

NEWFOUNDLAND CULTURE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL
LITERATURE CURRICULUM

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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NEWFOUNDLAND CULTURE IN THE
HIGH SCHOOL LITERATURE CURRICULUM

by

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this work is to show that the definition of literature as an art form has often been overlooked when materials have been selected to be included in the high school literature program. When young readers are introduced to the experiences of literature, they are often exposed to writings other than those effecting an artistic experience.

The pressures to have materials included that exhibit other intentions are many and varied. The selection process becomes complicated when the intentions are so manipulated to appear to be literary when in fact they are outside the domain of literature.

It must be the task of English educators to remind themselves of the intentions of literature. This entails also the constant awareness of the age and experiential background of the targeted audience.

In this work, I contend that the Newfoundland high school program now includes Newfoundland writings chosen with the intent to give exposure to Newfoundland literature, to preserve the traditional Newfoundland culture, and to supply culturally relevant materials for Newfoundland students. However, what has received most attention has been the preserving of a culture. But the culture to be preserved may not be the culture of the students, hence one to which they

may not be able to relate. What is culturally relevant may not be relevant for the students being targeted.

Through an examination of the materials already in the literature program and in consideration of the results of a survey conducted in high school classrooms, I conclude that the culture promoted in these writings is too far removed from the knowledge of the students. I have also examined the areas of literature, folklore and history and find that many of the materials must have been selected for their fulfilling of the objectives of folklore and history rather than the objectives of literature. Literary quality and the literature experience have been sacrificed in favour of preserving a culture, while writings of folklore, regional history and nostalgic reminiscences continue to be emphasized.

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INTRODUCTION

For the past number of years, the high school curriculum has included in it selected Newfoundland writings as part of the literature program. Many of these writings, however, can and should be challenged on their merit as suitable for young readers. Do they actually have much to offer students as selections of literature? They are included as such.

The inclusion of various materials has apparently been influenced by folklorists and others who have attempted to find ways to aggrandize a culture in their attempt to supply substance to a literature program. Many materials are matters of history, folklore, and nostalgia, most of which may well be unfamiliar to the student, at least initially.

The literature programs in school have come to represent more than the providing of materials for literature appreciation. Given this development, there is a need to reflect upon some of the dominant definitions of literature, its role for young readers, and the materials that might fulfill the needs of these young readers. Following this first concern, any regional literature might well be included because of its literary quality, but not for intentions outside the role of literature. At present, the curriculum has become cluttered with materials from different areas, all blanketed as "literature".

It is much easier to foster acceptance for materials if practical benefits can be stated for their inclusion. Since many educators apparently have problems understanding what literature should do for the student, it is too often given a role that is easily understood and explained. When it can be explained in terms of preserving heritage, culture, and traditions, the role of literature can be easily reduced to accommodate this seemingly practical, beneficial and obviously essential role. It matters little that some of the content may be questionable on grounds other than its quality as literature. The intentions overshadow the means, and the means are then justified in terms of "literature".

There is a need for English educators to argue the right of literature to exist as literature. It need not be assigned a different function, such as delivering certain content material. If this is allowed to continue, literature as an art cannot really exist in any sense of the word.

Not exposing students to literature-as-literature denies them access to the "real" experiences of literature and helps create an attitude that literature is written for an elite group. There is no need for literature to encompass all writings deemed to be a necessary study for students. If this is so, then literature gives way to other areas of study in the literature program. Actually, that is a symptom of the problems already stated.

No item of literature, by the very definition of literature, need supply immediate practical instruction for the individual reader. Nor does any creative piece of literature need to be an example of some other form or type of writing. The emphasis in literature should be on individuality. An individual reader shares an experience through a piece of writing. The piece of writing is an "exemplar for" the subject of literature. Similarly, the selected Newfoundland literature need not be "examples of" Newfoundland literature but exemplars for literature. The fact that the writer is from Newfoundland is secondary to the piece of writing itself.

It appears that some educators are stressing the need for writings which fall outside the domain of literature. It becomes the job of English educators to allow literature to promote its own justification argument, especially if it is being infiltrated by other areas having different intentions.

Writers such as Northrop Frye maintain that literature should develop experiences in aesthetics. This study asserts that the selected Newfoundland writings chosen for the high school program offer content only.

To show what is in the program as well as what should be in the program this paper looks at what literature is. Since many of the writings already included fall into the categories of folklore and history, these two subjects

are examined to attempt to illustrate that they, and their writings, are not literature.

This paper also reports on a survey conducted with selected senior high school students in the province to gain some indication of how much of the culture addressed in the selected writings and in the past culture of Newfoundland generally exists in the minds of students entering the senior high school programs. (See Appendices A and B.)

If writings in history and folklore are included in the literature program to teach a culture, then much fine literature will be overlooked in order to fulfill these other intentions. However, if aesthetics receives priority in selecting materials for literature, then it is likely that quality literature will be selected for the fulfillment of the literature experience.

Chapter 1

LITERATURE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

When it is the duty of schools to teach literature, it is not unusual to find criticism about what is included within the framework of that which is termed 'literature'. Out of all the world's great literature, each individual (especially the literature teacher) builds his/her priorities of what s/he considers to be literature, but must select for the classroom material from the approved writings for that curriculum of study. It eventually comes down to the basic questions: "What is literature?" and "Why should it be taught?" which, in turn, leads to the objectives of any literature program.

First, a definition of literature must be established, because the justification of materials that fit objectives must also fall under what literature is. Webster's Third International Dictionary supplies a definition which appears to be the one most closely related to the general objectives outlined in the course outline for the high school literature courses supplied by the Department of Education for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Webster's Third defines literature as "writings in prose or verse; esp. writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal intent." The definition supplied in the Course Description for Thematic

Literature 1200 (1981) supplied by the Department of Education reads:

Literature is language used imaginatively and artistically. It communicates ideas and feelings. It expresses perceptions, interpretations, and visions of human experience through such forms as the short story, the poem, the novel, the essay, the play. It exists in all cultures. It appears in written, oral and enacted form. (p. 2)

This definition is further expanded to state that literary concerns "focus on pursuits rooted in every man's (sic) quest for truly human values in living", and that literature "represents for students the patterns that men (sic) have created to make sense of their world". Furthermore, it "can not only provide reading pleasure and enjoyment but also provide self-understanding and the basis for personal values". The universality of what literature is echoes the ideas of such a person as Northrop Frye, who says "as a reader of literature I exist only as a representative of humanity as a whole". (Frye, 1964, p. 101)

Frye (1957) also sets a definition that separates literature from other writings and therefore determines what writings constitute literature. He says:

In literature, questions of fact or truth are subordinated to the primary literary aims of producing a structure of words for its own sake, and the sign-value of symbols are subordinate to their importance as a structure of interconnected motifs. Whenever we have an autonomous verbal structure of this kind, we have literature. Whenever this

autonomous structure is lacking, we have language, words used instrumentally to help human consciousness do or understand something else. (p. 74)

This is an important distinction for the purpose of this paper, since it spells out what can be termed literature with a universal meaning as opposed to words used to communicate something of a more particular reference. Frye, in his book The Educated Imagination (1964), distinguishes the "language of the imagination, which is literature, from two other ways of using words: ordinary speech and the conveying of information." (p. 134) There is no doubt that literature is understood and accepted as different from ordinary speech and writing. "There is no direct address in literature: it isn't what you say but how it's said that's important there." (Ibid., p. 46) In ordinary speech and writing there is a definite message intended for a particular audience, whereas "the literary writer isn't giving information. That's why you can't produce literature voluntarily, in the way you'd write a letter or a report." (Ibid.)

What is of concern (or should be) for the literature teacher is the kind of material that is designated to be used in the classroom to fulfill the objectives and, more importantly, to expose the student to representative materials of 'good' literature that maintain universality of meaning, aesthetic value, and

comprehensibility for the background of the students being taught. The pool of literature appears inexhaustible in volume, but there is always pressure exerted from various sources on any curriculum to have particular materials included on specific grounds; and, in the screening procedure, someone (or some group, more likely) will outline what is needed. This, in turn, will attract publishers who scramble to produce materials that will be acceptable.

In the junior high and high school literature programs in Newfoundland, then, there has been a strong message in recent years to include what has been termed 'Newfoundland Literature' or sometimes, 'Newfoundlandia'. Sheila Saunders (1982) has defined this term as: "Anything and everything that is specifically related to the island, whether it comes under the heading of history, geography, literature, folklore, music. During the past decade a number of books, containing various Newfoundland writings, have been published, with most of them aimed at the schools, and some designed to reach a particular group, such as English teachers." (p. 24)

The course outlines stipulate that Newfoundland writings must be included as a part of the literature section. English Eight: Course Description (1978) specifically states that "no matter what the approach, thematic or genre, representative pieces of Newfoundland literature must be included for study in the appropriate

sections", a statement which is favoured by the literary concepts to be covered in the course. (p. 6)

If particular materials are chosen for study, then obviously there must be a reason for choosing these materials; and, no doubt, the justification is found in the emphasis upon using culturally relevant materials and for developing an understanding and appreciation for culture and heritage. In fact, there are a number of legitimate reasons for including Newfoundland writings in the curriculum. One study was done which showed that using Newfoundland writings with children in isolated areas of the province was more successful than was true for other materials. (Perry, 1931) Children found the materials much easier to relate to and to understand.

Folklorists have also promoted the inclusion of folklore materials to make students aware of the attempts to "record 'fast-vanishing relics' before their complete disappearance from modern culture". (Brunvand, 1976, p. 9) The unique Newfoundland heritage, traditions, culture, and speech patterns were singled out for preservation beginning from the discovery of the outposts by visitors. As early as 1940, Tompkins stated that "as long as he (the Newfoundlander) continues to have the intelligence to appreciate its picturesque ways, there is no immediate danger of Britain's oldest colony becoming standardized". (p. 70) This idea of the preservation of culture was taken

up by other people after Confederation, when the onslaught of a North American culture was imminent. This idea was soon internalized by many Newfoundlanders, especially during the 1960s, when throughout North America there was an emphasis on getting back from urban living to the 'roots', which basically was rural, old-style living. Many of the writings from Newfoundland concentrated on this theme and, eventually, the theme appeared to dominate the writing.

So the emphasis on a separate, unique Newfoundland heritage and culture is not new nor has it been ignored, since many writers have found in it a mass of ideas to write about from which developed the Newfoundland literature. This was a very important step in the development of Newfoundland writings since it promoted a necessary consciousness of a people to analyze and view themselves in relation to others and therefore help to fulfill one of the purposes of a distinctive regional literature.

What has to be addressed, though, is how writings of a Newfoundland culture fit into the category of literature, if they depict specifically a past way of life that has appeal for a restricted few and lacks universal meaning. In that sense, these materials may be included, not to provide students with worthy literature but may be selected because of their appeal to folklore. What may indeed be happening in the literature program is the use of materials that may have nostalgic value for the teacher, but

are foreign to the student because they do not relate to the student's present culture. Daigon and Laconte (1971) point to this tendency for materials included in the literature classroom to satisfy the needs of the teacher and not those of the students. (p. 174)

If this be so, then the inclusion of such writing needs to be given a proper context and, although included in the literature program, a clarification needs to be made to students about why it is there and why it is different from other literature included for study.

When Newfoundland writings are used to speak specifically of the past, they need not be classified with those writings having more universal meaning. Since these two types of writing have different intentions, though each is labelled as literature, the whole function of literature becomes confusing for the student. The materials misrepresent the definition.

It is not the intention in this paper to deny a place for folklore in a literature program. In fact, it can hold a very prominent role in fulfilling certain objectives in a literature course. Folklorists have very convincingly pointed to the need to study culture, and have made the case that it can be an integral part of a literature curriculum. Richard Tallman (1972) points out that "the study of folklore helps to make both history and literature more immediate and believable for students" (p. 169); that when

students "discover the importance of lore and history" for themselves and others "the abstract meanderings of their textbooks can become real and alive". (Ibid., p. 170) He goes on to point out that "folklore by nature is interdisciplinary" and that teachers should find means so that the "study of folklore can enrich standard courses like English. (Ibid., p. 183)

Since some of the writings found in the materials used for study in the literature programs in junior high and high school deal with folklore and not literature, it is the folklorists to whom we should turn for insight into its value, purpose, and teaching strategies. If it is not literature, it is not fair to treat it the same as the materials recognized as literature.

When folklore is addressed by such people as Tallman, the emphasis is on student collections from his/her own heritage and culture and not so much on the reports and writings of others. These materials may well have more meaning for the students. This in no way discredits the work and writings of others, but adds to it through the individual local collections. This clearly sets a different perspective for study than the purpose espoused in the objectives of literature.

When writings with intentions of preserving a culture are given the same treatment in the program as literature with universal meaning and intent, the definition

of literature becomes so broad that it is meaningless. Not that the two cannot be taught as one course, but rather that there must be employed different strategies and techniques in order to arouse an appreciation for both. Indeed, if we were to ask of both types of writing "Why do we teach this or read this?", the answer would most likely indicate the distinction of which is literature and which is not. One type of selection may have much to say about a world community, whereas the other has something to say about one particular part of a regional area at one particular point in its history.

The question remains: What do we do about it? Should the two be taught together? There appears to be no problem in doing so. But the answer must fall back to Frye's distinction pointed to earlier. The language in each kind of writing is used for a different intention. Any reading that a person does adds to his/her experience, and it is our reading experience that we draw upon in writing, as well as our personal experience. Anything that one reads becomes a backdrop for what s/he becomes, and literature is a place to transfer the imaginative energies of literary writings and pass them to the student. "The student response to this transfer of energy may be to become a writer himself, but the great majority of students will do other things with it." (Frye, 1964, p. 116)

Further, an understanding of and an appreciation for one's heritage and traditional cultural background is important in understanding oneself. Certainly, the values of studying the past have been well-documented by historians and folklorists, among others. William Hamilton (1976) says that it is "an intensely human characteristic that compels us to find meaning between ourselves and our environment" and that it involves a human "compulsive desire to look backward, to know something of our own past and that of our surroundings." (p. 2) However, Hamilton (1976) points to J.S. Bruner in The Process of Education for caution about "harnessing these innate interests". Bruner explains that to teach specific topics "without making clear their context in the broader fundamental structure of a field of knowledge is uneconomical." First, Bruner says that it makes it difficult for students to "generalize from what he has learned to what he will encounter later". Secondly, if there is not an understanding of general principles, the learning "has little reward in terms of intellectual excitement." In other words, interest is more easily created when the learner can make the knowledge usable beyond the situation in which the learning has occurred. Thirdly, "if the knowledge is not structurally tied together it will likely be forgotten." (Hamilton, 1976, p. 2)

This is an attempt to tie how materials are to be included and taught to the purpose for having them there in

the first place. The emphasis of the folklorists and sociologists appears to stress the need for the students to collect information about his/her own background.

This idea of studying one's heritage and culture is worthwhile and indeed essential in gaining an understanding of oneself. Such writings can also provide an understanding of how these writings developed out of the culture. But this demands a study that has as its priority intentions that require more time than can be afforded in the literature program. Content in the form of studying a culture and past way of life is necessary in that kind of program.

The conclusion that little understanding of the culture being studied exists in the minds of the students is based on the experience with teaching students in the classroom, and on the results of the cultural survey conducted for this paper. Furthermore, although there is a need for students to gain an understanding of this culture, there must also be an awareness made through literature of other topics, concerns, and aspects of Newfoundland and Labrador, especially as they relate to the culture and lives of the developing student. Yet the selections now available deal more with teaching culture than with experiencing literature.

In themselves these writings present a problem for those who stress the need for regional literature to be

included, for the reasons that it provides an easier style of writing for students and a form of literature that uses local dialect and expressions to which they can more easily relate. But does that then mean that we are to ignore the cultural change in Newfoundland, and the influences of North American culture through mass media and social contact - that, in fact, students can relate more easily to a past culture? Surely we can't expect the modern Newfoundland youth to learn all about a past way of life that has practically disappeared. If there is a need to know this and it doesn't presently exist, then that is not the job of literature but rather the job of history. That can only require a different aspect of reading which surely begs the teacher to shift emphasis from the larger world view to the particular - again suggesting a different 'type' of study.

All writings must be included together as literature; so say the course outlines. With so many different materials, the teacher is faced with nearly as momentous a background to fill in for these Newfoundland writings as is necessary when teaching regional British writings, or American writings, or Toronto writings, or Inuit writings. The culture being discussed has not lived in the minds of these students and, indeed, may be as foreign as the cultures of other lands. The ocean talked about may be the same ocean, and the land may be the same land, but the attitudes, customs, beliefs, lifestyles,

songs, dances, have changed. And what is being accounted for may be foreign not only to the individual student, but also to the community or environment of the student. The nostalgia of reminiscing sometimes develops a change from the actual. Furthermore, the very nature of "a Newfoundland culture" suggests singularity, whereas there was indeed a plurality of Newfoundland "cultures" varying from region to region, or even from cove to cove. If a person were to collect the artifacts and particulars of his/her past culture and compare them to the culture written about in the stories and reports, there could well be some wide discrepancies. There has also been a great emphasis on the "quaint, cute, whimsical, syrupy beset by 'gooey fabrications' in which traditional performance was sentimentalized and prettified." (Abrahams and Kalcik, 1978, p. 224) Richard Dorson called such things "fakelore." (Ibid.)

The important thing to remember is that it is beneficial to expose students to these materials in order that they experience the value of critically evaluating the way in which writings depict a culture. But that comes very close to becoming the job of history.

To determine why there is an emphasis on local regional writings (here, "regional" means a particular geographical place such as Newfoundland and Labrador), one could look beyond just the works of the folklorists and

sociologists. Actually, modern theories of literature study give insights into the increased emphasis on student experiences in an approach to literature as well as the teaching of reading. The psycholinguistic/language experience model (cognitive-developmental-perspective) emphasizes the linguistic experience of the reader. According to this approach, the teacher should create an environment which fosters personal and aesthetic response to a text, and text selection is based on a variety of types and genres as well as different linguistic forms. This approach recognizes the works of Kenneth Goodman and Frank Smith. (Anderson, 1986) This is only one approach among several, but it has received a modicum of recognition in the past decade. Other approaches extend back as far as the arguments of Matthew Arnold, who maintained that the purpose of literature study requires using materials that represent "the best thoughts and words of western civilization." (Ibid.) The modern psycholinguistic approach, coupled with the pressures of the folklorists and others alluded to earlier, permitted the movement (especially in Newfoundland, where there has been a pronounced change in lifestyle since Confederation) toward local materials and content that are supposedly more closely related to the student's own environment. The idea, of course, was to use "culturally relevant" materials.

I have no argument against that idea, since it is obvious that the North American urban culture was foreign to the Newfoundland outport child of the 1950s. But after the advent of television and other mass media, the emphasis begged a change to accomodate the changing culture. Yet there appears to have developed a need to promote the use of culturally relevant materials as well as the idea of cultural preservation, both of which involve more than the literature program should be expected to do.

There remains the problem alluded to earlier - the cultural relevancy of some Newfoundland writings. For today's Newfoundland student, many writings are about a "foreign" Newfoundland culture. They require a treatment that sets up a background and significance for these writings as much as the "mainland" writings of the 1950s might require.

The need, then, to teach all Newfoundland writings has been established within the framework of a changing culture. The decision to place these writings in the literature program would appear to be a sound one, since it might instill in the student an appreciation for his/her heritage. This can help develop an awareness of self-identity, an important purpose of the school program. The identity of a people speaking through the various literary voices can give this effect quite adequately.

However, caution has to be exercised in choosing literature for study from such a small region which is still in the beginning stages of producing meaningful literary work, both for people outside the region as well as for people at home - in other words, a more universal meaning and appeal. To adhere too long to the same writings can not only allow a misrepresentation of the literature available, but also stifle the development of a good regional literature.

In this sense, Newfoundland writing in the curriculum seems to fulfill two main purposes. On the one hand, it provides an understanding and appreciation for a past culture demonstrated by the importance of strong personal values for survival. A study of this kind also gives individual readers the opportunity to realize who they are in relation to the world community and an appreciation and understanding of the development of modern culture and values. However, to do this, the writing must be placed in a social, economic, political and, therefore, historical context to achieve a full understanding. If not, it becomes meaningless (according to Bruner). Furthermore, it is reminiscent of the reasons for studying history and, although it may not be factually documented in all cases, it is written with the intention of communicating 'what it was like' in the past.

Another reason for studying Newfoundland writings is to allow the student the opportunity to experience the literature of his/her own region as a part of the world community of literature - a literature using the regional setting and regional expressions as a backdrop to transmit a meaning that has universal appeal. In other words, Newfoundland literature is important in the curriculum for promoting the development of local writers and for tracing the accomplishments made by writers to date. There is an obvious danger if there is a continued adherence to writings of the past. This adherence can promote a feeling of inferiority that may persist and cause a stagnation of creativity rather than a promotion of awareness for what is rich and varied in the present culture and surroundings about which to write. Youth of today have their own problems and experiences that continually provide emotional reactions and energies which can create literature, and these writings need to be encouraged. By providing a variety of literature from the region there is a greater opportunity for a strong regional literature to develop that has universal meaning and appeal.

To expose students continually to the 'good old days', as if the only good things happened in the past, is unhealthy and misleading. Anyone who thinks that way has not really considered the past in context. Northrop Frye refers to this view as the "mythology about 'the good old

days' when everything was simpler." Frye attributes this view to people who "assume that the society of their childhood was a solid and coherent structure." (Frye, 1964, p. 144) Susan Parr (1982) claims that "typically, adults are nostalgic about their own youth and critical of those younger than they." (p. 7) She argues for the need for study by quoting Walter Kaufman's statement to the effect that "the perception that the past was better is itself likely to be oversimplified, uniformed, and ironically, indicative of the need for humanistic study." (Ibid.) Kaufman also adds that "those who believe that past ages were not sick ought to study the humanities." (Ibid.)

It is necessary to refer once again to Frye, who views literature as not that which is to be instilled into students, but rather a "reshaping" of "the student's total verbal experience." This experience includes the influences of television and movies as well as reading. Therefore, literature "should be the means of leading the student from his present subjective social vision into the total vision of mankind." (Frye, 1976, p. 21) Albert Ayars (1983) states that "children understand complex adult concepts and societal values when these values are related to their daily experiences." (p. 116) Literature that is related to their own experiences, culture, and lifestyle then is likely more meaningful in the development of self-identity than are

writings of a foreign vision; and many of the writings of the past may represent a foreign vision for students.

The "close identification of literature and life is not always clearly appreciated, especially, perhaps, by students whose major interests lie elsewhere than in the humanities.... To them English literature often seems either trivially irrelevant or else an incomprehensible 'high-brow' luxury." (Seary and Story, 1966, p. 5) The creation of such feelings can be traced to a number of causes. Seary and Story points specifically to such study material in school as "poems and plays far from adequately representative of the scope of English literature ... or by being required to study texts which, for proper comprehension, needed a maturity and experience he (the student) did not possess." (Ibid., pp. 5-6) What may likely result is a "feeling that English literature is a narrow and specialized study, remote from and alien to all he knows of life." (Ibid., p. 6)

As stated earlier, there is a need for the inclusion of cultural materials in the literature program. But as pointed out by Rowland Lorimer (1984) in his discussion of Canadian literature in The Nation in the Schools, "methods must be found to help students realize how a piece of literature grows out of culture, how it is crafted into a work of art, and how, in turn, such works

enhance what is distinctive and what is best about a community." (p. 99)

In writing for young adult readers, many of today's writers are incorporating modern Newfoundland and using the present relevant culture with its regional flavour as a backdrop for literature that is more meaningful and appealing to modern youth. Throughout Canada, there is this regional emphasis in writing that is proving successful, since it apparently has wider meaning and appeal. These writers "create a localized reality, deeply rooted in both physical and emotional topography." (Saltman, 1987, p. 65) The best of the Canadian writers seem to be regional writers. (Ibid.) A potential danger for the literature programs is that these regional Newfoundland writings would not be given the same treatment as the earlier writings, or, worse still, would be overlooked altogether.

Barbara Smith (1978) says "we find that the works that survive ... are those that evoke and exemplify emergent meanings. It is true that literary works may engage our interests and touch our spirits as records and images of an otherwise irrecoverable past, but to endure as something other than vivid historical artifacts, they must also be able to serve as metaphors and parables of an unpredictable future." (p. 151)

In an attempt to find relevancy in materials for Newfoundland students, the assumption that writings about a

past way of life are therefore culturally relevant, is a questionable one. It may assume that the stigmatized 'Newfoundland character' is true for all times and all generations and it may give the view of a static culture. Furthermore, students may be instilled with the feeling of inferiority from a local perspective because they are not aware of that which is supposedly their culture - the one they are living or the one in the writings - and, on a wider perspective, because they are already associated with a culture that has been viewed inferior and primitive in comparison to the dominant North American culture. The implications for the curriculum are obvious. These writings of a past culture must be placed in context and treated differently. If culturally relevant materials are superior and are essential, then first there must be an understanding of what that culture is, and then selections made based upon what is relevant. However, if the purpose of the program is merely to study the past culture and heritage in its own right, then materials must be chosen to reflect that culture, but they must be placed in context to avoid any confusion which can occur from blending the two kinds of writing without first having established a firm distinction.

The literature to be studied simply must adhere to the basic objectives of literature. The intentions of literature have already been explored concerning the teaching of literature for the development of the student in

a world community. Furthermore, although there probably must be fostered a feeling for past tradition and culture, there must be no confusing of the stated values and intentions of literature. In other words, the literature curriculum must not face an erosion of universal intent through the reflections on the past just because the use of writers of a past culture may indeed be satisfactory reading for the adult reader who can relate to that past. Such writings may offer little literary quality or universal value for the student of a different culture who must certainly be aware of his/her own living culture in preparing for future. Since the objectives for the two types of writings are different, the teaching strategies must correspondingly be different.

Chapter 2

FOLKLORE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL LITERATURE PROGRAM

The reasons for the emphasis on Newfoundland literature in general and, more specifically, upon the selections chosen for study in the school curriculum, can be traced to the influence of the folklorists, especially after Newfoundland joined Confederation. With the sudden awareness that Newfoundland society and culture were facing a drastic influence from the mainland North American culture, and were being threatened by this "new" culture, all efforts seemed directed toward the preservation of the traditional. Since this change appeared revolutionary rather than evolutionary in nature, the apparent need to preserve became more intense. The contrasts between the people, lifestyles, and ideas of the past and those of the more modern culture were so stark, especially to outsiders, that they conjured up many humorous situations and insinuations.

This focus of attention seemed to praise the rustic beauty and simple values of the traditional life of the people and, on the other hand, circulate the oddities and humorous incidents resulting from this sudden culture clash of a simple people suddenly jerked into a new and strange culture. The powerful impact of the new culture appeared to have a belittling effect on the simple laid-back

way of life of the old culture. The old values and customs became the quaint and curious, whereas the new culture demanded conformity. But the new culture had so much to offer that could free the individual from a life of dependency and hardship that, to those living in the period of Confederation, the new culture offered a way out of this antique bondage. It was therefore accepted eagerly, especially after the benefits of leaving the old way of life were experienced.

To gain an understanding of the writings of this culture one must look at the role and intentions of folklore. It is indeed from the folklorists that much of the writing received its motivation and continued success in publication.

The New Columbia Encyclopedia defines folklore as "the body of customs, legends, beliefs, and superstitions passed on by oral tradition.... Today most folklorists and anthropologists regard folk customs, legends, and beliefs as an imaginative expression by a people of its desires, attitudes, and culture values." The role of folklore is also explained as becoming increasingly "important in the study of primitive societies and in understanding the history of mankind." There is no mention of any tie to the art of literature. Folklore is defined as a separate type of writing serving a function different from that of literature. It is through its affiliation with writings

that give an understanding of the past that folklore acquires its recognition and its separate definition.

Because of these qualities of folklore, it deserves to be recognized as distinct enough to be separated from literature even in the school curriculum. Such diverse materials have been included as literature, including materials from folklore and history, that the very term "literature" has been changed in order to blanket these materials. Partly because the writings have been treated as literature, there has been such a tendency to romanticize and sensationalize life in the past that there is little resemblance to the actual life. This gives a false impression of the past. Since these writings have been included in the literature to give an understanding of the past, they have been, by definition, included to serve the function of folklore. In that case, they misrepresent in two ways: they are not folklore because they give a false depiction or misunderstanding of the past; and they are not literature because they have been included simply to give that impression of the past.

There is certainly a need for a close inspection of the local writings to insure that they fit the particular category to which they have been assigned. "Genuine folklore should be given in the form in which it is used by the folk, not as reshaped by writers seeking to popularize it." (Fowke, 1976, p. 10) Once materials are included for

study in the curriculum, many of the inaccurate writings can easily be accepted as accurate by the indiscriminate reader, especially those who are of school age. In other words, folklore must be firmly established as folklore, and literature designated as literature, each according to its separate definition and role in the curriculum.

Just as early colonial writings reflect "the origins ... of literary attitudes that shaped writers such as Cooper and Twain" (Ziff, 1970, p. v.), so the early writers of historical and folklore materials of Newfoundland's past can shape the development of today's writers. Ziff, in discussing the colonial period of writing in American, shows the value of these writings by stating that all writings in the past were necessary in establishing the different aspects of American society. In all these writings, "the field of vision was being defined." (Ibid., p. 20)

The idea of establishing a field of vision falls back to the role of folklore in influencing literature. That point is well taken, and understandable. But it does not mean that writings can now be studied as literature simply because they are important as folklore. In developing a "field of vision," a society is bent upon gaining an understanding of itself as a society. That is not the same as gaining a literary experience through a reading of literature. And although it may seem necessary

to study folklore and history to find where a people have come from and to get an understanding of where they may be going in their development of an art form, to do so does not fulfill the definition of literature.

To study past writings as a study of past literature is to suggest that there has been a development of literature from somewhere. This very notion may also suggest that particular writings are literature. That may indeed not be so. In other words, we are now back to the original discussion of early Newfoundland writings. In fact, we are now offering the study of the development of literature as opposed to the appreciation of literary writings as a means of gaining a literary experience. There may also be a suggestion that Newfoundland writings have developed from the past culture writings, and are now a part of a particular literary style. If that is so, then there is a need to include these later writings in a literature course rather than the earlier writings from whence they developed, since the emphasis in literature should be upon the literary.

The folklorists' contribution in Newfoundland may indeed be valuable in establishing a "field of vision" of a people. But as a study of literature experience, it ignores the purpose for studying literature in the first place.

The influence of government has also been instrumental in having cultural materials gain such high

recognition in the curriculum. The multicultural programs of the federal government have made available money for prompting the "mosaic" concept of Canadian culture, and "attention has been devoted to the various minority cultural groups in Canada - specifically to the preservation, study and display of their distinctive cultural traditions." (Carpenter, 1978, p. 56) This has emphasized the need for folklorist study in the various regions, and power gained by reason of the funds made available to groups has enabled their entry into the printed word and its circulation. "Essentially, the Canadian taxpayer supports folklore heavily without understanding the nature or meaning of this material or accepting it as significant." (Ibid., p. 62)

Given this influence, the mass materials being produced provoked the continuance of the kinds of materials and writings already mentioned. Nostalgia, reminiscences, and humor have been readily put to print and circulated. This influence has had an impact, not only through an understanding of what the past culture has been, but also through a judgement on the present culture as well. In other words, the culture is "not being allowed to evolve naturally, but rather, is being moulded from above. In effect, cultural freedom is restricted in Canada by elected governments." (Ibid., p. 65)

The natural place where these restrictions would have the most impact is in the education of the young.

Therefore, many materials geared toward the school student have been assembled by publishers. But no separate area of study has been set aside. That tendency to use folklore as literature is where the problem lies. Since the two are separate, in interest and function, they should remain so in their treatment in the classroom.

The need to record this passing culture was obviously necessary. Initially, there was some embarrassment for a people to be reminded of their being a part of this seemingly inferior culture. Nor has that inferiority disappeared completely even today. The coined term "Newfie" or "Newf" is used in a somewhat derogatory sense that suggests to the Newfoundlander that s/he is a part of an inferior segment of North America, and in an inferior culture. That inferiority comes mainly from the outside view of the people, yet it has been internalized. Therefore, it has less to do with the knowledge or lack of knowledge of the culture by Newfoundlanders, but more to do with the lack of knowledge about the strengths of the culture by many people outside the area.

Folklorists traditionally tend "to view change negatively, whether it occurs on a small scale in the transmission of particular texts or on a large scale, such as when a community migrates or becomes urbanized." (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1978, p. 109) In Newfoundland, folklorists convincingly expressed the view that the past

was valuable as a cultural way of life, and in many ways had qualities superior to the new cultural way of life. There arose from these views a tendency to concentrate on not what was being gained from the culture clash, but on what was being lost by the Newfoundlanders. This again reflects and exemplifies the traditional folklorist view of change. "Consistent with these trends, the immigrant groups in North America are generally studied in terms of the folklore they lose in the process of settling down in the 'golden land' and not in terms of what they gained." (Ibid., p. 110) Many educated Newfoundlanders who had escaped the poverty and hardships of the past tended to view their cultural upbringing as sound, and set to explore its uniqueness so as to make it appealing to the younger Newfoundlanders who were being raised in a more modern (and possibly less stimulating) setting.

It is through the efforts and influences of such people that a consciousness resulted in massive writings about the past. With this increased publicity, a determined effort was raised to hold on to these customs which appeared to be disappearing from the Newfoundland lifestyle and culture. So great was the effort that even today every child, upon reaching the adolescent years, is expected to become somewhat immersed in this cultural milieu of song, dance, stories, recitations, and writings. Naturally, the place to expose the young in a learning environment would be

through the school curriculum. And, since literature has something to do with understanding oneself, it has become the subject given the job of exposing the child to the writings of the past which eventually became in turn a part of the literature to be studied in the courses.

Of course, the publishers had a lot to do with the promotion of particular writings. Writers began taking trips of nostalgia which they shared with the readers as a part of culture and, then, literature. There was a scramble to publish local materials for the waiting curriculum market which had been geared up to accept it. Indeed, local publishers did make it available out of presumed respect for such important things as the value of transmitting a culture or preserving a way of life that was fast disappearing, quality writing could be sacrificed somewhat. Very often, it was. Quality writing could be chosen for the curriculum from other writings - from outside the local area. Newfoundland writings had other purposes to fulfill, other than just the literary experience of a piece of writing.

Briefly, that illustrates how the folklorists have been instrumental in causing a regression. Not only in the general population, but also in the materials chosen for study in the literature curriculum were they instrumental. Yet these were the same Newfoundlanders who were seemingly dragged into the twentieth century, not the people who saw a way out of their plight of continuous poverty and took it.

The writings have often reflected the best of that life, and have glorified the battle for survival. But there is actually little glory among the hardships of that life which would cause one to want to return and give up the benefits offered by the present culture. It is important to record it, not necessarily to re-live it.

As for culture, the Newfoundlander of today lives in a changed culture, and for the young Newfoundlander, especially, it is this culture which is of most concern. Since it is unlikely that the past will be relived, any concern for what history can offer the modern Newfoundlander should be the concern of history. If many of the Newfoundland writings are to be included as literature, then there are ramifications for the definitions of literature, folklore and history.

Changes are taking place in the writings of Newfoundlanders as well. There are more writers who are breaking away from this continual reliance on regression. Writers such as Kevin Major, Bill Gough, Percy Janes, are among those who use the sense of place only as a backdrop to create modern regional literature worthy of study because of its literary quality.

In the past, writers who attempted to move in that creative direction were unfortunately overlooked and ignored. Newfoundland literature, in its development, suffered because of it. Writers such as Irving Fogwill

received little recognition whereas others who reported on a past culture were popularly acclaimed. The topic, not literary quality, was the determining factor. Literature was not promoted.

Hopefully, the trend toward a more universal and world view will continue and there will no longer be a need to find a place for Newfoundland writings just because they fit a particular affiliation with time and place. This will permit writers to be more easily placed in their appropriate categories: history, folklore, sociology, and so on. Newfoundland literature can then become a recognized part of the art of literature, and be categorized for what it contributes to the literary experience - as well as for what it tells of a people and their history and culture.

Although some anthologists have attempted to include more scholarly selections, the writers are basically the same, and the writings have the same sense of place and culture. In other words, the writers are still those who are very much caught up with a past culture and its strengths and weaknesses rather than in concentrating on a more realistic culture and time to which the young reader can relate.

Chapter 3

HISTORY IN THE HIGH SCHOOL LITERATURE PROGRAM

Historical writings of Newfoundland form some of the materials that make up the Newfoundland canon. These have a distinct function to serve, and to argue that distinction needs the insights offered by philosophies of history. Any study of past occurrences should be categorized somewhere within the study of history.

The study of the past is not indulged in primarily for the experience it will allow the individual reader. Rather, it has a more redemptive motive in many cases. Rolf Gruner (1985) points out that the modern "philosophy of history in broad terms ... can be called future-directed, ameliorative/redemptive, universalist, secular, and Promethean." (p. 29) He states that the "future may be looked forward to in dread and fear or in expectancy and hope, and as far as philosophy of history is concerned it is typically the latter.... History has thus a healing, redemptive function." (Ibid.)

Gruner also mentions the impact of the scientific method on the purpose for history as well as the study of history. "Since generally truth and knowledge have come to appear to be the garb of science, and all reasoned belief tends to present itself as scientific, philosophy of history, too, aspires to something like scientific status and claims to have derived its results scientifically. More important

than this, however, is the similarity in aim or motive." (Ibid., p. 31)

The universality in the definitions of modern philosophies of history suggests that "the difference between existing historical civilizations and regional cultures are envisaged to disappear." (Ibid., p. 30) That helps us to separate the study of history from both literature and folklore. Literature focuses more on the individual, and not so much on society. In literature there is an emphasis on the individual "artistic" experience to be derived from reading a piece of literary writing, whereas in history "there is often the tendency to make light of the individual in favour of the species: the real man, the whole man, is not the individual person but the human race." (Ibid., p. 30) In its concern for the "human race", there is no regard for the reading experience itself, but rather an emphasis is placed on the content as sought-after information.

Vitorino Tejera (1984) outlines the scientific aspect of the philosophy of history. He says that it "functions like a special science, namely it is required to be assertive, only in its reconstructive phases. In its other phases it will consist either of foundational query, working at uncovering assumptions and consequences, or else it will be an evaluative, critical or creative discourse about its subject-matter." (p. 3) When tackling the concept of experience as applied to history, Tejera refers to Justus

Buchler who said that "most philosophers have been concerned with experience mainly in so far as it bears upon 'knowledge'.... They have inadvertently left it to art to deal with experience in its proper breadth and to render exhibitively what they equally have recognized and encompassed assertively." (Ibid., p. 8)

Just as the use of experience in history is different from its use in literature, so the use of language in history is different. Historians make use of literary techniques in their presentations, but that hardly makes for literature. A variety of techniques may be used by the historian. "A historian both uses or practices a number of special sciences (such as demography, archaeology or economics) and practices or uses, whether consciously or not, rhetorical and literary (presentational) techniques." (Ibid., p. 19) The historian uses the different techniques to formulate, interpret or explain his/her subject. Tejera says that "while the artist interrogates primarily through contriving rather than through formulating, the historian seeks to verbalize effectively (exhibitively as well as assertively) the phenomena he has contrived to uncover, reorder or reinterpret." (Ibid., p. 97)

Historical knowledge has removed the purpose for writings outside the writings themselves. J.H. Randall (Tejera, 1984) states that "historical knowledge is the

greatest of all liberators from the mistakes and muddles, from the tyranny of the past." (p. 86)

Historians have noticeably kept the study of history distinct from the study of art. Not that art in reality (especially literature and literary writings) have no place in the study of the past. Historical writings have not focused much attention on the literary. In fact, "historians are quite willing to listen to neighbours in the social sciences, but the less manageable contribution of literary critics and philosophies are often met with extreme suspicion if not active resistance." (Lacapra, 1985, p. 73)

The interconnectedness of the two is obviously avoided. "The novel is pertinent to historical research to the extent that it may be converted into useful knowledge or information." (Ibid., p. 125) The separateness of the "science" from the "art" is obvious. Literature is viewed as "redundant when it tells us what can be gleaned from other documentary sources" and yet "is paradoxically most superfluous when it seems to provide us with the most 'useful' and 'reputable' information for it must simply replicate or confirm what can be found in more literal documents such as police reports." (Ibid., p. 126)

This is not to suggest that there has not been any attempt to show that there may be value in the interconnecting of the two. History has apparently so much concerned itself with 'science' that texts have been ignored

because they offered no documented-style proof of their concern with past events. The need for a broader perspective has been suggested by Lacapra, who states: "a more interactive model of discourse that allows for the mutual - at times the mutually challenging - interchange of 'documentary' and 'rhetorical' dimensions of language may further a broader conception of historical knowledge itself - one that gives a new twist to the venerable idea that history is both 'science' and 'art'." (Ibid., p. 21)

The value of literature to history has been argued for on the practical, offering documented-style supplementary information or insight into past events or occurrences. However, many writings of the past offer more to the inexperienced reader as history than as literature. These writings have interest in terms of gaining knowledge of life in the past but are limited in the literary experience sought after in literature.

Since history deals with answering a query into the patterns from the past that helped shape the present and may give some insight into understanding the future, the reader comes to the text with questions - with a search for content. "Theory emerges from history just as history itself can only be understood with questions and answers in mind. History and theory explain and implicate each other. There is a profound unity of fact and idea, past and present." (Welleck, 1982, p. 157)

The distinctive outwardness of focus of history that helps separate it from literature can be traced, then, to its intent. "The idea of a completely neutral, purely expository history seems to me a chimera. There cannot be any history without a sense of direction, some feeling for the future, some ideal, some standard, and hence some hindsight." (Ibid., p. 142) A distinction can also be brought from the insight of Hardison, who comments on the difference between purposive activity and nonpurposive activity. "Purposive activity is directed to something beyond itself" whereas "non-purposive activity is its own justification." (Hardison, 1972, p. 81) Historical writings can be said to have a purposive intent, whereas literature is more likely to offer reflections of the nonpurposive. "You do not, for example, write a poem to persuade the reader to be virtuous or to strengthen (or to weaken) the state, but to express and communicate experience. And by the same token, reading a poem is not an exercise in moral rearmament or a political indoctrination session, but an enlargement and enrichment of the inner life of the reader.... The role of the poet is not to fashion a higher eloquence, a more persuasive stimulus to action, but to create a medium in language that permits his own inwardness to touch and perhaps illumine the inwardness of others." (Ibid.)

Robert Daniel (1966) also viewed history as being very distinct from literature. "History is sometimes classed

with the humanities, along with literature, the arts, and philosophy, but it differs from all of these subjects in being based primarily on fact rather than on imagination and feeling. It is more often included among the social sciences, together with economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, and some branches of geography and psychology." (pp. 23-24)

The basic differences between literature and history can be stated as content and intent, both of which suggest purposive activity and an outward perspective of viewing historical writing rather than the inward view that literature has. This is not to say that there can be no benefit in reading either kind of writing in either subject, so long as the reader is aware of the intent of the materials being read. "Ideally, every history course should include expository writing as a vehicle of clear thinking, and the experience of reading history purely as a form of literary art." (Ibid., p. 65)

History has not separated itself from literature through its distinct language style. Christie (1987) states that "history, and how we write it, are questions forcefully reposed." (1987b, p. 1) Writers of history are compelled by the discipline to adhere religiously to a regimented language form that is reserved only for the writer of history. It is then not possible to use language devices only as a standard for what is historical and what is

literal. Such writers as Pierre Burton and Cassie Brown have relied upon historical facts to recreate incidents with the use of the creative imagination. The literary experience is gained through the imaginative which is created so superbly around an actual historical occurrence. There is no doubt about the value of these writings to different subject areas including literature, but these are not the ordinary. Rather, such vitality and vividness of presentation is so effective partly because these works are so exceptional.

There are also many variations in the use of historical events in writing that are not entirely empirically founded. Dugald Stewart coined the term "conjectural history" to label this kind of writing. (In Christie, 1987, p. 203) "Conjectural histories are temporally idealised narratives whose ordering is, strictly speaking, not empirically founded, but entailed by the author's conceptions of human nature and the probabilities of its response when placed within, and obliged to respond to, an authorially given environment." (Ibid.) That environment, according to Stewart, "may be specified in any or all sorts of ways: conceptual, linguistic, political, social, economic. For such narratives empirical historical materials play an illustrative rather than a fundamentally evidential role." (Ibid.) They are recognized as having a place in the study of history.

Historical writings of the past are not always the same as imaginative literature. When they deny the reader a literary experience, they cannot be classified as literature. Their inclusion for study as literature leads to a misunderstanding of what literature is, and of its distinctness from other writings.

The intentions for writing history have been more influential in the selection of Newfoundland writings for the literature program than the intentions of literature. Selections such as "The Fisherfolk of Newfoundland" were chosen for study because of their historical value. But it is not fair to a literature program to have to be influenced by such intentions and still expected to stress the experiences of literature.

Chapter 4

NEWFOUNDLAND WRITING IN THE HIGH
SCHOOL PROGRAM

It is not the purpose of this paper to relate the importance of heritage study or to condemn the values of the characters who supplemented the culture and heritage of the past. To remember the stories and characters who survived the hardships of the Newfoundland cultural, political, economic, and social setting is undoubtedly valuable to the youth. Along with other benefits from that past, there can come a sense of courage to face difficulties and discouragements. The eulogistic selection by Ray Guy titled "Uncle John" found in Passages (p. 160), has its place in the literature program, if it can transpose the characters of the past into a meaning of the present. "They have shown us that the worst of times may be survived, that hardships may be overcome, that sorrows pass ... and that at the end of the trip the good parts are what we will remember best." (p. 161)

Other writings, poetry and prose, are important as Newfoundland writings and also as a means of understanding the Newfoundland background. But the writings of the past are often too many, too fragmented, and not contextually and historically set. Anthologies of short stories and essays can be worthwhile, but a fragmentation of selections seemingly assembled in a thematic form, yet used individually

within the program guidelines as a whole, fragments them even more. This is especially true when excerpts of drama are included to give the reader a sense of "what it was like." It is extremely difficult to give a sense of the turmoil and conflict surrounding the debate over Confederation in an excerpt of about two pages. There must be a whole dramatic experience or the literary experience intended is lost.

By the time the high school student has reached the Level One literature course, s/he will have been exposed to three anthologies of Newfoundland writings, one in each of the junior high years. These are entitled Openings, Stages, and Passages, and were compiled for junior high students by educators in the Newfoundland school systems. Throughout that series of anthologies there is a stated emphasis on making students aware of Newfoundland writers and writing, as well as on developing an appreciation of the culture.

Even so, the literary value of a selection such as Art Scammell's "My Political Career" is questionable for students in the ninth grade. The humour is dependent upon a knowledge of politics, and a considerable background in the past culture and way of life is mandatory - neither of which may have been established in the ninth grade student. The selection will no doubt have relevance for the older Newfoundlander who has a firm grip of the way of life in the past and who, at the same time, has some knowledge of

political debate. The relating of these two is what creates the humour. Again, though, the ignorance of the past culture is highlighted and, since the content is difficult for the reader to fathom, it could be that a negative attitude towards the culture is likely to be formed.

Neither does the selection "Bonavista Circuit" necessarily appeal to or have literary value for the student. Although the prejudice suggested by the headnote is important in the selection, the selection itself is no more than a brief account of a historical incident displaying religious prejudice. It is a biased account of a historical situation during Newfoundland's early settlement. The headnote states that "traces of this may exist in some communities even today," which suggests a stress on information and didacticism of some sort but one which is unlikely to provoke any literary experience.

Selections of historical situations often can result in a shallow treatment of a much larger significance that is outside the perspective of the literature program. Such is the case of the historical accounts of the demise of the Beothucks as a race of people on the island. The historical accounts of J.P. Howley, who was the leader of the group which captured Demasduit and killed her husband, are a part of the information needed to understand the situation. The accounts tend to be included to illustrate the subjectivity in the description of the incidents. But

these accounts are not necessarily historically well-set, yet it is only through the historical understanding of the destruction of a people that they have real significance. The ballad selection, Passages (p. 137), does show some literary quality through the expression of the feelings of one writer about the treatment of one of the Beothuck people.

The destruction of these people must be seen, and deserves to be seen, in a historical perspective, in order to understand the implications of the act of Howley and his group and to appreciate the totality of the acts by fishermen and explorers. Why would ordinary settlers and fishermen attempt to destroy a people? That question is answerable through an historical understanding of the cultural clash. It can be an interesting historical and sociological study, but to attempt a literary response uninformed and restricted to one view of one incident is unfair to history. It is a historical account, and although it can be defended for its literal quality, it is probably more because of what the article ignores than what it admits that gives it any appeal. And what it ignores is a historical background that should be studied to understand the history and avoid possible misunderstanding of the historical aspect of this terrible tragedy.

The first book in the junior high anthologies, entitled Openings, concentrates mostly on the narrative, which is well suited to the student just entering the

literature program. But even in these selections there is included terminology that requires quite a change from the school reading experiences carried over from the elementary reading texts. The dialect, as varied in spelling pattern as the writers themselves think it sounds, is something with which the young reader must come to terms. If the students were previously nurtured on the basal readers, it is unlikely that they are familiar with the Newfoundland idiomatic and dialectical expressions, not to mention the nautical terminology and the adherence to cultural content that persists throughout these writings. In fact, it may well be a new perspective of viewing reading materials, yet (speaking from my own experience) the young students find the humor most appealing and easily related to.

In the second anthology, Stages, there is a movement towards more essay style writings and historical accounts. It is assumed that the student at this level can better handle this type of writing. And so s/he might, but whether an account such as "Newfoundland - The Winter Frosts" has literary appeal or an interest for students of this age is questionable. (p. 112) This is an account of a person who spent a winter in Newfoundland and attempted to explain the season. There is also still quite a considerable reliance on the humor of Ted Russell, and a depiction of life in pre-Confederation Newfoundland.

Frequently selected for anthologies are the writings of Ted Russell. These seem always to involve a depiction of the past. The CBC has dramatized many of these writings, and they appear again and again. Although they hold appeal for the humour of the past, they also emphasize aspects of the past that add to the stereotype, and not to the diversity.

The third anthology, Passages, has already been mentioned. Its editors tend to concentrate on selections about a changing culture. There is a feeling of change throughout the text - a sense that the past is disappearing from view, and yet there is a desperate need to hold on to what was. This feeling pervades throughout, from the changing of place names in Harold Horwood's "Fumigating the Map" (p. 2) to the traditional ballads, narratives and accounts of a past life and its characters. It also includes the concern for the disappearance of the Indian and Inuit way of life in the writings about the Beothucks as well as a selection entitled "We, the Inuit are Changing".

Overall, the three anthologies are thematically structured, similar to the other reading texts in the junior high program. But like all these anthologies, they are fragmented and shallow in their depiction of the Newfoundland environment and its writers. There is little chance that the student will get to know "something of their styles" (p. v.) in connection with the many writers represented, except those

few who appear so frequently, such as Ted Russell and Ray Guy.

Furthermore, these anthologies are intended to offer something other than a literature experience for the student. The need for a connection with a more widely structured program in immersing the child in the material is suggested in the introduction section "To the Teacher".

The editors suggest that classes engaged in enjoying this series should have access to at least a good wall map of the province, a library selection which includes at least the titles referred to in the series, and suitable audiovisual material available from the Department of Education, especially the series entitled 'Communication Newfoundland Style'. Subscriptions to Newfoundland magazines and periodicals, use of television and radio programmes with Newfoundland content, involvement in local productions by drama groups, and arranged visits to the school by local authors are all avenues which should be explored as the opportunities arise.

With that type of immersion, the center of focus is certainly inverted. The amount of material available to the student, outside the Newfoundland material, is already overwhelming. To become so engrossed in Newfoundland writings is another type of "navel staring". Transfer is unlikely because of the amount of other literature available that has more personal appeal to the student and because the time limitations of the course will not permit it.

It has been suggested earlier in this paper that to comprehend the selections and gain any literary response

considerable background information is essential. It is necessary but unlikely to come into being - and there the quandary lies. Selections should be restricted to those that have literary value for the student as seen from his/her own cultural perspective, because otherwise the student will become involved in writings that 1) hold little meaning, 2) for which the student is ill-prepared, and 3) in which the student has little interest.

For a wider utilization of the text, the selections requiring historical background and cultural setting can be directed to other areas of study, such as cultural studies. The text offers some caution in the suggestion "that material not cross over grade lines as this may lead to boredom or frustration for the student." (p. iv) However, boredom or frustration may result from the content as well as from the inappropriate readability level, if the student is not provided adequate background or has no prior knowledge of the content. Dialect alone can be frustrating for many students who are unfamiliar with the stereotypical jargon and dialectical expressions and constructions devised by the different writers. Very often a literary experience is dependent upon these very dialectical expressions.

Once the student has been immersed, as is suggested, or even exposed to these writings for three literature courses, it would appear that a wider and modern

Newfoundland literature would follow. Indeed not. The next move is into the anthology, The Newfoundland Character. This is a more detailed look at the past. There appears to be a continuing passion for an historical study, rather than an exposure to literature.

A glance at the structure of the Newfoundland anthology used in the Thematic Literature 1200 course may well give the impression that it meets the intentions of the course very well. This anthology, The Newfoundland Character, is compiled in a thematic format. The publishers, then, sensing the emphasis on themes, designed a text along that line.

However, the text is designed for use as it is - a whole unit of study in itself. All the selections studied under the various headings are supposed to portray a Newfoundland character or qualities of character that are uniquely Newfoundland. But the course description does not necessarily lend itself to such a rendering of the text. Rather, the text is to be used with other materials and selections chosen for study under the headings decided upon by the teacher which combine to give the required thematic approach. The thematic design of this particular text is irrelevant to its use in the course.

There is certainly much more to be understood about the creation of a character that is illustrated in selected Newfoundland writings in a given anthology. Basing

evidence on the very few who wrote, many of them from outside the social and economic structure, is to limit one's view. Writers such as Rev. Canon J.T. Richards, Farley Mowat, P.T. McGrath are people who were not a part of the Newfoundland culture. They were visitors who observed briefly a small segment of the culture and way of life, and then wrote their views of what they observed. These views are very limited in their scope of this culture, and are, therefore, of little value in understanding culture or experiencing literature. Other writings which are reminiscences of a past which has disappeared have become distorted by present knowledge and cultural influences. (Interestingly enough, many who write in retrospect about 'the good old days', escaped that way of life and now write about its virtues.) Certainly it is difficult to comprehend a character when there are so many omissions in the way of life, especially in writings about life as seen by the people themselves.

The purpose of the text, The Newfoundland Character, is given in the note to the student at the beginning of the text.

This text has a purpose; to give you an idea of the kind of people Newfoundlanders are by looking at their past history, culture, and their struggle with the sea and the land.
(p. 3)

Although the writings about the past are to be studied to understand the Newfoundland character of today, it does admit that some qualities are the qualities of all people.

Honesty, bravery, neighbourliness, ingenuity, and so on are qualities that are found in most, if not all, people. But some qualities may be more outstanding in Newfoundland people. If so, then these qualities show a distinct side of the Newfoundland character. (Ibid.)

It appears that to understand the distinctiveness of the Newfoundland character, there has to be a clear sense of the qualities of all peoples, and that requires a wide perspective of human qualities. Not that there could not be an emphasis on particular qualities coming from the selections of the text, as there surely will be, but to nominate some as distinct or unique suggests different aspects of humanity and therefore a sophisticated perspective of humanness. I am not entirely convinced that the student of this age group and reading experience can adequately make those distinctions. I would rather propose that an accumulated knowledge of the qualities proposed by the text selections might evolve if the text were studied in its entirety as a unit of study. But are these the distinct qualities of all Newfoundlanders or of only a selected sample of Newfoundland writings that give a particular impression of the Newfoundland character?

If a basic knowledge of the past culture and the social framework and circumstances of the selections were

more adequately understood, then the students could more easily comprehend the shallowness of the samples provided. However, with limited understanding the student is developing a reading experience as well as knowledge that is in part truthful and can possibly be refuted if a close study of his/her individual ancestral background were studied. This refers to an earlier suggestion of the value of folklore in giving deeper understanding of and appreciation for these kinds of writings.

The note to the student also comments on the points of view that the anthology attempts to bring forward in the writings included. One view is that of the visitor who writes of his/her impressions; a second is that of the "non-Newfoundlander who shares his (sic) life with Newfoundlanders and who has an influence on them." The third is the Newfoundlander him/herself who "tells his (sic) experiences as he lived them." The text adds that the student is to "look for the traits of character that are coming through and the values of life that Newfoundlanders live by." (p. 3) It is difficult to comprehend the relationship of the past isolation of the Newfoundland outport to those living in a logging community or an urban center such as the city of St. John's. Some of the values are important within the social setting discussed, but a greater appreciation for a particular cultural situation is necessary to understand the values that may have

significance in modern culture. That relationship or knowledge may be beyond the literature program or even the capacity of the literature teacher.

Nor should there be a denigration of the virtues and values of other cultural circumstances coming from other Newfoundland communities. Again, a reference to the problems of the mining towns such as St. Lawrence show other Newfoundlanders engaged in real life struggles to survive in different situations, some of which may be more related to a modern culture. Any attempt to bring together a variety of Newfoundland characters that can be categorized as the Newfoundland character is a difficult task. Surely the most that can be expected is probably a Newfoundland character, one among several. Merely through the screening process itself - of screening material to determine what to include in the anthology - the editors have projected a predetermined Newfoundland character. The criteria for determining what to include had to be based on some similar notion. Then too, as mentioned earlier, the selections themselves are products of a select few people who did write and their view had either been as an outsider or had been affected by time as s/he looked back and viewed the circumstances in retrospect.

A close look at some of the particular selections will give an indication of the type of writing which may be of concern when included as literature for the student.

"What Charming Folk" was written by a government official "sent out by the British Government in 1943." "He had been in Newfoundland a week when he wrote this." (p. 13) It is obvious that he had not travelled widely in a week or had not had much of an opportunity to visit many isolated communities in that time, especially since he was on government business. The whole piece reeks of first impressions that are angelically uncharacteristic of any people. He generalizes in characteristics such as the following:

They are the best-tempered, best-mannered people walking. I do not believe I ever heard a Newfoundlander swear.... They are gay, good-humoured and generous; tolerant, temperate, tough, God-fearing, sabbath-keeping and law-abiding. Fond of holidays, but fine workers; politically maddening but personally the salt of the earth. (p. 13)

In order for the student to fathom the intentions of this writing - the circumstances around pre-Confederation sentiments of various individuals - there must be a lot of teacher input. The value as literature of such a selection on its own is indeed questionable.

Another selection from that anthology is no less difficult for the first year high school student. Although a more modern selection, Farley Mowat's "An Antaeon People" is the voice of an outsider who obviously is limited in his view of a people. There appears to be an absence of humanness about the people discussed, since everything about

them appears positive. Besides being so angelic in descriptive imaginary (if it is that), it is much too difficult for the inexperienced reader of this age group to read. It would take a very experienced reader to engender any kind of literary experience from this selection, since it is loaded with words and terms that will send a young reader to a dictionary and an encyclopedia - not to mention the many footnotes. In fact, the selection of about five hundred words has seventeen footnotes. The Fry readability test shows it to be well above the reading level of most students of this age. In fact, it may be beyond the readability level of high school students at any grade level. An example of the text is:

In distantly envisaging these people's lives as they had been, we failed to glimpse the heart of darkness beating black within the present hour. Their lives had undergone a sinister sea-change. We had not long been about our task when we began to recognize the change, and began to understand that our account was being transmitted, without our volition into a requiem. We who had come to chronicle human life in its most admirable guise remained to witness and record the passing of a people. (p. 26)

The whole selection included in this text is an excerpt from the introduction to Mowat's book The Rock Within the Sea: A Heritage Lost. This excerpt deals with the problem of resettlement but without the social and personal impact of what resettlement really meant to the people involved. The language of this selection may well

deny the student access to feel the impact of the tragedies and turmoil of people. The psycholinguistic theorists would have little trouble finding solid grounds to condemn this selection, if not for its dealing with subject matter foreign to today's students, then certainly for the vocabulary stumbling block that the text sets up for the reader.

Another selection that is difficult in terms of its readability is "The Fisherfolk of Newfoundland" by P.T. McGrath. A dictionary is an absolute necessity. And, although the headnote says that "the subject matter speaks for itself", quite a bit of Newfoundland history must be known to unravel meaning from the text. This is dated 1904 and is an interesting historical view of Newfoundland from a person of the time, and comes from quite a sophisticated writer. But it has so much content obscured by the language that it is difficult to read. Almost any example from any part of the selection can display the ineptitude of the language in producing an experience in literature. For example:

The sea has no terrors for these people. Daring, courageous, keen-witted in their industry but otherwise innocent as infants, self-reliant and adaptable, imperiling their own lives to rescue an endangered colleague and sharing their last crust with a poorer neighbour, they are a splendid and rare type of men in this age of contrasting trails....
(p. 9)

The selection appears historically out of focus for the young reader because of the over-reliance on assumptions that the student just can't have identified. A feel for the historical situations and time would be needed to give meaning to such expressions as "age of contrasting trails". The only possible value of this selection would be historical, and this after much teacher input. As a literary experience, the selection would provoke more of a negative response to Newfoundland literature than in evoking any kind of positive literary response.

Another selection that is highly historical in content is "The First Settlers on the French Shore" by Rev. Canon J.T. Richards. The writer was a deacon in the Anglican church and spent many years on the northwest coast of the island. He writes an interesting history of the settlement of the coast. Except for the attempt to call attention to some aspect of population in Newfoundland's early settlement the selection is very limited. "This paper attempts to give the history of the settlement of that part of the French Shore which was the scene of my own labours for over forty years." (p. 89) The writer established his own intentions within the text, then. Certainly to gain appreciation and meaning content must not take precedence, because it denies a literary appreciation.

What appears to suffer drastically as well is the drama. In the junior high, most of the exposure to

Newfoundland drama is supplied by way of excerpts from larger works. Yet a feeling for the traumatic emotions surrounding such issues as Confederation and resettlement have been explored repeatedly by local playwrights. But excerpts are fragmentary and allow no development of the emotional reactions of characters who must have been torn by these affairs.

The novels reading list for the junior high over the last ten years has not revealed much of an emphasis on Newfoundland writers. As of September 1986 there was just one novel with a Newfoundland setting, but not by a Newfoundland writer, The First Spring on the Grand Banks by Bill Freeman. It is unfortunate that more longer works are not made available since there are novels available which can be more representative of literature.

In the senior high, the Newfoundland content in the literature is also restricted to anthologies. In the Level One course, Thematic Literature 1200, the Ted Russell play The Holdin' Ground is available as a choice for dramatic study. In the novel section, Death on the Ice is available as a choice. These two are fairly representative and have universal themes coming out of a regional setting. Certainly Death on the Ice is a type of writing that should be experienced as a totality because of its depiction of a historical event that can evoke a literary experience from

people in any culture. It is well-deserving of its placement in the school curriculum, in any land.

In the Level Three course, Thematic Literature 3201, there is choice in the non-fiction area of either Lure of the Labrador Wild, about a trek across the Labrador portion of the province early in this century by two Americans and an Indian trapper, and Bartlett, the Great Canadian Explorer, a biography by Harold Horwood. Bob Bartlett was a Newfoundland-born captain who for many years took explorers into Canada's northern waters.

It appears that Newfoundland writers have produced an abundance of verse as well. Whether the bulk of the verse produced is of strong literary quality is questionable, and has been challenged by some local critics. But the point is that there is quite a lot of modern verse that has attempted to place the strong feeling of a modern people in a particular setting in a world perspective of humanity. In the bulk of modern verse being produced, there has been a modest move away from the strong oral tradition of the past.

Much of the older verse, since it came out of an oral tradition in the isolated outports, was arranged in ballad meter. Many items were transplanted from one and another 'motherland', mostly from Europe. Much verse was written about the turmoil, disaster and hardship, as well as the humor that surrounded life in the outports. But there

was an adherence to this ballad-style of oral-traditional nature.

Since most of the early items were oral, a certain few were copied in print only after someone decided they were worth preserving. But most were intended for a listening audience, thus they were designed to be sung or recited. That delivery had a significant effect upon the understanding of a life-style and its social relationships, as well as upon the history of particular areas.

Again, the abundance of this material grew even more when recorders became interested in these ballads as a part of the 'quaint and curious' aspect of a culture, as they attended to the preservation of a tradition. After this work of the folklorists became well known, more was written and this style was publicized. But recently a change has taken place, this represented in the attempt to give a more imaginative and universal quality to the writing.

Much of the development of the verse has come from a focus upon the aspects of the culture, the place, and the struggle of a people. Some verse may have meaning within the universal aspect of humanity, but the bulk of that which has been publicized has been tied to the ballad form. And since the modern has grown out of an oral culture, there is no wonder that this is so. Yet the tie to this ballad form and the sense of time past, as well as to a sense of the

unique and different, have persisted too long and have limited the development of different types and styles of poetry.

The anthologies are still quite addicted to this mode. In The Newfoundland Character there are seventeen verse selections; according to the text, six are lyric, five are narrative and six are ballads. However, upon inspection, one can see that most use the regular rhyme and rhythm so characteristic of the ballad form. Most have the narrative form, and/or stand in praise of the people or the land. For example, the poem "The Old Schoolhouse" is categorized as a lyric poem. The first stanza reads:

Come hither folks and listen to the
Tales of yesteryear,
When life was lot more simple then,
And we lived free from fear;
By lamplight learned our lessons,
Also the golden rule,
Then after prayers and peaceful night,
We hurried off to school. (p. 136)

So, also, the narrative very much resembles the oral recitation and/or song. For example, the following is the first stanza of a narrative poem called "A Dear Loss". Note the similarities to the ballad style:

Skipper Ned was haulin'
A hauling of his trap
When a north wind got so maulin'
It carried off his cap.
And the skiff pinned by the centreline
Seemed rearin' to be free
As she groaned beneath the weight of twine
In the quick choppy sea. (p. 33)

To illustrate the use of the ballad style, here is the first stanza from a ballad called "Fish and Brewis":

I went fishing last summer with old Danny Clarke
Out hauling the trawl lines from daylight to dark,
We got there at daybreak, stayed most of the day.
Came back in the evening to salt it way.
(p. 122)

Similarities run through most of the verse, especially in a form that reflects the oral tradition. It becomes obvious from most of the verse contained in the anthology that the emphasis on this culture of yesteryear remains strong, whether the particular selections are telling about disasters, fishing voyages, or simple reciting humorous incidents.

This adherence to the traditional and to the past, again, has the same effect on poetry as prose. To include this verse which emphasized the past and reflects that culture may not be culturally relevant to the student; and, indeed, many of the terms and events are foreign to him/her. In order to give the student an understanding of the verse and the conditions about which it was written, the headnotes and footnotes offer some information. Even so, much of the background is historical and reflects a culture that has long since disappeared.

Aside from the potential historical and cultural significance of the verse, it does little to represent the more modern or the variety of verse being written by Newfoundland writers today. Much of the modern verse

displays current cultural experiences of living in Newfoundland, whereas much of that included in the given anthology is that of an unrelated and unfamiliar past. It offers little opportunity in dwelling on a more progressive style, a more universal theme and, therefore a more progressive and universal poetry. The whole anthology attempts to depict a stoppage in time. That is probably a good way to study culture itself, but the literary value of this kind of writing is questionable. It dwells much with the regional, and the repetition suggests mediocrity, when compared with styles portraying a worldwide view of humanity that literature should portray.

It would be unfair to comment on individual selections without dealing with the format of the text as a whole. The use of small print is detrimental to its presentation, and would likely not have very much appeal for the student. The actual text selections are categorized as follows: six selections are literary and narrative, four are anecdotes, one is a news article, five are magazine articles, ten are prose extracts from larger works, one is a satire on traditional customs, three are short stories, and seventeen are selections of verse. If one considers that seventeen verse selections are mostly ballad style, and that the three short stories deal with past Newfoundland life, the rest are certainly limited in their imaginative capacity, and deal very much with historical occurrences or

situations. One of the short stories is a Newfoundland legend. Twenty-seven of the selections are listed under the essay category, as opposed to three short stories.

An anthology of Newfoundland and Labrador literature entitled Landings is used in Literature 3201, which is the literature course offered in the final year of high school. (The print in this text is very small.) The text is better designed as an anthology of literature. It includes more literary selections, and not so much emphasis is placed on the historical. This text does not have the stated intention that The Newfoundland Character has and is, therefore, concerned more with the presentation of Newfoundland writings as such.

Much of the content, though, is based on the past life in Newfoundland. The prose is predominantly a matter of accounts and essays, but the eighteen verse selections are of a more modern style than the traditional ballad. They deal with feelings toward aspects of Newfoundland history, culture, and cultural change. There are, as well, more modern verse selections that address the universal questions of humanness. For example, one selection by Geraldine Rubia, is entitled "Eight-Year-Old". It deals with the problems of an eight-year-old in any culture and time. Because of that the headnote is probably unnecessary and may even be detrimental to interpreting the poem, since it makes reference to times past. Yet the poem address the

"timeless and universal." (p. 11) One sentence in the headnote reads: "When we read about the difficulties and hardships of days gone by we often wonder how it must have been for the children." That sentence attempts to relate the timeless and universal aspect of the selection to the past. The poem should be left to its own interpretation. There is no mention of the past in the selection. A student at this level should be quite capable of interpreting this poem, and it certainly needn't be emphasized that anything written by Newfoundland writers has to have some connection to the past. There is already enough of that emphasized in other writings and other anthologies.

Both the verse and the prose are more scholarly in this anthology and present life from a wider perspective. More selections are about a changing Newfoundland and are written with a more universal meaning. The selection "The Soul of a Newfoundlander" by Cyril Poole, for instance, is a "scholarly and formal" expository essay. (p. 42) It contains information that is literary and factual but should be readily understood by students at this level.

The difference in presentation is very adeptly noted at the beginning of this text in a section of verse titled "Introspection". The editors comment:

Seldom do the poets give answers or conclusions, but they always throw new light on the topic; we see and think differently after the encounter with the poem. And that is what the authors intended. This is a unit to be enjoyed

intellectually as well as aesthetically. There should be ample time for discussion, but we should realize that there are seldom correct responses or conclusions. (p. 87)

Most of the poetry deals with universal themes and evokes ideas that take the reader away from the sense of just one particular place and time. Many of the poems use a local setting as a backdrop for a more universal statement.

This text also allows more freedom of interpretation and cautions the student about letting suggestions made in the text affect his/her interpretation.

The headnote is a possible interpretation of the theme in the selection, but is also a challenge. Let each headnote make you think, but do not let it make your thinking. (p. 56)

The editors also attempt to supply a sense of a universal meaning and interpretation. In commenting on resettlement in Newfoundland, the editors set it in a world context:

But the trauma associated with resettlement is not unique to this province. The people of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia moved en masse to parts of the Soviet Union. The Crofters were moved from the Scottish Highlands, and the Irish left a famine stricken country to come to North America. In all these situations there were anguish and heartbreak. There are few loves stronger than the love of people for their "place". (p. 55)

The distinct, the quaint and the cute are not given so much emphasis in this text, since the local scene and situations are related to the sea and the land (the local setting); still, each makes a statement about people that has more

relevance to all cultures, rather than merely to a past Newfoundland culture. This text is a more recent publication than the others discussed here. Hopefully, this suggests that there may be a change in the right direction in the type of materials to be selected for future programs.

It should be kept in mind that most students at Level Three of the high school courses have already done a study of local culture in a cultural heritage course. Some sense of history and culture may have been internalized by this time, and the readers may be expected to be more adept in relating the literature to a literary experience and allowing the content to become a springboard to this experience. Less experienced readers can become overwhelmed by facts and content that are unfamiliar, whereas the more experienced reader, more conditioned to a variety of readings and purposes for reading, may be expected to assimilate materials for his/her individual use in interpreting a text.

Surely, if we are to emphasize Newfoundland writers in the literature programs, we should emphasize the literary. To ignore the literary and dwell on the historical is robbing literature of its purpose. Many of the accounts and historical writings are a means of explaining that does little to add to the experiences intended in and by way of literature.

What has been criticized here about Newfoundland anthologies may be criticisms which can be directed toward other texts as well. What appears to be accepted as literature in any of the anthologies very much depends upon what will be accepted as literature within the school curriculum. However, the concern of this paper is with which Newfoundland writings should be included for study as literature, and to do that there has been an attempt to define literature along the lines suggested by educators and critics in the art, in conjunction with what is termed "literature" in course objectives. If writings are basically relating information that is not primarily intended to be a creative work of the imagination, they are unlikely to represent the creative art of literature.

When the intentions of the course broaden to include literature that can offer the student an understanding of and an appreciation of his/her heritage and culture, then there is a possibility that writings may be focusing upon the folklore and the historical. Still, there can be no purpose in labelling these writings as literature. Teachers of literature must be committed to the teaching of literature as well as to the critical treatment necessary to give them meaning within the framework of their intentions. If the student is overwhelmed with factual accounts and content, the literary experience is missing, cannot be achieved, and, therefore, cannot be anticipated. These

materials should not be treated as literary materials, since they cannot depend upon the imagination of the reader to make the imaginary connections to create a literary experience. Mortimer Adler (1985) says of literature: "Of all the creative arts, literature alone, because it uses language as its medium, produces imaginary objects or fictions of the imagination about which we can communicate descriptively. The poet, novelist, or dramatist describes a fictional character which is the product of this imagination.... Depending on their powers of imagination, and the assiduity of their efforts, the readers of his work will be able to produce for themselves the same imaginary objects, or at least to achieve close approximations to them, sufficient for the purpose of conversation." (pp. 69-70) This sets literature in a different perspective from other writings and from other art. The writings which can achieve what Adler is suggesting are quite different from historical writings, personal accounts, and cultural delineations.

The time has come to separate the intentions of the writings and to allow Newfoundland writers to proceed with the development of literature from this province that can be accepted everywhere and appeal not just to a particular audience. Literary writings must be placed intentionally in the hands of the students who can and will achieve a literary experience.

The writings from and about a past culture are writings of the beginning of a developing literature. It is important to trace the literature from the oral tradition so that in order to see where the literature is going we can get a sense of where it began. But that is a study of the literary heritage itself.

The traditional literature has been exhausted as a literary form and is losing its appeal for many of today's youth. The generations who can reflect with nostalgia upon the past culture are aging and there need not be a forcing of this culture into the literature forever. It dampens the creativity of the young writers and dilutes the literature representing the province in the literature programs.

Chapter 5

NEWFOUNDLAND CULTURE SURVEY

In late 1987, I constructed a survey comprised of two parts and distributed it to Level I senior high school students in various parts of the province. The survey was designed to check the students' knowledge of representative aspects of Newfoundland culture. (See Appendix A.) How much of the terminology of a past culture exists among today's high school students? If it were found that students understand the terminology of the past culture, then most of the writings could possibly be read for literary value as well as for gaining an understanding of the lifestyle and social structure talked about in the writings. However, if the terminology is not familiar, then it would suggest that many of the writings were talking about a culture and way of life foreign to the students. If this is so, much time must be spent giving the student an understanding of the content (i.e. culture) which demands more than a meeting of student and writings in a literature program.

Part One was a "Pop Quiz" designed so that a student could respond in a word, phrase or short statement delineating what s/he thought each test item meant. The students were made aware beforehand that the test was intended to check their knowledge of Newfoundland culture, which called upon them to attempt to place the items in that cultural context. Any reference to the answers in a

Newfoundland cultural context would suffice, so long as the association was not too vague or ambiguous.

Since word-to-referent was the key to the answer, each response had to be judged on the adequacy of the linking supplied. A response to the word "jackatar" (Appendix A, Item 19) for example, was judged correct if a reference to a person of mixed ancestry, even if it was used in a derogatory sense, was given. It was judged incorrect if there was supplied a reference only to a person. However, the fact that a respondent made the distinction between a "jackatar" and other Newfoundlanders was considered to satisfy the requirement of "mixed ancestry" if the respondent made reference to the darker complexion as a distinctive characteristic.

The Pop Quiz is comprised of twenty-five items made up of both words and phrases from traditional Newfoundland language. Ten of the terms were chosen from words found in the anthologies used in the junior and senior high school programs. Ten were selected from suggestions made by teachers from various schools in the province where the surveys would later be distributed. Five terms were selected randomly from The Dictionary of Newfoundland English. All answers can be checked in The Dictionary of Newfoundland English. Most words and phrases are found in Newfoundland writings available generally.

The Pop Quiz is designed to determine how much of the past vernacular and traditional idioms and expressions are still present or have been learned by students once they have reached this level in their schooling. (These students have already been exposed to three anthologies of Newfoundland writings in junior high and are now being exposed to another anthology. Through school exposure alone they would be expected to recognize many of the items.) If the selected words and phrases are indeed a part of the students' backgrounds, then the responses would indicate some reference to the items in their Newfoundland cultural context. This would also demonstrate that the student could formulate that contextual response indicating that the word had been internalized from his/her environment. If the student cannot make the association, then the word or phrase is presumed not a part of his/her vocabulary. In such a case the student would need explanations of the concept if the word or phrase were confronted in context. It is highly unlikely that these would be defined in their regional Newfoundland cultural context in a general purpose dictionary, not to mention the concepts and connotations surrounding these words in their regional setting.

If indeed students cannot recognize these expressions, then learning a culture seems to be the priority of the program. Is this, then, the function of literature? If other literature is ignored in favour of these types of

writings, then there appears to be an emphasis on teaching cultural content and not on providing exemplars for Newfoundland literature.

The second part of the survey consists of the Warren-Garlie Counterbalanced Intelligence Test. This test was originally devised to show that "verbal intelligence tests have a strong cultural component which often militates against subcultures whose language experience is at variance with the larger groups." (Nesbit, Back, Garlie, 1975, Appendix B) Its inclusion here was designed to provide another method of checking student knowledge of the province and its past culture. The instrument consists of twenty multiple-choice type questions on geography, history and cultural dialectical expressions.

The test was not used to measure intelligence in this survey. It was intended to indicate the amount of working knowledge the student has of these selected aspects of the culture. It is assumed that students at this level should score quite high in this test, because it does include items on history and geography. Given the modest number of items in a multiple-choice format covering such broad areas, it appears to be well-suited for high school students.

The survey was distributed to schools in different areas of the province and to schools of different sizes. Teachers from these schools were sought from those attending the Summer Session at Memorial University, St. John's, in

1987. The surveys were handed to them to be administered in their schools early in the school year, preferably in September. All surveys were indeed administered within the two-month period of September and October, 1987. The targeted group were students entering Level One, Senior High School. Surveys were administered to students in St. John's and the Avalon Peninsula, Central, Western, Eastern, Northern island Newfoundland, and Coastal Labrador. A total of 400 surveys were distributed and 354 were returned. An item analysis of the results is included in Appendix B.

The consistently low scores from all areas of the province substantiated the assumption that student knowledge of the past culture is low. The results could well advise against any assumptions that students are a part of that culture or that the culture has much relevancy to today's high school student.

The results of the Pop Quiz were indeed dismal. Out of the twenty-five items on the quiz there was an overall mean score of 3.7. Many items were not attempted and of those that were scored as "incorrect" many made reference to a present cultural usage unconnected with the past Newfoundland cultural usage. For instance, the word "banks" (Item 12) was often associated with "a place to put money" or some such response. It was rarely associated with fishing grounds, although students were advised beforehand to give the Newfoundland cultural reference that the word suggested

might be connected with. Similarly, the word "loader" (Item 15), which in its past cultural context referred to a kind of fish, was often inappropriately (in terms of the survey) referred to as a machine to load things. Only seven of the 354 respondents made any reference to fish. The word "fortnight" (Item 23) was missed by most students, even though it occurs from time to time and is explained in some text writings. Thirty respondents correctly identified the time period of two weeks. This word is a good indicator of the disappearance of common terminology from the vocabulary, since this term was used widely in most areas of the province. Although students had met this word in earlier writings, it still held little meaning for them, suggesting that these common terms are actually far removed from the vocabulary and everyday experiences of the student.

The high scores for the Pop Quiz were numbers 6 ("scrunchions"), 11 ("Ode to Newfoundland"), and 20 ("figgy duff"). Number 11 was judged correct if any reference to a song was made. The word "ode" may have been a clue for some respondents that it had something to do with song. However, many respondents correctly referred to the traditional Newfoundland anthem. Numbers 6 and 20 refer to traditional Newfoundland foods that are still popular today.

In the Cultural Counterbalanced Intelligence Test, consisting of twenty items, the mean score was 10.7. This reflected a higher score than the Pop Quiz, which was

expected. The design of the exam permitted the student the opportunity to see the answer which gave clues to words met previously in Newfoundland writings. Since some items cover geography and history and the total number of items is only twenty, it was apparently easier for students to make guesses than to formulate responses as in the Pop Quiz.

According to the test designers, the mean score here places students overall in the "average" category of cultural knowledge. However, students of senior high grade levels are expected to have a better knowledge of geography and history than would a general population. From this perspective the students did not score very well. Furthermore, many of the items included things that are still a part of the culture because of its closeness to the sea - such things as fish, food, boats, and idiomatic expressions. For example, number 5 item scored high:

5. "Jiggs Dinner" refers to:

- (a) a hearty breakfast
- (b) a medicine compound given to a sick horse
- (c) a meal of boiled beef and vegetables
- (d) a short "mug up" before bed.

as did Item 11:

11. To catch a person by the scruff means:

- (a) to catch him by the back of the neck
- (b) to find him near a clump of trees

(c) to catch up with a person who is leaving
the island illegally

(d) to catch him by the back of his pants

and Item 15:

15. A punt is a:

(a) boat

(b) gun

(c) type of small coniferous tree found in
Newfoundland only

(d) small lake

The test showed, however, that there may well be a void in the amount of cultural knowledge that the student has internalized in his/her repertoire of Newfoundland culture. What is missing is that part of the past which must now be learned as a discrete matter in order to be fully understood. Learning this content material requires a kind of study beyond the scope of literature. And both tests in the survey illustrated that such knowledge is not a part of the students' environment. This, in turn, demonstrates that writings about the past culture are not likely to provoke a literary experience, because of the amount of unfamiliar content material. The survey has shown that the student does not "live" the culture that s/he is to preserve.

If, on the other, the intent is to teach students about their heritage, then that is not the job of literature. This survey has demonstrated, though, that this intent is the

one that will most likely be accomplished. But that will require an imparting of knowledge. For that, it must be placed in the proper subject area, be it folklore, history or some other area. If it is to be included in the literature program in the school curriculum, then the missing knowledge must be dealt with first before a literature effect can be intended.

Chapter 6

LITERATURE AND CULTURE WRITINGS:
A CONCLUSION

Attacks upon the justification for teaching literature are nothing new; then, too, there continually arises the question of what literature is. For the purposes of this paper I find Frye's statement about literature substantial and indeed sufficient. There are others. Some extreme views refute the whole idea of literature. "Literary theorists such as Terry Eagleton ... want to literally throw out the term literature altogether; and literary educators such as Louise Rosenblatt want to include everything so long as it is amenable to an aesthetic reading; that is, a reading in which the object of students' response is not the words themselves, but the reader's own attention to what is being personally lived through during the reading event." (Bogdan, 1985, p. 240) The critical point for this paper is that literature should evoke a worthwhile experience for the reader. However, the need to focus upon facts and unfamiliar content cannot be a priority of the text if a student is to achieve that experience. Literature is not something that exists on the periphery of language such that only a few students, the 'elite minority' (Ibid., p. 243), can approach it. Given the proper selection of text, any student can have a literary experience. It has little to do with elitism but rather more to do with the experiences of the individual and

the text s/he is faced with. The reading selection must be such as to enable an understandable relationship with the student's experiential background. And given that relationship, many types of writing can carry the potential for a literary effect.

Unfortunately, more than a few of the selections included in those anthologies currently in use in this province will not permit that experience, for they offer little to which the student can relate. To include such selections is to assume that the student will achieve an experience that will be both pleasing and informative, yet any literature that attempts to speak of material unfamiliar to the student may well provide a block to his/her understanding. E.D. Hirsch, Jr. says that "if we have to run to a dictionary or encyclopedia every two or three words, we soon lose track of a writer's argument and give up in despair." (Newsweek, April 20, 1987, p. 73)

Stanley Fish (1980) brings another perspective to that view of literature which permits any written materials to have the potential to be literature. He also views the term "literature" to be unnecessary. According to Fish, it is what we decide to include as literature that makes literature, and there is nothing different about particular materials themselves which allow them to be distinct enough to be termed literature. "The conclusion is that while literature is still a category, not definable by

fictionality, or by a disregard of proportional truth, or by a predominance of tropes and figures, but simply by what we decide to put into it. And the conclusion to that conclusion is that it is the reader who 'makes' literature." (p. 10)

If we were to view literature this way, that the reader 'makes' literature, then the reader cannot make literature if the text is beyond his/her reading capabilities or outside his/her experiential background. If the terminology and the content are such that the reader must continually seek outside sources for help in unlocking the printed text, then the value as literature and the literary experience may well be lost in the attempt to formulate an initial understanding of the text itself. It is only by way of the connections made by the text interacting with the reader's experience that a literary response can be evoked. As for the text selections mentioned, cultural circumstances and historical context must be established prior to the reading in order to evoke a literary response. Otherwise, the reading becomes an exercise unto itself - something to be struggled with to find any meaning. The results of such exercises-as-literature are often disastrous, and with such selections included there might not, indeed, be a need for literature, since its purpose has been defeated and the exercise will probably have left a negative view of the 'literature' studied.

If the goal for the inclusion of Newfoundland writings in the curriculum is that it will instill an appreciation for Newfoundland regional writers, then some selections included in the anthologies may actually foster a negative effect. It would appear that a young market is to be the target group so that they would carry their tastes for Newfoundland literature with them and would probably not only be Newfoundland literature readers, but might also become Newfoundland writers themselves. To accomplish that, however, there must be a move away from reliance on past cultural writings and a closer addressing of the students' literary needs with materials that are appealing and suitable for their reading tastes.

The heavy reliance on anthologies has repeatedly fragmented the materials and has given no firm feeling for the total experience. Excerpts from major works sometimes tease the reader, who cannot then find the total work because it is nowhere to be found in the school. Taken out of context, it may well prove meaningless. This is especially true of some of the drama found in anthologies. These anthologies as a whole give a narrow perspective of Newfoundland literature. And certainly the heavy reliance upon sensational depictions of the past may not evoke the same sensations in the mind of today's young readers as in those of an older generation.

Not that the literature programs need to follow the trends and ephemeral fads of an entertainment audience, as the television and film industry must apparently do. But if a positive attitude toward literature is to be established and the relationship to the values necessary in the lives of the young is to be highlighted, we should include some of the things that interest them as well. The earlier culture based on basic survival skills had quite different customs, beliefs and values than those which are essential to the young of today; and although a knowledge of these survival techniques may be beneficial, they must be related somehow to the current culture.

A concern has been expressed in the United States and elsewhere about the failure of schools to teach children essential materials and facts. E.D. Hirsch, Jr. (1987), in his book Cultural Literacy, states that students should learn certain facts that he terms essential to further knowledge and understanding. "It isn't the facts that deaden the minds of young children," he argues, but rather "it is incoherence - our failure to ensure a pattern of shared, vividly taught, and socially enabling knowledge to emerge from our instruction." (Time, June 29, 1987, p. 62) He holds that certain facts are necessary to higher learning and that they are important in making sense of literary texts. Certain learning experiences may well require a knowledge of some facts in the experiential background.

Since this suggests that certain facts and concepts are important to an understanding of a piece of writing before it can become meaningful, what first must be learned about a certain culture, then, is "shared, vividly taught, and socially enabling knowledge." (Ibid.) This will demand more than a few selected materials inserted into the literature program about a fabricated way of life of which the student has little knowledge. The knowledge must be internalized before the literary value can have an impact. It is frustrating to be forced to confront both at once. And some of what is included for study in the anthologies will demand that of students. Many selections bear little relationship to the other literature. This cries out for a change in perspective.

Earlier it was argued that experiences are not limited to those of the natural environment. Reading can provide an experiential background that can form a backdrop for creativity and comprehension. It may be argued that such is the case with cultural experiences: reading can provide a background for the imagination. Knowledgeable facts can and will be relayed. This knowledgeable reading can formulate perspectives and connections that will whet the imagination. In order to have a literary experience with the past, students must become knowledgeable of the past first. Where is the student to get this knowledge? If it is from the anthologies, then we are trapped. It is possible to have

the teacher fill in the background knowledge if, indeed, the teacher is knowledgeable of, or even aware of, this restricted culture.

There is much to know about a past way of life that must be learned before the imagination can create truthfully on its own. By "truthfully" I mean without a conglomeration of notions that borders on the fantastic. They become untruths when the text assumes to be true what the individual environmental experience proves counterfeit. There is, then, a conflict of assumptions that is not easily resolved in those literary texts which rely on these untruths for literary experience.

Many writers rely heavily on history to create imaginative experience in literature. It might be interesting to experience imaginative creations from a Newfoundland setting and culture that can be appreciated anywhere. This is highly unlikely, though, if we are continually forced to look inward to our past instead of asserting ourselves outward as a part of a world community of cultures. This demand to look inward requires a different set of perspectives than a more worldwide view of literature and, as mentioned earlier, it resembles more the work of the folklorist and the historian to study the local culture first.

If the student of literature is to be confronted with these historical and cultural materials, then a

different perspective is needed before they are selected for reading. In order for the reader to bring meaning to bear upon the text, s/he is to have a knowledge of certain facts, terminology and social constructs. "In order for literature to work its magic and foster self-reflection, it needs to be experienced directly. While explanations may help, much of the meaning of a poem or a novel is created by the reader. The literary experience occurs when the interaction between the reader and the work results in changes in both. The reader, far from being a passive absorber of information, brings to the experience an established framework or pattern of values through which he or she interprets the work." (Johnson, 1985, p. 50)

The decisions of the compilers of anthologies often determine what aspects of the past are to be preserved as the traditional. When aspects of culture are chosen to be preserved, the school classroom is the obvious target. "Education, it is true, is a highly effective carrier and organizer of tradition." (Williams, 1981, p. 18) Raymond Williams points out that there are "general cases of amendment and modification of the presented past and its desirable or possible continuities." (Ibid.) He points out further that there are cases where there is "operative reselection of the tradition which is necessary to keep it relevant and powerful in changing conditions." (Ibid.) Of course, Williams is not discussing one particular culture but

rather culture in general. The interesting point is how certain perceptions of culture, especially in Newfoundland, have influenced a modification when it was felt necessary to keep particular aspects of the culture relevant and, then, how these modifications become the culture that has become perpetuated in writings and put into the educational programs.

The Newfoundland culture and traditions that are preserved are recollections and perceptions often not characteristic of the actual conditions and social relations that existed in fact. If we rely upon recollections, there is made evident a past distorted through the recollection process itself. As Van Den Berg (1972) points out: "The past that is significant is the past as it appears now. The past that is significant is a present past." (p. 80) If the significance is to preserve something past, or to highlight some aspect of the past, then that very significance will influence what is brought forward. "If the past has no task to fulfill, none at all, then it isn't there: then no recollection of this past is possible." (Ibid., p. 82)

What is presented for the student are recollections of a past that has been declared significant. If we are to look at individual selections to understand the reasons for their being written, there can possibly be a better assessment of their content. Earlier, the effects of the folklorists and outsiders who came to visit and record a

passing culture were mentioned. What was recalled was influenced not only by the recollections of the recollectors themselves but also by the individual recorder. Much of the earlier folklorist attention was drawn to the 'quaint and curious' and the humorous. Eventually only aspects of the culture which fitted these stereotypical notions were studied, and there emerged an overabundance of those materials. The significant past became aspects of this stereotypical Newfoundland way of life. Deviations from the stereotype simply didn't suit; it is likely that many possible recollections were never brought forward because they did not have a "task to fulfill." Once stereotypes and stigmas have been created, they are difficult to change, let alone eradicate.

The stereotypes are sustained through the writings. Newfoundlanders and their heritage persist with this particular image not only within their own province but also within the Canadian multicultural milieu. Attempts have been made to convince people of the strengths of this culture and heritage: and, indeed, the purpose for including it for study in the literature program appears to be linked with this intention.

To be labelled 'quaint', 'curious', and 'different' does little to boost one's ego in social relations. The attention gained is most likely the kind that one would just as soon avoid. What has created the 'stupid Newfie' of the

Newfie jokes has been the emphasis on his/her ignorance of a dominant culture. To be continually reminded of this ignorance, however strong the culture was (and is), rekindles the feeling of inferiority, for one coming from a heritage that was backward and illiterate. And since that is what has been highlighted, that is what persists. Although there may now be attempts to show how the culture survived because of other institutions and pressures, the original writings and perceptions still exist. Many of the characters in the literature fit the stereotype that has given Newfoundlanders the inferiority they feel about their past culture.

Highlighting the ignorance represented in the recollections does little to attempt to free the student from a negative past. Recently, some literature has dwelt on the problems associated with attempts made in the past to step into the twentieth century urban America from the isolated Newfoundland outposts. It holds one's interest and is amusing for those of us who can relate to these experiences. Some of the humour is superb and some of the writings appear quite scholarly and well written. But it is doubtful whether the writings will have much of a literary effect on young readers when placed in the literature program. The experience of the student is quite different from those who have actually lived through the cultural change. What is very often transmitted is how very backward and 'inferior' the past culture must have been.

If students are to learn about their heritage, then focus should be turned toward the local level as it exists within a North American context within a world perspective of cultures. The typical Newfoundland figures, lifestyles, oddities and characteristics can be explored in relation to their local characteristics of culture. A knowledge of culture from this perspective should make the literature writings much more effective.

There should also be a wide selection of Newfoundland materials to choose from. Stipulating that particular anthologies are comprised of selections representative of Newfoundland writings creates a narrow focus of Newfoundland materials available as well as a narrow range of topics associated with Newfoundland writings.

The fact that some of the included writings have little universal appeal means that they are written for a captive audience. That audience is assumed to have knowledge of the subject matter. A person with a considerable cultural background but with a low reading level can receive some literary experience from the text, if only from these scattered bits and pieces that s/he can unlock. However, those with a limited experiential background must be confronted with a more easily accessible text in order to get any literary response. It depends upon these two factors complementing each other. For example, an older person with limited reading ability who has lived most of his/her life

experiencing Newfoundland social gatherings such as the Newfoundland 'time' can find aspects of Ray Guy's essay on the topic quite rewarding without having to access all the language. The phrases and sentences s/he can access will help recall probably forgotten episodes and aspects of the past that will permit him/her a rewarding experience with the past. It may even allow a deeper understanding of an aspect of the 'time' not thought about before.

But as the experiential background moves farther away from the subject, the accessibility of the language becomes more important. Unfamiliar materials, ideas, concepts and images become highlighted that must be internalized and stored in order to evoke anything close to the experience that the more experienced reader can feel. Thus there is a need to establish a lower reading level for much of the historical and cultural writings, if they are used with inexperienced readers.

When we consider writers of literature, though, we need to think, not what makes them Newfoundland writers, but rather what makes them good writers. Many Canadian writers have now received international recognition, and to distinguish them as Canadian or Newfoundland writers because they are expected to be different is unfair. It is the writing that makes them internationally known - not their nationality or region. Christopher Wiseman (1984) says of Canadian writers that we should ask: "How far do they go

toward achieving excellence? What are they trying to do with language so as to allow it to create experience of value? What do they find as they explore the condition of being human?" (p. 34) He further adds that "we should be trying to forget nationalistic questions and be asking about quality." This suggests ways to select and teach literature written by Newfoundland writers. There have been indications of this distinction in recent years through the resource books made available to teachers, but there still exists among educators the notion that Newfoundland writings must be significant just because they are Newfoundland writings. When this attitude is brought to bear upon a text, coupled with the already established notion of inferiority of Newfoundland-produced materials, there is not a fair attempt to bring universal meaning to the literature. The idea of having Newfoundland writings inserted into the literature program along with other materials was an honest attempt to treat them in a fair manner. However, anthologies limit the types available for study and these are not necessarily compatible with the literature program.

There should be an emphasis on writers who can write with a sense of place but can be read by anyone - writers such as Irving Fogwill, Bill Gough and Kevin Major - because as Wiseman says: "Human experience is universal and must be shaped by language so we can find its deepest nature and potential." (Ibid., p. 36) He says that "the writer is

not a direct spokesman (sic) for a country but for the 'holiness of the heart's affections'." (Ibid.) Our emphasis, then, for literature should be first on that literature which focuses on universality of meaning that extends beyond the boundaries of place. When we make that available there is a literature that the student can relate to in the larger meaning of what it is like to be human.

When there is some other purpose for including writings, such as an understanding of heritage and culture, the purpose must be clearly understood, because content is an important component of the text. Caution is necessary to avoid confusion of purpose. We must decide whether the particular entry will evoke a literary experience, or whether we intend to evoke a literary experience at all.

This conclusion has ramifications not only for teaching Newfoundland writings but for the development of Newfoundland writers as well. If we continually emphasize the importance of universality of meaning in literature, there may be a greater awareness of the need for this type of literature. Any highlighting of a Newfoundland literature that strives for universal meaning and appeal may eventually lead to more literature that will achieve the necessary characteristics to make it so. If we fail to do this - if we continue to stare back at the past - the stagnation, mentioned earlier, will likely continue.

Lisa de Leon (1985) found in compiling her book of writers of Newfoundland and Labrador that "there are so many authors of Newfoundland, a set criteria had to be established to trim the number to a manageable thirty-seven." (Intro.) Many of these are fairly prolific writers. It would appear from this that it is quite possible to have a wide selection of Newfoundland writings available to school classrooms. A greater variety of writings would offer a more respectable view of the writers as a group. This could also help develop a more positive attitude toward ourselves as a literary group in Canada. But, as Paul Robinson (1974) notes, "Replacing attitudes of dependency and inferiority with feelings of confidence and self-esteem is no easier in education than it is in other aspects of our social-economic lives." (p. 4)

Experienced readers may find the old writings of Newfoundland's early settlement and history very interesting, since the reader can weigh the merits of the writers and fit them into their historical and social context and get an understanding of their reporting within that context. To appreciate how some of the writers had manipulated language to effect a particular purpose requires an experienced reader with a wide perspective of the historical and political inner-workings of the systems and structures of colonial Newfoundland. Elizabeth Miller (1983), commenting on the ambivalence of early Newfoundland writings, says "What we are receiving ... are impressions of the outport not only

determined at least in part by the writer's own direct experience but also filtered through that writer's personality. This makes for a degree of ambivalence, a quality that makes all literature, not only Newfoundland literature, a fascinating and rewarding study." (p. 17) It is a "fascinating and rewarding study" so long as the reader is equipped to make the necessary distinctions. It is highly unlikely that the young student can learn about a past culture and make that distinction. Thus, to include these writings for the ambivalence they contain is to leave an assumption as to the background of the students and/or to what the teachers can supply.

The literature available should have meaning for the reader, since in literature, as in the totality of education, there is an "act of self-discovery and a judgement upon the self thus discovered." (Falardeau, 1961, p. 40) Falardeau says that "by it a man rediscovers the past, grasps the most profound and hidden currents of the present and thereby comes to know himself in depth as well as in breadth." (Ibid.) As already mentioned, the literature must hold meaning and relate somehow to the students themselves in order to allow that kind of response.

Faced with declining enrollments in recent years, teacher reshuffling in some staffs has resulted in teachers having been forced into positions in which they feel uncomfortable. Among some teachers there is a feeling of a

lack of competence in dealing with Newfoundland cultural courses, since they are unfamiliar with what is termed 'Newfoundland culture'. This may suggest how the culture being taught is viewed, how much of it still exists, and whether it does hold any interest for today's youth. If teachers feel uncomfortable with these cultural readings, then there is a concern about how much background knowledge is available to the students and with how much enthusiasm and emphasis it is likely to be taught.

The emphasis on a study of this culture appears to have come from the focus on the "rustic, subsistence life that has all but disappeared." (Jackson, 1986, p. 22) As Jackson points out in Surviving Confederation, there is an appeal for the life close to "soil or sea" as being "superior to more civil modes of life." "For what people have in mind as the 'true' culture of Newfoundland is the life of a largely mythical indigenous outport people who were supposed to have lived their lives in tranquil rusticity quite independent of all these influences." (Ibid.) Jackson refers to the "British and French colonial history, the Christian tradition ... the impact of the Americans and Canadians; and the "relatively sophisticated life of the 19th century Newfoundland towns at the height of the salt fish trade." He concludes: "It is in any case part of the romantic mythology of local culture to play down factual history." (Ibid.) But without its historical context and

accounting it has little meaning and no sense of reality. Therefore, what remains is likely neither a chance for literary experience nor a positive view of one's culture and heritage. In relation to what has remained of the culture, Jackson comments that "it is hard to deny that for the most part in Newfoundland today, culture has become what it has become everywhere else: contemporary television, shopping-mall and barbecue culture. Over the past three decades of Confederation whatever was unique about Newfoundland life had already been diluted to the vanishing point." (Ibid., pp. 23-24) The point is that the Newfoundland culture of the anthologies no longer exists. This culture has little relevancy to the modern culture and, unless they are superbly written, many selections about the culture will not transfer. Work other than in literature alone must be involved in order for the majority of students to establish a meaningful experience.

Whether students will indeed want to study this past way of life and its literature will depend upon various factors. An interest will certainly be dependent upon the teacher and his/her background, the natural environment of the student, and the students' knowledge of Newfoundland history. These influences are important and to presume that they are not is a failure to target the materials to meet the needs and interests of their intended audience and the objectives of the literature program.

In discussing the capitalist mode of production and the cultures of nations in that mode, Raymond Williams (1983) points out that "Most human beings adjust, because they must, to altered, even radically altered conditions. This is already marked in the first generations of such shifts. By the second and third generations the initially enforced conditions are likely to have become if not new social norms - for at many levels of intensity the conditions may still be resented - at least the new social perspective, its everyday common sense." (p. 187) This again implies that a change of culture is inevitable. As much as we attempt to revive it, it is not as it was, and never can be, because there is a whole new social, political and economic order that dictates the changes. The past culture worked for a past way of life and in order to appear viable now it must be placed back in that perspective. The change of perspective is a change of 'cultural premises'. "At birth, and perhaps even before, we find ourselves in the midst of not merely a natural environment but also a cultural environment. Because we are evolutionarily so well prepared for learning, we start to learn everything we can. But - and here is the joke - the fact that we learn a lot of other things." (Bohannon, 1983, p. 64)

Must we expect students, then, to become interested in a past culture? The fact that they have already learned what makes meaning for them in their present culture and are

still struggling with the social and political perplexities in that culture makes it very difficult to get meaning and to relate experiences in a different one. The most that could be expected would be to experience vicariously something that a character experienced in a given situation. Otherwise the material becomes flat or, at the best, develops some historical connection.

Frye (1976) states that "from kindergarten onwards the teacher is not instilling literature into a mind that doesn't know any, but reshaping the student's total verbal experience. This experience has been built up by television, movies, and the conversation of his parents and classmates as well as by his reading. It already contains a great deal of mythology, much of it phony, derived from advertising or class stereotypes, and literature is or should be the means of leading the student from his present subjective social vision into the total social vision of mankind." (p. 21) We cannot assume that the subjective social vision is that of the past. It should rather be a present subjective social vision - that of the student and what s/he understands of his/her environment and culture.

The impact of television, parents and class stereotypes are not of a past fantasy but of a present reality. The present subjective social vision for the Newfoundland high school student should not be expected to be restricted to the culture of a past Newfoundland vision.

A more broadly based vision of themselves in a society built up by television and advertising may be distorted, but if so, it is a distorted present view that is a part of their reality and not a foreign past.

Literature must start with the student's limited social vision and proceed to a broader vision of humanity, and any writing included for reading as literature should fit the intentions and purpose for which it was chosen. The student must be made aware of the intentions of writings so there can be a developing awareness of the different kinds of writings available which provoke different responses. Literature must attempt to evoke the experience expected of literature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After a study of literature, of Newfoundland culture and heritage, and of the materials now available for study in the high school literature program, certain recommendations present themselves. These recommendations came out of the conclusions reached in this paper concerning the inadequacy of the present program to meet the intentions of literature. They also take into consideration the needs and development of today's young student growing up in a modern technological culture far removed from the culture of his/her ancestors of just a generation or two ago.

1. Writings of heritage, culture, and traditions are important to the maturing student and therefore should hold a prominent place in the reading materials available to the high school student. They should not, however, be included as literature.
2. Writings of folklore and history which are now included in the literature program should be studied under the category for which the content they contain was intended. Only literary selections should be included.
3. A study of Newfoundland heritage and culture should be provided for study in the junior high program, but not necessarily in the literature program. The content of such a study might be a good background to a later study of literary heritage.

4. A study in Newfoundland literary heritage should be provided in the senior high school program. A deeper understanding of the developing literature and its past is necessary in order to get an understanding of how it is progressing as a regional literature.
5. Books from Newfoundland writers, when they are of good quality, should be made available to elementary and primary school students. This will develop a positive attitude toward Newfoundland literature and eliminate some of the inferiority that pervades these writings.
6. Literature from modern Newfoundland writers and about modern Newfoundland lifestyles should replace some of the writings now included in the literature programs. These can be selected for their representation of literature and their appropriateness to the student reader.
7. Literature selected for study in the high school program should be selected for its quality as literature regardless of the birthplace of the author. The emphasis for selection must be on literary quality.
8. Literature selected for study should also take into account the interest, readability level, and the experiential background of the student. In order to promote a literary response and a positive attitude toward the art of literature, these criteria must be considered when materials are being selected.

9. Literature as an art must be emphasized. No writings should be included because of the content alone. The intention must always focus upon the art experience.
10. No writings should be included as excerpts from longer works unless the excerpt can be so presented as to provoke a literary experience apart from the larger work. Even if it is possible to provide such excerpts for the student, the complete work must be made available to the student.
11. Further study is recommended to establish just how much of the past culture is known by today's Newfoundland students. Such a study could have an influence on the whole issue of cultural relevancy in the selection of material as well as upon the way cultural topics are approached in the classroom.
12. An immediate study into what alternative materials are available for classroom use is recommended. All educators should be made aware of Newfoundland writers and their writings and any reviews done on these writings if Newfoundland literature is to be emphasized or used in the literature programs. It is necessary to promote a broader focus of what Newfoundland literature is.

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APPENDIX A

NEWFOUNDLAND CULTURE POP QUIZ

In the blanks provided tell in a few words what the words or expressions mean to you. Just a brief statement will do.

1. choice Madeira _____
2. Jolly Poker _____
3. gurdy _____
4. sunker _____
5. nunny bag _____
6. scrunchions _____
7. a time _____
8. dun (fish) _____
9. rind _____
10. trap skiff _____
11. ode to Newfoundland _____
12. banks _____
13. old sadler _____
14. lunger or longer _____
15. loader _____
16. gunning punt _____
17. yaffle _____
18. marline _____
19. jackatar _____
20. figgy duff _____
21. gly _____
22. gunwales _____

23. fortnight _____
24. all mops and brooms _____
25. 7th child of the 7th child _____

WARREN-GARLIE COUNTERBALANCED INTELLIGENCE TEST

For each of the following, circle the letter of the answer which you think best fits the statement.

1. What famous Newfoundland explorer crossed the island on foot in 1827?
 - a. Davy Crockett
 - b. William Cormack
 - c. Sir William Grenfell
 - d. Pierre Radisson
2. "Duckish" is a term which means:
 - a. many ducks huddled together in a pond
 - b. a person who swims well
 - c. a person who shies away from danger
 - d. the time of day between sunset and dark
3. A "dwoi" (pronounced "dwy") is:
 - a. a short snow shower
 - b. a dried up mud hole
 - c. the back sitting room on a boat
 - d. a Beothuck Indian word meaning a small creek
4. "Douse the killick" means to:
 - a. throw the grapnel overboard
 - b. throw some water on the anchor to keep it from rusting
 - c. nail the anchor to the deck
 - d. paint the anchor
5. "Jiggs Dinner" refers to:
 - a. a hearty breakfast
 - b. a medicinal compound given to a sick horse
 - c. a meal of boiled beef and vegetables
 - d. a short "mug-up" before bed
6. Which is biggest?
 - a. a trap boat
 - b. a long-liner
 - c. a schooner
 - d. a rodney
7. The term "ballycaters" means:
 - a. salt water spray frozen to the beach rocks
 - b. rowdy, ignorant persons
 - c. fat-bellied people
 - d. a flock of salt water ducks

8. The population of Newfoundland is approximately:
 - a. 500,000
 - b. 300,000
 - c. 1,000,000
 - d. 50,000
9. If a person is spoken of as "not easy", he is said to be:
 - a. miserly
 - b. very unfriendly
 - c. an unusual sort of person
 - d. very strong
10. Newfoundland's "second city" which is situated on the mainland (in poking fun) is said to be:
 - a. Toronto
 - b. Vancouver
 - c. Boston
 - d. Montreal
11. To catch a person by the scruff means:
 - a. to catch him by the back of the neck
 - b. to find him near a clump of trees
 - c. to catch up with a person who is leaving the island illegally
 - d. to catch him by the back of his pants
12. A "kink horn" is:
 - a. a person who thinks himself inferior to others
 - b. a nickname for a locally grown type of corn
 - c. part of the human anatomy situated in the throat
 - d. a "townie" when he is in the "outport"
13. The most abundant species of fish caught in Newfoundland over the years has been:
 - a. salmon
 - b. halibut
 - c. speckled trout
 - d. cod
14. The nickname that was given to the Canadian National train in Newfoundland was:
 - a. the "Newfoundland Speedster"
 - b. the "Newfie Express"
 - c. the "Newfie Bullet"
 - d. the "Newfie Jet"

15. A punt is a:
 - a. boat
 - b. gun
 - c. type of small coniferous tree found in Newfoundland only
 - d. small lake
16. A sleiveen is a:
 - a. a deceitful person
 - b. a small rope used to fasten a boat to the pier
 - c. a sled which is used to carry wood
 - d. a small fish used for bait
17. The term "flankers" means:
 - a. small smooth stones on the beach
 - b. sparks from a chimney
 - c. a type of flower found in the eastern parts of Canada
 - d. a term used by fish cutters
18. This person discovered Newfoundland in 1497.
 - a. Sir Wilfred Grenfell
 - b. Christopher Columbus
 - c. Vasce de Gama
 - d. John Cabot
19. Newfoundland is situated off the _____ of North America.
 - a. West Coast
 - b. North Coast
 - c. Northeast Coast
 - d. Arctic and Labrador Coasts
20. A "mug up" is:
 - a. the picture of a criminal
 - b. another name for the woodland caribou
 - c. a short break for something to eat or drink
 - d. a special buoy used in cod fishing

SAMPLE ANSWERS FOR POP QUIZ

1. good quality dried fish
2. character in a rhyme sung while hauling on a line
3. spool used in hauling nets aboard
4. a submerged rock over which the sea breaks
5. a sealskin, burlap or canvas knapsack used to carry food and personal equipment esp. when hunting, sealing or traveling long distances on foot; a hunting bag
6. a fatback port, cut into cubes, often fried and served as a garnish over fish and brewis
7. a party or celebration, esp. communal gathering with dancing, entertainment, etc.
8. fungus that develops on imperfectly cured fish
9. bark of a tree (v. cut the bark from a tree)
10. a large undecked fishing boat used to set and haul nets and codtraps
11. a song in praise of Newfoundland
12. undersea elevations or areas of shoal water where fishing is successfully carried out
13. a great black-backed gull; also a mature seal
14. a long tapering pole with bark left on, used in floor construction of flakes, and in making fences
15. a codfish with a blunt head
16. small open boat used to hunt sea birds
17. an armful of fish
18. small line
19. a Newfoundlander of mixed French and Micmac Indian descent
20. boiled pudding with raisins

- 21. a device with baited hooks to catch sea birds
- 22. the upper edges of the sides of a boat
- 23. two weeks
- 24. not feeling well; sick
- 25. has magic or supernatural powers for curing illness or easing pain

ANSWER KEY FOR COUNTERBALANCED INTELLIGENCE TEST

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. b | 11. a |
| 2. d | 12. c |
| 3. c | 13. d |
| 4. a | 14. c |
| 5. c | 15. a |
| 6. c | 16. a |
| 7. a | 17. b |
| 8. a | 18. d |
| 9. c | 19. c |
| 10. a | 20. c |

APPENDIX B

POP QUIZ

Number of Respondents

Test Item																								Totals		
1.	0	+	0	+	0	+	1	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	1
2.	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	6	+	5					11
3.	1	+	0	+	1	+	0	+	8	+	1	+	0	+	2	+	3	+	12	+	6					34
4.	0	+	0	+	2	+	1	+	2	+	1	+	12	+	0	+	3	+	2	+	0					23
5.	2	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	2	+	17	+	0	+	6	+	1	+	31	+	3					62
6.	26	+	5	+	20	+	30	+	35	+	18	+	19	+	28	+	10	+	27	+	28					246
7.	3	+	0	+	2	+	7	+	9	+	7	+	10	+	8	+	7	+	7	+	5					65
8.	1	+	0	+	0	+	4	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	1	+	0					6
9.	2	+	2	+	8	+	1	+	14	+	5	+	4	+	14	+	7	+	5	+	10					72
10.	5	+	0	+	12	+	2	+	17	+	3	+	7	+	17	+	3	+	9	+	13					88
11.	31	+	7	+	32	+	41	+	19	+	17	+	22	+	30	+	0	+	18	+	30					247
12.	8	+	1	+	13	+	15	+	14	+	5	+	16	+	10	+	3	+	14	+	8					107
13.	0	+	0	+	0	+	2	+	2	+	2	+	2	+	0	+	3	+	2	+	2					13
14.	0	+	0	+	2	+	0	+	1	+	0	+	1	+	1	+	0	+	1	+	2					8
15.	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	1	+	2	+	4	+	0					7
16.	2	+	1	+	7	+	16	+	11	+	1	+	12	+	15	+	5	+	15	+	9					94
17.	0	+	1	+	5	+	0	+	8	+	0	+	0	+	7	+	3	+	3	+	2					29
18.	0	+	0	+	1	+	3	+	2	+	0	+	9	+	3	+	0	+	0	+	2					20
19.	0	+	1	+	3	+	14	+	2	+	12	+	6	+	4	+	0	+	0	+	1					43
20.	13	+	6	+	16	+	21	+	32	+	4	+	20	+	27	+	4	+	13	+	18					174
21.	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	1	+	2	+	0	+	2	+	0					5
22.	3	+	1	+	11	+	6	+	9	+	3	+	10	+	19	+	1	+	12	+	12					87
23.	1	+	1	+	6	+	5	+	3	+	2	+	8	+	1	+	3	+	0	+	0					30
24.	0	+	0	+	1	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	1	+	0	+	2	+	0					4
25.	0	+	0	+	4	+	7	+	8	+	4	+	5	+	5	+	0	+	8	+	5					46

WARREN-GARLIE COUNTERBALANCED INTELLIGENCE TEST SCORES

Number of Respondents

Item No.																				Totals		
1.	6	+	3	+	12	+	14	+	8	+	4	+	21	+	20	+	6	+	14	+	7	115
2.	14	+	5	+	13	+	14	+	24	+	12	+	19	+	18	+	2	+	8	+	14	143
3.	3	+	1	+	6	+	1	+	4	+	1	+	4	+	5	+	1	+	4	+	7	37
4.	16	+	4	+	21	+	20	+	28	+	6	+	21	+	21	+	4	+	20	+	23	184
5.	35	+	8	+	38	+	38	+	39	+	18	+	29	+	38	+	10	+	34	+	30	317
6.	11	+	2	+	9	+	12	+	22	+	9	+	20	+	15	+	7	+	26	+	16	149
7.	5	+	0	+	4	+	3	+	16	+	13	+	3	+	16	+	10	+	28	+	5	103
8.	17	+	4	+	32	+	23	+	23	+	19	+	23	+	27	+	3	+	21	+	21	213
9.	17	+	2	+	13	+	13	+	16	+	6	+	9	+	23	+	2	+	15	+	16	132
10.	25	+	8	+	25	+	33	+	39	+	17	+	31	+	38	+	7	+	35	+	30	288
11.	35	+	8	+	38	+	38	+	39	+	16	+	34	+	34	+	10	+	38	+	31	321
12.	11	+	2	+	13	+	6	+	16	+	4	+	12	+	13	+	2	+	10	+	11	100
13.	30	+	8	+	36	+	33	+	35	+	17	+	36	+	34	+	8	+	31	+	31	299
14.	25	+	8	+	31	+	34	+	31	+	13	+	38	+	38	+	4	+	25	+	28	275
15.	27	+	8	+	31	+	37	+	42	+	15	+	32	+	40	+	10	+	37	+	28	307
16.	14	+	2	+	22	+	14	+	24	+	15	+	9	+	24	+	8	+	26	+	24	182
17.	15	+	5	+	14	+	27	+	35	+	16	+	22	+	35	+	9	+	34	+	29	241
18.	30	+	6	+	32	+	32	+	34	+	12	+	31	+	36	+	5	+	24	+	26	268
19.	11	+	6	+	32	+	31	+	20	+	8	+	22	+	25	+	8	+	24	+	13	200
20.	34	+	8	+	32	+	34	+	33	+	15	+	34	+	38	+	9	+	37	+	30	304

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES TO "POP QUIZ"

gunwales - guns for shooting whales; wind against a boat
rind - tear your jeans

jackatar - a sneaky person; mainlanders; black person; a man's overcoat; in a great deal of mess, dirt.

loader - tractor with big scoop, tractor

fortnight - tomorrow night; the night of the attack on a fort

marline - fish; a sweet name for a girl

yaffle - something to eat; talk a lot; talk

dun (fish) - finished

lunger or longer - opposite of shorter

gly - fly; someone happy, right in his glee

scrunchions - small fish-like creatures

nunny bag - tea bag; pea bag

old sadler - old dog; fisherman; an old person who used to ride a horse

all mops and brooms - cleaning day

gurdy - something to go under your dress; dirty

choice madeira - a good wine; a rich cherry wine; type of wife to choose

sunker - sun is high overhead

Jolly Poker - good poker game; fun maker; Santa Claus

banks - a place to keep money; walls on the side of a river

SOME TEACHER COMMENTS

"The answers here are simply outrageous. I can't believe some of these answers." (Teacher commenting on his students' responses to the Pop Quiz.)

"I don't believe some of the words you have included here are correct. For example, I think 'nunny bag' should be 'gunny bag'."

"I didn't believe that students could miss what I considered easy words."

"It is a very interesting survey and I look forward to hearing how the results turn out."

"I had never thought about actually checking this type of material. I assumed that all my students understood this. What my students did on this survey is indeed disappointing."

"It's about time someone did something about Newfoundland literature. It seems as if anything can get into the classroom."

"It is about time for modern Newfoundland writers to get into the curriculum. I hope that your work helps get some different material made available."

"I have known about some good Newfoundland writers for a number of years who deserve to get exposure, but have been denied probably because they have not been writing about the right subjects to get recognition in the Newfoundland curriculum. I hope this can change soon."



