Evans' widow Mary, because changes to the Canadian Conference structure while James was seconded to the WMS meant that Mary could make no claim on the Canada Conference Superannuated Fund. Furthermore, Ephraim was of the opinion that the WMS owed James ninety pounds sterling in back wages. Imagine Ephraim's disappointment to find that the WMS considered Evans to be in debt to them, and that because Evans had not been seven years with the Missions, Evans' widow had no claim on the WMS pension fund.[33]

For the better part of twenty years little was said on either side of the Atlantic about James Evans. Sometime around 1850 John McLean, the son--in--law of James Evans (no relation to the John McLean that wrote Evans' biography),

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[31] HBCA, D.5/18 #50, Dr. Alder to George Simpson, December 1, 1846.
[32] Ibid.
[33] WMS, Box 14G, Ephraim Evans to The Rev. J. Bunting, December 23, 1847.

published what seems to have been an attack on the character of William Mason as a way of vindicating his late father--in--law. His attack on Mason was so aggressive that it caused the Bishop of Rupertsland, the Rev. David Anderson, to note "there is in what Mr. McLean writes so much of improbability and inconsistency that it carries upon the face of its own reputation."[34] Nevertheless, William Mason in the eyes of many Canadians, was the one responsible for Evans' downfall.

By 1865, however, the Canadian Methodists were beginning a campaign to rehabilitate James Evans and to "rescue his memory from oblivion."[35] The reason? The memory of James Evans had become a pawn in a turf war between the Canadian Methodists and the Church of England over the invention of the Cree Syllabery. In 1861 the Cree Bible upon which James Evans and William Mason had collaborated during their time together in Norway House was published in England, fifteen years after Evans' death. Credit for the work went to William Mason alone. Mason once again became the target of the Canadian Methodists. Not only had he betrayed Evans, he had betrayed Methodism itself.[36]

Mason was originally a member of the Church of England who had been ordained by the British Methodists for mission work in the HBC territories. But after Evans' departure from the HBC territories, the WMS ceded control of its missions to the Canadian Methodists. In 1854 Mason accepted an offer of ordination in the Church of England by the Bishop of Rupertsland[37] and returned to the Anglicanism of his roots. Hence the pressure for a biography that would set

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[34] SOAS-MMS, Box 105. 15G.26, December 28, 1850.
[35] UWO, #242 Richard Jones to J. Carroll, April 3, 1865.
[36] Gerald Hutchinson, "Introducing William Mason", unpublished research paper, (1993).
[37] Doc. E99 C 88 M, United Church Archives, Toronto, Ont.

the record straight, give Evans his due, and no doubt, from the perspective of the Canadian Methodists, put Mason in his place. The task of writing Evans' biography fell to the Rev. John Carroll, and he had no trouble gathering information on Evans from Canadian sources. One of the correspondents contacted by Carroll replied that, "It affords me much satisfaction to see that you are inclined to do what you can to rescue the good name of one of the most successful missionaries we have ever had among the Indians from the grasp of the slanderer and from being forgotten by the church of his choice."[38] Evans' brother Ephraim was equally forthcoming when Carroll approached him for information, by ensuring that Carroll knew exactly who had caused his brother the grief of his recall:

> As regards the difficulty to which you allude, that it has been hinted that he fell into disgrace &c, you have been misinformed in supposing that the HBCo were prominent, if at all connected with attempt to blast his reputation. At least, I have no evidence of that. He was antagonism [sic] with their policy on the Sabbath question, and other matters, but I have reason to believe that the attempt to injure his moral character was made by an assistant in the Mission who soon after left our work, and became a Puseyite ultra.[39]

The "Puseyite ultra" to which Ephraim referred was, of course, none other than William Mason. To call Mason a "Puseyite ultra" would have been the highest form of insult one Methodist could lay on another. The Puseyites were members of the Oxford Movement, an organization dedicated to restoring the power of High Church Anglicanism[40], and as such would have been the antithesis of the Methodism of James Evans.

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[38] Ibid.
[39] UWO, #243, Ephraim Evans to John Carroll, May 15, 1865.
[40] Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. "Pusey, Edward Bouverie."

In that same letter, Ephraim made some other interesting observations. He claimed that he had in his possession letters from the Committee in London declaring that they fully exonerated his brother on the charges that had been brought against him. Furthermore, James "had lived and died with their undiminished confidence," and that "his return to the District as their Superintendent was fully contemplated."[41]

Ephraim also cautioned Carroll not to mention the matter of Evans' recall "because the man who concocted the foul slander is capable of saying anything now that he (undeciperable) cannot live to contradict it."[42] It is clear from the correspondence between Dr. Alder and George Simpson that the WMS had none of the confidence in Evans that Ephraim suggested they did. But, on the other hand, there is no reason to doubt that Dr. Alder might have in fact written a to Ephraim Evans, praising his brother after his death. James Evans was dead, and there would have been no good reason for the WMS to have anyone believing that at the time of his death, Evans' was under suspicion. As for the source of information concerning the character of William Mason? No doubt it was James Evans, or his son--in--law, John McLean.

Carroll had a much more difficult time extracting information about the career of Evans from the WMS. Elijah Hoole, who received Carroll's request first consulted with William Mason who, was by now in York Factory before responding to Carroll. Mason was clear in his response to Hoole:

> You wish to know if my opinion upon the charges brought against the late Rev'd. James Evans remains unchanged. It does...Time has not cast any

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[41] UWO, #243, Ephraim Evans to John Carroll.
[42] Ibid.

> brighter lights upon that dark period, nor has any testimony been borne to my knowledge by any of the parties concerned attesting to his innocence of those crimes, which caused my late unfortunate colleague's sun to go down under a cloud.[43]

With Mason's opinion in hand, Hoole drafted his response to Carroll:

> We are now in a position to communicate to you our mature judgment upon the proposal to sanction the publication of a memoir of the late James Evans; and I regret to state that the conclusion to which we have come is that we cannot encourage the enterprise, but must advise you to relinquish it.[44]

Apparently Carroll did just that. Evans was to return to oblivion and languish there for another twelve years. But then the cycle repeated itself once again. This time the instigator of the campaign to rehabilitate the name of James Evans came from one Edward Barrass who, in a letter to James Evans' brother Ephraim, noted that:

> You would, I presume, see in the Guardian a week ago, an article respecting the fraudulent conduct of a clergyman in declaring that he originated the syllabic character for the Indians in the Northwest. I agree with the editor, that it is not to our credit as a church that no biography worthy the name has ever been published respecting your sainted brother who was the founder of that character. Now that you are retired from the active work, should you not turn your attention to this subject? I have thought that your retirement might be a providential indication to you, that you should attend to this work and thus redeem a noble name from falling into the shades of obscurity. [45]

Ephraim never did write his brother's story. But three years after Barrass recommended that he undertake the task, McLean completed the first Evans biography. There is no evidence that McLean even bothered to consult with the

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[43] WMS Archives, Box 109, 19G.9 Mason to Elijah Hoole, March 13, 1865.
[44] UWO, #244, Elijah Hoole to John Carroll, August 28th, 1865.
[45] UWO, #246, Edward Barrass to Ephraim Evans, October 27, 1877.

WMS when he wrote his biography. Neither does it appear that he consulted with William Mason, who by this time had left York Factory for England. His primary sources would have been the recollections of the family of James Evans: Ephraim, his brother; Mary, his wife; Clarissa, his daughter; and John McLean, his son--in--law.

But McLean also had an "ace--in--the hole." McLean ministered for a time in Moose Jaw in what was then Assiniboia territory. While there he made the acquaintance of Henry Bird Steinhauer, Evans' native interpreter who, with William Mason, wrote up Evans' trial documents. Surely an eyewitness to the whole ministry of James Evans in Norway House, especially one without a visible axe to grind, would be a reliable and trustworthy source of information. Yet in a letter to William Mason shortly after the trial, Steinhauer recounted his unequivocal feelings of despair at the position which Evans had placed him in by demanding to be tried.

> I must confess that about this time I was at a stand. I looked back and saw the good the Mission had done among these Indians and taking in the future I saw that from this period there must inevitably be the stamp of reproach upon us. Then I wished that these accursed reports might not be true. Why? For the sake of the accused? No--for no man's sake but for the Mission's. If there is one who ought to think and wish well and pray for the prosperity of the Wesleyan Missions, I am one, and why? Because I owe all to its instrumentality by the liberality of the friends of the Missions. I have been educated and have been placed in the situation I now hold in this mission by that means and many of the people have been blessed by the instrumentality of missions and is calculated to do still more abundant good to many who are still in heathenism. Were not these considerations sufficient to make one wish for the groundlessness of reports calculated to ruin the cause which lies nearest to our hearts. Ah! But it was a wish

> destined to vanish before a clearer light and a restatement of these reports.[46]

Did Steinhauer share these sentiments with McLean? Probably not. Would McLean have incorporated them into his biography of Evans if he had? In any event, with the arrival of McLeans' book, the truth about James Evans was going to be told.

Remember though, that McLean had no access to the trial documents themselves, which were held by the WMS. Nor did he have access to William Mason. He had his conversations with Henry Steinhauer, but as the above shows, Henry might well have been circumspect in what he revealed. Really, then, all he had was the word of Ephraim Evans that his brother had been fully exonerated, and that he died with the undiminished confidence of the WMS. I certainly have no quarrel with McLean for basing his story on the foundation of Ephraim's word. He was writing in good faith, and for the audience for whom he was writing, Ephraim's word was enough. What amazes me is that for as long as the James Evans story has been told and retold nobody bothered to check to see if the foundational story was true by examining the relevant documents from either the WMS or the Hudson's Bay Company archives. Almost one hundred years passed between the release of McLeans' biography, and Gerald Hutchinson's discovery of the trial documents. Here I am, one hundred and fifty--three years almost to the day of the Evans' trial, writing a story that might have been told long ago had it not been for the church's unwillingness to look more closely at the foundations upon which it is based.

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[46] WMS Archives, Box 14G.

There has been a tremendous amount of damage done by this historical myopia. On one hand, those who wanted to protect the name of James Evans have unfairly besmirched the character of William Mason. On the other hand, the historians' claim that it was Evans, not Mason, who was responsible for the Cree Syllabic, has completely obscured the truth that the Cree have always held: that they gave Evans the syllabics.

For example, a document held by the Maskwachees Cultural College of Hobbema states that the syllabic characters were a gift from the Kitsemanito to the Cree. Kitsemanito enjoined the people not give them the characters away, "but a Methodist priest, The Rev. James Evans kept wanting these natives to teach him these syllabics. These natives finally gave in and showed him the syllabics because the priest came crying to them."[47]

If the truth in the Evans biographies is foundational, the "truth" in ***Cloven Hoof*** reflects my own understandings of holism. For example, no character really knows what the "truth" of anything is. No one knows if the information they are receiving is being given to them out of self--interest on the part of the giver. So, for example, Fraser tells Donald Ross that the beaver is gone in the North. Ross chooses to ignore him. Fraser tells Ross what he has heard other people tell him about what Evans has been saying to the Indians. (Yes, it really is as complicated as that.) Ross discounts the information because of its source. But when Young Bernard keeps information from Donald Ross because he feels that Ross will

[47] This story was related to me by Buff Parry, researcher for the Ermineskin Band, at a board meeting of the Mountain Cree Syllabics Institute, February 13, 1999, at Rundle's Mission, Pigeon Lake, Alberta.

discount it anyway, (Bernard has seen Ross do that with the information he got from Fraser, remember) Bernard gets in trouble.

I deliberately kept both the flow and sources of information as ambiguous as possible, not to confuse, but to show how difficult it was for the characters to assess what was "true." The characters then have to be constantly evaluating the trustworthiness of the information they are receiving. The "truth" only emerges as the different characters are forced into disclosure to each other. I would suggest that the truth that the characters reveal about themselves under forced disclosure is different from the truth that each wished to believe about him or herself. Even then the audience is left to decide whether anyone is actually "telling the truth." As a writer, then, I hope that I have planted the seeds of a question in the minds of the audience: What is the "truth" they tell?

Repressed Narrative, Myth, and Parable

James Farris notes that, "Even when attending to its own tradition, the church has often repressed or ignored stories that have an important bearing on its history."[48] He calls these stories repressed narratives. There is no doubt that McLean and E.R. Young believed that their biographies of Evans were a corrective to the narrative that the WMS had so successfully repressed for the better part of thirty years. But I also want to suggest that their biographies were received as myth.

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[48] James Farris, "Annotations on Christian Narrative," in Theology and the End of Modernity, ed. Mark Husbands (Toronto: Uof T Press, 1996), p. 60.

Northrop Frye notes that myths have two contexts:

> In their structure they resemble other types of story, and so are potentially literary. But in early societies they also develop a social function that we have been calling ideological. They play a leading role in defining a society, in giving it a shared possession of knowledge peculiar to it. Its proclamation is not so much "This is true" as "This is what you must know." Such a mythology is close to what is meant by the biblical term *torah*, essential instruction, including the laws, which no one can be excused from learning. So a mythology creates in the midst of its society the verbal equivalent of a *temenos* or sacred ground a limited and sacrosanct area.[49]

John Dominic Crossan pushes Frye's analysis further. Myth defines, to be sure. But it also harmonizes that which cannot be harmonized. Myth is not just an attempt to mediate in story that which is sensed to be irreconcilable. Myth in, by, and through this attempt, establishes that reconciliation is possible. [50] Crossan quotes Pierre Maranda to the effect that:

> Myth is the expression of the dynamic disequilibrium which is the acknowledged powerlessness to build adequate homomorphisms between incompatible and, hence, disturbing facts. It is an expression of the reluctant acknowledgment that the event is mightier than the structure. But myth is also and more than anything else the hallucinogenic chant in which mankind harmonizes the vagaries of history--the chant hummed for generations in the minds of men and humming itself in the human mind (that innate dream to reduce continuous randomness to a final pattern) as hinted at by Plato and Jung....[51]

These reflections on myth, especially the emphasis on reconciling the irreconcilable and creating harmony, are indispensable for understanding the development of the story of James Evans. His early biographers had to reconcile

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[49] Northrop Frye, Words With Power, p.31.
[50] John Dominic Crossan, The Dark Interval, p.37.
[51] Crossan, p.36.

the irreconciliables of Evans' good works as a missionary on one hand, and his trial for immorality on the other. By reconciling these opposites they did create a myth which then became history.

Myth is one pole of the genre of the story. The other pole is parable. A parable is a story set within a world created by myth, and which functions to subvert the world in which it is set. "A person," notes Terrence Tilley, "will often be unnerved as a reaction to an effective parable."[52] Parables unnerve not because they render myth false, but because they undermine the very principles upon which myth is based. Myth has a double function: the reconciliation of an individual contradiction, and more importantly, the creation of belief in the permanent possibility of reconciliation. Parable also has a double function that opposes the double function of myth. The surface function of parable is to create contradiction within a given situation of complacent security, but even more unnervingly, to challenge the fundamental principle of reconciliation by making us aware of the fact that we made up the reconciliation. Reconciliation is no more fundamental a principle than irreconciliation. "You have built a lovely house, myth assures us; but, whispers parable, you are right above an earthquake fault." [53]

A parable rocks the foundations of the old myth by working within the world it structures. If the hearers are rigid, they will either reject the parable or be so startled as to have to reject their own myth because they are so unsettled. They will then have to set up a new one by discovering or creating a counter myth. A counter myth is a proposed alternative to an old myth. A parable proposes no

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[52] Crossan, p.37.
[53] Crossan, p.40.

alternatives, but leaves room either to see life in the old or construct something new.[54]

In sum, says Terrence W. Tilley:

> Parables are stories which subvert the mythic world in which they are told. How people respond varies. ...Some have their worlds transformed. Others have their worlds destroyed. Parables work to reveal the unexpected, subvert the normal, cast out certainty to make room for hope, and thus provoke various responses. They are dangerous stories.[55]

The Evans biographies, I have suggested, became myth because they did reconcile the irreconcilable: the godliness of Evans on one hand, and his recall from the HBC territories under a cloud of suspicion on the other. As we have seen, however, this was done by relying on the evidence and the testimony that was at hand, primarily the recollections of Ephraim Evans that a) Mason was to blame for the trial, and b) the HBC and Evans did not get along because of Evans' opposition to the HBC's Sunday travel policies. This was the foundational truth upon which everything else would be based; that was the problem.

The first sentence of McLean's biography shows he is aware that he is relating what had been a repressed narrative:

> Long did we wait for a short biography of the man who did so much for the Indian tribes of the Northwest, but it came not. Much thought upon our negligence in not doing something to remind the Christian public of the heroism of a brave Canadian Missionary caused me to assume the responsibility, although other minds and hearts could have done better in indicting a life so full of devotion and courage.[56]

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[54] Terrence W. Tilley, Story Theology, (Delaware: Michael Glazier Inc., 1985), p. 50.
[55] Tilley, p.51.
[56] John McLean, James Evans, p.1.

It is not surprising that McLean treats his reader to a saintly depiction of the missionary, who was totally blameless in his dealings with the HBC. Whatever conflicts might have arisen between Evans and the HBC were all the responsibility of the HBC. The Company men just could not stand the righteousness of the missionary.

McLean notes:

> in the early years the servants of the company were useful assistants in all mission work. James Evans did not, however, intend that any arrangement should interfere with his declaration of the truth of God, and in the discharge of his duties towards his dusky parishioners there could not be compromise with any man.[57]

The "any man" with which there could be no compromise was none other than George Simpson, the Governor of the HBC. McLean rightly noted that Evans and Simpson had differing views on what constituted proper Sabbath observance. That was known from Ephraim Evans. James Evans wanted the HBC boatmen to observe the Sabbath by not working the boats on Sunday. Simpson, on the other hand, was adamant that the short navigational season in the north country meant that it was imperative for the boatmen to make no unnecessary stops.[58]

But McLean attributed a motive to George Simpson that was McLean's very own creation. Governor Simpson was jealous of Evans, and was threatened by Evans' popularity among white and native alike. Nothing could have been further from the truth, of course. Simpson considered Evans a minor annoyance until it became clear to Simpson that Evans was working to destroy the trade and billing

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[57] John McLean, p. 176.
[58] BCA, AE. R73 La5, Simpson to Ross, March 12, 1842.

the expenses for his efforts to the HBC. But as McLean envisioned the relationship between George Simpson and James Evans, "Sir George Simpson could not allow another master in the territory owned by the Company, and he chafed under the growing influence of the missionary who could win men to obey the laws of God." [59]

This was the reason, according to McLean, Simpson wished to remove Evans from the HBC territory, and the reason that Simpson hatched a nefarious plot against the missionary. E.R.Young took this new character trait that McLean attributed to George Simpson and pushed it even further. Simpson was not just jealous of Evans' success, according to Young. Simpson had character flaws that bordered on the pathological. Young's Simpson is "obstinate and immoral, lost to all sense of shame and honour; a man who was one of the great libertines of the century."[60]

Young also added his own embellishments to the description of Simpson's role in Evans' downfall. Like McLean, Young never mentioned the specific charges that were brought against Evans. But Young points to the possibility that Evans was charged with sexual impropriety by noting "Some poor, timid, women were terrorized into swearing falsely against one of the purest minded of men, and thus try to destroy his influence and drive him out of the country."[61]

Young's greatest act of creativity was to place George Simpson in the judge's chair at the trial of James Evans. McLean had said that Simpson had

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[59] John McLean, James Evans, p.193.
[60] Egerton Ryerson Young, The Apostle of the North, p.233.
[61] Egerton Ryerson Young, p.233.

plotted against Evans, but took his involvement no further. But according to Young:

> "A mockery of a trial was held, at which Sir George constituted himself the judge, and summoned this man of God before him, and, producing his own witnesses who had been prepared for the occasion, he proceeded to find him guilty."[62]

It is true that Simpson launched an investigation into Evans' conduct. But this investigation centred on Evans' relationship with Betsy Hassal, the wife of Evans' guides, Thomas. Simpson was searching for evidence to suggest that Evans had, in fact murdered Thomas, in a shooting incident that Evans had claimed was accidental.[63] But this investigation was begun after Evans left the Territories, and there was never a trial.

Young also continued to embellish the story begun by McLean in describing Evans' recall. All McLean said was that Evans was recalled. Young, however, used the recall to castigate both Simpson and the secretaries of the WMS.

> With broken heart Mr. Evans continued his work at Rossville, until there fell upon him the stroke that showed the vindictiveness of the character of the man who was resolved to drive him out of the country. Imperative orders from England that he should at once leave the missionary work in the hands of his colleagues, and come across the ocean to answer the grave charges. From the tenor of the letters it seemed evident that the officials of the church were already much biased against him, and that he would have a difficult task in disabusing their minds of the prejudices with which the slanders of his enemies had filled them.[64]

Young was dead wrong historically with that conjecture. George Simpson had asked the WMS to recall Evans eight months before Evans himself demanded

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[62] Egerton Ryerson Young, p.234.
[63] AE.R73.La5, The Ross Collection, Simpson to Ross June 25, 1846.
[64] Ibid.

to be tried. The WMS had no knowledge at all about the trial at the time that it occurred. But Young's assertion did serve to reconcile another irreconcilable. Why, if Evans was the saint he seemed to be, did the WMS stand in the way of his biography? Young's response? The WMS did not trust Evans at the time of his trial, and nothing ever changed. In other words, according to Young, the problem was with the WMS, not coincidentally a British institution, rather than with Evans, a Canadian missionary.

In a letter to George Simpson informing him of the death of James Evans, Dr. Alder of the WMS made the following observation concerning the way the secretaries dealt with the evidence that Evans had offered them to prove his innocence of the charges that had been brought against him:

> I must say that the various documents which he placed in my hands and the verbal statements which he promptly made whenever questions were put to him, afforded important information respecting some things calculated to excite doubt and suspicion; and the communications thus furnished although not given under the sanction of an Oath, were delivered in such a manner and with such solemn asseverations and appeals that unless Mr. Evans is to be considered as having been one of the hardened and ungodly men that ever lived, they are entitled to our attention and credence, and may well weigh against the evidence of Margaret Sinclair.[65]

The subtext of Alder's position is this, if I hear him correctly: either we have to believe Evans was telling the truth, or we have to believe that he is evil incarnate. Since we cannot do the latter, we must do the former. If there is any world that I would hope the parable of ***Cloven Hoof*** might subvert, it is the world represented by statements like Alder's. Evans was not one of the most hardened and ungodly men that ever lived, and Maggie may well have been a more credible

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[65] HBCA, D.5/18 #50, Alder to Simpson, Dec.1, 1846.

witness than Alder gave her credit for being. Evans was no saint, and Maggie was no angel. I tried to show this in ***Cloven Hoof.***

I also tried to show that, from my perspective, the damage that Evans did to everybody, the girls, William Mason, and his own wife, by denying that he had done anything was at least as great as what he actually might have done to and with the girls. In the rush to clear Evans' name, this has always been the forgotten piece. Now, I hope, it will be a little less forgotten.

Christ and Nanabush

I noted above that Evans' early biographers drew on the archetype of the Christ to portray the character of James Evans. I, in turn, used the archetype of Nanabush. I mentioned earlier that McLean and Young wrote their biographies according to literary conventions that governed the religious writing of their day. One of those conventions was that the purpose of religious narrative was not just to inform, but to exhort and uplift. Therefore, McLean notes in the introduction to his biography of Evans:

> A missionary genius is worthy [of] our most enthusiastic study and admiration, for the contemplation of such a life is fraught with good. Not the life of a missionary merely, are we studying, but that of a philologist, inventor, explorer and patriot, whose noblest ambition was to live for his country, humanity and God.[66]

McLean would have taken it for granted that the person James Evans consciously patterned his own life upon would have been Jesus himself. It was no stretch, therefore, to tell Evans' story within the same pattern, or archetype. I would suggest that the Christ

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[66] John McLean, James Evans, p.13.

figure or archetype that McLean used, was the suffering servant of Isaiah, the archetype that most Christians even today consider to be the prefiguring of Jesus:

> He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut out of the land of the living...[67]

Intentionally or not, McLean paints a similarly pathetic portrait of Evans at the end of his ministry in Norway House:

> The faithful toiler, well nigh heart broken was recalled, and at last, the scene of his labours, where he had laboured hard to lay the foundation of purity and material progress had to be forsaken. Sad were the days spent in preparation for his departure. Friends and foes shunned him... and no loving hands were stretched forth to help him in his hour of distress. Faithful servant of God, thou hast not laboured in vain, nor art thou alone in thy sorrow and solitude... Thy God shall defend thee, when thy foes are many and strong![68]

The most important element of the suffering servant archetype is that the suffering servant is totally guiltless. Whether McLean knew it or not, he was placing James Evans within what Dominic Crossan describes as a theology of vindication.[69]

Crossan notes that the theological motif of persecution and vindication of the innocent and righteous runs throughout Jewish scripture. In some cases vindication happens before the death of the righteous one, as in the story of Joseph

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[67] The Holy Bible, (KJV) Isaiah 53: 7-8.
[68] John McLean, James Evans, p. 193.
[69] John Dominic Crossan, The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998).

and the charges brought against him by Potiphar's wife. In other cases deliverance from death is not deliverance before, but after, earthly death. Vindication in this second form is not "earthly life restored, but eternal life promised."[70]

The image of the suffering servant who is vindicated before death was the perfect archetype for Evans in McLean's story. McLean never shares with his readers the exact nature of Evans' sufferings at the hands of the HBC. The suffering of Isaiah's servant is a generic complement the vague sufferings endured by Evans. However, in McLean's story, Evans is vindicated before death, when he returns to London.

Egerton Ryerson Young took this theology of vindication a step further. He had no compunctions about telling his readers how and by how James Evans was tried. I mentioned above that Young placed Simpson at Evans' trial. He was dead wrong historically first by placing Simpson at the trial, and secondly by stating that Simpson found Evans guilty. But Young had good theological and literary, if not historical, reasons for placing George Simpson at the trial. Young wanted to demonize Simpson to elevate Evans. Young describes the trial in these terms:

> Since that sad mockery of a trial in Jerusalem when false witnesses there perjured themselves against the Holy One of God, we know of nothing more diabolical. How the brave man continued in his work as grandly as he did is only to be accounted for by those who know the power of divine grace. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." With this grip on the Almighty One, who allowed him thus to be terribly assailed, he hung on amidst the dense darkness that seemed impenetrable.[71]

Evans, according toYoung, becomes the persecuted Christ of the New World. Simpson becomes the representative of the Jewish authority that according

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[70] Crossan, The Birth of Christianity, p. 499.
[71] E.R. Young, The Apostle of the North, p.224.

to the theology of the day, put Jesus to death. What could be more demonic on one hand and more heroic on the other, for a nineteenth century Christian audience? Young even managed to cast Henry Steinhauer in the role of Judas Iscariot:

> One of the saddest and most humiliating things about this whole affair is that while all the Christian Indians were true, in some way or another, one of the young missionaries for a time fell under the baneful spell of the governor, and jealous at the marvelous popularity of Mr. Evans, became the traducer of one who had ever been his friend, and whom as afterward confessed, he knew to be innocent. [72]

Cloven Hoof contains two stories of Nanabush, both told by James Evans. There is a particularly profound connection between those stories and the historical James Evans. Allow me a digression to explain. While reading through the Evans' material from the University of Western Ontario Archives for the second or third time, I came across a letter that had at its head "This is found in a notebook of Evans containing sermons."[73] I assumed that I had all the Evans material there was to be had; yet I had never run across any of Evans sermons. John McLean noted in his biography that most of the Evans manuscripts were burned in a fire before Evans left Norway House.[74] (He did not say whether Evans set the fire himself). In any event, I had assumed that whatever personal reflections Evans might have written during his time in Norway House had been destroyed.

On a hunch I called the archivist at Western and asked if they had ever seen any of Evans' sermons. They checked the catalogue, and discovered two rolls of microfilm pertaining to Evans that had not been catalogued. They were not sure

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[72] Ibid., p. 235.
[73] UWO, #190, James Evans to Colin Campbell, September 17, 1844.
[74] John McLean, James Evans, p.167.

what was on them, but they were happy to send them out. Imagine my surprise when they arrived.

There were sermons, to be sure, but there was much more. There was Evans' impassioned speech to the Chipewyan urging them to forsake the trade and clear the land. There were Evans' love poems written about his daughter, Clara, after she married John McLean and left the territories. There were also the Nanabush stories. Since Nanabush is an Ojibway figure and not related to the Chipewyans, it is unlikely that Evans heard these stories in the HBC territories. It is more plausible to assume that he heard them while he was still in Canada, and brought them with him when he came west. Why he recorded them is another mystery. Perhaps he recorded them as an ethnographer. Maybe they just tickled his fancy. In any event, these stories somehow spoke to him, and they became part of his life. But they also spoke to me. While Evans was the embodiment of the Christ for McLean and Young, for me he was the embodiment of the trickster--Nanabush to the Ojibway, Mercurius to the ancients.

Nanabosho, according to legend, was the ruler of the earth. He created the Chippewas, and taught the Chippewas all the rites and mysteries of their religion. He was sometimes referred to as "the great light," the Spirit of Light," and the Great White One." But according to Ella Elizabeth Clark:

> To the Indians of the past Nanabozho myths had religious significance. But in most of the Chippewan tales recorded in this century, Nanabohzo is not the benefactor of mankind, the culture hero, and does not have spiritual meaning. Instead, by some incongruity which Chippewas of today cannot explain, he is often identified with a trickster and with the Great Hare. In

> many tales Nanabohzo, or the Great Hare, is a mischief--maker, a trickster who is often the victim of his own stupid attempts to deceive others. [75]

Could there be a more appropriate description of James Evans than that, "he was the victim of his own stupid attempts to deceive others?" The Nanabush stories then formed an integral part of ***Cloven Hoof***.

Pan as an archetype for interpreting James Evans came to me directly from Donald Ross. In a letter to George Simpson he wrote:

> Our Reverend neighbour here has at length shewn the cloven foot and unmasked himself...and I think you will find that I have in no way done injustice to his true character--he has now played his first card, Sunday travelling--his second and by the most important in his ruin, a share in the proceeds of the trade--he just holds ready to make the best use of.... I am quite aware that if Mr. Evans career not be speedily checked, the trade of this valuable section of the country will be lost to the Company[76]

Donald Ross was referring to the devil in his mention of "the cloven foot." But before there was the Christian devil, there was Pan. There is a great irony here. James Hillman notes that Pan is the root word for pastor, and pastoral, and Pan was the god of herdsman.[77] Hillman describes the archetype of Pan this way.

> For the solitary goat is both the oneness and the aloneness, a cursed nomadic existence in empty places. The lechery then, is secondary, and the fertility too; they arise from the dry longing of nature alone, of one who is ever an abandoned child, and who in innumerable pairings is never paired, never fully changes the cleft hoof for the rabbit's paw. He may please the Gods, but he never makes it to Olympus; he couples, but never wives; he makes music, but the muses are with Apollo.[78]

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[75] Ella Elizabeth Clark, Indian Legends of Canada (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart Ltd., 1960), p.5.
[76] HBCA, D.5/14 #18, Ross to Simpson, May 21, 1845.
[77] James Hillman, An Essay on Pan (Zurich: Spring Publishers, 1972), p.xix.
[78] Hillman, p.xxi.

I wrote the character of James Evans before I read Hillman's description of Pan, but my interpretation seems to be a good fit. The lechery of Evans in ***Cloven Hoof*** is secondary to his "dry longing" to recreate for the Indians a lost paradise in which he alone will rule. Yet, like Pan, Evans never made it to Olympus.

To this point we have examined the difference between myth and parable. I have attempted to locate ***Cloven Hoof*** within the genre of parable, and described the images, archetypes and theology I have used to place it there. Before leaving this discussion, I want to suggest that the parable of ***Cloven Hoof*** is, in its own way, an exercise in the theology of vindication.

McLean and Young vindicated James Evans before his death, by claiming that the WMS cleared him of the charges that had been brought against him while he was in Norway House. In ***Cloven Hoof***, I sought to achieve a measure of after--death vindication for the characters of William Mason, and the girls, Maggie and Eliza, who testified against Evans, and who were denounced for their efforts. I also sought to vindicate Donald Ross, and his wife Mary, who as agents of the HBC have been seen by the church as the persecutors of Evans. In the chapter that follows, I will examine the narrative structure of the play itself. I contend that the narrative structure of the play has a theological integrity that supports and complements ***Cloven Hoof's*** theology of vindication, and I hope to show how the narrative structure of the play advances this theological content.

CHAPTER 2

CLOVEN HOOF AND THE THEOLOGY OF NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

In the Chapter One I described the methodology I created to write ***Cloven Hoof***. I attempted to show how that methodology came from the source material itself, and how I shaped the play according to the conventions that the early biographers of James Evans themselves used. This chapter follows from the last, and attempts to create a web that links the psychological and literary theory I have already discussed with narrative theology. There is a raft of material available on the theology of personal narrative. Less attention has been paid to the theology of fictional narrative, which is the genre of **Cloven *Hoof***. Mark Ledbetter's Virtuous Intentions: The Religious Dimensions of Narrative[1] is one study that looks exclusively at the theological dimension of fictional narrative, and I use his method of analysis to place ***Cloven Hoof*** within a theological context of narrative fiction.

According to Ledbetter, narrative is intrinsically theological because it is motivated by desire; specifically the desire for an ordered and coherent world. Narrative has a religious function because it not only reveals an existential crisis, but also because it suggests a paradigmatic solution to the crisis.[2] Furthermore, the religious desire that motivates narrative fiction is a wish for something "other

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[1] Mark Ledbetter, Virtuous Intentions: The Religious Dimensions of Narrative (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989).
[2] Ledbetter, p. 5.

than" what exists at the beginning moment of the fictive act. Narrative is an encounter with "otherness," and it is this encounter that gives narrative its religious dimension. We desire some intelligible ends to our crises, and it is narrative's desire to give such an end, such a solution to us.[3]

Dudley Owens Edwards says much the same thing in the introduction to ***Hare and Burke***, his play concerning the trial of the Edinburgh grave robbers of same name. "As a playwright I have the advantage over the historian in not having to declare this the most likely solution on the basis of the evidence. What the theatre wants to know, is whether it works".[4]

In the last chapter I illustrated how Evans' biographers were motivated by a desire to create an ordered and coherent world in which to place the memory of James Evans. ***Cloven Hoof*** represents my desire for an ordered and coherent world that is grounded in the theology of vindication which I described in the last chapter, a theology that takes into account the information that those biographers were missing. By so doing I hope to show that the theology of the play is embedded, not just in its content, but in its very structure.

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[3] Ledbetter, p.7.

[4] Owen Dudley Edwards, Hare and Burke, (Edinburgh: Diehard Publishers, 1994), preface.

The Theological Basis of Narrative Technique

Narrative is motivated by desire for meaningful human existence. Technique is the process by which meaningful existence is revealed.[5] Technique has a religious function because it involves itself with the discovery of value. Narrative technique makes evaluative judgments about existence that establishes the particular virtues that one may follow to lead the good life.[6] According to Ledbetter, there are four elements of technique that comprise narrative structure: tone, atmosphere, plot and character. Each, by the nature of its function in the narrative act, has religious and theological overtones, because each element points to, discovers, and interprets a religious worldview. To understand how narrative leads to religious decision making and the discovery of virtue, we need to understand how these elements work in the text, and the nature of their religious and theological significance.[7] To these elements within ***Cloven Hoof I*** wish to now turn. A word before I do. There is a great deal overlap between these categories because they are interdependent. One cannot talk about one category in terms that are exclusive to the others. While I have tried to minimize the overlap, I beg the reader's indulgence for that which is there.

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[5] Edwards, p.11.
[6] Edwards, p.10.
[7] Ledbetter, p.11.

Tone

To have a story is to have a storyteller. The narrator creates a sense that invites such subjective observations like trust or wariness, optimism or pessimism, expectation or resignation on the part of the viewer.[8] Tone is also the relationship that exists between author and narrative. It takes on an almost a confessional nature, as the author cannot hide his presence in the story.[9] But tone also has a religious meaning and function because tone is so closely tied to the issue of authority. Tone asks that we accept someone else's world, if only for a short while. According to Ledbetter:

> The granting of such authority, I suggest, is a religious act committed by the reader, but required by tone. The critic grants the text autonomy. Tone is what informs and creates the text's autonomous world, which the reader is willing, at least momentarily, to accept. .... I suggest that this quality is a religious attitude toward the newly discovered world in the text.[10]

The question of authority and worldview is an important one for understanding ***Cloven Hoof.*** While the play is a work of narrative fiction, it is based on history. I created no fictional characters for ***Cloven Hoof,*** with the exception of Fraser the boatman, Donald Ross' colleague who brings the bad news about the trade in the Chipewyan country. Every other character lived a life that was independent of my imagination. As an author I had to be conscious of the authority vested in me to deal with the historical realities out of which the

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[8] Ledbetter, p.12.
[9] Ledbetter, p.12 .
[10] Ledbetter, p. 12.

characters and the story emerged. "While narrative," suggests Ledbetter, "is motivated by a desire for meaning, not truth,"[11] historical narrative has a specific sensibility that differs from pure fiction. The story already has integrity and a continuity that is dictated by the historical record.

There are times when authors might cast aside that integrity for the sake of the story. For example, Northrop Frye notes that William Shakespeare made Hotspur and Prince Hal the same age in ***Henry IV***, even though history shows that Hotspur was twenty years older than the prince was. Yet this "is not poetic license indulged in by the poet for arbitrary reasons. Rather it is an illustration of the fact that within literature the shaping of events takes precedence over the history."[12] Similarly Peter Schaffer "shaped the events" in ***Amadeus*** to take precedence over the history of the relationship between Mozart and Salieri.[13]

I did not feel that the options available to Shakespeare and Shaffer were available to me in the same measures, given the subject with which I was dealing. For one thing, much of what had already been written about James Evans that claimed to be fact was really fiction, sometimes inadvertently, sometimes not. I was clear in my own mind that, while I was writing fiction, following the integrity of the historical record would be paramount. Evans' biographers had written fact that was based on fiction. I wanted to reverse the process and write fiction that was based on fact. So while it is true that narrative is concerned with meaning

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[11] Ledbetter, p.6.
[12] Northrop Frye, Words With Power, (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), p. 57.
[13] A. Peter Brown, "*Amadeus* and Mozart: Setting the Record Straight", American Scholar, V.61, (Fall 1992), p.49-67.

rather than truth, I felt it imperative that whatever meaning ***Cloven Hoof*** might convey should be based solidly on the historical record.

By doing so, I was inadvertently following a convention established by Margaret Atwood in her historical novel, ***Alias Grace***:

> when there was a solid fact, I could not alter it; long as I wished to have Grace witness McDermott's execution, it could not be done, because, worse luck, she was already in the Penitentiary that day. Also, every major element in the book had to be suggested by something in the writing about Grace and her times, however dubious such writing might be; but in the parts left unexplained- the gaps left unfilled- I was free to invent. Since there were lots of gaps, there is a lot of invention. ***Alias Grace*** is very much a novel rather than a documentary.[14]

The convention that Atwood established differentiates between narrative truth and historical truth, which was part of the methodological discussion of Chapter One, so I will not discuss them further here. But these observations on the difference between historical and narrative truth speak to the issue of the tone of ***Cloven Hoof***. I would suggest that ***Cloven Hoof*** is a "both and" kind of creature; a hybrid of historical and narrative truth. My decision to follow the historical record as closely as I could dictated both the structure and the tone of ***Cloven Hoof***. In my initial drafts of the play, Bernard was present in Norway House throughout the trial of James Evans. I also visualized him as a young man rather than a boy. I had to abandon this premise if I was to maintain the integrity of the historical record. The Hudson's Bay Company records showed that Bernard was the apprentice clerk in Norway House from 1843-1845. But in 1845 he was transferred to Fort Frances in the Lac La Pluie district. As much as I wanted him to be at the trial, it would have been historically impossible.

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[14] Margaret Atwood, Alias Grace, p.35.

The same records also showed that in 1846 Bernard was transferred again, from Lac La Pluie to York Factory. He would have had to go through Norway House to get to his new posting. It was then possible that Bernard, Evans, Ross, and Mason could have all been together in Norway House as I suggested they were, not during the trial itself but in the months preceding it. There is no evidence to suggest that this actually happened. But, on the other hand, there was nothing in the historical record to suggest that it didn't either.

Bernard's absence from Norway House (the historical truth) then led me to reconsider the way the narrative truth would be told. I would tell the story using Old Bernard as the narrator, recounting the events that led to the trial, and disclosing the motivations behind it. If tone "is what informs and creates the text's autonomous world which the reader is willing at least momentarily to accept,"[15] then it is Bernard who sets the tone of the play, by what he says, and how he says it.

I go back to the difference between construction and reconstruction in narrative. It seems that Bernard is engaged in an act of construction in his narration. He relates the history of his involvement in the trial and he has the authority to do so because he was there. On the other hand, he can just as easily be seen to be involved in an act of reconstruction engaging in acts of poetic license. (He was a poet after all.) This is because the audience sees and hears the historical facts that Bernard recounts through two different filters.

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[15] Ledbetter, p.11.

The first of these filters are the events that Bernard experienced as a fifteen-year-old boy. The second filter is the way Bernard chooses to recount those experiences as an old man. How Bernard recounts those experiences sets the tone of the play. The audience is asked to accept his world the way he describes it, and to accept his depiction of the other characters in the drama, as he sees them. This is important to emphasize; the adult characters, male and female together, are being seen through the eyes of a young boy. From Bernard's perspective, they are all flawed. Donald Ross and James Evans both exploit him for their own advantage, and Mary Ross threatens him with the termination of his employment. Furthermore, Donald Ross is pompous, James Evans is condescending, Mary Ross is vulgar and Mary Evans lacks self--consciousness. From Bernard's perspective, no adult is better or worse than any other is. They are all oppressive.

The events that Bernard experienced are filtered through his sense of powerlessness because he is a boy in an adult world. He is searching for a father and vulnerable to both father figures in the play: Evans, who flatters him, and Ross, who alternately exploits, rewards and chastises him. He is afraid of Mary Ross. His vulnerability sets in motion a whole chain of events that he cannot control or foresee because he disobeys Donald Ross' command not to go to the Evans' house.

Yet the way he tells his story, he considers himself neither a victim of circumstance, nor incorrigible. As an old man, the character of Bernard is still vulnerable. The play begins with him writing his last report as an HBC factor. He has obviously been a successful one at that. But at what cost? When Evans accuses him in the first scene of "selling the natives back into the slavery from which I so painstakingly delivered them," all Bernard says in response is "It wasn't

like that." But wasn't it? The reason Bernard relates the story of his relationship with James Evans is to "tell the truth, for his sake." But why is Evans still haunting him, and why does Bernard feel the need to tell the truth as one of his last acts with the HBC? As Bernard's author I would suggest that he is telling the truth, less to set the record straight and more to justify his life, not to the audience but to himself.

It is clear in Bernard's narration that he is unapologetic about the role that he played in Evans' downfall. But the shadow side of Bernard's narration is the question that Bernard himself cannot ask. What might have happened had Bernard gone with Evans and become his aide, instead of staying with Donald Ross? Might they together have been able to make life better for the Indians? Might Bernard have ended up with Clara, his heart's desire, had he followed Evans?

The tone that Bernard sets as the narrator, then, is an ironic one. On one hand, he relates a story of success. He avoided being sent back to Dublin, a fate worse than death for him. He successfully masterminded the plot to get Evans to leave the territories. Yet, in the end, was it worth it for this sensitive poetry-writing boy to wholeheartedly embrace the values of the HBC? Bernard wants us to believe that it was, because he wants to believe that it was. But the very fact that he wants to convince himself and us of that suggests that there is doubt in his own mind. He is questioning the authority of the text of his own life. By so doing, he invites those who hear his story to do the same.

Mark Ledbetter notes that, "Tone takes on an almost confessional nature. The author cannot hide his/her subjective presence in the story."[16] Margaret

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[16] Ledbetter, p.11.

Atwood says something very similar about how the author's presence sets the tone of the piece in her reflections on writing ***Alias Grace:*** "A different writer, with access to exactly the same historical records, could have - and without a doubt would have - written a very different sort of novel."[17]

Another writer could have, and would have written ***Cloven Hoof*** in a manner and with a tone that would have been much different than my own. So my presence in the piece merits some examination. Bernard Rogan, upon whom the characters of Young and Old Bernard were based, was born in 1827. He entered into service in the HBC as an apprentice clerk in Norway House under the factorship of Donald Ross as a sixteen year old boy in 1843. He retired from service in 1871 and died shortly thereafter in 1874. He would been forty-seven when he died. James Evans was born in 1801. He died in 1846, at forty-five years of age. As I write this, I am not far off the age that the protagonist and antagonist of ***Cloven Hoof*** were when they died. I hope that I am at midlife rather than life's end. But there is a sense in my own psyche that parallels Bernard's own wish to make coherence of his life. Like Bernard, I have been modestly successful in my career; I do ministry that I enjoy in a place that I enjoy doing it. But the "story" that I have told by the paths that I have chosen to this point means that there are other stories I will not tell, in this life at any rate. I am becoming increasingly aware of my own finitude. Hence the appeal for me of creating historical fiction, which transcends the time in which, it is set, and characters who deal with timeless situations. It may be a poor substitute for immortality, but, on the other hand, it beats the alternative.

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[17] Margaret Atwood, Alias Grace, p.37.

Atmosphere

> Atmosphere discovers and establishes the boundaries in the narrative. The establishing of limits and boundaries is also a religious act. Atmosphere involves the creation of a credible environment in which the action of the narrative takes place. ...Characters within fiction cannot change atmosphere; authors must be consistent to an atmosphere throughout the text. ...Characters have no decision over the time and place to which they belong. Characters respond to limitations imposed by atmosphere and discover possibilities for living the good life. While the atmosphere of the text lies beyond the borders of human attention, how characters exhibit themselves in light of limited understanding and control tells the reader something about the characters and the characters something about self-identity. Characters often discover the virtuous life by accepting and/or challenging the limitations of atmosphere or by confronting the otherness that atmosphere suggests by its transcendence of human control.[18]

Before I go further in this analysis, I add a caveat to Ledbetter's observation that "Characters respond to the limitations imposed by atmosphere and discover possibilities for living the good life." I find the phrase, "the good life", ambiguous. Clearly the same "good life" is not equally accessible to all. In the context of ***Cloven Hoof,*** I would suggest that the children and women represented by Bernard, Mary Ross and Mary Evans are less concerned with achieving "the good life," and more concerned with simple survival. Stephen Crites notes that every story must be set within a world.[19] The world of ***Cloven Hoof*** is the land of the HBC territory, a world of hierarchy and social oppression, a world inimical to the interests of women and children.

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[18] Ledbetter, p.13.

[19] Stephen Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience", Journal of the American Academy of Religion, V39 (3), Sept., 1971, p.296.

It is a land unto itself, cut off from civilization by the physical barrier of the Canadian Shield. The fur-- trading fort at Norway House is a symbol of civilization in the vast wilderness of the HBC territories. The role of fort society is not to civilize the wilderness, but to ensure that the wilderness does not overwhelm the fragility of civilization that the fort represents. To preserve civilization in the wilderness, life must be ordered. Everyone must know their place. As Bernard says in his opening monologue of ***Cloven Hoof***: "The Factor and his wife were King and Queen, and Governor Simpson, well, he was God, wasn't he?" The atmosphere that this establishes is one of stability, hierarchy, and oppression. The conflict in ***Cloven Hoof*** erupts when James Evans challenges the atmosphere of hierarchy and stability that fort society demands by openly siding with the interests of "Natural Humanity" (the Indians) against the interests of the "Established Civilization" of the HBC.

This atmosphere is crucial to establishing the conflict between James Evans and Donald Ross. It is more than a clash of personalities. It is a struggle of "natures" against each other and against "Nature." Evans sees in the nature of the Indians an essential goodness that can and must be restored. Donald Ross, the enlightenment rationalist, is deeply suspicious and, indeed, fearful of whatever it is that lurks within the bosom of a "Natural Humanity." The men struggle with one another against the backdrop of the inhospitable wilderness of the HBC territories, which, as I suggest later in this chapter, has its own persona within the play. The intellectual environment that provides the context for the conflict between Evans and Ross in ***Cloven Hoof*** was in reality a conflict that was part of nineteenth century culture. My understanding of that conflict played a large role in the

shaping of the atmosphere and the environment of ***Cloven Hoof.*** Allow me a digression to explain.

Joe Holland in his essay, "Linking Social Analysis and Theological Reflection," notes that behind every theology, there is a social analysis that is an interpretation of the society in which theology functions. But behind both theology and social analysis there is what Holland calls the root metaphor upon which both draw.[20] Until the seventeenth century the root metaphor which governed white, male, Eurocentric consciousness was an organic one. Society was analogous to the human body. Everything was connected in a great chain of being, and each part had its proper place within the whole with its own responsibilities and duties. But bodies, like societies, have their cycle of growth and decay. While it was acknowledged that other civilizations rose and fell, there was the hope that Christian civilization would be immune to decay. In this consciousness, change was negative, rather than positive. It meant subversion of the existing order. The function of authority, both religious and secular, was to control the social order and preserve the tradition and the metaphors, which governed the culture.[21]

Societies and cultures never suddenly sit down and decide to change the root metaphors that govern them. But they nevertheless do change. Neither can these metaphors be imposed from above. They emerge from below. So to understand the conflict between James Evans and Donald Ross we need first to locate the root metaphors out of which both were operating.

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[20] Joe Holland, "Linking Social Analysis and Theological Reflection: The Place of Root Metaphors in Social and Religious Experience", in Tracing the Spirit: Communities, Social Action and Theological Reflection, ed. James E. Hug (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), p.161.

[21] Joe Holland, p.164.

The Methodism to which James Evans claimed allegiance emerged from the chaos of the mid--eighteenth century, thirty-seven years before the American war of independence and fifty years before the French Revolution. But, even before these political revolutions occurred, a new white, male, Eurocentic consciousness was emerging from the medieval imagery, which had gripped the collective imagination for centuries. The questions of how culture ought to be organized, the understanding of human nature, and humanity's relationship to nature, was suddenly up for grabs. The root metaphor of the organic society was giving way, to be replaced in its turn by a metaphor borrowed from human ingenuity and creativity: the mechanism and the machine.

The changing metaphor was most obvious in the new consciousness that was emerging concerning the Eurocentric relationship to the heavens. To the medieval mind, the heavenly bodies were all that were left of God's original creation. They were made of quintessence, a substance purer than the elements, and were immune to change and decay. But with the acceptance of the mathematics and astronomy of Isaac Newton, the movements of the heavens looked increasingly mechanical. As a consequence, the organism, the living human body, was left as the highest entity in the visible cosmos. The sky and the heavenly bodies that filled it were suddenly no longer seen as symbols of heaven, but rather symbols of alienation. God, who in the older mythology was seen as the provident king sitting high in the heavens, became not a symbol of benevolence, but a symbol of tyranny.[22]

In the old organic, or heliocentric, metaphorical system, the sun had been the symbol of consciousness. This metaphor reached its apex during the Renaissance,

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[22] Northrop Frye, Words With Power, p. 239.

which was a time, according to Northrop Frye, that contained "a feeling that consciousness represented something that tore man loose from the lower part of nature and united him with a higher destiny."[23] The earth, on the other hand, had nothing to commend it in this mythological structure. It was a symbol of humanity's fall into nature, and "at its centre, according to Dante, is the devil, or more precisely the devil's arse."[24]

But the death of the "sky God" metaphors literally turned things upside down. If the heavens were no longer the abode of God but rather a soulless collection of inanimate objects obeying their own mathematical logic, where, then, would traces of the divine be found? The answer was, of course, in nature. Not only in the natural world, but human nature as well. And not only the nature that was observable to the human senses, but the nature that lay beneath appearances.

> What was new were the suggestions that the natural came from man's setting in physical nature, that reason was not a faculty separating man from this nature, but one uniting him with it, that man should recover the perspective in which he was a child of nature as well as a child of God, and that the old upper level of nature to be reached by virtue and religion and the benefits of civilization was not really a fulfillment of nature, as it had claimed, but the impoverishing of large elements of it.[25]

William Blake's poetry from the mid--eighteenth century reflects the dawning awareness of the death of the "sky God" and, with him, the old mythological universe. Blake took seriously the possibility that the greatest influence on human nature lay beneath the surface of the individual in the interior

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[23] Northrop Frye, Spiritus Mundi: Essays on Literature, Myth and Society (Indiana: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, Indiana University Press, 1976), p.71.
[24] Frye, Spiritus Mundi, p.71
[25] Frye, Words With Power, p. 241.

life. He opposed the thinking of generations before him who had assumed that the heavens, the stars and the planets were the great influences of human destiny.

Blake redefined the understanding of human nature using the categories of "innocence" on one hand, and "experience" on the other. He associated innocence with children, because the child assumes that the world makes human sense, that the world is created for him. But then experience takes over. The child grows into adulthood and comes to realize that the world is not this way at all. The world in fact is, at best ambiguous, and, at worst downright hostile to human wish fulfillment. What happens, then, to the innocent childhood vision of the way the world is supposed to be? According to Frye:

> The answer is simple enough to us now, but nobody really hit on it before Blake. The childhood vision is driven underground into what we now call the unconscious or the subconscious, or some other metaphor meaning underneath, where in proportion as the sexual life grows in intensity and insistence, it becomes a furnace of frustrated desire, just as Israel became a "furnace of iron.[26]"

If the unconscious became "a furnace of frustrated desire," where did the heat go? It was directed against the institutions that had supported the old "sky God" who had now lost his potency and was ripe for overthrow. The institutional church itself came to be seen, not as guardian of tradition, but a barrier to human freedom. Blake's poem, "The Garden of Love," reflects this change in consciousness:

The Garden of Love

I went to the Garden of Love
And saw what I never had seen:

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[26] Frye, Words, p. 244.

A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this Chapel were shut
And "Thou shalt not" writ over the door;
So I turned to the Garden of Love
That so many sweet flowers bore;

And I saw it was filled with graves
And tomb-stones where flowers should be;
And priests in black gowns were walking their
rounds;
And binding with briars my joys and desires.[27]

This attack on the authority of institutional religion was mirrored by an upsurge in matters of the individual spirit. Romanticism, marked by the "growing belief in the shaping power of childhood, the enthusiasms and disillusionment with revolution, the obsession with crises of personal faith, and the "Love of Nature leading to love of man,"[28] was rapidly gaining momentum.

Again it was the poets of the time who best captured this emerging sense of the freeing of the human spirit. Wordsworth's poem, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," provides a good example:

Ode

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting
The soul that rises with us, our life's star
Hath elsewhere in its setting
And cometh from afar
Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness

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[27] William Blake, "The Garden of Love", in William Blake, ed. Victor Paanen, (Boston: Twayne Publications, 1977), p.83.
[28] Daniel J. Boorstein, The Creators: A History of Heroes of the Imagination (New York Vintage Books, 1992), p.618.

> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God who is our home. [29]

Wordsworth's poem reflects a more subtle attack on the institutional church than does Blake's "Garden of Love," but it still contains words worthy to be called subversive by the institutional church. If humanity, as Wordsworth says, already comes "trailing clouds of glory," of what use are the sacraments and the teaching of the church to mediate the relationship between God and white Europeans? There was no doubt about it. The foundations were shaking. The new human project was about discovering and developing the self outside the confines of institutional life. That change would have a dramatic impact on the institution of the church.

Morley Punshon, the minister of the Metropolitan Methodist Church (now Metropolitan United) in Toronto during the 1880's described the effect that this transformation of mythology had on the church of Wesley's day:

> If you look into the churches you find that the decline is equally lamentable, and you find, even among the reputedly orthodox, the looseness of thought which too frequently introduces to looseness of life. There had been great preachers, men of massive thought and burning word, both in the established and non--conforming churches, but the words of the preachers fell powerless, and it was as though the theology of the writers was embalmed .... Among the dissenters, if the truth was held it was held as a sentiment rather than as a power, and while a large number of the clergy sought relief from subscription to the articles which they had long disavowed, others drank or dreamed away their lives; shepherds were profligate or idle, while the hungry sheep looked up and were not fed. [30]

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[29] Helen Gordon, ed. The New Oxford Book of English Verse (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 271.
[30] Morley Punchon, Lectures and Sermons (Toronto: Adam, Stevenson and Co., 1873), p. 151.

John Wesley's Methodism was, at least in part, a reaction to this new understanding of human nature, nature's original innocence, and the capacity for humanity to develop free from the confines of the institutional church. In his doctrinal sermons Wesley made his position clear. The Romantics were not on to anything new. Instead they had fallen into the trap of self--deception that had plagued humanity since Adam and Eve were in the garden. Human nature was as corrupt as ever, despite the claims of Romanticism to the contrary. In his doctrinal sermon on original sin Wesley preached:

> Here not a few persons of strong understanding, as well as extensive learning, have employed their utmost abilities to show what they have termed "the fair side of human nature." And it must be acknowledged, that if their accounts of him be just, man is still but "a little lower than the angels," or as the words may be more literally rendered, "a little less than God".... So now it is quite unfashionable to talk otherwise, to say anything to the disparagement of human nature; which is generally allowed, notwithstanding a few infirmities, to be very innocent, wise and virtuous.[31]

Far from being innocent, wise, and virtuous, "natural humanity" was marked by ignorance and a separation from God that human longing and endeavor alone could not overcome. Being ignorant, humanity cannot know God, because it cannot love what it does not know.[32] This understanding, according to Wesley, was what made Christianity unique and set it apart from all heathenisms. In defining the difference between the two Wesley noted that:

> The one acknowledges that many men are infected with many vices, and even born with a proneness to them, but supposes withal, that in some the natural good much over balances the evil; the other declares that all men

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[31] Rev. N. Burwash, Wesley's Doctrinal Sermons (Toronto: Methodist Publishing House, 1881), p.438.
[32] Burwash, p.441.

> are conceived in sin and shapen in wickedness, ...and so that there dwelleth in him in his flesh, in his natural state, no good thing, but every imagination of the thought of his heart is evil.[33]

Humanity's capacity for self--deception, and its unwillingness to acknowledge its existential, sinful, nature was not only an affront to true religion in Wesley's doctrine, it was the enemy of the development of true self-consciousness. In his sermon "Awake thou that sleepest", (preached on Ephesians 5:14 "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead), he had this to say:

> Full of diseases as he is, he fancies himself in perfect health. Fast bound in misery and iron he dreams that he is happy and at liberty. He says "peace, peace," while the devil, as a strong man is in full possession of his soul. He sleeps on still, and takes his rest, though hell is moved from beneath to meet him.[34]"

Unlike the Romantics, Wesley found no traces in nature of an original innocence that existed before the separation of humanity from nature, and his own "doctrine of the wilderness" sprung directly from his own experience of it. In 1735, Wesley undertook a missionary voyage to what was then the colony of Georgia. He was much impressed with the possibilities of preaching to the natives because they, in his words, had:

> no comments to construe away the text of scripture, no vain philosophy to corrupt it; no luxurious, sensuous, covetous, ambitious expounders to soften its unpleasing truths. They have no party, no interest to serve, and are therefore fit to receive the gospel in its simplicity.[35]

Yet a scant two years later, Wesley was describing those same Indians as "gluttons, thieves, dissemblers, liars, murderers of fathers, murderers of mothers,

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[33] Burwash, p.441.
[34] Burwash, p.19.
[35] Francis J. McConnell, John Wesley (London: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1939), p. 47.

murderers of their own children."[36] Wesley's lack of success with the Georgian Indians might well have contributed to his metaphorical understanding of the wilderness, to which we now turn. Far from being a place of communion with the divine, it represented for Wesley the state of self-deception in which humanity frequently found itself.

In his sermon appropriately titled "the Wilderness State," Wesley relied on the metaphor of the people of Israel wandering in the desert to describe the situation of those who had come to awareness of their sinful state, but had not yet entered into the joy of the salvation of God.

> In like manner God has delivered them that fear him from the bondage of sin and Satan. They are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus, yet not many of them immediately enter into "the rest that remaineth for the people of God." They come as it were, into a waste and howling desert, where they are variously tempted and tormented.[37]

This bit of brief comparison of Methodist doctrine and Romantic philosophy was invaluable in helping me create the atmosphere out of which the characters of James Evans and Donald Ross emerge. Evans dressed himself in the trappings of Methodist doctrine and wore it well. Yet his personal writings show a yearning more closely associated with the Romanticism that Wesley strived against. He found in the wilderness not a "howling wasteland," but rather a place of joy, freedom, and perhaps even the communion with the divine so well expressed by other Romantics of the day. His travelling diary records situations of what most

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[36] McConnel, p.47.
[37] Burwash, p. 458.

people would consider unbelievable hardship. Yet Evans seems to be having the time of his life. In a journal entry dated Thursday, December 9, 1838 he wrote:

> We are barricaded with our canoe and our evergreen tops; and considering the frost and snow, which is eight inches deep, we are pretty comfortable. The weather is very cold. A fine golden eagle flying over my head, the wind howling, the waves beating on the rocks, the bending forest, the crackling fire, and the Ojibway, with my other accompaniments tell me I am far from home. No!--this is my home, though far from the haunts of civilized men. But I shall meet them again, I trust, on earth; if not I will meet them in heaven, O blessed hope![38]

The "blessed hope" that he will meet up with civilization again does little to dispel the sense that he is perfectly content where he is, and that in the wilderness, he has found a paradise, his "homeless state" notwithstanding.

But the "Nature" of the HBC territories changes everyone, Evans included. Bernard, in his first soliloquy, describes being swallowed up by the land and transformed, as was Jonah by the whale. That image came to me as I was imagining Bernard trying to convey the sense of being at the mercy of the land, and the paradoxical sense of dependence and mistrust that the geography of the HBC territories fostered within those who lived there. Some time after writing that scene, I came across this exchange between Northrop Frye and author David Cayley:

> **Cayley:** We talked earlier about journeys by train, and you mentioned how impressed you were by the experience of being in the Gulf of St. Lawrence on board ship. Was that when you returned from Oxford in 1939?
> **Frye:** Yes, in the 1930's you had to go by ship. There weren't any transatlantic flights then. I suddenly realized when I was in the middle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence that I was surrounded by five Canadian provinces. You don't get that kind of experience anywhere in the United States.

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[38] quoted in "A Letter to the Editor", The Guardian, Vol X, N.25, April 9, 1839.

> **Cayley:** What did that image say to you?
> **Frye:** Well, it said Jonah and the whale more or less...
> **Cayley:** You've also suggested, I think, that this produced an inner, as opposed to an outer, frontier in Canada.
> **Frye:** Oh I think so. The sense of introversion in the Canadian psyche is very marked, and it's a matter of making internal journeys and finding there are images there.[39]

The inner frontiers of ***Cloven Hoof*** look something like this: Donald Ross, the Presbyterian Scot, is a product of the religion of the Enlightenment. God is in heaven and everyone else has their place in the great chain from heaven down. Nature is as far down as you can get. It is there to be acted upon, and to be used. Ross' religion serves to support the established authority of the HBC and initially he is quite pleased to welcome Evans to the fort. Evans can help maintain that authority over the Indians, and make them as rational as Donald Ross himself is. But James Evans becomes more than Ross' adversary. He becomes his nightmare. I return to the Pan archetype to explain this. As James Hillman notes:

> When Pan is dead, then nature can be controlled by the will of the new God, man, modeled in the image of Hercules or Prometheus, creating from it and polluting in it without a troubled conscience. (Hercules, who cleaned up Pan's natural world first, clubbing instinct with his will power, does not stop to clear away the dismembered carcasses left to putrefy after his civilizing, creative tasks. He strides on to the next task, and ultimate madness.) ...Pan still lives, and not merely in the literary imagination. He lives in the repressed which returns in the psychopathologies of instinct which assert themselves...primarily in the nightmare, and its associated erotic, demonic and panic qualities.[40]

In James Evans, Donald Ross sees the return of a nature that he hoped he had subdued with his intellect and his accounting books. He panics when he realizes that he can no longer control the Indians with intellectual appeals to their

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[39] David Cayley, Northrop Frye in Conversation (Concord: Anansi Press,1992), p.125-27.
[40] James Hillman, op.cit., p.xxiii.

own self-interest. He cannot threaten or cajole them, for example, into crewing him to Red River. Evans subverts him in ways that intellect alone cannot guard against and Ross collapses. The force of will cannot restore Ross. It takes the surreptitious interventions of his wife, Mary, and Bernard.

Evans, on the other hand, is a Romantic at heart. He believes in his own goodness, and the goodness of the Indians. He prides himself on being unlike the stereotypical clergyman that Bernard is familiar with. He will be about the business of restoring a lost nature that the Indians possessed before the fur trade. Yet when he is subverted by his accidental shooting of Tom Hassal, Evans becomes demonic, threatening the Indians who disobey him with the eternal fire of damnation.

Both men are guilty of the sin of self--deception, as Wesley would understand it. Nature is not dead, but neither can a lost nature be reclaimed. Ross and Evans react differently to circumstances which the atmosphere and environment thrust upon them. Donald Ross does not try to transcend the limits of the atmosphere. He merely seeks to uphold them. Ultimately he fails in doing so even though the order of the Fort is restored with Evans' departure. Evans does try to transcend the limits of the atmosphere of the Fort by siding with the Indians against the Company. He, like Donald Ross, fails when his deceptions become revealed, and he is forced to return to London. What the characters learn about themselves through this experience is left for the audience to decide. Does Donald Ross become more humble, more aware of his human frailties? Perhaps he does. On the other hand, we are free to believe that nothing changed for Donald Ross after Evans left; Evans reveals something of his feelings about the damage that he

did in Norway House in his final dialogue with Bernard. But does Evans ever know what exactly it was that he did take?

Isolation is also a feature of the atmosphere of ***Cloven Hoof***. The psychological boundaries in the play parallel the geographical boundary imposed by the Canadian Shield to create an atmosphere of isolation and oppression. Certainly the characters in the play are isolated from civilization; the little exposure they have to it, they have brought with themselves. Hence Mary Evans reveals that music is "a tiny ray of light in the darkness." But they are also isolated from the wilderness that surrounds them. Bernard gives the wilderness its own persona in his introductory speech when he describes the law of vigilance of the HBC. "Never turn your back on the sky," says Bernard, as if to say that nature itself has a force and a presence that wills human destruction. Margaret Atwood notes that this is a theme that runs throughout much Canadian writing on the North:

> popular lore and culture established early that the North was uncanny, awe inspiring in an almost religious way, hostile to white men, but alluring; that it would lead you on and do you in, that it would drive you crazy, and finally would claim you for its own." [41]

In another lecture within the same series, Atwood describes "the complex of imagery and story that has gathered around the idea of the North as a mean female--the sort of icy and savage *femme fatale* who will drive you crazy and claim you for her own."[42] That feminine imagery of the North fits within the enlightenment model of the universe which places God above humans, men above women and children, and white male Eurocentrism over nature. I adopted that

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[41] Margaret Atwood, Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p.18.
[42] Atwood, Strange Things, p.88.

imagery of a feminine nature as a dominant metaphor for ***Cloven Hoof***, even at the risk of being stereotypical rather than archetypal, simply because I tried to place the characters within the images and the metaphors of their own time.

Bernard's description of the law of vigilance applies not just to physical, but also psychic survival. The wilderness must be kept "out there" beyond the boundaries of the fort. That job falls to Donald Ross, and by extension because of the hierarchy of the day, to his wife Mary. Her job description is to enforce social rationality. "I work," she says when Mary Evans asks her if she plays the piano. Furthermore, her work is to make sure "everyone knows their place around here. Things run better then." Mary Ross knows that some boundaries, especially the one between pragmatism and sentimentality, must not be crossed or else chaos ensues. She is critical of her husband for allowing another woman in the fort, asking Donald Ross if they are "running a fort or a Sunday School." She is openly contemptuous of Mary Evans' claim that "vulgar language so degrades the feminine element of the fort," and she is the driving force behind the Evans' expulsion from the fort to the village.

In fact it was a personality conflict between Mary Ross and Mary Evans that led to the Evans' departure from the fort. Letitia Hargrave, the wife of the Factor at York Factory during the time the Evans were in Norway House, had this to say on the subject:

> I really think that the whole affair has been caused by Mrs. Evans and her daughter's successful rivalry over Mrs. Ross and her children--For they were the derision of the whole passers by for their finery and exhibition of good education and knowledge of astronomy as Mrs. E used to say

> whereas Mrs. Ross and Jane did not know the names of the commonest stars.[43]

In ***Cloven Hoof***, however, there is more than rivalry going on between Mary Ross and Mary Evans. Mary Ross' job is to be vigilant against the encroachment of anything that might undermine the potency of the fur trade and, by extension, her husband. If to live in the "wilderness" state, as John Wesley suggested, was to live in a state of self--deception, then Mary Ross clearly transcended the limitations imposed by the atmosphere of the play. All of the other characters live in some kind of state of self--deception. Donald Ross wants to believe he is all powerful; Evans wants to believe that his predicaments are signs of God's providence, not his own recklessness; Bernard wants to believe that he is nothing but a naive youth; Mary Evans wants to believe that her husband is all virtue; William Mason wants to believe that he is all victim. Each character somewhere during the play has to face the hard reality of their own existence, and to recognize that it is not all what they say it is. All, of course, except Mary Ross. She is never deceived by the others, nor a victim of self--deception. She, of all the characters, knows exactly who she is and what she is about from beginning to end.

The atmosphere of the fort may have defined her lack of official power in the workings of the trade. But, as she informed Bernard, "I've got unofficial ways of making you wish you'd never been born," and she was never afraid to use them. On the other hand, she exercises her power not for power's sake as do her husband and James Evans, but rather in the service of love. "Don't ever get in the way of my love for Donald Ross again," she admonishes Bernard. But that admonishment is more out of concern for Bernard's well--being than it is a demonstration of

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[43] Margaret MacLeod, ed. The Letters of Letitia Hargrave (Toronto: Champlain Society, publisher, XXIII), p.151.

Bernard's powerlessness in her presence. She knows the power of her love. It has the power to obliterate, like a killing snow squall. The character of Mary Ross is the personification of "Nature" itself. This is not the Eden-like "nature" which James Evans sought to reclaim. Neither is it the fallen "nature" that Donald Ross tried to repress. It is "Nature," the primal element which surrounds the fort at Norway House, exposing the weaknesses of all who are blind to its power.

Plot

> Plot's religious significance in narrative is that the plot is the prime mover of narrative toward wholeness. Plot takes fragmented moments of action and creates order. Plot takes open--ended situations and brings them to a close. While these actions are not unique to religion, they do have religious implications.... Narrative begins with an established moment in time. Rising action follows. A crisis moment is revealed followed by some recognition of crisis and the re-establishment of a more stable time, and plot...leads most powerfully toward moral judgment. *Denouement* demands a sorting out of life; a plot cannot end without the assigning of value. Thus a character's action and development is highly dependent on the plot. The plot establishes the context within which character makes virtue--revealing decisions. The plot provides a framework for character decisions. The provision of a guiding framework is perhaps plot's most religious function.[44]

There is a mystery within the James Evans story itself that the historical record alone cannot answer. Just a few short months before Evans was to leave his post, rumours of Evans' inappropriate relations with the young girls of the Indian Village and the fort began circulating. These relationships were not current ones; the girls involved were no longer living in Evans' house. One of the incidents for which Evans had been charged had occurred at least two years before

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[44] Ledbetter, p.14.

in 1844. Why then, did the rumours start when they did? Who started them? To what end? These are the kinds of questions that Dudley Owen Edwards says, "history cannot reach."[45] The historical record pertaining to James Evans offers up no clues to these questions, only more questions.

For example, was Evans really planning to stay in the territories and form his own settlement as ***Cloven Hoof*** suggests he was? Perhaps yes. Donald Ross took a statement from one Magnus Harper after the boatmen refused to travel to Red River, to the effect that Evans had promised them their own island in Lake Winnipeg if they refused Ross' contract.[46] Did James Evans really murder Thomas Hassal? Probably not. But George Simpson heard a report that Evans might not leave the territories altogether once he was recalled. He might only go as far as Red River. Simpson then wanted Ross to investigate the possibility that Evans might have murdered Tom Hassal, have him arrested, and tried for murder in Red River, as I mentioned in Chapter One.[47]

While I was trying to establish who started the rumours, I first had to establish a motivation for any one to start them in the first place. The above two pieces of information gave me the motivation I needed. What if, wondered I, the recall from the WMS came and Evans simply refused to go? What if he had garnered so much support from his Indian friends that he was able to turn his back on the WMS and stay where he was? Who in the HBC would be the most affected if that were what Evans chose to do? The answer was clear. It would be Donald Ross. But would Ross have started the rumours? Probably not. George Simpson

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[45] Owen Dudley Edwards, Hare and Burke, preface.
[46] HBCA D.5/14 #17A, May 20, 1845.
[47] BCA AE.R73.La5, Simpson to Ross, June 26, 1846.

had given him instructions to stay on good terms with Evans, to ensure that Evans would not suspect the HBC was behind his recall.[48] Ross was in enough difficulty with Simpson already for not being able to control Evans. It would hardly stand him in good stead to directly disobey an order from Governor Simpson. William Mason also had the motivation to besmirch Evans. But the evidence was clear that he did not. Mason advised Evans to deny the charges that had been made against him and to carry on. Evans, however, insisted that Mason try him.[49] There was no evidence linking anyone to the rumours. The question then called for a narrative answer and solution. The plot of ***Cloven Hoof*** is my solution to this mystery. Bernard, under coercion from Mary Ross, was behind the plot against Evans.

The plot was my own invention. The form of the plot was not. The archetype of the plot came from the story of Joseph in Egypt, from the book of Genesis. I used Robert Pinsky's analysis of this story as my own jumping off point. Pinsky notes that Joseph's story unfolds in the key of a folk tale. "The teller of the folk tale, imagined in the stereotype of an elder, a wise man or nurse or grandmother, shares the cunning of her protagonist, that younger son or daughter whose resourcefulness and success reflect the same qualities in the teller."[50]

Similarly in ***Cloven Hoof,*** the teller of the tale and the protagonist are the same character, separated in time by thirty years.

Pinsky also notes:

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[48] AE. R73. La5, (Pt5), Simpson to Ross, December 29, 1845.
[49] University of Western Ontario Archives, #216, The Evans Papers.
[50] Robert Pinsky, "The Story of Joseph's Interpretation of Dreams", in Genesis: As it is Written, ed. David Rosenburg (San Francisco: Harper, 1996), p.204.

> The younger daughter or son by definition lacks power. The elder brothers are stronger, more experienced, and in the tradition of patriarchy closer to that fountainhead of power, the father. Often the youngest is the parental scapegoat or pet--in fairy tales where the doting parent is succeeded by a malign one, both--which is to say chosen.[51]

Bernard, like the young Joseph, became my chosen one. Like Joseph in Egypt, his task is to restore the brokeness of his family. Also like the story of Joseph, that brokeness is in part caused by the actions of the younger brother himself. Joseph causes brokeness by lording his powers over his older brothers. Bernard causes brokeness by allowing himself to be seduced by Evans. In the restoration of the brokeness, the plot creates wholeness. That wholeness is the value which as Ledbetter says "denouement demands."

Character

> A character in narrative intensifies our own self--awareness, if for no other reason than we are relating to their lives and interpreting ourselves in relation to those lives.... The narrative element of character has religious significance because existential crisis always confronts the characters and provides a situation in which virtue--establishing decisions are made.... The character element is religious because within the hypothetical world of the text, narrative presents character with myriad possibilities for him/her to choose good and bad. The character in a text suggests potential for good and evil according to the decisions he/she make. A character is not merely an element placed within a pre-structured world; rather a character creates the novel's world. ...Most important, the character addresses the critical question of self-identity. The essential desire of character in the novel is to discover "Who am I?" Such a question is replete with religious implications and for the literary critic unavoidable implications. The question for self-identity invites exploration into human nature, its malleability and possibility, and has social as well as personal implications.

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[51] Pinsky, p.204.

> Implicit in the question of self-identity is the human being's relationship to the world.[52]

The question of character has been raised in relation to the other elements of narrative already, so this is, in some ways, a summation of things said before. But I do want to examine the characters of ***Cloven Hoof*** in relation to the above analysis of character. Specifically I want establish how each character might lead to a greater self--awareness on the part of the audience by exploring the virtue--establishing decisions that each character makes. What do these decisions tell the audience about the worldview of the characters, and by extension, their own worldview?

Again, I need to add a caveat to Ledbetter's assertion that "narrative presents character with myriad possibilities to choose to do good and bad." Obviously, the women and children in ***Cloven Hoof*** do not have myriad possibilities to do anything. Their choices are limited because of age and gender, and their concern is to survive. Mary Ross and Mary Evans do not have the options to leave their husbands. Bernard cannot quit the company. Their choices are circumscribed in a way that the choices available to the men are not.

Donald Ross

As I mentioned before, Donald Ross is a product of the Enlightenment. He prides himself on his ability to keep things running smoothly, and his ability to keep his head in difficult situations. While he is a father figure to Bernard, he is not above exploiting Bernard's writing skills for his own ends. Yet he is vulnerable under his pragmatic persona. He gives Bernard his own symbol of power (the

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[52] Ledbetter, p.15-16.

coat) and is genuinely pleased that Bernard will one day be a factor in his own right. He is also concerned in his own way about the welfare of the Indians. He threatens Johnny and Henry with the possibility that they will never get another trip from him, but it grieves him to do so. However, even in this matter, he would put his head above his heart. His concern for the Indians is also shown in his wife Mary's revelation to Bernard. It was Donald's idea to bring in the missionary, because he had a genuine concern for the spiritual well--being of the Indians regardless of the trade benefits the missionary might bring to the HBC.

At the beginning of the play, Donald Ross makes a virtue out of doing nothing. He refuses to rise to Fraser's concern that the beaver are all gone, and he refuses his wife's demand to move the Evans' family from the fort. But, as Bernard points out in his soliloquy about Donald Ross, underneath Ross' visage of power lies the reality of Ross' powerlessness. He knows what Fraser is telling him about the beaver is true, but there is nothing he can do about it. He knows the Evans family is disrupting the life of the fort, but there is nothing he can do about that either. With so many of the issues affecting his factorship out of his control, Donald Ross is a frightened man. But he can admit that to no one. He can only fill the container his fear creates in himself with his bottle, another sign of his powerlessness.

In spite of his weakness, or perhaps because of it, Donald Ross makes one great virtue--making decision when he offers James Evans the trial documents. On one hand, this gesture can be seen as pure expedience; he is willing to do anything to get Evans out of the Territories. But, on the other hand, it is a gesture born from empathy. Ross knows that he has disgraced himself by his drunken conduct, and that no one will look at his factorship with the same respect again. He also

holds Evans to blame for that. But he sees that Evans and himself are both in the same predicament. No one will ever look at Evans' ministry the same way again if word of his trial gets out. By offering Evans the documents, Ross offers the missionary a chance that was denied himself: the chance to escape to London with his reputation more or less intact. Evans, as far as Ross is concerned, has suffered enough. While he could destroy Evans, he chooses not to do so. This represents a change for Ross. His head would say that Evans has to pay the full price for what he did. But his heart is a little more forgiving. By making this gesture, Ross is acknowledging a new self-awareness. He has been saved from self-destruction by the intervention of Bernard and unbeknownst to himself, Mary Ross. He offers the same salvation to James Evans.

Mary Ross

Mary Ross' great virtue is her love of her husband Donald. This takes awhile to reveal, for, at the beginning of the play, she seems contemptuous of Ross' inability to make hard decisions. She raises the possibility in the mind of the audience that perhaps it is not love that motivates her to keep badgering Ross, but self-interest. If Donald Ross falls, so does she. But she makes her motivations clear to Bernard. Her love is expressed not in sentiment, but in power. She will take on the devil himself on behalf of her husband, not because he is the factor, but because she is his wife.

It might seem paradoxical then that I find her virtue--making decision is not in her collusion with Bernard to bring down James Evans. She is so single--minded in her devotion to her husband that to support him by fair means or foul would not have even been raised as a question in her mind. Her virtue--making

decision is to acknowledge to Mary Evans that Mary is doing the right thing by planning to go to London without her husband if need be. "You may not have stood by him before, but you're standing by him now," she tells Mary, in the second-last scene of the play. For the first time Mary Ross can acknowledge someone else's capability for devotion, even when that somebody is the woman she has seen as her arch--rival.

Again it is a moment of empathy. Mary Ross has hated Mary Evans because of her taste for the finer things in life, like butter, mustard, and music. There is a twinge of jealousy in everything that Mary Ross says about Mary Evans, because Mary Evans expects things that Mary Ross cannot even dream of having. Yet, by acknowledging Mary Evan's strength, she also acknowledges their common bond. Both of them are where they are because of their husband's choices. The two Marys have had to make the best of it. As strong a person as Mary Ross is, her opportunities for making her own decisions have always been circumscribed by her husband's position. By acknowledging Mary Evans' decision, she also acknowledges that perhaps there are other ways of showing devotion. Her world expands to include other possibilities with her acknowledgment.

James Evans

At first it seems difficult to equate James Evans with virtue--making decisions. He is after all, the trickster, who makes life up as he goes along, exchanging one persona for another as the mood strikes and the circumstances dictate. But he finally allows himself a moment of honesty when asked by William Mason why he molested the girls. Evans' answer, "Because there was nothing to stop me," sounds chilling. It is chilling. But Evans makes no excuses for what he

has done. He does not blame the girls for leading him on. He just admits that he is motivated by the desire to go as far as he can in any situation until he is stopped. His revelation also reveals the lack of virtue on the part of the other characters. Why was there nothing to stop him? Because everyone preferred to turn a blind eye to what he was doing. The implication in that for me is that if anybody cared for the well--being of Maggie and Eliza, they would have stopped Evans long before the issue of a trial ever arose. But nobody did. Bernard only told Mary Ross about Maggie and Eliza's predicament to get himself out of trouble. Mary Ross started the rumours about what Evans was doing, not to bring a measure of justice to the girls, but to get Evans out of the territories. William Mason wanted Evans to deny that he was guilty of anything. By freely admitting his own pathology, Evans shines a light on the culpability of the rest of the characters for what happened to the girls. I am left to wonder, and I hope the audience is too: How much abuse occurred, especially in the residential school system, because there was nothing to stop it?

Evans makes another virtue--making decision in the form of a revelation in his last dialogue with Bernard. Evans tells Bernard in the last scene of the play that he and the others only saw what they wanted to see. "Donald Ross wanted to see order and dignity, William Mason, a light heart, and Bernard a father." Through this self--disclosure, Evans again points out the lack of virtue of the other characters. They preferred self--deception to reality. In a perverse kind of way, Evans, through his conduct, finally made it impossible for the others to go on deceiving themselves. But he was prepared to let them go as far as they would in their own self--deception.

Mary Evans

Mary Evans' virtue--making decision also comes through her self--disclosure. At the beginning of the play, she, of all the characters is most definitely playing a role--that of the devoted clergyman's wife. She seems totally unaware of the effect that she has on other people, and she seems oblivious to the scorn that is heaped upon her. But in the climactic scene, she admits that she has known all along what people have thought of her. Until that moment, however, she had no options for doing, or being anything different.

Her virtue shows when she tells James that she knows all about the girls. She does so in a way that shows she has found a new dignity within herself. She is prepared to leave her husband, but she is also prepared to work for his defence should he decide to stay and face the charges of murder. She does not try to influence his decision, and remains strong when Evans pressures her to reconsider her own decision to leave. She admits to the others that she has let her fascination with the heavens blind her to the reality of what was happening around her, but now that the telescope is gone, she is prepared to see things for what they really are, and deal with them on that level.

William Mason

William Mason's decision for virtue comes when he first refuses, then agrees, to help Bernard trap James Evans. Until that moment, Mason has seen himself as victim. He did not want to come to Norway House in the first place, but he was forced to because there was nothing for him in Lac La Pluie. He has constantly disapproved of Evans' lighthearted behavior, because Mason takes life so much more seriously. When he relates the results of the trial to Bernard, he does so in a

tone that smacks of his own resignation. Even when Bernard offers the possibility of effecting change in the situation, he demurs. He would rather take his chances with the secretaries in London. It is only when Bernard threatens to reveal Mason's misplaced intimacy with Clara that Mason responds.

On one hand, it seems like Mason is being victimized once again; he is being coerced into doing something that he does not want to do. But Bernard's comment that "maybe you were just born under an unlucky star," allows Mason the chance to re-evaluate his life. He has thought that kissing Clara was the worst thing he has ever done. Bernard's revelation shows him that his minor indiscretion pales in comparison with his willingness to suffer unnecessarily, and to prolong the suffering of others by not acting when he has the opportunity. At some level, he has considered himself to be nothing but unlucky. He expects the worst and he is seldom disappointed. Bernard's challenge to him, coming even as it does under coercion, gives him the chance to be the agent of his own destiny. To do that, however, he must first confront the man who has caused him so much suffering, James Evans.

Bernard

I said a great deal about the character of Old Bernard in the discussion of tone. It is enough to say here that his decision for virtue is to listen to the hauntings of James Evans, to tell the story of what happened from his own perspective, and to let the audience decide either for or against him. But his younger alter ego requires some attention. Bernard is, for all intents and purposes, an orphan. He spends time in the company of others, but he is alone. He works in proximity to Donald Ross, but he spends much time teaching himself to copy the

hands of others, and writing his own poetry in his bunk, hoping to remain undiscovered.

He is a very private sort, to the extent that no one knows about his relationship with Clara. Bernard is always "in the picture" but nobody particularly cares that he is. When Mary Ross tells him that James Evans has promised Clara to his better, Bernard takes a decision for virtue. From that moment on, his presence will matter. He takes all the skills of writing, persuasion and coercion that he has learned from Donald Ross, rallies Mason and Ross, confronts James Evans, and sends him packing. In that moment, Bernard moves from boyhood to manhood.

It is a life and death struggle he is engaged in. If his plan fails to dislodge Evans, and if it becomes public knowledge that he acted at the behest of Mary Ross, both his and Donald Ross' careers are finished. There is no guarantee that the outcome of the confrontation will go his way. In fact there is a moment when it looks like it may not. When Ross reveals that the WMS has not yet seen the trial documents and that Evans can take them with him, Evans could just as easily refuse the offer and stay to fight the charges against him. Except he does not do that. He accepts Ross' offer and goes to London. But Evans only goes because Bernard has been willing to risk his very self to expose Evans. It is easy to say that Bernard was not operating out of any kind of altruistic concern for Donald Ross, or for any one else for that matter. Perhaps he did what he did only because Mary Ross forced him. Yet perhaps that too is just part of the transforming power of plot: that individuals acting out of immediate self-interest set in motion a chain of events, the *telos* of which they can only barely begin to perceive.

We have now examined how the theological concerns of narrative are embedded in the structure of ***Cloven Hoof***. In the next chapter I will discuss the reactions to these elements that I have garnered from both critical readers of the play, and a general audience who heard the play read in December of 1998.

CHAPTER 3

CLOVEN HOOF: THE PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT

> In any assessment of a work of art, criticism focuses on both subjective and objective factors. Among the objective factors to be considered are the participant's own goals leading to the creation of the work, as well as the responses of the public or clientele. In addition the participant will be expected to write maturely about the process of creating the work as an artistic experience. Objective factors in assessment include the applications of normal canons of criticism by connoisseurs of the selected art form for theological reflection on the meaning of the symbolism of the art form for faith. Technical competence in the "craft" of the art form will be considered along with the work's symbolic and aesthetic statement.[1]

Cloven Hoof has been through many evaluations and assessments as it has moved from concept to publication. I have included these assessments, along with my own observations about them, in what follows. My practicum supervisor, Geoff LeBoutillier, the owner of Tohaventa Holdings, provided the first evaluation. I contracted with Geoff early in 1996 to supervise me in a major practicum in script writing. We agreed that I would write a treatment of ***Cloven Hoof***, and that my evaluation for the practicum would be based upon the quality of that treatment. Between January 1996 and June 1997, I wrote three different treatments for Geoff. After the third treatment, Geoff and I both agreed that I had gone as far as I could under his supervision. His evaluation is more a description

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[1] "Proposal/Dissertation Guide", St. Stephen's College Doctor of Ministry Program Handbook, (1993), p.5

of the entire process to which we committed, rather than an evaluation of any particular treatment. I was more than impressed with the way that Geoff documented our time together. As he notes in his report, he was unable to give his "enthusiastic approval of my last draft." I must say that when I contracted with Geoff, I had no idea how difficult the process was going to be. I knew the story, backwards and forwards, and in my own naïve way, I assumed that the writing of a screenplay would be a relatively simple process of sequencing all the dramatic bits together. Geoff quickly disabused me of that notion. He rightly noted that I was unclear about what the film was really about, and through the writing of successive drafts, that clarity continued to elude me. Geoff also noted two specific challenges that I was unable to overcome within the genre of film. The first was the difficulty of the genre itself, "the inner struggle period piece." How do you dramatize it? The second, related to the first, is the difficulty of converting narrative action into dramatic action.

I hope the play that I have written shows how seriously I took Geoff's analysis. After working with Geoff, I tried very hard to get into the heads of my major characters. To do so I did the background research on the struggle between Enlightenment and Romantic theology, which I discussed in the first chapter under the heading of Atmosphere. I also worked very hard to develop a one line sentence that would answer the question, "What is the play about?" In the end my sentence was: "***Cloven Hoof*** is the story of a man who sought to be a martyr because he could not be a saint." The play developed from there, as I attempted to show the damage that James Evans did to those around him in his pursuit of martyrdom.

I took a great deal of heart from Geoff's evaluation. I had come to the end of the practicum with a feeling of failure because I had not produced a workable treatment. However, Geoff's analysis indicated to me that it was not necessarily a lack of technical competence that was holding me back. Rather it was my inability to decide which story I wanted to tell, and how I wanted to tell it. I also took great comfort from Geoff's observations that I would keep at the work even after I finished with him. He was right. His evaluation follows:

June 5, 1997

William J. Close Ric
Director, D.Min. Program
St. Stephen's College
University of Alberta
8810 - 112 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2J6

Dear Mr. Close,

RE. *Geoff Wilfong-Pritchard's Practicum*

Geoff began consulting me on his James Evans story in December, 1995. It's hard to believe so many months (and so much work!) have gone by so quickly. I only wish the process could have been more conclusive for Geoff, and that he could have had my enthusiastic approval of his last draft. What's called in the film biz, "a payoff." But, to paraphrase, I guess some are born screenwriters, and some have screenwriting thrust upon them. It's a tough field. Film is horrendously expensive. Facetious though it may sound, one industry adage is that all we do is make filler between ads; filler gripping enough to keep viewers tuned in from commercial A to commercial B.

The medium, by necessity, is driven by money. Even low-end video is $1,000 a minute. Theatrical features and MOWs (Movies-of-the-week) cost millions. Even low budget long-form pieces cost at least $1.5 million. So how does one raise that kind of money? Answer: the story has to be an incredibly good yarn.

That's not to say that the James Evans story would have to be made as a contemporary action flick set on Mars. On the contrary, the material is rich, and Geoff is to be commended for his nose for great dramatic resources. Evans' tale obviously resonated with Geoff's creative spirit, and through him, I must add, I too became inspired by the possibilities. Having gotten to appreciate Geoff's dogged determination over the past few months, I am certain he won't throw in the towel. He'll just keep plugging away.

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Just to put all this in perspective, I presently am working on two long-form pieces. One I became intrigued with about ten years ago, optioned two years ago, raised development money for verbally one year ago, but it took another year to get the money in the bank. We hope to shoot it next spring, but I wouldn't be surprised if it took yet another year to get it done. The second long form piece is based on an idea I had 17 years ago. I did a draft then and a fifteen year hiatus followed. After a couple of years serious work with a co-writer, the script is now out and about and starting to scare up money and interest, but it won't be shot for at least another year. So, one project over a decade in gestation, and another closer to two decades. Suffice to say, things move slowly. Geoff has been on the Evans case for barely 18 months. He's got a long way to go.

The thing that amazes me most about Geoff's work during this period is his final report. He has such a clear understanding of my ramblings about the drafts! That is a true sign of a good writer - a good listener. He knows where his work was weak and keeps trying to improve it. That's the necessary drive. That's what it takes. That and being ego-less.

When I read proposals, outlines, treatments, and screenplays for films, and even when I am pitched verbally, if pictures begin appearing in my head, and the pictures can be strung together in a compelling manner, then I know that they are cinematic and the story will work on the screen.

In Geoff's case, he definitely got the pictures part, but the strung-together-in-a-compelling-manner part seemed a bit of a challenge. He got a lot better during the process, mind you, but still, even in the end, the material seems fragmented. We are still struggling. What is the film really about? ✓

The problem is, and we discussed this from the start, Geoff chose a very difficult genre - the inner struggle period piece. If he'd been working on a movie about John Cabot or the Franklin Expedition, it would have been a lot easier. Man against nature, or Man trying to overcome a physical adversity. But Geoff chose Evans vs. Evans - a man against himself. That's tough. It works in novels where you can get into the hero's head, but on film? How do you dramatize it?

The clear story overview, or pitch line, eluded Geoff. We have a pitch line for one of our projects. It goes like this:

> *Christmas is outlawed in Splithoof, Saskatchewan because the mayor, Alex Kringle, who's also the town barber, is Santa's son. When Alex was a little boy growing up at the North Pole, on Christmas Eve his father was always "away on business." He had to stay home alone eating peanut butter sandwiches. He grew up bitter and twisted, eloped with Santa's prize elf, Pix, and set up shop in*

Splithoof where he founded the ABC, the Association for the Banishment of Christmas. The organization is so successful that now more and more people all over the world are disbelieving in Christmas. Santa is shrivelling up and in danger of being blown away on the winds of insignificance.

But Alex and Pix's daughter, Sandy, a Nancy Drew aficionada, gets wind of Christmas and writes Santa a letter. As soon as someone in a town believes in him, Santa can gain entrée, which he does. He comes to Splithoof incognito. But super-sleuth Sandy discovers that he is her grandfather, Father Christmas, and manages to effect a rapprochement between father and son. Christmas returns to Splithoof.

Geoff and I failed to come up with this kind of succinct overview of his story. We couldn't free ourselves from the facts.

When adapting historical material to film, or, for that matter, when adapting work from another medium be it print or stage, the screenwriter is faced with many problems. Foremost, as mentioned above, is how to convert narrative action into dramatic action. Second, and it's a related problem, is how to separate yourself from the original material without compromising either yourself or its integrity. For example, despite the sexual nature of Evans' alleged transgressions, to his credit Geoff did not exploit this aspect to make his concept marketable. He kept his eye on the larger, spiritual battle and thereby set himself a more difficult and more admirable challenge.

To deal with Evans' period, the HBC, fur-trapping, early missionary era, is also a difficult challenge. It's so easy to look hokey or pedagogical. Alliance's *Black Robe* worked to a degree, but Fil Fraser's Edmonton-produced *Marie-Anne* definitely fell into the trap. I'd say Geoff's outline appeared to be moving closer to the *Marie-Anne* end of the scale.

There's another industry adage: "If you want to send a message, call Western Union." It's a fine line between telling a story about something that's important to you, and trying to change people's behaviour. But cops and robbers movies aren't made to reduce crime. They're made because people have a fascination with Man's darker side, and, even on the cheapest form of TV, they love to see *hubris* punished and stories unfold according to Aristotelian precepts.

In Geoff's movie, we kept being confused about what was really important, what was Evans' fatal flaw, and how could this be dramatized so that it would be gripping to a wide audience; e.g., an audience large enough to support the immense costs of a period piece with a cast of hundreds, forts, canoes, etc. Evans' struggle, itself, was hard to get a handle on. It seems to be a movie about a clergyman's struggle with his own desire to do good vs. his megalomania vs. his incestuous lust for his own daughter, a lust eventually re-targeted to live-in Cree lass.

Because of this constantly shifting central conflict, I suggested to Geoff a solution that I still think might work. Tell the story from his own perspective.

> *A modern clergyman goes back to Evans' alleged crime to try to find the key to his own inner struggle.*

I always found Geoff's treatment of the subject matter objective and removed somehow and lacking a visceral relevance. It never rang completely true from a human perspective. Maybe it was the fact that his resource materials were largely suspect and possibly slanted to serve the agendas of their writers. Perhaps dramatizing his own fight with the material and tapping into his own heart would help make the drama more immediate and believable.

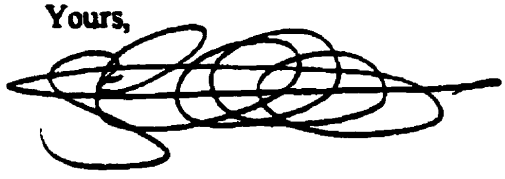
In any event, all my kudos and reservations aside, we must remember that, even for veteran screenwriters, the process of writing a feature film can be a lengthy and excruciating process. One last industry adage: writing the script is easy - writing the outline is 80% of the work. Geoff is presently somewhere in the middle of the outline stage. While he did not in the end deliver an outline worthy of raising a few million dollars for production, that is hardly a suitable benchmark for an otherwise academic pursuit.

When I was an undergraduate at Harvard, I wrote a stage play for an independent study course with the venerable American playwright, William Alfred. The play was dreadful, but I think I probably got a B. In my opinion, Geoff's work was exemplary by comparison. He worked incredibly hard, and kept coming back for more. I, for one, hopes he continues to do so.

The bottom line is, he still trying to find a way to spin a good yarn out of this material, and I am absolutely certain that he'll keep at it till he drops.

I hope he learned lots about the medium from me. Film is both a business and an art and consequently a perverse medium. He's a fool for even trying, but then so am I.

Yours,



Geoff Le Boutillier

By the fall of 1997 I had decided to switch the genre of ***Cloven Hoof*** from screen to stage at the urging of my friend and colleague, Tom Crothers. As Tom has extensive experience in play writing and directing, I contracted with him to do a course in "Writing Subtext." Following that course I was ready to write ***Cloven Hoof*** as a stage play. I had what I considered to be a circulatable draft completed by the fall of 1998, and I asked Tom for an informed critique of the work. I also asked Gerald Sheppard, Professor of Old Testament at Emmanuel College in Toronto to provide an assessment of my work. Gerry had shown interest in my work from the first time I mentioned it to him, and it was he who advised me against the danger of demonizing James Evans. Like Tom, Gerry also has extensive experience in both theology and drama. I felt their opinions would be valuable ones, and I was not disappointed. Both critics raised issues with the ending of the play. Tom felt that Evans got off lightly, and that perhaps I could do more with the consequences that befell Mary Evans because of her husband's behaviour. Gerry also noted that the play ended with a great deal of ambiguity, and wondered if perhaps there was more I might want to convey other than "the unpredictability of the moral conduct of non native leaders in the north?" I am taking both these comments seriously as I work towards producing another draft for professional presentation. Tom also noted that the vulgarities that I placed on the lips of Mary Ross seemed out of character, and that, as a result, Mary Ross seemed out of balance with her partner Donald. In future drafts I will attempt to make the character of Mary Ross less vulgar, and more earthy.

The two evaluations of my informed critics appear on the following pages. I should note that, while I gave both critics the same questions to use as guidelines

for evaluation of ***Cloven Hoof***, the variance in the way the critics responded is indicative of the way their attention was captured by different facets of the play.

An Evaluation by Tom Crothers of the *Cloven Hoof: a drama in two acts,*
by Geoffrey Wilfong-Pritchard

The Rev. Geoffrey Wilfong-Pritchard
St. Andrew's United Church
9915 – 148 Street
Edmonton, Alberta

Dear Geoffrey,

Thank you for inviting me to be part of the critical review process required by St. Stephen's College requirement for research that lies within the "Work of Art Category" within the Doctor of Ministry program. I accept.

I have studied your script thoroughly both from the point of view of a theatre writer/ director and of a theologian.

This is a fine piece of writing. So often one sees historical material presented in prosaic, documentary form, but your script has well developed characters, dramatic structure, and wit which means, in my estimation, it is a work of creative theatre art. Congratulations.

Herewith, is enclosed my formal evaluation in the form of answers to the questions posed by you.

Sincerely,

Tom Crothers.

An Evaluation by Tom Crothers of the *Cloven Hoof: a drama in two acts,*
by Geoffrey Wilfong-Pritchard

Questions:

Is the plot believable?

Yes, and so are the subplots, i.e., stories of all the other characters as they act and react to the force and actions of Evans.

Would someone who is not familiar with the fur trade and 19th. cy. missionary practices understand the play?

Yes, but those who do have a knowledge of the fur trade would even get more from it. All people understand the ramifications of power brokerage, the drive for control, or for power, transgression of morality both personal and public. This is all in the play, including retribution and the need for redemption. There is a danger of trying to be too explanatory about the specifics of the fur trade, but by and far you have avoided doing this. The one exception is in Old Bernard's long speech pp.8-10. Better, I think if this information can be conveyed through dialogue, say with Ross. However it could be edited a little in the interest of keeping the action flowing. But keep in the wonderful stuff about not turning your back – that captures the flavour.

How might an audience relate to the characters?

The drama, after it leaves the playwright, is an interpretive art, and how the audience relates to the characters mainly depends on how a director, designer, and actors interpret them. Unfortunately or fortunately, the writer has often little control over this, especially after the first production. Having read the script as a hypothetical director, I will answer this question from that point of view. The director is often called *an audience of one.*

Young Bernard.
From your writing, I see him develop from having the ingenuousness of a young apprentice to a fairly cynical, aggressive young man. He is clever, and one who is able to hide his cleverness. He has the insight of the poet/artist as revealed in his dialogue with Evans and Mason in act two (pp. 50-56: 81ff). Here we find the boy has grown into a man. He is an astute survivor as can be seen in the different ways he relates to the other important characters – he is perceived slightly different by each:

To Donald Ross, a prodigy, "son" a clever and loyal clerk, on whom he can depend to be accurate and to improvise if required.

To Mary Ross, a clever, street-smart guttersnipe from Dublin. She is maternal towards him in her rough way, but he is a male and from her point of view all males are capable of doing stupid things; therefore he needs a constant reminding that she can see through him, and that she has a heavy hand. Also, her protectiveness for Donald would make him automatically suspect.

To Evans, Bernard is seducible and malleable through flattery and "fun" (i.e., the social evenings). He sees Bernard as a useful tool from whom he can glean

information about Ross and the inside workings of the fort and the Company. It is an indication of Bernard's astuteness and toughness and ambition that Evans miscalculates these attributes of character. Later Bernard is able to go straight to the jugular.

Old Bernard

He is consistent and the fact that I can relate him perfectly to the young Bernard makes him a good round, complex character. Your creation of old/young Bernard is quite brilliant.

Ross

He is believable. As long as he is in control and has Mary in the background cracking the whip, and Bernard scribing and clerking, he is a good factor and figurehead. He and Mary are two parts of the one man. His degeneration and consternation as Evans gains influence and control and the manifestation of alcoholism is all believable. I like his dignity and apparent strength when I first meet him. It is not too long, however, that one senses his vulnerability. Good character writing.

Mary Ross

Here I feel you miss the mark a bit. She is a caricature. I see what you are getting at, but you use her in a way that is superficial – a sort of 19th cy., "feminist." I couldn't help thinking you were creating her in deference towards a personally conceived female audience. I think her vulgarity is wrong. She comes across as a 'smart ass' androgynous adolescent. She does not ring true. This annoys me, as I think it will annoy your audience, especially since she is such an important character in the dynamic of her husband. She can still be tough without the vulgarity. The

vulgarity robs her of being a 'queen' to Ross' 'king.' Work on her speech. Take out the linguistic anachronism. Remember she is a Scot, a Presbyterian with pride. The social pretensions of Mary Evans should be a sufficient foil to show off Mary Ross' naturalness and earthy humour. Mary Ross' survival instincts should be enough to show her strength. In her dialogue with Bernard pp. 89-91 ff., you come closer to the woman Mary Ross is – especially the line "Love you little twerp. Never get in the way of my love for Donald Ross." A line like this is pure theatre at its best – memorable, touching and manifests the inner character. Please think through Mary Ross again – at least get rid of the profanity. I don't say this out of prudery but in the interest of integrity to the character. If Mary is not right, Donald will not be right and the whole piece will be out of tune.

Evans:
Excellent! Fascinating. He belongs to that long line of archetypal men who personally languish for love and humanity underneath. You have got this quality in him. He is self assured, yet lost. Hypocritical, yet sincere – a walking paradox. He is full of hubris and destined for destruction. He is a plum role for a good character actor. Bravo. Having said that – there is more you can do with him within the contextual structure of the play.

Mason and all the others are well done and form a very nice composite of that community, each doing his/her part in the actions and reactions of the plot. Congratulations.

Do you empathize with the characters?

Yes. With the exception of Mary Ross, I can share the human emotions they experience. However, towards the end, Mary becomes an empathetic character.

Mary is the classical 'tough guy with a good heart.' This is her persona, but you have got the deeper nature of her in there as well. Work on her.

Stereotyping – caricatures?

No, again with the exception of Mary Ross. Each other character reads as natural and round. This means your dialogue is true to the type who speaks it. Your native people are natural human beings and there are no stage Scotsmen or women, or *curriere du bois.*

Theological motifs?

Yes. The theme of guilt and damnation is strong. I found particularly interesting the way in which the Methodist, Evans, in order to win over the natives, preaches the salvific availability of the Kingdom on earth through the propitiatory action of Christ, yet later uses fear of damnation and hell to control them. Both theologies as used by him are shallow because he teaches them out of an egotistical motivation. His teaching to Bernard the difference between Calvinism and Methodism (fate/predestination, rectitude, arrogance of the elect compared to the optimism of Methodism) is interesting because he eventually is the living proof of the Calvinist belief in *personal damnation* in that he is damned to start with but is blind to the fact: he is *unregenerate* in that he still persists in his own sense of being right, and because he cannot change his ways but moves towards deeper sin, he is *reprobate.* Blindly, he goes through these classical Calvinistic stages of death while blithely believing he is of the *elect.*

The *paradisaical* motif is present. As long as each plays out his part within the hierarchical order of the Company structure, order reigns, but as soon as there is a disruption of that order (as in the case of the rebelling boatmen, and Evans inciting the natives to farming instead of hunting and his usurpation of Ross' authority) things fall into chaos in a HBC community sense, and in the personal sense, of Ross' dissolution. This is a Miltonic view of the Fall of Man. To the company a well ordered fort and its subsequent profit is paradise. It is also Deistic, showing the rationalist mindset from the previous century: *God is in his heaven: all's well with the world.*

The theme of redemption is alluded to and preached but there is little redemption in the play. There is retribution, however. Things are set in motion to get rid of Evans and they work, but only through chicanery and blackmail. There is little regeneration in this play, if any – people either win or lose. It is interesting, though, the play is set within a framework of redemption from the characters' point of view: the line at the beginning of the play, *there is no mercy without redemption,* is echoed at the end of the play. Bernard and Evans both ask each other if they are not sorry for what they did. Evans has that wonderful line, *I'm sorry for what I took, but not for what I gave.* Given Evans' pathology, the though is enigmatic and tantalizing. I liked this framework of penitence/mercy/redemption sandwiching the play, but perhaps you need to be a little less subtle in case it is lost on the audience.

Evans, though he sees the Calvinism of Ross as diabolical, is himself diabolical. He tries to characterize himself as the trickster (Nannoosh), but he is not a true trickster in the mythopoeic sense, or as the archetype of the Trickster characterized by Carl

Jung. In the larger picture, the Trickster disturbs the people only to teach and bring them to clearer seeing of the danger of their own natures or the going against the natural order of things. Evans moves and acts more like the classical Satan (not the early Satan who is the servant of Yahweh – the tester) but the later Satan who arose out of Christianity. From Evans machinations come no teachings or love (in the philippic sense), only sexual exploitation, pain and death are in his wake. The real victims of both the Mission and the Company are the natives. The way of life, their ingenuousness vis a vis the white man, have been abused, exploited and corrupted.

Finally there is the theme of good and evil. This is done without preaching but through humour and through the foibles of human beings. Literature which does not raise moral issues is not worth its salt. This play does. It does not have, as far as I could see, a soteriological theme, except, perhaps by implication. Salvation is offered in various forms but all fail because they are offered by men with deeper personal motives.

Archetypes?

In the Jungian sense, yes: allusions to the trickster, there is the Shadow in the darker side of all the characters (except the natives) the principal shadow being Evans himself, he personifies both personal evil and universal. And, of course, there is the persona of the HBC and its employees, each in their place of the hierarchical order; which becomes set against the persona of the mission and the missionaries. There is a lovely scene which exemplifies the contradiction of the inner ego shadow in the entrance of Mason with the missionary persona. Mason's Methodist minister's, pristine persona confronts the dark eroticism of his superintendent engaged in an 'orgy' of Blind Man's Bluff.

Berrnard, the closest to having an integrated Self, sees through the persona of Mason and Evans. He characterizes Mason in the lines elaborating on his disapproving outlook, p.36 out of his mother's womb smeared in disapproval.

There are also the archetypes of the anima and animus presented in the characters of Mary and Rev. Evans, and those of Donald and Mary Ross. Mary Evans is a sick anima – her gluttony for butter, her false propriety, her, as she puts it, "standing behind her husband's" instead of being one and in balance with him represents the pathological nature of Evans. The compensating masculinity of Mary Ross for her weak animus exemplified by Donald is interesting. But her "strength" is good in the sense that it is a healthily compensation. There is a balance of personality here because anima and animus are together and seeking balance. That is why Mary must be written true in her language.

Finally there is the sick womb of the fort. The Company is like a changeling in this womb, the fur trade its placenta – the HBC is a parasitic foetus as are the missionaries. These are the bad twins of 19th cy., colonialism: the beaver are hunted out, as are the larger animals. The missionaries both papist and Methodist wish to feed on the souls of the native people. Only despair, pain, and dissolution are left in their wake.

Script preparation for production?

This script presents production problems but certainly not insurmountable ones. It is rare that a new script – especially a first script – is not worked through in a production workshop, and undergoes rewriting during rehearsals. Having said that, this script is predictable. There is a problem of prolixity, but not an overweening one. A seasoned director/designer would select a workable theatrical convention. This is not entirely the writer's problem. The main thing is you have written a script that is not boring; therefore, it follows the first rule of art: *Do not bore the arse of the audience*. The writer is the first true creator for theatre, and you have produced a workable piece.

Other comments.

From my knowledge of the background material, I thing the LMS have got off very lightly. There is pathos in the fact that Evans died the heroic figure and has been touted through history as that while the MLS refused a pension to his poor

demented, butter gobbling widow. I would challenge you to set this to rights – but perhaps this is another play, or article.

Congratulations.

Tom Crothers

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The Reverend Geoffrey Wilfong-Pritchard
St. Andrew's United Church
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Edmonton, Alberta T5N 3G1

November 22, 1998

Dear Geoffrey,

I really enjoyed your play and hope you find an opportunity to have it performed for a larger public. I thought you handled the dialogues very well. The plot has the strength of allowing us to identify well with Evans, then realize the situation is not so clear cut and finally we are repelled by Evans. So, issues that I think could be further developed are listed briefly below, but the weight of my comments should be enthusiastic support and evaluation of your work.

--At the beginning of the play, the two men (old Bernard and James Evans) seem to agree that a key question is "Which sin is greater?" They tell us "flesh and blood shall judge us both." Why is this question the key one and how can "flesh and blood" judge it? We are left with the impression that Evans does not have flesh and blood judge his sin or face much real punishment, but the same is true for Bernard's complicity in the mistreatment of Indians. If the audience of the play is asked to judge, then you may want to make that statement even more explicit -- perhaps have the men address the audience and plead their case to the audience.
--I thought you might want to clarify a little what the Chief means when he states that he had never seen the light until now (a cliche in itself) on p. 12. Is he converted to Christianity, simply made aware of how the company had been taking advantage of them, or both?
--Also, James Evans is described earlier in the play in terms of the Indians as "his friends"? Perhaps it is not too important, but I would like to know why they are friends with each other.
--The play ends with great ambiguity. Do you want to clarify a little more what this play explores about the human situation. Is it simply, the moral ambiguity of those who tried to live and work in the northern territories? The reality of a man with an impressive sensitivity to justice in some areas (the Indian rights to land), but an impoverished sense of his own personal moral responsibility? At a time when native people properly accuse non-native teachers in Christian schools of illicit sexual involvement with their children, I could not help thinking about that issue here. Is there anything specific that you want to convey, besides the unpredictability of moral conduct by non-native leaders in the north? Obviously you do not want to reduce the play to a simplistic lesson in morality. It does not need to end in a proverb.

In sum, I am really impressed with this work and wish you well in your future endeavours.

Warmest regards,

Gerald T. Sheppard
Professor of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis

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Evaluations of Cloven Hoof from the Play-Going Public

In the winter of 1998, I undertook yet another evaluation of ***Cloven Hoof***. I had by this time received the above responses from my informed critics, and their comments seemed to indicate to me that the theology, aesthetics, and the craft of the play were all basically sound. There was another constituency from whom I wished to hear at this stage: the play-going public. In many ways this was the most crucial evaluation for me. How would someone who might never have heard of James Evans respond to ***Cloven Hoof***? Would it be understandable? Would it entertain? Would the characters that I had created come alive for an audience?

To test these questions, I arranged a reading of ***Cloven Hoof***. I conscripted members of my Doctoral Committee, members of St. Andrew's Church, and a few interested friends to read the parts to an audience made up of St. Andrew's Church members, colleagues of mine who are employed by the provincial archives in Edmonton, and the friends and relations of all of the above. I should add that St. Andrew's Church is where I currently minister, and so there might the perception that this particular audience might give the play a more generous hearing because the membership knew the author. I considered the relationship I had with the congregation a help rather than a hindrance to the evaluative process. The members of this congregation have a profound sense of the drama of liturgy, and they are never hesitant to critique the weekly liturgy. Furthermore, many of the members of this congregation are theatrically literate, and I felt they would be able to separate their personal feelings for me, from their feelings for the play.

The readers had no rehearsal together, but had a few weeks to study their parts individually. About sixty people attended the reading on the night of December 12, 1998.

Following the reading, there was a time for questions and comments from the audience and the readers. Following that I administered a brief questionnaire to the audience asking for feedback. The questionnaire and the rationale for the questions I asked appears below. I received about thirty completed and partially completed questionnaires, and the responses follow the questionnaire itself. Overall, the response was very positive. People for the most part found the characters engaging, and the complexity of the plot at least interesting. The comments confirmed what I had privately suspected; the play as it is written is too long. However, I did want to see it and hear it before deciding what, if any, cuts to make. Generally however, I feel that ***Cloven Hoof*** passed muster with this most important of constituencies, the ticket-buying public.

Development of the Evaluation Questions, Public Reading of *Cloven Hoof*, December 12, 1998

I developed seven questions to ask the audience. The rationale for these questions follows:

1. Did you like the play? If not why not?

   This question just asks for first impressions without the need for analysis. It helps lead the audience into the rest of the questions.

2. Was the plot believable? If not, why not?

   Drama requires "suspension of disbelief." To suspend disbelief, and invite the audience into the story, the plot must be believable.

3. What was your first impression of the main characters?

   I asked this question to test the strength of the characters as I had written them. If people had no impression of them, the characters would be weak. I also want to establish if there is congruence between the way I see the characters, and the way the audience does.

4. How did you feel about them at the end of the play?

   This was an important question to ask. If the audience's perceptions of the characters was the same at the end as it was at the beginning, I would not have succeeded in developing the characters.

5. After the trial scene, whom did you believe: Evans or the girls? Why?

   I wrote the trial relying exclusively on the trial transcripts themselves. I was interested to know how the "history" sounded, and how people responded to it.

6. Was the ending of the play satisfactory to you? Why or why not?

   One of my professional critics suggested that the ending of the play needed work; that Evans and the WMS got off too lightly. I wanted to test the ending with the audience to see how they felt.

7. If you were recommending this play to a friend why would you tell them to see it?

This question sums up the answers to questions 2-6. It is really question one reframed, but asking for more analysis of why people liked it (if they did) and what they might say about it to others.

The evaluations follow:

1. Did you like the play? If so why? If not why not?

- yes-because of its relevance today and the way it challenged the audience
- yes and no- a good exposition of more of the church's dirty laundry
- yes-brought history alive-very effective-held our attention-appreciated the humour
- Yes, it was a good drama, with some light touches. It definitely drew me in.
- I liked it and really appreciated hearing it. The dialogue moved well and the characters came alive.
- yes-good movement-historical drama and humour
- good on the whole-should the language used be more typical of the time?
- Liked it but it was too long
- Yes, much. I found myself drawn into it-the plot was fascinating and I was waiting for each step to unfold. Some parts were predictable, some very surprising. While slow at times, especially early in the first act-it was never boring. This was a complex subject which was handled well.
- Yes! It's a story that needs to be told.
- Yes it was interesting.
- Yes, interesting story line

- I did like it. I thought the change of time frame cleverly helped to tell the story. There is lots of intrigue in the plot.
- Yes very much
- Enjoyed the presentation-clearly on a stage with appropriate lighting, entrances, etc., it would make a huge difference.
- Yes-we have the same things happening in our society today.
- It was well written. The Nanabush stories at the beginning and the end work so well.
- It was great! A mix of historical fact, mystery.
- Yes-Canadian history presented in a story/dramatic form.
- Yes. I was not familiar with the story of James Evans and have found it very entertaining.
- Yes. It engages! It's timely-native issues-Humanness of the church-Armageddon!
- Yes, a good combination of drama and humour.
- As a work in progress I found it evocative and of historical and theological interest. Yes, I liked most of what I saw.

2. ***Was the plot believable? If not why not?***

- Yes-historical foundation
- Very plausible
- Yes. In the first act James Evans spoke in long chunks. I preferred shorter comments with dialogue between or among 2-3 characters. Except for the native girls at the end could you have introduced a native person to round out the James Evans character?

- Yes-the "intrigues" in a small community is familiar as is the complexity of human motivations of living in the "both/and" rather than absolutes.
- No. The interrogation of Young Bernard by Mary Ross was stretching the reality.
- Yes it was believable though the events were disturbing.
- I had never heard of James Evans before, so I have to believe [the description in the program] that it is historical.
- O my yes.
- It was plausible and well crafted-the flashbacks worked well-did not disorient

3. ***What was your first impression of the main characters? How did you feel about them at the end of the play?***
   - Colourful, real people. Liked James Evans less and Donald Ross more
   - Each was caught up in their own position except Bernard the observer
   - OK, except James Evans didn't quite fit my conception of a missionary
   - Donald and Mary Ross liked to be in command. D. Ross was very impatient with James. James was hard to pin down. I didn't like him-he seemed to be a will-o-the-wisp, saying agreeable Christian things to placate Ross, Bernard and Mason, but doing his own thing. Mary E. seemed very unhappy. I liked young Bernard. Old Bernard seemed closed in his opinions. I felt sorry for Donald Ross as he slipped into alcoholism. Could he have worked with James? (I think so). I felt empathy with James when he suffered for Tom's death but he didn't come across as a peacemaker. He didn't like Ross or Mason, and he tried to

divide Bernard's loyalties. And he didn't appreciate his wife. I still liked Bernard-he was a neutral foil and he tried to keep an open mind.

- I'm not sure this is a true first impression for me- I still really like Mary Ross-she and Donald are most real for me. I think the "why" has to do with Mary R.'s energy for protecting, supporting, pushing Donald. Perhaps she's learned to love more clearly than the others?
- Donald impressed me-but Mary I saw as a vicious, jealous woman. James at first impressed me as one anxious for the welfare of others. Mary- a quiet individual who didn't have many interests to keep her occupied except her piano. I wasn't interested in having them as a "friend," especially Mary. Guess I held James in too high a regard-he disappointed me.
- Believable, real people, although the language was inconsistent with the context of the times. Each was very distinct. I found the men to be consistent except for Bernard. The women were the ones who changed the most. The characters were very complex and the play skillfully brought out various facets for us.
- They were believable characters. They all had human failings but there was good in all of them.
- I thought Donald was a dedicated employee of the company-his wife Mary was one who stood up for her husband and wouldn't let anyone stand in her way. James Evans was hard to describe in that his character seemed to change. His wife didn't see what was there or ignored it. I thought Donald became a weak character but Mary remained strong.
- Donald Ross-don't cause waves

Mary Ross-the woman behind the success of Donald

James Evans-self serving (centered)

Mary Evans-in a dream world, not seemingly caring about the happenings around her.

- Donald and Mary Ross-both excellent. I found James and Mary Evans true to their characters-but probably more a judgment of the readers for the evening. The character of Bernard was developed most effectively throughout the play.
- I thought Donald and Mary Ross were very pompous and I liked James and Mary Evans but changed my mind later. I felt sorry for Donald Ross. I thought Bernard was a troublemaker and I thought James Evans was an evil man.
- Ross-bureaucratic, domineering

  Mrs. Ross-scheming dominant partner

  James Evans-pietistic, self centered

  Mary Evans-dreamer, out of touch with reality

  Bernard the younger-subservient, untrustworthy

  Ross-weak character

  Mrs. Ross-overly domineering, spiteful, protective of her husband at any cost

  James Evans-pitiable

  Mary Evans-same impression
- They played their parts well and were quite believable-Really surprised about James Evans-cleverly written

- They all appeared to be devout to their calling-they all seemed to break down to some extent.
- I liked Bernard

  Mary Ross was good-the humour was appreciated

  Donald Ross seemed powerful yet at the same time a tiny bit vulnerable

  Mary Evans was who I thought she was

  I hated the character of James

  I liked Mary Ross even more

  I admired the change in Mary Evans.
- Very interesting and complex-each had their own agenda-added to the interest of the play
- It takes a while to get to know them. But the story/play holds interest as we learn the whole story.
- Donald-a dedicated employee of the HBC to the exclusion of the Indians welfare

  Mary-I like her outspokenness and her Colourful language

  James-probably had good intentions but let his human frailties get in the way

  Mary Evans-seemed a bit ethereal at first but ended up as a person of substance who could face her husband's transgressions

  Bernard- a young man of character, eager to please but not to sell his soul for a cause.

  I liked them all at the end for their humanness-nobody's perfect.
- All authentic

- Characters were realistic, although we agree that some of the language was too modern day
- Donald-hard nosed business man, ruled by his wife but wouldn't admit it

  Mary Ross-hard edged bawdy woman who knows how to survive and gets what she wants

  James Evans-pious, self righteous man-something suspicious about him untruthful

  Mary Evans-self righteous-out of touch with reality

  (at the end)

  Donald-more compassion for his awkward position in it all

  Mary Ross-admiration for her action in exposing James

  James Evans-pity and loathing-compassion for his vision for the Indians and how his own religious sensibilities conspired against his sexual desire.

4. ***After the trial scene, whom did you believe: Evans or the girls? Why?***
   - the girls - it was clear they were being manipulated and intimidated
   - the girls. I distrusted Evans at an early stage, i.e. his character
   - the girls - were in their own "habitat" and would feel less threatened by Evans - with Mason as "magistrate". Evans was fighting for his position - and his manipulation of H. Bay Co. etc. - didn't do anything for his character.
   - I don't know who to believe. Why would the girls lie? Or the one girl lie? Evans was successful at putting the one girl's testimony at risk (because of Jack). But I still didn't trust Evans.

- the girls - it felt as if the language of "obscurity" mystified the questioning and the simplicity of their answers rang true.
- Evans. But at the end I wasn't sure - it seemed to suggest the girls were truthful.
- The girls. Leading questions, circumstances. First Nations culture versus European culture - First Nations people are disadvantaged - and taken advantage of. The entire trial was a set up by Evans - he had something to "fix" and needed to manipulate the situation to his advantage.
- The girls - I thought they were too frightened to give honest testimony.
- The girls - because I didn't trust James Evans.
- Girls.
- The girls, why would they gain by their accusations
- I believed the girls - the evidence was reinforced sufficiently.
- I believed the girls.
- The girls - although the discrepancies in testimony created doubt.
- The girls told the truth but were I thought belittled.
- The girls - they seemed sincere.
- I believed the girls because they had no reason to lie but Evans had so much to lose (you showed that well)
- The girls - my kids wouldn't lie to me
- The girls. Evans is obviously manipulating the trial.
- The girls. I could sense the intimidation they must have felt from this person of authority.
- The girls - powerlessness.

- The girls - I felt he was guilty.
- The girls. Evans seemed rather slimy and a bully at that point.
- The girls - he was obviously manipulating them and they were confused

5. ***Was the ending of the play satisfactory to you? Why or why not?***
   - It tied up most of the loose ends and still managed to leave a realistic tension between sinner and saviour.
   - Yes and no. The story finally unfolded, but not soon enough.
   - Yes - justice prevailed.
   - Yes and no. I liked Bernard (young) and the way you used old Bernard - that was brilliant.
   - Yes - the dialogue between Mary Ross and Bernard tied some loose ends and the final piece between Evans and Old Bernard completed the play but left questions....
   - Yes, I think it was realistic.
   - Yes - closure for each person except - I wanted more - this was a great play and I was intrigued and could have stayed all evening.
   - No. I would like to have seen more punishment for James Evans.
   - Yes.
   - Yes.
   - Yes, came full circle
   - I was a bit bothered by the scene of Mary Ross and Bernard as it seemed a bit of an anti-climax after the previous scene. However, its significance became apparent.

- Yes - I think everyone had to do a lot of careful thinking about their faith, their ambitions and rivalry.
- OK
- Yes.
- Yes. You could draw your own conclusions.
- Yes.
- Yes. He was "found out".
- Yes.
- Yes it was. It seemed to make the best of a bad situation for all of them although Evans seems to have got off "Scot free".
- Yes. Act II very long.
- Very satisfactory. A good ending.
- Yes, it came full circle.
- I felt it unnecessary (too tedious) to explain the fate of every character except perhaps James and Bernard, a little mystery around that is okay.

6. ***If you were recommending this play to a friend, why would you tell them to see it?***

- It was interesting and thought-provoking
- If they think the Catholics have nothing on us see this one
- Provides a new aspect of our early history. - some light on the operation of HBCo. missionaries were human - not the saints they are often portrayed as.
- This is part of Alberta's history and it is important to get at the truth of this incident particularly in the light of what is known about sexual abuse

or misuse of the native peoples by white missionaries. Isn't this very Clintonish - what is the truth

- it's a good historical drama about a piece of our own history - rare indeed! The dynamics of the plot are a continuing part of (church) life today.
- Would recommend it for the same reasons as I like it. Good movement - historical, drama and humor
- Definitely and I would love the opportunity to see it again.
- It would be worth seeing for the historical aspect alone.
- It was an interesting story of a real person and persons in the life of the church.
- Excellent flow from Old Bernard talking of story, to back to the time of happening
- Interesting subject matter. I agree with a comment that it needs a bit of editing for length. I also felt at times that the language seemed too contemporary.
- I think I would recommend this play to a friend and I would like to read some more material on this. I think Geoff has done a commendable job in writing this play. I am very glad I attended it.
- Historical record. Very complex plot - spoken overly quickly at times and not easy to follow - a little on the long side.
- Yes - it was a fascinating story, and cleverly written. I would have certainly wanted to see this play over the odd one that wasn't so great at the Citadel. This play has real potential.
- Because it is Historical, and written by someone we know

- I would tell them to see it because it would be a good example of the problems in the church right [now] and from a language point of view it was connected well and the symbolism was constant throughout the play.
- It's a great play!!
- Yes - a riveting story of the past - brings out their humanity, and ours.
- It's historical, not fiction alone, and so is believable.
- Western Canadian History. Church History.
- This is great and a great story in history.
- history parallels today's issues. great characters.
- for much the same reason I said I liked it (I found it evocative and of historical/theological interest) - as well I have great interest and respect for new works and new artists.

Further comments:

- Nanabush stories - worked very well - symbolically, and analogously - shows the depth of connection and respect Evans had for the Indians. I would have liked to have heard more about Evans' work with syllabics for that work really underscores his heroic and radical nature and adds to the pathos of the sexual misconduct rumours and that fallout.
- telescope and piano - very strong metaphor for Mary Evans and helps very much to sketch her character.
- language - make sure it is appropriate to the time and setting of the play
- overall the play is too long to hold audience's attention - 1 1/2 max.
- characterization - sometimes inconsistent, or not emphatic enough in their traits

- TRUST your audience to understand what you mean - you will insult them and bore them if you adopt a moralizing tone, or explain or repeat the obvious - let the symbols, images, and characters speak for themselves - too much editorializing and you lose your audience. The intrusive narrator went out with the 19th century style.
- play must be shortened to sell, especially Act I. Some of the characters and dialogue do not advance the plot.
- one minor comment - you used "good on you" in your dialogue. If you are using current words that is fine, if you wish to use words common in 1864 there are just a few to check out.
- If you shorten James' speeches in Act I it would be a better length.
- the words of the Chief were too sophisticated - they didn't go with my expectations of that character.
- very timely given the current times.
- I would have liked to see some references to the Cree alphabet work.
- the old and young Bernard characters were clever and well used.
- time changes - logical, easy to follow and fit well in the plot.
- staging well done - I could visualize the play taking place.
- title is excellent and appropriate.
- taught me things about myself by how I reacted.
- this was not what I expected - far more sophisticated, complex, funny, deeply serious, very believable, intriguing, well done!
- Thank you for the honour of hearing and seeing it. I hope you will allow it to go further and be professionally produced.
- Good luck Geoff!

Oral Comments by Actors and Audience

Geoff Wilfong-Pritchard: I'd like to ask the actors if they have anything to say about the parts they were playing.

James Evans: Well I've gone through it twice now, and what struck me the second time was the number of plot points and theatrical devices that Geoff has put into the play that you don't necessarily get the first time you read the play. But if all you people were to sit down and read it again you'd be amazed at what you'd pick up. I appreciate the fact that Geoff said this is draft number two of probably what are going to be four drafts, and the editor in me says yes, this could do with a good edit, but nevertheless I am enormously impressed with the quality that is here. I'm certainly no theatrical expert and no literary expert, but this is an extraordinary piece of work and I wish him the best of luck.

Donald Ross: The device of shifting time within the scope of the play, shifting from one time to another, and of course there were a lot of shifts and shifting back at the end into a time before the middle is really difficult to pull off, and I felt and found that there was an excellent flow to the play, and that caused a tremendous flow of energy among and between the characters here even though we were reading off pages and you could see that we had our heads in the book a lot, you could also see that we were getting energy from you, but you could sense people in their character really feeling a part of the play and striving toward an end

result, the protagonists were flowing and changing back and forth, and I found it a very interesting and fun thing to be part of.

William Mason: I had the privilege of playing two characters and I found it really ironic that Johnny and Henry were the only ones who put the gospel ahead of self- interest. William Mason I felt was a pathetic person. I think he had a very genuine call, but that he allowed the trappings of office to obscure that call and to try to conceal his own brokeness and his own humanity. And to try to imagine what it would have been like for those two young native girls to be interrogated by the two missionaries, whose very dress made them the authority, and yet knowing in his own heart that they were telling the truth and I think that's really regrettable.

Mary Ross: I couldn't help thinking how pertinent the script is to today and how all the issues are right there on the table still, and how it is that this acting is going on in this section of the church (sanctuary) the issues are here. I think Evans was a very complex man, haunted. And as I have listened and worked over the months that Geoff has been at work on this, I'm sorry that his work on the language translation has not somehow made it into the play, but his whole imagination around language is a whole other depth to the man. The part that I played, Mary Ross, she is that part of all of us that has really not found a place in so much of our religious experience, but what she comes through with in the end is love. She doesn't come through as the penitent Mary Magdalene although I'm not sure how penitent she actually was, but she showed great love for a man who was very broken himself. It's been very exciting to see your whole process and I can't

wait for the final performance. As we were going through it I kept seeing the scenes in my minds, the different sets and the lighting.

Audience Response:

I've read it two or three times and the first time I read it I was really impressed with the technical aspects of it, how the scenes were constructed and how the characters were introduced, and how they came and left. But seeing it and hearing it I'm really impressed with the poetry of it, the language and the symmetry, how it begins with the story of Nanabush and ends with the story of Nanabush. It has a wonderful rhythm and symmetry to it and I really enjoyed it.

I have a number of comments, looking at it from a dramatic point of view, I think the Nanabush stories worked marvelously, and how that works with the Christianity and the whole understanding of native spirituality. The humour works really well. It is long. I have a feeling of the language that in places there is an image or a fragment of a phrase that could stand by itself but then you sort of base a lecture on it, my sense is that as audience that we get it. The only other thing is the language, is it too modern, would they use words like shit snot nose and slut.

My Own Observations

There are a few themes that run through all the critiques of ***Cloven Hoof***. The first is the complexity of the plot. Although many people commented on this, no one found that the plot's complexity made the play incomprehensible. On the

contrary, most felt that the complexity of the plot helped to draw them in and hold them. The characters seem well--developed, although there is some concern about the modernity of the language in some places. I will address this concern in future drafts.

The reaction to the character of Mary Ross was interesting to observe. Some people were quite taken with her the way she was. Others felt that she was not a character at all, but a caricature, and that the historical character of Mary Ross deserved better treatment. I based my development of her character on the quote from Factor Hargraves, which suggested that Mary Ross was a somewhat vulgar and coarse person. I executed no "hermeneutics of suspicion" on this quote but just took it at face value. Perhaps she really was as she was described. Perhaps Hargraves had another agenda for describing her in such terms.

I did not want to exploit her vulgarity, but at the same time it was there to be worked with. I also considered the fact that as a Scot from Red River she would have been looked down upon by Mary Evans, who had an English background. That might well have led Mary Ross to be even more nasty in her dealings with Mary Evans. Her vulgarity aside, she had an abiding commitment to someone other than herself. That made her unique among the characters of ***Cloven Hoof***, and because of that she was in many ways my favourite character. However, my portrayal of her got in the way of the larger message of ***Cloven Hoof***, and so I will recast her in future versions of the play.

Some of the critiques suggested that the character of James Evans might be more rounded if there was some reference in the play to his work with the Cree syllabics. There are a couple of natural places to introduce this aspect of his character, and I will do so in future drafts. Many people felt the play was too long.

Having seen it live, I can see where there are some natural places to make cuts, to shorten the dialogue, and to eliminate some dialogue altogether without jeopardizing the structure of the play. I will address this as well in future drafts.

As a result of the assessment process generally, I can say with some confidence that ***Cloven Hoof*** meets the requirements to be considered a "Work of Art" within the St. Stephen's DMIN program.

EPILOGUE

This brings us to the end of ***Cloven Hoof,*** the processes by which it came to be, and the methods used in its evaluation. This epilogue then, takes the form both of "where have I been" and "where to from here". First, let me state the obvious. As I mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, the question that brought me into the Doctoral Program was a question related to my ministry, and the breadth with which I wanted to define that ministry. The six years of my life that have gone into this project have confirmed what I hoped to find; that I can be enough of a generalist in ministry to be involved in congregational ministry, historical research, and writing, and that each of those elements can work to strengthen the other. As I peer into the future and wonder where ministry might take me, my hope is that those three elements will always be a part of whatever I do to a greater or lesser degree. If the Doctor of Ministry program is about integration, I consider it a success, and I am glad to have been a part of it, as the completion of ***Cloven Hoof*** marks for me a new beginning rather than an ending.

The way the process of writing the play and dissertation has also shaped my own theology of ministry. This project began small: there was Gerry, who had the story, Shirley, my partner, who typed many of the original manuscripts of James Evans into a more legible form; and me, who was searching for a dissertation subject. Since then, the number of people involved in this project has grown exponentially. It started with the original three, to close to one hundred, by the time I factor in those who have seen it the play, read and commented upon it, and those who have brought their expertise in Cree Syllabic to the Evans' material that I discovered. This project has truly been interdisciplinary, cutting across the

boundaries of history, theology, drama, and linguistics. It has involved people deeply committed to the United Church of Canada and those with no formal ties to any denomination. The scope of the project however, has proven big enough to include us all. I hope what has been begun with ***Cloven Hoof*** might be a model for ministry in the future; a uniting of perspectives across the spectrum to illuminate common interest.

As for my own reflections on my place in this story; Since this dissertation has dealt with the realm of narrative, what better way to conclude than with a reference to another story? In ***The Lyre of Orpheus***[1], Robertson Davies recounts the story of Hulda Schnackenburg, a doctoral student who is commissioned to complete an opera by the composer, E.T.A.H Hoffman. What Schnakenburg does not realize is that the spirit of Hoffman is still very much alive in Limbo, just waiting for someone to complete his work so that he can find eternal rest. At the beginning of the story the spirit of Hoffman describes the state of Limbo in which he finds himself, in the following terms:

> There are artists and writers and scholars here who have had two thousand years of neglect, and would be grateful if some candidate for a Doctor of Philosophy degree would stumble on their work and seize it with joy, as material that nobody has hitherto pawed over and exhausted. The dullest thesis--and that is saying much--may be enough to release an artist from Limbo and allow him to go--we don't really know where, but we hope for the best, because to people like ourselves, used to a creative life, boredom is punishment enough. When we were good children of the Church, some of us, we heard about sinners who roast on a bed of coals, or stand naked in Siberian hurricanes. But we were not sinners. Just artists who, for one reason or another, never finished our work on earth and so must wait

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[1] Robertson Davies. The Lyre of Orpheus (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1988).

> until are redeemed, or at least justified, by some measure of human understanding.[2]

That story has not been far from my thoughts as I have worked through this dissertation process. Many has been the time that I have felt like the graduate student in Davies story. Never have I felt that I have been working with lifeless historical documents as I have read through the primary materials that all the characters left behind them. There has always been a spirit lurking, metaphorically speaking, just behind the words, and it is that spirit that I have tried my best to channel. In the above quote, Hoffman suggests that redemption and justification come through human understanding. I hope that ***Cloven Hoof*** is a small step in the direction of providing some human understanding into the motivations that guided each of the characters in this story. Whether this redeems and justifies them, is for others, not me, to say.

There are some practical considerations concerning the play to which I will be attending in the near future. My colleague Tom Crothers has agreed to take the draft of ***Cloven Hoof*** that appears in this dissertation, and work with me to prepare it for possible production. If the evaluations of the play reading are trustworthy, and I believe they are, the people who have been associated with the play either as audience or participants have had a genuine sense of excitement about the play. That excitement gives me the energy to push on to the next level of writing and rewriting.

The research that I have done in the writing of the play has had some fascinating spin-offs. The Evans material which I uncovered in the University of Western Ontario contains a great deal of material that has some profound

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[2] Robertson Davies, p, 47.

implications for how the church and historians will understand the origins of the Cree Syllabic and the history of James Evans in the years to come. For example, the material contains a small book that Evans wrote in 1839 when he was winter-bound on the north shore of Lake Superior. This book proves that Evans knew that the native people's with which he was dealing already had a written system of hieroglyphs. It was these hieroglyphs that Evans codified into his syllabic system, rather than inventing the syllabic system out of his own imagination. Gerald Hutchinson is at work on this document, exploring its implications for the way we understand the origins of syllabics. There is much more research to be done in this area, and the members of both the faculties of Native Studies and Linguistics at the University of Alberta have expressed an interest in this material.

That same Evans material also contained within it a great deal of material written in Cree Syllabic. This material has been turned over to the Mountain Cree Camp Syllabic Institute for translation. Preliminary work on the material indicates that much of the material consists of letters written to James Evans by the Cree prophet Badger Sound. While translations are unavailable at this time, the early indications are that some of the letters provide yet another perspective on the charges that were brought against James Evans. These documents too will one day be released in publishable form, and if there is any way I can assist in that project I will be glad to so. These are but two strands of new research that are associated with this project. By the time these strands are woven together, the entire history of both James Evans' ministry, and the history of the development of Cree Syllabics will need a serious overall. I hope to see the day.

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