

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF FOLKLORISM  
WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE FOLK  
CULTURE OF NEWFOUNDLAND

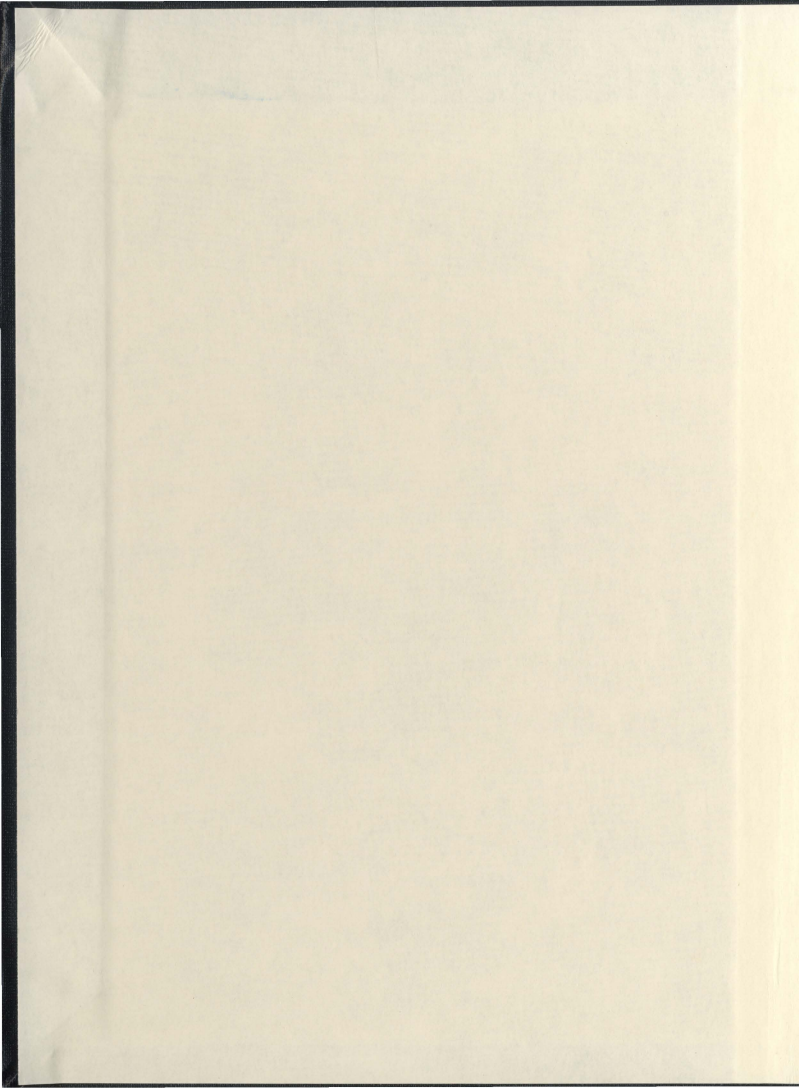
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AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF FOLKLORISM  
WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO  
THE FOLK CULTURE OF NEWFOUNDLAND

BY

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A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate  
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## ABSTRACT

Folklorism, an analytical concept that indicates the conscious use of folklore and refers to a variety of phenomena related to the conservation, revival and invention of traditions, has been discussed primarily among German folklorists. This thesis is an application of the concept in a North American context. Folklorism is investigated as an essentially neutral indicator of cultural processes that occur in reaction to specific social and economic conditions and change the function of folklore. In such processes folklore is purposefully used outside its original context, it is preserved, given a second existence, or newly invented according to traditional patterns. The thesis explores the historical conditions that encouraged the process of folklorism and examines the proliferation of contemporary phenomena related to folklorism in Newfoundland. These include such subjects of conventional folklore studies as the custom of mumming, the French minority culture and folk festivals which, however, are analyzed from the perspective of their ideological and commercial underpinnings. Other chapters address how the activities of folklorists themselves influence "the folk" and the related issue of their social responsibility. Particular attention is paid to tourism developments which inevitably influence the folk culture of host societies. As an analytical tool to interpret basic sociocultural processes folklorism has the potential to broaden the field of folklore by addressing social, economic and ideological trends, by integrating the academic and applied aspects of the discipline and by acknowledging the increasingly complex role folklore plays in western societies with their recent emphasis on heritage and cultural conservation.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks are due, first of all, to the supervisor of the thesis, Dr. Neil Rosenberg, whose patience I have sorely tried over the years when a number of other projects kept interrupting this work. His meticulous reading of the text was much appreciated. Dr. Peter Narváez, who took over as supervisor during Dr. Rosenberg's sabbatical leave in 1989, gave valuable advice. When Dr. Wilfred Wareham left the Department of Folklore, Dr. Gerald Pocius agreed to take his position on the committee. The three committee members have recently produced studies on revivals, the mass media and mumming that relate directly to this thesis and have helped me in that way as well.

This thesis was originally inspired by the work of German folklorists, who I hope will consider it as complementary to their efforts. In the early 1980s Dr. Regina Bendix, then a graduate student at Indiana University, also became interested in the concept of folklorism; she has generously shared her work with me. During the years of research, writing, and simply living in Newfoundland, however, "the folk" have become my major source of inspiration and knowledge.

A fellowship from Memorial University allowed me to come to Newfoundland in 1982 to pursue graduate studies. I received additional funds from student assistantships at the Folklore and Language Archive, and fieldwork in the summer of 1985 was made possible by a grant from the Institute of Social and Economic Research. I gratefully acknowledge this financial support.

The trials of classes and examinations were made easier by overcoming them together with my friends and colleagues Dr. Barbara Rieti-Lovelace and Dr. Janet McNaughton, to whom I could confide my academic and personal concerns. Faculty members, fellow students and staff at the Department of Folklore have all been supportive. Special thanks go to those who have been my roommates during years spent in various locations across St. John's.

Throughout my parents have provided a measure of security and faith, for which I thank them. This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my brother, folklorist Dr. Hermann Dettmer, who has always encouraged my endeavors. With his untimely death in July 1990 I have lost the best of friends and mentors.



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## INTRODUCTION

When I arrived in Newfoundland in 1982, I became fascinated with the traditional folk culture of the fishing villages, the outports, like many folklorists and other visitors before me.<sup>1</sup> Soon, however, I became even more fascinated with the discrepancies I noticed that belied the apparently unchanged quality of "the folk," those people who still participated in a largely traditional lifestyle. These included an old fisherman of Petty Harbour who proudly displayed a photograph showing him as an actor in the film *Orca*; an eccentric self-taught historian in Conche who played host and informant to folklorists, among other strangers, and turned to collecting an odd assembly of artifacts that reflect both the local and his individual past; folklorists who invaded outports during the Christmas season to go mumming among "the folk;" traditional fiddlers who were "discovered" at an advanced age and toured the world with their folk music; the appeal of a folk culture advertised in tourist brochures. I eventually chose such phenomena of a folk culture reflected, preserved, imitated and presented in new contexts, which were discussed in Germany as folklorism (*Folklorismus*), as the focus of my research rather than a more conventional subject of folklore studies of which Newfoundland offers unusually rich sources.

As a research orientation folklorism, an analytical construct that addresses the conservation, revitalization and invention of traditions for ideological, commercial or playful purposes, has the potential to broaden the discipline of folklore and to integrate its academic and applied aspects. In Germany, and in much of Europe, where folklore is rooted in the peasant class and relatively long history, the introduction of the concept was part of a major shift in focus during recent decades. This was largely due to the work of Hans Moser and Hermann Bausinger, who in the 1960s moved folklore studies in Germany toward becoming an applied social science. Roughly defined, they used the word folklorism to describe a broad, neutral indicator of cultural processes that occur in reaction to specific social and economic conditions and change the function of

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<sup>1</sup>Throughout the thesis I have excluded Labrador from the discussion, which forms the mainland portion of the province but is culturally distinct from the island of Newfoundland.



folklore.<sup>2</sup>

This thesis argues that the concept is applicable in a North American context as well. The issue is important, for in the postindustrial late twentieth century the conventional objects of folklore scholarship, traditions pertaining to a pre-industrial era, appear less important while the focus of folkloristics has shifted to study processes of cultural and social interaction. Today's folklorists no longer seek the "pure," spontaneous and unselfconscious expressions of folklore dating back to antiquity that were the aim of romantic nineteenth century collectors in Europe, who engaged in folklorism from the inception of their discipline by editing the folk poetry they collected to establish a common body of knowledge as basis for newly emerging national identities. Instead, by the end of the twentieth century folklorists are confronted with an increasingly complex situation, for "the folk" have become conscious of their own folk culture while former boundaries that divided classes and levels of culture have dissolved, a fascination with the folk cultural past has persisted, and the preservation of heritage has become a popular concern. All of these conditions have encouraged the growth of phenomena associated with folklorism as explored in this thesis.

Folklorism indicates the secondary use or imitation of folklore outside its original local or class context and is characterized by an orientation toward the past, a selective emphasis on particularly attractive elements of folklore, and the pretense of an "authentic" or old, quaint quality, even if these materials are newly revived or invented. By referring to and pretending to be folklore, folklorism presupposes folklore in form of primary, naively enacted tradition that is transmitted spontaneously and directly as a self-evident part of a living, dynamic culture shared by regional, ethnic, or otherwise defined groups.

The concept of folklore itself has been re-interpreted by successive generations of folklorists according to changing scholarly interests and needs as well as shifts in political and regional conditions so that no single valid definition exists. For many folklorists, however, folklore still implies traditional, unreflective behavior and a certain conservative quality; it has to be old within the culture and must be transmitted in direct

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<sup>2</sup>See the following chapter, "Folklorism and Western European Folklore Scholarship," for a discussion of their contributions to the development of the concept.

interaction between performer and audience. It must reflect an "intangible ordinary man" and it cannot be published, packaged and marketed to still be considered folklore (Oring 1986, 16). Contrasted with such a restrictive interpretation of folklore, folklorism continues to refer to a pre-industrial folk society and to traditional genres of folklore, such as customs, legends, folksongs, which, however, acquire new functions. This is particularly evident in times of social and cultural disruptions when traditions become marginal and lend themselves to be revitalized for more consciously ideological, commercial or playful uses.

Folklorism implies a basic dissatisfaction with radical changes in the sociocultural environment; by evoking an earlier, essentially outdated way of life folklorism seems to offer security when faced with a confusing new situation that threatens a society's cultural identity. To that extent folklorism is a phenomenon of transitional periods, a cultural coping mechanism that accompanies a general phase of development, such as the process of modernization from pre-industrial to industrial society. The worldwide distribution of identical consumer goods and the influence of the mass media that have created a homogeneous culture among affluent societies again caused a reaction that took the form of emphasizing regional and national characteristics to regain a sense of cultural identity.

Folklorism thrives when folklore becomes a conscious, rather than self-evident, element of culture. Accordingly the first to engage in folklorism were members of an educated upper class influenced by romantic nationalism who by the nineteenth century deemed they had lost the essential folk culture, but tried to preserve and cultivate folklore that they believed had survived in the peasant class. Somewhat later an emerging bourgeois middle class, who felt alienated in the process of industrialization and urbanization, began to long for the apparent security offered by pre-industrial values and rural lifestyles, which again became a motive for folklorism. Such early forms of folklorism introduced the fiction of a self-sufficient, simpler and more "natural" folk culture, which existed elsewhere, in the past or in other, less developed societies; it was an attitude tied to distinct class differences and to romantic-nationalist notions.

This attitude remained an important aspect of folklorism as it emphasizes the "authentic," the semblance of a certain natural, quaint and original quality that provides

a contrast to a modern urban existence perceived as drab and monotonous. Folklorism thrives when folklore provides inspiration for colorful arts and entertainment that caters to the eclectic tastes of a postmodern society. The act itself of presenting, reviving or imitating traditions, however, changes the meaning of the specific cultural artifact by enhancing the typical aspects of the regional folk culture and by stimulating feelings of nostalgia, while commercial exploitation of these forms, particularly by the tourism and entertainment industries, is generally a later development.

Folklorism is as old as folklore scholarship itself, for nineteenth century European scholars participated not only in the collection and conservation of folklore they believed on the verge of disappearing, but shaped and edited the materials they collected to construct emerging national identities on the basis of a common past. Though pervasive throughout the history of the discipline, for example in form of the feedback effect scholarly and popular folklore publications have had on "the folk," folklorism was long ignored or regarded with contempt by folklorists. The tendency to consider folklorism as entirely negative when compared to "genuine tradition," however, has largely been overcome by the 1980s, for the process of folklorism appears not only inevitable as "the folk" increasingly appreciate and cultivate their own heritage, but folklorism clearly fulfills important psychological needs by strengthening a sense of cultural identity where such an identity is being threatened. Moreover, folklorism is inherent in the applied work of increasing numbers of public sector folklorists who influence the public's notion of the nature of folklore as they produce festivals and choose to present selected aspects of folklore that eventually are considered representative of tradition.

In its more problematic aspects, folklorism implies regression to an imaginary past as a means to avoid dealing with current social or economic problems. By selectively emphasizing traditions, a national/regional identity is constructed based on past achievements rather than present reality. In regions suffering from economic underdevelopment and inferior political status, the process typical of folklorism results in the display of an impressive folk culture to compensate for the lack of economic and political power. The seemingly innocent and colorful nature of such folklore thus hides underlying problems that folklorists should not ignore.



Folklorism is part of popular culture as far as it is reproduced and communicated by technological media in mass societal contexts, a change in transmission of folklore that implies increasing spatial and social distances between performers and audience (Narváez 1986, 1). Folklore, folklorism and popular culture essentially differ in mode of transmission, procedures and contexts of a given performance, and in the extent to which the particular item either is part of or simply refers to tradition. In form and function, however, folklorism cannot be clearly separated from folklore. The categories depend on the degree of intellectual rationalization and the varying perspectives of the participant, audience and organizer/promoter, as well as on any hidden agenda of ideological or commercial nature. New forms and creativity are necessary for the survival of traditions and in this sense folklore and folklorism complement each other; one generation's folklore has the potential to become the next generation's folklorism and vice versa. Both categories are constantly changing, though folklore evolves imperceptibly and slowly, while folklorism is deliberately and rapidly introduced or invented.

While its phenomena are not new, folklorism suggests attitudes of postmodernity, or "advanced consumer capitalism," an in-between period where new patterns of orientation have not yet emerged while old securities are being questioned. John Dorst has claimed in his study of the institutional production of a variety of images of the past in Chadds Ford that postmodernity is a legitimate interest of folklorists (1989). The concept of postmodernity, or postmodernism, is treated with caution in this thesis, as it is too complex and too controversial to be applied with ease. On the other hand, characteristics in common with folklorism are too obvious to be entirely ignored. A controversial term, postmodernism does not present a distinct aesthetic and philosophical ideology as much as a complex map of late twentieth century directions. The movement offers a great range of styles, techniques and technologies to choose from, but at the same time implies uncertainty about their use and their authority. Playful and eclectic leanings, a sceptical view of technical progress, and a search for renewed humanism, are tendencies also typical of folklorism. While postmodernism does not affect all areas of society equally, its influence is especially pronounced in the past-oriented, organized, cultivated aspects of folklorism evident in tourism, an industry that is given particular attention in this thesis.

Much of folklorism simply takes the form of harmless hobbies and leisure time activities, though the concept covers a broad range of phenomena that refer to a folk culture of the past, that are claimed to be "authentic" even if contrived, that may hide an agenda of ulterior motives and that importantly influence the sense of cultural identity. Thus complex and broadly conceived, folklorism has remained a controversial concept but nevertheless has proven to be useful since its introduction to German folkloristics in the 1960s. While written from an essentially neutral position, this thesis emphasizes the ideological, commercial, as well as applied implications of folklorism. Excessive and negative aspects of folklorism, however, are also noted following the overriding criterion whether or not such deliberate use of folklore adversely affects the quality of life of the group in question.

When I began my research, interest in folklorism was still limited among North American scholars. By the time this thesis nears completion, such related subjects as the nature of authenticity, cultural intervention and the applied aspects of public sector folklore work have become important topics of discussion. Even if the word folklorism does not enter the terminology of American folklorists, the subject matter is widely acknowledged as the discipline recognizes the increasingly self-conscious, purposeful and creative use of traditional folklore materials.

In 1984 the proposal for this thesis met with some enthusiasm by faculty members of the Department of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland, for it promised to introduce this concept to a wider North American audience in form of a holistic study of Newfoundland as a region with social, cultural and economic conditions that are particularly conducive to the process of folklorism. Inevitably, the thesis took on a life of its own. Even in an area as self-contained as the island of Newfoundland, it proved impossible to address all instances of folklorism, which flourished while the thesis was in progress. However, the contemporary manifestations of folklorism chosen for closer investigation represent particularly important aspects of the folk culture of Newfoundland in the 1970s and 1980s, and they illustrate the wide range of phenomena included in the concept.

This thesis is in part based on field research of a number of folk festivals which was supported by a grant from the Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial

University of Newfoundland, in the summer of 1985. Observations related to tourism developments benefited from my active involvement in the tourist industry as tour guide and consultant. Screech-Ins were studied in interviews with performers and in the role of participant-observer, as well as from secondary sources, such as newspaper reports, during the controversy surrounding the ceremony in 1990. Much of the folk culture of Newfoundland, however, became familiar to me as participant-observer by living here (since 1989 in the setting of a traditional outport near St. John's), and by frequent excursions to rural Newfoundland. Materials and insights for this thesis thus derive from focused as well as incidental observations, while research into the social, economic and cultural history of Newfoundland includes both primary and secondary written sources.

The thesis is divided into three major sections: Part I, "Theoretical Survey," discusses the concept itself, the role the concept plays in European scholarship, related issues that are being discussed in North America, and how the concept is applied in the Newfoundland context. Part II, "The Emergence of the National and Regional Identity of Newfoundland," explores the economic, social and cultural history of Newfoundland. This includes and contrasts both scholarly and popular perspectives to provide a diachronic view of the rise of a distinct Newfoundland identity. The analysis of these divergent accounts reveals the construction of a distinct national/regional identity on the basis of romantic/ideological use of folklore, pronounced class differences and economic disadvantage as important factors that encourage the process of folklorism in this specific region.

Part III, "Contemporary Manifestations of Folklorism in Newfoundland," discusses the proliferation of folklorism in contemporary context as it spread beyond former boundaries based on differences in class and educational level to become a more general, typical aspect of Newfoundland culture. All phenomena studied share as common theme the continued orientation on selected, often romantically and nostalgically enhanced traditions of the past folk culture that belong to an essentially outdated way of life but remain important for the regional cultural identity. The first of two subsections explores cultural intervention, including the influence the work of folklorists, preservationists, revivalists, organizers of folkloristic events and state support for cultural activities has had on "the folk." While the thesis was in progress, the impact



of the work of academic folklorists on "the folk," which Hans Moser discussed as feedback process (*Rücklauf*, 1964), and in particular the influence of increasing numbers of public sector folklorists in the United States as "authenticators" of folklore, which is always a political role, were acknowledged and debated by the likes of Archie Green (1986, 1988), David Whisnant (1983, 1988) and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1988), who emphasized that even the teaching of folklore has an ideological base.

The folk culture of Newfoundland has been studied and taught extensively, for the simple reason that the only English degree granting Department of Folklore in Canada is based here. Such a situation implies the scholar's responsibility, whose privileged academic position allows him to choose what folklore to collect, preserve and cultivate and thus to shape the public perception of folklore. Among examples discussed in detail, folklorists have played a role in the politically sanctioned renaissance of the French-Newfoundland minority culture and in the renewed popularity of the custom of Christmas mumming in Newfoundland. The rapid rise of folk festivals during the 1980s represents yet other aspects of folklorism associated with the larger movement of folk music revivals. While such festivals to some extent build on older communal celebrations which they replace, important elements of folk festivals now include the role of the organizer along with support by government grants and such obviously commercial motives as selling local products and attracting tourists.

The second subsection of Part III addresses commercially inspired forms of folklorism encountered in the tourist industry, which has been strongly encouraged by the government in an effort to diversify the provincial economy. Because of the extent and importance of folklorism phenomena associated with the tourist industry in Newfoundland, the subject is introduced with a separate theoretical discussion on "Folklorism and Tourism." The specific examples analyzed in the last chapters include the stylization of the environment with artificially concocted legends and the invention of a welcoming ceremony, the "Screech-In." There is some evidence, however, that the optimistically promoted tourist industry clashes with traditional values and lifestyles and that careful consideration is needed to ensure that this developmental strategy benefits rather than negatively affects the local population. Accordingly tourism developments in Newfoundland indicate the potential of a largely untitled field for applied folklore work.

Even though I studied folklore at North American universities, early in my academic career I became conscious of the divergent paths folklore studies have taken in North America as compared to Germany. Ideas I first encountered at the bi-annual congress of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde* (German Folklore Association) in Kiel, organized in 1979 at the tail-end of a decade of restructuring and changing the direction of German folklore scholarship, are reflected in this thesis.<sup>3</sup> Since then I have translated Hermann Bausinger's pioneering study, *Volkskultur in der technischen Welt* (1961), a work that has further influenced my own perception of folklore as a social science. Like the translation (1990), this thesis is an attempt to help bridge the gap between folklore scholarship in Germany and in North America.

Beyond its academic contribution, this thesis became a catalyst that led to my active participation in the development of tourism in Newfoundland. Throughout the 1980s the inshore fishery has steadily declined, despite the occasional good summer of fishing here and there. But while future economic prospects are bleak, the quality of life in rural Newfoundland has generally remained good; most people who live in the coastal fishing villages, the outports, own their land, their house, their boat, and they often share food and skills on an informal, reciprocal basis. Much of their time is free and flexible and in the outports a slower pace of life prevails that urban citizens have long lost.<sup>4</sup> This lifestyle, however, is increasingly dependent on government support in form of unemployment insurance and welfare; new economic developments are absolutely necessary to make the outports viable again.

During a first extended tour of Newfoundland in 1983 I became convinced of the tourism potential of the island for a certain type of tourist, such as affluent, environmentally concerned, "adventure" travellers or "eco-tourists"; even if they come in small numbers and are confined to a short season, tourists can help to improve the rural economy. Subsequently a small tour I designed and guided in 1988 for the German non-profit organization "Friends of Nature," in itself not very significant, was successful in that it proved my ideas valid and introduced a different model of tourism to

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<sup>3</sup>Proceedings of the conference were published by Konrad Köstlin and Hermann Bausinger, 1980.

<sup>4</sup>See also Ralph Matthews 1976.



Newfoundland at a time when it is still possible to influence the direction tourism is taking. Therefore it is of vital importance to educate Newfoundlanders about the problems and benefits associated with tourism so they can participate in the decision-making process. More than any other business, tourism affects the very environment and lifestyle of the local population, for it largely depends on such intangible qualities as obliging behaviour, including the extreme of acting the stereotype to fulfill tourists' expectations. Because of its influence on the folk culture, tourism should be carefully studied by folklorists.<sup>5</sup>

Along with my active involvement in the tourist industry, which could be considered public sector folklore work, I have maintained an academic interest in tourism. Theoretical literature on tourism has proliferated since the 1970s and tourism has become an important subject for German as well as American folklorists. Beyond the writings of Moser, Bausinger, and Jeggle and Korff on tourism as a major factor in the process of folklorism, German folklorist Dieter Kramer has moved toward applied folklore in his book *Der sanfte Tourismus* (Soft Tourism, 1984). In the United States, for example, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has taught classes and lectured on the topic, including a guest lecture at Memorial University, "The politics and esthetics of tourism: a folkloristic approach."<sup>6</sup> In recent years the annual meetings of the American Folklore Society have regularly included panel sessions on the topic of tourism.

Rural, peripheral areas far from the industrialized cities, the regions that by virtue of contrast most attract urban tourists, are also the areas most folklorists prefer to study. By their activities, conscious or not, folklorists have encouraged tourism, preparing the way with publications, exhibitions, festivals they help to produce. Even fieldwork can be considered a form of tourism, and the collecting of folk arts and crafts for museums and archives resembles an early form of souvenir hunting. While folklorists do not usually carry much clout in the business world, their knowledge can help to change stereotypical perceptions and to encourage tolerance and cultural appreciation, for

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<sup>5</sup>Consequently I have lectured to folklore classes and tourism associations, have offered workshops on tourism, assisted a community in assessing its tourism potential, and in 1991 helped to design a provincial strategy for the development of adventure tourism.

<sup>6</sup>Tape MUNFLA 85-334, November 28, 1985.

example by bringing a more sensitive approach to the development of tourism projects than entrepreneurs motivated solely by commercial interests. As consultants, interpreters, organizers of festivals and exhibits, museum curators, writers or tour guides folklorists can provide advice and expertise concerning traditional cultures and thus influence the tremendous impact tourism has everywhere, including the more extreme, problematic manifestations of folklorism that are currently generated by the tourist industry.

This relates to the attention folklorists in the United States have recently begun to pay the idea of cultural conservation, which encourages folklorists to participate in shaping cultural events and policies. The growing preoccupation of North American folklorists with cultural conservation in the 1980s shows some similarity with the German attempts at reorientation of the discipline that included folklorism in the 1960s; there is soul-searching about the question of authenticity and about the functions of folklore in modern times, as well as a promise to make folklore newly relevant by moving it into the applied realm. By indicating common concerns addressed in different contexts the gap between the divergent international approaches to folklore scholarship may be closed. Newfoundland proved to be an ideal field for this task, as it combines elements of the Old and the New World and experienced a late, partial transition to an industrial society which made it possible to observe processes that have long been completed elsewhere.

Most importantly, this investigation with folklorism as analytical focus provides a framework for a realistic rather than overly romantic assessment of the role folklore plays today by exposing underlying motives, such as ideological or commercial underpinnings that affect even the work of folklorists. While Newfoundlanders are facing social and economic problems in the real world, they have repeatedly tried to cope with them in cultural terms by referring to their past traditions, and thus engaged in the process of folklorism. Here folklorism above all takes the form of a persistent, romantic fascination with pre-industrial folklore that is still part of recent local memory. Sentimentally re-interpreted from the vantage point of the present, this folk culture continues to provide the basis for a distinct cultural identity, an image that appeals to Newfoundlanders as well as outsiders, including scholars and tourists.

**PART I**

**THEORETICAL SURVEY**

## **Folklore and Folklorism: Exploring the Differences**

In this thesis the concept of folklorism provides a broad framework for understanding and interpreting phenomena related to the secondary use of folklore, i.e., the conservation, revitalization and invention of folk traditions, in a North American context. While folklorism, a theoretical construct, is conceived as a neutral indicator of social and cultural processes that refer to the folk cultural past for inspiration, exploring the process of folklorism reveals the ideological and economic underpinnings of much folklore that is supposedly the expression of naive and unselfconscious tradition. Consequently, making folklorism part of the legitimate field of inquiry of folkloristics indicates a break from narrow definitions of "folk," "folk culture," and "folklore," or any overly romantic notions of the discipline of folklore, and encourages the integration of academic and public realms. As explored below, it is futile to consider folklorism as inferior when compared to "pure" folklore or "genuine" folk tradition; instead folklorism is intricately connected to folklore as it inspires new forms of cultural expressions based on folklore that address current psychological needs or satisfy the demand for aesthetic enjoyment.

### **SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS OF FOLKLORISM**

The concept of folklorism makes a critical distinction between folklore experienced out of first and out of second hand, i.e., folklore enacted spontaneously and unselfconsciously in its original communal context, versus folklorism that consists of mediated, organized, invented folklore which is removed from the original context and consequently acquires new functions. Nevertheless manifestations of folklorism are always claimed to be naturally evolved, "authentic" folklore; they are based either on existing folklore or on the imitation of folk-like elements. Once recognized, the pervasive nature of the phenomena associated with folklorism and their early appearance in the history of the discipline of folklore become obvious. This is partly due to the notion perpetuated from the beginning of the discipline of folklore, however erroneous, that folklore is rapidly disappearing and therefore must be preserved and cultivated to survive. Paradoxically folklorism proliferates as a result of just such efforts that have made unreflected folk traditions a matter of conscious concern. The growth of phenomena associated with folklorism further indicates the influence of the mass media,



increased education and mobility, as well as the availability of goods of any kind for consumption, which include folk traditions. Technological advances in particular, from print to sound and video recordings, have made it possible to fix items of folklore in time and form, available to be copied, imitated and revived in new contexts.

When affected by the process of folklorism, folklore is consciously cultivated as "folklore." Aesthetic, emotionally appealing, demonstrative and showy elements are emphasized as the performance of folklore changes from spontaneous enactment to deliberate, organized event and often acquires a more or less hidden ideological or commercial agenda. Such forms of folklorism seem to present "genuine," original folk culture and deny any connection between culture and ideology, or culture and economy, though they flourish particularly in the context of nationalist/ideological movements and within the realm of the entertainment and tourist industries. While much of contemporary folklorism takes the form of arts and harmless hobbies and simply seems to indicate the increase in leisure time, the widening of the horizon, and the eclectic tastes acquired by a postmodern society, folklorism nevertheless can function importantly as a cultural coping mechanism. This is particularly relevant in transitional phases of economic and political development, at times when old values and customs are questioned and new responses have not yet been integrated into the cultural canon, as during the transition from pre-industrial to industrial society. Here folklorism implies both a positive identification with the past and a rejection of modernization. Where such a transition is experienced as problematic and causes feelings of inferiority, as is likely in peripheral, economically underdeveloped areas or among ethnic minority groups, folklorism becomes a defensive strategy; cultivating and glorifying a past folk culture enhances a sense of cultural identity which at the same time can substitute for the lack of economic and political status.

#### PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF FOLKLORISM

Folklore and folklorism are intricately connected and cannot be clearly separated. Folklorism has never been fully defined and covers a broad range of phenomena that may be more easily studied in isolation.

The introduction of the concept of folklorism has made it possible for folklorists to continue to focus their attention on pre-industrial folklore while simply changing the perspective to include the conscious use of such materials. On the other hand, folklorism has tended to become a label for materials that conventional folkloristics long chose to ignore, such as the more or less obvious ideological and commercial use of folklore.

Though folklorism was essentially conceived as a neutral indicator of processes that change the function of folklore, it is difficult to maintain objectivity when dealing with the pretense of "authenticity" that is inherent in folklorism, or when faced with designations like "fakelore" and "phoney folk culture" that result from excessively zealous and exploitative use of folklore for commercial or ideological ends. Overall the concept may be more usefully applied to European folkloristics with its early preoccupation on the peasant class as "the folk," while no such clearly delineated class differences developed in North America.

#### SOURCES OF FOLKLORISM

Folklorism is encouraged by advances in technology from print to records and film that have made it possible to fix folklore in time and form, to remove it from the narrow context of oral tradition and to make it available to be copied and revived. It thrives under the influence of romantic and ideological impulses, common especially in the nineteenth century, that have repeatedly inspired educated and political elites to emphasize, cultivate and preserve selected aspects of a folk culture in order to construct a common national or regional identity. At its most problematic, folklorism has furthered the ill-conceived ideological aims of fascist governments in the early part of the twentieth century. A more generally experienced basic dissatisfaction with social changes introduced by rapid modernization further inspires folklorism expressed by insistence on traditional forms as a means to achieve and maintain a sense of security. Folklorism fills a cultural vacuum when elements of traditional folk culture have become marginal in their use but are revitalized or imitated in new contexts, for example to provide symbols of identity and to creatively inspire new forms of art and entertainment. The inferior situation of a particular group in relation to the dominant political and cultural power can lead to a reaction of cultural overcompensation, to substitute for the lack of real power with the cultivation of "inner riches" based on colorful folklore.

Exposure to other cultures through travel and the mass media increases the awareness and appreciation of the indigenous folk culture as a value in itself rather than a self-evident part of everyday culture and thus leads to folklorism. Scholarly collections and publications as well inspire folklorism in form of scientific and pseudo-scientific insights that reach the public in a feedback process. For commercial purposes the entertainment and tourist industries make use of folklore by selectively emphasizing attractive and showy elements while pretending to present "authentic" folk culture.

#### PROCESSES OF TRANSFORMATION/SIMULATION

Folklore acquires a variety of new functions when performed outside its original local and class context and by undergoing regular processes that result in folklorism:

- When demonstrative aspects of a rural folk culture are considered in danger of disappearing, a social and political elite, including folklorists, influenced by romantic-nationalist impulses, may decide to collect and conserve these "survivals" which can eventually acquire symbolic meaning and be assumed to represent a national heritage.

- Nationalist-ideological movements may integrate the cultivation of folklore into their programs to create a sense of nationhood.

- In the process of modernization a folk custom may become marginal and therefore lend itself to new functions. The society compensates for insecurity experienced in the transitional phase of development by referring to the past folk culture and the custom is revitalized selectively by emphasizing its most aesthetically pleasing aspects.

- The entertainment and tourist industries may discover the economic potential of colorful folklore which is consequently subjected to commoditization; folk culture is presented on stage and in the mass media for entertainment, or developed into a tourist attraction; folk-like elements are newly invented to serve the same purpose.

- The local population participates in folklorism as part of an economic strategy to attract tourists; this results in two separate cultures: a culture of everyday, modern life and a culture as if frozen in the past that is put on display for the benefit of the visitors. At the same time the local population may experience a new appreciation of their folk culture and may eventually integrate the new forms of folklorism into their communal traditions.



- Folklore may be embraced as providing inspiration for the formal arts (music, painting, literature) which both transform and imitate folk cultural materials.

- Folk revivals, particularly folksong revivals, can indicate a break in continuity of folk tradition and draw selectively on older sources for inspiration to create essentially new events that often acquire a (hidden) commercial or ideological agenda, thus changing folklore from spontaneous to purposeful performances that are aimed at a new audience.

#### APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPT

Among the most obviously ideological applications of the concept, folklorism indicates the efforts of political or educated elites engaged in national movements who emphasize and enhance the folk culture of the past in order to construct a common national identity, including the extreme of fascist use of folklore in the twentieth century. Of political importance as well is the cultivation of folklore among ethnic minorities to reinforce group cohesion, which is encouraged by multicultural policies. Another significant movement, heritage conservation, indicates a widespread folklorism that affects all classes. Along with amateur enthusiasts, public sector folklorists are playing an important role in this trend as they identify and "authenticate" folk heritage, work that is generally sponsored by government departments and therefore tends to support the status quo. The tourist and entertainment industries use folklore selectively for commercial purposes and contribute to the regionalization of culture by making folklore part of the defining features of a vacation destination. Academic folklorists as well influence the public's perception of folklore by their research, teaching and publications that result in a feedback process.

#### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FOLKLORE AND FOLKLORISM

The categories folklore and folklorism are intricately connected and cannot be clearly separated. They differ mainly in the degree of intellectual reflection and the varying perspectives and attitudes of the participant, audience and organizer/promoter of the folklore materials. Moreover, one generation's folklore can become the next generation's folklorism, or inversely folklorism can turn into folklore. The two concepts can be visualized as existing at the opposite ends of a continuum along which each manifestation occupies a specific position at any given time, which, however, is subject to an ongoing process of change.



Folklore consists of a range of traditional materials that represent the collective knowledge of a group, including inconspicuous conversational genres and family folklore. These are shaped collectively and enacted recurrently within a frame of reference shared by a specific group. Consequently folklore is situated in present local and social circumstances; it implies traditional, unreflective behaviour and a certain conservative quality. Each item of folklore is to some degree improvised and unique, as tradition allows for innovation at need and therefore results in variation. By contrast, folklorism continues to refer to a past folk society and traditional genres of folklore, but is purposefully created, imitated, performed outside the original culture and class context; because of the selective focus on aesthetically pleasing, showy and demonstrative elements of folklore, folklorism does not represent the totality of a folk culture.

Compared to folklore, which is communicated directly, interpersonally in small groups, folklorism is tied to the mass media and is part of popular culture as far as it is reproduced and communicated by technological media in mass societal contexts, which implies a change in transmission that increases the social distance between performer and audience. Like goods of any other kind, folklore is increasingly available for consumption and becomes a source for popular, commercially inspired entertainment; when subjected to commoditization, folklore turns into folklorism. This is facilitated by technology which allows for the unlimited, exact reproduction of folk cultural goods and thus takes folklore out of the realm of folk tradition and the former collective, slow process of change and variation.

The range of genres of folklore materials that lend themselves to the process of folklorism includes predominantly demonstrative and attractive elements of pre-industrial folk culture that are indicative of an earlier, rural lifestyle, such as customs, music, festivals, foodways, material culture, occupational lore; all of these can acquire symbolic meaning for the identity of a nation, region, ethnic minority or other group, while sentimental and nostalgic elements of folklore that provide the semblance of a counter-world are often integrated into the entertainment and tourist industries.

## Folklorism and Western European Folklore Scholarship

The term *Folklorismus* was first discussed by German cultural sociologist Peter Heintz (1958) as an aspect of social change due to the increase in culture contacts and culture conflicts within and between Western nations in the nineteenth century. Subsequently the German folklorist Hans Moser introduced the concept to the discipline of folklore in his seminal essay "Vom Folklorismus in unserer Zeit" (1962). Moser preferred the term *Folklorismus* to *angewandte Folkloristik* (applied folklore) because he found it shorter and more appropriate:

It is a term of great breadth which draws on two strands: the increased cultural levelling which leads to a growing interest in things "folk" and the practice of satisfying, strengthening or awakening this interest. Through various tactics, the audience is offered an impressive mixture of genuine and falsified materials from folk cultures, particularly in cultural enclaves where life still seems to breathe originality, strength and colour (Moser 1962, 179-80. Trans. Regina Bendix 1988, 7).

For the German discipline of folklore, i.e., *Volkskunde*, the concept *Folklorismus* also indicated the growing use of the English word *folklore* in German cultural publications and commercial advertisements (Moser 1962, 179). The *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (Second Edition, 1987, 1012) compares the German usage of the latin suffix *-ismus* to that of *-ism* in English as a productive suffix in the formation of nouns denoting action or practice, state or condition, principles, doctrines, a usage or characteristic, devotion or adherence, etc. (*criticism; barbarism; Darwinism; despotism; plagiarism; realism; witticism; intellectualism*). The dictionary further lists *ism* as a distinctive doctrine, theory, system, or practice: *This is the age of isms*. [extracted from words with the suffix *-ism*] (1012). In the course of the 1980s American folklorists have adopted this concept in its anglicized form, folklorism, a practice I have followed in this study.<sup>7</sup>

Within a field that in Germany in the 1960s was selfconsciously suffering from the stigma of a comparative dearth of theory, that was still preoccupied with pre-industrial

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<sup>7</sup>Examples are the conference on "Culture, Tradition, Identity" of March 1984 at the Folklore Institute at Indiana University, parts of which are printed in the *Journal of Folklore Research*, 21.2/3 (1984). At the conference of the American Folklore Society of the same year Regina Bendix presented a paper, "Folklorism: A Threat or a Challenge?" which resulted in the publication "Folklorism: The Challenge of a Concept" (1988). A symposium on folklorism was organized by the author for the 1985 American Folklore Society conference. Recent translations as well have used the anglicized version, e.g. Dow and Lixfeld 1986.

folklore, the peasant class and survivals of presumably old traditions, and that had yet to deal with the Nazi use of folklore, folklorism soon acquired the status of a show piece. The successful introduction of the concept in itself indicated that German folklorists had reached a critical phase. The study of folklorism made it necessary to look at the influence popular culture and the mass media have had on folklore, as well as to seriously consider the attraction folklore materials exert on popular culture. Subsequently at least some German folklorists, prominently including Hermann Bausinger at the University of Tübingen, changed their overall approach to the discipline.<sup>8</sup>

Though it eventually gained quasi-theoretical status, Moser never clearly defined folklorism as much as he called for its study and described examples of it. A challenging concept, more suggestive than precise (Bausinger 1966, 61), folklorism covered a wide range of phenomena and did not fit existing folklore theories. As key elements of folklorism Moser identified conservationist and commercial efforts to satisfy and increase, even to create popular interest in folklore by cultivating selected, particularly colorful and attractive elements of folk culture. Outside the original local context or imitated by another social class, folklore loses its unselfconscious, spontaneous quality and relives instead a more purposeful secondary existence. For example, as early as the nineteenth century singers from Europe's Alpine regions performed "folksongs" on the stages of many countries, while in their native land romantically inclined members of the educated elite were concerned with the conservation and conscious cultivation of customs they believed in danger of disappearing. On the whole, the selected pleasant and attractive elements of "folklore" now presented on stage and preserved in archives and museums never quite existed like this in the past, and even included inventions of folk-like elements created outside of any known tradition (Moser 1962).

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<sup>8</sup>Bausinger had already done much to de-romanticize folklore by bringing it squarely into the twentieth century with his pioneering work *Volkskultur in der technischen Welt* (1961), the first major study to show that folk culture and the world of technology are not mutually exclusive, that "the folk" adjust easily to technological inventions and that formerly narrow spatial, temporal and social horizons have expanded. The work was published in English translation 1990.



Moser further established that folklorism was not an entirely new phenomenon. The transition from "folklore" (or folk culture) to "folklorism" is achieved essentially by a shift in function. Contrary to the assumption that earlier folk customs were based on a spontaneous, playful attitude, he discovered that at least by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries social conditions became an important factor in their enactment. The upper classes were the first to indulge in folklorism when they cultivated folklore out of fashionable, romantic, pedagogical, or political impulses. Out of deference, or hoping for remuneration, the peasants obliged by entertaining their rulers with songs, dances, and customs (see also Bausinger 1979, 179-186). Eventually, however, folklorism reached all social classes, a process that was accelerated by the media with their almost unlimited possibilities of diffusion and by the commercial exploitation of folklore as practiced especially by the entertainment and tourist industries.

In a second paper on folklorism Moser introduced the important idea of *Rücklauf*, i.e., feedback, a process that returns collected, analyzed, edited or otherwise prepared folklore to "the folk," who then incorporate "scientific or pseudo-scientific insights" into what has become conscious enactment of folklore (Moser 1964, 10). Moser traced this process to printed materials of educational intent during the age of enlightenment and to the entertainment literature of the late romanticism that featured stories of peasant life. Published research of folklorists has frequently played a role in this feedback process, as have the efforts of self-appointed cultivators of a "folk" heritage or the products of regionally inspired poets. *Rücklauf* addresses the important question of the scholar's influence on the persons and objects he studies, and hence his social responsibility (Moser 1964).

Expanding on Moser's essays, Wolfgang Brückner focused on the political implications of folklorism in the institutionalized world that characterizes the social and political situation of our time; folklorism describes not only folklore experienced in a secondary sense, but also a secondary *Heimat* (native area), when the idea of a home territory is politicized (Brückner 1966). The regionalization of culture is an important aspect of the process that turns folklore into folklorism. The political use of folklore, however, remained generally hidden in the West, while it was obviously an element of folklorism as developed in the East, which is discussed below.



While folklorism was introduced as a neutral indicator of the forms of folklore proliferating in modern society, without being clearly defined the term tended to become a label applied to all that was considered contrary to the objects of purely academic folklore research. Consequently in Germany from the 1960s on the *term* folklorism achieved widespread use, while the folklorism *phenomena* continued to be largely ignored. In an important paper Bausinger criticized the implications of rejecting such phenomena on principle and pointed out that primary and secondary traditions (i.e., directly or indirectly transmitted folklore) often merge (1966; translated 1986). These developments, he argued, should be carefully observed, including the obvious commercialization of customs by the mass media. Instead of showing contempt, Bausinger urged that folklorists should research the essence and functions of such materials as well as the shifts of folklore in function and perspective. In the case of minority groups, for example, folklorism serves important needs when customs enacted together increase group awareness and achieve an ordering function in both esoteric and exoteric terms.

In the same paper, however, Bausinger isolated a more negative aspect of folklorism in its inherent pretense of "genuine folk culture," an authenticity supposedly based on real naïveté, expressed by primary, unselfconscious population groups, the quintessential "folk." This aspect of folklorism first applied to nineteenth century upper classes who were at a sufficient social distance to label the rural population as "the folk," "authentic," "original," or "natural," even though by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries "the folk" were at least partially conscious of their own culture. Increasing democratization eventually spread these once exclusive upper class attitudes to the masses (Bausinger 1966; translated 1986). While Bausinger merely mentioned a more pervasive folklorism than before, when comparing the present to the past, Moser noticed an important difference in that folklorism now is primarily determined by commercial interests (Moser 1962).

Subsequent joint research by Bausinger and Brückner that focused on the subject of continuity indicated that folklorism is the rule rather than the exception. They proved repeatedly that only the rare folkloric object, such as a custom, experiences real continuity in the sense that the same outward form and same function are carried by the

same bearer over space and time as far back into the past as can possibly be traced (Bausinger and Brückner 1969). At the same time new forms are absolutely necessary to maintain the vitality of a folk culture, while folklore specifically identified as "folklore," confined to a museum existence with its traditions frozen in the past, inevitably turns into folklorism (Bausinger 1966, 70-71).

In 1969 Bausinger mailed a questionnaire on folklorism to folklorists of fifteen countries. While nine international responses confirmed that folklorism is a widespread phenomenon that can nowhere be avoided, the experiment indicated an important difference in folklorism as practiced in East and West, for the folklore predominantly adapted to the commercial ends of the entertainment industries in the West, openly served the political purposes of the State in the East (Bausinger 1969b). Later studies, however, reveal this division to be merely one of degree of conscious use, for even though in the West the ideological use of folklore is not generally acknowledged, it certainly exists (Whisnant 1983).

In Germany, folklorism has played a role in broadening and restructuring the discipline of *Volkskunde*, while it distanced itself from its origins in romantic philology and moved toward becoming an applied social science. After much debate during the latter part of the 1960s, this new orientation was expressed in the *Falkenstein Formula* of 1970:

*Volkskunde* analyzes the transmission of cultural values (including their causes and the processes which accompany them) in their objective and subjective form. The goal is to contribute to solving sociocultural problems.<sup>9</sup>

Consequently the study of folklorism was integrated into the program of Bausinger's department at the University of Tübingen and his unconventional textbook *Volkskunde* (Bausinger 1971) includes a discussion of folklorism and its relationship to tourism and the culture industry.<sup>10</sup>

Few German folklorists participated in the debate on folklorism in writing and only Konrad Köstlin sharply criticized the use of this ambiguous concept in his paper

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<sup>9</sup>Trans. Dow and Lixfeld 1986, 2; for a German reference see Scharfe 1970, 124-39. It must be emphasized, however, that not all German folklorists followed this new direction.

<sup>10</sup>Part of this textbook is included in the translation of *Folk Culture in a World of Technology*, "Relics - and What Can Become of Them," 116-160.

"*Folklorismus und Ben Akiba*" (1969). Because it had become popular among German folklorists, it could easily be assumed to be self-evident, generally known and carefully reflected. But the fact that folklorism was regarded as a phenomenon implied an attitude of fascination rather than understanding and impeded further theoretical exploration. By assuming connections with the past and the future, and by focusing on the objects of traditional folklore scholarship, folklorism could simply be used as another perspective of studying those same objects of conventional scholarship. For Köstlin folklorism thus has prevented folklorists from facing a perhaps basically different and new situation regarding the objects of folklore in today's society.

One of the few convincing theoretical studies that have used the concept of folklorism is Max Peter Baumann's investigation of functional changes of the yodel in Switzerland, as its performance progressed from naive-spontaneous to deliberately planned events (1976). The example of the yodel is also cited in a regional study of the people of the Zillertal, a valley in the Tyrol, Austria, by Utz Jeggle and Gottfried Korff (1974, translated 1986), a study that is particularly relevant to the situation of Newfoundland. In the eighteenth century economic necessity forced the people of the poor and overpopulated Zillertal to become entrepreneurs by peddling locally distilled herbal essences over wide distances. Eventually greed caused the quality of the product to deteriorate, which ruined the business. A subsequent venture saw entire families of the Zillertal engaged in producing ordinary leather gloves, while pretending to use the more expensive, rare chamois leather. From the beginning this trade depended on a folksy appeal the Zillertal salesmen had cultivated, a behavior that somehow substituted for the authenticity that was lacking in the leather. This resulted in a strange symbiosis of seller and product: out of need the Zillertaler sold more than gloves, he marketed his own entertaining personality.

After the glove business had folded as well, Tyroleans began to perform their naive stereotype on the international stage, an evolution which Jeggle and Korff consider logical. To please their foreign audiences, Tyrolean singers either rewrote or newly invented songs in the old pattern to include frequent yodels, which became their "trademark." Meanwhile the stereotype first learned as a sales strategy became even more internalized with the arrival of tourists who discovered the Tyrol relatively early as



a vacation destination. Finally the people of the valley turned their home environment into a stylized idyll, complete with legends, to create an exotic experience for the tourists. This study recognizes the extreme development of folklorism as a chain of events, a process based on economic necessity which reaches its climax in the forms of folklorism generated by the tourist industry (Jeggel and Korff 1974; translated 1986).

Korff subsequently identified aesthetic (over-)compensation for economic underdevelopment as another important factor leading to folklorism (1980). Glorifying one's past in collective narcissism can reduce a threat to self-confidence and offers a symbolic redressing for groups suffering from economic disadvantage. Accordingly the desolate situation of some rural, marginal areas is turned into a positively accepted lifestyle embedded in cultural lag by offering elaborated and aestheticized "inner riches" in form of language, poetry, customs, folk art, as a substitute for modernization. Tourism only reinforces this tendency if such "inner riches" are later found to be marketable.

These are the major early commentaries on folklorism as introduced to folkloristics in (former) West Germany. As mentioned before, a distinctly different approach to folklorism developed in the (former) socialist countries to the East, which will be discussed next.



## Folklorism in Eastern Europe

After the Second World War Eastern European folklorists were encouraged and expected to participate in the cultural policies of their new Marxist-Leninist governments. East German folklorist Ulrich Bentzien explained their specific aim:

The increased socialist cultivation of folklore in the GDR is based on the qualitative development of the idea of Marxist-Leninist heritage ... The concern is to raise the cultural niveau of the nation, an attempt to enrich the cultural everyday world and holidays of the workers, to stimulate their esthetic and emotional capacity as well as to possibly generate new group-forming traditions geared to a socialist lifestyle on the basis of old folklore (Bentzien 1982, 23-4).

Bentzien preferred to call this political folklorism "cultivation of folklore" and distinguished it from the economically motivated folklorism of the capitalist West, which he clearly considered a more negative phenomenon. In *Folklore and Folklife* Richard Dorson has called the Eastern approach "the Ideological School" (1972, 15-20). Aside from their different ideological bases, however, the two forms of folklorism appeared surprisingly similar in form and function.

Unlike the West, Eastern Europe has devoted much research to folklorism. Here folklorists were encouraged to participate in implementing socialist cultural policy as well as to deal theoretically with folklorism and its impact. Their research resulted in a variety of theoretical models that accommodate folklorism, as well as a vast literature on the subject, which are discussed by Regina Bendix in "Folklorismus: The Challenge of a Concept" (1988). In particular she mentions the Czech Bohuslav Beneš, who took characteristics common to both folklore and folklorism and analyzed the difference in their expressions. According to Beneš, the "channel of dissemination" of folklore is collective transmission that is partly oral, while folklorism is disseminated in directed transmission that is tied to the mass media. He considered folklorism a more or less intellectual phenomenon, as folklore transformed and reproduced in non-original circumstances. To him folklore *is* communication, specifically within a certain group, while folklorism is communication of folklore, an act of representation rather than communication (Bendix 1988, 9-10).

The Hungarian Vilmos Voigt, one of the editors of the international *Folklorismus Bulletin* which has been published sporadically since 1979, has focused on the relationship between art and folklorism, such as the inspiration musicians like Béla

Bartók have drawn from folklore. He distinguished between "old folklorism," which includes the Romantic movement of the early nineteenth century, and "neo-folklorism," an aesthetic movement in twentieth century art. Voigt claimed that folklorism is the artistic equivalent of democracy and progress as it is closely associated with social emancipation (1980, 422). As discussed by Bendix, the Russian folklorist Gusev has proposed synchronic and diachronic typologies of folklorism, the former divided into the categories of "folklore reproduced in non-traditional contexts," "ideological folklorism," and "artistic folklorism." His diachronic categories range from the transformation of folklore traditions as part of the contemporary culture of folk masses to the reproduction of folklore by mass communication (Bendix 1988, 11). Bendix suggests that Yugoslav folklorist Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin has carried folklorism theory even further in her transformational model that avoids value-laden dichotomies:

1. Folklore in its original expression (leading to)
2. Folklore living its second existence - folklorism - and changing in several ways and reaching mass culture on several levels (leading to)
3. Folklore as an inspiration in all kinds of cultural activity, offering to modern art its motives, rhythms, content and ideas (Rihtman-Auguštin 1978, 168).

Meanwhile the rapid political changes in the East Block countries beginning in 1989 indicate that their citizens are eager to leave the socialist past behind and that they are ready to embrace the Western material culture and lifestyle that were previously inaccessible to them. This new situation, no doubt, will inspire its own forms of folklorism, which must remain conjectural at this time.

## The Continuing Folklorism Debate

After years of relative silence on the subject, folklorism was again discussed in 1978 at the international conference at Neusiedl/See in Austria.<sup>11</sup> Köstlin participated with a paper on folklorism as a form of therapy, analyzing folk cultures exaggerated to the point of grotesqueness as a sign of increasing insecurity that can be relieved by an insistence on traditional forms (1982). Nevertheless Köstlin emphasized once more that not much is gained by calling all colorful folklore resulting from such unstable situations folklorism. Instead this form of folk culture should be newly evaluated. As an example he compared individual therapy that promises the solution of conflicts, self-discovery and stabilization to folklorism as therapy for the masses with its promise of a counterworld of simple, basic life and the security provided by living in a hypothetical past world. Even if the alternatives are synthetic and commercialized, they nevertheless are experienced as alternatives. As a case in point Köstlin mentioned regional dialects, which in the 1970s underwent a process of revitalization in Germany. Using the dialect suggests a deep intimacy with the environment and thus confirms the speaker's regional identity. Moreover, dialect literature creates a circle of "insiders," which can be interpreted as a strategy against mobility. Such forms of folklorism promise to make people feel at home in a place, to reassure them by participation, as offered in certain activities at vacation centers and in the "typical" aspects of souvenirs (Köstlin 1982). Similarly Ulrich Tolksdorf has investigated foods as an essential part of feeling at home, brought to awareness mainly when one enters a new environment, in the role of refugee, immigrant or tourist. While in a foreign place, foods can represent *Heimat*, the home territory. A close association between food and regional identity is a factor in the recent proliferation of regional cookbooks, which also function as popular souvenir items for the tourist industry (Tolksdorf 1982).

Like the questionnaire distributed by Bausinger nine years earlier, the conference at Neusiedl/See of 1978 provided an international assessment of the state of folklorism research. Nils-Arvid Bringéus reported on the situation in Scandinavia, where the

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<sup>11</sup>This was the first working conference of the association *Volkskultur um den Neusiedlersee* which resulted in the publication of *Folklorismus*, eds. Edith Hörandner and Hans Lunzer, 1982.



phenomenon was being discussed as a revitalization of the past influenced by the feedback effect of folklore scholarship (1982). Finding it difficult to separate the idealistic from the commercial forms of folklorism, Bringéus related folklorism to a reaction or protest against the technocratic society, where the goals of the larger economy conflict with the interests of individuals. He differentiated "folklore" from folklorism on the basis that folklore is "situated in life" temporally, spatially, and socially, while folklorism essentially transports something from one time into another and changes its function. Folklorism is part of the lifestyle of our time, an expression of our positive attitude toward the past; it confirms that humans are cultural beings in rational as well as emotional terms (Bringéus 1982). Interest in the folklorism phenomenon in Scandinavia was also indicated, for example, by Anders Salomonsson's study of "Homebrewed beer in Gotland" (1977-78), one of the few investigations that document the development of folklorism on a specific aspect of a folk culture in an isolated area.

Reporting for the British Isles, Alan Gailey admitted that the topic was barely discussed among British and Irish scholars, who delegated folklorism a low priority, though he did not deny the existence of such manifestations (1982). He noted a growing interest in traditional popular culture as well as in the development of what may be called "folksy" phenomena. Gailey included the folk music of Ireland among his examples of folklorism. By 1987, however, Venetia Newall gave a presidential address to the Folklore Society on the topic, "The Adaptation of Folklore and Tradition (Folklorismus)," and Gailey acknowledged folklorism in his article, "The Nature of Tradition," in 1989.

Meanwhile outside of folklore the British historian Eric Hobsbawm, together with co-editor Terence Ranger, contributed to the literature related to folklorism with his study of *invented traditions*. Their definition recalls characteristics of folklorism:

... they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition. It is the contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant (1983, 2).

Hobsbawm recognized that even traditional lore of genuine antiquity becomes "invented" once it has suffered a break in continuity and is subjected to the efforts of preservationists and revivalists. While he assumed that the private sphere of most



people these days is hardly affected by traditions, in their public lives the consciousness of being citizens remains associated with symbols and semi-ritual practices represented by flags, ceremonies, music. For Hobsbawm "invented traditions" were highly relevant to the relatively new phenomenon of "nation" and associated ideas: nationalism, national symbols, histories; all of these depend on exercises in social engineering which are often deliberate and always innovative. The ultimate paradox lies in modern nations claiming to be rooted in remotest antiquity and thus forming "natural" human communities, which, perhaps, constitutes another attempt at achieving group consciousness (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, 7-14).

Extending the argument even further, Robert Hewison has claimed that the "Heritage Industry" movement is threatening to take over the British Isles. Instead of manufacturing goods, the English are now manufacturing *heritage*. Faced with current economic problems they choose to dwell instead on the delights of an imaginary past. Hewison warned that such a regressive focus on heritage not only distorts the view of the past, but also stifles contemporary culture, for the rapidly growing number of organizations and cultural institutions dedicated to preservation "present a picture of a country obsessed with its past, and unable to face its future" (1987, 9-10).

While these related issues were being discussed in England, in Germany continued interest in folklorism was indicated by Ulrike Bodemann, who established a convincing model which outlines the regular process of the development of folklorism:

- 1) a cultural manifestation is faced with extinction;
- 2) against all expectations it is revived;
- 3) in this process demonstrative and representative aspects are either emphasized or added;
- 4) by revitalization this cultural element acquires new functions for the people involved (1983, 107).

No longer concerned with questions of authenticity and the manipulation of folklore, Bodemann addressed the social and psychological dimensions of folklorism as one of the cultural mechanisms to bridge gaps in cultural continuity and to alleviate insecurities arising from economic, demographic or social shifts, or changes in means of communication. Relying on marginal traditions that can be freed to be included in new functional aggregates, the revival compensates for a vacuum in situations when:

- 1) contact with foreign cultures by travel, migration or media creates an awareness of one's own cultural repertoires and the desire to renew, develop or change these;

2) the isolated position (economic, religious or ethnic) of a group separated from the dominant cultural environment leads to a narcissistic reaction which exaggerates the role of outsider (= overcompensation);

3) "doing folklore together" can create a collective identification that is integrative and at the same time exclusive;

4) the surplus of leisure time in an affluent society creates a need for filling this time with activities clearly divorced from the working world -- a phenomenon that only recently has affected all levels of society;

5) a pronounced desire to return to more natural lifestyles frequently refers to historically and anthropologically more basic cultural forms as a complement (= forms of regression) (Bodemann 1983, 108).

As Bodemann observed, paradoxically in cases of folklorism cultural forms that originate in reaction to the dominant lifestyles ultimately serve instances of just this dominant world. In principle, however, it takes a second step to integrate folklorism into economic and ideological realms. Overall, Bodemann considered the concept folklorism largely freed from negative connotations, though still problematic because too flexible and covering too many phenomena. While the term at first indicated an embarrassingly "folksy" quality or *Kitsch*, by the 1980s folklorism thus came to be viewed as a cultural reaction to specific social and economic conditions that fulfills important psychological needs.

In 1990 papers presented by European scholars at the 4th Congress of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF) on the theme "Tradition and Modernization" provided further evidence that a shift within the discipline during recent decades accommodates folklorism if not by name, then by subject matter.<sup>12</sup> Rudolf Schenda in particular urged that one of the major tasks now facing folklorists is to uncover hidden ideologies that are masked innocently in the guise of folklore (1990). Thus in Europe the concept of folklorism is accepted as a complex, problematic, but nevertheless essential part of the discipline of folklore.

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<sup>12</sup>See, for example, the plenary papers by Bausinger and Niedermüller, 1990.

## Related Theoretical Concerns in North America

Instead of devoting their time to the study of the culture of the past, like their English and European colleagues, the very founders of the American Folklore Society at the end of the nineteenth century decided to concentrate on living folklore, in particular the folklore of ethnic minorities and children. From the beginning Francis James Child, William Wells Newell and especially Franz Boas

were consciously engaged in a project of cultural intervention. They saw the founding of the American Folklore Society as a moral as well as an intellectual, scientific and scholarly enterprise. By making the public aware of the rich cultural resources carried by tradition-bearing Americans of all backgrounds, they felt sure that at one and the same time, scientific research might be forwarded, and misconceptions concerning race and culture might be confronted (Abrahams 1988, 65).

This approach indicates a significant difference between European and North American folkloristics, as the American experience lacks the distinct class structure that first encouraged the folklorism process in Europe, where an educated elite focused its romantic-nationalist leanings on a lower class, "the folk," while the North American approach to folklore from its beginning had a more egalitarian bend.

The field of folklore, however, is continuously being redefined and North American folklorists seriously began to pay attention to issues related to folklorism in the 1980s. Folklore scholarship in America, as in Germany, had undergone an important reorientation in the 1960s and 1970s. But in North America "new perspectives" (Paredes and Bauman, 1972) took a different turn by shifting emphasis from regional "folk" society to classless, universal "folk" groups, and to performance, context and introspective detail.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile Richard Dorson, who dominated North American folkloristics from the 1950s through the 1970s while striving to make it an accepted academic discipline, effectively had stalled research on phenomena related to folklorism as he passionately battled against "fakelore," which he defined as the presentation of spurious and synthetic writings under the claim of being genuine folklore. This entirely negative concept was aimed against any commercialization of folklore materials as well as any uncritical, intellectually inferior publications that appeal to a mass audience. A

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<sup>13</sup>See, for example, Dan Ben-Amos' important paper "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context" (1971).



self-appointed guardian of American folklore scholarship, Dorson spent much effort on distinguishing folklore as a purely academic subject from folklore as a mere hobby.<sup>14</sup> Consequently the study of popular culture developed separately at Bowling Green State University, Ohio, in a department headed by folklorist Ray Browne. The title of Browne's upcoming publication indicates the confrontational nature of the relationship between the disciplines while Dorson influenced the field of folklore in North America, *Against Academia: The History of the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association and the Popular Culture Movement 1967-1988*.<sup>15</sup> Another recent Bowling Green publication, written by folklorists associated with Memorial University of Newfoundland, explores the relationship between folklore and popular culture and is considered an important statement on that subject (Narváez and Laba, eds., 1986).

Extending Dorson's idea of "fakelore" into the past, Alan Dundes claimed in 1984 that even such once sacred cows as the *Ossian*, published in 1765, were fakelore because MacPherson composed fragments into a poem he pronounced genuine. Similarly the brothers Grimm had often combined several tale versions into one text while aiming to establish a German märchen canon. As common background for such cases Dundes identified nations suffering from an inferiority complex; where folklore seemed lacking, fakeloric embroidering on perceived or invented traditions such as those presented in museums, composite texts, or fake histories, were designed to build self-respect. While Dorson viewed fakelore as exclusively serving commercial interests, Dundes conceded that fakelore can become folklore and may be just as intricate an element of culture as folklore, which essentially acknowledges the process of folklorism (Dundes 1984). This approaches Dell Hymes' position, who pointed to the constantly changing nature of tradition as a meaningful response to life experiences as based not in the past, but in social life and therefore subject to a selective process (1975). Likewise Dan Ben-Amos emphasized that creativity, a process that implies change, is necessary for the survival of tradition (1984, 113).

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<sup>14</sup>The numerous instances when Dorson mentioned Fakelore in writing include his answer to Bausinger's questionnaire of 1969, "Fakelore" (1969) and a contribution to a special issue of *Folklore Forum* on the topic of "Applied Folklore" (1971).

<sup>15</sup>To be published at Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.

The most detailed American study of the manipulation of folklore, based, however, on a European example, is William Wilson's investigation of the various politically inspired interpretations of the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*, which demonstrates the role of folklorism in the development of nationalist ideologies (1976). Barre Toelken was one of the first folklorists to directly comment on folklorism in North America. Choosing the example of the pow-wow as currently practiced by American Indians, he indicated that the function of this formerly social dance has changed to express the common interest of a minority and thus has gained political importance. It now presents an idealized model of cultural and ethnic stability and indicates widespread nostalgia for an older way of life. This instance of folklorism in form of conscious application of tradition is not new among American Indians; instead it illustrates how their dynamic cultures have survived because they were able to adapt to changing circumstances (Toelken 1983).

Growing interest in the folklorism debate in the USA was indicated by the "Culture, Tradition, Identity Conference" held at the Folklore Institute at Indiana University in March 1984, which devoted a paper and discussion section to the topic "Folklore and Folklorismus."<sup>16</sup> Linda Dégh, for example, acknowledged the move away from a narrow focus on folkloric items and the symbiotic relationship between scholars, appliers, laymen, creators, peddlers and consumers of folklore that influenced a revitalization attempt of American-Hungarian folklore. However, she did not consider a division into folklore/fakelore/folklorism helpful (1984, 197). Subsequently, at the 1984 conference of the American Folklore Society, Regina Bendix presented a much noted paper, "Folklorism: A Threat or a Challenge?" The following year I organized a panel on folklorism that generated a lively discussion, all of which indicated that the concept was becoming important to North American folklorists.

While the term folklorism is not commonly used in North America, issues that are related to the concept, such as revivals, the search for authenticity, the commoditization of culture and cultural conservation have increasingly attracted scholarly interest. Examples include the work of Kenneth Goldstein, who has examined British folksong

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<sup>16</sup>Selected proceedings and discussions were published in a special issue of the *Journal of Folklore Research* 21.2/3 (May-Dec.) 1984.

revivals as complex phenomena that have been influenced repeatedly by technological advances ranging from print to radio to sound recording, all of which produced permanent sources of folklore that made such traditions available for future use and imitation. Goldstein suggests that technology simultaneously helps to keep traditions alive, to revive older materials, and to provide inspiration for new songs (1982). The process of folklorism manifested in revivals thus does not preclude the continued existence of folklore and does not affect all folklore, but rather introduces such materials to new performers and makes them available for consumption by a wider audience beyond the original context.

Neil Rosenberg has explored a number of folksong revivals with the major one, the "great boom," centered in North America in the late 1950s and early 1960s, a time when most folk music scholars still considered these phenomena outside their mainstream academic interest. Revivals supposedly lacked "authenticity" as the performers did not represent "folk" but an educated, politically active elite, and criteria then applied to "authentic" folksongs included that they should be of humble, rural origin, old, anonymous, survivals culled from oral tradition, which suggests the preoccupation of European folklorists with "pure" folklore. Recording technology, however, with the potential to fix performances in permanent records, necessarily broadened the concept of folk music authenticity. Consequently Alan Lomax, the most influential of North American folksong collectors, not only collected and recorded folksongs, but intervened by coaching the performers he promoted to adjust their repertoires and styles so they would fit his own idea of authenticity, a music that also appealed, for example, to a left wing intellectual audience in New York City. While ostensibly representing something authentic, revivals thus have been subject to elitist influence that changed traditions to suit specific social and political agendas.<sup>17</sup>

Among the American folklorists who have recently tackled the complex issue of authenticity, Shalom Staub has suggested that even if folklorists tend to avoid the word, an analytic construct in the academic sense, they nevertheless search for some loosely

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<sup>17</sup>For this information on revivals I depended on a preliminary version of Neil Rosenberg's introduction to a yet unpublished anthology of essays on the North American folk music revivals, *Transforming Tradition - Folk Music Revivals Examined*.



defined quality of the authentic, which implies a self-conscious attitude (1988, 169). In commonsense usage, the term indicates a quality found elsewhere, in another historical period or in another, more basic, simple culture; the more remote and exotic, the more likely a cultural artifact is to be considered authentic (Staub 1988, 172). As Linda Dégh has observed, paradoxically a Hungarian-American audience accepted as authentic a harvest dance sanctioned by Washington for presentation at the bicentennial celebration, which she described as "a concoction of operetta and popular tunes, steps, instruments and costumes," but rejected the traditional, unrefined dances of Hungarian villagers as fake (1984, 197). Here the inauthentic, i.e., folklorism, appears more real than folklore because audience expectations have been influenced and raised by popular culture so that the showy, aesthetically enhanced characteristics of folklorism have set a standard that "ordinary" folklore cannot match.

During the 1970s the question of authenticity was discussed from a Marxist perspective by adapting the concept of "commoditization of labour" developed by Marx and Engels to "commoditization of culture." Dean MacCannell in particular made an important contribution to the topic when he demonstrated a semiotics of attraction, including the concept of "staged authenticity," on the example of the tourist experience (1976).<sup>18</sup> His analysis, however, implies the negative view that commoditization destroys the meaning of cultural goods and that tourism in particular is anathema to authenticity. This notion was promoted more explicitly by Davydd Greenwood who considered the commoditization of a public ritual he observed in Spain in the early 1970s as fundamentally destructive of the local culture, as well as a final logical outcome of capitalist development (1989, 180). Several years later, however, when he again investigated the event and realized that it had acquired new political significance, he revised his initial pessimistic view to conclude that the objectification of local culture for the sake of tourism is not always detrimental to that culture, but that it is part of a complex, ongoing process of change that offers the potential for transformation and stimulation (Greenwood 1989, 183-5).

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<sup>18</sup>Tourism theory is discussed in more detail in Part III B of this thesis.

While commodity production has come to be viewed as currently principal means of communication (Baudrillard 1975), Eric Cohen has argued that the commoditization of culture nevertheless allows for the preservation or new formation of cultural meanings and that furthermore tourists themselves define authenticity much more loosely than any scholar (Cohen 1988, 383). This is confirmed by John Urry's analysis that postmodern or postmass tourists are less concerned with a sense of the authentic than previous generations of tourists, but instead are aware of participating in a game, or even a whole series of games, and that they know what seems to be a quaint traditional village, for example, could not survive except for the income from tourism (Urry 1990, 100). By the late 1980s MacCannell's analysis thus appeared outdated, if stimulating, for in a post-Marxian world the emphasis has shifted to one of image, advertising, consumption, where tourism fits as an essentially postmodern activity (Crick 1989, 333).

The arbitrary, artificial nature of cultural productions has further been explored by John Dorst in his investigation of several institutions that produce images of the past and provide apparently infinite replication of authenticity in Chadds Ford. He argues that the structure of cultural production has profoundly changed and that therefore postmodernity, or advanced consumer capitalism, is a legitimate interest of folklorists (1989, 56). His concerns are related to the concept of folklorism as applied in this thesis, for he sees a need to identify the mechanisms which produce such effects (1989, 207). Though the postmodern debate has focused mainly on the arts and on the media, Dorst argues that folklorists "could bring to this debate the ethnographic expertise and the sensitivity to cultural specificities that are now so conspicuously absent" (1988, 219).

The need to discuss folklorism becomes the more urgent as growing numbers of North American folklorists are now engaged in public sector work. State support inevitably has an ideological impact; once folklorists find themselves in a position to select what is "authentic" and worthy of promotion, generally choosing from folklore that has survived in isolated "folk" enclaves or among ethnic minorities, they take active part in the process of folklorism. David Whisnant's investigation of the ideological basis of efforts to preserve Appalachian culture between 1890 and 1940 (1983), however, is an example that does recall attitudes of the nineteenth century European upper class who turned to "the folk" to realize their own didactic, conservationist impulses.

A recent publication of essays that explore the role of public sector work, *The Conservation of Culture*, similarly acknowledges that cultural conservation is always a political act and a form of cultural intervention (Feintuch 1988, 6). Cultural conservation, which became part of the political rhetoric of the 1980s, indicates a small, but flourishing movement in the United States that emphasizes public responsibilities growing out of academic disciplines and social concern (Feintuch 1988, 1). First adopted for a report that introduced a federal policy study aimed at adding the protection of intangible elements of cultural heritage to the existing Historic Preservation Program (Loomis 1983), the term is defined as follows:

Cultural conservation is a concept for organizing the profusion of private and public efforts that deal with traditional community cultural life. It envisions cultural *preservation* and *encouragement* as two faces of the same coin. Preservation involves planning, documentation, and maintenance; and encouragement involves publication, public events and educational programs (Loomis 1983, iv).

The current emphasis among folklorists on cultural conservation is again related to the growth of public sector folklore work. According to Mary Hufford (1988), it implies the recognition that cultural resources are endangered by haphazard developments and that folklorists are qualified, and should be called upon, to assess intangible cultural elements as part of a larger concept of socionatural stewardship.

Another result of the growing movement is a new appreciation of related, earlier efforts by B. A. Botkin, whose emphasis on applied folklore was once maligned by Dorson. Botkin intended to return folklore to "the folk," as he explained in 1938:

... the most important task confronting the folklorist in America is that of justifying folklore and explaining what it is for, breaking down on the one hand popular resistance to folklore as dead or phony stuff and on the other hand academic resistance to its broader interpretation and utilization. Upon us devolves the tremendous responsibility of studying folklore as living culture and of understanding its meaning and function not only in its immediate setting but in progressive and democratic society as a whole (Botkin 1988, 263).

Adopting a similar credo, Archie Green has advocated to move from collector to partisan, for public folk service at its best can provide fresh tasks and bold visions (1988, 18 and 24). But to do so, Whisnant has warned, folklorists must pay more attention to the socially, politically and economically enmeshed process of cultural change and to avoid the tendency to sanitize and romanticize that lingers on in films, exhibits, festivals (1988, 235-6). He urged:



... public sector folklorists not only have to do with insight and effectiveness what they have been trained to do, but also have to defend the very territory and concept of tradition itself against ahistorical understanding and manipulative use (244).

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett assessed the situation in her important article "Mistaken Dichotomies" (1988). North American academic folklore programs, even if they emphasize the dichotomy between pure and applied folklore, are inevitably of an applied nature because they are tied to ideology, national political interests and economic concerns. Moreover, by the 1970s so many students were studying folklore that the surplus of professional folklorists in North America had to be absorbed by the public sector (1988, 140-1). Consequently Kirshenblatt-Gimblett suggested that academic folklore programs should teach critical discourse to prepare students for public sector work that is socially responsible (142) and that the split between academic and applied traditions should be closed (152).

Compared to the United States, Canadian folklore scholarship has played a minor role within North America. The fact that two of the three Canadian folklore institutions are situated in Quebec and Newfoundland<sup>19</sup>, regions that are particularly threatened by the sociopolitical environment, indicates that for Canadian folkloristics social, political and economic factors and a sense of inferiority have been more influential than international trends in folklore scholarship (Henderson 1973, 103 and 107). In general, a fascination with rich sources of ethnic and regional folklore has prevailed that led to an emphasis on collecting folklore materials.

Overall, issues addressed by the concept of folklorism clearly are important to North American folklorists as they study and influence such cultural processes as revivals, tackle the issue of cultural production, participate in cultural conservation, and generally redefine their role in a postmodern setting. The fact, however, that these New World folklorists have chosen to investigate phenomena under separate categories that their European colleagues have grouped under the label of folklorism indicates a major difference in approach. The importance accorded the concept of folklorism in Europe as providing an entirely new perspective may be less relevant in North America. As an analytical construct, however, folklorism provides a frame for the interpretation of

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<sup>19</sup>The third institution, the Canadian Center for Folk Cultural Studies, is located in Ottawa.

significant processes which affect the current use of folklore, the meaning of which may be missed if individual phenomena are studied in isolation. The following investigation of folklorism in Newfoundland attempts to provide such a holistic approach for a specific region of North America.

## **The Concept of Folklorism as Applied to the Folk Culture of Newfoundland**

By using the concept of folklorism this thesis examines the ideological, interventionist and commercial aspects of much of the folklore of Newfoundland that is nevertheless presented and perceived as naïve, unselfconscious traditional culture. A second, important focus throughout the thesis is the nature of the continued attachment to a folk culture based on a disappearing lifestyle that is variously evoked to provide a sense of regional cultural identity in the face of current problems and pressures from outside or, in the case of tourism-related developments, to construct the image of a romantic, rural counterworld, of a past that appeals mainly to affluent visitors from urban, industrial environments.

Newfoundland occupies a special niche in North America because up to the 1950s life in outport communities approached the ideal of a folk society with families as the social units of action and rigidly structured socio-economic classes. These communities, however, were never self-sufficient and fishing families were long tied to a near-feudal system of economic exchange that left them at the mercy of the merchants. Nevertheless this folk cultural past, selectively and nostalgically enhanced in retrospect, remains a vital part of the Newfoundland regional public memory, as well as the focus of a common identity which has created a situation particularly conducive to folklorism.

Among the Canadian provinces, which adopted the ideal of a cultural mosaic rather than that of the American melting pot, only the folk culture of Quebec has been emphasized more than that of Newfoundland to define a separate identity. In Quebec, where the Canadian government has consistently supported the traditions of its French population since the 1960s, Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin have recognized the feedback process Moser identified as an important ingredient in the development of folklorism (1964):

... it is impossible to separate spurious and genuine tradition, both empirically and theoretically. In the Quebec case, for example, the work of folklore popularizers is almost as traditional as tradition itself. Almost from the beginning of European colonization, observers have written about folk life in Quebec, and their descriptions have become absorbed into the sense of identity that the folk entertain about themselves (1984, 281).



An island of complex history, at the periphery of larger powers, Newfoundland has experienced many of the conditions that encourage folklorism outlined above in this theoretical section. As will be explored in Part II of this thesis, the last two hundred years of Western history have seen recurrent nationalist movements that have also affected Newfoundland. Such movements are reactions to real and imagined threats to one's territory or culture, to feelings of insecurity and dissatisfaction with the status quo. The rise of nationalism is built on a sense of homogeneity and shared culture, or a conscious decision to unite. An important ingredient of the nationalism and national romanticism characteristic of nineteenth century Europe was an emphasis on one's folk culture as symbolic of a national identity, often in defense against powerful external pressures. Significantly countries subjected to colonization tended to accumulate extensive folklore archives, while dominant colonizing countries established museums of anthropology (Köngas-Maranda 1982). For example, while Great Britain amassed and displayed treasures from Greece, Egypt or India, Ireland spent much effort on collecting native folklore and reviving the Gaelic language and heritage to counteract the stifling influence of the English culture (Dorson 1978, 44). Similarly the threat of being dominated by mainland Canadian/North American culture has led Newfoundlanders to emphasize their folklore as part of their regional identity.

To establish a common past for their nation was considered a central task by such early folklorists as the brothers Grimm, who edited the publications of their collections of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* accordingly. That these practices were deemed quite acceptable in the context of romantic nationalism demonstrates that folklorism is at least as old as folklore scholarship itself. Another case in point is Finland, a country long dominated by Sweden and Russia, which today features a wealth of archives, open air museums and other projects that emphasize its folklore. In his study *Folklore and Nationalism in Modern Finland* (1976), William Wilson has succinctly analyzed the use of folklore in the development of the Finnish State, where a combination of purposeful nationalism and folklore studies served to create a national spirit in the nineteenth century. Central to Finnish nationalism was the *Kalevala*, an epic that supposedly celebrated the heroic actions and the spirit of the ancient Finns, which Elias Lönnrot edited and reconstructed from a variety of songs and poems he had collected. Its

publication in 1835, which for the first time used Finnish as a literary language, magically gave young nationalists new pride in the Finnish past.

Subsequently the *Kalevala* underwent several academic and political re-interpretations. For example, when Finland's independence was threatened by Russia, the resistance movement once more relied on the *Kalevala*, though its purely Finnish origin had long been questioned, to establish a sense of a noble Finnish past that could serve as a model for shaping the future. Finnish folklorists then argued for a strong northern state by using folklore to help justify an anti-communist government. Only after the Second World War was the *Kalevala* valued more for its poetical merits than for its historical qualities. Wilson concludes that a nation must continually re-create itself and through folklore seek the image of a noble and heroic past -- processes which, however, can feed powerful propaganda.

While folklore scholarship in Finland repeatedly adapted to current ideologies to serve specific national needs and goals, folklore was commonly used in fascist Italy as part of the government propaganda machine. Here, however, twenty years of manipulation of folklore failed to give the regionally divided Italian citizens a sense of national unity (Simeone 1978). The search for a folk identity and common culture was a major concern of Nazi ideology in the German attempt to build a thousand year *Reich* on traditions and customs alleged to embody the spirit of Nordic ancestors (Kamenetski 1972). Under Hitler, folklore studies were charged with weeding out all alien elements to achieve a folklore of purely Nordic origin and to prove the superiority of the German "race" and civilization, which made folklore an important aspect of Nazi *Weltanschauung* (Kamenetski 1972, 235). Responses to the Depression years in the United States, too, included the glorification of America, its founders and institutions, a fervent admiration of American history and land. The more uncomfortable the present, the more Americans seemed to value the past, which they often refashioned by making the common man a romantic image (Metcalf and Weatherford 1988, 159-161). Such observations similarly apply to the situation of Newfoundland, where a number of crises in the all important fishery and severe economic hardship served only to raise the esteem of the increasingly marginal figure of the fisherman.

These examples indicate the pervasive, at times, ruthless use of folklore in nationalist movements. In Newfoundland, nationalism first became a concern in the late eighteenth century, when the population had grown sizable enough to warrant official institutions and to support an intellectual elite. Along with most of the Western states which experienced much nation-building and identity-seeking during that period (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, 263-307), Newfoundland achieved nationhood and a distinct identity within the nineteenth century. As investigated in Part II, here, too, the process repeatedly involved folklorism in the form of ideological use of folklore, as a factor in the emergence and maintenance of a specific regional identity which was closely tied to prevailing economic and social conditions.

In the historical development of Newfoundland, four major strands of folklorism can be discerned. A first political use of folklore, inspired by romantic nationalism and the search for a distinct identity during the nation-building period of the nineteenth century, is echoed in the neo-nationalist movement of the 1970s. On a separate level the rich folk culture based on Old World heritage that evolved in unique ways in the relative isolation of small pockets of populations and persisted well into the twentieth century, proved to be of great scholarly interest; accordingly academics collected and archived, taught, published and otherwise encouraged and disseminated folklore. A third, more widespread strand of folklorism was introduced when the Newfoundland population in general, partly helped along by government policies and the influence of the mass media, began to enjoy their folk traditions as "folklore" and participated in the revival of folksongs and the mumming custom. Yet another strand of folklorism is beginning to affect Newfoundland with the emergence of a tourist industry that clearly commoditizes elements of the folk culture in order to attract tourists to the island.

While Part II provides the historical background, explains the social and economic causes of the rise of folklorism and indicates a folklorism that is mainly based on class differences, Part III analyzes contemporary folklorism phenomena that have proliferated to affect all classes and continue to influence the folk culture of Newfoundland. Among the many instances of folklorism that can be observed in Newfoundland, these case studies were chosen to explore important aspects of folklorism, to demonstrate the sources of folklorism, the variety of contexts where folklore materials can be subjected



to the folklorism process, as well as the transformations which consequently affect these materials.

The first of two subsections examines instances of cultural intervention of ideological motivation, including the efforts of folklorists, preservationists, folk music revivalists, social activists, and government agencies involved in cultural education, politics, conservation and revitalization. Among the specific cases, folklorism associated with the cultural revival of the French-Newfoundland minority culture is discussed as an example of a traditional folk culture that had become marginal, but was revitalized against all expectations because of such external reasons as a favorable climate for folk music revivals and new government policies that encouraged multiculturalism.

The chapters on the mumming custom and on folk festivals address the revival and invention of traditions. Common to these subjects is the recognition that even the most benign outside influence on a folk culture constitutes a form of cultural intervention that changes the function of folklore and raises the awareness of "having folklore" among the local population, "the folk." Mumming belongs to the large international category of customs enacted with the expectation of some form of reward (*Heischebräuche* in German). Hans Moser found numerous archival references in Bavaria from as early as the fourteenth century, of rural servants and craftsmen who performed songs and music for remuneration (1962). If unemployed during the winter, they at times may have made this a second source of income, moving from house to house between Advent and Old Christmas day. From the end of the fifteenth century some of these groups performed mumming, sword dances, and finally dramas of spiritual and secular themes for the entertainment of the upper classes they visited (Moser 1962, 191).

Mumming in Newfoundland is explored as a custom that attracted scholarly attention and through a publication entered a feedback process that returns folklore to the "folk" in edited and digested form. Moreover, mumming was revived in several stages, the first consisting of efforts by members of the intellectual elite, social activists who referred to printed sources in order to revive a folk drama they considered part of their heritage that had experienced a break in tradition. The second, more popular

revival of the simpler form of mumming as house visit, which had survived in the original context at least in some remote areas, thus drew on recent folk memory when a sentimental song inspired new popularity of this custom. Subjected to the process of folklorism, the function of the custom of mumming has changed from collective, communal tradition to that of symbol of regional identity.

While folk festivals began to reach rural Newfoundland as late as the 1980s, they have proliferated rapidly. As investigated in this thesis, these events provide some of the best opportunities to observe the process of folklorism. American folk festivals are related to the larger complex of the folksong revival of this century. Revivals, an integral aspect of folklorism, deal with things previously obscure that are redefined from the vantage point of the present. Aspects of the past are selectively revived as they appeal to present fashions and ideologies; these in turn are informed by political orientation such as regionalism or sympathies with "the folk" defined as the working class. Folksong revivals grow from a romanticized view of history, an ethic of non-commercialism and a desire to influence and educate "the folk" about its past.

Folk festivals in Newfoundland in particular depend on extensive organizing efforts that often originate in the desire of enthusiastic amateurs to preserve and revive traditional music. Such impulses recall former upper class aims to preserve the folk heritage of the peasant class which they perceived as on the verge of being lost. Influenced by folklorism, folksongs are presented on stage outside of their original context; performances change from spontaneous to organized, administered, repeatable events. As a result, folksongs are newly appreciated by wider audiences; they are recorded and thus preserved in fixed form to become the potential subject of future revivals. Moreover, festivals may eventually become a tourist attraction staged for outsiders rather than for the benefit of the communal group itself.

While the above contemporary manifestations of folklorism in Newfoundland are not, or at least not obviously commercially inspired, folklore clearly becomes a commodity in the context of tourism developments, which are discussed in the last part of the thesis. Because folklorism has become an important aspect of the growing tourist industry of Newfoundland, the topic is introduced by a separate theoretical section, "Folklorism and Tourism." This is followed by specific examples in the chapter "Tourism

as Generator of Folklorism in Newfoundland," and by an investigation of the controversial welcoming ceremony, the "Screech-In."

The tourist industry has learned to cater to an essentially romantic desire of an urban, industrialized, alienated clientele who want to experience a counterworld that appears more "natural," authentic and original than their own structured existence. These characteristics are most often found in underdeveloped, rural areas at the periphery of larger nations, such as Newfoundland, or in Third World countries that become ideal travel destinations. Here the process of folklorism involves particularly colorful and entertaining aspects of folklore that are selectively enhanced, adapted or invented while pretending to be old and "authentic;" or they may be presented on stage as playful imitation of folklore, like the "Screech-In" ceremony. Such products of folklorism often serve to confirm the regional stereotype which tourists first learn from the promotional materials; at the same time folklorism can create a buffer that protects the local population from the intrusion of tourists into their private lives. In tourism it does not matter whether an attraction is based on culture, nature or artificial construction. Folklorism flourishes in the stylization of the natural and cultural environment for the sake of tourism. Meanwhile tourism in Newfoundland is still considered to be in its infancy and ample reasons for cultural intervention exist, including applied folklore work, in order to give this new industry a direction that benefits the local population and ideally allows them to participate in the decision-making process.

Not much is gained by merely labelling as "folklorism" the various instances of revivals, regressions and inventions that have changed the function of folklore. Beneath such movements that come and go and often seem to express hardly more than generational conflicts lie deeper human social and cultural needs that must be addressed. During the last decades the sources of nationalism and regionalism, often preconditions for the development of folklorism, have attracted the attention of German folklorists, prominently including Ina-Maria Greverus and her students at the Department of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Frankfurt.<sup>20</sup> In 1972 Greverus

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<sup>20</sup>Like Bausinger, Greverus has avoided the label *Volkskunde* and prefers the less historically burdened *Kulturanthropologie*.



explored the importance of the home territory. Human beings live in their *Heimat*, a concept that simultaneously indicates society, cultural milieu, and specific locality. The meaning of the term, however, has changed over time; up to the nineteenth century it signified such concrete physical realities as ownership of land, place of birth and habitation, a place to which one belonged and owed responsibility, which in turn offered security and protection.

According to Bausinger, during the nineteenth century *Heimat* remained the privilege of affluent farmers and urban citizens, who gave the concept a sentimental coloring beyond its material meaning (1980). *Heimat* became a place of compensation for the insecurities and lacks suffered in reality, a place where the nicer things of life appeared in exaggerated form, expressed in the clichés of the picturesque which still dominate the image of *Heimat* today. Paralleling the perception of folklore of that time, by the end of the nineteenth century *Heimat* was increasingly related to the peasantry and the soil, as contrasted with urban, industrial civilization which was regarded as a threat. At the same time *Heimat* was integrated into the concept of the new nation, the *Vaterland* (Bausinger 1980, 12-14).

Following the loss and destruction of much territory in Germany during the Second World War, *Heimat* became the subject of political, pedagogical, and humanitarian engagement, a sort of creed of many dimensions, including language, tradition, family, community, and landscape. In essence, *Heimat* is a realm of satisfaction (*Satisfaktionsraum*), a specific environment of both spiritual and physical qualities, where the individual is known and respected, where he or she occupies a place as an active, co-creative member (Greverus 1972, 28-36).

As Wolfgang Brückner has demonstrated, the concept of *Heimat* remained politically usable and was perfectly managed, for example, in educational planning and historicized festivals and parades by the governing powers of the Southern German States of Bavaria and Hesse (1965, 206, 210). Bausinger has concluded that overall the *Heimat* movement has been constant in that it concentrates on certain areas, including folksongs, costumes, farm houses, and so-called folk art. *Heimat*, moreover, became a favorite of the German culture industry which manufactures artifacts of identity, such as popular songs and films, based on its theme (Bausinger 1980, 17).

The *Heimat* movement is an expression of attachment to a place, an essential human need that has persisted over time. Greverus contrasted the need for a territorial home base with the major American values of adjustment and acculturation, which are considered basic to "the American way of life." Significantly, however, the idea of the melting pot has not become a reality; ethnic minorities still exist, a fact that was eventually acknowledged by multicultural policies (Greverus 1972, 37). In 1979 Greverus further explored the search of modern man for a home territory. With increased mobility he chooses a domicile accidentally, interchangeably, according to the criteria of his professional career; he prefers undisturbed living, without neighbors, in easy care houses that offer no identification: his identity has become portable, it now depends on his salary and his personal partner (Greverus 1979, 242).

Like *Heimat*, identity has lost its self-evident quality. According to Bausinger, precisely because it has become a problem, this concept deriving from psychoanalysis is a fashionable subject of discussion (1980). An analytical construct, identity nevertheless can be experienced directly as a feeling of the individual being in tune with himself and his environment. It creates an awareness of continuity, of order and security within a time of changes. To some extent *Heimat* and identity are thus interchangeable concepts, indicating functioning relationships between people and their environment expressed in landscape, song, dialect (Bausinger 1980, 19). Social identity, as achieved by interaction with others, can be mediated by regionally specific cultural givens in form of clothing, foodways, language (Bausinger, Jeggle, Korff and Scharfe 1978, 204-8).

Constructing and maintaining a sense of separate identity is an important aspect of regionalism. Under the influence of folklorism, however, cultural elements draw on patterns of the past that are no longer relevant and may retard or even prevent developments that are necessary for a viable, present-oriented lifestyle (Bausinger, Jeggle, Korff and Scharfe 1978, 256). Significantly in the 1970s urban citizens of industrial societies made new efforts to regain a *Heimat*, to recapture the mutual relationship between human and environment, between the private and public domain that were once characteristic of traditional lifestyles. Among these efforts was a return to the village. Despite their often marginal situation, villages have not been destroyed

by industrial developments. Instead, a German community study found an overwhelmingly positive identification with the village, which in late twentieth century Germany, however, tends to be a temporary refuge from the city for commuters or a place of retirement. Greverus concluded that the village is not so much a problem as a model for future lifestyles; it offers responsibility and potential for action and allows individuals influence that is usually denied in the cities (Greverus 1979, 236-246).

What Greverus discovered in Germany can be applied to the precarious survival of Newfoundland outposts. Feelings of nostalgia caused by the loss of a home territory are familiar experiences to the many Newfoundlanders who were resettled or were forced to emigrate because of the lack of jobs on the island. Inevitably the various roles Newfoundlanders had to adopt under these circumstances have created problems of identity. Yi-Fu Tuan has stated that the complex and artificial urban experience leads to a new appreciation of the simplicity of nature and comparative peace of rural life (1974, 103). This explains to some extent the flourishing minority folklorism Newfoundlanders practice in Toronto, their frequent visits home and the fact that many of them return to the island for their vacations and retirement, all of which imply the basic satisfaction provided by the rural Newfoundland lifestyle, as well as the void and alienation and the loss of cultural identity many Newfoundlanders experience in urban centers.

When culture is specifically tied to a place, however, it loses its universal neutrality and its self-evident quality. If details are stylized to the point of uniqueness, they turn into the value-laden symbols of a region. The seal hunt, the dory, rubber boots, the sou'wester and oil skins have become regional symbols precisely because fishing is no longer the most common occupation in Newfoundland. Such symbols are selected and thus do not represent the whole spectrum of values, norms and items that make up a particular culture. If specific objects and instances are acknowledged as typical, culture is pressed into a new role, it characterizes regions. The regionalization of culture, once descriptively completed, is later confirmed in publications, regional museums and in the media. It is the elite, however, who no longer suffers the narrowing conditions of adhering to regional traditions, who now wants to cultivate regional culture and preserve the feelings of regional ties in others, a movement that, if pursued to the extreme, leads to a stylized relict culture (Köstlin 1980, 25-33).



In Newfoundland, too, the regionalization of culture, beginning with a distinctly articulated self-definition, has turned folklore into symbols. Nationalism, regionalism and nostalgic sentiments that grew from dissatisfaction with adverse political and economic circumstances gave rise to folklorism in Newfoundland, a process that was accelerated by specific events, such as the resettlement of remote outposts and the international anti-sealing campaign that attacked the core of the Newfoundland identity. A perception of the unique quality of Newfoundland's folk culture increased when outside contacts and exposure to the media widened the local horizon and provided a basis for comparison, which in turn resulted in a desire for the preservation and revitalization of folklore. Moreover, despite its peripheral location, Newfoundland participated in mainstream North American movements which in the 1970s and 1980s included a preoccupation with the search for roots and an emphasis on ethnic and regional heritage, movements that indicate both the fragile nature of cultural identity and the basic need for it.

Throughout this thesis folklorism is broadly interpreted as a neutral indicator of cultural processes that involve folklore in secondary, reflected, purposeful ways. Emphasis is placed on the continued orientation and the positive attitude toward the past that developed in reaction to abrupt cultural transitions and indicate dissatisfaction with the present, as well as a romantic fascination with apparently more basic, simple, "natural" lifestyles. Value judgments are generally avoided, though abuses are discussed, for example when folklore is used for ideological purposes or becomes a commodity available for consumption without regard to the needs and wishes of the population, as encountered in the emerging tourist industry in Newfoundland. Similarly activities by folklorists and social activists who evoke the folk cultural past and encourage a national/regional consciousness, even if of benign intent, are recognized as cultural interventions that have influenced the perception of folklore in Newfoundland.

## **PART II**

# **THE EMERGENCE OF THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL IDENTITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND**

## The Social and Economic History of Newfoundland

This chapter explores the formation of a distinct Newfoundland identity as based on specific social and economic conditions, including a peripheral island location, a relatively homogeneous and isolated population, the defining role of the inshore fishing economy, and an incomplete transition to an industrial society that ultimately left the province economically underdeveloped when compared to the Canadian mainland. These factors are analyzed as important preconditions leading to the development of folklorism in Newfoundland.

Situated at the entrance of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Newfoundland forms the northeastern point of the North American continent. Archaeological evidence dates the presence of Maritime Archaic Indians and Dorset Eskimos to about 9,000 years ago. An early settlement attempt by Vikings around 1,000 AD at L'Anse au Meadows on the Northern Peninsula lasted only a few years. By the fifteenth century the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, one of the richest fishing grounds anywhere, had attracted seamen from Portugal, Spain, the Basque area, France, and Britain, who fished in Newfoundland's vicinity.<sup>21</sup>

John Cabot is credited with the discovery of the harbour of St. John's in 1497. A century later, in 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert claimed Newfoundland as the first British colony. However, several British colonizing efforts during the seventeenth century proved abortive on these rocky, barren shores. For more than two centuries the island mainly served as a land base for the seasonal fishing voyages of British fishermen and settlers constituted only a trickle compared to the number of British migrants fishing seasonally off the Newfoundland coast. Nevertheless, a few seamen from Devon, Cornwall, Dorset, Somerset, and Ireland preferred a harsh, but relatively free life in Newfoundland to the difficult social and economic conditions at home. They survived as fishermen and hunters in small, loosely organized coastal communities, that were first established around Conception Bay, the area closest to Europe.

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<sup>21</sup>This history is widely known from diverse sources including Judge Prowse's copious account of 1895, *A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial, and French Records*, which is meanwhile regarded as based on fiction more than fact, as well as George Story's essay "Newfoundland: Fishermen, Hunters, Planters, and Merchants" (1969), and popular publications such as sponsored by the provincial Department of Tourism, *Historic Newfoundland and Labrador* (English 1955).



Official British policy discouraged settlement of Newfoundland with the exception of economic centers on the Avalon Peninsula, seats of merchants and captains like St. John's (founded 1528), Harbour Grace (founded 1610), Trepassy (founded 1617). During the seventeenth century competing Frenchmen established their own stronghold at Placentia, a harbour used earlier by Basque fishermen. The French-British wars of the eighteenth century brought foreign troops to the island and expanded the export of fish. Even after their decisive defeat in 1762 the French retained fishing rights along the southwest and northeast coast, the "French Shore," a situation that lasted until 1904. Today their presence is reduced to the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. French-speaking Newfoundlanders now constitute less than one percent of the population and are concentrated on the Port-au-Port Peninsula on the west coast of the island.

Newfoundland was settled along its coastline with "fish," in Newfoundland a word synonymous with cod, as the sole basis of its economy. By 1750 settlements slowly expanded from the Avalon Peninsula northwards, for with the added exploitation of furs and seals a gradual diversification of resources made year-round survival easier (Mannion 1977, 5-6). By the late eighteenth century the migratory transatlantic fishery suffered from a decline in fish prices and the number of settlers began to exceed that of the seasonal fishermen. A de facto colony had been established which now attracted schools and missions.

John Mannion dates a decisive expansion of permanent settlements to the period between 1803 and 1836, when the population rose to 75,000 with immigrants arriving from southwest England and southeast Ireland, who increasingly included women. After the 1830s rapid population growth due to high birth rates led to new settlements in northern Newfoundland and Labrador (Mannion 1977, 6). The basic economic structure of the modern outport society emerged during the nineteenth century. Earlier on, long distances and high costs involved in transatlantic fishing had developed a trade controlled by merchants based in European ports; because of the growing number of residents the merchants adjusted from hiring European fishing crews for the season to trade with the settlers for their dried salt cod (Mannion 1977, 7-8).

In the small outports scattered along the coast of Newfoundland production for the saltfish trade essentially relied on family households. Fishing crews of three to four

male relatives, friends, or shareholders worked out of small boats within close range of the shore ("inshore"), while a shore crew, including the women, processed and cured the fish. In addition to fishing and boat building, subsistence activities included small scale agriculture and a few domestic animals, berries gathered in the surroundings, hunting for game and birds, logging and sealhunting in the winter. Most often this meant a life close to the subsistence level, an existence that was never self-sufficient and always depended to some degree on supplies from outside.

These supplies were provided in a system of commercial exchange that developed between merchants and fishermen and persisted from the mid-1840s to the Second World War. In the spring the merchant advanced supplies both for production and consumption (i.e. salt, nails, clothing, flour, tea, salt meat, lard) to the fisherman against his future salt-cured catch to be collected in the fall. Under this "truck" system prices were set by the merchant and the fisherman rarely saw cash (Sider 1986, 18-19). At best this was a mutually beneficial, symbiotic relationship; at worst this system lent itself to exploitation by the merchants, a fact that added to an interpretation of Newfoundland's history as one of chronic dependence and exploitation from outside. This attitude further resulted in distrust of anyone who gained financial success beyond the average member of the community.

Even for nineteenth-century Newfoundland, however, life in the stereotypical tiny, isolated outport does not convey a complete picture. By 1850 over half of the population lived in centers of more than five hundred residents (Staveley 1982, 223). Merchant activities were increasingly concentrated in St. John's. Furthermore, lifestyles differed to some extent as people adapted to their environments with specific patterns of occupational pluralism. Of these areas one region came to be considered typical of traditional Newfoundland, the northeast coast including Conception Bay, Trinity Bay, Bonavista Bay, with the possible addition of the Fogo and Twillingate districts (but excluding St. John's). Michael Staveley has defined this area as the pivotal Newfoundland region because of a distinctive set of adaptations that it shared with no other place:

The North-East Coast combined the three elements in which Newfoundlanders excelled and dominated: the inshore fishery, the Labrador fishery, and the seal fishery. On this basis, the region was the engine which drove the traditional Newfoundland economy. Beyond this, it was a cultural and emotional symbol of all that Newfoundland had become (1982, 228).

When fish production declined between the period of 1884 to 1920, due to, among other factors, an increasing disparity between the growing population and limited available resources, the economic weakening of this "core" region additionally dealt a blow to the self-image of Newfoundlanders (Staveley 1982, 231-3).

The saltfish trade had peaked in the nineteenth century, at which time the standard of living in Newfoundland was comparable to that elsewhere in the Western world. A great deal of wealth was accumulated when Newfoundland sold its fish on the world market, but the capital was owned by the merchants, not the fishermen (Sider 1986, 192). During that period Newfoundland became increasingly politically independent and responsible government was introduced in 1855. By the 1880s, however, the average fisherman produced only one quarter of the fish caught earlier in that century (Mannion 1977, 12).

Distant fishery markets became more discriminatory in the early twentieth century; by 1918 capital was needed to compete successfully with Norway and Iceland; American currencies became more valuable, leading to increased trading with the United States (David Alexander 1983a, 33). Unable to control such external factors and always at the margin of international interests, Newfoundland was squeezed out, ignored, eventually firmly tied to the North American market (Staveley 1982, 240). Alexander ultimately blamed the serious deterioration of the fishing economy for Newfoundland's reluctant move into confederation with Canada (1983a, 32-33).

During the depression years of the 1930s prices for fish fell to an all time low, wages were at a minimum and many fishermen were forced to depend on the "dole" of six cents per day per person allotted by the government. The traditional barter system between fisherman and merchant finally failed, as Victor Butler experienced in the once prosperous outpost Harbour Buffett:

If a man was a good fisherman he knew his family would not be in want through the winter, for his merchant would help him out. But as the depression began to set in, the earning power of the fishermen was not enough to supply their wants. If they could not buy sufficient supplies for winter use, they were out of luck as the merchant could not or would not let a man have credit until time for fishing in the spring. The larger the bill a man owed the harder he found it to get supplies in the spring (1977a, 21-22).

The struggle for bare survival improved only after the beginning of the Second World War, when the price of fish increased. But by then, faced with bankruptcy,



Newfoundland had appealed for help to Britain, the mother country, which was granted against the price of independence: from 1934 until confederation with Canada in 1949 Newfoundland was ruled by a Commission of Government.

Meanwhile Newfoundland's economy had begun to diversify. The new railway, built at great expense at the end of the nineteenth century, helped to open the island to industrialization. When mines and paper mills were established, however, the pattern set in the merchant-fisherman relationship remained typical for industrial development in Newfoundland. Generous conditions at minimal obligations were offered by the government to outside companies to develop the mining and forestry industries; dealing from positions of strength, these companies paid little taxes, used the locally available cheap, unskilled labor while avoiding local control, and ignored incentives by the Newfoundland government to develop secondary industries on the island (Staveley, 235-6).

Alexander traced Newfoundland's subsequent disadvantaged economic position to such external factors as marginality and exploitation, as well as to the low level of literacy on the island that left only a small educated elite to provide entrepreneurial, managerial and administrative talent during the nineteenth century. According to Alexander, the low educational level that persisted well into the twentieth century has prevented alternatives to employment in fishing, logging or mining and has limited Newfoundland's capacity to adapt to an increasingly technological modern world (1983b, 110-143).

New opportunities came during the Second World War, when both the United States and Canada established naval and airforce bases on the island. The war years temporarily solved the unemployment problem, brought new prosperity and suddenly widened the insular horizon by introducing mainland North American culture and material goods to Newfoundland. Governor Walwyn commented on these changes in 1944:

The higher rates of pay, coupled with the physical presence of so many servicemen of a nation whose wealth and daily comforts are so much in advance of Newfoundland standards, have led to a realization amongst average Newfoundlanders that they have missed much in the past (Straus 1975, 559).

This was echoed by Commissioner Winter:

Altogether the bases have probably done, and will continue to do, much toward the modernization of Newfoundland building, architecture, communications systems, and the art of better and more comfortable living generally (Straus 1975, 560).

A few years after the war Newfoundlanders were given a choice to decide their political fate, to continue government by Commission, to regain independence, or to join Canada in confederation. Mainly due to the efforts of Joseph Smallwood, who subsequently became its first premier, in 1949 a narrow margin of voters decided on confederation and Newfoundland together with Labrador became Canada's tenth and youngest province.

While there is no doubt that Newfoundlanders have benefited from the generous Canadian social welfare system, the province has remained at the margin of a larger power, again dominated and situated at the periphery. Smallwood's enthusiastic, singleminded attempts to modernize and industrialize Newfoundland, to bring it into the twentieth century, have since become controversial, for the large international business projects he attracted to the island often ended in dismal failure. It has been a longstanding complaint in the Canadian Maritime provinces, as well as in Newfoundland, that the economy has weakened since confederation, that the resource sector, chronically exploited by outside interests, has remained underdeveloped and that local manufacturing, unable to compete on the Canadian market, has declined. Moreover, the long anticipated boom from oil off Newfoundland's Atlantic shore is still pending (House 1985).

Following the overall Canadian pattern, Newfoundland became increasingly dependent on United States markets, which meant that the demand changed from saltfish to fresh frozen fish. Fish plants became necessary and the system of family fishery was replaced by factory fishery, a move that was inevitably accompanied by tensions and disjunctions of the social organization and culture of Newfoundland (Sider 1986, 22). At the same time modern fleets of foreign nations began to fish the Grand Banks and seriously depleted the fish stocks before Canada claimed a protective two hundred mile fishing limit in 1977.

Saltfish production, once the mainstay of the Newfoundland economy, all but ceased as steadily declining fish resources threatened the very existence of the traditional inshore fishery. A 1985 estimate listed merely 11,000 full time and 25,000

part-time fishermen on the island out of a total population of about 560,000 (House 1985, 31). Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s the situation has continued to deteriorate because of declining fish stocks. But though the value of goods produced both in mining and construction has long exceeded that in the fishery, fishing has persisted as the most important, pervasive element of Newfoundland's social and economic geography, for reasons such as the wide spatial distribution, individual ownership, and its symbolic value as an underpinning of Newfoundland's traditional culture (Staveley 1982, 239). Thus the inshore fishery, even while declining and ultimately threatened with demise, gained in ideological importance as a reminder of a more secure and affluent past.

Meanwhile, instead of developing a strong and competitive fishery comparable to those of Iceland or Norway, the general thrust of economic development since confederation has been to change Newfoundland society to fit the demands of modern industry. Nowhere was this more obvious than in the attempt of Smallwood's government in the 1950s and 1960s to resettle up to six hundred of the smallest and most remote outposts into larger "growth centers." Intended to provide better jobs, education, and the amenities of modern life, this policy exclusively relied on the benefits of industrialization and urbanization as alternatives to underdevelopment. But the promised jobs often proved elusive and for some people the standard of living deteriorated rather than improved after resettlement. Consequently resettlement, which ultimately affected about two hundred communities, became a highly emotional, controversial issue.

Despite the worsening economic situation in Newfoundland, the Progressive Conservative government of the 1980s under Brian Peckford, which followed the transitional leadership of Frank Moore after Smallwood's liberal government was defeated in 1972, held the traditional economy sacrosanct, at least in its rhetoric (Overton 1986, 170). Adopting a similar philosophy, the influential Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at Memorial University of Newfoundland has aimed to encourage the development of local resources and to benefit the rural communities by emphasizing the revitalization of the inshore fishery, agriculture and the development of tourism (House 1985, 20). The thrust toward small scale industries continued when the



liberal government under Clyde Wells created an Economic Recovery Commission to develop long term economic strategies for the province.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the picture of chronic underdevelopment and exploitation, highest unemployment, lowest average income and a high cost of living compared to central Canada, Newfoundland does not resemble a Third World country as much as it is typical of a remote, peripheral region of an advanced industrialized nation. Confederation, after all, brought improved social services and education, introduced roads and modern communication facilities (House 1985, 32-4). Unemployment benefits now provide much needed security. Originally designed for mainland Canadian urban living standards, such payments appear high considering the traditionally low cash incomes in Newfoundland and have made it possible for many to continue living in the outports in relative comfort, even while the fishery is failing. Essentially Newfoundlanders have made one more adaptation when they learned to include the Canadian welfare system in their way of life. Many, however, leave the outports and the island to find employment. The postwar baby boom in Newfoundland lasted well into the 1960s, partly encouraged by the baby bonuses from Ottawa, and caused a dramatic rise in population. Outmigration was a factor even before confederation, but now an estimated 200,000 Newfoundlanders, about a third of the size of the resident population, live and work in mainland Canada; many others have adopted a lifestyle of temporary migration to be able to keep their families living in the outports.

The combination of failed industrial developments and an inshore fishery kept barely alive with the help of federal support payments resulted in a "dual" economy in Newfoundland, separating the traditional and the modern sectors, the rural and the urban population, the "baymen" of the outport and the "townies" of St. John's, who differ in lifestyles, values and attitudes (Ralph Matthews 1976, 21). In a sense, rural Newfoundland has reached the industrial age without ever having gone through the process of industrialization. Largely because of the failure to modernize and its relative poverty, rural Newfoundland came to be viewed as an enclave of traditional culture, a quality that eventually made the province not only a favorite research object for social scientists and folklorists, but also an emerging tourist destination.

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<sup>22</sup>This commission, headed by sociologist Doug House, essentially continued the work begun with the Royal Commission for Unemployment and Employment of the 1980s.

## The Development of the Newfoundland Myth

While the previous chapter details salient economic and political aspects of Newfoundland's history, this chapter explores a view of history adopted by an educated elite influenced by romantic and progressive nationalist ideals, the "Newfoundland Myth."<sup>23</sup> The selective, sentimentalized notion they developed of "the folk," i.e., the fishermen, became the basis for the Newfoundland stereotype, which parallels movements in nineteenth century Europe that made folklorism part of the political rhetoric of that time.

Even while Newfoundland achieved increasing independence during the nineteenth century until it obtained Responsible Government in 1855, its outlook long remained focused on Europe. The continued attachment to Britain is symbolized by the use of the Union Jack as the provincial flag until the late 1970s and by the readiness to fight for Britain in the two World Wars (Calhoun 1971). Nevertheless the relationship to the old country was deeply ambiguous. During the nineteenth century a local view of history developed that perceived Newfoundland as a "land of historic misfortune," exploited from outside, namely by the merchants of the west coast of England, who competed unfairly with the native settlers (Prowse 1895, xvii). These brought hired servants from England and Ireland to fish during the summer until the first half of the nineteenth century, when they were superseded by resident merchants who instituted the "truck" system mentioned in the previous chapter to barter with the fishing families in the outports, which became wholly dependent on them. Furthermore Britain was accused of deliberately retarding colonization of Newfoundland and on the whole neglecting her oldest colony. According to this view, fishermen were heroes who escaped from the migratory fleets and hid from persecution in isolated coves. They defied strict anti-settlement laws imposed by England in favor of the migratory fishermen and English merchants, who subsequently came to be regarded as the villains.

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<sup>23</sup>According to Richard Hofstadter, "myth" does not convey an idea that is simply false, but rather "one that so effectively embodies men's values that it profoundly influences their way of perceiving reality and hence their behavior. In this sense myths may have varying degrees of fiction and reality"(1955, 24f).

Research by historians since the 1950s tends to deny any basis for this view (Keith Matthews 1978). From Cabot's voyage in 1497 to 1699 there is no proof of real legal obstacles to settlement. Instead it is likely that retarded development was due to economic circumstances which proved favorable to migratory fishing for about a hundred years, then to partly migratory fishing for another two hundred years (Rowe 1978). However, even if such views are based on imagined rather than real causes, they have important implications for the construction of a regional identity, a process that is basic to folklorism, which therefore bears closer investigation.

The first to blame the West Country merchants for any conceivable evil existing on the island was John Reeves, a Board of Trade barrister who became the first Chief Justice of Newfoundland in the 1790s. His attitude reflected contemporary feelings at the beginning of a nationalist movement (Keith Matthews 1978, 22). Subsequently several other nationalist writers have elaborated on Reeves' views. They began to argue for local government and trusted in the as yet untried agricultural potential of the island that in their opinion promised future prosperity. At the same time they praised the independent, fearless, hardworking Newfoundland fisherman, proud to be subject to the King of England, even though he was deprived and oppressed from outside. An early example of nationalist rhetoric employing the emerging stereotype of the "hardy Newfoundlander" is a letter William Carson, M.D., addressed to "the inhabitants" in 1813:

The dangers and fatigues of the occupation of a fisherman, with the variability of the climate, have given a hardiness and activity to the people of this country rarely to be met with in any other. The inhabitants of Newfoundland may be characterized as a hardy race, fearless of danger and capable of undergoing the greatest corporeal exertion. They have no strong antipathies, violent prejudices, or unjust prepossessions; they have that fondness for liberty which all men possess, that are not subdued by fear, or unseduced by the illusions of vice. Their love of liberty is chastened by a sentiment of just sub-ordination, and a respectful demeanor towards those in superior situations. The natives while young possess as strong an attachment for their native harbours, as the Scotch and Swiss do for their native mountains.<sup>24</sup>

Nine years later Carson's contemporary Patrick Morris, a merchant who immigrated from Ireland in 1800, was actively participating in nationalist politics as

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<sup>24</sup>The letter titled "Reasons for Colonizing the island of Newfoundland" was published in Greenock, printed by William Scott, and sold by Sir Richard Phillips, London. (Photocopy available in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University, St. John's.)



chairman of a committee appointed by the inhabitants of St. John's, when he made an appeal to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1822, which evoked the "Newfoundland myth":

From the earliest period, the affairs of Newfoundland were mainly influenced by merchants residing in England, the trade and fisheries were a monopoly in their hands, to preserve which they exerted all their influence to prevent the improvement or settlement of the country, apprehensive that it would be fatal to their monopoly. They represented the soil as barren and incapable of improvement; the climate so extremely severe as to render it uninhabitable; aware that it was a favourite object with government to increase the naval strength of the empire by the extension of the fisheries, they stated the moveable fishery carried on by themselves as the best to promote that object, and that the sedentary fishery of the natives would defeat it.<sup>25</sup>

This view remained generally accepted during the nineteenth century and was perpetuated by the most influential of the historical writers of that period, Judge Prowse, in his copious work *A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial, and French Records* (1895), the historical validity of which, however, has since been questioned. He divided Newfoundland's history roughly into four epochs:

The early or chaotic era, from 1497 to 1610, when the island was a kind of no man's land, without law, religion, or government, frequented alike by English and foreign fishermen, only ruled in a rough way by the reckless valour of Devonshire men, half pirates, half traders.

The Fishing Admiral period, from 1610 to 1711, a dismal time of struggle between the colonists and the western adventurers or ship fishermen from England. This may also be designated the colonisation period.

The Colony under Naval Governors, 1711 to 1825; the advent of the first resident Governor, Sir Thomas Cochrane.

The modern era, the struggle for autonomy (xv-xvi).

Prowse called the allegedly deliberate retardation of settlement a stupid, cruel, and barbarous treatment. "It is no marvel that Newfoundland did not thrive under such a regime; the real wonder is that the settlers lived at all under such oppressive restrictions" (xix). Such an opinion offered a convenient explanation for the perceived backward condition of the island. Adopting Carson's and Morris' earlier optimistic, progressive views, Judge Prowse believed Newfoundland held immense resources that only needed to be tapped to achieve industrial development.

Like Prowse, other leading citizens based in St. John's increasingly saw a future not so much in the fishing industry, as in the development of agriculture and the

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<sup>25</sup>Report or Memorial to the Right honourable Earl Bathurst, the Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated in Dec. 1822, from the Committee appointed by the inhabitants of St. John's, Chairman Patrick Morris. Copy of the Public Record Office, Colonial Office. "Original Correspondence Newfoundland," Vol. 66, 69.

exploitation of natural resources such as mining and timber, which eventually surpassed the fishery in terms of net profits. The completion of the railroad in 1898 held further promise of modernization. Much of their hope, however, was ultimately based on nationalist expectations which tended to overestimate the potential of the island and to disregard the limits set by a harsh climate, exhaustible resources, and long distance from the major markets while striving for greater independence (O'Flaherty 1979, 55-6).

The political independence Newfoundland enjoyed from 1855 on reached its climax when the French Shore question was settled in favor of Newfoundland in 1904. Newfoundlanders could finally consider themselves in full possession of their island. During this time Newfoundland acquired some of the paraphernalia associated with nationhood: a capital, a flag, a national anthem, and political institutions generally based on the British model.

For European nations and the United States founding acts played an important role and were accompanied by invented traditions, perhaps best exemplified by France where the Bastille, the Marseillaise and the tricolour provided obvious symbols of nationhood (Hobsbawm 1983, 278). In the case of Newfoundland, the island location combined with the historical myth of the hardy Newfoundlander created a consciousness of being a "distinct race of man." This process of developing an identity, however, mattered less to the generally illiterate fishermen of the outports than to the economic and intellectual elite centered in St. John's, which was in a position to keep abreast with international trends.

What is clear is that nationalism became a substitute for social cohesion through a national church, a royal family or other cohesive traditions, or collective group self presentations, a new secular religion, and that the class which required such a mode of cohesion most was the growing new middle class, or rather that large intermediate mass which so signally lacked other forms of cohesion (Hobsbawm 1983, 303).

The measure of independence achieved by nationalistic efforts became a source of pride, even though Newfoundland's economy was always dependent on a changing variety of markets, both in Europe and North America. Consequently a first suggestion to join with the newly formed Canada in 1869 met with overwhelming defeat. Another indication of aggressively pursued national interests was the "Bait Act" which prohibited the sale of bait to competing French fishermen who in the 1880s still had the right to fish the French Shore. In an essay of 1887, "The Fisheries and Fishermen of

Newfoundland," in which he argued for the Bait Act, Richard Howley revealed his awareness of a distinct Newfoundland identity:

For nearly half a century there has been no immigration sufficient to give any notable impress to the population of the colony of Newfoundland. Its people therefore stand revealed, among the inhabitants of the American Continent and its islands, as a special type, and a production of their own clime, its constituents and influences. It were untrue to say that they retain no marks of their race, and their descent from the vigorous British stock whence they derive. Nevertheless the brand of a new life and a new land is already set upon them, and the Newfoundlander is as distinct in mental character, in certain points of physique, and tricks of speech, as any separated race can be from the parent source....

No country is more free from acts of crime or violence than Newfoundland. Yet with all his soft "slobbishness" of temperament the Newfoundlander is not a safe animal to exasperate. Like the dog of the country he will bear any amount of teasing and tantalizing from a kind master or a trusty friend, but is a decidedly ugly customer for a recognized foe to deal with.... Form a figure clothed in heavy pilot cloth, when ashore and unemployed; in canvass trousers, reeky and oily, and guernsey shirt with fur cap or sou'wester when at sea; behold a brown, weather-beaten face, smooth, except for the thick muff of hair that grows up from and around the throat, and peaks out from the chin, and you have the Newfoundland fisherman as he is, a healthy, hardy, patient, and somewhat stubborn seadog (198-200).

The patronizing, if affectionate portrait of the Newfoundland fisherman drawn in such detail by Howley was echoed and elaborated on a few years later by Rev. Moses Harvey's flowery prose in a handbook evidently designed to attract visitors, if not investors, to the island. Declaring the 200,000 Newfoundlanders to be of good stock, Harvey wrote:

... on the soil of Newfoundland, the tough enduring Saxon and the more lively, versatile Celt have met, in proportions not far from equal; and from this wholesome amalgamation of races have sprung the stalwart men and comely matrons and maids whom the traveller of to-day looks on with admiration. The race has taken kindly to the soil and thriven. Reared in one of the most salubrious climates in the world, breathing an invigorating atmosphere, engaged largely in open-air employments, -- many of them constantly battling with the billows, -- a hardy, energetic race has grown up, in whom the red corpuscles of the blood predominate and who are well fitted for the world's rough work... The noblest nations of the earth, past and present, were not nurtured amid the flowers of the South, but in the cold and stern North, where nature had to be conquered by sweat of brow, and where the barren wilderness had to be transformed by hard toil into the fruitful field (1894, 194-5).

Rev. Harvey also credited Newfoundlanders with mental quickness and general intelligence, if lacking education; he found them to be orderly, pious, law-abiding, sober, charitable, and of proverbial hospitality (1894, 196). He continued to describe the stereotype of the Newfoundlander:

On the whole the fishermen of Newfoundland, though they have not much of this world's goods, compare not unfavourably, as to their condition, with the labouring



classes of other countries. If they have privations and hardships they have many compensations for these, in their free open-air life, their robust health, their capabilities of enjoying simple pleasures. There is perhaps as much genuine happiness among them as among any similar number who toil for the daily bread.... Their passionate attachment to the land of their birth, their love for it when settled in other lands and their frequent longings to return, -- all indicate that their life has been on the whole a happy one (1894, 203).

The "hardy, happy" fisherman, deeply attached to his island, thus became the stereotype of the Newfoundlander. As defined in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*<sup>26</sup>, the term "stereotype" implies the following characteristics: 1) it is simple rather than complex or differentiated; 2) it is erroneous rather than accurate; 3) it has been acquired secondhand rather than through direct experience with the reality it is supposed to represent; and 4) it is resistant to modification by new experience. These characteristics can vary and are not necessarily correlated (259).

Defined mainly by his occupation and his environment, the Newfoundland fisherman was romanticized much like the European peasant before him, while ignoring the real hardships and conflicts of his condition: isolation, poverty, ill health, illiteracy. The distanced view that produced this stereotype was possible because during the nineteenth century an upper middle class had evolved in St. John's, made up of a commercial elite and assorted professionals. They dominated the political sphere and were economically as well as physically and culturally removed from the outports, but nevertheless kept referring to the "fisherman" for a sense of identity.

While life in the outports continued much the same as it had for several generations, this new urban class had adopted the aforementioned progressive ideals, and was looking for a future no longer in the fishery, but in industrial development, in the exploitation of land based resources, and in an improved agriculture to emulate the progress evident elsewhere in North America. Even though their expectations eventually turned out to be overly optimistic, at the beginning of the twentieth century the mood was confident. Much of the writing of that period was of a promotional nature and, like Harvey's handbook quoted above, was designed to dispel misconceptions abroad and to portray Newfoundland in an appealing manner, in short, to booster the

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<sup>26</sup>The Macmillan Company and Free Press, 1968, 259-262.

image of Newfoundland for potential investors and tourists.<sup>27</sup> The purposeful, politically inspired creation and dissemination of this image that ignored the complexities and hardships of real life continued the process of folklorism which had begun with the reaction to the perceived neglect by the mother country in the nineteenth century.

Beyond the openly promotional and political materials mentioned above, the urban milieu of St. John's fostered an impressive number of writers during the period of 1895 - 1915, whose publications again focused on the sense of a distinct Newfoundland identity. Founded in 1901, the *Newfoundland Quarterly*, which continues to be published, became the main journal for local history, poetry, story-telling (O'Flaherty 1979, 115-6). The nascent literary movement contained much commentary on a heritage perceived as on the verge of being lost, which provides further proof of the distance that had evolved between the "fishing folk" and its urban contemporaries. As it had in Europe, the awareness of a distinctive folklore grew out of the nationalistic, antiquarian interests of the elite. Isaac C. Morris' sentimental description of the home of "The Old Fisher-Folk" is an example:

To the eye of the stranger it appeared small and uninviting, but when viewed in that higher sense of peace and contentment, it was a veritable heritage.... All the furniture of the fisherman's home was plain and oldfashioned. Like the owner, it was out of date; but it could not fail in eliciting the curiosity of those given to observation.... These old homesteads, scattered along the inlets of our great bays, are comparatively unknown to the outer world, and even to ourselves; but the story of their occupants is well worth telling (1901, 19-20).

This fond description of what clearly represents a poor, lower class environment, suits the taste an urban upper class tends to acquire for a rural counterworld. Traditional values and folkways provide a contrast to urban living that nurtures nostalgic longings for an imaginary past. Such interest in selected, sentimentally affected elements of folk culture is typical of folklorism as cultivated, to begin with, by a privileged, educated class who no longer participates in that lifestyle except by choice, as a leisure experience, or as a source of nationalistic or artistic inspiration, while the lower class is expected to retain and cheerfully cultivate that lifestyle. This is folklorism based on class differences, similar to the European experience that separated peasants

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<sup>27</sup>Susan Williams has explored such promotional materials in her Master thesis *Images of Newfoundland in Promotional Literature 1890-1914*, McGill University, Dept. of Geography, 1980.

from the urban elite, a situation that lasted in Newfoundland until the middle of the twentieth century.

The *Newfoundland Quarterly* contained more scholarly folklore publications as well, such as a series of articles on "Newfoundland Name-Lore" by Rt. Rev. Bishop Howley (1902). These were inspired, on the one hand, by "a sincere desire to preserve our very characteristic and quaint local terminology by showing the historical origin or descriptive appropriateness of our names on the one hand; and on the other to eliminate all names which may be inappropriate, vulgar, trite and unmeaning" (1902, 5-6). Howley's effort thus went well beyond mere documentation to include aesthetic, as well as pedagogical considerations that impose the author's own values on the Newfoundland population. His desire to elevate the folk to his own standards of propriety gives an early example of an attempt to construct and cultivate a suitable, tasteful past, a "heritage."

The distinctive regional qualities of Newfoundland were also noticed by outsiders. Literary reactions of missionaries, visitors or military personnel passing through the island were mixed, however, and ranged from disparaging comments on the backwardness and intellectual inferiority of the fishermen to delight in the primitive, but friendly lifestyle of Newfoundland (O'Flaherty 1979, 87). The peculiar dialect in particular attracted early outside attention. During several visits to Newfoundland, George Patterson of Nova Scotia began to collect the uncommon or entirely new English words he encountered. His "Notes on the Dialect of the People of Newfoundland" were first read at a meeting of the Montreal branch of the American Folk-Lore Society in 1894 and subsequently appeared in the *Journal of American Folklore* (1895, 27-40). He continued to write articles on the subject of Newfoundland folklore, which he assumed was particularly rich and interesting because of a "long seclusion" from the outside world (1895, 285-290). As the result of further inquiries he noted:

... on the one hand the persistency with which words and forms of speech have maintained themselves among people separated even for centuries from their old home and their parent stock, and on the other, the manner in which words undergo variations in sound and meaning in adopting themselves to their new surroundings (1897, 212-3).



The characteristic speech of Newfoundland can be traced directly to the original settlers from Ireland and the West Coast of England, for a striking conservatism has preserved older elements of the vocabulary, syntax and sounds, which have long become obsolete elsewhere. At the same time the settlers creatively adapted and invented terms to suit their lifestyles, resulting in a rich dialect full of expressive phrases and proverbs (Story 1977, 74-80). Such a common language is one of the most important features contributing to a sense of national and regional identity. Moreover, the distinctive nature of the Newfoundland dialect was eventually recognized and publicized in the impressive *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* (Story et al, 1982), which by its very publication raised the awareness and the esteem of this aspect of the regional folk culture.

Politically independent, with a distinctive language and folklore, relying largely on the fishing economy, Newfoundland entered the twentieth century with a sense of national identity. The historical myth of domination from outside and unfair treatment in the past had been written, popularized, institutionalized and had ultimately resulted in the Newfoundland stereotype. But though their relationship with the British Empire was ambivalent, writers were fond of identifying Newfoundland as "England's oldest colony." Even when looking forward to an industrial future, the folk heritage of the fishermen was increasingly valued. Hobsbawm has called this a curious paradox:

...modern nations and all their impediments generally claim to be the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities so "natural" as to require no definition other than self-assertion (1983, 14).

While the focus on an apparently simpler, more "natural" way of life, on a past that offers a sense of identity and thus acquires symbolic value, was first promoted by a political elite that believed in progress and engaged in nation building, they prepared the stage for later movements that perpetuated the Newfoundland myth and the stereotype of the "hardy, happy fisherman" beyond their own class; in that sense, in Newfoundland the process of folklorism began during the nineteenth century.

## The Smallwood Era

In recent obituary statements both friends and foes of Joseph Smallwood agreed that no other person has done more to influence the history of Newfoundland than the man who brought Newfoundland into confederation with Canada in 1949, who led the new province for more than two decades, who tirelessly fought for what he considered "progress" and who battled the "cursed inferiority complex" Newfoundlanders had developed when their traditional fishing economy began to fail.<sup>28</sup> Before World War Two Smallwood's career, however, included the ideological use of folklore as part of his rhetorical strategy to bolster a sense of identity among Newfoundlanders, a case of folklorism that suggests practices common among fascist leaders in Europe of the same time period. This chapter examines Smallwood's influence on Newfoundland first in the role of amateur folklorist and manipulator of folklore, later in that of premier and enthusiastic promoter of industrialization, which eventually caused a neo-nationalistic reaction.

Despite its reduced fortunes, during the First World War Newfoundland contributed men to the British army at considerable expense; this, combined with the large deficit resulting from the construction of the railway and such economic disasters as the collapse of the saltfish trade during the worldwide depression, brought Newfoundland close to bankruptcy by the early 1930s. It had to appeal for help to the British mother country. Perhaps unfairly, a Royal Commission accused the Newfoundland government of financial irresponsibility and of political corruption and placed it under a Commission of Government in 1934 (Rowe 1978, 14-16). Consequently, during the depression Newfoundlanders suffered not only extreme economic hardships, but the added insult of being reduced to second-class status within the British Empire.

These conditions formed the backdrop for the rise of Joseph Smallwood, a self-made journalist of lower class background. Early in his career, while in New York, Smallwood converted to socialism in a populist, idealist sense, believing that a better life is possible for everyone (Richard Gwyn 1968, 19-20). His book *The New Newfoundland* (1931) carried the telling subtitle "An Account of the Revolutionary

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<sup>28</sup>Joseph Smallwood died December 12, 1991.

Developments Which Are Transforming Britain's Oldest Colony from 'The Cinderella of the Empire' into One of the Great Small Nations of the World." He adopted the popular view of Newfoundland as victim of historic misfortune, as explored in the previous chapter, which held that Newfoundland was sacrificed to the selfish interests of English merchants:

Nothing was further from their thoughts than to permit their fishermen ... to get out of their control by settling in Newfoundland.... While the American colonies, and neighboring Nova Scotia in Canada were forging ahead in population Newfoundland was deliberately and purposely held in check, through merchant influence in the right quarters as a mere summer fishing station (1931, 228-9).

Smallwood fully believed in the potential for progress in Newfoundland: "After whole centuries of neglect, indifference and misrule on the part of selfish absentee interests, Newfoundland is emerging, ever and ever more rapidly, into the full noonday of enlightenment, development and prosperity" (1931, 233). For him, too, new prosperity was to be found not in the unprofitable fish trade but in modern, large-scale industrialization. "The outstanding fact is that, after so long a period of primitive existence, Newfoundland has entered upon a new life, a life very much akin to that of industrial America or industrial Canada (1931, 7)."

Smallwood not only caught the mood of the day, for the outports had suffered greatly from the depression, but he was clearly influenced by the boosterism prevailing in North America during the first decades of the 20th century in form of competitive, aggressive advertising and lobbying for urban growth and development.<sup>29</sup> Above all, Smallwood tried to fight feelings of inferiority and went to the opposite extreme of glorifying the accomplishments of Newfoundlanders:

It is entirely doubtful whether there be any other country in the world of the size of Newfoundland that has produced such a large percentage of famous or notable men as this small island has yielded. Newfoundlanders are very proud of these fellow-countrymen of theirs who have "made names" for themselves out of the competition of keen minds and trained intellects ... (1931, 234).

While building on the earlier promotional literature on Newfoundland dating to the turn of the century, which practiced relentlessly positive thinking, Smallwood convinced

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<sup>29</sup>In a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Atlantic Association of Sociologists and Anthropologists in Sydney, Nova Scotia, March 1989, "Beyond Boosterism: The Need for a Critical Analysis of Tourist Developments in Newfoundland," Jim Overton mentioned Sinclair Lewis' novel *Babbitt* (1922) as presenting a prime, satirical example of this striking and pervasive phenomenon.



several hundred writers and researchers to contribute to *The Book of Newfoundland*.<sup>30</sup> In the first volume's editorial introduction he stated that its purpose was to help restore the faith in Newfoundland, to kindle the pride in the native country, and to quicken the interest of non-Newfoundlanders in a country of vast, mostly underdeveloped and unmeasured national wealth, a country with a future brighter than its tragic past. To achieve this goal, the volumes included articles on folklore.<sup>4</sup> Despite the flaws of this overly ambitious project, "in style, content, and mood, it is Newfoundland in the 1930s captured for posterity" (Richard Gwyn 1968, 53).

Eventually Smallwood rewrote much of this material for a regular column featured in the *Daily News*, "From the Barrelman," which in 1937 inspired a fifteen minute daily radio news program sponsored by the local importer and wholesaler Frank O'Leary. This followed the pattern set earlier by the *Doyle News*, the most successful and influential radio program on the island. For six years Smallwood's program all but equalled the *Doyle News* in popularity. As the "Barrelman," the trusted lookout man of a sealer's crew, Smallwood gave Newfoundlanders a new identity, for he devoted his program to the "glorification of Newfoundland and everything good within it" (Paine 1985, 59).

In an interview with Peter Narváez in 1982, Smallwood admitted that his "Barrelman" program was consciously political (Narváez 1986, 52). He aimed to stir and create a sense of regional pride and heritage, a sort of Newfoundland nationalism, while fighting the "cursed" inferiority complex. His method was to cite hundreds of examples of the skill, ingenuity, strength and resourcefulness of Newfoundlanders (Narváez 1986, 52). With great verbal skill, a matter of much prestige in Newfoundland, Smallwood, for example, solicited tall tales, which he believed to be a distinctive feature of the humor of Newfoundland, by telling them himself (Narváez 1986, 58-60).

During the six years of his radio program, Smallwood undoubtedly changed, revived, disseminated, invented oral traditions, while amassing huge amounts of primary sources of folklore and oral history which he collected from his audience. The extent of his influence on the folk culture of Newfoundland, however, can only be

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<sup>30</sup>Under Smallwood's editorship, 6 volumes have been published. Volumes 1 and 2 appeared in 1937, 3 and 4 in 1967, and 5 and 6 in 1975 (St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers, Ltd.).

guessed at (Narváez 1986, 61). Herbert Halpert recalls that in 1945, when he first became interested in the folklore of Newfoundland, Smallwood told him that

there was no point in my collecting folktales because he had already collected them himself through his radio programme, "The Barrelman," on VORG. However, he kindly wrote down for me a list of a dozen books which would serve as an introduction to Newfoundland. I was told he was an authority on the subject, and his list, which I still have, certainly demonstrated this (Halpert 1991, XIII).

By purposefully using folklore to create new pride in Newfoundlanders, Smallwood clearly engaged in folklorism. Reacting to a painful present, he tried to fill a psychological and cultural void caused by stressful economic and political conditions. As a therapy to redress the perceived wrongs and the second-class status Newfoundland had slipped into, Smallwood glorified and exaggerated any native distinction and achievement he could find and used the existing folk culture to construct a common identity. In the process of this cultural coping strategy he took the "baymen" of the outports seriously and told them about themselves in their own language (Richard Gwyn 1968, 54). Essentially Smallwood adopted the role of a populist teacher, a booster of group identity. He created a new awareness of the Newfoundland folk culture and emphasized the Newfoundland stereotype by referring to traditional forms of folklore. For example, he thus changed the use of tall tales from mere entertainment to purposeful cultural-political indoctrination, making Newfoundlanders look better in glorified past tradition than current reality.

It must be noted that his efforts coincided not only with the economically inspired boosterism in North America, but also with the political forces of fascism in Italy and national socialism in Germany, two regimes that went to extreme lengths of manipulating folklore in order to advance their ideological goals. While Joey Smallwood did not enter politics until after the Second World War, his conscious cultivation of folklore to "make Newfoundland better known to Newfoundlanders," to show how brave, hardy, strong Newfoundlanders are and what hardships they can endure (Richard Gwyn 1968, 53) are disturbingly close to Hitler's attempts to prove the superiority of the Nordic German "race." German feelings of despondency and inferiority, too, arose after the First World War. Smallwood's use of folklore therefore was no isolated phenomenon,

but followed trends and precedents in the world at large.<sup>31</sup>

With the establishment of American and Canadian military bases in Newfoundland during the Second World War, the problem of unemployment was solved almost overnight and the process of Americanization accelerated. First experiences with American prosperity, improved communications, and travels abroad had created new wants and needs; employment on the military bases provided new skills and culture contacts. Undoubtedly many Newfoundlanders eagerly wanted to participate in the newly introduced lifestyles. While still a separate political entity, Newfoundland was increasingly dominated by the United States and Canada, who became its major trading partners in the postwar period (Staveley 1982, 217).

Nationalism briefly resurged after the Second World War, before confederation, when many Newfoundlanders hoped to reclaim independence. A number of short-lived magazines then expressed nationalist views, such as the *Atlantic Guardian*, founded 1945 in Montreal by three Newfoundland emigrants, among them Arthur Scammell, who became one of the most popular songmakers and writers celebrating traditional outpost life. Their dominant mood was "indulgent, uncritical nationalism, born of a sense of exile from an embattled homeland" (O'Flaherty 1979, 150).

The marginal position and the basic economic weakness of Newfoundland, however, were not resolved after the Second World War, and the Commission of Government presented no permanent solution to its problems. When Newfoundlanders were to choose their political destiny in the late 1940s, Smallwood recognized the economic advantages to be gained from a union with Canada. Consequently he entered politics and campaigned skillfully, aggressively and incessantly until confederation was achieved by a narrow margin of votes in 1949, even though prior to confederation no particular sympathies existed between Canada and Newfoundland. When stationed in Newfoundland during the Second World War, Canadian servicemen reputedly adopted a rather aloof and patronizing attitude toward Newfoundlanders, compared to the generally friendly and gregarious Americans (Richard Gwyn 1968, 69).

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<sup>31</sup>According to personal communication by Werner Staubitzer, one of a number of German professionals invited by Smallwood during the 1950s to help establish new, small-scale industries in Newfoundland, Smallwood has expressed some admiration for Hitler. The movie "Little Man From Gambo," made about Smallwood for satirical purposes, consciously copies Nazi propaganda. (For this information I am indebted to Neil Rosenberg.)



Newfoundlanders sang about Canada as the wolf at their door. Canada was still a strange country to most Newfoundlanders ... who saw her as an overbearing *parvenue*, unsympathetic to Newfoundland problems, in particular concerning the fisheries, and uncomprehending of Newfoundland history and tradition (Paine 1985, 61).

Essentially Newfoundland's confederation with Canada was motivated by economic reasons, namely a desire for a higher standard of living, just as Canada herself owed her existence to most prosaic reasons:

Britain had lost interest in the expense and bother of maintaining responsibility for semi-independent colonies. The mainland colonies feared American invasion and sought security in unity. At a time when trade patterns were changing and trade barriers were again on the rise, businessmen were attracted by the idea of a common economic market. And the politicians realized that if the colonists united then as Canadians they could borrow at a lower rate on the London capital market to build the railways and other facilities which all the colonies required (Alexander 1983a, 145).

Robert Paine has related the persuasiveness of Smallwood to his rhetorical ability to indicate the advantages of the Canadian welfare system, while reminding Newfoundlanders of the hardships and deprivations of the depression years. Like a scoff, a traditional meal that may include ingredients taken from someone else, a feast was to be had at the expense of Canada (Paine 1985). Smallwood's insights allowed him to be both "man of the people" and "visionary leader." His political power solidified in the mood of great optimism prevailing in the 1950s when the Canadian welfare system immediately improved the standard of living in Newfoundland, as he had promised (Neary 1980, 209-11).

No one has expressed more enthusiasm about the great benefits of confederation than Smallwood himself, who governed the new province as its premier for the first twenty-two years. In an editorial essay for *The Book of Newfoundland* (1967, Vol. 3), he pointed to the dramatic changes in the "Happy Province," how the "immensely rich Canadian Government" provided money for children, the unemployed, the old; how the "ancient curse of isolation" was ended by more and better roads, by the closing of two hundred of the more remote settlements as people were encouraged to move to larger places; how education had accelerated vastly. By 1967 Ottawa had spent more than two thousand million dollars in Newfoundland and Smallwood claimed that the old inferiority complex and the patient resignation to the elements had disappeared in the overall explosive forward rush (1967, 1-3). In the following volumes of *The Book of Newfoundland*, Smallwood continued to celebrate (his) achievements, adopting the role

of modernizer and liberator and showing a fondness for the title "founding father of confederation." Throughout his career he remained the booster and visionary of a grand industrialized future, while he still glorified the best, most famous Newfoundlanders (1967 and 1975).

Within his own lifetime, Smallwood's charismatic, persuasive powers of speech became legendary. Inspired by the right occasion, he could mesmerize an audience, as remembered by Ray Guy, satirical journalist and patriotic Newfoundlander:

They were nailed to the spot. They swayed like spars at anchor in a slight breeze. Their cheeks were flushed, their mouths loose, their eyes glazed, their breathing heavy and regular. Little children gazed up at their elders in wonderment.

Possibly a medieval religious experience was rather like that with the faggots piled and ready for heretics (1987, 7).

By the end of Joey Smallwood's reign in 1971, however, it was commonly recognized that Newfoundland's economic problems were more deepseated and more intractable than those of any of the other Canadian provinces (Whalen 1974, 19-21). As a group, Newfoundlanders had failed to achieve the Canadian variants of North American affluence and they were increasingly "being fitted into the Canadian mosaic as yet another 'have not' group" (Neary 1974, 14-16). Within Canada, most people are vaguely aware of the distinctiveness of Newfoundland based on their unique dependence on fish (Staveley 1982, 215). A separate identity is also indicated by the notorious "Newfie" jokes current in Canada, which have assigned Newfoundlanders the stereotypical role of the numbskull, revealing the Canadian view of Newfoundlanders as poor and backwards (Thomas 1976, 142-153).<sup>32</sup> The esoteric/exoteric factor in folklore identified by Hugh Jansen (1959) applies in this uneasy relationship, where the geographic and cultural isolation of Newfoundland within Canada has fostered opinions and prejudices on both sides, for Newfoundlanders have countered their negative image in Canada by telling jokes that show how they really are the more quick-witted and, in turn, make the mainlanders the butt of their jokes.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>The public use of "Newfie" was first recorded 1938 in Smallwood's Barrelman radio program (Narváez 1986, 58).

<sup>33</sup>See also the chapter on "Screech-Ins."

Despite the many failures of the Smallwood government, some real progress was achieved. One of the most obvious results of his emphasis on improved education and the growth of the civil service sector was the emergence of a new middle class based in St. John's, the traditional commercial center of the island. Eventually that very class ousted him in 1972: "Smallwood, the modernizer, fell victim to the modernized" (Neary 1974, 15). When the tide turned against him, Smallwood was blamed for abandoning the traditional economy and lifestyle. The man who had once glorified the hardy Newfoundlander in the media, in his subsequent political career was alleged to have advised the fishermen to burn their boats (although he insisted that he never made such a remark) and to leave their outports, though the factory jobs he had promised in exchange for resettlement most often did not materialize (Goulding 1982, 52). Resettlement policies of the 1960s in particular, that could be blamed for the loss of the traditional way of life, have left a legacy that became central to a cultural reaction, a new nationalist movement. The attempt to rapidly, forcibly modernize Newfoundland thus ultimately inspired another phase of folklorism, again characterized by a focus on the past, which will be discussed in the following chapter.



## Newfcult and Nostalgia<sup>34</sup>

This chapter presents an overview of important recent factors that have influenced the perception of the Newfoundland folk culture and led to the contemporary folklorism phenomena discussed below in Part III of this thesis. While it is impossible to detail all aspects related to folklorism in Newfoundland, among the outstanding elements was a new nationalist movement in the 1970s that represented in part a reaction to the rapid Canadianization urged on Newfoundlanders during the first decades of confederation, and the realization that, in spite of Smallwood's efforts and promises, economic underdevelopment had persisted when compared to the other Canadian provinces. As is characteristic of such movements, it dwelled on the past which, in retrospect, appeared more satisfying than the present. The movement was accompanied by a flourishing of indigenous art, of theatre, music, painting, literature, poetry, which came to be known among urban intellectuals as the "Cultural Renaissance."<sup>34</sup> While it is impossible to detail here all the manifestations of this complex movement, I will attempt to indicate the major underlying themes and causes, specifically as they relate to folklorism.

This movement was initiated by the growing number of intellectuals and academics, the new middle class of St. John's who had benefited from the improved educational opportunities provided by the Smallwood government. Rather than adopting Smallwood's progressive policies, they advocated the merits of the traditional way of life which they perceived as being threatened.<sup>35</sup> The cultural renaissance, however, differed significantly from the "official" culture promoted by the six Arts and Culture centers that were established across the province in the 1960s. Smallwood had hired John Perlin, member of an upper class St. John's family, to direct these centers and eventually to become Director of Cultural Affairs. During Perlin's controversial career that lasted from 1967 to 1989, he practically decided the cultural policy for the

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<sup>34</sup>Allegedly Clyde Rose, who became the publisher of Breakwater Books, was the first to refer to this movement as a "little renaissance" in his foreword to the 1972 edition of Ted Russell's play *The Holding Ground* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., originally published in 1954).

<sup>35</sup>James Overton has succinctly investigated the movement in his paper "Towards a Critical Analysis of Neo-Nationalism in Newfoundland" (1979).

province as he emphasized fine arts presented by touring companies from abroad. Consequently he has been accused of all but ignoring the emerging indigenous art scene (Meeker 1989).

H.M. Enzensberger has credited the modern middle class, the *petit bourgeoisie*, with a cultural hegemony: it takes care of innovation, it decides what is to be considered beautiful and worthwhile striving for; it invents ideologies, sciences, technologies, produces art and fashion, philosophy and architecture, critique and design. In short, middle class ideas and values decisively influence the whole sphere of mass consumerism. Basic to its pervasive importance, however, is a high degree of industrialization and a measure of affluence (Enzensberger 1982, 202-4).

After confederation a new elite, concentrated in St. John's, replaced the moneyed merchant class. The smaller towns of Corner Brook, Gander, Grand Falls formed their own upper classes which, however, tended to look to St. John's for inspiration. The new nationalist movement was also a sign of the cultural dualism and the class differences that had long separated the town, i.e., St. John's, from the outports, resulting in a classic rural-urban dichotomy expressed by "townie" Newfoundlanders regarding outport lifestyles and personalities, the "baymen," as backwards, uncouth, uneducated, and making them the butt of the original Newfie jokes. Nevertheless, Martin Laba has observed that "Underlying the derisive quality of the townie's folklore in dealing with the bayman, there is a covert but decisive acknowledgment that the roots and predominant character of Newfoundland society are based in the rural, outport culture" (1978, 16).

The neo-nationalists recognized that their claim for a separate identity hinged on "the distinctive homogeneous culture of the outports which makes Newfoundland a *nation*; possibly the only true English-speaking *nation* left in North America" (Story 1974, 25; emphasis by the author). Ignoring any internal divisions and conflicts within Newfoundland, such nationalism holds the declining traditional economy sacrosanct and assumes an idea of organic community or national essence which ties the people of a region together (Overton 1979, 170). Nationalism always nurtures a sentimentalized or romanticized view of culture, and therefore cultural revivals are part of virtually all neo-nationalist movements; they become a means to mobilize local sentiments to resist or

control the forces that are shaping the local economy and to restructure a past way of life (Overton 1986, 229).

Never completely isolated from the rest of the world, Newfoundlanders in the 1960s and 1970s also participated in the general trend in American culture to look for their roots, an expression of newly valued attachment to place that embodied conservative, traditional, and nostalgic impulses. This movement was exemplified by the unprecedented success of the *Foxfire* publications that consisted of student collections of Appalachian oral history and by the popularity of *Roots*, the book based on oral history by black author Alex Haley. Such a search for the past is a highly conscious endeavor that offers almost unlimited choices of what to restore and recreate. In a sense, the past becomes an exciting new frontier (Yi-Fu Tuan 1980, 3-8). These selective efforts of reconstructing a suitable past suggest the availability of culture for secondary use that is part of the process of folklorism, as is the sentimentally affected view of history.

Accordingly, a central concern for the participants in the Cultural Renaissance was identification with the traditional lifestyle of the outports. By implication, resettlement was deeply regretted and became a powerful motif for artistic expressions of feelings of betrayal, loss, insecurity. Such feelings were particularly common among well educated Newfoundlanders who had spent time on the mainland and on their return to Newfoundland reacted emotionally when they realized their childhood homes had changed or even vanished from the map. It appears that the widening of the horizon achieved by travelling and living outside the island for an extended period was instrumental for a growing appreciation of the old lifestyle. Accordingly, after his return to Newfoundland in the late 1960s, the poet Al Pittman interpreted resettlement as a bleak and hopeless prospect. His play *West Moon*, performed in 1980 by the Mummers Troupe, focused on the dead left behind in the graveyard of abandoned St. Kevin's in Placentia Bay. They are given a voice during All Saint's Night to lament the passing of a way of life. Significantly, more than anything else the soul of fisherman Jack wants to sail again on the first real boat he owned:

And we'd be loaded down with fish. The best kind of salt fish from off of my own flakes in St. Kevin's. We'd be takin 'em down to Spencer's Cove, to A. Wareham and Sons. Nothin' but Madeira on board and she loaded down to the gunwales. With the



sun on the water, a nice sou'west wind, and me at the wheel of my own boat.<sup>36</sup>

In the early 1980s, parts of the play were incorporated in a film made for CBC television, "People of the Islands," a sequence of the nationally distributed series *Heritage*, which re-enacted a nostalgic visit to an abandoned outpost. Playwright Al Pittman was featured with a number of artists, musicians and teachers committed to traditional Newfoundland, who, along with other high profile neo-nationalist Newfoundlanders, have become popularly known as "professional Newfoundlanders" or "supernewfs." They earned this title because of their particularly ardent and articulate concern to restore and protect the dignity and distinctiveness of Newfoundlanders, while they became adept at advancing their cause by using the media.

For Al Pittman, the loss of a past, which he believes would have come with or without Smallwood, and the fear of "being swamped in a culture essentially foreign to our own," have remained important concerns and he refused to be reconciled:

... suddenly the government exhorted the people to abandon their old ways and adopt the new, to come out of their fishing boats to work in factories, to leave their homes on the islands and in the coves to take up residence in the "growth centres" of the new, industrial Newfoundland. The change was sudden and shocking, and the shock waves have not yet faded (1979, 7).

Pat Byrne, who befriended Al Pittman when they both lived in Montreal in the 1960s, has often and vehemently expressed a similar view that something "wrong" has happened. As singer, songwriter, actor, professor of English and student of folklore he has become a zealous promoter of traditional Newfoundland and has made it his mission to fight the deep insecurity caused Newfoundlanders when they were rushed to be industrialized and Americanized, when they were taught to be ashamed to speak their dialect, to play the traditional accordion tunes and to eat such favorite local dishes as cod tongues. He concedes, however, that he was able to experience what "we" have only after he had experienced the different environment of the mainland for a few years.<sup>37</sup> Thus the contact with another culture created the awareness of his own cultural repertoire and raised his interest in traditions that had become marginal. It is precisely at the point when a cultural void is felt that traditions become available to be used for new functions and lend themselves to the process of folklorism.

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<sup>36</sup>Quoted from an unpublished working copy with permission of the author.

<sup>37</sup>Personal communication, October 1986.

As a further example, in 1973 the local publishing company *Breakwater Books* was established which at first published only Newfoundland authors.<sup>38</sup> To promote the image of the new company, several of the co-founders travelled across Canada and performed entertainments which resembled traditional Newfoundland community concerts, for example, Al Pittman read poems, Clyde Rose talked about life in Newfoundland and recited parts of plays, and Pat Byrne with his brother Joe provided traditional music, sometimes with the addition of other musicians (Gorham 1991).

Pat Byrne's first performances as a folk singer, unaccompanied in traditional style, were acknowledged as "the real thing" by older Newfoundlanders and thus achieved immediate acceptance. But while he sang in the old musical style, he presented new political messages, as in the following song "The Government Game," written jointly with Al Pittman, which he performed while touring Canada and eventually recorded commercially in 1983:<sup>39</sup>

Come all you young fellows and list while I tell,  
On the terrible misfortune that upon me befell.  
Centralization they say was the name,  
But me I just calls it the government game.

My name it don't matter, I'm not young anymore;  
But in all of my days, I'd never been poor  
And I had lived the right good life and not felt no shame,  
Til they made me take part in the government game.

My home was St. Kevin's, a heavenly place.  
It thrived on the fishin' of a good hearty race,  
But now it will never again be the same,  
Since they made it a pawn in the government game.

Sure the government paid us for movin' away  
And leaving our birth place for a better day's pay.  
They said that our poor lives would ne'er be the same,  
Once we took part in the government game.

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<sup>38</sup>By the 1980s, once the initial mission was accomplished to provide a forum for local talent and local materials, as well as to make them known more widely, other Canadian and even international writers were added to the roster of what has become a successful publishing business.

<sup>39</sup>The song is featured on the album *Towards the Sunset*, which sold 15,000 copies, a remarkable number considering the small Newfoundland population base. See discography.

It's not many years now since they all moved away  
 To places more prosp'rous way down in the bay.  
 There's not one soul left now, not one who remains;  
 They've all become part of the government game.

Now St. Kevin's lies there all empty as hell,  
 Except for the graveyard, where our dead parents dwell.  
 The lives of their children are buried in shame,  
 They lost out while playing the government game.

To a place called Placentia well some of them went  
 And in finding a new home their allowance is spent.  
 So for jobs they went looking, but they looked all in vain,  
 For the roof had caved in on the government game.

It's surely a sad sight their moving around,  
 All wishin they still lived by the cod fishing ground.  
 But there's no going back now, there's nothing to gain,  
 Now that they've played in the government game.

They tell me our young ones the benefits will see,  
 But I don't believe it, oh how can it be.  
 They'll never know nothing but sorrow and shame,  
 For their fathers were part of the government game.

And when my soul leaves me for the heavens above,  
 Take me back to St. Kevin's, the place that I love  
 And there on my gravestone write next to my name:  
 Just say I died playin' the government game.

Adopting the role of a fisherman, Pat Byrne's strong voice, singing without accompaniment, angrily blames the government for destroying a past, happy lifestyle. He makes a political statement clad in the form of traditional communication. Byrne, however, moved from Placentia Bay to St. John's with his family when he was eleven years old and has since become a highly educated man, a member of the middle class who has learned to reject the fatalism with which Newfoundlanders tend to accept the vagaries of fate. He never fished, nor did he directly experience resettlement, or chose to live in an outport as an adult. The very distance he is removed from such an existence and his urban background allow him to purposefully, intellectually pursue his avowed mission of protecting the dignity of traditional Newfoundland. This attitude of identifying with the working class is characteristic of North American folksong revivals of the 1960s and 1970s. In this case, folklorism serves to bridge a cultural gap and to



make it possible to continue communication in traditional ways, even though the content of the song is political, non-traditional and the intended audience and location differ from that of the old folksong performances. Pat Byrne, however, is well versed in both worlds and has performed alongside traditional performers at folk festivals, which are discussed below in part three of the thesis.

Meanwhile the displaced people themselves had used traditional channels to communicate their concerns in rhyme and tune and composed a number of new songs dealing with the recent resettlement trauma. Erny Wilson of Merasheen wrote "The Leaving of Merasheen" in 1967, a song that became popular as "The Merasheen Song." In 1985 it was featured on an album, "A Selection of Old Time House Party Songs from Merasheen Island."<sup>40</sup>

Attention all good friends of mine, come listen to my sad tale;  
Concerning of an island down in Placentia Bay.  
It was the home of childhood times, my memories still do stray;  
To that little Isle of Merasheen, down in Placentia Bay.

The people made their living on the land and on the sea,  
They all helped one another, it was their policy;  
With their little garden by the house, and the boats moored to the pier,  
With a sing-song in the evening, around a keg of beer.

Sometime in December they turned out all the lights,  
And closed the doors of their happy homes they worked for all their lives,  
T'would break your heart to see them walk to the boat to go away,  
So we bid farewell to Merasheen down in Placentia Bay.

No more we'll watch the caplin as they wash upon the sand,  
The little fish they used for bait, to fertilize their land,  
No more we'll watch the gardens grow or their meadows full of hay,  
Or walk the road in their working-clothes in the good old-fashioned way.

The houses now are all closed up, their windows no more will rise,  
Their doors will never open again to welcome you inside;  
Nor will you hear the sound of laughter, or the songs we used to sing,  
Those days are gone forever now and so is Merasheen.

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<sup>40</sup>Merasheen Records, the Merasheen Reunion Committee. See discography.

I hope you're settled down by now in your homes across the waves,  
 Although we're separated we'll meet again some day,  
 And from all of us who live far away and from our children,  
 We thank you for the happy home we had in Merasheen.<sup>41</sup>

This is a sad, but resigned song; the author accepts the inevitable and wishes everyone good luck for the future. Its deceptively pleasant waltz tune, accompanied by guitars and accordion, resembles popular entertainment music and belies the serious theme. Essentially Erny Wilson presents the more pragmatic and progressive outlook, while a refusal to accept the present and to concentrate on the past instead, as indicated in Pat Byrne's angry protest song, is characteristic of folklorism.

For many, however, moving away did not solve their problems and since resettlement in the 1960s, every five years tearful reunions on now deserted Merasheen Island in Placentia Bay have become regular occasions to re-enact some of the old customs. The recording of the above mentioned album *A Selection of Old Time House Party Songs from Merasheen Island* is the result of such an event. These simple house party songs, now fixed in form and time to be listened to in new contexts, have become nostalgic souvenirs, re-enacted to evoke the past in its most pleasant aspects and to serve as a reminder of a former secure identity when contrasted with a more difficult, complex, and insecure contemporary situation. The therapeutic regressive tendencies of folklorism are obvious in this case, for the reunion brings the former residents back to their old, deserted homes in physical as well as psychological terms.

As a related development, in the late 1980s a tourist business grew out of these return visits, a family operation initiated by a former resident of Merasheen Island, who offers boat rides and accommodations on one of the deserted islands. The theme of the basic two day tour is "A Step Back in Time," and the above mentioned album, along with other souvenirs, is available for sale in the small store included in the newly built inn.<sup>42</sup> The introduction of tourism to the area continues the process of folklorism by commercializing the appeal of a past colored with nostalgia first discovered by the

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<sup>41</sup>This version was recorded by Eric West in the house of Mrs. Harold (Bride) Rose in Ferndale, Placentia Bay, on July 6, 1978. It is deposited at MUNFLA as part of the collection 78-236, transcript 186 (8).

<sup>42</sup>This operation is discussed in more detail in the chapter on "Tourism as Generator of Folklorism in Newfoundland."

former settlers of the area, and now offered to outsiders of their culture as a vacation experience. Similar to the situation in the poverty-stricken valley of the Zillertal explored by Jeggle and Korff (1974; translated 1986), tourism is a logical further development if these islands are to become newly viable in economic terms.

Overall about two hundred outposts were resettled after a majority of at least two thirds of their population had agreed to leave. As the adverse emotional reactions indicate, however, the resettlement program, initiated 1953 under the Department of Welfare and continued in 1965 by a joint federal-provincial program run by the Department of Fisheries, fell short of its goal to improve the quality of life in rural Newfoundland. Eventually the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Memorial University was asked to investigate the matter, and to assess the situation.

Governments are only too keen to have social scientists romping around in isolated villages, carrying out studies and making recommendations. This strengthens the assumption that the problem is "out there" -- among the outporters, the Indians, the Eskimos, the poor (Lotz 1971, 57-8).

As a result of this investigation, it was recommended to revitalize the outposts through community development. Consequently in 1966 the Memorial University Extension service together with the National Film Board conducted a community development experiment on Fogo Island, a small island of about 4,000 residents, who then faced resettlement. When members of the ten separate communities of Fogo Island saw videotaped interviews of their fellow islanders they began to realize that they shared a common problem. Subsequent cooperative efforts have so far prevented resettlement. The "Fogo Project," as it came to be known, is often cited as a positive example to be emulated by other Newfoundland communities.<sup>43</sup>

Despite the precarious economic situation in the outposts, for many people resettlement simply did not offer an attractive alternative to the accustomed way of life.

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<sup>43</sup>28 video cassettes were produced, Nos. LCN:00370-LCN:00396, 1989 Video Catalogue, Media Unit of the Memorial University of Newfoundland Division of Extension Service (28-30). Some of these video tapes have been used in teaching "Newfoundland Folklore" classes. Additional materials include an MA thesis in Sociology written on the subject (Carter 1984) and various reports on the proceedings of the Fogo Island Conference, March 29 and 30, 1967 and the Fogo Island Fisheries Conference, January 16 and 17, 1979, as well as a manuscript "Fogo process in communication: a reflection on the use of film and video tape in community development," produced by the Extension Service, Memorial University (n.d.), all on file at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland.



Ralph Matthews, who investigated three outports which narrowly avoided resettlement, has summarized the attitude of one of these communities:

The people of Grande Terre seem to have everything most urbanites want. They have freedom to do as they wish. They own their own homes and have no worries about mortgages or debts. They have clean air, good water, free wood, plenty of land and fish. From their point of view it would not make sense for them to move to a larger town or city. Most are uneducated and probably "Wouldn't be much good in town" (1976, 103).

In these cases the exclusively economic perspectives of the "planner" and the cultural and social realities of their objects are clearly in conflict. The economic activities of an outport cannot simply be measured in cash, as much is produced for home consumption, or used in direct exchange. Therefore Matthews has proposed to judge the outports in terms of "social vitality," which includes intangible cultural resources, rather than merely "economic viability" (1976, 48). Such an approach takes into consideration the emotional attachment to the home territory (*Heimat*) and to the traditional way of life that have persisted in rural Newfoundland and have resurfaced in much of the western world, indicating an attitude of rejecting forces of modernization that is basic to folklorism. Moreover, as has been argued by Ina-Maria Greverus, rather than being redundant, village lifestyles may well present models for the future (1979).

Accordingly, the Peckford government of the 1980s adopted a neo-nationalist approach and employed much political rhetoric to fight for the inshore fishery, the mainstay of the traditional lifestyle, even though this increasingly appeared to be a losing battle in the face of diminishing fish stocks and strong competition from international fleets further out in the Atlantic Ocean. By contrast recommendations of the 1985 Royal Commission for Employment and Unemployment, contained in the summary report *Building on Our Strengths* (1986), no longer focused as much on the fishery as on making the outports newly viable by skipping the twentieth century altogether:

From time to time, an alternative vision, looking backward romantically to an idealized past of independent self-sustaining fishing outports has been suggested. This sentimental version of our history is a poor guide to our future.... The biggest transformation has to come in those small communities where most Newfoundlanders live. These have to develop into modern communities which use up-to-date communications, intermediate technology and modern forms of enterprise in order to achieve the new self-reliance which is fitting for a post-industrial age (4).

These policy advisers essentially saw no future for the traditional economy and lifestyle,

but differed importantly from the Smallwood government's attitude of "outport life is for the birds" in that they newly valued the outport as essential to the Newfoundland identity; it was considered sacrosanct and efforts were being made to preserve it at all costs, if under new economic premises.

But plans made by government bureaucrats have exerted only limited influence on the reality faced by the people of the outports, who now experience great insecurity. John Mannion's study of Point Lance in the 1970s, an outport in transition, captures the problem:

Fewer and fewer of the younger generation subscribe to the traditional way of life. In part, the blame for this new disparity between young and old resides with the older generation, who abandoned the old economy. In the past young men inherited lands and other property and skills to continue in a traditional way, but the disintegration of the old way of living means the present generation have little to transmit to their children. Lacking the initial capital and resources so essential to become a successful farmer-fisherman, the disillusioned youth have turned to the quick profits of wage labour that takes them away from home. Some young Point Lancers accumulate enough capital in seasonal work away from home to finance themselves in the fishery but are reluctant to do so. They regard the fishery as an unclean, miserable occupation with long, irregular hours and uncertain economic rewards. Most of these youth would prefer to live in Point Lance if they could find local jobs for wages. For most of them such a prospect is highly unlikely. A portion of Point Lance's youth -- probably a minority -- support the notion of a revived economy and appear committed to living and working in Point Lance. Fish and farm prices were never better, and there is government support for such efforts. It is on the shoulders of these young people that the future of Point Lance rests (1976, 56-57).

Like the crisis of resettlement, which caused a break in tradition that subsequently inspired many to revive traditional values, another crisis, the international anti-sealing protest that focused on Newfoundland in the 1960s and 1970s and attacked the traditional occupation of the seal hunt because of allegedly inhumane killing methods provoked a defensive response that again drew on a proud past for ammunition, for Newfoundlanders perceived the protest as a direct threat to their identity.

The seal hunt, even though of no great economic value by the 1960s, had long been considered an important component of the distinctive Newfoundland lifestyle. Beginning on a commercial basis in the early 1800s, it grew dramatically over the following decades and increased the importance of the outports. It offered one of the rare opportunities to earn cash outside the fishing season and gave rise to a new class of sealing skippers and traders (Prowse 1895, 450-2). The rich folklore, however, that had evolved in the more remote parts of the British Isles around the human-like qualities

of seals, did not carry over to Newfoundland, where seals are simply valued as a basic resource for fur, meat and fat. Instead sealing itself, a dangerous activity in a challenging environment, became the source of much folklore; many songs celebrated the struggle for survival, the acceptance of hardships, disasters, death, which were familiar aspects of this occupation (Scott 1975).

In the 1920s the visiting writer George Allan England spent six weeks on two sealing steamers to experience "the greatest hunt of the world," which he subsequently celebrated in a book dedicated "For the strongest, hardiest, and bravest men I have ever known -- The Sealers of Newfoundland." He admired, romanticized, and glorified Newfoundland sealers much like quintessential noble savages:

Vikings of the North -- that is how I think of the livyers. Newfoundland has its rich folk and its cultured ones aplenty. With them I am not concerned. I am thinking, writing only of the types who catch the cod and hunt the seal; the obscure, patient, tireless ones who live and labour by the chill and fog-bound northern waters; the poverty-bitten, humble, heroic, cheerful, truly pious, and indomitable men who gamble with death, and who all too often lose (1924, 269).

Much later Cassie Brown presented a very different picture of the seal hunt in a painstakingly reconstructed and documented account of the sealing disaster of 1914 that left over a hundred men stranded on the ice for two days and nights, many of whom died. Her contrasting, realistic tale is one of greed, of subhuman living conditions, and of flagrant disregard for human lives (Brown and Horwood, 1974).

Because of the hardships and dangers it involved, participation in the seal hunt came to be regarded as a test of manhood, a rite of passage for young Newfoundlanders. The symbolic value of the seal hunt increased after participation had peaked and dropped from at most 10,000 men in the nineteenth century to 5,000 in the early twentieth century (Busch 1985, 74). The number continued to decline to about 2,000 in the 1920s, and to less than 100 in the 1970s. Nevertheless, "... the seal fishery was part and parcel of the Newfoundland economy and culture. In both the expressive and material culture its influence spread throughout the whole island" (Ryan and Small 1978, 10-11).

Ironically the seal hunt began to attract the attention of conservationists, a major international movement of the 1960s and 1970s, after this activity was already much diminished and posed no threat to the survival of the seal population. At first concerns



were limited to the apparently cruel killing method by clubbing, which consequently was regulated by the Canadian government. Then a second wave of protest in form of emotional appeals in the media created an international outrage. Attacked on moral and ethical grounds by increasingly organized, sophisticated, urban anti-sealing groups, Newfoundlanders felt isolated and were put on the defense. This affected the educated elite as much as "the folk," and they united against the threat from outside. English professor Patrick O'Flaherty, for example, raged at "... the annual barrage of mindless abuse that we have to endure, as a people, during the seal hunt" (1979b, 23). He noted that the arrival of a chic and muddled crowd, including actresses and hired stewardesses, began to signal spring each year in St. Anthony, a center for the seal hunt, as they were "blundering idiotically around the ice fields, well fed and well funded" (1979b, 23).

At first bewildered and amused, then offended, Newfoundlanders eventually began to react to the protesters. They, too, exaggerated when they resorted to justifying and rationalizing the seal hunt in their traditional expressive forms of songs and poetry.<sup>44</sup> In 1978 the publication of a collection of sealing songs and poetry, *Haulin' Rope and Gaff* (Ryan and Small), was demonstratively celebrated on board the sealing ship *Lady Johnson II*. After 30 years the sending-off ceremony for the sealing fleet was revived in St. John's and attracted 4,000 people in a display of support that included official speeches and prayers, salutes of church bells and ship horns (Lamson 1979, 48-9). Recourse to folklore, to argue by reason of tradition, became the defense when faced with this external threat to their identity.

O'Flaherty blamed softened urban attitudes for the sentimental attachment to dumb animals; the anti-sealers had become alienated from "... the traditional, vital labors of common people in rural settings, whose hands are dipped daily in ocean, soil and blood" (1979b, 23). Refusing to accommodate these "alienated, uprooted urban sentimentalists," for whom the seal fishery is of no economic consequence, he defended the distinctiveness of the Newfoundland lifestyle:

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<sup>44</sup>Cynthia Lamson has explored these forms of protest in her MA Thesis, Department of Folklore, Memorial University, which was subsequently published by the Institute of Social and Economic Research in 1979.

Our destiny is not to become assimilated into some melting pot. It is instead, if we can judge from our experience so far, to go on in our own way and build on what we have, using all our resources on land and sea (1979b, 24).

Linking Newfoundlanders with their ancestors on this rock, O'Flaherty emotionally claimed that the killing of animals is a natural activity and concluded an essay he wrote, ironically, for the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of confederation, with an appeal to the sense of own worth, feeling of manly fulfilment and independence offered by the old outpost, "Newfoundlanders are fish and seal killers yet. ... we raise our bloody hands in pride together" (1979b, 24). Thus the attack on the seal hunt was perceived as an attack on Newfoundland's heritage and was countered by exaggerating traditional values. Building on a long history of resentment and fear of outsiders, the anti-sealing protests eventually became a cultural nationalist issue which mobilized sentiments for 'the people' and against a common foe. The press and the politicians subsequently made the defence of the seal-hunt a popular issue (Overton 1979, 239).

By the 1980s the boycott had become almost totally effective because of the lack of alternate markets for seal skins. Environmental principles challenged and threatened traditional occupations; financially independent protesters dealt with people who still relied, or wished to think that they did, on the exploitation of nature for their survival. Positions were clearly overstated in an issue that drew much emotional response on either side. In the process, the identity of Newfoundlanders was threatened when they were negatively portrayed by the international media, for the seal industry was more vital to their self-image than to their economy. It is precisely the marginal nature of the seal hunt that made it important in symbolic terms and drew it into the realm of folklorism. Instead of being remembered realistically as an occupation that involved hardships and misery, the seal hunt symbolized the opportunities for adventure and heroism that supposedly express the Newfoundland spirit; it was valued more for psychological than economic reasons.

Meanwhile, however, the tide has changed and to some extent the Newfoundland seal hunt has been repudiated. Excessive activism by Greenpeace and like-minded groups have in some cases victimized human beings, while various animal species that were to be protected have proliferated to a degree that again threatens the "natural balance." By the mid-1980s the media, including the influential German magazine *Der*

*Spiegel*, began to report on the plight of the sealers (Wiedemann 1986). Seals, in fact, never were an endangered species and their population rapidly increased when they were no longer hunted. Among other factors, such as over-fishing by international offshore fleets, seals are now being blamed for the dramatic decline of fish stocks in Newfoundland waters. Natural conservation pursued with more sentiment than logic thus can reverse roles in the global environmental crisis.<sup>45</sup>

While resettlement and the anti-sealing protests were threats to their identity imposed from outside over which they had little control, many Newfoundlanders who decided to leave the outports in search of better employment opportunities elsewhere found their sense of identity threatened by dislocation. Of the estimated 200,000 Newfoundlanders who have emigrated to mainland North America about 50,000 live in Toronto, where many of them behave much like an ethnic minority. They carefully cultivate a semblance of the culture they left behind and tend to endow anything that reminds them of Newfoundland with symbolic meaning. Harold Horwood has called Toronto *The Biggest Outport* and has noted that Newfoundland participates each year in the *Toronto Caravan*, an exposition of ethnic minorities, as the only Canadian province to claim such a status (Horwood 1979, 8).

When Robert Klymasz investigated Canadian immigrants from the Ukraine he found that traditional food, music and costumes have remained important for minority groups under pressure in their new environment because folklore provides an escape mechanism and a means to differentiate their identity from that of the mainstream culture (1973). In Toronto Horwood similarly discovered a lifestyle reminiscent of traditional Newfoundland, complete with old fashioned stores as they now only exist in the remotest of outports. Some emigrants have lived here for thirty years without losing their affinity for Newfoundland while they remember and cultivate their traditions as if frozen in the past. About six "Newfie" clubs serve Screech, a brand of rum bottled in Newfoundland, and Newfie beer, fish and brewies, molasses duff, the occasional scoff, for in exile "[Newfies] are fanatical about their own special foods which, more than

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<sup>45</sup>An attempt to compensate people for the loss of income from the now defunct seal hunt in form of organized tourist excursions by helicopter to the spring ice to view newly born seal pups, proved somewhat irrelevant for it did not benefit the former seal hunters, but an entirely different class of entrepreneurs who conducted these tours mainly out of Prince Edward Island and the Magdalen Islands.



anything else, set them apart from other Canadians" (Horwood 1979, 9). As commonly experienced by refugees and immigrants, food has a particularly high symbolic potential and foodways tend to be preserved longer than any other aspect of folklore that demonstrates regional identity (Tolksdorf 1982, 226-8).

For Newfoundlanders living in Toronto music, however, is quite as important, with a preference for visiting Newfoundland performers who play the traditional fiddles and accordions and help perpetuate this thriving minority folklorism. The very success of the *Downhomer*, a monthly paper published in Toronto with a circulation of 40,000 copies that features Newfoundland news and human interest stories interspersed with advertisements related to Newfoundland goods, which features the slogan "Serving Newfoundlanders Wherever They May Be," is further proof of the continuing attachment Newfoundland expatriots cultivate for their home province and of their refusal to give up that identity even while participating in the mainland economy.

Such romantic attachment to a home left behind often becomes a source of creativity. As noted, for example, in the German tendency to produce sentimental *Heimat* songs and films (Bausinger 1980) in reaction to more or less forced emigration, while living on the mainland the popular Newfoundland writer and songmaker Arthur Scammell similarly began to reconstruct the outport experience he remembered from his childhood in anecdotes that portray life in the old outport as a pastoral idyll, a product of the selective process achieved by distance over time and space and a sentimental imagination (O'Flaherty 1979a, 152-4). David Jones, too, an amateur singer whose performances at the Brimstone Head Fogo Island Folk Festival I observed in 1985 and 1986, wrote his most popular song during his "exile" on the mainland from 1969 to 1977, when he tried to convey his nostalgic longings for Fogo Island to new mainland friends:

There is an island in the sea  
that keeps calling out to me  
for it's in my dreams both night and day.  
That's the place where I was born  
and I lived for so long  
on the little isle of Fogo, my friend.

So I left my home town  
just to travel around

to see how the people lived their lives.  
 But I found no friends so close  
 as the ones that I loved most  
 on that little isle of Fogo, my friend.

Now Joey said you've got to go  
 off the island where it's so cold  
 leave our homes and move us to some distant shore.  
 But the people they said no  
 that they did not want to go  
 from that little isle of Fogo, my friend.

For the people that lived there  
 after work all through the year,  
 in order to live on that land,  
 through the summers they would fish,  
 in the winters they would hunt,  
 on that little isle of Fogo, my friend.<sup>46</sup>

The outport had remained Jones' spiritual home while he experienced alienation and dissatisfaction with life in the city.<sup>47</sup> Ironically Jones, who eventually felt so homesick that he returned to Newfoundland, is too young to have been personally confronted with the threat of resettlement. Moreover, when interviewed he expressed only pity for the hard life of a fisherman; he much prefers his job as a building supervisor in Lewisporte with weekends off, which allows him to visit Fogo Island frequently. Obviously it is far easier to maintain a positive view of life in an outport if experienced occasionally as leisure time, rather than confronting the everyday problems of a traditional existence in economically depressed times. By referring to a lifestyle that he admired and glorified from a distance, but in reality considered no longer viable for himself, Jones participated in folklorism without, however, reflecting on the discrepancy inherent in his attitude.

In the 1960s and 1970s the regional cultural identity of Newfoundlanders was influenced by their vulnerability to outside factors. The traditional existence was threatened not only by adverse economic conditions, but also by the cultural leveling process of Canadianization, by resettlement policies that uprooted whole communities,

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<sup>46</sup>Taped interview MUNFLA®C9426/85-041

<sup>47</sup>See also Overton 1984, 86-91.

and by attacks from outside, as during the anti-sealing protest. All of these factors contributed to feelings of insecurity that often lead to folklorism as a means to strengthen a fragile sense of cultural identity. For similar reasons folklore has been an important dimension of the regional and local identity of all of Atlantic Canada (Rosenberg 1977, 79). In Newfoundland the most visible sign of coping with these adverse circumstances was a sudden flourishing of indigenous arts, the celebrated "Cultural Renaissance" of the 1970s, a phenomenon Korff has described as cultural over-compensation for a lack of economic development and political status compared to the dominant culture, when "inner riches" in form of arts, language, poetry, are substituted for material success to build new confidence and pride (Korff 1980).

Subsequent media attention helped to overcome the negative stereotype of the "Newfie" within Canada. Sandra Gwyn, for example, enthusiastically reported for *Saturday Night* (1976): "Only yesterday Newfoundland stood for cod and Joey Smallwood; now it stands for some of the freshest, brashest, most compelling art in the country" (1976, 40). She coined it the "Newfcult phenomenon," compared this cultural blossoming to Quebec of the early 1960s, and commented that Newfoundlanders had discovered "that their life force flows out of their folk tradition. Celtic and passionate, funny and tragic, salty and earthy" (40). The sudden abundance of indigenous theatre, writers, painters, musicians, inspired her to claim: "Newfoundland artists are creating a visual mythology for their own time and place" (44).

The very exaltation of Sandra Gwyn's writing was not wholly appreciated, but brought an angry response, among others, from strongly patriotic Newfoundland writer and journalist Ray Guy, who long continued to call Newfoundland a "country" and has devoted much of his satirical writing to the traditional outports. Guy resented that Newfoundland was first "Snickerized" by Newfie Jokes, then "Patronized" and finally "Lionized" by the rest of Canada, which exploited Newfoundland as a new cultural product (1978). Surprised Newfoundlanders in their outports began to realize that they had been "discovered." Most of them, however, still took their own culture and folklore for granted and differed from the "professional Newfoundlanders" who had brought attention to the island in that they were more interested in acquiring mainland-style bungalows and cars and often preferred imported country music to their own folksongs.



While they were eager to catch up with the consumerism of the rest of Canada, traditional life in the outports became romanticized by the media, and cultural issues were promoted and funded by the government. Imitating earlier European attitudes of glamorizing the peasant class, "Newcult" dwelled on the dichotomy between the educated middle class and "the folk," in this case the fishermen, the former imposing ideas of what the folk ought to be on the unsuspecting, somewhat unwilling latter. Such excessive interest in the Newfoundland folk culture inspired the criticism of Lin Jackson, another patriotic Newfoundland writer, who recognized the elitist bias inherent in this form of folklorism:

And so the culture promoters who visit our villages and our whales on field trips or summer holidays have managed to turn ordinary people like ourselves into sacred cows. They see us as noble savages; heroes and heroines of "authentic culture." For them we are an endangered species; they want to do everything to keep things the way they are: to shield us from all social and technological change, to encourage us to go back to our old ways, to stay simple, to refuse progress, to remain in the embrace of "unspoiled nature." It makes them sleep better at night (1986, 4).

By the 1970s Newfoundlanders thus had experienced several distinct phases of folklorism inspired by their political, social and economic situation and influenced by more general trends in the western world. So far folklorism affected mainly the upper classes, including an educated elite, who valued and romanticized a past, an essentially outdated lifestyle, that they had already left behind. Here the Newcult phenomenon indicates a certain postmodern irony in that the new conservative nationalists had profited from modernization by acquiring better standards of living and better education; but along with this welcome process they acquired an attitude to lament the passing of a culture that made their occasions for protest also occasions for emphasizing cultural tradition (Habermas 1983, 7-8). Thus the course of the 1970s set the stage for an unprecedented flourishing of phenomena related to folklorism that became a pervasive force to affect the Newfoundland folk culture more generally. Major aspects of folklorism in Newfoundland in the last decades of the twentieth century and their implications are explored in the case studies that constitute the remainder of this thesis.

## SUMMARY PART II

By providing a broad interpretation of Newfoundland's history that includes both academic and popular perspectives, Part II of this thesis shows that Newfoundland's peripheral, isolated location, its relatively homogeneous population and complex history at the margin of larger powers as well as its relative economic underdevelopment and resulting inferior status as a Canadian province proved conducive to the development of folklorism. The emergence of a Newfoundland identity was based on the traditional lifestyle of the outports that up to the 1950s closely resembled that of an ideal folk society; on the occupation of fishing and the stereotype of the "hardy, happy fisherman" even though the economic importance of the traditional inshore fishery and the saltfish trade declined drastically in the course of the twentieth century; and on the consciousness of being an independent country. In addition the perception of being exploited by outsiders, beginning with a sense of neglect by the mother country, Britain, fueled nationalism in the nineteenth century. This movement was carried by members of an educated urban middle class who optimistically believed in progress and modernization even while they romanticized the fisherman as basis of their distinct identity, much like Europeans regarded their peasant class. Folklorism in Newfoundland was first practiced by this elite, who had become distanced enough from the traditional rural lifestyle to make it a symbol of the past, a sentimental counterworld that could serve as focus for nostalgic as well as nationalistic impulses.

Because of the collapse of the saltfish trade followed by extreme economic hardships and the loss of political independence, Newfoundlanders suffered a crisis of identity in the early twentieth century. In reaction, this inspired Joseph Smallwood, journalist and radio broadcaster, to emphasize and cultivate the folk culture, to refer to the past in order to build self-esteem and a sense of proud heritage in Newfoundlanders; the practice suggests the purposeful ideological folklorism fascist leaders adopted in Europe before World War Two.

As a politician, however, who led the new Canadian province as its premier from 1949 to the 1970s, Smallwood strongly advocated industrialization and consequently has been blamed for abandoning the traditional culture. Moreover, the eventual failure of many of these industries perpetuated the sense of being exploited by outsiders.

Compared to other Canadian provinces, Newfoundland remained poor and underdeveloped, which by the 1970s caused another reaction that drew again on the past for inspiration. A result was the celebrated "Cultural Renaissance," a flourishing of indigenous arts as a form of folkloristic overcompensation for low political and economic status. Artists drew inspiration from past traditions and out of the deep resentment generated by the controversial, government-encouraged resettlement program that had left many outports abandoned. Another crisis, the international anti-sealing protest directed against Newfoundland, brought a revival of traditions associated with the seal hunt in defense of the Newfoundland identity. Such folklorism is part of a general phase of development, a cultural coping mechanism during times of socio-cultural disruption as experienced, for example, in the transition from pre-industrial to industrial society, which in Newfoundland occurred late and was never quite complete. Here folklorism is both an expression of positive identification with the past and rejection of modernization.

Part II thus illustrates the influence of folklorism as an important factor in the creation and maintenance of a distinct Newfoundland identity, as well as in the reaction to specific social and economic conditions that threatened this endemically fragile sense of identity, including the loss of political independence, underdevelopment, resettlement, out-migration and the anti-sealing campaign. Newfoundlanders responded by exaggerating their traditional culture which in reality had become marginal in the context of the dominant industrial society. Folklorism that refers to a past that is no longer relevant, however, was first the privilege of an affluent and educated elite, those who had left the outports and the traditional lifestyle behind, who wanted to preserve their sense of heritage by cultivating these traditions in others, in "the folk," a situation that indicated pronounced class differences which prevailed until the 1970s.



**PART III**

**CONTEMPORARY MANIFESTATIONS OF FOLKLORISM  
IN NEWFOUNDLAND**

**A - CULTURAL INTERVENTION**

## **The Academic Community and the Folk Culture of Newfoundland**

This chapter examines the nature of the extraordinary scholarly attention the folk culture of Newfoundland has received, and its consequent influence on "the folk" through the feedback process that is an important aspect of folklorism. Specific examples of the influence of folklore scholarship on the folk culture of Newfoundland are investigated in the chapters "The Cultural Revival of the French Newfoundland Minority" and "Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland," while the chapter on "Folk Festivals" explores the combined roles of organizers, funding institutions and "the folk" in the preservation and revival of folklore. In section B the essentially postmodern phenomenon of tourism and its implications for the process of folklorism are examined in theory, "Folklorism and Tourism," followed by specific examples of recent tourism developments in Newfoundland in the subsequent chapters "Tourism as Generator of Folklorism in Newfoundland" and "Screech-Ins." As diverse as the subjects are that make up Part III of this thesis, they focus on a common theme, on the continued nostalgic and romantic appeal of Newfoundland folk traditions of the past and their conscious cultivation, which first gave rise to a distinct Newfoundland identity and which continues to generate contemporary forms of folklorism.

For academics in the 1960s rural Newfoundland presented a fascinating enclave of "pure" folk culture apparently uncontaminated by processes of modernization, a discovery that created amazement, excitement, and inspired collecting efforts comparable to those of nineteenth century antiquarian scholars who culled what they considered "survivals" of folklore from unsuspecting European peasants. The Department of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland itself was conceived in the 1960s out of a sense of urgency to record the passing of a culture at a time of rapid transition to a modern economy. Consequently from the beginning the major thrust of folklore studies in Newfoundland has been the documenting and archiving of Newfoundland folklore.

Like the Canadian folklore institution at University Laval in Quebec, the Folklore Department at Memorial University has remained insular in its preoccupation with the folklore of its immediate region, rather than extending its mandate to the rest of

anglophone Canada. Neither of the institutions has gained a reputation for original theoretical contributions. Instead the fact that they were established in areas alienated from the dominant Canadian culture indicates that "... a prominent, if not dominant motivation for much folklore scholarship in Canada has arisen from a sense of political, economic, and social inferiority" (Henderson 1973, 103). This sense was particularly pronounced in Newfoundland, which had joined Canada as late as 1949 and had remained at the margin of power, never quite achieving the economic prosperity and sociocultural status of the other Canadian provinces. As explored in Part II of this thesis, such a situation fosters a psychological retreat to a past that is perceived as more agreeable than the present, and by comparison offers a sense of identity and security. It further encourages an emphasis on indigenous cultural resources as a form of overcompensation for economic underdevelopment, a phenomenon that in this case resulted in the Cultural Renaissance of the 1970s, as discussed in the previous section, which did much to raise the appreciation of Newfoundland within Canada.

But the folklore of Newfoundland attracted scholarly interest well before the Department of Folklore at Memorial University was established in 1968. As early as 1894 George Patterson of Nova Scotia introduced folklorists to the peculiar dialect and folklore of Newfoundland when he read his "Notes on the Dialect of the People of Newfoundland" at a meeting of the Montreal branch of the American Folk-Lore Society. He followed this with a number of publications in the *Journal of American Folklore* (1895 to 1897).

Subsequent scholarly collecting activities in Newfoundland focused particularly on the rich folksong tradition -- a tradition that, however, had already become the subject of native amateur collecting and publishing efforts. For example, Johnny Burke produced and freely distributed songsters around the turn of the century and *The Old Time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland*, collected and published by local businessman Gerald S. Doyle, importantly influenced the folksong repertoire of Newfoundland during the early twentieth century.<sup>48</sup> Neil Rosenberg has claimed that Newfoundland's folksong scholarship, if conceived as the product of a nascent awareness of a national character,

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<sup>48</sup>The songster appeared first in 1927 and saw four subsequent editions until 1978. For a discussion of these publications see Paul Mercer, *Newfoundland songs and ballads in print 1842-1974* (1979).



culture or soul, started with Doyle, who used both printed sources and fieldwork to compile four editions of his songsters that included advertisements for his products and thus served cultural as well as commercial interests (1989, 48). Doyle's second edition of the songster, printed in 1940, added musical notation to the texts. It reached an unusually wide audience because many of the servicemen from Canada, the United States and Britain, who were then stationed in Newfoundland, took these songsters home as souvenirs (Rosenberg 1989, 52).

A first outsider to collect folksongs was Elizabeth Greenleaf, an American graduate of Vassar College, who had come to Newfoundland in 1920 as a volunteer teacher for the International Grenfell Association, a missionary organization established by Dr. Wilfred Grenfell to service isolated regions of Labrador and northern Newfoundland with medical and educational support (Rosenberg 1989, 48). Because she had become familiar with the discipline of folklore at her university, she recognized the "collectible" quality of the singing tradition she encountered in the isolated outpost where she taught:

I listened without particular interest, until it suddenly dawned upon me that he was singing a real folk-song, one handed down by oral tradition. At college I had listened delightedly to ballads as I had heard them sung by the Fuller sisters, Professor John Lomax, and others, not expecting ever to hear them sung by one of the folk (Greenleaf and Mansfield 1968, introduction).

It was not so much the singing itself, but the scholarly defined "folk" nature, indicating something "authentic" and "quaint," that first attracted her; her surprise and excitement to discover "the folk" singing a folksong indicates an elitist appreciation of folklore in the original context after having first encountered it in an artificial, secondary setting. While local singers are aware that these songs relate to the past, her reaction, "this is a real folksong," included further intellectual reflection, introducing an element of conscious evaluation to the tradition of singing folksongs in Newfoundland, an attitude that changes the function of such folklore from mere entertainment and communication to one of representing a rare and old quality that therefore was considered worth preserving and collecting.

Accordingly Greenleaf began to seek out such songs and wrote them down, an activity she continued when she returned to Newfoundland the following year. In 1929 she was joined by a trained musician, Grace Yarrow Mansfield, on a fieldtrip supported by Vassar and encouraged by the respected folklorist George Lyman Kittredge. This

was considered a pioneering event: "The original venture ... illustrates the attitude of the modern college in placing the product of learning as its main business, not confined merely to classroom routine." It was further hoped that "... their venture may stimulate others to carry on this work, especially where fields equally new and uncultivated can be found."<sup>49</sup>

Greenleaf and Mansfield collected 185 ballads, songs, and dance tunes from a variety of sources, including printed songs from broadside sheets and Doyle's songster (Rosenberg 1989, 49). Beyond text and tune, the excellent introduction to the published collection provided the context and social setting in which these songs were collected, which made it an unusually complete study for its day that continues to be valuable. The collection also made scholars aware of Newfoundland as a haven of folklore, as indicated by MacEdward Leach's foreword to the 1968 edition of their book: "If a folklorist should be given the opportunity to create an ideal folk region, he could hardly do better than to duplicate Newfoundland." He argued that poverty, considered a seed-bed of folklore, resulted in "... extremely rich, highly exciting, remarkably uniform folk culture" (Greenleaf and Mansfield 1968, foreword).

In his essentially romantic scholarly enthusiasm for such pure raw material Leach neglected more humanitarian concerns; viewed from the safe distance of an academic occupation, poverty and backwardness could be considered blessings for the sake of scholarship. In his own collecting activities Leach nevertheless found fault with this nearly ideal Newfoundland "folk":

The great significance for folklorists of this region is the fact that there is a culture closer to a pure folk culture than perhaps any other in North America ... Unfortunately, however, this is not a 'good' folk culture. It is not good, because it is static and not creative in any way (1965, 12).

In his opinion Newfoundlanders failed not only in comparison with the "highly creative" Scottish folk culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but also proved negligent of the heritage left them by their English, Irish and Scottish ancestors: "... much they have imperfectly preserved; much they have not understood and as a result have garbled" (1965, 12).

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<sup>49</sup>Preface by H. N. MacCracken, Greenleaf and Mansfield, edition of 1968.

Leach's attitude of preferring a "pure" tradition differs little from the observations of Maud Karpeles, who earlier expressed disappointment at the lack of folksongs in Newfoundland that fit her criteria, specifically materials of English derivation. The disciple of Cecil Sharp, she came to Newfoundland in 1929 and 1930 to collect English folksongs, a project she had originally planned together with Sharp before his death. Her collection, however, was published as a book as late as 1971, and consequently had less influence on the scholarship and on the popular awareness of folksong in Newfoundland than the more comprehensive Greenleaf and Mansfield collection published in 1933 (Rosenberg 1989, 49). Karpeles considered the active tradition of making new songs specific to Newfoundland experiences and concerns of little esthetic value, but admitted: "If one looks at this collection as a whole, one's feeling of wonder at the persistence of tradition is renewed" (1971, introduction). Hoping to exert a beneficial influence on the quality of the Newfoundland folk singing tradition, her publication was to help the singers "to restore to them their confidence in the value and beauty of the songs which they and their forefathers have treasured and which have in the past afforded so much pleasure" (1971, 20). Thus Karpeles essentially continued Cecil Sharp's work, concentrating exclusively and narrowly on British-derived songs in a "paternalistic-colonialist approach to collecting" (Carpenter 1980, 115).

Subsequently Kenneth Peacock engaged in a major folksong collecting effort in the 1960s, and he, too, liked to think that he was completing the research Cecil Sharp planned for Newfoundland. At the same time he was well aware of the increasing popular appeal of folksongs, of "that growing army of young folksong enthusiasts who are finding new meanings in old traditions" (1965, xx) and edited and selected his materials to create readable and singable (rather than scholarly precise) versions of the best and most representative songs. His publication was to be a source book not only for professional singers and musicians, or scholars such as musicologists and historians, but also for the general reader (1965, xx); essentially it was tailored to suit the folksong revival movement. "The search by discerning professional folksingers for a more authentic approach comes at an opportune moment, for folkmusic has suddenly become big business in North America and will have to compete with the other commercial products of the music industry" (1965, xxiv). Though he noticed the respect



urban Newfoundlanders began to show for outport traditions, a factor he considered vital for the conservation of its unique culture, he also acknowledged an inherent paradox "... while most urban (and would-be urban) Newfoundlanders are busy aping the latest fads and fashions of the mainland, researchers like myself are travelling about the outports bringing back Newfoundland's only authentic culture to the mainland's 'avant-garde' coffee-house cultists" (1965, xx). Thus the "authentic" quality of Newfoundland's folksongs provided source material of great appeal to folksong revivalists, while in the early 1960s Newfoundlanders were not particularly interested in cultivating or marketing their folksong heritage.

As Peacock anticipated, however, the published scholarly collections of Newfoundland folksongs eventually did contribute to the local revival and popularization of Newfoundland music, particularly in the context of the Cultural Renaissance of the 1970s. Peter Narváez has described how in 1974 he found rock drummer Noel Dinn perusing Peacock's three volumes of *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports* in order to develop arrangements for his newly formed folk rock band *Figgy Duff*. Known for their original interpretation of traditional materials, *Figgy Duff* used public collections as well as their own fieldwork to develop a musical repertoire which has earned them a national reputation and led to comparisons with the *Chieftains* from Ireland (Narváez 1982, 11). Their records, international tours and media appearances have made *Figgy Duff* the best known of numerous revivalist musicians active in Newfoundland since the 1960s. At the same time the collection of numerous folksongs which still exist in traditional context continues, notably with folklorist Kenneth Goldstein, who together with a number of collaborators has produced systematic field recordings across Newfoundland since 1978 (Rosenberg 1991, 160).

While folk music was the first folklore genre to attract scholarly attention from outside (with the exception of Patterson's early essays on the Newfoundland dialect and folklore), since the 1960s the Newfoundland folk culture in general has become the subject of scholarship. After Memorial University received its charter at the time of confederation in 1949, the study of the regional culture was considered extremely important. E. R. Seary, head of the English Department since 1954, acted on a special sense of urgency because of the rapid Canadianization Newfoundland underwent

during the first decades of confederation. He emphasized the responsibility to study subjects pertaining to Newfoundland, in particular the regional language and literature, place names and family names, including folklore, local history, biography (Macdonald et al. 1975, 6). His essay on "Regional Humanism" expressed concerns familiar to all folklorists, "... in an age of rapid and violent change the need to preserve these traditions is of paramount importance if our heritage is not to be forgotten" (Seary 1966, 15). Moreover, in the spirit of the Canadian ideal of multiculturalism, he stressed that local, regional interests are essential to the country:

... nowhere in the English-speaking world, as far as I know, with one exception, do universities respond to that passionate concern for local interests felt by the Irish, the Afrikaner, the French-Canadian. The exception, need I say, is the Memorial University of Newfoundland in which in recent years a modest beginning has been made with the help and goodwill of the Regents and of the Canada Council (1966, 14).

Seary was not only instrumental in establishing departments of linguistics and folklore at the university, but he emphasized regional studies that encourage cooperation between, among other disciplines, history, sociology, geography, anthropology, linguistics, folklore. These studies ultimately were to serve academic purposes as well as to benefit the communities, indicating that Seary anticipated the applied aspects of such work and that he was concerned with the social relevance of the proposed research. As part of his mandate, Seary hired the American folklorist Herbert Halpert.

Halpert had become familiar with folklore research when he recorded and catalogued folk music and folksongs for the American Federal Writers' Project One, under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the depression years of the 1930s and 1940s. After the Second World War Halpert collected more folklore while he taught and administered at two small colleges in the United States. He became particularly skilled in encouraging students to collect from their own traditions, activities which he hoped would instill a sense of pride and a new appreciation of their culture. In turn Halpert collected from his students, who could provide him with context and "insider" information that usually eludes the researcher. He regarded his students' work as an untapped source and encouraged them to publish, occasionally adding his own

annotations and comparative notes to such projects.<sup>50</sup> With his emphasis on context Halpert's teaching went beyond academic practices of that time, and his attempt to instill pride and appreciation in the indigenous culture makes the teaching style he developed interesting in terms of the feedback (*Rücklauf*) process indicative of folklorism, i.e., the intellectual awareness of folklore scholarship he raised among his students and their Newfoundland informants. At the same time his emphasis on both preservation and encouragement make him an early advocate of cultural conservation.

Halpert first came to Newfoundland during the Second World War when he visited the air bases at Stephenville and Gander as part of his duties as an information and education officer of the United States Army. Even under those circumstances he noticed the active storytelling tradition and began to write down stories, hoping to return at a later date. The memory of this early collecting experience helped him decide to accept the position offered in the English Department in 1962 when he was contacted by Seary from Memorial University.

During his first year at Memorial University Halpert taught English, but introduced some folklore exercises. By the second year he taught a small folklore course and began field trips to collect folklore. He realized only in hindsight that these early field trips, which indicated the incredible richness and variety of Newfoundland folklore and were meant to become part of further systematic fieldwork, became instead salvage collections, for the traditional lifestyles changed rapidly over the next few years (Halpert 1991, XIV-XV). In addition, Halpert participated in devising questionnaires given to all students of the compulsory first and second year English classes on such topics as names, mummering, Christmas customs, proverbs, dialect, children's rhymes and games. Distributed before the Christmas vacation, this resulted in about 1,250 responses from across the island, "a fabulous batch of material."<sup>51</sup> Eventually other departments followed suit and developed similar questionnaires.

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<sup>50</sup>Interview of Herbert Halpert by Carole Henderson, St. John's, March 25-27, 1970, tape MUNFLA C3673/78-57.

<sup>51</sup>Taped lecture by Herbert Halpert, Folklore Department, Memorial University, St. John's, Folklore Society Brown Bag Lunch November 11, 1982, "Early Years of the Folklore Department." MUNFLA tape C5999/82-286.



In 1968 the university created a separate Department of Folklore to be headed by Halpert. As a teacher, Halpert again asked his students to collect from their own background, considering research by a native insider of tremendous advantage.<sup>52</sup> Subsequent class discussions of their collections became a means to obtain comparative material. Essays on "the old days" or topics such as "growing up in my community" were emphasized to capture the transitional stages of urbanization Newfoundland was undergoing. Ideally Halpert hoped to educate students to interpret their own material, and encouraged them to learn and adopt various approaches of the Social Sciences.

An interview conducted with Herbert Halpert in 1970, two years into the history of the Department of Folklore, conveys a feeling of tremendous excitement and enthusiasm.<sup>53</sup> He found himself not only in the midst of what must have seemed a goldmine of traditional folklore, but it was also a time of cooperation and much interest in folklore among his academic colleagues at Memorial University, as well as of generous financial support from Canada Council and the university, which enabled the department to acquire portable recorders, tapes, files. With characteristic verve Halpert explained at the first conference of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada in 1977:

I have had no trouble convincing Newfoundlanders of the genuineness of my feelings about their traditions and that I do not regard these traditions as quaint specimens to be examined with amused astonishment. I undoubtedly lean over backward and shame St. John's "townies" into proving to me that their traditions are just as good as those of the "baymen," i.e., the outport students. Any supercilious outlander who gets into our folklore graduate program soon realizes that we regard him as one starved from having no vigorous tradition of his own. Of course, if he then proves to us that he does have a traditional background, we occasionally admit he is almost as lucky as a Newfoundlander (1977, 7).

Throughout his collecting activities Halpert emphasized social role and meaning and eventually trained native scholars to do emic analyses, including Lawrence Small and Wilfred Wareham, who later became faculty members (Carpenter 1980, 121). Overall, however, the department has been dominated by American and British scholars. Aware of his own preferences and the need to provide his students with a diversity of approaches to folklore, Halpert hired Neil Rosenberg in 1968 to assist with

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<sup>52</sup>Interview by Carole Henderson, MUNFLA tape C3674/78-57.

<sup>53</sup>Interview by Carole Henderson, March 25-27, 1970, MUNFLA tapes C3673 and C3674/78-57.

teaching and to take professional care of the new Memorial University Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA). This housed collections by Halpert and John Widdowson, an English linguist teaching at Memorial University, who became Halpert's student and collaborator, as well as the student collections, tapes, "survey cards," and questionnaire responses accumulated since 1962. Primarily considered a research institution, the archive is designed to preserve an important part of Newfoundland's traditional culture, to provide a survey of the kinds of folklore available in Newfoundland and to make these materials accessible (Halpert and Rosenberg 1976, 110-111).

Under Halpert the major thrust of the Department of Folklore was eclectic traditional collecting. He encouraged every student to experience fieldwork, preferably "at home" by recording the passing of a culture from older relatives and neighbors. Most of the early collections placed in MUNFLA were produced by students. Access was to be limited to scholarly purposes, excluding casual visitors and the popular media. Such rules were to prevent exploitation of the folklore materials. This reveals academic privilege, considering the fact that the material was originally collected from "the folk." Inevitably the selective use of such folklore archives is part of cultural politics, even if their institution is based on idealistic principles. But while the wider public was denied direct access to the original materials housed in the archive, a publication series of potentially popular appeal was initiated and records and sample tapes of some of the holdings were planned to provide feedback of their folklore to "the folk" in digested and edited form:

We feel strongly that exposure to genuine traditional singing and storytelling as well as to other traditional modes of performance is important for Newfoundlanders themselves, some of whom are only faintly aware of the rich varieties of Newfoundland's expressive culture. Such records will also demonstrate Newfoundland's unique cultural contribution to the Canadian mosaic (Halpert and Rosenberg 1976, 113).

In addition, popular interest in folklore has always been high in radio and television programs produced in St. John's that deal with such outport traditions as seasonal customs and traditional occupations. Halpert occasionally appeared in the media and several of his students participated, for example, in an educational radio broadcast series including such topics as festivals and mumming (Laurel Doucette and Martin Lovelace, 1975-6).

When Halpert became Henrietta Harvey Research Professor of Folklore in 1973 and Professor Emeritus in 1979, he stopped teaching regularly. Since then the collection emphasis has changed, reflecting the less "purist" attitude of archivist Philip Hiscock, which was encouraged in the 1980s by Director Neil Rosenberg and Associate Director Peter Narváez. The archive now increasingly includes such items of popular culture as newspaper clippings, radio scripts, copies of commercial recordings made by Newfoundlanders. Meanwhile the use of the archive as well has become less restrictive. From 1984 to 1986 non-academic researchers have included actors, researchers of genealogical or community history, writers for the Labrador regional journal *Them Days* and for *Readers Digest*. Since then the archivist has noticed that media from all over North America, including daily newspapers, are increasingly interested in these folklore materials and that schoolteachers in particular are asking more frequently for information about folklore as well as how to collect folklore.<sup>54</sup> This confirms the growing demand among modern, industrialized people for "authentic" folklore, a pre-industrial, rural heritage, which makes Newfoundland an increasingly popular source of inspiration for folklorism.

Beginning in the early 1970s the folklore faculty and their corresponding interests expanded. For example, from 1971 to 1974 David Hufford as researcher and teacher pioneered work in the area of folklife and belief with his study on the Old Hag phenomenon (1982); Peter Narváez has investigated the role of the media and the relationship between folklore and popular culture (1986); Neil Rosenberg has researched folk music revivals. Overall, folklore studies at Memorial University now approach the ideal proposed by Moser in 1964 that folklore scholarship should register all aspects that form part of a certain area of folklife (1964, 44-45). At the same time graduate students in folklore at Memorial University have been accepted from outside of Canada and represent a correspondingly international range of interests.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Information provided by archivist Philip Hiscock.

<sup>55</sup>Together with three fellow students, who began the Ph.D. programme in Folklore with me in 1982, I was encouraged, however, to choose a topic related to Newfoundland and all of us have researched and written theses on aspects of the Newfoundland folk culture.



By September 1991, about 6,700 collectors were listed in the archive, representing about 8,500 collections; the number of informants was estimated to be 12,000.<sup>56</sup> This, however, represents only part of the collections, as from the 1970s on students had a choice whether or not to deposit their essays in the archive. According to archivist Philip Hiscock, now only about 60% of the collections received in the archive are handed in by students. Although the influence of such collecting activities on the population and on their perception of folklore can only be guessed at, the sheer volume of collectors and informants applied to such a relatively small population group as Newfoundland's approximately 600,000 inhabitants is bound to significantly raise the awareness of their folklore among them.

Rosenberg has admitted that the enthusiasm and support given to the fledgling Department of Folklore had its drawbacks. Being studied by folklorists -- or for that matter by anthropologists or sociologists, who simultaneously "discovered" Newfoundland in the 1960s -- became symbolic of economic deprivation, and was perceived by some Newfoundlanders as one more example of exploitation from the outside, comparable to the strip-mining of yet another non-renewable resource (1978, 3). Moreover, the very act of studying and collecting folklore by outsiders reinforces this most conservative element of culture (Rosenberg 1978, 7). Conservatism, however, should not be encouraged by folklorists when confronted with economic and social hardships, though the status quo may be considered ideal by such "purist" researchers of the past as the song collectors Maud Karpeles and MacEdward Leach. The solution sought by Kenneth Goldstein, who pays his singer-informants a token amount of money, remains a problematic ethical issue and can hardly be afforded by financially strapped students.<sup>57</sup> Many potential informants are aware that such research is supported by grants and some have shown distrust when approached by interviewers, expecting that their information will be turned into profit according to the familiar pattern

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<sup>56</sup>Information provided by archivist Philip Hiscock, September 17, 1991.

<sup>57</sup>Kenneth Goldstein discussed this problem as guest speaker at a "Brown Bag Lunch" organized by the Folklore Society at Memorial University, Summer 1985.

of Newfoundland's dismal economic history.<sup>58</sup>

The folklore collected and preserved by folklorists, moreover, may become the raw material for a variety of uses over which they ultimately do not have any control. At worst, folklore may provide techniques for domination and manipulation that serve the dominant social system; or it may be used for commercial purposes, such as in tourism enterprises (Kramer 1986, 42). Martin Scharfe has argued that the obviously privileged situation of tax supported scholars calls for public responsibility as a logical consequence, because their work inevitably effects society even if subject to misunderstandings and distortions. Scharfe suggests there should be:

less Latin, less jargon, and above all clear popularization. Still better, there must be a democratization of science, so that the number of recipients who understand is as large as possible. The articulation of our intent must be so clear as to kindle reason (1986, 90).

Discussing the situation in North America, Archie Green has arrived at a similar position by pointing out that, stated or not, folklorists hold philosophical positions and tend to accept mainstream norms and the dominant ideology:

Within their home of liberal thought, cloistered folklorists have occupied many parlors: self-conscious antiquarianism, sentimental romanticism, show-business hucksterism, Anglo-conformism, melting-pot fusionism, cultural pluralism. A few souls have also wandered to radical closets. On the whole, we have not explored attic or cellar links in the terms "folklore" and "ideology," nor have we identified the hidden value positions of progenitors. Whether we tag ourselves variously as teachers, journalists, curators, archivists, preservationists, presenters, or cultural documentarians, we feel, in the 1980s, that we cannot escape our chosen mission of explaining American tradition. To articulate appreciation of language and literature, of art and artifact, prepares us to shed "ideology" of its negative connotation and to understand this word in its technical sense. Precision in language is prelude to clarity in ideological position. Ultimately, American scholars spin the fibers of popular sovereignty and democratic equity, of enlightenment rights and communal needs. While interpreting the folk's cultural emblems, folklorists also embroider diverse ideological banners (1986, 358).

Even if folklore studies in Newfoundland have concentrated on seemingly innocent academic pursuits, such considerations are nevertheless important in view of the role folklore has played in the formation of a distinct Newfoundland identity and in the various nationalist movements explored in part two of this thesis, as well as in the

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<sup>58</sup>A case in point is an incident related by Jane Burns, whose attempt to interview a cab driver in St. John's proved abortive (1979, 79-87). I, too, encountered some raised eyebrows and barely concealed hostility when I introduced myself as folklorist at social occasions in St. John's in the early 1980s, shortly after my arrival in Newfoundland.

transformation of Newfoundland into a tourist destination, as discussed below. The all but overwhelming presence of folklorists on this island must ultimately be matched by a sense of social responsibility and active engagement in cultural matters. These considerations fit with such issues raised by folklorism as the realization that folklorists themselves are major users and perpetrators of folklore in secondary, reflected and purposeful ways.

As mentioned before, along with folklorists, social scientists of neighboring disciplines (foremost sociology and anthropology), discovered Newfoundland in the early 1960s as a veritable social laboratory where it was possible to study the processes of a pre-industrial society entering the modern industrial world, processes that were no longer evident elsewhere in North America. In 1961 the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) was formed as part of Memorial University to become one of the first social science research institutes in Canada. Its interdisciplinary efforts to investigate the social fabric of Newfoundland began with a series of descriptive community studies based on the field experience of six research fellows who each spent a year in a specific community. They provided inspiration and field material for the anthology *Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland*, the first major study to come out of the Department of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland.<sup>59</sup> By the mid-1960s ISER expanded its role, expecting the data collected to be of value to economic and social policies.<sup>60</sup>

Toward the end of the 1960s comparative research spread beyond Newfoundland, while one of the major foci became a study of the resettlement program requested by the government, as mentioned above in the chapter on "Newfult and Nostalgia." New publication policies and the extended research mandate indicate the proliferation of social science research in Newfoundland. In the 1970s ISER sponsored a great deal of activity bearing on the complementary nature of "applied" and "pure" aspects of research in the social sciences. The list of publications reached 54 titles in 1989, which indicates the importance empirical social research has achieved at Memorial University,

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<sup>59</sup>ISER Report No. 1, 1961-63. See also below, chapter "Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland".

<sup>60</sup>ISER Report No. 2, 1963-65.



as well as the interesting research situation Newfoundland continues to provide.<sup>61</sup> Faced with a deepening economic crisis that affected not only the fisheries, but even the papermills and mines, by the 1990s the social and practical relevance of research sponsored by ISER was emphasized even more.

Occasional grants have made ISER a major supporter of folkloristic research in Newfoundland and Labrador, while research funds available to the Department of Folklore have steadily declined over the past decade compared to the initial generous support provided in the late 1960s and during the 1970s. To some extent the presence of ISER, with its emphasis on applied work, allows the Department of Folklore to remain more "purely" academic. It must be noted, however, that since Halpert's headship the subjects studied have expanded to include such topics as popular culture and public sector work. Moreover, basic folklore courses taught in the Department of Folklore, which attract many undergraduate students, have the potential to increase the awareness of a common cultural background, a distinct identity, and to create greater understanding among Newfoundlanders of different walks of life.

The educational efforts of the Department of Folklore include a publication series initiated in 1975 with the autobiography of a fisherman, Victor Butler, edited by folklorist Wilfred Wareham.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, in the late 1970s the local publisher Breakwater Books began "Canada's Atlantic Folklore and Folklife Series," which by 1991 listed sixteen volumes.<sup>63</sup> The series is intended for a general readership and presents images of the past in form of life histories, memoirs, community studies.<sup>64</sup> The first volume of the series, a collection of songs and poetry of the Newfoundland seal fishery by Shannon Ryan and folklorist Lawrence Small, amounted to a political gesture when it was published amidst world-wide anti-sealing protests to reaffirm and validate a threatened

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<sup>61</sup>ISER reports Nos. 3 (1965-68), 4 (1968-71), 5 (1971-74), 7 (1981-84), and 8 (1984-1989).

<sup>62</sup>The book was reissued in 1980 by Breakwater Books.

<sup>63</sup>Volume sixteen is an anthology that celebrates the twentieth anniversary of the Department of Folklore, *Studies in Newfoundland Folklore: Community and Process*. Eds. Gerald Thomas and J.D.A. Widdowson, 1991.

<sup>64</sup>Breakwater books catalogue 1989.

aspect of the traditional Newfoundland culture (1980).<sup>65</sup> It is important to realize that many revival efforts lean on popularized folklore scholarship made available in publications which can define and shape perspectives, values and tastes.<sup>66</sup> Certainly it is no accident that Breakwater Books, as well as a number of rival local publishers of Newfoundland materials, were thriving during the 1980s while the Peckford government cultivated a neo-nationalist mood that looked to the past for inspiration.<sup>67</sup> Newfoundlanders thus had ample occasion to be exposed to the feedback process identified by Moser (1964), when folklore is returned to "the 'folk' in digested, edited, published form as part of the folklorism process.

One of the major scholarly projects to which the Department of Folklore and MUNFLA contributed was the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, published in 1982 after twenty-five years of interdisciplinary research. Essentially the dictionary culminates the interest in the peculiar language visitors have long noted, including George Patterson in the 1890s.<sup>68</sup>

It is the purpose of the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* to present ... the regional lexicon of one of the oldest overseas communications of the English-speaking world: the lexicon of Newfoundland and coastal Labrador as it is displayed in ... sources which range from sixteenth century printed books to tape recordings of contemporary Newfoundland speakers (xi-xii).

Beyond its scholarly value, the publication of such a dictionary serves to confirm and emphasize the distinctly regional quality of the Newfoundland culture. The wide popularity the dictionary achieved within a short time further indicates a major shift in attitude from the period of Canadianization of the 1950s and 1960s when speaking the

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<sup>65</sup>See also above, chapter "Newfcult and Nostalgia."

<sup>66</sup>See also David Whisnant 1983, 15.

<sup>67</sup>The influence even minor publications can have was exposed by Swedish folklorist Nils-Arvid Bringéus, who had published a short folkloristic study of the legend of a sunken churchbell in his home community. This not only revived the legend, but also inspired a street name, a new coat-of-arms, the design of the T-shirt worn by the local youth band and furthermore moved a local composer to write a march. Finally someone replaced the "lost" bell of the legend with a new one (Bringéus 1982, 56-7; also Newall 1987, 137).

<sup>68</sup>See also above, chapter "The Development of the Newfoundland Myth."

dialect was strictly discouraged in the schools.<sup>69</sup> By way of a prestigious, scholarly publication a former source of shame was turned into a status symbol, emphasizing the unique identity of Newfoundlanders as based on their folk culture. Beyond this validating effect, however, by placing the language in written form, the dictionary also freezes folklore in time that was and to some extent still is part of living, changing oral tradition. It is a further step towards making folklore a self-conscious, rather than a self-evident part of the folk culture. The fact that a popular song was composed entirely from material out of the dictionary by the singing duo Simani also indicates that the dialect is newly, more consciously appreciated.<sup>70</sup>

In Canada folkloristic research tends to be funded by government agencies; consequently monies that become available, for example when multicultural policies were instituted under Trudeau in 1971, are expected to be used in research that legitimizes existing cultural policies, which inevitably influences what is being studied and published (Carpenter 1978, 55-8). Thus in Quebec, at Laval University, about one hundred and twenty-five folklorists were directly or indirectly employed by the government in the 1970s, at a time when only a few teaching positions were available to anglophone folklorists throughout Canada (Carpenter 1978, 60). According to Elli Kõngas-Maranda, folklore then became a tool to create a Quebec identity. Not only did poets and singers use folklore for nationalistic ends, the published work of folklorists was widely read. This had various unexpected results:

... a book is published on Quebec architecture; a picture in that book raises the real estate value of each house depicted by 20-50%; house agents run around with the book under their arm. Another entrepreneur publishes on beliefs and customs; the book is a non-book containing little annotation, and some of it dishonest; the book sells like hot cakes. Folklorists can no longer cope with the popular demand. Their only means of controlling the chaos is to try to do better research, to hold up the standards of scholarship, to give back to the people what is rightfully theirs, but adding to the materials their proper understanding (1978, 34).

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<sup>69</sup>Folklorist Wilfred Wareham has discussed that fact as an indication of the feelings of inferiority prevalent in Newfoundland at that time.

<sup>70</sup>Simani's "A Cramped Song" is featured on their album *Outport People* of 1985, see discography. Folklorist Gerald Pocius has studied the singing duo and their song material and has lectured and written about their phenomenal success (1988). See also the chapter on Mummung.



Here folklore unwittingly becomes a marketing tool, vouching for "authenticity" that raises demand and value of a commodity such as real estate, which illustrates that the work of folklorists can have unexpected results beyond their control. While folklorists in Newfoundland so far have not inspired such blatantly commercial use of folklore among their fellow citizens, they exert some influence beyond scholarly teaching and publications, when they are asked to appear in the media or to contribute their musical talents to festivals. For example, in 1990 and 1991 folklore archivist Philip Hiscock wrote weekly columns of *Folklore* topics for the regional Sunday paper, some of which stimulated responses from his audience.<sup>71</sup>

Folklore work in Newfoundland, mainly characterized by enthusiastic collecting and a fascination with unusually rich and recent sources of folklore, has helped to instill students and many of the Newfoundlanders who became "informants," as well as the Newfoundland public at large, with a new interest in their folk culture. As a consequence of this work, now many among the "folk" are well aware of their folklore. Folklorism begins when folklore becomes a self-conscious, rather than self-evident, element of culture. In the situation of Newfoundland, where a folk heritage is increasingly emphasized, the process is all but inevitable and must be recognized by those who continue to research, teach and publish in this changing environment.

Specific examples of folklorism to which folklorists have contributed, are explored in the following chapters on "The Cultural Revival of the French-Newfoundland Minority" and on "Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland."

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<sup>71</sup> *Sunday Express* [St. John's]. Among the media activities, several folklorists have contributed to the CBC radio program *Goose Bumps* featuring jazz, country and folk music. A former folklore student has become a CBC radio reporter and producer. I was asked in 1982, shortly after my arrival in Newfoundland, to participate in a radio show on international Christmas customs.

## The Cultural Revival of the French Newfoundland Minority

In this chapter the revival of a minority culture is investigated as a coping strategy that fills a vacuum created by low social and economic status, an essentially defensive reaction that focuses on the revitalization of cultural riches pertaining to a pre-industrial past to achieve a new sense of identity and pride. In this case the process of folklorism combines a number of agents, including folklorists, cultural politics, international folk music enthusiasts, the mass media, thus representing an example of the complex forces that influence folk cultures today.

From the early twentieth century on the collection of francophone traditions has been emphasized, beginning with Marius Barbeau, who dominated the discipline of folklore in Canada from the National Museum in Ottawa until the 1940s. His influence is still felt at the folklore institute at University Laval in Quebec, established in 1944, where the collection of French oral traditional material is well supported financially (Henderson 1973, 193). But while the cultivation of the folklore of francophone Quebec was vigorously pursued (Handler and Linnekin 1984), the small French minority of Newfoundland was neglected until the 1970s, when favorable government policies and the interest of folklorists combined to encourage its cultural revival.

Of mixed Acadian and Breton origin, French Newfoundlanders constitute less than one percent of the population and are concentrated on the Port au Port Peninsula on the west coast of the island. Distributed mainly among four small communities, about 1,500 people still speak French every day.<sup>72</sup> During her fieldwork in the 1920s, Elizabeth Greenleaf found Gaelic and French songs in the southwest coast area that were "only waiting for a collector with knowledge of these tongues" (1968, xxv), and in 1959 and 1960 Kenneth Peacock again noticed their folksongs (1965, xxii-xxiii).

After the English conquered the French in the second half of the eighteenth century, several generations of French Newfoundlanders lived isolated on the Port au Port Peninsula. English settlers, however, began to move in at the turn of this century. By the late 1920s all education was provided in English. When the Americans built an

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<sup>72</sup>The communities are Cap-St.-Georges (Cape St. George), La Grand' Terre (Mainland), Maisons-d'Hivers (Winterhouses), and L'Anse-à-Canards (Black Duck Brook).

air base in nearby Stephenville in the 1940s, the use of English was emphasized even more and speaking French in public became a subject of ridicule while the ruling powers encouraged assimilation. Consequently the people of the Port au Port Peninsula tended to stick to themselves and predictions were made in the 1960s that their language would not survive the next twenty years (Abbott 1989b, 14-15).

Such expectations were proven wrong, however. Among other factors that contributed to the revitalization of what had clearly become marginal traditions, Gerald Thomas, the first of Herbert Halpert's students to receive a graduate degree in Folklore at Memorial University in 1970, took an interest in that area. He had been trained in Renaissance French and was well qualified to study the culture and language of French Newfoundlanders. As Halpert's student and disciple, it became Thomas' goal to inspire a sense of identity among French Newfoundlanders and to document their language, which had evolved for over a century without formal education and was now believed to be on the verge of disappearance.

In 1975 Thomas began a separate archive, Le Centre d'Etudes Franco-Terreneuviennes (CEFT), at Memorial University and expressed as his goal to strengthen the identity of French Newfoundlanders. Founded under the auspices of the Department of French, it houses mainly research material accumulated by extensive fieldwork on the Port au Port Peninsula and the private library of Gerald Thomas. CEFT has remained a separate institute emphasizing the traditional language and culture of French Newfoundlanders, but engages in some collaboration and cross-referencing with MUNFLA. Archive functions include promoting the appreciation and understanding of this minority culture.<sup>73</sup>

Thomas began his work on the Port au Port Peninsula at a critical time. While the French language and culture had previously been regarded with disdain, by the 1970s new bilingualism policies brought federal funds to the area. These policies supported language minorities and tried to preserve their language and culture. Accordingly, since the 1970s several local francophone associations have been formed who effectively campaigned for French education. They also revived the "Fête de la Chaleur"

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<sup>73</sup>CEFT brochure, 22-25.



(Candlemas) custom and established an annual French folk festival, "Une Longue Veillée."<sup>74</sup> By the 1980s the francophones of Newfoundland had access to French radio and television from Moncton and Montreal, they produced their own monthly newspaper, "Le Gaboteur," and they were planning a community television program. Within two decades they had learned to assert themselves (Abbott 1989b, 16-17). The young have adjusted to that situation and some among them learned French as a means to gain access to jobs and money as much as because of any attachment to their language and culture.<sup>75</sup>

Thomas has expressed the hope that his book, *Les Deux Traditions*, based on his Ph.D. thesis on the story telling traditions of the Port au Port Peninsula, will contribute to the newly discovered interest and pride in the language and culture of French Newfoundlanders:

Avant toute autre chose, le présent livre veut rendre aux Franco-Terreneuviens une partie de ce qu'ils m'ont donné librement et généreusement. J'espère qu'il contribuera à la revalorisation de leur identité qui, brimée si longtemps, semble avoir atteint le seuil d'un épanouissement nouveau (1984, 20).

Although Thomas spent much effort to preserve and validate the French Newfoundland culture and particularly the language, real effects of his work on "the folk" are difficult to measure. There is no doubt, however, that Gerald Thomas has profoundly influenced the life of his major informant, Emile Benoit, who features prominently in *Les Deux Traditions* as representative of the public storytelling tradition that once was a vital part of French Newfoundland culture. Emile, as he was popularly known, was a man of many talents and when he was discovered at an already advanced age in the 1980s, his skills as a fiddler and composer made him the most famous French Newfoundlander, a symbolic figure for that culture.<sup>76</sup>

For much of his life Emile, born 1913 of French and Acadian ancestry, was a subsistence farmer and fisherman. He grew up in a musical family and by the time he was sixteen years old he regularly played the fiddle at traditional social occasions in the

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<sup>74</sup>See also below, chapter "Folk Festivals."

<sup>75</sup>Personal communication from Geraldine Barter, November 27, 1986.

<sup>76</sup>Emile Benoit died September 1992.

vicinity of his home in Black Duck Brook. Eventually he composed his own tunes, inspired by events and encounters in his life, which were added to the traditional local repertoire. His career as a fiddler beyond that narrow home environment began when he was sixty years old, in 1973, after he won second prize at a fiddling contest in Stephenville. From then on he appeared at folk festivals and similar events in St. John's, Ottawa, eventually across Canada, in the United States and even in Europe. He has performed on radio, television and film and has recorded two solo albums.<sup>77</sup>

Gerald Thomas first befriended Emile Benoit at the 1978 Newfoundland and Labrador Folk Festival in St. John's.<sup>78</sup> At that time the Department of Folklore was headed by Kenneth Goldstein, who advocated the active involvement of folklorists to help shape such events. Accordingly, Thomas took care of the visiting French Newfoundland performers. While Emile Benoit became his informant as a narrator, Gerald Thomas began to act as Emile's manager in musical matters, taking care of the paperwork aspects of his career, arranging performances at various festivals around the country, even at times soliciting work for him. Thomas claims that at least in the beginning of his public career Emile needed some protection, as he seemed "like a fish out of water" in such contexts.

Thomas considers his role as a catalyst as an extension of his academic work. In a symbiotic relationship, Thomas obtained an object of study to further his academic career, while he helped to accelerate a process that provided Emile Benoit with extra income and public recognition for his entertainment talents, a situation he obviously relished after a life of hard work. In the dissertation he wrote on Emile's creative abilities, Colin Quigley has explicitly claimed that Emile's performances should not be considered folklorism, for he continued to play the fiddle as before wherever and whenever possible, and that Emile simply moved his act to larger stages (1987, 156). With that comment Quigley apparently felt compelled to stress the "pure" folk quality of Emile's performances as compared to folklorism, revealing the all too common bias among folklorists that folklorism is a negative concept and that supposedly "pure,"

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<sup>77</sup> *Emile's Dream* and *Ça Vient du Tchœur*, see discography #3 and #4.

<sup>78</sup> The following information is based on an interview with Gerald Thomas, St. John's, June 28, 1985, MUNFLA tape C9422/87-001.

uncontaminated folklore is still the preferred object of study, rather than accepting folklorism as a neutral indicator of changing perspectives and functions. Emile, however, clearly participated in folklorism as he pursued a new career that took him well beyond the narrow communal context where his art first evolved, but where it was not as greatly appreciated as by the new audiences he reached on stage and via the mass media.

Aside from the new performance context, and the fact that he now spent several weeks each year on the road to play at different folk festivals, Emile essentially remained a farmer and fisherman typical of the older generation of French Newfoundlanders. Besides his fiddling he often performed jokes and storytelling in the kind of broken English that only a few years ago would have been considered a source of embarrassment, but that became a distinguishing feature for Emile as he acted out the stereotype of the traditional French Newfoundlander in lively performances on stage.

One example of Emile's relationship with Gerald Thomas bears special interest in terms of folklorism. In his capacity as Emile's manager Gerald Thomas was asked in 1985 to negotiate Emile's participation in a film to be produced for Expo 1986 in Vancouver by Walt Disney Enterprises. This hour-long film of 360 degree format was to consist of ten minute regional sequences from across Canada. Because of its remarkable scenery the Newfoundland outport Baie de Verde on the Avalon Peninsula was chosen to represent the Atlantic Provinces.

Thomas went along to the filming to take care of Emile's needs. When the local musicians originally scheduled to accompany Emile experienced difficulty playing with him, Thomas arranged to replace them with such well known professional folk revival musicians from St. John's as Noel Dinn, Kelly Russell, and Christina Smith. All of them, as well as Gerald Thomas and folklore student Colin Quigley, who happened to be on hand and fit the director's idea of typical Newfoundlanders, assumed certain poses in an old net loft to film forty-five seconds worth of "typical" outport entertainment to follow the blessing of the local fleet filmed earlier.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>See also Quigley 1987, 161-162.



Obviously no one expects a Walt Disney production to be a documentary. The selective process, the enhancement of ordinary activities by replacing the local fiddlers with particularly gifted, even professional performers to "portray" a typical fishing village are indicative of the process of folklorism, which makes such locations and events larger and more attractive than real life. It is particularly ironic, however, to include a member of the small French minority and two folklorists in a film that imitates an "authentic" event. The result, an "essentially false yet powerful image of traditions in Newfoundland" (Quigley 1987, 162), pleased the California film producers, who expected to show the film to about ten million visitors at the 1986 Expo in Vancouver, and to one hundred million more viewers over the next ten years at Disneyworld in Orlando, Florida. Authenticity is typically pretended in such folkloristic entertainments that are tailored to suit a public whose preferences have long been studied. Moreover, audiences will likely perceive this film as a generic product devoid of reality, for North American consumers have long become accustomed to the exaggerated claims of advertisements and the standard formulas of commercial entertainments that characterize postmodern society. The mayor of Baie de Verde nevertheless hoped that this film would attract tourists to his outport, and Gerald Thomas expected that it would further Emile Benoit's career.

The relationship of Gerald Thomas and Emile Benoit included both friendship and patronage. When Emile performed outside his accustomed context, he clearly benefited from the help Thomas could provide. While it is not uncommon that a relationship between folklorist and informant turns into a friendship, it is unusual that a folklorist adopts the role of managing his informant's career. Thomas, in turn, has used Emile as an articulate, rich source of information and he has brought many of his folklore students to Emile's house in Black Duck Brook, which became a base for folklore research. Together with his wife Rita, Emile, who was considered somewhat of an outsider in his own community, thus has influenced folklorists' perception of the Newfoundland folk culture and has inspired, among other academic work, the above mentioned dissertation written by Colin Quigley (1987).

Through his own talents and Thomas's patronage, Emile Benoit achieved an unusual measure of fame and fortune and was able to step outside the boundaries of

his own folk culture at an advanced age. Among other awards, he was given an honorary degree at Memorial University in 1988 in recognition of his role in keeping French Newfoundland music alive and expanding its repertoire (Abbott 1989a, 18). Essentially Emile owed his second career as a fiddler to exceptionally favorable circumstances, including the influence of the worldwide folk music revival, of which the cultural renaissance in Newfoundland was part, the national interest in francophone communities, governmental "multicultural" policies, and the presence of folklore collectors, fiddlers and folk music enthusiasts (Quigley 1987, 65).

Because of his exposure to the media and his high profile appearances as a cultural representative, Emile has not only become the most visible and best known French Newfoundlander, but he now epitomizes the traditional Newfoundland fiddler even to international audiences (Quigley 1987, 160). According to Quigley, younger Newfoundland revivalist musicians have adopted his original compositions and consider them a distinctive "Newfoundland" music, whereas the music of other fine folk musicians can be traced to Scottish, Irish or French Canadian sources. Because the social and political context of the revival movement placed a high value on indigenous materials, Emile's own compositions became an important influence on future generations of Newfoundland musicians (Quigley 1987, 157). Newfoundland folk music thus has been importantly influenced by one particularly gifted folk musician.<sup>80</sup> Again, processes of folklorism and of folklore are intertwined as Emile's music is simultaneously shared informally by the community of regional folk musicians, but also reaches much wider, more remote audiences through the technology of commercial recordings and the mass media.

Meanwhile the Port au Port Peninsula itself has remained an area of extremely high unemployment at the periphery of an already marginal province. Some of the residents have become "more French" in order to be eligible for the government funds that support the Francophone Associations and the festival "Une Longue Veillée."

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<sup>80</sup>It must be mentioned, however, that at about the same time Newfoundland fiddling was similarly influenced by Rufus Guinchard, an English-speaking Newfoundlander, whose age, career and influence closely matched that of Emile.

These are efforts to insure the continuation of the French language and culture.<sup>81</sup> Marina Simon, Présidente, Les Terre-Neuviens Français, stated this clearly in her address published in the festival program of 1985:

Salut,

Au nom de Conseil d'administration des Terre-Neuviens Français, je veux vous souhaiter la bienvenue a notre 6e festival folklorique. Ce festival est très important pour nous car il est l'outil par lequel nous cherchons a promouvoir notre culture au reste du pays.

Il y a treize ans de cela, ce festival n'aurait pas été possible, parce que le français a Cap St. Georges et ailleurs sur la péninsule, était pratiquement éteint. Avec la fondation de notre association en 1971, il y eût un nouvel espoir pour la culture française a Terre-Neuve. J'espère que ce festival saura vous interesser et que vous garderez un bon souvenir d' "Une Longue Veillée".

Je veux remercier tous les artistes qui ont participe a ce festival soit ceux de la Nouvelle-Ecosse, du Nouveau Brunswick, de l'île du Prince Edouard, des îles de la Madeleine, des îles St. Pierre et Miquelon et enfin ceux de la région de la Baie St. Georges. A vous tous que avez contribue a faire de notre festival un succes, merci beaucoup. Je termine en remerciant les visiteurs, notre audience fidèle a notre rendez-vous annuel.

The revival includes elements of the French Newfoundland folk culture that had become obsolete, as for example the carding and spinning of wool performed by Veronique Simon at "Une Longue Veillée" in 1985. The many visiting French Canadians from outside the province as well as French performers from St. Pierre and Miquelon made it a show of French solidarity beyond a regional celebration. Local talent consisted mainly of older fiddle players and the Cape St. George dancers, who performed sets of well practiced French and Acadian dances on stage. While these are part of Acadian traditions, coordinated costumes of green and white and the polished performance made the dances attractive show pieces beyond any simple entertainment and indicated pride in the revitalized folk culture. The festival ended rather grandiosely with fireworks, proving that, indeed, it was well-funded.

"Une Longue Veillée" takes place in early August, a convenient time for tourists, and in particular folk music fans, to visit the area.<sup>82</sup> These could be expected to make the festival a commercial success. In 1985, however, the festival failed to attract the large, faithful audience that had been anticipated. A new event on the west coast, the

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<sup>81</sup>Private communication from Geraldine Barter, November 27, 1986.

<sup>82</sup>Interview with Colin Quigley, Corner Brook, August 5, 1985, MUNFLA tape C9424/87-001.



"Humber Valley Strawberry Festival," had been scheduled simultaneously and competed for the same visitors. Moreover, relatively high entrance fees in this poverty stricken area and an apparent lack of enthusiasm for their traditional culture kept most of the youths of Cape St. George outside the grounds where "Une Longue Veillée" took place. Overall, the festival resembled a highly organized, professionally arranged show more than a communal event. Among the local population, the older generation seemed most appreciative of the festival, listening to the music and quietly sitting in the chairs provided for them until the last of the fireworks exploded, as passive spectators of their own heritage.

As a response to such increasingly routine, showy entertainment, the small French community of Mainland, located at the west side of the peninsula, began to organize its own "mini" festival in 1986, apparently with good success.<sup>83</sup> Here Geraldine Barter, a native of Mainland and a former student of Gerald Thomas, has done much to reactivate the French culture by founding the association "L'Héritage de L'Île Rouge" and establishing a French school. She also helped to produce *Le Gaboteur*, the weekly French newspaper which is distributed across the island and has become important even to the French community in St. John's, and she has participated in the movement to establish a local radio and television station in Mainland, a community media project based on the model of Nain, Labrador, that will provide a few hours of French programs per week.<sup>84</sup>

Barter's community-directed efforts may do more to preserve and cultivate the French Newfoundland culture than any archive or scholarly publication can achieve. Ultimately the heightened awareness native French people like Barter obtain from an education that includes folklore, who then move on to apply their knowledge, best illustrates the potential influence folklorists can exert to help "the folk" reclaim their heritage and to make it newly relevant in social and cultural terms.

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<sup>83</sup>Personal communication of Marie-Annick Desplanques.

<sup>84</sup>In September 1992, however, the center of the Francophone Association in Mainland, including all media equipment, was destroyed by fire amidst allegations of arson, indicating that the revival has caused social tensions as well as cultural benefits.

The Port au Port Peninsula, at the periphery of a peripheral province, provides an example of how underdevelopment, high unemployment and a situation of perceived inferiority can result in a defensive reaction that newly values traditional language, music and customs to the point of overcompensation. Helped along by complex external influences, including academic interest, governmental policies, international trends and the mass media, changes to the sociocultural environment occurred rapidly and drastically. The resulting revival is related to the phase of folklorism, somewhat delayed on the Port au Port Peninsula, that Newfoundland entered with the cultural renaissance of the 1970s. As a microcosm of Newfoundland, French Newfoundlanders have repeated the experience of the province in amplified version; folklorism is an intricate part of the revitalization process as French Newfoundlanders draw strength and a sense of identity from the past rather than the dismal present. While French Newfoundlanders now participate in folklorism that functions like a therapy by turning former disadvantage into a source of pride, the emphasis on their folk culture, as a further step, also prepares the way for tourism, which has become a matter of priority for the regional rural development association, making folklorism ultimately part of economic strategies to address the urgent, real problems of lack of job opportunities and poverty in the area.

## Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland

This chapter explores several phases of folklorism on the example of mumming, a custom that has been revitalized across the island and has come to be considered symbolic of traditional Newfoundland.

English and Irish settlers brought mumming to Newfoundland, where it has survived to this day in the simple form of housevisits in disguise among neighbors and friends during the twelve days of Christmas. As suggested by research Martin Lovelace conducted in England, informal house visits were once ubiquitous there as well (1980). They predate more elaborate mummers' plays, like those mentioned by Moser as a form of folklorism encountered already in fifteenth century Bavaria, where "the folk" performed such plays for the upper classes with an interest in folklore while expecting some form of payment (1962, 191). The mummers' play, a mock drama based on spiritual themes, flourished in St. John's in the early nineteenth century when it was performed by the local working class for the governor, the merchants, the clergy, until the newly emerging middle class of St. John's objected to the often boisterous, even violent aspects of what they considered a low form of entertainment. A series of incidents in the vicinity of St. John's, including a murder, led to the banning of all kinds of mummers by Act of Parliament in 1860-61. This effectively ended public performances of the play. Chesley Skinner has suggested that because the mummers' play was an affair organized by a selected group that followed conventions and necessitated rehearsals, it differed sharply from the informal entertainments at community concerts that were open to anyone with the talent and will to participate. Therefore the play was confined mainly to the more populated east and northeast coasts of Newfoundland, while mumming in form of house visits, which is essentially a separate tradition, persisted in St. John's until about 1920, and has continued even longer in the outports (Skinner 1984, 50-52; Story 1969, 172-9).

The central theme of such mummers' house visits is a guessing game, in which the identity of the visitors, who adopt ingressed speech and are disguised by masks and costumes that often reverse their gender, is to be ascertained. This allows for considerable mischief and licentious behaviour until the mummers are recognized, at which time the host is expected to reward the entertainment with drink and food. This



form of mumming survived in Newfoundland because it is particularly appropriate to small communities where people know each other and enjoy equal social and economic status. In such a context the entertainment, drinking and dancing involved in mumming are an end in itself, rather than a means to raise money (Lovelace 1980, 279).

From a Marxist perspective, Gerald Sider has claimed that mumming remained popular in the outports because it facilitated social interchanges and provided an occasion to ease tensions, as the population of traditional, fishing communities was divided into fishing crews. An important aspect of mumming as a form of social interaction therefore was the possibility to rearrange work relations in a situation of relative freedom and flexibility. According to Sider, mumming lost its social relevance and was abandoned with the introduction of wage labour (1977, 24-7; also 1986), which many Newfoundlanders experienced for the first time during the Second World War when they worked on the American and Canadian military bases that brought new prosperity to the island after the hardships of the Depression.

Subsequently, by the 1960s mumming was generally considered dead in Newfoundland, though it remained in the living memory of many as occasions for innocent fun. In nostalgically affected hindsight mumming lost the stigma of lowly, rough entertainment and earned fond eulogies:

For the most part the departure of the mummer has been deeply regretted, especially by the older people. There is a good deal of nostalgia for the days when folks made their own fun, and even though some unfortunate incidents occurred under cover of the mummer's mask they were mainly outstanding because of their rarity (Porter 1968, 32).

As a particularly colorful aspect of a rich folk culture that seemed on the verge of disappearance, mumming attracted scholarly attention in the 1960s and became the focus of Halpert's and Story's holistic interdisciplinary anthology, *Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland* (1969). The project was conceived in 1963 after Halpert attended a lecture on mumming by anthropologist Melvin Firestone. Halpert's office was then located near the Anthropology Department where several anthropologists were producing the first extensive ethnographies of Newfoundland outports.<sup>85</sup> Their year-

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<sup>85</sup>Halpert's lecture on "Early Years of the Folklore Department" November 10, 1982, MUNFLA tape C599/82-286.

long fieldwork sponsored by ISER (Institute of Social and Economic Research) in a number of outport communities allowed them to observe Christmas customs as living traditions (Chiaramonte 1969; Faris 1972; Firestone 1969). They contributed several essays to the publication that interpreted mumming as social and psychological phenomena. Additional essays provided the historical background for the changing patterns of folk customs. Halpert's own contribution was of theoretical nature, a typology of mumming which incorporated his fieldwork and the responses collected from students who completed questionnaires during the Christmas vacations of 1965 and 1966. The book traces the cultural history of Newfoundland as documented by one particular feature of its folk culture.

While these non-native academics never claimed that mumming was unique to Newfoundland, they transformed the everyday custom into something of interest. Subsequently mumming became all but a fixation for cultural research in Newfoundland. The mummers' play was even featured in school textbooks, including an issue on "Folk Drama."<sup>86</sup> The extent of the mumming complex still alive in Newfoundland until recently was assessed in a thesis by Margaret Robertson (1979) who further investigated the questionnaires filled out by students during the Christmas vacations of 1965 and 1966. Based on materials deposited at MUNFLA and her own interviews, she studied the mumming traditions of 343 Newfoundland communities and came to the result: "It seems safe to say ... that the house visit was an almost universal Newfoundland activity, that it was indeed a national custom" (12). According to these materials, the twelve days of Christmas were occasions for much drinking, dancing, rowdy and bawdy behavior, to raise hell in disguise and to play tricks, in short, generally a time of license. Under the mask of a hobby horse, for example, people chased and bit anyone they could catch (15). Robertson concludes:

On the whole, one can say that the Newfoundland mummers' Christmas house-visit was an extraordinary kind of thing. Once a year, for a limited period of time, the Twelve Days of Christmas, a whole people took turns masquerading in strange costumes and facial disguise to entertain, amuse, and frighten, but also to escape from and to reaffirm their value system (218).

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<sup>86</sup>This was produced by folklorist Lawrence Small as part of a ten volume module set on Newfoundland folk literature, written and edited by faculty members of the Department of Folklore at Memorial University, published 1983 by Breakwater Books for the exclusive use in schools. See also Pocius 1988, 61.

While the house visits never completely disappeared, conscious efforts to revive mumming focused on the traditional mummers' play, which had ceased to exist in Newfoundland for over sixty years. Performances were first organized in 1972 by the "Mummers Troupe," an experimental, political, collective theatre group that was to play an important role in the cultural renaissance of the 1970s and helped to make mumming a central symbol of that revival. Theatre then was unfamiliar to most Newfoundlanders, who lacked not only knowledge of the art form, but also leisure time to prepare such performances. Theatre traditions therefore were mainly confined to the urban population of St. John's (Skinner 1984, 62-6).

Lacking indigenous examples of the folk drama to produce their mummers' play, the Mummers Troupe adapted a version from literary and historic sources, which retained the traditional rhyming exchange and fight between the figures of King George and the Turkish Knight, who were accompanied by Doctor Hennessey to revive the dead, and included Beelzelbub, Father Christmas, and his wooden horse Old Bell (Drodge 1982, 138). Christopher Brookes, who claimed major credit for the revival of the play, described their intentions much later:

For the twelve nights of our first mummering Christmas, we tried hard to blend the old magic of solstice ritual with a more contemporary magic of theatre performance. Sometimes, amongst a handful of people in a small room at Christmas, it was fine magic indeed. Thereafter, we went mummering every Christmas until the company died in 1982 (1988, 54).

As is characteristic of folklorism, a folk tradition was selectively revived while the reference to "old magic" was deemed important and the mention of the "solstice ritual" indicates the pervasive feedback phenomenon (*Rücklauf*, Moser 1964), the trickling down of often outdated folklore scholarship to influence popular ideas of folk heritage. As overall objective, however, one of the performers stated to show that Newfoundland history was exciting, entertaining, enjoyable and "not something to be shoved away and forgotten in the museums and archives" (Drodge 1982, 26). This indicated a certain disdain for the academic work of documenting this custom, even though scholarly collecting had made available the raw materials for their show.

It is precisely the marginal quality of a custom, while it is still known but no longer actively performed, that frees it for folkloristic use. In this case the revival of mumming by a group of social activists created a more memorable, lively and convincing image of



the custom than any scholarly description or collection could convey. Introducing the Mummers' Play to a wider public raised the cultural consciousness of the artistic elite of St. John's (Pocius 1988, 61). Moreover, the combined efforts of several intellectual elites and the attention the media paid to the Mummers' Troupe, which remained at the forefront of the theatre revival of the 1970s, made Newfoundlanders aware of mumming as an image of cultural identity (Pocius 1988, 64).

While the Mummers' Troupe continued to perform mumming every year, members of the group often changed and the folk drama was periodically rewritten to suit a new cast. In the late 1970s Geoff Butler began to accompany them on the accordion, a job he performed again in 1981.<sup>87</sup> For an average of four performances each night during the twelve days of Christmas (following three weeks of practice before December 25), the Mummers Troupe performed at sites chosen because friends or acquaintances were known to have a party, or they simply drove around St. John's looking for signs that indicated a gathering, such as groups of parked cars, lights, boots on the porch. In the words of Christopher Brookes: "We mummered taverns and restaurants and the airport ... We mummered Portuguese fishing trawlers in the harbour ... We even mummered a city bus.... We were a hit" (1988, 53). "Father Christmas" would knock at the door and ask permission to come in. If permission was granted, he blew a rusty bugle and the play began. A few songs and dances followed and sometimes a hobby horse was introduced to play havoc with the hosts' sense of propriety. Afterwards the players were generally invited to share food and drink.

Geoff Butler noticed that older people, even if they were surprised by the visit, knew about mummering as part of their cultural memory, while younger Newfoundlanders often seemed at a loss how to interpret the event. He personally felt a sense of participating in something very old, though not necessarily of Newfoundland origin, "like a window to the past."<sup>88</sup> This fits the characteristic of folklorism that even newly revived folklore materials are referred to as old; the idea of ancient tradition, real or invented, adds an important quality to the event.

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<sup>87</sup>Personal communication October 29, 1986.

<sup>88</sup>Personal communication October 29, 1986.

Subsequently Geoff Butler performed again in Christmas plays as a member of the revivalist Celtic rock band Figgy Duff. That group had adopted a sense of critical responsibility concerning Newfoundland traditions and considered the revival of the play much like a moral obligation. Their interpretation of the play was mystical and serious, and while the traditional characters were retained, they added a larger cast, including a spirit, dancers, and the figure of "Orson Wild Man of the Woods." Costumes were made from twigs, barks and berries and performances were held in halls and schools rather than in private homes.<sup>89</sup>

Consistent with their strong British folk revival roots, Figgy Duff's interpretation leaned on British calendar customs. Like the Mummers' Troupe they, too, were influenced by survivalist theories which have entered popular knowledge particularly through Sir James Frazer's work, *The Golden Bough*. Moser has isolated a tendency in folklorism that whatever represents a special stage in analyzing customs within the discipline of folklore, specifically the notions of nineteenth century scholarship, eventually is regarded as canon by the popularizers of folklore even though academics have long since rejected these arguments (Moser 1964, 22). Assuming that customs in their present playful form make no sense, such popularizers attempt to reach back to presumed ritual origins. The idea that the mummers' play is a survival of a midwinter fertility rite or dates back to ancient mystery plays proved as fascinating to early scholars and their readers as to twentieth century revivalists, even though ironically in the case of mumming no such antique origin has been documented and the simple house visit is the older form (Lovelace 1980). Henry Glassie allows that agricultural fertility as a dimension of luck may well be at the origin of mumming, but in his study of mumming in Ballymenone in Ireland he found that the function has changed in modern times to provide entertainment and encouragement of community (1983, 134-5).

It can lead to excesses if too much meaning is attached to customs and their ancient origin; to successfully revive a tradition, its interpretation has to make some sense (Moser 1964, 21-2). Rather than naive and serious folk creations, some customs may well have originated as parody and exaggeration, for fun and humor have always

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<sup>89</sup>Personal communication by Anita Best, January 1987.

been important ingredients in such entertainments. In the case of the mummers' house visit in Newfoundland, for example, the usual disguises of old shirts, rags, clothes of the opposite sex are readily available in any outport without necessarily indicating a deeper level of meaning.

Yet another interpretation of "wild man" figures is offered by Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann. "Wild men" were ascribed an erotic role in the fashionable baroque and renaissance theatre of the noble class; later "the folk" adopted these roles and peasants began to mythologize themselves in "wild man" dances, reproducing the picture the upper classes had made of them (1985, 218). Here, too, the origin in upper class entertainment tends to be obscured in later years in favor of more mystical interpretations.

According to Gerald Pocius, the elaborate artistic efforts during the 1970s to revive the mummers' play in Newfoundland, which included paintings, an exhibition and newspaper articles with mumming as their theme, failed to capture a wider popular imagination (1988, 64). They did not fit the needs of most contemporary Newfoundlanders as much as those of educated members of the middle class especially of St. John's who enjoyed such performances.<sup>90</sup> By contrast, Henry Glassie has documented a successful revival of the mummers play in Ballymenone between the two World Wars that lasted more than a decade. At a time of conflict, the old tradition provided occasions to interact and functioned to achieve a more peaceful and relaxed condition for the divided camps of Catholics and Protestants. But the cooperative effort and the communal ethic essential to mumming is lost today in Ballymenone, and the now illegal custom has been reduced to a cherished memory (Glassie 1983, 136-9).

After the urban centered revivalist efforts of the 1970s that reached a relatively small artistic and intellectual audience, mumming experienced a sudden, widespread revival across Newfoundland in the 1980s. The new popularity of mumming was not based on any calculated educational or nationalistic efforts, but on a sentimental song released in 1983, "Any Mummers Allowed In?" generally known as "The Mummers Song," by the popular duo Simani (the name is derived from their names: "Sim and I"),

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<sup>90</sup>English professor Roberta Buchanan, for example, fondly remembers a surprise visit of the Mummers Troupe at her house.



which caught the imagination of "the folk" and caused a nostalgic reaction. Surprised by the instant success of his song, Bud Davidge, the songwriter, commented: "I wrote it from experience, probably the easiest song I've written. To realize after that so many people remembered the same images as I did was extremely satisfying" (Meeker 1986).

His text follows:

Any Mummers Allowed In?

[Spoken]

"Don't seem like Christmas if the mummers are not here,"  
Granny would say as she'd knit in her chair,  
"Things have gone modern and I suppose that's the cause,  
Christmas is not like it was."

[Knock]

"Any mummers allowed in?; allowed in?" (with ingressive voice)

[Sung]

- 1 Hark, what's the noise out by the porch door?  
"Granny, 'tis mummers, there's twenty or more."  
Her old withered face brightens up with a grin,  
"Any mummers, nice mummers 'lowed in?"
- 2 "Come in, lovely mummers, don't bother the snow,  
We can wipe up the water, sure, after you go,  
Sit, if you can, or on some mummer's knee,  
Let's see if we know who you be."
- 3 There's big ones and small ones and tall ones and thin,  
Boys dressed as women and girls dressed as men,  
Humps on their backs, and mitts on their feet,  
"My blessed, we'll die with the heat."
- 4 There's only one there that I think that I know,  
That tall fellow standing over long side the stove,  
He's shaking his fist for to make me not tell,  
Must be Willie from out on the hill.
- 5 Now, that one's a stranger if there ever was one,  
With his underwear stuffed and his trap door undone,  
Is he wearing his mother's big forty-two bra?  
I knows but I'm not gonna say.

- 6 "Don't s'pose you fine mummers would turn down a drop?"  
 "No! Homebrew or alky, whatever you've got."  
 Not the one with his rubber boots on the wrong feet,  
 He's enough for to do him all week.
- 7 "S'pose you can dance." "Yes." They all nod their heads,  
 They've been tapping their feet ever since they came in,  
 Now that the drinks have been all passed around,  
 The mummers are plankin' 'er down.
- 8 "Be careful the lamp, and hold onto the stove,  
 Don't swing Granny hard cause you know that she's old,  
 No need for to care how you buckles the floor,  
 Cause mummers have danced here before."
- 9 "My God, how hot is it, we'd better go,  
 I 'low we'll all get the devil's own cold,"  
 "Good night and good Christmas, mummers, me dears,  
 Please God we will see you next year,  
 Good night and good Christmas, mummers, me dears,  
 Please God we will see you next year."<sup>91</sup>

Like many of the other songs which have made Simani popular, the Mummers Song obviously did strike a familiar chord with Newfoundlanders. During the 1985 Christmas season the song was enacted for a special program of the CBC television series "Land and Sea," aired January 6, 1986, which has been repeated in subsequent Christmas seasons and is said to be the most often videotaped show in Newfoundland; it has become a media tradition in its own right.

The song provides a nostalgic description of a traditional mummers' house visit. After a sad comment that mumming is a thing of the past, the unexpected performance of the mummers is described in the most pleasant aspects of the custom. There is no rough or frightening behavior which in the past, however, was often part of mumming. The popularity of the song indicates the need of "the folk" to refer to an idealized past to reconstruct a sense of community that appears to have been lost in the recent transition to modernity, which in particular introduced more private, isolated lifestyles to Newfoundland and dissolved many of the traditional communities. The new fondness for mumming throughout Newfoundland thus also expressed an antimodernist attitude

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<sup>91</sup>Copyright Bud Davidge 1982, CAPAC. Quoted from Pocius 1988, 67-68. See discography.

that is inherent in folklorism. Moreover, Newfoundlanders now attach to mumming the significance of a symbol of their culture and their identity; it has come to be considered something unique to Newfoundland, an affirmation of cultural continuity (Pocius 1988, 79).

In the last decades, the custom of mumming has undergone three distinct phases of folklorism. The first phase consisted of scholarly interest in the relics of a custom believed to be on the verge of extinction. This encouraged cultural conservation efforts that included collecting and classifying; as a result mumming was preserved in archives and scholarly publications intended mainly for an academic audience. While these efforts had little effect on "the folk" themselves and their custom of house visits, which continued in some outports, they helped to inspire a number of artists to introduce a second phase of folklorism when they revived the Mummers' Play from written sources. Their motives were influenced by nationalism and they made mumming the symbol of a distinct Newfoundland identity.

This essentially urban revival, however, again failed to be broadly perceived beyond a limited, educated audience. Only the third phase, initiated by a commercial recording and disseminated rapidly by the mass media, the Mummers' Song, introduced folklorism to a large "folk" audience because it suited the popular taste in music, it evoked a sense of nostalgia for a fondly remembered shared folk culture and it was readily available for consumption from records and videotapes. Eventually the theme and music of the Mummers Song was used in a television advertisement to sell Purity Syrup, a locally made concentrated fruit juice that is traditionally served to children during the Christmas season. The combination of these factors suddenly made the custom newly relevant. Pocius has traced the complex inter-relationship of these various efforts at preservation, revival and popularization, which also characterizes the intricate relationship between folklore and folklorism:

While academic elites like folklorists and anthropologists may have kindled an initial interest in mumming, and revivalists like the Mummers Troupe brought this cultural form to the attention of a wider public, it was a simple composition recorded by a local band that has revived a custom beyond all expectations. Ironically, as a country and western-influenced group has indeed brought about a revival of this form of indigenous Newfoundland theatre, Chris Brookes, founder of the Mummers Troupe, has written an intellectual history of his group, to be published by the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Memorial University, the initial sponsor of academic research on Christmas mumming. And ISER is using several lines from the Mummers' Song to promote the book! (1988, 80).



The popularity of the song that introduced the third phase, however, was not simply an accident. Songwriter Bud Davidge, school supervisor by profession and cultural conservationist by avocation, takes his songs seriously:

I've always viewed the writing of our own work ... as a contribution in some small way to the culture of our province. I believe we have to create our own culture, utilizing the rich background and heritage that we have. There's nothing wrong with bringing back the old music of the past, but we must also be creative in order to keep the culture vibrant (Meeker 1986, 29).

Beyond purely commercial purposes, Simani is using folklore effectively and intentionally to both preserve and change Newfoundland folk culture. The folklorism that inspired a mass audience has the potential to become folklore, as their songs enter the repertoires of many traditional folk singers. For example, a CBC (Canadian Broadcast Corporation) Christmas program produced 1986 in the remote outport Tilting on Fogo Island, known for its active singing tradition, featured Simani's Mummers Song sung a capella by a woman along with a number of older ballads. It fit her song repertoire well and, as it seemed, naturally.

Meanwhile the song has become the inspiration for many to go mumming again. As musician Eric West discovered when he went mumming in his native outport Ladle Cove, the hosts now commonly request the song as part of the mummers' performance so that it has more or less voluntarily entered the performance repertoire of musicians who participate in mumming. Other, less musically talented mummers, however, simply bring along tape recorders and play Simani's original Mummers Song as they enter a house.<sup>92</sup>

I experienced another of the new variations of mumming in Pouch Cove during the 1990 Christmas season, when guests at a large family party sneaked into a bedroom and re-emerged dressed like mummers, timing their entrance to coincide with the playing of the Mummers Song, which they had secretly requested from the "disc jockey." They continued to behave like mummers during a house visit until the end of the song, then disappeared into the bedroom to change back into their party clothes. Other guests imitated their behaviour until the novelty wore off and the disc jockey stopped playing the Mummers Song each time a new "mummer" appeared. Some of

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<sup>92</sup>Personal communication, January 1986.

them had participated in traditional mummers' house visits as recently as two years prior to this event. The older tradition, merged with the new element of the recorded song, may well become part of that family's folklore.

Meanwhile no public Christmas party seems complete without a performance of the Mummers Song. Senior citizens were delighted when four mummers performed to Simani's music during the 1991 Christmas dinner and dance arranged for them by the Lionesses (the women's section of the Lions' Club) of Pouch Cove. Thus the conscious manipulation of folklore does not necessarily destroy folk culture, but the combined influence of academics, cultural revivalists and commercial musicians has resulted in a new appreciation of mumming and has perpetuated and strengthened the custom in an innovative, creative process.

Christmas mumming in Newfoundland has given rise to a number of phenomena related to folklorism, ranging from academic preservationist efforts to politically inspired attempts at cultural revival and to feelings of nostalgia evoked by a commercial song that is disseminated by the mass media. On a number of levels mumming has become the symbol of a happier past, of antimodernist attitudes and of a regional identity, while it continues to be practiced for entertainment and fun, for the simple enjoyment of folklore as a common hobby with a new element, the commercial song, smoothly integrated in the performance. In the case of this custom folklore and folklorism are intertwined; neither folklore nor folklorism can be studied in isolation to understand the nature of mumming in Newfoundland in the 1980s.

## Folk Festivals

Folk festivals, here understood as events built around local folk music traditions and their revival, were introduced to rural Newfoundland only recently. They are explored in this chapter as some of the best opportunities to observe the process of folklorism, as well as the reverse case, the potential of folklorism to become folklore.

The enduring universal significance of festivals is based not so much on purpose or meaning of a specific event, but rather on the occasion they provide for celebrating together and on the need for a periodic escape from life's everyday routine. Festivals primarily offer a chance for interaction and to re-establish a communal identity. It is for these reasons that festivals have continued to flourish in the Old World even after their original meaning, as part of seasonal or Christian calendar customs, has been obscured. They are extremely complex events and important social phenomena (Robert Smith 1972).

In North America, since the 1930s the "folk festival" has become the most typical of festivals. While the main function of a traditional festival was the reaffirmation of community, and the organization was therefore shared collectively among its members, modern "folk festivals" often consist of performances that are encouraged and even funded by governmental institutions. They are organized by outsiders to the community to provide education and entertainment, and to give older traditional performers a new audience, as well as a renewed appreciation of their art.<sup>93</sup>

By the early 1960s most mainstream American communities of some size had at least attempted to create their own festival. Often these originate as efforts by businessmen to improve the economic viability of inner cities that have suffered from the impact of suburban shopping malls. But even if they are conceived as economic strategies for redevelopment, such festivals can become institutions that celebrate a common history, draw communities together and express their self-image. Sheldon Smith observed "... all of the festivals blend ethnicity, history and commercial activities along with symbols of importance to the region. Furthermore, almost every component of community is brought into co-operation" (1985, 94).

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<sup>93</sup>See also Stoeltje 1986.



By 1982 Joe Wilson and Lee Udall counted 3,000 annual festivals of wide variety in the United States. These ranged from indigenous communal affairs based on a particular culture, for example religious observances and fiddlers' contests that are locally controlled and aimed at a local audience, to food fairs and commemorative celebrations that are often sponsored by Chambers of Commerce or tourist associations. Apart from such community-based affairs, festivals may be organized by outsiders, including public sector folklorists, around such themes as a museum, a historical site, or multicultural folk arts (Wilson and Udall 1982).

In rural Newfoundland until the 1950s community concerts were the major form of public entertainment.<sup>94</sup> They were usually, though not exclusively, clustered around Christmas. As described by Chesley Skinner (1984), these concerts were open to anyone willing to share his/her talent, for in the often extreme isolation of the outports people had to draw on community resources. Talent was a less important requirement than the fact that performers had to have large repertoires of songs and monologues. These events were generally fundraisers sponsored by one of the local organizations, held in a lodge, parish hall or school, and combined entertainment with communal self-help. The organizers were usually teachers, priests or merchants, educated and prominent members of the community who could afford the time to put a concert together and play the important role of master of ceremonies. The concerts featured entertainments suitable for the whole family, something for everyone, with an emphasis on comic materials. The most common songs performed at concerts, however, were not traditional Newfoundland songs, but numbers from the U.S. and Great Britain;

... the popular Newfoundland folksongs, those published in booklet form and tourist brochures, were seldom presented in a serious mode as a solo performance; these were performed as pantomimes with actors treating it more like a dialogue than song (Skinner 1984, 199).

Skinner claimed that interest in community concerts has waned considerably since 1950 and suggested that the resettlement program and the change in local school systems that resulted in the bussing of children to larger schools outside the communities are to blame for this decline (1984, 202-3).

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<sup>94</sup>Community concerts are similar to, and also known as, soirees and times, which could take the form of either private evening gatherings or public events.

Similar to the times, concerts and soirees of the winter season, the summer "garden party" of the outports evolved as a form of communal festival. Apparently adapted from the formal annual garden party of the Lieutenant Governor in St. John's, these were at first organized by the Church as summer fund raising events, primarily to help finance parish projects, such as new schools, churches, and their upkeep (Doucette 1975). The party became a welcome break during the hard work of the fishing season and moreover functioned to give the community a sense of identity and of loyalty to their priest and church (Casey 1971). Undoubtedly the informal purposes of fun and socializing, meeting old friends and courting, were more important than the official one of fundraising (Doucette 1975).

As elsewhere, the influence of the mass media changed many of the functions of earlier cultural events in Newfoundland. While the community concerts had declined, from the late 1970s on a public folk festival in St. John's offered an occasion for the performance of traditional folk culture, providing a staged context in which the older cultural forms could reappear.<sup>95</sup> Following two years of an informal "Good Entertainment" festival that involved fieldwork and celebrated newly "discovered" indigenous musicians, the first Newfoundland Folk Festival was organized August 12-14, 1977 by the St. John's Folk Arts Council, a branch of the National Canadian Folk Arts Council. Among the hosts and performers were students and faculty of the Department of Folklore at Memorial University, as Kenneth Goldstein, then Department Head, advocated they should join such activities to give them direction.<sup>96</sup> Program notes expressed the educational aim of the event: "... Through these activities we hope to create an increased appreciation and awareness of our rich cultural heritage." The audience was allowed to participate and was encouraged to learn dances and square sets from the performers. Because of its success it was decided to make the festival an

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<sup>95</sup>For a discussion on the influence of the media on the folk culture of Newfoundland see Hiscock 1984.

<sup>96</sup>Interview, Gerald Thomas, Department of Folklore, St. John's, June 28, 1985, MUNFLA tape C9422/87-001. Listed on the program were Kenneth Goldstein, Wilf Wareham, Martin Lovelace, Paul Mercer, Mac Swackhammer, Neil Rosenberg (with the bluegrass band Crooked Stovepipe), all members of the Department of Folklore as either faculty or students.

annual event.<sup>97</sup>

By 1979, its third year, Andy Samuelson became chairman of the festival and dominated the organization of the event from then until 1989. Sponsors during this period included Festival Canada, the Canadian Folk Arts Council, and the Secretary of State. In different years they were joined by the Municipal Council, the Department of Cultural Affairs, and in 1983 by the special committee to celebrate the 400th Anniversary of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's arrival in St. John's in 1583.<sup>98</sup> The changing format is indicated by the grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony announced in 1979, and by Samuelson's zealous desire, expressed in the program notes of 1980, to "at all costs preserve our long and great heritage, our unique Province."

As seems inevitable, the festival increasingly became a staged show, a routine event patterned after others supported elsewhere in Canada under multicultural policies. To counteract this, special features were introduced to add new interest. In 1984, for example, musicians and crafts people from Labrador helped to entertain and educate the audience. The festival has remained a popular event and has survived despite often sparse funding. It has also been criticized in the local press:

Each year we are treated to the ludicrous spectacle of Newfoundlanders entertaining other Newfoundlanders as if the people on stage were representative of another culture ... By annually packaging their culture as a thing not to be participated in, but to be observed, they have actually lent credence to the myth that traditional Newfoundland culture is a museum piece. This is a policy and an attitude written directly into the constitution of the [Folk Arts] Council (Gard 1983).

The Newfoundland and Labrador Folk Festival in St. John's has increased the awareness of the folklore, specifically the folk music, on the island. Since its inception in 1976, festivals have proliferated and enjoy great popularity across Newfoundland and Labrador. These festivals now range from well funded and heavily advertised events aimed primarily at the tourist trade, such as the "Fish, Fun and Folk Festival" in Twillingate and the "Hangashore Festival" in Corner Brook, to small local events that still recall the old garden parties and community "days." Folk festivals in Newfoundland, indeed, differ significantly from North American folk festivals, for they celebrate their own folk culture rather than that of seemingly exotic ethnic minorities.

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<sup>97</sup>The programs are on file at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

<sup>98</sup>Program notes 1979-1984.



A new commercial festival modeled after mainland American fairs was introduced to the Humber Valley in 1984, designed to raise the awareness of the relatively new and unknown crop of strawberries in that area. By 1985 the event drew 9,000 visitors, including people from as far away as Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the United States. Besides the opportunity to pick your own strawberries ("U-pick"), which made the event a commercial success, the festival featured a variety of attractions. Opening ceremonies included speeches by local politicians, pretty young girls dressed up in "Strawberry Shortcake" costumes, food stands, craft displays, children's games, and musical entertainment. However, a local heritage angle was added to such generic festival entertainments when during the following days about sixty competitors entered a log rolling contest, a reminder of the historical lumberjack traditions of the area, and a picnic at Rocky Brook Cabins near Cormack featured typical Newfoundland food and music.<sup>99</sup>

The festival was not only an economic success, it positively affected communal relations and resulted in unprecedented cooperation when several communities of the Humber River Valley combined their efforts for this event. Thus the festival succeeded both by introducing this area to a larger travelling public otherwise not inclined to visit this valley because of the better known attractions of nearby Gros Morne Park, and by creating an event that fulfills local needs as it combines elements of the old and the new, commercial and non-profit activities. This confirms that economic strategies can result in institutions that draw communities together when they blend ethnicity and history with symbols important to the region (Sheldon Smith 1985, 94).

As a major focus of my fieldwork I attended the Brimstone Head Folk Festival at Fogo, Fogo Island in 1985. The fact that this was to be the first festival of its kind in a particularly remote area of Newfoundland promised to make it a particularly valuable experience by allowing me to observe the process of folklorism from its inception. I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the second festival in 1986 as well, which provided me with a basis to analyze the direction this process was taking over time.

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<sup>99</sup>Interviews with Mrs. Goodridge, Gerard Beaulieu and Jean Burton, Deer Lake and Cormack, August 6, 1985, MUNFLA tape C9425/87-001.

Fogo Island, a small island in Notre Dame Bay off the northeast coast of Newfoundland with approximately 4,000 inhabitants distributed in ten separate communities, presents a microcosm of Newfoundland. In 1929 Elizabeth Greenleaf visited Fogo while collecting folksongs and gave the following description:

... a fascinating place of considerable wealth and commerce, at the same time it retains many traditional customs. The harbor is deep and safe, two trading establishments dominate its shores, and as it lies right on the main sailing route between St. John's and the Labrador, Fogo has a very up-to-date and "sea-goin" atmosphere (Greenleaf and Mansfield 1968, xxviii-xxix).

The former affluence of Fogo Island is still visible in a number of stately homes, now partly neglected or abandoned. After its fortunes had diminished, Fogo Island was considered for resettlement in the late 1960s. By then, however, the advantages of the resettlement program were being questioned. Instead Fogo Island became the focus of an experiment, later known as the "Fogo Project," initiated jointly by the Memorial University Extension Program and the National Film Board.<sup>100</sup> In the midst of private agonizing over the decision to leave or to stay, interviews with people of Fogo Island were videotaped and subsequently shown in the remaining communities, which so far had existed quite isolated from each other on the island, to the point of developing distinct dialects. For the first time Fogo Islanders realized that they shared common problems. This recognition became a turning point and led to a cooperative effort that has so far prevented the resettlement of Fogo Island, a success story that has often been cited as a model for other Newfoundland communities to follow.

The Fogo Project has made possible a continued, if precarious, existence on Fogo Island. With the initial cooperative experience almost twenty years old, the Folk Festival offered Fogo Islanders a new opportunity to participate in a joint venture and to prove the vitality of their folk culture. The first folk festival, which essentially followed the pattern of the old community concerts in Newfoundland, was initiated by Michael Henry, a teacher and folk music enthusiast from mainland Canada. Michael came to teach on Fogo Island in the late 1970s and had waited to establish himself within the community before attempting to organize such an event. Prior to the festival he was instrumental in forming the Fogo Island Folk Alliance, which states as its mandate to renew and

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<sup>100</sup>See also above, chapter "Newcult and Nostalgia."

revitalize the folk arts of Fogo Island. After observing festivals in other Newfoundland communities, members of the Folk Alliance decided they could do as well on a small scale. Practice began with folk nights arranged during the winter of 1984-5, which extended beyond the community of Fogo to include the nearby outport Joe Batt's Arm. While the people of the more distant outport Tilting did not participate in these practices, they eventually added some very fine singers to the festival who had maintained an active singing tradition in their church concerts.<sup>101</sup>

Michael Henry and his Australian-born wife Jane Whitten, who at one time had attended folklore courses at Memorial University, put considerable effort into the organization, and as a prerequisite succeeded in raising funds from the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, the Secretary of State, and from Esso. They advertised the festival widely in folk music magazines and sent letters of invitation to various institutions, including the Department of Folklore at Memorial University, which is how I learned of the event.

Most people of Fogo Island had never experienced such a festival and anticipated it with some curiosity, if not apprehension. Several of the scheduled performers developed stage fright before the event and withdrew their participation, which reduced their number to seventy, all but ten of whom were residents of the island. Organizers Michael and Jane, amateur musicians themselves, simply wanted the performers to play, to enjoy, and to share their talents. To be assured of an audience, Michael scheduled the festival to follow the annual Fogo Day celebration, and thus tied it to a traditional community event. While the usual fundraising sales, games and raffles took place in the afternoon of Fogo Day, July 13, 1985, the main stage for the festival was constructed nearby. The site was particularly beautiful, a gently sloping meadow overshadowed by the impressive large rocky outcropping that forms Brimstone Head, a landmark of the community of Fogo, near a bay in which, just then, a small iceberg was floating. At that time of the year the whole island was dotted with blooming iris.

The festival opened with an evening concert on the main stage that featured special guests from St. John's, the group Barkin' Kettle. While that main stage used

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<sup>101</sup>Personal communication, Michael Henry and Jane Whitten, July 12, 1985.



sound equipment and was separated from the audience by its raised construction, an additional small stage a short walk uphill within a natural amphitheatre provided an attractive and informal setting for the performance of traditional music and dancing during the full day festival on July 14.

When it became obvious that the traditional, mostly older musicians scheduled to perform on this relatively small, intimate stage were reluctant to perform in such strange, new context, folklorist Wilfred Wareham, who attended the festival along with folklorist Kenneth Goldstein while they were engaged in ongoing folksong collecting activities across the island, performed a traditional song in front of the audience, which helped to break the ice and instilled some confidence in the Fogo Island "folk" to go on stage.<sup>102</sup>

Listeners seated on the scattered rocks were then treated to some magical moments of traditional singing, step dancing, accordion and fiddle music. For the first time this folklore was performed out of the traditional context, if to a rather small audience. At the same time the main stage with its amplified sound featured mostly country music, which catered to the majority taste of Fogo Islanders, as this music is indeed very popular in Newfoundland outports.

An outstanding aspect of the festival, besides the abundance of musical talent on the island it revealed, was the large extent of community involvement the organizers were able to muster. The men of the Lions' Club ran a beer tent and provided homemade "Fish n' Brewis;" the women cooked church suppers, as is the custom at special events, to feed the many visitors. A number of teenagers were employed to direct traffic, manage the ticket sales and to help backstage. A rudimentary campground designated near the festival site accommodated visitors from outside the island who had no relatives or friends in the area, and about three families had been persuaded by Michael and Jane to offer their homes to accommodate strangers while being paid for room and board.

Judging by a private party I attended after the festival and by comments of my host family, the Hovens, the response to the event had changed from sceptical to

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<sup>102</sup>Other than that, all three folklorists attending that festival, including myself, remained in the background as members of the audience and as participant-observers.

overwhelmingly positive. The people of Fogo Island obviously approved of the new festival; it fit their cultural expectations. In particular the community of Fogo began to appreciate the dedicated work of Michael and Jane. Reassured by what they had just seen, many offered help and promised to perform at next year's festival. My informants confided that many more good performers existed on Fogo Island than had been on stage this first year.<sup>103</sup> The emphasis on encouraging local musicians to perform in public created new pride in their own folk culture and improved awareness of their talents on and off the island. Attracting a mixed age group of community members and outside visitors, and to please all of them, was a considerable achievement of this first Brimstone Head Fogo Island Folk Festival. Overall, it significantly widened the local horizon, while changing the attitude of Fogo Islanders toward their folk music from self-evident, marginal part of their culture to that of a valuable cultural heritage that was to be cherished and enhanced.

Throughout the following year the festival was much discussed. Michael recalled an episode during the winter when he chatted with a mechanic working on a car, who countered his friendly, "What are you doing there, Fred?" with: "Just waiting for the next festival!" The festival had clearly made an impact on the island; by the time the second one came around, Michael received more help than before. He still took care of fundraising and advertising, but on the whole found the job as organizer less worrisome, because the performers now knew what to expect and the community "got into the feeling" beforehand.<sup>104</sup>

During the winter they ran small concerts every two weeks for practice, indicating increased organization and even professionalization involved in the event as compared to formerly spontaneous performances of these same materials. Michael worked on the festival much of the year, including an application for funding from the Secretary of State through the multicultural section. Newfoundlanders qualify for the section's funding as an ethnic minority, a unique status among Canadian provinces. For Michael Fogo Island, on the periphery of Newfoundland, exhibits a very pure folk culture

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<sup>103</sup>Interviews July 13-15, 1985, Fogo, Fogo Island, MUNFLA tape C9422/87-001.

<sup>104</sup>Interview with Michael Henry, Fogo, Fogo Island, July 14, 1986, MUNFLA tape C9426/87-001.

unadulterated by outside influences; he suggested jokingly that it should qualify not only on the basis of their identity as Newfoundlanders, but as Fogo Islanders, to double or square the usual grants. However, by introducing this "pure" folk culture to a larger audience Michael promoted not only a new appreciation of Fogo Island folk music, but also made it a commodity available to the culture industry. Ironically Michael's intervention inevitably would change the "authentic," spontaneous and natural quality of the folk music that appealed to him to begin with and make the performances more constructed, organized.

The first successful festival had generated much favorable word of mouth advertising. Additionally Michael advertised heavily in folk music magazines and regional publications, such as *Atlantic Insight*. Consequently the media, including CBC television, local and national radio, showed much interest in the second festival, which I again attended. The immediate effect of this increased awareness was traffic that proved too much for the single government operated ferry, whose crew worked a very long day, putting in several extra shifts, without being able to accommodate all the cars headed for the festival, so that many visitors suffered major delays. Unfortunately for the first day of the second festival the weather was unseasonably cold, windy, and damp. No alternative indoor site was available and performances went ahead anyway. Unlike the previous year, when Michael Henry had planned the event, the community had decided to celebrate Fogo Day on a separate date; furthermore nobody wanted to miss any of the performers and instead of two separate stages, a single large stage was erected on the main location below Brimstone Head. Pat Freake, a carpenter who participated also as one of the major and most enthusiastic performers, spent four days to construct that stage, assisted by several younger volunteers.

Because of the bad weather Saturday's performances (July 12, 1986) attracted merely about 300 people during the afternoon, who shrank to 200 in the evening while just a few very cold folk music enthusiasts lasted until the end, when performers had to wear gloves and hats on stage to keep warm. The unfavorable weather caused some of the visitors to leave the island early. Sunday, however, turned out a more pleasant day and attendance soared to between 1,500 - 1,700 people for the afternoon and evening performances. As special attractions for the second festival a few paid guests



were invited from outside the island, including John White, a once very popular, older star performer from St. John's, who sings in "St. John's traditional" or "Stage Irish" style.<sup>105</sup> Michael's public relations efforts had attracted two professional folk revival musicians as well, who visited from as far as Vermont and Saskatchewan. This signaled the beginning status of the festival as a travel destination for folk music enthusiasts, drawing audiences from ever wider circles. Because of the long distance they had travelled, they were allowed to go on stage, though in general efforts were made to keep the content of the event "local." This added outside attraction was politely acknowledged by the audience, who, however, seemed to prefer their own performers over the more polished, but less familiar music presented by these professionals.

Again the responses I elicited during and after the festival were very enthusiastic; celebrating their own culture, several of the local performers considered this second festival even better than the first one. Middle-aged singer Aaron Cobb valued the chance to get to know fellow islanders of his age group who can sing or have other talents; he often had the urge to join in when others performed.<sup>106</sup> The festival thus encouraged not only staged performances, i.e., folklorism, but also promoted the communal sharing of folklore, though the spontaneous participation once common in Newfoundland kitchens, the center of the traditional home, was possible only after the official festival program was over and private parties sprang up in the community. Even while the process of folklorism turned their traditions into publicly staged events, people nevertheless may be inspired to revive and continue their folklore in traditional group context, indicating that folklore and folklorism are not mutually exclusive but may well reinforce each other.

Just before the festival the word got out that Michael and his wife had decided to leave the island in the near future. Many Fogo Islanders were upset by the news. To ensure that the festival would go on without him in the future, Michael had trained two young local women and left the procedures for the festival organization on computer record, to be used again in the coming years. He hoped to find a successor to organize

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<sup>105</sup>Personal communication by Neil Rosenberg.

<sup>106</sup>Interview at Fogo Island Folk Festival July 13, 1986, MUNFLA tape C9426/87-001.

future festivals. On the day after the festival I interviewed Pat Freake, who had constructed the stage and then had performed jokes and played a variety of odd instruments, including a bread pan, tobacco tin, spoons, bottles, besides the more common accordion and mouth organ. Now that the festival was over, Pat was visibly depressed. He felt positive, however, that it would continue even without Michael and Jane. "We only wants the leader, we are not gonna let it down, by all means."<sup>107</sup> He expected the Lions Club to take over and big changes to happen as people are better prepared for the festival in the future. He also anticipated that more people would be willing to put up visitors in their homes, once they realized that this can earn them money, indicating a budding tourist industry in the area.

By the second festival in 1986, community preferences increasingly influenced the course and shape of the event. It is much to Michael Henry's credit that he acted mainly as facilitator, master of ceremonies and catalyst, taking on major duties without insisting on a strict format of the festival while he hoped that the community would adopt the festival as their own. During the first festival visitors from outside the island were particularly delighted with the small stage uphill which provided an informal, intimate performance setting with a picturesque background. Fogo Islanders, however, who take the scenery for granted, decided against that stage as they did not want to walk back and forth between the sites and were afraid to miss any of the performances. While a visitor from Maine, as an outsider, commented on the spectacular scenery as one of the most attractive features of the event,<sup>108</sup> Fogo Islander David Jones suggested that a parking lot should be "bulled" (i.e., bull-dozed) nearby to make the festival more accessible to older people. My hostess even wanted the whole event shifted inland to the centrally located ball field which is more accessible to cars, and apparently other community members agreed with her, even though the ball field lacks the scenic attraction that clearly impressed visitors.<sup>109</sup> As native Fogo Islanders increasingly impose their own ideas of what is appropriate and convenient and their

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<sup>107</sup>Interview with Pat Freake, Fogo, July 14, 1986, MUNFLA tape C9427/87-001.

<sup>108</sup>Interview with Nelson M. Warner Jr., Fogo, July 13, 1986, MUNFLA tape C9426/87-001.

<sup>109</sup>Personal communication by Bridget Leyte, Fogo, July 14, 1986.

festival becomes established as a communal tradition, it may well become less attractive for visitors from outside the island.<sup>110</sup>

The first and second Brimstone Head Fogo Island festivals indicate the growing awareness and appreciation Newfoundlanders are acquiring for their own folk culture. At first promoted by educated outsiders, folk music enthusiasts and teachers who were familiar with the folk festival genre, the value of their local folk heritage has been confirmed by an audience of outsiders and the idea of public performances, built on former, more private traditions, has caught on. This, however, also signals the loss of folklore as self-evident part of the local culture that is informally and collectively maintained rather than strictly organized for scheduled performances.

While the first festival was still associated with Fogo Day, the second one could stand on its own. Residents exerted their influence when they chose to have two separate occasions to celebrate both the festival and Fogo Day. The enthusiastic response I observed in the community indicated that for them the second festival had been even better than the first one, that it had enhanced the reputation of Fogo Island and brought people, as well as money, to the island. This signals an important transformation of the self-image of Fogo Islanders; the success of the festival instilled new pride in their traditional culture, while the accompanying financial success introduced the idea of economic alternatives to an increasingly uncertain fishery, i.e., tourism.

The small take-out restaurant near the festival site had earned an unprecedented \$2,000 during the two days; the Lions Club showed a handsome profit from beer sales; the women made money on their church suppers, and the local stores had profited as well. Ten households, compared to only three at the first festival, had put up visitors in bed and breakfast fashion and judging from my own stay in one of these homes, had found it a profitable and congenial experience. Thus first steps had been taken to turn the cultural bonanza into a financial one as well, indicating the accelerating process of folklorism that makes revitalized and enhanced indigenous cultural riches a source for profitable enterprises.

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<sup>110</sup>Nevertheless by 1991, when I observed that festival from afar while visiting the nearby Change Islands, the old site was still in use and a large number of cars were again lined up and waiting for the ferry to attend the by then well known event.



Some negative comments, however, were raised as well. Members of the community had been apprehensive about a motorcycle group expected to attend the festival which later turned out to be a few young men interested in folk music who caused no trouble for the security forces specially summoned for the event. The ferry personnel were clearly overworked by the influx of visitors. They were neither relieved by a second crew nor did they receive overtime pay. At least the restaurant personnel, while very busy, were compensated for their extra hours of work. Perhaps most seriously, an elderly woman suffered a heart attack while the festival was going on and because of the increased traffic and the many parked cars the ambulance was slower than usual in getting her to the hospital.

The reputation of the first Brimstone Head Fogo Island Folk Festival inspired CBC radio producer Fred Eckert-Maret to record the second festival for his provincial broadcast series "Music Craft," aimed at a general Newfoundland audience aged twenty-five and older. He was looking for something unique and interesting, of polished and original, but at the same time "quaint" quality.<sup>111</sup> While the usual focus of his series is classical music, Eckert-Maret intended to transform the material recorded at the festival into a special program that was to explore or reflect the traditional music performed and recorded in Newfoundland. With this in mind he included the context of the event by conducting a number of interviews with performers and members of the audience, doing ethnography much like I did, though his tape recordings were intended to be played on the radio to lend an air of authenticity to his show. Compared to other Newfoundland communities he found the music of high caliber and the tradition amazingly alive. An important reason for him to share this with a larger audience in Newfoundland was a desire to keep these traditions active "as long as people have a good time celebrating them." At the same time Eckert-Maret believed that his radio program would have an impact on the event, and compared this potential influence to the earlier video tapes of the "Fogo Project." He expected that the example of the successful Fogo Island folk festival would inspire more festivals in other areas of Newfoundland even though the "Music Craft" series attracts primarily an urban

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<sup>111</sup>Interview with Fred Eckert-Maret, Fogo, July 13, 1986, MUNFLA tape C9426/87-001.

audience of classical music lovers. The program was broadcast in early 1987, adding yet another level to the event by introducing the Fogo Island folk music to even wider audiences by means of the mass media. The material was thus ever further removed from the original folklore context of collectively evolved tradition, performed informally, spontaneously among small groups that shared the same culture. It was integrated into the culture industry, however, precisely because the entertainment was considered "authentic," indicating the paradox of folklorism that thrives because of advances in technology while providing an eclectic audience with the semblance of something natural, old, uncontaminated by modern ways.

The fact that the first two Fogo Island folk festivals generated great enthusiasm and excitement is not unusual for such an event. In his investigation of bluegrass festivals, Neil Rosenberg discovered a pattern that applies to other types of folk festivals as well. A stage of early vitality, when only musicians and their fans attend, is followed in later years either by demise, if the enthusiasm wanes and not enough new converts can be found to continue the event, or favorable reports attract larger, more eclectic crowds that turn the event into a general festival by adding aspects common to calendric customs, such as drinking and licentious behavior. At this stage music becomes a mere background feature. In the worst cases crowds can get out of hand. Those who have initiated the festival often cannot control its later development (Rosenberg 1985, 277-90). Moreover, with repetition and increased institutionalization it becomes difficult to maintain the initial enthusiasm. Once they become routine, predictable events, such festivals destroy the potential for spontaneous, unselfconscious participation. Ultimately folk festivals, especially when pressed into the service of tourism, may offer nothing but quaint entertainment and local color (Brauner 1983, 27).

I caught a glimpse of what eventually may be in store for the Fogo Island Folk Festival at the Burin Peninsula Folk Festival held for the second time in 1985. This festival featured about a hundred local performers, including entire families from the Burin Peninsula and the neighboring areas of Placentia Bay and Fortune Bay. An additional twenty musicians were invited from elsewhere, mainly St. John's. Because too many performers had been scheduled, including many country and western groups,

time and space became very scarce and the organizer, an energetic, middle aged woman of that community, decided to be more selective for next year's event. Specifically she intended to exclude some of the country music which in her opinion does not fit the concept of a folk festival, popular though it is in rural Newfoundland.

To reserve folk festivals for forms of folk music that are seldom featured in the media is a recurrent controversial issue; with such an agenda, the relatively open nature of a festival gives way to a more controlled, standardized event that reflects the preferences of the organizers and the funding agencies and those of outside visitors, who emphasize the rare and quaint, rather than the wishes and the taste of "the folk," i.e., the local people. As Skinner discovered in his investigation of community concerts in Newfoundland, at least by the 1950s traditional Newfoundland folksongs were less popular than materials imported from the United States and Great Britain (1984, 202). Insisting on the performance of traditional songs in spite of this preference constitutes a form of cultural intervention that changes the nature of folk festivals in Newfoundland, making them less a communal event than a show staged for outside audiences.

A differently conceived festival, "Une Longue Veillée" celebrated by the French minority of the Port au Port Peninsula, was held for its seventh year in 1985. This well funded, well advertised event was organized by employees of the French cultural center at Cape St. George, as part of the effort to promote the minority French language and culture in Newfoundland.<sup>112</sup> Among other functions, such as celebrating the French minority culture of Newfoundland, "Une Longue Veillée" is considered an important asset to attract tourists to the economically disadvantaged area of the Port au Port Peninsula. By the late 1980s professionally designed tourism plans for Newfoundland emphasized the construction of events and attractions, including festivals, to bring tourists to the province.<sup>113</sup> A case in point are the suggestions made in the "Southwest Coast Regional Tourism Plan" to "improve" the Codroy Valley Folk Festival (n.d.). Since the early 1980s this small local festival had been run by volunteers of the Codroy

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<sup>112</sup>This festival is discussed in more detail in the above chapter "The Cultural Revival of the French Newfoundland Minority."

<sup>113</sup>This is discussed in more detail below, chapter "Tourism as Generator of Folklorism in Newfoundland."



Valley Fiddler's Association, the Recreation Association,<sup>11</sup> and the Lion's Club who emphasized the promotion of local traditional music and talent, much like the festival on Fogo Island. In order to attract increasing numbers of visitors to the region, however, the tourism plan proposed to expand and change the festival.

Specific suggestions contained in that report were to enhance the image of the festival, to make it clearly distinct from other festivals in the area, and to compete with them by establishing an identity and a profile that generates excitement and interest in the festival (4-59). This included as a first step to adopt a new and distinctive name, such as: "Fiddlin' Cod Folk Fest," "Heritage Days Festival," or "Newfie Fun Fest" (the latter was meant to convey a fun, party-like atmosphere). Further suggestions included the creation of a logo that could be used to merchandise products such as hats and shirts (4-61); "headline" events and media exposure were also considered important. The planners estimated that if all suggestions were followed, the combined effort of strong image enhancement and aggressive marketing could increase visitors from the present 2,000 to 15,000 or even 20,000 (4-70/71). When festivals are commoditized to become generic tourist attractions there is a danger that elements of the folk culture will be exploited without regard to community preferences nor any benefit to the community itself, though communities have been known to react by endowing such events with their own meaning.<sup>114</sup>

Today's folk festivals are complex, ambivalent events that can turn into frozen, empty rituals for the host population if they are designed and used by entrepreneurs exclusively to add local color to the vacation experience of paying guests. The Brimstone Head Folk Festival, however, exhibited some of the essential features of a true festival by its second year. Reference was made to it during the year and social life on the island began to be marked by successive festivals. A highschool reunion in Fogo was intentionally scheduled for the Friday preceding the festival, so that visiting family members and friends were able to attend the festival as well. A preparatory phase involved the elaborate construction of the stage, the cooking of special foods. While in 1985 some of the fishermen could not participate because the festival took

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<sup>114</sup>See also Greenwood 1989.

place during the week and they had to take advantage of the rare good weather to continue with their fishing, the second festival was specifically scheduled on a weekend to allow them to attend. Thus in 1986 the community together could enter a liminal stage during which ordinary social life was suspended, a phase marked by special music, foods, entertainments. Outside visitors brought money into the town. The community emerged revitalized. By 1989 the idea had spread and the community of Tilting developed its own festival, building on the experience of Fogo. Self-reflectively and consciously Fogo Islanders began to celebrate their own revived folk culture in public, as the newly introduced custom of the festival was being integrated into their communal traditions. The process helped to improve their self-image and pride, which did much in psychological terms to compensate for the economic disadvantage they suffered. At the same time demonstrating a vital folk culture helped to validate their earlier decision to resist resettlement.

In such events individual organizers have become all important and it is to them that festivals increasingly owe their inspiration and direction. But even if outsiders introduce the idea of conservation and change of folklore materials, and the event is designed specifically for folk music enthusiasts or tourists, the local population may nevertheless benefit by newly appreciating their own culture.<sup>115</sup> Initiated by a cultural outsider, who brought the necessary experience, imagination and dedication to realize the potential for a folk festival and who was willing to devote his energies to cultivate the local folk music, the Brimstone Head Folk Festival is an event characteristic of folklorism. First self-conscious performances in the festival context, that had to be carefully encouraged, soon became more "natural" as the community adopted this new framework for traditional entertainments; at the same time the influence of the outsider waned.

For the youths of Fogo Island the previously ignored traditional music seemed exotic, but nevertheless instilled pride in their cultural heritage. For the middle aged and older population it became an occasion to experience traditions anew that were still part

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<sup>115</sup>For example, Regina Bendix has explored a Swiss festival that was designed for tourists, but over time became more important to the local population; alpine processions planned especially for tourists increasingly attracted local farmers who enjoyed the display of their own culture (1989, 137-8).

of the living memory, and to share their folklore informally at the periphery of the organized event. For the outside audience, the tourists and folk music enthusiasts, the collectors, radio producers and radio listeners, the festival offered magic moments of enjoying an aesthetically appealing folk culture far removed from their own experience. The festival thus functioned on many levels that ranged from collective communication of folklore to folklorism-induced mass media entertainment.

While outside interests created the festival and thereby reassured Fogo Islanders of the worth of their tradition, it is the community's active participation and acceptance of the event into their communal repertoire of customs that makes this festival part of their folk culture, i.e., turning folklorism into folklore that emphasizes and expresses their native identity. On the example of this folk festival, the process of folklorism thus is revealed as part of the transition from isolated, nearly pre-industrial folk society to one of an ever widening horizon that participates in essentially modern forms of communication and entertainment. For "the folk" themselves, however, as a result of the process of folklorism the newly discovered cultural strength and pride in their cultural identity also confirms the continued vitality of the community.



**PART III**

**CONTEMPORARY MANIFESTATIONS OF FOLKLORISM  
IN NEWFOUNDLAND**

**B - FOLKLORISM AND TOURISM**

## **Folklorism and Tourism - A Brief Theoretical Survey**

Some of the most notable cases of folklorism described by Moser in 1962 were phenomena related to tourism. As an early example from the end of the nineteenth century, he attributes the tendency of the citizens of Munich to celebrate "peasant balls" in peasant costumes to the increase in tourism after the 'railroads facilitated travel (Moser 1962, 196). Moser further mentions the shabby, sad figures of Canadian Indians in neglected settlements near the National Parks of the Rocky Mountains who have made a business out of performing war dances for tourists. As far as the tourist industry is concerned, it does not matter if the attraction is history, nature, folklore, or any other curiosity, and when folklore is involved, quality is of no concern (Moser 1964, 41). Since his observations folklorism associated with tourism has become more prominent along with the tremendous worldwide expansion of that industry. Developments specific to Newfoundland, where tourism is considered a bright hope for future economic growth, will be analyzed in the following chapters, "Tourism as Generator of Folklorism in Newfoundland" and "Screech-Ins."

The study of tourism, a complex and diverse phenomenon, is considered an emerging field within a variety of disciplines of the social sciences. While tourism is difficult to determine in all its aspects, a widely used technical definition was proposed by the International Union of Travel Organizations in 1963, which was approved by the World Tourist Organization in 1968:

temporary visitors staying at least twenty-four hours in the country visited ... the purpose of whose journey can be classified under one of the following headings: a) leisure (recreation, holiday, health, study, religion and sport); b) business (family mission, meeting) (quoted in Cohen 1984, 374).

More recently Valene Smith has offered a general definition, "a tourist is a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change" (1989, 1).

Travel has a long history and can be traced to antiquity, for example when Romans at the height of their power visited Greece, then a culture in decline. This pattern was repeated much later when Americans toured Europe after the Second World War. In the eighteenth century young English aristocrats engaged in an

exceptionally early form of tourism, the Grand Tour, which took them to the courts of continental Europe and was considered part of their education (Turner and Ash 1976, 29-33). By the late eighteenth century the bourgeoisie began to rival the aristocracy in its taste for travel. This rising middle class, a highly urbanized and uniform society, was inspired by romanticism with a desire to "return to nature," to an untouched landscape and an unchanged history. An attitude of idealizing and sentimentalizing a lost state of innocence and equality, to be found either in another time or another, less developed culture, has remained one of the important motivations for tourism (Turner and Ash 1976, 41-2).

Modern (mass) tourism was made possible because railways and steamboats improved transportation in the nineteenth century. Increasing affluence and leisure time, and the proliferation of cars and airplanes introduced tourism on a grand scale after the Second World War. Consequently what originated as an escape from industry developed into an industry itself. Tourism, in fact, has become the world's largest industry and is expected to increase in at least some social and economic areas (Valene Smith 1989, 4). It exerts a profound influence on almost any country, region, locality and is particularly important for many underdeveloped, peripheral areas that have adopted tourism as the main focus of developmental strategies.

During the 1960s a positive view of tourism prevailed that was based almost entirely on economic considerations. Scholars have long hesitated to seriously study tourism and to acknowledge its complex nature as well as its pervasive influence on cultures, because many found it difficult to accept play and leisure as legitimate areas of scholarly investigation. In the course of the last decades, however, awareness grew of the sociocultural consequences, of the lack of security and control over fickle international markets, as well as the political implications of some of the developmental decisions. Such concerns were reflected in a proliferation of scholarly and applied literature on tourism that appeared in the mid-1970s, with the American journal devoted to the study of tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research*, commencing publication in 1973.

Hans Magnus Enzensberger's 1958 essay, *Eine Theorie des Tourismus* (8th edition, 1973), an early culture-critical analysis of tourism, contrasted "tourism," i.e., travel for its own sake, for pleasure and adventure, as a modern phenomenon with



"travel," an activity people have engaged in since antiquity for various biological or economic reasons, which up to the eighteenth century was generally considered a necessary evil, a dangerous and uncomfortable undertaking. Enzensberger made a connection between industrialization and tourism and defined mass tourism essentially as a reaction to repressive industrial urban environments. He traced the beginnings of tourism to the word "tourist" as used in England since about 1800, for during the nineteenth century the English, then the most industrialized, privileged, and richest people, became the early leaders of tourism.

To be economically viable, travel had to be mass produced like every other consumer good. Its basic norm became the "sight," a concept first introduced and classified according to the star system by early travel guides such as John Murray's *Red Book* (1836) and the famous *Baedeker* (1839). Sights are pictures of the far away based on a romantic view of nature and history. By the twentieth century, however, the demand for "sights" surpassed the supply, and sights are now artificially produced. They range from festivals and imitated or invented customs to the extreme of amusement parks in the style of Disneyland (Enzensberger 1973, 188).

These tourist attractions were assessed as "pseudo-events" by American historian Daniel Boorstin (1961), who deplored that in order to fill tourists' exaggerated expectations native populations everywhere now provide artificial, non-spontaneous cultural products, and in the process sacrifice native rituals, holidays and celebrations (1961, 91-117). His view of modern tourism influenced, among others, Dean MacCannell, who acknowledged the tourist's search for authenticity in another time period or another place as an integral aspect of modern society that is intimately linked to the emergence of a new leisure class and a new kind of post-industrial consciousness (1976). MacCannell's original work combined a number of theoretical orientations (Marxism, semiotics, structuralism), but narrowly focused on only one type of tourist, the sightseer. His analysis included what he labelled *staged authenticity*.

The touristic way of getting in with the natives is to enter into a quest for authentic experiences, perceptions and insights.... Tourists make brave sorties out from their hotels, hoping, perhaps, for an authentic experience, but their paths can be traced in advance over small increments of what is for them increasingly *apparent* authenticity proffered by tourist settings.... In highly developed tourist settings such as San Francisco and Switzerland, every detail of touristic experience can take on a showy, back-region aspect, at least for fleeting moments. Tourists enter tourist areas

precisely because their experiences there will not, for them, be routine. The local people in the places they visit, by contrast, have long discounted the presence of tourists and go about their business as usual, treating tourists as a part of the regional scenery (1976, 105-6).

MacCannell's work was part of a number of important studies on tourism to appear almost simultaneously in the mid-1970s, which together acknowledged the importance of the tourism phenomenon in modern society. Among those concerned with the destructive influence of tourism on native cultures, Lois Turner and John Ash compared the arrival of tourists, the *Golden Hordes*, to the earlier invasions of barbarians (1976). A variety of anthropological case studies on the impact of tourism, including some preliminary theoretical work, were combined in the anthology *Hosts and Guests*, edited by Valene Smith (1977). These case studies were reexamined and updated for a revised edition published in 1989, and thus provide a rare example of continuity in tourism studies. In her introduction of 1977 Smith offered a typology of tourists defined in terms of frequency of visits and degree of adaptation to local norms, including "elite," "explorer," "off beat," "unusual," "incipient mass," "mass," and "charter" tourists (8-13). This essentially was an elaboration on an earlier typology introduced by Eric Cohen (1972), who had identified tourist roles that ranged from "organized mass tourist" who travels within an environmental bubble provided by the tourist establishment, to non-conventional "explorer" and "drifter" types who prefer more direct contact with the host populations (Cohen 1972, 177-9). In the revised edition of *Hosts and Guests*, Smith further identified five types of tourism, "ethnic," "cultural," "historical," "environmental," and "recreational" (Smith 1989, 4-5).

However, in a 1989 survey of representations of international tourism by the social sciences Malcolm Crick has questioned whether a respectable, scholarly analysis of tourism has yet been achieved. Among the pitfalls he encountered in social science literature on tourism, Crick lists an inadequate framework for economic analysis, a lack of local voices, and a failure to differentiate between social change due to tourism or other independent processes of modernization (1989, 311). While specifically addressing "economic development and political economy," Crick suggests that currently profits made in tourism tend to reinforce existing economic patterns. Overall tourism has brought more havoc than benefits and should be rethought outside the general materialistic framework, e.g. within the framework of underdevelopment, to

indicate the need for change in general economic and social relations between industrialized and Third World countries. On the topic of "tourism and sociocultural change," Crick noted a shift from earlier, optimistic accounts by economists that neglected qualitative cultural data to more critical current assessments, as anthropologists regret the triumph of technology over traditional ways of life and intellectuals, church leaders, and radicals of host countries increasingly condemn Third World tourism (Crick 1989, 335). At the same time Crick warned scholars not to make tourists the scapegoat for all social change, as the impact of tourism can rarely be distinguished from that of other contemporary forces. Finally, Crick emphasized the importance of paying attention to local voices, to the full range of indigenous perception of change and continuity (1989).

By the end of the 1980s tourists have become used to the exaggerated claims of product advertising and are likely aware that part of what they experience is a show produced especially for their benefit. According to John Urry, there are signs that tourists are increasingly selective and critical, that anything can be regarded as in style. He assumes that postmodern or post-mass tourists are less concerned with a sense of the authentic than previous generations of tourists; instead they are aware

... that they are a tourist and tourism is a game, or rather a whole series of games with multiple tests and no single, authentic tourist experience. The post-tourist thus knows that they will have to queue time and time again, that there will be hassles over foreign exchange, that the glossy brochure is a piece of pop culture, that the apparently authentic local entertainment is as socially contrived as the ethnic bar, and that the supposedly quaint and traditional fishing village could not survive without the income from tourism (Urry 1990, 100).

Folklorism perceived as play softens the impact of tourism. It relieves the natives from the pretense to live in the past and instead allows them some degree of freedom to "act out" their folk culture.

In 1991 the journal *Annals of Tourism Research* devoted a special issue to "Tourism Social Science" (18:1) that investigated the role of tourism in a variety of academic disciplines. The results indicate that tourism research is slowly coming of age as the focus of multidisciplinary investigation, but that it is regarded predominantly as a socioeconomic phenomenon (Graburn and Jafari 1991). As for the role of anthropology, it was recognized that tourism fits anthropological concerns with culture contact and culture change, that research towards practical ends can pay theoretical



dividends and that anthropologists can offer ethical sensitivity to touristic activities (Nash and Smith 1991).

Essentially tourism involves the transformation of nature and history into attractions, the technical and economic potential to cover long distances, an economic situation that allows for enough consumer power to afford travel, and the social promise of leisure time. It also includes the tendency of different social classes to choose from a variety of forms and destinations of travel, which turns tourism into a status symbol that divides the classes (Prahl and Steinecke 1979, 228). The more remote and the less known the destination, the higher the prestige; the more frequented and used, the less desirable the destination. This indicates the self-destructive tendencies of tourism: when the masses arrive, the initial appeal is inevitably lost. As Enzensberger has observed, tourism destroys what it seeks by finding it (1973, 192).

While it is easy to criticize the excesses tourists commit when they travel, the phenomenon is based on real needs caused by a stressful, hectic urban existence, which has created the desire for contrast, to seek relief in less developed regions of a more "natural" way of life. The key to the problem ultimately is to improve the home environment, the living and working conditions of the tourist so that travel is no longer an escape from an unbearable everyday existence, but a quest to satisfy curiosity, to learn and to experience the "different." Only then can the relationship between hosts and guests improve.

Moreover, it is not so much individual tourists as the very speed and the great numbers of tourists involved in post-war tourism developments that have created problems in the host countries. Many resorts now offer the same crowded, polluted conditions the tourists hoped to escape while the ideals of tourism have remained rooted in romanticism and still call for landscapes and histories waiting to be discovered. No such region is naturally evolved; we always encounter a more or less consciously produced image, such as Dorst has investigated in the various institutions that presented images of the past at Chadds Ford (198). Moreover, as soon as they realize what is expected, natives often oblige tourists by acting out the stereotype. This has resulted in phenomena like the costumes and yodels encountered in Alpine regions and the role of "primitive savages" played in Third World countries that make

caricatures of the natives. If a region is described in terms of its past, the situation is particularly precarious; it can lead to an emphasis on tradition on the one hand, while the tourist industry calls for the latest in luxury accommodations and services on the other. If folklore is part of the attraction, a region is stylized to conform to tourists' expectations, including natives who become actors in a culture that appears frozen in the past, only to participate in more appropriate modern lifestyles once the tourist season is over.

Among German folklorists tourism first attracted attention when associated with folklorism (Gyr 1988, 227-8). Besides Moser's essays (1962 and 1964), a study of the people of the Zillertal traced the process of folklorism to economic necessity that ultimately transformed the Zillertal into a tourist destination (Jeggle and Korff 1974).<sup>116</sup> Hermann Bausinger has identified several phases in the development of tourism associated with folklorism on the example of an Alpine village in Austria, outlined as follows (1979, 169-172). The resort originally was simply a summer pasture for the cattle belonging to a village in the valley below, with a small inn that catered to people travelling from Austria to Switzerland on a pass nearby. Mountain climbers and summer tourists began to arrive in the late nineteenth century. They were easily satisfied with what the peasants could offer them and appreciated their lifestyle, which contributed to the later glorification of peasant ways. At first only a few of the residents realized the chance offered by the new tourism industry. They turned their summer seats into more permanent buildings and rented rooms to tourists. Soon afterwards industrial tycoons began to buy farm land and to build in the area. When winter sports were introduced, the place began to thrive. This second phase of touristic developments was characterized by the hectic build up of infrastructure and the equally hectic destruction of traditional buildings.

As Bausinger noted, the former summer seat did not become a village as much as a location for many restaurants and tourist homes, ski cabins and ski lifts. This affected not only the outward image of the resort, but also the social interactions, attitudes, and opinions of the residents. The native population increasingly suffered from cultural

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<sup>116</sup>See above, chapter "Folklorism and Western European Scholarship."

insecurity and, for example, no longer knew how to behave at funerals, for keeping the corpse at home during a wake, as was traditional, would disturb the tourists. Overall, neither the local people nor the tourists liked the modernizations that had removed all distinctive characteristics of the area. At least the summer tourists wanted to enjoy some of the old style of a farming village, rather than experience a touristic no man's land. But because there was hardly anything left to preserve, new houses were built in the popular "Swiss" pattern, a generalized style indicating "Alpine peasants" according to the tourist industry which by then was fully established. It suited the expectations of tourists visiting Austria, expectations that also include folk costumes, folk music and dances and leave touristic developments wide open for any form of folklorism. In Bausinger's example the resort thus has come full circle by consciously producing a "folk" past for the benefit mainly of tourists, the demise of which was earlier hastened by the introduction of the tourist industry itself.

In another area of the Austrian Alps Alfred Gumper has more recently discovered tourism developments that led to extremes of folklorism (1982). Until the 1950s the two villages observed by Gumper had suffered very low standards of living, which forced many of the young to emigrate. However, tourism rapidly increased after the highway was completed in 1957. Within a few years the villages experienced unparalleled economic growth (89-92). Gumper noticed, among other changes, that festivals are now primarily designed to entertain tourists and therefore are organized to take place during the tourist season (113). To create a distinctive image, Wulfenia, a modest blue flower, which grows exclusively near one of the villages and in a remote location of the Himalayas, was promoted as a special attraction, while earlier it had been regarded as a weed. From the 1970s on it was vigorously protected and the area is now referred to as "home of Wulfenia." In 1979, the two hundredth anniversary of its discovery by Wulfen was commemorated with a special silver coin, and the city adopted the new name of "Wulfeniastadt Hermagor." The following year the remains of Wulfen himself were transferred to the local shrine. By 1981 this once insignificant plant had been made a regional symbol, the object of touristic promotions, and was featured on postcards, T-shirts, and sweaters (128-130).



The accelerating process of folklorism in that area included the rediscovery of the long forgotten local folk costume, which was traced back to an eighteenth century painting and carefully reconstructed. Great efforts were made to achieve "authenticity," and because they realized the commercial value of tourism, about two hundred residents began to wear the costume. Additionally a folk dance group, founded in 1981, performed during the tourist season (Gumper 1982, 136-137).

These examples of folklorism were observed in or near early European centers of tourism. Areas that are "discovered" relatively late often pass through these phases at an accelerated pace, or remain stuck in an earlier phase, for developments affected by mass tourism have become all but predictable anywhere in the world. Appearing in mass, ill informed by the unrealistic superlatives of promotional materials, average tourists are prevented from accepting their hosts in their natural role. Clever tourism entrepreneurs have long analyzed what they want and provide standardized offers for every taste, a world of sights that even the natives may eventually accept as reality. But such artificially concocted experiences and attractions have prevented the increased international understanding tourism was once expected to bring; instead contacts tend to be of a routine, superficial nature for the hosts while the tourists simply see the stereotypes confirmed that are suggested in promotional materials, which often feature the local folk culture as part of the image of the region. Folklorism thus is a frequent factor in the dissemination of regional stereotypes, while chances for cultural progress through outside contacts are missed.

Despite the questionable benefits of tourism as an industry, in Newfoundland tourism is being hailed as the potential solution to deepseated economic woes. With its island geography, rural character, traditional culture and relatively unspoiled landscape, Newfoundland fits the romantic ideal of a tourist destination. While the success of various government tourism strategies is uncertain at the time of writing, tourism developments represent both a promise and a danger to the folk culture of Newfoundland.

## Tourism as Generator of Folklorism in Newfoundland

The retreat to a selectively enhanced past that involves folklorism in form of cultural overcompensation, that offers security and identity in reaction to social and economic distress has been discussed as a coping mechanism that essentially impedes progress defined as active, successful participation in an advanced industrial economy. For tourism, however, the romantic cultivation of a past folk culture becomes an attraction, a commodity to be developed, marketed and consumed; underdevelopment and backwardness are turned into assets that cater to the tourists' desire for "authenticity," "heritage," something more simple and natural than his own daily existence. Thus folklorism is no longer a regressive move, but fits an ultimately postmodern industry, tourism. This chapter explores conspicuous instances of folklorism that have been part of recent tourism developments in Newfoundland, while indicating future implications of such economic strategies.

Since the late nineteenth century, when the railroad first opened the island to travellers, mainly wealthy American sports hunters and fishermen, tourism has periodically been regarded as a potential solution to Newfoundland's economic problems. In the last few decades tourism developments have increasingly been encouraged by both the federal and the provincial governments in an effort to diversify the economy. By the late twentieth century the largely unspoiled natural environment and the traditional, slow paced lifestyle of the Newfoundland outports, a result mainly of the failure of industrial development, have become rare assets in the tourist industry that have a romantic, quaint appeal for increasingly sophisticated, urban tourists who have tired of mass tourism and are looking for "something different." By the late 1980s tourism, a growing sector of the Newfoundland economy, ranked fourth among the major industries, before forestry and agriculture.<sup>117</sup> While the fishery is steadily declining, tourism has come to be considered one bright hope for the economic future of the province.

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<sup>117</sup>According to statistics provided by the provincial Department of Development, Tourism and Promotions Branch, between 1985 and 1990 tourism grew at a rate of eight to ten percent per year. By 1990 the tourist industry generated about \$400 million in revenues for the province and employed 9,400 persons or 4.7% of the workforce.

At present, however, most of the tourists (about 80%) are residents touring their own province, while a high proportion of the remainder are expatriot Newfoundlanders returning to visit friends and relatives. So far relatively few mainland Canadians and international tourists have made Newfoundland their vacation choice, though they are the target of major marketing efforts as the most important type of tourist to insure the viability of the industry.

Government efforts to promote tourism in Newfoundland date back to the late nineteenth century when the fisheries experienced a first serious crisis. Newfoundland was then marketed to wealthy Americans who came to hunt and to fish. Promotional materials of the early twentieth century, such as *The Newfoundland Road Booster and Tourist Trade Advocate*, described Newfoundland as "A Paradise for Sportsmen" and "The Norway of the New World" (Hibbs 1924, 111). Hunting and fishing in wilderness areas have continued to draw affluent tourists from abroad to Newfoundland, albeit in exclusive, small numbers.

As early as 1915 an American travel writer commented on the "magnificent scenery and sportive pools and barrens," but voiced reservations about the modest accommodations and the plain food, complaints that have continued to haunt the Newfoundland tourist industry up to the 1990s. However, the author found Newfoundland to be "a very human place and therefore democratic. The people are by nature appreciative, chivalrous and unaffected" and the dialect with its obsolete English words had "a quaint, not unpleasing effect" (Wood 1915, 332 and 351). Her description of the Bartletts from Brigus, explorers of the ice, is reminiscent of noble savages: "Heroism is at a discount in this nook of the world where adventure is bred in the bone and danger is the sauce of life" (360). Overall such materials promoted the themes of "back to nature" and a "simpler lifestyle," presenting travel in Newfoundland as an essentially romantic experience, which was emphasized even more when general sightseeing attractions were added to the initial focus on hunting and fishing.

Smallwood, too, was convinced of the tourism potential of Newfoundland and wrote in 1931:

Escaping somewhat the malignant grip of her age-old inferiority complex, Newfoundland eight or ten years ago suddenly awoke to the realization that she was not such a bad place after all -- particularly when it came to scenery, climate and general outdoor attractiveness. With the awakening came the realization that there



must be hundreds of thousands of Americans and Canadians who would appreciate the beauties of Newfoundland -- and would pay for the privilege -- if only they could be brought to know about them" (1931, 52).

The development of tourism in Newfoundland has long been encouraged and supported by government. Specific advertising efforts are aimed at the estimated two hundred thousand Newfoundlanders who left the island to find work and tend to return to Newfoundland regularly.<sup>118</sup> When the Newfoundland government advertised a first "Old Home Week" in 1904, about six hundred Newfoundlanders arrived from the United States (Overton 1984, 92). In 1965 the Smallwood government invited expatriates back for "Come Home Year 1966." The year was celebrated in hundreds of special events that emphasized and showed off recent progress (Wheeler 1967, 581). As part of the effort, several local "songsters" were published that combined the themes of patriotism and progress (Mercer and Swackhammer 1978, 36-45). The following song is an example, written for the occasion by G. F. Earle and distributed in form of a broadside leaflet:<sup>119</sup>

#### COME HOME TO OLD NEWFY

##### *The Invitation*

Come home to old Newfy, the land of your birth,  
From your lands of adoption all over the earth;  
Come home to the smell of the kelp and the fir,  
To the taste of the caplin, the lobster and turr.  
Come home to the scrunchion, the praties and fish  
All mixed with the brewis in the fisherman's dish.

##### *Transport*

Come home to old Newfy now changing her ways,  
With highroads to take you to islands and bays;  
The ferries and bridges on tickles and runs  
Await your return with your daughters and sons.  
Come home with the car that you long to bring back  
And whizz past 'the bullett' still scraping the track.

##### *Nature*

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<sup>118</sup>See also above, chapter "Newfult and Nostalgia."

<sup>119</sup>See appendix.

Come home to the hummock, the wood and the wild  
 And traipse through the pathways you made as a child.  
 The boat's on the collar, the trout in the stream,  
 The rasp and the bakeapple waiting for cream.  
 Come home to the landwash, the ponds and the bars  
 And bide till it's duckish and wait for the stars.

### *The Sea*

Come home to the ocean that would be your host  
 And get on the steamer and sail round the coast;  
 Get glimpses of men hauling cod-traps and trawls  
 And men driving pot-heads with screeches and bawls.  
 Come home to the jigger, the piggin and gaff  
 And quot on the cuddy and have a good laugh.

### *Food*

Come home to the cod-tongues, the breeches and sounds  
 And eat them in motorboat out on the grounds.  
 We'll keep in cold storage some flippers and birds  
 And Newfoundland rabbit and moose from the herds.  
 Come home to fish-cake, the rounder and scrod  
 And pea-soup with doughboys and chowder with cod.

### *Simple Pleasures*

Come home to the time and the quick Irish dance  
 And share the old customs of Britain and France;  
 Come boil up the kettle with crunnick and scrub  
 And have a big scoff of your favorite grub.  
 Come home to the tilt and the fire on the beach  
 And cabbage and pork with a bottle of Screech.

### *Gathering Places*

Come home to the shop and the squid jiggin' ground,  
 The lodge and the corner where men hang around;  
 The fishermen gather outside the Church gate  
 For a smoke or a quid and a chat as they wait.  
 Come home to the wharf when the coastal boat blows  
 And meet all the livyers assembled in rows.

### *Place Names*

Come home to the Place Names so rare and unique,  
 Expressing emotions both cheerful and bleak;  
 Names funny and sad colour harbour and bay

To mind you of life back in grandfather's day.  
 Come home to the gut and the cove and the bight  
 And romps on the planchen or talk through the night.

### *Industry*

Come home to the power we call Joey's Juice  
 And hear the big paper mills grinding black spruce;  
 And see all the fish-plants, the wood-plants and mines  
 And buildings erected with concrete and pines.  
 Come home to the rivers and fish through the day  
 And hunt in the woodlands or out in the bay.

### *The Outport*

Come home to the Outport before it's too late,  
 Ere the place you remember has gone out of date;  
 Some places have vanished because they were poor,  
 But many remain with the wide-open door.  
 Come home to the old-timer's cottage and dish  
 With lashins of jam and some roasted salt fish.

### *The Capital*

Come home to St. John's with her Narrows and Forts,  
 To this oldest of all North American ports;  
 Her front is some altered - and so is her back -  
 She flies the new flag by the old Union Jack.  
 Come home to her streets and her lanes and her hills,  
 The Lake and Regatta give wonderful thrills.

### *The Invitation Renewed*

Come home to old Newfy, the land of your birth,  
 From your lands of adoption all over the earth;  
 Come lie on the settle and talk of old times  
 And hear the old stories and sing the old rhymes.  
 Come home to the old-fashioned strong cup of tea  
 And drink in the air as it pours from the sea.<sup>120</sup>

Set to a tune composed by Earle's grandfather, this song uses the appeal of childhood memories, of familiar foods and dialect, which acquire symbolic value for any expatriate, to create the nostalgic setting that will draw them back to Newfoundland. The many items of food he has woven into the text indicate the strong connection

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<sup>120</sup>Copyright G. H. Earle, 1966.



between foodways acquired in childhood as part of the socio-cultural system and the regional identity. People who must leave their native environment and experience difficulties coping with their new surroundings tend to adhere to their native foods even longer than to their language; moreover, with the introduction of tourism the local food becomes a public symbol of identity that offers the tourist the opportunity of an encounter, literally the taste of a different culture (Tolksdorf 1982, 225 and 229). For his song G. H. Earle hence chose the essential themes of tourism advertising, i.e., a mixture of nature, the great outdoors, and culture presented as distinctive language and lifestyle, as native foods and customs. At the same time the visitor is reassured that things are no longer quite as backwards as they used to be. In the spirit of Smallwood, the message is one of pride and belief in progress. But the text also indicates something of the paradox of tourism as it relates to folklorism, for it describes an experience that, while quaint and different from the daily urban existence of the visitor, nevertheless offers the latest in comfort and modern amenities.

The appeal to expatriates to come home is not restricted to such extraordinary events as a "Come Home Year," but is a sustained advertising effort by government tourism planners. For example, a single issue of the *Downhomer* (April 1990), published monthly in Ontario, carried three advertisements repeating the same basic message "Come Home to St. John's This Summer, We Really Miss You..." Evoking feelings of nostalgia and guilt, the photo of an elderly couple is accompanied by the text: "Are You Coming Home to Visit, Son? We'd Sure Love to See You..."(3); a picture of young people gathered around a bar features the line "Wouldn't it be Great to Get the Old Gang on the Go Again..." (5) and a couple with three young children seems to say "A Lot of Things Have Changed, But We Still Think About You..." (11). These tourists of the "vfr" (visiting friends and relatives) variety constitute a reliable market, even if they leave comparatively little money in the province, as they do not necessarily rely on the infrastructure that is provided for the tourist trade.

Until the 1970s Newfoundland was advertised as "The Happy Province," a slogan that recalled the stereotype of the "hardy, happy fisherman." A 1976 development strategy, however, designed for the newly created Tourism Department, called for a more aggressive approach and for a highly marketable image, an image based on

uniqueness and a wide range of special activities and active participation that would make Newfoundland truly distinct from the Maritimes.<sup>121</sup> Compared to the more accessible Maritime provinces, Newfoundland is late to develop tourism and in the 1980s tried hard to catch up. When I first arrived in Newfoundland during the summer of 1982, the glossy brochure available at the ferry terminal in Nova Scotia *Newfoundland and Labrador - Just Waiting For You*, much resembled in style, format and content materials I collected earlier for New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, all of which conformed to a certain generic concept of travel promotions. Despite the repeated claim to be "different" and to offer a "new experience," such brochures describe a blend of proven touristic attractions in exalted prose that tends toward superlatives. Any possibly negative aspects are quickly glossed over, e.g. the weather, the long distances to cover between major attractions. Incongruously, quiet outposts are portrayed as hot spots of entertainment: "... there is an endless variety of exciting and fun-filled activities ongoing in the hundreds of communities throughout the province. Join the hospitable Newfoundlanders at work and play, and your days and nights will be filled with action" (2).

In the competitive world of tourism, such largely intangible cultural elements as a friendly, hospitable attitude toward strangers and local folklore have become major factors to profile and differentiate travel destinations, and this brochure repeatedly mentions Newfoundland folklore as if it existed specifically for the benefit of tourists:

And there's the music. Newfoundlanders sing, dance and play more than anyone else; and they do it better. Music is everywhere, and Newfoundland has a wealth of thousands of its own folk songs that is unequalled in North America. Listen to them, sing them, and take them home with you (2).

And another example: "Nowhere in North America will you find such rich folklore, such unusual and colorful traditions, or so many people willing to tell you about them" (5). The simple diet, long considered a handicap for the tourist trade in Newfoundland, is advertised as another attraction: "You can eat traditional dishes prepared from the most basic and readily available foods, but which make a taste treat that can never be forgotten" (5).

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<sup>121</sup>A Tourism Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador prepared for the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Tourism by the Tourism Work Group and Development Planning Association, St. John's, August 1976.

While "Mumming" and "Bonfire Night" are said to be customs "that make Newfoundland different, and much more fun to visit," (6) there is evidence of some ambivalence in the attempt to appear interesting, but not too backwards. Thus the comment on the pure Irish and English dialects, "as it was when Will Shakespeare was alive," is modified: "The only surprising thing about this phenomenon is how such speech is so fluently mingled with modern sophisticated conversation" (5-6). The next page prematurely claims that "The gentle and quaint traditions of a storied past exist side by side with the optimism and frenetic business pace of the new oil age" (7), even though the oil boom, like the boom in tourism, has proven elusive throughout the 1980s.

In such literature all is bright, beautiful and optimistic; outport life is presented in idealized, romanticized, selective pictures. No mention is made of underdevelopment, poverty and unemployment. For the (mass) tourist industry native customs and lifestyles obviously are not the subject of cultural conservation, but products to be marketed. Little consideration is given to the effect such advertising must have on the people of the outports, who are expected to cater to the tourists according to such unrealistic descriptions, to be hospitable and friendly in the service of tourism, even though only few among them stand to profit from it. Not only are they not asked if they want to participate in an industry that affects their very lifestyle, but repeated efforts have been made to educate Newfoundlanders as to how they should please tourists and how they should change such annoying habits as littering and poaching.<sup>122</sup>

By the late 1980s promotional efforts became more professional, less naive. The brochure "Discover Newfoundland and Labrador -- A World of Difference" was introduced in 1988 with a new thrust, "About a thousand years ago the Vikings landed!" This refers to the archaeological discovery in 1962-64 of the small, short-lived hamlet a group of Vikings established at L'Anse aux Meadows on the tip of the Northern Peninsula that has since been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Readers are invited to "catch the spirit of the Vikings and discover Newfoundland and Labrador," which again is described as a "very special place," a "unique culture." The text is

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<sup>122</sup>These issues are being addressed, for example, in the recommendations of the "Adventure Tourism Strategy" developed for the province in 1991 under the chairmanship of the Economic Recovery Commission.



shorter and more factual, the language less exalted; however, folklore remains an important promotional element: "Here you will encounter one of North America's oldest surviving folk cultures -- people on the doorstep of North America with a rich tradition of language, music and folklore that they brought with them from the Old World centuries ago." Tourists are still invited to participate in the experience, but since the proliferation of festivals in the 1980s public settings are indicated rather than private homes: "We share with you a living folk culture of language, song and dance that we celebrate in a most entertaining way during an annual calendar of festivals and community events" (n.p.).

Compared to most of North America, Newfoundland's history is unusually long and interesting, which inspired an unassuming, but popular booklet written by L.E.F. English in 1955 that reached its nineteenth edition in 1988. The author intended his "romantic history of Britain's Oldest Colony - Canada's Newest Province" as much for native Newfoundlanders "interested in preserving that which reminds us of our great heritage" as for the entertainment of tourists (5). He devoted a major section of the booklet to folklore, including explanations of Newfoundland terminology, place names, weather lore, folk medicines, omens, folk songs (1988 edition, 26-63). Historical accounts of various regions and towns in Newfoundland are sprinkled with legends. On the whole, it is an informative, well written booklet, though the exultant prose of the introductory passage resembles that of later promotional materials, which it may have inspired:

Visit the fishing villages, the so-called outports of the Province of Newfoundland. Listen to the quaint language of the folk, and hear the English speech, as it was pronounced in Devonshire in the time of Shakespeare. Or, linger awhile in the settlements where are located the descendants of Irish immigrants, and hear the rolling accent of Cork or the rich burr of a Kerry brogue. Ask for a thrilling ghost story or an intriguing tale of pirate treasure, and you have folk legends in galore. Or it may be that you would be invited to hearken to fairy magic and watch the little fellows dance on the greensward in truly bewitching moonlight. Join in the merry throngs that laughingly tread the reels and quadrilles to the music of the village fiddler. Hear the folk songs of England and Ireland, songs that today are remembered only in the sequestered hamlets on the Newfoundland seashore. Revel in the supreme thrill of realizing that the welcome given the stranger comes from the heart of a delightful people who are remarkable above all else as the most hospitable folk in the whole world (5).

Brochures of general interest, however, were increasingly augmented by invented attractions, such as the "Come Home Year 1966" mentioned above. The tourist industry simply exploits events of historic or any other significance as devices to attract

tourists. Hence in 1983 the 400th anniversary of Sir Humphrey Gilbert claiming Newfoundland as England's first overseas colony was celebrated in various ways, highlighted by a royal visit of Prince Charles and Princess Diana. Every day during that summer an actor dressed in period costume rowed a boat into the harbour of St. John's to re-enact the historic ceremony. A special brochure, published by the Department of Development, Tourism Branch, in St. John's interpreted the curious spectacle:

In 1583, Newfoundland celebrates one of the most significant events in the history of the English-speaking world. In the first week of August 1583, the courtier and colonizer Sir Humphrey Gilbert ceremoniously took possession of the island by authority of a Royal Patent granted him by Elizabeth I. Having solemnly read the details of his commission to the assembled crews of the forty or so English and other European fishing vessels then in St. John's harbour, Gilbert formally declared the territory a possession of the English crown and proclaimed local ordinances establishing the supremacy of the English Church and of English Law. Gilbert's declaration of 1583 established Newfoundland as England's first overseas colony and was the first step toward the creation of the British Empire.

This attempts to make the most of an event considered important only to Newfoundland which, as discussed in Part II of the thesis, felt long neglected by the British mother country while a colony and never played a significant role within the English-speaking world. Sir Humphrey Gilbert, here benevolently described as "courtier and colonizer," was known for his cruel subjugation of the Irish and for being a pirate. He did not live to colonize Newfoundland, but drowned on the return voyage to England. The occasion, however, fits a preoccupation of the tourist industry with "firsts" and "records" of any kind, which is perhaps particularly pronounced in Canada, a young country with little drama to show for in its history. In this domain, for once, Newfoundland can claim an advantage over other Canadian provinces, and tourism promoters are trying to exploit this by turning elements of history, as of folklore, into picturesque attractions of the present.

By the end of the 1980s the search for special events that could be linked to Newfoundland's history reached new extremes. In 1988 "100 years of municipal government in St. John's" was celebrated across the province during the "Soiree '88" (St. John's Tourist Information Guide, 1988). This unlikely soiree had been two and a half years in the planning and featured another royal visit from England, Prince Edward, amongst a hodge podge of entertainments that included art displays, a rubber duck race, folk music and storytelling. It was considered so great a success that immediately more events were being planned:

The special anniversaries and celebrations committee will continue, in fact, to bring important dates to the attention of Newfoundlanders. 1997, for example, is the 500th anniversary of the landing of John Cabot, and 1999 is the 50th anniversary of Confederation, while 1992 marks 100 years since the founding of the Grenfell Mission (Stone 1988, 37).

It does not seem to matter that the distinction of the first landfall of Cabot is also claimed by Cape Breton, that Newfoundlanders voted for confederation with only the smallest of margins, or that Grenfell's Mission is now regarded with some ambivalence. Even the slightest excuse suffices for a celebration, as long as it promises to draw tourists. The events are then put together from a stock mixture of amusements that includes folklore along with a variety of other entertainments. Royal visits add an official air and some importance to these occasions, while they emphasize the enduring attachment to Great Britain and the comparatively long recorded history of Newfoundland.

Another promotional effort introduced in 1989 advertised St. John's as "City of Legends."<sup>123</sup> At closer inspection, however, the legends appeared to be simply items of local history added decoratively to local brochures. The page listing "Nightlife," for example, featured the following:

"The Legend of the Great Fire of 1892": On a hot Friday afternoon, in July of 1892, a Mr. Tommy Fitzpatrick accidentally dropped his pipe while working in a barn. The ashes from the pipe set off a fire which raged for almost 24 hours, and eventually destroyed more than half the town.<sup>124</sup>

Three years prior to these publications the archivist at the Memorial University Folklore and Language Archive had been contacted by the tourism department of the City of St. John's. He suggested the use of legends and helped to organize and record a legend telling session. The material, however, was never used and seems to have disappeared after the researcher completed her temporary contract.<sup>125</sup> Nevertheless the first "City of Legends" brochures won a national award and the St. John's tourism

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<sup>123</sup>See appendix.

<sup>124</sup>St. John's Tourist Information Guide, 34.

<sup>125</sup>Personal communication with Philip Hiscock, archivist, September 1990.



department decided to continue the theme.<sup>126</sup> Consequently another effort was made to use archival materials and in 1989 a graduate student was hired to select over two hundred items from the collections. But the materials, mostly in form of student papers, did not suit the manager in charge of the "legends" campaign, who considered it too cumbersome to contact the informants, get the releases signed, and rewrite the stories. Instead he hired two more students for the summer of 1990 to collect primary materials related to legends that would not be restricted to history and would allow him greater freedom of use.<sup>127</sup> Such ventures nevertheless present an opportunity for folklorists to participate in the development of tourism as it relates to folklore, to which they can bring a more culturally informed, sensitive dimension than the average tourism marketing consultant.

While tourism promoters in St. John's went to some trouble to search for legends suitable for their purposes, an outpost did not hesitate to use and invented legend to stylize the local environment for the benefit of tourists. *The Newfoundland and Labrador Vacation Guide* (August-September 1991) published an article "Resident creates rock legend," which explains how a young woman used her fantasy to weave a "legend" around a rock formation in the harbour of her outpost. She combined fact and fiction in her story of the confrontation of white settlers with the Beothuck Indians and added the problem of overfishing for salmon as an element of current interest. Her text concludes:

Even today, the giant stone man lies across the entrance to the place where the salmon river begins, as a reminder to those who intruded upon the Beothuck way of life. The Beothuck are gone, but every year the river is abundant with salmon returning from the spawning grounds (34).

When recognized as a potential tourist attraction, this "legend" was inscribed on a sign resembling a historical marker. The fact that several tourists stopped to take in the sight is mentioned as validation of this story that combines notions of the appeal of native heritage with contemporary ecological concerns. In the future even local people may make this invented legend part of their etiological folklore.

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<sup>126</sup>Personal communication with Kai Bath, Manager, Department of Economic Development and Tourism, City of St. John's, June 1990.

<sup>127</sup>Personal communication with Patti Fulton, archivist, and Anita Best, graduate student of folklore, June 1990.

In spite of all promotional efforts, Newfoundland is not yet well known as a travel destination. The visitors who do find their way here, however, often appreciate precisely the fact that Newfoundland has remained relatively obscure. After all, an enduring romantic ideal of tourism is the "discovery" of an unknown place. An American travel writer thus admired "the raw glory of Newfoundland's landscape" in an article published in the *Seattle Times*:

... like the rest of Newfoundland, Gros Morne has yet to be discovered by the hordes of tourists who crisscross the United States and Canada, notching national parks on their Winnebagos. Last year only 30,389 people signed the park register. Compare this to the 10 million who visit the Great Smoky Mountains every year (Davis 1988, J2).

Newfoundland, however, has prepared for tourists with a budding souvenir trade. Once they arrive, tourists can choose from a changing variety of souvenir books, coffee table style, their color photographs typically emphasizing pre-industrial subjects, as is the practice elsewhere.<sup>128</sup> These again present a selective, romanticized view of Newfoundland and ignore that the dwelling of choice in many outports has long become the modern bungalow or trailer and that older houses often have been renovated or altered to resemble the newer ones. Here folklorism is evident in that these pictures evoke a past that is no longer representative of the lifestyle of the people of Newfoundland except in the remotest areas.

Other successful souvenir items are cookbooks featuring simple Newfoundland dishes, often interspersed with local anecdotes. One of the most popular of these, *Fat-Back and Molasses*, a collection of "Favourite Old Recipes from Newfoundland and Labrador," was produced by Rev. Ivan F. Jespersen with the cooperation of United Church women from a number of small communities.<sup>129</sup> The proliferation of regional cookbooks corresponds to a recent emphasis on local cuisine served in restaurants across the province, including fish dishes that previously were considered lowly everyday fare and not suitable as "restaurant food." Cod tongues, for example, are now offered to tourists as a curiosity, something that indicates an amusing "folk" quality. Craft items like knitted socks, mittens and sweaters, "traditional" hooked mats, and

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<sup>128</sup>Bausinger has cited an example from Switzerland (1971, 174-5).

<sup>129</sup>The cookbook went through three editions in 1974, 1977 and 1980.

miniature dories, are often all but mass produced for the tourist trade as are the images of puffins, pitcher plants, and Newfoundland dogs pictured on anything from keychains to T-shirts. These are made to appeal mainly to middle class North American housewives who consider shopping an important aspect of their vacation. Government employed craft specialists now encourage the use of designs and materials that fit current tastes and market demands to make souvenir production more economically viable.<sup>130</sup> Tourism has also inspired a local renaissance of the Newfoundland dog, which in the province was no longer a particularly popular breed prior to the 1980s, as people had little use for such a large dog. Its great popularity among the affluent population of western societies, however, eventually had tour operators and park interpreters acquire Newfoundland dogs that now pose for pictures with tourists. In Newfoundland, as in other tourist destinations, the tourist thus encounters an increasingly organized, artificially constructed world full of goods and attractions produced or enhanced for his benefit.

Throughout the development of tourism in the province the lack of infrastructure, especially accommodations, to serve the tourists has been a continuing problem even though loans and grants were made available to the private sector under various government strategies designed to stimulate the economy in remote rural areas (Seymour 1980, 35-37). While earlier governments have tended to favor large scale projects and attractions, the recent push to improve accommodation facilities across the island has encouraged more modest bed and breakfast style operations as well. As "Hospitality Homes" they once existed in most outports to provide room and board for the occasional travelling salesman, cleric, teacher or tourist. Ideally such private accommodation gives the interested tourist a chance to get acquainted with the local population and culture. In 1985, however, I observed folklorism in the making when I visited a new bed and breakfast established in a picturesque outport within reasonable driving and sailing distance from St. John's. The owner was born in Newfoundland, spent most of her adult life in Ontario and decided to return to Newfoundland with her husband after he retired from his job. With some help in form of government grants she

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<sup>130</sup>A "Crafts Strategy" developed for the province in 1991 under the auspices of the Economic Recovery Commission is aimed mainly at the tourist market.



transformed a plain house into the "Galecliff Lodge." The house now fits a certain North American standard of comfort and decor, equipped with modern appliances and filled with nicknacks and fake antique furniture, including make-believe family photos in the bedrooms. It no longer resembles the original house nor any house typical of that outpost.

I arrived with friends shortly before the place opened officially, while the yard was about to be bulldozed. Only a large rock resisted all attempts at landscaping. As we discovered when we sat down for dinner, our hostess had found good use for this rock; next to our plates were rolled and tied sheets of imitation parchment with the printed "Legend of the Kissing Rock":<sup>131</sup>

It is believed that many, many years ago, long before the fearless Vikings sailed to these rugged shores in their mighty galleons, our land was inhabited by a fearless race of seamen.

In this little settlement now known as Upper Island Cove, the men would leave for sea from this very spot. Their wives and loved ones would accompany them to the rock to bid them farewell, not knowing whether they would ever return from their treacherous journey.

These gallant sailors considered it good luck to touch the rock before leaving, sometimes chipping a small piece from its base to carry in their pockets, thus ensuring them a bountiful catch and a safe return.

Superstition prevailed [sic], it was considered foolish to defy fate and leave without first going to the rock.

So the legend goes that those who reach across the Kissing Rock and exchange a kiss will find everlasting luck and happiness.

An entirely concocted "legend," this story bears no relationship to Newfoundland history or outpost culture, where the sexes lead quite separate lives and public displays of affection would be frowned upon. A clever businesswoman, she simply made the best of what she considered an eyesore. To her, the invention of the legend was a stroke of genius. Several photos displayed on a wall which showed guests standing on that rock and the mention of the "Kissing Rock" in a travel article published in California indicate that she had not only invented a real attraction, but that that legend gave her essentially new house a "historic" quality: "The Kissing Rock is a giant boulder beside this historic home ... Our hostess ... told us of the legends about the joy that will befall a couple who embrace on the kissing rock" (Riley 1986).

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<sup>131</sup>See appendix.

The use of a rock to create a "sight" may be considered an essentially harmless and amusing matter, though it misrepresents local history and culture. But our hostess tried to spread her influence to the community in more insidious ways. My first visit in 1985 happened on a beautiful early summer evening. Walking through the village we met several people who engaged in friendly chats, as is common in outports. When we commented on the pleasant experience, our hostess was quick to take credit for it and indicated that she had instructed everyone to be nice to her guests. We were dismayed. It was my experience that visitors are generally appreciated in outports for they bring news and entertainment; assigning a conscious role to the local population to smile for tourists is a move toward typecasting the happy, quaint Newfoundlander in the service of tourism. Like most tourists, we preferred to consider our experience an "authentic" encounter; like any efficient entrepreneur, she tried to control the quality of the product she sold, including intangible cultural elements of that outport, which she learned to appreciate as an attraction that could be commoditized because she had experienced a different environment while living on the Canadian mainland; she tried to cultivate and enhance a romantic appeal that most Newfoundlanders do not even notice or simply take for granted.<sup>132</sup>

The Galecliff Lodge opened in 1985 amidst much public fanfare and media attention and has since come to be considered the model of a good bed and breakfast operation by tourism planners and prominent guests that include leading politicians. The picture of the smiling hostess presenting a pie has been featured in government promotions; she has lost track of the many newspaper articles that have mentioned her lodge and she herself has published a popular souvenir cookbook, *A Week at Galecliff Lodge* (1990). After two years in the Bed and Breakfast business, however, the hostess admitted in 1987: "During the first year I made nothing and I haven't calculated what was made last year. You just have to love what you're doing and love the people you are meeting."<sup>133</sup> When I visited her in 1989, she still complained that she did not earn

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<sup>132</sup>Even in the 1980s Newfoundlanders often found the enthusiasm tourists express for their environment puzzling, another factor that makes it difficult to encourage tourism entrepreneurship among them.

<sup>133</sup>*The Sunday Express* [St. John's] 10 January 1988: 19.

much, even though she and her husband had opened a second bed and breakfast in the village. But worst of all, the community was not cooperating with her plans.

In 1985, full of energy and ideas, she had hoped to become mayor of that outport and to involve all of the community in the tourist industry. Two years on the town council taught her, however, that she could not get anywhere with "them," i.e., the conservative men who sat on the council with her. Not only did the community not live up to her dream of turning the town into a tourist resort, but her neighbors are now making life difficult for her family. At one point some of her mail disappeared. When her husband started to build a small greenhouse in 1989, he was told to get a permit, an unusual formality in an outport. She has also learned that several tourists were given wrong directions when asking for her house. All this has left her somewhat bitter and disappointed. Consequently she has decided to concentrate on her guests, whom she enjoys, and to ignore the community as much as possible.<sup>134</sup>

It can only be conjectured what went wrong in her case. Perhaps the 39 years of absence had made her too much of an outsider, or the mainstream North American taste, style and self confidence she had acquired in Ontario, as well as her apparent success as a business woman have contributed to the rejection of her plans in that outport. This case, however, is not the only one where a community has come to resent people who attract tourism to the area. For example, a particularly industrious family from Point Lance had started a small combination gas station/restaurant/motel operation in the nearby community of St. Bride's. When I recommended the place to visitors from Ottawa they were unable to locate it, even though they repeatedly asked for directions. Eventually they had to drive back to Placentia, a distance of about forty kilometres, to find accommodation. When I later informed the family of this incident, they became quite concerned and indicated that they had encountered hostility in that community before. By comparison in the community of Branch in the same general area, where I had repeatedly discussed the idea of opening a bed and breakfast with a local store owner, this elderly lady was convinced that no one would be willing to start such a business. Nevertheless a bed and breakfast was successfully established in

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<sup>134</sup>Personal communication in May and June, 1989.



1990 by a young couple who inherited a house in that community. These new entrepreneurs, however, had to overcome considerable resistance by a conservative town council and by other community members who expressed bewilderment as to why anyone would open their house to strangers. It took three years before they felt that their venture was slowly being accepted.<sup>135</sup>

In spite of their friendly and hospitable reputation, Newfoundlanders tend to adhere to conservative and egalitarian values within their own community. They do not look kindly on people who want to better themselves and who rise above the others. James Faris documented such attitudes in Cat Harbour, where he found that these values were stressed to the point that local leadership and any exercise of power are viewed as socially aggressive and those who lead may be subjected to severe criticism and attack (1972, 102-3). John Szwed has similarly stated:

Individuals who attempt to better their circumstances far beyond those of their fellows are strongly discouraged by gossip, suspicion, ridicule, social satire (in form of songs and imitations), and ultimately by withdrawal of aid and friendship (1969, 106).

Impulses from outside are often regarded with suspicion, which in some cases, no doubt, are based on past bitter experiences, given Newfoundland's history of exploitation. With traditional attitudes prevailing, it is hardly surprising that the government has had difficulty inspiring local entrepreneurs to create the necessary infrastructure for tourism and thus to effectively alter established economic patterns. Changes tend to occur slowly in rural Newfoundland and so far there have been sociocultural barriers to any unbridled growth of tourism and, by implication, folklorism related to the tourist industry.

Since the 1980s, however, tourist attractions are rapidly increasing, including tour boat operations. One of the most successful among these, "Harbour Charters," operates out of St. John's with a "Grand Bank Schooner," the *Scademia*, which can accommodate up to fifty people. Skipper Charles Anonsen once sailed on the last of the Newfoundland schooners, the *Norma and Gladys*; he related his new schooner to that experience: "Imagine the early days of the fishermen who came from all over the world to fish off the Grand Banks. They came in these schooners. It's not everywhere

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<sup>135</sup>Personal communication by Arthur and Rosemary Whalen, July 1991 and August 1992.

in the world you would get the opportunity to go out to sea on one of these boats" (Gushue 1987). Any of the remaining old Newfoundland schooners, however, have long been sold to tour boat operators in the New England states and the Maritimes, where the tourist industry had an earlier start. The *Scademia* is a new boat. It does not smell of fish and it does not sail out to sea, but generally uses engine power to take passengers on short tours out of St. John's harbour no farther than Cape Spear. The tour comes complete with traditional music and a Newfoundland dog named "Bosun," the mascot of the schooner. "Screech-Ins," which will be discussed in the following chapter, are performed on demand. The experience is at once contrived (the simulation of "old schooner") and honest (sightseeing as a form of commercial entertainment).

Inspired by these successes, in 1989 a businessman from St. John's started operating an inn and a tour boat on Woody Island, Placentia Bay, which was resettled in the 1960s. He called his basic two-day tour "A Step Back in Time." The brochure promises tourists that they will "Walk back in time with us as we visit these old abandoned settlements and relive the fun-filled times of outport Newfoundland," and invites them to "Enjoy cod jigging, beachcombing, picking mussels, a moonlight beach bonfire, a "yarn" with local fishermen, row a dory, knit a fishing net or wander the island at your leisure."

For more than a decade the only permanent, year-round resident of Woody Island was Randy Lieb, a German immigrant, who moved to the island in the early 1970s and makes a living as a fisherman, painter, writer.<sup>136</sup> Randy has become an attraction, presumably one of the "local fishermen" mentioned in the brochure, and once they arrive on the island, the tour operator encourages tourists to visit him. While Randy enjoyed some of these contacts, he realized that after the first few encounters he was "hamming it up" for the tourists, obliging them by playing a more eccentric character than he really is. During the first tourist season Randy welcomed the change and even considered becoming a partner in the business. However, he had chosen to live on Woody Island precisely because of its isolation. Now the world is following him there. By the third season, the situation had become problematic, as he explained in a letter:

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<sup>136</sup>I met Randy Lieb in 1988. The following is based on several visits to Woody Island and on personal correspondence.

I have been somewhat flattened by tourism here, and am becoming prickly. This spring, Loyola asked for admission to take some people through my house. Next thing, he was marching groups through my place two and three times a week, and I literally started heading for the hills when I saw another group coming, because I got so sick of hearing myself apologize for low ceilings and unwashed dishes and all that and giving the same old answers to the same old questions....

Of course, these people who were in my place told others about it, and so it started that people would knock at my door at all hours when I was home, and tell me that they SIMPLY HAD TO see the inside of my place. The fact that when I told Loyola that I want to renovate the old part and he didn't want me to do it because it might be less interesting for his guests ... didn't help matters any.

So I made myself very scarce. And Loyola has become very solicitous now, inviting me for a meal and a drink whenever I come near the hotel, sending out more than enough bread so that I don't have to bake. My present notion is that I will proceed with my plans. I will remodel the old part ... But I don't want to let any tourists any more in my house, unless they have something to offer in the way of real pleasant conversation or interesting connections or whatever... I found that one disagreeable person can do more to spoil one's day than ten very nice people can do to make it beautiful (July 28, 1991).

What Randy experiences is the classic dilemma of tourism. Tourists crave the unusual, the different. They want to participate in the experience, if only from the outside and for a short moment. But by doing so, they intrude and alter what they touch. Randy is now enduring what natives all over the world have experienced when they were "discovered" by tourists and became the objects of their curiosity. According to the brochure, these tourists want to take "A Step Back in Time," to experience a more basic, simple, "natural" lifestyle as promised to be found in the past. It does not matter that Randy, who voluntarily gave up the amenities offered by urban life, is not a native, or that his house is not typical of Newfoundland houses and in that sense not "authentic." Before the arrival of tourists reduced him to an attraction, Randy was living his dream of being lord of a manor. He has now, somewhat unwillingly, become part of a business without sharing in the profits, for the benefit of which he is expected to open his house, like a museum, and to preserve his environment against his own wishes. But just as "sightseeing" has become a standardized, fixed element of tourism, "life-seeing" as an attraction destroys the spontaneous quality of human interaction and encourages the artificial behaviour typical of folklorism. When tourists expect to encounter the stereotype that was portrayed in the brochure, the potential for increased inter-cultural understanding is denied that tourism was once expected to achieve.

Another example illustrates the complex role of "authenticity" in the touristic encounter that brings together different cultures. According to fieldnotes by Lynn Noel,



who acted as Guest Lecturer on board a cruise ship touring the waters of Newfoundland and Labrador in July, 1991, various shore excursions created dissonances. Aside from the obvious class division between affluent tourists descending on isolated outposts populated by poor natives, the visit to an Innu (Indian) camp proved to be a particularly awkward event:

We had been sold a very exciting experience ... the first expedition into this isolated community, where a group of the Innu (the combined term for the Naskaupi and Montagnais people) had set up a facsimile of their traditional hunting camp for us to see. The first stop, a white trapper's camp, was a tremendous success -- even if it had been set up for our benefit, people loved seeing the campsite, the plants, the snowshoes, the canvas tent -- all the familiar artifacts of pioneer life. Various passengers bought his tea, his snowshoes, and one even tried to buy his tent ... But while this was nice, we were chafing to move on. Everyone was thrilled at the prospect of seeing "real Indians that have never seen a white man before."

Well, they don't speak English. Why is this a shock? Because we are so used to having culture interpreted for us. Nor do they appear to be reaching out to us. And why not? They are doing what they have been prepared to do -- acting like real Indians -- just as we are acting like real tourists. There was great social awkwardness all around....

There were two wall tents, about twelve by fourteen, with spruce bough flooring and tin woodstoves. Five women in traditional dress were working on a pile of native handicrafts, making duffle mittens and stuffed dolls. In the other tent, more women were offering samples of baked bannock, brewing tea, and stringing snowshoes in a delicate rawhide lace on a round frame. There was a dead murre, very authentically limp, in a corner, but the woman I spoke to couldn't tell me what they did with it and I couldn't tell her that I knew they ate it.

It emerged that this was a camp as it would have been in the late 1950s, a summer fishing camp on the river near the ocean. In the winter the people moved back inland and hunted caribou. Today, of course, they lived in government housing in Northwest River, but called themselves a separate nation.... After we had stayed about an hour (which was 40 minutes too long), we piled back on the bus, and I hope the Innu were as relieved as we were (Noel 1991, 6-7).

The problem, it seemed, was that the tourists did not know what to do in their role as spectators and that they felt some insecurity because of a lack of communication. Ironically passengers complained that this was not "the real camp," but was something "somehow fake and trumped-up for tourists." Noel concluded that they had paid to see a "Paradise lost," but that the camp did not live up to expectations and that they were dismayed to realize that life in the wilderness is tough and poor and that there was no chance to share the native vision on a one hour bus tour. The Innu, in fact, did not offer too little, but rather too much "authenticity" whereas the white trapper's camp fulfilled expectations by being contrived enough to be pleasing.

Common sense notions and popular images of "authenticity" are part of the dominant cultural view. Authenticity is attributed to that which is socially and culturally distant; the greater the social distance, the more likely the culture will be considered pure and authentic (Staub 1988). Such notions assume an antiquated, therefore timeless quality that is rescued into another time; but what appears authentic is most often contrived or at least cultivated and organized (Bausinger, 1971, 198). Moreover, in tourism the manipulation of settings has become a convention, and without interpretation an authentic event is considered boring. It appears that tourism has entered a postmodern phase where what is fake or reproduced seems more real and satisfying than the original; in any case, the function of the "fake" is the same as that of the "authentic" item and the same system of references remains valid whether the item or the experience is fake or authentic (Bausinger 1971, 161). The casual visitor has neither the knowledge nor the inclination to differentiate between the two and the search for the authentic itself leads to the fake, i.e. to folklorism, as a product of role expectations that are part of the tourist industry.

Despite the optimism and faith expressed publicly in the bright future of tourism in Newfoundland, at present hardly anyone is making a good living of it. Moreover, it is not necessarily the government encouraged attractions that have proven to be successful in this largely unpredictable, uncontrollable industry. After the government invested more than a million dollars into making the picturesque, old outpost Trinity a Heritage Village in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the residents were not much better off in terms of employment opportunities than before, while they are now restricted by building codes and other rules established to keep Trinity artificially "quaint" (O'Hollaren 1985). Instead the "Trinity Loop" amusement park nearby, based on a train ride along an old railroad loop that serves as theme for assorted attractions of rides, games and food concession stands, the brainchild of a former construction worker, has proven very successful and can be expected to grow in popularity since the railroad was closed in the late 1980s. In the case of Trinity, the more successful attraction, the amusement park, relies mainly on working class Newfoundland resident visitors, who constitute most of the regional tourist trade, while the heritage village appeals to middle class, foreign tourists who so far have not discovered Newfoundland as a major vacation

destination. In this case folklorism again differentiates the social classes, with the educated public clearly more interested in the reconstructed cultural heritage experience than "the folk," who are content with more basic, "real" amusements.

Essentially the "Trinity Loop" is a more honest tourist attraction than any heritage village, for there is no pretense that this park offers anything else but commercial amusements. The owner is limited only by his fantasy and business sense, whereas the residents of Trinity are now made to conform to a certain "traditional" outport style without necessarily benefiting from it financially. In Trinity, too, the economic motive of attracting tourists is important, but is concealed under the theme of heritage conservation.<sup>137</sup> Paradoxically the so-called fake may be a more appropriate, playful tourist attraction than more serious "authentic" ones where economic motives are hidden (Bausinger 1971, 176). As an additional benefit, the fake can act like a buffer zone that directs tourists into specific areas and thus protects the host population from being intruded upon in their real life.

The above indicates that folklorism is closely associated with tourism developments, and that some of these developments are fraught with problems. Moreover, financial benefits from this industry are often marginal when compared with other types of employment. Because of limited economic options, however, tourism is enthusiastically encouraged by both the provincial and the federal branches of government and assorted development associations. For example, by the late 1980s specific tourism plans had been devised for most regions of Newfoundland, awaiting implementation with the next financial subsidiary agreement to be signed in Ottawa. These plans include such recommendations as establishing a "Living Outport" destination in Rose Blanche on the Southwest Coast.<sup>138</sup> A 130 year old stone lighthouse along a spectacular stretch of coast has been singled out as this community's major attraction. Additional tourism resources are:

- \* An overall fishing village charm
- \* Colourful and distinctive outport architecture

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<sup>137</sup>Trinity Loop Railway Village [Networker] (NLDC and IRAP) Newsletter, Issue 5, July 1989, 1 and 10-11.

<sup>138</sup>Southwest Coast Regional Tourism Plan (n.d.).



\* A rugged yet fascinating, natural resource base (i.e. the ocean, rock cliffs, coast line, harbours, etc.)

\* Interesting and hospitable local residents with a distinctive culture, heritage and lifestyle (4-40).

According to this plan, Rose Blanche is to become a "sub-destination" as part of building an "overall destination appeal" of the Southwest Coast region, an "anchor attraction" at the end of the 40 km stretch of road from Port aux Basques. Plans refer to Peggy's Cove in Nova Scotia "as an example of the type of unspoiled, rustic fishing village atmosphere which could be achieved in Rose Blanche" (4-41). Program suggestions include that visitors should be introduced to local townspeople as part of guided walks, that the newly to be constructed inn should schedule story telling sessions with local townspeople or the staff, and that regular parties and get togethers should be hosted at the inn to allow visitors and local residents to meet and talk in a friendly social atmosphere, which includes traditional Newfoundland music (4-45 and -46). It remains to be seen how Rose Blanche residents will react when tourists arrive in large numbers. According to plan, by year ten of the project Rose Blanche could expect between 15,000 to 20,000 visitors per year (compared to a few thousand up to 1990). This inspired a cautious final comment in the plan:

... such a significant level of tourist visitation may, in fact, negatively impact the character and integrity of the community as it presently exists. It will therefore be important to monitor tourism development and marketing activities to ensure a 'comfortable' degree of visitation is generated" (4-51).

But tourism developments cannot usually be controlled and their effects are irreversible. To be singled out as a "Living Outport destination," after all, may prove to be a mixed blessing for the residents of Rose Blanche, as it has been for Peggy's Cove in Nova Scotia, the obvious model for this plan, whose few local residents are overwhelmed by tourists each year from May through October.<sup>139</sup>

So far, tourism has been the subject of much hope and has been boosted as the potential solution to Newfoundland's economic problems. In central Newfoundland, for example, tourism was announced as an "untapped gold mine," promising unlimited

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<sup>139</sup>Historian Ian McKay has explored the development of Peggy's Cove, the fishing village that has become the most famous landscape and the ultimate tourist attraction of Nova Scotia. Besides two articles on this topic published in 1988, I received an unpublished manuscript from McKay, "Twilight at the Cove: Notes for a Genealogy of the Picturesque in Nova Scotia," 1986. McKay has also edited special issues on tourism published by *New Maritimes* in 1987 and 1988.

future economic benefits to a town threatened with the closure of the papermill, once the sole reason for its existence (Maher 1989). Such an optimistic attitude hardly acknowledges that a growing tourist industry will not only affect the economy, but the very lifestyle and the environment of Newfoundland. Because of its influence on the folk culture, tourism is peculiarly suited as a field for applied folklore, as folklorists should be able to provide a more sensitive approach to the development of cultural attractions than the average tourism planner.

Tourism presents the most problematic, ambivalent phase of folklorism discussed in this thesis. In Newfoundland new necessities clash with old lifestyles. The allegedly egalitarian values of outport communities do not condone the entrepreneurship required for tourism developments and there is a danger that developments will be initiated by outsiders with little interest in the communities beyond the profit to be made. In this industry the Newfoundland hospitality, an important part of the image presented in tourism advertising, has to be modified into business relationships. The colorful folklore emerging in the newly instituted folk festivals may be pressed into routines serving the tourism industry. There is a danger that the home environment of Newfoundlanders will become stylized to match the image portrayed in tourism brochures to cater to an industry that promises to provide a much needed source of income. On the other hand, as a more positive scenario, increasingly sophisticated, experienced "post-mass" tourists are aware of participating in a game when they travel; they allow for more playful forms of folklorism as explored next in the investigation of "Screech-Ins."

## Screech-Ins

Previous chapters have repeatedly referred to "Screech-Ins," a welcoming ceremony designed to make visitors "honorary Newfoundlanders," which in the 1980s were performed in many informal and formal settings and had become all but ubiquitous as scheduled entertainments for bus and boat tours, business meetings and conventions. An invented tradition loosely based on a seafaring initiation ritual, focusing on the representation of the stereotype of the Newfoundland fisherman on stage, Screech-Ins are investigated as an extreme example of folklorism as well as a form of entertainment indicative of postmodernist tendencies.

The ceremony is based on a gimmick of the Newfoundland Liquor Commission to advertise "Screech," their own brand of rum, which was named after a popular variety of cheap, dark Demerara rum bottled in Newfoundland (Story et al, 1982, 442). The term *Screech-In* refers to the 1960s practice of coining nouns for certain kinds of social events, such as the "sit-in" or the "love-in" (Hiscock 1990, 9). In the early 1970s people buying Screech were given a free glass of that rum. By the mid-1970s the Liquor Commission gave out certificates stating that by drinking Screech the initiated was enrolled in the "Royal Order of Screechers." A booklet distributed along with the certificate explains the "Screech Story":<sup>140</sup>

Long before the liquor board was created to take alcohol under its benevolent wing, Jamaican rum was a mainstay of the Newfoundland diet, with salt fish traded to the West Indies in exchange for rum. When the Government took control of the traditional liquor business in the early 20th century, it began selling the rum in an unlabelled bottle. The product might have remained permanently nameless except for the influx of American servicemen to the island during World War II.

As the story goes, the commanding officer of the original detachment was having his first taste of Newfoundland hospitality and, imitating [sic] the custom of his host, downed his drink in one gulp. The American's blood-curdling howl, when he regained his breath, brought the sympathetic and curious from miles around rushing to the house to find out what was going on. The first to arrive was a garrulous old American sergeant who pounded on the door and demanded, "What the cripes was that ungodly screech?"

The taciturn Newfoundlander who had answered the door replied simply, "The Screech? 'Tis the rum, me son."

Thus was born a legend. As word of the incident spread, the soldiers, determined to try this mysterious "Screech" and finding its effects as devastating as the name implies, adopted it as their favorite.

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<sup>140</sup>See appendix.



The opportunistic liquor board pounced on the name and reputation and began labelling Newfoundland Screech, the most popular brand on the Island, even today.

The booklet continues with a few recipes that use Screech and then introduces the idea of the order:

#### ROYAL ORDER OF SCREECHERS

While Screech is available in many parts of North America, there is something in the unique character of the beverage which allows it to reach its peak only when consumed in Newfoundland. Tasted anywhere else in the world, Screech is a delightful drink; tasted in its home port, Screech is the ultimate in sensory experiences. To pay homage to those who are fortunate enough to try Screech in its birthplace, the Royal Order of Screechers was founded.

Under the auspices of the Province's liquor authorities, visitors to St. John's can arrange to partake of Screech in its traditional surroundings. The occasion is solemnly recorded in the register of the Royal Order of Screechers; the successful candidate is presented with a scroll commemorating the occasion; and the Order welcomes another lifetime devotee.

But the Liquor Board's simple ceremony is just one of a number of Screech-Ins that have developed since the 1970s. Several parties have subsequently claimed credit for inventing distinctive, more elaborate versions. Around 1974 Screech-Ins were performed as a weekly event at the Bellavista Club by Jim Healey and Fred Walsh. They made people kneel down to eat a piece of bologna, bow to or kiss a rubber squid, take a glass of Screech, after which a man with a plumed hat tapped them on each shoulder with a sword. According to Healey, it was a great, enjoyable show, that died, however, when the club's style of entertainment switched to disco in 1976 (Brian Jones 1990). Philip Hiscock has mentioned Joe Murphy as another inventor of a Screech-In (1990, 9). An early version is claimed by Myrle Vokey, a former teacher and school supervisor, who organized his first Screech-In in 1972 for a National Teachers Conference held in St. John's. The following discussion is based on an interview with Myrle Vokey as well as on several of his performances I observed.<sup>141</sup>

Myrle's first Screech-In was so successful that he was asked to perform it again and again. By the mid-70s this had become quite demanding on his time and he began to charge a fee when he "screeched-in" larger groups. However, he claims that the money is less important than the fun he has performing Screech-Ins. Myrle is a natural entertainer who played with a band in nightclubs before he got married. Screech-Ins

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<sup>141</sup>MUNFLA tapes C7483/85-041 and C9421/87-001.

have given him the opportunity to perform in public again. In early 1985 he estimated that he had screeched-in close to 100,000 people and the enthusiastic letters he received show that many people enjoyed the ceremony.

Myrle's performance lasts up to an hour. He is often scheduled to appear after a formal dinner and tries to create a surprise when he walks in as a "typical Newfoundland fisherman" dressed in oilskins and southwester, and carrying an oar. Before the actual Screech-In he gives a short lecture as introduction to the culture and language of Newfoundland, sprinkled with anecdotes and jokes chosen to indicate how quick-witted Newfoundlanders are, contrary to the numbskull stereotype of Canadian "Newfie" jokes. Myrle is particularly good at demonstrating various regional dialects within Newfoundland and he goes to some length explaining expressions of Newfoundland English, revealing his profession of teacher. This part of the entertainment is quite flexible and he easily adjusted to a variety of audiences in the performances I observed. In fact, he was quick to make me the butt of a joke as I was taping one of the Screech-Ins, i.e. "Elke here is a folklorist. They used to call this foolishness, now they study it as folklore."

Next Myrle pulls out his accordion and invites the audience to sing along from songs he provides in a booklet titled "Newfoundland Screech-In."<sup>142</sup> These are simply photocopied versions of some of the most popular Newfoundland songs, such as "I'se the B'y," "Squid-Jiggin' Ground," "Ryans And The Pittmans," "Jack Was Every Inch a Sailor." Additionally he has included "The Ode to Newfoundland" and "This Land is Your Land," the latter to be used at all-Canadian conferences to create a feeling of shared culture at the end of the singalong.

For the Screech-In ceremony itself, he invites about six or eight people up to the stage, usually chosen from among the leaders of the group, who are then subjected to a few indignities. First they have to eat a piece of bologna, a cheap and popular type of sausage that is offered to them as "Newfoundland steak." Then a cod is brought in, usually a fresh fish (if not available, Myrle uses a dried salt fish). Myrle explains that the cod is the backbone of the Newfoundland economy and then passes the fish around to

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<sup>142</sup>See appendix.

be kissed by the to be initiated. This is usually the highlight of the entertainment and elicits much squealing and squirming. Next all have to kneel down and learn a password, as if they were to become members of a secret order, "so that they may recognize each other after they leave Newfoundland." Myrle claims that when he made up the words for his first Screech-In in 1972 he had nothing funny in mind. When he asks the would-be Screechers: "Be you a Screecher?" they are to reply: "'Deed I is, me old cock. Long may your big jib draw." Translated the response means: "Indeed I am, my old friend. Long may your sail have wind," i.e., have a good voyage. "Cock" is the short form of "cockney," an endearing term, though most people know it as slang for "penis." Especially women, but men too often find it embarrassing to speak.

Myrle speaks the words so fast that they become unintelligible and are difficult to repeat. Often the gibberish his victims try to say sounds suggestive, adding to the fun of the audience. For this "test" Myrle particularly likes to pick on people from Ontario or Nova Scotia, making them look slow and dumb while he, the quick witted Newfoundlander, is very much in control of the situation.<sup>143</sup> Even if they play along on stage, however, some of his victims resent being made to look the fool.<sup>144</sup>

As a teacher and a Newfoundlander Myrle Vokey has made it his personal mission to reverse the stereotype of the stupid, slow witted Newfoundlander, often at the expense of making other Canadians look ridiculous by comparison. He chooses as means the dialect, an important and easily recognizable aspect of the Newfoundland identity. Depending on how much teasing he is willing to do, eventually all pass this speech test. Myrle then goes to some length to "translate" and explain the password and its meaning in traditional context. Finally all get to drink a glass of Screech. The rum was supplied free by the Newfoundland Liquor Commission until their sales went down in 1989 (Brian Jones 1990). For children Myrle substitutes cod liver oil, and for very small children Purity syrup (a drink of fruit flavored syrup and water), products

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<sup>143</sup>According to Pat Byrne, however, who has occasionally performed on stage with Myrle Vokey as part of the program, at times Myrle has "fallen flat on his face," i.e., he did not succeed in looking smarter than his "victims." Personal communication.

<sup>144</sup>Martha McDonald, for example, a folklore student from Nova Scotia, was not pleased when she was singled out to be made fun of at the Screech-In Myrle performed at a brown bag lunch of the Folklore Society at Memorial University in 1985, as she confided afterwards.



considered typical of Newfoundland. Finally the candidates kneel down and are dubbed on both shoulders with Myrle's oar, after which they receive their Screecher's certificate. Myrle then usually repeats the ceremony off stage for the rest of the group, sometimes helped by his wife, until everybody who wants it has a certificate.

The structure of the event Myrle created closely follows traditional initiation ceremonies with an ordeal (kissing a cod fish), a test (learning the "secret" password), and a newly conferred privilege (being considered a "Screecher").<sup>145</sup> Initiation rites have long been common among seafaring people to pass the time on board ship and to mark the "crossing of borders." The best known among these is the equatorial baptism, to which novices are subjected when crossing the equator for the first time. This includes pranks, the appearance of Neptune and a few indignities the initiates are submitted to. According to Hiscock, the Strait of Belle Isle between Newfoundland and Labrador similarly provided an opportunity for celebrating a "crossing of lines" when steamers took Newfoundlanders to fish on the Labrador coast for the summer (Hiscock 1990). This indicates that the custom was known in the region, so that the Screech-Ins had a traditional precedent of sorts.

The applause and the many appreciative letters Myrle has received imply that most "Screechers" enjoy his performance. That he has found many imitators is perhaps the best compliment. Myrle, who considers himself "pretty much the first to do Screech-Ins," noted with some amusement that he was once told in Corner Brook that he had done it "wrong," i.e. that it was done differently there. In fact, by the mid-1980s Screech-Ins had become so popular that even Newfoundlanders performed them on each other at private parties or "Newfie Nights."<sup>146</sup> Screech-Ins were practically a must, or at least a standby, for tour operators and conventions. I was screeched-in by Vokey during an early phase of my fieldwork, but was asked to be screeched-in again in 1989, after I had moved to Pouch Cove, an outport near St. John's. During "Pouch Cove Days" (August 18-20, 1989), the community's summer festival, about six new residents were singled out to kiss a cod, drink a glass of Screech and perform an

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<sup>145</sup>Standard Dictionary of Folklore - Mythology and Legend, Vol. 1, A-I, ed. Leach, Maria, New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1949.

<sup>146</sup>Personal communication, Cindy Turpin, October 27, 1986.

honorary dance, after which they received a local version of the Screech-In certificate.<sup>147</sup>

Since 1982 a more commercial, professional Screech-In has been offered by *Newfoundlandia Productions* as part of their program designed mainly for conventions.

Their brochure advertises:

We'll show you the time of your life in Newfoundland. First of all, you'll get the chance to kiss a cod and if that's not enough to whet your appetite for fun, we'll pickle your pucker with a swalley of world famous Newfoundland Screech and induct ye all into the "Loyal Order of Screechers", declaring ye all Honorary Newfoundlanders.

We'll help you celebrate your new citizenship with a night of jigs and reels with the locally renowned Judy Knee Dancers, traditional Newfoundland music and entertainment that ye won't forget for a long time to come.

The hearty/familiar tone of this text fits the "Crazy Clyde" character, a "fast talking, joking bayman" often portrayed in local television advertisements by Mack Barfoot, co-owner of *Newfoundlandia Productions*, a professional actor, musician and entertainer.<sup>148</sup> Mack adopted that character for a Screech-In he performed for a conference organized by Terra Nova Telephone at the Hotel Newfoundland, St. John's, September 1986. As part of a "Newfoundland Night" this Screech-In, too, was scheduled after dinner. Mack's company had decorated the stage with large panels representing the scene of a fish stage. Alternately a dory, lobster pots and nets may be added.

Mack played his salesman character instead of a stereotypical "Newfoundland fisherman," though his two assistants wore salt-and-pepper caps as a token gesture toward the outport lifestyle. Rather than focusing on the Newfoundland culture, Mack began his routine by telling jokes typical of sales meetings anywhere, many of a somewhat suggestive nature. Then he called twenty names of leading employees who had to come up to the stage to be screeched-in. At one point a cod weighing thirty-five pounds was carried around on a platter by the assistants, looking more like an elegant dinner dish than a revolting dead fish, and the about to be initiated were given peppermint candies after the obligatory kiss. Next they were given a taste of "wild

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<sup>147</sup>See appendix.

<sup>148</sup>The following description is based on an interview with Mack Barfoot, who refused to be taped, and on a performance of his version of the Screech-In I observed at the Hotel Newfoundland, September 1986.

bologna" and were taught a few words of Newfoundland speech, e. g. how to pronounce "b'y" and "Newfoundland." The password was not particularly emphasized; instead more local products, purity crackers and hard tack, were passed around to be tasted. Then old skipper Bill, wearing a cap, came on stage to dance a jig by himself, which seemed out of place in that large hall of the Newfoundland Hotel. As Mack explained later, however, Bill was his partner's father, who genuinely likes to dance and refuses to accept payment for his performances.

When the skipper had finished his routine, all in front were asked to dance, bobbing up and down to the rhythm of some Newfoundland music. Then glasses of Screech were brought in on a tray and served by the assistants, while Mack explained a number of possible humorous uses for Screech. After the rum, the assistants served water to dilute its effect or taste. Another honeymoon joke, and the initiated received their certificates; the audience applauded when their names were called. A lull resulted as more people near the stage were screeched-in. Eventually dance music started up, indicating that the Screech-In was over.

Mack claimed that his version is tactfully done "as a spoof" and that he is careful not to embarrass anyone in public. He would have liked to have his version of the Screech-In sanctioned as the "official" one. According to Mack, audiences at conventions are pretty much alike, hence his routine of generic jokes, some of which he learned from a punner's magazine to which he subscribes and from the large collection of jokes he owns. He thus prepared his performance according to what he thinks his public expects. Most members of the audience, however, seemed only mildly interested in the entertainment. One of Mack's assistants confided later that this Screech-In had been "too sophisticated" and that he would have liked to "create more of a mood" by rubbing a salt cod into someone's hair (leaving a smell that is hard to get rid of), or by doing a few more dance steps.

The obvious difference between Myrle Vokey and Mack Barfoot is that the former does Screech-Ins for "fun," as a hobby with an educational purpose, whereas the latter has integrated Screech-Ins smoothly into the "Newfoundland Night" program he arranges for his business venture, *Newfoundlandia Productions*, which provides a living for him, his employees, and a number of Newfoundland artists and musicians he



occasionally hires. Unlike Myrle Vokey, who does not depend on the income he makes from Screech-Ins and therefore dares to be outrageous, Mack Barfoot cannot afford to tread on anybody's toes. Increased commercialization has made Mack's Screech-In a routine and rather bland entertainment. Mack's "cleaned up" version attempts to please everyone, but has lost much of its specific Newfoundland flavour, informative content, and the element of reversal that makes Newfoundlanders look smart in comparison with mainlanders or foreigners. It differs little from any other after dinner routine performed by a stand-up comic. Myrle Vokey's and Mack Barfoot's versions of the Screech-In thus represent opposite extremes of the many versions of this invented tradition that are performed with various degrees of skill, but commonly play on the Newfoundland stereotype and involve rum and kissing a cod.

Hans Moser suggested in 1964 that one should neither doubt nor ridicule the positive attitude of organizers who consciously create a custom, even though the value expressed in their ideas is typical of folklorism (13). Staged customs like Myrle Vokey's Screech-In with its demonstration of dialect and wit can provide a much more life-like image of a folk culture than the best collection of folklore kept under glass in a museum. Such customs, however, often end up under more or less ambitious managers who emphasize what they consider essential or, like in the case of Mack Barfoot, what they think the public expects (Moser 1964, 20-21). Screech-Ins are not officially controlled. Not many performers are as skillful as Myrle Vokey when they try to spoof the stereotype of the Newfoundland fisherman or when they test the wit of visitors to the island. The drinking involved in this custom as well has occasionally led to excesses and subsequently to criticism. At times people have let themselves be screeched-in repeatedly during the same event to obtain more free rum.<sup>149</sup> Because of such problems controversies about Screech-Ins have flared up off and on.

In 1984 Pat Byrne felt offended enough by recipes using Screech called "Newfie Nightcap" and "Newfie Bullet," which he considered racist terminology and an insult to his culture, to write a letter to the President of the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup>Personal communication by Tim Houlihan.

<sup>150</sup>As discussed above in the chapter "Newfult and Nostalgia," Newfie jokes have notoriously made Newfoundlanders the numbskull figure of Canada.

He took that opportunity to complain about Screech-Ins as well, particularly about the lack of dignity when the caricature of a fisherman is portrayed at these events.<sup>151</sup> In his reply several months later, the president of the liquor corporation defended Screech-Ins:

On the matter of Screech-Ins, the Corporation has tightened control over the conduct of Screech-Ins since the time when there was no central organization defining what was acceptable. I personally find that some of the antics at a Screech-In are juvenile; however, I should point out that while we provide the product, certificates, and general guidelines, much of the rest of a typical Screech-In is related to a style of Newfoundland entertainment rather than to the Screech and would be the same whether it was called a soiree, Newfie night, or a Screech-In.

Against the type of reaction reported by you, we have to balance the tremendously positive support to Screech and Screech-Ins given by municipal and provincial tourism departments; by various other Government departments; by many civic, cultural and social groups which have organized Screech-Ins; and by individual tourists who have been involved. A complete list of the groups and individuals who have participated in Screech-Ins would probably demonstrate that a large cross-section of the population does not feel inferior or intimidated by the unique nature of this Province. As to the dignity of the Screech-In, I, frankly, am not sure that it is desired by either participants or organizers that the Screech-In process be "dignified" (July 27, 1984).

By the late 1980s, however, criticism of Screech-Ins increased and finally came to a head. A letter to the editor of the *Evening Telegram* in July 1989 foreshadowed the controversy that was to take place mainly in the various local newspapers. The writer defines Screech-Ins as a:

... recent and utterly tasteless habit ... [which] has nothing to do with a genuine Newfoundland tradition. ... it is our own selling of ourselves as "quaint and queer" through such practices that must be stopped. As Newfoundlanders we have much to be proud of and much to share. It is time we found a way to welcome our visitors by some means that they could cherish and we could be proud of. I, as a Newfoundlander, am certainly ashamed by screech-ins (Kennedy 1989).

New controversy was sparked by the article "Harmless Screech-Ins provide a pat on the cultural back" published by Philip Hiscock in his "Folklore" column, a regular feature of *The Newfoundland Signal*.<sup>152</sup> Hiscock related Screech-Ins to a variety of "initiation rites" performed by seamen for many years; rather than insulting and tasteless, he considered it part of popular culture that provides some local performers with extra income. Moreover, most Newfoundland audiences find it amusing, while the visitors may be rather perplexed. In any case, visitors would not mistake the entertainment for reality.

<sup>151</sup>Letter dated April 5, 1984. Pat Byrne has graciously provided copies of this correspondence.

<sup>152</sup>The entertainment section inserted in the *Sunday Express* [St. John's] during 1990.

Next a brief notice appeared in the rival daily paper, the *Evening Telegram*: "Screech-in on way out?" (1990), apparently triggered by a press release from the Heritage Coalition of Newfoundland. This organization was announcing a contest to develop a new welcoming ceremony for visitors to the province as an alternative to Screech-Ins, inspired by the following remarks Lieutenant Governor James McGrath had made at a Rotary luncheon in January, 1990:

Many of us have been present during a "Screeching-in-ceremony" when a poor unfortunate visitor, who having been singled out for this dubious honor, is forced to kiss a dead codfish, eat a piece of bologna, swallow a glass of Jamaican rum neat and then repeat all kinds of often unintelligible words supposedly using one of the various Newfoundland accents which are so much a part of our culture... Personally, I find this embarrassing as a Newfoundlander. This is not laughing at ourselves; rather, this is subjecting ourselves to ridicule (Brian Jones 1990).

Garfield Fizzard, Chairperson, Heritage Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador, was irritated to the point of writing a letter to the editor of the *Sunday Express*:

We in the Heritage Coalition find that many versions of the Screech-In are offensive on a number of grounds, including: (i) they tend to equate hospitality and rum-drinking, not everyone's opinion; (ii) they fly in the face of this province's traditional hospitality which attempts to make the visitor feel "right at home"; instead, they seem to get much of their humor from making the visitors feel uncomfortable; (iii) they are unsuitable for families with children; (iv) they can easily be interpreted as a put-down of the fishermen of this province, who should not be made to look foolish.

We are not suggesting a ban on Screech-Ins. It's a free country. But we would cheer if groups would exclude them from their programs. Recognizing that many groups would like a welcoming ceremony for visitors, the Heritage Coalition is announcing a contest for a Screech-In replacement. Individuals and groups are invited to develop a ceremony to be used by those who have no stomach for the Screech-In.

Finally Fizzard appealed to all Newfoundlanders:

Those [sic] who want to see an end to the whole nauseating business are invited to think about what might take its place and to enter the contest for a replacement. Or they may simply give us any suggestions on what might be included. The Coalition has no preconceived notions as to what the final ceremony might look like, except that it should reflect our traditional hospitality, it should be fun, and it should be suitable for all age levels (March 11, 1990).

CBC radio agreed to cooperate with the Heritage Coalition and announced the contest repeatedly during the following weeks on its regular Radio Noon program, as well as Saturday mornings on the Weekend Arts Magazine until the deadline for entries, April 30, 1990. Meanwhile more opinions appeared in the local media, including the *Newfoundland Herald*, the weekly television magazine, where Moira Baird asked the question: "Screech-In -- Newfoundland joke or grand tradition?" (March 17, 1990, 12)



and suggested that there need not be a welcoming ceremony at all, that it might be quite enough to shake hands with visitors.

Among positive opinions was a letter to the editor of the *Sunday Express* headlined: "Scot is proud to have been screeched in." The writer claimed that he thoroughly enjoyed the process of being screeched-in and considered it a powerful public relations tool: "Many another country would pay handsomely to have something similar devised for the promotion and development of its international relations" (Lymburn 1990). An amusing contribution in the *Evening Telegram* offered six outrageous suggestions for the contest illustrated by cartoons:

- 1) Cheque-In. You take a drink of water (can't afford BEER or SCREECH) and kiss the cheque [i.e. unemployment cheque].
- 2) Trade-In. Exchange your spouse at arrival for an official Newfoundlander and kiss a new world of romance.
- 3) Dog-In. Take a bite of a tasty bone and kiss a mainlander's best friend.
- 4) Crosbie-In. He'll take a bite out of you and you can kiss his !!?#! [Referring to native Newfoundlander John Crosbie, then federal minister of finance].
- 5) Tea-In. Have a sip of tea and kiss the bag.
- 6) Meech-In. For those of you who find Meech Lake hard to swallow, kiss Clyde Wells! [i.e. the Newfoundland premier who opposed the Meech Lake accord] (Brian Jones 1990).

After all this noise, the contest proved disappointing.<sup>153</sup> In spite of the province wide promotion, CBC radio received only twenty-one entries. (A simultaneous limerick contest yielded about 500 entries, with many listeners submitting up to five and six limericks.) When the four best entries were announced May 19, 1990, the excitement around the contest had noticeably subsided. Entries selected by the honorary judges, such prominent Newfoundlanders as painter Christopher Pratt, musician Kelly Russell, and former broadcaster Marg Kearney, included the innocuous suggestion to recite "I'se the B'y," to find Fogo and Twillingate on the map, and to create the "Order of the Red Ochre," referring to the Beothuck Indians.

Honorable mention went to Dave Murphy, operator of Switchel Schooner tours, for the "Switchel Ceremony" he had suggested. This involves a teaspoon of black strap molasses dissolved in a cup of hot tea, a piece of homemade bread and a request that the visitors tell a brief story of their best experience since they had come to

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<sup>153</sup>Personal communication by Susan Woolrich, CBC radio, St. John's, May 23, 1990.

Newfoundland. Dave emphasized that he wanted to create a "nice" experience, without alcohol. However, he indicated that at the right occasion he would not mind performing a Screech-In for tour guests on his schooner, depending on the circumstances and his sense of what is appropriate.<sup>154</sup>

The woman who won the contest suggested a six-part ceremony that involves language and speech patterns without making fun of them. For example, she devised a multiple choice test, with such questions as: what is a cracky? For foods she chose cod tongues; for drink, Purity syrup, a local product suitable for children. She included some singing and dancing, because "that is interesting and unique." At the end the visitors would get a degree. Most importantly, all her suggestions were considered in good taste and suitable for all ages.

After the contest was over, CBC radio forwarded all entries to Garfield Fizzard of the Heritage Coalition, leaving it up to him to devise a ceremony from a combination of these entries. This evidently had not been a good contest subject. While she was surprised that such a major effort yielded so few entries, reporter Susan Woolrich of CBC radio suggested that a welcoming ceremony is a "deeper" matter than the writing of limericks; it involves the public presentation of a regional identity, a difficult subject particularly at a time when Newfoundland, once again, was "down in the dumps," at least in economic terms.

The controversy centered around the idea that it is the stereotypical Newfoundlander who is being portrayed on stage. At least after Myrle Vokey's performance, however, tourists may well revise the stereotype they most likely had already acquired before they arrived in Newfoundland. In his ceremony Myrle consciously has incorporated the traditional value of hospitality (to offer food and drink) and he chose the cod as central object because it is very important to the Newfoundland economy and identity. Furthermore, he makes a point of revering what is usually denigrated: the dialect, the fish, cheap booze and bologna. At the end, in playful reversal, the lowly fisherman knights the foreign visitor, who is generally considered his superior.

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<sup>154</sup>Personal communication, May 23, 1990.

It is hardly surprising that such Screech-Ins have become popular among Newfoundlanders themselves, for they build directly on important Newfoundland symbols and they counter-act feelings of inferiority. The fact that "townies" of St. John's like to engage in Screech-Ins indicates the degree to which they have become distanced from the traditional outport and to which they can make fun of the old lifestyle.

Screech-Ins thus function as an invented tradition of essentially commercial origin, i.e., selling rum and promoting tourism, that refers to a traditional rite of passage, makes use of the Newfoundland stereotype, and has become a widespread, popular, more or less business-driven entertainment. As for the tourist, it is a peculiarly satisfying experience to encounter the representation of the Newfoundland stereotype that should confirm his expectations, but then surprises him by providing a new understanding. He participates actively in an event, he learns something new, even symbolically becomes "one of them", which is the ultimate, never to be realized goal of a tourist. The ceremony involves a playful, essentially postmodern blurring of boundaries that symbolically transforms him from cultural outsider to insider (Urry 1990, 85). Finally, the tourist has a certificate to show that he has really been there, another important aspect of a voyage. Indeed, the manager of *Trapper John's*, a downtown St. John's bar, has claimed that tourists, who come to his bar specifically to be screeched-in, fail to see why anyone would be upset by the ceremony: "They can't see anything wrong with it and neither can I ... If it wasn't a tradition before, it certainly is now" (Flaherty 1991).

But in early 1990 Newfoundland fishermen were facing their worst economic crisis yet. The closing of a number of fish plants was pulling the economic base away from some outports, threatening a new era of resettlement. Ottawa seemed unwilling to help the traditional inshore fishery so that the fisherman portrayed by Myrle Vokey and his imitators may well rapidly become a figure of the past. Newfoundlanders were again facing a sensitive situation when it became difficult to laugh at themselves and at "the others," those visitors from the mainland who had the power to decide their destiny. Possibly on the verge of extinction, the fisherman as source of the Newfoundland identity that was again threatened could no longer be comfortably made fun of in front of outsiders.



At the same time the tourist industry was trying to foster a professional attitude and to raise the standards of catering to tourists. This would rule out any kind of potentially offensive behaviour and encourage "nice," polite, predictable routines, i.e. Mack Barfoot's essentially commercial Screech-In would be preferred over Myrle Vokey's more idealistic, but outrageous and unpredictable performance. It is interesting to note that the attempt to do away with Screech-Ins should be sponsored by a "Heritage Coalition" and that one of the complainants specified that Screech-Ins are not a "genuine Newfoundland tradition," while any alternative ceremony introduced by the Heritage Coalition would be just as lacking in "authenticity" as the Screech-In.

Eventually a certain sense of being "fed up" with the controversy was expressed by an editorial in the *Evening Telegram*, which seemed to put a final verdict on the matter, suggesting that the paltry number of entries indicated the low level of interest in the community and that the Heritage Coalition should now leave well enough alone:

There is no need to have any welcoming ceremony for tourists coming to Newfoundland. Very few other provinces or countries have such a thing... The Coalition, we should add, has no mandate from the government or the citizens to find such a ceremony. If they want to have some kind of ceremony at their own meeting, then they are free to do so. But they should leave the rest of us out of it (19 May 1990, 4).

Because of the controversy the Screech-In, that popular entertainment to welcome new residents during Pouch Cove Days in 1989, was no longer performed in the town at their 1990 festival. The town clerk seemed under the impression that "Screech-Ins are no longer allowed" and indicated that the certificates would probably be discarded.<sup>155</sup> Meanwhile Garfield Fizzard handed the contest entries to a committee organized by a member of the local Arts Community, who returned them to him the following summer without accomplishing anything. It appeared, however, that not as many Screech-Ins were performed in 1991 than before. The premier's office had stopped signing the provincial Screech-In certificates (Flaherty 1991). Fizzard knew of at least one local group that chose a "Newfoundland Night" instead of a "Screech-In" for a conference that involved national and international visitors. He seemed satisfied that several entertainers now leave out some of the elements that offended him, but keep

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<sup>155</sup>Personal communication, September 1990.

performing the same songs and stories.<sup>156</sup> The controversy, however, is not over.<sup>157</sup>

The Screech-In controversy indicates lingering class differences that were at the heart of the development of the Newfoundland stereotype in the nineteenth century. Again leading citizens, including the Lieutenant Governor and the Chairman of the Heritage Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador, are trying to impose their perception of the Newfoundland identity by fighting what they consider a "low" representation of the central figure of the Newfoundland identity, the sacrosanct fisherman, now of increasingly symbolic rather than economic importance. This conservative elite, however, now finds itself somewhat isolated in postmodern context, confronted with a growing white collar middle class which increasingly dominates the cultural sphere in Newfoundland, as elsewhere in the western world, who has achieved a great enough distance from the past, including the indigenous folk culture, to consider it a source for creative impulses. Postmodern attitudes are reflected in the performances of Myrle Vokey and the reactions of the tourists who appreciate and understand the event as a game, while at the same time they seek the historical past through the popular images and stereotypes that they have established about them (Jameson 1983, 118). Meanwhile "the folk," like the people of Pouch Cove, who first accepted Screech-Ins as fine entertainment, are left floundering what to think of it; again their image and identity are being decided for them by others, who continue to draw on the folk culture selectively for their specific needs.

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<sup>156</sup>Telephone interview, September 1991.

<sup>157</sup>For example, when I gave a paper on the subject at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society in St. John's, October 1991, a secretary at a downtown St. John's business, who noticed the title while photocopying the paper, asked glaringly: "Are you for or against it?" Two reporters were present during the talk and part of the presentation was broadcast and discussed immediately afterwards on the local "Radio Noon" program on CBC radio (October 18, 1991). As a result, the reporter received a phone call from a listener who wanted to know if entries to the contest would still be accepted.

### SUMMARY PART III

The pervasive nature of contemporary folklorism phenomena discussed in this section indicates first of all the continuing romantic fascination with the rich folk traditions of Newfoundland, which has affected folklorists as well as other scholars and amateur conservationists. The work of folklorists themselves has raised the awareness of their folk culture among Newfoundlanders by researching, teaching, publishing and otherwise disseminating folklore, while native students are encouraged to investigate and record their own culture. Field research by social scientists became so ubiquitous as to be perceived by "the folk" as a form of exploitation, which raises the issues of cultural intervention and social responsibility that are addressed as important aspects of folklorists' work as privileged academics.

Examples of folklorism analyzed in detail include the revitalization of the French Newfoundland minority culture that was encouraged by folklorists and multicultural policies. From a source of shame, their distinctive folk culture was transformed into a matter of pride, providing compensation for feelings of inferiority to a region that suffers from extreme economic underdevelopment. The career of French Newfoundland fiddler Emile Benoit, who became a symbolic figure for that culture, is symptomatic of that process. It further indicates the mutually beneficial relationship possible between folklorists and "the folk," as Emile became the research object for a number of folklore projects, while simultaneously his career as folk musician benefited from the experience folklorists had in managing folk festivals and similar events.

The investigation of the complex processes that led to the revival of the custom of Christmas mumming illustrates, among other influences, the feedback process generated by academics. Mumming first attracted the attention of foreign scholars when it seemed about to disappear from memory, at least in its more elaborate form of folk drama. A phase of collecting and documenting the custom was followed by the revival of the mummers play by educated social activists. Their artistic performances based on outdated scholarly interpretations appealed mainly to an intellectual urban middle class audience. In a third phase of folklorism, mumming in its simple form of house visits in disguise was revived across Newfoundland because a popular song, rapidly disseminated by the mass media, expressed widespread nostalgic longings for



past communal values that had been lost or were about to disappear. Moreover, in the process of engaging the cumulative interest of academics, artists, social activists, and "the folk," mumming has turned into a symbol of regional identity that is based on a collective, sentimentally enhanced image of the past. At the same time the custom has reentered the folklore repertoire of families and communities who have made the song a new focus of the tradition and have integrated it into revived performances of the custom.

The cultural management of "the folk" is an important factor in the emergence of folk festivals across Newfoundland. While traditional concerts were organized by leading members of the community, formerly teachers, merchants, or priests, these events now depend more heavily on government support and cultural conservationists from outside of the community. Festivals are complex events whose meaning depends on the various perspectives of the performer, the organizer, the local population and the visiting outsider. If a festival fulfills local needs, it may well enter communal tradition, i.e. folklorism becomes folklore. If pressed into the service of tourism, however, festivals may be reduced to routine entertainments that merely add local color to essentially commercial ventures.

With tourism the process of folklorism accelerates, as folklore has become one of the attractions advertised in brochures and commoditized in popular forms of entertainment. This presents both the most problematic phase of folklorism explored in this thesis and the most indicative of postmodern tendencies, for the breakdown of boundaries and values, of differences between levels of culture and class, the authentic and the fake, and a generally playful, eclectic attitude are particularly pronounced in tourism. The examples discussed, however, indicate that the economic motivations of the tourist industry tend to clash with the social structure and traditional values still prevalent in the outports of Newfoundland, while the industry is enthusiastically promoted "from above" by the government as a potential solution to persistent economic problems. The situation suggests a yet untilled field for applied folklore, for folklorists can bring a more informed, sensitive approach to cultural issues, especially relating to the recent emphasis on community-based tourism developments, than bureaucrats who lack specific knowledge of the cultural fabric of these places.

In the last instance of folklorism examined in this thesis, the Screech-In ceremony, the stereotype of the fisherman is presented on stage to entertain visitors. While many Newfoundlanders, along with the tourists, enjoy this ritual as a game, these performances have threatened the sense of dignity of conservative leading citizens, who attempted to change the "inauthentic" invented tradition. The Screech-In example points to continued class differences that have affected the perception of the Newfoundland identity as based on the romanticized, but in economic reality increasingly irrelevant, figure of the Newfoundland fisherman. Because of his marginal nature, but nevertheless symbolic importance, the fisherman has become a sacrosanct figure for the more conservative segment of Newfoundland society, while others have made him the subject of the creative use of folklore, showing a sense of play that nevertheless reveals a continued fascination with the past.

## Conclusion

The broad range of social, psychological and economic factors discussed in this thesis suggests that the concept of folklorism cannot be clearly defined while the phenomena associated with it are ubiquitous. As an analytical tool to interpret basic sociocultural processes, however, folklorism offers the potential to illuminate the role folklore plays today in a realistic, rather than an overly romantic manner. Adding folklorism to the terminological canon of the discipline allows folklorists to continue to deal with the conventional objects of folklore scholarship, if from a new perspective; at the same time the concept acknowledges the complex role folklore and folklorism play in an increasingly postmodern society and it broadens the field of inquiry by including social, economic and ideological trends. Folklorism also addresses the role of the mass media and popular culture as they continue to draw inspiration from tradition and integrate elements of folklore into the culture industry in a process of ever more rapid, impersonal transmission.

In Newfoundland, folklore has remained important to the regional cultural identity and is still cultivated as part of recent memory. This thesis has analyzed aspects of Newfoundland folklore that have long been of interest to folklorists, such as the custom of mumming, the newly emerging folk festivals, the revitalization of the French minority culture, according to their new meaning, specifically their ideological or commercial underpinnings based on current sociocultural conditions. Other subjects discussed are less conventionally part of the discipline of folklore, i.e., the influence the work of folklorists themselves has on the folk culture, as well as developments related to tourism that draw on a romantic image of "the folk" and emphasize the regional stereotype for commercial purposes. A sense of cultural identity and belonging to a place and its history are central to folklorism; even the invented tradition of Screech-Ins is designed to welcome tourists to Newfoundland by making them symbolic insiders.

Folklorism has been a recurrent factor in creating a sense of national/regional consciousness and a specific Newfoundland identity, though a number of different strands can be distinguished. Many of the phenomena associated with folklorism remained restricted to the intellectual and monied elite, while a more recent, general folklorism, most popularly expressed in the desire to revive the mumming custom and in



the successful introduction of folk festivals, reached the wider population, "the folk" themselves.

The awakening nationalism of the nineteenth century was based on such natural, physical givens as the island situation and the common occupation of fishing, as well as on an emotionally charged perception of being the victim of "historic misfortune" that was blamed on neglect by the British mother country. Reaction to such perceived injustice was expressed in cultural terms by emphasizing and exaggerating the worth and the superior qualities of the hardy "race" of Newfoundland fishermen. From this a stereotype emerged much like that of the romanticized European peasant, while the beginning awareness of a unique language and folklore formed the basis for a distinct identity of a short-lived nation. These developments are consistent with nineteenth century trends elsewhere in Europe and North America, from which Newfoundlanders were never quite excluded.

The independence Newfoundland achieved in the nineteenth century was cherished even though in economic terms it was more imagined than real, for the small size and marginal situation of Newfoundland in relation to the British mother country and later to Canada and the United States gave Newfoundland a weak position as a country. The economic decline of the early twentieth century and the subsequent humiliating loss of independence to a government newly instituted by Britain resulted in the "cursed inferiority complex." Here the process of folklorism can be traced to economic conditions, for this in turn inspired the career of Joseph Smallwood as a radio broadcaster, who fought the inferiority complex by using the media while drawing on folklore to glorify the achievements of Newfoundlanders as a form of compensation. His ideological use of folklore was remarkably similar to the practice of fascist leaders of Europe who in the 1930s and 1940s engaged in folklorism to motivate their people towards ill-conceived racist aims.

During the nation-building of the nineteenth century, and while recovering from economic and political adversity in the twentieth century, Newfoundlanders repeatedly drew on the idea of a unique character expressed in their traditional folk culture to establish, and later to reclaim, a distinct identity. When Newfoundland became part of the Canadian confederation after the Second World War, it again risked losing its

distinctive characteristics. During the first decades after confederation Smallwood as premier advocated Canadianization. But the process of rapid transition did not fulfill expectations, as it did not solve the basic problems of poverty and second-class political status. Consequently disenchantment with the domination by central Canada fostered a cultural movement of pronounced regionalism which newly focused on the pre-confederation Newfoundland past and sentimentally reevaluated the traditional culture. This movement, too, is part of a wider reaction to a cultural levelling process that led people elsewhere in the industrial world to yearn nostalgically for a return to the country and to the past and to show new interest in cultures that seemed to have retained a distinct, original character, an elusive "authentic" quality -- the movement which Hans Moser recognized in his 1962 essay as basic to folklorism. In Newfoundland, however, the past still continued to some extent in the lifestyles of the outports that had remained partly traditional, with the inshore fishery made more viable because of supplementary incomes that became available with the generous Canadian system of social welfare.

The new regional consciousness of the 1970s, helped along by a great flourishing of the arts that drew on the folk culture, went far to change perceptions of the Newfoundland identity within Canada. At least for the educated, the image of the "Newfie" as an embarrassing symbol of backwardness changed to one of appreciation when cultural riches were revealed and cultivated in form of folk music, indigenous theatre, painting, literature. Much of the Newfcult phenomenon of the 1970s was generated by and remained restricted to the educated, intellectual middle class. It was introduced by zealous cultural leaders, the "supernewf" actors, musicians, poets, publishers; by the 1980s their activities became less noticeable for they had reached their goal of changing the inferior image of Newfoundland within Canada.

This cultural movement became a source of pride and brought new admiration by mainland Canadians that compensated somewhat for the lack of economic development. Because it dwells on the past, on a sense of loss for an essentially outdated way of life that is enhanced by selective memory, such a movement may impede actions that are necessary to fully participate in a modern economy, revealing the anti-modernist bias of folklorism; it also indicates a postmodern questioning of the achievements and aims of advanced consumer capitalism. In this sense Newfoundland

may be considered a model for the future that provides a realm of satisfaction, a *Heimat* which compares favorably with the problems experienced in urban environments.

Newfoundland has experienced most of the conditions identified by Bodemann that lead to a desire to revive folklore and consequently foster phenomena associated with folklorism (1983). A break in tradition occurred when the inshore fishing industry failed, while subsequent adjustment to an industrial economy proved difficult and partly unsuccessful. Outside contacts via travel, employment-related migration and the media have introduced Newfoundlanders to foreign cultures and at the same time have created an awareness and a new appreciation of their own culture. Within Canada, Newfoundland exists at the periphery, far removed from the dominant mainland culture, suffering from a situation of perceived neglect and inferior status that has led to a narcissistic reaction of cultural overcompensation. Moreover, "Doing folklore together" creates a collective identity that is both integrative and exclusive (Bodemann 1983, 108).

During the last few decades political, economic and social conditions encouraged folklorism on a broad scale in Newfoundland, while at the same time traditions had become marginal to an extent that they lent themselves to acquire new functions. The process that transforms folklore to folklorism in such cases, as outlined by Bodemann, applies particularly to the custom of mumming:

- 1) a cultural manifestation is faced with extinction;
- 2) against all expectations it is revived.
- 3) in this process demonstrative and representative aspects are either emphasized or added;
- 4) by revitalization this cultural element acquires new functions for the people involved (107).

The example of mumming shows a declining custom that was revived in several forms and phases, including scholarly collecting and publishing, as well as performances by social activists that focused on the elaborate mummers' play. Quite separate from these efforts, however, mumming in form of simple house visits in disguise became newly popular when it was featured in a sentimental song. As a result of this revival, mumming now functions as a regional symbol, even though the custom is not exclusive to Newfoundland. Simultaneously, however, mumming has been strengthened as folklore performed informally by small groups, indicating how folklore and folklorism are intricately connected.



Folklorism begins with a distinctly articulated self-definition based on a collective, identity-assuring historical experience, i.e., the construction of an appealing self that consciously incorporates sentimentally affected traditions from the past and that compensates for pronounced feelings of regional inferiority (see also Korff 1980, 40-47). A major motive in such regionalist/nationalist movements is nostalgia for the past, which endows even negative or painful memories with a sort of benign filter, creating an emotional frame that accepts the superiority of times and things past. Nostalgia pleads for continuity; it is essentially a conservative reaction, a reassuring element based on the perception of past happiness and accomplishments. Regardless of deteriorating present circumstances, the past confirms the individual's worth and is conducive to a sense of identity (Davis 1977, 419-20). Hence nostalgia is the major motive for the minority folklorism indulged in by many Newfoundlanders who have left the province to find employment elsewhere, especially in Toronto, where they participate in a folk culture as if frozen in a past representative of the time of their departure. They focus on a personally experienced past that is, however, interpreted from the knowledge and awareness of the present and therefore indicates present moods rather than past realities (Davis 1977, 416-7). Here folklorism serves psychological needs that arise from cultural disruptions and ease the adjustment to a new social and economic environment. The pronounced folklorism cultivated by Newfoundlanders abroad, which has earned them the status of an ethnic minority within Canada, indicates the great need for a cultural identity that is lost in anonymous urban context when compared to the more human scale of the rural communities of Newfoundland.

Nationalism, regionalism and nostalgia gave rise to folklorism in Newfoundland in a continuing process that accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s, following the nostalgia wave North America experienced in the 1960s and 1970s. This was intimately related to a collective identity crisis when fundamental beliefs and convictions were shaken by the civil rights movement, by the new disdain of the Protestant work ethic and authority in general, by women's liberation and flower power, by the Vietnam war and by the hippie subculture. The nostalgic reaction offered recourse from insecurities caused by too rapid changes in mores and customs (Davis 1977, 421-2). Crises specific to Newfoundland that paralleled those widespread movements centered on the issues of

resettlement and the international anti-sealing protest, both of which challenged the traditional self-image.

Typically the first impulse of folklorism, introduced by an educated elite, hardly influences "the folk," whose culture, however, provides the raw material for the process. Folk culture is generally identified as that traditional part of the overall culture that has not been affected by modern impulses and expressions. But as Bausinger confirmed in 1961, traditional folk culture has long been penetrated by the world of technology, for the products of technology are available everywhere. In Newfoundland, too, where modern developments tend to appear late, once relatively firm, closed horizons have disintegrated. Many have left the island, but even those among the population who remain in their outports encounter the world via the mass media, or visitors, or the occasional tourist.

Newfoundland is unusual in the North American context because of the continued emphasis on its "peasant class," the fishermen, who by the late twentieth century are threatened with demise. Much of the nineteenth century romanticizing that in Europe focused on the simple, "natural" life of the peasants and their folklore was in Newfoundland applied to its fishermen. That early form of folklorism clearly separated the classes and was based on the social distance educated urban townies had achieved from the baymen of the outports. While treated derisively by townies, their urban contemporaries, as the butt of the original "Newfie" jokes, the baymen of the outports were nevertheless crucial to the Newfoundland identity. Even though the real economic importance of the fishery has declined, it continues to be important for the self-image of Newfoundlanders. Thus the threats of resettlement and of the international anti-sealing protest were perceived as a menace to all patriotic Newfoundlanders. Ironically movements of protest became occasions to revive and celebrate essentially outdated traditions. The cultural reaction, however, was expressed most vehemently by the intellectual elite of St. John's, who no longer participated in the traditional lifestyle of the outports, but wanted to cultivate and preserve it in others, "the folk."

Some of the more disturbing aspects of folklorism occur when folklore becomes part of the culture industry, a commodity available for consumption much like any other

good. By popular demand the Mummers' Song, for example, which refers to the Christmas season, is now performed by its composers throughout the year; other examples abound in tourism developments, including the Screech-In ceremony that incorporates folklore in organized, more or less commercially inspired performances to welcome visitors to Newfoundland. The crucial consideration, however, must be whether or not such developments benefit the local population, "the folk," and whether they improve their quality of life, including a sense of cultural identity, rather than their appeal to some elitist sense of heritage and tradition.

Much contemporary folklorism is an expression of eclectic postmodern tendencies and increased leisure time that seek inspiration in any number of objects and use the past as a source of creativity. Such folklorism often is simply playful, appealing and adds color to monotonous everyday life. Folk festivals seem to suggest such instances. Cultural phenomena that adopt the term "folk," however, indicate a self-conscious awareness that the object is no longer folklore. In Newfoundland folk festivals, which are taking the place of earlier public events, have proliferated since the 1980s. Beyond mere entertainment, some of these events were created for specific, more or less obvious secondary purposes, including to revive the French minority culture of the Port au Port Peninsula, to sell the strawberries of the Humber River Valley and to attract tourists to Twillingate. They fulfill quite different functions for promoters with an economic or cultural agenda, for an audience who expects entertainment, and for communities who may make the festival their own because of a newly acquired taste for consciously celebrating their traditional culture, or who may participate in such ventures to attract tourists as a new source of income. In contrast to most folk festivals in North America, however, which present the seemingly exotic cultures of ethnic minorities, Newfoundlanders self-reflectively focus on their own folk culture.

In folklorism the role of the cultural intervenor, the inventor or organizer of the folkloric event, is instrumental, as was the case in Fogo Island where a teacher and folk music enthusiast introduced the concept of a folk festival in 1985. Because from the beginning he involved the local population in the process of developing the festival and tried to base the event on their traditional experience, they increasingly made the festival their own. By contrast, when the hostess of a lodge invented the "Legend of the



Kissing Rock" as an attraction for her visitors, she combined the proven appeal of history and folklore to create an artificial "sight," to add local color while claiming an authenticity she knew had no factual base in the community. That community eventually refused to cooperate with her plan to be turned into a tourist resort, for tourism is still a foreign concept to many Newfoundlanders; this industry will have to be introduced sensitively and in tune with local priorities if rural communities are to benefit from such developments.

The invented tradition of Screech-Ins as well took a problematic course as it depends on the stereotype of the Newfoundland fisherman, important symbol of the regional identity, to be successfully enacted. The emotional attempts by a conservative public to change that "embarrassing" ceremony, as battled out in the local press in 1990, indicates a lingering inferiority complex that resurfaces whenever misfortune threatens, like in the late 1980s when the traditional inshore fishery experienced another crisis. Other Newfoundlanders, however, members of a new middle class that emphasizes cultural rather than financial capital, had acquired a sense of play that allowed them, along with the tourists, to enjoy Screech-Ins as a game rather than interpreting it as a demeaning spectacle that ridicules the figure symbolic of Newfoundland. The variety of opinions that surfaced during the Screech-In controversy indicates the persistence of class differences and that folklorism as part of postmodern attitudes has not affected all levels of society to equal degree.

In Newfoundland the focus on the outport lifestyle and fishing is an expression of the positive attitude toward the past, the emphasis on "heritage" and "folklore" which has become part of the lifestyle of our time. It also expresses the growing importance of the attachment to a *Heimat*, a native area to which one belongs, a universal, postmodern experience in a mobile society where individuals must adopt multiple roles and where such strong regionally based identity as enjoyed by Newfoundlanders has become rare. Newfoundlanders, however, are often dispersed by resettlement or by outmigration to find employment elsewhere, often on the Canadian mainland, where they form an ethnic minority within a Canada of plural cultures. This again is part of a more general trend of growing ethnic and declining national identities, as culture is playing an increasingly central role in postmodern society where many forms of culture

are accepted as inherently of equal value. Folklorism becomes a means of coping with present problems, for the cultural past gains in symbolic significance when in reality it is no longer viable because of social and economic changes. Cultural identity, as important as it is to human well-being, is a fragile, unstable, constantly evolving property that often needs to be strengthened purposefully to provide an adequate sense of security and satisfaction. The process of folklorism, as demonstrated on the example of Newfoundland, thus seems inevitable and the underlying factors that make folklore newly relevant in secondary settings should be addressed in North American folklore scholarship. As Dundes recognized,

Fakelore, like folklore, reflects the culture in which it is engendered ... it is perfectly obvious that the folklorist cannot possibly avoid dealing with fakelore as it is, for better or worse, a permanent part of the intellectual history of folkloristics (1984, 168).

Above all, "the folk" have become aware of their own traditions, which therefore are no longer a self-evident part of their life, a situation that was influenced by and that must now influence the work of folklorists.

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## Discography

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## APPENDIX

## FOGO ISLAND FOLK ALLIANCE

PRESENTS

SPECIAL THANKS FOR DONATIONS FROM:

BAY BULLS TRADING COMPANY  
 DR. GARRY BEST  
 HAROLD A. COISH  
 CULL'S FAMILY WEAR  
 FOGO ISLAND BUILDING SUPPLIES  
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FUNDED BY: SEC. OF STATE AND THE NFLD. AND LAB. ARTS COUNCIL.

SUPPORTED BY: FOGO LIONS AND FOGO TOWN COUNCIL



"PRINTED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF ESSO IMPERIAL OIL LIMITED."

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, VOLUNTEERS!!!!!!

FRIDAY, JULY 12TH

7:30 OFFICIAL OPENING  
 WITH BEATON TULK AND BILLY GODWIN

BARK AND KETTLE  
 PAMELA REID AND DELMAN REID  
 DOUG WARREN AND ED SHEPPARD  
 LEN PENTON AND DORMAN RALPH  
 DAVID JONES, JEAN DEVEREAUX,  
 GERALD DONAHUE  
 ERIC WEST  
 BARK AND KETTLE

10 CENTS



# STAGE ONE SATURDAY JULY 13TH STAGE TWO

12:00 COUNTRY AND WESTERN I  
DOUG WARREN AND ED SHEPPARD  
PAT WALBOURNE  
MAUREEN FOLEY  
RON FOLEY

12:00 OLD IRISH AND NFLD I  
WILF WAREHAM  
JACK SHEA  
ROSE MARIE BURKE  
SCOTT HANCOCK  
JOE EMBERLY  
EMELINE PICKETT

1:00 OLD IRISH AND NFLD II  
LEN PENTON  
DORMAN RALPH  
WILLIAM FOLEY  
MARGARET BROADERS  
EMMA FOLEY  
MARIE BORDERS  
ALLAN FOLEY

1:00 POPULAR NFLD I  
AIDEN FOLEY  
RON FOLEY  
DOUG WARREN  
ED SHEPPARD  
PHYLLIS FOLEY  
MICHAEL WALBOURNE

2:00 COUNTRY AND WESTERN II  
MICHAEL HENRY  
MARY PENTON  
ROXINE CULL  
GREG KELLY  
BRENDA PENTON  
KEITH DONAHUE  
MADELINE PENTON  
TONY HAGMAN  
ALLAN FOLEY

2:00 OLD IRISH AND NFLD III  
CON MOONEY  
RON KELLY  
DAN FOLEY  
MARIE FOLEY  
MAG CULL  
PAT FREAKER  
MART FOLEY  
JACK COLE  
EMELINE PICKETT

3:00 POPULAR NFLD II  
GEORGE SMITH  
PAMELA REID  
DELMAN REID  
DAVID JONES  
JEAN DEVEREAUX  
GERALD DONAHUE  
CAROL PENTON

3:00 OLD IRISH AND NFLD IV  
JANE WHITTEN  
KEITH DONAHUE  
KATHLEEN DECKER  
RONNIE DONAHUE  
EV BRETT  
GREG FOLEY  
PEARCE DWYER  
PHYLLIS FOLEY

4:00 CONTEMPORARY FOLK  
TONY HAGMAN  
SHARON TORRAVILLE  
GARRY BEST  
KIM OSMOND  
HAYWARD COFFIN  
GREG KELLY  
MICHAEL WALBOURNE

4:00 COUNTRY AND WESTERN III  
GEORGE SMITH  
PHYLLIS-ANN JACOBS  
AARON COBB  
CAROLYN COBB  
ANGELA WILLIAMS

5:00 OLD IRISH AND NFLD V  
MICHAEL HENRY  
HARRY EVELEIGH  
DARLENE BURKE  
ELIZABETH DECKER  
ANGELA WILLIAMS  
HAYWARD COFFIN  
GREG KELLY  
BERN WALBOURNE

5:00 SONGS OF FOGO ISLAND  
DAVID JONES  
JEAN DEVEREAUX  
GERALD DONAHUE  
PAT WALBOURNE  
KEITH DONAHUE

## SATURDAY NIGHT CONCERT

7:30

MICHAEL HENRY, CON MOONEY,  
JANE WHITTEN  
KEITH DONAHUE  
ROXINE CULL  
PAT WALBOURNE  
JACK SHEA AND PAD FREAKER  
AIDEN FOLEY  
BILL FOLEY, ROSE MARIE BURKE,  
DARLENE BURKE, PHYLLIS FOLEY,  
HILDA MCGRATH,  
BERN WALBOURNE  
GREG FOLEY  
CAROL PENTON  
JOE DWYER  
EARL CULL  
GEORGE SMITH  
DOUG WARREN AND ED SHEPPARD

# COME HOME TO OLD NEWFY

by  
G. H. EARLE



## COME HOME TO OLD NEWFY

MODERATE

Set to Music by G. H. Earle and Mabel Kirby

The musical score is written for a piano and voice. It consists of eight systems of staves. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff with treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo is marked 'MODERATE'. The score begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The melody is simple and catchy, with a mix of eighth and quarter notes. The piano accompaniment provides a steady harmonic foundation with chords and moving lines in both hands. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

This tune is an adaptation of a favourite air of F. C. Earle, Entertainer, Comedian and Wit at the turn of the century in Notre Dame Bay, and set to music in his memory by two of his grandchildren.



# COME HOME TO OLD NEWFY

by G. H. EARLE

## The Invitation

Come home to old Newfy, the land of your birth,  
From your lands of adoption all over the earth;  
Come home to the smell of the kelp and the fir,  
To the taste of the caplin, the lobster and turr.  
Come home to the scrunchions, the prafies and fish  
All mixed with the brewis in the fisherman's dish.

## Transport

Come home to old Newfy now changing her ways,  
With highroads to take you to islands and bays;  
The ferries and bridges on tickles and runs  
Await your return with your daughters and sons.  
Come home with the car that you long to bring back  
And whizz past 'the bullet' still scraping the track.

## Nature

Come home to the hummock, the wood and the wild  
And traipse through the pathways you made as a child.  
The boat's on the collar, the trout in the stream,  
The resp and the bakeapple waiting for cream.  
Come home to the landwash, the ponds and the bars  
And bide till it's duckish and wait for the stars.

## The Sea

Come home to the ocean that would be your host  
And get on the steamer and sail round the coast;  
Get glimpses of men hauling cod-traps and trawls  
And men driving pot-heads with screeches and bawls.  
Come home to the jigger, the piggin and gaff  
And quot on the cuddy and have a good laugh.

## Food

Come home to the cod-tongues, the breeches and sounds  
And eat them in motorboat out on the grounds.  
We'll keep in cold storage some flippers and birds  
And Newfoundland rabbit and moose from the herds.  
Come home to fish-cake, the rounder and scrod  
And pea-soup with doughboys and chowder with cod.

## Simple Pleasures

Come home to the time and the quick Irish dance  
And share the old customs of Britain and France;  
Come boil up the kettle with crunnick and scrub  
And have a big scoff of your favourite grub.  
Come home to the tilt and the fire on the beach  
And cabbage and pork with a bottle of Screech.

## Gathering Places

Come home to the shop and the squid jigg'in' ground,  
The lodge and the corner where men hang around;  
The fishermen gather outside the Church gate  
For a smoke or a quid and a chat as they wait.  
Come home to the wharf when the coastal boat blows  
And meet all the flyers assembled in rows.

## Place Names

Come home to the Place Names so rare and unique,  
Expressing emotions both cheerful and bleak;  
Names funny and sad colour harbour and bay  
To mind you of life back in grandfather's day.  
Come home to the gut and the cove and the bight  
And romps on the planchen or talk through the night.

## Industry

Come home to the power we call Joey's Juice  
And hear the big paper mills grinding black spruce;  
And see all the fish-plants, the wood-plants and mines  
And buildings erected with concrete and pines.  
Come home to the rivers and fish through the day  
And hunt in the woodlands or out in the bay.

## The Outport

Come home to the Outport before it's too late,  
Ere the place you remember has gone out of date;  
Some places have vanished because they were poor,  
But many remain with the wide-open door.  
Come home to the old-timer's cottage and dish  
With lashins of jam and some roasted salt fish.

## The Capital

Come home to St. John's with her Narrows and Forts,  
To this oldest of all North American ports;  
Her front is some altered—and so is her back—  
She flies the new flag by the old Union Jack.  
Come home to her streets and her lanes and her hills,  
The Lake and Regatta give wonderful thrills.

## The Invitation Renewed

Come home to old Newfy, the land of your birth,  
From your lands of adoption all over the earth;  
Come lie on the settle and talk of old times  
And hear the old stories and sing the old rhymes.  
Come home to the old-fashioned strong cup of tea  
And drink in the air as it pours from the sea.

## BY THE AUTHOR

My most impressive years were spent among the islands of Notre Dame Bay in north-east Newfoundland in the 1920's and 1930's. It was a free life among ordinary people struggling to live but the world was ours. There were no radios and no organized sports and adults as well as children had to make their own entertainment and create their own hobbies. Everything and everybody around us had some value and importance; and a visit to a neighbouring island or community to see the things and people there was always exciting. We knew the smell of the seaweed and the different trees in the woods and looked forward to the fish and birds and animals in their season and to the Sunday morning scoff of fish and brewis.

Transport on land was primitive but the sea was our highway and could link us to the "Newfy Bulle" if we needed it. We were at home on the sea; and all that swam in it or flew over it or sailed on it was somehow our kith and kin. We found joy in natural things and wandered over the hummocks and barrens and through the woods looking for trout or berries or frankum or birds nests or nothing special.

Taking the boat off the collar to go to some beach or island to boil the kettle never failed to give pleasure despite the flies; and a "time" in the lodge was always exciting for it brought everybody together and gave promise of ice-cream and home-made candy and fun.

We learned wisdom and heard humour by listening to the fishermen who gathered in groups in favourite and traditional places; and would never miss our link with the outside world symbolized by the steamer. Visits to other people's homes were frequent and we would often roll up the mats and "drive works" on the floor or sit and sing and exchange yarns. If invited to stay for tea the jam or roasted fish or whatever it was would always taste better than at home. The four f's . . . freedom, friendliness, food and fun . . . were never very far away.

Things are changing now. I was away for 18 years and came home but that long absence has given me an experienced sympathy with many whom we hope to welcome back in 1966 and in the years to come. Vast numbers will remember only the Old Newfy and will want to see and enjoy some of it and we must show it and give it to them. All will be pleased with our progress with roads and industry but surely they will not want us to force ourselves to try to look like mainland Canada or U.S.A. It would be false. Let us be our unique and natural selves and thank God for what we are.

*G. H. Earle*

— G. H. EARLE

# Tourism St. John's

# CHRONICLE

**ST. JOHN'S**  
THE CITY OF  
LEGENDS

Vol. 1, No. 1

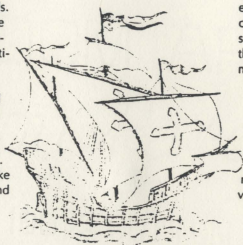
## The City of Legends

**S**t. John's is a city of legends. Those of us who live here sometimes take our fascinating history and beautiful scenery for granted. But the people who visit St. John's do not. People come from all over Canada and the United States to see our scenery, to live our culture and traditions, and experience our legends. When tourists leave here, they take with them many memories. And they leave us with tourist-generated revenue.

The City of St. John's Economic Development and Tourism Division is working to increase tourism activity in St. John's. To this end, they have developed a plan to promote St. John's as "The City of Legends!" This is a theme that will be used throughout all tourist publications and advertising produced by the Division; a theme that will be built upon for many years.

**A hint of mystery...  
a lot of fun**

By promoting St. John's as "The City of Legends", our historical sites, culture, events and attractions, and



our scenery are presented to tourists in an interesting manner. St. John's is a city with a fascinating past, and traditions which still

endure today. All this will be included in tourist publications, designed to let potential visitors know that St. John's is a city with a hint of mystery...and a lot of fun!

### Three Major Markets

The "City of Legends" theme has been designed so it can be adapted for the three major tourist markets. These are visitors from out of the province, resident visitors, and group travel markets, including conventions and meetings, bus tour groups, and cruise ship markets. Materials for each of these markets have been prepared, highlighting the points about St. John's which would attract that particular segment.

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## *The Legend of the Kissing Rock*

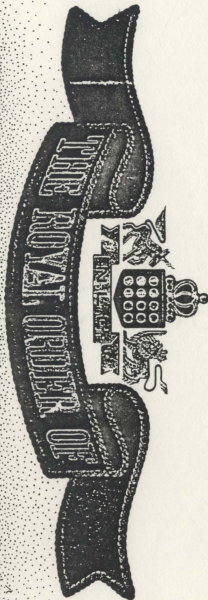
*It is believed that many, many years ago, long before the fearless Vikings sailed to these rugged shores in their mighty galleons, our land was inhabited by a fearless race of seamen.*

*In this little settlement now known as Upper Island Cove, the men would leave for sea from this very spot. Their wives and loved ones would accompany them to the rock to bid them farewell, not knowing whether they would ever return from their treacherous journey.*

*These gallant sailors considered it good luck to touch the rock before leaving, sometimes chipping a small piece from its base to carry in their pockets, thus ensuring them a bountiful catch and a safe return.*

*Superstition prevailed, it was considered foolish to defy fate and leave without first going to the rock.*

*So the Legend goes that those who reach across the Kissing Rock and exchange a kiss will find everlasting luck and happiness.*



# SCREECHERS

This is to certify that ELKE DETTMER  
 of GERMANY has consumed on this day,  
 the 24th of May in the year 1985,  
 some of Newfoundland's golden elixir.  
 The bearer of this Certificate is hereby  
 enrolled in the Royal Order of Screetchers.

Adika

Maria Lohy

PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT OFFICER



# The Town of Pouch Cove

This is to certify that

\_\_\_\_\_

having consumed the allotted portions of  
Screech (the "Spirit" of Newfoundland) and  
other traditional culinary delights, and having  
bestowed a kiss on our majestic Codfish, has  
been admitted on \_\_\_\_\_ to the

## 'Loyal Order of the Rock' of Newfoundland and Labrador

and will henceforth continue our fine tradition of friendship and good times by  
offering a Smile, a Welcome and an Open Door to Friends and Visitors alike.

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
CLERK/MANAGER



# NEWFOUNDLAND SCREECH-IN



Cover of Myrle Vokey's Songbook



