

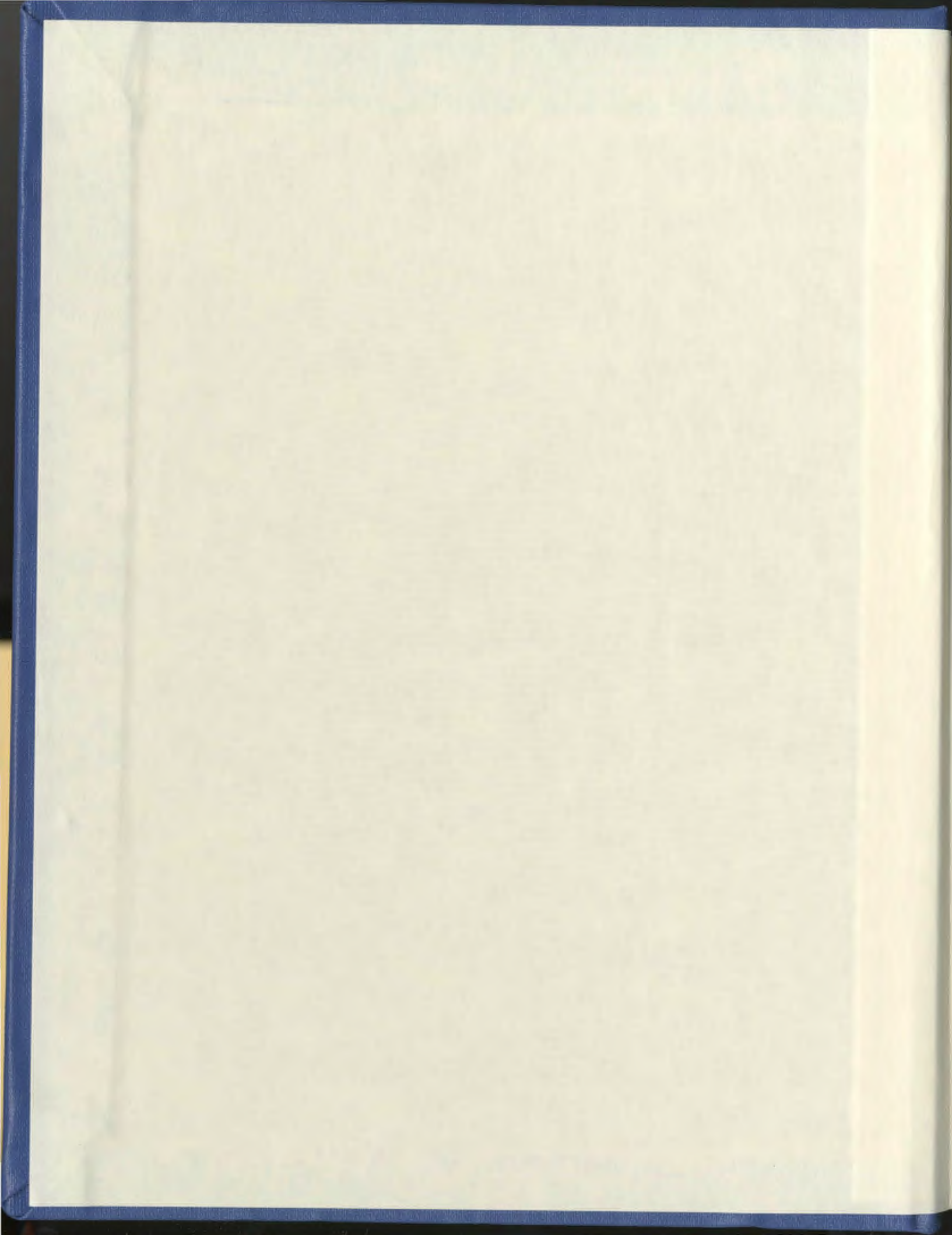
RELIGIOUS THEMES IN SELECTED TWENTIETH
CENTURY NEWFOUNDLAND FICTION

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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Virginia Ryan

Virginia Ryan

Religious Themes
in
Selected Twentieth Century
Newfoundland Fiction

by Virginia Ryan

**Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a
Master of Arts
to
the Department of English
of
Memorial University of Newfoundland**

April, 1993

Abstract

This thesis examines themes reflecting the reign, the decline, and the aftermath of Christian faith as manifested in selected twentieth century Newfoundland fiction. It concentrates first on fictional depictions of life in pre-Confederation Newfoundland, and then on fictional depictions of Newfoundland since 1949, with Percy Janes' Requiem for a Faith, because of its multi-generational scope, serving as a bridge between the two. What is revealed through this approach is a thematic continuity in the fiction suggestive of a perennial preoccupation, on the part of Newfoundland authors, with both the necessity and the damaging effects of religious belief in Newfoundland life.

The study explores the tendency of certain authors, particularly those writing about early twentieth century Newfoundland, to link the harshness of the outport environment with a correspondingly harsh interpretation of Christian doctrine. It reveals, however, that belief in a merciless and vindictive deity is not restricted to outport people nor the pre-Confederate era; fiction depicting post-Confederation and urban Newfoundland continues to feature characters who either sustain and practise a faith devoid of love and charity or suffer because they are subjected by others to the emotionally crippling effects of such a faith.

The thesis examines, as well, the phenomenon of the progressive decline of Christian faith in twentieth century

Newfoundland as presented in its fiction. This decline is shown by Newfoundland authors to stem from a number of causes, among them a rebellion against religion's excessive harshness, a perception that doctrinal form is being practised without attention to its content, the ever-encroaching influence of North American society on Newfoundland culture, and a dawning sense that the maintenance of religious faith is incompatible with the mindset of contemporary times.

The fiction also reveals that characters who relinquish traditional forms of faith tend either to replace them with alternative belief systems or to meet with psychic vertigo, because of what seems to be an inherent human need to believe in an ordered and meaningful universe. Thus, the thesis concludes that twentieth century Newfoundland fiction presents its readers with a paradox. On the one hand, it reveals the hollowness of a Christianity devoid of the observance of Christ's injunction to love God and to love one's neighbours as oneself. On the other hand, it points to the psychic wasteland that ensues when humankind, for whatever reason, turns its back on faith.

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Preface

As I was writing the concluding pages of this work, its themes were reverberating throughout the province. The weighty contemporary struggle between the Denominational Education Councils and a public slowly awaking to the drawbacks of a religiously demarcated school system was being featured on a nearly daily basis by the media. Then, as thousands of Newfoundlanders watched the demolition of the Mount Cashel Orphanage, which an outraged collective conscience could not bear to leave standing, I was struck by the prophetic musings of one of Patrick O'Flaherty's short story characters who, scarred by personal memories of cruelty wreaked under the banner of religion, had reflected that "Not enough monasteries had been razed to the ground. Much useful work remained to be done with wrecking balls and bulldozers (Summer of the Greater Yellowlegs, p.7). The work of the wrecking balls, it seems, is in progress; the scars, however, remain.

That the scars remain and continue to be explored by the province's writers is evinced in a recent issue of TickleAce magazine by Carmelita McGarth, who in her review of the "Special Newfoundland Issue" of Canadian Fiction Magazine observes that contemporary Newfoundland writers "are writing [among other things] about religion," religion being one of the things "which seems to define us as Newfoundlanders" (90). What this thesis suggests, however, is that Newfoundland writers have been writing about religion for a very long time, the prevalence of religious themes

in their work bespeaking the degree to which religion has been part of their definition.

As I began the task of editing, I was therefore not surprised to pick up a still more recent issue of TickleAce only to find therein poems by two of the authors on whose prose I had concentrated in my thesis, each poem suggesting the ongoing struggle between faith and its loss, the need to believe contending with the need to cast faith aside: the paradox in Newfoundland writing on which my work had centered. Helen Porter, in "Sunday Best," addresses the frustration and residual guilt she experiences when a young Salvationist visits her on one of the rounds he devotes to lapsed parishioners, writing

When I close the door I want to weep
but I don't know why.
Is it because I've lost my faith?
Or because I'm remembering the Sundays
of long ago
When we all went to my mother's after church
and ate the kind of dinner only she could cook?
Or do I weep for this young man
So secure in his salvation that he gives his life
to the cause
and trudges from house to house on Sundays
bringing the good news of the gospel
to people like me? (56)

Percy Janes, in "4:19 a.m.," centers on the "war" that continues inside him between faith and its aftermath, observing

In brave noon glare the mind will baulk in dignity
to check its swinging like a pendulum between the poles
of faith and unbelief...

but admitting that

In double dark of hour and dream I hearken, prostrate:
tic-toc, God is...toc-tic, is not...there is no maybe...
a thousand times denying, yet not once repudiating Him. (59)

Here I heard two voices affirming contemporarily what my thesis had suggested to be a recurring cry in Newfoundland fiction: that despite time-honoured tradition and sentimental associations, the thinking individual in this fiction finds reason to turn his or her back on faith, but that, despite the conscious act of turning away, something in the human psyche weeps for what it has lost, and cannot swear that in turning away it was not mistaken. That there is a preoccupation with religion in contemporary Newfoundland writing is thus self-proclaimed and critically recognized; what I hope my thesis will reveal is the degree to which religion has preoccupied Newfoundland writers throughout the twentieth century.

In any work of this nature there are errors and omissions. Doubtless other readers would have focussed on authors or works that I have not included in this study; I can only say in my defense that I have chosen to analyze works that seemed to me most expressive of the themes on which I was concentrating, and further, that my treatment of twentieth century Newfoundland fiction was neither intended nor declared to be encyclopedic. While this thesis may be criticized on these grounds as well as others, I only hope that it will also be recognized as a pioneering work: one that ventured onto ground which had been hitherto unexplored, and found something there.

I regret that Dr. Elizabeth Miller's work on Norman Duncan and his writing, The Frayed Edge: Norman Duncan's Newfoundland, had not yet been published at the time I was writing this thesis; it

appeared, in fact, after my writing was completed. I am sure it would have provided me with important insights into the work of the author who was more influential than any other in provoking my study. I regret, as well, any pertinent critical works that I may have overlooked; here I can only say that my involvement with primary sources was virtually all-consuming. I found I had so much to work with that to look far beyond primary material, for example into historical sources, might more properly be the task of some subsequent study. I did, however, use secondary sources when I found them to be relevant to my work.

I wish to thank a number of people for the parts they played in assisting me as I worked my way through this project. For the financial assistance, support, and encouragement that made it possible for me to stay home and write, I thank the Memorial University of Newfoundland English Department - and in particular, Dr. Ron Rompkey and Dr. Patrick O'Flaherty. I also wish to thank the numerous people at the Marine Institute whose encouragement and assistance similarly helped me along my way.

For his invaluable help in the endless-seeming task of editing with a word processor I thank Kevin Layman, who works with students at Memorial University's computer laboratories; it was Kevin whose philosophical perspective and patient guidance enabled me to regard the computer less as an unwelcomed alien and more as a useful assistant.

For devoting an entire summer to the typing of my first draft,

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for reassuring and encouraging me, and for providing me with a necessary objective perspective when I needed one, I thank my husband, John Ryan. It was he whose belief that I would complete this project sustained me through times when I felt uncertain that I could.

And for entrusting me with the freedom to go my own way and develop this work in my own time and fashion I thank Patrick O'Flaherty, who has been both friend and academic advisor. In his role as critic and editor he was both meticulous and tireless; but he brought to this role a faith in his student and an enthusiasm for her ideas that have meant the world to her.

PART ONE: LITERATURE ADDRESSING EARLY TO MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY NEWFOUNDLAND

CHAPTER I: THE REIGN OF FAITH

Fictional depictions of early twentieth century Newfoundland and Labrador considered here, whether they focus on the outports, on the town life to which outporters "escape," or on the wildness of coastal Labrador, evoke a world that is harsh, dangerous, grim, and isolated, with a religion, whether borne of this harsh isolation or inflicted upon it as a form of control, that is itself both harsh and grim. The positive function of this religion, if it has one, is the means it offers people to cope with their hard lives, while its negative function is the divisive, often hypocritical, and ultimately life-denying spirit with which it can invest the human psyche. From Norman Duncan's ten stories of "Ragged Harbour," where religion is a major focus, to the "Haystack," "Raggedy Cove," and "Milltown" of Percy Janes' House of Hate (1970), where religion is a more peripheral authorial concern, the reader confronts a comfortless landscape, an ocean with an appetite for human calamity, and characters who cope or fail to cope with this starkness because of the complementary austerity of their faith. Our first consideration, then, will be to look at fictional depictions of the hardness of early twentieth century Newfoundland life, and at the associations made by the authors between that hardness and the religion that accompanied it.

1. A HARD LAND

That life in Newfoundland - particularly pre-Confederation Newfoundland - is harsh has been underlined by various critics in their analyses of its literature. Margaret Duley's 1956 article on Newfoundland's "Local Literature" quoted A.P. Herbert, "that most sympathetic writer on Newfoundland," as saying that "the Island has been 'begrudged and belaboured by a niggardly and hostile nature'" (Duley, 20), to which she added "the Arctic Current and the Gulf stream [sic] throw their conflict back on the land," so that her experience of a gull's "eyes like yellow ice, the symbol of the pitiless heart of the north" became a key inspiration in her own fictional treatments of Newfoundland (26). Terry Whalen, reviewing Patrick O'Flaherty's The Rock Observed (1979) in the 1980s, conceded that "In terms of a rugged quality in its geography, the grimness of its economy ... and a long history of feudal politics, Newfoundland is a profoundly dystopian province" (36). This dystopia is deeply evoked in the fiction of Duncan, Duley, Harold Horwood, and Janes.

Norman Duncan, the only writer of fiction discussed in this thesis who is not a native Newfoundlander, was inspired by his visits to outport Newfoundland at the turn of the century to write a number of stories describing the hard life of Ragged Harbour, which were subsequently collected in the collection The Way of the Sea (1903). Duncan wrote of outport Newfoundland as being "the edge of the uninhabitable" (108) and of Ragged Harbour - his fictional recreation of the isolated outport - as being "cut off

from the surging progress of these days by the great waste which encompasses it"(129).

The natural elements of Ragged Harbour are cruelly vindictive. As I have observed elsewhere (Ryan,178), for Duncan the sea is a "reaper" of humans (Duncan,104), while the north wind, its ally, "dream[s] of the bodies of men"(122). Doom and darkness prevail over beauty there, with a sunset's beauty "a borrowed glory that, anon, [flees], leaving a melancholy tint behind"(15); children playing outdoors on a winter's evening are "mock[ed]" by "hoary old hills"(137) because, committed from birth to a hard and perilous life, they are raised "no more for love" than for "the toil of the sea" - a sea which has an "emnity" for them (4). As O'Flaherty writes in The Rock Observed, "Duncan's men and women endure on the perilous brink of the earth's darkest places"(97), aware of "the need for perpetual vigilance in a setting where danger constantly threatens"(99).

In the three novels that Margaret Duley wrote about Newfoundland we find a nearly identical depiction of rural Newfoundland's harshness. The Eyes of the Gull (1936), her earliest novel, describes the plight of Isabel Pyke, doomed to live and die in an outport village where she was pierced with "The spirit of Helluland," which was merciless and "Colder than the ice from the North"(152). Isabel yearns to escape to the clemency of "Andalusia," where "the sea didn't strain to lick everything off the shore"(177) - revealing Duley's tendency, like Duncan's, to anthropomorphize the Newfoundland elements and invest them with

evil intent. This tendency recurs in her next two novels. In Cold Pastoral (1939), the story of Mary Immaculate Keilly's "escape" from the drudgery and harshness of her outport home to the relative clemency and ease of an upper-class family in St. John's, the narrative description of outport life is of a place where "The land conceded man a beach! The sea bore him out to his traps and his trawls and often tried to restrain him. The wind and the waves gave him the buffeting that was his heritage. When he was feeling too secure the sea rose and spat at the land"(9).

Sometimes, as in Duncan's stories, the sea was not content with tormenting man - it yearned to draw him under, as Duley suggests in this passage: "Quiet tonight but longing, crying for something it had not got ... It [the sea] had to suck most of the time and feel something on its tongue"(23). The effect of this constant danger on the outport man is summed up in her description of Mary Immaculate's fisherman father: "not fitted for the processes of thought," he "knew work, endurance, acceptance and the faculty of keeping his mind on his hands"(46).

The idea of the precariousness of human existence when it is "buffeted" by the grim Newfoundland elements persists in Duley's third novel, Highway to Valour (1941), where, writing of life in the protagonist's outport birthplace, named ironically "Feather-the-Nest," she states: "Life seemed a continuation of putting out, of balancing in a threatened boat and seeing caverned cliffs with no more refuge than a bird-ledge for a gull"(1), in a country where "death always seemed close ... where the wind searched every cranny

and the sea sucked the land"(115-116). Here we find Duley's oft-quoted line, "There was a war between people and place, with the strength of both contending forever"(2), as she introduces the novel's protagonist Mageila Michelet who, oppressed by "the blind murdering forces of nature"(2), must undergo a journey to reconciliation with this place - a journey that becomes the novel's theme. Mageila must learn to be at peace in a land where "living people who seemed greatest could be least because of the earth that shook them and the sea that drank them in"(6). Here we hear echoes of Duncan in Duley's description of "rocks" upon which "the delicacy of new snow lay ... like a mockery of lace"(19). In outport Newfoundland, any seemingly delicate beauty was a trick, a mirage, momentarily hiding from its beholder the terror of land and sea. As biographer Alison Feder states, "Margaret [Duley] was proud of the beauty of Newfoundland, but also sick of its harshness" (Feder, 1983, p.31), a harshness apparent in these narrative descriptions. In the words of O'Flaherty in his entry on literature in the Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador (1991), "In all three novels the reader has a sense of the author warring with her homeland and becoming reconciled to it only with difficulty"(328) - the difficulty of a Mageila Michelet.

Moving on to Harold Horwood's descriptions of coastal Labrador in White Eskimo (1972) and of outport Newfoundland in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday (1966), we see a writer who celebrates the wonder and beauty of the province's elements, rather than investing them with deadly intent. For Horwood, the evils of place tend to

be man-made, rather than borne of wind and sea; yet even he describes the physical hardships of outport Newfoundland as being hardly bearable in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, the story of young Eli Pallisher's coming-of-age in the community of "Caplin Bight." "The bitterest memory of Eli's boyhood," writes Horwood, "was the year of the fish failure," when a twelve-year-old boy was "expected to do half a man's work," a year of "'hard, hard times'" when most of Caplin Bight's residents had to "'go on the dole'," when fishing supplies evaporated, and when "people occasionally starved to death"(16-17). The fate of one Hezekiah Pike is described as an example, Hezekiah being "the father of twelve children, who two winters before had been found frozen to death on his way to the dole office ... a pair of leaky sea boots and a suit of white overalls made from flour sacks covering his naked body in the snow drifts"(17). Horwood points out that such times of fish failures are not freak incidents, but "regular hazards faced by inshore fishermen," times of "famine for the men and women and children who live out of the cod traps"(17). For people in places like Caplin Bight, "hardship [was] as general as the sea and joy as occasional as its foam"(110) - a pronouncement on the hard nature of outport life reminiscent of those of Duley and Duncan.

Percy Janes, in House of Hate, does not mince words when describing the quality of life in rural pre-Confederation Newfoundland: it was a "harsh," inhospitable, unfruitful land to which key character Saul Stone and his mother were brought, from Ireland, by "a dark and vicious fate"(11) - Saul being the father

of the novel's narrator, a father whose resulting rancour and its crippling effect upon his children become the novel's theme. All a boy like Saul could know, growing up in an outport like "Raggedy Cove," was "work," writes Janes (11). Saul's

daily companions and his great unresting enemies had been hunger and insecurity ... it was grimness and battle all the way through his early life on the east coast of this island and in Labrador, where each day's food must be won from a capricious ocean or a niggardly cold and rocky soil. It was mostly a famine and rarely a feast for anyone then living in the Raggedy Coves of our crazy coastline. (319)

Although the industrial "Milltown" Saul eventually moved to was a relative "economic haven," the move came "too late" to free him of the psychic damage borne of his "fear of a screaming stomach" (319). The hard life of Duncan's Ragged Harbour, of outport existence in Duley's three novels and of Horwood's Caplin Bight, resounds in full in Janes' treatment of early twentieth century outport Newfoundland.

2. A HARD RELIGION FOR A HARD LAND

How, then, was humanity to cope with the environmental extremities here described? One means, some of the authors suggest, was to embrace a religion as harsh as the life to be endured - a religion that strangely resembled that life in many of its manifestations and gave its people rules to live by, while commanding them to accept with calm resignation as simply the will of God that which could not be explained in any other way. This harsh religion for a harsh land is particularly evident in The Way

of the Sea, Highway to Valour, and Tomorrow Will Be Sunday. Dulcy writes in her article on Newfoundland literature of "the seaman's philosophy," during "his worst ordeals... 'that it will be better tomorrow, please God'" (24). What we see in the above three works is an odd combination of this simple submission to God's will and the sense that by following certain rules, this will may sometimes (but not always) be positively influenced.

As I have observed elsewhere, Duncan's style and naming strategies serve, throughout the ten stories in The Way of the Sea, to evoke a sense of the strict Old Testament fundamentalism that prevailed in Ragged Harbour (Ryan, 183-184). The characters are given Old Testament names, and the stories for the most part are delivered in the style of sermons which explore the hard fate of Ragged Harbour people and the faith they use to endure and explain this fate. As Terry Goldie stated, "Duncan presents the Newfoundlander as obsessed with an Old Testament fear of God's wrath" (Goldie, 11) and, one could add, an Old Testament belief that things are the way they are because of the Lord's will, which man can in some cases propitiate through proper behaviour, but which in other cases he must simply accept as instances of the Lord's inexplicable capriciousness.

In the story "The Chase of the Tide," two young boys meet their death by rowing a punt out to sea to unravel the mystery of the tide. As they set off, they hear a dog barking - which to Ragged Harbour people signals someone's death - and conclude that the person to die is Job Luff, who will go to hell because he had

been heard "cursing God," because he had "a rotten paddle to his punt," and because he was a "Seven Days Adventist" (14,15,21). Such reasoning suggests that local belief connects religious nonconformity with an inability to outfit oneself properly for outport toil - and that both these tendencies will condemn you to hell. Later, realizing their own danger as their punt confronts a gathering sea, one boy, Ezekiel, fearfully asks the other one whether he has "been good the day, b'y?" because in his mindset any form of "sinning" invites the Lord's punishment. Jo, his companion, answers "indifferently" that "I 'low I hasn't spread me caplin quite - quite straight" (24), and this admission suggests to Ezekiel that the danger they are in is the result of Jo's failure to perform his tasks properly, and that they, like Job Luff, will pay for it by going to hell. As phrased in my article, "If you curse God, the sea will get you; if you do not spread your caplin straight, God will get you" (Ryan,196). In the harsh religion for a harsh land of Ragged Harbour, here are two cases where God's wrath is seen to have been provoked by wrong behaviour - and most of Duncan's characters accept this hard code as ample explanation for life's tragedies. As Duncan writes in the sermonic prologue to one of his stories:

In Ragged Harbour, some men have fashioned a god of rock and tempest and the sea's rage - a gigantic, frowning shape, throned in a mist, whereunder black waters curl and hiss, and are cold and without end; and in the right hand of the shape is a flaming rod of chastisement, and on either side of the throne sit grim angels, with inkpots and pens, who jot down the sins of men, relentlessly spying out their innermost hearts ... (220)

Job Luff and two young boys have simply acquired too many black marks from the "grim angels." As Duncan explains in another story, "The Raging of the Sea," the harsh God of Ragged Harbour "gave them dominion" over "the fishes of the sea"(69), but expected them, in turn, to follow a set of stringent rules and conventions while not wavering from the particular fundamentalist doctrine at work in their community. And "such," explains Duncan, "is the teaching of grey seas and a bleak coast - the voice of thunder is a voice of warning, but the waving of the new-blown blossom, where the sunlight falls upon it, is a lure to damnation"(219). In a land where life is hard, to yield to gentleness and beauty is to weaken, for an unaffordable moment, the vigilant stance so necessary for survival. Bleak, harsh landscapes and seascapes and prevailing religious code are intertwined, producing a straight-and-narrow path for man to walk upon. If a person's "sins" do not seem to warrant the harsh existence he endures, that, too, must be accepted. As a fisherman muses in "A Beat t' Harbour," "the wind is the hand o' the Lard, without pity an' wonderful for strength; it holds the punts from the harbour tickle an' gives the bodics o' strong men t' the lop o' the grounds. Ay, the wind is the hand o' the Lard, strange as the ways o' the Lard"(260).

The elements of outport Newfoundland thus are vehicles of God's will - a will which may be "strange," but which is all-powerful and not to be questioned. At the end of this story, in which the son of the fisherman just quoted, who though fearful of the sea becomes through fate's twisting the captain of a ship only

to drown at sea, the mourning father, following the code of Ragged Harbour, comments: "'Twas kind o' the Lard t' take un - that way" (305). And although he follows this comment with a remark that questions the code to which he is committed ("They's something wrong with the warld ... but I isn't sure just what" - p.305), mirroring the authorial question which reverberates through all ten stories - and which will be addressed later in this thesis - acceptance of what is perceived to be God's hard and sometimes inexplicable will for those dwelling in this harsh land is the code with which the characters in Ragged Harbour endure their lot in life.

Highway to Valour is quite different from The Way of the Sea in that, far from Duncan's alluded-to textual and subtextual questioning of acceptance as a justifiable part of the hard-religion-for-a-hard-land, Duley reveals through Valour's unfolding text a sense of the appropriateness of such acceptance. However, in the way they unite religion and religious observance with the outport elements, depict God as manifested in those elements, and use a biblical writing style to underscore their themes, the two authors are markedly similar, both evoking the sense of a bleak, hard religion for a bleak, hard land.

In the small Methodist community of Feather-the-Nest, doomed to be destroyed by a tidal wave, the people's favorite hymns "were all of the sea. 'Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.' 'Throw out the life-line'," etc. (13). The protagonist, Mageila Michelet, whose "highway to valour" is the road to acceptance upon which she

travels throughout the novel, reminisces near its conclusion:

When I look back my life seems full of sea and church. I got tired of church, but it makes you remember the Bible. When I was very young I thought it had been written about Newfoundland. There was so much about waves and billows, and people doing business in great waters ... Once ... I asked [a wise old woman, reading from the Bible] if the chapter she was reading had been written about Feather-the-Nest. She ... told me the Jews were land-people and feared the sea; but they had to do business in great waters, so they came to write of the emotion of sea in people.
(321)

Here we see outport characters consciously linking the trials and fears of their seafaring existence with Old and New Testament scriptures. Yet in experiencing the grim rituals of fundamentalist doctrine, Mageila links place and religion subconsciously as well. At the "second-meeting" conducted by their strictly religious mother, while Mageila's sisters could laugh at the strangeness of the "testimonies," Mageila "could not laugh" because

Under lowered lights the shadows seemed to grow deep and dark, blue and bleak as the shadows on granite rock and winter snow. There was a gathering atmosphere mounting and expanding as if human expression was fusing with the sounds of the outside world. The faint rocking to and fro resembled the ebb and flow of the tide, a hymn of washing, wailed to be clean as the water-turned stones on the beach. There was a sense of blood, like the slain lambs'; and once when the wind was blowing and the sea lamenting, the atmospheres became so fused that a woman cried out loud with many tongues. (13-14)

Some pages later, anticipating the approaching tidal wave, Mageila, listening to the sea, "was reminded of second meeting: rocking, rocking and singing of being washed in the blood, while the sea

went on outside straining to reach the church"(37). In both passages there is the sense, as in Duncan's "the wind is the hand o' the Lard," that the grim observance of faith and the grimness of outport life, where the sea is always "straining to reach" the people living so close beside it, are natural complements of each other, and are somehow borne of each other, inextricable. A "twice-saved sinner," Sister Waddleton, returns from her sinful travels in South America to the outport where "the rocks brought her back to the Lord and the seas cleansed her thoughts of Rio"(15). Here too, although without the sense of menace of the preceding passages, we see a character for whom the harsh nakedness of the outport is inextricably blended with her sense of closeness to God.

This "God," manifesting himself in nature like the God in The Way of the Sea, could be both inexplicable and wrathful - but, like nature, had to be accepted both in clemency and hardship. Mageila, broken by the loss of all her family to the tidal wave, saw God as Duncan's characters would have seen him: "He was nature - something withdrawn like the moon, something gigantic like the sea, something a million second-meetings could not solace when the sea fell on the land"(53). This is God the inexplicable, who cannot always be propitiated - the "Lard" of "strange ways" whom the reader meets in Duncan. Later in the story, Trevor Morgan, the married Englishman with whom Mageila falls in love, muses as he travels from Newfoundland to Labrador by boat on Labrador, "the land that God gave Cain," and on Newfoundland, "The land God piled

up with his surplus of rock." "Both places" suggested to him "the bleakness of God and the rocky work of his hands"(109). A bleak God for a bleak place - a hard religion for a hard land: as Trevor sums it up, "the Englishman had grass in his soul and the Newfoundlander had rock"(110). A rocky land breeds a rocky soul, which embraces a religion equally hard. This seems to be Duley's message.

Yet as earlier suggested, Duley sees an appropriateness here, an appropriateness voiced by the wise old woman, Mrs. Slater. Feder, in her analysis of Highway to Valour, observes that "All the large happenings and important moments of the book call forth the resonances of the Bible"(Feder,78). And in the words of guidance that Mrs. Slater offers the stricken Mageila we hear these resonances clearly and recognize them as central to the novel's theme: "The sea gives and the sea takes away, and for the fat years it demands its lean years. The sea made your people prosperous. It's the nature of things that your sorrow should come from it" (63). This "absorption" of "the cadences of Scripture into the speech of some of her characters"(Feder,77) is an authorial style Duley shares with Duncan - a style in each case meant to underscore a key teleological theme. There is "wrath" in the Gods of both The Way of the Sea and Highway to Valour to equal the wrathful environment; where the novels differ, as will soon be seen, is in their authors' ultimate acceptance of that wrath.

When we turn to Horwood's Tomorrow Will Be Sunday we see that this author, who celebrates the forces of nature in

Newfoundland, does not create a fictional environment where wind, land, and sea are seen to be the physical manifestations of a wrathful God. However, Horwood does evoke the sense that the hardship and isolation of outport life has caused its people to embrace the concept of a wrathful God with a strict creed for his people's conduct, and that, as Adrian Fowler puts it in an article on Newfoundland writing, "the outport ... presented as an intellectually and culturally barren environment helpless against the periodic ravages of famine and disease, [is] susceptible to the Tyranny of religious fanaticism" (Fowler, 126-127). People in Caplin Bight believed that those who suffered were being punished, just as Duncan's characters did in Ragged Harbour. Elias, father of the novel's protagonist Eli, is a case in point. Elias' creed is that if a fisherman and his family do poorly and starve, there is divine justice in their fate - even if their failure is beyond their control. "'Tis God's law," he states, "that a man suffer fer 'e's sins, kin 'e help 'em or no - an' that 'e's wife an' children suffer along with 'im. It be written that way, an' ye can't get around it" (18). With such a creed, Caplin Bighters can justify the calamity that befalls neighbours like Hezekiah Pike, even while they might pity them. This reasoning goes beyond the logic which Elias also expounds on page 18 - that you must strive to provide for yourself, that no one can expect "God's gifts to drop straight into their hands." Such reasoning, borne of the hardship and isolation that constituted pre-Confederation outport life, derives from a creed in which there must be a religious justification for

tragedy Martha, Elias' wife, tries to argue that "If some poor 'angshore be brought low be 'is own foolishness, maybe that be a cross an' affliction 'e can't help"(18). But Elias counters her argument by pointing out that it is "written" otherwise - that as in Duncan's outport world, sloppiness, laziness, or physical inability go hand-in-hand with godlessness, and are punished with hardship and often death. Such a teleological outlook, harsh as it is, derives from and makes justifiable the grim life of its proponents. A poor fisherman must be a sinner in the eyes of God - which is why he is a poor fisherman, and why he starves.

One must wonder whether the authors writing about pre-Confederation Newfoundland saw any redeeming benefits to the religion its people embraced - whether in any way religion could be seen to be a good, stabilizing force in response to a rigorous and difficult land. Historically, it can be pointed out that it was religion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that first brought education to the outports (see G.M. Story's article on Newfoundland society, "Newfoundland: Fishermen, Hunters, Planters, and Merchants," pp.18 and 25) - a point that is made, as well, by a character in Janes' Requiem for a Faith, II (1984,p.80), to be discussed in Part Two of this thesis. However, in the fictional literature focussed on early twentieth century Newfoundland, those authors who make a point of examining the function of religion in their characters' lives, where they do depict religious belief as functioning positively, do so provisionally, with a caveat - with the single exception of Duley in Highway to Valour who, while

tearing Wesleyan Methodism to shreds, concludes by endorsing the form of faith preached by old Mrs. Slater and finally embraced by Mageila. Our next focus, then, will be the extent to which authors addressing early twentieth century Newfoundland treated religion as a positive force in their characters' lives.

3. RELIGION AS A STABILIZING FORCE

The one positive pronouncement Duncan makes about the religion of Ragged Harbour is that it is people's "comfort and relaxation" at times when physical salvation is not in jeopardy (Duncan,129). However, this observance is found in the prologue to the story containing what is probably Duncan's strongest condemnation of Ragged Harbour's religious observance - "Concerning Billy Luff and Master Goodchild" - in which a child needlessly dies through adherence to that religion, while the adults surrounding him reveal by their behaviour that the "comfort and relaxation" they derive from their concept of religious observance is grotesque (see Ryan,194-195). Hence, we must read into Duncan's "comfort and relaxation" the irony with which he invested it, and thereby conclude that this pronouncement of his may not be positive at all.

The idea of religion as a positive force in the outport characters of Duley's earliest novels, The Eyes of the Gull and Cold Pastoral, is present, but ambiguously so. Perhaps this is the result of the "ambivalent attitude" Feder claims she had towards many aspects of life (Feder,30), or perhaps, rather, it is the result of her personal exploration of faith through her writing,

which does not seem to evince authorial certainty until we reach Highway to Valour, in which a form of religious faith is, without doubt, shown to be a positive and stabilizing response to life in Newfoundland. In The Eyes of the Gull, while protagonist Isabel Pyke "had been in spiritual rebellion to Newfoundland all her life"(10), her Aunt Dorcas, who "trusted" in a kind God, is described as a person whose "mind might be chained to the limits of the small outport, but [whose] spirit lay in profundity"(27). Dorcas' creed is that "there's no fear to them that read the Word and trust in God. 'There can no evil happen to the just'"(27). Throughout the novel we see in Dorcas a steadfast, reassuring goodness which suggests that the woman lives her faith, and has attained a genuine Christian charity and peace of mind. The presence, beliefs, and actions of Dorcas, in the novel - together with those of her somewhat more skeptical but equally decent husband, Seth - suggest that O'Flaherty condemned it too completely in his work The Rock Observed, where he claims that the "religious values and family loyalties" of outport people in The Eyes of the Gull "are not seen as possessing any intrinsic worth"(133). There is an "intrinsic worth" both to the family loyalties and to the religion that Dorcas has embraced and through which she lives her life; indeed, she and husband Seth seem to be the only two well-balanced and kindly characters in the novel. Yet therein lies the limitation of the religion functioning in this outport: only one or at most two people are shown to truly live it and hence benefit by it, while the protagonist, who is our main concern, can neither be

touched nor saved by it herself and dies a tragic death. Such a religion, as will be discussed more fully later on, cannot in and of itself make life bearable, without human action and human love - the missing ingredients without which Isabel cannot survive.

The uncertainty in Duley when she comes to consider religion in a positive way is further evinced in Cold Pastoral. Consider her description of Josephine Keilly, mother to protagonist Mary Immaculate, a strict Roman Catholic outport woman in town for the day to visit her daughter who now lives a more sophisticated and urban life:

Josephine advanced under their eyes, and nothing about her suggested ordeal. Her shoes were dusty, her nose shiny, but her walk suffused serenity. Days filled with hard work, and leisure given to prayer, gave her an equality beyond the standards of man. Frequently calling to mind the greatness of God and her own nothingness, she trusted the humility of others. She wore a brown knitted shirt, a cardigan coat over a wool-lace jumper. The newness of the suit was evinced in the startling whiteness of skin suddenly exposed against a red neck. Hair had been washed and frizzled by some agency and lay bunched under a toque of the same wool as her suit. Hands in cotton gloves clasped a cheap bag. Josephine had come to town! Molasses-brown eyes stared with frank interest, while full lips smiled away from teeth holding black-edged cavities. (163-164)

O'Flaherty, addressing this same passage in The Rock Observed, remarks that "in this Josephine is allowed some dignity, but the note of mocking irony directed at the 'bay noddie' is unmistakable" (134). One can see, too, by reading on, that though her faith caused her walk to "suffuse serenity," to give her "an equality beyond the standards of man," and to trust "the humility

of others," this "trust" and this "faith" are undercut in the perhaps kindly-meant but belittling laughter of the Fitz Henry family - guardians of her daughter - during her visit and after her departure (pp.167,169,171). One can also observe that although Josephine's outport faith has a noble ring in this passage, that same faith did not prevent her from viewing a person less fortunate than herself (the "simple" Molly Conway, back home in the outport) in a superstitious and uncharitable fashion earlier in the novel (27). Hence, one must hesitate in calling Josephine's "faith" a totally good, balancing, and positive response to life.

Similar doubts must be raised about Mary Immaculate, whom at one point Duley characterizes as "That rare thing, a perfectly happy person"(123). Duley claims for Mary that she sustains this happiness through "The knowledge that certain things were the will of God [which] must have had an unconscious effect on her mind," such that "She could grieve but she could not prolong"(123). Later, Duley asks of Mary, "Was she not Josephine's daughter, leaving everything to the will of God?"(216), while still further along Mary says, "David [one of the Fitz Henrys] laughs at my acceptance of some tenets of the Church, but if we didn't accept, we'd go crazy wondering. I have to be like that"(299). Yet this unstinting faith is shown to be less than complete near the novel's end, when Mary learns of her mother's death and "hopes" there will be a heaven with "saints" and "angels" for her (331). Either Mary's faith was never so solid as the author earlier suggested, or it has slipped over time; either way, though, it is obviously not

the unfailing stabilizing force in her life that causes the reader to deem it an authorial answer to the rigours of human existence.

Momentarily bypassing Highway to Valour, because of the contrasting message it portrays, we also find a hint of a paradox in the treatment of religion in Horwood's Tomorrow Will Be Sunday. For although Horwood, as will soon be made clear, portrayed the religious creed of Caplin Bighters as hypocritical and life-denying - indeed, a condemnation of this creed is one of the novel's central themes - there is one passage where the villagers discover a foundering ship on a stormy night and rally out to save the lives of its occupants in which their faith is shown to inspire a genuinely positive response to the calamitous forces of outport life. Horwood here writes that Eli, witnessing the willingness of the Caplin Bight men to risk their lives to save the lives of others, "felt the solidarity of man against the blind forces of chaos, and the surging power of prayer uniting them" (189). In this instance, although we see very little of it elsewhere in the novel, the "surging power of prayer" is shown to unite outport people and motivate them to give of themselves unstintingly in a time of need, and religion is seen as of use in combatting the "blind forces of chaos" - the forces which Duncan had seen as confronting the Newfoundlander on a daily basis. For once in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, the cruel capriciousness of nature is evoked in combat with a faith that moves men to goodness and even to heroism. This slight inconsistency of theme, like that found in Cold Pastoral, makes the reader wonder whether the authors in each case had fully

resolved their own attitudes towards outport existence and outport faith. In these treatments of early twentieth-century Newfoundland - and we will see a similar ambiguity in such treatments of post-Confederation Newfoundland as Janes' Requiem for a Faith and Wayne Johnston's The Time of their Lives (1987) - adherence to a grim religious creed can result in small-minded superstition and cruelty towards one's fellow man, but it does not always do so. As we will see in Duley's treatment of acceptance in Highway to Valour, a certain form of religious faith, at least in the theme of one novel, is a necessary part of human adaptation to the extremities of rural Newfoundland existence, and to existence in general. However, as this thesis will go on to reveal, in most authorial treatments of religious faith in Newfoundland and Labrador, whether they address pre- or post-Confederation existence, the negative effects of the practice of faith far outweigh any positive ones it may provide.

To turn back to the more complex case of Highway to Valour, here protagonist Mageila's mother practises a brisk, strict Methodism which, with its constant activity, church business, and "Christian works," left her little time to ponder outport hardship; as the narrator puts it, "Life did not torment her"(11). However, Mrs. Michelet's brand of religiosity, while it might keep one too occupied to ponder, is condemned both narratively and through the reflections of Mageila as too life-denying; as Feder puts it, the novel is "a repudiation of the sterner side of dissenting religions"(Feder,34). The life-denying quality of this form of

religion will be discussed later in this thesis.

However, in Highway to Valour another form of religiosity is also examined: that of the sage-figure, Mrs. Slater, and of Moira, the Catholic maid who works for Mrs. Kirke in St. John's (for whom Mageila eventually goes to work as well). Indeed, it is a faith or power that Mageila herself possesses until the tragedy of the tidal wave, killing all her family, temporarily strips it from her. At the beginning of the novel, Mageila muses upon her own "God-given faculty" of healing, without which outport life could be unbearable:

Looking from the frowning hills to the hungry sea, Mageila glimpsed a mood that might be unbearable to people [who did not yield to her power of healing] ... They saw the sky falling down from above, felt the damp creeping up from below, heard the whispers from the sharp-pointed trees on the hills, and shrank from the rage of the foaming sea. (3-4)

Susceptible herself to such a mood because of her sensitivity, she becomes overwhelmed by it when she loses her family and sees the village of Feather-the-Nest in ruins. At this point, the chaos that Duncan describes and to which Horwood briefly refers confronts Mageila: she is made to "see that the universe lived like a monster. Wind was its breath, the sea its blood and passion, and the sky its high indifferent mind"(89). As Duley puts it, "The cruelty of nature was in her like a bodily affliction"(88), and her inability to accept this cruelty causes her grandfather - another sage-figure, if a secular one - to lecture her soundly on the need

for acceptance:

It's no good moping against things that won't change ... You can't get away from storms, but they're only the other face of calms ... It's a hard world in these parts; but your people belonged to it, living the life that was given them, dying the death that came their way. You've got to see all round and accept the whole horizon. (95)

As earlier suggested, the "highway" Mageila subsequently travels in the novel leads her to that acceptance, so that life will have meaning and be livable again.

This need for acceptance is preached in Feather-the-Nest by Mrs. Slater - a woman whose existence and beliefs become a touchstone for Mageila as she proceeds with her life. "This character, "a widow with a bent back, sunless flesh, and gnarled wind-bitten hands" whose religion spared her from loneliness despite her seeming-isolation (14), caused Mageila to come "to the slow conclusion that Mrs. Slater had found God and the others [other churchgoers in the outport] had not"(16). Mrs. Slater says to Mageila, "we didn't fashion the world, hard as it seems. Times come when God seems far away ... Useless to tell you now that morning will come again"(58), and suggests the wisdom of acceptance in her already-quoted line, "It's the nature of things that your sorrow should come from" the sea (63). Mageila eventually internalizes this belief in the wisdom of acceptance to such an extent that she can offer it to her friend and would-be lover, Trevor: "in bad moments there must be something - a faith, the rocks, the roots under the trees"(133). As both Feder and the author herself point out, we see a turning point in Mageila when

she can face the gore of a coastal whaling station without flinching (Feder, 68-69; Duley, 162); she has hereby accepted the "cruelty of nature" as part of life, and has seen that storms are "only the other face of calms" and that God was "in both, and He would not go against Himself" (Duley, 103; Feder, 69). Similarly, Mrs. Kirke, the modern-thinking St. John's woman who employs Mageila as a kind of governess for her daughter, while "irritated" with her maid Moira's "acceptance" of all human ruination and tragedy as "the will of God," regards this woman, with her ability to accept, as a stabilizing force in her own life - "the cornerstone of what comfort she had" (227).

This, then, is the positive face of acceptance as both a religious and secular response to living. And "acceptance," whether spiritually or temporally inspired, is, as we shall now see, a contentious issue both in the work of Newfoundland authors and in critical analyses of their work.

4. THE PROBLEM OF ACCEPTANCE

In Highway to Valour, the Englishman Trevor cannot reconcile himself to the attitude of acceptance Mageila achieves. On page 174 he muses, "Acceptance? Inertia? It was the quality he had seen in the patients waiting to enter the mission-hospitals. It was in the risked lives whether the sea was open or shut. It was in Mageila. She had no right to be so brooding, so uncomplaining over devastation." Yet the overall theme of the novel is that it is precisely this quality of acceptance that

brings peace to Mageila and gives her the strength to commit her life to the worthy cause of using "her God-given power ... of healing" in isolated coastal settlements. As O'Flaherty puts it, "what happens to Mageila is not seen as stifling or debasing. Through suffering, she becomes reconciled; having initially feared the sea, she eventually comes to know that her fear is unworthy and decides that she will not 'grovel away from her heritage.' We leave her at the end a moral victor over both her lover and her surroundings"(1979, p.138).

Religiously-inspired acceptance is thus advanced as a positive response to the hardships of Newfoundland life. Is Duley's portrayal of it in Highway to Valour, then, a fitting rebuttal to the objections to such acceptance that we find in other authorial treatments of the subject? Interestingly, Trevor's objection to Mageila's acceptance in Duley's third novel strongly echoes Peter Keen's objection to Isabel Pyke's acceptance in her first one. In The Eyes of the Gull, Isabel blames the outport environment, not religion, for her acceptance: "It must be the place, the wind, and the sea. They do what they like and we accept it" - while Peter tells her "you mustn't have such acceptance. It's all wrong! You must help yourself - reach out"(103). Yet Isabel's acceptance is mirrored in that of her devout Aunt Dorcas - earlier mentioned as an example of faith at work in a positive fashion in outport life - and is subtly refuted in Dorcas' more temporally-minded husband. Near the novel's end, when the full extent of Isabel's torment becomes apparent to the old couple,

Dorcas sums up the grotesque nature of Isabel's mother - with its concomitant effect upon Isabel - as "the will of God," adding, with reasoning we have already encountered, "we mustn't question. The ways of the good God are inscrutable and strange." Her husband Seth, by contrast, answers, "Nonsense, woman," blaming Isabel's mother for her condition, while seeming to imply that her treatment of her daughter should have been beyond everyone's acceptance (188). Implicit in this gentle rebuttal, and echoing the words of Peter Keen, is the suggestion that mere acceptance, without human will and human action, is not the "answer" at all.

Similarly, in Duley's Cold Pastoral, Mary Immaculate's parents' perpetual willingness to accept "everything as the will of God" does not satisfy Mary's inquisitive mind (17), with the notable exception of the incident when her father explains the juniper's habit of "bend[ing] to the east": "It's the poor man's compass, that's what it is," he explains. And it "pleases" Mary that "God ... gave her father a compass he couldn't buy" - in other words, that he provided a poor man with tools with which he could help himself. This pleasure that Mary takes in the notion that man need not be the mere stoic vehicle of Divine will - that he has the further ability to learn and to act on his own behalf - brings into question Adrian Fowler's interpretation of Duley's growing "appreciation" of the outporter's psyche. For, in comparing her authorial stance in The Eyes of the Gull to that in Cold Pastoral, he praises Duley's "better appreciation of the stoicism developed by people who, having to cope day by day with such tragedy, 'could

mourn, pray, and eat at the same time'" in the latter work (Fowler, p.121). Yet such "stoicism" is shown, even in Cold Pastoral, to cause people to accept tragedy far too readily; after three days of seaching for Mary when she is lost in the woods, writes Duley, "The men were ready to give up" because "Resignation came easily, and there was always the consolation of prayer"(44). As Duley reveals, stoic resignation in this instance would have resulted in a tragic and needless mistake - for in perservering in the seach, Mary is found and saved. Even Moira, in Duley's Highway to Valour, while she attributes the exigencies of living to "the will of God," does not use this belief to exempt her from taking action when action is necessary: there are intimations that she is at least partially responsible for Mr. Kirke's, and wholly responsible for the dog, Brin's, deaths, when she sees such measures as being the salvation of the Kirke household (Highway to Valour,289,301). A religiously-sponsored acceptance of fate as an inadequate response without the added input of human effort is a theme that will recur in the writing of Janes and O'Flaherty in their treatments of post-Confederation Newfoundland life. Even the acceptance of Mageila in Highway to Valour may be seen in this light: the "acceptance" of Mrs. Slater, Moira, the maid, and Mageila herself is not synonymous with "resignation" as it is in her earlier novels; all three of these women, despite their acceptance of life's cruelty, commit themselves personally to its amelioration. But the early twentieth century writer who wrestles most with the notion of religiously-inspired acceptance is Norman Duncan - particularly in the two

stories that conclude The Way of the Sea.

As previously mentioned, the ninth of Duncan's stories, "A Beat t' Harbour," relates the fate of a young man who fears the sea, and yet ends up becoming a sea-captain and drowning, and the meditations of his father, who enigmatically both accepts and questions the ways of the world and the will of God. Young Dannie Crew, while fishing with his father, wishes "that folk would buy songs" so that he might thereby earn his living, rather than having to go to sea (276). The irony here is that out in the greater world, as author and reader both know well, there is a living to be made by "making songs" - but the Dannie Crews of Duncan's Ragged Harbour have no notion of that world. Hence his second wish is that he "might spend the days makin' boots," so that he "could stay ashore"(276). His father responds as most Ragged Harbour adults would respond, based on the world-view that Ragged Harbour affords them, saying "'Tis not the way o' the world, b'y" - which finishes the subject, causing Dannie to select the career of a schooner captain, despite his fear of the sea. Later in the story it becomes apparent to Dannie's father that his son, now a captain, is living a life of mortal dread; and linking "the way o' the world" with the way of God - which is his way of understanding life - the older man cries "Lard, Lard ... must I curse Thee for my son's sake afore I dies?"(287). So apparently old Thomas Crew's "acceptance" of life-as-it-is is not complete - a fact reinforced at the story's end when, with his son drowned, he muses "They's something wrong with the world ... but I isn't sure just what"(305). And herein

lies the tragedy that Duncan perceives in the Ragged Harbours of Newfoundland: that humanity, by a perceived divine instruction, accepts as inevitable that which is not or should not be inevitable, realizing too late - if at all - that its conception of the nature of things may be in error. Dannie and his father, like Isabel Pyke and her Aunt Dorcas in The Eyes of the Gull, have accepted limitations - whether worldly or divine in their origins - that result in needless tragedy. When Aunt Dorcas, pondering Isabel's demise at the conclusion of The Eyes of the Gull, quotes from the scripture: "When I consider Thy Heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained: what is man that Thou art mindful of him?" (200), one can divine beneath the apparent humility of her words a bafflement similar to Thomas Crew's with the ways of God and of the world.

Duncan's final story, "The Fruits of Toil," is more expressive still of the authorial discontent with passive, divinely-inspired acceptance as a fitting response to life, as well as of Duncan's eloquent cry to the universe for a fairness and justice he would like to believe in but cannot find. In this story, Solomon Stride, a "good" man by anyone's standard and a hard worker and skilled fisherman to boot, commits himself steadfastly to earning a living from the sea - a living that will free him of debt to the merchant and afford him the pleasure of buying for his wife a longed-for sewing machine - only to find, year after year, that all he can obtain from the sea is "enough to keep their bodies warm and still the crying of their stomachs" (316). One year when

the fishery fails their only child dies of starvation (315-316); the sewing machine is forgotten; and at the end of his life, despite his steadfast desire to owe no man anything, he is \$230.80 in debt to the merchant (323). Yet far from bemoaning his fate, he accepts it, and in fact credits God with giving him more than his due, saying on his deathbed, "Ah, the Lard he've favoured us above our deserts"(329), citing the mere "eleven famines," the child they had "for a little while," and such luxuries as "sugar" and "baking powder" as the "fruits" of his toil for which he is humbly thankful. Such religiously-inspired acceptance allows Solomon to die a peaceful death, it is true; yet the undercurrent of bitter irony with which Duncan invests the story reveals an authorial rage that so good and hard-working a man has been condemned to a life of such relentless hardship, and that his religion has taught him to accept such hardship even to the extent of looking upon it as a munificence. "Sure the Lard he've blessed us, Priscilla," Solomon says to his wife. "Goodness an' marcy has followed us all the days o' our lives. Our cup runneth over"(328). Such reversions to scriptural passages, indicative of Solomon's inbred propensity to accept without complaint the Lord's will and the inevitablity of hardship, are juxtaposed for the reader against the actual pitiful emptiness of that "cup." For while, as O'Flaherty writes, Duncan "did not dismiss Solomon's efforts ... as trivial"(1979, p.100), he did expose, through the meagerness of Solomon's "fruits," a lack of fairness and order in life that amounts to a questioning of telcological certainty. Solomon Stride's fate does not befall him

through lack of personal effort, and his acceptance, like the one that Duley honours in Highway to Valour, is not an acceptance borne of mere resignation: it is the active acceptance of a Mrs. Slater or a Mageila Michelet, cognizant of the strangeness of God's ways yet trustful that, by doing one's own part in life, all will come out well and as intended. And while this acceptance does indeed function positively on one level, in that it enables a people born to hardship to be at peace with themselves despite that hardship, it underlines for Duncan a lack of fairness in the universal order of things. A tidal wave may be inevitable, and the ultimate positively-functioning response to it may be acceptance; but to work oneself to the bone amidst the extremities of nature, "go[ing] forth in hope ... and returning spent to the dust" for generation after generation (Duncan, 332), causes an objective onlooker to question the meaning of existence - in which case a religiously-nurtured acceptance, while palliative, may become part of life's problem rather than its solution. Such is the core of James Overton's criticism of Duncan's vision, in his critique of The Way of the Sea: as he puts it, "Duncan's outporters are given the role of victims no matter how heroically they struggle" (Overton, 148), while all around Duncan's Ragged Harbour are communities rallying for change and amelioration through a Fishermen's Protective Union of which Duncan seems to be unaware. Yet in the observances and memories of Newfoundland authors, "Ragged Coves," "Raggedy Harbours," and "Caplin Bights" have indeed existed prior to, during, and despite the emergence of the politically-active

organizations to which a sociologist would point, and have provided ample material for authorial exploration of the exigencies, motivational forces, and religious observances operant therein - explorations which, while fictional, reach more deeply into the human psyche than does social activism, and which have a different and no less important focus of concern. Duncan's concerns, unlike Overton's, are teleological: he is seeking some sense of universal order and justice that transcends humanly-arranged orderings and justice systems, while analyzing the apparently erroneous "justice" he sees Newfoundlanders as having embraced.

The issue of religiously-based acceptance as a fitting or unfitting response to life in the Newfoundland outport - one form of teleological concern - has, as we have seen, been treated variously as a good means for coming to terms with a hard land, as a solution at its best partial, requiring in addition such elements as human love and human action, and as a palliative tendency easing, but also obscuring, the cruelties of outport life. One is tempted, here, to invoke the well-known maxim:

God, give me the strength to change what I can
change, the serenity to accept that which I
cannot change, and the wisdom to know the
difference ...

as an authorial solution to the question of acceptance. Operating on this basis might satisfy everyone from Duncan to Duley to Overton. However, this maxim, as the literature reveals, is far easier to invoke than it is to practise. So we must let the differing authorial treatments of acceptance stand as they have revealed themselves. But when we consider authorial treatments of

other aspects of the influence of religion on early twentieth century outport life, we will tend to find more concurrence. That the life was a hard one is borne out in the fiction discussed above; that the religion embraced for guidance and comfort derived from the harsh environment - and whether or not it had a positive dimension - was a subject for scrutiny for some but not all of the authors. But in the following pages, as we shall see, the themes of (a.) a perceived hypocrisy in religion as practised in Newfoundland, both on the part of the clergy and their parishioners, with a resultant devotion, on both their parts, to the form rather than to the content of religious doctrine, (b.) a concomitant prevalence of interdenominational tension, and (c.) a harshness of religious creed and upbringing which leads to divisiveness between people and ultimately to a tragic dehumanization which overrides human compassion and human love, are markedly consistent in fictional treatments of pre-Confederation Newfoundland - and in treatments of post-Confederation Newfoundland as well. Religious faith as practised in Newfoundland and Labrador, whether a central authorial concern or part of the social background to the unfolding of a story, is consistently depicted as problematic if not psychically destructive by Newfoundland authors. In the following pages these negative themes will be examined.

5. NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF THE REIGN OF FAITH

i. The Hypocrisy of the Clergy.

First to be addressed are the fictional treatments of the

clergy, the spiritual leaders of pre-Confederation communities. In Duncan's Ragged Harbour, a clerical presence is largely missing, as the community does not have a parson of its own but must "make do" with the occasional visits of the parson from "Round Harbour" (131). The only times we meet the "pastor" in The Way of the Sea are in "In The Fear of the Lord," where he presides over an "aftermeeting" of his congregation and "raise[s]" a "hymn"(229), and in "Concerning Billy Luff and Master Goodchild," where he converts Billy Luff - "his supreme achievement"(131) - and is shown to endorse and encourage a perverse denial of life which a child has himself absorbed through reading a misguided and antiquated book, with the equally influential encouragement of his mother. It is worth noting, though, that as an eight-year-old, Billy Luff is believed by the community to have the makings of a preacher (130-131;139) precisely because, at his remarkably young age, he has been "converted"(129) and has consciously turned his back on the natural levity of childhood - which suggests that to be a preacher one must be, in some way, inhuman. It is also worth noting that the one boy who "envied Billy the Lord's call to be a parson" did so because "He, too, wanted to be a parson, and wear slippers, and have the folk send goat's milk and potatoes and the fattest salmon to him" (139) - reasoning which alludes to the relative "softness" and ease perceived to be enjoyed by an outport clergyman, who can expect his parishioners, however poor, to provide him with the best of what they possess. The only other instance in The Way of the Sea where we meet a person proclaimed to be "called" by God is in

"The Healer from Far-Away Cove," where a recluse, Ishmael Roth, gradually divines, through his loneliness, that he has been "called" to be a healer. Duncan makes it clear, though, through revealing the absurd reasoning by which Ishmael comes to uphold the notion that he has been "called" (191-194), and by direct authorial commentary - e.g., "the things of the wilderness and of the sullen sea ... had undone old Ishmael Roth" (194) - that while "The people believed in him as he believed in himself," and while his eyes bore "a strange, fine light ... such as might have burned in the eyes of prophets" (201), Ishmael's "calling" is a self-delusion. Perhaps Duncan suggests too here, by intimation, that the resemblance of Ishmael's burning eyes to those of the ancient prophets calls into question their authenticity and sanity as well.

The clergy does not figure prominently in Duley's three Newfoundland novels, either; in Cold Pastoral, her brief description of the "Father Melchior" who ministers to Mary Immaculate's outport community is actually flattering, in that she juxtaposes the liberal thinking borne of his education and knowledge of the world against Josephine's narrow Irish superstitiousness, to Josephine's detriment (18-21), but in general it is not the clergy but the people upon whom Duley concentrates. In Highway to Valour she paints a very unflattering picture of Mageila Michelet's mother as a spiritual leader - a picture that will be discussed in connection with the life-denying nature of doctrinal adherence, later on; the only clergyman to surface here is Mageila's Uncle Leander White, who makes a brief and ineffectual

appearance and is then forgotten (78,89).

It is in Horwood's Tomorrow Will Be Sunday and White Eskimo, and in William Gough's novel Maud's House (1984), all three of which were written well after Confederation but addressed life in pre-Confederation Newfoundland and Labrador, that the clergy are scrutinized intently and revealed to be guilty of misguidedness and hypocrisy. The case made against Brother McKim in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday is particularly noteworthy in its blending of condemnation and pathos - a pathos which anticipates that evoked by O'Flaherty in Priest of God (1989) and by Johnston in The Divine Ryans (1990). Here, however, we will look briefly at his condemnation; the pathos of his existence belongs more properly to the discussion of religion's authorially-perceived denial of human needs.

The clergyman in power at the beginning of Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, Pastor Tishrite, despite his sternly-preached, doctrinally-endorsed prohibition of sexual pleasure, is ultimately "recalled" from Caplin Bight for having an extramarital affair with a young local woman (56-57) - recalled with a "tight-lipped discretion and prim propriety" on the part of the village elders which suggests that they realized, in some part of their nature, the fallible nature of the clergy, but could barely bring themselves to admit it. This pastor is then replaced by Brother John McKim, who "reports said ... was a man with God's hand upon him in a most exceptional way - a man full of zeal and holy fire, who spoke with tongues and saw visions of spiritual things not given to ordinary mortals to witness"(57-58). Yet it transpires

later in the novel that McKim, this "visible incarnation of divine law in Caplin Bight"(176), initiates and seeks to perpetuate a homosexual relationship with Eli, the novel's young protagonist, thus teaching the boy "the meaning of sensuality, the abandonment of the spirit to the crying demands of the flesh"(181) - the very aspects of human nature against which he has raged week after week from the church pulpit. And as if this two-faced existence is not sufficiently hypocritical, Brother John proceeds to deflect his deeds onto an innocent man - the teacher, Christopher Simms, whom the preacher sees as a rival for the boy Eli's attention (195-196) - and to engage in outright lying to conceal the relationship he has initiated but which the church he belongs to deems to be a sin (199,203). Hence, while Horwood does evoke from his readers a certain compassion for John McKim the man, as will soon be suggested, John McKim the preacher is offered up as an example of the potential for hypocrisy in the leaders of organized religions.

In White Eskimo, Horwood's novel about native/white relations in coastal Labrador and the "messianic" deeds of Gillingham, the "white Eskimo" who sought to liberate the Inuit from white "corruption," he delivers an excoriating condemnation of the hypocrisy of the Moravian mission in general and that of the Reverend Kosh in particular as its functioning representative, in their dealings with the Inuit population in Labrador. The Mission had, in the words of one of the novel's narrators, striven for generations to wrest from the Inuit "the forbidden arts of dancing, singing, and divination"(50). Yet, relying on the local police

force to "help them enforce their rules, like the rules against beer and dancing," it had been willing to turn a blind eye in the case of the white policemen's indiscretions. If you were a policeman in coastal Labrador, "You could drink quietly at home, have an Eskimo girl or two, even keep a mistress if you were discreet about it" (7). The mission, so strict in its dealings with Eskimo ritual and sexual practices, had no moral qualms about using a policeman who had "slept with every good-looking teen-age boy" in the village at which he had been stationed. It also allowed him to be its business manager, permitting him to sit "in the front row in church and [entertain] transient constables with evenings at home drinking bootleg booze" despite its strict prohibition of drinking among the natives (7). The history of the Moravian mission in Labrador is here described as being based on materialistic greed:

There was a time ... when the mission itself carried on the whole trade of the coast, and grew wealthy. They still look back on that time ... as their golden age ... They've never forgotten the shiploads of furs and caribou hides that they bought from the natives for a tenth of their value and shipped to Europe at a thousand per cent profit. (26-27)

Although it is conceded that the Mission did aid the Inuit in their confrontations with the white "lawless whalers and fishermen" who might otherwise have exterminated them (27), its overall failure to truly comprehend the nature of the Inuit psyche and its consequent institution of rules and conventions that threatened to destroy the Inuit way of life, together with its aforementioned propensity for double standards and its greed for wealth, are themes that permeate

the novel. Reverend Kosh, the Mission's "spiritual leader" in Nain at the time of Gillingham's "heroic" escapades upon which the novel focusses, was a fitting embodiment of Moravian missionary hypocrisy:

Manfred Kosh, the missionary, lived in a huge white house that had been a fort, built by the founders of his mission two hundred years before ... No pioneer, no devotee of the hard life, but rather a lover of luxury, he nevertheless ruled the natives, and especially the younger ones, like an eighteenth-century schoolmaster. (10)

Later in the novel it is said of Kosh that "in exchange for authority and wealth, [he] gave dirt, disease and superstition"(228). Such descriptions typify the authorial treatment of the Moravian clergy throughout the novel.

Clerical materialism such as that described in White Eskimo and covert clerical lust such as that of Brother McKim in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday both figure in William Gough's novel, Maud's House - a nostalgic look back at outpost existence which centers on protagonist Maud's presence in "George's Cove." Because she comes from another outpost and thus does not "belong," and because she enters into a common-law relationship with a George's Cove man which violates local custom and religion, she lives the life of a pariah until the story's conclusion, when the house she and Ern, her lover, had lived in is finally recognized to be hers; thus she finally comes to "belong" to the community. George's Cove, traditionally Methodist, is converted to a new, fundamentalist sect by one Pastor Roberts, who is described as arriving in the community very much like a travelling salesman with

a "circus tent" (52). Once established there, we see the pastor's obvious materialistic supremacy in George's Cove - he has the "first and only car in the cove," with "real leather seats" (56). We also see the grim, efficient monetary calculations by which this man of God has achieved such material well-being:

And the pastor prays. He watches the boats return from the morning's fishing, he watches how much fish is unloaded from each boat, keeping it in his memory like a nut. When it comes time to fill the collection plate for the glory of God, he will remember who has caught the fish, he will remember every gutting. (78)

This is a preacher who can pray and assess how much money each parishioner should yield to the church simultaneously, with no moral qualms. And this is also a preacher whose being can be consumed by lust while he stands at the pulpit, renouncing it - and can simultaneously transform his lust to hatred and to righteous rage, as could Horwood's Brother McKim. Gough writes of Pastor Roberts:

Every time he thinks of Maud his fingers pluck and are restless as a dying man's nails on an afghan. But the pastor can't make her leave his eyes, his thoughts ... Each Sabbath the church holds his thoughts. All the raw faces and red ears listening to his talk of sin ... But what of Maud? Her sin, her eyes a-blaze with the devil's music ... Her looks so soft sometimes, like oil on wool that's getting ready to be spun, carding, and then pulling the wool with oil on the hands, and it lit by kerosene light till it looked like the Golden Fleece. Lamplight somewhere in her eyes mixes with smoke, too. When his thoughts had gone that far, he would pray for guidance, would let the bible fall open at random ... His finger would touch the verse ... Once it read, "A whore is a deep ditch and is a narrow pit." All verses, even if less direct, could spin

and the hate would be there for Maud, as much
a part of the thought of her as the grain is
in oak. (69)

From Duncan to Gough we see authorial depictions of men-of-God who are self-deluded, who secretly lust after that which they must condemn in their parishioners, who use their authority to achieve a standard of material comfort their parishioners cannot enjoy and at their parishioners' expense. In short, we are impressed with the sense of an authorially-perceived hypocrisy inherent in the spiritual leaders of rural Newfoundland and Labrador - a hypocrisy that can stem from many sources, several of which are authorially explored and will be discussed later in this analysis. This hypocrisy - a tendency to adhere to and uphold doctrinal form without necessarily experiencing any deeply-felt commitment to doctrinal content - is shown in fictional treatments of both pre- and post-Confederation Newfoundland to be a common phenomenon among the people as well as their clergy. It is a phenomenon that manifests itself in descriptions of daily habits and behaviour as well as in the evidence of interdenominational conflict that surfaces in most fiction written about Newfoundland.

ii. Observance of the Form but not the Content of Religion.

Telling examples of characters abiding by spiritual form while thinking nothing of spiritual content commence, not so much with Duncan, where people tend to abide by both the form and content of their religion but where the interpretation of religion's content is shown to be tragically in error (although in

a brief aside in one story, the narrator comments that a "pretense to righteousness is conventional in [places like Ragged Harbour]-p.73), but with Duley. And some of the fictional examples Duley provides recur repeatedly in later Newfoundland fiction. In Cold Pastoral, when a pregnant Josephine, out in a stormy sea in a skiff with her husband, informs him that she is about to give birth, his distracted reaction, "Nonsense, woman! You can't go dropping your child in a skiff. Tell your beads. That'll stop you a bit"(12), anticipates the sometimes comedic, sometimes condemning depictions of Catholic Newfoundland of Johnston and O'Flaherty, both of whom, like Duley, reveal seemingly-devout characters using the telling of the rosary not as a form of religious meditation but as a means of distraction, of passing the time, or of appearing to be holier than someone else. In Highway to Valour the pre-packaged predictability of the "testomonies" of Sister Waddleton, which are rumoured to be rehearsed and "recensored" every Saturday night so that they will be appropriate to the decorum of Sunday's "second-meetings"(15), reveals a population for some of whom the religious ritual of "testimony" is more a kind of customized performance than a heart-felt deliverance of one's innermost feelings and transgressions; and this tendency towards ritual-as-performance will be seen again in the fiction of Gough, Janes, William Rowe, and O'Flaherty.

Another example of religious form without content as functioning in Highway to Valour's characters is in Duley's description of the Dilke sisters - the three aunts of protagonist Mageila, staunch Methodists and pillars of the community of "Ship

Haven," women whose hands busily do Good Works but whose hearts are seldom inspired with the love and compassion upon which Christianity is supposed to be based. All this is revealed through their gossip, their concern for the material rather than the emotional and spiritual aspects of life, and their preoccupation with appearances and outward behaviour as opposed to what dwells in the mind and heart. Consider Duley's description of them as they await the arrival of their father and Mageila, who has been taken from the desolation of "Feather-the-Nest," where she has lost her home and family, to live with them. The running narrative description of their musings bespeaks their concern for the form rather than the content of good Methodism. They plan to persuade the orphaned Mageila

to take a Sunday-school class. So difficult to get anyone to teach in the Sunday school ... Besides, it would take her mind off herself! Was Beatie's hat too smart for mourning and for a minister's wife? Yes, Ella knew her coat was not a good black ...(75)

Teaching in Sunday School is a form of busy-ness to keep one's mind off oneself, and Mageila's plight is quickly eclipsed by concern over the propriety of mourning attire, which in turn seems to figure more prominently in the three women's minds than any sense of bereavement over their dead sister, who is Mageila's mother. A few pages later, "Trying to encompass [the] incredible reality" of her sister's and brother-in-law's deaths, Aunt Molly "frowned at [Aunt] Beatie's hat ... 'That hat is wrong,' she pronounced. 'It's not proper mourning and it's intended for a much younger woman'" (77). It seems that there is little room for spiritual

concerns in the minds of the most prominent Methodists in town. And the nature of their piety is further conveyed on page 99, where the aunts deem "the middle aisle of the biggest church" as the best place to show off the new wardrobe that has been purchased for Mageila. Form rather than content, the external rather than the internal world: this is the level at which the pillars of Methodism in Duley's fiction operate.

Horwood, too, creates characters who tend not to get past the veneer of spiritual form to the heart of spiritual content. With wry humor he describes Jehu Gilmore, the resident religious fanatic of Caplin Bight in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, as a man who "testified from house to house, sometimes in English and sometimes in less profane tongues, but in either case made a point of staying for dinner"(79), implying that Gilmore's exaggerated religiosity was sometimes little more than a means of getting a good meal. And in a far from humorous vein, the narrators in White Eskimo describe the Moravian missionaries' failure to realize that all they have managed to get the Inuit to adhere to is the form of Christianity, because its meaning, its content, is so alien to the Inuit sensibility - so that Moravian pastors may point proudly to the Eskimo brass bands and to the Inuit observance of Christian holy days that they have established, failing to see that the Inuit are merely going through the motions of Christianity, without internalizing it at all. As one narrator of White Eskimo puts it, "Two hundred years of missionaries yammering about sin has done little or nothing to change" the Eskimo attitude towards such

things as sexuality (63). And further on in the novel, pitting what author and narrator see as the richness and naturalness of Eskimo culture against the grim lifelessness of Christian, Western European culture, we read:

The Eskimos never gave up the warmth of their personal lives. They have always loved their wives and children and friends, and enjoyed the rich sensual life that the missionaries call original sin. The black pall of Protestantism was so foreign to the total pattern of Eskimo culture that they simply never adopted it at all. They went through the forms - Sabbath observance, nominal monogamy, verbal 'purity' - but only a total destruction of their culture could have turned them into the kind of Christians that these Germans and Englishmen had become ... What the Eskimo did was substitute one outward form for the other. Their Christianity is a sort of ritual magic. It is the observance of the forms and taboos that matters to them. Make the correct public motions and perhaps the Christian god will bless you with children and full bellies. (89-90)

Once again we see a Newfoundland author focussing on the gap between religious form and religious content, although in this case it is not the practitioners of form without content - the Eskimos - who are revealed as hypocrites, but rather the foreigners who endeavoured to convert them but lacked the sensitivity needed to see that the content of Christian doctrine was incomprehensible to the Eskimos.

Finally, we see Gough exposing the gap between the form and the content of professed religiosity in Maud's House where, as in Highway to Valour, fundamentalist testimony-giving becomes more a performance than a genuine religious experience. Gough writes that in George's Cove, "The church was named the Gospel Church and

the people had their favourite stories of temptation and salvation which they got to polish up over the years. They were always glad to give them with pride when called on" (53). Indeed, during Pastor Roberts' reign over the people of George's Cove we see, for a time, that religious form is valued more than religious content, in the contrast between the sexual/moral make-up of both the pastor and Vince (who is newly returned to the village to lay claim to the house Maud lives in and who is regarded by the pastor as a good, upstanding Christian), and that of Maud in her relationship with Ern. The pastor, as we have already seen, must suppress by turning to hatred the lust he feels for Maud, while Vince, who himself once lusted after Maud, experiences an overwhelming and ill-concealed lust for the pastor's young daughter, Ruth - even though Vince is a married man, and a trusted guest in the pastor's home (see pp.88-90). Yet these two men, along with the rest of the community, feel supported by their church in condemning the common-law relationship that Maud has had with Vince's brother, Ern, even though Maud and Ern's love is described, throughout the novel, as being pure, true, and honourable. Again, as long as religious form is seen to be observed - in this case, "form" being the institution of marriage - content, the degree of heartfelt love and commitment of man and woman for each other, becomes irrelevant.

Yet there is no more prevalent example of Newfoundlanders' authorially-perceived propensity for paying more attention to form than to content in religious matters than the persistently recurring theme of interdenominational conflict in

Newfoundland fiction - both pre- and post-Confederation. Whether this conflict is treated humorously, as is often the case, or with evident authorial regret and condemnation, it is ultimately cast as a grievous handicap in human relations and as an aberration of the "Great Commandment" as found in the New Testament, where Jesus is quoted as saying

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength ... and ... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. (Mark, 12:29-31)

iii. Interdenominational Conflict.

George Story writes in one of his essays on Newfoundland society that "Throughout the nineteenth century, religious animosities were strong," and "religious rivalry, hitherto covert, rapidly became the most serious political and social problem of the century," often leading to violence, and resulting in the "remoulding" of "Newfoundland's educational system ... along the denominational lines it still preserves" (Story, 27). While there is little evidence of this overt violence in twentieth century fictional depictions of Newfoundland, there is much evidence that twentieth century authors have continued to see this rivalry - which, if one considers the scriptural quotation above, is manifestly un-Christian - as characteristic of Newfoundlanders' dealings with each other. As Mageila states in Highway to Valour, observing in Ship Haven the "three church spires, three schools - Roman Catholic, Church of England, Methodist - all in one tiny

place," denominationalism "is the curse of the country!" (84). And we will see it as an ironical theme or sub-theme in works ranging from Duncan's stories of 1903 to O'Flaherty's of 1989.

Duncan's *Ragged Harbour* is so homogeneously fundamentalist and so cut off from the rest of the world that for the most part the only "tension" is between the converted and the unconverted - as in the story "In The Fear of the Lord." There is, then, only a slight reference to interdenominational rivalry, as already mentioned, when the doomed boys in "The Chase of the Tide" assume that Job Luff will go to hell because, unlike the practitioners of *Ragged Harbour's* faith, Job "do be Seven Days Adventist" (21). The same is true of Horwood's *Caplin Bight*, where the chief denominational enmity is again felt by the reborn fundamentalists for the "unbelievers" and nonconformists who still adhere to the Anglicanism that had preceded the fundamentalist movement in the village; these people, "as the pastor assured his flock," were "headed straight for the second death" (20). Hence, we do not see much interdenominational rivalry in these two works, but neither do we see much evidence that the characters are inclined to "love their neighbours as themselves," if their neighbours do not share with them their religious persuasion. This is one way, then, of observing religious form without content. In the fiction addressing pre-Confederation Newfoundland, it is principally in the works of Duley and Janes that we see another way - interdenominational rivalry - at work.

In *Cold Pastoral*, Duley invokes the age-old tension

between monied upper-class Protestantism and poor outport Catholicism through Mary Immaculate, who must cope simultaneously with both mindsets. When the wealthy Protestant Philip Fitz Henry of St. John's conveys to Mary's Catholic outport mother that he wishes to adopt the child, her response is that, wondrous as this privilege would be for her child in terms of ameliorating her life, she can assent only if he allows Mary to "remain a Catholic and observe the rules of her Church," adding that she is "sorry [he does not] have the jewel of faith [himself]" (85). While the Fitz Henrys agree to comply with this wish, they do so conditionally. As Lady Fitz Henry decrees, "Mary can go to Mass. Any bias will be mitigated by other associations. It's necessary to dilute a great deal of her training" (85). And this the Fitz Henrys proceed to essay; by page 98 they have her dutifully reciting, "I must not ... talk about the Saints in Heaven. Religion is not as obtrusive as I make it. I can forget about souls sizzling in torment. It is a relic of uneducated minds." For the Fitz Henrys' genteel brand of Protestantism is not the hell-fire and damnation variety one finds in other sects; theirs is not a "house for [the] tambourines" of the Salvation Army any more than it is a house for "Popery" (94). Yet outport Catholicism, that "relic of uneducated minds," lives on in Mary Immaculate; her unselfconscious, spontaneous reaction to the hat of the Fitz Henrys' Protestant "bishop" further on in the novel is that it is "an exalted hat for heretics" (174) - suggesting that the propensity to dismiss a "rival" faith as inferior is equally inbred in monied Protestantism and in unmonied Catholicism.

In Highway to Valour, again the interdenominational tension is between Protestantism and Catholicism - here, between the outpost Methodism of Mageila's mother and aunts and the rather exotic Catholicism of her father, who hails from the French island of St. Pierre. It is interesting to note that in this novel we find one of the few instances of a man "turning" to his wife's religion in Newfoundland fiction - the other instance being in Helen Porter's January, February, June or July (1988). Generally, in cases of "mixed" marriages in Newfoundland fiction, it is the woman who "turns" to the man's religious faith. But in Highway to Valour, Pierre Michelet marries Sheila Dilke in Sheila's Methodist church, assenting that their progeny be reared as Methodists (8), and the couple lives together "without contention" (9). Here it is characters outside the marriage who reveal interdenominational enmity. When Pierre returns "to his own French island" and "creeps" into "his own church," there is always "a Jesuit or two" to warn him that he is "sleeping with the Devil" by being married to a Methodist (8). And after the tidal wave kills the couple, when Sheila's sisters observe that the Michelet's insurance policy does not cover "Acts of God" like the tidal wave, but that "you could insure for anything at Lloyd's [emphasis mine]," they remark, "How careless of Pierre not to insure at Lloyd's! That's what comes of being French and a Roman Catholic" - suggesting their Wesleyan assumption that Catholics are "flighty" and not sound in their judgements (76). And protagonist Mageila's reaction to the institutional manifestations of these attitudes is, as already

noted, that denominationalism "is the curse of the country" - quite probably voicing Duley's own opinion as she wrote the novel, exposing, as she did, the hypocrisy evident in the Methodism she knew quite well while exploring what she perceived to be the relative levity of a Catholicism with which she was less familiar.

Janes, in House of Hate, paints by far the most graphic picture of interdenominational conflict as operant in pre-Confederation Newfoundland. He writes that while still in Ireland, Saul Stone's family was "a stubbornly indestructible island of Protestantism in an ever-pressing Roman Catholic ocean," hoping by "emigrating" to the New World to escape the "pressure" of Catholicism (10). And Saul's anti-Catholicism - as well as the consequent anti-Catholicism of some of his offspring - surfaces many times throughout the novel. When Saul, who was "Church of England," married Gertrude, who was Methodist, she had to "turn to the man" as a matter of course, as far as he was concerned (28-29). But when Gertrude teasingly asked him what he would have done if she had been a Roman Catholic, he "drew apart from her, gave her an indignant stare, and answered in unmistakable terms that in such a case he would never have had anything to do with her at all" (29). Later in the story, when Saul's daughter Flinksy finds a man - Rome - she is greatly relieved at his religious suitability, thinking "Above all he was a Protestant, so ... There could be no talk of turncoats, Judas, invincible ignorance, or eternal damnation" - a reaction from her father she could be sure she would have faced had Rome been otherwise (69).

Indeed, the entire Stone family's pleasure over son Racer's "Anglo-Saxon" appearance stems from their deeply held feeling that "Dark men were deep men suggesting Romanism and unnamed evils"(75). And when reference is made to a fight Saul has had over religion, his son Ank reveals his own religious bias, nurtured in him from birth, by describing how Saul was giving some "dirty Micks ... a few tips about what he t'ought o' the Pope and the Virgin Mary and all their ole rigmarole"(140).

Saul Stone's unmitigating hatred of everything Catholic is further revealed when son Crawfie starts living common-law with a woman named Moira. His particular fury is over the fact that Crawfie "was beginning to breed on her." The "mere thought that any grandchild of his, even a bastard, should be born of a Roman Catholic mother was ... enough to send the Old Man into one of his epic obscene rages." Even Gertrude, who was not so "bitter" about the affair, was "scandalized"(238-239).

Nor is anti-Catholicism Saul's only religious bias; the novel reveals in two instances the man's anti-Semitism as well. At one point, Flinksy is chastized by her father for speaking to shop owner Ben Swersky, whom Saul calls "A Jew! Bloody Christ-killer," adding "You must be pretty hard up, by Jesus, if you got to go chasin' after them kind"(66). Later on in the novel, when Gertrude purchases a suit for son Fudge of which Saul disapproves, one of the hypothetical reasons the narrator offers for Saul's disapproval of the suit is "because it had been bought at a Jew's"(172). All of this denominational prejudice is particularly ironic in that it

takes place in a household where no semblance of Christian love is ever in evidence. It is a prime example of the tendency of characters in Newfoundland fiction to cling to the veneer of religious form without for a moment pondering on or living out the religious content from which the form supposedly derives - as will become increasingly evident in analyzing fiction addressing post-Confederation Newfoundland.

This discussion of the negative aspects of religious faith as authorially-construed in pre-Confederation Newfoundland would not be complete, though, without addressing the overall harshness of religious creed and upbringing - and their divisive and damaging psychic effects - as portrayed in the fiction. As was demonstrated in discussing the notion of a hard-religion-for-a-hard-land, religious faith, to the degree that it was depicted as deriving from and complementing an isolated and unremittingly cruel and dangerous existence, was correspondingly harsh. But all the novels, whether they suggest that the religious creeds operant in Newfoundland and Labrador derive from the particular hardships of place or not, give evidence that there is a harshness inherent in these creeds, either through doctrinal decree or through a misguided human interpretation of that doctrine. The novels further suggest that, through promoting divisiveness between man and woman, condemning sexuality, and exhorting people to renounce the world in all its earthly and human manifestations, religion, whether by its explicit direction or by erroneous interpretation, overrides human compassion and human love and through this life-

denying quality can cause human tragedy.

iv. The Harshness of Religious Creed.

The harshness of religious doctrine in Duncan's The Way of the Sea has already been described; mere children are caused to fear that the neglect of even the smallest task will bring upon them hell-fire and damnation, while children and adults alike, by adhering to a "Lord God A'mighty" rather than to a "dear Lord" as the divine force ruling their lives (see, for example, the conversation between Solomon Stride and his wife on p.223), are convinced that to take any pleasure in earthly things is a sin, and thus deliberately cut themselves off from the opportunity to experience earthly happiness. This tragic mindset is the subject of both "Concerning Billy Luff and Master Goodchild" and "In the Fear of the Lord." It will be analyzed at the conclusion of this chapter when the ultimate psychic effect of religion's life-denying nature in fictional pre-Confederation Newfoundland is discussed.

The harshness inherent in both Methodism and Catholicism is evident in Duley's three novels - a harshness often stemming from a religious doctrine that is beyond the influence of wind and sea. In The Eyes of the Gull Isabel, steeped in the Methodism on which she was raised, cannot mentally overcome the verdict that the achievement of love and happiness by the dead Elfrieda Tucker (whose premarital sexual union with a man other than the one to whom she was betrothed is a sub-theme throughout the novel) was a great sin, despite her ability to comprehend why Elfrieda did what

she did and to feel compassion for her.

In Cold Pastoral, the limiting strictures of Roman Catholicism are embodied in Mary's mother, Josephine, whose every move is governed by "the hopes of Heaven and the pains of Hell" (168). And they are evoked by Mary herself when she cries to the Fitz Henrys' maid, Hannah, who has cruelly undermined her throughout her residence at the Fitz Henry home, "Humperdinck [who created the opera Hansel and Gretel] must have been a Catholic ... when he made the oven for the old hag, and the oven in real life is Hell ..." (296) - the implication being that only a Catholic could have envisioned a universe in which punishment for transgressions was so absolute, unquestioning, and cruel.

By the time Duley wrote Highway to Valour, Feder suggests that she herself had "probably be[gun] to waver from orthodoxy," and that therefore protagonist Mageila's religious perceptions reveal "that there was not sufficient loveliness or joy for Margaret in her own church" (Feder, 35). Highway to Valour does indeed point to a grim joylessness to Methodism which, as Feder puts it, Duley treated "with malicious humor and often outright derision" (71). The Methodist minister of Feather-the-Nest "would rather see his children's legs cut off than see them dance," writes Duley (3). Mageila's mother, Sheila Michelet, who was "the bones and blood of Methodism," came of a people who "did not sit with folded hands or stop to consider the lilies" (7-8). The "bas-relief" of "the two Wesleys, Charles and John," was "placed opposite the marriage bed" of Sheila and her husband (an ironic

image anticipating Johnston). All of these images convey the sense of a religious creed that tolerated no levity, no moment of idleness, however enraptured, no private and sensual pleasure in marriage - indeed, no joy at all. The grim, "exhausting" nature of a Methodist Sunday is described on page 12, and we see on that same page that any yearning for lightness and frivolity was quenched: when, for a school concert, "Mageila wanted to sing a French folk-song her mother insisted on Moody and Sankey." The "loveliness" alluded to by Feder is here shown to be regarded as sacrilegious. As Mageila reflects on her mother's family's Methodism later on in the novel, "The Wesleys had bleak flesh, unlike the flesh of her own father [who, as previously mentioned, was French and Roman Catholic]. They could not speak with his joyous voice, neither could they stand with suspended hands and listen to a high birdcall. The Wesleys could not dance, because they had stiffened their knees against altars" (89). And while the Roman Catholic authors we will later discuss would probably take exception to Duley's rather romanticized elevation of Catholicism compared to Methodism as a vehicle of joyfulness (and while this depiction of Catholicism clashes with Duley's depiction of it in Cold Pastoral), the principal authorial concern here is with a harsh, Wesleyan attitude towards life with which Duley seems to be intimately acquainted, and which her narrative condemns.

Horwood's narrative in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday also condemns the religious creed of the characters about whom he writes, and his condemnation is even more personal and bitter than

Duley's. As O'Flaherty writes in The Rock Observed, "Horwood excoriates with ... ferocity and disdain" the "evangelical Christianity" of Caplin Bight (166). At the very beginning of the novel, the "primitive, negative moral code" of Caplin Bight is "summed up:"

... sex was sin (except between husband and wife, in bed with their clothes on, and avoiding anything "unnatural"). Swearing or using "vulgar language" was sin. Sloth and sensual pleasure were sins. These were all sins against God ... So long as you didn't kill, steal, lie, or blaspheme, and so long as you kept yourself "pure" - that is, sexless - you walked perfect before the Lord. The only positive commandment was that of hard work.(4)

As previously mentioned, the God of Caplin Bight was a wrathful one, such that, in a prayer meeting designed to try to cure a sick child, the people's task was "wrestling with God" rather than appealing to his mercy (27, emphasis mine). Brother McKim's very first sermon in the community warns of God's wrath: "Behold the Lord cometh from afar ... burning with anger. His lips are full of indignation, and His tongue a devouring fire"(59). "This God, like the one in Duncan's The Way of the Sea, is no dear Lord but "God in the form of the awful shape of Justice," and McKim describes the "imminent" end of the world as a time when people will be "dung upon the ground" with "the stink ... com[ing] up out of their carcasses"(60), as a conclusion to "the six thousand years of sorrow and weeping that began with Adam's fall"(63). Such language bespeaks the utterly joyless, life-repellent code of McKim's fundamentalism. This mixture of "the Old Testament, which he knew

almost by heart," and "the Book of Revelation, which he knew absolutely by heart"(59) was the spell Brother McKim cast over Caplin Bight. This its people readily absorbed. And Horwood, like Duncan, does not hesitate to use authorial intrusion to drive his point home and to make it clear where he stands on the issue of Caplin Bight's religiosity; McKim's dark prophecy, he writes, caused most of the people to abandon their fishery and prepare for the end of the world, when they "should have been ... repairing their boats and preparing for the trap voyage"(65, emphasis mine).

We see a similar authorial intrusion in Horwood's description of McKim's wife, Sister Leah - an intrusion, again, which makes clear his personal stance, and serves to reinforce in the reader the sense of religious harshness Horwood perceives in what he presents as the religious fanaticism of Caplin Bight. "Sister Leah," he writes, "hated [the unbelievers in the community] with the sort of bitter, unforgiving hatred that is reserved for the deeply religious, and that, in other ages, launched massacres and civil wars"(76). Horwood here is not displaying Caplin Bight's religious code as one peculiar to outport existence, but is relating it to what he perceives as religion's long-time, widespread effect upon the world: a tendency to inspire hatred. In this regard, too, he reveals a personal vendetta against religious extremism in a way similar to Duncan who, as earlier stated, related the light in the eyes of a character he proclaimed to be deluded to the ancient light in the original prophets' eyes.

So harsh is the notion of God the people of Caplin Bight

have internalized that the concept of a loving God - again as in Duncan - seems suspect and foreign to them. When Brother McKim, warmed by the carnal pleasure he eventually experienced with protagonist Eli, began preaching, not of God's wrath, but of his love, "It was the first time in many years that the rough but kindly fisherfolk of Caplin Bight had heard the gospel of love preached ... It sounded strange and somewhat upsetting to ears attuned to the gospel of hate, but on the whole they viewed with favour, if with a little mistrust, this newly revealed aspect of the Almighty"(186). But ultimately - and tragically - the fundamentalist preacher cannot sustain in himself this sense of a merciful and loving God. Once his homosexual deeds have been made public, and his wife has proclaimed to him that he is "cursed an' cut off from the Lord's elect," his name "blotted out o' the Book o' Life," he concludes that "There be no forgiveness, I know, for the sin agin' the Lord. The Lord is a hard taskmaster"(341-342).

The harshness and joylessness of religions that present the Lord as "a hard taskmaster," and the consequent ramifications of such creeds for the people who embrace them, seen in Duncan, Duley, and in Horwood's Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, form part of Horwood's "case" against the Moravian mission in White Eskimo, where his principal concern seems to be the insensitive zeal with which the missionaries drove out the Inuits' old religion to replace it with a new and unsuitable one. It is ironic that Duley, herself so concerned with the harsh, deadening quality of Methodism in Highway to Valour, could write of the tourists who travelled by

ship to the Labrador coast that "They learned the history of the Moravian Church in Labrador, of the Brethren settling far away to divert the Eskimo from his plundering ways" (Highway to Valour, 196). For in Horwood's story it is the "Brethren" who did the plundering, attempting to replace the joyful pagan customs inherent in and suited to the Inuits' lifestyle with a grim Protestantism that suppressed their joyful responses to life while interfering with their long-evolved physical adaptation to it.

The Moravian Reverend Manfred Kosh is characterized as a man "armed with the sword of the spirit to do battle for the Cross against the power of the Drum" (22), the "drum" being a reference to Inuit ceremonies that the Moravian missionaries had forbidden for three generations (23). In mid-story, feeling threatened by the charismatic influence of the "white Eskimo" Gillingham, who encouraged the Inuit to resume their pagan rituals and beliefs, Kosh is shown calling in a riot squad to stop all pagan celebration, "Enforcing Christianity at gun point" (105) as it is ironically put. He is elsewhere shown to be willing to use the harshest of measures to retain the supremacy of his church among the Inuit: at one point we see him resorting in a sermon to sharp ridicule to denounce those Eskimos who have re-embraced their old ways and to woo the remaining ones to abide by his teachings (62-63). Visiting "pagan Eskimos" are given "the choice of Christian baptism or immediate expulsion from the settlement" (63), and the sermon is "wound up with a peroration on sin and damnation that would have made the rafters ring had he been gifted with a better

voice, but Mr. Kosh's voice, unfortunately, was harsh rather than full, and grew harsher when he got excited" (63).

In White Eskimo, missionaries both "religious and medical" are condemned for striving to obtain charity for suffering natives who would not have been suffering if their way of life had been left unchanged (153). Christian religious holidays, which the Inuit are forced by the Mission to observe, coincide with the best hunting times, and thus prevent them from harvesting their food from nature as they would once have done (49,67), while making them easier prey to the 'flu epidemics that are part of the trappings of white civilization that the missionaries have visited upon them (50,68).

The Inuit in White Eskimo, unlike the characters of the other novels just discussed, do not, for the most part, internalize the grim doctrine that has been thrust upon them, managing to comply with the religious form required of them without even comprehending its content. In one scene we see Reverend Kosh witnessing the "spontaneous outburst of joy" the Eskimos are still capable of demonstrating in celebrating the arrival of friends and family, which, it is narratively conjectured, he must be comparing grimly with the "stilted and formalized greetings" they have learned to give him upon his own arrivals to the community (60). But the authorial condemnation of the religion he represents is declared, in no uncertain terms, in the diatribe against Protestantism and its harsh, life-denying tenets in a passage

delivered by one of the novel's narrators:

[Protestantism is] a terrible creed - ruthless, sick and sentimental, all at once ... They denied love. This was perhaps their greatest evil. They had their 'love feasts' as a substitute for real human relations, perverting love into a sickly religious sentimentality, but they were cold to their wives and cruel to their children and distant to their friends.

They turned worldly success, business, trade, into religious virtue. They became hard and inhuman; hardness and inhumanity they called godliness. And because they had robbed their lives of natural warmth, denying tenderness and compassion, denying all sensual pleasures except sadism and the lust for wealth and power, they had to create an emotional substitute. The hymn sing, the prayer meeting, the gathering of the 'saved' as distinct from public worship, became an emotional wallow where all the human feelings that were denied to their families and friends were turned toward the fantasy objects of their faith ... (88-90)

This is not a "Protestantism" inspired by the physical hardships of Newfoundland and Labrador; it is a creed imported from northern Europe (88). And in White Eskimo, while the missionary attempt to ingrain it in the minds of the Inuit is Horwood's principal religious focus, he does not miss the opportunity to allude to its appearance in Newfoundland and Labrador - and Canada - as a whole. Gillingham makes an observation which anticipates a theme of religious harshness we will encounter in Johnston's novels and in O'Flaherty's short stories: if you were schooled by "mission types," the teachers "knew that love was only another name for sin, so the nearest they could get to loving anybody was to whip him"(119). Hence, while White Eskimo differs from the other fiction dealing with pre-Confederate times in that its exploration

of religion is not of a religion that is fully functioning in the majority of its characters, its depictions of the harshness of religious creed as lived by its adherents resemble those of 'The Way of the Sea', Duley's three novels, and Tomorrow Will Be Sunday.

In House of Hate and Maud's House there is reference, too, to the harshness of the religious codes experienced by the novels' characters, although in these two works the reference is more brief. In House of Hate Janes mentions the "strict as the Bible" Methodism and the "suffocating atmosphere of piety at home" from which the narrator's mother, Gertrude, escaped (16). And far later in the novel, Gertrude's son Crawfie is shown to be the victim of a religious intolerance amounting to harshness that still goes on today - he is "struck off the Anglican Teaching List for the entire Province" because it is discovered that, while serving as a teacher, he has been "living common-law" (238). However, except for these remarks, and the propensity of the characters to harbour denominational intolerance as previously discussed, religion is seldom shown functioning in this novel.

In Maud's House, however, we find striking if brief echoes of the religious creed functioning in the works of Duncan, Duley, and Horwood. The hell-fire of the new fundamentalist religion that has been brought to George's Cove is at first startling to a people used to a gentler Methodism (although Duley might question such "gentleness") that has "died" (52-53). However, it does not take them long to absorb this new and harsher creed,

with a resultant change in community behaviour:

George's Cove had gone different. And though the dances still kept on ... there was a difference. At least on the surface and that was where it mattered most. That was where the nods didn't go friendly; that was where the backs could turn; that was where the hellos stopped. And even if it was still the same underneath, it didn't really matter.(54)

What the new religion has given George's Cove is a disinclination towards human kindness, and a new propensity to shun one's neighbour - the sort of propensity that might be found in Horwood's Caplin Bight.

In the new fundamentalism of George's Cove, all of the pastor's sermons focus on sin (69). The music and dancing still extant in the community are remnant evils of still more sinful times. As the pastor ruminates while standing at the pulpit, "The music could hook the ears and tap feet that shouldn't be tapping;" and his great accomplishment, to date, is that "The community has become God fearing"(69). This view of song and frivolity as sinful echoes the Methodism in Highway to Valour, while the incitement to fear God is reminiscent of the religions depicted in The Way of the Sea and Tomorrow Will Be Sunday. Indeed, the image Gough evokes of Pastor Roberts' preoccupation with earthly sin links him with Duncan's deluded "healer" and Horwood's half-maddened Brother McKim and Sister Leah. Gough's pastor, reflecting on his parishioners, thinks thus:

Sinners all, the fishermen laugh and joke and make the water run red and make the gulls circle and scream, make the women in their households of sin cook and ready the house, send the children of sin, the children of

lust, all a-chatter in the morning air...(78)

In his morning meditations, Pastor Roberts

... wanted to see the place where sin was always ready, to see the place where he had helped God overcome the sin of that day. He and God had joined forces to fight, and that alliance could never be shaken; that alliance was foretold. It was hinted at in small passages that smoked and rang like dream bells in the works of the Prophets. (77)

Pastor Roberts' sense of joining God in battle in an "alliance foretold ... in the works of the Prophets" evokes the earlier authors' images of an inhuman light burning zealously in the eyes of the crazed and deluded. His utter condemnation of his flock as foul and hopeless sinners is reminiscent of the image of people as "dung upon the ground" in Brother McKim's vision of the Second Coming. We see in these authorial depictions religions based on harsh negativity, on fear, on a joyless "straight and narrow path" conceived through a sense of man's inherent evil. So harsh is the God of this religion that in Caplin Bight people must "wrestle" with him; in George's Cove he is asked to "help ... crush the evil from [a] life" (78, emphasis mine). The woman whose evil Pastor Roberts seeks to "crush" is the aforementioned Maud; the "evil" of which she is guilty is her sensuality, which has caused her to live common-law with what "should" have been one of George's Cove's God-fearing men, and which continues to emanate from her in such an alluring way that "godly" men like the pastor must wrestle their lust into hatred in order to resist her. And these themes - of woman as the evil temptress, and of sensuality, sexuality, and the body as evils to be reviled by the God-fearing - recur in

Newfoundland fiction from the turn of the century right up to the 1990s, giving further evidence of the authorially-perceived harshness and divisiveness of religion as leading to a tragically life-denying human existence.

v. Woman as Evil Temptress and Grim Preserver of Doctrine.

In fiction dealing with pre-Confederation Newfoundland, woman is portrayed as the evil temptress - a creature for God-fearing men to be wary of - principally in the works of Duncan, Horwood, and Gough. Duncan, in the story "The Breath of the North," in which old Eleazar Manuel and his foster son James Rideout, while returning home from delivering fish to a trader, survive a perilous and unexpected early winter storm at sea, depicts Eleazar as a man harbouring a bitter and mistrustful notion of woman-the-temptress through his attitude towards the Biblical Eve. "It was a proverb in Ragged Harbour," writes Duncan, "that Eleazar Manuel couldn't 'bide Eve"(104) - a proverb borne out in his diatribe against her as he and James set out on their return to Ragged Harbour. "She do be to blame for it all," Eleazar "snorts." And he continues, "Old Eve! ... Sure, 'n had I been Adam, I'd a' trounced she for that. 'N it hadn't been for Eve, James Rideout, you'd have a fine garden t' walk in ... An' you wouldn't have t' goa out t' the grounds in a brewin' gale"(102-103). Throughout the early part of the story, Eleazar enumerates the ways in which he would punish Eve, if he had the opportunity: "She'd split fish for her sin," he says, and "In the sweat o' the brow o' she, she'd ...

chop wood" (102). It is somehow significant that Eleazar blames the female element in his spiritual world view for the hardships he sees as man's perennial lot, particularly in that, as I have noted elsewhere, the female as "evil temptress" and male-destroyer is a narrative motif elsewhere in Duncan's ten stories. Narrative similes liken the tide to "the hand of a woman on a victim's arm," leading him with "her winks and empty chatter" to his death. "The sea in its treachery is declared, by the narrator, to be "like a fair finger beckoning" (Duncan, 12-13; 30; Ryan, 191-192). Whether such allusions bespeak an authorial mistrust of the female element in the universe, or rather contribute to Duncan's depiction of the general mindset of Ragged Harbour fishermen, they convey the notion of woman-the-temptress as a definite fictional theme.

In Horwood's Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, the locally-perceived "evil temptress" is Virginia Marks, with whom both protagonist Eli and his teacher/mentor Christopher fall in love. Virginia, the first girl in Caplin Bight to dare to wear shorts, is a "public indecency parading Jezebel-like" in a community that "unanimously regarded the female body as unclean, if not actually contrived by Satan for the furtherance of sin" (126). Indeed, Virginia herself has internalized this notion of her "wickedness;" we find that despite her defiance of local morality she is burdened with a "profound" and "haunting sense of sin" (271), a sin which she describes to Eli in this way:

I want to tempt people - to coax them into sin. That gives me the greatest pleasure of all. I can't stand the smell of righteousness in a man ... You see, I'm a natural-born

temptress. I want to dance like the Egyptians, with only gossamer to cover my body and the hot, hungry eyes of men consuming my flesh. I want to ride like Lady Godiva, naked on the back of a coal-black stallion, while the eyes of the saved gleam from behind their lace curtains. I'd like to tempt every one of them into the most shameful lust and madness, so they'd drool at the mouth and do sinful acts they couldn't help - That's the kind of woman I am. (272)

"That kind of woman," who in this novel caused "Hcary-headed fishermen" to lay "down their fish forks, and gawky youths [to forget] their barrows while they stared openmouthed" (126), like the "fair finger beckoning" in The Way of the Sea, is locally conceived as a manifestation of evil, a conception both inspired and reinforced by the prevailing religious code; this conception, in turn, facilitates a sharp conceptual division between what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman in its proponents, thus contributing to a divisive mistrust between the sexes.

Paradoxically, while woman is shown to be perceived by the characters of both these works as an agent of sin and of man's downfall, women are also portrayed, by both authors, as being what I have called elsewhere the "grim guardian[s] of the most conservative interpretations of religious doctrine" (Ryan, 192). In Duncan's stories "Concerning Billy Luff and Master Goodchild" and "In the Fear of the Lord," it is a woman who insists upon the notion of a harsh, unforgiving God, overriding an attempted male resistance to that notion (see Ryan, 192); in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday it is Brother McKim's sexless, unloving wife, Sister Leah,

who embodies all the grimmest, most life-denying tenets of her religion. It is shown repeatedly that when Brother McKim doles out his harshest fundamentalist "medicine," it is always at Sister Leah's "prompting" (see pp.212,298,300,323,334,341). This paradoxical view of woman as both evil temptress and doctrine-bound detester of the flesh, revealed in fiction focussed on pre-Confederation Newfoundland as operant in Protestant-oriented fundamentalism, will reappear in Johnston's three post-Confederation fictional treatments of Roman Catholic Newfoundland - and calls to mind Margaret Duley's observation, in her article on Newfoundland literature, that "Newfoundland has been called a severely masculine country" (23). Whether or not there is truth in the notion that Newfoundland society has historically been "severely masculine" in its overall orientation, it is certainly true that the fictional works just cited convey the sense that to their characters woman, both as perpetuator of religious dogma and as sinful, alluring temptress, is separate from and detrimental to the male element in Newfoundland culture.

The notion of woman-as-evil-temptress in fiction addressing pre-Confederation Newfoundland surfaces again in Maud's House. As previously discussed, the fundamentalist preacher Pastor Roberts transforms his lust for Maud into hatred, while somehow excusing what he perceives as his own evil longings as being the result of the evil web of allure which Maud has spun. Hence it is Maud, and not the pastor, who is evil and guilty: "Maud ... Her sin, her eyes a-blaze with the devil's music, even Ern's fiddle

catching the tune when Maud got too near"(69). So we further see here, in the pastor's musings, that as far as he is concerned, Ern is not to be blamed either for the sinful union he has entered with Maud. "The sensuality that she exudes is a deadly trap into which an innocent man can fall, "whores" being "deep ditches and narrow pits," as the scriptures explain. This view of Maud as a temptress, her sensuality giving her alliance with the devil, is shared by the community of George's Cove, at large: in a community where all the good wives knit their socks the colour grey, Maud celebrates her uniqueness and her joy in sensual things by knitting Ern red ones - and there they hang "Next to the bloomers" when she has done her washing, a visible sign to all in George's Cove that Maud is a woman steeped in sin (17), as is made clear in the snatches of gossip revealed during a local dance at which she and Ern are present (18-19).

In the fictional works just discussed, women are agents of sin because they use their sensuality to lure man to a physical and/or a spiritual downfall. That sensuality, whether harboured in the minds and souls of the male or the female characters, is a further cause for damnation. For in many of the fictional outports of pre-Confederation Newfoundland - as well as in the fictional farmlands and suburbs of Newfoundland after Confederation - sexual relations are depicted as being little more than dreadful procreational necessities, and the human body as a thing to be reviled, in the religious codes directing the minds and lives of the characters. This religious attitude towards sex and the body

is in some cases treated with wry humor; elsewhere it is shown to have a truly damaging effect on the human psyche and on human relations. And, as we will see at the end of this chapter, as well as in Part Two of this thesis, there are times when the fictionally-perceived grimness of the religious directives concerning sexuality and concomitant human love lead directly to human tragedy.

vi. Sex and the Body as Evils to be Reviled.

Norman Duncan and Percy Janes are singular among the writers dealing with early twentieth century Newfoundland for their general lack of attention to religious attitudes towards sexuality. In Janes' House of Hate, as we have seen, patriarch Saul Stone's chief condemnation of sexuality is if it causes "dirty Micks" to copulate with "decent Anglicans" or if it is so much as suggested as a possibility between his daughter and a Jew (66). As such, it is a sign of his denominational bigotry rather than of any deeply-held anti-sexual religious attitude on his part. In Duncan's The Way of the Sea, while we have already seen old Eleazar Manuel's personal condemnation of Eve, and while young Jim Rideout is in two stories described as being "sinful mad for the maids" (101, 164), sexual relations between men and women are seldom an issue. In the one story where love and concomitant sexuality are featured - "The Love of the Maid" - there is nothing in the narrative description to suggest that there is a locally-held aversion to love or to sexuality. Indeed, in that story, where an old, provident man and

a young, romantically improvident one contend for the hand of a desirable "maid," old Elihu Gale's love and desire are described as "the living green of his heart"(162), while the maid's physical attributes, which are described as a blending of sensual attractiveness and the robust strength befitting an outport woman (163), seem to be locally approved of. No one is shown condemning her for them. Indeed, when Elihu witnesses young Jim's attempt to seduce the maid one evening, and we are told that it was Elihu's "opinion" that this "was a deed that deserved, and would eventuate in, damnation to a fiery lake"(165), his thoughts appear to spring from jealousy rather than from religious promptings. For the "Old Crow Road," described here as well as in "In the Breath of the North" as the courting path for young couples, appears to be a communally-accepted part of life in Ragged Harbour. Even Eleazar Manuel, who condemns "Eve-the-temptress" so sharply, appears to see "the Old Crow in the Spring, when the maids is laughing in the dusk" as acceptable - intimating only that if it were not for Eve, Ragged Harbour would have a better "roaad" upon which to court (103). Duncan's Ragged Harbour characters, though filled with the fear of hell's fire and damnation in many other aspects of their lives, are not shown to be religiously-directed to condemn sexual love.

In the religious codes at work in the fiction of Duley, Horwood, and Gough, however, sexual love and the human body do not get off so lightly. In The Eyes of the Gull, Duley has outsider Peter Keen and the protagonist Isabel allude to the difference

between the outport's religiously-conceived notion of love and love as it can be in its sensual and emotional entirety (50-52). To Isabel, love means procreation; the glamorous outsider educates Isabel by declaring "there are no babies in the love I mean." We then discover that Isabel is capable of comprehending and yearning for that latter form of love, which she likens to that described in the Song of Solomon (51). But we quickly learn that Isabel has not been "allowed to read" this part of the Bible - presumably because of its celebration of the sensual, which is intolerable to the religious mindsets of her people. Later we see Isabel, now aflame with the love - both emotional and physical - which Peter has awakened in her, searching the faces of the people of her village for evidence of any similar experience of love, but finding that "all the faces held no flame and the bodies contained no spring" (87). In church, similarly studying the minister and his wife for signs of a joyful sensuality, she muses:

The minister's black arms sawed the air and his fist banged the shiny cover of the great Bible. Could those banging hands lie gently on his wife's delighted flesh? It seemed incredible! The mouth of the minister's wife was thin and severe and looked like Aunt Susie Cruikshank's when she said 'wine is a mocker.'
(87)

To the "world of the little brown church" in which Isabel lives, "delighted flesh" is either unimaginable or forbidden; indeed, at the novel's conclusion when the charitable Aunt Dorcas attends Isabel's death and hears of the loving sexual experience Isabel has had with Peter Keen, even Dorcas, whose religious faith is characterized by a relative tolerance, regards Isabel's sexual

experience as "sin" and only prays that God will not "lay it" at the dying girl's "door," excusing her for her grave transgression because she had been "raised without love" - and Dorcas is not referring, here, to a fleshly, sensual love, but rather, to the parental variety (196-197). There is clearly no room, in the religious mindset of this community, for love that does not necessarily result in "babies," nor for the celebration of the sensual found in the Song of Solomon.

Though there is scant treatment of the religious attitude towards sexuality in Cold Pastoral, where it does appear it is similar to that of The Eyes of the Gull. Here Duley translates the Protestant aversion to the flesh to what she deems its Roman Catholic equivalent. There is a semi-comic scene, early in the novel, where the local priest, visiting Mary Immaculate and her mother in their outport home, attempts to explain the myth of Venus in the half-shell to Mary because she, too, was "born from the sea." Josephine, "Torn between respect for the infallibility of the Church" and her sense of discomfort over this talk of Venus, which smacks of the erotic, muses of the priest: "Pity he didn't tell her about the lives of the Saints and teach her to be reverent to those above"(19). Pondering on the name Venus, she suddenly remembers "the house in the City" in which she had once worked, where there had been a "great picture ... with three women posturing in front of a man seated on a bit of a platform. Three naked women!" And here Josephine "Quickly ... mumbled an Aspiration, for fear of impure thoughts." She recalls that the

picture's title had been "The Judgement of Paris," and that "Paris was a man, setting himself up to decide which woman was the most beautiful." Venus, she recalls, "With a red face," was "one of the hussies"(20). Here we see Duley portraying an outport woman who, because of her relative unsophistication, adheres to the tenets of her faith even more stringently than does her urbane spiritual leader in shunning the "evils of the flesh." Further on in the novel, however, Duley portrays a city priest as sharing Josephine's aversion to the fleshly and sensual. On a lovely Sunday morning when Mary attends "eleven o'clock Mass,"

Muffled through the panes came the sounds of the world. There seemed to be barks, shouts, swishes, and a sense of humanity urged hither and thither. Summer was fugitive, overfull of sea, sky and gourmand youth. As if oppressed with red blood, the priest preached of modesty, virtue, the brevity of bathing suits and the audacity of shorts. (137)

Both Josephine and this preacher feel "oppressed with red blood" - seeing it as a threat to the unearthly spirituality required of them by their faith. In this sense their aversion to the sensual reflects that of the local characters in The Eyes of the Gull, and anticipates a similar aversion in Horwood's Tomorrow Will Be Sunday where, as already mentioned, Virginia Marks, like one of Josephine's "hussies," is branded as evil on account of the "audacity" of the shorts she dares to wear.

In Highway to Valour, Duley writes with comic irony of aversion-to-the-flesh Wesleyan fashion, where any reference to the reproductive organs - which translates as a matter of course into a reference to human sexuality - is an unfitting topic of

conversation. When Mageila "asked her mother what womb was," writes Duley, "she was told it was a word in the Bible"(3). Similarly, this woman's sisters, commendable models of Methodism, as already mentioned, "did not recognize their bodies"(202). In a mindset where dancing is sinful, and a French Catholic, by taking delight in the sensual beauty of life, is deemed frivolous and imprudent, the body, with all its reproductive and hence sexual associations, is not fit to think about. As Duley writes in an ironically humorous mode that anticipates Wayne Johnston's treatments of the same topic in The Story of Bobby O'Malley (1985) and The Divine Ryans, Mageila's Aunt Molly "spoke openly of paying extra for virgin eggs to put in her cakes"(202). In the Wesleyan mindset here represented by Duley, even a cake is inferior if one of its ingredients has been defiled by the sexual act of hens and roosters - and a good Methodist does not mind alluding openly to the relative godliness of her sexually-untainted baking.

When we reach Horwood, though, we find fictional treatments of the religious attitude towards sex and the body that are in no way humorous. As Fowler puts it in his analysis of Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, "an oppressive sexual puritanism prevails in the community" of Caplin Bight which is "of crucial significance for a boy [Eli Pallisher] on the brink of puberty" (Fowler, 125) - and which we have seen as significant to Virginia Marks' self-concept. This can be shown to be equally "significant" in the fate of the fundamentalist preacher, John McKim.

Part of the prevailing religion in Horwood's Caplin Bight

was the directive to "despise the body and regard it as unclean." Hence, neither of protagonist Eli's parents "ever undressed in the children's presence," and the children themselves were taught at an early age to reveal as little of their nakedness as possible (3). Because of this religious aversion to the body, "Boys never went outdoors without their shirts, even on the hottest days; girls never exposed their legs above the calf. Even husbands and wives did not look upon one another's nudity; they mated in their clothes, and almost always in the dark"(125).

As Horwood portrays it, the result of this repressive attitude towards sexuality was a deeply-embedded sense of guilt in the protagonist Eli, the young "temptress" Virginia, and the majority of the youth in Caplin Bight as they began feeling the naturally occurring sexual desires of adolescence. Eli, who "found himself roused when a horse was whipped or another child was beaten ... linked this shameful pleasure in cruelty with the taboo against sex to produce a deep and abiding sense of guilt"(4). In Caplin Bight, then, it was easy to link a "pleasure in cruelty" which may indeed have been "shameful" with the total experience of sexuality, because sex was deemed so dark and sinful - an unfortunate and unhealthy linkage which the prevailing religious strictures nonetheless fostered. Similarly, Eli felt damned for his more healthy desires; "already at the age of twelve Eli had felt [Virginia] stir his blood with desires that, he was certain, were both disgusting and sinful"(11). To be guiltily convinced that natural sexual longing is "disgusting" at the tender age of twelve

is a heavy burden. And Eli was not alone in feeling this burden of guilt. Virginia Marks was "the chief object of the immature sex fantasies of the younger boys" in Caplin Bight, and "Nothing short of torture," writes Horwood, "would have wrung from them a confession that the image of Virginia followed them to bed, sent the blood pounding through their loins and their hands guiltily exploring the unmentionable region between their legs"(128).

It can be argued that there is a taboo against masturbation in Western society that is far more widespread and far less directly religiously-inspired than the taboo experienced in Caplin Bight. However, the rigid fundamentalism of this small community invested that taboo with a particularly confounding sense of evil and of sin, which was psychically crippling to those who wrestled with it. Eli went through his youth "with a lingering sense of sin profoundly rooted in his soul"(171); Virginia Marks, as previously discussed, was "a gypsy with a profound sense of sin," convinced because of her celebration of sexuality of her own "damnation"(271). This sense of sin sprang directly from the religious conviction, voiced by the fallen pastor John McKim, that the "flesh" is the "cross" you bear (339) - a conviction embodied most pronouncedly in his wife, Sister Leah:

Sin, in her view, was just another word for carnal pleasure, the greatest of all sins being the rapture of the lovers' embrace. Though she admitted the value of such forbidden fruits as a means of testing the faithful, whether they be pure gold, tried as by fire, she nevertheless doubted the wisdom of the Lord in mixing up the stern duty of replenishing the earth with the sensual pleasures that seemed to be inescapable from

it. If sex could have been all duty and no pleasure it would, she felt, have been a much more fitting arrangement. (74)

Sister Leah's Protestant fundamentalist attitude directly foreshadows the extremes of a Roman Catholic attitude towards sexuality as construed by Johnston in his characters Agnes O'Malley in The Story of Bobby O'Malley and Aunt Phil in The Divine Ryans. In all of these cases, it must be pointed out, it is not necessarily religious creed itself so much as an individual's interpretation of that creed which wreaks the psychic havoc. To that extent, then, the authors may be said to be exposing - and implicitly, condemning - not so much religion as the human susceptibility to carry religious belief to a damaging extreme. In Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, the most pitiful and profoundly damaged "victim" of this extremism is not young Eli or Virginia Marks but Brother John McKim himself, whose plight becomes clear to Eli in the scene in which McKim ensnares him in a homosexual relationship:

Was it possible, Eli wondered, that the pastor carried on in this boisterously sensual manner with Sister Leah, his wife? But the moment the question crossed his mind he knew the answer. That bitter, monumental woman could respond to her husband's caresses no more than if carved from marble. If they had any sexual relations at all - which Eli doubted - it was a cold affair in which she submitted passively to a very tame embrace, radiating disapproval and spiritual pain while the pastor sought the rapture of the orgasm.

How lonely the man must be, how [ull] of unsuccored wants, Eli thought, to have sought him out as he had done! For the first time he began to understand the feeling of compassion ... (181)

Guilt if you admit or succumb to sexuality, utter human loneliness:

if you refrain from it: this seems to be the psychic legacy inherent in the religiosity - or in the characters' interpretations of that religiosity - of Horwood's Caplin Bight. It is a theme he carries over into the novel White Eskimo, and one explored in Gough's Maud's House, as well.

In White Eskimo, where the Inuit attitude towards the body and sexuality is frequently compared with that of the missionaries - and of "white men" in general - Inuit sexuality is predictably shown to be far more healthy than the white Protestant variety. "Among white men," comments the messianic Gillingham, "sex is a nice mixture of the sacred and the obscene"(119). The "rich sensual life" that the Eskimos have "always enjoyed"(89), wherein

No feelings of guilt are ever instilled in Eskimo babies or children. Sex play at all ages is indulged and encouraged. Girls are expected to be pregnant, or even to give birth, before marriage. And friends who never swapped husbands and wives would be looked on as a little odd. (63)

is called "original sin" by the "missionaries," with their "black pall of Protestantism"(89). And whatever "violence" over "women" has erupted in a community like Nain is blamed, by Gillingham - and, implicitly by the author - on "feelings of guilt and taboo" with which "the missionaries have inoculated the mission Eskimos"(119). The European Protestants, according to Gillingham, have, as earlier quoted, "den[ied] all sensual pleasures except sadism and the lust for wealth and power," substituting for their innate but denied sensuality the "safety valve" of the "prayer

meeting"(89). Sexuality, viewed as "disgusting" in the fundamentalism in which Eli Pallisher is reared, is "obscene" in the more moderate but equally anti-sexual sects of the white Europeans in White Eskimo.

The same view of sexuality and sensuality recurs in the already discussed Pastor Roberts of Maud's House, although he is ultimately seen by both characters and readers to be more an aberration than a typical example of his brand of Christianity. Even the evil Vince notices this, sensing in the pastor's home "the Methodist gone wrong," so that "every dark coloured book on the shelves, each picture on the wall ... radiates hate and the tenseness of a house that waits for any wrong move; the statement that is suspect; the hint of rebuke from the wife; the move of a daughter that might be sensual"(68). To Pastor Roberts, even young children represent sin, because they are the products of a procreation based on "lust"(78) - an attitude that links him with Sister Leah of Tomorrow Will Be Sunday. But while Pastor Roberts may represent an extreme in the new religion of George's Cove, the community itself, as shown in the previous discussion of woman-the-temptress, is morally disinclined towards any manifestation of sensuality. The redness of Maud's knitting wool and the "black rush" of her hair as she lets it loose to dance (18) are viewed as suspect and unseemly.

Hence, in fictional communities where religious form tends to be embraced without regard for its content, where perennial hardship is somehow explained and accepted as the will of

a wrathful God, and where women can be singled out as perpetrators of evil because of an evident sexuality which religious creed condemns in both sexes, the predominant religious tenet seems to be that human life - in its many manifestations - represents spiritual corruption. Therefore, religious doctrine, and/or an erroneous interpretation of that doctrine, is shown in work after work to strip characters of compassion, while causing in some a profound loneliness and even a tragic renunciation of life. The remainder of this chapter will address this issue as it manifests itself in fiction focussed on pre-Confederation Newfoundland; and no author explores it with more poignance than the earliest one treated here, Norman Duncan.

vii. Religion as Life-Denying.

In two of Duncan's stories - "Concerning Billy Luff and Master Goodchild" and "The Fruits of Toil" - the sense that human compassion is easily overridden by the human determination to delve and wallow in a misguided sense of religiosity is clearly evoked (Ryan, 194-195). In both stories, the characters' propensity for mixing their religious convictions with folkloric belief in order to attain what they perceive as divine revelations causes them to treat their fellow man inhumanely - and, in one case, to pursue religiosity at the expense of human love. This propensity stems from the locally-held belief that the dying can reveal heavenly portents; and while the belief derives in part from folklore, the conviction that witnessing these portents is a religious imperative

does not.

In the first story, as the child, Billy Luff, lies on his deathbed, the tragic victim of a perversion of faith soon to be discussed, his Ragged Harbour neighbours eagerly flock to his bedside because, as "He's a holy child ... 'tis like the Lard'll send a sign when he dies"(149). The thought that a child might die more peacefully without an expectant audience does not enter their minds as, dressed in their Sunday finest and "in a state of delicious excitement," they "set out for Billy Luff's home"(148). When they reach it, the villagers find that the child is now wavering between a recitation of the religious "revelations" he knows they are expecting of him and the first voicings of his very human fear of dying - which causes the presiding parson to pray "even more fervently that a confident, glorious death might be granted onto this child"(151-152). The parson is thus as guilty as the villagers of seeking what will be the fulfilment of a personal religious conviction, regardless of the human element: the child's true feelings, and his fear. The little boy, who has just finished "whimpering" that "I doan't want t'die" to his mother, suddenly sees "The people, pressing in at the door to watch him," and resumes reciting the religious prophecies he knows they want to hear, "but so faintly that the ears of Priscilla Stride barely caught the words"(151-152). By such observations, as well as by his choice of language (e.g., the people's "state of delicious excitement") Duncan makes clear, through his subtle yet bitter irony, his authorial condemnation of this human propensity for

disregarding the value of life and of an individual's true feelings in an almost hysterical greed for the religious knowledge deemed to be of more importance.

"The Fruits of Tcil" contains the same theme, although in this case only a dying man and his wife are present. Here Solomon Stride, who struggled all his life for very meager "fruits" yet because of his religious mindset humbly saw them as an undeserved, God-given largesse, is attended at his deathbed by his wife Priscilla who, already seen among the crowd in "Concerning Billy Luff and Master Goodchild," is consumed with the desire to hear religious revelations from her dying husband's lips. Three times as "the soul of the man struggled to release itself" and Solomon, barely strong enough to speak, hovers between life and death, Priscilla single-mindedly pleads with him to reveal to her an answer to the religious mysteries with which she has long been preoccupied. Her final communication to him, then, is not her love, nor her grief over his departure, but simply her impatience to hear from him the revelations she feels he is "supposed" to produce. Her "moan," as he dies, is thus not a moan of loving grief; it is merely the moan of disappointment of a woman whose religious preoccupations have not been satisfied (328-331). Human life is shown to be of little value among people caught up in a dehumanizing religiosity.

In "In the Fear of the Lord," Duncan shows how the harsh world of Ragged Harbour and the tendency of its residents to interpret religion in the cruelest and harshest of ways can cause

a man to deny himself all earthly joy, earthly love, and earthly pride in personal creation; and in this story, Duncan makes his own attitude towards this interpretive propensity very clear. Pitting the "dear Lord" against the "Lord God A'mighty," Duncan introduces this tale of the plight of Nazareth Lute by using the already-discussed theme of a "harsh religion for a harsh land" to explain the typical Ragged Harbour mindset, which Nazareth eventually subscribes to, and which ultimately leads him to a form of tragedy. "It was not the dear Lord: it was the Lord God A'mighty," writes Duncan, that destroyed Nazareth's capacity for happiness - the "Lord God A'mighty" being the concept of deity most believable in "bleak places" where there is nothing to "make love manifest to the children of men." And this harsh deity, Duncan declares, is "a fantastic misconception, the work of the blind minds of men, which has small part with mercy and the high leading of love" (219).

Nazareth, whose father, the narrator tells us, "died mad" because of an excess of religiosity (221), lived his youth in "a wickedness patent to all the folk of Ragged Harbour," walking the roads of the community with a "jaunty gait" when, as the sternest interpreters of local doctrine put it, "men should bear themselves," not with pride or joie de vivre, but "as 'wrigglin' worms'" before the Lord (224). A portion of Nazareth's wickedness was his youthful "sin of unfailing jollity," and here again Duncan makes it clear that he sides with human jollity rather than with human "wormliness," declaring that "only the unrighteous, who are wise in a way, and the children, who are all-wise, loved him"

then(224).

But Nazareth, the jolly, jaunty sinner, eventually converted to Ragged Harbour fundamentalism, mentioning in his "testimony" the "three wrecks an' the measles" with which the Lord had warned him, unsuccessfully, to repent (again showing how in Ragged Harbour, God was made manifest to people through local elements and hardships), and the final near-wreck that had won him over (227-231). So from here on in, Nazareth "lived righteously" and "according to the commands of the Lord God A'mighty, his god, whom he had fashioned of tempest and rock and the sea's rage, with which his land had abundantly provided him"(231-232). But the narrator makes sure that we realize that "righteous living," Ragged Harbour-style, is not attained without a price: now Nazareth's "eyes were blinded to all those beauties, both great and small, which the dear Lord has strewn in hearts and places, in love withholding not; and his ears were stopped against the tender whisperings which twilight winds waft with them," and having "put the sin of jollity far from him," he denied himself all "sensual delights," which his adopted doctrine told him "are like snares set for the souls of the unwary"(232-233).

Nazareth, it seems, began to sense a kind of emptiness within, now that he had turned from all earthly pleasure, envisioning the eternity in heaven he had won, by his righteousness, as a long stretch of time in which he did not know "what [he would] do"(234-235). From out of this emptiness, he gradually conceived the dream of building a wonderful schooner; and

in the process of whittling a model of it, "a new, flooding joy came to him - such happiness as he had not hoped for in earth or heaven": the human joy of creation (236). Now "his last waking thought was not of the Lord God A'mighty ... nor yet of a yawning hell, but of the thing which his hands were forming"(237). In the ensuing years, as he worked on his schooner, "the cloud and flame of the wrath of the Lord God A'mighty, his god, were unperceived and forgotten"(246), as his heart, unfolding through the joy of creation, began to conceive the idea of a dear Lord, who would say to him at Judgement Day, "'Good an' faithful sarvent ... enter into thy reward, for you done well along o' that there schooner'," and perhaps even, "'I'm proud o' you, b'y - I'm fair proud o' you"(244) - a poignant revelation of Nazareth's longing to feel his God's love and approval.

Unfortunately, the locally-held interpretation of godliness soon intervened to take from Nazareth all of his happiness; as the narrator warns at the story's beginning, although "the benighted child within [Nazareth] trembled, ever trembled, to hear Love's timid knocking," the "doors of that poor heart were [ultimately] fast closed against Him ["He" being the "dear Lord"] (219). At the height of Nazareth's period of creation, old Simon Luff, who subscribed to the harsh religion of the Lord God A'mighty, likened Nazareth's schooner to the Biblical "golden calf," warning him that he loved his creation more than he loved the grim Lord God and would therefore be condemned - and Nazareth succumbed to the old man's grim pronouncement (247-248).

Again Duncan makes clear his personal vision that the true universe is, or should be, a compassionate one, presided over by a God who delighted in man's joys and earthly creations. "From the stars to the shimmering water and from the sea's misty rim to the first shrubs and shadows of the wilderness," says the narrator, "the infinite hymned the praise of great works" (248), as Nazareth, newly condemned by old Simon, fell asleep that night. But Nazareth then dreamt a dream concordant with the typical Ragged Harbour notion of God. In the dream, "the words of the Lord God A'mighty, his god, whom he had made in his blindness of tempest and naked rock and the sea's hard wrath," and who "had come in wrath to reprove him for his idolatry," commanded him to "scuttle" his schooner (249-250). And although the "benighted child" within him, who yearned for "love," prompted him to cry to the Lord, "'t isn't fair - sure, 't isn't fair," and "Why, O Lard, must I scuttle [my lifework]," the "Lord God A'mighty" insisted on the destruction and, as the narrator comments, "the hymn in praise of great works" - the hymn of a just and compassionate universe - "fell upon the ears of a numb soul" (251-252). Despite the gentle assertion of Solomon Stride, seemingly the one man in Ragged Harbour to uphold the notion of a "dear" and compassionate Lord who would not require him to destroy what he loved (254), Nazareth finally "scuttled his schooner," upon which he had worked for years, "even as he believed the Lord God A'mighty, his god, had commanded him to do" (256). Again Duncan reveals to us what he perceives to be the tragedy of adhering to a religion that denies the worth of life on earth.

Nazareth's brief attempt at revolt - his cry of "'tisn't fair" - becomes the cry of the author himself, who would like to see Ragged Harbour regaled with "hymns of the infinite" that celebrate life, but sees in the mindset he has depicted only their opposite.

It is in the story "Concerning Billy Luff and Master Goodchild," though, that Duncan shows Ragged Harbour religion negating the value of life most completely. Young Billy's conversion to Ragged Harbour fundamentalism at the tender age of eight was, as has already been mentioned, locally considered to be "the supreme achievement of the parson from Round Harbour"(131), and the boy was widely considered to have the makings of a preacher himself (130,139). However, another even more influential source of "spiritual" inspiration to Billy was an old children's storybook his family possessed - "the only storybook in Ragged Harbour"(131) - a book which fed Billy's "hungry imagination" with tales of devout young children who longed for the "glory" of an early death, and of evil ones who died and went to hell. In the book's introduction, the author had written:

" ... this little book is written with a design and a desire at once to profit and please you; by showing, in the examples of children, many of whom died young (and you, too, my dear child, may die very young), the great happiness and advantage of real and early Piety." (133)

The narrator goes on to inform us that Billy "loved" these stories, particularly the one entitled "The Entertaining History of Master Billy and Miss Betsy Goodchild" where the young characters' "contempt for the things of this life, their longing for the

release of death, threw parents and teachers into raptures"(133).

The stories in this book appealed to Billy's romantic imagination, and his desire to emulate its young heroes and heroines caused him to reason that since "These children died young" he "wished that he, too, might die young," chanting with his dying breath the scriptural words and prophecies he knew that Ragged Harbour would most love to hear (134-135). They also caused him to turn his back on the natural joys of childhood, so that, on a beautiful summer day when, his own chores done, he saw the other children playing, he refrained from such levity, repeating such chants from the book as:

I must not idle all the day
Lest Satan get me for his prey (135)

Relying on the reasoning he found in his storybook, he refrained from participating in any of the seasonal pastimes available to Ragged Harbour children, gradually coming to feel that joy was a sin (137).

However, susceptible as he was to the "teachings" of this book, with its stories of "A Very Good Little Girl who died Very Happy before she was Seven Years Old" and "Containin' the Hist'ry of a Sad, Wicked Child, an' his Miserable Death"(142-143), Billy might not have been so wholly taken in by them had he not been encouraged to do so by his mother. When the boy's healthy sense of human compassion caused him to say to her that the book was "terrible sad in spots," she would agree, but add, "but 'tis terrible wise, too"(132). And when she read him the story of two young boys who were drowned in a well because one of them "had been

making game of the minister," and he commented, "'Tis sad t'think o' the miserable death o' them b'ys," again she upheld the book's version of morality by responding, "But they was so wicked"(143,145), revealing that she, like Priscilla Stride, was inclined to uphold the strictest interpretations of religious dogma - a proclivity of women in this literature which has already been identified as a recurring theme. So when Billy "slipped" and engaged in a very natural boyish argument with another Ragged Harbour youth, the "teachings" of his storybook, endorsed by both his parson and his mother, caused him to dream "all night long about Hell"(146) - just as, in "The Chase of the Tide," little Ezekiel, convinced of God's desire to punish him for some minor transgression, "turned to his religion for consolation" and "thought deeply of hell"(24). This mindset, encouraged in the children of Ragged Harbour by their elders, resulted in Billy's death.

One day after school, Billy fell into the freezing ocean while "copying over the ice" and "determined to sit in his wet clothes until school was let out" for fear that "he should lose some useful piece of knowledge"(146). But this tendency to look at all worldly acts as potential spiritual testing grounds, which storybook, pastor, and mother had inculcated in him, led him to his deathbed where, as already described, the villagers hovered to hear miraculous revelations from his dying lips. However, in an extremely poignant moment, we see that as death neared, Billy, afraid of dying but glad of his mother's warmth and comfort, forgot

"all about Master Goodchild," and clung to his mother's hand, remembering stories she had told him of her girlhood, begging her to stay by him, and becoming again a simple little boy who longed for and delighted in his mother's earthly love (156). His mother, meanwhile, "had a shadowy perception of this: that the garment and mask of Master Goodchild had been changed for the pure white holiness of childhood; and now, first, she understood that her boy was lovelier thus robed"(155). In moments of extremity, Duncan is showing us, the human need for earthly love transcends that religiosity which denies the worth of the things of this world, and life assumes a value of which dogma has deprived it. It is no coincidence that in Duncan's earlier story, "The Chase of the Tide," when young Ezekiel saw that he was about to drown, he forgot "his God" and "cried for his mother, who was real and nearer," while "God had been to him like a frowning shape in the mist"(29-30). In both cases, Duncan is opposing the need for human love, warmth, and compassion to a religion he reveals as having blinded its adherents to the worth of such things, and is crying out, through his fiction, at the dehumanizing, life-denying effect of religion as so interpreted. The tragedy for Billy Luff and his mother is that it takes his death to awaken them to the "holiness" of life. And Terry Goldie's comment, in his critique of The Way of the Sea, that Billy's "theopathic ... obsession is almost justified by the absence of any glimpse of redemption [in Ragged Harbour]" therefore totally misses the mark (Goldie,11-13). For despite the grim harshness of life in Ragged Harbour so consistently painted by

its author, he is also consistently arguing for the inherent worth of life - whether the life is old Solomon Stride's or young Billy Luff's. Duncan's ultimate "battle" is with the teleology the people embrace to endure the rigours of that life, because of its life-denying lack of mercy and its denial of the importance of love, both mortal and divine. Duncan cannot accept the "contempt for the things of this life" and the "longing for the release of death" of little Billy's storybook, which is implicit, as well, in Ragged Harbour religiosity; the "things of this life," for Duncan, particularly the "high leading of love" he refers to in introducing "In the Fear of the Lord" (219), are to be celebrated and rejoiced in, not rejected with religious contempt. Nazareth Lute's scuttling of his schooner, like the desire to "die young" encouraged in Billy, is the dehumanizing result of a religion that recognizes the condemnation of a Lord God A'mighty, but not the love and mercy of a dear Lord. The need for love and mercy as key ingredients in religious faith - particularly for love, in its earthly manifestations - is a central theme, too, in two of Duley's novels.

In Duley's The Eyes of the Gull, we have already seen that Aunt Dorcas' religious faith, as good and as stabilizing a force as it seems to be for her, is not sufficient to sustain and fulfill the novel's protagonist, Isabel. For the world of earthly love and of joy in sensuality, to which Isabel has been awakened, cannot be satisfied by the seemingly fleshless unearthliness of "the world of the little brown church" which dominates the

community in which she lives (87). Human carnal and emotional needs such as Isabel's cannot be satisfied by a faith that either fails to address or condemns such needs. While Dorcas' faith does sustain her, it does not seem to have an answer for a young girl's need for warmth and human love. Although the old woman's simple teleology remains intact at the novel's end as she ponders Isabel's fate, it cannot explain for her God's ultimate intent for and relationship to mankind - and Dorcas does not strain for an explanation (200).

In Highway to Valour this missing ingredient in religious faith - the need for human love and for finding joy in life - is addressed more directly. In this novel, Mrs. Michelet's Methodism is the dehumanizer, causing her to love in her French, Roman Catholic, life-loving husband "the something she could not possess, manage, or ever know" (9). As protagonist Mageila reminisces, "Mama [Mrs. Michelet] gave us the Wesleys. Papa gave us French and folksongs instead of hymns" (127) - intimating that he found a value in earthly things that invested life with a joy it would otherwise lack: the "something" Mrs. Michelet lacked.

Mrs. Michelet in her Methodism "mentioned Christian works as some people mention beauty" (11), requiring young Mageila, in a manner eerily reminiscent of "The Story of Billy Luff and Master Goodchild," to sing such songs as "I should like to die, said Willy" and "Jesus wants me for a sunbeam" (12), suggesting that her interpretation of religious doctrine, like that of the people in Ragged Harbour, disregarded the value of life and encouraged a

form of life-denial even in young children. Mageila, on the other hand, ultimately learned through her experience of loss that earthly life and the bond of love between people were all-important. She agrees with Trevor on their boat trip to Labrador that it was "The loss of affection that [had] hurt [her] most," explaining "I know since Papa died that people need affection to live at all"(158) - an affection with which her mother's Wesleyanism would not have been able to provide her. In Highway to Valour Duley is not disputing the strength that can be derived from faith - especially from a faith like Mrs. Slater's - just as Duncan did not dispute the kind of strength that could be derived from belief in a "dear Lord" as opposed to a "Lord God A'mighty." Neither of these authors denigrates religion in its entirety - but both insist that human warmth, compassion, and love are essential elements of a healthy faith, and both explore faiths which disallow these elements and reveal the human desolation that can result from such disallowance. As Duley has Mageila state at the conclusion of Highway to Valour, "The ones who love will know they can walk through the waters and not feel drowned"(324): not the ones who simply believe, but the ones who can love, as well.

Love is a central theme in Horwood's treatment of religion in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday. Protagonist Eli grew up without any sense of love from his parents: "They supplied his physical wants as best they could," writes Horwood,

but showed him no tenderness and seemed not to realize that he might have emotional needs ... He was told that he must love his father and mother and, to a lesser extent, his small

brother Timmy, but was not shown how to do it, and didn't really know the meaning of love or any of the strong emotions connected with it, until he began to turn, after his twelfth birthday, toward people outside his immediate family. (3-4)

Therefore, as is revealed much later in the novel, he did not, as he matured, feel any love for his parents (256). That Horwood links this familial lovelessness with the religion dominating Caplin Bight is made evident in his discussion of the role Messiah-figure Christopher Simms played in Eli's life. One reason why Christopher had such a strong psychic impact on Eli, Horwood relates, was that he represented an opportunity to form a deep and meaningful relationship with another human being; for in Caplin Bight "all deep emotion was either repressed or sublimated into the transports of religious ecstasy"(116) - a remark that anticipates a similar pronouncement on Protestantism, already discussed, in Horwood's later novel, White Eskimo.

Yet the lovelessness of Eli's upbringing, though a central concern in the novel, is not the only evidence Horwood provides of the effect of Caplin Bight's fundamentalism on the human capacity for love. Two instances of Caplin Bighters' religiously-encouraged neglect of the "great commandment" to "love thy neighbour as thyself" stand out. One is the case of Jchu Gilmore, the "local religious fanatic" who, while witnessing the near-drowning of Mr. Markady and his son, merely stood upon a nearby bank, exhorting them to repent without lifting a hand to save them from death because, as non-believers of Caplin Bight's fundamentalist sect, they were sinners (44-47). While Jchu's

demonstrated lack of brotherly love may be linked with the extreme to which, as a half-crazed man, he took his religious fanaticism, no such excuse can be made in the case of the death of "The youngest child of Sister Melinda and Brother Eleazar Pike"(25), in which the "brotherly love" of the whole community as well as the motherly love of Sister Melinda are called into question.

When this little girl, a mere "year and a half" old, "became so ill ... that they had to call a special prayer meeting to pray her back to health," the narrator reports, by way of representing the villagers' collective belief, that while the child's father was a "backslider" about religion, her mother "was strong in the faith and had spoken in an unknown tongue ... So [that] the duty of the congregation was clear"(25). The implication here is that if Sister Melinda had not been such a good churchwoman, the congregation might not have felt so obligated to try to cure her daughter, and hence, that their acts were based solely on doctrinal formulae, in which simple human love and compassion played no part.

In the ensuing developments, the "backsliding" father wanted to take the sick baby to a nurse in the next settlement, but the mother preferred the power of prayer - and the child died. Predictably, "The death of the Pike baby posed no theological problem to the pastor. He pronounced flatly that the child had died because of lack of faith on the part of the father"(26-28). Yet here we see precisely where "faith" becomes questionable when it is not based upon love: the inhumanity instilled in the mother

through the doctrinal code she lived by caused her to feel "a little proud, perhaps, that the Lord had seen fit to lay upon her such a heavy burden," rather than to feel grief-stricken. Her tears, when she shed them, were caused by her shock and shame when her husband refused to obey the local code and allow the pastor to bury the child; the father's tears, "backslider" though he was, were for his daughter (29). This dichotomy between human love and commitment and commitment to doctrinal observance is reminiscent of Duncan, Sister Melinda's tears being like Priscilla Stride's moans of disappointment at her husband's deathbed, Brother Mcleazar's being more like those of Billy Luff's mother when she finally perceived, through the fog of her dogma, the preciousness of her little boy's life.

In Tomorrow Will Be Sunday we also see the prevailing religious creed dismissing life on earth in all its manifestations as worthless in comparison with the value of life after death. This valorization is evident later in the novel, in the aftermath of Brother McKim's prophesied "second coming," which fails to materialize, whereupon McKim pleads to his congregation, who had been joyously and dramatically readying themselves for the "end of the world," to "have faith that even this present trial should be turned, at last, into a blessing"(102). The "present trial" is continued life; the eventual "blessing" will be the end of life on this earth, when it finally occurs in all of its glory. We see in the above two cases, as in Duncan's story of Billy Luff, that life on earth, with all its attendant features - including human love -

is depicted by the author as being unimportant among people caught up in religious dogma. It is a theme that will recur, sometimes with tragic consequences, in the fiction of Wayne Johnston. And it is a theme with tragic consequences in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday in the case of Brother John McKim.

Brother McKim, despite the villain-like role he plays as a child seducer who then tries to ruin the life and reputation of an innocent man, is not, as earlier mentioned, depicted without authorial compassion. For Horwood goes to some length to explain what had made this parson the man that he was, intimating through various characters' opinions that, had it not been for the circumstances of his birth and upbringing, he might have become a very different person. Eli and Mr. Simms are in agreement about the man's formative years: both knew that "Brother John had been born with the seeds of greatness" but that he was then "steered into a blind alley, cooped up in a little harbor with nothing but rocks and Bibles and hymnbooks to feed his mind," the "invisible walls of the little fishing settlement where he had grown to manhood [turning] him inward until he became the leader of a small, fundamentalist congregation in one of the backwaters of civilization"(153,166). Further, the "zeal and holy fire" with which he arrived in Caplin Bight (57), however misguided, were not mere theatrics on his part. Eli notes the "lonely agony that Brother John suffered" when his prophecy about the Second Coming turned out to be mistaken (102). He evidently believed in what he preached - to a point.

The "point" at which Brother John's preaching became problematic was on the subject of sexuality. We have already seen how he could thunder out condemnations of fornication from the pulpit while secretly seducing a young boy. We have also seen through Eli's musings, though, what the nature of his marriage to Sister Leah must have been: he was wed to a woman for whom "the greatest of all sins [was] the raptures of the lovers' embrace"(74). As Duley's Mageila Michelet knew, through experience, and as O'Flaherty's Father John Ryan and Johnston's Ted O'Malley will be shown to know, through deprivation, love between human beings, in both its emotional and carnal manifestations, is a fundamental human need, and a need that John McKim suffered mightily from until he experienced sexual - and, to a degree, emotional - love with Eli. Then, as the narrator puts it, McKim's "towering sadness for the first time took on a touch of joy," and his sermons, as we have already seen, "began to be softened with frequent references to the Lord's all-embracing love for his people"(185). Brother John McKim had been starving for human love, the product of a religious creed that separated spirit from flesh, life eternal from life on earth, valuing the former qualities while regarding the latter ones as vile and innately sinful. His tragedy was that if he had not grown up indoctrinated as he was, spirit and flesh might have united and he might have been an effectual and a spiritually, sensually, and emotionally fulfilled human being.

These considerations are not offered by way of lessening our ultimate condemnation of McKim for his deeds, his lies, and his

nearly successful attempt at character assassination. But they suggest that much of the man's corruption was the direct result of the religious doctrine governing his life: a doctrine similar to those in Duncan's and Duley's works in its devaluing of human life and its ignorance of the need for human love. The harshness of such doctrine is without divine love, without mercy. By demanding of its adherents the separation of spirit from flesh and the sacrifice of the love and contact so needed by human beings, it causes its followers to live "lifelessly" or else to split themselves in two by "giving in" to what they perceive as sin - as both Brother John and Virginia Marks in this novel do, as little Billy Luff would have done if he had allowed himself to play with other children on a summer's evening, as Duley's Methodists would have done if they had allowed themselves the "delighted flesh" of the marriage bed (and note: Mrs. Michelet, in Highway to Valour, does apparently permit herself this "delight" with her Roman Catholic husband, but beyond becoming a symbol for her daughter of the importance of affection in married life, the personal ramifications of her "giving in" go unexamined - perhaps because she dies so early in the novel). Ironically, once John McKim's actions become community knowledge and, a broken and fallen man, he prepares to leave Caplin Bight, he, like the children in Duncan's stories, looks last of all in his extremity not for divine but for human communion - for the forgiveness of Eli. As Eli perceives it, this is the "seemingly desperate need for a final human contact by this man who was now so utterly outcast, so close to the last

desert of despair and unbelief"(342-343). And McKim's last words to Eli are as evocatively tragic as are the death cries of little Ezekiel Sevier and Billy Luff for their mothers, as he says, "very humbly: 'I - I still love ye, Eli. Try to think o' me kindly sometimes'"(343). In their hour of extremity, people trained from birth to look to a deity look instead to those they love for succour, seeing in a flash the value of life that their religion has never taught them.

In White Eskimo, while the frequent diatribes against Protestantism criticize its tendency to prohibit any sign of earthly love and, concomitantly, to strip life on earth of all sense of value and of happiness, Horwood does not make it his objective, as he had done in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, to demonstrate through the lives of his key characters the damaging psychic effects of this tendency. The tragic death of Gillingham's adopted daughter, Halfbreed, is more the product of the white medical invasion than of the Moravian invasion of Labrador; and, as we have already seen, Horwood suggests that the Moravian mission's attempts to inculcate in the Inuit its life-denying tenets did not fundamentally change the Inuit outlook on life, although they certainly interfered with the Inuit lifestyle. Similarly, as already suggested, religion is not shown to be a prevailing force in Janes' House of Hate, so that this novel cannot be said to explore the psychic effects of religion on its characters either.

In Maud's House, though, the central theme can be said to be the pitting of fleshly, "sinful," aberrant love against the

introduced doctrine by which the community abides. Maud cannot fit in in George's Cove in part, as has been mentioned, because she is not from the place, but in part too - especially according to the pastor - because of her "sinful" union with Ern, and her too-sensual enjoyment of life.

The life-denying lack of compassion together with the failure to "love one's neighbour as oneself" of Pastor Roberts is revealed when he refrains from comforting Maud and from acknowledging what is obviously her very real love for Ern, at Ern's burial:

Pastor Roberts has finished his work and normally he'd move over to comfort the wife. Seeing as Maud is the only thing close to a wife and she doesn't really count, he moves towards the family [to whom he is] grateful ... because it might have looked a little harsh otherwise if he'd ignored Maud. (33)

But he takes his stiff interpretation of doctrine one step too far when he refuses to bury a woman from George's Cove, Sue, simply because the woman had been Maud's friend (113), and it is this demonstration of his lack of compassion that finally awakens the community to the misguidedness of the pastor's religiosity (120). By the end of the novel what prevails in George's Cove is not the religious zeal of the pastor but the reawakened decency and neighbourliness of the people (see pp.115,135,137), which the author suggested had existed more or less intact until the advent of the pastor's evangelicalism (53-54). Hence, while religion, as humanly interpreted, is demonstrated to be life-denying and deficient in human compassion in this novel, it is not allowed, as

in Duncan's stories, to emerge as victor. It fails to come between Ern and Maud because they choose to defy it; and finally, it fails to continue governing the people of George's Cove because its excessive and unChristian harshness eventually becomes evident to them. In fact, a similar community warming and return to a sense of communal compassion and decency occurs at the end of Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, once the misdeeds of Brother McKim awaken the people of Caplin Bight to their folly in trusting so fully this human representation of the extremes of fanaticism (see their treatment of Christopher Simms at his homecoming, pp.353-354). The difference between the two novels is that in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, unlike Maud's House, religion would leave lasting psychic scars in its protagonist, Eli, while leading to the tragic ruination of its pastor, John McKim.

Hence, in the fiction of writers focussing on pre-Confederation Newfoundland, we see a recurring depiction of religion - whether the religion be standardized, universally-recognized Methodism or some non-standard, locally-brewed brand of evangelical fundamentalism - as a predominant force in people's lives, teaching them, through erroneous human interpretation or through grim, straight-from-the-text proclamation, that life on earth is corrupt, so that to take delight in human creations, mere human existence, or human love in its emotional or carnal forms is the vilest of sins. Yet from Nazareth Lute's destruction of his life's work to Billy Luff's too-eager renunciation of life, from the desolation of Isabel Pyke's existence to Brother John McKim's

tragic failure to find meaning and fulfillment in his, we see, as Mageila Michelet would put it, and as Maud and Ern defiantly demonstrate, that without human love, human compassion, and an infinite regard for the beauty and meaning of earthly existence, life is tragically wasted. The religion functioning in these characters' lives is shown to be divisive, dehumanizing, and life-denying - as well as being, as previously discussed, hypocritical in its adherence to form rather than to content and in its failure to promote the basic Christian doctrine of "loving one's neighbour as oneself."

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that some of the key characters in this fiction - and, in the case of The Way of the Sea, the author himself - demonstrate or begin to experience a decline of religious faith, or at the very least, a wavering in their sense of religious conviction. For although the decline of faith is not so conspicuous a theme in fiction addressing pre-Confederation Newfoundland as it is in that addressing Newfoundland in the second half of the twentieth century, it is significant that the seeds of decline appear in the early fiction: seeds that are in large part spawned by the negative attributes of religion discussed above, as well as by the sense on the part of some characters (and authors) that clinging to religious faith is not producing desired results. Thus, the next chapter of this thesis will discuss, in brief, such decline in faith as is apparent in fiction addressing pre-Confederation Newfoundland, and the authorially-provided reasons for this decline.

story "In the Fear of the Lord" we see young Nazareth Lute proceeding in the opposite direction: from non-belief to conversion and a tragically strict adherence to Ragged Harbour doctrine - the tragedy of which signals to the reader that it is the author who is questioning this faith. The one character who consciously defies the fundamentalism of Ragged Harbour is Job Luff in the story "The Raging of the Sea," who "had cast loose from religion when old Dick Lute went mad of it ... maintaining ... that 'thinkin' on things eternal' was too stiff a gale for him to weather: it would capsize any man in the end"(73). Thus, Job Luff - and perhaps Solomon Stride who, as previously mentioned, adhered to the local religion but insisted, in the face of stiff opposition, that God was a "Dear" and merciful one, rather than the "Lord God A'mighty," full of wrath - are the only characters in the ten stories who seem able to perceive that the people of Ragged Harbour have permitted their religiosity to lead them in a wrong and harmful direction. And while this perception does not precipitate any decline in the faith of Solomon Stride, it does do so in Job Luff, and it also affects Skipper Dan Crew, father of the drowned sea captain in "A Beat t' Harbour" who has already been quoted as saying "They's something wrong with the world ... but I isn't sure just what"(305). These are the only characters in The Way of the Sea to even attempt to question Ragged Harbour's teleology.

The case of Job Luff has been analyzed elsewhere (see Ryan, pp.187-188), and provides a convenient starting-point for analyzing Duncan's own attitude towards religious faith as revealed

in his fiction. For Job, though aberrant in his community both because of his faithlessness and because of the unconventional nature of his hand-built fishing punt, which is thought to derive its capricious and mysterious nature from Job's heresy, is described with a subtle admiration by the author. When Job is pitted against his more religious neighbours, they acquire a taint of sanctimoniousness from Duncan's pen (see p.73); and as they wait expectantly - even eagerly - for his punt to fail him and for the calamity due to all heretics to befall him, their somewhat less than Christian eagerness is juxtaposed against the picture of Job's skill, craftsmanship, and perennial success as a fisherman. Indeed, in describing Job's relationship to his punt, Duncan is showing us a man who has put his faith in his own powers of creation, rather than submitting helplessly to a vindictive universe: a quality which receives Duncan's approval throughout the story. What was the punt to Job Luff?

This: in the vast twilight silences, when she rode a lurid sea and the flaring heavens seemed about to break with their weight of rising cloud, he fondled her ropes and felt her gunwale and mast; and the familiar touch of these things of the solid waste steadied the faculties which the infinite expanse and flaming, threatening heights had made to reel. More, in the face of the frowning dawn, in the meshes of the night, in the swift descent of great winds, she stayed him; nor was he ever afraid of the sea he plundered, though it raged. (76-77)

Job Luff, we see, relied on his punt as other Ragged Harbour men relied on their faith, to steady him in the face of the infinite and the incomprehensible. As the story evolves and Job heads for

home in a treacherous storm with a large catch of cod we see, along with Job's skeptical neighbours, that Job's faith in his punt is justified: it, in combination with Job's skill as a seaman, performs perfectly in conditions that would have conquered a lesser boat and man. Job's undoing occurs when, for one unaffordable moment, he gives a glance of "triumph for courage and the punt" to the crowd gathered to watch his treacherous return (91); in that moment, he misses an instant's necessary concentration, and thus loses both his punt and his remarkable catch to the stormy waves. As I have suggested elsewhere (see Ryan, 188), Duncan does not tell this story by way of preaching that "pride goeth before a fall." He calls Job's loss "a tragedy of that coast" (96) - the tragedy being that such a man is not permitted even a moment's joy and triumph by the harsh Newfoundland climate and the still harsher capriciousness of the universe. This authorial cry of outrage appears elsewhere in the ten stories, as already suggested: it surfaces in Nazareth Lute's cry "'t isn't fair - sure, 't isn't fair" when, in "In the Fear of the Lord" he dreams that God has commanded him to "scuttle" his lifeswork, as well as in the tragic irony with which Duncan describes the dying Solomon Stride's "gratitude" for the meager rewards a hard life has brought him in "The Fruits of Toil." In the former case, it is the harshness of the local religious doctrine that is called into question; in the latter case, though, as well as in Skipper Dan Crew's musings on the "wrongness" of the world in "A Beat t' Harbour," it is also the harshness of fate against which Duncan cries. In these stories, as

in the story "The Chase of the Tide," where two little boys drown because they pursue an admirable youthful curiosity to unravel one of nature's mysteries, the author reveals a mindset diametrically opposed to that of his characters. For whereas the people of Ragged Harbour use faith to accept tragedy, Duncan, viewing that tragedy, finds in it a reason to question faith, a turnaround of mindset that will surface as a reason for the decline of faith in post-Confederation fiction as well. In the epilogue to "The Chase of the Tide," as Duncan strives to "interpret" the meaning of the little boys' death, he addresses the "Sea" as author of their fate, calling its "victory" either "cruel" or "gluttonous," but in either case, unjust (30-31). However, as I have elsewhere suggested, in this as in other stories, Duncan is in fact "grappling with something greater even than the sea: namely, the blind powers of nature and of fate, against which man cannot win" (Ryan, 186).

It appears, then, that in The Way of the Sea two teleological problems are being "grappled with" by the author: his implicit objection to the Newfoundland outporters' use of faith to justify or deny defeat, which is particularly evident in "The Fruits of Toil," and the still greater and eternally pondered question of the nature and meaning of the universe, which in Duncan's stories seems to preside, not merely with indifference, but with vindiction over the lives of a humble and hard-working people. It cannot be definitively said that this collection of stories reveals Duncan as atheistic or even as anti-Christian; as already stated, in his prologue to "In the Fear of the Lord" Duncan

declares the notion of a "Lord God A'mighty" to be "a fantastic misconception," but he juxtaposes this "misconception" against the notion of a "dear Lord" connected with "mercy and the high leading of love"(219). Whether he actually believes in this "dear Lord" cannot be ascertained from The Way of the Sea; however, what can be ascertained is that Duncan found the lives of his Ragged Harbour characters harder than was philosophically justifiable, and that his perceptions of outport Newfoundland, as manifested in his stories, were causing him to question whether or not any sense of order and justice prevailed in the world. Perhaps the "dear Lord" of mercy and compassion was a teleological objective Duncan longed to attain. In The Way of the Sea, however, there is scant evidence of any such benevolent force at work in the lives of the characters - and where it is shown to be at work, as in the mind of Solomon Stride as he recounts the "fruits" of his "toil," the notion of a benevolent Lord is shown to be comforting but ultimately delusive. A questioning of religious faith is thus inherent in The Way of The Sea, in small part through the book's characters, but in the main through the mindset of Norman Duncan, who used the exigencies of their lives to ask whether any order, mercy, or justice were indeed to be found in the universe.

In Duley's three Newfoundland novels, while there is scant attention paid to an actual decline of faith arising in the characters because of any of the previously discussed negative attributes of religion, there is, in the latter two novels - particularly in Highway to Valour - evidence of a wavering of

religious certainty in the female protagonists (in all three of these novels, it must be noted, the young female protagonist is shown as caught between the unquestioned faith of her upbringing and the uncertainties she sees around her, while an older, more homely female figure - Aunt Dorcas in The Eyes of the Gull, Josephine in Cold Pastoral, and Mrs. Slater in Highway to Valour - represents the pillar of faith which serves, in varying degrees, as a moral and spiritual touchstone for each protagonist). As already noted, in Cold Pastoral, despite the strict Catholicism of Josephine which her daughter, Mary, is depicted as sustaining within her own being, there is the suggestion, late in the novel, that Mary's Catholicism may not be as intact as the narrator has been asserting (see p.331, where Mary evinces doubts about the existence of heaven).

In Highway to Valour, though, despite protagonist Mageila's ultimate embrace of faith and acceptance, there are occasional signs of a departure from orthodoxy and a wavering of spiritual certainty on her part that signal in Mageila the beginnings of a decline in faith that will find their fruition in subsequent Newfoundland fiction. Once in St. John's, Mageila found that "she was tired of red plush and the once-a-week smell of the United Church," and learned that she could come closer to the "spirit" of faith by a "look at the sea," which reminded her of spiritual truths she had not found in the "good works," bustling, and unintentional religious hypocrisy of her Wesleyan aunts and family (253) - a departure from orthodoxy and the idea of church-

as-spiritual-meeting-place that anticipates Horwood.

Further, while it would be inaccurate to say that Mageila lacked faith, the narrative gives evidence that hers is a faith that wavers. Near the end of the novel, feeling deeply touched by nature's beauty while, with the outbreak of war imminent, she awaits word that her lover Trevor may have to leave her for battle, Mageila

heard an echo of Mrs. Slater's profound voice - "He is the rock. His work is perfect" - and in elusive glimpses she imagined a love that could exist without returns; it made her wish that if Trevor must go he would go now, when the God of perfection was in her. (273)

This passage suggests that, unlike Mrs. Slater, Mageila cannot be sure of perpetually sustaining a state of spiritual strength and certainty. Similarly, looking out a window in St. John's one day, and seeing "boys and girls" who evinced "ardour" and poverty, as well as little children straining to keep hold of impatient, older hands, Mageila experiences what can only be described as the feeling that God is deficient in his provision for his children: "The hot-looking clasped hands and the strain of extended arms brought moments when she implored God to be more than He was" (254). While such ponderings do not seem to cause Mageila to doubt the existence of God, her questioning of his sufficiency suggests, again, a wavering of her spiritual certainty, which in this case echoes somewhat Duncan's questioning of the fairness of the "infinite," while heralding the decline of faith in Eli Pallisher of Tomorrow Will Be Sunday who, like Mageila, finds in evident human suffering reason to question the "goodness of God" that he

has been taught.

Eli's doubts about his community's religious faith begin, early in the novel, when he sees the people of Caplin Bight in danger of starving. As the narrator explains:

That winter, as Eli saw his own young cousins practically dying a slow death from malnutrition, he began having doubts about the goodness of God, which was so loudly proclaimed in the little church, but since he didn't want to be "skinned alive" he prudently kept these doubts to himself. (23)

Eli's decline in faith is augmented when he observes that the miserly merchant, Solomon Marks, is believed by the congregation to be heaven-bound because he conforms to the strictures of Caplin Bight's religious doctrine, despite the fact that the whole congregation knows he is hoarding milk for himself as Caplin Bight babies are starving, while two of the community's "non-believers" are believed to be hell-bound, even though they provide for those babies:

The thought must have occurred to more than one that there was something very odd about two of the unsaved, who were headed straight for the second death, coming to the rescue of Christian children whom the Lord had promised to feed, but so far as Eli was aware he was the only one who said anything about it ... [whispering to his younger brother, alone, that] "Mr. Markady and Mr. Simms are both on their way to the second death ... and Elder Solomon Marks the merchant is going to heaven with the elect, even though he keeps milk hidden away in his basement for his own tea, while Mr. Markady and Mr. Simms give all the milk they have to feed other people's children. You know, Timmy, if I were God I'd ask Mr. Markady and Mr. Simms to come to heaven and send Elder Marks to the second death." (24)

In the first case, like Mageila, Eli is questioning the sufficiency of God; in the second case, though, he seems as well to be questioning Caplin Bighters' interpretation of Christian doctrine, in an instance where, as earlier discussed, they appear to be observing the form but not the content of Christian belief.

Not long after these two meditations of Eli's we see, in an interesting anticipation of later authorial treatments of the Roman Catholic telling of the rosary (particularly that of Johnston's Bobby O'Malley, who, in a reversal of Eli's situation, is directed to use "Hail Mary's" to combat a phrase his father has taught him, thereby using one form of "mumbo jumbo" to banish another from his mind - The Story of Bobby O'Malley, 16-17), that Eli, "frightened" by his first experience of a Caplin Bight prayer meeting, where he "found himself caught up in the hypnosis of prayer and carried along in a current of feeling not his own" and observing how "a prayer meeting can bend the individual will to its collective purpose," (27) decided to try to break this "spell" in which he had been caught by directing his mind at solving mathematical problems. Succeeding in this venture, and

No longer frightened by the feeling of possession, he decided to try, experimentally, allowing the hypnosis of prayer to seize him once more. Then he broke it a second time, with a shorter effort of will. It came far easier than before, he noticed, and before long he was slipping in and out of the trance like a seal popping in and out of a spout hole between the rocks. (28)

In conducting these mental gymnastics to extricate himself from the "hypnosis of prayer" into which the Caplin Bighters have willingly

ventured, Eli is further distancing himself from the faith practised by his community, and is thus exhibiting a further decline in faith.

Eli experiences yet another decline in faith when he attends Sister Leah's Sunday-school classes, in which she preaches against sexuality, at a point in his life when sexuality and sexual experimentation have become biological imperatives:

Up to the time of her coming he hadn't worried a great deal about [his sexual preoccupations], but Sister Leah promptly plunged him into a great maelstrom of doubt. It was obvious from her teaching that God demanded of Eli that he remain sexless; equally obvious, from the demands of his own nature, that he could not do it. For some weeks he struggled through the valley of indecision: heaven without sex on the one side, the second death with it on the other. In the end, sex and the second death won the day. (74)

Here we see neither the notion of God's insufficiency nor the observance of his community's hypocrisy leading Eli away from religious adherence; though light in its touch, this passage shows that Eli is rebelling against fundamentalist doctrine itself as it is interpreted in Sister Leah's harsh and life-denying fashion. And finally, in a narrative style that is far from light, we see the extent of Eli's decline in faith, and its effect upon him: at a time when the people of Caplin Bight are readying themselves for Brother McKim's prophesied "Second Coming," and Eli's father, one of the few men who have continued to fish and farm - and to feel that the fruit of the efforts he has expended therefore belongs exclusively to him and to his family - comes close to being

"expelled" from the "ecclesia," Eli "looked into his heart to ask if he loved the Lord, and knew that he did not"(70). This self-realization signals Eli's total breaking-away from the religion of his people; and realizing it, Eli, "with a gradually deepening feeling of being deserted by God and man," did "something that no boy of his age in Caplin Bight would ever have admitted - he cried himself to sleep"(71). His recognition of the adherence to form without content of his people, his feeling that somehow there is little justice in God's dealings with humanity, and his realization that he cannot conform to the harsh decrees of local religious dogma have made Eli a spiritual pariah in Caplin Bight; and while he accepts this identity, he thereby suffers the pain of loss. To lose one's religious certainty, as the next chapter of this thesis will suggest, is no easy matter, whatever the reason for that loss.

Eli's father, Elias, too, demonstrates in a subtle way some signs of a decline in faith - despite the fact that throughout the novel he furiously condemns all signs of spiritual waywardness in his son. For Elias, though not himself a "backslider," anticipates what in O'Flaherty's fiction will become a recurring theme and a reason to question Christian doctrine: Elias is a character who feels that one must do all possible oneself before expecting help from God. It is Elias who was first to abandon prayer and go to fetch the nurse when typhoid threatened his family (32), and Elias who went on fishing and farming while most of his neighbours spent an idle summer awaiting what Brother McKim had convinced them was the ending of the world. This suggests that

Elias' faith was not entire: as the narrator puts it, he "mixed [it] with a strong dash of horse sense"(90). In the instance in which Elias rebelled against sharing what he had produced with neighbours who had sat idle for a summer awaiting the Second Coming, proclaiming that "the Lord hadn't given him children to be made into beggars through the shiftlessness of his neighbours"(70), and thus risked losing his position as an Elder of the congregation, we see, as we will see in O'Flaherty's work, a questioning of the justice of the Biblical "prodigal son" story: a questioning of the notion of divine intervention allowing some people to exist without expending effort while others must struggle to provide for themselves. To this extent, then, Elias, too, challenged the doctrine by which his people lived, and thus becomes another crack in the wall of religious certainty of Caplin Bight.

Virginia Marks is another character in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday who represents a decline in faith - and in a manner far more flagrant and complete than Elias Pallisher. Virginia, early in the novel, was "almost openly contemptuous" of and "rebelled" against the doctrine of Caplin Bight (76). And the advent of Christopher Simms has an effect on the younger generation of Caplin Bight that may spell the beginning of changing times and a decline of faith in the community. For his celebration of the near-nakedness of the body - a deeply-held religious taboo in Caplin Bight - quickly adopted by the pariah, Virginia, and then, in turn, by the rest of the youth in the community, led the elders to fear "that the defiance of the clothing taboo seemed to be merely an outward

symbol of an even deeper change within: a willingness to question, to demand reasons - even, it must be said, to doubt." As the narrator goes on to relate, "It took them a long time to realize that this change was in progress, and to appreciate the threat to their power that it posed"(125-127).

In fact, this "change" in the youth of Caplin Bight does ultimately result in a "threat" to the prevailing religious powers of the community. By the latter part of the novel, influenced undoubtedly by Christopher, but also by the early realizations he has come to on his own, Eli is able to explain to a new teacher how "bogus righteousness" has ruled his people, who have allowed it to do so not from "evil" but from "ignorance" - signalling the completeness of his departure from the local faith (264). Virginia and Eli have stopped going to church as has the young semi-orphan, Johnny (323), and even Eli's younger brother, Timmy, who still attends, reveals in his "reports" to Eli his wavering belief in the value of what he hears there (334-335). Finally, Eli leaves Caplin Bight - but leaves behind him Christopher, who has been accepted back into a community that is evincing a new sense of tolerance, and Virginia, who is to marry Christopher, though she carries Eli's baby in her womb. The reader is thus left with a sense that the faith presiding in Caplin Bight at the novel's start has been subtly changed and in some way reduced. For if nothing else, the young protagonists, who have been shown to be greatly influential over the community's youth, have all experienced a total decline and/or a transformation of their religious beliefs - and thus,

Caplin Bight will never again be quite the same.

In Horwood's White Eskimo, the reader witnesses not so much the process of faith in decline as an exposé of modern thought in which Christian belief has long since turned to skepticism in a fictional present, and Gillingham's messianic mission in leading the Inuit (who, as already discussed, were not true "believers" to begin with) away from Christianity and back to their pagan lifestyle in a fictional past. The characters who, travelling aboard the SS *Kyle* in this fictional present, serve as narrators of Gillingham's story in the fictional past, are seen comparing a herd of dolphins to the human species, and their recognition of the dolphins' extreme intelligence is observed as posing "some interesting theological points" concerning the Christian notion of human supremacy over the animal kingdom (59). The tone established by this brief passage serves to complement one of the novel's themes: that the "infliction" of Christianity on Inuit culture has been the mistaken work of a group of backward-thinking individuals who maintain a falsified notion of the realities of the Christian faith. This theme surfaces when Richardson, who ran the Hudson's Bay trading post in Nain in the fictional past, challenged Moravian mission leader Kosh's notion that the Inuit had to be in Nain for observance of the Christian holidays of Christmas and Easter by saying, "You know well enough that the Christmas and Easter dates were fixed by the Church of Rome because older, pagan festivals were already being celebrated on those days. You could celebrate the birth of Christ just as well, and just as suitably, at the

autumn equinox as at the winter solstice"(68). In effect, Richardson is telling the missionary that his religiosity is sanctimonious and based on false premises, and that he should know better.

Meanwhile Gillingham, who like Christopher in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday may be said to be a kind of "Christ figure" in trying to bring truth, love, and well-being to a people, "set[ting] himself against ... all the professional do-gooders who were taking away the trapping grounds and the seal hunting and giving, in their place, jelly-roll wrapped in cellophane, made in Montreal and bought with government welfare checks"(75), directly and indirectly causes more and more Nain natives to leave the Moravian church, after which they experience a kind of "personal religious revival"(80) in returning to their own forms of spiritual observance.¹ In White Eskimo, then, a "decline in faith" has either occurred in the characters prior to the onset of the story or else faith - or at least, Christian faith - has never really moved them, at all, as in the case of the Inuit, who are shown as having adopted only Christian form without Christian content. As such, their "decline," precipitated by Gillingham, is a surface decline rather than a deep metaphysical turnaround in thinking. All the same, White Eskimo can be said to take its place in the

¹ That Horwood has cast Gillingham as a kind of Christ figure is quite apparent; on p.84 the trapper is shown returning from Nain "in a sort of Palm Sunday procession"; on p.117 his "heavy brows and thick ropes of blond hair falling back from his face gave him almost the look of a prophet"; on p.157 he is described as "being the Eskimo messiah"; on p.229 his return to the north is described as "his second Advent."

canon of twentieth century Newfoundland fiction as a work that heralds a decline in the grip of the churches on the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Maud's House, like White Eskimo, cannot really be characterized as exploring in depth any decline in faith on the part of its characters. True the people of George's Cove learn by the novel's end that their pastor, in his extremism, is not an altogether fitting model of spirituality; but this does not suggest that their adherence to the faith that he represents has lessened. On the other hand, Maud and Ern, in the middle of the novel, do take action that suggests, if not a decline in, at least a rebellion against, the evangelical interpretation of faith. When Pastor Roberts conducts his first service in the tent he has erected and begins to preach about the harsh, condemning, merciless qualities the Lord exhibits towards transgressors, both Ern and Maud walk out, and Ern proceeds to get drunk and come home "singing a filthy song about a cat" as a sort of counterbalance to, or comment on, the sanctimoniousness and harshness he has heard that day (53). And Pastor Roberts, himself, can be said to experience not so much a decline in faith as a decline in his vision of himself as a messenger of the Lord, near the novel's end.

Roberts and the reprobate Vince who, while staying in the pastor's house has, unknown to the pastor, been making sexual advances to his daughter, have together been working on plans for a "tabernacle" which the pastor, in an excess of materialism and glory-seeking, has long dreamt of building in George's Cove.

Together they have worked on finishing a model of this tabernacle, upon which the pastor has meticulously and lovingly worked for some time. But when the pastor catches Vince in the act of invading his daughter's room in order to seduce her, he casts him out of his house, prays for a time, and then destroys both the plans and the model for his tabernacle: an act which symbolizes his realization of his faulty power of judgement and maybe, as well, a humbling realization of the folly of his materialistic ambitions (130-131). In this sense, then, Pastor Roberts, too, can be said to exhibit a decline in faith - not a decline in his belief in God, perhaps, but a decline in his vision of his role as God's messenger and in his certainty about his interpretations of evangelicalism. Thus, Maud's House, too, belongs to the canon of Newfoundland writing depicting a fictional climate of religious questioning and doubt; and while, like White Eskimo, this depiction of religious questioning is not as central an authorial concern as it is in The Way of the Sea, Tomorrow Will Be Sunday and, to some extent, Highway to Valour, it joins forces with these other novels in paving the way for the still more manifest decline of religious faith evinced in fiction dealing with post-Confederation Newfoundland.

In works of Duncan and Horwood, then, as well as in those of Duley and Gough, we see evidence that acceptance of the harsh-religion-for-a-harsh-land starts to come undone, because authors and characters cannot abide this harshness, because they have come to perceive a hypocrisy among religious adherents, and, in some

cases, because in groping for a sense of mercy and justice emanating from God, they find this mercy and justice lacking, which therefore causes them to question God's role vis-à-vis human life. Yet turning one's back upon faith, as some of these authors and characters discover, is not a simple matter. For although these works of fiction reveal a host of negative attributes in the human adherence to religious doctrine, and although they therefore produce characters who come to question that doctrine, both pre- and post-Confederation Newfoundland fiction reveals as well that there is a deeply-felt, inherent human need to believe in something - to believe that there is a just and positive order directing human life, that there is a caring deity who gives meaning to human existence, that in the face of human fallibility there is someone or something infallible and good. Therefore, for many of these characters and authors, the aftermath of faith² - a state in which there is nothing to believe in - is humanly intolerable, the necessity of belief being one of the key underpinnings of human existence. The next chapter will explore authorial depictions of the human need for belief in fiction focussed on early twentieth century Newfoundland, suggesting that the aftermath of faith - a state in which man has nothing beyond himself to believe in - while it might rationally follow a decline in faith, is for some authors and some characters too unbearable a state to contemplate.

²A term borrowed from Percy Janes' Requiem For a Faith II, p.80

CHAPTER III: THE NECESSITY OF BELIEF

In critiquing Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, O'Flaherty, in The Rock Observed, characterizes Christopher Simms as the "'Christ' figure in the book's symbolism, who preaches the new message of redemption in his role as teacher in Caplin Bight." O'Flaherty goes on to observe that

Under his tutelage, Eli's mind [which, as I have suggested, arrived at a decline in faith quite independently of Christopher] expands beyond the limits enforced by outport drudgery and religion to explore the wonders of science and the delights of the natural world. He learns to overcome his emotional restraint, to become responsive, candid, and loving ...(167)

In short, O'Flaherty suggests, in celebrating Eli's liberation from the practical and religious strictures of Caplin Bight, Tomorrow Will Be Sunday can be seen as the work of a writer "who believed that evil in men springs from external tyrannies"(167) - in this case, the "external tyrannies" being outport isolation and concomitant drudgery, and the religious fanaticism at work in Eli's once-restricted world. Such an authorial vision, suggests O'Flaherty, is "naïveté."

Adrian Fowler, in his critique of Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, arrives at the same conclusion about the "naïveté" of Horwood's "message." "It is no accident," Fowler observes, "that Eli's heroes are all more or less educated people who have known escape from the constricting bounds of the community. Horwood [like Eli, whom I have quoted as saying just this] believes that ignorance is the enemy ... [that] Even Brother John's deformity is

seen to be the result of a deprived environment"; and Fowler likens Horwood to Percy Janes in his novel House of Hate, writing that "in both Janes and Horwood one encounters the sensibility of the reformer who finds the causes of his characters' unhappiness in social ills that can ultimately be remedied" (Fowler, 127) - an observation which will be shown, later in this thesis, to be true of Janes' Requiem for a Faith, as well.

The problem with casting adherence to religious dogma as an "external tyranny" imposed upon mankind - and therefore, as a "social ill" which can, by adopting rational actions and thought processes, be "remedied" - is that such an authorial vision does not take into account what is elsewhere authorially depicted to be the innate human need to believe in something, be the "something" God or simply the sense that there is a prevailing justice and goodness organizing and directing man's fate. For if, as authors like Duncan, Duley and, in some cases, even Horwood himself suggest, humanity has an organic need to believe that some positive, rational spirit is at work in the universe - a spirit greater than man, and upon which man can depend - it is too simplistic to cast organized religion in the role of an externally imposed evil whose removal, through travel, education, etc., will result in a happier and more intellectually-liberated individual.

In Duley's Highway to Valour, Trevor, on the boat trip to Labrador, muses on men like his fellow-passengers Dr. Britten (a scientist) and Captain Dilke (Mageila's grandfather), finding them "rational, tolerant, agnostic, content with scientific findings,

and ready to leave the incommensurable to metaphysical minds"(176). These men, Trevor feels, "nurtured on a liberal education and ... on strong natural forces," respectively, seem to have attained an admirable "serenity": the serenity one suspects Horwood and Janes would attribute to liberation from such "tyrannies" as adherence to religious faith. But what of the myriad people who are not Dr. Brittens and Captain Dilkes - people of a "metaphysical" bent, or people whom hardship or some deep, "incommensurable" prompting cause to need more than "scientific findings" to satisfy their longing for a sense of peace or of order? Reformers who find "the causes of [their] characters' unhappiness in social ills that can ultimately be remedied" perhaps forget the people with "metaphysical minds," the people whose own inner need for an explanation to life's mysteries causes them to create, or to adopt and then, perhaps, to misconstrue, religious rules and religious explanations. That Newfoundland fiction portrays religious faith as potentially psychically harmful has already been demonstrated; but much of this fiction reveals, as well, an authorial recognition that the need to believe is not a phenomenon imposed from without, but a powerful psychological imperative conceived within the human psyche, so that the embracement of religious codes, even if sometimes a tragic error in judgement on the part of the individual, stems from an innate human need that transcends education and economic amelioration. And again, no twentieth century author of pre-Confederation Newfoundland fiction explores this innate human need more deeply than does Duncan, the earliest

of the group.

Duncan, as noted elsewhere (see Ryan, 196-198) depicts man's "need to believe" in such stories as "The Fruits of Toil," where Solomon Stride is able to die peacefully only because he believes - apparently delusively - that the Lord has been kind to him and that all the events and debts of his lifetime have been resolved as they should. In other words, he makes peace with his life by keeping his teleology intact. However, the author explores this need for teleological certainty still more fully in the story "The Healer from Far-Away Cove." In this story, the hermit-like Ishmael Roth, as previously described, decides through delusive, irrational thinking that he has been called by the Lord to be a "healer by dreams" (194). He then proceeds to travel the coast around Ragged Harbour, administering "cures" to the ill that are blackly comedic in their inappropriateness. All comedy fades, however, when Ishmael resolves to heal the consumptive Ezra Westerly of Ragged Harbour, a "lean, gasping wreck" who has "waited patiently for a singular manifestation of the Lord's favour and great power to heal" (194-195).

Ishmael in one of his "dreams" arrives at what he is sure the Lord has decreed to him to be the cure for Ezra's consumption, administers this "cure," and then waits, in great hope and faith - as do Ezra and his wife - for Ezra's return to health. However, far from growing better, Ezra becomes more and more sick; and as he faces death, both he and his "healer" are plunged into doubt and anguish because of what seems to have been the Lord's misguidance.

Suddenly, though, Ezra picks on a technicality of Ishmael's "cure" which both men see as a mistake that Ishmael has made: a point at which he strayed from the Lord's directions for the cure's administration. Then, with ironic pathos, the narrator describes Ishmael's joy, because "his faith had been restored," and Ezra's "happiness," even though he is dying - because their sense of teleological certainty has been regained (215). Now they can believe again, as they have always believed, that the Lord does not make mistakes - that it is only the human failure to follow divine instructions that causes grief on earth. As I have observed elsewhere,

The message seems to be that man needs faith more than he needs results. As long as he can believe in the particular construction of order he has created, he can accept defeat, and even death, with resignation. Far from being bitter through his conviction that Ishmael's supposed error has cost him his life, Ezra dies happily because he has been restored to his belief that there is a God who does not make mistakes and who can cure you if the human instrument of the cure follows directions closely enough. (Ryan,197)

The "social reformer" would say that Ezra would have been far better off if, with proper medical facilities in Ragged Harbour and hence, proper medical attention, his consumption had been properly treated - or better still if, with better living conditions, he had never contracted it to begin with. Yet the reformer would thus be overlooking a significant aspect of Ezra's psyche, which would probably have continued to attribute his fate to the Lord's will, medical intervention or no, because of Ezra's need to see the hand of God directing his life. Yes, the reformer

might continue, but with proper education, Ezra would no longer need to see such things as medical success as being God's handiwork: he would know that it was simply advances in scientific knowledge that had cured him. Here too, though, the reformer would be overlooking the fact that millions of people in the current day who fully recognize the achievements of science and medical research still attribute these achievements, ultimately, to God - because of their innate need to regard life in this way.

Returning, though, to a non-reformist reading of the literature, we can see Ezra and Ishmael's need to view the universe as intact, which is fulfilled by sustaining a belief in God's perfection while attributing hardship to human failure, briefly mirrored in the story "In the Fear of the Lord." In this story, Nazareth Lute, toiling over his schooner and observing the toll that a succession of lean years has taken on Ragged Harbour, seeks to appease the Lord and bring back his bounty by putting "ashes on his head for three nights." When this act of propitiation fails to produce favorable results ("for three more years, the Lord God still frowned upon Ragged Harbour") Nazareth finds a way to vindicate God's role in Ragged Harbour's destitution: "he put no blame upon the Lord God A'mighty, his god, for scorning his poor propitiation, but, rather, blamed himself for having no sack-cloth at hand with which to array himself"(243). Once again we see a character willing to assume personal blame for all of life's trials rather than disturb the reassuring teleological certainty upon which he depends - a tendency that will re-surface in Horwood's

Tomorrow Will Be Sunday. The need to believe in a just and positive force at work in the world is shown in this fiction to be a central concern in the characters' lives - and it is a need that Duncan himself expresses, in the impassioned prologues and epilogues in which he questions the fairness of the exigencies of Ragged Harbour, revealing through his questioning that, unlike his characters, he cannot find a way to justify their hardships, but that, like them, he is deeply preoccupied with a personal search for universal fairness and justice: for something that he can believe in but which the world he witnesses has not revealed to him.

In Duley's novels, too, we see a need for religious belief on the part of her characters. In Cold Pastoral, as already quoted, Mary Immaculate defends her need for belief in "some tenets of the Church" by saying, "if we didn't accept, we'd go crazy wondering. I have to be like that ... "(299). In this novel, as earlier noted, Mary's actual acceptance of these tenets does not prove to be total; she suggests, though, as her speech reflects, that the alternative to belief is a miasma of uncertainty in which it would be humanly-impossible to live with sanity. Further, in Highway to Valour, despite the recently discussed image of serene, agnostic rationalism embodied in the scientist and the captain, the theme of the need for acceptance and belief is sustained throughout the novel, chiefly through the thoughts and experiences of protagonist Mageila who, as already quoted, asserts that "in bad moments there must be something - a faith, the rocks, the roots

under the trees" (133). If Duley sees agnostic rationalism and this need for "a faith" as polar opposites, she does not attempt to resolve the dichotomy in this novel. It is fair to say, though, that Mageila's need for faith, perhaps because of her "metaphysical mind," is the dominant theme, here, and bespeaks an authorially-construed need for teleological certainty on the part of her main characters.

Novelty on Earth (1942), Duley's fourth novel, which has hitherto been omitted from discussion because, while written by a Newfoundlander, it does not have Newfoundland as either a subject or as a setting, sustains through its key female characters the theme of the necessity of belief we find in her earlier works. This novel, set in an unidentified British colony, is the story of colonial protagonist Sara's adulterous relationship with a British businessman, Murray, who meets her while on business in the colony and who is held back from leaving his British wife for her because of his all-consuming love for his single, sickly son. And while religious faith is not a central focus of the novel - indeed, the adultery engaged in by the key characters undergoes no religious scrutiny - it surfaces a number of times in Sara's reflections about life, and in discussions she has with her friend, Nora. In one such discussion, pondering on Murray's lack of religious faith (he is a self-declared atheist) and its bearings on his fears for his son's health, the two women conclude that it must be unbearable to have no faith in God - no belief in "pity sitting in the clouds" - and therefore to "have a child [you] couldn't pray for" (161).

The women conclude that Murray's atheism makes him a "despot" who can accept neither the limitations of life nor that there is only so much that he can be or do for his child - or for any human being. Here, then, lack of religious faith is perceived by two characters as putting a person in the agonizing position of having nothing beyond himself to which he can appeal or in which he can hope in times of hardship, while ultimately discovering that he himself is powerless to ameliorate that hardship. Belief in God thus becomes a way in which, through prayer, one can feel that one is actively engaged in ameliorating life, by appealing to a positive, external force that is greater than oneself. Sara continues this vein of thought by saying that "Most of life is a monody," with people able to go only so far in reaching and helping each other, so that, as she concludes, "how necessary God must be to everyone" (162). In an ultimately monodic existence, then, a deity with whom one can have true communion and to whom one can pour out all one's hopes and fears with the possibility of having them helpfully addressed is seen by the novel's protagonist as a deep and a universal human necessity. As in Cold Pastoral and Highway to Valour, Duley is suggesting through her main characters the necessity of belief.

Far later in this novel, when she has followed lover Murray to England, there to discover that Murray's treasured son has become an invalid, and with nothing in their relationship as yet resolved, a more world-weary Sara asks herself whether, as Murray cannot pray for his son, she has it in her to do so herself.

And, jaded by the exigencies of life and by the "monody" in which she finds herself, a revised vision of prayer and religious faith dawns in her:

In the sudden freshness of the Embankment, and the mystery of sky over the manifestations of man's achievements, she felt she could [pray for Murray's son]. But there was only one prayer for mankind, that he should have guts to endure his cramp in the face of the gigantic universe. (271)

This "gigantic universe" is the one that loomed over Norman Duncan's characters and, it may be said, over Norman Duncan; and Duley's choice of language suggests that her character, like the stricken Mageila in Highway to Valour and like the many helpless characters of Duncan's, is newly aware of the frightening spectre of man's immeasurably small place in a vast and often indifferent-seeming universe. Thus, at this point Sara sees religious belief more as a stabilizing force than as anything else: prayer may enable one to endure life and one's place in life, but will not necessarily make life easy, nor grant a person all of his or her desires. Yet if prayer can only ensure that a man has "the guts to endure his cramp in the face of the gigantic universe," it is still preferable, for Sara, to the state of non-belief, in which man has nothing but himself to appeal to for stability - the loneliest and perhaps most frightening of all states. Once again we see a protagonist of Duley's - and, notably, a woman again, rather than a man - as maintaining belief in the face of disbelief, even when belief is pared down, in what must be Duley's most modern, progressive treatment, to its barest and least comforting state.

It is still more comforting for Sara than non-belief; it is still a human necessity, after all.

And despite the justified critical assertions that Horwood depicted religious doctrine as the product of an ignorant, isolated people who imposed it, a form of "external tyranny," upon succeeding generations, we see, too, in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, a portrayal of characters who had an innate need to believe in God, or at least in a just and positive universal order. In three incidents occurring in Caplin Bight we see characters whose need to believe in the goodness or at least the infallibility of God is reminiscent of the need for belief found in The Way Of The Sea; and in one of these incidents, even the skeptical Eli is forced to concede that such faith may be justifiable.

When a typhoid epidemic hits Caplin Bight and prayer fails to heal its victims, so that medical intervention must finally be sought, the local people, with reasoning reminiscent of Ishmael's and Ezra's in Duncan's "The Healer from Far-Away Cove," do not question the power of prayer nor the power of God to cure; instead they look for some human error to explain why prayer has not sufficed to save the many victims, and hence begin to question the "effectiveness" of the presiding preacher, Pastor Tishrite, as a "mediator with the heavenly powers" (38), and to find him lacking. His questionable "personal standing with God" is therefore seen as the reason why prayer did not suffice to end the epidemic, and thus the local teleology remains intact: not God, but a human being, their spiritual leader, has failed them. Similarly, when Brother

McKim's "Second Coming" fails to occur at its prophesied date and time, the people of Caplin Bight, again in a manner reminiscent of Duncan's characters, experience a moment of doubt when their "religious faith ... waver[s]," but quickly restore their belief in doctrinal verity: "The proof that they really were living in the last days was altogether too strong to be put aside," and instead "There was general agreement ... that a mistake had been made, somehow" - a human mistake, that is - "in computing the chronology" (101-102). Thus we see Brother McKim, like Duncan's Ishmael Roth, agonizing over his own failure, and seeking a way to restore the certainty of his calling - and of God's infallibility - by "poring over his books all night," looking for the spot where he had made a mistaken calculation (102). So deeply-rooted is the local need for belief that if half the villagers die despite all prayers, it is not because of any lack in the power of prayer, but because of lack of human effectiveness on the part of the human mediator in whom they have placed their trust; and if the whole community waits all night in vain, in a nasty rainstorm, for a prophesied Second Coming for which they have neglected all their fishing, farming, and preparations for winter, they blame neither the Lord nor his scriptures, but rather, a human error of interpretation. Here, it seems, religious belief is not an externally imposed "tyranny": indeed, in both cases it is a preacher, who in most situations would be the authority-figure and thus the vehicle of external tyranny, who is blamed by his flock - blamed because of the flock's demonstrated, innate need to preserve

intact the teleology upon which they rely for day-to-day spiritual certainty. The particular brand of teleology that they have embraced may have been imposed upon them by some itinerant fundamentalist, it is true; but their embracement of it and subsequent need to uphold it bespeak their inner need for something certain in which to believe.

Yet the most interesting example of all of Horwood's characters' need for belief occurs early in the novel, during the winter of famine in Caplin Bight, when "Sister Esther Pike the widow, believing literally in the Lord's promise, 'Your bread shall be given, and your water sure'," commences, in a voice audible even to passersby outside her house, to pray "for bread, reminding the Lord of His promise" (20-21). Eli, overhearing her loud and desperate prayers - she literally had no food in her house - then incites his younger brother, Timmy, to join him in playing a prank on her: together, they fetch two loaves of bread and some margarine from their mother's more-provident kitchen, return to Sister Esther's house, and lower the food down her chimney so that she will think the Lord has answered her prayers. As they expect, upon discovering the "promised" bread, she does indeed begin to praise and thank the Lord for "answer[ing]" her "prayer," at which point Eli, "leaning on the lip of the chimney, burst out laughing. 'It wasn't the Lord, Aunt Esther!' he called down. 'It's us!'" However, this prankish admission of Eli's does not in any way disillusion Sister Esther. Not knowing "who might have been the human instrument of the miracle," she nevertheless perceived the

appearance of the bread as just that - a divine miracle delivered by some human, if sacrilegious and mischievous, vehicle. "Going over to the fireplace she called up, tartly, 'I don't care if He sent the devil with it! This bread is from the Lord. Praise His holy name'" (22). Once again we see, reminiscent of the characters in "The Healer from Far-Away Cove," a character whose belief, or whose need to believe, is so great that she can cause any event on earth to fit into her conception of religious faith - so that even if some mischievous boys have set out to play a prank on her, they unwittingly do so according to divine instruction. And significantly Eli, even though the seeds of religious doubt have already begun to sprout in him, is forced to admit to himself that, for all he knows, Sister Esther might be right:

Just then it occurred to Eli that what she said might be true. He stopped laughing, and he and Timmy climbed down off the roof, feeling rather unworthy instruments of divine providence. "Next time we hear someone praying for bread," Eli said to Timmy, "we'll go in the front door and offer it like Christians, instead of playing Santa Claus like a couple of fools." (22)

Hence even Eli, the character in Horwood's story who undergoes a total decline in religious faith and is thus "liberated" from the chains of small-town fundamentalist dogma, here sustains the dim perception that perhaps he is not in ultimate control of all that he does, but may indeed, in an incident such as this one, be "used" as the instrument of some greater will and power. Thus, in the above three incidents, Horwood, whether intentionally or otherwise, reveals in his characters, as do Duncan and Duley, that they are

compelled by an inner need - irrespective of any dogma they have been taught to link with that need - to believe in and depend upon something outside and greater than themselves to order life and to steer it from the indifferent randomness of a chaotic and orderless universe. Further, like Duncan's characters, the characters of Tomorrow Will Be Sunday seek, in all instances in which the infallibility of this "something greater" may be challenged, to find evidence of human fallibility upon which to blame the mishaps of life. Horwood's Caplin Bighters, whether he intended this or not, reveals as do Duncan's and Duley's characters an innate need to believe in a positive life force that is greater than themselves.

In the messianic figure Gillingham of Horwood's novel White Eskimo, however, we are faced with a different phenomenon. Here we find a "hero figure" for whom "belief" is a given - but for whom what constitutes "belief" is quite different from belief as construed in the fiction previously discussed. Gillingham speaks of the human longing for immortality, claiming to have learned that "defeat and futility are not the ends of the spiritual quest [because] 'There is a sense in which man can become immortal' (266). He goes on to reason "Men would not be born with this consuming passion [for immortality] ... unless in some sense they could really enter into the processes of the universe and make themselves as gods." Hence, throughout the novel Gillingham succeeds in essaying and "conquering" the challenges of the northern wilderness, surpassing all other known men, native or otherwise, in his escapades, until he becomes, to the Eskimos, at least, "a

living myth," proclaimed by them to be "immortal"(269,271).

Gillingham's "answer" to Duncan's grim vision, and to all the characters so far discussed for whom adhering to religious faith is a necessary way of stabilizing oneself vis-à-vis a vast universe in which the individual seems immeasurably small, and of living with the assurance that a positive force, external to oneself, pervades that universe, would be this:

I do know that I measure myself against the universe and do not find myself entirely wanting. That vastness out there is an illusion. That feeling that man is an invisible mote in an infinity of stars is a vacuum that we carry in our heads. We can pit ourselves against anything, for we live not only in the body, or even within the range of the five senses. I pit myself against God ... because I am of the same body and substance as God ... and I am not afraid of the universe. If I faced God like Moses on Mount Sinai, knowing that what I faced was the ultimate, universal reality, I would not be afraid.

(266-267)

This character's belief, then, is diametrically opposed to the belief of characters in The Way of the Sea, Duley's novels, and Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, in that these characters reveal the need to believe in something external to and greater than themselves in what Sara, in Duley's Novelty on Earth, refers to as "the face of the gigantic universe," while Gillingham believes that there is nothing greater than the self - or, at least, the potential self. Gillingham does not turn his back on God, but sees himself as being on equal terms with him - and thus represents a mode of thinking existing on a different plane than that pervading the other fiction so far discussed. Significantly, this heroic belief-in-self does

not appear to rub off on any other character in the novel, and if it is authorially intended to serve as a *modus vivendi* for mankind it is presented without a complete set of instructions - unless they be simply to seek some extremity of the earth, pit oneself against it, conquer it, and leave behind a people who are inspired to speak of one as a living myth. Also significantly, when Gillingham departs for parts unknown for what appears to be the final time, leaving his Eskimo wife, now pregnant with his baby, her first action is "to visit the mission church and to pray" (272) - even though her people have been portrayed throughout the novel as being Christian in name only. It seems, then, that in his messianic departure Gillingham has left a void which his wife can attempt to fill only by appealing to the "something greater than the self" against which he has preached - thereby demonstrating, yet again, the human need for something to believe in which can be appealed to in times of extremity, loss, or doubt.

Thus we see, in most of the Newfoundland fiction discussed so far, that turning one's back on religious faith - whatever the negative manifestations of that faith - is a difficult experience for characters who unselfconsciously look to something greater than themselves for assurance that there is order and justice in life. Some of these characters have been shown to draw their perception of this "greater order" from the particular harshness of their homeland, and thus to fashion a notion of God and of his rules that is as bleak and unforgiving as Newfoundland's rocky coastline and capricious sea. For them, a humble acceptance

of their hard lot as God's will helps them to endure that lot - although in some cases the dichotomy between their acceptance and the implicit narratorial questioning of that acceptance alerts the reader to an authorial rejection of "acceptance" as an ample response to life. In other works, the religious order embraced by the characters stems, not from the harsh exigencies of outport Newfoundland, but from established forms of Christian faith hailing from other venues. However, whether through inherent doctrinal prescription or through misguided doctrinal interpretation, these representations of Christian faith are shown to be as harsh as the ones that emanate from the island's desolate shores.

In all the Newfoundland fiction discussed so far, though, religious faith, whether depicted as necessary and thus in some sense useful, as inappropriate, and thus potentially harmful to its adherents, or as a blending of these two qualities, is revealed through the characters and/or narrative commentary to result in religious practice in which form prevails over content, with the true and basic tenets of Christianity being ignored or forgotten. Hence, religious leaders and followers alike are revealed as hypocrites, prejudice and religious intolerance flourish among people who do not "love their neighbours as themselves," while women are singled out as being agents of sin through reasoning deriving from the doctrinal notion that sex and the body, even if necessary, are to be reviled. Consequently, as most of the fiction shows, religious adherents, being encouraged by their clergy or by their own interpretations of religious doctrine to devalue life in

all its physical and worldly manifestations, go through life psychically damaged, unable to take joy in living, unable to dance because they have "stiffened their knees against altars" (Highway to Valour, 89) and their souls against a harsh "Lord God A'mighty." For some of these characters, the result is a joyless life; for an unfortunate few, the result is worldly ruination, or even untimely death.

As further discussed in Part One of this thesis, the harshness and hypocrisy of religion as so depicted lead, on the part of a number of key characters and at least one author, to a questioning of or a decline in faith. From Duncan's unabashed authorial cries against what seems an unjust universe, to Duley character Mageila Michelet's wish that God - in whom she does believe - could all the same be "more than He was" (Highway to Valour, 254), to the outright defiance of Horwood's Eli Pallisher and Virginia Marks who, for perhaps differing reasons, reject a religion that is supposed to be as important to their existence as the air they breathe, but who thereby must endure the sense of loss or of unpardonable sin, to the narrators of White Eskimo, for some of whom formalized Christianity is passé, we detect in this fiction addressing pre-Confederation Newfoundland a climate of religious change in which forbidden doubts are being verbalized - a climate which will intensify in the fiction addressing post-Confederation Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders.

Yet as this discussion of pre-Confederation Newfoundland fiction has revealed, a departure from religious certainty is an

agonizing step for characters depicted as having an innate need for someone or something beyond themselves in which to believe. And as several post-Confederation authors will suggest, this departure, however justified, does not come without a price. For religious belief, as construed by Newfoundland authors both early and current, though deeply problematic, is not, as a "social reformer" might assert, simply an externally-imposed phenomenon that can be banished by external means. Even the very authors who have been critically accused of suggesting that problems of the heart, mind, and soul can be solved by improving social conditions bear witness, through their characters, that such is not always the case. Horwood, who in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday and its later, self-proclaimed "sequel," Remembering Summer (1987), reveals in the Eli's we meet in each novel either the pain accompanying loss of belief (along with a gentle admission that rationalism, too, has its limitations: for who is to say what force truly brought the bread to Sister Pike?) or an impassioned and sustaining belief that a utopian life can be achieved through the spirit of mankind (which is also a kind of religious belief). Janes, who in Requiem for a Faith will use a character to argue that the age of belief is for numerous socioeconomic reasons obsolete, will also admit through his characters that the need to believe in something beyond the self is as deep and persistent as ever it was.

Hence, as we conclude this discussion of the treatment of religion in fiction focussed on pre-Confederation Newfoundland, we are left with an enigma. Religion as it is conveyed in these

works, evolving from or imposing controls on the hard lives of early twentieth century Newfoundlanders, because it is too hard and because it loses sight of its own basic tenets, is questioned or even rejected by thinking individuals. Their alternatives, then, are the not always completely satisfying comforts of rationalism, the prospect of a meaningless, indifferent universe in which the individual is an inconsequential dot, or the quest, like Gillingham's, through believing in yourself alone, to prove by attaining a stature equal to God's that you are not an inconsequential dot - an unsettling group of alternatives, indeed. So at this point we will turn to a consideration of religion as it functions in fictional works addressing post-Confederation Newfoundland - a Newfoundland of relative prosperity, where the capital city, its suburbs, and even far-away mainland cities take their places beside rapidly-changing outports as fictional settings. This Newfoundland, as Janes in Requiem for a Faith will show us, has been bombarded with outside influences, so that what we read is the result of the unfolding of a "new era." It is a post-Vatican II Newfoundland, as well - except in the cases of Janes' Requiem for a Faith, Johnston's The Time of their Lives, and several of O'Flaherty's stories, which consider both pre- and post-Confederation Newfoundland in an effort to span the changing lives of three or even four generations of Newfoundlanders - which of course has a large bearing on the authorial treatments of Catholic Newfoundland, largely missing in the early twentieth century but increasingly prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s. And what we will

find is that, far from resolving the enigmatic problem of belief explored in the fiction focussed on early twentieth century Newfoundland, fiction focussed on the Newfoundland of more recent years addresses much the same themes as did its predecessors: the occasionally helpful but far more predominantly negative effect of religious adherence on the individual, a decline in faith that is at least in part a consequence of this negativity, and the subsequent state of non-belief in which characters grope for a missing spirituality and experience a sometimes nostalgic, sometimes despairing sense of loss. We will explore these phenomena first by considering the backward glances taken by some authors and characters at life before Confederation, and then by considering the fiction as it addresses post-Confederation and current-day Newfoundland.

**PART TWO: LITERATURE ADDRESSING MID TO LATE TWENTIETH
CENTURY NEWFOUNDLAND**

CHAPTER IV: THE REMEMBERED AND CONTINUING REIGN OF FAITH

1. A HARD LAND, REMEMBERED

In the fiction addressing post-Confederation Newfoundland there is general agreement, through the reminiscences of narrators and characters, that life in pre-Confederation Newfoundland was hard - as hard as it was described as being by the earlier authors. The only exception to this view is that exhibited by Janes in Requiem for a Faith I, where the author/narrator reveals a certain inconsistency in his evaluation of "the old days" - an inconsistency reflecting the time-worn fact that in times of change it is not only the negative aspects of a way of life, but some of the positive ones, as well, that are lost.³

The ambivalence of Janes' vision is clearly evinced in comparing his initial descriptions of "St. Michael's," preceding and during World War I, with his subsequent description of the state of early Newfoundland as a whole; and it is an ambivalence which will later be shown to characterize his depictions of the value of outport religious adherence, as well. Initially the narrator describes St. Michael's as a community in which the "progenitors" had "a deeply abiding sense of having sprung from the

³Janes' Requiem for a Faith, like Johnston's The Time of their Lives, is included in the consideration of later fiction unlike the previously-addressed works of Gough and Horwood, even though all of these works were written after 1949, because Requiem for a Faith, like The Time of their Lives, addresses both pre- and post-Confederation Newfoundland.

common working people" (2) with a praiseworthy self-sufficiency (7). Janes here shows us a picture of pre-Confederation outport life as decent and intact, with religion as one of the main ingredients holding it all together. Although everyone in this community worked hard, prayed devoutly, and raised big families, somehow there was still that precious, extra bit of time for a loving husband to bring his young wife the bit of honeysuckle vine that she coveted (6). Some forty pages later, however, early Newfoundland is described in very different terms:

For almost five centuries after 1498 Newfoundland had been mainly a fishing station and then a sparsely settled outpost of Empire still existing chiefly for the fishing trade - after which time it found itself to be a non-viable proposition economically in the competitive modern world. In the political sense too it was a morass of uncertainty, incompetence, confusion and corruption. A place run by merchants and clerics for their profit and proselytizing. (42)

These two conflicting descriptions can, in fairness, be said to contrast the inherent dignity of a people who evolved a decent, hardworking life in the face of hardship with the powers-that-be who sought to exploit that hardship; nonetheless, as we soon shall see, Janes' "requiem," whether it is, as stated, for a "faith" or rather, for a way of life, is ambivalent in its assessment of the values of that faith and of that life.

Subsequent post-Confederation authors do not, by in large, share Janes' ambivalence when looking back at early twentieth century Newfoundland existence: they depict it, as did their predecessors, as being a hard and thankless life of

unremitting labour and constant deprivation. In The Time of Their Lives Johnston, like Janes, addresses a span of generations, and he shows the earliest generation as struggling the most. In this novel, it was a hard and thankless effort if you tried to succeed at farming, in Newfoundland, but an equally hard one if you stayed with fishing (6,7,10). In the early days of Johnston's novel there was little food and scant clothing (9); and in a modern-day reminiscence on life in the outports anticipating a Helen Porter story which makes the same point, Jude, one of the second-generation Newfoundlanders peopling the novel, has this opinion:

The government was right to resettle people
... for there was not an outport in
Newfoundland that was fit to live in.
"Outports," Jude said, "sher it's only the
university crowd likes outports, an' that's
because they don't have to live in 'm." (94)

This remembered view of the harshness of outport life is echoed in many of O'Flaherty's short stories. In his first collection, Summer of the Greater Yellowlegs, the protagonist of "352 Pennywell" hates the smell of kerosene because it "reminded him of his childhood and having to lug cans" of the fuel in days when life was harder (11); in "Mixed Marriage" the protagonist, living in St. John's but raised a bayman, had been "inured to scarcity as a child" in a way that left him permanently scarred with the fear of continued scarcity, as in the outport psyche there was no expectation of things working out (32); in "Tokens" the protagonist, reflecting silently on the environs of "Ochre Pit Cove," observes that "Through two hundred years of settlement hardly anybody on the bleak coast had prospered," and remarks on

still-existing trees, planted years ago "but growing now in silent mockery of the effort to make this wilderness homely" - an image strongly reminiscent of Duncan's and Duley's view of outport harshness (58-59). And in O'Flaherty's second collection, A Small Place in the Sun (1989), this theme is sustained in "The Hawker," where a reprobate, quasi-religious salesman, reflecting on an outport, observes that it was "Full of misery, of course, but then so was most of Newfoundland" (109).

A Long and Lonely Ride (1991), Helen Porter's short story collection, also sustains the view of the old-time outport life as a life of hardship. In "The Summer Visitors," an outport-born woman who "escaped" outport deprivation because her father and she moved to Boston when she was young remembers, as Isabel Pike might have - condescendingly, it must be added - that "The only thing that was plentiful in [her outport birthplace] was rocks." Her outport-born husband adds that in those days, "All I ever done was work. I never knew what play was" - since, like Eli in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, he began fishing with his father while still a young boy (40-41). In "Moving Day," a story about resettlement, an outport-born girl, returning home from university only to find that her family is about to move to a larger centre, learns, as "Jude" observed in The Time of Their Lives, that life in an outport looks far rosier when observed from the outside than when lived from within. Her mother, strongly in favour of resettling, observes "how she was sick and tired of not being able to get a doctor when she needed one, and of having her children go to a one-room school

under teachers too young or too stupid to get a job anywhere else"; and in response to her daughter's cry that she doesn't "know how [she] can live if [she doesn't] have this place to come back to," the mother says, "To come back to. That's just the point ... I wouldn't mind coming back here for the rest of my life. But it's living here, day in, day out ... that I can't take any longer" (88-89). In dawning empathy, the daughter admits "I had never really realized before how much she must have hated the isolation of the island all those years" (89).

Hardships, deprivation, isolation - these words are commonly used by modern Newfoundland writers of fiction when describing the older, outport Newfoundland. Even Kenneth Harvey, for whom the outport is seldom a subject for fictional study in his collection of stories Directions for an Opened Body (1990), writes in the one story that does examine outport life of waves that "don't change, ever. They're still as fierce and godless" - sounding like Duley's Mageila Michelet in her hour of darkness - and of the years of silent fear of a fisherman's wife, who "watched the water so much waiting for [her husband] to come in safe from the fishing grounds that [the sea] was in her veins" (84,85 - "The Passing of Time").

But while the authors addressing post-Confederation Newfoundland concur with colleagues who dealt with earlier days about the hardship of old-fashioned outport life, there is a notable lack of carry-over of the notion that this hard life translated, organically, into a religion whose hardness sprang from

and closely resembled that life. This is quite understandable, of course, as the remembered harshness of an older way of life serves only as background material for an authorial concern with modern life in all of its religious and secular ramifications. But therefore the "Lord God A'mighty" fashioned of Newfoundland's tempestuous seas does not appear in the modern fiction, as it did in Duncan and Duley. Indeed, one of the only modern examples of the hard-religion-for-a-hard-land idea is found in Johnston's The Time of Their Lives where "Dad" - the overriding, tyrannical patriarch who, like Saul Stone in House of Hate, is the dominating and most psychically-influential force in the lives of his family members - grows up, like Duncan's characters and like Elias Pallisher in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, amidst a hard existence which has caused him to use religion to explain and justify hardship. "To Dad, like his fictional predecessors, "the weak were sinful ... [and] failure derived from weakness and was therefore a sin." In reasoning identical to Elias Pallisher's, Dad felt

if someone failed or was visited with hardship through what seemed no fault of their own, you could be sure that their punishment was just, that they had sinned in some way of which only they had knowledge. The crippled man, the barren woman - such people knew in their souls why they were damned. (12)

However, if Johnston is singular among the modern writers in creating a character whose religious beliefs derive, as in much of pre-Confederation fiction, from the harshness of his existence, he is not alone in depicting the remembered religious faith of pre-Confederation Newfoundland as being a palliative, comforting,

stabilizing force in dealing with that harsh existence - as did his predecessors. Nor is he alone in scrutinizing, as they did, both the positive and negative manifestations of this use of religion. And as this thesis will go on to show, almost all of the post-Confederation fictional depictions of religion in Newfoundland reveal an ongoing negativity associated with religious adherence - so that the theme of religious faith as hurting more than it helps prevails from the beginning of the twentieth century to the end.

2. REMEMBERED RELIGION AS A GOOD AND STABILIZING FORCE

In Requiem for a Faith I, where Janes introduces the "progenitors" of his four-generation examination of Newfoundland outport life, religion, as already mentioned, is portrayed as being one of the key ingredients by which community life was stabilized and held together. As the narrator puts it,

By the time of William John Coffin [the key "progenitor"], who was born in 1898, dozens of families were established on what was already called the St. Michael's Line; there was a school of sorts kept going by the Church of England, and above all there was a Minister. This seemed to put a seal of permanence on the community, for ministers of the Gospel were still not so common that any old place around the bay could be served by one. (1)

Far later in the unfolding of the generations of Coffins, in Requiem for a Faith II, the narrator observes in retrospect how religion had once functioned at the family level as well as at the community level to offer stability and to hold people together: at the funeral held for third-generation Billy Coffin (one of the "rebels" in Janes' four-generation classification system) the lack

of familial grief over his death-by-suicide, according to the narrator, was "a display in public of how the family bonds had loosened over the years and religious feeling now failed to bring them together or unite them as once it had the power to do"(64). Hence "remembered religion" in St. Michael's had functioned, as it had been shown to do in Horwood's Caplin Bight, to "unite" people at the family as well as at the community level.

Yet religion provided more than familial and community stability to the people of St. Michael's; it was also their means of escaping, if only briefly, the drudgery of their lives. In a constantly demanding weekly round of chores, "Only on the Day of Rest were all [William John's] and his wife's occupations laid aside"(Part I, p.3). For Sophy, William John's almost excessively-religious wife, her celebration of her faith on Sundays was "her moment of escape from the drudging drayhorse life of weekdays, her touch of uplifting grace"(7).

Sophy, like Josephine in Cold Pastoral and Mrs. Slater in Highway to Valour, used her faith, as well, to help her to accept hardship without complaint as the will of God - as when her sons, despite her prayers, went off to fight in World War I. As the narrator puts it,

Sophy did not rail ... at God who this time had not answered her prayers; she knew by faith and from previous experience that He sometimes had his own reasons for not answering at the time or in the way expected, but that blessings might follow in His own good time if only she were true to Him in her heart. (10)

This bespeaks the positive value of religious faith and acceptance

that, as in fiction exclusively addressing pre-Confederation Newfoundland, allowed people to accept without undue protest those things which were utterly beyond their control. Such "acceptance" is illustrated later in Requiem for a Faith I when William and Sophy, experiencing difficulty in dealing with the changing values of their offspring (the "inheritors"), "looked back on their own early days when they had been still single with no actual regret for that time but thankful that they had had from their God-fearing parents such a solid and useful preparation for the trials of later life"(30).

And as Janes' focus shifts from the generation of "progenitors" to that of the "inheritors," we see yet another seemingly positive function of religious faith in the case of William and Sophy's daughter, Charity. Charity, who had rebelled continuously against her family's treatment of her as the only female offspring and, in a sense, against the whole restrictive, moral fabric of St. Michael's, experienced a complete turn to faith after becoming pregnant out of wedlock with a stranger she never saw again. Returning to St. Michael's from the "escape" to Halifax which had resulted in this pregnancy, she committed herself to a "submission" to what would be "the second guiding star of her life [her son, presumably, being the first]"(42), so that religion became for her, along with her son, "all the comfort, the foundation and meaning of her own life"(78). Here, then, we see religion functioning as a kind of haven or path to follow - a force giving structure to a life that until then had seemed confused and

lost because of the conflicting messages pervading the outports at the beginning of the "era of change."

Another way in which religious faith is shown to be used to alleviate the hardships of outport life - as well as the hardships of the urban poor - is revealed in William Rowe's novel, Clapp's Rock (1983), a satirical exploration of contemporary Newfoundland politics and of man as a political animal. This novel centers upon the experiences and growing ambitions of its protagonist, Neil Godwin, but features as well an interesting treatment of religion through the experiences of Neil's father, Ernest - a product of pre-Confederation Newfoundland - who during a period of economic austerity conceived a "vocation" to become an Elder, or minister, in an unconventional Protestant sect called "The Gazers on the Goodlike Glory of God's Full Fair and Fearful Face"; the adherents of this sect were satirically referred to, by outsiders, as "Gawkers" (296-297;29). For Ernest Godwin's initial, trial "posting" as a minister of this faith, he was sent, at the dawning of Newfoundland's Confederation with Canada, to a poor, desolate outport named "Maggotty Cove" (297-298) where, early in his ministry, one of his congregation posed the question, "how [do] we know we are God's chosen ones?" - a question he initially felt unprepared to answer. However, suddenly inspired by a glimpse at his congregation - "here a wretched shape, there a malformed hulk, a sunken chest, a glintless eye, a shrunken frame, a vacant face, a shivering pelt," members of a community where the fishery failed, year after year - he was moved to compare them to the "runty,

scrawny lamb" which "would be spared the savage butcher's knife" (299). They would, in their "completed states," dwell in an existence where they would no longer be "bound" to "this rock," and where there were "no drudgery, no debts, no demoralizing doubts, no sinking down in desperation, no slavery for simple survival, no unloved work for daily needs" (31) - all of which "hit a credible cord" among his listeners (299) and subsequently swelled the ranks of his congregation. In a subsequent move to St. John's, having by now achieved the rank of "Chief Elder" because of his success as a preacher, he similarly found among the urban poor "people who ... had their hard lives stamped on their faces, dress, and manners" in contrast with the more well-to-do "townies." And he gave these people a religion in which, because they were like the "stunted, scrawny, runty and lame" lamb, they would be "spared the murderous butcher's knife" reserved for the "cuddly ... fat and fleecy lambs" - the more prosperous citizens of St. John's (30-32). Hence we see, in both a rural and an urban setting in the years immediately following Confederation, how hard lives, as in fiction focussed on pre-Confederation Newfoundland, will cleave to religion - in this case because the religion is based on accepting a gruelling present hardship through the belief that it will ultimately lead to a lenient afterlife.

The idea of using religious faith to help you through what might otherwise be an unendurable present by cleaving to its promise of an afterlife of ease is sustained in Johnston's The Time of their Lives where, in pre-Confederation Newfoundland, couples

like "Mom and Dad," in trying to survive as farmers, "worked twenty hours a day" without managing even to make "a life for themselves"(10;7). "Mom," it seems, endured this rigour through her faith in the afterlife. "For Mom," explains the narrator, "heaven was heaven as described in sympathy cards, a pleasant, arbor-like place, where nature was tamed and everything was clean and spotless"(11) - in short, where everything was as unlike her earthly existence as possible, and therefore something to which she could look forward happily.

In this novel we can see as well the ambivalence regarding the value of the old way of life and the religion that went with it - an ambivalence that links Johnston with Janes in Requiem for a Faith, and with O'Flaherty in some of his soon to be discussed short stories. In Janes the ambivalence lies, as this thesis has intimated and will continue to explore, in a celebration of old outport life and the religion that sustained it that is occasionally challenged by insinuations that the old life and religion were not as benevolent as the author maintains; in Johnston's The Time of their Lives and in O'Flaherty's stories, by contrast, authorial ambivalence emerges when depictions of the hardship of the old days and the attendant harshness and hypocrisy of the religious faith that pervaded them are softened by nostalgic, backward glances that suggest that there is something to be missed in those old ways and in that old, attendant faith. Again, as observed in introducing Requiem for a Faith, this inconsistency can be defended because it reflects the unfortunate

reality that no age is all good or all bad and that in the passing of an historic and religious era good things as well as bad ones are forever lost. In The Time of their Lives, this inconsistency is revealed in the concluding paragraph of the novel. Here Johnston, who throughout the story has painted a span of generations that proceeded from backbreaking, thankless labour to a psychically damaged and in some cases lost or uprooted second generation and an attendant faith that was sometimes laughable and at other times an instrument of psychological cruelty, finally suggests, in looking back at these phenomena, that there was still something of value in that life and in the religion that helped to hold it together:

How could they know, those young men and women who came up from Harbour Deep in 1921, that the farms for which they sacrificed so much would vanish by the end of the century? And those who were born when the land was cleared, when the place was first called the Meadows - how could they have known that their lives would span the life of their town, that the place that, when they were children, they thought would last forever, would pass away with them? Murchie, Lew, my mother, Hilda - it's the nights in the house they'll remember, the family gathered as if for safety in the kitchen. It was there they said the rosary, repeated sixty times, "Now and at the hour of our death." (194)

It is somehow significant that the novel ends with words from the rosary, the rosary thus being linked with the warmth of the kitchen and with a way of life in which a family grew, but which has now come undone around them. The suggestion is that religious observance was a part of what defined a way of life and held it together - as O'Flaherty puts it in his novel, Priest of God, "a

warm place, keeping fear out"(209) - so that the disintegration of the familial observance of religion is a manifestation of the not altogether welcomed disintegration of a way of life. In this sense, then, remembered religion functioned as a stabilizing force - much as it was said to do in Janes' Requiem for a Faith.

This theme is also found in several of O'Flaherty's short stories - again, despite the fact that in a number of these stories, as will later be shown, religious faith is seemingly disparaged rather than upheld. In "Fish Killer," from the collection Summer of the Greater Yellowlegs, modern times with their general indifference to teleological concerns are contrasted with the old days through the narrator's father, who reveals his "old-fashioned" way of attributing natural order to divine plan in marvelling at a salmon's camouflage, thereby being able to reason "Who says there's no God?"(42) This story is about the old man and what he represents in contrast with the modernity that will inevitably replace him. He is a fisherman of great prowess whose days, it seems, are over because of modern technology and changing times. His son, as narrator, reflects on how the older man had named "marks for the shoal" in relation to their positioning vis-à-vis the various communities' church spires, some of which are doomed to come down, and adds the cryptic observation "The churches had a lot to do with finding directions in the old days"(41). The implication in contrasting those "old days" with the current ones is again that something important has been lost - and that the church, as a "provider of directions" or as a stabilizing force, had

had an important and positive function.

Similarly, in the story "A Small Place in the Sun" in the story collection of the same title, O'Flaherty, writing of an outport childhood around the dawning of Confederation, shows a Roman Catholic fisherman who quickly resorts to the rosary and holy medals in times of trouble (8;11) despite signs, indicative of the "Decline of Faith" which will be addressed in the next chapter of this thesis, that his children have already begun to be lured from taking such religious appeals seriously (8). In both of these stories of O'Flaherty's, then, the stability achieved through adherence to religious faith is contrasted with a modern rejection - or demolition - of that faith, with the intimation that in its day, religious faith was indeed a guiding and reassuring force to the people who maintained it.

However, despite the structure, stability, and direction, the weekly relief from drudgery, the strength to accept the inevitable, and the promise to the downtrodden of a better afterlife that religion is shown to have provided pre-Confederation Newfoundlanders in fictional post-Confederation reminiscences, there is, as Part One of this thesis indicated, a problem inherent in the fictionally-depicted succour that religion offered its adherents. This problem is that in advocating earthly acceptance of life's trials, religion often prevented people from attempting to change that which could and should have been changed so as to ameliorate their lives. Thus, this treatment of the "remembered reign of faith" in post-Confederation fiction will conclude with a

brief exploration of this negative attribute of religious adherence.

3. THE PROBLEM OF ACCEPTANCE, REVISITED

Beginning again with Janes' Requiem for a Faith, because of its pivotal position in spanning pre- and post-Confederation Newfoundland and in examining the nature of religious adherence in both eras, we see again the author's ambivalent treatment of religion as a force in his characters' lives. For in Part I, in addressing the lives of the "progenitors" or earliest generation of Coffins while their offspring, the "inheritors," are still quite young, amidst the positive picture Janes paints of religion as a stabilizing force and as a refuge from confusion and drudgery, we suddenly see religious faith being used as a means of inhibiting necessary and justifiable change. For in Sophy Coffin's treatment of her one daughter, Charity, in whom she saw "self-will" as a religious "abomination" and upon whom she counted to help ease the drudgery of her own life, we see the common, old-time Newfoundland story of a girl taken out of school "at the age of fifteen and moved into the first stage of her destiny of a household drudge" (8-9). When Charity rebels, running away unsuccessfully to enlist in the W.R.N.S. (13), her mother charges her with the sin of pride, "Raisin' yourself up agen God and man" (14), while her father says, with reasoning reminiscent of Duncan's character Skipper Thomas in "A Beat t'Harbour," who similarly and tragically delimited his

son's future through his own ignorance and version of teleology,

We can't have everything we wants in this world, and the sooner you realizes that, the better. Sometimes we got to be contented with something less than our dreams comin' true. So you might be more contented yourself, in your mind, if you tries to do like your mother says and accepts the station that God is after callin' you to. (15)

In this case, the referred to "station" of stay-at-home "household drudge," in a family where the sons have been permitted to go their own ways and to create the lives they want for themselves, is clearly unfair, and is authorially-depicted as being so. Further education, a chance to meet new people and see new places - even if only in St. John's - could have been provided for Charity, and might have resulted, for her, in a more fulfilling future than the one which she attained. So the "acceptance" her father preaches, while kindly-intended, is not a healthy species of acceptance, but an unnecessarily stultifying one.

Similarly, in Part II of the novel, second-generation Mag Slaney, a Coffin in-law, sustains Roman Catholic-style the same determined acceptance as her mother-in-law, Sophy Coffin, in enduring the troubles brought on by her fourth-generation grandson, Jack. Mag, who has ended up having to raise Jack, a member of what Janes classifies as the "renegade" generation which has thrown all the old outport values, religious and secular, out the window, accepts Jack's insolence and tyranny "with loud wailing but also with submission to God's will for her, and with some effort to control this young bull"(74). While her "effort to control" Jack is commendable, her attitude of "submission" and of belief that God

has willed Jack's terrible behaviour on her is not; in the ensuing story we learn of Jack's shiftlessness, refusal to work, serious abuse of drugs, kidnapping of his female cousin, and ultimate ugly and meaningless death. Somehow one must question the part that Mag's "submission to God's will" has played in Jack's self-destruction; perhaps some form of intervention, on Mag's or someone else's part, might have served Jack better than acceptance. Again, as in Part One of this thesis, one is tempted to invoke the prayer about changing what one can change, accepting what one cannot, and having the wisdom to know the difference. Certainly in Charity's case, and quite possibly in Jack's, a response other than religious acceptance of one's lot was called for.

A similar point can be made concerning the effect of Ernest Godwin's religion upon its adherents in Rowe's Clapp's Rock. For while the author is not explicit in pointing this out, it can be intimated that a religion which depends for its popularity on championing and justifying the lot of the "underdog" is in no way encouraging its congregation of underdogs to strive to be anything other than underdogs. And lest these observations be charged as representing the position of the "social reformer" criticized in Part One of this thesis, it must be pointed out that it is not the fictional depiction of religious belief or of the need for belief that is here being called into question, but rather the depiction of a too-ready acceptance of hardships that are not necessarily inevitable, under the banner of religious submission. Charity and Jack of Requiem for a Faith, like the "Gawkers" of Clapp's Rock,

are products of a system of belief in which hardship, failure, perversion, and mediocrity are permitted to persist, unchallenged and unexamined, under the umbrella of "acceptance of God's will." And like the "crippled man" and the "barren woman" of Johnston's The Time of their Lives, who are similarly dismissed by a character as being what they are because of their own failings and God's will, these characters are using religious acceptance as a kind of excuse for an unwillingness to strive for truth, justice, and amelioration - or are having this acceptance used against them by someone else.

Thus, the fictionally-depicted positive attributes of old-time religion as treated in post-Confederation fiction must be balanced against its fictionally-revealed negative attributes. And in turning from treatments of the remembered adherence to religious practice to treatments of the continuing reign of religious faith in post-Confederation Newfoundland, we will find, as we did in Part One of this thesis, that the negative attributes far outweigh the positive ones.

4. NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF THE CONTINUING REIGN OF FAITH

1. The Hypocrisy and Materialism of the Clergy.

As in the first part of this thesis, our examination of the negative side of fictionally-portrayed religion in post-Confederation Newfoundland will commence with a look at authorial

treatments of the clergy, who are for the most part depicted as being driven by decidedly non-spiritual motives in their dealings with their congregations. Whether through a thirst for money or for political protection, and whether as representatives of new, previously unheard-of or old, traditionally-known religious sects, these spiritual leaders are exposed as acting not from spiritual but from earthly and often selfish promptings, thus contributing to an overall picture of organized religion as both hypocritical and materialistic.

In Requiem for a Faith it is not, predictably, the old-time priests and ministers who are exposed to critical narrative scrutiny but rather the pastor Everett B. Shepard - a product and symbol of the wave of mainland and American influences that Janes reveals as bombarding Newfoundland after Confederation (see Part II, pp.12-13). Shepherd, "in the older tradition of American Fundamentalism in the South," was "vociferously Evangelical and hard-shell Baptist"; he arrived unannounced in St. Michael's to establish "his own Temple ... to be known as The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, Second Coming" (Part I, p.74), in a manner reminiscent of Pastor Roberts' arrival in the George's Cove of Gough's Maud's House. He found an easy introduction to St. Michael's through third-generation Mary Coffin, who was engaged to Gordon Sweet, a member of the St. Michael's Pentecostal church and thus automatically more receptive to evangelicalism than a Roman Catholic or an Anglican might have been (73).

Shepherd's declared "Mission" was "to claim Newfoundland

for Christ" (Part I, p.74), but his ambition, as becomes increasingly clear in Part II of Janes' novel, is to garner for himself and his family as much fame and money as possible. As he preaches "fornication and finance - the vile sin of one and the terrible, unwished-for burden of the other" (Part II, p.14), we can see how much more money matters than faith to Pastor Shepherd. Once he had converted new members, their "financial defection" was "worse ... than an actual spiritual back-sliding," as far as the pastor was concerned (24). And not content with the number of conversions and attendant earnings gleaned from St. Michael's, Shepherd proceeded to use "electronic religion" and a knowledge of prime-time radio listening to get an ever-increasing audience to "send in contributions"(24), eventually hitting the financial big times when his evangelical "show" became a television regular - "Coast to coast with the Holy Ghost," as one of the Coffins sardonically referred to it (44).

Eventually Shepherd "put his kids on the payroll along with his wife" in this religion-as-bigtime-business of his (34), and capitalized on the charm of a fourth generation Coffin - Mary and Gordon's small daughter, Kim. Kim's "endearing quality was worth thousands, millions," as Shepherd reasoned to his wife, to justify to her why Kim spent more time on his evangelical television show than did their own children. He also reminded her that "the new Buick was not paid for yet"(50). Hence, Janes goes to considerable lengths in this novel to expose American-style evangelicalism, and the man who introduced it to St. Michael's, as

a sham.

We next see an authorial treatment of the hypocrisy and materialism of religious leaders - this time, though, not of a leader, but of a probationer - in O'Flaherty's story "The Hawker," in the story collection A Small Place in the Sun. This is the story of a self-proclaimed "sensitive" probationer "in the Methodist mission" (115) whose Methodist preacher-parents "had kept him and the rest of the family apart from other children to prevent their picking up [outport] accents" during the "rural circuits" of his boyhood (111-112) - a young man who weeps when he reads of "the sufferings of Brébeuf and the other Jesuit martyrs" (110), but who does not mind going from outport to outport conning impoverished, T.B.-ridden families (especially Roman Catholic families, upon whom he looks with condescension as being particularly naïve) into buying a bogus "remedy" for tuberculosis, so as to attain personal profit. Experiencing no moral qualms about parting the poor and the sick from their money for a "medicine" that will not cure them, and using his Methodist "religiosity" as proof of his authenticity, this man's only concern is that, in visiting T.B.-ridden families he may contract the disease himself. The bitter irony pervading the story reaches its height when, contemplating the health risk to which he is subjecting himself as door-to-door salesman, the probationer reassures himself by reasoning "Surely He [God] would look after His own" (113) - the implication being that in his mindset the outport sufferers of T.B. are obviously not "God's own," as he is. Hence both money-hunger and religious bigotry

function, in this story, to reveal the hypocrisy of a representative of faith.

O'Flaherty also addresses clerical hypocrisy and materialism - this time, Roman Catholic style - in his novel, Priest of God, the story of protagonist Father John Ryan's agonized inquiry into the meaning, verity, and place of religious faith in the modern world - a central thematic concern that reveals Lawrence Mathews' unfortunate classification of the book as a "page-turner" in his introduction to the recent Newfoundland issue of Canadian Fiction Magazine as a misguided and superficial reading of the novel (Mathews,7). In Priest of God it is the character Bishop English who reveals what is depicted as the inherent materialism of Roman Catholicism as an institution when, as an important figure in the hierarchy of spiritual leadership, he asserts to his "underling," Father Ryan, that "Most of the work [of the priesthood] is adding up sums"(28). The questionable nature of Bishop English's spiritual integrity is later revealed in a different way: in preaching "the evidences for the truth of the Resurrection," he relates the reasoning of an old Indian "brave" in a "Lash Larue movie" who, in helping his "Chief" decide whether to attack a white fort or not, "sees smoke rising from the fort" and concludes "'Heap big smoke, must be-um fire'," to the reasoning by which good Catholics should be assured of the Resurrection's "truth." The "smoke" of the centuries of holy people and theologians, "Intelligent, scholarly, saintly men, men devoted to the truth, men smarter than any of us, [who] were convinced that

Christ overcame death," should be ample reason for lesser mortals to assume that within and inspiring all that "smoke" is a "fire" - Christ's actual resurrection from death (183-184). That this is self-admittedly "the kernel" of Bishop English's "own feelings" about Christian faith (184) - i.e., that we should believe because better men before us have believed - in combination with his financially-oriented opinion that the priesthood is mainly useful in "counting sums" - is an element of characterization by which this author intimates to the reader the shallow and materialistic nature of this Roman Catholic authority-figure.

Clerical materialism rears its ugly head briefly, yet again, in Helen Porter's story "The Plan," in the collection A Long and Lonely Ride. Here an elderly woman, catalyzed by the dawning of yet another birthday into pondering whether it is worth it to go on living, observes of a clergyman who lives among the elderly people in her retirement community that he "was forever trying to interest the rest of them in his 'tour of the Holy Lands'," adding drily, "He would apparently get a free trip for himself if he got enough others signed up" (67). Although this instance of clerical profiteering is relatively benign in comparison with earlier authorial treatments, it sustains the theme that clergymen's motives make them untrustworthy representatives of religious faith in fiction addressing post-Confederation Newfoundland.

A final, different but related fictional instance of a clergyman acting from non-spiritual motives must here be noted, and it is that of Chief Elder Ernest Godwin in Rowe's Clapp's Rock. In

this instance, Godwin is revealed as supporting - and offering his church's support to - the prevailing political party in Newfoundland, not out of spiritual conviction, but because, a "shrewd cookie," he "knows that there is always the risk of his personal religious movement being wiped out overnight by some rich and dynamic theological cyclone from the mainland - unless he keeps his hand on the controls" (244). Here the Chief Elder is shown as just one more political animal in a den of political animals, using his position and the banner of his religion to protect his self-interest. All in all, priests, bishops, pastors, elders, and ministers fare rather badly in post-Confederation fictional portrayals. As is the case with some of their pre-Confederation predecessors, their hypocrisy, materialism, and weakness of religious conviction reveal them as upholding at best the form, but not the content, of religious faith. A discussion of overall adherence to form without content in post-Confederation fiction will comprise a further section of this chapter.

However, in fairness to these clergymen - and to the authors who so portrayed them - it is worth exploring some of the authorially-given reasons for which the ministers, priests, nuns, and Christian Brothers peopling this fiction embraced the religious life. In fiction focussed on pre-Confederation Newfoundland, Duncan and Horwood were the only authors to devote much attention to this consideration; in the fiction primarily concerned with post-Confederation Newfoundland, though, a number of authors address the reasons for the "calling" of their characters. And

while these "reasons," for the most part, are just as materialistic, hypocritical, or misguided as are the "spiritual leaders" thereby produced, they explain in part - and often with a certain authorial compassion - why so many clergymen, nuns, and Christian Brothers seem unsuited to the positions they fill, and why they thus become ineffectual, if not downright harmful, leaders of their "flocks."

ii. What "Calls" the Religious to Their Vocations.

Near the end of Clapp's Rock, while lying on his deathbed, Ernest Godwin, Chief Elder of "The Gazers on the Goodlike Glory of God's Full Fair and Fearful Face," confesses to his son Neil in an agony of self-revulsion that in filling this position his "life has been nothing - for thirty years a lifelong lie" (343). As he puts it to Neil,

From the moment I preached my first sermon in Maggotty Cove Motion, thirty years ago, till I preached my last words in the Temple of Truth here this year, I have despised every minute of it, every separate, isolated second of it.
(343)

Why, then, did the man spend his life in this way? As he explains to his son, and as this thesis has already briefly revealed, after his failed career in law Ernest and his wife had gone through a period of frightening economic uncertainty, during which time he began attending churches indiscriminately because they allowed his "heart to open to a comforting abstraction," until the "elegant simplicity of The Gazers ... won [his] allegiance" (296-297). He then went to the "Chief Elder" to tell him he had been "called to be a preacher," and went to Maggotty Cove where, by stumbling upon

the previously-described analogy which explained to the underdogs both why they were underdogs and why they would therefore be saved, he launched himself in a successful "vocation" which was nonetheless a personal lie. The only defence Ernest could offer his son for following this detested, lifelong path was that "it was the soft and easy way to go, because it appeared to be the right way under the circumstances"(344). Hence, the final and lasting image of Ernest Godwin which Rowe leaves us with is of a man who, dabbling in religion because it was a "comforting abstraction" and because he needed employment, launched himself on the path to religious leadership while harbouring in his heart the knowledge that he had no true vocation. Thus he pathetically went to his death despising himself. In a novel replete with searing satiric images, this one stands out as sincerely tragic. Here we see a preacher who, in his falsehood, has damaged himself far more than he has his flock.

In Johnston's three novels we also see explorations of what "calls" a supposedly "holy" person to a "holy" vocation - and none of the reasons the author uncovers turns out to be spiritual. In his first novel, The Story of Bobby O'Malley, a wry coming-of-age story set in the suburbs of St. John's in the second half of the twentieth century, we are offered a vision, through what happens to protagonist Bobby O'Malley, of how some young males in Newfoundland are "called" to the priesthood. In Johnston's fictional treatment it is the boys' parents (in Bobby's case, his mother) who decide that the boys are destined for the priesthood

and who push them in that direction until the boys manage, through force of habit, to convince themselves that they have indeed been "called." Bobby's "call," conceived by his mother, was ultimately "confirmed by the priest," and despite his father's satiric attempts to undermine the idea of such a calling (105), Bobby persists, almost to the novel's end, in believing that this is his genuine direction in life.

In protagonist Bobby's case, in a manner that is reminiscent of Billy Luff in Duncan's "Concerning Billy Luff and Master Goodchild" and that anticipates the young, would-be Salvation Army officers of Porter's "O Take Me as I Am," the emotionalism and romantic tendencies of his highly imaginative mind aid him in perceiving the priesthood as an attractive venture. In a way eerily similar to Billy Luff, Bobby, through his imaginative romanticism, comes to associate holiness in a positive way with death; at one point, he relates how, inspired by a novel he was reading,

I was in love with the notion of declining like [the novel's hero], tragically, romantically. That winter, whenever it snowed, I went out and climbed the hill behind the house. And I lay down and, closing my eyes, let the snow fall on my face. I imagined what it would be like to stay there and never go back - to be found afterwards, frozen to death, or to emerge in the spring, like a secret from the snow. The priesthood began to seem like a wonderful way to go, the call like a luminous tumor, growing inside me [emphasis mine]. (116)

This appeal to childish romanticism can contribute to convincing the young that they have a vocation. And Johnston does not

restrict his exploration of religious "callings" to the "calling" of his protagonist; we also see in this novel a Catholic boys' high school doing its best to entice boys into becoming Christian Brothers, with monthly films showing how attractive the life at an Ontario seminary can be (163). Anticipating the formative years of Father John Ryan in O'Flaherty's Priest of God, we see the success of this high school's methods among the boys who are somehow "outcasts." A member of Bobby's "gang," nicknamed "D-Cup" because he is fat, is described as "thinking about becoming a Christian Brother, but Tommy [another "gang" member] said that was only because he couldn't get a girlfriend" (172). Thus in The Story of Bobby O'Malley, parental ambition, childish romanticism, and physical deviations from "normality" all become reasons why boys are unwittingly lured to religious callings.

In Johnston's The Time of Their Lives, the brief explanation of what lies behind religious "callings" is focussed not on Newfoundland boys but on Newfoundland girls who, as in The Story of Bobby O'Malley, can be strongly pressured by their parents to find a religious vocation - which means entering a convent. Again spanning several generations and thus representing the concurrent change of attitude of these generations, the narrator - a third generation member of the family who lived in "The Meadows" - relates how his mother and aunts had been urged by their mother to "'get the call' and become a nun," and had later been condemned by their father for failing to do so (28-31). As the narrator

explains, among the second, up-and-coming generation,

Most women on the Meadows, my mother included, believed it was women who were too plain to find a husband or too squeamish for the marriage bed that became nuns; or women who couldn't stand responsibility, couldn't cope with everyday life. (28)

The older, first generation, by contrast,

believed that it was virtuous women that became nuns, women who wanted no part of sex, not because they were afraid of it, but because it was sinful. And the convent would guarantee a measure of material comfort, Mom [the narrator's grandmother] reminded her daughters - food, clothing shelter. "Think about it girls," Mom would say, each night after the rosary. "Pray to the Holy Ghost for guidance." (28)

Hence, we see here in a fictional setting how in the "old days," at least, parents placed great value on having at least one of their daughters enter a convent; and it is worth noting that in neither the older, more devoutly "religious" generation nor in the newer, more secular one, did actual dedication to God figure among the reasons why a girl might become a nun. Girls unable to find mates - like their male counterparts in The Story of Bobby O'Malley who became Christian Brothers - and girls unable to "cope" with life who thought sex was sinful and who welcomed the "material comforts" a convent offered: these were the ones singled out for a "religious" life. Religion played little or no role in the decision.

In The Divine Ryans, Johnston's third novel, we see a man electing to enter the priesthood for a reason similar to, though far more complex than, the female decision to enter the convent to

avoid "the marriage bed" in The Time of Their Lives. The Divine Ryans is the story of protagonist Draper Doyle Ryan's coming-of-age in an excessively "pious" household of relatives in the St. John's of a recent past. Draper Doyle, figuratively and literally "haunted" by his recently deceased father, must come to terms, at the novel's end, with the reason for his father's death, which he has known all along but has managed to block from his consciousness until this moment of epiphany.

The Ryans, a prominent Catholic family in St. John's peopled largely by priests, nuns, and lay people obsessed with religiosity, had decided early in the life of Draper's father, Donald, that he must be the son to marry marry and procreate, thus assuring the continuance of the family name. Donald, as a young man of promising intellectual talents who had displayed no interest in the holy life, quite suddenly decided that he wanted to enter the priesthood - a course his family denied him, which led, in a roundabout way, to the suicide which later haunts his young son, Draper Doyle. Donald, it turns out, was homosexual, and for that reason had elected to become a priest as what his son later reflects must have been "his only hope" (201). Draper Doyle goes on to muse that the priesthood would have "preserved" his father from a life of homosexuality he could not have kept secret in St. John's and which would not have been tolerated there (201) - but it is equally plausible that he sought the priesthood to "preserve" him from the heterosexual marriage bed his family required of him. In either case, though, and despite the fact that Donald Ryan did not

become a priest, his reason for wishing to do so - whether to avoid one form of sexuality or the other - had no more to do with a spiritual "calling" than that of any of the other characters so far discussed.

In O'Flaherty's Priest of God we meet a character who has become a priest - but who, as must by this point be predictable, has not done so as the result of divine inspiration. This novel, as previously mentioned, is in good part an exploration, through the introspective protagonist, of the role of priest and of the possibility of true religious belief in modern society. Thus we see Father Ryan, early in the novel, musing on how he had "drifted" into the priesthood just as he had "into university ... [and] parish work, moving more by instinct and the prodding of others than by conscious choice, trying to please. People pleasing" (9). In this respect, his motives combine, to some extent, those of Ernest Godwin, who more-or-less "drifted" into his "calling," and those of the Johnston youths who head towards the holy life at the "prodding" of their parents. However, there is also the suggestion that as a boy, Father Ryan had been an outcast who, like the fat boy in The Story of Bobby O'Malley who was said to have thought about becoming a Christian Brother because he "couldn't get a girlfriend," was overweight (his nicknames were "Fatty" and "Tubby" - p.85). There is also the suggestion that the boy John Ryan had been friendless: he was not included in the other children's games (85), and was a continual source of mortification to his parents (85; 173). In short, as an outcast among his peers and a source of

shame to his parents, John Ryan was psychologically "set up" to "drift" towards a vocation that might be "people pleasing" - again, as with the other characters, without divine inspiration as a motive.

Finally, in the Porter story "O Take Me as I Am" in the collection, A Long and Lonely Ride, we see the authorial exploration of the "call" to become a Salvationist officer - a calling which again is finally depicted as having little to do with truly religious inspiration. Noreen, the protagonist of the story, in reflecting upon her own past involvement in and present, ambivalent feelings about the Salvation Army, comes to realize that "true faith" did not always figure in the decision to become a Salvation Army officer, but rather, the "emotionalism" brought about "in the fervour of a prayer meeting." She goes on to muse that

This state of mind, for some, lasted only until the young officers found themselves in isolated settlements, far away from home, where they were expected to live on pitifully small salaries, where every move they made was watched closely by their congregations. Many dropped away, some to marry "outside," some out of bitterness and disillusionment, some simply because they weren't suited to the work. (34)

However, Noreen muses on sardonically, "there were always new recruits, undeterred by stories of the experiences of others, to take their places"(34). Thus, as is to some extent true of Bobby O'Malley and of Duncan's Billy Luff, the heightened sense of emotionalism or drama associated with the religious calling - of whatever denomination - can lure the young and the impressionable

into believing, erroneously, that they have been "called" by God to serve as spiritual leaders and spiritual examples, often with regrettable if not disastrous results.

Thus we see that while a number of spiritual leaders in post-Confederation Newfoundland fiction are portrayed as being hypocritical and materialistic, there is also a prevailing authorial concern for uncovering some of the reasons that might cause a "religious" person to assume that he or she has a "calling," to begin with. And these reasons - ranging from such material considerations as needing employment or seeking lifelong security, to the more psychological ones such as being pressured by school and family, being lured through romantic or emotional associations, or feeling ostracized physically and/or sexually from one's peers - can in some cases evoke empathy in the reader, who comes to see that some of these characters, in their so-called religious "callings," are victims of forces beyond their control. These authorial explorations, needless to say, are not offered by way of excusing what is fictionally portrayed as an overall lack of spiritual sincerity on the part of the clergy. They are suggestions, however, that the clergy as well as lay people may become victims of institutionalized religion, when institutionalized religion stems from impure sources.

In Duncan's and Horwood's fiction dealing with pre-Confederation Newfoundland, physical isolation is blamed as the major cause of delusive "callings" to the faith; in fiction focussed on post-Confederation Newfoundland, as suggested above,

the causes become far more complex. However, as we shall now go on to see, in the fiction focussed on late twentieth century life, religious adherence, whether on the part of the clergy or lay people, becomes a subject for condemnation when it focusses on the form rather than the content of faith and when, as is too often the case, it is invested with a harshness that is humanly crippling and that leads, once again, to divisiveness and to the denigration of life. The next sections of this thesis will deal, then, with these negative attributes of religion as they manifest themselves fictionally in the continued reign of faith in post-Confederation Newfoundland. We will begin, as in Part One, with an examination of the theme of the observance of religious form without religious content.

iii. Observance of the Form but not the Content of Religion.

Examples abound in post-Confederation fiction of characters practising religious form without understanding or caring about the content that is supposed to pervade and inspire that form. As in Part One of this thesis, examples emerge of religious services becoming mere performances empty of true inspiration, and of religious practices such as the saying of the rosary or confession becoming either contests or gimmicks, in either case devoid of inherent meaning. We will also see examples of religion as rank commercialism, of religious observance being practised without any concern for Christ's great commandment by

individuals seeking a guaranteed entrance to heaven, and of religious practice as being the mere effort to comply with a socially-expected convention that is rapidly becoming obsolete. We will commence this analysis with another look at Janes' Requiem for a Faith, pivotal in its spanning of pre- and post-Confederation Newfoundland, and proceed more or less chronologically to examine further fictional treatments of religious form being practised without attention to its content.

In Requiem for a Faith II, when third generation Coffin in-law Gordon Sweet assumes the role of "Guardian of the Saved" for the evangelical pastor Everett Shepherd, his main task is to catch and drag off those women who, through ecstasy, have fainted during the pastor's service. With a wry humor reminiscent of Horwood's description of "holy man" Jehu Gilmore's concern for his stomach, Janes' narrator observes that Gordon "did not mind the strain because [along with its religious implications] it gave him a really good appetite for his Sunday dinner"(35). The tongue-in-cheek nonchalance of this linkage of Gordon's concern for the supposedly-spiritual with his concern for the profane sets the stage nicely for Janes' depiction of religious service-as-performance, evangelical style, by Everett Shepherd.

Shepherd's preaching and his interaction with his congregation/audience strongly resemble those of Ernest Godwin in Clapp's Rock, soon to be described, in that narrative clues reveal to the reader what the congregation fails to see: that such sermons are ninety-nine percent theatrics and perhaps one percent

inspiration. Consider the narrative treatment of one such sermon, in which Everett is relating how he recently attempted to save some of the damned on "Water Street East."

Here Ev paused, visibly waiting for some reaction and encouragement from his congregation, and when there came only a vague distant murmur he called out in a town crier's tone to ask whether he had heard an Amen. Back to him at once it came on a mighty wave of sound, at which Ev nodded with a Mussolini grimace and then resumed his pacing across the platform, the Bible now upheld in his right hand as he resumed his sermon. (15)

Everett, as already indicated, is pursuing his religious "vocation" at least as much for monetary as for spiritual reasons, and his success in winning over congregations depends upon the dramatics with which he can entrance them. Hence, as the narrator proceeds to put it, "he milked the drama for all it was worth"(15). Such narrative language reveals the author's attitude towards his subject; and obviously, as far as Janes is concerned, this fictional creation of his is representative of a total concern for the form, rather than the content, of religious faith.

The same impression is created further on in Part II, where Everett's skill as a television preacher/performer is described:

Sometimes the power of the Spirit was so strong and overflowing in him that he would scream out threats of doom and damnation against all those who turned their faces away from God's mercy ... Towards the end of a TV sermon Ev would be seen close-up, snapping out of his semi-trance, sweating, but smiling craftily into the camera while he ended his act as always with words of self-congratulation in the approved Jimmy Swaggart southern style ... (35)

Janes reveals this character as a cunning operator whose talents enable him to use religion in pursuit of secular ends. But more pernicious even than his use of his own talents is his use of the fourth generation Coffin - Kim Sweet - a mere child whom Shepherd is shown placing before a television camera, "chanting out by rote the words she did not understand" because he knew she had great audience appeal (50). The notion of young children going through the religious motions "by rote" without understanding what they are doing will recur in Johnston's novels, particularly The Divine Ryans. Shepherd's use of a child's pliability - together with the child's own ability to perform convincingly something she does not even understand - contributes in Requiem for a Faith to the growing feeling that in rapidly-changing St. Michael's, religion is becoming an empty shell, something still in evidence physically, but hollow within.

It is interesting at this point to introduce Horwood's Remembering Summer. This was written three years after Janes' Requiem for a Faith but directed at the same era in Newfoundland's spiritual evolution - or devolution - as is the latter portion of Janes' novel, and addresses many of the same sociological and spiritual issues as Janes does, but from a different perspective. Remembering Summer, as O'Flaherty observes in The Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador, "featur[es] the return of an unrecognizable Eli Pallisher"(330) - the youth who left Caplin Bight at the conclusion of Tomorrow Will Be Sunday. Here a much older and more world-experienced "Eli" - whom any reader with even

the most casual knowledge of Horwood's life will recognize as Horwood himself - reflects upon the many young people whose spiritual, political, cultural, psychedelic, and artistic movements have been visited upon the environs of Beachy Cove, where Eli has a cabin. More will be said about this novel later, particularly in addressing the decline and the aftermath of religious faith - but Eli, too, makes an observation about religious form being practised without consideration of religious content, when he describes the continuing religious life of Beachy Cove locals as being that of "families where Sunday labour was forbidden, but violence was accepted ... where a holy picture on a wall was sacrosanct, but a boy might have to sleep in a barn for fear of a drunken father" (45). This bitter indictment, reminiscent of similar indictments against religious hypocrisy in Horwood's earlier novels, again heralds an era where religious form may still be intact, but the meaning of that form is rapidly being forgotten.

In Rowe's Clapp's Rock the reader is given another picture of religious-ritual-as-performance, reminiscent of Everett Shepherd's performance as a preacher, but also of the performance of characters like Sister Waddleton in Duley's Highway to Valour and the congregation in Gough's Maud's House, who reveal the willingness of members of the congregation to participate in ecclesiastical theatrics. Early in the novel we see Ernest Godwin, as "Chief Elder," leading his congregation through what the narrator terms a "participatory theology" session. In this "session," various members of the congregation play what seem to be

agreed-upon roles in questioning the Elder, who in turn delivers a long-rehearsed "musing" and subsequent explanation, "alone on the stage," as the narrator puts it. Again, as in Janes' Requiem for a Faith, the descriptive language indicates that this ceremony is entirely a matter of performance - and of a performance that goes on week after week and year after year. In response to a well-known challenge of the Chief Elder, the narrator describes how "the congregation would look at each other and let their eyes reflect fear," many of them having "a natural talent for assuming the [expected and appropriate] look." There is then "dramatic pausing" on the preacher's part, and "ritualistic laughter" on the part of the congregation (29-31) - all of which suggests, as did the people of Gough's George's Cove, who "had their favourite stories of temptation and salvation which they got to polish up over the years" and "were always glad to give ... when called on" (53) - the congregation's complicity in allowing the weekly church service to become a theatre piece or a game. In Rowe's description of this "game," there is no suggestion that any actual thought of God is inspiring these "players" in their actions; and hence, once again we see a highly-evolved and ritualized religious form at work, devoid of religious content.

When we reach Johnston's novels, we again see evidence that in fictional depictions of modern-day Newfoundland, religious form has little or nothing to do with religious content in the minds of its practitioners. In The Story of Bobby O'Malley's absurdist, satiric style, we see a parish priest prescribing use of "Hail Marys" to

rid young Bobby of his obsession with a troublesome phrase his father has taught him. Here the "Hail Mary" is used, without concern for its meaning on either the priest's or Bobby's part, to "fight fire with fire" as Bobby puts it, until the secular and supposedly-religious phrases "came together in a strange fusion of blasphemous gibberish, such as might be recited by the faithful at a Black Mass"(17). Here the phrase "Hail Mary full of grace" is not an expression of Roman Catholic devotion, but a palliative tonic prescribed to be used as necessary in a kind of mental war, just as, in a reversed situation, mathematical problems were used to combat group prayer in the mind of Eli Pallisher in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday.

Further along in the novel Johnston shows the "Hail Mary" being used in a different kind of war, when Bobby's family engages in "warring rosaries" with his aunt and uncle's family, with whom they are temporarily and not very comfortably living. In a highly satiric scene we see the two warring "camps" saying the rosary simultaneously, in separate rooms divided by a thin wall, each side trying to drown the other out and each trying, through tone of voice and length of prayer, to come out looking "holier" than the other. As Bobby, the narrator, puts it, "It was hand-to-hand combat, a pious gouging of eyes. 'Speak up dear, so God can hear you,' my mother would say, as I pelted puny Aves at the enemy"(45). But Johnston's satire makes it abundantly clear that whether or not God heard these "puny Aves" had nothing to do with it: again, a religious form is being used for entirely secular, and even

sacrilegious reasons.

Another example of religious form without content operating among the characters of The Story of Bobby O'Malley revolves around the idea of finding earthly ways to help one achieve a good afterlife. Bobby recounts how, in the naïveté of his youth,

The concept of grace puzzled me. We were supposed to spend our lives getting grace, the more you got, the better, and the more prayers you said, the more you got. The point was to horde it like coupons, and turn it in on the last day, for a discount on your stay in purgatory. (30)

The supposed meaning of grace and of prayer is significantly absent in this approach to faith. Prayer is not about communing with God, nor a way of helping people, but rather, a way of earning "holy points" - just as saying the rosary is a way of trying to outperform people you do not really like. Later in the novel, when it appears that Bobby is destined for the priesthood, his Aunt Dola provides another example of religious form being perceived as a means for securing "holy points." We are told that having a priest in the family, for Aunt Dola, is a useful commodity, making "death and entry into heaven ... easier, the way a stay in the hospital is made easier if there is a relative on staff"(108). Clearly, Johnston's characters have lost sight of the supposed meaning of the rosary, of prayer, and of the call to the priesthood, perceiving the use of religious form only in its function as a self-enhancing commodity.

In Johnston's The Time of Their Lives, we are reminded

that adherence to religious form but not its content is not an exclusively modern phenomenon by "Dad," the first generation patriarchal figure of the Dunne family. As the narrator puts it, for Dad religious observance was mandatory but mechanical, not thought about:

the distinction between mere mechanical observance and actual religiousness was one he did not draw. As far as he was concerned, God might have been some feudal overlord, putting a tax on the time and money of His subjects, requiring some material tribute from them, but otherwise ignoring them. (11)

Dad thus belonged to that ilk of people who unthinkingly abide by the rules and conventions of religion because of their upbringing, but for whom any feeling of actual religious faith is an alien concept. This brand of religious adherence was manifested by Duley's Dilke sisters in Highway to Valour and even to some degree by Janes' Saul Stone in House of Hate, for whom upholding the banner of the Church of England over his family and attending church on Sundays were the concessions to social propriety and to his upbringing that he maintained, out of habit. For none of these characters, it seems, was religion anything more than a matter of form.

In The Time of their Lives we get a taste of religion as a commercial commodity in the recounting of "Mom's" trip to St. Anne de Beaupré (a shrine which will figure again in Paul Bowdring's novel, The Roncevalles Pass, 1989). For while there is the suggestion that the shrine's power to cure is truly believed by some people (Mom, although dying of cancer, "said she felt much

better" after the trip which, whether true or not, indicates her desire to believe - 75), there is as well the suggestion that trips to St. Anne de Beaupré are a big-business operation, with Mom's daughter, Lew, as a local representative, selling "boxes of holy medals and pictures" from the shrine (71) and sending postcards from it, while its governors urge that all "cures" be reported to them, presumably to better market the place (72). And capitalizing on faith for commercial reasons is, as in the case of Everett Shepherd in Requiem for a Faith, an obvious if reprehensible use of religious form, with content long since discarded by the wayside.

In Johnston's The Divine Ryans, the ritual of confession is exposed as an adherence to the form but not the content of religion, just as was the saying of the rosary in The Story of Bobby O'Malley. The picture of protagonist Draper Doyle's mother and his Aunt Phil "waiting each other out" during their penance at the altar rail, Aunt Phil not "want[ing] to seem less devout by leaving first" and both women "kneel[ing] there, far longer than it took anyone to say their penance" (61-62), in a ritual that never varied from week to week, echoes the scene of the two families "warring" with the rosary in Johnston's first novel. As for Draper Doyle himself, he had learned what kind of sins were "expected" of him and so had created for his confessions what his Uncle Reg (the male figure in this novel who, like the father in The Story of Bobby O'Malley serves, by verbally undermining the religiosity of other characters, to underline the novel's satiric focus) called a "sinventory" of more-or-less artificial sins to confess to his

uncle, Father Seymour (57). But Draper Doyle "never felt more guilt-ridden than [he] did when leaving the confessional, what with all the lies [he] told while [he] was in there" (64). Thus the demands of the ritual of confession caused Draper Doyle (who was not about to pour out his true transgressions to a priest who also happened to be his somewhat vindictive uncle) to disregard the actual meaning of the ritual, with the ironic result that after following through with the ritual he felt worse than he had before. In fact, it is the realization that he is abiding by the form but not the content of this aspect of his family's faith that is troubling to the young boy.

To make matters worse, this priest/uncle, Father Seymour, in pressuring Draper Doyle to come out with still more sins in the confession box, hits upon a matter that has been deeply troubling to the young boy and which will be discussed in greater length when we address religion and sexuality: Draper's wet dreams, which he in his pre-pubescent innocence only dimly understands. Once Draper confessed the sin of "wetting the bed," his priest/uncle was satisfied (63). It did not matter to the priest whether or not Draper Doyle understood the actual meaning of these occurrences (which he did not - he merely thought he was urinating in bed); as long as he followed the proper form by confessing, the meaning of what he was confessing did not matter. This in a sense links Draper Doyle's experience with that of Kim Sweet in Janes' Requiem for a Faith: in both cases, an adult, clerical concern over form utilizes children in the acting out of that form without caring

whether or not the children, as participants, understand or appreciate the form's meaning. Whether Draper Doyle understands what he is "confessing" is of no more importance to Father Seymour than Kim Sweet's understanding of what she "chants" is to Everett Shepherd. In both cases, having the children carry out the form of religion is all that their ecclesiastical elders require of them.

Adherence to religious form without its content figures, too, in the fiction of O'Flaherty. In "Exchange of Body Fluids," a story in the collection Summer of the Greater Yellowlegs, a youngish secretary, seeking a lasting relationship while sleeping with various men

had started praying again recently, but only because saying the "Hail Mary" about two hundred times in a row drove other thoughts from her mind and helped her get to sleep. A priest once told her that it didn't matter why you prayed; every prayer counted anyway. (16)

Once again we see, as in The Story of Bobby O'Malley, a priest's stance endorsing rather than prohibiting the use of spiritual rituals for non-spiritual ends. As well, we see a fictional recurrence of the concept of praying as a means of amassing "holy points," rather than as a means of achieving a meaningful communion with God. So far, then, we have seen the "Hail Mary" used as a psychological trick, a weapon, and a form of sleep induction. In no fictional portrayal discussed to this point (except, perhaps, at the conclusion of The Divine Ryans, where it figured as an aspect of family solidarity - which is not actually a spiritual usage, either - and in O'Flaherty's "A Small Place in the Sun," where it was used as an act of propitiation by an older generation alongside

a younger generation who were not really interested in it) has this supposedly devotional prayer been used as an act of devotion.

In "Return to Laughter," a story included in O'Flaherty's collection A Small Place in the Sun, we are reminded again, as we were in pre-Confederation fiction, of Christ's injunction that man "love his neighbour as himself" by seeing a glimpse of a character in the act of ignoring this command, rather than enacting it as it seems his position should require of him. Here the "religion teacher" at a Roman Catholic school in St. John's is shown to be "especially good" at mocking the physical shortcomings of a new teacher on staff (53). This brings into question the nature of his role as "religion teacher": can there be true Christian belief inspiring this man in the teaching of Christian precepts to his students? More probably, as is evident from his willingness to break what Christ called the most important commandment, this teacher is yet another example of a supposedly religiously-inclined person who concerns himself only with religious form. Its content is obviously dead within him, as is evident in his unkind treatment of a fellow human being.

It is not until we reach O'Flaherty's novel, Priest of God, that we see a member of a religious order who recognizes and admits to the prevalence of superficiality in modern-day religious observance. Father John Ryan, the introspective and soul-searching protagonist of the novel, admits to himself the ease of giving in to form without content in Christian practice, admitting too, in so doing, that this tendency makes a sham of Christian religious

observance:

Moving to the altar, he took the wine and water from Dominic and said the Lavabo. The familiar phrases came to his lips and he relished them. The masses he enjoyed best were the ones in which he just said the words and let the content alone. Sometimes he could do that. Priests as well as laymen went through the motions, he knew, day after day. It was possible to spend all your life at the motions. Living lies; or half-truths. A bit less than half. (11)

Complicit as he knows himself to be in this "going through the motions," Ryan is made of a moral fabric that forces him to try to do better than that. Haunted by a past incident in which his ability to "go through the motions" had left him blinded to a real-life crisis that required action and true moral commitment, and that had, without his intervention, resulted in infanticide, he determines to unravel the mystery of a young parish boy's death, which he suspects to be the result of murder, and thus, this time, to deliver the content as well as the form of Christian commitment to his congregation. However, he is met with indifference or resistance by everyone he turns to, including his own bishop. The local merchant, Squires, a man who feels that religion, unlike race, can be "switched on and off" as convenience demands (36), sums up for Ryan the prevailing indifference to religious content on the part of parishioners when he informs him, by way of discouraging his continued concern over the cause of the young boy's death, that form without content is all that modern society requires of the Church, calling Ryan "a fossil, a leftover from the catacombs bringing outmoded notions of goodness into an indifferent

world," and assuring him that

These people [his parishioners] don't need your goodness, only your rituals, your magic: baptism, confirmation, the laying on of hands, all the voodoo stuff. But spare us your morality. (178-179)

In this fictional depiction, religious form and content are demonstrated to have become such separate phenomena in modern life that everyday people, discerning the difference between the two, consciously elect to maintain the form and disregard the content, because it is too uncomfortable and inconvenient. O'Flaherty has thus shown the religious form without content dilemma in perhaps the most grim of fictional depictions here considered, by creating characters who consciously opt for form rather than content, rather than "going through the motions" simply through lack of insight.

The last fictional treatment of this issue to be considered here is a brief one, and it appears in Porter's novel, January, February, June, or July, the coming-of-age story of a young female "townie" growing up among the poorer strata of St. John's society. Religion does not figure largely in this novel, but where it does, the suggestion is, as in all the previously-discussed fiction, that in contemporary Newfoundland society form is all that really remains of religious adherence for the majority of people. Here, young protagonist Heather Novak, musing on her Protestant uncle's conversion to Catholicism when he married a Catholic woman, and on the reaction her family had had to this occurrence, remembers her mother declaring, "I wouldn't change my religion for any man." Heather's astute mental response to her

mother's declaration is that she "couldn't remember the last time her mother had been to church"(55) - underlining once again that religious form and appearances matter far more to the characters peopling Newfoundland fiction than does religious meaning. Heather's mother, from force of tradition, would not change her religion, even though she does not practise it.

And so it seems, through these fictional depictions, that adherence to the form but not the content of religion, a practice evinced in fiction focussed on pre-Confederation Newfoundland, has escalated in fictional post-Confederation society to the point where religious content, or meaning, hardly figures in the minds of most characters at all - unless they are characters like Bobby O'Malley, Draper Doyle, John Ryan, or Heather Novak, who are being used to expose the false religiosity surrounding them. "Going through the motions" of faith, in Catholic and Protestant Newfoundland alike, is seen as the rule rather than the exception, with characters perpetuating this trend either through ignorance, indifference, or conscious choice. This attendance to religious form without content, which translates in post-Confederation fiction as it did in the writing focussed on the early twentieth century into a hypocritical preponderance of interdenominational conflict, translates as well, in late twentieth century fiction, into religion as a power-wielding political force in which an ecclesiastical concern over "running things" usurps all concern over the basic tenets of Christian faith. The next two sections of this thesis will examine these manifestations of the lack of regard

for religious content in post-Confederation fiction, first by addressing ecclesiastical power-mongering, and then by readdressing the issue of interdenominational intolerance which Duley once so aptly called "the curse of this country."

iv. Religion as "Running Things."

When Janes, in Requiem for a Faith II, touches on the religious reaction to the idea of Newfoundland confederating with Canada in St. Michael's, he introduces into Newfoundland fiction a theme that will manifest itself in a number of ways in subsequent novels and short stories. This is the tendency of religion to "run things" in Newfoundland, which anyone who has lived in the province will recognize as a reality. It suggests yet again that the Christian commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself is quickly overlooked when any opportunity for self-enhancement, at the individual or ecclesiastical level, presents itself. Janes has already been quoted as characterizing Newfoundland as "A place run by merchants and clerics for their profit and proselytizing" (Part I, p.42). When Mag Slaney, the second-generation Coffin in-law, serves as the Roman Catholic mouthpiece in objecting to Confederation:

Fawder Tobin down in St. Pete's, he got a letter, see? From d'Archbishop in Sin-John's, and he said we all got to vote agen diss Confederation, 'cause if we don't we wunt be Catlicks no more ... Them big people up dere in Canada, they wants to take our religion away from us, 'long with everyt'ing else.

(Part I, p.44)

she is both indicating the power the churches have in elections, and voicing a fear over the balance of power between Protestants

and Catholics which seems to be as old as Newfoundland itself, and which manifests itself in subsequent Newfoundland fiction as a perpetual game or battle. Smallwood's reassuring response to St. Michael's that "The denominational system that we have always practised will be maintained"(46) has indeed been borne out, both historically and fictionally. Indeed, we see in Rowe's Clapp's Rock and in some of O'Flaherty's stories that this system, ostensibly intended for the education of school children, continues to wield its unassailable power at the postgraduate level as well, while making its presence acutely known in the field of politics.

When protagonist Neil Godwin, in Clapp's Rock, is discouraged by his father from applying for a Rhodes scholarship, his father gives him a brief description of the history of interdenominational tension in Newfoundland. He claims this has resulted in an agreed-upon triumvirate system "to ensure equitable representation based on religion in all public institutions"(58), from the Supreme Court to the Cabinet and other arms of government, to the school system and to the public service. Neil, belonging to the third of this triumvirate known as "Dissenters," would not be able to win the scholarship until the following year, because "Last year, an Anglican ... won it. This year is the turn of a Catholic"(59). There almost seems to be a fairness to such a system, until one stops to realize (as does Neil) that in bowing thus to the balancing of religious powers, the notion of individual merit is abolished.

This theme of religion as a power - although in the

following case, not a carefully balanced power - that is permitted to override merit, is echoed in O'Flaherty's story "Mother Ireland," from his first collection. In this story, a vacationing university professor muses that "Of late years, he had grown proud of his Irishness, though he knew very well that to get ahead at the university [Memorial University of Newfoundland] you had to affect an English accent or, at the very least, be Anglican"(28). In "These, Thy Gifts," a story from O'Flaherty's second collection, a similar assertion is made: a Roman Catholic father, preparing his sons for life on their own, seeks to impress upon them that Roman Catholics had to know how to make friends "among the Mammon of wickedness" because this is "a province dominated by a greedy Protestant elite"(19). Later in the same story, the father also remarks that "There's no inside track" for a boy with an Irish name, so he must learn to fight for what he wants (21). In both stories, whether a dominant "Protestant elite" is an actual social reality or rather, a character's mistaken perception, what is important is that such a perception exists, and thus has a psychic impact on those characters who entertain it. As we will see in addressing the theme of interdenominational conflict in post-Confederation fiction, O'Flaherty's characters certainly have reason to assert that a Protestant-Catholic conflict exists. And where conflict exists between two factions, a struggle to achieve supremacy generally follows.

As has already been mentioned in discussing Requiem for a Faith and Clapp's Rock, religion in modern Newfoundland fiction

is occasionally portrayed as throwing its weight behind political issues - again an instance of spirituality being put on the back burner in the interests of institutional self-preservation. In Requiem for a Faith Mag Slaney indicated that the ecclesia were telling her how to vote; in Clapp's Rock the narrator revealed that Chief Elder Godwin threw his church's support behind what he felt to be the most powerful political party, so that it, in turn, would protect the status of his church. Similarly, in O'Flaherty's story "Mixed Marriage," found in his first short story collection, we see a political candidate struggling to win popularity at an outport garden party and, in particular, to curry favour with the parish priest, because he is well aware of "the nature of priestly influence over voters in the outports" (34). In Bowdring's novel The Roncesvalles Pass, a Newfoundland expatriate, discoursing on his homeland to a group of friends in the unnamed mainland city in which the novel is set, claims - for reasons he does not go into - that "the churches [in Newfoundland] crucified Coaker [who organized the Fisherman's Protective Union in the early 1900s] ... the only real socialist we ever had. They were rooting out Communists in 1910, forty years before McCarthy" (98). The implication in all these instances, whether fictional or not, is that maintaining control, through maintaining power, is an ecclesiastical priority in twentieth century Newfoundland. And even if it can be argued that the churches' struggle to maintain power stems from the concern that their spiritual vision be maintained in the lives of their parishioners, engagement in such

struggle is fictionally suggested to make of the churches politically rather than spiritually concerned institutions. Somehow, in dictating to a congregation how it must vote, as in dictating to a scholarship committee which denomination is to be favoured in making annual selections, the voice of God seems strangely absent. Again, spiritual form seems to figure in a world where spiritual content has been forgotten.

v. Interdenominational Conflict.

No theme in Newfoundland fiction, however, whether pre- or post-Confederation, illustrates more graphically the indifference to religious content of so-called religious adherents than the theme of interdenominational bias which, whether treated seriously or comedically, underlines the characters' utter failure to take seriously the commandment to "love one's neighbour as oneself." This theme recurs in the works of Janes, Rowe, Johnston, O'Flaherty, and finally, Porter, in whose novel there is the intimation that interdenominational prejudice ceases to be an issue among Newfoundlanders only as religion itself is finally abandoned.

In Janes' Requiem for a Faith, religious prejudice is manifested far less scathingly than in his earlier novel, House of Hate, but it continues to appear. Indeed, early on in the narrative Janes is quite willing to concede that the historical flood of interdenominational enmity between Protestant St. Michael's and the neighbouring Catholic community, "St. Peter's,"

has tapered to a trickle:

Even between these adjacent factions there was not much open strife at this time in their history, none of the violence extending to mutilation and murder that had marked and marred what passed for the spiritual life of such communities in days gone by. There was hardly more trouble than fights between the young fellows, bitterness over the occasional mixed marriage and that kind of thing. (Part I, p.6)

Even so, it is significant that the greatest manifestation of interdenominational bias is found in the character portrayed as being the most devoutly "religious," the first generation "progenitor," Sophy Coffin. Sophy, we learn, was deeply disturbed that her first-born son, Wesley, chose a "Roman" as a "sweetheart": "never had it occurred to Sophy that a child of hers would actually take up with a Roman Catholic ... [known for] falling down and worshipping idols" (Part I, p.11). And Sophy was doubly shocked to learn that Wesley was marrying in his betrothed's church - a church so alien and distasteful to her that she would not attend the marriage ceremony there, explaining,

I don't believe I could go into their church!
Them candles and all that bowin' down and
blessin' theirselves, and the priest talkin'
in Latin and all. I believes it would take
effect o' me. I finds all that right creepy.
(12)

That Sophy looked at Catholicism not only with fear but with condescension, as well, is evident later in Part I of the novel where she refers to Mag, her new daughter-in-law, as the "Roman" whom her son "should never have got in tack with" (49). Clearly, then, Sophy's Christian devotion contains no room for brotherly (or

sisterly) love, if that brother or sister is not of her own religious persuasion - and her remarks make of her, in this sense, merely a more mild-mannered version of House of Hate's Saul Stone.

In a manner similar to Janes', Rowe, in Clapp's Rock, is quick to point out that the "sectarian violence" of "one hundred years before" has since then been toned down, kept in check, as already discussed, by "leaders" who make sure that power is equally meted out to the three main religious groups (58). Rowe, in fact, chooses to treat religious bias humorously, as does later writer Johnston - although in both cases an irony pervades the seemingly-comedic treatment, suggesting that below the surface, neither author finds the interdenominational prejudice he perceives in Newfoundland to be funny. Rowe's narrator relates the story of the neighbouring villages of "Cape Cove" and "Handy Harbour," which were "of ... different religious persuasion[s]," each of which was fed a story of the villainy of the other so as to fuel an ongoing pugnaciousness by protagonist Neil's eccentric grandfather, who liked to keep the "religious strife" going lest religion end up with "a good name" (115-116). The ironic inference, though, seems to be that there is little reason to fear that religion will end up with a "good name" in a province where religious factions are so easily duped into finding new reasons to condemn one another.

In Johnston's The Story of Bobby O'Malley, the narrator at one point compares the contemporary, relatively peaceful manifestations of religious bias with former, more violent manifestations by referring to the religiously-inspired murders,

maimings, and whippings in the fictional suburb of "Kellies" which by Bobby's time had been largely reduced to a "cold war," except for occasional "incidents - beatings, and once, a rape of a Catholic girl by Protestant boys, bent on revenging something her father had done"(102). But Johnston is careful to underline the continued if subdued promotion of sectarian bias among his characters. In suburban post-Vatican II Newfoundland, his narrator relates, the Protestants were still "unofficially segregated," along with "people of other outnumbered persuasions," from the Catholics (100) in a community where "The Protestant church was ... as far from the Catholic church as it could be without leaving town altogether"(118).

Johnston's narrator proceeds to describe, with ironic humor, the ideas about Protestants inculcated in the minds of young Catholic children by their elders: that Protestants all have "orange hair," that they "never wash," and that they inevitably go to "Purgatory" (100-102). And despite the fact that for the most part Catholics and Protestants now "simply ignored each other" (102), the idea of Protestants-as-heathens and of Protestant girls as being dangerously promiscuous flourished in the minds of the young, to such an extent that as a young boy, Bobby was "terrified, afraid to go near the road," for fear that a Protestant girl would "get" him (103). In the opinion of Bobby's mother Agnes, because they were "born to the double burden of original sin and heresy," Protestants were "more to be pitied than persecuted"(101) - a seeming example of her Christian charity that, under Johnston's

pen, becomes more an example of patronizing condescension than of Christian good will. According to Bobby's Aunt Dola, who was more "up-front" than Agnes in her views on Protestantism, the O'Malleys' move to the Protestant neighbourhood in Kellies was a definite step down. (104).

We also see evidence in the fictional world of The Story of Bobby O'Malley that polarity between denominations was encouraged by the St. John's high school system. At "Brother Arthur Noonan High," nicknamed "the Barn" - the epitome of Roman Catholic institutional excellence - Bobby, who attended the school, relates:

We were taught to think of ourselves as the moral elite. The world outside was run by men whose teachers had let drop the reins of discipline. The Barn might have been the last bastion of decency, beset all round by infidels and Protestants. (128)

In short, in Bobby O'Malley's expanding world, if interdenominational bias was no longer violent, it was as insidious as ever.

The same insidious religious intolerance recurs in Johnston's The Divine Ryans. Protagonist Draper Doyle's family, which ran both a funeral home and a Catholic newspaper, the "Daily Chronicle," had used this paper to "ruin[] the careers of many a Protestant politician" (30). They openly hoped, while he was still alive, that Draper Doyle's father would use his intellectual gifts to "rout[] some Protestant in public, in broad daylight" (74). Even hockey, an important metaphorical subtheme throughout the novel, becomes in this light a metaphor for interdenominational

squabbling: the "Habs," primarily French and thus Catholic, were championed by the Ryan family, while the "Leafs," thought to be primarily Protestant, were scorned and regarded as the enemy. As Draper Doyle observes:

As far as they [the elder Ryans] were concerned, God had created hockey for the sole purpose of allowing Catholics to humiliate Protestants on nationwide TV ... When Montreal was playing Toronto at the Forum ... it was not a hockey game, but a holy war, a crusade carried on nationwide TV, Rome's Canadiens versus Canterbury's Maple Leafs, "the Heathen Leafs against the Holy Habs," as Uncle Reginald⁴ put it. (83-85)

The image of two priests, a nun, and a sanctimonious spinster, all siblings, intently watching a televised hockey game with the perception that it is a "holy war" is highly parodic - but it is also shown by Draper Doyle, who finally "escapes" this family, and by Uncle Reginald, whose main function in life seems to be the undermining of the sanctimoniousness of his siblings, to be the manifestation of a corruption and a perversion of religious ideals inherent in these siblings and in all that they represent.

As in The Story of Bobby O'Malley, this religious bias masquerading as holy righteousness is deliberately inculcated in the young by their elders and encouraged by their peers. Draper Doyle relates learning from a young friend that the ashes used to make the sign of the cross on Catholic foreheads on Ash Wednesday

⁴As earlier noted, Uncle Reginald serves the same thematic purpose in this novel as Ted O'Malley does in The Story of Bobby O'Malley; with his taunting, ironic observations he undermines the sanctimoniousness of those characters who take Catholic dogma too seriously.

came from "the Protestant crematorium," adding sardonically that "Only in death, it seemed, only when reduced to ashes, were Protestants of any use to Catholics"(65). In an infamous, school-organized boxing match in which Draper Doyle gets pummelled mercilessly, "Protestants" were assumed to "despise" his last name, so obviously Roman Catholic, while the Roman Catholics were expecting him to uphold it - making of his reluctant involvement in school sports another kind of "holy war." This indicates, as did The Story of Bobby O'Malley, the complicity of the denominational school system in fostering religious bias in the young (157).

Reference to interdenominational conflict is occasionally featured in O'Flaherty's fiction, just as it is in Janes', Rowe's, and Johnston's. In "352 Pennywell," a story from his first collection, we see again religion's involvement in politics, when a dreaming, would-be politician is reminded by his wife that his name, "J.J. O'Grady," is "too incendiary for Newfoundland politics." She explains that "Religion still matters here ... your name sends out the message that you're Irish Catholic, and all the Prods would vote against you"(11) - another reminder to the reader that in the fictional world of modern Newfoundland, religiously-sponsored acts and causes do not necessarily spring from spiritual devotion so much as they do from petty power-mongering and bias. In the title story from his second collection, A Small Place in the Sun, we see in the first of a group of stories centering upon the outport upbringing of a young boy, Jimmy Byrne, the sense of inferiority or, at the very least, of being conspicuously different

bred into Roman Catholic children by a society run by a "Protestant elite" when young Jimmy, suddenly finding himself amidst a group of Protestant boys, is glad that no one can see "the medal hanging around his neck"(13). Interestingly, this bias is reflected in reverse in the following story, "These, thy gifts," where, as previously discussed, a Roman Catholic father in St. John's is preparing his sons for the greater world. As part of this process, he drills them on all the people from whom, for safety's sake, they should not accept rides, and in so doing, a denominationally-biased mindset is revealed: we see that even less permissible and imaginable than accepting a ride from a bishop is accepting one from an Anglican bishop (16). It seems that in fictional Newfoundland, at least, you are bound to sustain an inherent religious bias whatever your persuasion; and in O'Flaherty's Priest of God we see this bias from both the Catholic and the Protestant positions.

In the "Long Cove" of O'Flaherty's novel, the Protestants keep to themselves, "Protestanttown" being the place where they live along with "Catholic families that had not prospered"(18). As new parish priest John Ryan soon learns, "The south side looks down on the north side, and the north side looks down on Protestanttown" (21-22) - an instance of Roman Catholic supremacy in fictional Newfoundland society reminiscent of that found in The Story of Bobby O'Malley, but unusual in O'Flaherty's fiction, in which Protestantism is usually shown to have the "upper hand." In a continuation of this instance of a local Catholic feeling of

supremacy, Bernard, an established, pro-Irish, anti-Anglo/Protestant teacher in Long Cove condemns Memorial University as "a WASP institution," and urges all nearby Catholic high schools to send their graduates elsewhere. He has even urged Newfoundland's bishops to "set up a Catholic university in the province" as a natural continuation of the "denominational system of education"(23). Bernard not only reveals religious bias, he celebrates and attempts to increase it.

The bias, of course, works both ways in this novel; Catholic Long Cove will not bury the United Church dead in their graveyard, but equally, the nearby United Church community of Hant's Cove will not bury the Catholics in theirs (33). But it is Cyril Squires, the local merchant and "king" of Long Cove, who represents the interdenominational bias that is most prevalent in O'Flaherty's fiction. Squires is of English and hence, Protestant, stock, and his family has assumed Catholicism only for convenience's sake. His opinion on religious politics, which he is only too glad to reveal to Father John Ryan, is that "the fate of the Newfoundland Irish was settled a century ago ... it's over. The English and Irish fought it out here, and the Irish lost," owing, he goes on to suggest, to their lazy shiftlessness and their innate inferiority (36-37) - an Anglo view of Irish Catholicism somehow reminiscent of that of the Fitz Henry family's in Duley's Cold Pastoral. Newfoundland fiction represents such bias as a never-ending bone of contention between factions that ironically refer to themselves as truly Christian.

In Priest of God, one of the few signs of changing times as being positive is reflected in the tolerant view of Mrs. Jenkins. She is the mother of one of the boys killed in a summer highway accident which Father Ryan is investigating in connection with the death of the Long Cove boy whose fate Ryan feels morally compelled to bring to light. Regarding religion, Mrs. Jenkins "didn't care one way or the other anymore" despite the continued denominational prejudice in the community she comes from, referring to her late husband's opinion that on Judgement Day, God would say "Oh, come on in, the whole lot of you" (72). However, the sense of resignation implicit in Mrs. Jenkins' relaxed attitude towards denominationalism heralds, in a way, a similar sense of resignation in a key character in Porter's novel, january, february, june, or july - and this resignation suggests not so much a new spirit of ecumenicalism as a new age in which denominationalism no longer matters because religion no longer matters. Thus, in concluding this treatment of denominational conflict in post-Confederation fiction, we will look briefly at Porter's novel, in preparation for an analysis of the religious harshness manifested in the fiction of this era - a harshness which we will proceed to see as one of the causes of the decline in religion which the fiction also manifests.

As already indicated, in january, february, june, or july the family of protagonist Heather Novak had difficulty in accepting the marriage of one of their family members to a Catholic. Indeed, Heather's grandmother, portrayed throughout the novel as a basically good and warm-hearted woman, still "had never been the

same with [son] Fred since he'd married Bernice Connolly" - the Catholic impostor - particularly because, in doing so, Fred also converted to Catholicism (55). Later on in the novel, though, Heather remembers her grandmother, this time reflecting on a daughter who had also married a Roman Catholic, as saying "Just imagine, two of my children married to Catholics ... It's funny how they overlooks their own kind and makes for the wrong colour"(87). However, in a resignation somehow similar to that of Mrs. Jenkins in Priest of God, Heather's grandmother goes on to qualify her objections, adding "none of the young people goes to church any more, so what difference do it make?"(88) The sorry impression with which we are left, then, in a perusal of twentieth century Newfoundland fiction, is that the identifying of a "right" or a "wrong" religious "colour" ceases only when observance of religion itself ceases - as Heather's grandmother articulates - and that thus, as already suggested, to the extent that religion continues to reign in Newfoundland, it does so through adherence to religious form, rather than to religious content (which would immediately identify denominational bias as un-Christian). Further, a perusal of post-Confederation fiction will show us, just as did writing concerned with pre-Confederation Newfoundland, that the continued reign of religion in Newfoundland carries with it a continued religious harshness - a harshness which breeds fear and shame in its adherents, while vilifying sexuality, encouraging divisiveness, and denying earthly joy in a way that can lead to human self-destruction. Our next step, then, is to analyze that harshness as

it manifests itself in modern Newfoundland fiction, first as it operates in general, and then as it focusses in upon sexuality, the nature of womanhood versus manhood, and on the destruction of the individual through a denial of life's inherent worth. We will begin, again, with a look at Janes' pivotal work, Requiem for a Faith.

vi. The Harshness of Religious Creed and Upbringing.

In Requiem for a Faith, as already observed, there is an ambivalence in the author's treatment of the old-style religion of outport Newfoundland. For while in general Janes seems to offer up the old religion as one that bound a people together, gave them strength, and epitomized the unique, decent, self-sufficient outport life that has faded into oblivion, we see in occasional glimpses that Janes admits to an innate harshness in that religion that made it a less-than-perfect guide by which to live. In Part I, for example, in characterizing "progenitor" Sophy through the eyes of her husband, Will, we see that religion had made of Sophy a grimly non-exuberant lifemate, for all that she was a good one. Will, the narrator tells us, "had been known to say wistfully that Sophy was a good woman ... but somehow there was no sport in her," because having a family "time" or enjoying the odd jig "had [for her] a taint of danger and evil, opening the door to hell"(5). In this sense, her interpretation of scripture is no different than Mrs. Michelet's in Highway to Valour and Pastor Roberts' in Maud's House. For all these characters any form of levity was immediately suspect in a spiritual sense - which made their lives and the lives

of those around them far more grim and joyless than they would otherwise have been.

Further, although in general Sophy's treatment of her family was loving, Janes makes a point of underlining the harshness with which she treated her only daughter, Charity, a harshness that Sophy was able to justify through her interpretation of her religion's dogma. Charity "was taught household duty along with her Commandments," notes the narrator, "and any tendency toward self-will was regarded by the mother as the greatest abomination"(8). As a result, Charity's youth was one of misery - a misery she "escaped" only by running away, becoming extramaritally pregnant, and returning home to devote her whole life to religion and to her son.

Finally, we see a tendency in Sophy Coffin which hearkens back to the characters in The Way of the Sea and Tommorow Will Be Sunday - the tendency to assume that any personal loss or tragedy was a punishment from God, which made of God, at times, a punitive and vindictive rather than a loving and merciful deity in her eyes. When Sophy and her husband learned (falsely, as it turned out) that their son Aubrey had been lost at sea (16-18), and again when daughter Charity disappeared (39), the narrator observes that "It was typical of Sophy that she ... started to wonder where she had gone wrong in so displeasing her God that He was once more visiting her with serious trouble through her child"(39). Sophy's conception here is obviously not of what Duncan called the "dear Lord" but rather of his "Lord God A'mighty" who punished people for

the slightest transgressions. In short, Sophy's spiritual life was ultimately characterized not by benevolence, but by harshness, a harshness which influenced not only Sophy herself but also family members who were closest to her.

In Requiem for a Faith II we see Walter Rose, who had at one time been the St. Michael's minister but who subsequently abandoned the religious life (for reasons which will be examined later), discussing with third-generation Garth Coffin - who has also experienced a decline of faith - the spiritual life of St. Michael's as a whole. As Rose puts it, the old faith, even for characters not so "devout" as Sophy, had made for "a very tight and narrow-minded community"(53) - one which might have ostracized a girl like Charity when she gave birth to an illegitimate child. Here, too, we catch a glimpse of the religion that pervaded outport life in the "good old days" as having in it a harsh and unforgiving streak which, while binding a community together and making it "tight" - which Janes elsewhere portrays as a good quality - also made it "narrow-minded" and intolerant, qualities the author obviously does not approve of.

Yet when we see the old religions adhered to by people like Sophy Coffin and Mag Slaney coming undone in Part II, we also see that members of the novel's third generation, like Mary Coffin, gladly turned their backs on "both the R.C.s and the other, more established, Protestant groups" for Pentecostalism and, eventually, for an even newer brand of evangelicalism. Ironically, while these characters did so because of what they perceived as these sects'

greater "hope and joy" (Part I, p.73), they were, in so doing, embracing a faith that taught people to "fear God as well as love Him"(Part II, p.15), with a pastor for whom the "major themes in preaching" were "the Terror of the Second Coming" along with "fornication and finance"(14). Thus, in rejecting old established faiths because they stressed "the dark and evil side of life" (Part I, p.73) in favour of newer and flashier versions of Christianity, characters like Mary were in fact turning to faiths that were equally grim and harsh in their spiritual messages. Everett Shepherd's "Terror of the Second Coming," for instance, recalls the harshness of Brother McKim's "Second Coming" in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday. It seems that the harshness of religious creed is an ongoing theme in Janes' fictional treatment of religion's "evolution" in Newfoundland.

Indeed, that harshness resurfaces, if only briefly, in subsequent fiction by Janes which does not have religious observance as a major theme. In Eastmall (1982), the story of an idealistic young couple and their fight - particularly protagonist Morley's fight - against the corruption inherent in corporate, industrialized St. John's, there is a scene where, as in the case of Crawfie in House of Hate, the denominational school system threatens to impinge upon a person's private life. In this instance Morley's girlfriend Donna feels threatened with losing her teaching job because, by living with Morley, she is violating the religious principles of members of the Roman Catholic school system (55, 56). This does not actually happen to her, but the idea that

the churches can strip a person of his or her profession, regardless of that person's dedication and professionalism, if the person fails to abide by all of their precepts, is a harshness of religious creed that hangs grimly over the young couple, and is so presented by Janes to the reader.

This harshness of religious creed makes a brief appearance in a different guise in Janes' 1985 novella The Picture on the Wall. This novella centers on the clashing of cultures in contemporary St. John's. It shows what could conceivably happen when a well-meaning but socially insensitive upper middle class couple attempt, without sufficient understanding, to ameliorate the lives of the lower class poor. In a scene in which lower class protagonist Knuckles, released from a month in jail, is trying to describe the experience to his girlfriend, Jade, he compares his treatment in the "slammer" to that experienced by boys in Roman Catholic schools, saying that it was "Worse than school, for fuck's sake. Dem fuckin' Brudders was just as bad. Always beltin' ya" (33). And in raising the issue of the Christian Brothers' apparently religiously-tolerated physical violence towards their pupils, Janes here anticipates the fiction of Johnston and O'Flaherty, for both of whom the harsh physical and psychological treatment of the young by priests and by Christian brothers is a recurring theme.

In Johnston's The Story of Bobby O'Malley we see a fictional recreation of the physical abuse of altar boys by the parish priest. As Bobby relates, an altar boy who unintentionally

makes a mistake during his attendance at mass is "slapped by the priest in full view of the congregation"(76), and this priest has full licence, it seems, to smack the boys "randomly, almost unconsciously"(78). This causes Bobby's father, whose thematic role, as earlier suggested, is to undermine by underlining all the excesses of the Catholic church, to remark that "no-one not wearing a hockey helmet should stand within ten feet of him," with the added, less comedic observation on Bobby's part that his father "didn't think it was funny, this strange impulse of the priest's" (78).

In The Story of Bobby O'Malley, "this strange impulse" is shown to be shared by the Christian Brothers at "Brother Arthur Noonan High," who are said to "beat up" and "strap" all "reprobates" with "zeal"(128). And the abuse of students by the Christian Brothers, which was referred to in Horwood's White Eskimo and will be referred to again in O'Flaherty's short stories, is not exclusively physical; it can be psychological, as well. As Bobby recalls, "Brother Bill Denny," or "Brudder Bill, as we called him, was by no means alone among Brothers in endorsing a theory that boys, like horses, had need of breaking," so that it was a common daily ritual in Bobby's class to humiliate a student in view of his classmates. The description of this activity as "the all-in-fun tearing down of a boy in front of his fellows" belies the humorlessness beneath the narrator's seeming tone. Getting boys to declare that they were "born broken" or that they were "slime" has about it a sense of dementia, and of the most negative sort of

spirit-breaking (133-134).

In The Time of their Lives, with its span of generations, the religiously-permitted physical and psychological harshness of the clergy is a remembered, rather than a contemporary, phenomenon. The narrator's mother claims that in her youth,

priests ... upon being told of some especially heinous sin, would leave the confessional, open the confessor's door and drag the sinner out for a public thrashing. They would take you from what you imagined was your lowest, most humble station, and drag you down even further. (161)

Hence, in this remembered world, even the supposed sanctuary of the confession box was not a real sanctuary at all. Priests, as what seems to have been seen as the punitive arm of God, were sanctioned to go to whatever degree of harshness they saw fit to punish members of the congregation.

Yet again, in The Divine Ryans - this time, as in The Story of Bobby O'Malley, in contemporary Newfoundland - Johnston portrays the clergy as authority figures who feel no compunction about the use of physical cruelty, seeming to see corporal punishment as part of their daily routine. As Draper Doyle relates, when his uncle, Father Seymour, gave a boy on his boxing team a "strapping," he

always maintained a kind of joviality with the boy whom he was strapping, as if the whole thing was somehow inevitable, a kind of time-honoured tradition that he and the boy were acting out, as if it was part of a boy's essential nature to be strapped, and part of a priest's to do the strapping. (38)

Later in the novel, remembering a particularly vicious beating

which Father Seymour had intended for him, we see through Draper Doyle's description that the insidiousness of this "time-honoured tradition" of physical cruelty could become, at times, intensely personal - a venting of sheer human rage or malice on the clergyman's part when, as Draper Doyle relates, in trying to go to sleep he could "see Father Seymour's face as he prepared to strap me, his eyes blinking rapidly with spite as he ordered me to open up my hand" (196).

It must here be pointed out that the suggestion is not being made in this thesis that the physical cruelty of priests and Christian Brothers is inherent in their religious creed - indeed, in referring back to Christ's "most important commandment," we can deduce that their actual creed would command the precisely opposite behaviour of these men. What is suggested, though, is that this mode of harshness, as fictionally presented, seems to be conducted with impunity under the guise of the church-as-institution. In all of the fiction considered here, cruelty, both physical and psychological, is overlooked, if not encouraged, by the very institutions supposedly founded on a belief in Christian love, forgiveness, and mercy. Somewhere, this fiction is suggesting, there is a breakdown in communication between religious institutions and the spiritual beliefs that are supposed to be inspiring them. And the result, for the individual who must grow up within these religious systems, is that he or she must endure both physical and psychological harshness in the name of Christianity.

This theme of harshness in the name of Christianity recurs yet again in various short stories of O'Flaherty's. In "Summer of the Greater Yellowlegs" from his first collection, O'Flaherty's narrator, pondering on the tragic fate of his dead brother Colin, who had had a troubled boyhood, remembered "with sickened loathing and rage" his brother's "treatment at the hands of the Brothers" in the boarding school they had attended in St. John's (7). There Colin, for being rebellious, was subjected to an undescribed harshness which we may infer to be similar to the cruelties mentioned above. In "These, thy gifts," from O'Flaherty's second story collection, we see in a clash between the protagonist and his son's teacher over the issue of corporal punishment in school that this teacher, who had been seminary-trained and bound for the priesthood, accepts as natural and beneficial the notion of strapping students (17) - just as would any of the religious authority figures in Johnston's novels. In "Maiden aunt," from the same collection, another of the stories chronicling the boyhood and youth of "Jimmy Byrne," the "harsh discipline of the Christian Brothers' school" is again referred to in describing the experiences of Jimmy and his brother when they left their outport home for a boarding school in St. John's (121). Particularly worth noting, here, is the verbal abuse of the students by the Brothers - reminiscent of a similar abuse in The Story of Bobby O'Malley and presumably utilized for a similar psychological purpose: to "break" the boys, stripping them of their self-esteem. In a conversation between Jimmy and "Brother Bowen"

in which the Brother spoke in long, semi-accusing phrases to the boy and was answered in what appears to have been the monosyllables expected of a student, the Brother, for no noticeable reason, concludes the talk by calling Jimmy "smart ass" (121-122). In a similar exchange later in the story, the Brother speaks to Jimmy with a similar, unprovoked insolence (127-128).

We are left, then, in these fictional depictions of contemporary Roman Catholic Newfoundland, with the sense that religious authority figures took deliberate advantage of their positions to degrade the young, and, in at least one case, to vent their personal spleen. But in the Roman Catholic world depicted by Johnston, this religiously-sanctioned treatment of young boys is only one example of the harshness of upbringing, Catholic-style. In his three novels he shows, as well, that Catholic religious creed, as interpreted by his characters, is itself a form of harshness, just as it was in the Protestant mindsets depicted in works ranging from Duncan's to Janes'. This creed inculcates in Johnston's characters an inherent sense of guilt and fear as pervasive and intense as anything the fundamentalists and Protestants could dish out. Thus, in concluding this discussion of the harshness of religious creed and upbringing in modern Newfoundland fiction we will look briefly at the harshness inherent in Roman Catholic belief as depicted by Wayne Johnston.

In The Story of Bobby O'Malley, interestingly, Johnston chose to create a sense of the negativity and fear inherent in Catholicism by comparing Catholicism with other sects, which he

accomplished through describing the effect it can have on a young child's mind. As protagonist and narrator Bobby recalls,

I was raised on fire and brimstone, the more subtle, Catholic kind, not hurled from the pulpit [as in the evangelicalism we have seen in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, Maud's House, and Requiem for a Faith] but whispered. The nuns spoke often of hell, their words like sighs [reminiscent of Duncan's children, whose minds were similarly "turned towards hell"]. They spoke in my dreams when I was eight. I think I would have preferred an evangelistic onslaught, full of fury and damnation, and apocalyptic final judgement. At least, then, things would have been out in the open. But the nuns and the priest knew where hell was. It was in the mind. (29)

The insidiousness of this teleological concept was further inculcated in the children by the local priest. "Hell," he would tell young children, "is whatever scares ye most" - a concept which causes Bobby to reflect ironically on the "greatness of God" as being his creation of "such a fail-safe torture chamber as the human mind" (29-30). Hence, the particular harshness inherent in Catholicism as fictionally interpreted by Johnston is that "hell," or whatever constitutes the greatest sense of horror for the individual, is something he carries around inside him, and from which he can thus never escape. As Bobby remarks ironically, "This change of tactics, this shifting of the beast from without to within, was someone's idea of humanizing the faith" (30). It "humanized" it, indeed. It made the worst manifestation of faith an intensely "human" experience by turning it into something constant and internal.

The grim harshness of Catholicism as portrayed by

Johnston was not limited to its implantation in the minds of young children. The creed that the priest at "Kellies" professed to young and old alike was that "for the Christian, life was a continuous cycle of hope and dark despair"(107), which makes of the religious adherent a pitiful kind of hamster, racing eternally towards nowhere on a treadmill. This harsh, grim doctrine is parodied by the author through the numerous sardonic observations of Ted O'Malley as well as by naming strategies. A Catholic women's group, "the St. Stephen's Sisters," becomes the "SS" (which the reader will obviously associate with Hitler's regime) - "a group of married, middle-aged women who get together once a week to talk about abortion and baked goods"(88). Catholic schools in the novel are given such parodically negative names as "the School of St. Peter's Chains"(126) and "Heavy Heart High"(136). But beneath the fun of this parody is the sense that the author is using it to reveal a phenomenon that is not funny at all: a system of indoctrination that turns wife against husband, boy against girl, and human being against fellow human being, while devaluing life on earth in the name of holiness. This is a phenomenon that will be analyzed in detail in succeeding sections of this chapter and that indicates a religious harshness as cruel as any other we have so far analyzed.

In Johnston's The Time of Their Lives, the theme of the Catholic preoccupation with hell and damnation is maintained through first-generation "Mom." Mom's interpretation of religious doctrine is reminiscent of that of Duncan's and Horwood's

characters in that, as far as she understood, even young children were considered vile sinners and, if they died, "their souls would stand alone before God and be judged severely"(11). Although heaven was, as already mentioned, a lovely and probably longed-for concept to her, hell was, as in The Story of Bobby O'Malley (and Duncan's The Way of the Sea) more "vividly imagined," her version of it being as grim as that of any fundamentalist:

It was not so much the suffering as the abjectness of the damned she stressed. Worse than the burning flames, Mom would tell her children, worse than the venom-oozing scorpions and snakes would be the jeers of the exalted, the scorn of the souls who would look down at the damned from heaven. (11)

There is no notion of mercy or of Christian charity in this harsh interpretation of Roman Catholic creed - an interpretation which is again shown being fed to young children along with their daily milk. Indeed, it seems that Johnston's Catholicism is based upon and inspired by the idea that the human being is vile, an unsaveable sinner, branded from birth, and forever incapable of genuine goodness and compassion. This fictional vision of Catholicism is most fully addressed in Johnston's third novel, The Divine Ryans.

As previously mentioned, The Divine Ryans centers on the coming-of-age of Draper Doyle, a youngster immersed in a family of priests, nuns, and sanctimonious laypeople and who is thus inevitably subjected to a battery of harsh interpretations of Roman Catholic dogma. His aunt Phil, a layperson and strict adherent of the grimmest interpretation of Catholicism, tried to inculcate in

him the notion that "the reward in the afterlife ... an eternity of rest ... [was something which] no matter how much work [he] did in this life, [he] could never fully earn" (17), thus suggesting to him that humanity is so vile that no matter how hard it tries, it cannot redeem itself without divine intervention. This negative creed, based on the notion of original sin, was even impressed on Draper Doyle by his otherwise intellectually-astute father, who tried to instill in the boy the idea that one was born with "the black mark of original sin on [one's] soul," a mark to which every sin would add, so that "confession" was the only way of keeping one's increasingly blackened soul from becoming so black that it had to go to hell (56). Again, in a way that links Johnston's novel about Catholicism in the late twentieth century to Duncan's stories about Protestant fundamentalism at the century's commencement, we see characters being moved, through an early-inculcated sense of fear, to focus their minds neither on this life nor on a happy afterlife, but on hell - a hell they fully deserve, but which incessant good works or prayer, along with a dimly-understood divine intervention, may possibly enable them to escape. This concept is based on fear and guilt, as well as on the notion that man is but a "worm," as one of Duncan's characters put it. It is thus a harsh psychological construct in which to live one's life, as these authors and this thesis both suggest. In The Divine Ryans Aunt Phil, who personifies this worldview most completely, informed Draper Doyle that "before [he] had even finished saying penance, sin was reaccumulating on [his] soul" (60) - evoking once

again the image of man struggling on a never-ceasing treadmill of "hope and dark despair" with the intimation that "despair" is the more appropriate emotion, since for humans sinning is the constant and inevitable proof of their vile nature.

Indeed, for Aunt Phil every aspect of living was based on a sense of innate guilt: guilt that you wasted food when others were starving (67-68), guilt because the soul was inherently "black" (111), guilt because of an innate and unjustified pride which must be "broken" (127), guilt because sin was so universal and innate that even a dead child had a soul so "black with sin" that he would have to go to "purgatory" (129). In the harsh worldview into which Aunt Phil and her cohorts tried (fortunately, without ultimate success) to induct young Draper Doyle, mankind, it seems, was supposed to detest itself. And this harshness of creed and of upbringing, which Johnston construes as a particularly Catholic phenomenon, has nonetheless surfaced as a theme in one way or another in all the fiction so far discussed, whether Catholic, traditional Protestant, or Evangelical Newfoundland was its focus. In fictional settings where fun is not tolerated because all forms of levity are spiritually suspect, where both the physical and psychological mistreatment of the young are shielded when not actually condoned by religious dogma, where God is perceived as severe, sin as innately human, and punishment as thus inevitable, and where faith encourages narrow-mindedness, with religion as a public institution invading and directing people's private lives, it is obvious, as earlier suggested, that something has "gone

wrong": that the spiritual beliefs upon which institutionalized religion is supposed to be based have somehow been lost, overlooked, or forgotten. For if Christ's oft-quoted injunction about loving God and one's fellow man were the spiritual well-spring inspiring the religious conduct in this fiction, the harshness of creed and upbringing just described, like the rampant interdenominational conflict which is equally evident, would not be such subjects of authorial focus. Indeed, such harshness and bigotry could hardly exist among adherents of a truly Christian faith. And if the practice of religious form without regard for content, the entertainment of religious biases, and an innate harshness in religious observance are proof that something has "gone wrong" in the religion fictionally depicted in contemporary Newfoundland, so too is the fictional treatment of women and of the attitude maintained by religious adherents towards sexuality and the body, all of which end up contributing to human destruction, life denial, or a turning away from religion, as Part One of this thesis demonstrated. We will continue this analysis of religion-gone-wrong, then, by addressing each of these themes in turn, as they manifest themselves in modern Newfoundland fiction, and finally, by considering where the fictional characters are led as a result of these negative attributes of religious adherence.

vii. Woman as Retainer of Faith and as Evil Temptress.

It is perhaps of some significance to note that, just as in much pre-Confederation fiction, female characters in much of the fiction addressing modern Newfoundland are singled out for special

treatment. On the one hand they are frequently shown, as in Duncan's and Duley's writing, to be the strongest retainers and adherents of faith. This is in some fiction portrayed as a rather positive virtue, but in more cases is shown to be a destructive tendency on their part. On the other hand, in a manner reminiscent of Duncan, Horwood, and Gough, women are fictionally shown to be viewed as evil temptresses, the potential destroyers of man - although in contemporary fiction this theme is found only in the work of Johnston, where it makes so bold an appearance that it must be considered despite the fact that only this one author addresses it. In either case, though, this fictional expression of religious differences based on gender signals yet another negative attribute of religious adherence: its tendency to serve as a source of attitudinal divisiveness between men and women, which in too many cases leads to misunderstanding and even to tragedy.

In Requiem for a Faith it is obvious, from previous discussion, that Sophy Coffin serves as the chief retainer and enforcer of religious adherence in her family. Her ethos, quite simply, was to serve God, husband, and family, and thereby to earn salvation in the next world (Part I, p.2). If fish prices were high, Sophy attributed this good fortune to God's will (6); and schooling, in her opinion, was not as "important" for her children as was their "spiritual education" (7).

As she and her husband Will began "to feel they were getting old," Janes' narrator observes, significantly, that "Will was showing some grey in his hair and moustache, however much this

might be denied by his antics on the dance floor," while Sophy, by contrast, "in a sense, had never been young"(25). The intimation here is that Sophy's lifelong grim and total adherence to her interpretation of God's requirements for human conduct had robbed her of the levity of youth. In this sense, then, her religiosity had been harmful only to herself. However, as earlier suggested, this same religiosity had also robbed her married life of some of the richness and laughter it might have enjoyed - thus hurting her husband as well as herself - and it had permitted her to treat her daughter as a house drudge, and to sharply delimit the girl's options in life, so that it can be said to have hurt this daughter also.

However, Sophy's role as "retainer-of-faith" does not have nearly as deleterious and divisive an effect on family life as does this same role as played by some of Johnston's female characters. In The Story of Bobby O'Malley Agnes, Bobby's mother, is obviously the chief retainer-of-faith, a faith she allows to come between herself and her husband with tragic results, as will be demonstrated in a later section of this chapter. Agnes is also shown force feeding this faith to her son, as in the scene in which, in endeavouring to put him on the road to becoming an altar boy, she actually puts him on the road to becoming a priest (70-75), without for a moment considering whether this is her son's desire. In her obsessive observance of her interpretation of Catholicism, she plays a strong role in destroying her husband's life in a way similar to Sister Leah's role in destroying John

McKim in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday. In allowing her religiously-inspired dreams for her son to take precedence over any understanding of his true nature, she resembles Billy Luff's mother in Duncan's most tragic story - although in Bobby O'Malley's case, fortunately, he awakens and learns to take his life in his own hands before it is too late. Agnes O'Malley, then, in her role as faith-retainer, serves as one of the chief sources of divisiveness, tragedy, and near-tragedy in the novel. In so doing, she seems to derive from a long line of female characters who function similarly in Newfoundland fiction.

In The Time of Their Lives it is first-generation "Mom" who sustains this role of retainer-of-faith, although the extent to which this affects her family is not an authorial focus as it is in The Story of Bobby O'Malley. All that is remembered is that "It was Mom who made sure that, every night after supper, the whole family knelt down to say the rosary"(10), and Mom who, as earlier discussed, described for her children with grim detail her dark vision of the afterlife (11), making of her, like Duncan's Priscilla Stride, a subscriber to the notion of a "Lard God A'mighty," rather than a "dear Lord." Mom, then, is yet another fictional female character who preserves the faith in a family for which gender seems to make her the natural player of that role.

In The Divine Ryans, though, the negative and divisive qualities of this womanly role are again manifested, as they were in The Story of Bobby O'Malley and, to some extent, Requiem for a Faith - this time by Aunt Phil. It is evident throughout the novel

that Aunt Phil makes all the Ryan family's decisions, and that in making them she is inspired by the strictest and grimmest of interpretations of Roman Catholic dogma. It is Aunt Phil who strives to ensure that her brother's widow behaves as befits a good Catholic in such a situation, with neither any regard for nor any understanding of the younger woman's feelings; and it is Aunt Phil who struggles to bring Draper Doyle up to be a proper Catholic, even though in doing so she tramples on his innermost soul, forcing him into situations which cause him grief, shame, and terror (as in her insistence that he join "Father Seymour's Number - p.12 - and that he accompany her to view a dead child at the funeral home - pp. 125-131, as well as in her means of "punishing" him for what she deems to be his sacrilegious sexual behaviour, of which he has no real understanding - p.49). In her adherence to what she perceives as the tenets of Catholicism, she willfully comes quite close, in several situations, to fracturing what remains of Draper Doyle's immediate family (see pp.49 and 185). Thus she becomes a major instrument of what she sees as religiously-sanctioned destruction, just as did Agnes O'Malley, to a lesser extent Sophy Coffin, Sister Leah, and at least one of Duncan's female characters before her. This long if tenuous line of female faith-enforcers denotes the divisive quality of religious adherence, perceived by its enforcers as an acting-out of God's will, and yet serving to rob life of joy and pleasure while in some cases causing personal tragedy. The fact that most of such enforcers are female is itself a manifestation of human attitudinal divisiveness, perhaps a

reflection of the attitudes of the authors themselves, or perhaps, rather, a reflection of the locally perceived role of women in religiously-governed communities.

Again, as was suggested at the beginning of this section, the theme of the female as retainer-of-faith is not always fictionally portrayed as a negative manifestation of religion. Indeed, Duley's characters Aunt Dorcas and Mrs. Slater, who were similarly singled out as strong religious adherents and even as "touchstones" for younger, more tempest-tossed protagonists, were cast in a positive light. Similarly, in two of O'Flaherty's short stories, women play enigmatic roles of preservers - or rather, defenders - of faith, in a world where the male protagonist's mindset is opposingly rationalistic, but where both reader and male protagonist are eventually given reason to question that rationalism. In "Tokens," the story concluding the collection Summer of the Greater Yellowlegs, the male protagonist, retreating from all of life's entrapments to a cabin in "Ochre Pit Cove," reacts angrily to his wife's suggestion on a weekend visit that he, like everyone else, is not omniscient, and therefore cannot be as confident as he is that there is no "God" and no "spirit world" (59,60). Yet despite his rationalistic scorn at her suggestion that things happen that "do have meaning outside themselves"(60), which implies that she retains a sense of the spiritual which he does not, in the unfolding story he finds reason, himself, to believe in a "world of the spirit." Again we see a female figure upholding at least the possibility of continued faith in the modern

world in the face of denial - a theme that resurfaces in O'Flaherty's A Small Place in the Sun in the story "Lights out."

This story, a monologue in which the female protagonist, addressing her unresponding husband, reveals the breakdown and attempted reconciliation of a long marriage, pits the male non-believer against the female who "kind of believe[s]" (64), in what emerges as the most contemporary treatment of the problem of faith we have so far encountered. In her wistful wish for belief, which resurfaces in the double-entendres at the story's end (the use of the words "Peace" on p.67 and "Grace" on p.70), we see her struggling to sustain in their marriage the spirit of forgiveness, again as in the preceding story pitting what is perceived as male, "know everything" rationalism against a female tendency towards spiritual belief (69). In this story, unlike "Tokens," it is not made evident which mindset - the woman's or the man's - is the more plausible. But as the wife reveals in her monologue, it is her earnest desire not only to sustain the Christian tenets of belief and forgiveness, but to infuse or re-infuse them into her marriage, despite her husband's resistance:

It's not too late to talk of forgiveness. Forgiveness isn't just for the young, as you think. There's no age limit on it, you don't transcend it. You don't know everything. I'm still a believer, in a way. I'll get around to it one of these days. (69)

This woman, although modernistically hesitant about religious faith, is reaching for it and thus keeping it alive as a concept in her married life despite her husband's "masculine" disinclination to believe.

Thus, whether in the role of stern enforcer, like Sophy Coffin, Agnes O'Malley, and Aunt Phil, or that of gentle preserver, like the two wives in O'Flaherty's stories, we see as we saw in fiction focussed on pre-Confederation a distinct fictional tendency to assign to female characters a predisposition towards adherence to faith that generally exceeds any such predisposition on the part of male characters. Further, where this predisposition is depicted as a negative tendency, we see it as causing familial divisiveness and, in some cases, the psychological destruction of family members.

Enigmatically, in Johnston's novels, as was demonstrated in some of the pre-Confederation fiction, not only is woman the grim enforcer/preserver of the strict tenets of faith, she is also, conversely, the evil temptress - the jezebel perceived by other characters as luring innocent males to temptation and to sin. In The Story of Bobby O'Malley, as previously noted, although Protestants in general were to be avoided in Catholic "Kellies," it was Protestant girls who were perceived to be the surest connection with damnation.

Protestant girls were said to be loose, their red hair a badge of promiscuity [In Maud's House, Maud's deliberate use of the colour red was similarly considered a sign of her "looseness"]. It was said that Catholic boys, walking the roads, were often enticed into the bushes by them ... When I was very young, I was terrified, afraid to go near the road. It was said that if you wandered off the road the Protestant girls would get you. (103)

In a community already divided by religious bias, this notion that Protestant girls would lure you to wickedness was a further element

of divisiveness - a deliberately inculcated male/female as well as Roman Catholic/Protestant demarcation. This description of "Protestant girls" is not unlike Virginia Marks' self-description in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, where again the idea was inculcated in young minds that there was a "sort of woman" who could lead men to destruction.

Yet in this novel, it is not only Protestant girls who are perceived as evil temptresses; it seems that, by the time boys like Bobby reached adolescence, they were thoroughly indoctrinated, by parents, church, and school system alike, into regarding all girls as a form of evil temptation. As Bobby puts it,

sex, for us, was a trick that girls, deep down, really wanted to have played on them. Sex was not the act itself, but all the subterfuge and two-facedness required to bring it off. Sex was something girls had that must be taken from them. And girls were the strangely attractive enemy, repositories of pleasure, ultimately concerned with entrapment, and ultimately successful. (157)

While the pubescent notion of the opposite sex as being both enticer and enemy can be considered a secular phenomenon throughout the western world, in Johnston's novel this attitude seems to be both inspired and encouraged by Roman Catholic upbringing, which casts sex as a sin for which someone must ultimately be blamed. Bobby, reminiscing on his Roman Catholic high school days, observes

we believed that girls were a fate which, though inevitable, must be resisted ... [while those boys who had girlfriends] acknowledged an attraction to that bit of bait girls held out in the darkness. The pleasures of giving in were such that the boys could not be blamed ... It was the girl, enticer, temptress, who

must be enjoyed and blamed at the same time.
(164-165)

So the "blame" for the sin of premarital sexual experimentation, just like the blame for taking the tenets of faith too seriously, is fictionally pinned on the female, who in both cases cannot seem to help herself, both her proclivity for sinful seduction and for sanctimoniousness seeming to be innate and unshakeable female qualities.

In Johnston's The Time of their Lives this theme appears again, although it is not so fully developed. Here, through the mindset of the patriarchal "Dad" we see, ironically, that although women are necessary in perpetuating the race and the family line, woman as a sexual being is to be despised. When his daughter, Lew, who had seemed inclined towards entering the convent, changed her mind, he called her a "slut" and a "whore," because, as he put it, she would "rather be on her back than on her knees"(31) - again suggesting that in the traditional Catholic mindset, there is something inherently evil and repulsive about female sexuality. Only women who choose to be nuns are beyond reproach, all others being jezebels giving in to their innately sinful natures.

The same attitude towards female sexuality is manifested in The Divine Ryans, where young Draper Doyle is haunted in his dreams by a feminine being called "Momary" - a blending of his sister and his mother - who is always pursuing him and trying to ensnare him in sexual acts. His youthful perception of the inherent evil of the female nature is expressed thus:

I knew that the "sex act" had to do also with

original sin, which my father had told me I should think of as the crime in a game of Clue. "If the crime was original sin," my father said, "the solution would be: 'The woman. In the garden. With the apple.'" The woman, I took this to mean had - though God only knew how - tempted the man to put his pee-swollen bud into her backside. A crime, it seemed to me, if there ever was one. (44)

Here we see a boy so young and naïve that he does not yet understand the biological aspects of the "sex act" already indoctrinated with both the notion that woman is somehow a dangerous temptress, her actions leading to sin and to "crime," and the idea that the "sex act" itself is a manifestation of sin. With such an orientation towards life, a child will step forward into a world beleaguered with dangerous temptations which he must either struggle to avoid or succumb to, with accompanying guilt and fear. Thus we see the psychological danger of inculcating in young children the notion that woman, as an evil temptress, will entice man into a world of sin - the psychological danger and, too, the consequent divisiveness such an attitude creates in male/female relationships.

If women are depicted in post-Confederation fiction as being both stern doctrinal adherents and luring evil temptresses, in both cases, at the root of these depictions, is a religiously-endorsed, negative attitude towards human sexuality - a thing which, as has been suggested above, women are paradoxically seen to both shun and encourage. This fictionally-depicted religious aversion to sexuality and to all things relating to the human body, which is a further example of the psychic damage shown to be caused

by religious adherence, is the next theme to be considered in analyzing the negative attributes of religious adherence in fiction addressing post-Confederation Newfoundland.

viii. Sex and the Body as Evils to be Reviled.

In fiction addressing late twentieth-century Newfoundland as in that addressing Newfoundland prior to 1949, the theme of the religious attitude towards sex and the body enjoys both serious and humorous, parodic treatments; but when treated humorously, the humor serves only to underline attitudes that are authorially-perceived to be deplorable. As in the case of the earlier fictional characters, modern characters are shown regarding the human body as temporal and thus revolting -- a form from which a good Christian longs to be released -- while regarding sexual relations as necessary evils from which no sensual pleasure ought to be derived. Again, the underlying message of such religiously-inspired attitudes is that life itself is immaterial, a mere testing ground in preparation for a far more important afterlife, and thus is not meant to be celebrated or enjoyed: an interpretation of Christian dogma on the part of these fictional characters which, as was true for their fictional predecessors, leads to earthly misery, loneliness, and even, in some cases, to human destruction.

In Part I of Requiem for a Faith, while Sophy Coffin, as a grim upholder of doctrine, predictably brought to her marriage bed the sense that such things as sex on Sunday might be "bordering on sin," she surprisingly managed to "overcome" this interpretation

of doctrine and thereby "not only ... satisfy her man but ... achieve a surprising pleasure herself"(4). Thus, Sophy Coffin is a break in the chain of fictional female characters who merely "endure" sex, if they permit it at all. Unfortunately, in the fiction of late twentieth century Newfoundland, particularly that of Johnston, she is an exception. And other than this description of the unexpected pleasure Sophy derived from her marriage bed, religious attitudes towards sexuality are not a focus in this novel - except for the brief observance, in Part II, that third-generation Billy Coffin knew that his Roman Catholic mother would have called his practice of masturbation "a mortal sin"(39).

Horwood's Remembering Summer, by contrast, has human sexuality as a definite focus, but this novel, which can be considered as the author/protagonist's total revolt against the religious precepts governing community life in the world of Caplin Bight from which the protagonist has escaped, highlights sex as one of the purest and most natural sources of human joy. The new Eli Pallisher is shown to have overturned the sexual guilt bred into him as a child in outport Newfoundland, his credo now being "The magic of sex is perennial and universal ... And nobody has to pretend that it's going to last forever ... it's lighting that fire right now that matters"(175). This attitude towards sexuality, evoking the mores of the North American 1960s, while it may be called a reaction to religious doctrinal adherence, is certainly in no way an example of it. It is included here only by way of preserving a sense of fictional chronology in that, as earlier

observed, Horwood is here addressing the same era in Newfoundland society that did Janes in the latter portion of Requiem for a Faith. It is not until we reach the fictional world of Rowe, and more particularly, of Johnston, that we see religious attitudes towards sex and the body as a definite authorial focus.

In Rowe's Clapp's Rock, the creed of the "Gazers on the Goodlike Glory of God's Full Fair and Fearful Face" emphasizes, as did the fundamentalist creed of John McKim in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, the eventual separation of "fleecy souls" from "the rotting flesh and the slimy exorails and the halting limbs that bind you to this rock"(31), thereby denigrating the corporeal world in comparison with the spiritual one. This detestation of the flesh, reminiscent, too, of Duley's "Methodism" and the fundamentalist attitude of Pastor Roberts in Maud's House, while it does not, in Clapp's Rock, include any discussion of human sexuality, still paves the way for the detestation of both flesh and fleshly love in Johnston's depictions of Roman Catholic Newfoundland.

In Johnston's The Story of Bobby O'Malley Agnes, Bobby's mother, is quickly revealed to be revolted both by the human body and by all things suggestive of sexuality, mentally dwelling within the protective shield of being an exemplary Roman Catholic. And although the narrative descriptions of her views on sexuality tend to be humorous, they also reveal that these views of hers, with their consequent effect on her view of married life, ultimately destroy that marriage, driving her husband first to infidelity and finally to suicide (although it must be added that other factors

may also have played a part in leading Ted O'Malley to self-destruction).

Agnes' "holy" denial of the sensual is wickedly, deliciously caricatured: pimples and blackheads on her face were, to her, "redeeming," because they marred what might otherwise have been called "beautiful" - and so she "highlighted" them (23). In a spirit reminiscent of the Dilke sister in Duley's Highway to Valour who preferred to buy "virgin" eggs for her cakes, and of Mageila's mother in that same novel who would only define the word "womb" for her daughter as "a word in the Bible," Agnes, in her denial of sexuality and her determination to shield her son from it, attempted to "neuter the universe" for him, lest he learn any of the terms or concepts that applied to sexuality (49). For example, in an episode in which school children were required to kiss each other on stage as part of a Christmas play, Agnes, totally opposed to such physicality and its suggestion of sexuality, tried to ingrain in Bobby, as he recalls, that

we had to keep a proper distance between ourselves and others. We must imagine ourselves encased in a sterile bubble, and let no-one come inside it [lest we be infected with other people's "germs"]. "Remember the bubble, remember the bubble," my mother liked to say. "If someone comes too close, step back." (111)

When Bobby wondered how this rule related to "married couples," his mother's explanation, although comically absurd, reflected perfectly her vision of married life, a vision which she practised with a thoroughness that made her marriage a sterile and joyless

void. Bobby explains,

My mother said that, by the grace of God, a man and a woman became "immune" to one another at marriage. "I'm immune to your father, and he's immune to me." It worked with children, too. "We're immune to you, and you're immune to us. Isn't that wonderful?" (111-112)

This "immunity" Agnes celebrated manifested itself, as suggested above, in her relationship with her husband - a relationship she viewed, religiously, as a necessary evil and a holy burden to be endured. As Bobby remarks sardonically, reminding Agnes of the night that she and her husband conceived their son "was like reminding a pope that he'd been a banker once" (167) - that is, it reminded her that she had once soiled herself with a corporeal act incompatible with the spiritual perfection to which she aspired. Late in the novel it is revealed that the night of conception when, as Ted O'Malley put it, his "hydraulic drill kept breaking" against her "sperma frost," was the only experience of sexual intercourse the couple ever had together. And in that one instance, Bobby remembers his father revealing to him, in a voice of "unburdened, blessed relief" because this agonized description of the misery and loneliness of his married life was something "he must have been waiting half his life to say,"

he [Ted] felt my mother's fingers going up and down his back. At first, he thought it was her version of passion, fluttering fingers instead of endearments, tactile moans and groans. It was a while before he realized that it wasn't passion, but prayer. She was telling the knobs of his spine like beads. On her back in bed, with him on top, she was saying the rosary. (168-169)

This passage, absurdist as it might seem, evokes the true tragedy

of Ted's and Agnes' marriage, in which Agnes fixed religion like a wall of steel between them, through her warped interpretation of what was entailed in being a good Catholic. After this revelation, Bobby goes on to describe the night his father cried out loudly in his room, and began to take an obsessive interest in graveyards and funerals (169) - which suggests that Agnes' self-imposed and, in her mindset, religiously-endorsed physical and emotional detachment from her husband was indeed in good part responsible for his eventual suicide. Agnes' sense of revulsion for the physical and the sensual, which she felt to be spiritually commendable, turned her eccentric husband's life into a lonely and unliveable void.

After Ted O'Malley's suicide, Agnes says something that links her, in her Catholicism, with the Methodism and Evangelicalism of earlier fictional characters who also felt religiously-required to despise the human body and the corporeal world. In Bobby's words,

She said the soul, at the moment of death, was so revolted by the body, it flew straight to heaven. That's where my father's soul was, up in heaven. She seemed to think of his soul as the man whom, if God had answered all her prayers, my father would have been, and of his body as the man he had been. (179)

Implicit in Bobby's concluding observation is the sense that Agnes would have been far happier in a marriage that was all spirit and no flesh. The tragedy underlying the humor in The Story of Bobby O'Malley is that a person, in interpreting religious doctrine as requiring the detestation of sexuality and earthly love, or in using such an interpretation as a shield behind which to hide

because of a personal sense of revulsion against sexuality, can rob both her own life and the lives of her family members of one of life's greatest and most natural joys, turning what could be a garden of sensual and emotional communion into a barren and lonely wasteland. This theme, though only briefly touched upon in Johnston's second novel, recurs again, if with somewhat more humor and less pathos, in his third one, The Divine Ryans.

In The Time of their Lives, Johnston only addresses the theme of religious aversion to sexuality in the already-quoted opinions of the first generation of Dunnes who believed that "it was virtuous women that became nuns, women who wanted no part of sex, not because they were afraid of it, but because it was sinful"(28) - so that a daughter being groomed for the convent who suddenly balks at the thought is classified by her father as a "slut" and a "whore" (31). But in The Divine Ryans we are treated to a more fulsome picture of the "religious" condemnation of sexuality through the already-discussed character, Aunt Phil.

Aunt Phil, like Agnes O'Malley, upholds what she considers a religiously-sanctioned notion that sex is a sin and, at best, a burden that some people must unfortunately bear. This character, herself a childless widow, sees nothing insensitive in observing to Draper Doyle's mother of her recently-deceased husband "He's free now ... Free from the marriage bed"(41), as though the "marriage bed" is one of the agonies of the corporeal world from which death mercifully releases you. Further, while Aunt Phil recognized "child-bearing" as "one of the sacramental duties of

marriage," it was narrator Draper Doyle's suspicion that "one of [her] objections to children was that they were visible proof that their parents had had sex, and were therefore an embarrassment to everyone" (43) - an association that links her with the Evangelical Pastor Roberts of Maud's House, for whom children were automatically "children of sin" because they were the products of a religiously-despised "lust" (78).

Aunt Phil's "embarrassment" over any manifestation of human sexuality, recurrent throughout the novel, links her with Agnes O'Malley and, in turn, with Duley's "Dilke sisters," all of whom seemed to wish they could "neuter the universe." Draper Doyle's sister Mary "disappointed Aunt Phil by developing breasts" at age twelve (46). Aunt Phil was a woman who "would not ... hang [her bras] on the clothesline for fear of people seeing them" (47), in other words, for fear of acknowledging or revealing that there was a sexual side to her being. And in a comical scene in which she and Draper Doyle walk past a male Doberman pinscher which is "humping" against a fence, in her urgent desire to "neuter" Draper Doyle's universe, not only does she drag him past the dog, covering his eyes so that he cannot watch its actions, she proceeds to deny that they have seen any such dog when Draper Doyle asks her what it was "doing" (132-133).

Once again, though, beneath this comedic treatment of sex as religiously-objectionable lies a dark authorial repudiation of such an attitude. This is apparent when the reader sees Draper Doyle being cruelly punished for natural sexual developments of

which he does not even know the meaning (the "underwear scene" described on pages 46-49, soon to be discussed in more detail), and when one considers the fate of Draper Doyle's father who, because he is surrounded and governed by a family whose religiosity approaches Aunt Phil's in its views on such things as sexuality, feels he has no choice once his sexual "aberration" is discovered but to commit suicide. Johnston's novels, in their absurdist, often satiric exposure of the tendency in contemporary Roman Catholic Newfoundland for people to subscribe to a religiosity that "neuters the universe," are contemporary links in a chain of fiction, extending from Duley's work to Horwood's, Gough's, Janes' and Rowe's, that explores and implicitly condemns those interpretations of religious doctrine that cause human beings to despise their bodies and their natural, inherent sexuality. As Part One of this thesis suggests, when "religion" tolerates an adherence to form without respect for moral content, thereby pitting gender against gender and one religious sect against another, when it is used to explain and defend a grim, harsh outlook on life, or to permit the harsh physical and psychological treatment of the religiously-weak by the religiously-powerful, and when it is interpreted as requiring of people that they denigrate and repress their physical beings, thereby causing them to turn their backs on sexuality and the concomitant need for earthly communion and love, not only has religion "gone wrong," it has, as well, become a life-denying and destructive agent, overriding the very compassion and brotherly love it is supposed to be encouraging

and celebrating. Therefore, we will conclude this discussion of the negative aspects of the continuing reign of faith in fictional post-Confederation Newfoundland by considering their cumulative destructive effects on some of this fiction's key characters.

ix. The Continued Phenomenon of Religion as Life-Denying.

What emerges in considering the overall effects of religious adherence on the lives of the characters of modern Newfoundland fiction is the sense that, just as in pre-Confederation fiction, these characters are being urged - or perceive themselves as being urged - to turn their backs upon the joys of life. In so doing, these characters condemn themselves, and sometimes others, to utter isolation, with a resultant sense of lonely despair or of bitter realization that their hearts, minds and souls have erroneously been given over to the hands and designs of someone else who is grievously misusing them. We see characters who fear, as Duncan's did, that to love anything in this world is to cheat God of the love that is meant for him, and characters who, awakened to what they feel to be the wrongness of this mindset, spend their lives reacting against it. We see men and women who, as already discussed, allow their interpretation of the doctrinal position on earthly and physical love to come between them and thus make a waste and a tragedy of what could have been a fulfilling, earthly relationship, and characters who for similar reasons have never let another human being come close to them, and who suddenly realize, late in their lives, what joy has thus been denied to them. We see childhoods robbed of warmth and love, and filled

instead with barely-comprehended guilt, shame, and false ambitions by elders who feel religiously-sanctioned to mould children into designs of their own choosing. Again and again we see life's worth being belittled in the name of piety. In several extreme situations, we see human beings destroy themselves, convinced of the hopelessness of living in a world governed by such a mindset or, governed by that mindset, convinced that there is no ultimate forgiveness for their "evil" attempts at finding joy on earth.

Sophy Coffin, in Requiem for a Faith, is governed by so grim an interpretation of Christian doctrine that when her first son is born and she finds herself loving him deeply, this rich and natural human experience is marred for her, as it was marred for Nazareth Lute in Duncan's "In the Fear of the Lord," by the fear that her love for her own "creation" exceeds her love of God, and makes of her a sinner for which she may be punished by having the child taken from her (Part I, p.4). This fear of hers stems from the belief with which she has been indoctrinated that love of fellow man, or of the things of this world, belongs on a lesser plane than the love of God. Thus, when husband Will tries to reassure her that God "is only too glad to see you think the world of the little fella" (thus embracing the notion of a "dear Lord") her worried response, like Ruth Stride's to Solomon in "In the Fear of the Lord," is "We should never mention ourselves in the same breath with the Saviour, Will"(4). While Janes does not address the continued effect of Sophy's teleology upon her life in his novel, we can assume that this mindset of hers continues, to her

dying day, to come between her and any wholehearted embracement of life.

The Eli Pallisher of Remembering Summer, by contrast, reflecting on his youth in Caplin Bight, which was governed by a religious mindset similar to Sophy's, writes "We were taught to mute all the senses ... Distrust the senses. Ignore them. Play them down," while he, concluding that this way of living is wrong, has been "coming down from the cross where his parents nailed him" ever since (20,21), making evident throughout this novel his attempt at a total embrace of the sensual fullness of life. Even the rebel Eli, though, seems permanently scarred by the tenets on which he was raised; in describing an incident with a youth in which he feels, in retrospect, that he behaved wrongly, this "Eli" admits that the grim, Old Testament Jehovah of Caplin Bight still dwells within him - the Jehovah who drove Adam and Eve out of Eden. He writes, "I don't admire Jehovah [Duncan's "Lord God A'mighty," once again] - especially when I meet him in myself, where he was planted so long ago"(119). Thus, even the Eli Pallisher of Remembering Summer, easily the character in the modern fiction we are considering who rebels with most force against religion's life-denying qualities, has not fully come down "from the cross where his parents nailed him." This bespeaks the tenacious quality of the religious tenets with which he had been inculcated in childhood.

In The Story of Bobby O'Malley we see, as already mentioned, an adult world endeavouring to twist and mould a child's

heart and mind because of adult preoccupations with religious doctrine. Bobby's mother, Agnes, wanted him to be an altar boy, to ensure that he would not stray too far off the moral path (70). But to become an altar boy one needed to earn what Johnston ironically terms sufficient "Virtue" points from the schoolteaching nuns, and Bobby was deficient in these. Therefore, his mother's plan became to let it be known that Bobby wanted to be a priest (73), a decision she made for him without asking him whether, in fact, he had any such wish.

Subsequently, through the malleability of childhood Bobby does go through many of the preliminary motions needed to become a priest. And gradually, through habit and encouragement from his mother, he comes to believe that he wants to be one, just as Billy Luff is convinced by storybook and maternal prompting that he wants to lead a holy and exemplary life.

Significantly though, at the beginning of this "campaign" to make Bobby a priest, when the local priest visits him to guide him to the start of the "road" - a "road" which at this point Bobby had not even contemplated - the boy makes an astute observation, one that links him both with Draper Doyle of The Divine Ryans and John Ryan of Priest of God. As Bobby reflects:

As he [the parish priest] spoke, it was as if he had something in his hands that he did not know was mine, and which I, until now, had not known was missing. He was turning it over and over, assessing its possibilities, and I wanted to reach across and grab it back. Instead, when I left, I left it with him, as if it wasn't anything I couldn't live without.
(74)

This "something" is the same "something" with which the mother and pastor of "Concerning Billy Luff and Master Goodchild" wrongfully meddled, with which Aunt Phil will meddle in The Divine Ryans and with which ecclesiastical superiors will toy in Priest of God - a younger person's will, his mind and, if the term be permitted, his very soul.

In The Story of Bobby O'Malley, as already observed, Bobby, in walking the "holy" road upon which he has been set, develops the notion, like Billy Luff's, that that there is something romantically attractive about death as opposed to life - again an instance of life on earth being belittled and denigrated in the name of piety. He remembers, while attending to his altar boy's duties, "feeling the pull of that dome [the tabernacle] like death" and sensing that "There was something strangely attractive about the kind of sadness and loneliness it excited" (164). "The sense of the "attractiveness" of this "loneliness" figures, too, in the psychological habits Bobby learned to foster in his role as "priest-in-the-making," habits we will later see Father John Ryan reflecting upon in Priest of God. These are habits that, like the attraction to "early death," signal the tendency of religious doctrine to encourage adherents to devalue life and all connections with the things of the world. Bobby, in grade eight, was already preparing himself for the lovelessness, insularity, and loneliness he perceived as being part of a priest's vocation - a perception that nobody tried to discourage in him. He deliberately remained aloof from the beginnings of adolescent romance and even adolescent

companionship, even though, despite himself, his genuine nature prompted him to hope that by acting so remote he might "draw [people] closer," which of course, he did not (109). When, at this stage, he considered the dawning sexual behaviour of boys and girls at dances, he revealed the way the dogma he was adhering to had affected his perceptions of femininity and of love:

I couldn't imagine that girls were generous, receptive ... I thought girls held on to everything they had - words, lips, sex - and it was the boys' job to take those things away. (109)

Such were the perceptions of human love and sexuality fostered in a boy on the way to the priesthood. He would presumably have sustained and inculcated similar perceptions in others if he had actually become a priest. Such is the loveless, joyless, life-denying effect of religiosity manifested in modern Newfoundland fiction, an effect Bobby escaped (and that, in O'Flaherty's novel Priest of God the defrocked John Ryan will similarly try to escape) by ultimately rejecting the religious path, and by leaving Newfoundland, the land and the society that had gone so far in fostering these things in him.

As previously analyzed, the life-denying effect of religious adherence is further evoked in the Story of Bobby O'Malley by Agnes O'Malley's attitudes towards sexuality and, therefore, towards her husband - who has already been described as escaping by suicide the lovelessness in which she has encased him. Agnes, a kind of caricature of extremist Catholic indoctrination, "had once thought the convent her calling," but "discovered, one

soul-searching summer, that all women are Sisters of Mercy - it's just that each one wears her habit a different way. 'I wore mine' [she explains to Bobby], 'by marrying your father'" - which caused his father to "live with someone who thought all women were latent nuns," devoid of sensuality, romance, and all inclinations towards earthly love. Agnes' response to the flowers he once brought her, which Ted O'Malley sardonically called "the closest that woman has ever come to being romantic," was "Teddy ... you are the cross I bear" (17-18). In living out what she felt to be the religiously-sanctioned notion that being married was only the sacrifice she made for God, she drove poor Ted O'Malley to self-destruction.

Perhaps Bobby best sums up the effect of Catholicism on the fictional characters of Kellies when he observes that gathering at church did not bring people closer together, but emphasized their insularity as they contemplated the joyless futility of life on earth. As he remembers it, church attendance meant

[feeling] like a part of a community of solitary souls. All of us there, together and silent in the darkness, hardly aware of one another, looking away from one another ... [with the priest proclaiming] that for the Christian, life was a continuous cycle of hope and dark despair. (107)

The Catholicism in this fiction is not life-affirming but life-denying, with sensuality forbidden, earthly companionship difficult and suspect, and human isolation, rather than human communion, religiously-endorsed.

In Johnston's The Divine Ryans, which similarly examines the coming-of-age of a young boy amidst a religious

sanctimoniousness that threatens to break his will while simultaneously revealing the adult despair and self-destruction that can result from religiously-governed attitudes towards sexuality, there is a scene in which Draper Doyle's mother and older sister, giving vent to the pent-up frustrations of living in a repressive household that condemns all things either sexual or suggestive of *joie-de-vivre*, make fun of sanctimonious Aunt Phil and the warped uncle/priest, Father Seymour, by parading around the kitchen in the aunt's and uncle's underwear (47-48). What follows is the previously alluded-to cruel treatment of Draper Doyle by Aunt Phil who, in what seems like an act of revenge borne of her obsessive, doctrinally-sanctioned hatred of sexuality, makes a spectacle of his dawning but dimly-understood sexuality in order to humiliate him. Taking his underpants, which were stained by semen (which he innocently thought to be urine) out of the laundry, she makes of them such a family display that even his mother and sister are ashamed of him and thus emotionally cut off from him. The image Johnston creates of "pee-stained [actually semen-stained] underwear [pinned] to the bulletin board," with a note underneath reading "I will not wash such filth," although comical in a satirical sense, is in fact not funny at all. In an observation reminiscent of Bobby O'Malley's remark that the priest held something belonging to Bobby that was not his to hold, Draper Doyle says "It might have been my little boy's soul that was hanging there" (49). And though Draper Doyle continues his observation with a witticism of Uncle Reginald's, there is an element of tragic

sobriety beneath the seeming "fun." For this little boy's soul, in its innocence, is being persecuted by the machinations of a woman whose grim interpretation of doctrine denies him all that is natural, and who seeks to breed in him a feeling of undeserved guilt which he can carry with him for a lifetime. In both 'The Story of Bobby O'Malley and The Divine Ryans, a child's soul is shown to be clutched and tampered with by adults whose religious intentions for the child take precedence over the child's actual nature. Aunt Phil, a woman for whom the notion that a family member "Worked himself to death" is a matter for pride (30), embodies the theme of religious adherents whose interpretation of Christian doctrine results in a devaluation of life, a devaluation she seeks to inculcate in Draper Doyle.

But the other more subtle and complete case of life-denial that serves as a mysterious undercurrent throughout the narrative, only to be revealed at the novel's conclusion, is the fate of Draper Doyle's father Donald who, as previously described, manages only to escape the religious repressions and directions that have dominated his life through suicide. In Draper Doyle's own words, his father "had ... been forced to a life that would lead him to suicide" (225). And the mixed "anguish and pleasure" the boy had seen in his father's face at the decisive moment precipitating the suicide, when he had surprised the older man in the midst of an act of homosexual passion, came from his dogmatically-conceived understanding that he had chosen "damnation in the next" life rather than "misery" in this one (209-210), and

was thus due an eternity of punishment for seeking a sexually aberrant form of earthly joy. This is an interpretation of dogma reminiscent of that of Virginia Marks in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, who similarly sought a forbidden joy and sexual pleasure in this life but was indoctrinated into believing that for doing so she was a condemned sinner. For characters inculcated with the belief that earthly sexual pleasure is an evil which will be punished by an unforgiving God, divine law indeed becomes life-denying, and can result in a burden of guilt or in self-destruction. It is significant that in Donald Ryan's farewell letter to his son, he wrote "I have come to believe that there is no such thing as forgiveness" (224) - a pronouncement that links him with John McKim in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, a character who like Donald sought pleasure and human union in a homosexuality which his society would not tolerate and who, when "discovered," assumed because of the religious tenets on which he had been raised that there could be no divine "forgiveness" for his socially-aberrant enjoyment of earthly love. Religious doctrine becomes life-denying when it denies people earthly joy, just as it does in adhering to the notion of a deity who is ultimately unforgiving. Both these aspects of religious doctrine are repeatedly featured in twentieth century Newfoundland fiction.

In The Story of Bobby O'Malley a man is destroyed because a human interpretation of religious doctrine denies him heterosexual love; in The Divine Ryans, the same doctrine destroys a man because it forces him into it. In both cases, a

father/husband resorts to suicide - to the denial of life when the life itself becomes life-denying. And in The Divine Ryans, as in The Story of Bobby O'Malley, dogmatically-Catholic elders attempt to gain control of the doomed men's sons, who escape the fate of their fathers only by rising to confront that dogma and by leaving Newfoundland, a place fictionally portrayed as being an all-too-effective breeding ground for dogma that is life-denying. The twin themes of the rigid, unfeeling control of the individual by ecclestical "superiors" and the religiously-endorsed notion that human sexuality, because it is concerned with earthly rather than with divine love, should not be sought as a means of pleasure or of joy, recur yet again in O'Flaherty's novel, Priest of God.

In witnessing the plight of Father John Ryan, the protagonist of Priest of God who, as already mentioned, strove during his appointment to the parish of Long Cove to come to terms with the verity and the function of religion in a world that turned its back upon him while undermining his attempts to act for the moral good of his parishioners, we see, in a passage strangely reminiscent of the passage in The Story of Bobby O'Malley where Bobby realizes that a priest has taken something from him that is not his to take, that even a priest can end up feeling similarly in his low position in the hierarchy of the Church. Late in the novel, when Ryan realizes that far from supporting him in his efforts to shed light on young parishioner Jimmy Snow's death and to thus bring truth and justice to Long Cove, his bishop intends to assign him to some new parish because of local complaints that he

has been a troublemaker, the priest muses: "What power he'd placed in the bishop's hands! The power to pass him around from bay to bay, as if he were some object for barter"(187). In both these instances - as in the instance where Draper Doyle felt that his "little boy's soul" had been pinned to a bulletin board - we see the dehumanizing effect that religion can have when people in positions of religious power use that power to direct and control another person's life, making of that life, indeed, an "object for barter." For in so treating a human being, the implication is that his or her own innate being is of no worth unless or until it can be used for religious ends determined by someone else.

We see as well the lonely lovelessness of Father John Ryan, his "struggles with sexuality in his early years in the seminary" and the "desire" that "He'd beaten ... into submission" which cause him, late in the novel, to ask himself whether Jesus would truly have wanted his followers to live such barren and life-denying existences (166-167). Indeed, Father Ryan, who preached of "God's love" every week at the pulpit, realizes as he "enviously" watches a pair of lovers in a restaurant that he himself has never felt love, because "A part of him had been crushed somehow. A part of him was already dead" (168). In this moment of realization, Ryan is acknowledging that the doctrine he has lived by has caused at least a portion of what should be "living" in him to be "dead," despite the fact that he is still alive. What he is acknowledging, in fact, is that religion, as inculcated in him, has denied him of some of the fullest and most meaningful parts of life, while making

of him a person unfit to speak to others of love.

At the end of Priest of God, reflecting on what he had mistakenly thought to be religious longings in the face of young Jimmy Snow as he lay dying in the ditch at the novel's beginning, Father Ryan realizes that what he had seen on that dying face was, rather, "unmistakably love" - carnal, homosexual love, and yet a "better" love than the ecclesiastical variety Ryan had taken it for (213). For in unravelling the mystery of Jimmy's death, Ryan had confirmed the "hunch" he had had that this death was not an accident, but a murder - the murdering of a young boy by an older man, the leading merchant's son, with whom the boy had had a homosexual relationship, and for whom the boy had felt a kind of "love." Here one must respond to the opinion voiced by Reverend Jamie Gripton in his review of Priest of God that it is "preposterous" of O'Flaherty to suggest that a young, abused boy could feel "love" for an abusive, "hard-drinking, verbally-intimidating outport merchant" - as "preposterous" as the real-life suggestion of a Nova Scotian bishop that "some of the Newfoundland boys may have willingly participated in the sex acts with priests and brothers" in the historic Mount Cashel Orphanage scandal of the 1970s and 1980s (14). For what must be remembered in both cases - as well as in the case of Brother McKim's homosexual love for Eli in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday - is that to suggest that such sexual activity is prompted by a genuine, perhaps desperate, but certainly understandable need for affection, tenderness, and human love on the part of both parties is not necessarily to forgive the party in

authority for initiating the activity, but merely to acknowledge the very real need for human, earthly love that for various reasons may prompt individuals to seek it in such a form. Jimmy, who came from an unhappy and repressive home on the "wrong side of the tracks" in Long Cove may indeed have felt "love" for the merchant's son, who eventually killed him for fear that this "love" might be made public. And while Father Ryan obviously does not see this manifestation of "love" as ideal, in reflecting on it in a comparison of earthly with doctrinally-asserted heavenly love, Ryan feels that earthly love is "perhaps, the best thing we could have": certainly something more real, more life-affirming, than "the imagined intricacies of God's love" that "priests elaborated on" (213) - a love of which poor, young, underprivileged Jimmy Snow "had some inkling," but which Father John, because of the doctrine he had embraced, had never known.

This "love" that Father Ryan, in recollection, recognizes on the dying face of Jimmy Snow is hauntingly reminiscent of the "earthly" love that Duncan's small boys turned to at the moment of their deaths, and that the homosexual Brother McKim demonstrated towards Eli just before he vanished, a "damned" and broken man. It is also the "love" denied to Ted O'Malley by a wife indoctrinated into the preferred "intricacies of God's love," and for lack of which his life becomes an empty shell, and the "love" for which Draper Doyle's father was willing to condemn himself to damnation. What we see, over and over in these novels, is that when an ill-conceived, dimly-felt notion of divine love is used to prohibit

earthly love, the effect on humanity is destructive. None of these authors deny the possibility of a Godly love; but they suggest that to cling to some doctrinal notion of it at the expense of earthly love becomes a life-denying endeavour.

At the end of Priest of God Father Ryan, like Bobby O'Malley and Draper Doyle, confronts the dogma which has directed his life and finally rejects it, leaving his native land presumably in search of a life of which his doctrinally-dehumanizing upbringing has denied him. At this point it is appropriate to introduce a new fictional character - Hugh Myers, protagonist of Bowdring's novel The Roncesvalles Pass, a young Newfoundlander who, like Bobby O'Malley, Draper Doyle, and John Ryan, has "escaped" Newfoundland, and is living in an unnamed mainland Canadian city which we can deduce to be Toronto, where the novel takes place. For while most of the discussion about Hugh and his observations on life will take place in the succeeding two chapters of this thesis, where the decline and the aftermath of religious faith in contemporary Newfoundland fiction will be addressed, one observation of Hugh's belongs here because it, too, suggests the life-denying nature of religious dogma as interpreted by religious adherents.

Hugh devotes a number of the "reflections" which constitute this novel to his relationship with and observations about his landlady, Mrs. Withers - a lonely old woman and devout Roman Catholic who makes an annual "pilgrimage" to the shrine of St. Anne-de-Beaupré. At one point in the novel, Mrs. Withers,

returning from one such "pilgrimage," presents Hugh with a "booklet" from the shrine, whose message is reminiscent of the life-denying quality of evangelical dogma in Duncan and Horwood's fiction and of Methodist dogma in the works of Duley and Janes. For this booklet "informs" Hugh that St. Anne-de-Beaupré actually does her supplicants, who go to the shrine to be cured of physical ailments, a favour by not curing them, teaching them, rather, "the meaning and value of sickness and suffering" - and that some supplicants actually thank her for not curing them, viewing suffering in this world as a means for "purification" in the next. Human suffering is thus seen as a way to "atone for [one's] sins" (94,95) and to prepare one for the "afterlife" - which suggests that in this application of Roman Catholic dogma, life on earth is meant to be both hard and of no real consequence. Once again, then, as in all the other contemporary Newfoundland fiction just discussed, we see religious doctrine belittling the experience of life on earth, and denying it any meaning or importance except in so far as it prepares the individual for the afterlife. As we have seen, the fictional characters who embrace this interpretation of Christian doctrine tend to deny themselves all potential for earthly happiness, while concurrently denying happiness to those in close emotional proximity to them, often with tragic results.

Thus, fiction addressing modern-day Newfoundland - continuing a theme introduced and developed in fiction concerned with pre-Confederation Newfoundland - generally depicts the adherence to Christian doctrine as adherence to the notion that all

earthly happiness and all forms of earthly love, be they parental, connubial, or otherwise, are sinful, in that they involve the individual in earthly rather than heavenly commitments. It further depicts such adherence as a belief that it is permissible to physically humiliate, terrify or bully an individual into compliance with another individual's interpretation of dogma. It also depicts religious adherence as being hypocritical, in that so many adherents focus on the form but not the actual meaning of religious tenets, with Christ's injunction to love one's neighbour as oneself being once again overlooked, ignored, or forgotten. Thus this grim fictional depiction of the negative effects of religious belief outweighs by far the occasional themes of religion as a form of comfort or support, suggesting, as has been observed earlier in this chapter, that somehow, somewhere, religion as manifested in the fiction of twentieth century Newfoundland has "gone wrong."

What remains to be investigated in post-Confederation fiction is, as with its predecessors, the extent to which "religion-gone-wrong" - as well as other factors - has contributed to a fictionally-conveyed decline of religious faith and then, finally, the effects of this decline-of-belief on fictional characters living in the "aftermath of faith" in late twentieth century Newfoundland. We will commence, then, by considering the evidence provided by modern Newfoundland fiction that there is indeed a decline of faith in contemporary Newfoundland society, simultaneously observing the effect of this "decline" upon the

fictional clergy, after which we will analyze some of the fictionally-offered reasons for this decline. And finally, we will address, as we did in fiction concerned with pre-Confederation Newfoundland, the extent to which faith is fictionally shown to prevail at all in modern life, along with the psychic consequences of faith's decline among characters living in faith's "aftermath."

CHAPTER V: THE CONTINUED DECLINE OF FAITH

1. EVIDENCE OF FAITH'S DECLINE

The evidence that faith is in decline in fiction addressing post-Confederation Newfoundland is plentiful indeed, this phenomenon being manifested in the works of Janes, Horwood, Rowe, Johnston, O'Flaherty, Bowdring, and Porter. And whether this decline in religious adherence is treated seriously or comedically, and as observed or, rather, experienced by the fictions' protagonists, it is obviously a cause for authorial concern and reflection, as the authorial attention to reasons for the decline will make clear.

Once again we will begin our analysis by perusing Janes' Requiem for a Faith, which chronicles the gradual erosion of faith in the four generations of Coffins in St. Michael's. In Part I of the novel, the first evidence we see that religious adherence is slipping is in the marriage of second-generation "inheritors" Wesley Coffin and Mag Slaney, as observed by their steadfastly religious elders. Wes and Mag, it seems, are not getting off to a good start in their married life, with Mag constantly nagging at Wes, and Wes responding with increasing, and sometimes blasphemously-expressed, resentment. His mother Sophy, "scandalized by her son's taking the Lord's name in vain" in his angry responses, as well as by the "rude and disrespectful way that Mag spoke to her man," concludes with husband Will that this younger generation is ignoring the doctrinal rules on marriage and is thus heading down the road to destruction. As Sophy observes in

reproof of Mag, "The wife should always cleave to the husband. It says so in the Bible, so it got to be true." Will responds, though, that "not all the young wimmen thinks so nowadays." What the older couple see as the dark ramifications of this departure from scripture are eventually borne out in Wesley's increased drinking and diminished church attendance, an early sign in this novel that the religion that once united the community and gave it a set of rules to help it function is coming undone (20).

Will's and Sophy's other offspring are similarly signalling an era of change. Sophy is further "scandalized" by one day finding in daughter Charity's room a sex magazine the girl has been reading, which Sophy promptly destroys, admonishing Charity to read her "Bible" and "Prayer Book" instead (21). But again, a rift has occurred which will deepen over time. Charity's mind, in her youthful loneliness, will not be filled and contented by reading the Bible, a generational problem anticipating the remembered plight of Bowdring's Hugh Myers, whose mind had been similarly unfulfilled by the Bible and thus left to "forage for itself" in the isolated community in which he was born but from which he ultimately "escaped" (Bowdring, 56).

Further, son Aubrey, whose "mind and considerable energy were fixed on more earthly and material things than religion," while still feeling "close enough to his mother to experience some guilt about this," was, like his brother, becoming lax about his attendance at church, finding "that after five and a half or six days' work in the plant he was content just to sleep in on Sunday

morning"(35). Through such descriptions, Janes is suggesting a gradual departure from religious adherence on the part of the "inheritors" that becomes a full-scale dismissal on the part of the third generation "rebels" and fourth generation "renegades" of St. Michael's.

As second-generation Mag (who as previously discussed, was a Roman Catholic) discovered when she herself became a mother, her son Billy was disinclined to be "influenced" by her in matters either "religious or secular," while daughter Mary "sometimes balked at being taken to Mass, wanting to watch TV most of Sunday once her school work was done"(65-66). This apparent disinclination towards religious observance of the third generation of Coffins caused Mag, whose own generation had unwittingly signalled the trend, to wonder about the "'new spirit' in religion" and about the notion of an insurmountable "generation gap"(66) - a "spirit" and "gap" that was made fully apparent to her when her son chose a "modren [sic]," or "ecumenical" Catholic girlfriend, who "appeared to scorn Mag's old-fashioned beliefs"(71) and who was eventually married to Billy by a "JP ... without the blessing of the Church or anything Christian at all"(80).

This third and "rebellious" generation, introduced in Part I of the novel and followed in Part II, embodies the rapidly-increasing departure of the younger citizens of St. Michael's from any adherence to faith, with what Janes depicts as a concomitant deterioration in the dignity and overall quality of the outport lifestyle, leaving the reader once again wondering whether Janes

sees this faith as a primarily constructive or destructive force in outport Newfoundland. It is during this examination of the eroding mores of third generation St. Michael's that Janes turns his attention, too, to the plight of the clergy - in this case, of a priest - in this era of religious decline.

Early in Part II of the novel Mag's parish priest, Father Tobin, becomes a momentary point of focus. And, anticipating the position of Father John Ryan in Priest of God, we now see this "spiritual leader" not as the strong authority figure he would have been in days gone by, but rather, as "lost and all alone," speaking bitterly of "the discontinuance of Latin in the Mass" along with other "doctrinal" and "social" changes that made him wonder whether

this watered down institution he belonged to was really a church at all, any more, and even whether he still had any true function in this parish. On Sunday mornings now he could hardly get enough people in the church building to say he had a congregation, and half of those who did come were not paying their tithe. (10)

Further anticipating the theme of social change in Priest of God, Father Tobin goes on to observe that some of the parishioners who did not seem able to contribute monetarily to the church "could afford to pay twenty-five dollars an hour to the psychiatrist who had recently set up practice in St. Pete's and St. Mike's and Paradise"(10), thus signalling the phenomenon, evident in both novels, of people turning to institutions other than the church for guidance.

Later in Part II we are shown, as in Priest of God, how the modern era of change can affect a priest spiritually and

psychologically, when Father Tobin is perceived by Mag as "shrinking as he got older, taking on a nervous and pinched look and sometimes almost giving the impression that he apologized for his presence wherever he was and whatever he was called to do" (56). As the narrator explains, these physical manifestations of uncertainty, reflecting in part the plight of Priest of God's John Ryan, derived from

a process of erosion - not of his actual faith but a haunting uncertainty and perplexity about his role as a priest of the Roman Catholic Church and a questioning of the relationship this put him into vis-à-vis the people of St. Mike's. What was his true office now? (56)

Father Tobin's sense of the "erosion" of the church as an institution and hence of the meaningfulness of his calling further signals an overall decline of faith in St. Michael's, because even though, as the narrator states, he himself is still committed to religious doctrine, his psychological dilemma indicates what Johnston, in The Story of Bobby O'Malley, will term a "doctrinal fuzziness" on the part of the clergy (Johnston, 30). This in turn will translate into a further weakening of the church as an institution.

If Father Tobin experiences only part of Priest of God John Ryan's dilemma, the sense that he is no longer functioning as he should in his parish, another spiritual leader in Requiem for a Faith, a clergyman who has given up his ecclesiastical title, evinces the other part - the condition of the clergyman who himself has lost his faith. The ex-Reverend Walter Rose, who in Part II of

the novel befriends third-generation Garth Coffin, admits to Garth early in their friendship that he has lost this faith (61). And in the ensuing discussions of these two characters, an important authorial preoccupation, like the one forming part of the inspiration behind Priest of God, is explored: why in the modern world it is so difficult to maintain spiritual certainty. Thus, the two clergymen of Requiem for a Faith give evidence, as do many of the lay characters, of the decline of faith in Janes' St. Michael's, with the ambiguous inference that "faith" has been both a harmful and a helpful element in this community, leaving the reader ultimately unsure of whether or not Janes is mourning faith's decline.

A final case in point is fourth generation "renegade" Jack Coffin, Mag's grandson, an unfortunate straw figure with no redeeming qualities whom Janes creates to embody an extreme example of the total abandonment of both religion and decency in contemporary outport Newfoundland. Jack "mocked" the "piety and practices" of his grandmother, developing "an intense dislike" of Christmas, Easter, and, in short, "the whole phoney racket" of religion (75). Jack also manifested, as will later be discussed, almost every possible form of vice which the modern era is capable of inflicting upon outport communities - again suggesting an authorially-perceived link between decline of faith and decline of human decency. The phenomenon of "Jack Coffins" in fictional, contemporary Newfoundland gives credence to the reflections of the ex-Reverend Rose, who observes that all that is left of religious

faith now is "a few fragments or a pile of rubble," and that, since "the young people don't believe in it ... it's bound to be a futureless thing"(82).

As if to prove the point, in Janes' novel Eastmall, while religious decline is not a major theme, the author makes sure we realize that his protagonists, Morely and Donna, have severed their ties with religious belief. Describing Morley's experience of the "Christmas of 1976," Janes writes:

He and Donna did their family and other social duties in the expected way and played their part as young people who no longer had any belief in the religious side of the thing but still felt ... some obligation to recognize it in other ways. (76)

In Morley's idealistic but agnostic (if not atheistic) view, in fragmented, post-1960s Newfoundland society (indeed, in all of North American society), people were either free-thinkers or they had "gone off job hunting or collapsed into the arms of the holyrollers"(37) - thereby classifying those who embraced new evangelistic cults not as evidence of a new age of faith but as evidence that the weak-visioned easily succumbed to artificial pursuits.

A similar sense is evoked in Horwood's Remembering Summer, which addresses the same era in Newfoundland (and North American) society. Here the "new" Eli Pallisher declares that although the culture from which he has come causes him still to "speak most naturally in the phrases of the Hebrew prophets," the "Bible is read no longer"(18). He refers back to the liberally-minded Joshua Markady and Christopher Simms of Tomorrow Will Be

Sunday as men who were "wise beyond their time and place" but who were incapable of "walk[ing] through the looking glass" to the world he now inhabits, their old world being a "dying" one, with "a new heaven and a new earth [but not the heaven and earth of traditional religion]" now to be formed (19). Eli further observes, in the spirit of Eastmell's Morley, that his old mentors had figured Eli to be "on the road to wealth and power," while instead he became "first a sailor and then a freak" (19). The people in the remembered world of "Caplin Bight," whether governed by or reacting against the religious dogma of the community, would not have understood, says Eli, "the evolutionary leap into cosmic consciousness" brought about by LSD and by flower-power (19) - a "consciousness" in which religious faith, as construed in this thesis, plays little part.

Turning to Rowe's Clapp's Rock, we see early in the novel that youthful protagonist Neil Godwin's "religious belief withered" as he beheld the antics occurring in his father's church (32). And while this loss of belief is first described as having been painful for Neil, we are soon reassured in the satiric style of the novel that shortly thereafter, his "religious and philosophical doubts had been swamped by a great tide of certainty: a comprehensive horniness" (36), which took religion's place as a preoccupation. Thus while he differs from the young protagonists of the two preceding novels in that he aspires to political ambitions which they would have abhorred, he joins them in creating the sense that religious faith has indeed faded in the minds of the youth of

fictional, contemporary Newfoundland.

We also see in Clapp's Rock Neil's father's previously-described lack of faith, which caused him to call his thirty years as a spiritual leader a "lifelong lie"(343). Hence, Ernest Godwin joins fictional ranks with Requiem for a Faith's ex-Reverend Rose and Priest of God's Father Ryan as modern-day clergymen who come to recognize that they do not, or never did, believe the things that they have preached. Hence, the decline-in-faith evident in modern Newfoundland fiction can be seen as a multi-generational issue, as well as a multi-professional one, in that it is found in both the secular and the ecclesiastical strata of Newfoundland culture.

In Johnston's The Story of Bobby O'Malley we see the tenuous nature of modern-day religion in the narrator's boyhood obsession with questioning all the tenets of his faith, which he explains as being a consequence of the times of change brought about by the relative liberality of Vatican II (30) - the same "times of change" bemoaned by Father Tobin and Mag Slaney Coffin in Requiem for a Faith. Indeed, as already noted, narrator Bobby refers to this era in Roman Catholicism as "a time of equivocation, of doctrinal fuzziness and confused clergy," causing him to observe "I suppose it was the worst time to be a Catholic, if what one wanted was to stay a Catholic"(30). And the ensuing developments of the novel, as experienced by Bobby and as voiced and parodied by his father, Ted, bear him out in this observation.

Ted O'Malley's every word and gesture become a mockery and denial of Roman Catholic doctrine, from the antics with which

he mocked his wife's anti-Protestantism (100) to his mockery of priestly ritual (69), and from his satiric comments on the prerequisites for becoming a priest (105) to the savage delight he took in the misadventures of Bobby's Christmas play (111-116). Indeed, Ted even succeeded in undermining Catholicism posthumously; his book of "memoirs," which after his death was found to consist of a list of absent pages (pages which had been flushed down the toilet), included the cryptic remark "Do this in memory of me," which implied both that he found the flushing-down-the-toilet of his life's memories a most fitting tribute to that life and that linking this act with words from the sacrament of Holy Communion was equally apt. And Bobby's ultimate, rum-induced revolt against the calling to the priesthood his mother had imposed upon him suggests, as did his father's life-long revolt against religious dogma, that this era in Newfoundland society (and indeed, in Western society as a whole) was indeed "the worst time to be a Catholic, if what one wanted was to stay a Catholic." The suggestion is, as will be picked up in O'Flaherty's fiction, that the times themselves were not (and are not) conducive to the maintenance of faith.

In continuing to examine evidence of loss-of-faith in Johnston's fiction, we find in The Time of Their Lives that in contrast with the strictly religious upbringing of the grandparental and the parental generations in this three-generation study, the narrator and his siblings, representatives of the new generation, gradually prevail upon their mother to allow them to

forego the customary religious observances (159-160). Indeed, in suffering a kind of middle-aged identity crisis, their strict, religiously-raised mother begins to join them in mocking priests and nuns (160). Therefore, the "generational petering out of moral authority" remarked on by Stuart Pierson in a review of the novel (35), while it may stem in part, as he suggests, from the loosening grip of "Dad" upon everyone's lives, becomes as well a "petering out" of religious authority in accordance with what we have seen as the evoked era of change.

In The Divine Ryans the sense of decline-in-faith is evoked, as it was in The Story of Bobby O'Malley, by the constant parodying of Catholic dogma by a rebellious adult family member - here that figure being the protagonist's Uncle Reginald. Like 'Ted O'Malley, Reginald infuses the novel he inhabits with a sense of the absurdity of Roman Catholic dogma through the satiric jesting and observations with which he undermines Catholic sanctimoniousness for both reader and malleable young protagonist. Early in the novel, apparently perceiving the difficulty with which young, "haunted" Draper Doyle was handling his father's death, as well as perceiving the potentially damaging effects the "religious" Ryans might have upon the young boy, Reginald began conducting sessions in "psycho-oralysis" with him (31) - sessions in which the two would talk about anything bothering Draper Doyle. In these "sessions," as well as in his lifelong dealings with the rest of the Ryan family, Reginald mocked and satirized all things "holy" with a seeming innocence and matter-of-factness that render his

satire all the more caustic and undermining. He did so in coining the term "sinventory"(57) and in suggesting the creation of a more "accommodating" form of holy confession (59) - which he referred to as "two minutes in the box" (62) - two examples of his mockery of the practice of religious confession. He further undermined Ryan-style Catholicism by mocking Aunt Phil's "religiously-inspired" detestation of sexuality, which he accomplished by explaining the term "marriage bed" to Draper Doyle as the "beast with two backs" which was "Not yet extinct"(41) and by referring to orphans, of whom Aunt Phil approved because of their seemingly sexless origins, as "little divinities"(43). He mocked the seriousness with which the Ryans regarded Father Seymour's station (referring to his underpants, for example, as "sacred shorts" - p.47). In all these instances, Reginald serves as the novel's court jester, exposing falsehoods and religious excesses for what they really are. Indeed, Reginald refers to himself as the "*devil ex machina*," literally descending upon his sanctimonious relatives from his upstairs apartment to "stir up trouble" among them (26-27). And in so doing he, too, signals a questioning and consequent decline of faith in Newfoundland society as suggested in its modern fiction.

O'Flaherty's short stories and novel, too, reflect the lapse in religious adherence apparent, as fictionally suggested, in modern Newfoundland. In Summer of the Greater Yellowlegs, three stories reflect this theme. In the already-discussed "Exchange of body fluids," a twenty-seven year old woman, obviously raised a Roman Catholic, and now seeking desperately for a man, reveals a

willingness to engage in adulterous relationships and to "sleep around" which certainly flies in the face of the doctrine upon which she was raised. It is she who was earlier referred to as having "started praying again recently"(16), but only because it helped her to sleep - indicating both that she had at some point ceased praying and that her reasons for resuming have nothing to do with religious faith. In "A friend to man" the presence at a family gathering of the seemingly-atheistic son, Theo, further signals that while religious faith is still alive in the practice of more conservative and "old-fashioned" characters, it has been decidedly rejected by modern-thinking academics. In a discussion about the institution of marriage, Theo has no qualms about saying to his Roman Catholic family:

What is it ... that makes us cling to the hoary practice of matrimony? Don't tell me it's a religious conviction about the sacraments. Or some notion that it's possible to love somebody forever. This is too secular and cynical an age for the old fictions. (23)

Theo's willingness to speak thus of a "holy sacrament," and his assertion that the contemporary age is too "secular and cynical" for such "old fictions" as religious faith, pick up and articulate the theme that emerges in works from Janes' to Johnston's: that there is something inherent in the modern era that is incompatible with religious faith. This theme is borne out, too, in the previously-discussed story, "Fish Killer," in which a son, home from the city, muses on his father, an old fisherman who represents both the old ways of fishing and the old ways of believing. The old man, as already mentioned, used church spires as landmarks in

"finding directions"; but, we are informed, "There were plans afoot to take down the tall spire" of one church (41), which we can assume to be the first of many church spires to suffer this fate, in a story that ends up suggesting that the old ways and beliefs embodied by this old man are now "over," his "small boat taking up space needed for the longliners"(42). Technology and the new "secular" era are crowding out both the old outport ways and the teleology that went with them - making of John D. Divine's "rhetoric" on outport Newfoundland where "the spires of little churches on village hilltops" are a part of Newfoundland's incontestable identity (as quoted in The Rock Observed, 149-150) a sentimental but unsustainable portrait.

Two stories of O'Flaherty's in A Small Place in the Sun address the decline of religious faith as well. In "These, thy gifts" a Roman Catholic parent is portrayed as gradually and unintentionally becoming "out of sync" with his religion. He will not entrust his sons to either priests or bishops in such matters as lifts home from school; balks, unlike other parents, at the traditional, seminary-sanctioned use of corporal punishment in the classroom; forgets, when presiding at table, to begin the meal by saying grace (25); and mentally includes "preachers who couldn't preach" among the "compromisers, bootlickers ... [and other] dunces [who] had gained the ascendancy"(23). This man, while not overtly condemning his faith, reveals in all these ways that he is slipping from the strict adherence to it which is expected of him. He too is a product of this "era" of change. And in the story "Return to

laughter," in which a Roman Catholic schoolteacher contemplates yet somehow fears to divorce her husband, she wonders whether "Her abandoned religion, which had filled her with suspicion and dread as a schoolgirl," is contributing to her inability to proceed with the divorce (58). Implicit here, of course, is the notion that some residual obedience to religious doctrine is holding her back; but in the ease with which she can consider her "religion" to be "abandoned" even though she works in a denominational system which requires that she maintain it, as well as in her very contemplation of divorce, which entails the breaking of a holy sacrament, she contributes to the sense that in modern Newfoundland fiction, characters are no longer comfortable with nor loyal to the religious doctrine upon which they have been raised.

In "A Gift," a new "Jimmy Byrne" story of O'Flaherty's included in the Newfoundland issue of Canadian Fiction Magazine, we see yet again a character in whom "faith" seems to be slipping - not, in this case, because of rebelliousness on the character's part, but rather because the character cannot seem to find in his practice of faith the rationale and response he requires of it. Jimmy Byrne, here an adult and a Roman Catholic liberal political candidate, is stumped on the contentious issue of abortion, because although he knows that abortion is condemned by his church's doctrine, the suffering and misery he has seen in low income St. John's families has caused him to wonder if it is wise to prohibit them from limiting family size (32). Thus his world view is causing him to question one of his religion's key precepts. As the

narrator puts it, when "He tried praying for guidance, as he used to in the old days" - suggesting he has not prayed for guidance very often in recent years - "No help was given from that quarter"(32). Moreover, when he then went on to consult with a "prominent Catholic theologian" on how to deal with the abortion issue, he "got such vague answers to his questions that he was more confused than ever"(32) - perhaps because this theologian was party to the post-Vatican II "doctrinal fuzziness" alluded to by Johnston in The Story of Bobby O'Malley. Hence we see religious faith ceasing to "work" for a character in modern fiction because it cannot provide him with guidance and because some of its dogma clashes with what the character perceives as the realities of modern day life. Here is another fictional suggestion that we are not living in an age conducive to faith.

It is in O'Flaherty's novel Priest of God, though, that we see the author reflecting most deeply on the evidence of a decline in faith in Newfoundland society, both on the part of that society at large, and on the part of Father John Ryan as a singular ecclesiastical member of that society. The author also explores, as did Janes in Requiem for a Faith, the effects of this decline upon this "ecclesiastical" protagonist, and finds, as Janes did, that for the clergy this era of decline can indeed be a time of great personal suffering.

A pervading theme throughout Priest of God is the decline of the power, prestige, and meaning of the church in the "Long Coves" of Newfoundland, symbolized, among other things, by the

dilapidation of the priest's residence in Long Cove, a residence, ironically nicknamed "The Palace," that "reflected an earlier day of glory in the church" but was now, like its religion, only "an old house"(42). As Father Ryan observed quite soon after his arrival in Long Cove, the minds and the lives of the local people (whom he reflected upon with irony as "the people of God") were "preoccupied with videos, the dart league, the politics of the fish plant ... the problems of raising youngsters, looking after the elderly, and keeping up with the neighbours," with the church being "well down the list." And because the church was so far down that "list," nobody came to Ryan's weekday masses, nor did they attend to the light chores parishioners had traditionally undertaken in keeping up the church: cleaning it, lighting the sacristy lamp, etc. (15) Even the women he visited in the house calls he considered to be his priestly duty to make did not give him their respectful and undivided attention, as they once would have done, keeping "one eye on the soaps" as they talked with him (16). Indeed, in considering the twentieth century Newfoundland fiction addressed in this thesis in its entirety, we can see the chronological decline of faith quite graphically: where characters in Horwood's Tomorrow Will Be Sunday were shocked to find it possible that a clergyman would seduce a youngster, characters in Priest of God, probably resulting from such real-life events as the Mount Cashel scandal as well as from the general decline of interest in the church, found it easy indeed to associate priests with sexual abuse (see pp.17,18,185).

All the above-mentioned manifestations of the declined religious faith of Long Cove make of Father Ryan's initial impression of the place - that "Going to church in Long Cove was a serious business"(6) - an ultimately ironic observation. Church attendance in the community was "serious business" only insofar as it maintained a custom, like school attendance or the filling out of income tax reports, that it had not yet occurred to anyone to question. It was merely an unconsidered tradition which people observed, out of habit, just as "Dad" observed it in Johnston's The Time of Their Lives.

And it is not only in Long Cove itself that this decline in faith is evident. Everywhere Father Ryan goes - to the Waterford Hospital (103) or to a used car dealership in St. John's (105-106) - he is treated with an odd blend of residual respect and modern-day impatience, symbolic of the church's decline in Newfoundland as a whole. At a Burger King restaurant where he stops for a bite to eat, the "writing" is quite literally "on the wall" for him: visiting the washroom, he observes some graffiti in which the phrase "Jesus saves" has "been revised to 'Jesus sucks'" (169).

But it was not only the population of Long Cove for whom "faith" had declined to a mere minimal observance of form, nor the used car dealers and blasphemous graffiti writers for whom Christian doctrine had become questionable. This decline of faith was experienced by Father Ryan, the "priest of God," himself, and it was an experience that caused him both humiliation and great

moral anguish.

Early in the novel, during Ryan's first church service in Long Cove, we find him reflecting on the Christian gospel of Christ's resurrection and admitting to himself that Christ's resurrection "was now to [him] more a matter of hope than conviction"(8) - a worrisome decline of certainty that his bishop's good-natured reassurance ("Let it alone; don't worry about it. You're not a philosopher, my dear boy" - p.8) served only to exacerbate. We go on to discover that Father Ryan no longer believed in the power of prayer to alleviate a crisis, so that when he made a renewed attempt during a time of crisis to use prayer to help him, he merely "found the repetition of the Hail Mary monotonous and dropped it after a few attempts"(49). Indeed, and for reasons to be discussed in the next section of this chapter, by the novel's end we find that Father Ryan has been severed completely from belief in the tenets of his former faith; in blessing the body and the blood of Christ during his last celebration of mass in Long Cove, the "body" was now only "unleavened bread" to him, while the "blood" was only "a tiny portion of sherry, mixed with a little water"(209).

Father Ryan's sorrowful personal plight in this era of declined faith is also evinced in the narrative, both in the treatment he suffers at the hands of others and in the psychological problems his declined faith creates for him. We see at the novel's start that it is the prominent merchant family, the Squires, who "run" the parish, not the parish priest, who is

advised to accept their guidance in all community issues (6). Right away, then, Ryan is given to understand that his status is inferior to that of the merchants, whose opinions and moral qualities he will soon find to be reprehensible. And, as he will ultimately discover, his very fate will be bandied about in the "backstairs politics" between merchant Squires and the bishop (186), making him feel, as earlier mentioned, that he is merely an "object for barter" to be planted and transplanted by people in positions of authority over him, for reasons that are not always morally justifiable.

We see as well the fear and agony Ryan suffers because of his realization that his faith has "slipped." In the confessional he found that he "had few answers anymore," and thus dreaded the soul-searching questions he "should" have been able to deal with -

"Do unto others as little damage as you can" now being his "motto," for fear that any advice or judgement he gave as a priest might be harmful or unsound (44). And "having few answers" amounts, ultimately, to the perception of a chaotic universe that was shown to be feared by Duncan and which will be shown to be feared by characters in Requiem for a Faith as well, a phenomenon which this thesis has suggested to be part of the dilemma inherent in conscious faithlessness.

For the priest like Ryan who decides to leave the church, there is as well another fear: as he envisioned it, the fear "of what lay beyond, in the muck and moil of the great world" which made him wonder, "What was out there for a cripple like

himself?"(208). A person who years ago gave his life to the church, we are brought to realize, may be neither practically nor psychically equipped to take on the independence required in the secular world. This makes of Ryan's final act in the novel, changing into "civvies" and boarding the bus that will take him, newly a layperson, away from Newfoundland, a very brave one indeed (210-214). It reminds us, as did Janes' Requiem for a Faith, that the plight of spiritual leaders in an age of declined faith, whether those leaders share that sense of decline personally or not, can be a pitiable one.

Bowdring's novel The Roncesvalles Pass features, through protagonist Hugh Myers' first-person reflections on life in a mainland city, with Newfoundland as a haunting background, a gently absurdist treatment of religion that makes further evident the sense of declined faith pervading contemporary Newfoundland fiction. "Glowing young missionaries intent on religious conversion" are linked, non-judgementally but matter-of-factly, with "devious salesmen" as the kind of people one could expect to find going from door to door, plying their wares (21). This evinces Hugh's personal sense of the place of religion in day to day life. A bit less gentle are Hugh's reflections on the "Pastor Raynor" he sometimes listens to on the radio as he eats his breakfast, remarking that he leaves for work after hearing this program with "even less enthusiasm than usual." Hugh goes on to relate one of the Pastor's born-again testimonies, which he refers to as "soporific bathwater," thus revealing clearly his attitude

towards evangelistic proselytizing, if not towards religious adherence as a whole (85-86).

Yet there is the sense, throughout The Roncesvalles Pass, that religion in its entirety is in a state of decline. This is evident in the lonely figures Bowdring paints of old women acting as sole surviving adherents to faith in an age that has left them behind, which will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis. It is evident as well in the small, aside-like potshots Hugh takes at the remaining religious establishment, some of them funny in an absurdist way, such as his reference to "Niagara Falls - Honeymoon Capital of the World and home of the world's largest Crucifixion scene and indoor Ferris wheel" (115) - and some not funny at all, as in his reference to a young nun eating biscuits at a Woolworth's lunch counter, "her life already dressed in mourning" at the probable age of nineteen (114). Implicit in such observances is the sense that religion, as viewed by Hugh, has been reduced either to rank commercialism or to the continued adherence of a tragically mistaken few. In either case, it is not a guiding force in either his life or the lives of his peers.

Finally, there is the suggestion in Porter's fiction that religion is in a state of decline, and further that, as suggested in Part I of this thesis, this is not necessarily an exclusively modern-day phenomenon. We have already seen, through the observance of protagonist Heather Novak's grandmother in january, february, june or july, the modern-day recognition that "none of the young people goes to church anymore" (88). But in her already-

mentioned short story "The Plan," in the collection A Long and Lonely Ride, we see in the reminiscence of protagonist Rita, now an old woman, that way back in the 1920s young Newfoundland girls could be in doubt about faith, if not decidedly atheistic. Remembering how she and her friend Leila had gone off teaching together as girls in 1929, Rita recalls that "Until that year she had believed implicitly that there was Someone Up There, but now she wasn't at all sure," while "Leila was quite convinced there was no one," with the result for Rita being that, "suspended somewhere between belief and disbelief ... [she] was probably less content than those who were convinced one way or the other"(66). Thus we are reminded that the questioning and decline of religious faith, while it may figure more frequently and prominently in fiction addressing latter twentieth century Newfoundland than in fiction addressing the years before Confederation, is not necessarily seen by post-Confederation authors to be an exclusively post-Confederation theme. The decline of faith in Newfoundland, as portrayed in its twentieth century fiction, is a phenomenon rooted in the early years of the century, if not before, becoming increasingly evident with the fictional passage of time.

But in considering the manifestly evident theme of the decline of faith in fiction addressing modern-day Newfoundland we must now explore, as we did in the fiction addressing pre-Confederation Newfoundland, the reasons offered by the fiction for this turning-away from religious faith - reasons which because they become an increasingly complex subject of focus in literature

addressing the modern-day province, require a section of their own. Thus, we will now consider seven "categories" of reasons offered by the fiction for the decline of faith in post-Confederation Newfoundland, reasons all leading to the issue of faithlessness in modern Newfoundland society which will be our concluding focus.

2. REASONS FOR FAITH'S DECLINE IN FICTION ADDRESSING POST-CONFEDERATION NEWFOUNDLAND

The characters we have been focussing on in our study of the fiction addressing the years following Confederation reach the point at which they question or ultimately reject adherence to religious doctrine for a variety of reasons. For some, as we saw in fictional characters living in pre-Confederation Newfoundland, religious adherence becomes pointless because religious dogma seems too cruel, narrow-minded, or exploitative. For others, in a fashion reminiscent of the concerns of such characters as Mageila Michelet and Eli Pallisher, religious adherence becomes suspect because they see it functioning as a practice of form without concern for content. For still other characters, a decline in faith stems from their sense of the inconsistency or the inadequacy of the clergy in dealing with parishioners. Some modern characters, as was shown to be the case with author Norman Duncan, see the presence of seemingly unexplainable and undefendable human tragedy as reason to question the notion that there is a prevailing justice in the universe. Other characters question or reject religious faith when they see it failing to answer their need to

see justice carried out in the world. The characters in some works of fiction - particularly the ex-Reverend Rose and Garth Coffin of Janes' Requiem for a Faith - point to a number of socioeconomic and historical reasons for the contemporary decline of faith. And finally, as has already been suggested, some characters feel that faith is simply incongruous with rational thought and with the spirit of the contemporary age. What follows, then, is an examination of each of these reasons, in turn, as they manifest themselves in the lives of post-Confederation fictional characters.

Kim Sweet, the fourth-generation Coffin in Requiem for a Faith who has already been described as the appealing little star of Ev Shepherd's televised evangelism, exemplifies the rejection of faith when it becomes exploitative. Kim, initially the "sweet," pliable, major "prop" in Ev Shepherd's T.V. show, eventually rebelled against the faith in which she had been raised when she realized how its leaders had exploited her, causing her to look like a fool among her peers while never inquiring as to whether she had any heartfelt desire to be put on stage to advertise something she did not understand (Part II, pp.76-79). In her dawning adolescence, newly aware of aspects of life from which her parents' religion had shielded her, she "quit the whole show or circus, as she now called Ev's Mission," eventually coming to "evinced almost a hostility" towards the faith it represented (77-78). For Kim, the religious exploitation of her childhood became ample reason to turn her back on faith.

In O'Flaherty's fiction it is not so much the

exploitation as the cruelty of religious practice that causes his characters to resent or to reject it. In the already-mentioned title story of the collection Summer of the Greater Yellowlegs the protagonist, a university professor, reflecting on the fate of his brother who had killed himself many years before, "remembered Colin's treatment at the hands of the Brothers," and concluded that "The Protestant Reformation hadn't lasted long enough ... Not enough monasteries had been razed to the ground. Much useful work remained to be done with wrecking balls and bulldozers" (7). Evidently, then, whatever faith this professor had had as a boy had been bitterly cast aside when he witnessed the cruelties inflicted in the name of that faith, so that, as the narrator puts it, "He had no belief left in a spiritual world, [although] something made him wish for a sign" (8) - suggesting, as this thesis will once again conclude, that in the casting aside of faith there is, nevertheless, a deep and inherent sense of longing for something in which to believe.

Similarly, in the previously-discussed story "Return to laughter" from O'Flaherty's second collection, an adult schoolteacher, reflecting on her "abandoned religion," associates it with the "suspicion and dread" with which it had filled her childhood (58). This suggests that religiously-inflicted psychological cruelty, as well as physical cruelty, can be reason enough to abandon faith.

In Priest of God, a combination of religiously-endorsed physical and psychological cruelty become reasons for Father Ryan

to question most bitterly the Roman Catholic dogma he is soon to reject. For when Ryan "recalled the struggles with sexuality in his early years in the seminary ... [the] desire ... He'd beaten ... into submission," it caused him to cry out, "What in Christ's name have I done to myself? I'm some kind of eunuch ... Did Jesus want this kind of half life for his disciples?" And he concluded his musings with the bitter answer, "He doubted it. He fucking well doubted it" (166-167) - strong language for a "priest of God," but language revealing the intensity of the suffering he had undergone in obeying what he now saw as the cruel and unnatural requirements of his faith.

And just as the perceived exploitativeness and cruelty of religious practice can cause thoughtful characters to turn from faith, so can its perceived tendency to survive as a form that has lost or chosen to ignore its inherent meaning. In Part II of Requiem for a Faith, conscientious and introspective third-generation Garth Coffin began to lose his faith, as did Eli Pallisher of Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, when he saw that church observance did not seem in any way to correspond with everyday life for the people of his community. In one of his heart-to-heart talks with Walter Rose, the ex-minister, he spoke of "people repenting on Sunday but the rest of the time going back to their same old ways of cheating and lying, swearing and fucking and all the rest of it" as a personal observation that had contributed to his own "intimations of unbelief" (66). Similarly, Walter Rose expressed the view to Garth that "on the whole dogma has been a

great curse" because in their preoccupation with differing denominational interpretations of doctrine, "all those theology men" of world history had turned the basic tenet of brotherly love into brotherly hatred, with "diverging dogma" causing "some of the most repellent and ghastly cruelties and persecutions in all human history," that is, the phenomenon of "Religious wars"(89). This manifestation of dogmatism prevailing with meaning forgotten - i.e., interdenominational conflict - contributed to Rose's loss of faith just as another of its manifestations, church attendance without week-long adherence to the church's supposed meaning, contributed to Garth's.

In a similar vein, the perceived superficiality of church attendance, along with a distaste for the prevalence of interdenominational rivalry in Newfoundland, contributed to Neil Godwin's departure from faith in Clapp's Rock. For as Rowe puts it, when Neil "actually listened" to the predictable and performance-like church ritual practised by his father and his father's parishioners, which he came to perceive as nothing more than a weekly sham, he became "sceptical of all religious conviction"(29-32). Further, although by this point Neil had already been "turned" from religion, his detestation of religious dogma deepened when he realized that "because of the incantation ... muttered over [him] at birth," he would be unlikely to win the Rhodes Scholarship that year (59) - an instance of interdenominational conflict already discussed in this thesis, and further evidence that faith declines when an individual observes

its form being administered without concern for the meaning of that form.

For Father Ryan in Priest of God, a church's ability to sustain its form without worrying about the content supposedly inspiring that form contributes to his decline in faith just as it has done for such different characters as Garth, Walter Rose, and Neil Godwin. In Ryan's case, though, it is his own ability to practise form without considering content, with his church's and congregation's support of this deficiency, that contributes to his growing loss of faith. Ryan, reflecting on his ability to preach of God's love to a dying boy when he himself was unsure of the existence of such a God or of such a love, and on his enjoyment in preaching the parable of the mustard seed to congregations even though his own inner life did not exemplify the parable, sees how easy it is for the church and its representatives to dole out form uninspired by content, and is thus both frightened and repulsed by the "faith" he has been practising (168-169). And when, as earlier mentioned, he confesses his lack of "conviction" to his bishop, who reassures him by advising him to carry on with his "mission" whether he believes what he is preaching or not, intimating that many other members of the ecclesia are just as doubting as Ryan, but manage to carry on preaching just the same (8), the priest is similarly disturbed by what he sees as the dishonesty of practising form devoid of meaning. The authorial implication is that the bishop's endorsement of such practice is a further sign that something is seriously wrong with the church.

Further, when, as already described, the "leading" parishioner in Long Cove, the merchant Squires, advises Ryan that his "rituals" but not his "morality" are what his congregation expects of him (178-179), this suggests to Ryan the mere role of "figurehead" that the priesthood has become. Thus when he later imagines the crass conversation between the merchant and the bishop that has led to his dismissal from the parish, a decision he reasons was based, not on deep insight into his nature and his priestly actions, but on "Backstairs work, politics," the priest, by now almost totally disaffected from Catholicism, is able to reflect, with bitter irony, "Some mystical body, this church" (186). Hence, the evidence Ryan has gathered both from personal experience and from the attitudes of others that the church is not "mystical," but an elaborate form upheld by conventions devoid of meaning, contributes greatly to his final departure from the priesthood.

In The Roncesvalles Pass we see yet another character whose skepticism about Christian faith derives at least in part from his observance that Christianity as a form can be upheld without consideration of its supposed meaning. Here Hugh Myers, in one of his reflections, berates the kind of "religious faith" evoked by right-wing America, because he feels that this "faith" has been used to justify mass murder - a penultimately hypocritical misapplication of Christian doctrine. In a short section on the might of United States military power - which Hugh obviously abhors - he exposes United States politicians' willingness to use as proof that "God" is "on [their] side" the success of the U.S. bombing of

Hiroshima. Hugh adds, caustically, "how could the Lord refuse [to guide missiles like Truman's towards their targets], tempted by a burnt offering of the magnitude that this man has in mind" (92-93). Thus, when heads-of-state suggest that their success in inflicting mass destruction on enemy nations is proof that their actions are divinely sanctified, thinkers like Hugh find that they must question the whole notion of divinity. For, once again, if a faith supposedly inspired by the injunction to love one's brother as oneself is invoked to condone hatred and destruction of one's brother, this "faith" has become an empty shell: a form being paraded without content.

In Porter's fiction we find two instances of decline in faith being linked with the perception that religious adherence is being maintained without attending to religious content. In January, February, June, or July, the protagonist's mother, Eileen, defends her falling-away from church attendance by pointing to the hypocrisy of those who do attend, but who also do such religiously-condemned things as committing adultery. This links her both with Eli Pallisher and Garth Coffin in suggesting that in an age where form (church attendance) is all that is left, with content (abiding by the tenets of the church) evidently forgotten, there is little point to going to church (88). And in Porter's previously-discussed story "O Take Me as I Am," from the collection A Long and Lonely Ride, we see through the protagonist's eyes a particularly compelling treatment of the link between empty religious form and the falling away from faith.

In this story, protagonist Noreen ponders on her nebulous feelings about the Salvation Army, whose church services she attends only when "things [get] too much for her" (28). Even then, with a sense that her faith has greatly declined, she finds, among other things, that she can find a "soothing otherworldliness" in singing the Salvation Army hymns despite the fact that she does not believe their lyrics (35-36). This links such hymn-singing with the "voodoo" and "ritual" that merchant Squires assured Father Ryan were all that people required of the church, and signals the ambiguity Noreen feels towards what once had been her religious convictions. Tainting the nostalgia with which Noreen remembers her early and more dedicated years of church attendance is the memory of one "Ruby Graves ... the saintly expression on her face as she knelt at her chair on the platform of the barracks," and then the act of adultery she witnessed Ruby performing, that same afternoon (30). Noreen's memory is evidence to her of the gap between the observance of religious form (church attendance) and content (the commandment against adultery) that reflects Eileen's views on church attendance in Porter's novel. It darkens Noreen's reverie on the "good old days" of firm belief.

But the major contributing factor to Noreen's doubts about her church stem from her memory of the Salvation Army's treatment of a youth named Andrew, a closet homosexual who became an officer but who was "immediately dismissed" when his homosexuality was revealed (36), thus making a mockery of the Salvation Army tenet, expressed in a hymn, that the Lord will "take

you as you are"(38). The Salvation Army church, Noreen knows, despite its professions, "won't take [Andrew] as he is" (39) - underlining the irony implicit in the story's title, as well as explaining Noreen's declining belief in the church's integrity. The Salvation Army officers lead their congregation in the singing of hymns whose lyrics, supposedly expressing the tenets of the church, are matters of form, but not content; they may resound splendidly in the Salvation Army Citadel, but they are not put into practice.

As we have seen, the cruelty and exploitativeness of religious practice, as well as a perceived dichotomy between religious form and its meaning or actual practice, have contributed to the decline of faith in a number of post-Confederation characters. A further factor contributing to this decline, evident in The Story of Bobby O'Malley and in some of O'Flaherty's fiction, is characters' perception of an inherent inconsistency and/or inadequacy on the part of the clergy in dealing with their parishioners.

In The Story of Bobby O'Malley, Bobby observes "What struck me most about priests was their calculated loneliness, and the idea they had that the man was closest to God who was furthest from his fellow men"(79). We have seen in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, Maud's House, and Priest of God the effect such "calculated loneliness" can have on the clergy, themselves. But what is being underscored here is the perceived incongruity of being guided in both spiritual and earthly matters by men who have deliberately

steered clear of any kinship with the actual lives, experiences, and exigencies of their brothers and sisters, an incongruity which apparently contributes to Bobby's eventual decision to forego the life of the priesthood.

This incongruity, which translates into an inadequacy of priests to deal realistically with parishioners from whose lives they have so distanced themselves, becomes a factor in Father Ryan's growing doubts about the priesthood and in the gradual erosion of his faith as construed in Priest of God. Towards the novel's end, remembering the night he knelt beside Jimmy Snow as the boy died, Ryan questions his church-sanctioned role as an intermediary for God: saying to a dying boy the pat phrase expected of a priest in such situations: "God loves you," when

How did he [Ryan] know, for a start, whether God, supposing there was one, loved his creation? He didn't know, that was plain. And who was he to speak for God, anyway ... It was a man's business to declare his own love, not be the spokesman for some nebulous variety that he couldn't comprehend and only half believed in. (168)

And love, the passage goes on to reveal, is something Ryan knows nothing of anyway, as it had been "crushed" out of him (168). The implication is that the "calculated loneliness" of which Bobby O'Malley spoke ill-prepares a priest to speak of love, love being something most possible to comprehend, at least initially, at the human level, a level denied to priests. Ryan's similar ill-preparedness to deal with a young mother who ended up murdering her son, giving her "absolutions" for abusing the child when a more awakened contact with the ways of the world would have warned the

priest that different measures needed to be taken, is something that haunts him throughout the novel and becomes an important factor in his questioning of the tenets of his faith (see pp. 117-120). Thus, priests' "calculated loneliness" is not only a cause for their personal suffering, but can lead to an inadequacy in their dealings with parishioners' worldly problems - and this inadequacy leads some thinking individuals in Newfoundland fiction to a further decline in faith.

If clerical inadequacy results in declined faith, so, too, does perceived clerical deviance and hypocrisy - revealed in O'Flaherty's fiction through the association of the clergy with sexual scandals, an association that causes many lay characters to regard the clergy with suspicion and, sometimes, contempt. In a story from A Small Place in the Sun frequently referred to in this thesis - "These, thy gifts" - the Roman Catholic father's injunction to his sons to accept no rides from clergy was previously cited as evidence of his decline in faith. This particular aspect of his decline is obviously based on his awareness of the clerical sexual abuse of children - a phenomenon that has become increasingly evident in "real life" contemporary Newfoundland. And in Priest of God, the widespread awareness of the clergy's deviant sexual behaviour contributes to the sense, throughout the novel, that Newfoundland society at large has suffered a decline in faith resulting from this behaviour. Early in the novel, in a decline of faith evident from the careless way in which she treats Father Ryan, one Long Cove woman refers to the

recently uncovered sexual scandal of priests, and especially to the notion that they were not like "normal" men who had sex "with women" (17). Shortly thereafter, the merchant's wife observes that Ryan is "out jogging all the time, staying out of trouble" (18) - a further if more subtle reference to the potential for clerical sexual deviance, and a further sign that the lay world has lost its respect for, and thus suffered a decline of faith in, the church as an institution. Indeed, the bishop himself refers to priestly sexual scandals as growing news items (185); hence the novel is suffused with the notion that priestly sexual deviance has contributed to an overall decline of faith in Newfoundland society.

Religious cruelty, exploitativeness, hyprocrisy, deviance, and inadequacy - all these factors figure in the decline of faith so evident in fiction looking at modern-day Newfoundland. But in two cases, so does another phenomenon - and one that we have seen causing Norman Duncan, Horwood's Eli Pallisher, and even Duley's Mageila Michelet grave theological doubts. That phenomenon is the existence of undeserved suffering and tragedy among human beings, which some strict adherents to religious creed would use faith to accept, but which characters like Walter Rose of Requiem for a Faith and Father Ryan of Priest of God come to see as a reason to question faith.

In Part II of Requiem for a Faith, in revealing to Garth Coffin how he came to lose his religious convictions, ex-minister Walter Rose points first to the atrocities committed in Nazi Germany and then to the suffering his wife underwent as she died of

cancer as the catalysts leading to his ultimate doubts about God's love. As he explains to Garth, during World War II when he served as a "fighting padre,"

I was also with the first British troops who went into Germany towards the end of the fighting, and I think the first real crack in [religious] belief came on the day we walked into Buchenwald concentration camp. ... when I saw all those corpses, human beings who had been obscenely tortured and died in agony, the mutilated and the living skeletons like zombies staring at me out of their graveyard eyes ... the devastating thought came to me: how could a God who was, as I had always thought and preached, a truly benevolent God, allow all this to happen? How could He, if He really cared about the Jews as well as for us and all people, permit such terrible inhumanity of man toward man? If He had the power to stop it. (62)

And while, as he goes on to say to Garth, he did not totally lose his faith at this point, the "experience in Buchenwald was a big eroding factor" (62).

After the war, Rose goes on to relate, he "was put to another test" when his wife fell ill with cancer. The "suffering [he] saw that woman go through from her cancer of the throat was enough to rend [his] heart and again raise doubts of God's mercy" (63). It was after her death, Rose confesses to Garth, that "I woke up one morning to realize I had been unconvinced of the Christian faith." Significantly, as we have seen in such characters as Eli Pallisher and Neil Godwin, the moment when he realized his loss of faith was a frightening one, a "cold" one; but finally, it was also a decisive one. Ever afterwards, Rose found he "had to admit a credibility gap between the Bible story and

[his] own powers of acceptance ... the heart of it all [being] ... a further conviction of God's not caring about his creatures as He was supposed to do"(63). And this new-found conviction caused Rose to leave the ministry, and to carry on as a "bemused agnostic" - whose further reflections on the reasons for the decline of faith on the part of society as a whole will soon be analyzed.

In a similar vein, for Father John Ryan of Priest of God his church's conviction that all sins - even those leading to the death of another - can be forgiven mankind through confession and penance, becomes problematic when he considers the previously-mentioned case of the woman who abused and ultimately murdered her child: a case in which he, as the church's representative, had played such an ineffectual and ultimately destructive part. For when, late in the novel, he again meets that woman, who has been "reformed" in prison and is now "on her way to joining the St. John's middle class," her son's murder having "given her the start she'd needed on the ladder to yuppiedom," Ryan, too, finds himself questioning the notion of divine justice, and deciding that there is none (167). In a world where the brutal murder of an innocent child leads only to the murderer's social amelioration, something is amiss. The undeserved and philosophically unexplained suffering and tragic death of that child - along with the child's mother's easy escape from guilt and accountability - lead Ryan, like Walter Rose, to question the very faith he has spent his life in preaching. He, like Rose, cannot understand why a loving God would permit such a tragedy to happen - if, indeed, God had "the power to

stop it."

But the fact that Father Ryan's inner turmoil over the infanticide case stems only in part from what he sees as the spiritually indefensible tragedy befalling the infant leads us to yet another cause for the questioning or the loss of faith in this fiction's characters: and that is when doctrinal teachings do not square with the individual's need to see what he or she perceives as justice, or fairness, meted out in the world. We will soon return to the consideration of this aspect of Father Ryan's philosophical "problem" with the infanticide case; but first we will "back up" to take a look at earlier examples of characters' departure from religion, when its doctrine does not satisfy their need to see order and justice prevail.

At the climax of Requiem for a Faith II, the "evil," drug-laden fourth-generation "renegade," Jack Coffin, more or less "kidnaps" his fourth-generation cousin, the previously-described Kim Sweet - enticing her to come and live with him, which she willingly does both to shed herself of the "faith" and values upon which she has been raised and because she feels that she is in love with him. However, Jack proceeds to keep her as a "captive" in the house he has taken over, permitting no communication between Kim and the rest of her family. The family, in its concern for Kim's well-being, therefore comes together in a group effort to "rescue" Kim, which results in a fight between Garth and Jack in which Garth defeats him, and in Kim's eventual return to her home when Jack's fickle nature is made apparent to her (pp. 97-101). What is

significant here, though, is the mental condition and subsequent physical actions of Kim's father, Gordon Sweet - the member of third-generation St. Michael's whom we have previously seen as a satellite of local evangelist Ev Shepherd. For Gordon Sweet, despite his years of religious adherence, is unsatisfied with what he perceives to be the leniency with which Jack has been reprimanded for "violating" his daughter. As the narrator relates,

It was a strange fact, especially to Gordon himself, that his religion, and pious urgings from Ev Shepherd to let it all go and stay behind him, had no effect on Gordon's determination to go after Jack. Prayer and forgiveness were all very well, but perhaps could be carried too far in certain circumstances. The truth was also that for a good while Gordon had felt his connection with Shepherd and the Second Coming growing loose and rather vague, mainly because in all his trouble [with his daughter, Kim] he had not found one iota of real practical help coming from that quarter, and real help and immediate support were what he had desperately needed during these recent harried times. At present religion was not a restraining factor in Gordon's thoughts and plans. The whole thing (his hatred of Jack and his need for personal revenge both to calm his own mind and to restore some sense of there being justice in this world) went deeper than any religious prohibition or dogmatic conviction. It seemed to be something more fundamentally human, a kind of pre-Christian imperative of man's nature. (102)

In the ensuing paragraphs, we see Gordon shoot Jack Coffin: not fatally, but enough to wound him and to satisfy Gordon "that a certain balance might be restored and life make sense again," through Jack having "to suffer some pain too," just as he has inflicted pain of one sort or another on so many other people (102). The two things that surface in this passage are that a

faithful parishioner reaches a point where he feels he must bypass religion because it has been of "no real practical help to him," and that this point of departure is triggered by what Janes calls man's "fundamentally human" and "pre-Christian" need to see order and justice restored to his world, a need that in this case can only be met by taking personal action that flies in the face of Christian doctrine. And this theme - man rejecting religious precepts, if not religion as a whole, when they jar with his "fundamental" need for justice and order to prevail - recurs in O'Flaherty's fiction, while echoing a minor but significant theme we saw in Horwood's Tomorrow Will Be Sunday. It thus emerges as yet another reason for the decline of faith on the part of the characters of twentieth century Newfoundland fiction, particularly on the part of characters living in the latter portion of the century.

As was discussed briefly in Part I of this thesis, man's sense of justice came into conflict with the religion to which he ascribed in the person of Elias Pallisher of Tomorrow Will Be Sunday. Elias, although not what the characters of the novel would call a "backslider," ran into a period of trouble with his pastor and fellow parishioners over his belief that "Every man as is any good eats hearty an' works hard" (71), a personal notion of justice that clashed with the pastor's pronouncements on "the early Christian practice of 'having all things in common'" (70). Elias, who worked hard and thus prospered during the summer when most of his neighbours sat by and did nothing as they waited for the Second

Coming, did not feel it right that he share what he had reaped through the sweat of his brow, to his own family's detriment, with those in the community who had done nothing, reasoning, as previously quoted, that "the Lord hadn't given him children to be made into beggars through the shiftlessness of his neighbours" (70). And this particular challenge to Christian doctrine - the sense that the hardworking should not have to share their fruits with the slackards - resurfaces, interestingly, in both the short fiction and the novel of O'Flaherty.

In the story "These, thy gifts," in A Small Place in the Sun, the Roman Catholic father frequently described in this thesis as trying to prepare his sons for life in the greater world, in trying to stretch and challenge their minds with fables, stories, and Biblical quotations, "told them why the man who came into the vineyard at the eleventh hour was thought by some to deserve as much as those who had come in early and borne the burden and heat of the day," but added that he found it "difficult" to agree that there was justice in this parable (15) - just as Elias had found it difficult. The "difficulty" this character found in accepting this particular notion of Christian justice is just one of the many subtle ways in which he is demonstrated to be questioning the very faith he is trying to uphold (other ways having been discussed, already). And this "difficulty" of his links him both with Elias Pallisher, a character dwelling in pre-Confederation Newfoundland, and with Father Ryan in Priest of God, a very contemporary example of an individual who struggles with and ultimately loses his faith.

For significantly, this same parable figures in Priest of God when police Sergeant Anstey, exasperated by Father Ryan's obsession with digging to the bottom of a case he considered to be murder but which the sergeant was ready to dismiss as an accident, says,

Reverend, you know the story of the workers who came to the vineyard late and got paid the same as the ones who came early? I've liked that story ever since I turned forty. You know what it means? Here's what I think. The early birds deserved a lot more than the lazy, hung-over slob who turned up late, let's face it. They deserved more, but they didn't get more. The point is, there's no justice. Some people get all the breaks, some get screwed. It's got nothing to do with what you deserve. That's just the way it is. It even says so in the Bible. (111)

This observation, with which the secular sergeant, out of bitter and weary disillusionment, dismisses the notion of justice is eventually echoed by the priest himself when, later in the novel, having become more and more disillusioned with the role he has been playing as a priest and with the nature of the world as a whole, he agrees mentally, "There was no justice: old Wils [the sergeant] was right"(167). Reflecting on the young woman who had murdered her child and had been "rehabilitated" by the justice and social service systems, thereby ultimately "profiting" from the murdering of her child, Ryan asked himself bitterly "Was that what remissionem fucking peccatorum meant? Was it?"

But Ryan, unlike the police sergeant, is ultimately unwilling to dismiss the possibility of achieving justice, even if it means rejecting the Bible's teachings and his bishop's

injunctions, which he proves by pursuing the facts behind Jimmy Snow's death until he reveals that there was indeed a murderer, whom he turns over to the law so that justice will, at least in this case, be served. Thus we see him, a priest, challenging and objecting to one of the basic precepts of his faith, just as the father in "These, thy gifts," Gordon Sweet in Requiem for a Faith, and Elias Pallisher in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday had done: challenging and objecting to Christian doctrine when it seems to overlook or deny the carrying out of justice. That the lazy should share the fruits of the industrious, that heinous crimes against innocent victims should go unchallenged: these are concepts seemingly endorsed by Christianity that the above-mentioned characters cannot accept, because they do not satisfy the characters' need for an essential order and justice in life. Thus these characters, each in his own way, reject that portion of their faith that is in dissonance with this need, and in so doing depart from faith in varying degrees. And in the cases of Elias Pallisher, Gordon Sweet, and Father Ryan, this rejection and departure from faith are signified by the actions that they take.

Interestingly, in "352 Pennywell," a story from O'Flaherty's first story collection, we again find a biblical reference that will recur in his novel - and one that relates to Pallisher's, Sweet's, and Ryan's actions in their pursuit of the justice they feel to be scripturally denied. In O'Flaherty's story, a carpet-fitter out canvassing for a political candidate, who dreams of achieving the glamour and power of a politician's

life himself some day, is given a card by one of the "potential voters" he is canvassing on which is printed the biblical quotation "Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands" - here the implication being that the "labour" to which he is most suited is not that of a politician but that of a carpet-fitter, his being "A carpet-fitter's hands" (12).

However, O'Flaherty uses this same quotation in Priest of God at a critical point during which Father Ryan is determining whether to act for justice' sake or to remain, more safely, the "palliator" which is all that his church and his parish want him to be. As he ponders on the course he should take, he recalls the same biblical mandate: "Thou shalt live by the labour of thine hands," remembering

It was a verse the one good teacher he'd had in his life ... used to quote a lot. "Yes there's prayer, yes there's grace, yes there's the people of God," he'd say, "but keep this in mind, too." (191)

And just like Gordom Sweet, who similarly decided that "Prayer and forgiveness were all very well, but perhaps could be carried too far in certain circumstances," Ryan resolves to act, to pursue justice even though both church and society have insisted that this is not his role.

Sickened by the role of religiously-endorsed "palliator" he had played in the child abuse case that had resulted in the child's murder - "palliator" being his "function, as the bishop said," in a "world ... rotten with filth and exploitation, children ... being screwed left and right, even by the priests" - Ryan

decides that in the case of Jimmy Snow's death he will indeed "intervene" in pursuit of justice, rather than merely palliate and be, as Gordon Sweet accused his church of being, of no "real practical help" to the people around him (191). So despite the quality of Ryan's hands - "those of a flawed, weak, stupid, bewildered dunderhead," as he characterizes them (191) - he decides, unlike the carpet-fitter, who will resign himself to the limitations indicated by his hands, to "live by their labour" and transcend the station church and society have decreed for him, proceeding to unravel and ultimately reveal the "mystery" of Jimmy's death, thereby delivering a murderer to the law and seeing that justice, for once, was done. Ryan, like Sweet and Pallisher before him, acts to see justice restored - using one biblical injunction in disobedience of another, flying in the face of the laws of his faith because of what Janes termed that "fundamentally human ... pre-Christian imperative of man's nature." But in so doing, Ryan found that the church no longer symbolized his notion of righteousness, and so he left it. Whereas Pallisher's defiance was ultimately absorbed by his church, so that he remained an adherent, and Sweet's defiance, more modernistically, left him in a kind of limbo vis-à-vis his faith, Ryan, in whom dogma and conscience suffered the most tortured battle, achieved both a moral victory and a total severance from his faith, when it did not uphold the justice he felt it was both humanly necessary and possible to achieve.

Hence, the departure from faith when it does not align

with the human need for justice can be added to the reasons for faith's decline in modern Newfoundland fiction. Further, in a departure from considering the effects of philosophical problems inherent in the characters and their religious beliefs to a consideration of the external, societal pressures shown to be imposed upon these characters, we see, too, that a number of socioeconomic and historical phenomena, explored at some length by Janes and his characters in Requiem for a Faith and mentioned in brief by Johnston in The Story of Bobby O'Malley and by O'Flaherty in Priest of God, are also fictionally offered as reasons for faith's decline in modern Newfoundland society. For as Janes puts it in Part I of Requiem for a Faith, the period "from the 1940s to the 1960s was for all Newfoundlanders a journey out of innocence into brute experience, through social changes far greater than the mere time lapse might have accounted for"(83). Thus, the ways in which these "social changes" are fictionally shown to contribute to the decline of faith in modern Newfoundland will be our next subject for consideration.

In Part II of Requiem for a Faith, the pre-Confederation influence of World War II upon Newfoundland is considered both by several characters and the narrator to have brought about a significant change in both the lifestyle and the religious attitudes of Newfoundlanders. Wes and Aubrey, second-generation Coffin brothers, in reflecting upon the changes occurring in St. Michael's at this time, agree that there is a lessening of "spirit" and of "reverence" on the part of young churchgoers, which they

attribute to "the upheaval of war" (24). The narrator soon goes on to explain this "upheaval" by suggesting that the "penetration" of the "foreign though friendly navies during World War 2" meant that "the [Newfoundland] people's isolation if not yet their insularity was becoming a thing of the past," so that "The old island was never to be the same again" (32). Newfoundland "servicemen" and "servicewomen" returning from the war overseas "seemed no longer content to follow or even tolerate the old Newfoundland way of life" - strict religious adherence most certainly being one aspect of that "way of life" - and many of them, in their discontent, are said to have left the outports for St. John's or else for "Canada or the United States," thus tearing apart the tightly-knit fabric of their communities. And, the narrator adds, "As for the St. Mike's girls, some of them had married Canadians or 'got their American'" and had followed their husbands away from the outport; if these girls did return, they, like their peers who had been overseas, were "permanently discontented with the limits and the limitations of their native settlement" (33). Such upheaval and discontent translate, among other things, into a decline in church adherence and the religious faith that went with the "old way of life."

Interestingly, in The Rock Observed, O'Flaherty makes strikingly similar non-fictional observations on the impact of World War II upon Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders, suggesting, as does Janes, that this war permanently penetrated the isolation of the island, making "visible, and to some extent accessible, the

North American way of life, with all its extravagance, speed, confidence, and vulgarity" - with North American media "blasting" into the "airwaves" and households of what had once been remote and quiet communities (146). Here O'Flaherty cites a passage from Margaret Duley's non-fictional wartime reflections, where among other things she wrote that as a result of the war, "Parents felt the loosening of all authority and the lowering of every moral standard," with their daughters yearning for the supposed romance and freedom to be found in St. John's (O'Flaherty, 147).

We have already seen this phenomenon at work in the case of second-generation Charity Coffin, whose longings to escape to the "bigger" world, like her subscription to previously unheard of American sex magazines, were in good part products of the infiltration of North American ideas and values, an infiltration prompted by World War II but then shown in Requiem for a Faith II to be escalated by the continued and increased influence of North American media upon post-war and post-Confederation Newfoundland. And just as we have seen Charity's exposure to and interest in these outside ideas bring her, for a time at least, into conflict with the religious adherence of her mother (Part I, p.21), so, Janes shows us, the subsequent generations' exposure to North American trends and values, through an increasingly influential and technologically-sophisticated media, put them at variance with the religious observances of their parents' and grandparents' generations.

Hence, in Requiem for a Faith North American media, as

well as the Second World War, played a strong role in bringing about a decline in the religious faith of Newfoundlanders. In addressing the plight of St. Michael's in the era of the fourth-generation "renegades" in part II of this novel, Janes writes of the evils of the 1970s "ME-generation," made manifest in communities like St. Michael's by an ever-more-efficient media (72), and, in particular, by Cable T.V., with its rampant spreading of U.S. values, which resulted in

less social mingling, a greater sophistication among the people with regard to the outside world, and a further falling off in attendance at the older, orthodox churches - by the youth of the town especially. (73)

And if the war and the media played their parts in leading the Newfoundlanders of Requiem for a Faith away from religious adherence, so, too, did the increased mobility of the younger generations, eager and able to taste the fruits of North American cities, but unable, in returning home, to mend the bridge this experiential leap had somehow broken. Thus in Part I we see second-generation Wes Coffin, returned to St. Michael's from a sojourn in Toronto, content enough to stay in his old community, but "indifferent to Church-going" now, his "time in Toronto" causing him to be "surprised by the big deal still made of religion here at home, when in outside, larger places it was, as far as Wes had been able to see, hardly important in the lives of the majority at all"(50). This increased mobility functioned similarly at the local level, as well; with "many local people ... getting cars," the sense of intact communities, prized both by Janes and the

"progenital" generation, was rapidly being eroded. As Janes puts it,

Restless, mobile people were everywhere, young and new faces that were forever coming or going and seemed disinclined to stop long enough to chat in a civil way or settle any point that may have come up in conversation.
(Part I, p.32)

People "disinclined to stop long" were obviously both "disinclined" to "stop" for church attendance and to "stop" to discuss this "point" with their elders. Interestingly, the issue of the increased mobility caused by car ownership as a contributing factor in the breakdown of tightly-knit, church-oriented communities is briefly addressed, as well, in O'Flaherty's Priest of God, when Father Ryan's "men's executive" comments on the priest's tendency to travel far and wide in his car, adding "God be with the days when the parish priest stayed where he was put. What's happening to us, I wonder?" (82) For although, as we have seen, genuine faith among Long Cove parishioners had eroded prior to Father Ryan's arrival in the community, the fact that the priest could no longer be counted upon to "stay put," available to his parishioners, was a further sign to those endeavouring to preserve the church as an institution that the old faith, like the old ways, was vanishing.

In Janes' exploration of the socioeconomic factors that have led to such a decline in faith in Newfoundland that he feels a "requiem" for it is appropriate, he also points to Newfoundland's post-Confederation adaptation to the Canadian system as a cause for religious deterioration. Janes suggests that this system, which brought such things as welfare and unemployment insurance to

Newfoundland, eroded people's work ethic here, inspiring in them a lifestyle of living on credit, "binging" and "boozing" - a lifestyle wherein neither time nor interest was left for going to church on Sunday, that being a good time to sleep off the weekend's hangover (Part I, pp.62-63). For second-generation Aubrey Coffin this signalled a "drastic change" from the better, older days when "most people in the town would get up at a decent hour and then go off to Church like good Christian souls before returning home to their festive Sunday dinner and a well-earned rest" (Part I, p.63).

A simultaneous cause for the breakdown of religion in St. Michael's, suggests the narrator, is the boredom imported to Newfoundland along with other elements of the Canadian system - a boredom provoked in second-generation Mag Slaney Coffin by the new phenomenon of wage labour, which left Newfoundland women who would once have been occupied with aspects of farming and fishing with unsettling, unaccustomed time on their hands which translated into familial dissonance (Part I, p.33). Ironically, when Mag's fourth-generation, "renegade" grandson Jack's total intolerance and abuse of religious practice are analyzed, neither a "religious overdose" nor "religious abuse" in his childhood is offered as cause for the "criminal deeds that were to be done as a result of [his] anti-religion" (Part II, p.76). Jack, it seems, is similarly afflicted with "boredom." His expresses itself far more perniciously than his grandmother's, and stems from the Canadian phenomenon of unemployment insurance rather than from the "freedom" from toil which afflicted Mag; but it is boredom resulting from an imported

system and imported values, just the same.

A further cause for Newfoundland's decline in faith, suggested here by Mag Slaney Coffin and echoed by Johnston's protagonist in The Story of Bobby O'Malley is the "new spirit" in religion (Part I, p.66) that Mag sees translating into a new leniency, where adherence to Roman Catholic doctrine is concerned. We have already seen the effect of this "spirit" on Mag's parish priest, Father Tobin; Mag herself, though, seems both baffled and defeated by the laxity with which her old church treats the new and uninspired generation. When she approaches the priest because both of her children have lost interest in going to church, Father Tobin, far from insisting on their attendance with whatever threats or bribes he deemed necessary, as might once have been the case, simply reasons to Mag that "Not every person was suited to being a Catholic" (Part I, p.65), a diagnosis which makes faithlessness an easy next step for her children. This dogma-less open-endedness is echoed in Bobby's reflections on the same "time of change" in the Roman Catholic Church, in The Story of Bobby O'Malley, where "equivocation" and "doctrinal fuzziness" made it "the worst time to be a Catholic, if what one wanted was to stay a Catholic." For in an era where change was so expected and permissible, reasons Bobby, "if one thing was changed, why should not everything be changed?" (30) Hence, historic change in the Roman Catholic Church as an institution is shown in this fiction to join other forms of historic social change as external forces that lead to the decline in faith of Newfoundlanders.

In a complementary role, the entrance into St. Michael's of a new, evangelical minister - the already described Everett B. Shepherd - "vociferously Evangelical and hard-shell Baptist," who saw it as his "Mission" to "claim Newfoundland for Christ," American-style (Part I, p.74), signals a further fragmentation of the long-time unity of belief and religious practice in the community. The founding faiths of St. Michael's, already eroding because of the external influences just described (as well as because of problems inherent in those faiths, as previously described) are here shown by Janes to be further dissipated by the arrival of a loud, materialistic, and mainland-oriented competitor, a new "faith" which attracts to its folds St. Michael's youth who thereby depart from the ways of their families.

Yet Janes points to still another external influence that results in a decline in faith for certain characters in St. Michael's, with implications for the world at large. It is here that it once again becomes difficult to determine Janes' personal position vis-à-vis the worth of the religion and lifestyle he shows to be declining. For it is obvious, in his treatment of the intrusion of North American attitudes into St. Michael's, that he finds the effects of this intrusion to be negative, and that to this extent he values the old outport life - and the religion he suggests has helped to keep it intact - far more than the largely North American and faithless lifestyle he describes as replacing it. But in discussing this final external influence on outport faith - the influence of education - it seems, as it earlier seemed

in his description of the way Charity Coffin was treated in the name of religion, that Janes is himself most willing to discard the religion and lifestyle that had once prevailed in St. Michael's, in preparation for something else that will take its place (a "something" which will be addressed in our final chapter).

A case in point is his description, in Part I, of the influence of university education and university life upon third-generation Linda Coffin. Linda's father, Aubrey, is gravely concerned over the radically untraditional attitudes Linda has picked up at Memorial University in St. John's, blaming them principally upon "all those foreign professors who had been brought in and put on the staff at Memorial, people of so-called liberal opinions who knew nothing about Newfoundland and the real needs of its population" (76). His fear is of

Strangers with alien thoughts that would eventually threaten the young people with an undermining of their way of life or at least of the life their forefathers had built up for them as a heritage. Hardly Christian thoughts or ideas, either, and in some cases obviously bordering on the subversive. There seemed to be so much political and social emphasis on what Linda was being taught, so little of the religious and moral side coming into play. (76)

Alluding on the same page to the influence of these "strangers with alien thoughts" and to the influence of Janes' own novel, House of Hate, as elements of education undermining Linda's morality and religious adherence, suggests to the reader that the author does not view the effects of liberal education as negatively as does Linda's father.

Linda, in fact, turns her back upon the religion of her forefathers, and her educational experiences at the university are indeed a contributing factor to this decline of faith. In a similar vein, her cousin Garth, after a deep perusal of "philosophy, psychology ... [and] theology," finds that he must turn from religion, announcing to his mother, as a result of his self-directed education, "I don't think I'll be going to church any more" (Part I, p.78).

Indeed, in Part II of the novel, the ex-minister Walter Rose, in one of his key philosophical discussions with Garth, affirms that "education [has] killed Christianity" in the Western world as a whole, and that education, wherever it is found, will lead to "skepticism," after which "will come puzzled unbelief, then indifference to religion" (80). As Rose further explains,

the main cause of Christianity's decline ... is the carry-over of a few key ideas from the nineteenth century, and its fall can be traced back, ultimately, to the spread of these ideas. I mean the discoveries in biology, anthropology, physics and astronomy, political and economic thought, psychology, psychiatry and a few more jaw breakers or mind breakers. A tremendous assault on Bible-based dogma.
(81)

The ex-minister sums this up by calling Darwin the "chief 'villain,' especially for creationists like Pastor Everett Shepherd, because it's in Darwin that you get the first open and solid and fundamentally evidence-based attack on the Bible story, the foundation of Christianity." Thus, explains Rose,

after [Darwin] the assault became so constant and fierce that within a century the whole edifice [of Christianity] was shaking. The

reason why Ev Shepherd bawls so frantically about the truth of the Bible is that he feels the reverberations of this attack, even though he's ignorant of the books that contain it.(81)

The picture painted here, then, is of Christian faith as a crumbling structure, with its remaining adherents struggling in vain to preserve what rational thought has proven to be a fiction. And although Janes has used one of his characters to offer this explanation, the reasoning seems to be his own: his inclusion of his own novel as one of the catalysts used in reeducating the young suggesting his personal endorsement of this new and rational attitude. As we shall soon see, neither Janes nor his character endorses nihilism as the appropriate "aftermath to faith"; they recognize only that humanity must believe in something. But that "something" will not be Christianity; and as Rose puts it, as a result of the revelations brought about by education, all that can remain of Christian faith for Newfoundland is the "learning and culture and scraps of civilization" the churches brought here and "fought ... to maintain" as well as the beloved "hymns and gospel songs"(80). Thus, Janes' "requiem" for an old way of life and the religion that went with it, which so often in the novel seems to be a eulogy for that life and faith, as well as an indictment against the forces that have brought about their decline, is at the same time a welcoming heralding of a new age of enlightenment, when the Charity Coffins will not have to be kitchen drudges and the Ev Shepherds' religious fictions will be overturned. This makes of Janes' "song for the departed" an ambiguous blend of mourning and

celebration.

Education, the last of the socioeconomic reasons offered for the decline of faith in Newfoundland by Requiem for a Faith, seems to be the only positive one. The others, such as the influence of World War II, with its concomitant infiltration of North American attitudes and mobility, the changes brought about by joining the Canadian system, and the "new spirit" in religion are shown as leading to a decline in the quality of a way of life as well as to a decline in faith. But all of this leads us to the final reason offered by modern Newfoundland fiction for a decline of Newfoundlanders' faith, a reason we have encountered already from the lips of one of O'Flaherty's characters. This reason is simply that religious faith is incongruous with the modern era in which we live, an era governed by rational thought that has no time for the "old fictions." Janes, O'Flaherty, and Bowdring address this "reason" in their fiction and so, in concluding this chapter, we will consider, in turn, each of their treatments of this theme.

In Requiem for a Faith II Janes writes that Garth, the third-generation, reclusive thinker "who in the Age of Faith would have made such a good monk, found in the Age of Technology nothing that spoke to his heart or answered to the inmost needs of his spirit"(20), a condition anticipating that of Hugh Myers in his boyhood in The Roncesvalles Pass. Janes is here suggesting that contemporary times are not inherently conducive to religious adherence, this being an age not of "faith" but of "technology." This theme is reiterated in the novel by Walter Rose who, having

lost his faith, seeks through reading learned works to find rational arguments for the truth of faith (63), but finds himself unable to accept the miraculous and supernatural element in Christian belief. As Rose puts it,

the mind has to slip a cog before accepting that ["that" being belief that Jesus is the son of God] and attaching any real meaning to it. The climate of my mind, and the climate of our times [emphasis mine], in a religious sense, is not receptive to such a claim. (64)

A few pages later Rose repeats this claim, intimating that the "changeover" from "faith" to "skepticism" is a natural product of "the climate of our time"(79), a claim repeated several times in the fiction of O'Flaherty.

As previously mentioned, in the story "A friend to man" from O'Flaherty's first short story collection, son Theo, a university professor, asserts at a family gathering that modern-day marriage has nothing to do with "religious conviction about the sacraments" because, just as Walter Rose would have put it, "This is too secular and cynical an age for the old fictions"(23). And current times are similarly referred to by merchant Cyril Squires in Priest of God, when he tells Father Ryan, as previously quoted, that Ryan's morality and spiritual beliefs are no longer required by his parishioners. When Ryan, himself unsure, tries to protest this assertion, pleading "There are values, Cyril," the merchant responds crassly

Certainly there are. My value, your value, Tom's value, Dick's value, Harry's value. Values everywhere. Get the point? A new age, padre. Join it. (179)

The defence of faith by so unconvincing a character as Bishop English only further serves to suggest that the church's attempts at self-preservation do not hold up in an age of rational thought. For when the bishop, in a Long Cove church service, offers as his ultimate proof of the verity of Christian faith the quotation from St. Paul, "If Christ be not risen, our faith is in vain"(184), while the narrative does not go on to disclose whether or not the congregation finds this "proof" convincing, the author is certainly revealing to the reader what can only be classified as an argument that will not hold up to the scrutiny of this, our "new age" of reason.

Finally, then, we come to Bowdring's protagonist Hugh Myers in The Roncesvalles Pass who, reminiscing in a dream on his formative years on Bell Island, remembers the Bible and the "Home Medical Guide" as being "the only books [he] can remember ever seeing in the house." Hugh goes on to comment that these were "comprehensive maintenance manuals for the life of the body and the soul, offering advice on all physical and spiritual ailments," but that "The mind was left to forage for itself"(56). This suggests that for this narrator and, by extrapolation, his whole generation, religious teachings were not adequate food for the hungry mind. In noting that Hugh has left behind both his Newfoundland home and its traditional mindset, we can deduce that for Hugh, like Garth Coffin, the modern, rational age in which he has grown up has left him hungry for things the Bible cannot offer him, so that "the climate of our time," as O'Flaherty puts it, is itself a reason for

the decline of faith in Newfoundland, as construed by its contemporary fiction.

Hence, in analyzing religious themes in fiction addressing pre- and post-Confederation Newfoundland we find that, for the most part, the early themes are echoed and expanded upon in the later works. Religion, while not construed in fiction dealing with modern-day Newfoundland as resembling and being psychically fashioned from the harshness of place, as was the case in works such as Duncan's and Duley's, continues, in fiction addressing the modern era, to be depicted as an often-useful antidote to that remembered harshness. Thus, even in the fiction that is most condemning of religious practice, such as O'Flaherty's and Johnston's, and to some extent Porter's, or that is most ambivalent in its treatment of the effects of religious faith, such as Janes', the reader senses a certain nostalgia for the days when faith was an inherent part of Newfoundland life. Religion, we are shown, could keep families together and ease heavy burdens, while providing a much needed respite from the toil of daily life. It also held out hope to the poor, the struggling, and the suffering that there was something to look forward to in the afterlife, a hope that alleviated the burden of some characters' earthly trials. Too, it provided a focal point, a light by which to steer, for characters who might otherwise have lost their way. In all these ways, then, religious adherence in remembered and modern day Newfoundland is treated favourably, as it was at least in part by authors who described its qualities in pre-Confederation

Newfoundland.

On the other hand, just as in fiction addressing the early part of the century, the fiction focussed on post-Confederation Newfoundland exudes the sense that any positive attributes of religious adherence are far outweighed by negative ones. Reliance on faith is shown to discourage attempts at personal amelioration. Religious leaders, although sometimes shown to be themselves the pitiable victims of societal pressures and institutionalized hypocrisy, are revealed as being motivated more by material than by spiritual promptings in their dealings with their congregations. Clerical and lay characters alike are shown, like their fictional predecessors, to practise religious form without regard for religious meaning, so that the spiritual injunction to love one's neighbour is forgotten in the pursuit of power and in the perpetuation of interdenominational biases.

Worse still, this modern-day fiction reveals a striking authorial preoccupation with the damage done to the individual as a result of adherence to religious dogma, damage inflicted through a spirit-breaking harshness of religious creed. This harshness manifests itself, variously, as physical and mental abuse of the ecclesiastically weak by the ecclesiastically powerful, as a divisive factor between man and woman, and as a denigration of all earthly joys that leads susceptible characters to deny themselves and others the human love, both emotional and sexual, without which life becomes unbearable. We see, particularly in the irony of Johnston's works and in the pathos of O'Flaherty's, that much human

destruction has been wrought in the name of religion, whether religion itself is to blame or rather the ways in which its creed is humanly interpreted.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise to see in the fiction representing modern Newfoundland that religious adherence is in a state of decline more pervasive than in fiction representing pre-Confederation Newfoundland, affecting entire generations where once it seemed to affect only the thinking few. Indeed, this theme of religious decline surfaces repeatedly as an endemic feature of the modern era; and thus, the reasons for the decline undergo far more extensive authorial scrutiny than did religious decline depicted in fiction dealing with early twentieth century Newfoundland. These reasons range from characters' recognition of the negative attributes of religious adherence to the external, socioeconomic factors brought on by Newfoundland's involvement in the Second World War, its confederation with Canada, and its consequent reception of a steady stream of alien, mainland attitudes and values.

What remains to be examined is the psychic and social condition of Newfoundland in this era of declined faith, as depicted in contemporary Newfoundland fiction. We must consider what remains of religious adherence in this "aftermath of faith," while examining whether "belief" of some sort is still necessary to Newfoundland's modern fictional characters, as it was to their predecessors, or whether the modern Newfoundland character has managed to delete from his or her psyche the necessity to believe

in anything beyond the self. We must consider, as well, the fictionally-depicted effect of faithlessness on modern Newfoundland society (to the extent that Newfoundland is indeed shown to be "faithless"). Finally we will examine those alternatives to Christian faith that are offered in some of the fiction as modern-day "replacements," to see whether they can adequately fill what Walter Rose refers to as the "vacuum" in which humanity is left in the "aftermath of faith."

CHAPTER VI: THE AFTERMATH OF FAITH

1. THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF BELIEF IN FICTION ADDRESSING POST-CONFEDERATION NEWFOUNDLAND

It is obvious, in the perusal of fiction addressing late twentieth century Newfoundland just completed, that despite the depiction of the decline of religious faith in key characters and even, in some works, in entire generations, the observance of formal religious practice is not shown to have died out completely in contemporary society. What is notable, however, is that most of the characters who are shown as adhering to their faith are also shown to be, in a sense, part of a dying breed of people. Further, wherever entire congregations are shown to endure, intact, they are considered by narrator or protagonist to be both misled and anachronistic, the depiction of their religious adherence thus being suffused with an element of the absurd.

Hence, for Garth's mother, third-generation Charity Coffin in Requiem for a Faith II, her "faith was still the rock of ages for her and never would be susceptible to change by any rational argument" (66). But these are the musings of Walter Rose, a minister who has left his church because to him it is no longer "rational"; and we sense in the conclusion of his musings on Charity ("Better to leave her mind in peace") that she is an anachronism, and that hers is a form of faith that cannot and will not go on functioning in the modern world. It is therefore merely an act of common sense and kindness on the part of the "awakened" that they do not torment her dwindling days by attempting to awaken her.

The only other "faith" that continues to prevail more or less intact in the latter day generations represented in Part II of the novel is the evangelicalism of Ev Shepherd. However, the reader has been made acutely aware of the shaky and questionable foundations of Shepherd's evangelicism, and has also, by the novel's end, been shown through the actions of Kim Sweet and her father the ease with which members of at least two generations can depart from such a faith when the spirit of the times or the limitations inherent in that faith render it unfulfilling for them.

Similarly, we have seen in Horwood's Remembering Summer that amidst the revolutionary attitudes and counter-culture lifestyles that converge, because of Eli's cabin, on Beachy Cove, an enclave of old-style outport religious adherence prevails there as well, with "Sunday labour" still "forbidden" and "holy picture[s] on a wall" still "sacrosanct"(45). But we also see through the accompanying, previously-quoted authorial observations that this "religion" is rotting from within, and that the youth of the community are increasingly drawn away from the "faith of their fathers" by the alternative ways of living and systems of belief to which they are being exposed.

Obviously too, formal religion is depicted as continuing to exist in Johnston's three novels, but here too we sense, through the absurdity with which religious practice is described, as well as through the ultimate actions taken by the novels' protagonists in the case of The Story of Bobby O'Malley and The Divine Ryans, that the religion being depicted is in troubled waters, its hold on

the young loosening, its practitioners becoming increasingly confused in an era of "doctrinal fuzziness." Agnes, in The Story of Bobby O'Malley, certainly remains a staunch believer throughout the novel, along with the other members of her women's group - the satirically named "S.S." And an old-style priest has survived intact through Bobby's adolescence - one who "asked nothing of his congregation but absolute subservience, to him and, where those few were concerned who recognized the distinction, to God"(79). But Ted O'Malley's undermining of Catholic dogma and his eventual "escape" through suicide, like Bobby's ultimate departure both from the priestly path and from Newfoundland, signal a change in the status of religion. These characters' actions suggest that the Agnes O'Malleys who play "warring rosaries" with the Aunt Dolas, like the old priest who expects subservience and takes smacks at his altar boys with impunity, are becoming anachronisms suitable for parody in an era that has made such parody permissible. In The Time of Their Lives, the local priest can still control "Dad" (74), but "Dad" represents a dead or dying era in Newfoundland history. His children and grandchildren are shown as lapsing from dogmatic adherence; again, the church is shown as losing its hold. Even in The Divine Ryans where, because we are focussed on a parodically ultra-Catholic family, Catholicism seems at its most intact, we see through the underminings of Uncle Reginald and the final "escape" of Draper Doyle, his mother, and his sister, that this little Catholic world upon which we have been focussing is an archaic one, its absurdity becoming its own undoing. There will not, despite

the family's wishes and machinations, be a succeeding generation of "Ryans" to uphold the family's name and staunch Roman Catholic traditions.

In O'Flaherty's first collection of short stories, an element of religious influence still exists both in secular institutions and at the family level in contemporary Newfoundland society; religion, as we have seen, still "matters" in contemporary politics (11), there still being "priestly influence over voters in the outports"(34), while there remain married couples who are "always first to the rails on Sunday morning"(23). However, once again we see that this religion is being challenged, and that it too is in some sense rotting from within: the couple who are always "first to the rails" must contend with the challenge of non-believing family members while they sit at table playing cards, in a society where until a generation or so ago such a division of attitudes would not have threatened family harmony. And in his novel Priest of God, O'Flaherty reveals that while religion does indeed still have a place and a role in Newfoundland society, such that it can continue to be influential in matters of politics, spiritually it has been reduced to the level of "voodoo stuff"(179), its adherents acting more out of habit and tradition than out of any sense of spiritual conviction.

It is when we reach Bowdring's novel The Roncesvalles Pass, though, that we encounter the most acute, absurdist images of the anachronistic nature of religious adherence in modern society. In the big mainland city in which native Newfoundlander Hugh Myers

resides and makes his reflections on life, we are shown an old Italian woman on a bus, who "clutched a black missal with a gold cross on the cover. Over her head, a telephone ad said 'Talk is cheap. Even cheaper on Sundays'" (55). With such double entendres, Bowdring underlines both the alienation and the absurdity resulting when a faith which has become archaic is viewed with the realities of the modern day as a backdrop. Similarly, we see the belief that Hugh's landlady continues to evince in the healing powers of St. Anne-de-Beaupré (also featured, and with a similar absurdism, in Johnston's The Time of Their Lives) to which she goes for an "annual pilgrimage" (73). But this belief is superimposed with absurdity through the images with which it is described: "Whatever the reason, Mrs. Withers believed in miracles the way some people believed in the Grand Lotto prize ... she talked about the Shrine with ... fire in her eyes" equal to that of a race track addict (74). We are left with the picture of this old woman descending an escalator in a subway station, looking "from behind like some mournful madonna cast in stone, surveying the cold pews in some empty, forgotten church" (74) - an image suggesting the very small place left for religious observance in this vast, fast-paced, and alienating city and, by extrapolation, in our contemporary world.

This image is quickly followed by Hugh's encounter with a door-to-door religious proselytizer who speaks of the "end of the world" with the same zeal as John McKim of Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, and who reminds Hugh that at this point in his life he is not among the saved (76-77). Bowdring renders this scene absurd too, though,

in sharing with the reader, as the missionary delivers his speech, the messages and illustrations in the missionary's magazine upon which Hugh is focussing instead of listening to the "sermon" (headlines like "Can You Love Your Neighbour and Smoke?") and by observing that "He [the missionary] seemed to be saying the same things over and over"(77). The psychic distance between the two men is evident when Hugh refers to "the cataclysmic benediction that this man's god was planning for us." It is clear that "this man's god" is not his own, if indeed he has any. The absurdism with which Bowdring portrays this religious proselytizing culminates in the sudden, perhaps "divine" intervention of the neighbour's lawnmowing and simultaneous singing, which signal the end of the "colporteur's" efforts with Hugh. The reader is left with the image of the missionary trying to enter this neighbour's garden, failing to find an entrance, and thus standing "look[ing] for all the world like a man barred from the Kingdom of Heaven," while listening to the "Ode to Joy" being sung from within (78) - an image that renders the missionary, like the old Italian woman and Hugh's landlady, somehow both pathetic and absurd, and which suggests the level at which religious faith survives in the present day.

However, it must also be said that in some of Newfoundland's contemporary fiction the degree to which religious belief continues to exist is more ambiguously presented than has just been suggested. In a work that has not yet been mentioned in this thesis, Gordon Rodgers' novella, The Phoenix (1985) - which is

essentially the coming-of-age story of a young boy living in Gander, who confronts in the space of one day death, dawning sexuality, and the challenge of being an individual rather than a sheep following the flock - the town's church is mentioned at morning and evening (the novella's beginning and ending). And this church, which is somehow central psychically as well as physically to the town, becomes an ambiguous symbol. The cross atop it "blazed above everything with a steady intensity," writes Rodgers (83), seeming to indicate a similar steady intensity in the religious belief of the townspeople, which is complemented by the eventual philosophical realization of the young protagonist, soon to be discussed. Yet the cross has been constructed of "warplane metal" (83) which, although very appropriate to the livelihood of the town, is paradoxical material from which to fashion the ultimate symbol of Christianity, evoking, whether authorially-intended or not, the image of Christianity-gone-wrong as Hugh of The Roncesvalles Pass and Walter Rose of Requiem for a Faith envisioned it: man displaying the stuff of war as being somehow linked with, or perhaps even sanctioned by, Christianity. Somehow, the cross on a church steeple built from warplane metal carries with it very different connotations than the "spires of little churches on village rooftops" of Devine's rhetoric (see The Rock Observed, p.150) or the church spires used for bearings in O'Flaherty's short story. Hence, in Rodgers' novella, which seems to suggest that religion continues to be upheld in contemporary Newfoundland society, there is an inherent ambiguity suggestive of

a negative element in that continued faith. Conversely, in Porter's fiction, which seems by in large to suggest that religion in contemporary Newfoundland is in a state of decline, there is an ambiguity suggestive of a continued positive attribute of religious faith at work in her characters, linked to an important theme that emerged in Part I of this thesis - the necessity of belief.

In Porter's january, february, june or july, for example, the second husband of protagonist Heather's grandmother is a devout Salvationist and decidedly a member of an old and fading generation. He believes that "Prayer can work miracles ... if you got the faith," referring to his hopes for his cancer-ridden wife. And while both young Heather and her sister "didn't believe prayer would do much good," Heather found herself permitting a bit of room for the possibility, with the mental musing, "Anyway, you couldn't be too sure"(99). In other words, despite the unreligious climate in which Heather has been raised, where prayer and church attendance are things of the past, Heather is unwilling to "write off" completely the possible existence of a positive, spiritual element in life - a tendency on her part which we will soon encounter again.

Similarly, in the story "One Saturday" from Porter's short story collection, Kathleen, a middle-aged woman who is plagued with feelings of guilt over the abortion she had six years previously and over the rage she harbours against the tiresome old mother-in-law she feels duty-driven to care for, while evincing in full the theme of religion-in-decline, demonstrates as well an

unselfconscious, spontaneous spiritual dimension to her psyche, in both a negative and a positive way. For Kathleen on the one hand displays what appears to be a total departure from doctrinal belief. Consider her hopeless, modernistic view on life:

What's it all about? she asked herself, staring through the window at the snow. We're born, we grow up, we have children, we worry about them, they grow up, we worry about our parents, they die, we grow old, our children worry about us, we die. How senseless it all is. (119)

This feeling of the "senselessness" of life, together with her tendency to laugh at herself when she refers to Jesus in times of relief (pp.115 and 121), suggests that she is not a practising Christian. However, we also see in her a negative carry-over from the faith in which she had been raised - a carry-over she seems unable to rid herself of - in her sense that having to care for her tiresome mother-in-law is her "punishment" for the abortion she had (pp.114 and 116). She acknowledges that "She had never been a Roman Catholic but the stern Protestantism that was her background could be even harder to live with at times, the way it left everything up to your conscience"(116).

Yet this residual religious negativity is counterbalanced, in a way, by an innate and spontaneous turning to and thanking of "Jesus" during moments of fear and of subsequent relief, as when one of her sons returns home when she has been worrying about him. She may laugh at this tendency, but it seems all the same to spring from something too deep within her to control. This suggests that the laugh, rather than the innate

sense of spiritual gratitude, is the tendency she has adopted out of habit (115). At the story's conclusion, with everything for the moment "right" within her world, she again "thanks" Jesus; and while Kathleen "giggles" at herself for doing so, Porter chooses as the story's final line an enigmatic reference to the Bible: "And, for once taking no thought for tomorrow, [Kathleen] leaned back against the cushions, an unlikely lily of the field"(121). This "lily," then, as "unlikely" as she may seem in her departure from religious adherence and in her tendency to worry and to lament the "senselessness" of life, cannot suppress in herself a sense of belief in a spiritual goodness, at times when her fears are allayed or her tormented world is momentarily balanced for her, again, so that she can sink into a trusting sleep. She, like the Biblical lilies, at this moment has released herself into a sense of trust that brings her tranquility, suggesting that despite herself, at one level of her psyche she continues to harbour a sense of spiritual awareness and belief. Whether this positive religious tendency has been ingrained in her through indoctrination, as has her Protestant sense of guilt, or whether it stems from something more deep than the claws of indoctrination can have reached, we see that it is brought to life within her at crucial moments. Somehow, she needs and ultimately abides by this sense of belief.

Thus, it seems that the ambiguity about religion's place in modern life, to the degree that it is evident in contemporary Newfoundland fiction, derives from a need for belief that persists in the human psyche despite the negative ramifications of religious

observance. The cross of Rodgers' church steeple has been constructed from the materials of war, and yet Rodgers demonstrates in his novella his characters' need to have it there as a symbol, "blazing" with "intensity." The female characters in Porter's fiction, by contrast, appear at first glance to have outgrown the need for religious symbols and adherence - and yet they ultimately reveal a deep if seldom-seen spiritual propensity in their lives. And as we shall see in the coming pages, this need for a spiritual dimension in life is manifested in the very same works that reveal all the negative attributes of religious adherence, whose effects have comprised the bulk of this study. Hence, it is time to address the necessity of belief depicted in the fiction addressing modern Newfoundland society. And simultaneously, we will consider what are fictionally offered as the implications for humanity of a faithless world.

2. THE NECESSITY OF BELIEF

In Requiem for a Faith II we see in the earnest and introspective Garth Coffin the same pain accompanying the loss of belief and the same longing to find something in which to go on believing that surfaced in Duncan's writing and in characters Mageila Michelet and Eli Pallisher in Part I of this thesis. In describing to Walter Rose how he came to lose his faith, Garth speaks of his consequent feeling of "deprivation," adding that "Once real doubt was lodged in my mind, I felt the world crumbling away from me, and myself sliding down into a void. It was torture

for me"(67). Garth goes on to speak of "that yawning emptiness inside" which he felt when contemplating the material things attainable in the world (67), and explains that in order to survive that unbearable mental stance, he had had to try to achieve "a rationale of unfaith ... a way to justify if not to explain life, assuming that God was never there [because he] just could not believe or accept that the world was ... abandoned to chance, cruelty and chaos"(68). In this moral and spiritual dilemma, Garth Coffin hearkens right back to Norman Duncan, who revealed through both his prologues and epilogues that he did not want to accept this "chance, cruelty and chaos" either - nor did his characters - although they, unlike Duncan and Garth Coffin, were content to embrace and uphold, unquestioned, a dogma to protect them from its contemplation. And Garth, like Eli Pallisher of Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, bemoans what seems to him to be the disease in which modern man, lacking anything solid to believe in, lives his life. Beholding "this world's natural beauty," Garth is "seized" with an "apprehension" because of its "agonizing contrast to the spectacle of human chaos and pain"(52), just as Eli, in Horwood's novel, pondered sadly on "Why, in this world where all things seem at home, is man alone an alien in his own house?"(220) So Garth tills the soil at his home in St. Michael's as he ponders this spiritual dilemma, acknowledging with pain that "Nobody has that answer, to the meaning of life, if mankind is on his own"(68). Still, "despite his intellectual convictions, in the teeth of his unbelief," he sings the "old gospel songs" that speak of the

assurance and teleological security that he has lost but for which he longs (69).

That longing for teleological certainty is expressed elsewhere in Requiem for a Faith II. The narrator, in discussing Ev Shepherd's tele-evangelism, explains that despite its tawdry nature, its "popularity" is based "on a national longing to see innocence and good triumphant in an increasingly materialistic and evil society"(50), an observation echoed by Walter Rose, who asserts to Garth that Shepherd's "success ... shows what a great hunger there is for something more than money or material values, on the part of the people"(80). For Rose, despite his own loss of faith, perceives that there is great danger inherent in a faithless world. "If man doesn't destroy himself with the Bomb," he says to Garth, "he may very well do it more slowly through lack of faith," because its loss leaves a "vacuum," and "the mind is like nature in abhorring a vacuum"(79). As Rose sees it, "some belief is essential, the one thing needful, in this life," an opinion he bases on the rather negative premise that "humankind is too weak to live in a moral void," and that "where there is no belief to act as a rudder for the individual human being, chaos and horror will eventually rule his or her life." He points to alcohol-, drug-, and crime-ridden Jack Coffin as an example (90).

Walter Rose sees other negative ramifications proceeding from humanity's loss of faith. Ironically, he suggests that "money-making" is one of the things that "rushes in to fill ... up" the vacuum left by faith's departure (79), even though, as he has

already stated, the longing to transcend money hunger and other "material values" is a motivating force in leading people to "havens" like Shepherd's form of evangelicalism. Hence, Rose conjures up the picture of a "rudderless" people running frantically from one false haven to another, in their desperate effort to fill the void created by the loss of belief. As he proceeds to explain to Garth,

The present money madness is perhaps just a straw that people are clinging to in what we might call ... the aftermath of faith. That's a maelstrom, in fact, and people are suffocating for want of something they can really believe. That's why, fundamentally, we have so many people hooked on booze, drugs, and what are called, I believe, far-out cults. And why we have so many who are crying to psychiatrists to give them a reason for living; and a good many, including an alarming number of young people, committing suicide.

(80)

In short, Janes has his character suggesting that the "rudderlessness" of this modern era of lack-of-faith is leading people to self-destruction - just as this thesis has, ironically, revealed it as happening through a misguided adherence to faith. This tendency towards alienation and self-destruction in a contemporary Newfoundland no longer possessed of religious faith is a surprisingly frequent theme in modern Newfoundland fiction, as is the accompanying tendency of characters to wreak heartache, intolerance, and destruction upon others. And nowhere is this latter tendency more explicitly evoked than in Janes' novella, 'The Picture on the Wall'.

The only real reference to religion in this violent tale

of clashing social classes, aside from the brief, aforementioned reference to the cruelty of the Christian Brothers, is in the bloody imagery with which the reader is left at the conclusion. Here Knuckles and Jade, the young protagonists representing the St. John's poor whom Newfoundland's and Canada's social systems have not managed to reach, mercilessly attack the upper-middle class couple, Norman and Edythe, who have tried with monied ignorance to help them. Breaking into Edythe's apartment, they beat Norman senseless and rape Edythe with an intended, violent cruelty, when she tells them she has no money on hand to give them. And as they pause before making their escape, Jade creates, from Edythe's blood, a "picture on the wall" which the narrator states "could have been regarded as a pair of scales, or perhaps a cross," while "another imagination might have seen it as a guillotine" (124). The "scales" could signify the scales of justice between privileged and underprivileged classes in St. John's being savagely "balanced," while the "guillotine," similarly, could be an allusion to the French Revolution and the symbolic overthrowing of a wealthy class. The "cross," though, seems to echo Requiem for a Faith; we see the "crucifixion" of this upper middle class couple, whose culturally-nurtured naïveté prevents them from grasping the depth of the problems of modern society, representing the spiritual wasteland of contemporary times, in which greed as well as other symptoms of imbalanced values fill the "vacuum" left by faith's departure.

And while it would be an unwieldy digression at this point to discuss in any detail the numerous other works of

contemporary Newfoundland fiction that feature such themes as violence to the self or to others, alcohol and drug abuse, and social alienation in evoking an era in which religious faith seems to have faded from view, the prevalence of such themes in fiction representing the era which has here been called "the aftermath of faith" must at least be noted. In the fiction of Janes, Rowe, Johnston, O'Flaherty, Porter, and, especially Harvey (whose characters are notably the least concerned with matters of faith), marriage generally fails, passion is fleeting, while intimacy is either spurned or longed for without fulfillment. Further, man is cut off from his fellow man through fear or through indifference, as are children from their parents, while poverty prevails and often leads to crime, with suicide being an alarmingly frequent theme. As protagonist Jane Shallow reflects in O'Flaherty's story, "Return to laughter," from A Small Place in the Sun, in contemporary Newfoundland "Marriages were breaking up all the time ... Half the people she knew were divorced"(54), because in current times, "Personal happiness was all that counted. The world had changed. You had to look out for number one"(56), while police Sergeant Anstey, in Priest of God, observes that "youngsters are breaking into manses and churches everywhere these days, looking for things to steal ... Nothing's sacred anymore"(64). The idea that "nothing is sacred anymore," which manifests itself in much of contemporary Newfoundland fiction in the ways just mentioned, seems to validate Walter Rose's apprehensions, in Requiem for a Faith, about the "rudderless" state of humankind, struggling chaotically

to fill the void created by the absence of anything in which to believe.

Rose, however, does not envision this void as being a permanent societal affliction. Convinced that man needs something in which to believe, he predicts that humanity will eventually emerge from its current, destructive spiritual vacuum when it finds new faith to which it can adhere. Thus he proclaims to Garth in their long philosophical conversation in Requiem for a Faith II that the "period of skepticism" that western society, including Newfoundland, is presently experiencing "is at best a bridge between one faith and another," and that

a new faith may very well arise between Christianity which in essence is defunct, and whatever comes next for the Western world. That is, if the irresponsible technocrats who rule our world at present don't destroy our total environment before this new and credible Revelation. (90)

The nature of that "new and credible Revelation," as perceived by Rose, will be discussed in the concluding portion of this chapter, when we address the possible alternatives to Christian faith put forth in modern Newfoundland fiction. At issue here, though, is humanity's urgent need to believe in something as experienced or observed by characters in that fiction, a need so great that Rose predicts that a new faith will sooner or later be conceived of necessity to fill the spiritual vacuum which seems to be resulting in so much human suffering. What remains to be examined here, then, are such other manifestations of the necessity of belief as are evinced in Newfoundland fiction written subsequent to Janes'

Requiem for a Faith. And an interesting place to begin this look at subsequent portrayals of the dilemma of faithlessness is Horwood's novel Remembering Summer, which in many ways echoes the conclusions reached by Janes in Requiem for a Faith.

The new, guru-like Eli Pallisher of this novel, like Walter Rose, spends much time reflecting on the nature of spiritual belief and its place in the modern world. Along with his young "disciples" (as he freely calls them - see p.42), he continually criticizes and reveals the falseness of what Walter Rose would have seen as the erroneous havens to which people are crowding in their desperate need to believe in something, while seeking instead the mystical "Toslow" which embodies his version of Rose's new and "credible Revelation." Like Rose, Eli sees Christianity as "defunct," with the present age being a kind of "apocalypse"; and Eli seems to view the cults of young people in the 1960s and 1970s as part of that apocalypse: "acid" can be your "trip," or "God" can be - all these "havens" seeming synonymous in Horwood's prose (32-33). In such observations, again Eli sounds like Rose who, as already quoted, attributed the spectre of "people hooked on booze, drugs," and "far-out cults" to the need for something in which to believe.

Eli, too, sees the present day as an era of eroding faith (although, putting this phenomenon in a historical context, he sees this era as only one in a cycle of such eras) whose population cannot appropriately deal with the loss of belief. His personal diagnosis of and prescription for this unhealthy age in some ways

resembles Walter Rose's, when he states that

Men have always turned backward when their faith was shaken - back to magic and witchcraft when religion began to crumble ... science, too, has proved too limited ... [and] men have turned backward once more, to the Church, to the astrologers [here suggestive of character Raff Dowling's "occultism" in Janes' Eastmall - p.31], to the games of the I Ching and the Tarot pack, as they always turn back, not knowing that there is a way to turn forward, a new verity whose appearing is not yet, but living somewhere just the same, infinitely removed from the stumbling superstitions of the wizards and the diviners.
(175-76)

The nature of Eli's "new verity," like Walter Rose's, will be addressed in the concluding section of this chapter. But again, what is evident in this speech is a fictional character's perception of the urgent need on the part of human beings to believe in something, a need, it seems, that will prompt them to grasp at any "straw" rather than face the void of meaninglessness we have seen as being a terrifying human spectre from Norman Duncan onwards. What is fictionally presented as a contemporary grasping at straws is again shown to be the result of the contemporary crumbling of Christian faith in Newfoundland society and in western society as a whole which is humanly unbearable, just as, ironically, adherence to that faith had become unbearable and had contributed to faith's demise. The agony of loss of faith, demonstrated at the individual level in much of the fiction discussed in this thesis, is here being shown at the societal level. In both instances the message seems to be the same: while a misguided adherence to religious faith proves to be humanly

destructive, so, too, does a total departure from faith. Here lies the ultimate paradox inherent in the religious themes of twentieth century Newfoundland fiction.

Of course, not all of contemporary Newfoundland fiction treats the suffering implicit in the loss of faith with equal gravity. In Rowe's Clapp's Rock, which is, after all, a satire, the principal characters ultimately seem to endorse a kind of nihilism - again, an alternative to Christian faith that will be discussed in the conclusion of this chapter. While protagonist Neil Godwin's initial feelings over his loss of faith are construed as being very painful - the reader is reminded of Duncan's query to the universe, and of Garth Coffin's suffering, when Neil is shown musing that without faith "all life was meaningless," and that he was thus "unimportant ... inconsequential, and ... exposed, without hope, to the random hurts of an indifferent cosmos"(34) - this feeling of loss, as already mentioned, soon translates into the "great tide of certainty" of "horniness"(36), and later into other worldly ambitions.

On the whole, however, we see in this fiction that where faith becomes nebulous, its characters genuinely suffer, with a number of them therefore ultimately reaching out to re-attain some sense of belief. This tendency appears in O'Flaherty's fiction - particularly in his short stories - which evinces a sustained ambivalence about the existence and function of belief in humankind, but which generally tends to end up suggesting that people both have and need to have an inherent spiritual dimension

to their lives. In the title story from his collection The Summer of the Greater Yellowlegs the protagonist, having arrived at a period of psychic darkness in his own life and reflecting on the act of suicide, meditates on his brother Colin, who had felt such darkness far earlier in life and had killed himself. But at the story's end, recognizing himself to be at "the edge," with "no strength left" and "no light," and further, having "no belief left in a spiritual world," the protagonist realizes all the same that "something made him wish for a sign" - a spiritual sign, that is, that there was meaning to be found in going on living. And as the story concludes, the man is given this "sign" by the longed-for but unexpected presence of a rare bird - a greater yellowlegs - "circling directly over his land." The appearance of this bird, this spiritual messenger, gives him the will to go on living, to heal the "wounds," both psychic and physical, that resemble those of the brother whose "broken spirit had foundered," and that had threatened to lead the protagonist down the same road to self-destruction. This "sign" reinvests him with a sense of light and hope that cause him to pray that his own "wounds" will "heal." In the story's concluding line, when the bird (or sign) "descend[s] into his well fenced garden," we are left with the feeling that a returned sense of spiritual belief is now his "well-fenced" protection from despair and self-destruction (8).

Perhaps significantly, the final story in this collection, "Tokens," deals similarly with the place of spiritual belief in man's life, although it does not conclude with the first

story's ultimate optimism. In a vein similar to that of "Summer of the greater yellowlegs," the protagonist of "Tokens," at the commencement of the narrative, represents modern man's falling-away from teleological certainty. As described earlier in this thesis, retreating to a cabin where he can live for awhile alone, he spends an evening pitting himself against his visiting wife's suggestion that there is a spiritual element to life. Yet simultaneously, a series of strange events befall the protagonist. At night he is repeatedly awakened by a "knocking" that his dog cannot hear, and for which he can find no explanation, such knocking being, according to his parents, a "token" signalling death (57). Further, he and one of his weekend visitors, in driving towards an abandoned community, see and speak with a woman who afterwards vanishes, and whose description matches that of a woman who had died fifty years earlier (60-61). Despite the protagonist's "secular age" argument - dismissing both folkloric superstition and spiritual belief by saying "This is the twentieth century. There are no more goblins. What you see is what you get" (61) - we see that by the story's end he recognizes the knocks to be portentous, and so chooses not to have a worsening injury to his hand treated by a doctor, with the suggestion that he does not expect to be around "next year"(62). At the story's end he returns to the spot where he had seen the vanishing woman, only to find "two shadowy figures waiting for him"(62). This unsettling conclusion suggests, as does the conclusion to the first story, that the "secular age" argument permeating this collection of stories does not, at

critical moments, function satisfactorily, even for modern-day man. And whether this recurring theme bespeaks a humanly-experienced need for spiritual belief or, rather, man's continued failure to divorce himself from such belief, it suggests that despite all rational arguments, somehow belief in something other than the rational continues to play an important role in the human psyche.

The same idea is explored in O'Flaherty's previously discussed story "Lights out," from his second collection, in which a middle aged woman delivers a monologue to her silent husband one night, in trying to piece together and resume a relationship that has been rocked by adultery as well as by the myriad smaller conflicts that constitute modern marriage. Amidst her revelations of the need for belief and for Christian forgiveness - values she is struggling to attain and maintain, both for the sake of her marriage and for her soul - we see her trying to remember the name of a woman who had "helped" her at a time when she had needed, but not received, moral support from her husband. First she wonders whether the woman's name was "Peace"(67); but in the concluding lines of her monologue she cries, cryptically, "I got it! It was Grace, it was Grace! Was that it? Oh tell me, was it?"(70) The urgency of those final words - "Oh tell me, was it?" - suggests that the "Grace" referred to here is more than a woman's remembered name, but is, as well, a crucial quality of the belief the speaker is yearning to reinstate in her own life, a spiritual "grace" that people need to sustain them in troubled times. Hence, in at least three short stories, O'Flaherty evinces the sense that belief,

despite the "secular age" in which we live, continues to be a human necessity, whether this necessity bespeaks an innate strength or an innate weakness on humanity's part. It is a theme he touches on, too, in his novel Priest of God, where Father Ryan, contemplating the church at Long Cove in which he is preaching for the last time, realizes, as earlier quoted, that the church, and/or its associated system of belief, is "a warm place, keeping fear out. Little wonder so many wanted to stay in it"(209). In O'Flaherty's fiction, then, those who depart from faith depart as well from "the warm place" that "keeps fear out," landing instead in the chaotic and ultimately frightening vacuum of meaninglessness to which Requiem for a Faith's Walter Rose referred.

This potentially frightening vacuum to which, as the fiction we are studying suggests, man ventures in the "aftermath of faith," is evoked as well in a section of Bowdring's The Roncesvalles Pass. "God," it seems, is merely a subject for artistic exploration in the cultural avant-garde of Hugh Myers' mainland city, as Hugh reflects in describing a "performance art" rendition of a Gerard Manley Hopkins poem which he attends with some friends. At the conclusion of this avant-garde performance, the actors chant the words "Praise him" (and the lower case "h" in "him" is significant, "him" being God) as a question, rather than as the exhortation which Hopkins had presumably intended. The effect of this performance on its audience - even though in leaving it, Hugh feels like he is being ushered out of a friendly church service - is alienation, a "feeling of gloom" having "descended

upon" Hugh and his friends, who "stood in silence in the rain, looking off in different directions" (54). Again, it seems that when spiritual belief becomes merely a phenomenon to investigate, rather than an inherent, living experience, the consequence for late twentieth century characters is a sense of loss or of being lost, and of being, as the youthful Eli Pallisher put it, an "alien in one's own house."

In Porter's fiction, too, belief, or a lack thereof, becomes an issue for some of her key characters, whether it be a momentary or primary and long lasting one. In january, february, june or july, we see in young protagonist Heather's musings on Terry Fox that, in an age when few young people seem to believe in anything, she herself longs to have something to believe in. Remembering the day she saw Fox set off from St. John's City Hall for his attempted cross-Canada run, when she had expected to feel pity for him, she recalled that she had "found herself envying him," because "It must be wonderful to believe in something that much, to be so certain that what you did would make a difference" (89). This longing of Heather's to share Terry Fox's sense of purpose reflects the already-quoted observation of Walter Rose's, in Requiem for a Faith II: "people are suffocating for want of something they can really believe" (80). Heather here is recognizing in herself the sense of alienation and emptiness that humankind suffers when it is "rudderless," lacking the inspiration, guidance, or direction that belief in something - whether it be God or the power to inspire charity in others through courageous

actions - provides.

Yet elsewhere in Porter's novel we see Heather similarly grappling with the issue of belief versus meaninglessness, but this time emerging with her sense of belief intact. At home one night, in a state close to despair, she muses

What did it matter if the dishes were done or not, if Puss went out or not, if Frank really liked - loved - her or not, if Nan lived or died? She felt like a very tiny puppet at the end of a very long string. (78)

At this point her musings resemble those of Duncan, who was similarly haunted by the notion that if life had no inherent meaning, and if what happened therefore did not matter, then humanity was indeed little more than a puppet at the end of a string held by indifferent Chance. In this as in Heather's continued musings, we are also reminded of the already-described character in Porter's short story "One Saturday," who in musing on the endless cycle of birth, life, and death concluded that human existence was "senseless" (A Long and Lonely Ride - p.119), as Heather ponders

What does it matter what we do? ... What does it matter if we're happy or not, if someone loves us or not, if we have what we want or not? It's all the same in the end, isn't it?
(79)

However, from somewhere within her young psyche comes the simple, unelaborated answer "It matters ... It all matters"(79). Thus, while teleological certainty, not a key focus in this novel, is no further explored than this, we see in this young protagonist a quiet conviction that there is meaning to existence and that all is

therefore not a mere chaos: a theory to which she had almost succumbed, and which would have left her with the sense of despair that threatened both Duncan and Porter's short story character.

This dawning of teleological certainty on the part of a youthful protagonist is reflected in Michael, the thirteen year old protagonist of Rodgers' novella, The Phoenix. Michael, who as earlier mentioned has experienced a kind of coming-of-age through a day-long odyssey in which he has witnessed the ghastly aftermath of a plane crash and simultaneously realized a new sense of himself as an individual, is like Porter's Heather Novak in the philosophical conclusion at which he ultimately arrives. For as, like numerous characters and at least one author preceding him in Newfoundland fiction, he "looked into the night sky and tried to imagine a universe that went on and on and on," he was not, like so many of his predecessors, frightened by the prospect, but was somehow psychically reassured, like Heather - and perhaps like Gillingham of Horwood's White Eskimo - of the meaningfulness of life. As the narrator puts it, "Michael closed his eyes but could imagine he was nothing"(85). Unlike Norman Duncan and the character Mageila Michelet as they confronted the spectre of a vast and cruel-seeming universe, unlike the young Eli Pallisher of Tomorrow Will Be Sunday and Garth Coffin of Requiem for a Faith, who experienced, with the loss of belief, a frightening sense of being "nothing" in a universe indifferent to man's existence, Michael, like Heather, somehow realized that in this vast universe he, small as he was, was something, and therefore, that life

mattered. We sense here the same spirit in which Horwood's Gillingham delivered the line "That feeling that man is an invisible mote in an infinity of stars is a vacuum that we carry in our heads" (White Eskimo, 266). This "vacuum" that the "White Eskimo," like Heather and Michael, somehow manages to avoid, is the same one of which Walter Rose speaks in Requiem for a Faith: the vacuum left when spiritual belief and certainty depart, and which seems in modern Newfoundland fiction to affect so much of the population of the western world. Unfortunately, neither White Eskimo, January, February, June or July, nor The Phoenix provides a formula by which modern man can share their protagonists' ultimate teleological certainty in this era of departed faith. What they do provide is a state-of-being against which the reader may contrast those fictional characters bereft of such certainty, thereby further underlining the disease in which man lives once he has left the "warm place" that "keeps fear out." And a fitting character upon whom to focus in concluding this discussion of the necessity of belief is Porter's character "Noreen," in "O Take Me As I Am" from her short story collection, a character who seems at once to recognize both the positive and the negative aspects of religious belief as humanly practised, while evincing all the modern-day cynicism towards, confusion over, and ultimate longing for spiritual certainty which this thesis has shown to suffuse twentieth century Newfoundland fiction.

Noreen, as previously described, has very ambivalent feelings about the Salvation Army church she once believed in, but

despite her doubts and her realization of the limitations of that church - limitations that have a lot to do with her ambivalence towards it and her "falling away" from it - we see in numerous places her acute sense of loss at having fallen from conviction, and her continued longing for the haven of belief. The opening line of the story is, "Whenever things got too much for her, Noreen went to church"(28). And when, upon entering the church and hearing a hymn being sung, she finds herself crying - which "church did ... to her"(29) - although she thinks with irony that people might mistakenly take her tears "as a sign of religious conviction" about which she reflects "but she knew better," she immediately qualifies that irony, mentally adding, "Or thought she did"(30). And throughout the story we will see Noreen qualifying the irony with which she treats what she views as her former faith.

For Noreen, despite dwelling in the secular age of unbelief, continues to be unsure of the place that religious belief occupies in her life. She recalls nostalgically "that clean, washed feeling that had come over her when she knelt at the penitent-form"(30). And despite the cynicism she feels and displays towards religion, she often finds herself internally defending religion in the face of a disbelieving world, as in the passage where she muses that her friends all read books "where the whole evangelical thing was made to look like a con job which, of course, it was. But not always. Even now, after having been through many phases very far removed from that teenage experience, she still had to say, not always"(31).

Further, when her daughter dismisses "Transcendental Meditation, EST, primal therapy, and all the other helping theories designed to bring people peace of mind" as being "a substitute for religion" and therefore "a crutch" (a theory to which both Walter Rose and the new Eli Pallisher would subscribe), Noreen's response is that "A crutch can be pretty important sometimes ... If something broken is healing, it's hard to get along without a crutch"(32). As she further muses to herself, even if religion is only a "crutch," it "seemed to Noreen that she herself had always needed one"(33). While "She didn't have one any more, had perhaps traded it in for a walking-stick that she used only on certain occasions" - such as the fictional present when, things being "too much for her," she finds herself in church - Noreen seems convinced that sooner or later, humanity ultimately has need of such "crutches" as religion because sooner or later human beings need help in dealing with "something broken," whether the "something" is "broken nerves, broken spirit, broken ideals, [or] broken faith." Her daughter "didn't need a crutch, yet," because "She was young"(33). But to Noreen, the religion-as-crutch idea obviously does not seem to render religion automatically artificial or trivial.

Yet whenever Noreen finds herself softening too readily to the idea of a religious dimension in life, her critical faculties awaken. We see the longing she feels for her past stage of belief when she considers the young parishioner beside her in church, totally caught up in the hymn he is singing, while "She

still remembered the ecstatic feeling, the shutting out of everything else, the sensation of being completely herself. It was a long time since she had felt like that" (31). We then see her re-experiencing this feeling, momentarily, as she "gave herself up to the singing ... [wishing] as she had often done before, that she could always, or at least often, feel the way she did at this moment" (34) - a phenomenon reminiscent of Sophy Coffin in Requiem for a Faith I, who would similarly "lose herself utterly in the old hymns" (7). Yet Noreen goes on to consider this moment of ecstasy a "spell" (34), and the hymns as having "a haunting quality about them, an other-worldliness, that took possession of her temporarily ... the words and the melody soothing although, or perhaps because, she did not for a moment believe" their allusions to "Judgement Day" (35-36) - so that the reader, along with Noreen herself, must wonder whether this "something" that she longs for is religious belief or simply a mesmerizing ritual into which one can temporarily lose oneself. Noreen's spiritual longing, combined with her critical alertness, sustains in her a tormenting ambivalence towards religious faith.

A bit later she asks, "Was there really a God?" as she prepares herself to resist the urge "to go forward" to the penitent-form, an urge she knows she would feel "once the emotion [in the church] thickened and she became conscious, as she always did, that something was missing from her life" (37). So again we witness Noreen's ambivalence, her sense that she longs for the "something missing," but also her awareness that it is

"emotionalism" that triggers this longing, an emotionalism which she demonstrates elsewhere in the story cannot be taken for "true faith" (34).

This enigmatic story ends conditionally, with Noreen pondering the church's limitations vis-à-vis the previously-mentioned homosexual member she had once known, whose sexual "aberration" the church had been neither willing nor able to accept. Listening to a young Salvation Army officer asserting that "There's nothing the Lord can't forgive," Noreen wonders whether that is so, reasoning that "even if it is, He only forgives the past. And only on the condition that you stop doing whatever it is" (39). However, she goes on to qualify her own cynicism, musing "perhaps she wasn't being fair to the Lord, whoever or whatever He was. Perhaps it was only those who called themselves His people who felt that way." And it is on this critical distinction between the idea of a deity and the institutionalized human interpretations of that deity that Noreen founders - longing for something that goes beyond the limitations and inconsistencies of institutionalized religion, but unsure as to whether or not that "something" is there. In this regard her longing is an echo of that of Norman Duncan, who cried out for teleological certainty, for a divine order and sense of mercy, but who could not be sure, on account of the unrelenting hardship he saw around him and the accompanying doctrine that justified that hardship, if that order, that merciful deity, existed.

Hence, from Duncan's writing in 1903 to Porter's of 1991

the concept of religious belief continues to be a problematic authorial preoccupation. In much of the Newfoundland fiction that spans those eighty-eight years we see humanity lose its religious faith because the human applications of that faith become unbearable, only to suffer a resultant sense of loss indicating that spiritual belief is humanly necessary, but that somehow it continually goes astray through the workings of human minds. Belief in something is humanly necessary; so we are shown by such post-Confederation characters as Janes' Garth Coffin and Walter Rose, Horwood's aging Eli Pallisher, and numerous characters peopling the fiction of Rodgers, O'Flaherty, Bowdring, and Porter. In the few instances in which it is achieved - namely, in the meditations of two young characters, Heather and Michael, and in the O'Flaherty character saved from despair by a "sign" - the fiction suggests that life can be liveable, even joyfully liveable. But in the many instances where belief-in-something is not attained by the characters, the fiction indicates that life becomes a dilemma, fraught with alienation, violence, and false attempts to attain a sense of spiritual certitude. Moreover, what frequently passes as being evidence of a spiritual goodness prevailing in the world is not always to be trusted: when regarding a reproduction of the cross it is wise to determine the material out of which it is constructed; when seeing masses thronging to follow an evangelical missionary or to reach a sacred shrine, one must determine both what motivates these masses and what serves as the foundation of the institutions to which they throng.

This in turn leads us to our final consideration in our analysis of fiction directed at life in post-Confederation Newfoundland: the fictionally offered alternatives to a religious belief that has proved to be so problematic. Key characters in four contemporary novels, Requiem for a Faith, Remembering Summer, Clapp's Rock, and The Roncesvalles Pass, suggest that humankind's agonized struggle with faith has resulted from looking in the wrong direction for something in which to believe, and that by replacing the old belief system with something new, human harmony can finally be attained. Thus we shall consider each of these fictional alternatives, in turn, in an attempt to determine whether they do indeed answer the problem of the human need for belief.

3. POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES TO FORMER CHRISTIAN FAITH

In Garth Coffin's and Walter Rose's philosophical conversations in Requiem for a Faith II, Rose suggests that rational belief must replace spiritual belief as a teleological system if what he sees as the contemporary chaos of rudderless humanity is to be assuaged. Admitting, as earlier mentioned, that "we must still have a faith to live by," Rose figures that it will have to be an "extension or culmination of the Humanism that began with the Renaissance" and that man will have to function on his own, be it

for a few decades or perhaps even centuries, until the idea of God reasserts itself on a sounder basis than we've had so far, or is dispensed with altogether. No more dogma fashioned from hypothesis or fairy tales. What we have now in the West is the end result

of the Humanism I mentioned. Essentially, it's man taking over from God. That's the spiritual history of our time ... (82)

Garth, however, points out that Rose himself has already admitted that "man on his own" has not been "doing such a great job" and thus, unconvinced of man's capacity to survive on his own, Garth continues to hunger for "certainty," a "rock," a "new truth or holding ground" to which man can look for support and guidance (82). Rose has just conceded, after all, that man "must still have a faith to live by."

Therefore, Rose proposes what he perceives as a possible "new faith," confiding that he has "fancied once or twice that some kind of established truth might soon be reached in matters of belief" (82). The "truth" Rose offers is a possible, although not yet achieved, biological explanation for the "proto-cell ... of human life," which would "finally eliminate the necessity for God and miracles in creation," the "central prop of Christianity" - the "Creation story," which is "the very beginning and basis of the Bible" - thus being "knocked away" (82).

Garth, though, continues to be troubled by the tentativeness of this alternative certitude - so troubled, that in a subsequent conversation he still finds himself wondering, "Where do we go without God?" (88) For presumably, in looking around him and in considering the conclusions that he and Rose have arrived at in previous conversations, Garth recognizes that it is all well and good to postulate that in a few decades or centuries some new faith may firmly establish itself as a light by which to live, but that,

in the meantime, humanity in this "aftermath of faith" is suffering and wreaking havoc upon itself. Again, though, Rose has an "answer" for him, and it is that in the meantime we must "make the best job we can of our lives ... within ourselves ... [and] in relation to other people," and "do our best to maintain and preserve [our planet]"(88). And here Rose goes on to declare Christianity officially dead, having "been a failure," a "house that is habitable in some ways but undermined in its foundations," and ultimately having "died of its own absurdity." Theology, adds Rose, should become "a subject for speculation," as "on the whole dogma has been a great curse"(89).

There are holes in Rose's arguments, though - as Garth seems at times to sense, and as the reader can easily see. For first of all if, as Rose declares, "what we have now in the west is the end result of ... [a] Humanism" Rose respects, it is not, as Requiem for a Faith makes manifest, an "end result" bespeaking worldly health and harmony, but one bespeaking chaos and despair. Further, there are no guarantees that Rose's "new truth" will firmly establish itself as an alternative teleological system, nor that people will "make the best of their lives" and "preserve their planet"; neither Requiem for a Faith nor contemporary times suggest that this is the case. Finally there is the issue of "dogma," which this thesis supports Rose in declaring "a great curse." But as Porter's short story character, Noreen, seemed to indicate in a flash of insight, it is not necessarily appropriate to consider this "dogma" as being synonymous with the spiritual element from

which it stems. Therefore it is dangerous to dismiss the spiritual element of Christianity, out of hand, because of the dogmatic human interpretations of that spirituality which we have come to associate with it. As Noreen would put it, "perhaps this isn't being fair to the Lord, whoever or whatever He is. Perhaps it is only those who call themselves His people" who perpetuate that life-denying dogma. Rationalism as an alternative system of belief, as proposed by Walter Rose, is unconvincing. He does not explain how it can be made to work in people's lives; he does not show any evidence of it functioning. In postulating a new way of believing that may evolve in some indeterminate number of years, he does not account for how humanity will fare in the meantime. Thus, Walter Rose does better at delivering a requiem than at being a prophet. One suspects that the longing for a caring deity, for a universal fairness, for a sense of personal meaning, of "mattering," so evident in this fiction, will not be satisfied by the theory of proto-cells.

We turn next to the ideas of Remembering Summer's Eli Pallisher, to consider whether this character has come upon a viable alternative to religious belief. This novel, in a series of flashbacks from a solitary and reflective present to a human and action-filled past, features narrator Eli, a kind of "guru figure," and the new era of young "freaks" surrounding him, seeking "Toslow" (presumably the Toslow of the Newfoundland folk song "The Ryans and the Pittmans") which, apparently abandoned now because of resettlement, has acquired some kind of mystic symbolism for them.

"Toslow," as Eli explains, is where the nineteenth and the twenty-first centuries will meet, "escaping not into the past but into the future, where the past, too, will be honoured in its wisdom, not demolished and laid waste as it has been in the board rooms of the cities" (19-20).

Eli feels that he has finally reached a point where he believes that "we [the human race] are going to survive" (21) - but only by reaching something like a utopian and rural Toslow, never in a city where "the images of the apocalypse crowd around [him]" (32). In fact, in Remembering Summer it seems to be the city, Wall Street and its various manifestations - politicians (39) and Metropolitan Pigs (59) - that is the chief evil afflicting man, moreso even than the repressive religion shown to be afflicting humankind in Tomorrow Will Be Sunday.

However, organized religion of any persuasion continues all the same to be treated as a repressive force in Horwood's prose. In this novel it is shown to be one of the forces that must be overthrown if one is to reach "Toslow." Eli here speaks of the "love generation," from which his disciples come, as something quite apart from the "decent white Christian" who saw nothing wrong in torturing "brown humanoids" (76). This generation has "an inward and spiritual grace" because it has "glimpsed the possibility of change" (136), and because it is "no longer chained by ... the death creeds of church and synagogue" (140). Indeed, Eli suggests that a whole new spiritual climate has emerged, with "the superstitions of Christianity and the Pharasees [sic]" finally "shaken off" (98), and

that it is only the emergence of such a climate that makes an eventual "Toslow" possible. In looking retrospectively at the forces that have led to this new climate Eli sounds, to some extent, very much like Janes' Walter Rose, explaining that

It was no new faith that chased out the Hebrew myths, but confidence in human reason. Born in faith, born again rational, born a third time into the vast world of magic where childhood faith looked like a set of tinker toys beside the infinite structures of vision.
(140)

This "birth" into the desired state of "vision" requires a rejection of Judeo-Christian doctrine through the influence of the rationalism Rose saw as a replacement for spiritual belief, although, unlike Rose's theory, Eli's does not see rationalism as an endpoint.

However, evincing the spirit in which he claimed that in the visionary Toslow, "the past, too, will be honoured in its wisdom," Eli does not "scrap" every vestige of the Judeo-Christian faith. In his euphoria over the beauty of the universe, he does not mind using a Christian phrase, "the peace that passeth all understanding"(122), and indeed he quotes freely from the Bible throughout the novel. The creed of his new visionary age of the "electric global village" is none other than the one which has been quoted throughout this thesis as part of the ultimate Christian commandment, which is easily forgotten: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," which Eli credits to a presumably historical Jesus, who "wasn't such a bad shit after all"(51). Hence, while Christianity itself has of necessity been scrapped in the age Eli

envisions as leading up to a utopian future, he does not mind salvaging from it that which he considers useful and wise. Further, while Judeo-Christianity has been "shaken off," the concept of God has been retained; indeed, it seems that Eli has divorced the idea of God from Judeo-Christian doctrine, viewing God as something spiritually real and important.

Reviewing his first years in the cabin at Beachy Cove, Eli writes "God was everywhere. The religious experience that had been occasional ... became a diffuse and perpetual light illuminating everything I did"(49). This indicates that he had retained a personal sense of God, stripped of Christian doctrine (he quickly makes it clear, following this revelation, that he is not a "Christian," but a "mystic" and a "sensualist," the two not being "mutually exclusive," as custom has made it seem - p.50). Later he writes that it is God from whom flows "the everlasting fire of life .. of creative evolution"(122). Hence, when he speaks of the "New Jerusalem" that his "love generation" will build in a way which makes it unclear whether God or a human generation is to be its real originator (64-65), the reader can only assume that God is the force behind "creative evolution," while Eli's favoured generation will be the instrument of that evolution. The surreal and wandering style of much of the narrative leaves the reader with much to piece together.

Thus, it seems the alternative Eli proposes to the former but now essentially defunct system of religious belief is a new, rather undefined, collective visionary awareness which retains the

injunction to "love one's neighbour as oneself" as a central creed, as well as the notion of a God, while rejecting all other aspects of Judeo-Christian tradition - an awareness which can only flourish far from the boardrooms of Wall Street, and one towards which he and his young disciples have, for a while, been travelling. Right up to the second to last chapter of the novel, still writing in retrospect, we see Eli and his "disciple" Dannie looking ahead to the spiritual realm of "Toslow," which will embody this new visionary state, as a destination that they and all their friends will someday reach.

Sadly, though, in the concluding chapter we learn that somewhere along the way, Eli has lost all of his "disciples." In this chapter, through which the twice repeated phrase "We always promise more than we can deliver" tolls like a sigh, Eli, it seems, is writing in a solitary present about the "pilgrims" of the "magic decade and the journey to Toslow" and what has happened to them since (187-189). Apparently, "Ten years of winter have changed them all" (187), and it seems that none of these young "pilgrims" has reached "Toslow." They have committed themselves to Kibbutz jobs or Master's degrees, or to writing poetry, or to death by suicide, or, ironically, they have turned from "crash pad to penthouse" or, equally ironically, to what seems to be some kind of Christian commune out west (188-190). And Eli, the narrator, perplexed by their choices but still somehow optimistic, looks, for the promise of eternity, to "trees [he] has caused to grow," as he awaits what his concluding poem makes sound like a dawning new age

(190-191). Obviously, though, Eli's alternative has not proved itself viable, at least for the moment, for while he himself clings to his vision of a better belief system by which to live, he has not managed to reach his "Toslow," nor to keep any of his former "disciples" committed to the journey.

Turning, then, to the ultimate truth towards which Ernest Godwin points in Rowe's Clapp's Rock, we find a response to teleological questioning that exceeds Walter Rose's rationalism and shares some of the revolutionary quality of Eli's exposing of falsehoods, but not Eli's hope that a new age will dawn. The elder Godwin admits on his deathbed that he has spent his life preaching something in which he did not believe, with the resultant conviction that to "believe in nothing" is "good," because the only truth to be found in life is "the exposing of falsehoods and idiocies." Therefore, he exhorts his son Neil to be "a howler of execration, a bringer down of exalted truths" (343-344); in short, he endorses a kind of nihilism as the only true belief system for humankind. However, although momentarily stirred to share his father's conviction, at the novel's end Neil, in the irony with which the novel is replete, rationalizes his way out of his father's exhortation, determined to attain command of the Newfoundland political system; and we see that the lonely, idealistic nihilism of a dying man is not a sufficiently enticing creed for a living and ambitious one. Hence, this alternative to old-fashioned religious belief is shown to fail when put to the test, just as the alternative offered in Remembering Summer failed.

Thus we are left to consider the "answer" to the problem of belief as briefly addressed in Bowdring's The Roncesvalles Pass, in a chapter entitled "Sunday with Searle" in which narrator Hugh compares two men's responses to the exigencies of life. One of the men, Nathan Searle, is the host of a radio program on classical music which Hugh often listens to - a host whose "musical ship [had] an obvious list toward the gloomier side of life" (83). For Searle tended to feature the music and the tragic lives of great musicians who had been "tragically cut short while they were still in their musical prime" by crippling or fatal diseases (83) and, in doing so, he was voicing the "anguished" and "resentful" philosophical "Why" with which he was apparently preoccupied (84). This is a "why" going right back to Norman Duncan's "why," cried out to the cosmos in response to the seemingly unjust cruelty of fate.

In contrast to Nathan Searle and his outraged "why," Hugh reflects on a "blind man named Hiram" he had once seen on film, a man who had been stricken blind suddenly and unexpectedly, but who had responded not with an anguished "why," but by cultivating his other senses, thus finding continued, if not increased, joy in living (80-83). As Hugh describes it, in contrast with the sadness reflected on the face of Hiram's girlfriend when she was reminded momentarily of his great loss,

Hiram's own face seemed to glow continuously with a wry, inscrutable, porpoise like smile. It was not the cherubic glow of religiosity that one saw on the faces of TV evangelists, who invited you to melt into the arms of the One Lord Jesus. Neither was it the serene,

Buddha-like smile of total acceptance of his fate. But it seemed to suggest that deep in the darkness of his days Hiram had somehow discovered light. (83)

This passage suggests that neither Hiram nor Hugh himself sees any "answer" as being found in either Christian evangelism or Eastern philosophy, but that "finding light in darkness" is a singular, internal process which Hiram had somehow successfully undergone. Hugh concludes the chapter with the observation, "I felt that Hiram might have an answer for [the "why" of] Mr. Searle" (84), which by extension suggests that Hiram might have an answer for the discontent of all humankind. Unfortunately, while one suspects that there is more to Hiram's "answer" than the simplistic adage "make the most of what you have" - or, equally, while one might justifiably argue that to assume Hiram's metaphysical outlook, whether it is simple or complex, is more easily said than done - Hugh goes no further in exploring Hiram's "answer" to the exigencies of life. Thus, as with Horwood's Gillingham, we are left with the image of a man who has found for himself a way to live in inner spiritual harmony and contentment, but who has left no roadmap for humanity at large, other than the rather unhelpful, implicit suggestion that we should try to emulate him. The reader is thus left to ask, "if it is that easy, would not humanity have long since done so?" For in perusing the characters we have been studying, as in considering the non-fictional lives around us, it is fair to say that we find few Hiram's and few Gillingham's. And thus, Bowdring's "alternative," as positive as it sounds, does not seem readily achievable as an "answer" to the problem of belief.

The study of the "Aftermath of Faith" in Newfoundland fiction addressing contemporary times must conclude with the admission that while this fiction has revealed, again, the problematic nature of religious belief, it offers no firmer resolution of the problem than did its fictional predecessors. The enigmatic treatment of the continued presence of religious faith in this fiction suggests that, to the extent that this faith persists, it does so absurdly and anachronistically; yet the simultaneous description of the state of humankind devoid of any spiritual certitude suggests that such a state is not humanly sustainable, because humanity seems to have a strong inherent need to believe in something, a need that will cause people to grasp at any straw, submit to any seeming haven, whether these "straws" and "havens" have integrity or not, rather than live in a spiritual vacuum. And those works of fiction that pronounce Christianity obsolete and go on to propose alternative systems of belief to rescue humanity from that vacuum end up proposing alternatives which are either unconvincing, unworkable, or somehow inimitable. So we are left, in our perusal of Newfoundland fiction addressing the late twentieth century, with the image of man being an "alien in his own house," struggling without success to fill the vacuum left by faith's departure, believing falsely that he has found an answer, upholding outmoded dogma with the lonely absurdity of a Bowdring character, or managing to sustain or find a sense of inner light and meaning, but not being able to share with the rest of humanity the secret of this spiritual attainment.

Hence, the religious themes in fictional writing spanning the years between Norman Duncan's The Way of the Sea and Helen Porter's A Long and Lonely Ride are, as already suggested, paradoxical. Again and again we see that the exigencies of life have played a strong role in causing humanity to conceive or abide by religious faith, which in the more contemporary fiction translates into a faith retained out of habit. Then we see that this faith, as humanly interpreted and evolved, becomes hypocritical, cruel, and even life-denying, so that key characters and, in fiction addressing contemporary times, even entire generations, come to question and reject faith because of its negative attributes, or else to be destroyed by it. Meanwhile, those characters who are shown as sustaining rather than rejecting faith are depicted as being anachronistic, blind, and ultimately absurd, or else as possessing a rare, perhaps enviable, but ultimately inimitable capacity to sustain a personal sense of meaning. But for those who reject belief the result is the suffering of a keen sense of loss which evolves, particularly in the fiction addressing the late twentieth century, into the prospect of a frightening vacuum which they will grasp at anything in order to fill. For there is the sustained sense in twentieth century Newfoundland fiction that man, despite the havoc that he wreaks through his tendency to render faith a destructive force, does indeed have a great need to believe in something, and that if this "something" is taken away, he will long for it nostalgically, or seek, because of a deeply inherent need, to replace it with

something new. Yet the few alternatives that are offered as replacements in this fiction prove to be inadequate. Again, as Father Ryan perceived it in Priest of God, the church, or whatever institution represents faith for the individual, is "a warm place, keeping fear out," so that it is "little wonder [that] so many" want to stay inside (209). However, as Newfoundland fiction indicates, the "rational" spirit of the times, together with the barrage of external influences that have brought Newfoundland, "screaming and kicking," into the North American mainstream, and the increasingly evident negative attributes of organized faith, have made it increasingly difficult for the thinking individual to "remain inside" the haven of teleological certainty. Yet from Norman Duncan onwards we are shown the pain inherent in going the alternate route.

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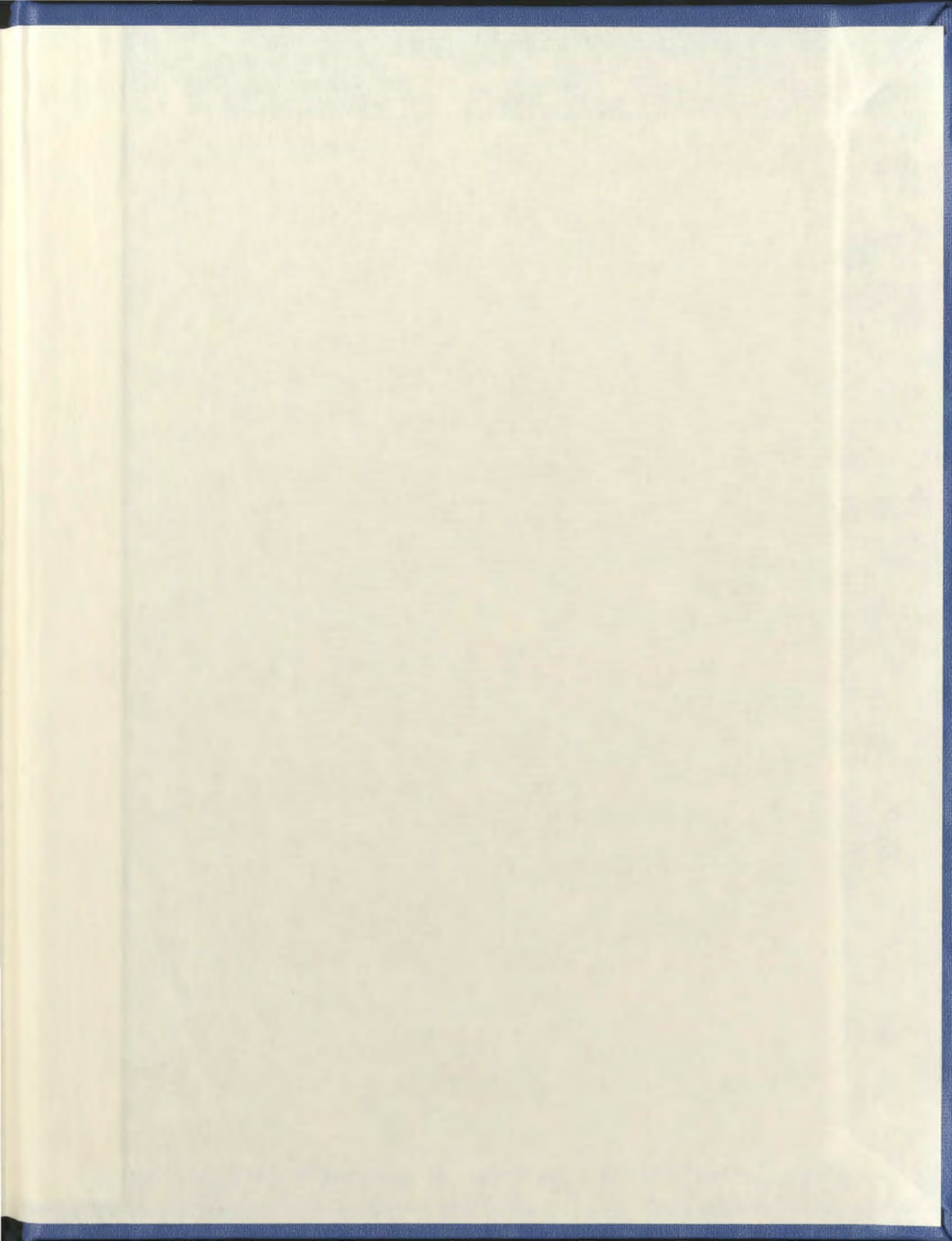
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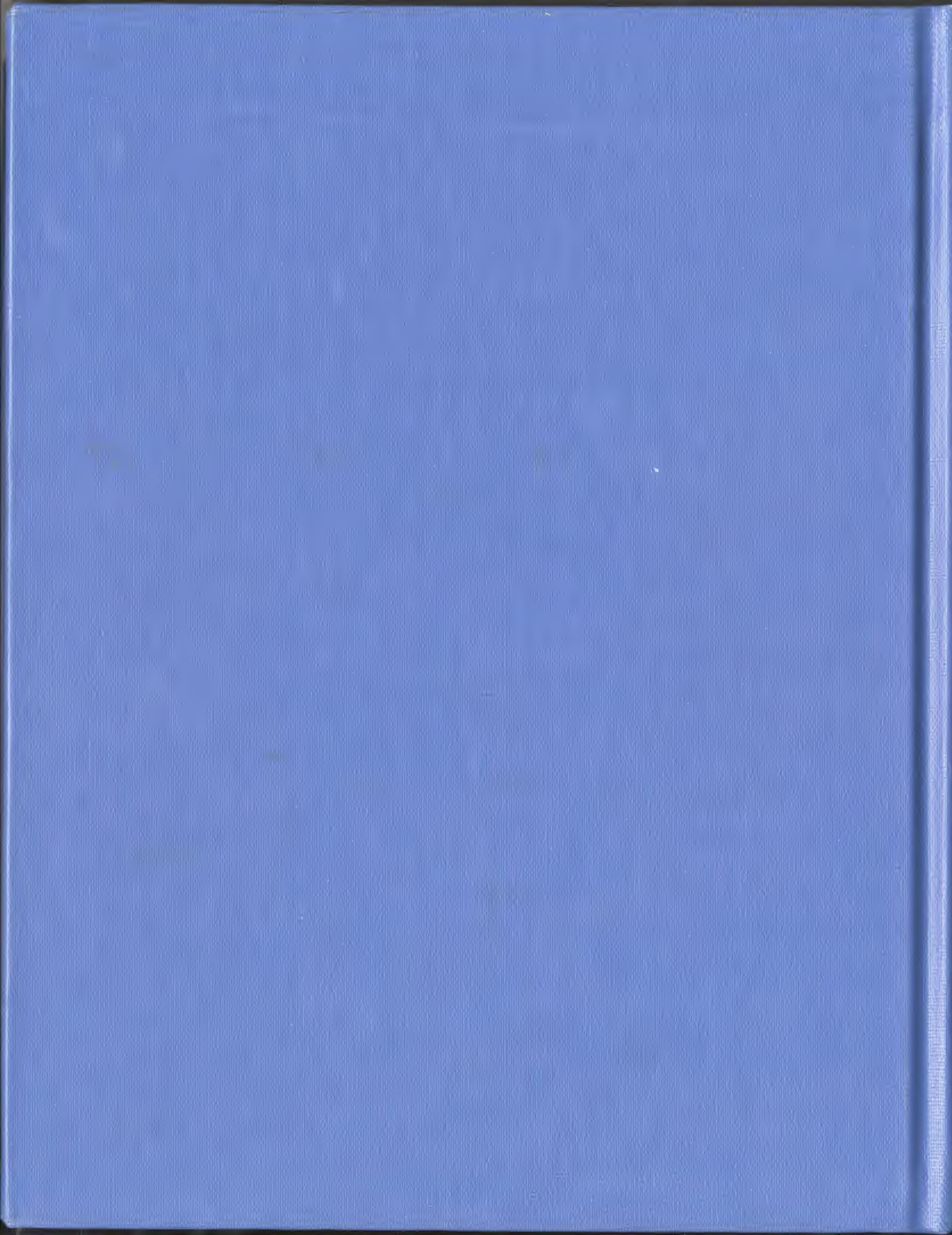
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CHAPTER II: THE DECLINE OF FAITH

The discussion of a decline in faith as evident in fiction focussed on early twentieth century Newfoundland should, in all fairness, be put in a proper historical perspective by pointing out that, as O'Flaherty reveals in The Rock Observed, there have been other periods in Newfoundland's history when observers writing about life on the island have noted evidence of religious decline as well (see O'Flaherty's quotation of part of a letter written by James Balfour, in 1766, in which the impiety of the young is compared with the far greater piety of preceding generations - pp.20-21). Nevertheless, not until the twentieth century were writers of fiction to explore the decline of faith in Newfoundland society - particularly of post-Confederation Newfoundland society - and to do so with such attention to the reasons for the decline: both those stemming from religion itself and those stemming from the influence of the outside world. In the fiction dealing with the pre-Confederation era, the influence of the outside world does not seem to have been an important factor - although it is, perhaps significantly, an outsider, Norman Duncan, who first used fiction about the place to question the teleology which seemed to function there. We will begin, then, by looking at Duncan's questionings, and proceed by examining such decline in faith as can be found in the characters of Highway to Valour, Tomorrow Will Be Sunday, White Eskimo, and Maud's House.

There is little evidence of a decline in faith on the parts of the characters of The Way of the Sea. Indeed, in the