MARGINALIZATION AND THE ACTIVE MARGINS IN THE PLAYS OF RAY GUY

by

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Abstract

The political, economic and cultural marginalization of human populations has become an important theme in post-colonial literary scholarship because it frequently has occurred in the context of colonial rule, and because colonial marginalization in various forms has in recent decades been the subject of widespread literary treatments. Such marginalization practices as objectification, commodification and stereotyping have been rooted in assumptions by colonial powers that they are also the sources of truth and value, and are the rightful rulers of the colonies they have held. Colonial powers frequently have marginalized colonial territories by discouraging cultural self-definition, through colonial authorities' and missionaries' imposition of cultural practices from the centres of power and the constant reinforcement of their superiority. Another frequent effect of colonial rule has been an inability within marginalized populations to escape economic or political dependency on the colonial powers--a state of affairs which frequently has been due to the economic exploitation of colonies by the colonial powers they rely on.

The post-colonial study of marginalization is an appropriate basis for an exploration of Ray Guy's plays

because all three of his plays emphasize marginalization, which has been a defining factor throughout Newfoundland's history. The plays are all set during the crucial period surrounding the 1949 regime change in which Newfoundland ended its life as a British colony and became a province of Canada.

Guy's first play Young Triffie's Been Made Away With focuses on a history of ethnocentric and egotistic missionary activity in Newfoundland; his second play Frog Pond addresses a psychological dependency among many Newfoundlanders on exogenous cultures as the sources of cures to Newfoundland's economic and political ills; and his third play The Swinton Massacre focuses on the residue of colonial attitudes in the new regime, and on marginalization practices among Newfoundlanders.

Guy also emphasizes the multifarious responses to processes of marginalization among marginalized people, drawing attention to the active margin as a site of struggle and change.

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Introduction

The years just before and immediately following Newfoundland's Confederation with Canada in 1949 were years of great adjustment. Newfoundland's history begins with a period of about two centuries during which settlement was at worst forbidden and at best tolerated by the British and the French alike. Following this period, Newfoundland spent from 1824 until 1949 under varying degrees of British colonial influence, ranging from periods of self-government to periods during which government was controlled entirely by colonial agents. The Commission of Government, which was the governing body for Newfoundland during the fifteen years directly preceding Confederation, was comprised of British-appointed civil servants. At the time of Confederation, Newfoundlanders were learning to deal with the economic, social and psychological residue of colonialism in the absence of the colonial structures themselves, which had supported a particular status quo, had entrenched and continually reinforced the association of economic and political power with Britain, and were accompanied by various religious and medical missions which encouraged, often without success, the perception by Newfoundlanders of their own moral and cultural inferiority. Newfoundlanders at this time also had to attempt to shape,

and at the very least to understand and cope with, a new configuration of power in the province, internally and in its relations with its new primary country of influence, Canada.

History books about Newfoundland consistently draw our attention to the multifarious effects of its peculiar colonialism, not only on Newfoundland's economy and political structures but also on the attitudes of its citizens toward political and economic matters. Our attention is drawn time and again to the psychological effects of colonialism, the economic disparities it engendered, and the ongoing struggle among Newfoundlanders to cope with these lingering effects, which did not disappear or significantly decline after the 1949 change of regime.

Ray Guy, an outspoken newspaper columnist since the late 1960s, has become well known in Newfoundland for his acidic wit and provocative political commentary. Since 1985, Guy has been commissioned three times by the Resource Centre for the Arts in St. John's to write plays. All three of his resultant plays focus on the tumultuous period around Confederation. Guy's plays demand to be read with their politics in mind: as a journalist, he has grounded his plays, like his columns, in very specific historical events and processes, and many of his characters are based on

specific political figures or classes of people. In all three plays, Guy emphasizes marginalization, which has become a catch-word in post-colonial criticism. Without idealizing them, he also draws attention to various forms of resistance to these processes among marginalized people, and leaves his audiences not with didactic conclusions, but rather with options, questions to ponder.

Guy's first play Young Triffie's Been Made Away With is set in 1947 in the fictional outport of Swyers Harbour. In Triffie, Guy depicts a community dealing with some of the last in a long line of religious and secular missionaries in Newfoundland, and interrogates the motives and the effects of many of those who came to Newfoundland with heroic notions of helping out a poor, marginal society. Triffie is a telling and discomfiting satire of the ethnocentrism and egotism at the root of much missionary activity.

Two of the three missionaries in the play have presumed to know what is good for the local people, have attempted to impose these notions on them, and in the face of the community's general refusal to accord with their whims, have grown embittered and resentful. Because voices of resistance throw the missionaries' missions into question, the missionaries would prefer to hear only the voice "from that space in the margin that is a sign of deprivation" (hooks 343)--specifically the deprivation they have presumed--so

that they may be regarded as saviours. Sneja Gunew suggests that the centre "desires the existence of the marginal but not . . . its marginal specificities" (143). These specificities, when insisted upon by marginalized people, break down the centre's authority and destroy any "point relative to which others can be defined as marginal" (Ferguson 10). The insistence by Triffie's three protagonists on maintaining their individual identities in the face of unconsultative would-be helpers is depicted as perhaps the basic ground-level resistance tactic available to all marginal people in the face of externally imposed cultural change.

Guy's second play Frog Pond depicts an anti-Confederate St. John's merchant family trying to cope with the rapid changes in the first years of Newfoundland's post-colonial life. Having been privileged and wealthy under British rule, they now find themselves forced into the economic margins by a regime hostile to their political sentiments. They maintain a firm loyalty to Britain and hope that Confederation is just a phase. Others in Frog Pond place their economic hopes solely in the United States, or in Canada via Confederation.

In Frog Pond, Newfoundland is referred to by most of the characters in terms which suggest it is a mere margin to whatever centre each character latches onto. The authors of

The Empire Writes Back suggest it is common in colonial societies to perceive:

> that being itself is located at the centre, and that nothingness (by implication) is the only possibility for the margins. (Ashcroft et al. 90)

The characters in Frog Pond do not see "Newfoundlander" as a valid identity, because they do not see Newfoundland as a valid culture in its own right. Newfoundland is shown shifting in the minds of its moneyed classes, not out of the shadow of another, dominant culture, but rather from one margin to another.

Guy's third play The Swinton Massacre is set in 1954, during Newfoundland's initial post-Confederation development frenzy under Premier Joey Smallwood. In Swinton, Guy immerses us in early post-colonial Newfoundland, in which a whole new set of administrative and legal mechanisms were accompanied by attitudes that largely were holdovers from Commission of Government. The effects of this jarring incongruity, Swinton suggests, often were disastrous. Among the colonial holdovers depicted in Swinton is a government which is psychologically distanced from the public it serves, and which accordingly develops and enacts policies without consulting the public which the policies will affect--an economic echoing of the missionaries in Triffie who decide independently of the community they would help

what it is that the community needs. Another holdover we are shown is the public's fear of power and of the powerful. Those residents of Lar's Hole, Swinton's fictional outport, who are not enthusiastic about the dubious new local development project generally go along with it quietly. A third habit from colonial days depicted in Swinton is the constantly outward-looking search for development ideas, which is the residue of attitudes such as those held by the Frostt family in Frog Pond.

In his plays, Guy focuses as much on the coping and resisting practices of marginalized people as on the processes of marginalization themselves. In Triffie, Aunt Millie chases the missionary Pastor Pottle out of her post office, refusing to succumb to his hatefully pious pontificating. The serving girl Rita in Frog Pond frequently speaks in a way that reveals her insight into social prejudices, and engages in a small but significant act of refusal when she opts to birth her child out in the yard rather than in a house full of snobs and exploiters. In Swinton, Violet Bridger castrates a man who tries to rape her, and the Lar's Hole Wild Man remains purposefully mute for over twenty years because he refuses to involve himself in a society he regards as rotten at the core. The attention Guy pays to the responses of the marginalized is important to him as a politically committed writer who has

consistently criticized passivity in the face of oppression. bell hooks similarly insists on the importance of recognizing the active, the resistant in the margins:

> If we only view the margin as sign, marking the condition of our pain and deprivation, then a certain helplessness and despair, a deep nihilism penetrates in a destructive way the very ground of our being. (342)

One of the tasks of post-colonial literary scholarship is the study of writers emerging from marginalized societies or parts of societies, who put oppressed or underrepresented social groups at the centre of their work. Such writers tend to engage in the creation of literature that is explicitly political, drawing attention to their backgrounds, their perspectives, their intention to promote political change or at least to discuss specific political realities in their art. Ray Guy is such a writer. He recognizes deprivation, loss, and marginalization without constructing them as a totalizing framework which defines the outports, leaving no room for local agency and the full complexity of political culture that exists therein. By drawing our attention to the processes of marginalization that affect Newfoundlanders, then depicting as the focus of his plays not the resultant pain and deprivation but rather the strategic reactions to these processes by his characters, Guy refuses to condescend, to play the missionary, and opts instead to pay

testament to the activity, the validity, the centrality of what goes on in the margins.

Chapter 1

Young Triffie's Been Made Away With: Missionaries and Refusal

In Ray Guy's first play Young Triffie's Been Made Away With, we are told that Dr. Percy and Mrs. Grace Melrose, the play's missionary team of medical practitioner and social organizer, arrived in Swyers Harbour, Newfoundland about two decades previous to 1947, the year in which the play is set. Pastor Pottle, a religious missionary in the community, arrived shortly after. All three intended to bring the advantages of various forms of enlightenment to this isolated community. Unfortunately, the doctor becomes a shaky-handed alcoholic who loses patients; his wife becomes a loathful, prejudiced prescription drug addict; and the pastor beats his daughter Triffie, kills and mutilates sheep and sexually molests orphans. By the play's end all is revealed, the doctor and his wife are dead, the pastor is nailed by one hand to a table, and the local characters, all of whom are in one way or another socially distanced from one another throughout the play, leave the scene together, drawn closer by the bizarre series of events which unfold in the play.

The plot revolves around attempts to determine--and

alternately to hide--firstly who has been killing the sheep, and secondly who has killed the pastor's daughter Triffie. On the way to the solutions of these mysteries, many other forms of decrepitude and vice are revealed. We gradually recognize that rather than bringing the light of divine or secular knowledge to a deprived population, the missionaries have brought prejudice, misunderstanding and chaos to a community which seems able to manage its own affairs better than its would-be helpers can.

Early in the play, Dr. Melrose suggests that when they first arrived, he and his wife Grace were "Lord and Lady Grenfell" (6). Clearly, the famous British medical missionary to Labrador and his respected wife were their chief inspiration and source for what they expected to encounter. Mr. Washbourne, Swyers Harbour's resident recluse, who has the clearest insights of anyone in Triffie, similarly suggests they were drawn by "the Wilfred Grenfell thing you see . . . Off to a terribly remote area to do good works among the natives" (29). The doctor:

> threw himself into . . . The classic rural doctor thing. Dashing off on missions of mercy, in dark of night. In blizzards. Small boats. Horse and slide". (29-30)

Grace, at first considered "a sweet little woman," "organized women's groups and God knows what" (29).

There was a great deal of information available for prospective missionaries to Newfoundland in the early twentieth century to draw upon. Much of it, at least the bulk of that which was written by or about Grenfell, encouraged the sort of attitude that the Melroses started out with. Ronald Rompkey notes that Grenfell's 1919 autobiography A Labrador Doctor "encouraged a whole new generation of authors to write about Grenfell's life as a heroic biography" (203). Rompkey suggests that Grenfell "emerged as a phenomenon distinct from the Mission itself . . . a romantic figure . . . a folk hero" (223). Grenfell describes in heroic terms the "'ineradicable British trait'" (Melrose is from Ontario, but we must remember that many non-British in the time of Grenfell's mission also were shown to possess this British trait) that "'makes them actually crazy to go and leave the flesh pots and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Empire'" (Rompkey 212). Grenfell describes a mission which encompassed much more than medical practice, noting such endeavours as transporting "ministers and travellers," distributing libraries, bringing children to "the shelter of the orphanage," distributing food, using his boat as a "floating court of justice" which saw "wrong doing punished," and intervening in bootlegging operations (Grenfell. "It was . . . " 25). There was much work for the women of the mission as well, teaching "'cooking, sewing,

weaving, knitting, wood carving, . . . the three R's' . . . piano lessons," as volunteer Carolyn Galbraith suggests. Rompkey notes that many volunteers worked tirelessly at such endeavors:

> exhibiting . . . satisfactions as they went about the task of meeting the perceived needs of a population with which they had virtually nothing in common. (244)

The gap between many outsiders' perceptions and the local realities of Newfoundland's outport communities was reinforced for Newfoundland comedy collective CODCO during a 1973 touring visit to St. Anthony. Helen Peters writes that the tour had been very successful and audiences "turned out in droves and applauded the actors who showed them that comedy could be made from the fabric of their everyday lives." But an encounter with a British nurse stationed in St. Anthony "caused the group's heart to sink," showing them that their endeavour was vulnerable to significant misinterpretation. The nurse informed them that "their depiction of Newfoundlanders was ' . . . wonderful. I know exactly what you mean. You know, I have to work with them everyday'" (Peters xiii).

The information disseminated to prospective missionaries, financial donors and the general public, at least by Grenfell himself, was in part fiction, a romanticized, heroic version of events in which "actual

events were recast to serve the greater purpose--publicity for the Mission" (O'Brien. Foreword to Grenfell. "Queer" 48), and which reinforced simplified, typified understandings of Newfoundland's culture and people. Rompkey writes:

> A Labrador Doctor was written with an audience in mind. It was the kind of 'wholesome' and 'instructive' missionary literature marketed by missionary societies throughout the world . . . (200)

Grenfell, to spread the idea that Newfoundlanders were desperately in need of missionary assistance, indulged in condescending depictions of the people he served/saved. For instance, he suggests of one man he was trying to assist: "the intricacies of the problem had entirely failed to penetrate his dullard cranium" ("Queer" 50). He also suggests the man's "Eskimo blood" had contributed to his being "bereft of all initiative, and so incapable, except under orders from others, of earning a livelihood" (49). Such suggestions of native (in two senses here) deficiencies among the people suggest not a socially and economically struggling people in need of a hand-up, but rather a simple(minded) people in need of a perpetual guiding hand. Millicent Blake Loder, who was raised in a Labrador orphanage run by missionaries, suggests: "the staff was good to us, but always let us know that we were not their equals" (113).

bell hooks describes a tendency among those with missionary feelings, who include a substantial portion of present-day writers who write politically about marginal literatures but who do not emerge from their source cultures. She suggests that the working, resisting voices from the margin itself may be erased, consumed in the translation by an outside voice--if the outside voice focuses too exclusively on the suffering, and not enough on the actuality of or potential for resisting it among those who are suffering:

> No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own . . . . I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer . . . . (343)

Missionaries such as Grenfell saw themselves as part of a chain of heroes, passing their legacy on to succeeding generations who would continue to assist and to speak for marginal cultures: "'Today, . . . I am but the spent runner, handing the torch to you, who are bursting with greater potential for the race than I ever had'" (Grenfell in Rompkey 250).

The Melroses in Triffie have been schooled in the Grenfellian version of Newfoundland, and perhaps hoped in

the beginning that they too would prove to be, as Grenfell said of himself and his wife, "of more than ordinary ability" (Rompkey 218). Their first few years in Swyers Harbour were a missionary's fantasy. At first, as Dr. Melrose suggests, it was "Newfunland." They thought the local people "were quaint. Simple. Honest. Charming. A little adverse to bathwater perhaps . . . but charming" (7). Mr. Washbourne suggests that for "ten years or so it was a jolly good show," but that slowly, "it dawned on them that they were trapped." The character of Father Power in Al Pittman's play A Rope Against the Sun expresses similar feelings of entrapment. He fears that if he admits to the Bishop that he has failed to rid the local people of their superstitions and asks for a transfer, the Bishop will "surely punish me by making me spend the rest of my life here." On the other hand, Father Power fears that if he does not go to the Bishop, "he'll think I'm happy here and leave me here to spend the rest of my life. What an awful state to be in" (13).

Mr. Washbourne suggests that the first step in the Melroses' gradual entrapment occurred during the Depression, during which:

> The health boys in St. John's didn't have a cent to bless themselves with. They had Melrose here and they were determined to keep him here.

Stuck in Swyers Harbour for much longer than they were mentally equipped for, the Melroses turned to intoxicants to soothe their growing anxieties. The medical administrators, believing it would be difficult to find a replacement for the doctor, left Dr. Melrose to practice in Swyers Harbour though they knew "his scalpel got shakier as his hootch consumption rose." As Washbourne suggests, "you know _their_ kind of logic . . . better a perpetually pissed sawbones than none at all" (30).

It is suggested in _Triffie_ that the decision to leave Dr. Melrose in his practice in Swyers Harbour is symptomatic of institutional weaknesses, reinforced by metropolitan indifference among St. John's administrators regarding the well-being of the outports. Mr Washbourne suggests: "It sometimes seems, doesn't it, . . . that St. John's looks on its outport brethren as second class citizens, indeed" (30). Perhaps the most striking single indicator of the lack of substantial representation of the well-being of individual outports has been "the total absence of any local government outside the capital city, St. John's," which Gerald M. Sider describes as "one of the most salient features of the Newfoundland state." Sider notes that this situation "persisted past the mid twentieth century" (99).

This legislative centrism was mirrored by a similar tendency in the medical establishment. Dr. Charles Curtis,

successor to Grenfell in the Labrador mission, maintained an indifference toward the specific character of the communities he served, and to their varying needs. Dr. Tony Paddon points out:

> Dr. Curtis never even visited northern Labrador . . . Dr. Curtis was not to visit the northern stations until 1950, twenty-six years after he had assumed the superintendency.

Dr. Paddon suggests that such indifference made it difficult for northern communities to attain proper medical care. He suggests that several doctors trying to work in northern Labrador "felt that too much emphasis, and too many resources, were centred in St. Anthony [the central mission station]" (142). In the fictional community of Swyers Harbour, Dr. Melrose and his wife, and those with whom they interact, suffer because of decisions made by a centrist administration in St. John's. The Melroses' romantic vision has been destroyed and they have wanted to leave for a long time, but because of institutional pressures combined with the doctor's decreasing surgical competence, they remain.

Dr. and Mrs. Melrose respond to their perceived imprisonment in different ways, though they share chemical addiction as a coping method. Mrs. Melrose is more obviously bitter, as well as more fully possessed of, and more willing to express, prejudice toward such isolated communities as Swyers Harbour.

Mrs. Melrose intended in her missionary fantasy to modernize, civilize, Peterborough-ize the people of Swyers Harbour while her husband healed them. But Mr. Washbourne suggests: "As the place closed about her head, she developed a loathing for her parishioners." She was unable to effect any miracles, and faced with the persistent reality of a population she did not understand and could not change, she grew bitter:

> Oh, she still trots along to play mother hen at her women's group. But she flings out the most bitter sarcasm at them . . . in a form she <u>believes</u> to be well above their wooden heads [my stress]. (30)

In Pittman's <u>A Rope Against the Sun</u>, the teacher Michael Kennedy undergoes a similar shift in perception, rejecting his initial, romantic stereotype of the fictional community of Merasheen once he encounters the inevitable ugliness. He becomes fixated upon it and is unable to attain a balanced vision of a community which includes both beauty and ugliness. He starts out with notions of "A seafaring people, . . . the stuff novels and poems and plays are made of," and ends up asserting that:

> They are much too petty to be fascinating, too greedy to be admired, too narrow-minded to be interesting, and too self-centred to be lovable. (23)

He suggests: "Christ, it's enough to make a person sick...I don't know why I ever came here in the first place" (37-8).

In Triffie, Mrs. Melrose cannot accept or understand that there is knowledge in Swyers Harbour different from and perhaps more locally suitable than that which she possesses. Ray Guy is adamant in pointing out both the knowledge of the outport person and the frequent lack of recognition of it by people foreign to the outports. In "Just a Punt and a Jigger," he suggests:

> These so-called "poor humble fishermen" had to have more knowledge tucked away in their weather-beaten skulls than a jet pilot has. (You May Know 31)

In "Not so Stunned as Fast," a researcher from the fictional "'Institute for Research into Human Abilities'" tries to ask academic questions about "the Darwinian notion . . . that intelligence is adaptable" to an old fisherman who has recently moved to Bung Hole Tickle in accordance with Smallwood's resettlement program, questions which the fisherman's grandson who is home for the summer from Toronto tries to translate (That Far 117). The fisherman, busy gutting fish, either ignores, cannot hear, or does not understand the jargonistic questions, and the researcher begins to lose patience:

> "You're wasting my valuable time . . . I have better things to do than sit here in this abominable stench and banter with you two cretins all day." (118)

Finally, the grandson puts the question in terms

comprehensible to his grandfather: "What he wants to know is whether you're so God-damned stunned since you moved in here as you always was!" (119). G. M. Story supports Guy's position, suggesting that traditional outport people,

> though today they would be classed as "unskilled" on the modern industrial market, achieved a virtuosity in technical accomplishments which enabled them to construct their own houses, build their own boats, and conduct a fishing operation requiring judgment, skill, and daring.

Story also notes a rich oral culture, "particularly creative in song" and also rich in oral literature, which developed in the outports (33).

Mrs. Melrose is not interested in the local knowledge of the people of Swyers Harbour. She wants "the existence of the marginal" but not its "marginal specificities" (Gunew 143), because these specificities make the local people less malleable to her aims, less satisfying to her missionary ego. Russell Ferguson suggests that "the power of the center depends on a relatively unchallenged authority." He suggests that there is a threat to the supporting paradigm of the centre figure inherent in "the very process of becoming visible" that occurs when "historically marginalized groups insist on their own identity" (10).

Just as there is practical knowledge in outport

communities that has gone unrecognized by outsiders, there are spiritual beliefs which are pervasive in Swyers Harbour and also in A Rope Against the Sun's Merasheen which defy or extend beyond mainstream Christianity, and which are looked upon as uncommonly strange and dubious, as "superstitious," by characters whose belief systems have developed elsewhere. Father Power in A Rope Against the Sun laments that he cannot rid the people of Merasheen of beliefs inconsistent with Catholicism:

> For all my sermons and prayers, they remain a very superstitious people. They believe it is bad luck to coil a rope against the sun, to purchase a broom in May . . . . They believe that death is foretold by . . . a bird entering a room . . . . They believe in banshees and fairies . . . . these people, good Catholics though they are, are prone to live and die according to the beliefs contained and nurtured in these "charming" tall tales. (11-12)

Similarly, Mrs. Melrose, once she has become thoroughly embittered, pounces on the superstitions of the local people in order to show that Swyers Harbour is "like a little piece of the Dark Ages trapped here for all time among these rocks." She ridicules the casting of bread upon the water after Triffie's disappearance, a practice--loosely based on a Biblical passage--in which the bread is supposed to come to float over the body of the drowned person (10).

Mrs. Melrose also suggests that the community is degraded, and that it would be "better to be in hell with a broken back. A merciful God invented the Black Death for places like this" (39). She fails to recognize that the only real degradation among the local people is in Vincent Bishop, who is psychologically scarred from World War Two, and that nosiness, gossip, reclusivity or excessive hunting, which are characteristic of the local characters in the play, are hardly degraded behaviour compared to Mrs. Melrose's drug addiction and participation in the killing of a patient. The Newfoundland political theatre collective The Mummers Troupe, in their play They Club Seals, Don't They?, address the ongoing controversy over the Newfoundland seal hunt, and with it a long tradition of ill-informed external judgments of various aspects of Newfoundland culture. George, a sealer and fisherman, who constantly struggles to make ends meet, reads aloud to his wife a letter, "postmarked Florida":

> "You dirty rotten son of a bitch. If I could get to you I'd beat you senseless and then I'd skin your hide like you do to the seals. You're a mean bastard . . . I hope you die . . . Your enemy forever, John Fulton."
>
> (The Mummers 18)

The Mummers also include in their play a song which encapsulates the cultural stereotyping which frequently has

been part of anti-sealing campaigns, and which suggests the sort of stereotyping to which Newfoundland as a marginal culture has traditionally been vulnerable:

> Blood-thirsty Newfoundlanders,
> Spit on them, curse and slander,
> There's half of them not worth
> To walk upon God's earth.
> Ruthless, savage spoilers,
> Barbaric heartless swilers,
> The brunt of mainland humour,
> Is all they're bloody worth. (28)

Dr. Melrose is uncomfortable with his wife's hateful ranting about the local people. He has good insights into local culture, is kind in his social dealings, and is generally just more likeable than she is. But beneath Dr. Melrose's genuine civility lies an equally genuine undercurrent of self-serving indifference.

One might be tempted to overemphasize Dr. Melrose's sympathetic side because of the contrast he offers to his vitriolic wife. He recognizes that the belief among many in the community in "The Stranger" as a culprit for all sorts of mischief, which Mrs. Melrose regards as a superstition indicative of their being "soft in the head," is the product of centuries of abuse suffered at the hands of various actual strangers (5). He also has insight into, and sympathy

for, the plight of locally stationed American servicemen who are left there after World War Two, who have missed the glory of "ticker tape parades" and a "hero's welcome" and are left lingering far from home "until Stateside decides what to do with that anti-submarine camp out on the point" (6). Though he speaks sympathetically and means it, Dr. Melrose persists in his medical practice despite his debilitating alcoholism and the danger he poses to his patients. He displays a selfish refusal to acknowledge his incompetence and a willingness to ignore the well-being of his patients in order to hide his decrepitude from himself. Early in the play, we bear witness to his denial, as he describes Triffie's birth:

> Her mother died, you see, when she was born. There were . . . complications. That's what's left young Triffie dealing from a partial deck. (11)

Even as everyone around him starts to catch on, Dr. Melrose still denies there is a problem. Aunt Millie diplomatically suggests that "he likes his scattered drop," and notes that a doctor, unsteady under the effects of liquor, might "go to work and chop out the wrong bits" (16-17); and Mrs. Melrose, in a drug-addled frenzy, sarcastically suggests that maybe he could get a position at the "Mayo clinic, eh, doctor? Mount Sinai?", and that he might be able to teach medical students "to skin a cat, whiskey doctor. Whiskey

doctor. Whiskey doctor" (6). Mrs. Melrose notes that many of the doctor's former patients are going to St. John's for treatment despite the considerable journey. Despite this, he persists in treating those who still come to him, such as the developmentally delayed Triffie whose father is too caught up in his religious frenzy to care about his daughter's earthly fate.

Dr. Melrose, unlike his wife, does not turn to intoxication to escape from the local people, but rather to escape from the pain of stifled ambition. His drunkenness reinforces through botched operations the unpromising status of his career, which in turn reinforces his need to drink. Dr. Melrose is caught in a cycle of denial based on his need to feel a sense of control. This need is implicit in his original missionary impulse and, Rompkey suggests, it was also a characteristic of his role model, Wilfred Grenfell: "If one pattern emerges from his life, it is the struggle to control" (297).

As the emergence of the truth about Triffie's death becomes more obviously imminent, Dr. Melrose loses even his feeble semblance of control. He begins to realize how abominable he and his wife both have become, and he helps her to escape in the only way he can think of: injecting her, when she asks for more drugs, with a fatal overdose of morphine, "enough . . . to drop a Clydesdale" (43). Previous

to this, we see his composure beginning to crack. He hints at the botched abortion that kills Triffie, in a drunken monologue to the investigating Ranger. Speaking of the sexually predatory Vincent Bishop, he suggests that pretty soon,

> these talented digits will be called on once more to . . . abort, abort, abort. Ha. Hard to Port and Hard to Starboard. Tea, Sergeant? (32)

Triffie's fatal abortion and the events leading up to it and following it are indicative of how the Melroses adversely have affected the people they originally came to help. Mrs. Melrose, because of her lack of faith in the mental capacities of the people of Swyers Harbour to deal with their affairs, leads events on a disastrous path. Firstly, after discovering that Triffie and a local boy named Billy Head are actually blood siblings fathered by Pottle, she corners Billy and threatens to castrate him if he tries to have sexual relations with Triffie. She refuses, however, to tell him or anybody why he should not, feeling that he is not capable of dealing with the information in a civilized way: "I know what these people are like. They're simple minded, they're retarded" (6). She leaves Billy, who Mr. Washbourne describes as "no genius but . . . not as stupid as he may appear" (28), with empty threats which he as a proper youth defies, "Because she . . . she threatened

me" (41). Triffie becomes pregnant, as the doctor somehow discovers while examining her for an ulcerated leg. Mrs. Melrose, knowing it must be Billy who has impregnated her, insists on an abortion (42), to cut short an incestuous pregnancy which she could have prevented by trusting Billy or his adoptive parents with the relevant information.

The doctor's willingness to place others at risk is displayed by his willingness to perform the operation at all, especially in the presence of his frantic wife shouting, "Rip it out. Rip it out." He says in his final confession: "It all went terribly wrong." He refers to the operation, but the statement could also refer to his whole career, and to his scheme, following the operation, to cover up the true course of events by putting stab wounds into Triffie's back and throwing her into the water, knowing he "would be the only examiner. I thought I'd be able to cover over . . ." His intention to absolve himself of responsibility and presumably to keep practicing medicine in Swyers Harbour ultimately becomes repugnant to him. His acknowledgment in the play's final scene of his own reprehensible acts, and his sacrifice of his own life to protect Billy when Pottle attacks him later in the scene, redeem him as a sympathetic character, though perhaps only slightly: "My God, what wretchedness" (42). The recognition

comes late, after Triffie's death repeats that of her mother, one of Dr. Melrose's early "losses," a second generation of surgical death at the hands of a doctor who has been unable to let go of his ambition and its residue enough to care genuinely for his patients, or to resign.

Another missionary to Swyers Harbour whose capacity for caring is limited to himself is Pastor Pottle. The pastor is a caricature of evangelical Protestant preachers, whom Guy seems to have created in order to satirize a tradition of religious missionaries to outport Newfoundland.

Missionaries like Jacob George Mountain and William Wilson who wrote, in 1855 and 1867 respectively, about their experiences in Newfoundland, regarded the bulk of Newfoundlanders as spiritually lost "atheists in the world" (Wilson 245) who desperately needed guides. For Wilson, the role of each evangelical church was to reflect "the light from the Sun of righteousness" to the "'regions beyond,'" to the "deep recesses of moral darkness," with the goal of ensuring that "each and every land enjoys the light and the blessings of pure, Protestant Christianity" (243). Like Wilson, Triffie's Pottle assumes that that which is beyond what he knows or what he recognizes as true and proper Christianity is most likely evil. The pastor's prejudices come to the fore when he remarks about the reclusive Washbourne: "The old man in the woods. What guilty secrets

there? What darkness has set him apart from the custom and hearts of his fellow man?" (35). Dr. Melrose notes that the "good folk of Swyers Harbour" had gone to the church after yet another mutilated sheep had been discovered, to try to prevent "the Pastor and his little flock" from accusing and attacking Washbourne. The doctor suggests that the community for the most part recognize that Pottle would "go for someone like Washbourne" in such circumstances: "[Washbourne] lives apart and alone. He's eccentric" (1). As well, the pastor may very well be exploiting local suspicions about the mysterious Washbourne in order to cover up the fact that he killed and mutilated the sheep himself. Both of these passages suggest a tendency among religious missionaries to target the marginal, as Mrs. Melrose also does, either for conversion or persecution depending on their relative pliability.

The undogmatic, relatively flexible-on-details approach to religion that many missionaries have lamented as being characteristic of Newfoundlanders is taken to task by Pottle, who suggests that all the residents of Swyers Harbour except his own flock "ignore the word of God. Their parroted prayers, their lip service to the Scriptures" (34). Pottle's rhetoric is peppered with suggestions that Swyers Harbour is not rigorous enough in living according to God's word. The pastor's own interpretation of what proper

religion entails includes opposition to "Satan's chariot" (10) despite the obvious advantages of automobiles for a scattered population, and to medications given by Dr. Melrose to the pastor's parishioners for illnesses they have contracted from spiritually cleansing immersions in the forbiddingly cold Newfoundland waters (3). Pottle is unwilling to respect the specific character of the community he encounters, favouring instead not only the spirit but an excruciating minutiae of the details of his previously constructed paradigm.

The small congregation of Pastor Pottle's church are among Swyers Harbour's most down-trodden residents. Mrs. Melrose suggests: "They're the bottom of the barrel right now, right. They come from the low end of the social scale. And the economic scale." She suggests that the pastor offers them an eternity of riches that will not only compensate for their earthly poverty, but will exclude those who ridicule or oppress them:

> Then they'll be the ones . . . while the others are howling forever over a slow fire . . . who'll be enjoying the new chesterfield suites, the Aladdin lamps, the gas washing machines . . . whatever goodies they suppose are waiting for them up there. (3)

The encouragement of earthly passiveness in waiting for heavenly reward echoes Mountain's advice to his parishioners:

> Never be afraid or ashamed of being poor, but be greatly afraid and ashamed of being . . . envious, or covetous, in your poverty. This is most wretched of all . . . to have the evil things of Lazarus now, yet to be tormented with Dives hereafter. (xvi)

Rather than encouraging his congregation to better their situations, Pottle exploits their desperation and class jealousies in order to ensure himself a following. He preaches a revenge which appeals to those who feel socially or economically oppressed or neglected. Mrs. Melrose recognizes this appeal:

> they know [revenge is] coming sure and soon. So they gloat. And that makes them happy. What a comfort religion is, to be sure, in more ways than one. (3)

Pottle reinforces the social and economic disadvantages of his parishioners by encouraging them to wait for God to be the agent of their revenge instead of recognizing and struggling against the sources of their poverty. The bell hooks passage quoted above regarding the desire of the speaker-for-the-margins for the voice of pain minus the voice of resistance is appropriate in this instance as well. Pottle needs the voice of pain to feed his messianic ego, but the voice of resistance would make the cure he offers superfluous. His congregation are good (for him) because they are marginalized by others and do not want to go on

feeling excluded, while Washbourne is evil or at least suspicious because he lives in the margins by choice. The pastor preaches a strictly exclusionist foundation for marginality, in which heavenly revenge is so appealing because, within the parameters of his explanation, living in the margins can only be regarded as deprivation, and the eternal goal for his flock must always be to attain the elusive centre for themselves, or rather to wait for God to do it for them. Washbourne's choice throws this simplistic understanding of cultural marginality into doubt, so Pottle must villainize the question mark to keep his flock from asking questions.

Pottle is immersed in a sectarian struggle among Christian denominations in Newfoundland which prioritizes territorial struggles for capital (human and monetary) over the well-being of parishioners. Rand Dyck points out that the "apparent homogeneity" of Newfoundland, ethnically speaking, "is complicated by the interesting distribution of religious affiliations." Dyck points out the "important and unusual role" of religion in Newfoundland, noting that "each of the main affiliations established its own school system and some outport communities have had as many as three or four tiny schools" (52). There has been a general unwillingness based on sectarian feeling to allow the mixing of different denominations within one school, or to keep

religion in the background in schools in order to allow inter-denominational cooperation. Guy is explicit in his criticism of such divisiveness, addressing in "A Spirit of Wisdom and Grace" the difficulty that outport communities have had attracting teachers. He notes that the teachers they managed, in the time of his youth, to recruit to work in their tiny denominational schools:

> mostly were eighteen and twenty-year-olds who had barely scraped their heels through grade eleven . . . and who couldn't teach a chimpanzee to peel a banana. Or more mature misfits who were simply desperate for the eighty bucks a month.

Guy notes that they could have had one decent school for every three or four tiny ones, except that the schools represented "three or four different denominations. Christian denominations." He requests: "So if you please--don't talk to me about the glories of denominational education. Because I may vomit" (That Far 5).

Michel Foucault writes of a "battle 'for truth,' or at least 'around truth'" (132) which seems very accurately to describe the sectarian separation of schools which Guy suggests was debilitating to the "potential doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers and skilled tradesmen who were cut down before they were old enough to shave" (That Far 6). Foucault suggests that the battle for truth is:

> not a matter of a battle "on behalf" of the truth, but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays. (132)

This is certainly the case in Swyers Harbour, as Guy is careful to point out. The Pastor, when he first arrived in town, preached in front of Aunt Millie's post office until she made him go away. And then, as Mrs. Melrose notes,

> he rented the school. The school board was glad to take his couple of dollars until . . . until he began hooking in a few Methodists and even the occasional Church of Englander. He got his walking papers once more. (2)

The pastor remains hopeful: "We'll have a school, one day, glory be to God. A place where the pomps and vanities of this wicked world may not enter" (34). Wilson discusses the evolution of the "Church-of-England School Society for Newfoundland and the Colonies," which at first allowed Wesleyans such as Wilson to participate in administrative matters in what was first known simply as the Newfoundland School Society when it was established in 1823. The Wesleyans in turn gave regular donations to the school funds. With the help of the Wesleyans' money, schools were built in a number of communities. Following this cooperative beginning, the name change took place, and "our people from henceforth were debarred all management or control in the schools." He adds: "Persecution, also, was not quite kept

out of the way in the matter" (268). In Triffie, Pottle was kicked out of the school building when the potential loss of human capital began for the other denominations to outweigh the monetary advantage of his tenancy. As Foucault suggests, there is no battle "on behalf" of the truth, since tenancy was not refused to the pastor on principle from the outset. The Methodists and Anglicans were not concerned about the spiritual fate of those who did not belong to their own congregations. As long as Pottle's congregation came from elsewere, the school owners were perfectly happy to collect rent. The churches are depicted as power players with no substantial stake in the well-being of particular outport communities, whose residents are reduced to commodities in inter-denominational struggles. Refusing to rent the school to Pottle in the first place would still have denied acknowledgment of individual agency to the people of Swyers Harbour, who would have been discouraged from making an institutionally unpopular choice, but at least would have absolved the churches of hypocrisy in the matter.

The pastor's motivations are for the most part inaccessible, but hypocrisy runs so deep in him that it is clear one thing that is not among his goals is the actual improvement of anyone at all. Rather than actively engaging with the Swyers Harbour community to help them overcome what

he regards as their spiritual corruption, he merely rails against them. He suggests of his dead daughter:

> She is *now* safe from the gainsayers and the naysayers, safe from the idle and blasphemous tongues of the ungodly and the unsaved of this Satan-ridden place, safe from the whoredoms of Babylon and Swyers Harbour, safe from the Christ-hating gossips and scolds, safe from the mockers and idolaters, safe from the whoremongers . . . . (24)

He recognizes the flaws and shortcomings in just about everyone in the community accurately (35), but is too immersed in his apocalyptic frenzy to try actually to help anyone. He treats every criticism of himself or those connected to him as an assault on God worthy of eternal punishment in hell, noting that the children that made fun of Triffie, called her a "Holy Roller" and a "Jesus Jiggerjogger," threw mud at her and took her Bible from her, will all "suffer for their sins soon enough" (34). Mountain similarly suggests: "The act of insolence or disobedience passes at once on from the representative to the person represented [from the preacher to God]" (xii).

It becomes apparent as the play progresses that the pastor's villainizing of the people of Swyers Harbour in general does not waver from his villainizing of Washbourne specifically: it is a strategic sham designed to cover up

his own deficiencies. Pastor Pottle, played by Andy Jones of CODCO fame in Triffie's first, Resource Centre for the Arts production, may in large part be based on characters like CODCO's Father Dinn, also played by Andy Jones. CODCO's production Das Capital includes a scene entitled "Father Dinn on Sin," in which Father Dinn warns a group of young children of "The pain of hell, . . . a billion, trillion times hotter than any red hot stove." He tells them:

> every day, thousands of little souls are sucked careening and swooping into the gaping mouth of hell. Lit-tle boys and lit-tle girls dragged across a hideous bed of broken glass onto a mound of red hot coals.--shrieking for their mommies and daddies who cannot hear them.

Father Dinn eventually works himself up into such a frenzy that all his repressed urges from the thirty-five years he has been delivering the same sermon to children cannot be repressed anymore:

> I'm freaking out, boys and girls. I have "flipped my lid." I'm going to go now and jump over the wharf. But before I do, I am going to do something I have always wanted to do. I am going to show you, boys and girls, my dick. (Peters 147-8)

Like Father Dinn, Pottle may be suffering from a complex mixture of guilt and desire or may be in the religious

profession because it offers a sort of predatory indulgence, but either way, both characters desire to hide certain aspects of themselves behind a shield of religiosity. As Triffie progresses, we discover that Pastor Pottle has routinely beaten Triffie for such things as chewing a piece of gum given to her by an American serviceman, a sin he deemed worthy of broken ribs and copious bruises (11). It is revealed that he has been subscribing to child-pornography for some time (22), that he fathered an illegitimate child (Billy) (40), who he tries to attack physically when he discovers that Billy has slept with Triffie (43), and above all, that he "has been buggerin' the bejesus out of that orphanage they've got in Whitbourne . . . He's been at those children for years" (40). As well, though we are never told for certain that it is he who has killed and mutilated the sheep, he does ramble obsessively about the blood of the lamb and ends a climactic scene by bleating incessantly (36).

The extent of the pastor's earthly weaknesses goes well beyond the limit necessary to satirize a missionary drive. There is something else at work here as well, which Guy points to when the Ranger inquires why Dr. Melrose did not report the pastor's beating of Triffie and when the Ranger indicates that the orphanage matron had known of the pastor's sexual abuse of the orphans for years. Guy suggests

that there have been institutional weaknesses in many of Newfoundland's social structures which have made people in outports reticent to report abuses by people in their communities. The doctor implies it is absurd to think it would be a good idea to "inform our so-called welfare system" or to "contact that farce of an orphanage at St. John's," or even to lodge a complaint with the Ranger. He suggests that "in six months, perhaps a year's time, something might be done. Might. Might." And he asks the Ranger:

> What do you think would have happened to the poor girl, meanwhile when the . . . the man of God found out? If he suspected she'd babbled it out. Broken arms? Legs? Neck? (11)

The reticence to speak up on the part of the matron who ultimately "couldn't take it any more," may be the result of similar reasoning. Although she ultimately goes to the Ranger station in Whitbourne and "spill[s] her guts" (32), she refrains from doing so until it is already apparent that the pastor is in trouble. Like Dr. Melrose, she may have doubted whether anything could be done before the pastor discovered he had been reported and went berserk. But the matron may have had another reason for keeping such crucial information to herself. As will be discussed further on, a general distrust of outsiders has developed in Swyers

Harbour because of centuries of careless or hostile treatment at the hands of strangers. The matron in Whitbourne withholds crucial information about Pottle even though reporting his behaviour to the police or to social services may be the best way of stopping it, perhaps hesitating to invite more strangers whose help, in her eyes, very likely will be as helpful as that provided by people like Pastor Pottle.

Because Swyers Harbour's residents cannot or will not depend on official protective bodies for their well-being, they turn to other methods of protecting themselves which prove, despite the small victory at the play's end, to be insufficient, as is indicated by the repeated abuse and killing of the defenseless Triffie and the killing and mutilation of the sheep. One of the local tactics is Aunt Millie's obsession with gossip. She collects information about the lives of her fellow residents with great fervour, and is nosy and unfair. We are told that she listens to other people's conversations on "the good old party line, eh, Aunt Millie?" (38). Dr. Melrose suggests: "pick anyone in Swyers Harbour...and good old Aunt Millie'll do the job on them, good and proper. She was just born like it" (31).

Occasionally, as Millie gathers information at the post office she runs, through such ethically dubious means as envelopes that "got ripped in passage" (22), she comes

across information which could aid the community if it were made public. Her discovery of the pastor's subscription to child pornography, for instance, offers a clue to his perversions: "The shockin' things they're doin in them pictures. With the young girls . . . and the young boys" (22). Her post office is a hub of information: "Sees all, hears all, tells all . . . That post office of hers is like the centre of a spider web" (13).

In the perceived absence of any legal or administrative protection, one might feel compelled to turn to more drastic and perhaps less ethical methods of self-defense. When Dr. Melrose suggests Aunt Millie was "born like it," he may without realizing it point to a heritage of gossip as protection in outport communities. Marilyn Porter in her paper "A Tangly Bunch": the Political Culture of Outport Women in Newfoundland suggests that women controlled most of the unofficial aspects of social organization, and that "their command over channels of informal information is in itself a considerable resource" (22).

Aunt Millie's use of information-gathering as a self-defense tactic is accompanied by her personal resilience in the face of those who would attempt to impose their wills on her. Robert Young suggests that "explicit military and political resistance" is only one of many possible forms of resistance. Another is the decision simply

to refuse colonization in whatever form it is being attempted (149). Aunt Millie not only refuses the pastor's religious terrorism, but explicitly discourages him. Firstly, she "put the run on him" when "he tried to proselytize out front of the Post Office" (2). Then she stands up to his damning rhetoric:

> Ha, Frighten me, would you? Fat blasted chance . . . Do you think there's no one knows. Do you think there's no one knows what happened the time that poor little creature [Triffie] got her rib broke. You thinks there's everyone around here is deaf and dumb, you thinks . . . (25)

Despite Aunt Millie's potential as a sort of guerrilla fighter in defense of the people of Swyers Harbour, she is limited in several ways, and is in fact one of Guy's more complicated characters. As is mentioned above, she attains her information by invading people's privacy, and despite her occasional valuable discoveries, she seems mostly to discover trivia such as the amount of Washbourne's pension (21), or Aunt Ducky Piercy's recent interest in the Salvation Army (23). Also, the choices she makes regarding which information to spread and which to keep private are troubling. During the course of her interview with the Ranger, for instance, she tells him all about Washbourne's background, Billy's childhood, Ducky's subscription to The

War Cry, and Washbourne's monthly cheque, but the only potentially valuable piece of information she gives him, involving the pastor's subscription to child pornography, she relates with hesitation. Similarly, during her subsequent hostile encounter with Pottle, she uses his abuse of Triffie as a weapon in their exchange, but it is clear she has never used this knowledge of ongoing abuse in a way that might have helped Triffie (25).

Millie seems generally to use her position as postmistress selfishly. She enjoys the power of constant access to private knowledge, because of the feeling of authority it offers:

> There's tings a postmistress learns in her line of duties. Tings she got to keep to herself. Like a doctor. Like a Ranger. (22)

Millie has a distorted view of her relationship to these other, protective professions, because hers is not a protective profession, and because it is the duty of a ranger or a doctor to use their information to the best advantage of the communities they serve, which she does not do. At best, she protects only herself, as her exchange with Pottle suggests. She uses her knowledge of his secrets to intimidate him and keep herself untouchable, but she also keeps the secret of his abusive behaviour, protecting her enemy by refusing to share the defensive weapons she has acquired.

Millie's reticence to report abuses might to an extent be based on doubts similar to Dr. Melrose's regarding the abilities of official protective bodies to deal effectively with the abuse, but Millie's suspicion of outside bodies may run deeper than the doctor's, and be more akin to the Whitbourne matron's general suspicion of outsiders. Millie is suspicious of Billy Head solely, it seems, because he is so shy and reclusive, so unhelpful in her obsessive quest for private knowledge, and is suspicious of Washbourne based on his similar position as an "anchorite." This suspicion regarding marginal characters who turn out to be "the good guys" echoes that held by her arch-enemy Pottle.

Aunt Millie's habit of prejudice--founded though it may be on a history of abuse at the hands of strangers--combined with her willingness to sacrifice the well-being of others in order to retain her private rhetorical weapons, prevents her from being of assistance to her community, and keeps her a mere gossip-monger.

Millie's fear of the unknown is matched by loyalties which are deeply ingrained in her and which occasionally seem to fly directly in the face of strong evidence. This is indicated by her relentless defenses of her son despite his despicable activity. Dr. Melrose reports to the Ranger:

> Brenda, the fair damsel Brenda, had been interfered with. Good old Brit term, that, "interfered with."

> Well, she wasn't really. Not in the technical medical sense that is. But, by God, the poor girl did have one hell of a black eye and there were some nasty finger marks around her throat . . . Aunt Ducky Piercy [Brenda's mother] isn't the first anxious ma to confide to me their fears for their vestal virgins. (29)

Accustomed to equating threats with strangers, Aunt Millie has trouble dealing with the fact that her own son has become a menace:

> Oh, my God. The thoughts of it. The thoughts of it. The Ranger out hooftin it through the tuckamores after my Vincy like, like he was a mad dog or something. There's no justice. There's no justice left in this world whatsoever. (37)

Aunt Millie's lament may at first seem unreasonable given the assault her son has committed, but there is an element of truth to it which is pointed out several times. It is stressed that before he went to fight in World War Two, Vincent Bishop was, as Dr. Melrose suggests: "the shyest kid you'd ever met" (5), and as Aunt Millie says: "so meek as a lamb. Wouldn't say boo to a goose" (23). In fact, Aunt Millie does not appear to suggest by her remarks that the Ranger is being unjust. She consents that the Ranger

> is only doin' his job but it hardly seem fair, somehow. No, it don't. Because he suffered a lot, you

> know, in them long war years. He been hardened in the crucible of battle (37).

She recognizes that "the war changes people something wonderful . . . Deed and deed and double-deed it do," and she notes the "shockin nightmares my Vincy do be havin' since he come back," full of "bitter roars" (22).

Aunt Millie, understandably, has trouble reconciling that her son has become a piece of scarred war-waste, sent back to the margins where the nightmare of war can ferment, neglected by the political centres for which he fought. She sees her son as important, part of a crucial battle on behalf of good, "puttin' the boots to Mister Hitler" (14). Robert Kroetsch speaks of the shock he felt when he read a popular history of World War Two and found "Canada mentioned only once--and that in connection with the Dieppe raid." He writes: "I, with my community, was obsessively concerned with the war." Kroetsch at that moment perceived that "in a high modern world, with its privileged stories, Canada was invisible" (22-3). Kroetsch's description is apt as well for post-war, pre-Confederation Newfoundland. Aunt Millie must feel this jarring incongruity deeply, especially given the presence of the American base nearby, making the war seem all the more urgent and real.

Vincent Bishop is the only character in Triffie among those raised in Swyers Harbour who is unable to get along at

least functionally well with the others, and his nastiness is the result of his having been exploited and spit out by the war machine. "I suppose the poor fella got a sniff of gas, a bit of the old shell shock, whatever," Dr. Melrose suggests, and earlier states: "Frankly, he did come back one nasty little bastard" (31-2).

Mr. Washbourne is the only other "local" character in Triffie who it seems has spent much time outside the community. He is the child of British parents who Aunt Millie suggests were "quite the upper crust," and who had "come over years and years and years ago to start up one of them pulp and paper mills down the shore." She notes that the mill was a failure, and "on top of that their house burned down", killing Washbourne's parents (21). While only the pastor's flock regard Washbourne as truly threatening, the whole community seems to have built up a picture of him as a mysterious and vaguely suspicious figure, an image he reinforces by remaining an "anchorite," as he describes himself. The result is that nobody knows how Washbourne feels about the community, why he stays or where his sympathies lie. There are, as the pastor suspects, dark secrets behind Washbourne's reclusivity, though they are things that have happened to and around him rather than things he does or has done. He maintains a degree of sympathy for the Melroses beyond that which anyone else in

the play can muster, because he sees a likeness between their predicament and his own parents' situation. Washbourne's parents had come to Newfoundland with specific expectations which fell through, found themselves trapped, and ended their days in a blaze set by Washbourne's father who, after he "set fire to my mother's bedroom, . . . shot himself dead" (30).

As with Pastor Pottle, Washbourne's motivations for being in Swyers Harbour are to a large extent left mysterious. He does not socialize with other residents of the community: "I've never gone out of my way to talk to the gentle folk of Swyers Harbour;" but he does not avoid social mingling because of any sweeping prejudices such as those held by Mrs. Melrose or the pastor. He simply does not find their topics of conversation interesting: "What do they talk about? The weather. The fishery. And each other. A crucifying bore, don't you think?" (27). Despite this, he speaks of his fellow residents more or less amicably, in a way that neither idealizes nor derides. While he speaks eloquently of the Melroses' feelings of being trapped (29-30), which he recognizes because of his parents, he gives no indication of feeling similarly himself. For whatever reasons, he has cast his lot with the people of Swyers Harbour, at least in so far as he chooses to interact with other people at all.

When Washbourne does interact, he is shown to possess a a wry humour as well as generous feelings, especially toward Billy, to whom he relates as a fellow loner (28). Aunt Millie, though she regards Washbourne as being "queer in more ways than one" (14), grants:

> He's friendly enough, you know, in his way. He'll say good morning if tis in the morning and if tis in the evening he'll say good evening. Or he might say "Fine Day," or "Wet day" as the case may be. Course if tis in the winter he'll say "Blustery Day" or . . . (19)

Washbourne's sometimes biting humour shows through when he asks, in relation to Vincent's being nowhere to be found: "Could it be possible that he is abiding in the fields, ma'am, keeping watch over other people's sheep by night?" (37). Washbourne's sympathetic feelings toward Billy Head shine through when he attempts to make him feel better about having unwittingly slept with his own sister:

> You'd been warned not to. Threatened with rather unpleasant usage if you did. That must have inflamed any strange attraction you had to Triffie in the first place. Forbidden fruits. I once had an erotic dream about a nun. Carmelite order I think she was. Absolutely top drawer, as I somewhat dimly recall.

And he tells Billy:

> Ah, don't take it so hard, lad. It's all right,

> now . . . I'm sure the Heads, your parents, are extremely proud of you, sir. It'll all come out in the wash. (41)

At the beginning of Triffie, we are offered a picture of Billy that might lead us to picture someone unstable and probably dangerous. The doctor says:

> Well, that's about all the young bugger does . . . prowl along the beaches, skulk through the woods with that dog and axe and gun of his . . . (10)

This interpretation of the recreation activities of outport youths is something that Guy has taken to task in his columns. He suggests that youths in the outports, free to roam and explore, may have been lucky not to have to endure the intensely organized leisure activities of city youth. He asks:

> Is the only thing worth giving the young a square of asphalt inside a chain-link fence and a swimming pool with enought chlorine to sting and redden the eyes?
>
> When there are conners to be caught, plenty for all, and long grass on the cliff-tops to sit in and warm bogs to jump barefoot into and caplin on the beaches and boats to go out into, fooling around?
>
> (That Far 56-7)

And in another column he assures these rural youths:

> They'll have you drilled and organized and laden down

> with sports equipment in no time. Then they'll bus you off to Clarenville and Gander where you'll perform in front of screaming adults who are all in a frenzy for you to win, win, win. (That Far 30)

Washbourne offers a description of Billy that seems to sum up how Guy would like us to picture him. Washbourne has purchased "a brace of rabbits off him. Partridge. Trout. A regular Daniel Boone is young William" (28).

There is a telling moment early in the play, in which Billy discovers Triffie's body, that reveals he is neither hardened nor twisted, and that informs our subsequent discovery of his sexual encounter with her. There is an obvious warmth in Billy: "Oh, God, Triff, what . . . What . . . What did you want . . . What did you want to go and do that for? Oh, you poor little jeezler . . . ." (8). Billy's capacity for caring is matched by a sense of justice that is well-ordered if a bit severe. He suggests to Washbourne that the way to deal with the pastor is to "cut his throat, sir" (43).

Billy and Washbourne are in similar positions of double marginality. They are parts of a community that has had to endure stereotyping and abuse from outside, and they also are the objects of prejudice within their own community, who tend to be suspicious of the two mysterious and marginal characters because the lack of public knowledge of the

details of Washbourne's and Billy's lives likens them in the mind of Aunt Millie at least to the various strangers who have adversely affected Swyers Harbour over the years. The tendency to make assumptions about those who cannot or do not speak of or for themselves, in order to fill the gaps for oneself no matter how distorted the final picture, is shown to transcend particular class, colonial or urban/rural classifications.

Aunt Millie may, like the Melroses or the pastor, make unfair assumptions about the unfamiliar, but she is willing to revise her opinions when the evidence for revision is clear. She incorporates new information, while the missionaries refuse it and fester, struggling to live in paradigms that jar with the reality of their surroundings. Aunt Millie's amicability with Washbourne and Billy by the play's end, which evolves from curiosity mixed with a degree of suspicion, is a telling indicator of the ability of the local people to get along at least tolerably well with each other despite their differences. While at first we are led by the Melroses to believe that the local people are degraded half-wits or, more diplomatically, primitive, and while they certainly do seem a bit bizarre, they are ultimately pretty sane, basically kind, and more "civilized" overall than their missionary helpers. Millie, Billy and Washbourne are shown to have modes of dealing with

one another that defy a reading of their often prickly interactions as mere antagonism. A good example of this is the willingness of the people of Swyers Harbour early in the play to protect Washbourne from the wrath of the pastor's flock, despite the vague suspicions of Washbourne that Millie articulates.

Swyers Harbour is certainly not a community that could be described as idyllic, even aside from the havoc wreaked by the Melroses and Pastor Pottle. Gerald M. Sider describes a mixture of "intimacy and antagonism" (164), "warm alliance and cold distance" that, while not unique to outport Newfoundland, "does seem particularly intense" in many of them (105). Billy is suspicious of anyone asking him questions, and is reticent to speak to anyone at all. Washbourne finds the local talk a "crucifying bore" (27). Aunt Millie suggests:

> There's nothing wrong with the place. A nice little place. A perfect little place. I always said that and I always will. Tis the people what's <u>in</u> the place what spoils it. If it wasn't for the people, this'd be the nicest little place you ever wish to see. (15)

The fact that there is a certain amount of passive antagonism among the characters in <u>Triffie</u> who are permanent residents of Swyers Harbour is compensated for by their ability to rally around each other in mutual support when

the need arises, as is shown in the last scene of the play (36-44). Homi K. Bhabha suggests that there is in marginal or minority discourse:

> a contentious, performative space of the perplexity of the living in the midst of the pedagogical representations of the fullness of life.

He suggests that the "history" (his quotes) which such people will inscribe can include political solidarity, but will not reflect notions of the "sociological solidity or totality of society, or the homogeneity of cultural experience" ("DissemiNation" 307). In Swyers Harbour, solidarity among local people is tenuous and social relations within the community must be measured against its relations with the outside in order not to seem merely antagonistic.

In The Location of Culture, Bhabha suggests that hybridity and variance may be looked upon as indicators of hope and health, though immediate, explicit political action may be harder to muster without the illusion of uniformity. The considerable variance of character among the local people in Triffie renders impotent the attempts at uniform change intended by the missionary characters, though the same variance and resultant friction may also weaken attempts to actively resist them:

> Where there is no human nature, hope can hardly spring

> eternal; but it emerges surely and surreptitiously in the strategic return of that difference that informs and deforms the image of identity, in the margin of otherness that displays identification.
>
> (Bhabha Location 62)

The missionaries continually run up against people who complicate their simplistic presumptions and who deny their power simply by maintaining their own, by being and remaining "other" in various ways:

> It is not that the voice of authority is at a loss for words. It is, rather, that the colonial discourse has reached that point when, faced with the hybridity of its objects, the presence of power is revealed as something other than what its rules of recognition assert. (Bhabha Location 112)

The mutual support displayed in the play's final scene acts as an assertion--to re-direct a comment by Chinua Achebe--that:

> their past--with all its imperfections--was not one long night of savagery from which the [missionaries] acting on God's behalf delivered them. (45)

On the contrary, Swyers Harbour regards itself as having had to defend itself from generations of savages from outside, who have imposed themselves in various ways on a functioning community, repeatedly disrupting it.

An important symbol in Triffie is "The Stranger." The symbol is introduced by Dr. Melrose who relates a story of Aunt Millie blaming "The Stranger" for the killing and mutilation of the sheep. Dr. Melrose quotes her: "It was the Stranger done it. I knowed it. I knowed it. I seen him." The belief in a concrete single person known as "The Stranger" is not peculiar to Aunt Millie. Dr. Melrose tells his wife:

> Every place like this comes equipped with a stranger. Surely you've heard of him. I'll bet the Stranger was around ever since Swyers Harbour was founded. Maybe before. (4)

The Stranger, Dr. Melrose explains, is a composite construction based on a long history of unpleasant interactions with various actual strangers. He suggests:

> when these communities were first founded they were founded where they are for two reasons, fish and fear. Fish and fear of the Stranger . . . the Pirate, the Navy, the Law, the pillagers, the French. (5)

Elsewhere, Guy writes:

> With the merry lash and the branding iron and the deportation ships they attacked this infestation of Newfoundlanders in the earliest days. With the torch and the wrecking bar they drove them to hide among two thousand holes in the rocks because they had no business to be here.

> There to survive alone among the fog forever in suspicion of strange ships passing. Report the stranger at once, youngsters. (You May Know 114)

In the "Five Minute History Lesson" scene of the Mummers Troupe play They Club Seals, Don't They?, King Charles tells a couple of early settlers in Newfoundland:

> All right then. You take all the risks, supply all the labour, and sell only to my merchants at my price . . . And you can stay. But if you sell to anyone else, especially those damn Frenchies, I shall burn you out.

Soon after, the French make a similar demand, and when the couple explain that they are under threat and must sell to the English, King Louis has no sympathy: "C'est domage. You sell to me or I burn you out" (The Mummers 9).

Dr. Melrose fails to implicate himself, his wife, or the pastor in his recognition of the substantial historical foundation for this local belief, perhaps because he associates the Stranger with pirates, merchants and military forces, and doesn't see doctors and preachers--ostensibly altruistic agents--as potentially being the same type of "Strangers." Jean-Paul Sartre points out that colonial aggression has always been clothed in the language of humanism, which he suggests has always been "an ideology of lies, a perfect justification for pillage." He suggests that "its honeyed words, its affectation of sensibility were only

alibis for our aggressions" (Young 121). The three missionaries in Triffie all refuse to admit they are imposing themselves on a community that does not want or need what they have to offer as specific agents, though a doctor certainly is needed and a preacher may be for some. Aunt Millie puts her fear of the Stranger in a more concrete context when she suggests there are "so many strangers on the go, too. You don't know who is who or what is what" (14).

The Swyers Harbour predisposition toward suspecting the foreign has already worked its way into Washbourne's psyche. Although he is a first-generation outport resident, he sees the sort of impact that outside intervention has had in Swyers Harbour. He suggests, after the final chaos which ends with the Melroses dead and Pottle nailed by one hand to a table to keep him from escaping, that maybe he and his new companions should refrain from helping the Ranger complete his investigation:

> Well, good people what do we know about this little business? Do we know what happened? Were we here at all? Do we help Mr. Ranger with his inquiries? Or are some things better left alone? Ah, well, let's sleep on it shall we. Come lad. Away we go, dear lady. (44)

Washbourne's comments are indicative of an insularity and fear, already present in the community, which he has adopted

and which has been reinforced by the disastrous effects of the latest round of strangers.

Although his protagonists are adverse to outside involvement in the affairs of Swyers Harbour, Guy recognizes that outsiders can be valuable allies to residents of outports. By depicting the Ranger in Triffie in a positive light, Guy limits his criticism of outsiders to those who would attempt to impose changes on a community rather than listen to and consult with the people they desire to help.

Guy also has no delusions of a previous or possible utopia destroyed or prevented by outside intervention. This is made clear in Triffie, in which there are no idealized characters or cultures. When Aunt Millie asks whether it is possible that "when them Americans goes, . . . our little community will be the once-tranquil place it used to be?", Washbourne chuckles, finding the remark astonishing, then begins to laugh with increasing heartiness (44). Two things are implied by this. Firstly, Swyers Harbour is inescapably linked to the world outside. There is shown to be a variance of cultural influence and heritage in the community which conflicts with isolationist notions of a consistent local stock and character: Washbourne is the child of immigrants and is still more influenced by his numerous subscriptions to "newspapers and magazines from all parts" (21) than by local culture; Billy is the biological child of Pastor

Pottle; and Aunt Millie's son, though he hails from Swyers Harbour, has been influenced a great deal by his experiences in the war. The second implication of Washbourne's laughter is that, even if they could return to their previous condition, it would be no utopia. Peter J. Roberts suggests that "our selective recall...does much to obscure many of the less pleasant aspects of earlier times" in Newfoundland, and states plainly that "The 'good old days' weren't always that good" (157). And besides, the myth of the Stranger has, as Dr. Melrose points out, arisen because of repeated assaults on such "tranquil" communities dating back to the first settlement.

In Triffie, Guy does not restrict his criticisms to outsiders. He is careful to draw our attention also to the limited potential and possibly counterproductive effects of the brand of resistance espoused by Triffie's trio of protagonists. He grants only that resistance through refusal and endurance may be enough to escape what bell hooks describes as "collective despair." Millie, Billy and Washbourne are able to avoid regarding their own marginality solely as a "sign, marking the condition of our pain and deprivation" (hooks 342). They defend their own subjectivity through their refusal to succumb to insensitive imposition. Ultimately, though, their mode of resistance cannot be fruitful in terms of actually improving their defenses

against assaults. They are subject to a fatalism which Cyril F. Poole suggests is often quite pronounced among Newfoundlanders (92), and apparently feel satisfied that they have survived another invasion.

The uncertainty with which the play is concluded is important. The trio decide to "sleep on" the decision whether or not to help the Ranger complete his investigation. The Ranger has been a sympathetic character throughout the play, genuinely trying to solve the heinous crimes he has been sent to investigate. But the Ranger is from away. The decision will be whether to risk another round of disastrous outside involvement by accepting the assistance of outside agents who can augment with social and legal mechanisms the personal strength of the Swyers Harbour characters, or to persist with defense mechanisms which the disasters in the play reveal to be inadequate. Guy implies that the attempted continuance of isolationism is not a positive alternative for the people of Swyers Harbour, and yet he acknowledges the possibility that the overall effect of outside involvement could continue to be adverse, and that it is understandable that the protagonists suspect it will be. Guy leaves us to ponder the possibilities by ending the play with a choice.

Chapter 2

Frog Pond: Newfoundland Marginalized from Within

Set in the early 1950s, Ray Guy's second play Frog Pond spans two days in the lives of the Frostts, a formerly prestigious St. John's merchant family. There is a tendency among these characters toward loyalty to and psychological dependency on specific cultures outside Newfoundland. Only the servant girl Rita does not express a longing for a particular exogenous culture, and it is Rita alone who escapes caricature, and who offers a future through the birth of her child.

The cultural loyalties among the characters vary, but all are manifestations of a shared longing for miracle cures, easy answers to complex social and economic problems. Most of the Frostts, and the local Monsignor, indulge in the nostalgic idealization of their countries of "origin" (though it appears they are all Newfoundland-born). Homi K. Bhabha, in a discussion of the longing for a "'true' national past, [which] often [is] represented in the reified forms of realism and stereotype," suggests this type of nationalistic nostalgia denies the "performative time" in which people actually live ("DissemiNation" 303). Georgina

Frostt, her sons John and Albert, and the Monsignor all fear the instability of the living culture in which they live, and retreat from it into contrived stereotypes of Britishness or Irishness.

Others in Frog Pond look to the United States or to Canada as new-world utopias. Their idealized creations are also grounded in stereotype, and evade the real complexity of the social and economic challenges facing them as Newfoundlanders.

Antonio Perrault, in a Quebecois nationalist essay which articulates and promotes the sort of purist cultural assumptions held by most of Frog Pond's characters, speaks of "our gifts as a Latin people" and fears cultural influences which might interfere with the maintenance of cultural "purity." For Perrault, the promotion of the essential(ist) qualities of the French-Canadian people "offers the hope of a great future" (221). Most of Frog Pond's characters share Perrault's fear of cultural influence from outside a particular stereotype, and share his reliance on simplified images of culture as a foundation for hope.

Newfoundland, as a settler colony with a history of economic dependency, displays cultural characteristics of the countries from which its people are descended, and also of other countries such as Canada and the United States,

upon which it has had to rely. George Lamming, in distinguishing the post-colonial situations of Africa and the West Indies, points out that while African countries can draw upon pre-colonial local heritages in the re-construction of identity in the wake of colonialism, "Colonialism is the very base and structure of the West Indian's cultural awareness" (Harris 174) and, I will add, the Newfoundlander's as well. Newfoundland's hybrid culture, for the purists in Frog Pond, amounts only to confusion, to a lack of culture. In The Empire Writes Back, the authors, discussing a "driving force" in the works of V. S. Naipaul, describe "the perception that being itself is located at the centre, and that nothingness (by implication) is the only possibility for the margins" (Ashcroft et al. 90). Naipaul, a native Trinidadian, pessimistically regards Trinidad as inescapably a place of mere mimicry, the sum of anemic versions of its various source cultures, rather than as the site of vital new cultural practices. Frog Pond is dominated by Naipauls, characters whose geographic home is, for them, a cultural non-entity at best, or at worst a prison (Ramraj 190) which they try to escape through the attempted wholesale importation of specific exogenous cultures or economic practices. Only Rita, the most economically dependent, politically powerless character in Frog Pond truly accepts that she is a Newfoundlander.

Russell Ferguson, in an observation that is apt for Newfoundland where political and economic power has shifted among various outside centres, suggests:

> When we try to pin it down, the center always seems to be somewhere else. Yet we know that this phantom center, elusive as it is, exerts a real, undeniable power over the whole social framework of our culture, and over the ways we think about it. (9)

Frog Pond is set during a time when British political dominance in Newfoundland was being replaced by a combination of Canadian influence, a degree of local power, and an economic reliance on foreign business-owners, primarily in manufacturing. Con Hartrey in Tom Cahill's play As Loved Our Fathers, who is staunchly anti-Confederate and also opposed to the British-run Commission of Government, suggests the change of regime will not release Newfoundland from colonial status:

> Because, by God, it was bad enough being a colony of England, but if we joins Canada . . . , in twenty years we'll be . . . a colony of Ottawa and Toronto. (22)

While many Newfoundlanders looked forward with excitement and hope to what Con insists is a new colonialism, for the security they believed it would provide, those who thrived within previous regimes in Newfoundland, for whom British colonial status offered

privileges that were relatively secure, Confederation, Guy suggests, was a disaster. Georgina Frostt, second wife to the late Sir Robert Frostt, had according to her son John been known as "the Queen of the Island of Newfoundland" (Frog Pond 64) before the regime change. By the time in which Frog Pond is set, the mother country is Canada, to whose heritage Georgina does not belong, and the premier of Newfoundland is Joey Smallwood, self-proclaimed defender of the common man. She can expect little respect for such honours as her late husband's knighthood. She states: "Sir Robert earned his knighthood. Then there was a rush to knight all sorts of trash before this, . . . this . . . this Confederation!" (5)--a rush which can be read simultaneously as a lack of proper respect for such accolades and as a desperate last-ditch act of nostalgia for British ties. Rand Dyck points out that "Newfoundland's population is almost entirely of British heritage (92 percent)" (51). It is easy to see how Newfoundland could be seen by those who fared well under British influence as little more than a distant county of Britain, and how the severing of British ties might seem appalling and frightening.

Georgina is addicted to her old status as badly as she is addicted to cigarettes. She stubbornly goes on smoking, despite adverse health effects extreme enough that she relies on an oxygen machine, and she stubbornly insists

that her family continue to live as British aristocrats in the face of a volatile marketplace and changing social conditions, despite the fact that this rigid attachment accelerates the self-destruction of her family. She rules the family with an iron hand, comfortable with her rigidity because she is not of the generation that has to adjust to new modes. The most explicit example of Georgina's prioritization of her family's prestigious heritage over its survival, is the killing of her step-son Steve, child of Sir Robert's first wife, family black sheep, and free-market capitalist/gangster. Steve is a threat to every shred of "nobility" the family may have left, and is also, until his death, perhaps the best candidate among the Frostts to carry them successfully into the new era. Georgina kills her family's future because she believes that it is a disgrace.

Because Confederation destroyed the security of the old hierarchies which supported her, Georgina is unable to acknowledge that it might provide certain benefits to Newfoundland. She is off speaking terms with a Bishop with whom she had been friends, solely because the church gave its approval to the regime change: "His blessing . . . and my blessing can only come from a single source. And from there, never from here, can he expect forgiveness. Capitulating jackass" (33). Even during her sole moment of kindness in the play, when she brings Rita and her newborn

into the house, she cannot resist delivering the ultimate insult to Rita's cousin, the handy-man Herbert: "Get that woman of yours over here at once. Are you deaf, you imbecile . . . you, you Confederate" (59).

Georgina sees the demise of her family coming, but opts to let it come rather than altering her standards in accordance with new modes. The family pays money they cannot afford in order discretely to dispose of Steve's body. Georgina suggests:

> It was a great bargain. We have merely traded an abysmal future to preserve an honourable past. The name, the Frostt name will stand, and that is all that really matters. (52a)

When Herbert discovers and refuses to keep secret the cause of Steve's death, Georgina opts to kill herself in a blaze that destroys the family estate, rather than deal with the shame of a trial.

Georgina cannot let go of her little England, cannot bear the idea of adjusting to new realities in Newfoundland, to an unpredictable future. All this despite Britain's eagerness to unload Newfoundland after World War Two. Valerie Summers in her book Regime Change in a Resource Economy: The Politics of Underdevelopment in Newfoundland traces a series of British recommendations dating from 1942, that Newfoundland should confederate with Canada (137, 140,

141). In Cod on a Stick, Newfoundland comedy collective CODCO satirically portray this eagerness. Queen Elizabeth is seen speaking to a "Newfie Puppet," with which she is tired of playing. She calls the "Capcano Company" in order to acquire the services of Captain Canada to come take the Newfie Puppet off her hands:

> Yes, this is Mother England. I'm calling about a little problem I have--Newfoundland. Ah, I've got a young puppet here who's very eager and willing to learn, but I simply just don't have the time to devote to it. Do you think you could possibly help me out? (Peters 33)

Britain regarded Newfoundland as an economic liability, and decided that it would be better to rid itself of responsibility to the colony than to have to feed large sums of money into its economy. Summers suggests that Newfoundland and its future constituted what must have seemed "an intractable political and economic problem" for the British government (142).

Georgina Frostt maintains a desperate loyalty to a "mother country" that would have her give it up, and lives in a province that increasingly has no use for it. She is placeless, somewhere between marginalizer and marginalized. She is accustomed to setting standards and is unable to cope with having to conform to standards set elsewhere, standards emerging from new "counter-narratives of the nation" (Bhabha

"DissemiNation" 300) which, because of their public force, have shifted the old ideologies into marginal positions in a new configuration of power in Newfoundland.

To redirect a comment by Michael Harris regarding Alec Waugh's novel Island in the Sun, Frog Pond "shows the English in the habit of rule, but without the reality of inalienable power" (150). In Island in the Sun, a journalist visits Santa Marta's Government House and notes that the colonial governors within "still behaved as though they owned the universe" although "they had lost their empire . . ." (Waugh 108). The colonial administrators, Harris suggests, "retreat to colonial refuges, such as the [Country] Club" (157), which is the only place where the "colonizers [can] pretend that life outside is not changing" (151).

Frog Pond, where the Frostts live, acts much like the Club in Waugh's novel. It is an illusory shelter from the changing tides. A central image in the play is the frog itself, ancient and of "shockin' size. Half so big as a boxin' glove. Almost too big to be natural is one way of lookin' at it" (4). The frog is indeed too big to be natural, and the lengths to which the Frostts must go to keep it thriving are ridiculous. At the beginning of the play, Herbert returns from cleaning out the pond, which is filled with refuse: "Tin cans, one old car tire, bottles

down there in the old sludge. . . . a couple of women's undergarments," and most ominously, a bone of "some poor animal, too big for mutton, not big enough for beef" (3), implying either literally or metaphorically the sacrifice of human beings to the pond, to the Frostt wealth. John quickly shuts Herbert up, before he can elaborate any further. Looking at the pond as a symbol for the family's past, we see that all its detritus must be dug up and hauled away, not spoken of, in order that the frog (the Frostts' history) may remain clean and healthy.

We also observe a dead chicken being hung above the bowl in which the frog is being kept while its pond settles. The frog is inside the house, and the chicken is there to attract maggots and flies for it to eat. At least two things can be inferred from this image. Firstly, as Georgina notes, the maggots allow "Sir Froggie" to "have his nourishment and his entertainment all at the same time" (5). Georgina's comment suggests a history of predatory activity in which the Frostts ruthlessly exploited the outport people, as St. John's merchants frequently did in order to make their own substantial livings. Rand Dyck describes this pattern of exploitation in Newfoundland as a "blatant reality" (54), and Lady Hope Simpson, wife to Sir John Hope Simpson, one of the first British members of the Commission of Government that was the ruling power in Newfoundland from 1934 until Confederation, writes:

> Here the merchants have exploited the fishermen, as you know--grown richer & richer while skinning the people who work for them . . . (Peter Neary 63)

Georgina's comment also suggests that the Frostts have enjoyed the exploitation itself as well as its benefits. Secondly, the use of rotting flesh and bugs within the walls of the home, as nourishment for a symbol of past privilege, reinforces in our minds Georgina's willingness to sacrifice everything in the present, in this case the health of herself and her family, to preserve a polished past. John's wife Edythe points out the ugliness at the core of this preservation instinct:

> Well. A few hunchbacks in the kitchen, a mad monk down the bottom of the garden . . . let's build a 15th century tableau around that frog and the lovely serving wench, Rita, shall we. Christ, the flies. (7)

We are clearly led to associate the frog with the Frostt patriarch, the late Sir Robert. Georgina suggests that she has few things left to remind her of Sir Robert, and Herbert, misunderstanding, responds: "Well, I spose, ma'm, in a poor light, ma'm, there <u>is</u> a remarkable resemblance . . ." (4). As with the frog, it seems a great deal of garbage-removal has been necessary in order to arrive at a pretty picture of the late merchant. In fact, aside from a change of loyalties, we are led to believe that Sir Robert

was not much different from his son Steve. Herb naively points out: "old Sir Robert . . . he used to say, 'Every man for himself and God for us all.' A wonderful religious kinda man, he was" (51). Steve reveals that the accepted story of Sir Robert's death, that he died from heat prostration while in the Caribbean, is a fiction:

> Haw, haw, haw. That's choice. That's rich. Heat godam prostration? Kicked the bucket in the biggest old whorehouse in Kingston, Jamaica. Heat prostration? Yella fever, more like it--high yella fever. (28)

Even Georgina, obsessed as she is with Sir Robert's good name, implies that his Britishness and not his character is the cause for admiration. She tells the frog, in advice that sounds eerily Steve-like: "Gobble up the competition, Sir Frog. In a small pond like yours there are not many flies to go around" (6).

Ultimately, the frog is shown to be bloated and ridiculous, a grotesque symbol of aristocratic living in an economy dominated by poverty. Herb notes: "My, the flies the flies. I spect that old frog out there is goin' blow up and bust" (50). And Georgina finally responds, exhausted, to its "BARUMPH": "Shut up, you old fool. I think we don't have much longer" (60).

Tied to the family strings are Georgina's sons John and Albert. They are both loyal to the family heritage,

primarily because of respect for their mother. Albert, known as Junior, is the younger son and, for reasons related to the death of his father, has become emotionally unstable, showing his loyalty to the family primarily through outbursts. For instance, he responds to the news of Steve's return from Boston by suggesting: "I'll kill him, I'll kill him, I'll kill him . . . I'll cut his throat" (8).

There are occasional suggestions throughout the play that "perhaps, in another few years, we shall let Switzerland take a whack at his [Junior's] correction" (8). Georgina speaks of the apparently sophisticated treatment methods devised by the Swiss as a miracle cure for Junior's condition, so that she does not have to face the traumas which have led to his instability. These include his father's dubiously explained death and his half-brother Steve's assault and murder of a former maid of the Frostt family (8). The real, the complex, the ugly, become, in Georgina's retelling, simple, pat, bland and false: Junior is "overly sensitive. Always was" (3), a sensitivity that is "greatly accentuated" by "the death of his poor father, occurring as it did in the middle of his formative years" (8). Junior's treatment is always put in terms of "sooner or later" (11), implying that it is among the perpetually remote fantasy solutions Georgina uses to defend herself from things too complex for her to control.

Junior's incompetence leaves John with full responsibility for the family's business affairs. John is impotent, caught between his mother's rigid attachment to British colonial, anti-Confederate attitudes, and a new complex of loyalties in Newfoundland under Smallwood's premiership. John describes his mother as a "courageous old lady" for killing Steve, and suggests it was a generous act, "to help the family, to protect, to preserve" (62). He remains attached to the family's British colonial heritage, and does not recognize the selfishness of Georgina's act. Harold Horwood notes that in St. John's, there was a tendency to regard England as "the mother country" and "the British Isles as home." He notes that many people born in St. John's early in the twentieth century, "even those whose grandparents had been born in St. John's," would assert: "I'm English" (Horwood Joey 10).

John is a product of his family attachments, feeling, as the authors of The Empire Writes Back suggest of many colonials in regard to the colonial power, that Georgina, Sir Robert, and all things British are "the origin and therefore claim the final authority in questions of taste and value" (Ashcroft at al. 16). John is unable to deal with current issues in Newfoundland, because he cannot escape the "little England" which his parents have created, his mother maintains, and he respects. The Frostts after Confederation

live in a stifling, self-imposed double margin which leaves John squirming helplessly.

John recognizes that he cannot maintain his mother's strictly anti-Confederate stance and also succeed in the emerging business environment which Smallwood dominates. It is implied in Frog Pond that Smallwood does not hesitate to punish anti-Confederate merchants by withholding contracts. John recognizes this, suggesting:

> We're cut off at the root. We must make a public confession of our anti-Confederate sins. We must grovel. We must . . . excuse me Mother . . . kiss ass. Or we die. (9)

John's recognition of his tenuous business position does not, however, give him the strength to overcome his respect for--and fear of--his mother or his own attachments to the residue of custom left over from the old regime. As his wife Edythe notes, calling him a "pathetic little damp squib":

> What guts you may have my dear hubby have been stretched to a thread with this bloody Confederation tugging one end and that . . . that battleaxe, that demented immovable force in a wheelchair [Georgina] . . . attached to the other. (22)

Steve sees John "standin' there, catchin' flies in the middle of a whole new godam ballgame" (28), and Herb suggests more sympathetically:

> He feels for this and he feels for that, he feels for this one and he feels for that one . . . and not much of nothing never gets done. (51)

The only one who it seems has any potential to "get things done" is Steve, who Edythe latches onto as her saviour from her predicament as the powerless dependent of a family whose time has passed. Edythe sees the family floundering and abhors them, but she is dependent on them, so she stays with them but rails against them, exerting the only power she recognizes in herself. Her venemous railery includes all manners of unpleasantly accurate if hyperbolically expressed insights. When Georgina suggests that perhaps the "current foolishness" in Newfoundland might be "brought up short in its tracks," and that perhaps it is only a matter of waiting, "with honour, with dignity, with obligation," Edythe retorts: "Ready for a peasant luncheon with honor and dignity in the goatshed darling? It may be a very long haul" (11). In a tirade in which she sarcastically expounds on the economic benefits of, fittingly enough, the selling of miracle cures, Edythe barely masks her opinion of the Frostts generally and her husband specifically:

> Bring me your tired, your rich, your jaded, your limp, your flaccid . . . When even St. Jude has let you down and nothing else can get it up . . . Not . . . not even St. John, eh, John . . . come to the Poooooch Cove

> Shrine, dip your wick in the blessed St. Truncheon's tiny tool pool . . . (43-44)

To escape the pain of her situation, Edythe indulges in fantasies, often manifested in obsessive reminiscing about past overseas vacations. She looks at pictures of a vacation in Montego Bay, but tears up a picture of herself in which she looks "fat as a pig" (21), eliminating the undesirable parts of the actual vacation from her fantasy. She tells the Monsignor about "all those rude, skinny bum-pinching [Italian] boys . . . Such a blessed relief" (35). Like Georgina and John, whose refusal to adapt to the new conditions in Newfoundland is a cause for her abhorrence, Edythe distracts herself from the reality of her surroundings by cloaking herself in pleasant, distant stereotypes. Also like them, Edythe compares her fantasies with what she sees around her, and is frustrated by the disparity.

For Edythe, Steve appears to offer a genuine escape from the stifling slow death of the Frostts. Also, the very fact of his reputation in the family undoubtedly adds to his attractiveness, because it offers the possibility of excitement and because any attention paid to him will certainly irritate John and Georgina. John disgustedly suggests that "Steve thinks he can waltz back here . . . , wade in among our own little homegrown gang of punks &

gangsters . . . and beat them at their own game." Edythe finds it "rather exciting. Fight fire with fire . . . Better than being hung out to dry . . . or to rot" (10). Steve's presence ignites the long-brewing tension between Edythe and John, and their quarrels lead to talk of a divorce, which Edythe promises will be "loud, Johnny, and big and diiirrrty" (44b).

When Georgina kills Steve, all the venemous gusto Edythe has drawn from his presence deflates, she realizes her helplessness, recognizes she is still dependent on John, and so decides to "forgive him" (49). She is shown to be, as John rather cruelly puts it, "pitiful wreckage" (44b), helplessly attached to a sinking ship.

Edythe's behaviour can be read in part as a metaphor for Newfoundland's shifting external dependency. Before Confederation, Newfoundland was governed by British-appointed civil servants, three Britons and three Newfoundlanders. For the most part, people were dissatisfied both with the quality of government and with its undemocratic nature, but felt unable to alter the situation, lacking population density, wealth and political organization. Richard A. Parsons, in The Book of Newfoundland, published in 1937, writes:

> His Majesty's government offered Newfoundland financial assistance on conditions which involved the suspension

> of Dominion Status and the relegation of the oldest settlement of Empire to the position of a Colony ruled by Commissioners who are not answerable to its people. (37)

Edythe has, as far as we know, no money of her own and is in the politically and economically unfortunate position of being a woman in the early '50s.

As John's willingness to divorce Edythe suggests, the Frostts are as eager to be rid of a woman they regard as a nuisance as Britain was to be rid of a country it regarded as an economic liability (Summers 142). When Britain offered the National Convention as a forum to discuss Newfoundland's constitutional future, several possibilities were discussed, with their various advocates claiming to offer cures for Newfoundland's ills. The outport people, geographically disparate, habituated to not participating in their own government, and desperate for an escape from extended hardship, were vulnerable to whoever was best at tapping into their sense of need and at using language that was compelling to them. Steve offers hope to Edythe, a feeling of being part of something new and exciting, but as her renewed reliance on John after Steve's death reveals, she remains vulnerable to the whims and follies of those around her as long as she continues to seek miracles and to place all her hope in other people's aspirations. Through his

portrayal of Edythe, Guy suggests that there are no miracle cures, no systems or individuals that can make Newfoundland's problems disappear, and that the passive reliance on outside agents for leadership and organization cannot lead to any substantial improvement in quality of living.

The initial attractiveness, to Edythe at least, of Steve's vision for the future is not hard to understand. As she says, "It's something." At least it seems to be. He speaks of progress, suggesting: "Schools. Schools. New schools. . . . Hit those kids and hit 'em hard. The godam future." And he tries to encourage a bit of forethought:

> I tried to get the message across to John here this morning . . . Find out what the people are gonna want in five years time and you be the first . . . Can't seem to get to first base. (35)

Steve's brand of reform is not, however, any more attractive than the Frostts' stubborn stasis, and only appears so because his nastiness is dynamic rather than static. Steve, on his way to a meeting with the "little guy in the big bow tie," says: "Welcome to the world, New Found Land," to which John responds: "Welcome to Chicago, 1924" (41). Steve is a snake-oil salesman obsessed with monetary gain. He will sell anything, real or fraudulent to make money:

> Frostt Miracle Cruise Ships. Frostt Provincial Pilgrimage Airlines. Frostt Hotels. Frostt Carbonated Holy Water. Frostt Prayer Bead Industries Inc. Frostt, Frostt, Frostt. Beats a dive off Signal Hill, eh Johnny? (43)

One begins to see why John and his mother might prefer their slow crawl toward death.

Steve's automotive preference succinctly sums up his overall attitude. He refers to the MG as a "Brit pansy wagon" and suggests to Junior:

> You want a real car, put hair on yer chest, you get American steel, eh, Pat? [the Monsignor] Burn some rubber, warm up the chicks. Get them dollies cookin'. (37)

Steve embodies the worst stereotypes of American capitalism, his whole life organized around conquest. The Frostts' distaste for him appears to be based on his acknowledgement of his motives and methods, rather than his instinct for conquest, tied as they are to a heritage of conquest cloaked in a guise of civility.

The image of rape is the central image to keep in mind regarding Steve Frostt. It is the basis of his whole economic outlook. He takes what he can get and then disappears before having to deal with the consequences of his actions. The first instance mentioned in the

play--carried out, ironically, by the Frostts who hate him--is his exile to the United States years earlier, to avoid trial and public shame to the family after he rapes and murders one of the family servants.

This instance of escaping punishment for damage done in (to) Newfoundland informs his economic intentions. Firstly, he predatorily tells his family: "you stand in the way of progress . . . you're gonna get crushed just like a li'l ole pinch a coon shit" (38), then he begins to reveal his methods of progress, which include blackmailing the Monsignor by using his past indiscretions against him in order to obtain "a fair share of them godam school contracts." He agrees when the Monsignor calls him a "fiend from the bowels of hell": "Right you are, Pat" (44a). He intends to assault the province for what can be squeezed out of it, and then, to borrow John's warning to Edythe, leave it with "your panties stuffed down your throat and your eyes bulging out" (44). The image of Steve as economic rapist is reinforced by his suggestion that he "might even make [the move back to Newfoundland] <u>semi</u>-permanent this time" [my stress] (33).

Smallwood, caught up in his vision of an industrial future and needing concrete evidence of the progress he promised would accompany Confederation, was vulnerable to the machinations of outright shams or of developers who

recognized they could use his overwhelming drive to their benefit. Albert Perlin notes the increasingly desperate economic situation in Newfoundland around the time of Confederation, and suggests that "out of all this was coined the slogan 'Develop or Perish'. [Smallwood] had decided that his main job was to be the great developer" (84). Such industrial powerhouses as John C. Doyle and John Shaheen used Smallwood's desire to develop at all costs to negotiate development projects in which all the financial risks would be taken by the Newfoundland government and, by extension, the people of Newfoundland (Wells 156). The developers had nothing to lose, and the province everything to lose, which it frequently did. Steve is a barely if at all exaggerated version of capitalists who had no stake in the well-being of Newfoundland, who took advantage of its lack of and desperation for wealth and of Smallwood's drive to concretize his vision of Newfoundland's future.

The fact that Steve is, at least by adoption, American, makes him relevant to the issue of the attractiveness of the United States to Newfoundland in the time leading up to Confederation. Richard Gwyn notes that while the notion of Economic Union with the United States was "far-fetched," it was attractive because "Newfoundland's ties with the United States were far stronger and far more affectionate than those with Canada" (103). Steve articulates this affection

when he states that Newfoundland "could'a joined up with the U.S. of A. and you gotta settle for half-ass godam Canada." Herbert inquires as to whether there is really a difference, and Steve responds vitriolically:

> Is there a difference between godam chalk and godam cheese. Between a . . . a godam icebox and a godam automatic self-defrostin top-of-the-line Frigidaire? (26)

For Steve, it is the United States alone that offers a viable (adequately exciting) future. He intends, since Newfoundlanders, in his view, were too stupid to join the United States, to use the methods he learned there to show Newfoundland what good old American grit and know-how can accomplish--for him.

The Monsignor who comes to visit the family is excited to meet Steve at first, assuming that since he has been living outside of Newfoundland, he might offer sophisticated conversation. He suggests, "We're still terribly rustic, I'm afraid" (34). He is trapped in his feeling of being trapped, unable to appreciate anything that does not somehow resemble his conception of Ireland or at least England. John suggests that the Monsignor, because of a sexual fling he has had, is "condemned to Newfoundland forever" (31). John's choice of words reveals that he shares to an extent the Monsignor's feeling that a life in Newfoundland is a life in a type of

prison. Victor Ramraj, discussing V. S. Naipaul's descriptions of Trinidad, praises him for not idealizing it, but fails to recognize the equal fault in blanket condemnation: "Naipaul portrays Trinidad through images of darkness, prisons, and wastelands rather than through images evocative of a tropical paradise" (190). Guy shows the Monsignor doing this, but depicts him in a way that does not imply praiseworthiness or accuracy of vision. Instead, the Monsignor is seen as a nostalgic and spineless "Bish's [Bishop's] gofer" (31) writhing in his anxieties and prejudices.

The Monsignor's desperate need for modes he assumes to be those of the British Isles (he is a native of St. John's) leads him to refer to the Frostts' stifling and aggressive home as an "oasis of culture and civility . . . carved out of the howling wilderness" (34), "a little bit of paradise . . . in our poor rude and rustic Isle" (36). He reminisces fondly for the days of his youth, when he and his friends used to pick "the little sharp gravels" out of the wheels of Georgina's father's "lovely maroon Buick" for spare change from the chauffeur. Harold Horwood describes the striking disparity in early twentieth-century St. John's between its very wealthy and the squalor that characterized much of the city. He describes the poor boys sweeping the walks hoping for copper coins from "wealthy citizens in top hats or

bowlers, carrying gold-headed or ivory-headed walking canes, their ankles sheathed in spats" (Horwood Joey 10). The Monsignor's notions of what constitutes civil living might lead one to question his judgment of the rest of the "rude and rustic isle."

Although those in Frog Pond who regard Newfoundland as a prison are satirized for it, Guy does not indulge in the idealization of the people who call it home. As the Frostts' long-time handyman Herbert displays, misconceptions, regrettable behaviour and vain hopes transcend boundaries of class and particular loyalties. Some of Herbert's misconceptions are cute, and make Herbert a sympathetic character in a way that none of the Frostts or the Monsignor is. For instance, he keeps telling Rita that it is crucial for her, being pregnant, "not to go to work an' look at anything too nasty" (11) like "that picture they got on the wall . . . with the four eyes on the one face." But Herb also suggests that Rita should avoid looking at "that little feller down to the post office with the big lump on the back of his head" (12). And he indulges in generalizations about people from particular communities: " . . . stuck up, she is. . . . Kelligrews, see. They're all like that up there to Kelligrews. Might just so well talk to that . . . that bloody frog, there" (13). In the same speech, he reveals the reason why Rita is stuck working for the Frostts during her

pregnancy. Rita's family has sent her off to avoid shame, and Herbert's wife will not let Rita stay with them:

> When we got your mother's letter, Suze, she put her foot down right away . . . She's not bringin' her disgrace in from around the bay with her, and waitin' her time in my decent, Christian kitchen, she said. (13)

In the collectively written play Time Before Thought, the character of Mercedes Barry (also the name of one of the writers) describes the same prejudice within certain communities in Newfoundland in greater detail:

> I feel like the town whore. I don't know what I'm going to do. Mom says she doesn't want the baby in over the doorstep. All she calls me is slut or whore, and Dad won't even look at me. (Barry et al. 330)

After Mercedes delivers her baby, she says: "They won't give me anything for pain because I'm a single mother" (338).

Herbert also maintains a strikingly complex mixture of political loyalties and sentiments which reflect the complexity of political and social attachments which pervaded Newfoundland around the time of Confederation. An obvious example of this complexity is his ambivalence toward his employers. A second-generation Frostt employee, he feels attached to the family, and respects and emulates them, obviously admiring their success and their "civility" (5, 14). Feeling he has gained status by his association with

the Frostts, he has adopted a degree of aristocratic snobbery regarding outport people, suggesting that Rita "should be down on her knees night and day, overburdened with gratefulness for the lovely position she found here." He demands that Rita articulate her appreciation: "Speak. Speak. Don't show your ignorance, now. Don't let on you're a baynoddy" (5). Rita says she is "much obliged, your ladyship," then comments on the smell of frog and rotting chicken. Herbert, shocked, tells Rita: "You must never threaten to cast your stomach in the presence of your employer," and tells Georgina: "Her condition, ma'm, on top of her origins, I'm afraid" (6).

On the other hand, Herbert, caught up in the rhetoric of Confederation, perceives that the disparity in standard of living among classes is unfair. Like Trese in Tom Cahill's As Loved Our Fathers, he is moved by the attention Smallwood pays to people like himself. Trese says:

> He talks about the poor people, Joey do. All the others talks about fish exports and taxes and trade agreements and joining the States or something. Joey talks about the old people and the poor people, and how he can give them a share of what's on the go. (20)

Herbert's conflicting loyalties lead him on a twisty path between populist rhetoric and the reinforcement of aristocratic attitudes. He suggests to Rita: "We got a

little thing around here now, my girl, called the Con Feather Ation. Jack is as good as his master" (16). Rita recognizes Herbert's contradictory stance and points it out to him. When he suggests that if any of the Frostts have tried to molest Rita he will . . . and he trails off, Rita barks back: "you'll threaten 'em, will you Herb? . . . to do only half so go a job rakin' up the dogshit off their grass, will you Herb? That should settle 'em" (15-16). Even at the end of the play, after he has refused on principle to help hide the murder of Steve, Herb does not recognize that he cannot maintain both his attachment to a class that has marginalized working-class people but has employed him and his father, and his new attachment to a regime whose loyalties have not been tested, but which is definitely antagonistic towards anti-Confederate St. John's merchant families like the Frostts. He naively requests of John:

> Ah, before I goes, I wonder if . . . there's a chance of a job nightwatchman, sir, up at that new fac'ry they got in Holyrood, that rubber plant. If you could see your way clear, sir? References. (64)

Herbert's ambivalence toward the Frostts is echoed by another paradoxical pair of sentiments, which inform and are informed by his strained allegiances. On the one hand, he feels powerless to effect substantial change, a feeling consistent with how many Newfoundlanders historically have

felt about structures of official power, and which has led to a griping tolerance of all manners of abuses--a tolerance exhibited by the community of Swyers Harbour in Young Triffie's Been Made Away With. Herbert tells Rita: "Never mind what makes the world go round. Not much the likes of we can do 'bout what makes the world go round" (17). On the other hand, Herb is caught up in Confederate excitement, in a feeling of being part of something important--like Edythe feels regarding Steve--so he punctuates his conversations with random, frequently non-sensical pro-Confederate comments. He suggests: "There's a nasty dose of flies, then. Put you in mind of a anti-Confederate rally" (50); and when Rita is delivering her child, he tells her: "I'm gettin doctor to you right now . . . the old bastard. Dirty old anti-Confeatheration bastard" (53). Albert Perlin notes that Smallwood, "consumed with the rightness of his cause," "fought solidly and ferociously," using his knowledge of the outports, of the effective use of radio, and of how to use "positive talking-points" (81). Smallwood stirred up what might be called "Post-imperial nationalism," which Alan Filewod suggests may be reducible to "nostalgia for a sense of historical belonging" (13-14). Herbert certainly feels he belongs to something historically important when he remarks: "Thanks be to God for the Confeatheration . . . and for the little feller give it to us. Bless his cotton socks" (25).

His feeling of belonging to a movement, of being at the centre of things, leads him to parrot the exclusionary rhetoric of the campaign for Confederation, which opposes but is reminiscent of his aristocratic exclusionary rhetoric. The character of Joey Smallwood in the Rising Tide play Joey is shown indulging in this sort of rhetoric, suggesting in the National Assembly:

> The twenty-one millionaires are anti-Confederate. The twenty-nine dictators are anti-Confederate. They sit and shiver in their stylish offices for fear Confederation will come along and sweep them into the ashcan of history. (Rising Tide 251)

Herbert is caught at a crossroads of political belief, mainly wants the feeling of importance that comes with a sense of belonging, and does not recognize his internal contradictions. Like several other characters in Frog Pond, Herbert asserts power through factional exclusion, seeks his sense of belonging through the marginalization of significant portions of Newfoundland's population--but unlike the others, Herbert is not sure who to marginalize.

Herbert's political and economic saviour is Canada, via Joey Smallwood. Newfoundland's people, though at the centre of the Confederate rhetoric which Herbert espouses, are to him still essentially passive eaglets waiting for the mother's food. Valerie Summers writes:

> a majority of Newfoundlanders were convinced that the most immediate indicators of dependency and underdevelopment in their everyday lives--poverty, economic uncertainty and weak opportunities for improvement in their lives--could be ameliorated by federation with Canada. (152)

Herbert is so convinced by all the talk of "big improvements" (Frog Pond 25) that he is just waiting for all the miracles of Confederation to come floating down:

> Right is right, sir, and wrong is wrong. It idden like it used to be, no more. We got the justice now, we got the same law for high and low, we got a better world, a decenter world to look forward to. We got the Confeatheration. (62)

Confederation, for Herbert, is a miracle cure, offering "big improvements" that require no effort on the part of most people. Although it appears to be something wonderful, Confederation is still something that is happening to--and not because of the efforts of--Newfoundlanders. Newfoundland is still perceived as a margin.

As is made obvious in The Swinton Massacre, Ray Guy hardly perceives Confederation or Smallwood's premiership as a miracle cure. Newfoundland's experience of Confederation, Guy suggests, flies in the face of the vision disseminated by pro-Confederates before the referenda and by Smallwood

and his cabinet after Confederation. The character of Smallwood in Rising Tide's Joey suggests:

> There is not one single person who has not benefitted from Confederation. Not one. It's like the gentle dew of heaven falling on the just and unjust alike, the Protestant and the Catholic, the Confederate and the anti-Confederate. (Rising Tide 263)

Because of the promise of such Canadian benefits as social insurance and family allowance, "It was Newfoundland's most exploited who chose Confederation as their best option for a more successful and brighter future" (Summers 169). Summers points out that despite certain improvements due to new social programs:

> Self-generated economic growth has not materialized. The external dependency of the old regimes has been replaced with a dependency on the equalization largesse of Ottawa. (170)

Summers also notes that there are still "high inequalities in wealth and opportunities across regions" in Newfoundland (170). One dependency has been replaced by another, and regional and class disparities largely have been unaffected.

Michel Foucault suggests that revolution may be regarded merely as a "recodification of the same relations" that existed in a previous "State" (122). He suggests there are, therefore, many kinds of revolutions and:

> one can perfectly well conceive of revolutions which leave essentially untouched the power relations which form the basis for the functioning of the State. (123)

Guy certainly perceives no substantial change in the relationship between State and people under Confederation, a regime change that was fought for with revolutionary intensity and regarded by many as the dawning of a new era. Looking back on the "Only Living Father"'s two decades as premier, Guy suggests:

> It was a long and shameful twenty years in which a comical and raucous imposter kept up one of the biggest April Fools in our history. (That Far 83)

In Frog Pond, Smallwood is depicted as being as susceptible as the Frostts and Herbert to the seeking of miracle cures, many of which, for Smallwood, were found in Europe. He brought in a number of dubious "experts" to organize industrial development or to start one sort of factory or another. Herbert L. Pottle, in a book about the Smallwood era entitled Newfoundland: Dawn Without Light, writes:

> Smallwood's act of associating the province's crusade for industrial expansion with foreign expertise . . . diverted the people's essential attention from the value of their own resources--personal, natural, technical--and displaced it by a rising expectation that

> a revealed fulness of salvation was at hand by the grace of the Minister of Economic Development and his ministering angels, and that all they had to do was to await for the government to deliver them the goods. (27)

One of the most notorious of Smallwood's "angels" was Dr. Alfred Valdmanis, to whom reference is made in Frog Pond. Herbert, who has just dropped Steve's body off at the airport, comments on the excitement around Dr. Valdmanis's arrival: "They was all clustered around 'en like flies around a honey bucket." He suggests one might "think it was the Second Comin' or something." Georgina, who is not without significant insights, suggests:

> So it was, Herbert. So it was. And after him there'll be the Third Coming and after that the Fourth and the Fifth. (61)

Harold Horwood suggests that, for Smallwood, Valdmanis "appeared to be Newfoundland's saviour." Horwood writes that Valdmanis, "along with Joey himself," had become "the real ruler of Newfoundland," driving an opposition member in the House of Assembly to refer to "the Smallwood-Valdmanis government" (Horwood Joey 173). Valdmanis eventually was convicted of "defrauding the Newfoundland government of $200 000" (Dyck 63).

Guy's perspective on Smallwood, as one who in his drive to fulfil his vision of the future of Newfoundland,

objectified and marginalized the "toiling masses" he championed in his drive toward Confederation and the premiership (Summers 138), is dealt with more extensively in The Swinton Massacre. Suffice to say that in the context of Frog Pond and its concern with a desperate search for external cures among people who regard Newfoundlanders as incapable of managing their economic and political affairs, Smallwood is yet another person who, more ominously because of his immense power in the province, looks upon Newfoundlanders as a collection of passive dependents in need of a saviour.

The only character in Frog Pond who feels fully centered in Newfoundland is the "serving wench" Rita. This is not to suggest that she idealizes Newfoundland like others in the play idealize other centres. Rather, she is able to recognize that there are no ideal cultures, and accepts that her particular un-ideal home is Newfoundland. While she, as a victim of the prejudices of her own community, may have more reason than anybody in Frog Pond to seek an outside source of comfort and a fantasy of a better world, she maintains a balanced vision, recognizing that an escape from social prejudices is not to be found in any culture. She recognizes the snobbery and prejudice of the Frostts, that their charity in hiring her is a sham. As Steve notes: "Fine old Frostt tradition . . . Employ the handicapped. Christian

charity and you get your piss pots scrubbed out real cheap" (29A). She opts to birth her child out in the yard, rather than have it be born into a house of iniquity: "Shag them crowd. They don't even own the dirt, too, do they?" (55). She does not, like Edythe, get caught up in the American entrepreneurial dream that Steve promotes. After he is killed, Rita suggests: "He's easier to look at today than he was yesterday" (48). She does not share Herbert's excessive enthusiasm regarding Confederation either. Her remark comparing herself, the King and the "friggin' old Pope" (17) suggests Rita sees through factionalisms and hierarchical pretensions wherever they exist.

On one hand, Rita is to an extent what all the others in the play fear becoming, and which Edythe articulates as stereotype: "Arrr, lads, we do be turrible h'etnik round these yere parts, arrr, bye, we does indeed" (8). Rita is tough, familiar and comfortable with physical hardship, and has little respect for social hierarchies. She is the "h'etnik" Newfoundlander who, immediately following her labour, responds to Herb's queasy account of having "to saw off poor Wishy Matterface's right leg with the bucksaw," with: "Oh, thanks, Herb. Yes, tell me a story" (55); who can stare at the squashed Steve and postulate on the fact that her relatives, unlike Steve, "never went all pasty color" when they died (46). On the other hand, she is not trapped

in local myths like her cousin Herbert is. Her familiarity with the stories and myths of her locality has not led to her blind acceptance of them. While she is in labour, Herbert rants about how the labour is too early, and offers several dubious "old wive's tale"-type theories why. He fears that "you went to work and went agin God's plan." Rita cuts him off, impatient with his pontificating, and tells him: "If I had the strength, I'd shove me fist right down your throat" (54).

Though Rita does not define herself culturally, she does not, like the Frostts or the Monsignor, deny her identity as a Newfoundlander. Rand Dyck points out that among Canadian provinces, "Newfoundland has the highest proportion of residents born in the province (93 percent)" (52), and yet a history of economic dependency and colonial rule, along with the very fact that Newfoundland is a settler colony and its own cultural voice is hybrid rather than "original," has led to a domination by "foreign voice[s]" of discussion of Newfoundland's cultural identity. Laurel Doucette suggests that it has been:

> difficult to develop approaches informed by our own sensibilities, sensibilities that . . . grow out of our experience of life here. (128)

Rita, in avoiding the trap of cultural denial, does not fall into the opposite trap of simplistic, nationalistic

affirmation of a Newfoundland identity, as Herbert does and which results in factional struggles about who are real Newfoundlanders and what is a valid Newfoundland identity. Trese in As Loved Our Fathers, who has avoided the same traps that Rita has, irritatedly suggests to her staunchly anti-Confederate husband Con:

> You're getting like a child! If people want to vote for something, that's their business! What in hell do you think they're holding the damn voting for, anyway--so everybody will do what you say? (Cahill 51)

The fact that Rita does not shape and maintain a particular, defined identity for herself demands in the context of the play to be read as a positive sign. Antonio Perrault in "Inquiry into Nationalism" expresses his fear of the loss of the two "essential" tenets of Quebecois identity. He fears Quebec might become "anglicized," and might fall into Protestantism (221). It is such purist, exclusionary notions of identity which all the characters in Frog Pond except Rita strive for.

Ironically, the interaction and struggle among "pure cultures" reinforces what Bhabha suggests is "the effect of colonial power." He suggests that attempts at "the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions," in struggle against the repressed traditions--and in the case of the Newfoundland depicted in

Frog Pond, the struggle among repressive powers themselves--in fact lead to "the production of hybridization" (Location 112). Although most of Frog Pond's characters primarily associate themselves with exogenous cultures, they inevitably affect and are part of Newfoundland's constant (re)creation as a hybrid culture.

Rita does not achieve any grand liberation from the constraints of her situation by the play's end. If we are to read her character as a recommendation to Newfoundlanders, which I believe is reasonable, then her lack of immediate material transcendence of her circumstances suggests that there are no easy solutions to Newfoundland's complex political, economic, and cultural challenges. It is implied that her recognition of the lack of miracle cures and of the need for personal agency--the latter identifiable in her willingness to work at whatever job she as a pregnant single woman can find, and to endure whatever circumstances are necessary for her survival--offer more real possibilities for a future than does the desperate search for an ideal source culture and reliance on external bodies characterized by others in Frog Pond. The source of this implication is her fertility, contrasted with the Frostts' impotence. When John reveals that he has sold the family name to "a string of airport gift shops, right across Canada" for "the usual ten percent," Edythe responds: "Ah, well, even eunuchs

manage to find compensations" (52A). In contrast to this dubious economic/social progeny, Rita carries a child while slavishly waiting on the Frostts, births him in the mud, and still the child is, Herbert suggests, "perfeck. Couldn't hardly be no perfecter" (59).

In Frog Pond, Guy suggests that it is important to match a clear recognition of the multifarious challenges which Newfoundland faces with a sober recognition that there can be no quick fix, and that lasting benefit must find its roots within Newfoundland and must be struggled for through hard work and a willingness to look complex issues in the face and not to hide from them in vain hopes or simplistic visions. Because she is unsupported, Rita for the time being can only out-survive the Frostts, but her fertility is a testimony to the possibility maintained by such survival which, if matched with a widespread awareness like Rita's, Guy suggests may at best lead to lasting betterment, and at the very least to continued survival, which impotent hope and external dependency cannot guarantee.

Chapter 3

The Swinton Massacre: Objectification and Ambivalence in the Outports During Early Post-Confederation Development in Newfoundland

Ray Guy's third play The Swinton Massacre is set in 1954, during the early years of post-Confederation development under Premier Joey Smallwood, and is concerned with the implications for Newfoundlanders of the economic development practices of the time. In Swinton, we are introduced to a community on the verge of being overhauled and turned into a site for the raising of germ-free swine. As the play progresses, disaster follows disaster, and it becomes increasingly apparent that the project has dealt Lar's Hole a blow from which it may not recover.

As his Evening Telegram columns of the late 1960s testify, Ray Guy was greatly concerned about Smallwood's development schemes and with the incongruity between Smallwood's enthusiasm to develop and his general unwillingness to acknowledge the validity of public or professional dissent. John Crosbie, who left Smallwood's cabinet and government in 1968, suggests that a "major problem" for independent thinkers in Smallwood's governments was that "Mr. Smallwood was deciding everything" (150).

Crosbie suggests many of Smallwood's schemes were "economically demented," (147) and suggests that Smallwood "didn't want to think about things obviously going to fail. . . . He wanted so badly to have things done" (150). Throughout Swinton, Guy includes fictionalized excerpts, regarding actual events, from Gerald S. Doyle's popular radio news program. He points in one of them to Smallwood's hostility to opposition. Progressive Conservative Opposition leader Malcolm Hollett alleges that "products from the new rubber plant at Holyrood are defective," and charges that the boots produced at the plant "blister and rot when exposed to the sunlight for a few days." Doyle announces:

> The Premier responded that if there was anything in the province that blistered and rotted when exposed to the full light of day, it was the Honourable gentleman opposite. (26)

Smallwood in his impatience to develop turned repeatedly to foreign investors, and with them foreign raw materials, equipment and management. Richard Gwyn offers several examples of this "style of industrial development." He writes of a tannery which

> was to be operated by a Czech, William Dorn, who would ship out an entire plant from Hamburg. Beside it would be a boot-and-shoe plant [the one referred to above]

> and a glove factory, the latter using only the skins of gazelles. Another industry would be United Cotton Mills, turning out shirts, women's dresses, aprons, and sugar, salt, and flour sacks from the raw material imported from the United States, Haiti, Turkey, and Egypt.

Gwyn suggests that Smallwood was too trusting of these industrialists, and uses the example of the cotton mill plan as evidence:

> The parent company, Smallwood explained, employed fifteen hundred men and women operating sixty thousand spindles. It was, unfortunately, without any dollars of its own to invest (150).

Very early in Swinton, Guy directs our attention to the dependence on imported resources and expertise in Smallwood's industrial schemes, mentioning "Newfoundland's economic advisor, Dr. Alfred Valdmanis," a Latvian who became infamous for his dishonesty, as well as Adler's Chocolates of England and an imminent trip to South Africa by two government representatives "with a view to obtaining a steady supply of gazelle skins for the new tannery and leather works" (4). The care Guy takes to draw our attention to the fact that the management and resources for the new industries are being brought from other countries implies that in his view such development would either turn

Newfoundland into a province full of serfs filling the pockets of foreign business owners, or collapse rapidly, leaving the province and its inhabitants poorer than before.

Matthew Edel describes certain economic phenomena that frequently prevail in marginal economies, which ring true for Newfoundland during Smallwood's premiership. He describes "the Marxist 'push' or 'refuge' argument," noting that there consistently is a lack of internal control in the marginal economy because of the decision-making authority of "foreign investors or creditors." He notes that "local decisions may be restricted, if surplus is siphoned off by such investors or creditors." He also notes that a relatively limited domestic market "due to low incomes, biased income distribution, and dependence of consumer habits on foreign goods . . . discourages investment in the domestic market industry" by the foreign business owners in the area, and leads to "a specialization in export products and import activities, and international flight of whatever capital these generate." He suggests a tendency in such development for local people to become merely a labour force:

> Capitalist employment is limited by slow domestic accumulation, and by a bias toward capital intensive technologies stemming from dependence on imported technologies and equipment. (52)

One of the effects of development that is almost completely biased toward imported technologies and expertise is the denial of agency within the mainstream economy to individuals living in the affected region. They become entirely vulnerable to the economic whims of investors who have no direct stake in the success of the regional economy.

The industries initiated under Smallwood's leadership almost all failed. Gerald Sider writes:

> Smallwood was distinguished . . . by the magnitude of his efforts . . . ; and by the consistent failure of his development projects, every single one of which failed or was continued by massive government subsidy.

Sider notes as examples of poor economic management: "Churchill Falls hydroelectricity, from which the Province of Quebec takes all the profit," and "the Come-By-Chance oil refinery, in which Newfoundland heavily invested." He writes:

> The enormity of the concessions made to foreign capital --the amount given away for little or no return--even when judged by contemporary colonial standards, is one of the most prominent features of Newfoundland "economic development." (148)

The combination of the frantic pursuit of foreign industry and the lack of clear thought regarding how these new industries would work in the context of the specific

communities in which they were set up, has led Herbert L. Pottle to suggest that "what was tossed about as policy was more like a discrete series of bricks having no organic or architectural building force." "The mortar which . . . was necessary for every phase of public policy was noticeably lacking in the fabric of economic development." Pottle, a member of the Smallwood government for the first few years of Confederation and very likely the inspiration for Swinton's Wild Man whose name we discover is Herbert W. Pottle, is very critical of the Newfoundland government's consistent tendency during Smallwood's years as Premier not to consult "the people" when developing its policies. He notes critically that Smallwood's development "policy" consisted mainly of:

> announcements of imported industries with no necessary relationship to the existing economy and no meaningful dialogue whatever with the local communities for which these industries were unilaterally designed. (99)

Although Smallwood ostensibly organized his development schemes with the benefit of Newfoundlanders in mind, he was, as Pottle suggests, unwilling to listen to doubting voices or to consider the long-term effects of his endeavors. Belle Bridger, one of The Swinton Massacre's family of protagonists, suggests, doubting the potential benefits of the swine scheme:

> But I mean to say, pigs? Newfoundland is not big enough, they got to heave pigs in on top of us? What are we getting punished like this for?

Her husband Harve tells her:

> Oh, give it a rest, girl. Times are changing, that's all. Can't expect the times to change and Lar's Hole to stand still. (3)

It is apparent in Swinton that the scheme to turn Lar's Hole into a centre for raising swine comes as a surprise to much of the community, indicating that there was no consultation. Opinions in the community may vary after the fact, but the decision itself already has been made outside the community, and the people of Lar's Hole are expected to comply with it.

Aubrey Macdonald romantically suggests that Smallwood "climbed a mountain, and he found the path, and he surmounted his multitude of obstacles because he never once took his eyes off his goal" (32). Guy implies that the degree of Smallwood's focus blinded him to the individuals within the masses to which he appealed. They became an idea which he fought to defend, "giving the people only the supporting role of supplicants in need of benevolent protection" (Kruger 170). Herbert L. Pottle suggests that Smallwood and his government:

> tended dominantly to . . . patronize the public rather than to ennoble them, to stunt them around the

> pedestrian rather than to prod them toward the impossible. (210)

And in the collectively written play Joey, Rising Tide, a Newfoundland-based theatre company, dramatizes Smallwood's increasing megalomania, the increasing relegation of "the people" to the back rooms of his vision. In a scene involving the resignation of Smallwood's colleague and confidante Greg Power, the character of Greg tells Joey: "The whole thing has gone sour . . . Don't you remember 'The people, Lord, the people.'" Joey, upset about the recent loggers' strike and unwilling to reverse his public condemnation of it, shows his jealousy of the strike leader, and his unwillingness to accept public loyalty that is not consistent with his own goals: "They came out of their midnight camp meeting with their eyes shining for Landon Ladd, the way they shine for me, Greg." Greg responds: "You said it Joe. You care more for yourself than you do for them" (Rising Tide 273).

Smallwood is not a speaking character in Swinton, but is referred to repeatedly. The administrator of the swine project, who marginalizes and treats as pawns the people of Lar's Hole, is Francis X. Boyle, who appears to be a parody of Gerald S. Doyle, a St. John's merchant who sponsored the news program to which the Bridgers listen in Swinton. Boyle is a merchant from St. John's whose marginalization of his

fellow Newfoundlanders accords with the play's depiction of the exploitation--of the poorer classes by the wealthier and of outport residents by St. John's capitalists--that encouraged and exacerbated exploitation by foreign business owners supported by the Newfoundland government. Boyle makes efforts to ensure that the community is intimidated into compliance, as is indicated by ambitious and repulsive local resident Willie Nelson Stubbige's suggestion to Harve:

> What's wrong with you, boy? Seems like you're not entirely in agreement with all this stuff. Gotta show an interest, boy, otherwise there might be some people is going to get the wrong impression here . . .(16)

Russell Ferguson speaks of the "omnipresent center, the invisible center," which "exiles to its margins those who cannot or will not pay allegiance to the standards which it sets or the limits which it imposes" (13). Smallwood is the invisible centre in Lar's Hole's overhaul. As will be discussed further on, the capitalist Boyle has developed the scheme independently of Smallwood, in order to gain the Premier's economic favour, which he fears losing because of Smallwood's vindictiveness. Chesley Carter, a federal Liberal MP during the Smallwood years, suggests that Smallwood was "susceptible to flattery," and that "to disagree with him was to arouse his hostility." Carter

suggests that "such people never know who their real friends are" (102-3). It is Smallwood's weakness for flattery that Boyle intends to exploit with his swine scheme, through which he hopes to prove himself one of the good guys in Smallwood's eyes.

Boyle is far more concerned with the success of his project than with its impact on the local people. He breaks promises with people, even on a petty and personal level, as he does with Willie in Swinton's first scene. Boyle promises Willie five dollars to get some pills for him, and then when Willie reminds him of his offer, shouts:

> What! You drooling mental case. Do you realize . . . Do you realize what you just did. What you just did is called, by any court in this land, extortion. Do you know how many years in His Majesty's Gaol . . . Go on. Get. Get out of my sight. Get. Get.
>
> (Act I Scene 1a 4)

More ominously, when a man who has been hired to intimidate the local people is eaten by the first swine to arrive in the community, Boyle, instead of being horrified, is delighted that the swine has not eaten the man's pigskin gloves:

> Pigskin! Don't you understand? God be praised! At least the brute hasn't got cannibalistic tendencies! That would have put paid to the whole shooting match. (38)

The objectification and commodification of people is one of Guy's primary concerns in Swinton. Herbert L. Pottle suggests that the government perceived and performed its goal to catapult Newfoundland into the twentieth century "as an engineering operation." He suggests:

> It was never considered that the question, "What kind of people do we want?" might be more pointed for public policy than "What kind of machine?" (216-7)

There are three examples of objectification that stand out in the play, of which other instances are symptomatic. Among the three is the killing of all local dogs and cats, which ostensibly might infect the incoming swine with local germs. The obsession with keeping the swine germ-free is probably satiric of Smallwood's own boast when he set up his pig and goat farm in the 1930s, that his Toggenberg goats would give "germ-free milk" (Moakler 25), and is certainly satiric of the hyperbolic fervor characteristic of development planning under Smallwood's governments. The man who is hired to intimidate the local people, who is himself from a Newfoundland outport but pretends to be a German pretending to be Swiss, tells the local people:

> no dog cherms, no cat cherms, no goat cherms, no horsie cherms, no people cherms. YOU VILL ALL BE STERILIZED! YOU VILL BE STERILE! . . . Compared to these schwein, you are all filthy! Remember zat! (36)

Belle notes:

> I know now they're not going to have the sad sight on their hands when they shoots Uncle Albert and Aunt Kate's Carlo. They might so well shoot the poor old souls themselves. (14)

Harve tells Belle:

> Don't ask me, girl. Germs, that's all I know. Dogs got the germs . . . they don't want the pigs to get 'em. Another thing I heard, I heard them pigs is going to have 'lectric lights and flush toilets. According to that, the pigs is going to be better off than the people. Must have voted the right way. (15)

In a remark that suggests metaphorical relevance for the animals to be bred in Lar's Hole, Belle tells Willie: "I can't tell a lie. Big pigs was strangers to me till I come here to Lar's Hole" (19).

Another example of the commodification of Lar's Hole is the decision to change its name to Swinton in accordance with its new economic identity--and its new rulers. Mrs. Parsons, a resident do-gooder who came to Lar's Hole with her pastor husband, is involved in a long-term love-affair with Boyle and supports the swine project. She seeks input from her school class for ideas for the name change, reporting that the suggestions were "sweet. They tried at the new name." There is, however, no indication of any sort of democratic input regarding whether to change the name at

all. When Harve suggests that perhaps the decision is a bit rash, and that "it was always . . . I mean to say, way back in me poor grandfather's time, and perhaps even before, Lar's Hole was what it was then," Mrs. Parsons replies sharply:

> Nonsense. That's an ignorant mutilation. Reverend Parsons has made painstaking inquiries at the University College. This . . . this "Lar's Hole" is an absolute perversion. And a laughing stock for filthy minds, make no wonder. (10)

Mrs. Parsons shows a complete lack of respect for local attachments, and a willingness to override the local people's wishes regarding the fate of their own home.

The example of objectification and marginalization that defines and supports all others in the play is the suggestion that the swine project, though intended also to make money, is essentially just an elaborate political joke. Harve, having heard rumours, suggests that the whole project has been devised without Smallwood's knowledge:

> It got nothing to do with Joey Smallwood. Tis only some of them St. John's big shots trying to make a little surprise for him, that's all . . . a birthday box for him or something. That's the most I can make out of it. Sure Joey Smallwood don't know now but Lar's Hole is something good to eat. (4)

Boyle later tells the local people what a great joke the whole project is. He locks forward to showing up "those sneering anti-confederate hard-cases" who refer to Smallwood as "that little failed pig farmer from Gander" (35). Boyle's ultimate plan is to parade, on the Premier's birthday:

> Two thousand super swine, some of the largest and finest and healthiest swine in the world . . . ten abreast in a mighty cavalcade the whole length of Water Street . . . A vast river of prodigious porkers . . . marching ten abreast down anti-Confederate Water Street--that street of infamy, that street of shame!
>
> (35)

Boyle's plan is intended to satisfy Smallwood's grudge against many St. John's merchants, the vast majority of whom were "anti-Confederates," and who made things considerably more difficult for the Confederate campaign, since they had much of the available campaign money and supported Smallwood's opponenent, the Responsible Government advocate Peter Cashin. In Joey, the character of Cashin questions Smallwood's qualifications as one who "wants to lead our country." He suggests Smallwood is "a failure. He couldn't even run a pig farm." Joey responds:

> I've learned a great deal about pigs, Mr. Cashin. There are two kinds of pigs, Mr. Cashin. Those with four legs and those with two. (Rising Tide 252)

Smallwood, then, will be helped by the swine Boyle to lead swine down the street run by those he regards as swine.

Boyle's proposal, ridiculous as it may sound, is a fictional modification of an actual occurrence which involved an attempt "to turn the Burin Peninsula, with its vast stretches of heath land, into cattle country" (Horwood Joey 221). The idea of farming in various forms became a sort of personal obsession for Smallwood, who suggested: "The cowboy looms larger than the fisherman in Newfoundland's future" (221). Horwood describes the incident from which the Swinton pig parade is adapted:

> Cattle brought from the Canadian West were turned loose at Goobies, and herded by cowboys a distance of ninety miles to Winterland on the Burin. . . . To show his confidence in the scheme, Joey rode off at the head of one such cattle drive in person, wearing a ten-gallon hat. (221)

Boyle could not care less about the well-being of the people of Lar's Hole. Though he pays lip service to local benefit, he mixes it with derogation:

> how your thunderous applause would ring out over the hills and cove of Lar's Hole here tonight . . . had any of you the mental capacity to grasp the enormity and the poetic justice of this singular scheme. But perhaps you'll understand this, then: Jobs! Jobs! And more jobs, for the deserving poor of . . . Swinton. (36)

Boyle is trying to please a premier who he is frightened could destroy his business possibilities in the province, and he is willing to bend, scrape, and even destroy a community to ensure his own favour. Mrs. Parsons points out:

> You used to be so . . . so . . . masterful. Now you're a string of boiled spaghetti. This pig charade, what's THAT all about. All this mumbo jumbo, your fake German . . . you . . . your craven obsession with this . . . this Joey Smalwood character. Weak, Francis. You've become weak as water. (Act II Scene 2 5-5a)

John Crosbie tactfully suggests that "it wasn't the thing to do to question anything [Smallwood] said" (148). Boyle is less subtle in trying to explain to Mrs. Parsons why he has been behaving as he has been:

> We've created a monster. A hideous cross between that darkie king they have in the West Indies, that voodoo creature they call their Papa Doc Duvalier and that . . . that bullying dictator they've got in Quebec, Duplessis.
>
> That's Joey Smallwood for you . . . And we're stuck with him, my dear, for as far as the eye can see.
>
> Madness, my dear, is the reality in Newfoundland from now on. He wants pigs, then pigs he must have. Next year it might be chinchilla ranching, white slavery, hothouse cucumbers . . . who knows.

> And we . . . we of the better classes, the mercantile community, the plain men of business, we're utterly helpless. He's got the mob, the masses solidly behind him. So don't judge me too harshly, Beatrice, my dear. If only you knew how it is . . . (Act II Scene 2 5a)

John Murphy, present mayor of St. John's and long-time Water Street merchant, writes of Smallwood, apparently with admiration, that he treated the creditors who harassed him in his younger years with "an air of detached amusement," and that

> these firms and individuals, who constantly chased him to pay his bills, bowed and scraped and sought favours from him when he became the powerful Premier of Newfoundland. (34)

Guy has written of Smallwood's cabinet, with words that can also apply to merchants like Boyle trying to gain patronage contracts:

> They, among all of us, have the scented handkerchiefs clamped most firmly to their noses. They, who live at the very centre of the dung hill, have either learned to enjoy the stink or have sprinkled their hankies well with their own delusions and rationalizations. (Evening Telegram 6 Dec. 1968)

The fact that Boyle has become a Smallwood yes-man

breeds in him a feeling of powerlessness, for which he compensates by asserting his control over the people of Lar's Hole with a severity that demands compliance, by hiring his "fake German"; by exploiting Willie's reckless ambition, all the while verbally abusing him and finally neglecting and taunting him after he has been castrated by Violet Bridger (50); and generally by mixing a dilletante-ish interest in local culture and songs with an utter willingness to destroy the foundations which have built and supported that culture. Willie suggests:

> Now, here's a man . . . who got the means to go anywhere in the world he want to . . . London . . . Parsfrance, Monkreal, Halifax. But where do he come? He comes here, to Lar's Hole. Because we all knows he's a wonderful common man. Common as dirt. He been in your homes, a lot of yez, buying up your old stuff, collecting your old songs, and seldom, if ever, kicking the common man out of his path, eh? Because here's . . . a great friend of Lar's Hole . . . Oh. Pardon my French . . . Swinton, I mean. (34)

Boyle has very specific reasons for vacationing in Lar's Hole year after year which have nothing to do with love for its inhabitants. For one thing, he is a bit of a culture collector: "I've particularly enjoyed your quaint myths and legends and stories" (34); "I found another folk song

yesterday" (51). James Clifford associates the collection of cultural artifacts with the pursuit of power, an understanding which is fitting in an examination of Boyle. Clifford suggests:

> In these small rituals we observe the channelings of obsession, an exercise in how to make the world one's own, to gather things around oneself tastefully, appropriately.

Through the impulse to order one's world, Clifford suggests:

> An excessive, sometimes even rapacious need to <u>have</u> is transformed into rule-governed, meaningful desire. Thus the self that cannot have it all learns to select, order, classify in hierarchies--to make "good collections." (143)

Boyle is also drawn to Lar's Hole because of his ongoing affair with Mrs. Parsons: "How long has it been now, my love. You and I, meeting like this. Once a year I sail into your little harbour" (Act II Scene 2 5). When the swine scheme falls apart, Boyle assesses what he can take with him, deciding to give up the pursuit of Smallwood's favour and the contracts that go with it. He leaves Lar's Hole with his collection: songs, stories, and Mrs. Parsons. He tells her: "I'm going away. We're going away. I'll not spend the rest of my life kowtowing to a jumped-up little rabble-rouser" (48). They decide to leave their spouses, and

depart the scene singing Boyle's newly discovered song, a bastardization of "Farewell to Nova Scotia" (51)--a fact that seems to escape Boyle, though such hybridization is characteristic of folk songs, of which he is such an avid collector. He leaves Lar's Hole still firmly encased in a self-reflecting bubble, seeing only those parts of the outport which he has appropriated for himself.

Mrs. Parsons, the central item in Boyle's Lar's Hole collection, is not actually from Lar's Hole, though her origins are not specified. It might, however, be safe to assume that she is from somewhere in Newfoundland or at least Atlantic Canada since it appears that Halifax, which she idealizes as a sort of cultural mecca, is the largest city she has visited. She is the wife of a locally stationed pastor, and in her we can see parallels with the Melroses and Pastor Pottle in Triffie, and with the idealizers of outside centres in Frog Pond. With the Melroses, especially Mrs. Melrose, she shares two things: works that fit her own notions of what is good but which do not meet the actual needs of the people she encounters; and a growing feeling of being trapped in a hell-hole, as it becomes increasingly apparent that the local people will not be swayed or improved according to her plan. Among her acts of benevolence in the community is her decision to take on the task of killing everyone's cats: "Along completely humane

lines, of course. We've all got to pitch in, haven't we? (9). Similarly, the duty of choosing a new name for Lar's Hole is undertaken with enthusiasm, and with no recognition that perhaps she should consult with her fellow residents. By the play's end, her frustrations have gotten the better of her, and she articulates her position, with a self-consciousness which Mrs. Melrose never attains:

> I'm rotting away here in this god-forsaken place. And taking it out on the little people. I know it, I've become an angel of mercy from hell, Francis.
>
> (Act II Scene 2 5)

Mrs. Parsons uses her nostalgic, idealized reconstruction of Halifax as a psychological escape from her surroundings, like most of the characters in Frog Pond do; and like those in Frog Pond, her fantasy ultimately causes more frustration than it relieves, because of the disparity between it and her perception of her actual surroundings:

> Ah, to see Halifax. To know Halifax. And then to be placed by Christian duty in . . . Lar's Hole . . . So many small minds unable to grasp what is happening here. (11)

Though she derides the people of Lar's Hole by remarking on their mental capacity rather than their moral standing, there are moments in which she bears a striking resemblance to Triffie's Pastor Pottle. Like him, she uses religion as a

shield from that which she does not understand, and to hide her own more wayward tendencies; unlike him, her sexual activities are relatively harmless and consented to. The gap between her preaching mouth and her lewd loins seems to point specifically to the hypocrisy into which moralists are likely to fall, and is used to satirize those who dictate values. Her Biblical shield leads her into Pottle-esque rants, such as when the Lar's Hole Wild Man appears:

> The Baptist! John the Baptist, crying in the wilderness! . . . And I, John, saw coming down all the whoredoms of Babylon, the great mother of harlots and abominations of the earth . . . And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs . . . (39)

But she engages in sexual role-playing and bondage with Boyle, with no apparent feelings of guilt (Act I Scene 1a 2, Act II Scene 2 5a).

Mrs. Parsons, until her recognition at the end of the play, lacks the self-awareness necessary to recognize her own contradictions, and is too attached to her feeling of being trapped, to her fantasy reconstruction of Halifax, to Boyle, and to her self-appointed angel of mercy role which leads to such catastrophes as the failed and bloody pulling of one of Violet Bridger's teeth and the killing of family pets in the name of progress, to have any but a negative effect on the Lar's Hole community.

Another one of Boyle's willing pawns in the swine scheme is left flailing in the water, castrated, bleeding and delirious. Willie Nelson Stubbige has been a supporter of the swine project from the outset because of his own reckless ambition, which Boyle exploits. Willie is a despicable, lascivious man with a craven obsession with power and a respect bordering on fear for those who hold it. He is a yes-man's yes-man, who grows more despicable in his treatment of his fellow Lar's Hole natives as Boyle continues to verbally abuse him and damage his self-esteem.

Willie is shown to be a disgusting person independently of the influence of Boyle and his entourage. He unself-consciously suggests to Harve and Belle, mostly because of his own lust, that they should prostitute their mentally unstable but physically attractive daughter Violet in order to cover the costs of taking care of her:

> Her hands'll never maintain her jaws, my son. It's you and Belle are going to be feeding it for the rest of your lives. So if she can make a dollar anyway at all, I say let her make a dollar. (22)

Willie is also shown to be entirely neglectful of his commitments once there is something more exciting to do. When Harve asks him, not for the first time, whether he has managed to get "that part for me engine? That old magneto?", Willie responds:

> Magneto? You're gone right off the head, too, is yez? Magneto . . . when this is the biggest night, I s'pose, in the history of Lar's Hole. (30)

Willie ultimately shows himself to be utterly reprehensible, by attempting to rape Violet Bridger.

Although there is an ambivalence in many of Guy's characters which suggests he has transcended simplistic class- or geographically-based visions of who merits sympathy and who does not, Willie is certainly the clearest example in Guy's plays of this recognition. Other authors writing in post-colonial contexts, in which nationalism has frequently been used as a psychological defense against the residue of colonial oppression, have been praised for gaining a similar transcendence to Guy's own, recognizing the artificiality of nationalism, its generalizations, and its ideological reflection of the rhetoric of colonial oppression. The authors of The Empire Writes Back praise Indian author R. K. Narayan for his willingness to write works in which "not all the ironies work to the benefit of the Indian verities." The authors suggest that nationalist critics "have found his tone too complex and too ambivalent," and that "those who seek to totalize the text . . . will inevitably be forced to "edit" the text to make it fit such readings" (Ashcroft et al. 111). Similarly, Salman Rushdie is praised by Timothy Brennan for using his novels

as "an opportunity to explore postcolonial responsibility." Brennan suggests:

> In fact, the central irony of his novels is that independence has damaged Indian spirits by proving that "india" can act as abominably as the British did. (63-4)

In The Swinton Massacre, in which simplistic readings of marginalization--of Newfoundland as a whole by Britain and then Canada, and of the outports and economically depressed classes by St. John's and the merchants--are undercut, Brennan's comments regarding Rushdie's India ring true for Guy's Newfoundland. Boyle exploits other Newfoundlanders for whatever can be gained, and bails out when it seems he personally can benefit no further--manifesting an attitude commonly attributed to the British in their relations with Newfoundland; and Willie is willing to overlook the wishes of his fellow outport residents in attempts to satisfy his own ambition--embodying a crassly selfish attitude toward outport people commonly attributed to the St. John's merchant classes. In both cases, we see characters who marginalize those whom they might be expected to respect and assist if Guy were committed to the rhetoric of nationalism.

Willie is not the only example in Swinton of an outport resident working in tandem with the industrialists. The elusive and perplexing Alfred Braun-Woggan, who has been

hired as a tool for intimidating the local population, is also from a Newfoundland outport. Aside from his last moments of panic before being eaten by a swine, he never speaks without his adopted German accent and persona, and we are never given his true name. Braun-Woggan relishes the feeling of power that his job brings: "These schwein got problems? I got problems. And believe me, then you got problems" (36). Braun-Woggan is as despicable as Willie, who relates the following tale about the shooting of Carlo the dog with some relish:

> Well, sir, the German by this time . . . calm as the clock. And right slooow like, he gradually hauls out this bloody pistol he got, eh? And right slooow then, he puts the muzzle of the gun right down on top of waddyacallit, Carlo's, hind paw. Bango! And then he puts the gun down by the other hind paw. Bango! And then he moves up to the forepaws. Bango! Well, jeeze, if you hadda been there you woulda shit a Krinkle. (18)

Braun-Woggan has been hired to exploit a post-World War II fear of Germans, in order to encourage submission by the local residents to the whims of those behind the swine project. The people of Lar's Hole are told that Braun-Woggan is Swiss, but his persona is so stereotypically Nazi that it is clear they are supposed to figure out he is actually a German pretending to be Swiss, a "discovery" which makes

them more intimidated, because it seems to them that they have discovered something that Boyle and his cohorts wanted to keep hidden. What they are not supposed to determine is that he is a "fake German," a fact that becomes apparent as he falls back into his outport mode of speaking when the swine attacks him:

> Liddle piggy? Come on, Liddle piggy. Ve vant to see you, ve vant to play mit you . . . now, now . . . whaddya doing? Jesus! Help! Get this Goddam pig off me! B'ys! B'ys! Help me, b'ys! B'ys, help me, b'ys! Aaaaarrrrrgggggghhhhhh! (38)

Braun-Woggan's multi-layered persona suggests careful calculation, absurdly drawn as it is, of the relative effectiveness of different intimidation tactics, and shows the extent to which the involved capitalists are willing to go in their self-serving drive to please Smallwood. In fact, as the striking similarity between Alfred Braun-Woggan's name and that of a real-life German hired by Smallwood in the early 1950s suggests, Boyle and his associates could very well have used Smallwood himself as the inspiration for their implementation of a fake German (perhaps they could not find a real one) for their strong-arm tactics. Harold Horwood writes about

> a man the Tories called "the sinister Max Braun-Wogan," whom Joey always referred to as 'Max Brown,' to make

him sound like a nice guy from down the street.

(Horwood Joey 182)

Braun-Woggan's job in Swinton is to ensure compliance, as Horwood suggests the real-life Braun-Wogan's also was. A German eye-glass specialist named Sennewald had in a telegram to the Opposition Tories promised to show "documents revealing surprising manipulations in both St. John's and Germany behind all new industries." The Tories sent Sennewald money to come to Newfoundland to meet with them, and published his telegram. But Sennewald was met at the airport in Gander

> by Max Braun-Wogan, the German mystery man, founder of something called "Neue Technique Corporation", and now a member of Valdmanis's staff.

Afterward, Sennewald "was interviewed by Valdmanis and Smallwood." He publicly declared it had all been a misunderstanding, and flew back to Germany. "The Tories said he had been kidnapped, and hinted darkly at methods . . . borrowed from Hitler's Gestapo" (Horwood Joey 182).

Through the presence of Alfred Braun-Woggan in Swinton, Guy suggests that Smallwood and the capitalists with whom he operated were willing to go to great and frequently unethical lengths in order to keep their plans moving along uninterrupted by protest or dissent.

Despite Boyle's attempts to ensure compliance,

resistance in Lar's Hole is not quashed. The Bridgers display a certain amount of ambivalence because they recognize the desirability of certain improvements that might accompany successful new industry, but they also perceive that rather than being in the presence of saviours, they are in the presence of intruders. Harve asserts: "I haven't got much, but what I got, no man is taking from me! They might move me, but my finger'll be dead on the trigger!" (23). And Belle suggests: "Sure, tis the war all over again, ain't it? That's the feeling I got" (2).

There is enought resistance in the community, once it becomes apparent that their well-being is not a consideration for Boyle and his cohorts, to drive Boyle, and with him Mrs. Parsons, to "dust our heels out of Lar's Hole. It's getting pretty rough there ashore. The great unwashed are turning surly" (49).

A poignant if somewhat revolting image of resistance in The Swinton Massacre is Violet Bridger's castration of Willie. She is demented and unstable, but Belle suggests:

> She looks at me sometimes, you know . . . like there is someone in there wants to get out . . . and I think, if only . . . if only I was smart enough . . .

Harve responds resignedly: "Ah, don't, girl, don't. You're only chasing yourself around in circles. We've been through that a hundred times before" (28). Violet proves through her

castration of Willie that she is neither mindless nor helpless. Her defensive act can be read as a metaphor for resistance in Lar's Hole generally, because of how its residents are perceived by Boyle, by Mrs. Parsons, and as Guy elsewhere suggests, by Smallwood. Mrs. Parsons remarks on the proliferation of "small minds" in Lar's Hole (11); Boyle refers to what her perceives as the inferior mental capacities of the local people (36); and in a column entitled "A Few Passages From Unholy Writ," Guy has Smallwood say, as he passes over "the Kingdom of Joe":

> Behold, o ye congregation of hangers on; we passeth hence over an exceeding stunned people; Rejoice, O ye followers and disciples; . . . Verily, I say unto you, they are like unto a manner of people that falleth to the ground and misseth. (<u>You May Know</u> 85)

Violet, though regarded by all as insane, fights off Mrs. Parsons's zealous attempt at tooth-yanking (23) and defends herself against Willie when he attempts to rape her, cutting off his genitals with a razor (46). After surviving all this and a house fire, she is still able to show her parents that she is all right, uttering her first barely discernable syllables, an attempt at her mother's repeated request that she let her know she's okay by saying "Christ is my Saviour" (134): "Kyss eh ma fave-yerr" (56).

In a column entitled "An Unhealthy Trend" Guy points to

a tradition among politicians in Newfoundland to regard politics as an elite business that does not involve consultation with the public at large, and a tradition among the Newfoundland public to accept this order of things. In the column, he ironically responds to a recent upsurge of public involvement in political matters, stating with the voice of a politician:

> Events have reached a pretty pass indeed when we find that even unschooled persons of the middle and lower classes are seriously venturing opinions on politics and government.

He further suggests:

> Politics should be left to the politicians. It is a matter of absolutely no concern to the average citizen and not a fit topic for general discussion.
>
> Let the population go about its business and leave government entirely in the capable and rightful hands of those who have been set in authority over us. (<u>You May Know</u> 67-8)

The resistance shown by the "great unwashed" of Lar's Hole, Guy suggests, would be, if non-fictional, the exception to an unfortunate rule. But he does not suggest that when active resistance does not happen, it is necessarily because of personal weakness or laziness on the part of the marginalized outport populations. Rather, he

suggests in the article cited above that the Newfoundland public has become habituated "to having everything done for them [or to them] by the government" (Lady Hope Simpson in Peter Neary 63), and he suggests in The Swinton Massacre that non-resistance also is frequently the result of a great deal of ambivalence among outport residents about the restructuring of their lifestyles.

Harve and Belle Bridger, perhaps the two most poignantly drawn characters in any of Guy's three plays, are full of ambivalent feelings, constantly torn between the possible benefits of the new age under Confederation, and the insensitive way in which change is manifested in their lives. Although they frequently speak in terms of resistance and opposition, they recognize that the success of such opposition would deny them things that they very much want. They appreciate the fact that they are getting support cheques to help them care for Violet, and that there is social security for the retired: "The old people never seen so much cash money in their lives put together before" (3). They look forward to new roads, electric lights, and above all to a time when:

> There'll be homes [for Violet], there'll be homes one of these days. Nice places, too, like they got in there in St. John's. Not like the Lunatic Asylum, more like them nice orphanages they got in there. (13)

Chesley W. Carter points out that Smallwood "provided roads to abolish isolation from each other within the province. He greatly improved the public services of our province, particularly health and education" (113). Belle and Harve recognize that they do not and cannot exist in some simply oppositional relationship with the St. John's administrative bodies and industrialists. Robert Young notes:

> The claim for a straightforward oppositional kind of resistance also assumes that subjects can resist from a position outside the operations of power, according to the dominant inside/outside model of conventional politics.

Young notes that according to Foucault's formulations, "the forces of domination and resistance are caught up, sometimes indistinguishably, within each other" (86). The Bridgers support and oppose different individual parts of a single regime, with the effect that a simple alignment of loyalties becomes impossible to maintain.

Earlier in his career, Guy had written about the endurance of Newfoundlanders as a sort of nationalist principle, sugggesting that Newfoundlanders can take whatever is thrown at them, survive it, and move on. Shannon Ryan describes the dissemination of this notion of Newfoundlanders in The Ice Hunters, his history of sealing in Newfoundland. He suggests that to compensate for the constant tragedy and hardship of sealing,

> Writers began to extol in story, song and obituary the men who had built and prosecuted this industry. Heroism, tragedy, humour and pathos were all recorded, as were many isolated adventures, activities incidents, statistical records and personal achievements. (412)

This culturally reinforced image of the enduring Newfoundlander, which became a source of understandable pride throughout the island, in time became accepted as a sort of national principle--the "essence of the people. Rather than recognizing endurance as a valuable tool when required but never the most desirable option, Guy glorified it and, by using it to define Newfoundlanders, rhetorically limited them to endurance, to mere survival (You May Know 114-6).

By The Swinton Massacre, Guy has abandoned the glorification of what amounts to a defense among the suffering, and acknowledges that it is necessary to look at individual cases with respect for their specificity. As Jean-Paul Sartre suggests: "It is dangerously easy to speak of eternal values; eternal values are very, very fleshless" (84). The Bridgers must tackle the issue of eternal values, of the traditional, oppositional picture of the stoic dignity of the outporter in the face of all manners of oppression. Sartre notes: "Even freedom . . . is nothing else but the movement by which one perpetually uproots and

liberates oneself" (84). For Harve and Belle, the refusal to consent to the regime that oppresses them by ignoring their specificity and agency in its assertions of power would entail consenting to the denial of other freedoms which the regime offers, such as a life with some time for themselves, without the constant worrying about their daughter, and with the security of knowing they will not be destitute when they are old or out of work. At the play's bittersweet end, when they decide to move to Halifax, there is a similar compromise of freedoms: the cosmopolitan advantages of which Mrs. Parsons speaks are chosen over the emotional comfort and attachments of home.

It may be symptomatic of Smallwood's government in the early years of Confederation, at least as Guy paints it, that the options for the marginalized are restricted to total opposition like that chosen by the Lar's Hole Wild Man, with all its conseqences in terms of material poverty; or abject submission; or emigration. In The Swinton Massacre, we are given a picture of a regime that works entirely in oppositional rather than consultative terms. Compromise is not regarded as a viable option, and opposition is punished as clearly ass compliance is rewarded.

The Bridgers are simply too tired to endure any longer in Lar's Hole. Willie suggets to Harve:

> You might be a stubborn man, Harve Bridger, but I'd call it a safe bet . . . that you got about so much chance of standing up to people like them as a . . . a fart in a gale of wind! (23)

Having at least partially expected disaster for quite some time, the Bridgers have saved a "bit of money up under the hen house. In case something happened" (55). They suspect that it will be a long time before the shower of promised benefits of the new regime makes its way to Lar's Hole, and that there will be quite a few years of nastiness like the swine project first:

> life is too short, innit? By the time Canada gets down here to us, we might all be dead and gone. So we might so well shag off to Canada. (55)

The Bridgers' decision to "shag off" to Halifax seems based more on resignation than enthusiasm. Halifax has had an earnest and eager promoter in Lar's Hole in the person of Mrs. Parsons, who, while not particularly liked by the Bridgers, still has mamaged to clothe Halifax in a mystique that is compelling. She is so convinced of its wondrousness that when Boyle asks where they shall escape to, "Barbados? Tahiti? The Andaman Islands?", she responds: "Halifax!" (49). Willie reecognizes how thoroughly caught up Mrs. Parsons is in her fantasy, and suggests that her descriptions of it cannot but be rash:

> I doubt if she have heard anything at all since she come away from Hali-bloody-fax. Look, I knows for a fact, they wasn't in Halifax no more than three months. Just after the War. And that only while the Reverend Mister was getting his rupture doctored. (27)

The Bridgers have become intrigued by certain mysterious Halifax phenomena which Mrs. Parsons has spoken of, things like "Tucky Fried Chicken." Belle notes that Mrs. Parsons told her: "I don't think there's anything I miss more than Tucky Fried Chicken." But Belle adds she is "not altogether sure" what it is. She suggests: "Wonderfl things there must be up there in Halifax," and asks: "How long before we sees stuff like Tucky Fried Chicken in Lar's Hole? . . . Half a lifetime?" She tells Harve: "Life is too short, I said to meself, life is really too short." Herbert L. Pottle, who as I've mentioned shares a name with Swinton's Wild Man who significantly opts at the play's end to remain in Lar's Hole, suggests that the rush to develop, to drag the province into the twentieth century, was mirrored by a "reckless euphoria" of materialism among the people of the province. Progress during these years was measured "not in terms of ideas but of utilities--TV sets, washers, dryers, deep freezers, mod styles, paved roads, two cars" (214-5). Pottle laments what he regards as a wrong prioritization, based on short-term gains rather than

long-term promise. Harve and Belle have become victims of this mentality via Boyle's disastrous swine scheme, and are also affected b it psychologically via the mystique of "Tucky Fried Chicken." To Belle's remark that life is too short, Harve responds: "True, my dear, true. Truer words was never spoken," but the stage directions note that Belle is "on the verger of tears again." Harve, just after agreeing with Belle, agitatedly asks: "Where in the world is that blasted train?" (54-5).

Before Boyle came to Lar's Hole, bringing with him his ill-intentioned and ill-fated swine scheme, the Bridgers stayed, apparently satisfied to remain in their home community. As is stated above, the benefits of the new era seem to be lagging far behind the costs. Their lifestyle has been overturned, and without any foreseeable benefit. So they decide, hesitantly, painfully, to go to where the benefits have already settled in, because "life is too short." Early in the play, Harve sums up Halifax's mystique, suggesting: "We'll all be dead and gone soon enough. Dead and gone to Halifax" (13). Through his sarcasm, Harve reveals his hesitation at the prospect of moving there, and indicated what he believes may ultimately be the fate of the outports generally. Al Pittman suggests in West Moon that each outport carries the memories of all its dead, through stories, customs, habits, and that it is much more difficult

to sustain these memories when removed from the memories' signposts to other towns or cities. He suggests that the life in a heritage is inextricably attached to specific places, and suggests that with the bonds of place broken, "the dead would be dead indeed. And death indeed would be their dominion" (32). The Bridgers fear the death of their memories, the loss of ancestry, of history, of place.

In Swinton's final stage direction, Guy echoes the struggle and ambivalence of Harve's earlier comment: "As they ascend into heaven, or Halifax, they begin to sing 'Life is Like a Mountain Railroad.'" The song they sing is an anthem of endurance, indicating their ride will remain far from easy in their new heaven, and they already suspect it will be something less wonderful than Mrs. Parsons suggests:

> Life is like a mountain railroad
> With an engineer that's brave
> We must make the run successful
> From the cradle to the grave.
>
> Mind the grade and watch the trestles
> Never falter, never fail
> Keep your hand upon the throttle
> And your eye upon the rail.

Jack, one of the dead in West Moon, tells his wife:

> I don't hold it against you for goin', Maud. . . . I know it couldn't of been a easy thing to do. I hope you're not down-hearted on account of it. . . . The main thing is for you to be content. No sense greivin' over what's gone past. Just be glad you're alive, girl"
>
> (Pittman 58).

In neither Pittman's play nor Guy's is there a suggestion that things are going to start being easy, but in neither are we left with the utter helplessness and death with which we are left at the conclusion of Michael Cook's play Jacob's Wake. In Cook's play, the old Skipper peers into the fog and tells his son Winston: "'Tis the shape of death, boy. I kin see'n . . . rising out of the drift, moving across the ice without a sound." Winston responds, ominously: "Father, there's nothing there. Nothing" (242). At the end of Jacob's Wake, the stage directions are very specific:

> There comes a flash that lights up the stage. There is nobody there. Then again, a blackout, the storm dying. The lights go up again, intense, white light that illuminates the threadbare reality of the stage home. Upstairs, the Death Mask is still lit. All fades into the lone quiet crying of a bitter wind. (247)

The Bridgers in Swinton remain active agents, making strategic moves for survival, bittersweet as they may be,

while the Blackburns in Jacob's Wake rage forward into death.

There are no "happy endings" in Guy's plays any more than there are tragic ones. He tends toward the bittersweet, toward ambivalence and uncertainty, small triumphs which contain the seeds of their own potential defeat. The knowledge of unending struggle hovers in the air for all his protagonists. This is true for the Bridgers, and also for Violet and the Wild Man, who are the focus of the play's other end, its other option. Violet and the Wild Man stay in Lar's Hole, perhaps because, as Belle suggests, "them two wouldn't stand a chance anyway, not in a civilized place like Halifax" (58).

Violet, by castrating Willie, shows a reserve of defensive strength and good sense where it is unexpected. Similarly, the Wild Man is shown to have a stalwart strength, refusing to participate in a system he believes to be rotten at the core. He shows the Bridgers a business card that informs them his name is "Herbert W. Pottle, Esq." and that he is "Mute By Choice Until Freedom Comes Again." The card is dated 1933, the year that Newfoundland agreed to relinquish Responsible Government and accept the British Commission Government. That he still chooses not to speak indicates that he does not regard Confederation with Canada as a return to freedom. The

real-life Herbert Pottle suggests that what promised to become a truly accountable government for the people, a "unique kind of partnership," became instead "a hand-to-mouth relationship," and that "the old-time political patronage, which was rather amateurish and clumsy, now became a full-time professional business" (214). Clearly, if Herbert L. Pottle is the inspiration for Herbert W. Pottle, Confederation under Smallwood must for the Lar's Hole Wild Man must be something less than a revolution for the people. Belle suggests to the Wild Man: "Well, you're a wonderful steady man, sir" (57). His considered decision to remain mute and his ability to stick to it indicate that he, like Violet, possesses strength and sense where it is unexpected.

Touchingly if absurdly, the Wild Man and Violet walk off together, an unlikely pair of heroes, representing those who choose to stay in the outports no matter what happens, and who likely will continue to be regarded as crazy (Violet) or primitive (the Wild Man), despite the strength and sense they possess.

Violet and the Wild Man are likely to remain voiceless, as their different types of muteness suggest. Violet cannot communicate to people, cannot explain her motivations for her erratic behaviour; the Wild Man has nothing to say to a regime he perceives to be corrupt. They will not speak, and

if they did, the entire play implies the regime in power would not listen to their voices. Again, we see a small, ambivalent triumph in which we feel for the characters in a way that lingers and pains because there is no idyllic end, and in fact no end; just an implication of continued process, struggle, escape into new spaces that themselves will require struggle and escape, just the endlessly repeated upheavals that Sartre suggests are the only only attainable freedom. The impossibility of final escape from struggle is suggested by Belle's call to Violet and the Wild Man, as she and Harve move on to new struggles elsewhere: "To youse we throws the torch" (58). When Belle says to Harve, "God's will be done," he replies: "God's gonna have an awful lot to answer for" (59).

The fact that Guy ends all his plays without any escape from the struggles they depict suggests a streak of fatalism, a belief that there may never be any real "progress" because struggles keep shifting and truths along with them; but as Cyril F. Poole suggests in regard to a tendency toward fatalism among Newfoundlanders: "Fatalism permits of struggle and battle even though the outcome rests with the gods" (96). Poole's comment suggests that individual agency is only a part, and perhaps a small part, of what controls the outcome of situations, but that one can still recognize and possess that part, and so have an effect

on his own fate. In Guy's plays we are left with uncertainty, perhaps never with much optimism, but always still in a space of struggle, of engagement with the odds. It is this combination in all its protagonists of uncertainty and the commitment to keep struggling on behalf of their beliefs, even as they shift, that gives Swinton's ending its undeniable poignancy.

Conclusion

Ray Guy's plays are characterized by shifting. They all take place during a time of transition which informs the changing beliefs of their characters and the changing character of their communities. Accordingly, there is no one totalizing process of marginalization in Guy's plays, and no unified process of resistance to marginalization. We can look to Aunt Millie in Triffie who maintains and disseminates a view of Billy and Washbourne as worthy of suspicion just because they tend not to be social, or to Herbert in Frog Pond with his traces of aristocratic snobbishness and his scathing if unfocused railing against "anti-Confeatherate bastards," or to Willie in Swinton who allies himself eagerly with the developers who abuse his fellow residents in Lar's Hole, to recognize that, as Guy depicts it, the tendency to marginalize transcends divisions of region and class. We also see the margins themselves shifting, in terms of who belongs to them: Washbourne in Triffie, a first-generation resident of Swyers Harbour, finds himself struggling along with the other local characters against invasive missionaries; the Frostts in Frog Pond find themselves being marginalized by the new regime; and Boyle in Swinton, who fears being ostracized by the Premier, gives up and leaves the province when it

becomes apparent that his attempt to please Smallwood has been a disaster. While the margins shift and the marginalized marginalize in Guy's plays, the impulse to marginalize is shown in all the plays to be most immediately and expansively threatening when embodied by those with the greatest political or economic power because, as Foucault suggests, there is a battle "around truth," and those who hold more power hold more truth because they can speak it more loudly and with greater force (132).

When the politically or economically powerful engage in processes of marginalization, they frequently promise and occasionally deliver much-needed tangible benefits that the marginalized people fear losing or preventing if they resist or refuse: to try to get rid of Mrs. Melrose would be to lose Dr. Melrose who, though a drunk, is Swyers Harbour's only doctor; to discourage development in Lar's Hole might, in the minds of the Bridgers, threaten the possibility of a professional care home for their daughter or of old age pensions. Mary Walsh, who has acted with Guy and has directed all his plays, suggests in a personal interview:

> The good old days. There were no goddamn good old days. There was only the days. It's a falsehood, and a way to make yourself unhappy . . . to imagine that . . . some way of life has been snatched from you. . . . Other than in St. John's, everyone in this country [Newfoundland] voted to join Confederation. (Walsh)

Characters in Guy's plays have a wide range of attitudes regarding the relative benefits of the old and new regimes, from falsifying nostalgia for a lost time such as that expressed by Georgina Frostt, to a craven obsession with all things new like Willie Stubbige's, but overall, the plays are characterized by ambivalence, a constant juggling of potential benefit and loss.

Guy's protagonists tend to be torn between adaptation "to conditions of imposed pressure," and resistance, the "struggle against domination and appropriation." Gerald M. Sider suggests that this combination is characteristic of Newfoundland "village culture" (193). The three protagonists in Triffie are left with a difficult choice: invite the Ranger's (the outsider's) help and risk more unwelcome outside influence, or refuse to assist the Ranger and risk never improving their defenses. Herbert in Frog Pond is torn between loyalty to a family that has employed two generations of his own family, and his excitement at the prospect of a regime under which "Jack is as good as his master." The Bridgers' ambivalence in Swinton leads them to leave Lar's Hole, reluctantly, for Halifax, because of the apparent human cost of development at home. In none of these cases are we led to choose one option or the other. Instead, we are led to understand the characters' ambivalence, and to respect their responses to the difficult compromise of freedoms they all must face.

Ramraj suggests that writers who are explicitly politically involved in their work:

> lead us . . . as literary critics to wonder whether the writer, having an axe to grind, is . . . loading the dice in his favour, is falsifying and so can be accused of . . . being a publicist, . . . rather than an incisive and insightful writer. (187-8)

Ramraj is partial toward disinterested, "objective" writers, a perspective Sartre suggests is impossible. He suggests:

> The "committed" writer knows that words are action. He knows that to reveal is to change and that one can reveal only by planning to change. He has given up the impossible dream of giving an impartial picture of society and the human condition. (83)

Ray Guy, in his depiction of marginalization processes in Newfoundland around the time of Confederation, avoids the illusion of objectivity, but also avoids the trap of the publicist. While he makes his sympathies clear by his choice of subject and focus, he does not idealize the economically depressed classes or the residents of the outports, and he does not prescribe a particular ideology or plan of action as the proper response to political and economic marginalization.

The fact that Guy does not idealize the outports does not disengage him from the struggles he depicts; it does,

however, fulfil with more than lip service Bhabha's requirement for political writing "if its authority is not to become autocratic": "Despite its firm commitments, the political must always pose as a problem, or a question, the priority of the place from which it begins" (64-5). Perhaps the clearest instance of this in Guy's plays is Washbourne's hearty laughter in response to Millie's nostalgic suggestion of a possible return to a tranquility she has retroactively constructed.

In a personal interview, Guy expresses his tendency to align himself with the less-spoken-for. He gives as an example his earlier tendency to write nationalistic material in his columns, to compensate for what he perceived to be a general inferiority complex among Newfoundlanders. He suggests that in the 1970s, when this sort of nationalism became orthodox, he stopped writing that sort of material, believing that the extent of its newfound orthodoxy needed compensation as much as the previous attitude of inferiority had (Guy). In his plays, the less-spoken-for that he chooses to address is not the pain and damage of marginalization processes, which have received quite a lot of literary and dramatic attention, but is rather the active responses to these processes. Guy does not generalize about the feelings of those in the outports, and he certainly does not pity them. Instead, he engages in the depiction of options,

variance of choice--that which Cornel West calls "the new cultural politics of difference." West suggests that these "new politics" focus on the "agency, capacity and ability of human beings who have been culturally degraded, politically oppressed and economically exploited by . . . status quos." West further suggests that, because of its focus on differences, "this theme neither romanticizes nor idealizes marginalized peoples" (34-5). Romantic, idealistic, or heroic depictions of marginal communities, despite their favourable appearance, merely help to lock the marginal community, in the view of the audience, into a particular role or a specific character. Walsh suggests:

> There's lots to celebrate. But there's no point in bullshitting it. You know, if you're going to celebrate, celebrate what really is there to celebrate. Don't try to put a golden glow over everything. (Walsh)

As early as 1968, during a period when Guy still strategically engaged in nationalist rhetoric, there are examples of his recognition of the deceptiveness of such a totalizing view of Newfoundland. Describing tensions between Harold Horwood, who had said there was no warmth in outport life, and Farley Mowat, who had tried to explain the pointless slaughter of a whale by a number of people in an outport community as the result of corruption from outside, Guy suggests that both were generalizing. He writes that

there are outporters who "are, of course" capable of pointlessly killing a whale, but also that:

> Harold went overboard when he said there was no warmth in outport life. He reveals that his view of the outports is just as full of holes as the view of outports without whale-killers.
>
> (Evening Telegram 14 November 1968)

The roots of Guy's utter refusal in his plays to simplify the outports are traceable in a piecemeal way throughout his journalistic career. While Guy insists on celebrating resistance and the active margin, he refuses to generalize the complex reactions among marginalized people to processes of marginalization. Through his satire, Guy attempts to release the outports of Newfoundland drama from romance, heroism, or poetic tragedy, which have been typical tones in literary and dramatic work regarding Newfoundland's outports. Walsh suggests: "We [Newfoundlanders] are no more romantic than anyone else. We are all, after all, human beings." (Walsh). Guy strips the outports of mystique and instead reveals them as the sites of controversy, struggle, and change.

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