

Confederate Hauntings:  
The Spectral Legacy of Nationhood in Contemporary Newfoundland Fiction

by

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A thesis submitted to the  
School of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfilment of the  
requirement of the degree of  
Master of Arts

Department of English Language and Literature

Memorial University

May 2015

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

## Abstract

Casual references to ghosts, hauntings, and specters abound in contemporary Newfoundland writing. Frequently, the Newfoundland nation emerges as a ghost that haunts the post-Confederation moment. Wayne Johnston, in his memoir, *Baltimore's Mansion*, considers Newfoundland's "ghost history" in which "the independents had won the referendum" (241). Paul Chafe, in his important dissertation on Newfoundland fiction, points to a province-wide "longing" for "Newfoundland if only things had turned out differently. This is the narrative that haunts Newfoundlanders" (78). Discussing comments made by crab-fisher Tom Best, Jennifer Delisle, in her literary study *The Newfoundland Diaspora*, writes that Best puts forward an affect of being "haunted by the loss of nationhood" (20–21). This pattern warrants a more thorough examination of the idea of the spectral as it works in Newfoundland literature. To that end, I use the diverse field of spectral theory—which uses ghosts and hauntings as analytical tools—to examine three important works of post-Confederation Newfoundland fiction: Wayne Johnston's *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (1998), Michael Crummey's *Galore* (2009), and Paul Bowdring's *The Strangers' Gallery* (2013). All of these novels use the idea of the spectral to convey Newfoundland's historical, geographic, and social complexity. In *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, the spectral works to bolster nationalist narratives of Newfoundland that are defeatist, exclusionary, and oppositional. Alternatively, *Galore* and *The Strangers' Gallery* use the spectral as a means of challenging the rhetoric of Newfoundland nationalism.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to Scott Moffatt, Maria Goodridge, Bess Forrestall, Marc Lewis, Colin Campbell, Diana Jones, and Mandy Rowsell. Special thanks to Dr. Larry Mathews for sparking my interest in Newfoundland literature and supervising this thesis.

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## An Introduction From the Depths of the Sea

One of the two epigraphs to Michael Crummey's *Galore* is taken from *Psalms*: "I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea" (n.p.). The epigraph is a powerful invocation of a people who have undergone a communal trauma and are now waiting for the redemptive hands of an Old Testament God to restore them to prosperity. Who these people are is not entirely clear. Their specific historical or geographical location is not important. What is important is their uncertain and precarious status *as* a people. They are, after all, at the depths of the sea: drowned or drowning, dead or dying, not- or barely-existing. Of course, God's promise is their resurfacing. But that is yet to come. For now, His people remain underwater.

The epigraph, then, presents a people who are existing in an ontologically ambiguous state. It is hard to say definitively whether or not these people truly exist in the present moment. The realization of their sovereignty is simultaneously past and future. The word "again" takes on a special significance in that it registers the temporal ambivalence of the epigraph. Is God referring to the future? (As in, "my people will be brought back; they will be great *again*.") Or is He referring to the past? (As in, "Yet *again*, I will bring my people from the depths of the sea.") The tension between past and future remains unresolved. Even at the level of metre, "again" falls squarely in the centre of the iambic heptameter and thus achieves a balance among the three iambic feet that precede it and the three which follow. "Again" straddles the before and after of the line: it points both backwards and forwards in time while refusing any fixed position in the present.

Where are God's people in all of this? They reside in the same liminal space as the "again": one that encompasses both past and future while maintaining a relationship to the present that is at best tenuous. It is surprising that God still calls them "my people," that they

remain cohesive and identifiable as a group without asserting any necessary or essential characteristics. In fact, their defining characteristic is precisely a lack thereof. Ultimately, this is a people who are haunted by the threat of their own non-existence, by the possibility that they may never return from the depths of the sea. As such, their very being comes to take on what Jacques Derrida might describe as a “spectral” quality. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida defines the specter as follows: “It is something that one does not know, precisely, and one does not know if precisely it is, if it exists, if it responds to a name and corresponds to an essence. One does not know: not out of ignorance, but because this non-object . . . this being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge” (5). The specter is not only that which is impossible to know—its very being is always in question. The people from Crummey’s epigraph are a spectral people in this sense. Their contemporary moment is one of uncertainty, undecidability, and liminality. This thesis explores how three post-Confederation Newfoundland novels—Wayne Johnston’s *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (1998), Michael Crummey’s *Galore* (2009), and Paul Bowdring’s *The Strangers’ Gallery* (2013)—imagine a Newfoundland nation that is spectral in much the same way as I have just described God’s people from Crummey’s epigraph.

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Newfoundland’s Confederation with Canada in 1949 is an event that still haunts the works of many of the island’s representative writers of fiction. The novels of Wayne Johnston, Paul Bowdring, Michael Crummey, Patrick Kavanagh, Ed Riche, and others, are all explicitly preoccupied with the legacy of Confederation in Newfoundland today. The lost possibility of a politically autonomous Newfoundland nation that Confederation signalled is an important and related preoccupation for these authors: it, too, haunts their work and maintains an undeniable

hold on it. In many recently published Newfoundland novels, the nation emerges as an ontologically ambiguous entity. Is it past or present? Here or there? Living or dead? Johnston's Sheilagh Fielding summarizes the situation as follows: "The river of what might have been still runs and there will never come a time when we do not hear it" (*Colony* 560). For Fielding, Confederation has not destroyed Newfoundland's national viability so much as it has placed it in an uncertain light: although it is not wholly realizable, Fielding is still aware of its lingering presence which is, in fact, also an absence. She now sees the nation as existing in the hypothetical realm.

We can begin to understand how these novels show Newfoundland to be spectral through a survey of their descriptions of the landscape. In *Colony*, narrator Joey Smallwood reflects that in the interior of the island "there was beauty everywhere, but it was the bleak beauty of sparsity, scarcity, and stuntedness. . . . It was a beauty so elusive, so tantalizingly suggestive of something you could not quite put into words that it could drive you mad" (137). In *Galore*, Abel Devine wanders through a bog that "seemed virtually uninhabited, a place without history or memory, a landscape of perpetual present. He knew it as his country but was at a loss to say how" (289). In *Gallery*, Anton reflects that the blue mountains of the island's west coast are "not really blue": "you can never go into the blue mountains. . . . If you go there, they will be brown or grey. They are always beyond" (279). These excerpts emphasize the divided nature of the individual's perception of Newfoundland as a physical space: although the characters of these novels can see and imagine Newfoundland, they can never realize it in the present moment in a satisfying way. Newfoundland thus becomes, like Derrida's specter, "visible and invisible, phenomenal and non-phenomenal," "a trace that marks the present with its absence" ("Spectrographies" 117). Joey cannot put Newfoundland into words. Abel cannot say how it is his country. Anton can never go

to the blue mountains. Instead, these characters must all come to terms with the fact that Newfoundland is not open to human comprehension. It is always beyond.

This reading of Newfoundland as a lack-centred space that is resistant to human comprehension and intervention is not a new one. Essay titles such as Cynthia Sugars' "Original Sin, or The Last of the First Ancestors: Michael Crummey's *River Thieves*," Chafe's "'Old Lost Land': Loss in Newfoundland Historical Fiction," or his "Lament for a Notion: Loss and the Beothuk in Michael Crummey's *River Thieves*" all underline loss as the determining factor in interpreting representations of Newfoundland. Jennifer Delisle, near the beginning of her study *The Newfoundland Diaspora: Mapping the Literature of Outmigration*, recounts her family's "common story": "an old one—Newfoundland's economic hardships have propelled a continuous stream of out-migration, not only since Confederation with Canada in 1949, but for well over a century" (2). Paul Chafe begins "Old Lost Land" by cataloguing the "signposts of the island's history": "the eradication of the Beothuk, the loss of independence, the loss of a generation of men at Beaumont Hamel in the First World War, the moratorium on the cod fishery" (168). In the introduction to the section on Newfoundland literature in his book *Anne of Tim Hortons: Globalization and the Reshaping of Atlantic-Canadian Literature*, Herb Wyile cites Chafe's list and adds that, today, "that sense of loss is perhaps stronger than ever" (173). I do not take exception to the notion that loss is a central theme in Newfoundland literature. Indeed, my argument that Newfoundland nationhood is spectral hinges on this very idea. There is, however, in the scholarship that I cite above, a tendency to construct these experiences of political and economic defeat as a necessary element not only of Newfoundland's past but also its present and future. To varying degrees, Delisle, Chafe, and Wyile all invoke, to use Delisle's words, a "continuous stream" of defeat and dispossession. The risk here is that readers of



Newfoundland literature become too heavily invested in these defeatist narratives and thus lose sight of the possibility of any alternative. To be fair, Delisle, Chafe, and Wylie all acknowledge the basic inadequacy of these narratives. Delisle contends that “literature is a space in which writers, and their readers, imagine Newfoundland . . . and in the process both document the forces of diaspora and resist its losses” (27). Chafe, in the final sentence of “Old Lost Land,” gestures to a hope for “another possibility” for Newfoundland (181). Wylie’s main criticism of *Colony* is its inability to look “to the present, let alone the future” (186). Clearly, then, there is a consensus that we need to imagine Newfoundlands other than those reeling in a post-Confederation stupor of upset and self-pity. Despite this consensus, the question of finding a legitimate alternative remains, for these scholars, unanswered.

I find myself with the same dilemma. How should one pay tribute to the loss that is undoubtedly present in the Newfoundland imaginary (and is based on historical reality) without *defining* Newfoundland by that loss? How can a group respectfully memorialize past trauma while upholding an ability to imagine presents and futures that are not traumatic? The spectral Newfoundland nation offers one possible way around this problem: it maintains the importance of loss in any understanding of Newfoundland but also opens up space for alternative iterations of the Newfoundland imaginary. Maria del Pilar Blanco and Esther Preen, in their introduction to *The Spectralities Reader*, contend that the specter “is always both *revenant* (invoking what was) and *arrivant* (announcing what will come)” (13). It “signals the unbidden imposition of parts of the past on the present, and the way which the future is always already populated with certain possibilities derived from the past” (Brown 36). Thus, that which is spectral offers “the potential for different re-articulations of these possibilities” and even “provokes the one it haunts to a response or reaction” (13). The specter allows one to work through traumatic repetition and

thus renews agency to the traumatized subject. Grafted onto Newfoundland, the specter becomes an entity that can potentially catalyze new, non-traumatic understandings of place and identity.

Stan Dragland, in his essay, “*The Colony of Unrequited Dreams: Romancing History?*” implicitly enacts this sort of vision of Newfoundland. Dragland explains how the central struggle in *Colony* is “with Newfoundland itself, ‘Old Lost Land,’ a land independent from the human sphere . . . a mystery that words won’t even reach” (195). The key here for Dragland is loss and lack—the creation of a thing (Newfoundland) that we desire but can never have. In emphasizing these qualities he risks reinscribing defeatist Newfoundland narratives. Near the end of his essay, however, there is a turn in his treatment of the Newfoundland nation. Commenting on Johnston’s description of Newfoundland as “the country of no country” (*Baltimore’s Mansion* 228), Dragland writes: “It [the Newfoundland nation] is not, and it is. It *is* in story” (206). Dragland’s cyclical language resonates with Derrida’s definition of the specter as a “non-object” or a “non-present present” (“Spectrographies” 117). By stating that Newfoundland “*is* in story,” Dragland brings to the forefront the process of the nation’s construction—the fact that the nation is brought about through mediation. Such a recognition calls to mind Benedict Anderson’s definition of the nation as an “imagined community”: “It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (6). This image of communion is, for Anderson, possible thanks to the rise of literacy and the widespread dissemination of mass-produced texts such as newspapers and novels: “the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which . . . set the stage for the modern nation” (57). Since the publication of *Imagined Communities* in 1982, many have criticized Anderson for being too overtly focused

on text as the primary mediator of nation. As David Williams writes, “the governing idea of Anderson’s imagined communities—that print alone has the power to effect such mediation or that no media before print anticipated such forms of community—will not . . . stand up to systematic investigation” (xii). Nonetheless, Anderson’s point that the nation can only come into being through mediation is sound. In the novels that I consider in this thesis, a variety of media make the Newfoundland nation possible, prominently: newspaper and radio (*Colony*); oral folk stories passed around the island via coastal shipping routes (*Galore*); and historical discourse and archival production (*Gallery*). In acknowledging that Newfoundland exists “in story”—that it comes about through mediation—Dragland encourages readers to imagine *remediations* of that story. That is, he encourages us to revise and rewrite the story of Newfoundland. In doing so, he makes way for the articulation of a non-essential imagined community.

Dragland’s engagement with the complexity of the Newfoundland nation culminates at the conclusion of his essay: “I can’t claim to be a Newfoundlander . . . but from my odd position inside and outside at once I’d like to try an insider’s ‘we’” (209). By insisting that he has no right to “claim to be a Newfoundlander,” Dragland implies that there must be some essential trait that Newfoundlanders have which he is without. In this way, Dragland reinforces a concept of national identity that is based on a binary opposition of self and other. However, in the very same sentence he deconstructs this opposition by suggesting that he exists as both insider and outsider. By placing the “we” in quotation marks, Dragland invites readers to consider the potentially problematic nature of any national identification. Who gets to count themselves among the “we”? And why? Who is excluded? The un-ironic tone of Dragland’s final sentence further complicates the situation: “I think we *are* off, off and running” (209). Here, there is little to suggest that he believes himself to be posturing as a Newfoundlander. The “we” here is not

placed in quotation marks. This shift from a self-reflexive and ironic “we” to one that is steadfast in its conviction may indicate a transformative moment for Dragland’s understanding of himself as a Newfoundlander. It also registers an understanding of national identification as fluid. Dragland ultimately resists any essential “we” in that what, precisely, he suggests “we *are*” is difficult to ascertain. The word “off,” as Dragland colloquially uses it, indicates the beginning of a process or journey. On a more literal level, “off” signifies a state of exile: to be “off” is to be away, at a distance, removed. That “we are off, off and running” suggests the existence of a Newfoundland nation that is, rather than stuck in a traumatic past—unable or unwilling to imagine itself as anything other than lack—looking to a future that contains an infinity of as-yet-unrealized possibilities. Dragland’s Newfoundland is *affirmative*: it insists on the idea that Newfoundlanders exist as a cohesive and identifiable group, that they “*are*.” It is also *open-ended*: it recognizes that the processes of identity formation and nation building are and always will be ongoing. This tension pervades all of the novels that I consider in this thesis.

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The spectral Newfoundland nation, then, is self-haunting, self-deconstructing, and always involved in a process of becoming. This provides the opportunity to forge a national space based not on division and demarcation but rather fluidity, dynamism, and openness. Homi Bhabha, in his essay, “Narrating the Nation,” explains that

the “locality” of national culture is neither unified nor unitary . . . nor must it be seen simply as “other” in relation to what is outside or beyond it. The boundary is Janus-faced and the problem of outside/inside must always itself be a process of hybridity, incorporating new “people” in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning. (4)

*Colony*, *Galore*, and *Gallery*, in their presentations of a spectral Newfoundland nation, all move towards a concept of national culture such as the kind that Bhabha identifies.

I argue that *Galore* and *Gallery* are more successful than *Colony* in exploring the possibilities of the spectral for Newfoundland. While *Galore* and *Gallery* both conclude looking rather hopefully towards the future, *Colony* is unable to move past the loss of Newfoundland's political sovereignty. This paralysis leads to a romantic invocation of Newfoundlanders as a geographically- and possibly even genetically-determined people: "we are a people in whose bodies old sea-seeking rivers roar with blood," Fielding proclaims in the novel's concluding sentence. Commenting on Kay Anonosen's essay, "Confederation," Jennifer Delisle writes that, there, "Newfoundland identity is defined in opposition to Canadian identity" (24). Similarly, though the Newfoundland nation does, in *Colony*, emerge as spectral, the novel still articulates an oppositional identity. This is dangerous in that it closes down any possibility for, to paraphrase Bhabha, the incorporation of new "people" into the body politic; in doing so it maintains an image of the Newfoundland nation that is not only defeated but also potentially exclusionary.

Alternatively, *Galore*'s final scene speaks strongly to a concept of the nation as "a process of hybridity" (Bhabha, "Narrating" 4). The scene shows Abel Devine, brutalized following the Battle of Beaumont Hamel, on board a ship bound for Newfoundland. The novel ends before the ship actually returns to Newfoundland, after Abel throws himself into the ocean. Such an ending suggests a refusal to offer any definitive statement of what, exactly, Newfoundland is or should be. Readers are left moving *towards* the island: imaginatively entertaining possibilities for nationhood. *Gallery*'s concluding lines likewise imply a refusal of

national and narrative closure: “*Teach us to sit still / Even among these rocks . . .*” (346). These lines are taken from T.S. Eliot’s poem “Ash-Wednesday,” which continues as follows:

Sister, mother

And spirit of the river, spirit of the sea,

Suffer me not to be separated.

And let my cry come unto Thee. (105)

*Gallery* resists such a definitive return “unto Thee.” There is no uncomplicated embrace of a Newfoundland nation. The final two words of the novel—“*these rocks*”—contrast nicely with the popular nickname for Newfoundland—*The Rock*. Where *The Rock* is suggestive of stability and singularity, “*these rocks*” connotes multiplicity and variation. The conclusions to *Galore* and *Gallery* resist the idea of a closed and completely sovereign Newfoundland.

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Chapter one will examine Johnston’s *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*. The publication of *Colony* was, as Larry Mathews notes in an early review, “the single most important event in the history of Newfoundland literature” (n.p.). In the introduction to his special issue on Newfoundland Fiction in *Essays on Canadian Writing*, Mathews claims that *Colony* “represents a quantum artistic leap forward” in the quality and ambitiousness of fiction in and of Newfoundland (9). The novel was deservedly shortlisted for the Giller Prize and was a runner-up on CBC’s *Canada Reads*. Robert Chafe, who wrote the recently-staged theatrical adaptation of *Colony*, writes that “the publication of *Colony* in 1998 was to become a cultural landmark in Newfoundland. . . . People loved and hated and debated it. . . . It was and is all but sacred” (12). In this first chapter, I argue that the novel offers an account of the Newfoundland nation which, though complex, multifaceted, and highly self-aware, is limited by its unwillingness to move

beyond its lamentation for the lost possibility of political independence. In *Anne of Tim Hortons*, Wyile compellingly argues that “there is little sense in the novel of looking ahead to what Newfoundland might be within Confederation. Instead, the emphasis firmly resides on what might have been” (184). The effect of this, Wyile suggests, is that *Colony* “is also characterized by a nationalist nostalgia and an ambivalence about Newfoundland’s post-Confederation fate. It suggests the inevitability of Newfoundland’s present liminality—disenchanted with Confederation and tantalized by independence—while lamenting the loss of that independence all the same” (178). While *Colony* does mobilize a spectral Newfoundland nation, it is one that is compromised by unproductive nationalist nostalgia that dwells on the past and reinscribes oppositional narratives between Newfoundlanders and their “others.”

I will pay particular attention to the novel’s use of D.W. Prowse’s *A History of Newfoundland* as a kind of spectral emblem of the Newfoundland nation. As narrator Joey Smallwood sees it, Prowse’s *History* “contained, not a record of the past, but the past itself, distilled, compacted to such a density that I could barely lift it” (46). Delisle catalogues the ways in which different characters are haunted by Prowse’s *History*:

It is an object of obsession for Joe’s father. When Joe’s mother throws it down the hill in frustration, it causes a fatal avalanche that becomes her and young Joe’s secret. The *History* is also the object of Joe’s downfall at school, since the letters cut from another copy of the book form a letter sent to the newspaper designed to frame him. Joe retrieves his father’s copy when the snow melts, and he seems fated to carry the book with him throughout his life. (138–139)

To this list I add that D.W. Prowse is himself haunted by his own book. Near the beginning of *Colony* readers see Prowse not as an historical authority but rather as a senile stroke victim:

filling “hundreds, thousands of pages with scrawl,” thinking himself “back working on the first edition of *A History of Newfoundland*, a delusion that not even showing him a copy of the first edition inscribed with his own name could shake for long” (49). Prowse’s *History* haunts *Colony* itself by way of the many epigraphs taken from the *History* that introduce each section of the novel. Prowse’s *History*—“the past itself,” as Joe sees it—is thus, for many of the characters and for us as readers, disarmingly—and disabblingly—woven into the present moment. The pervasiveness of Prowse’s *History*, paired with Fielding’s mock-history of Newfoundland, is unsettling to conventional orientations to the past. Delisle suggests that it is in this way that *Colony* “resists the assimilation of Newfoundland history into a teleological narrative ending in Confederation with Canada” (139). This reading is appealing. *Colony*’s playful engagement with history can certainly be read as resistant to Confederation. However, as I will explain in the following chapter, it strikes me as incongruous with many of the characters’ actual engagements with Prowse’s *History*. They are all burdened by it and thus unable to resist much of anything.

I will conclude this chapter with an examination of the final section of *Colony*: a newspaper column written by Smallwood’s chief antagonist and platonic lover, Sheilagh Fielding. In the column, Fielding discusses Shanwnawdithit, “the last Beothuk Indian” (556). On the one hand, as Paul Chafe argues, this moment serves as an indicator of the precariousness of the claims to Newfoundland nationhood that any population might make. The final section of the novel marks Newfoundland as a contested site and warns readers “that this island is always in a state of flux . . . that what may seem like home may actually be a new colony/nation/province in which Newfoundlanders no longer have a place” (“Artist” 75). Alternatively, as Danielle Fuller argues, Fielding’s identification with Shawnaudithit can be read as serving the opposite function. By invoking a kinship with an absent Beothuk people, Fielding may in fact be



overwriting their history—the Beothuk struggle becomes hers—and in doing so advancing the interests of the settler-invader group. “Subsequently,” Fuller suggests, “the ‘people’ interpolated by the concluding images of the novel are clearly the descendants of white settler-invaders” (33). Both readings are worth exploring in moving towards a more fully-developed version of the spectral Newfoundland nation, such as the kind that operates in *Galore* and *Gallery*.

In chapter two I will examine the character of Judah, from Crummey’s *Galore*, who, in the novel’s opening scene, emerges out of the belly of a whale in front of the community of Paradise Deep. In the novel’s opening paragraph, the narrator describes Judah as “The Great White. St. Jude of Lost Cause. Sea Orphan.” (1). Judah is other: he is origin-less and unassimilable into the community’s imaginary. He does not, to paraphrase Derrida, belong to knowledge (*Specters* 5). Judah functions essentially as a ghost in Paradise Deep. His presence initially forces many of the community’s inhabitants to question their understandings of the familiar and so triggers a sense of unhomeliness. In *Canadian Gothic*, Cynthia Sugars explains that in early Canadian literature ghosts function in such a way as to infuse the Canadian space with a collective history. Ghosts, she argues, “assert and overcome [a perceived] cultural and historical belatedness” (4–5); “the national uncanny is informed by . . . a desire for haunting” (15). In other words, ghosts, though they frequently serve to destabilize and disrupt, can also fulfill a desire for national cohesiveness. This is because ghosts point to a shared past with which all members and descendants of a settler population can identify without having any personal experience of. Judah becomes an affirming agent for the Newfoundland nation of which he is an emblem. The nation that Judah affirms is a spectral one: it is unstable, non-essential, fluid, and rooted in the future’s possibilities. *Galore* ends after Abel—Judah’s great-grandson—throws himself into the ocean, before the ship that he travels on arrives in Newfoundland. The novel

thus resists any final vision of the Newfoundland nation. Furthermore, *Galore* is set over a period of generations: it shows an *ad hoc* national community that is in a process of formation and never a truly stable, finished product. Judah is the only constant in the novel; and he, of course, is only partially, spectrally, present.

I will also show how *Galore* puts forward a concept of nationhood as necessarily mediated. Following Anderson, we can say that the nation only comes into existence *through* its being enunciated, written, or broadcast. This emphasis on mediation alone is a key means of spectralizing the nation. Justin D. Edwards elaborates on Anderson's definition of the nation as an "imagined political community" as follows: "if a nation is imaginary, a precarious fabrication that is built upon questionable cultural narratives, then a nation is also haunted by the spectral figure of its own fabrication" (xix). *Galore* makes this haunting explicit by showing how the nation is mediated primarily through and around Judah. Near the end of his life, Judah takes to scratching biblical verses into the walls of his cell. Is Judah *writing nation*? I will examine the metafictional tension between the oral tradition that *Galore* celebrates and the text-based medium in which the novel, *as a novel*, is written. Judah, as a writing figure in an oral tradition, draws readers' attention to the various transmissions—spoken, written, or otherwise—of a spectral Newfoundland nation and to the centrality of these transmissions in the creation of nation.

In the third and final chapter, I will examine how narrator Michael Lowe of Paul Bowdring's *The Strangers' Gallery* portrays St. John's as a space that is in various ways haunted by the memory of a Newfoundland nation. Of particular interest in this respect is the novel's presentation of the Colonial Building: the former site of Newfoundland's House of Assembly where, in 1933, the legislature "voted itself out of existence, committed parliamentary suicide"

(*Gallery* 61). The Colonial Building acts in the novel as a synecdoche for Newfoundland nationhood: it seems a little bit out of place in a rapidly suburbanizing and gentrifying contemporary St. John's; its function as a piece of public infrastructure—"a latter-day Athenaeum," as Michael describes it (62)—is not entirely clear; its relevance to the lives of most of the city's residents is minimal. And yet, the Colonial Building endures in *Gallery*, and in St. John's today, as a signifier for a past—specifically: a past in which Newfoundland exists as an independent nation—that will remain forever out of reach.

As a professional archivist, Michael is ideally situated to recognize the historical residue of his material surroundings. He shows St. John's to be a haunted space by infusing his descriptions of the city with historical detail. For readers, the effect is to make the past partially accessible while at the same time reinforcing our displacement from it. Michel de Certeau, in his essay, "Walking in the City," suggests that buried inside the structures and spaces that we live in there lie innumerable histories waiting to be uncovered. Michael's role as narrator is, as de Certeau says, to "indicate the invisible identities of the visible: it is the very definition of a place, in fact, that it is composed by these series of displacements and effects among the fragmented strata that form it" (108). "Haunted places," de Certeau continues, "are the only ones people can live in—and this inverts the schema of the Panopticon" (108). Thus, for de Certeau, haunting is a politically subversive phenomenon, for it indicates an alternative to the established order. The ghost is unwanted by those in power. In *Gallery*, hauntings operate as a form of resistance to colonial and capitalist narratives that have invaded St. John's and, the novel suggests, threaten to erase historical memory. Hauntings forge a form of cultural integrity and continuity in the face of insecurities surrounding the legitimacy of claims to nationhood.

*Gallery* does indeed risk falling into the same nationalist trap that I argue *Colony* does. *Gallery*'s tenor is elegiac. And it is certainly true that the loss of a Newfoundland nation is the central preoccupation of the novel. Despite this, *Gallery* ultimately offers a vision of the spectral Newfoundland nation that is deeply aware of a traumatic past but oriented towards an alternative, open-ended future. *Gallery* ends with the promise of a baby for Michael and Miranda: not Michael's biological child, but Anton's. In adopting Anton and Miranda's child, Michael enacts a model of a collectivity—family, community, nation—based not on raw physiology or any psycho-genetic essentialism but rather a sense of intersubjectivity and mutual dependence.

*Gallery* is an appropriate novel with which to conclude this thesis because it, perhaps more directly than either *Colony* or *Galore*, speaks to the conflicted legacy of Newfoundland nationhood for individuals living on the island today. Michael, born shortly before Confederation, belongs to a generation for which Newfoundland's entrance into Canada is widely accepted as a good thing. Indeed, the novel presents the idea of being either for or against Confederation as a somewhat quaint relic of an earlier time: "I didn't think there were people like him still around," Michael's girlfriend, Elaine, remarks after meeting the eccentric Miles Harnett, "a dyed-in-the-wool anti-Confederate" (137). Despite this, Newfoundland nationhood persists in spectral form. *Gallery* shows that it exists beneath the surface of Newfoundland life and gives shape to its discourse.

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If the spectral Newfoundland nation is indeed a valid trope in Newfoundland literature, where does it come from? What is the social context that makes this an appealing way of imagining and representing Newfoundland? One of the ways that we can read these hauntings

are as a reaction to a particular brand of Newfoundland nationalism that, as Sean Cadigan writes, “has a negative tone, a fascination with conspiracy theories, how Canada has not done enough, how provincehood has undermined cultural identity” (288). Perhaps we could say that, at its best, in Newfoundland literature, *the spectral subverts defeatist and oppositional nationalist narratives*. A wide range of political, cultural, and consumer activities construct these narratives. A few examples include: former premier Danny Williams’ 2004 decision to lower all Canadian flags from provincial government buildings following a breakdown in talks between him and then-Prime Minister Paul Martin over the allocation of revenue generated from oil deposits off the coast of Newfoundland; Greg Malone’s recent work of popular history, *Don’t Tell The Newfoundlanders: The True Story of Newfoundland’s Confederation With Canada* (2012), which falsely suggests that “Newfoundland was occupied by Canada in 1949 by means of a constitutional coup arranged with Great Britain” (238); the popularity of “FREE NFLD” apparel sold at Living Planet, a successful boutique in downtown St. John’s; and songs such as folk-rock band Shanneyganock’s hit, “Home Boys, Home” (“it’s now or it’s never / we’ve been pulled apart forever”). These examples all work to construct a narrative of Newfoundland as having been unfairly robbed of its dignity by some external force—typically understood as Canada, Britain, or both. The byproduct of this narrative is the nationalist desire for an economically and politically “FREE NFLD.”

Newfoundland is made up of a much more diverse and disparate group of people than any Williams-esque brand of nationalism can hope to account for. By presenting Newfoundland as one stable, fixed, eternal entity—*The Rock*—we risk erasing divisions of class, race, and gender that exist in the province. We also risk stifling alternative imaginings of Newfoundland. The spectral Newfoundland nation offers another possibility. It offers a vision of Newfoundland

as a contested symbol that is always in flux, always being reinterpreted in order to fit the needs of the present and anticipate the inevitable alterations of the future. It offers a Newfoundland in which “we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves” (Bhabha, “Commitment to Theory” 22). It offers a Newfoundland worthy of the name.

## Chapter One: Defeatist National Narratives in *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*

Wayne Johnston's *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* offers a complex and seemingly contradictory vision of the Newfoundland nation. On the one hand, the Newfoundland that *Colony* puts on display is a closed and rigidly-defined national entity. This is evident in the novel's concluding sentence, in which Sheilagh Fielding declares, "we are a people in whose bodies old sea-seeking rivers roar with blood" (562). Here, Newfoundland identity is genetically and geologically determined. Fielding imagines Newfoundlanders as existing in a physical communion with the land: blood and river water mix in order to affirm a "sense of person-linked-to-place which is essential for nationalism" (O'Dea 380). The effect of this is a problematic construction of Newfoundlanders as a physiologically distinct race. On the other hand, *Colony* offers possibilities for deconstructing essentialist understandings of identity. Somewhat surprisingly, Fielding is the centerpiece of this project. In most of her public writings and social interactions, she affects a staunch resistance to the idea of any kind of collective identification. In one scene, Joey Smallwood, attempting to court her journalistic support for Confederation, reprimands her: "Aren't you going to take a side in this thing? . . . Under Confederation, we can make a new start. We can make them pay for what they've done to us" (464-5). To which Fielding replies: "Who's we? Who's us? Who's them?" (465). Fielding's questions indicate a refusal "to take a side" and an awareness that national identification requires an us/them binary through which citizenship forms in oppositional terms. In Fielding, then, there exist two clashing attitudes towards the Newfoundland nation: the first embraces nation and looks to it as a foundation for identity; the second is skeptical of nation and seeks to deconstruct it. This tension pervades the novel itself. *Colony* is highly aware of the problems that attend nationalisms of all kinds. Frequently though, this awareness is eclipsed by an intense grief over

the loss of Newfoundland's political independence that manifests in nationalist rhetoric such as the kind that concludes the novel.

Paul Chafe reads *Colony* as distinctly postcolonial in its resistance to any single, totalizing definition of Newfoundland. He argues that the novel inspires "readings that regard the past as hybrid and multi-faceted, full of conflicting 'truths' that create not one Newfoundland history but a Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders that contain multitudes" ("Artist" 78). In this way, the novel is a liberating text that offers alternatives to commodified place-myths and encourages readers to imagine new Newfoundlands: "dissenting voices are given the opportunity to reinsert themselves into recorded history and rework and requestion accepted 'facts'" ("Artist" 58). Herein lies the emancipatory potential of *Colony*'s postcolonial bent. I agree with Chafe's argument that *Colony* offers a multiplicity of Newfoundlands to choose from. The novel portrays a host of perspectives inflected in different ways by class, gender, occupation, and degree of urban/outport experience. This results in an anti-authoritarian heteroglossia: a panoply of divergent utterances, an "arena . . . of intense interaction and struggle between one's own and another's word" (Bakhtin 354). I also agree that this heteroglossic multiplicity can prove liberating in the face of colonial discourses that construe Newfoundland as a cultural backwater and Newfoundlanders as childlike. Discussing the implications of heteroglossia in the novel, Bakhtin writes:

What is involved here is a very important, in fact a radical revolution in the destinies of human discourse: the fundamental liberation of cultural-semantic and emotional intentions from the hegemony of a single and unitary language, and consequently the simultaneous loss of a feeling for language as myth, that is, as an absolute form of thought. (367)



For all of its heteroglossic/postcolonial hybridity, *Colony* ultimately offers a unified vision of Newfoundland—what Bakhtin might call an “absolute form”—that deviates only slightly from colonial narratives of defeat and disenfranchisement. In *Colony*, Newfoundland’s complexity and hybridity can even be read as perpetuating these narratives. Near the end of the novel, Joey is left baffled by “the paradox of Newfoundland”: “It stirred in me . . . a longing to create something commensurate with it. I thought Confederation might be it, but I was wrong” (552).

Newfoundland’s physical enormousness takes on a sublime quality. Joey sees in it a “paradox,” a problem, a thing so huge as to be beyond human comprehension. In light of Chafe’s analysis, what is interesting here is that Newfoundland’s complexity—its paradoxical, hybridized largeness—is precisely the problem. Rather than emancipating Joey, it leaves him aporetic, at a loss. In this way, *Colony* subsumes a potentially liberating postcolonial hybridity into a nationalist narrative of defeat.

Important for the purposes of this thesis is the way in which *Colony*’s invocation of a spectral Newfoundland nation works to bring this situation about. Herb Wyile writes that the novel is “preoccupied with what Johnston has described as ‘the ghost history’ of Newfoundland, the specter of what might have been” (174). Johnston’s Newfoundland nation is very much “a trace that marks the present with its absence” (Derrida, “Spectrographies” 117). The lost possibility of political independence for Newfoundland preoccupies *Colony* and the lives of its characters. The Newfoundland nation that *Colony* delineates is spectral in a different way than it is in *Galore* and *The Strangers’ Gallery*. In the latter two texts, spectrality registers a loss and subsequently opens up a possibility; in *Colony*, spectrality registers loss and little else. To put this in spatial terms, we could say that *Galore* and *Gallery* make productive use of the space that the loss of political independence creates for the concept of Newfoundland and the subjectivities

of Newfoundlanders. At the very least, these two novels recognize that there is space to be made use of. *Galore* and *The Strangers' Gallery* hold out a hope for the future and look forward to the possibilities offered by Newfoundland's current, post-Confederatation position.

Alternatively, in *Colony*, the loss of political independence registers as pure negative. The novel is a record of a collective trauma that has not yet been worked through. There is little hope for future resolution. In the novel's final pages, Fielding writes, "the river of what might have been still runs and there will never come a time when we do not hear it" (560). Newfoundland, for Fielding, is a space of traumatic repetition. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud defines "destiny neurosis" as "an essential character-trait which remains always the same and which is compelled to find expression in a repetition of the same experience . . . the subject appears to have a *passive* experience, over which he has no influence, but in which he meets in repetition of the same fatality" (22). Fielding identifies in Newfoundland a similar destiny neurosis. Its defining mark is a psychic wound that does not heal. This wound is both a reminder of past trauma and a warning of trauma to come. The spectral Newfoundland nation, in *Colony*, reminds readers of the trauma of Confederation and inscribes this trauma into contemporary understandings of Newfoundland.

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This obsession with collective historical trauma is consistent with many other iterations of mainstream Newfoundland nationalism. As Jennifer Delisle suggests, "Newfoundland nationalism is often built upon a collective memory of hardship and oppression going back to the earliest settlements in the seventeenth and eighteenth century" (18). Such a nationalism is a hazardous construction. Jerry Bannister writes that it

carries with it the noble rhetoric of liberation but also the parochial seeds of tribalism and the danger of racism . . . Defining Newfoundland history in terms of binary antagonism—insiders (islanders) versus outsiders (mainlanders)—nationalism places the blame for the island’s failures squarely on the shoulders of others. (151)

This sort of Newfoundland nationalism is only superficially empowering. While it may provide temporary emotional relief from a feeling of marginalization, it ultimately only reinforces this feeling. By placing “the blame for the island’s failures squarely on the shoulders of others,” nationalism diminishes Newfoundlanders’ understanding of themselves as capable and effective agents. This leads to a greater sense of disenfranchisement than would otherwise be the case.

In *Colony*, Judge D.W. Prowse’s *A History of Newfoundland* operates as a key avatar of Newfoundland nationalism. As Bannister explains, the text installs a “paradigm of repression” in Newfoundlanders’ self-understanding (126): “Rather than triumphing over their history of oppression, according to this view, Newfoundlanders are haunted by it. We are not free from our past but trapped by it, forced to endure seemingly endless cycles of economic failure and social misery” (126). Chafe argues that *Colony*, in asserting a postcolonial hybridity, challenges Prowse’s *History*: “A major source of the history Johnston is underwriting in his novel is the ‘grand narrative of struggle’ that is Judge Prowse’s *History of Newfoundland*” (“Artist” 45). It seems to me, however, that there is little in the novel to suggest that Johnston fully succeeds in “underwriting” this history. Although *Colony*’s hybrid make-up does challenge the dominance of Prowse’s *History*—and the larger nationalist narrative for which it stands—the trajectories of the novel’s characters compromise this challenge. At the end of the novel, almost all of the characters are, in different ways, defeated, dispossessed, and broken. Joey fails to transform Newfoundland into “one of the great small nations of the earth” (165). Instead, he forgoes self-

determination and bends to the political will of Canada and Britain in order to secure political fame. Joey's parents remain on the Brow—poor, unhappy, and unable to imagine alternatives to their impoverished situation. As Chafe himself points out, Joey's father, Charlie Smallwood, "sees himself as the product of a long line of failure, and while he readily rages against his fate, he as eagerly accepts it . . . Faced with an extensive narrative of Newfoundland failure, Charlie accepts his lot and laments the glory that could have been, if only" ("Artist" 57). Perhaps most distressingly, the novel revels in what amounts to Joey's vandalism of the island's economic well-being as he obsessively pursues an unrealistic plan of land-based industrial development: "Someone convinced [Joey] there was no better place in the world to manufacture gloves made entirely from the skins of gazelles than Newfoundland. Into this scheme went half a million dollars; out of it came not so much as a single pair of gloves" (502). At the end of the novel, Joey counts himself among a group of "men who wound up . . . all but destroying the country [they] had sought . . . to save" (530). Fielding is perhaps one character who manages to achieve a degree of self-determination by taking control of her personal story and that of Newfoundland through her historical and journalistic writings. She is able to uphold an image of authorship and control that no other character in the novel can. Nonetheless, her fate, at novel's end, is not exactly satisfying. She is, after all, Joey's unrequited love, and at novel's end we see her alone, writing to a senile Joey who is unable to return her affection, imagining herself "*hugged and kissed*" by him (556). Thus, like the culmination of the Newfoundland national project, the culmination of their love remains, at novel's end, an unrealized possibility existing only in an imagined, hypothetical realm.

*Colony* ultimately does little to overturn the "paradigm of repression" that is put forward

by Prowse's *History*. The text serves in the novel as a reminder of Newfoundland's colonial status and the defeated mentality of its people. Joey tells readers:

the *History* contained, not a record of the past, but the past itself, distilled, compacted to such a density that I could barely lift it. My father revered the *History*, not so much because it justified the ways of Newfoundland to the world, or because it denounced England for its three-hundred-year exploitation of Newfoundland, though that it did both he greatly appreciated, but because it was the concrete product of a man who had succeeded in doing in life the thing he considered most worth doing. (46)

Prowse's *History* is a burden for Joey. It weighs him down; he can "barely lift" it. This situation is literalized when Joey carries not one but two copies of Prowse's *History* on a cross-island trek: one is an illegible copy which belongs to his father and represents a feeling of oppression that is tied to familial poverty; the other copy, which he reads while he walks, represents a similar feeling of oppression that is tied to national failure. Together, the two copies weigh Joey down, slow his pace, and suggest a twining of familial and national defeat. Through this twining, Johnston problematically renders the nation on the same genetic terms as the family. Prowse's *History* fosters a defeatist and oppositional understanding of Newfoundland identity. Charlie's main reason for admiring the *History* has to do with what it represents: independence and autonomy—two things which he is without: "it was the concrete product of a man who had succeeded in doing in life the thing he considered most worth doing." Prowse's *History* thus symbolizes an ideal of self-determination that Charlie cannot achieve and is haunted by. Charlie passes this haunting on to Joey. Although it holds out a hope for future prosperity, Prowse's *History* ultimately asserts a lineage of failure—both that of the Smallwood family and of Newfoundland.

Prowse's *History* emerges as a secular Bible through which Newfoundlanders understand their experiences. It invades the very structure of the novel through the epigraphs that introduce each section. Consider, for example, the first two of these epigraphs—one introducing the novel as a whole, the other introducing section one. The first epigraph's primary function is to indicate an historiographic self-awareness: "The history of the Colony is only partially contained in printed books; it lies buried under great rubbish heaps of unpublished records, English, Municipal, Colonial and Foreign, in rare pamphlets, old Blue Books, forgotten manuscripts" (n.p.). This epigraph performs "the obligatory postmodernist gesture toward the irrecoverability of authentic historical experience" (Flynn 6). The epigraph also speaks to the "irrecoverability" of Newfoundland as an historical artifact. It is lost, or, at best, "only partially contained in printed books." The second epigraph presents Newfoundland as a White Elephant of a colonial holding: "in quite a natural way, as one pawns off a worthless horse on a friend, so Sir William sold a large portion of his grant at a very high price to Lord Baltimore" (n.p.). This epigraph anticipates *Colony*'s preoccupations with class division and with Joey's failed effort to transform Newfoundland into a politically and economically independent unit. It also anticipates the novel's presentation of Newfoundland's marginal position between Britain and Canada. *Colony* portrays Confederation as confirmation that, in the eyes of these larger nations, Newfoundland is nothing more than a commodity, "a worthless horse," an unpromising resource that one might be inclined to "pawn off" on another. Taken together, these epigraphs foreground Newfoundland's subaltern colonial status.

Prowse's *History* is also a key plot device. In this way, we can understand the text as controlling *Colony* itself. A forged letter written with cutouts from Prowse's *History* results in Joey's leaving school, effectively setting the story in motion. It is not until Fielding reveals to

Joey that it was her father who forged the letter as revenge for getting her pregnant (which, in fact, he did not: it was Judge Prowse's grandson) that the novel finds any resolution. Following Joey's leaving school, Charlie becomes completely obsessed with Prowse's *History*: "he got going about Judge Prowse's *History*, which he was now calling the Book. 'That cursed book,' he said, 'I wish to God I'd never seen that Book'" (65). That Charlie takes to calling Prowse's *History* "the *Book*" is especially interesting in that the word recalls the word for another important symbol of oppression in *Colony*: the *Boot*. The Boot is the large, black, boot-shaped sign for Charlie's father's footwear business, which is affixed to the wall of the Narrows of the St. John's harbour as advertising to seamen. For Charlie, "the Boot was like the hag . . . he had dreamed about the Narrows boot swaying in the wind on the iron bar like some ominously silent, boot-shaped bell. At other times, it was a boot-shaped headstone" (10–11). Charlie's nightmares reveal his fear of failing to overcome the feeling that his life has been predestined. In recounting them, Joey reveals that he is subject to the same fear. On the night of the second referendum—after the votes are counted and Confederation is guaranteed—Joey oversees the removal of the Boot from wall of the Narrows: "It took the man, using a steel saw, ten minutes to cut through the iron bar drilled into the cliff, ten minutes to bring down the Boot, which landed with a thud on the prow of his boat" (486). The anticlimax of this scene is palpable. The "thud" that the Boot makes as it falls into the boat does not strike us as liberating but rather pointless.

This scene concludes section five of the novel; section six opens with the following epigraph from Prowse's *History*: "May we not confidently hope that when the morning sun shines out again . . . evil times will have passed and our island, closely united with her prosperous younger sisters [i.e. Canada], will once again become a happy and contented Newfoundland" (487). Joey fulfills Prowse's hope for union with Canada. However, the post-

Confederation Newfoundland in *Colony* is neither happy nor content. Walking through the confetti-littered streets of St. John's, Joey feels the weight of a revolver and an iron ingot in his coat pockets. Joey's body becomes emblematic of Newfoundland's political stature: "they caused me to hunch slightly and I wondered if I would ever walk upright again" (484). The revolver that Joey carries with him is symbolic of the oppositional and potentially destructive nature of his politics. The iron ingot that acts as counterweight to his revolver forges a symbolic connection with the iron bar on which the boot hangs. It signifies the material residue of Joey's impoverished past and is a reminder that he can never fully extricate himself from the narrative of defeat into which he was born.

Joey's final position in the novel illustrates most clearly his failure to self-determine. Following a stroke, Joey is left unable to "*read, write, or speak, but can only understand the spoken word*" (555). Fielding writes to Joey: "*They made you a recording of the judge's History, took turns reading. Old Prowse speaking to you in dozens of different voices*" (555). The recording of Prowse's *History* haunts Joey's final moments. The text has become the lens through which he perceives reality. Even those closest to him are now mediated through the *History*: the words his family members speak to him are in fact Prowse's. Joey's understanding of the world becomes indistinguishable from the *History*: "*when the voices out there stop making sense, the voice in here will, too*" (555). Joey's position recalls an earlier scene in the novel in which Prowse's grandson takes Joey to meet the Judge and have him sign Charlie's copy of the *History*. The scene shows Prowse to be a senile stroke-victim, sitting in his study, mindlessly filling page after page with illegible scribbles. When the Judge signs the book, he merely defaces it with a scribble. The signature ironically divests Prowse of his authorial presence. David Williams suggests that "the illegible scrawl of a man afflicted with 'agraphia' is not even



an autograph but merely the mark of an absent author” (109). Prowse’s signature is, in a sense, an anti-signature: it is a record of a signer that is not in any meaningful way present. The text erases its author, strips him of agency, debilitates him. Joey, then, is haunted not only by the defeatist vision of Newfoundland that Prowse’s *History* espouses but also his memory of the Judge and the realization that he has, in a sense, become him. Fielding makes the connection between Joey and Judge Prowse explicit: “*Stroke-stricken. Struck. ‘He was always having strokes, Prowse [i.e. Judge Prowse’s Grandson] said, but he meant the judge, not you’*” (555). Joey’s ultimate failure, this scene suggests, is his inability to self-author.

This failure is analogous to Newfoundland’s failure to achieve independence. The pairing of these two failures is perhaps most interestingly illustrated by the fact that Joey is the editor of not one but two (failed) encyclopedias of Newfoundland. The first, *The Book of Newfoundland*, “wound up stacked like cod in some warehouse on the waterfront” (385). Fielding, in her final address to Joey, briefly mentions the second: “*You an inventory of the world. Like your Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador, which I have heard is almost finished’*” (556). The two encyclopedias are indicative of Joey’s chameleon-like politics. *The Book of Newfoundland* is a nationalist document. *The Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* is also nationalist, but it is also distinctly post-Confederate: its title articulates the *province’s* status as it is interpolated inside Canada. Both encyclopedias, unlike Prowse’s *History*, are failures that indicate the larger failure of Joey’s life’s struggle to write himself into history. That Prowse’s *History* overwrites the end of Joey’s life registers this failure as absolute.

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Fielding operates as an antagonist to Joey’s political ambitions. By way of her *Condensed History of Newfoundland* and her various columns interspersed throughout the novel, Fielding

establishes herself as a trickster-like figure who urges Newfoundlanders to think outside of the dominant national discourses that surround them. Privately, however, she harbours a deep nationalist sentiment. This is clear from the beginning of the novel when she expresses her longing for a past in which Newfoundland exists as an independent country. For Fielding, post-Confederation Newfoundland is a fallen space, one that has lost a fundamental part of itself that it will never fully recover. “*The past is,*” she laments, “*literally another country now*” (3). Nostalgia is the by-product of this recognition. Fielding idealizes Newfoundland’s past—“*the sun shone through the sails and cast an amber-coloured light across the harbour and the streets*” (6)—and in doing so eclipses the need for any consideration of its present or future. What Newfoundland is and who Newfoundlanders are thus become matters of great uncertainty. By placing Fielding’s narration immediately after the epigraphs from Prowse’s *History*, Johnston connects Newfoundland’s colonial past with the post-Confederation present that Fielding and Joey are living in. This results in the construction of an ongoing historical narrative in which Newfoundland exists in a state of perpetual defeat and disenfranchisement. Fielding’s imaginative re-creation of a pre-Confederation Newfoundland destabilizes her present political reality and presents the Newfoundland psyche as likewise destabilized. To identify as a Newfoundlander, she suggests, is to occupy a subjectivity that is haunted by a promise of nationhood that is both unrealizable and un-erasable; it is, ultimately, to live with a lack.

Fielding’s nationalist inclinations are confirmed on the night of Newfoundland’s official entrance into Canada. In an unsent letter to Joey, anticipating the effects of Confederation, she writes: “*Nationality, for Newfoundlanders a nebulous attribute at best, will become obsolete, and the word country will be even more meaningless than it was before. The question that has been there from the start, unasked, unanswered, unacknowledged, will still be there*” (494). Fielding’s

statement registers with Blanco and Preen's notion that the specter is both "*revenant* (announcing what was) and *arrivant* (announcing what will come)" (13). For her, the answer to the question that is Newfoundland exists in an inaccessible past and an unrealizable future—though never the present.

The spectral void that is left after Confederation stands not as a space of potential—as it does in *Galore* and *The Strangers' Gallery*—but rather as a traumatizing lack. Consider the final lines of Fielding's *History*:

I wish this Newfoundland could be  
Unlooked at except by me  
And when I died looked at by none.  
Then out of time this place would run.  
The land again would be the same  
As before the people came.  
It would not be empty, lonely  
Or forlorn. It simply would not be. (523)

Here, there is little of the ultra-ironic flair that pervades the rest of her *History*. The poem communicates a sorrow for Newfoundland's continuing colonial legacy that culminates in a desire for self-annihilation, a desire for a Newfoundland that "simply would not be" (523). Wylie suggests that Fielding's *History* ultimately reinforces the "romantic nationalist view of the history of Newfoundland as 'a narrative of the long struggle for control over the island between the tyrannical West Country merchants . . . and the humble settlers'" (180). Although Fielding's writings are subversive in the sense that they engage critically with the narrative conventions and

epistemological assumptions of Prowse's *History*, they ultimately function not to liberate but rather debilitate the Newfoundland psyche.

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One way in which Fielding deals with the resulting feeling of paralysis is by imagining herself in solidarity with Shawnawdithit, "the last Beothuk Indian" (556). Reflecting on the two years that she spent recovering from tuberculosis in the sanitarium, Fielding remarks that she grew to feel a kinship with Shawnawdithit. By invoking the demise of the Beothuk people, Fielding extends Newfoundland's defeatist narrative to the pre-colonial period. We can read the slightly awkward recognition of the Beothuk people at this late stage of the novel as an indication of a postcolonial awareness that white settlers are not the only Newfoundlanders, that other groups have felt a connection to the island and that all peoples are nomadic, perpetually renegotiating place-based identities. Fielding makes readers aware of the precariousness of nationhood by evoking Shawnawdithit explicitly as "the last Beothuk Indian" (560).

Fielding acknowledges the fact that her identification with Shawnawdithit is naïve: "I was young enough to think that Nancy [i.e. Shawnawdithit] and I had something in common," she says (558). Nonetheless, the emotional climax of the novel's conclusion overrides Fielding's awareness and stifles any consideration of the appropriative way in which she identifies with the Beothuk people. Danielle Fuller argues that the ultimate effect of this scene is that "the 'people' interpolated by the concluding images of the novel are clearly the descendants of white settler-invaders" (33). Shawnawdithit is a signifier not so much for herself but rather for the Beothuk as an extinct people. Fielding uses her to construct a vision of Newfoundland as an empty space without a people who can claim history or cultural memory of any sort. This move clears the ground for her assertion of ownership of the land on behalf of the settler group. Terry Goldie

defines indigenization as the process whereby “the ‘settler’ population attempts to become as though indigenous, as though ‘born’ of the land” (“Man”). He describes the logic of indigenization in Newfoundland as follows: “We had natives. We killed them off. Now we are the natives. In a paradoxical equation, the claims of guilt allow a belief in the white as ‘indigenous’ which has not been possible in other parts of Canada” (*Fear and Temptation* 157). Fielding takes this situation one step further. Not only does she situate herself as a member of the new native group, but she also forges an illusory connection with the Beothuk. In doing so, she suggests that the history of violence inflicted on the Beothuk and the national history of white Newfoundland settlers are one and the same. Fielding thus overwrites Shawnawdithit’s personal history in order to fabricate an idealized native subjectivity that advances the interests of Newfoundland nationalism.

Fielding’s indigenization renders problematic her novel-concluding statements in which she suggests that there exists a natural connection between the Newfoundlander and Newfoundland. Commenting on the uniqueness of Newfoundland’s physical terrain—“the northern night, the barrens, the bogs, the rocks and ponds and hills”—Fielding suggests that

These things, finally, primarily, are Newfoundland.

From a mind divesting itself of images, those of the land would be the last to go.

We are a people on whose minds these images have been imprinted. (562)

Ultimately, then, Fielding affirms an essentialist understanding of Newfoundland—a Newfoundland that exists in some *final* or *primary* state. Fielding’s use of the word “imprinted” resonates with Joey’s description of the colonial education that he received during his time at school: “England had so early been *imprinted* on my brain that no amount of drawing maps could supplant it” (italics mine 89–90). We can read this echo as Fielding’s final rejection of an

English colonial mindset. The imprint of the Newfoundland mind is, now, not a map, but rather, an image of the land. Fielding replaces a colonial *geographical* determinism with a postcolonial and nationalist *geological* determinism. Whether or not the latter is truly a progressive alternative to the former is for the reader to decide. It seems to me unlikely. Rather than challenge the defeatist Newfoundland narrative that Prowse's *History* espouses, *Colony* updates it for the late twentieth century.

## Chapter Two: Abject Communities in *Galore*

Michael Crummey's *Galore* is a magic realist narrative that tracks the histories of two families living in outport Newfoundland over a period of six generations. Like *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, this is a novel explicitly preoccupied with the creation and maintenance of Newfoundland identity. Intergenerational transmissions of various kinds—stories, genetic traits, supernatural powers—operate in the novel as hauntings that help to create Newfoundlanders' sense of communal identity. Discussing *Galore*, Cynthia Sugars writes:

the idea of an inherited ancestral unconsciousness provides an invigorating evolutionary haunting that sets Newfoundlanders in place and time . . . this endeavour is both affirming and unsettling, since to conjure the ghost of inheritance is at once to 'fix' and 'unhinge' the individual's self-presence as a modern-day Newfoundlander. ("Phantoms" 12)

In *Galore*, then, there is a similar tension as exists in *Colony*. Both novels contain competing impulses for and against the Newfoundland nation. In different ways and to varying degrees, both novels offer possibilities to, in Sugars' words, *fix* and *unhinge* the concept of nation itself. *Galore* overcomes this tension by collapsing the two impulses into one through the figure of Judah, who exists at the centre of a nation-affirming folk tradition. The novel bears witness to Judah's improbable emergence out of the belly of a beached whale and his propulsion into the future through his descendent, Abel, who, at novel's end, throws himself into the ocean, presumably back into the belly of the whale. This cyclical narrative track construes the nation paradoxically as, on the one hand, complete, unified, and closed, and, on the other hand, unfinished, ongoing, and in a perpetual state of re-creation and rejuvenation. Judah's miraculous birth is a unifying origin story for the neighbouring communities of Paradise Deep and The Gut.

As generations pass, the story of Judah turns into legend and comes to serve a similar unifying function for Newfoundland as a whole. Despite his centrality to Newfoundland's folk tradition, Judah himself remains an elusive, ghostly figure. He is "The Great White. St. Jude of Lost Cause. Sea Orphan" (1). The ontological ambiguity of his character thus becomes that of the nation. By figuring Judah as foundational to Newfoundland identity, *Galore* makes way for a spectral Newfoundland nation that resists easy assertions of collective identity.

Before moving on, it will be useful to consider in general terms the idea of the folk as it operates in contemporary Newfoundland fiction. Herb Wyile writes compellingly about what he sees in Atlantic-Canadian literature as a "pronounced, if sometimes ambivalent, engagement with the Folk iconography that has had such a defining influence on the image of the region" (26). Folklore and folk iconography, Wyile explains, fit somewhat uncomfortably inside the literature of the Maritimes and Newfoundland. This is because political and corporate powers have taken up the folk as a tool to further their own interests by propagating a "view of the region as a seaside respite populated by cheery, rubber-booted denizens figuratively laying out the welcome mat for weary urban visitors" (22). For example, Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism's highly successful advertising campaign presents the island as a quasi-edenic space detached from the industrial/digital mainland. One commercial pictures a couple walking at dawn along an undeveloped coastline as a narrating voice intones, "finding yourself out here, on the very edge of the continent, waking up to the first sunrise in North America, it's hard to believe that most people still wake up to an alarm clock." Another Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism commercial boasts, "its about as far from Disneyland as you could possibly get." Flattering as presentations such as these might be, Wyile contends that they are potentially damaging as they comply with a "derogatory view" of the region that ultimately perpetuates an



understanding of Atlantic Canada as an exotic and inferior Other to central and western Canada (22). It would be, Wyile claims, “naïve to dismiss the possibility that . . . the present popularity of literature in Atlantic Canada may be yet another instance of the ‘creative’ destruction of capitalism’s voracious appetite for new products and markets—and that the region’s distinctiveness is just one more resource to be mined and left behind” (24). With a book like *Galore*—that is, a book completely invested in the potential power of the folk—this is a real risk. Importantly, though, this risk need not preclude the possibility of genuine artistic and literary engagements with folk culture: “what contemporary Atlantic-Canadian literature makes clear is that fiddles and shopping malls, lobster boats, and satellite dishes can and do happily and unselfconsciously coexist” (Wyile 25). The challenge, then, for Crummey, is to use folk culture as a tool for writing about Newfoundland that does not necessarily lead to a commodified presentation of the island. Of course, this is a matter that Crummey himself has only a limited degree of power over: readers will interpret the novel according to their own biases. Citing David Creelman, Wyile points out that “critical reception of Maritime literature is distorted by stereotypical assumptions about Maritime culture” (23). Crummey successfully resists any such distortion through presenting Newfoundland folk culture as it evolves over time. The novel shows the stories, epistemologies, and rituals of the folk to be genuine and meaningful ways of interpreting and being in the world. As Crummey explains in an interview with Cynthia Sugars, that is one of the things that literary critics talk about: that this sense of Newfoundland as a timeless place, or of outport Newfoundland as a place apart from the world, is in some ways doing a disservice to Newfoundland, because it creates the sense that there was a real Newfoundland that no longer exists, and that whatever we have now is some sort of pale shadow of it. (n.p.)

By showing how Newfoundland's folk culture has transformed over a period of two centuries—from the early settlement era to the early twentieth century—*Galore* combats the idea “of Newfoundland as a timeless place.” Rather than falling back on the folk as an easy and obviously intriguing literary trope that reproduces commodified place-myths, Crummey recalibrates the folk as a valuable means of understanding Newfoundland culture today and through history.

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The Newfoundland that *Galore* first introduces readers to is not quite a nation. None of the novel's early characters imagine Newfoundland as a cohesive political or social unit. Their national allegiances lie in the Old World. Devine's Widow, who first comes to Newfoundland as an indentured servant to King-Me Sellers, is a native of Ireland and an Irish speaker. She occasionally speaks English—but only for the “sake” of her daughter-in-law, Lizzie, who has just “enough Irish to discipline her youngsters and make love to her husband” (16). We might consider this opening an exact reversal to that of *Colony*. While *Colony* opens with a post-Confederation lament for a lost country, *Galore* opens with a description of a community whose collective consciousness is pre-national. In place of the nation stands a community “forged on affiliations, affects, and interdependencies as much as conflict, contradiction, and inequalities” (Karavanta 725). Newfoundland, here, is a space of refuge and opportunity for a diverse group of people, “Irish and West Country English and bushborns of uncertain provenance,” all with varied backgrounds and sometimes competing interests. It is not that collectivity, community, or even the possibility of nation, do not exist; however, the foundations for these categories are pragmatic rather than abstract. Characters come together not out of arbitrary tribal affiliation but rather a need to form strategic bonds that ensure survival. The community's harvesting of the whale from which Judah emerges demonstrates a communal ideal of pragmatic interdependence

and mutual accountability: “men harvesting chunks of baleen from the creature’s jaw with axes . . . Women and children floated barrels in the shallows to catch the ragged squares of blubber . . . Mary Tryphena’s grandmother . . . wading grimly into the water” (3). In synchronically organizing around the dead whale, this group exemplifies a community that is based more on the material requirements of the present moment than it is on historical antecedent. The dead whale is, ironically, almost the antithesis of the transcendent national ideal which Judah eventually becomes. The whale refers only to itself and its own base-level materiality. Nonetheless, the whale, because it offers food and oil, brings these individuals together in a temporary, non-essentialist, high-functioning community.

The image that this scene presents—a group of people congregated in water “red with blood,” dismantling a dead whale—suggests an interest in the abject (2). Julia Kristeva defines the abject as follows: “It is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object. . . . It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” (4). Recognizable as existing outside of the self while at the same time being of it, the abject defies the boundaries between subject and object. In this way, it disrupts Enlightenment notions of the autonomous human and suggests instead one existing in perpetual dialogue and exchange with the outside world. The “stench” of the whale, its “white underbelly,” and “the stomach’s membrane floating free,” all invoke this interpretive possibility (3). This community, organized around the dead whale, is what we might call an *abject community*—one that is open-ended and fluid, perpetually adjusting its borders and criteria for citizenship depending on the material reality of the present situation. Ted Chamberlin suggests that “dividing the world up into Them and Us is inevitable, but

choosing between is like choosing between reality and imagination, or between being marooned on an island and drowning in the sea. Deadly, and ultimately a delusion” (239). The abject community does not erase the binary of us and them; it does, however, recognize, as Chamberlin does, the hazards of limiting definitions of community to such an opposition. This model of community maintains the existence of an us/them binary while allowing for the possibility of individuals to move from one category to another or inhabit both at the same time. In this way, the abject community can uphold an affirmative identification while still remaining open-ended and non-exclusionary.

The abject community as I am here defining it is resistant to the organizing mechanisms of those in power. As Kristeva suggests, the abject “disturbs identity, system, order” (4). By allowing for the possibility of identification on both sides of any given binary (self/other, us/them, islander/outsider), the abject challenges a colonial logic of opposition that justifies oppression of and violence directed towards the other. King-me Sellers is *Galore*’s most obvious representative of such a logic. He is the novel’s merchant-colonizer who threatens to erode the abject community’s values of intersubjectivity, interdependence, and mutual accountability. King-me’s ideology is one of hierarchized violence. Under the employ of Spurriers and Co., he officially settles the community of Paradise Deep and in doing so enacts a colonizing process that has at its heart ideals of ownership, domination, and control of the land, the sea, and the people who live and work in those spaces. King-me’s impulse to own and control the natural world is clear from his first appearance in the novel, in which he hobbles “down from his store to make a claim” to the beached whale. He “swore he’d have the whale’s liver and eight puncheons of oil” (2). King-me understands the natural world as nothing more than a resource that he is able to control, compartmentalize, and profit from.

So, *Galore* presents readers with competing ways of understanding settler life in Newfoundland. The first is reflective of a traditionally colonial mindset. King-me looks to own and control the land and its new inhabitants so that he may profit at their expense. The second seeks to undo colonial categorization and hierarchized violence. The settlers struggle to forge a genuinely new world—a new way of understanding self, citizenship, community, and nation—the spirit of which Devine’s Widow expresses before she makes love to her husband for the first time: “We got nothing now . . . but what we can make together” (78). In many ways, we can read the first half of the novel as a struggle to assert the values of the abject community in the face of divisive colonial forces. This struggle takes numerous forms. The community’s name, Paradise Deep, is itself a reflection of a conflict between the settler population and the ruling merchant class. When King-me first arrives in the harbour, “he settled on Paradise” as a name; however, as the previously settled inhabitants already knew the harbour as “Deep Bay,” it comes to be called “Paradise Deep” (75). As another example, consider the mummers who traipse around the community every Christmas season, inviting themselves into private homes and forcing drink and dance on all those they come in contact with. The mummers defy King-me’s will to own. *Galore* presents mummering as a carnivalesque tradition that offers a momentary subversion of the merchant’s hierarchical organization and challenges the notions of private property and land ownership. The mummers intrude on the Sellers’ residence—which the community normally regards as an impenetrable space—and in doing so blatantly disregard King-me’s authority and his claim to the land. When the mummers arrive at the house, they ensure that they have “plenty of snow on their shoes and clothes to leave a mess behind them, a protest against King-me’s lack of enthusiasm for their entertainment” (44). The mess that the

nummers leave behind is a reminder of the fragility of colonial categorization and perhaps also an insistence on the primacy of the abject.

The potential problem here is that in countering the closed binaries that King-me espouses, *Galore* simply sets up new ones between the oppressed and the oppressor, the abject and the categorical, and, most blatantly counterintuitive of all, the non-binary and the binary. In bypassing this risk, *Galore* presents King-me Sellers (note the obviousness of his name) as deliberately cartoonish. To be sure, many other characters in the novel are similarly cartoonish. Terry Goldie points out that “Devine’s Widow . . . is a diviner,” and that “Harold Newman . . . is both a ‘new man’ and a herald of science” (“Galore” 90). These names underline *Galore*’s status as fiction, and perhaps even myth. As a result, readers become overtly aware of the distance between the story world and our own. King-me’s character is particularly interesting because it engages critically with the conventions and patterns of Newfoundland historiography. Goldie writes that “while King-me might be just the merchant capitalist, the local dictator that is so much a part of Newfoundland economic history, his name suggests not just a triumphant conqueror of checkers but a winner in the great games of mythic narrative” (“Galore” 90). King-me’s character initiates an ironic fusion of Newfoundland economic history and mythic narrative. Greedy, spiteful, and jealous, King-me is a parodic caricature of the “tyrannical West Country merchant” that Prowse’s *Galore* and Newfoundland nationalism generally identify as the chief villain of the early settlement era in Newfoundland (125). Through King-me, *Galore* critiques nationalist versions of Newfoundland history that insist on “a narrative of the long struggle for control over the island between the tyrannical West Country merchants along with their allies in the British government, on the one hand, and the humble settlers and their political champions, on the other” (125). King-me *overplays* his role as merchant-colonizer-villain such

that readers become aware of and sceptical about the simplistic oppressor/oppressed logic that his character implies. By presenting King-me as a caricature of the West Country merchant, *Galore* exploits the literary potential of the figure while maintaining a critical awareness of its historical dubiousness and nationalist-ideological uses. Politically, then, *Galore* stands in opposition to the forces of colonialism but also distances itself from nationalist reactions to these forces. The novel opens up a new space between colonial oppression and nationalist reaction that allows the individual to “elude the politics of polarity” that colonialism and nationalism both inscribe (Bhaba, “Commitment to Theory” 22).

Perhaps even more than King-me, Reverend Dodge represents a threat to the values of the abject community. Dodge emerges in the novel as an agent of colonialism as King-me shows the newly-arrived minister around the community: “Dodge wandered along the uneven row of crosses, names scored or painted on the wood. Spingle. Codner. Bozan. Harty. Devine. . . . Protestant and Catholic set down in a mash. He turned at the far side of the cemetery and shouted across to Sellers. —We will have a fence” (57). The cemetery is a synecdoche for the entire community. Dodge’s desire to build a fence reflects a desire to install divisions and demarcations into the community’s collective understanding of itself. Such fences are dangerous because they overlook the hybrid nature of the shore’s population. The colonial and nationalist narratives that compete for dominance in this space work not only to divide the inhabitants of Newfoundland into discrete categories; they also erase certain groups—or, at least, certain important aspects of the lived experiences of these groups. It is this erasure that allows us to understand the real value of Crummey’s staging the early pages of *Galore* in a hybridized, pre-national Newfoundland. As the construction of Newfoundland’s unified national narrative—a national psyche—asserts itself more strongly over the inhabitants of the island, it obfuscates their hybrid history. By

foregrounding this history at the beginning of the novel, Crummey makes readers aware of its lingering presence in the face of totalizing cultural narratives. The pre-national Newfoundland thus comes to haunt the Newfoundland nation as it emerges later in the novel. As Mina Karavanta suggests, “the specter is a presencing of what remains and the embodiment of the promise of these remains: the resistant ontological and political matter of these other lives that any dominant ontology and politics cannot fully exorcise nor excel but rather is doomed to conjure” (728). It is in this way that the spectral Newfoundland nation manifests in *Galore*. Hauntings work to remind present day Newfoundlanders of the precariousness of nationalist constructs at play in popular discourse. They also remobilize another, buried Newfoundland—one that is, as I suggest above, not quite a nation. Their community is a “mash,” a “scatter” of loosely aligned religious, cultural, and linguistic influences (57). The haunting remnants of this abject community thus destabilize the rhetoric of Newfoundland nationalism and gesture towards a collective unit that insists on historical continuity rather than amnesia and openness rather than exclusion. It acts as a specter—a not-fully-known being that asserts its absence into the present and in doing so destabilizes it. Kerrivan’s apple tree clearly demonstrates this process of the presencing of an absent object that works to destabilize the contemporary moment. The tree is an emblem of a pre-national Newfoundland: “Sarah Kerrivan brought the sapling from Ireland a hundred years before” the starting point of the novel (13). It is a spiritual centre of the abject community: “Every infant born in the Gut and many born in Paradise Deep during the last half century had been passed through its branches to ward off the worst of what the world could do to a child . . . No one considered youngsters properly christened until they had travelled that circle” (14). Kerrivan’s Tree is largely forgotten until near the end of the novel, when Abel, Judah’s great-grandson, is born. Everyone expects him to die. He is “a glove of translucent skin” (260).



Out of desperation, Mary Tryphena decides to try passing the child through Kerrivan's Tree, which, now two hundred years old, is "still standing on the far side of the Gut" (260): "The branches were gnarled and brittle . . . even the stones of Callum Devine's rock fence had been scattered by generations of winter frost" (260). The tree and the rock fence that surround it have changed shape over time. They are no longer as obviously vital as they once were. Nonetheless, they remain rich and symbolically loaded objects both for characters and for readers and thrust the community's past into the present. The specter registers alternative possibilities that the dominant logic of the present suppresses. The specter of the pre-national Newfoundland that *Galore* registers is as such a subversive and empowering agent. It shows us that there are new pasts that we can look to, alternative presents that we can live in, and unimagined futures that we can hope for in constructing Newfoundland through time.

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In *Galore*, Newfoundland nationalism works as a tool of the island's political elite: it provides the general population with a false sense of unity that bolsters the power of a select few. This dynamic is, according to Bannister, true to modern Newfoundland history generally: "since the early nineteenth century, elites have relied on nationalism when it served their economic and political interests" (151). The novel's most obvious representative of such a nationalism is William Coaker—an important figure of Newfoundland history who is best known as the founder of the Fisherman's Protective Union (FPU). For an example of Coaker's nation-edifying force in Newfoundland history, see the lyrics of the FPU anthem:

We are coming, Mr. Coaker, from the East, West, North and South;

You have called us and we're coming, for to put our foes to rout.

By merchants and by governments, too long we've been misruled;

We're determined now in future, and no longer we'll be fooled.

...

We are coming, Mr. Coaker, and we're forty-thousand strong.

*Galore* does not include or mention this anthem. However, it does serve as a good springboard for understanding how the novel presents Coaker as a man of the people, a unifying figure who is able to transcend the challenges that Newfoundland's geographical enormity—"East, West, North and South"—poses to collective identification. Newfoundland, here, is clearly an "imagined community": "it is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 6). Furthermore, the anthem speaks specifically to Newfoundland nationalism as I have been defining it throughout this thesis: it identifies a defeatist and oppositional narrative of collective struggle and disenfranchisement at the hands of oppressive "merchants and governments." Ultimately, as Bannister contends, such a nationalism works to reinforce the island's existing power structure. Through his fictional presentation of Coaker, Crummey shows himself to be aware of this problematic dynamic. Coaker first emerges in the novel as a potential folk hero: "he had the rhythm and demeanour of a preacher, the same bluff assurance. He began with an overview of the sad facts of a fisherman's life, the deplorable conditions they lived and worked in, the parasites in St. John's who bled them dry" (272). These lines present Coaker as an advocate of the kind of oppositional and defeatist rhetoric that has been a key component of Newfoundland nationalism since the early nineteenth century. Coaker uses this rhetoric in order to acquire personal wealth, bolster his public stature, and secure political power.

Coaker works to constitute the nation by using a variety of media. He insists “that all F.P.U. members be able to read and write” (280). Following Anderson’s logic, national consciousness depends on mass literacy. This is because texts of various kinds—bureaucratic documents, novels, newspapers, political pamphlets—can spread over a vast geographical area and in so doing act as points of reference for individuals who would otherwise have little in common. Of course, texts are not the only such points of reference. In fact, *Galore* downplays the importance of textual literacy—“most of the [union members] were able to write their own names and read simple Bible verses” (260)—and instead looks to other media as more significant catalysts of nation in the context of Newfoundland history. Portraits of Coaker himself act in the novel in this way: “The stores offered a framed picture of President William Coaker that sold by the hundreds and hung in kitchens and parlours along the shore like a Protestant crucifix” (290). Also significant with respect to the construction of nation but absent from *Galore* is the existence of radio. Goldie writes, “Joey Smallwood . . . said that radio made Newfoundland into a country, but even before the radio, the gramophone had begun to connect the communities as a new way songs could be transmitted” (“Galore” 89). *Galore* contains only one mention of the gramophone—however, in light of Goldie’s point, it is an interesting moment. When Eli goes to visit Coaker’s house, he hears “Coaker’s gramophone in the parlour, the music seeping . . . into the open air” (322). The gramophone is most obviously a sign of Coaker’s decadence and the luxury in which he lives in comparison to those he claims to represent. Following Goldie, we can consider the gramophone as a signifier for the construction of the Newfoundland nation. That the music from the gramophone is “seeping” out “into the open air” points to this possible function: the gramophone helps to create a collective identification that extends beyond the confines of one’s lived experience to Newfoundland as a whole.

Coaker's messianic status dissolves as he comes to live in decadence while his constituents struggle to make ends meet. His home is "the only touch of ostentation in the town, a turret and gabled windows, a sun porch screened in at the back" (321). Coaker masks his own elitist agenda for a populist one and in so doing becomes a symbol for the exploitative nature of Newfoundland nationalism. *Galore* demonstrates this dynamic when Coaker coerces Abel, Judah's great-grandson, to enlist in the army with the hope of consolidating unity among his constituents. Later, in an attempt to hold on to power in the legislature, Coaker supports the forced conscription of Newfoundland men to fight in the war: "in *The Fisherman's Advocate*, Coaker spoke of the torture he suffered making the decision to support conscription. . . . But he never managed to explain his reasoning to anyone's satisfaction" (323). Coaker's practical political function, then, ultimately varies little from that of King-me. Both figures exploit the communities that they claim to be the leaders of. *Galore* thus shows that colonial and nationalist Newfoundland narratives—represented by King-me and Coaker, respectively—are two sides of the same coin. By installing totalizing and unified communal narratives, they erase cultural differences and suppress hybrid identities.

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*Galore* resists the binding narratives of both colonialism and nationalism by evoking and participating in a storytelling tradition that makes equal space for self-determination and communal identification. Judah exists at the centre of this tradition. His association with the abject places him in sharp counterpoint to King-me. After the community discovers him inside a whale and pronounced dead on the spot, Judah resurrects as follows: "a foul rainbow sprayed from the bowels . . . —If he's alive enough to shit, James Woundy said, he's alive enough to walk . . . Froth bubbled at the mouth" (5). As a representative of the abject, Judah undermines

the compartments with which King-me attempts to organize and control the New World. As such, Judah is a subversive figure. And he is clearly very threatening to King-me. Watching Devine's Widow pull Judah from "the whale's guts," King-me comes to feel that "the widow was birthing everything he despised in the country . . . Irish nor English, Jerseyman nor bushborn nor savage, not Roman or Episcopalian or apostate, Judah was wilderness on two legs, mute and unknowable, a blankness that could drown a man" (75). Here, the narrator describes Judah only by that which he is not. He defies categorization. To King-me, he comes to symbolize a part of the natural world that cannot be owned, controlled, or colonized. In his muteness—his passive refusal of the organizing codes and conventions that King-me attempts to assert over the inhabitants of Paradise Deep—Judah stands as a resolutely defiant figure. Judah's connection to the un-ownable and abject wilderness marks him a threat to King-me and his colonial endeavors and reminds him that "something of the place would always be beyond his influence" (75).

Discussing Judah, Sugars suggests that "such points of transcendental origin exist outside the rift of historical time while setting in motion a sequence of historical (genealogical) determinism" ("Phantoms" 27). Sugars' point would seem to pose a problem to my argument, for, if Judah does in fact initiate "a sequence of . . . determinism," it follows that his character represents yet another variation of the binding (*determined*) colonial and nationalist narratives that I have been arguing *Galore* writes against. To a certain extent, this is indeed the case. Judah's entrance into Paradise Deep via the belly of a whale and the transformation of this event into legend do work to constitute a national Newfoundland consciousness. Judah, near the end of his life, after he willfully takes up a prison sentence handed down by King-me's great-grandson, Levi, for a crime that he did not commit and takes to scratching biblical verses into the wooden walls of his cell, becomes a nation-edifying, folkloric figure: "some claimed the Word was being

transmitted directly to Jude's hand by the Lord. God's Nephew, he was said to be calling himself. Older tales of Jude's dominion over the fish of the sea, of the people healed by his presence, were revived and retold" (227). Notice here the repeated signifiers of orality: "some claimed"; "he was said"; "Older tales . . . were revived and retold." This kind of language indicates the existence and persistence of an ongoing and dynamic folk tradition. *Galore* identifies this transmission over time and space as constitutive of the Newfoundland nation. Goldie claims that "the connective tissue of the country was provided by sailors who told stories and sang songs" ("Galore" 89). We can consider Judah one such story. It is through him that Newfoundlanders are able to overcome their extreme isolation and the island's geographic vastness and foster a sense of national sovereignty.

So, it is certainly true that an important element of Judah's character is the construction of nation through the story of his miraculous birth. He is a nation-edifying, even a nation-constituting, entity. However, if we take a close look at the particular *kind* of national narrative that forms around Judah, something more nuanced emerges. At once abject and transcendent, Judah is a highly paradoxical figure who functions both to undermine and affirm notions of collective Newfoundland identity. His character is very much a part of the material world but also of a higher order. Through Judah, the abject becomes the transcendent. As such, it seems to be the case that Judah symbolizes a communal identification that is rooted in the values of the abject community: interdependence, mutual accountability, pragmatism, and intersubjectivity. There is, then, an acknowledgement that such a community is an ideal, even utopian, construction—that the abject community will almost certainly always be out of reach. Despite this, in Judah we also see an insistence on the values of such a community and an impulse to work towards these values, however utopian the prospect of their full realization might be. To

return to Sugars' point, I follow her argument that Judah sets in motion "a sequence of . . . determinism" and add that what it is precisely that he determines is an affirmative though ultimately *indeterminate* communal/national entity. Judah's character insists on an open-ended and non-exclusionary narrative through which the borders of nation are always in flux, always being revised according to the material needs of the present. Consider an early scene in which Judah catches hold of a seemingly endless string of squid: "The squid on the line coming aboard in an endless march . . . in one continuous string . . . By mid-afternoon every shallop and half-shallop and skiff in the flotilla was weighted and the crews blackened and fousty with ink" (27). Here, what is especially interesting is the emphasis on the squid's ink: it is an abject material that covers the fishermen as they haul the squid into their boats and so stands as a signifier for their shared communal identity. Further, this scene indicates a metafictional awareness: the ink in which the men are covered can be seen as connected to the same ink with which *Galore* is written. Crummey establishes a continuity between the pre-national, orally-rooted Newfoundland culture that Judah enters into and the contemporary, post-Confederation, text-based one that *Galore* preserves and with which it transmits Judah. Crummey's preoccupation here would seem to be the link between oral storytelling culture and written culture, and the extent to which each is able to reflect, enforce, and modify social bonds.

Does this connection suggest an unsettling of the distinction between the oral and the written? At the heart of *Galore*'s celebration of Newfoundland's folk tradition is the paradox that the novel is itself a text-based document. The novel's concluding section—which shows Abel mute and crippled following a near-death experience on the battlefield in France—self-reflexively addresses this paradox when the nurse gives Abel a pen and paper with which he writes: "*Death and life are in the power of the tongue . . . and they that love it shall eat the fruit*

*thereof*” (330). Abel—in paradoxically writing about the value of orality, “the power of the tongue,” here seems to be standing in for Crummey, the author of a novel that revels in a predominantly oral, folk tradition. The note functions in two different ways. First, it registers the shift from a predominantly oral to a predominantly written storytelling tradition; this shift is more forcefully prefigured by Judah himself, when he, to the bafflement of the community, begins etching biblical verses into the wall of his cell. Second, the note, like the entire novel, expresses an awareness of the oral tradition that precedes it, and, ultimately, insists that it exists as a part of that tradition. Importantly, the novel does not present the shift from written to oral as *progress*—that is, the novel does not elevate the written over the oral—but rather as an *alteration* that inevitably attends technological and material change.

Jabez Trim’s Bible—“an incomplete copy” (4) “recovered from the gullet of a cod” (19), portions of which were “so distorted by their soaking they were barely legible” (19)—is an important symbol for this process. For many years, the Bible is the narrative core of the community’s spiritual life. Jabez Trim is one of the few members of the community who is able to read the written word, and so he takes on the role of makeshift spiritual leader, reading on Sundays from the warped text to an ecumenical congregation and in so doing helping to foster the community’s collective identity. One Sunday, Jabez reads the story of Isaac and Abraham on the Mount. The passage’s concluding verses “were blurred beyond reading and Isaac was left with his father’s knife poised above him”:

James Woundy was so taken by the truncated tale that he still retold it on the long trips to and from the fishing grounds, adding his own version of what he considered to be the inevitably gruesome conclusion. Jabez tried explaining that God gave Isaac a reprieve at



the final moment, but James was skeptical. —That don't sound like the God we knows out here, James said. (19–20).

Jabez Trim's Bible thus represents both a blending of oral and written storytelling conventions, as well as a particular conception of storytelling as a process that participates in a longstanding tradition but is also open to interpretation according to the experiences of the individual participating in that tradition. James Woundy finishes the story of Isaac and Abraham according to his own needs and desires. This moment resonates with T.S. Eliot's essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent." There, Eliot claims that artists ought to develop "an historical sense": an awareness "not only of the pastness of the past, but also its presence" (14). Eliot's argument is that contemporary writers who practice with such an understanding enter into a dialogue with past writers and existing texts. In doing so, they change our understandings of all literature and also of the tradition with which they engage:

the existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. . . . For order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted. (15)

For Eliot, the "ideal order"—the canon—is always changing. Through genuinely engaging with the canon (as James Woundy does by revising the end of the story of Isaac and Abraham), artists reformulate and reimagine it in such a way that fits the needs and desires of individuals living in the present. *Galore* invokes a storytelling tradition that operates in much the same terms: it is clearly identifiable, though always in flux, always changing according to those living and working in the present moment.

Bhaba claims that “the very act of narrative performance interpolates a growing circle of national subjects” (*Location* 215). Following Eliot and Bhaba, we can say that in *Galore*, the Newfoundland nation, as an entity that comes about through narrative, is an open-ended, unfinished, and ongoing process of perpetual reformulation and rearticulation rather than a stable and easily-identifiable entity existing in some *a priori* state.

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The challenge that Crummey tasks himself with in *Galore* is to imagine a nation that avoids the pitfalls of nationalism (e.g. tribalism, racism, oppositional politics, etc.). Perhaps such a nation is impossible—for, traditionally understood, the concept of nation demands a degree of exclusion. Citizenship is meaningless unless some people are left out of the tribe. Given this, we must understand *Galore* as a novel that takes a revisionist stance towards the Newfoundland nation and the concept of nation as such. At the centre of this revision is *Galore*'s presentation of the folk as existing not in some timeless, ahistorical past to which we no longer have access but rather in the novel's—and, as such, the *reader's*—present. *Galore* does not memorialize Newfoundland folk culture; it participates in it. In doing so, it works to constitute a Newfoundland national identity that is rooted in the malleability and inclusivity of the folk. By novel's end, readers come to see themselves—whether they identify as Newfoundlanders or not—as participants in Newfoundland's ongoing folk tradition. The novel brings Newfoundlanders and non-Newfoundlanders alike inside this tradition. Thus, without destroying the concept of Newfoundland itself, *Galore* makes possible a non-exclusive communal identification with Newfoundland.

I see *Galore* as extending the project that Wayne Johnston takes up in *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*. Like *Colony*, *Galore* insists on an understanding of Newfoundland as a hybrid space. As my chapters on these two texts demonstrate, *Galore* offers readers a more

nuanced take on Newfoundland that does not rely on nationalist rhetoric. That *Colony* (1998) was published a full decade before *Galore* (2009) might account for this difference. While eleven years may not seem a very long time in the world of literary history, it is the case that the period between the mid-1980s and the early-/mid-2000s did mark an important shift in the quality and sophistication of Newfoundland fiction. Johnston, with *Colony*, was entering into relatively uncharted territory in terms of high-quality fictional representation of the island and its culture for an international audience. Crummey, working a decade later, had the benefit of writing *Galore* in a period in which Newfoundland literature had established itself much more firmly in the national and international literary establishment. It is also worth noting that Crummey was writing at a time when Newfoundland's economy, thanks to the high price of oil, was enjoying a period of relative prosperity. Johnston, on the other hand, was writing in the mid-/late-1990s—a period in which Newfoundland was still feeling the devastating effects of the Cod Moratorium. While it would be flippant to make any interpretive leaps based on these facts alone, they may help us to account for the affective and political differences between the two novels.

*Galore* imagines Newfoundland's present as continuous with the past though not destined to repeat it. Thus, the novel's characters avoid the traumatic repetition that tragically paralyses Johnston's Fielding and leads her to embrace nationalist rhetoric. Instead, what emerges is a dynamic engagement with the past that is perhaps best summarized by the following expression, common in *Paradise Deep*, "Now the once," which Harold Newman, the American doctor, explicates as follows: "The present twined with the past to mean soon, a bit later, some unspecified point in the future" (326). This, ultimately, is where *Galore* leaves us. Abel's entrance into the belly of the whale is obviously an act of the novel's present; however, it gains

its symbolic resonance only through Abel's ancestral connection with Judah and our knowledge of that history. It is through creatively engaging with the past and the present simultaneously that Abel propels Newfoundland into an unknown future.

### Chapter Three: Performing a Spectral Newfoundland in *The Strangers' Gallery*

How does the specter of nationhood haunt contemporary Newfoundland culture? What is the effect of such a haunting for individuals living and working in Newfoundland today? Following Confederation, what of the national psyche remains? In this chapter, I use Paul Bowdring's *The Strangers' Gallery* as a text through which to engage these questions. My main focus is on the novel's presentation of St. John's. Bowdring shows the city to be a sort of text that is always involved in a process of revision and reinterpretation by the individuals who live inside it, who *read* it, who collectively maintain conflicting yet cohabitating understandings of it. St. John's then, like Newfoundland itself, is a hybrid space in which there co-exist multiple experiences, knowledges, and discourses. In *The Strangers' Gallery*, a discourse of oil-based global capitalism threatens to overwrite the city's hybrid nature. Capitalist discourse functions in *Gallery* in much the same way as colonial and nationalist discourse in *Galore*. It enforces a unified, singular, and totalizing view of the world; in doing so, it silences dissenting perspectives and marginalizes those who hold those perspectives. Narrator Michael Lowe, an archivist at Memorial University, works to undermine global capitalism's hegemony in the city space. As an archivist, he is well poised to recognize the many traces of the past that exist all around St. John's, and he shares these recognitions with readers. Such recognitions work as hauntings: they bring the past into the contemporary moment and remind us of alternatives to this moment. Norma Lundberg, in an early review, explicitly connects Michael's narration with the act of haunting: "[Michael] travels on foot through long-familiar streets . . . conjuring the ghosts of demolished dwellings and shops, sharing their dismay that entire neighbourhoods were razed 'waiting for progress to wave its magic wand'" (102). Hauntings, in their affirmation of multiplicity and hybridity, work in *Gallery* to resist capitalist narratives of totality and unity. As

Derrida suggests, “hauntings belong to the structure of every hegemony” (37). I take this sentence to have two different though compatible meanings. First, Derrida is suggesting that hegemonies of various kinds are themselves *ghostly*. This is because hegemonies are—like nations—imagined, unreal, spectral: they come about through the assertion of a phantasmal set of social constructions designed to police human activity. Second, Derrida is suggesting that hegemonies are themselves *haunted*. This is because underneath the unifying logic of hegemonic discourse there lurk suppressed experiences and ways of knowing that are never fully extinguishable and have the potential to unsettle the established order. Michael’s narrations haunt and in doing so resist a hegemonic capitalist discourse that has invaded St. John’s.

This discourse manifests itself in the novel primarily through descriptions of the oil industry and how it has affected life in the city. The novel begins in October 1995 and ends in September 1996. This is an interesting point in the province’s recent history. As Jenny Higgins writes,

Work had almost ended on building the Hibernia oil-production platform, which reduced the number of construction jobs from a peak of 5,800 in 1995 to about 1,000 in 1996. First oil was still a year away from being pumped and deals had not yet been reached to develop other offshore oil deposits or the massive nickel deposit at Voisey’s Bay. (n.p.)

The province’s politicians and business leaders were, at this time, keen to portray the oil and gas sector as an economic and political savior. Citing J.D. House, Sean Cadigan writes that the tenor of Newfoundland political rhetoric and policy in the mid-1990s was “‘neo-Smallwoodian,’ preoccupied with resource megaprojects—oil, nickel, and hydroelectricity—rather than with fish and small-scale rural development” (284). As an example, consider the following statement

given by then-Premier Brian Tobin in a January 1997 speech to the Newfoundland and Labrador Industries Association: “1996 was a banner year for the oil and gas sector . . . let’s capitalize on our opportunities . . . let’s work hard to solidify Newfoundland and Labrador’s position as the oil capital of Eastern Canada . . . I’m here to salute this organization and the dynamic oil and gas industry we are shaping together for Newfoundland and Labrador” (n.p.) Tobin’s rhetoric clearly conveys a sense of hope for the province’s future that is inextricably bound up with the successful development of Newfoundland’s offshore oil resources. Given this, what is interesting about the timeframe of *The Strangers’ Gallery* (1995–1996) is that it is set in a moment in which Newfoundlanders were anticipating but had not yet realized the full economic benefits of the oil and gas sector.

Michael’s narrations reveal his skepticism about the assumptions underlying Tobin’s comments. In the first part of this chapter, I will explain how Michael’s descriptions of St. John’s evoke a process by which a narrative of oil-based global capitalism overwrites the city space. Michael recognizes this narrative as potentially threatening to the cultural integrity and historical continuity of St. John’s, and of Newfoundland generally. Michel de Certeau, in his essay, “Walking in the City,” writes, “the system . . . saturates places with signification and indeed so reduces them to this signification that it is ‘impossible to breathe in them.’ It is a symptomatic tendency of functionalist totalitarianism . . . that it seeks precisely to eliminate . . . local authorities, because they compromise the univocity of the system” (106). By this, de Certeau means that dominant ideological systems (capitalist, colonialist, nationalist, etc.) limit the possible meanings of place. The *saturation of signification* imposed by the global capitalist system imposes a singular, *univocal* way of understanding the city. As such, it, by de Certeau’s estimation, functions in order to limit—to “reduce”—St. John’s to a vision that is produced by

and supportive of the existing capitalist logic. Michael's descriptions of St. John's reveal an awareness of this process. For example, at Memorial University,

a four-line highway, choked with traffic for most of the day, runs through the heart of campus . . . Carved out of Pippy Park, with not a tree or bulrush left standing, is a conglomeration of garish red-brick buildings housing the career-track professional schools . . . a mile-long, corrugated steel structure with a wave tank instead of a think tank; a heating plant with a mile-high smokestack . . . and voracious parking lots still chomping at the borders of the park. (72–3)

Here, Michael sees the interests of global capitalism as having taken over the university. The “career-track professional schools”—“business, engineering”—are the new centerpieces of the campus (73). In place of a “think tank”—a space devoted to thought as an end in itself—is a “wave tank”—one presumably devoted to the production of knowledge that can be integrated into the off-shore oil industry. Michael describes the development of the campus as symptomatic of a profit-driven, growth-obsessed culture, one looking to expand endlessly outward, “chomping at the borders of the park.”

The novel's critical stance toward the effects of the oil industry in Newfoundland are perhaps more forcefully demonstrated in a scene in which Anton, Michael's long-term house guest, places a sticker that says “*I'm changing the climate. Ask me how*” on the bumper of an idling SUV (264). The scene culminates with the owner of the car—“a man who matched the size of his vehicle”—assaulting Anton (264). Michael notices that the man is wearing a t-shirt that says *Bull Arm*: “the Trinity Bay construction site of the huge Hibernia drill rig that we'd been hearing so much about” (264). Michael presents the man—arrogant, aggressive, violent—as a stand-in for the oil industry in Newfoundland as a whole. As in the description of Memorial



University, the implication is clear: the interests of an oil-based system of global capitalism have violently invaded St. John's. This, Michael suggests, is a system that is inconsiderate of alternative discourses, especially those that might complicate its own discourse of extraction, accumulation, and profit.

Perhaps the most interesting example of this dynamic is found in a scene in which Michael meets with his brothers, Raymond and Hubert, in Hubert's downtown office at Noble Drilling and Exploration. Michael describes the view of St. John's from Hubert's office as follows:

It was a dizzying bird's-eye view of the whole downtown—the old town, the harbor, and the Southside Hills—that the tenants of this tower, mostly lawyers, accountants, and oil industry executives, could luxuriate in without exposure to the elements or the populace at large. The large-framed, blue-tinted, floor-to-ceiling windows seemed to limit, but at the same time, to enlarge, the view. (161)

The "bird's-eye view of the whole downtown" that Michael describes suggests a totalized vision of St. John's. It offers the viewer the illusion of an ordered urban space that masks its hybrid reality and erases its many histories and memories. The "large-framed, blue-tinted, floor-to-ceiling windows" imply a complete severance between those regarding the view—the "lawyers, accountants, and oil industry executives"—and the people living and working in the city below. That these windows both "limit" and "enlarge" the view suggests that it presents an idealized part of the city standing in for a larger and much more complex whole. Michael's description gestures to the process by which hegemonic narratives work to "limit" a person's understanding of the world. The view is an instance of *saturated signification*, of the imposition of a singular, univocal way of seeing and understanding the city space.

Michael's description of the view from Hubert's office resonates with the opening section of de Certeau's "Walking in the City." There, de Certeau describes the experience of "seeing Manhattan from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center" (91). From such a position, the viewer recognizes a utopian representation of the city as an ordered whole rather than the complex smear of conflicting meanings that de Certeau claims it really is: "the panorama-city is a . . . simulacrum, in short a picture, whose condition of possibility is an oblivion and a misunderstanding of practices" (93). The view of Manhattan from the 110th floor—or, in the case of *Gallery*, the view of St. John's from the 9th floor—is, likewise, a simulacrum: an image that stands in place for something that does not really exist, a signifier without a referent. De Certeau contrasts the order and coherence of the view of the "panorama-city" with that known by the "ordinary practitioners" of the city:

they are walkers . . . whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read. . . . The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representation, it remains daily and indefinitely other. (93)

For Michael, a walker, the city—in its totality—defies representation. There are simply too many lives, too many realities, too many unknowns for there to exist a singular vision of the city space. Every "ordinary practitioner" of the city has his or her own meanings and ways of understanding the spaces that they move through. For this reason, no one representation can adequately encapsulate the city's reality.

To return to *Gallery*, then, we can say that the view from Hubert's office works in much the same way as the view of Manhattan that de Certeau describes: it removes the viewer from the

reality of the urban situation and offers an illusory vision of the city that claims to be complete but can never be. Such a totalizing view is, in *Gallery*, a function of a hegemonic capitalist discourse that overwrites the city's hybrid makeup. This imposition is a problem because it results in the erasure of St. John's varied histories, memories, and contemporary experiences. Consider also the "investment art" that adorns the walls of Hubert's office. The collection comprises "Newfoundland paintings and photographs arranged in thematic groupings. . . . Hubert's office had a resettlement theme: black-and-white photographs of children with sad, wounded, perplexed faces standing on stony beaches watching their half-submerged houses being towed out to sea" (165). That these photographs are "investments" suggests that Hubert values the images not for the knowledge they convey but rather their monetary worth. The result is a dynamic by which a capitalist logic subsumes the lived realities of Newfoundlanders and exploits these realities for profit.

Michael's main function as narrator is to resist the totalizing tendencies of capitalist discourse and uncover the experiences and knowledges that such a discourse threatens to erase. He attempts to re-inject the urban space he lives in with stories, memories, and histories that run counter to what de Certeau calls "the very logic of the techno-structure" (106). De Certeau insists that the acts of storytelling and of remembering have the potential to initiate an invigorating haunting which affirms personal meanings of place and in doing so upsets hegemonic systems: "stories and legends that haunt urban space like superfluous or additional inhabitants" (106). For Michael, the ghosts that come about through remembering are useful and important not only because they inoculate us against historical amnesia and cultural erasure; they also act as anti-authoritarian, destabilizing forces.

Michael's objective, then, is to instil in readers an understanding of St. John's as a haunted space. He does this through walking around St. John's, through talking and listening to people, through considering the city's architecture, its spaces, and through recording utterances that reveal experiences alternative to the dominant logic. In doing so, Michael is able to foster an understanding of the city that might not otherwise be accessible.

We could think of Michael as a kind of *flâneur*. I am not the first person to consider a Bowdring character in this way. Discussing Bowdring's *The Night Season* as well as novels by Michael Winter, Lisa Moore, and Ed Riche, Paul Chafe writes:

The Newfoundland narrators of these novels are of the city: they live in it, they observe it, they read and write it, and—most notably—they spend a large portion of their time strolling through it. . . . These new Newfoundlanders have much in common with one of the more interesting creations of modernity—the *flâneur*. (“Beautiful Losers” 116)

As Walter Benjamin, who first formulated the idea of the *flâneur*, writes: “The street conducts the *flâneur* into a vanished time. For him, every street is precipitous. It leads. . . into a past that can be all the more spellbinding because it is not his own, not private” (417 qtd. in “Beautiful Losers” 117). The *flâneur* thus “provides a much needed contrast to the getting and spending existence of his fellow urbanites, providing a pause for himself and others (through his writing) to experience and remember all the elements that contribute to the city's identity” (“Beautiful Losers” 117). Michael can certainly be read in these terms. He spends most of his time quietly observing the city as it passes him by, contemplating its various pasts and potential presents and futures. He reminds readers of “all the elements that contribute to the city's identity.” He writes, records, compiles, and organizes everything around him both at and outside of work: “I write everything down, in fact, though I'm not a writer, just a self-appointed, obsessive recording clerk

. . . At last count I've filled one hundred and twenty notebooks" (82). The archival process is for Michael a kind of default setting. It seems that he would do it regardless of whether or not anyone was paying him. Michael is competent in his position at the university library, but readers do not get the sense that he works very hard. Michael's idleness and his work emerge as one and the same. Such a blurring of the distinction between work and idleness is typical of the *flâneur*. It marks the *flâneur* as a person who has, in a sense, "won" the game of modernity, who, in Georg Simmel's words, has successfully resisted "being levelled down and worn out by a social-technological mechanism" (11). As such, we can understand Michael's *flânerie* as defiant to the capitalist logic that he is born into. By walking around the city, reading about it, and writing down his interactions inside of it, he is able to uncover alternative realities for St. John's and author his own experience of its urban space. It is in this way that Michael is a subversive. Lost in thought, relatively unrestricted by the demands of modern life, Bowdring's *flâneur* considers alternatives and insists that Newfoundland need not be *this way*: there are, he shows, other tangents of urban/provincial/national experience to pursue.

Consider a scene where Michael, while walking home from work, meets a former neighbour, Mr. Kenney, "staring down into a ragged muddy hole where his house had once stood. Sawdust covered the ground between him and another large stump at the other side of the garden, the remains of a tree that must have been more than fifty years old, planted perhaps when he had bought the house" (13). Mr. Kenney himself operates as both a haunted and haunting subject. He is *haunted* by his memories of this location. Mr. Kenney superimposes his memories of his now-demolished home onto the literal hole that is before him. Alternatively, for Michael, Mr. Kenney is a *haunting* subject—he forces Michael to acknowledge the "remains" of the past. Like the remains of the tree planted in Mr. Kenney's backyard, here, Michael's narration

emphasizes the continued presence of the past, its ability to insinuate itself into and alter the landscape of the contemporary moment. It is interesting that Michael points out that the tree is “more than fifty years old,” and, given that this scene takes place in 1996, an artifact of pre-Confederation (1949) Newfoundland. As such, the tree seems to stand in for an unrealized vision of Newfoundland political sovereignty. Although it has been cut-down—reduced to a stump—it nonetheless has managed to persist in the present by way of its various remaining fragments: “sawdust covered the ground”; “the backyard was covered with the limbs of other trees” (13). Although neither Michael nor readers have direct access to Mr. Kenney’s memories, it is clear that he *has* memories of this space, and this is sufficient to provoke a haunting. By conjuring the ghosts of a pre-Confederation Newfoundland as they exist in the remnants of the cut-down trees that litter Mr. Kenney’s former property, Michael does not necessarily fall back on the rhetoric of Newfoundland nationalism. Rather, he acknowledges the historical reality of the pre-Confederation period, and the fact that Newfoundland’s entrance into Canada was not inevitable. Michael’s narration thus forces readers to confront the fact there is something *more*—a ghostly *other*—lurking in the hole over which Mr. Kenney broods. This results in the destabilization of the novel’s contemporary moment and the consideration of the many possible ways that an individual can engage with any given space. Michael’s *flânerie* instigates a subversive act of remembering that works temporarily to undermine the dominant, totalizing narratives of the present. Mr. Kenney is a local authority whose knowledge stands in opposition to the prevailing ideological system. More than just working as a critique of global capitalism, the novel attempts to show readers how dominant ideologies attempt to erase and destroy worldviews with which they are incompatible. It also, as I will discuss in the following section, shows readers tactics for subverting such dominant systems.

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If Michael emerges in *Gallery* as a *flâneur*, than his friend, Brendan “Miles” Harnett, is a hyper-*flâneur*. Even the idea of the *flâneur* as a walker through the city is exaggerated in Miles: “the marathon race-walking champion of St. John’s during his university years, Brendan had earned the nickname ‘Miles’” (140). While going through a collection of books that Miles leaves to Michael in his will, Michael notes that a London guide book “had more notes on it than all the other books combined”: “judging from the all his jottings in *Nairn’s London*, it looked as if the old *flâneur* had spent no small amount of leisure time poking into the nooks and crannies of London” (315). As Chafe suggests of Johnston’s Fielding, Miles is “a *flâneur* with a purpose” (“Beautiful Losers” 117). His purpose, like Fielding’s, is that of the Newfoundland nation: “Miles is known . . . as a Newfoundland nationalist, though *patriot* is what he prefers to be called” (146). As an independent scholar, the president of the loosely organized Prowse Society, an outspoken agitator at community lectures, Miles works to disrupt popular and accepted understandings of post-Confederation Newfoundland history. Miles’s Prowse Society is an “alternative historical society”: “not an alternative to the Newfoundland Historical Society so much as to King Joey Smallwood himself, to the society, the political culture, that he had created, to *L’Etat c’est moi*” (43). Lacking any rigidly outlined structure—“no official membership, no officers, no dues, no constitution, no publications, and no meetings”—the Prowse Society is able to place on offer a style of historical discourse rooted in an oral storytelling tradition (143). This, along with an emphasis on dialogue and conversation, stands in sharp contrast to the closed, unitary, Smallwoodian histories of the post-Confederation era. As Miles sees it, history, more often than not, is made in order to tell the story of those in power, and, concomitantly, to justify and re-inscribe our society’s existing power structures.

Although the Prowse Society is resolutely defiant of post-Confederation Newfoundland history and ideology, it is also clear that Miles himself is bound up in ideologies of his own. Miles appears to be blinded by his obsession with a lost Newfoundland nation and his near-biblical attachment to D.W. Prowse's *A History of Newfoundland*. Perhaps nowhere is the rigidity of his ideology placed on more clear display than in a scene near the beginning of the novel in which Miles, as an audience member at a community lecture about the Human Genome Project, manages, over the protests of the lecture's moderator and the entire audience, to deliver a speech in which he laments what he sees as the continuing colonial history of Newfoundland. In emphasizing the ancestral inheritance of a communion with the land (as we see Fielding do at the end of *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*), Miles places the physical body at the centre of Newfoundland sovereignty. It is, he suggests, through bloodlines that Newfoundland identity is transmitted and, accordingly, it is in the physical bodies of Newfoundlanders that the nation exists. This is highly problematic as it maintains essentialist concepts of race and opens up the possibility for exclusive and rigidly-defined communal identifications. In this speech, Miles articulates an understanding of the human body as the last uncolonized Newfoundland space: "Now you're talking about mapping the human body, colonizing the human body. Not maps of water, but maps of blood. . . . We've already been socially and politically engineered, and now we're being scientifically engineered" (69–71). Miles's rhetoric frames the sovereignty of the Newfoundlander's body as correlative with the sovereignty of Newfoundland as a national body. Reflecting on the geneticist's comparison of the human cell with the archive, Miles tells the audience: "I spend a lot of time in the Archives myself, and I know that if I tried any of that funny business in there with any of those documents that . . . [Michael] and his colleagues would have me arrested. . . . I can't fiddle around with those documents. . . . I certainly can't get a



copyright or a patent on them” (70). The body, then, like the archive, is, for Miles, the container of a vast communal knowledge, an almost Jungian national unconscious that is, as Sugars suggests,

both distinctive and inheritable. Indeed, the commitment to geographical and historical determinism in the defining of a people acts as a safeguard against historical memory loss, since the determining contribution of geography and history are posited as somehow genetic predispositions whose acquisition occurs at an unconscious (even if physiological) level. (“Phantoms” 11)

As Miles sees it, genetic research places this safeguard of identity under threat of erasure, and, in doing so, undermines the Newfoundland national project. Miles’s closing remarks in his impromptu speech at the community lecture employ a rhetoric that looks to an “original” population from which contemporary Newfoundlanders have descended: “We’re descended from fewer than twenty-five thousand souls” (71). Miles emphasizes the notion of a Newfoundland people as distinct not just culturally and geographically but also genetically from the rest of the world. As such, Miles problematically affirms a genetically-determined conception of Newfoundland identity.

If Miles is such an ideologue, than how can we rightly say that he is really challenging the dominant discourse in any meaningful way? Michael offers us one way of resolving this conflict: “Though [Miles] would be the first to point out that Prowse’s book was called A History of Newfoundland and described by Prowse himself as ‘a very incomplete history,’ it was certainly the version that [he] subscribed to” (underline mine 66). Miles emphasizes Prowse’s use of the article “A”—suggesting multiplicity and variation—as opposed to “The”—suggesting totality and completeness. This is in direct contrast to the novel’s description of Joey

Smallwood's radio program, *The Barrelman*, and his political dominance as the leading public visionary of Confederation: "Joey's voice, his mesmerizing oratory, would go on to become *the* Voice of Newfoundland, drowning out practically all other voices after 1949" (147). It is this process of one voice drowning out all others that Miles is most resistant to. As such, his treatment of history is, if not exactly anti-ideological, at least anti-authoritarian. That is, although Miles has no trouble embracing one particular version of history over the other, he is resistant to the possibility of any single version coming to dominate the public space.

Miles demonstrates this resistance perhaps most clearly one Remembrance Day, when he gives Michael and Anton a walking tour of the city, which Michael dubs "Harnett's Historical Haunted Hike" (151): "he headed down the valley to Rennie's Mill Road, then up through Bannerman Park to the House where, depending on his frame of mind and who he was with, you might hear a sermon, a confession, a history lesson, or some new archival revelation" (154). In dubbing Miles's tour a "haunted hike," Michael makes the connection between *flânerie* and the act of haunting explicit. He enacts a haunting in which history and memory impinge on the present and in doing so resist the dominance of hegemonic presentations of Newfoundland. Following the official Remembrance Day ceremony, Miles stands in front of the war memorial to recite, "as if in retort [to the official ceremonies], E.J. Pratt's 'Before a Bulletin Board (After Beaumont-Hamel)'" followed by Thomas Hardy's "The Man He Killed" and finally Wilfred Owen's "Dulce Et Decorum Est": "almost spitting the last two lines, 'The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est / Pro patria mori,*' 'It is sweet and fitting to die for the fatherland'" (156). Miles's recitation infuses St. John's with a ghost history and challenges colonial and nationalist narratives operating in Remembrance Day ceremonies. It also expresses a desire to perform an alternative version of Newfoundland history.

Ultimately, it seems that Michael recognizes in Miles a surprisingly sophisticated take on the concepts of nation. At one point, Michael suggests that “his political philosophy was neither a politics nor a philosophy, but the sort of impenetrable and unstable ideology that, when all was said and done, would be more amenable to a poetics rather than a politics or an ethics” (147). This emphasis on “poetics” would seem to suggest a recognition that nations come about *through mediation*: they are fictions; as such, they can be re-written and re-interpreted to fit the needs of the present moment. In this light, Miles’s patriotism takes on a self-consciously performative air. Discussing *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, Jennifer Delisle suggests that “the loss of the Newfoundland nation is both exposed . . . and combated, as Newfoundland is preserved as a country of the mind” (196). Thinking about Miles’s character, we could say that the Newfoundland nation is not so much “preserved” as it is *performed* as a country of the mind. For Miles, nationhood comes about *through* performances of various kinds. Here, Judith Butler’s concept of performativity as she uses it in deconstructing gender is helpful. Butler argues that gender is not a pre-existing entity but rather something that can only come about through discourse. Gender is constituted through a variety of speech acts and social activities: “a performative is that practice that enacts or produces what it names” (13). Sarah Salih’s explication of Butler’s performativity is useful in understanding how the concept applies to nation: “there is no ‘natural [national?] body’ that pre-exists its cultural inscription. This seems to point towards the conclusion that gender is not something one *is*, it is something one *does*, an act, or more precisely, a sequence of acts, a verb rather than a noun, a ‘doing’ rather than a ‘being’” (62). Miles’s performances work not only to communicate Newfoundland but also to bring it about. In that Miles’s Newfoundland is self-consciously performative, it follows, then, that it is also an open-ended process of perpetual redefinition, a “‘doing’ rather than a ‘being.’”

And Miles is well aware of this. At one point during his tirade at the Genome Project lecture, he references the “single solitary bottle of cod liver oil” that Newfoundland sends to the Great Exhibition of 1851 to represent the colony: “‘That’s right,’ Miles says, ‘one bottle of cod liver oil’” (67). “Displayed behind the bar of the Travers Tavern . . . was a glowing amber bottle of cod liver oil, whose illustrious provenance the barkeeper had filled him in on during his first evening there—the original bottle from the Great Exhibition of 1851, no less” (147). As an emblem of a pre-Confederation Newfoundland, the bottle operates as a kind of ghost. Like the tree branches that litter Mr. Kenney’s property, it represents an insertion of the past into the present; it is a token of a point in Newfoundland’s history when Confederation was not inevitable, and as such, a reminder of the fragility of Newfoundland’s contemporary moment. Alternatively, we can also read the bottle as a somewhat simplistic symbol for the nation. Miles resents the bottle because it is a symbol of Newfoundland’s colonial status, and of Confederation’s perpetuation of the processes of colonialism. Further, it indicates an objectification of the Newfoundland nation: “‘The list of objects displayed filled a three-volume, fifteen-hundred-page catalogue, and under ‘Newfoundland’ we find listed a single solitary bottle of cod liver oil’” (67). Miles identifies in the Exhibition catalogue a process by which ethnographic objects are made to stand in for the nations they claim to represent. They even, in a sense, *become* the nation. This result is an understanding of nations as pre-existing things, objects, ontologically stable units that exist independently of human activity or utterance. Miles suggests that the opposite is in fact true: that nations exist only after the performative act, and that as such national units are always in flux.

Might we say, then, that Miles performs a kind of *meta-nationalism*? That is, Miles, through his various cultural and civic activities, brings into being a self-reflexive, self-conscious

kind of nationalism that, like meta-fiction, seeks to draw attention to its own constructed status. Support for this idea can be found near the end of the novel, at which point the reader gains a full understanding of the depth and complexity of Miles's engagement with the idea of the Newfoundland nation. Going through a copy of *The Book of London*, Michael notes that "Miles appears to have been more than pleased to find both history and fiction under Narrative, and to hear that: history seems to be the kind of writing most susceptible of mixed motivation" (underline not mine 314). For Miles, it would seem that history and fiction exist on the same flat narrative plane. As such, concepts such as nation emerge as imagined, narrative constructions rather than historical inevitabilities. Miles recognizes that history is necessarily ideological, "susceptible of mixed motivation." This, for Miles, is not necessarily a bad thing. Perhaps the key word here is "mixed": Miles's continued performance of the Newfoundland nation in a post-Confederation context reminds readers that we can read the events of the past in a number of conflicting ways, and indeed that we *must* do so if we are to combat the imposition of hegemonic ideological visions of the past, present, and future. Miles offers alternatives to the dominating narratives of global capitalism that threaten the contemporary moment in Newfoundland. In doing so, he works against the *saturation of signification* in the public space and encourages us to find new possibilities for signification, for the flourishing of meanings unimpeded by the dominant order.

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The novel's concluding section is taken entirely "from the Brendan 'Miles' Harnett Fonds," an archival document that Michael compiles over the course of the novel. It is a recording of two meetings of Miles's Prowse Society. In the second of the two meetings, the attendees say to Miles:

“You put *your* stamp on it, Miles”

“Give us forty verses, Miles.”

“Tell us a cuffer.”

“Yeah, Miles, tell us a cuffer.” (344)

The request that Miles receives from the audience for “forty verses” and for him to put *his* “stamp on it” gestures more likely to an evening of poetry or song than it does history in the traditional sense. Miles acts not primarily as an historian but as a storyteller; more accurately, Miles acts as a *cuffer*<sup>1</sup> (a role that clearly emphasizes performativity). James Faris writes that

a cuffer is essentially an exaggeration or a twist—something “new” on an old item. . . .

Although most men will have a general (or even specific) idea of the “facts” of the incident, the cuffer is a technique used to create humor, or, as usually happens, to get an argument started over details of the particular case which will insure that discussion and conversation continue—even an argument about the picayune details, when everyone may well know the exact “facts” (the “facts,” of course, may not be relevant). (148)

Although the cuffer maintains a real world referent, there is also a tacit agreement that the person performing the cuffer will alter and rearrange the facts in order to serve the story, in order to put his stamp on things. The cuffer challenges the idea that there can exist a singular and unified historical discourse in the first place. Inherent to the act of cuffing is an embrace of epistemological slipperiness, a recognition that things cannot ever be told as they actually are. As such, Miles uses the cuffer as a means of forging an alternative history, one that refuses to submit to the accepted ways of understanding Newfoundland’s past and its present. It is in this

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<sup>1</sup> Somewhat confusingly, the word “cuffer” can refer either to the performance (e.g. Miles *performed* a cuffer) or to the person performing (e.g. Miles *was* a cuffer).

way that Miles, as “Cuffer-in-Residence,” is able to foster a sense of Newfoundland sovereignty that emphasizes its own constructed, fictional nature (138).

Near the end of *Gallery*, after Miles has died, Michael suggests: “*His* patriotism . . . seemed closer to a religion, or a theology, rather than a politics. A quixotic and ultimately inexplicable belief in resurrection and eternal life . . . a strange and exasperating amalgam of preaching, remembrance, contentiousness, love, and grief, and perhaps above all, melding the entire mix, hope” (311). Miles recognizes the political sovereignty of Newfoundlanders as existing in the past and the future. As for the present, he takes up a kind of religious “belief in resurrection and eternal life” for Newfoundland that registers a feeling of hopefulness and possibility rather than defeat and disenfranchisement. Michael does not feel the same emotional connection to the idea of a politically autonomous Newfoundland that Miles does. He sympathetically engages the sentiments of staunch anti-Confederates such as Miles without taking them up himself. As David B. Hickey suggests, Bowdring “knows that the old St. John’s townie, practiced in his/her anti-Confederate shtick, is a dying breed. And though the book doesn’t suffer fools gladly, Bowdring is still able to sympathize with their pathetic plight” (n.p.). As Anton suggests, Miles believes that there “still exists, a blue country somewhere in the blue mountains . . . He can see it but he can’t go there.” (279). The Newfoundland nation, Anton here suggests, exists only in the hypothetical realm. Importantly, and as I have argued throughout this thesis, this is true of all nations. Nations only come about through mediation and as such are never wholly *present*: they exist through mediation. Miles recognizes this fact and even sees in it a possibility. His various patriotic performances around St. John’s—speeches at the Prowse Society, recitations at the War Memorial, or interruptions at community lectures—stand as attempts to infuse the city space with alternative national narratives.

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While speaking with Dr. Larry Mathews' 2014 graduate seminar on contemporary Newfoundland fiction, Paul Bowdring told the class: "My heritage is literary." This comment might also apply to Michael. He was born in 1949, the year that Newfoundland joined Canada; as such, Michael's nebulous heritage is for him a source of great consternation. He feels not quite a Newfoundlander, not quite a Canadian. As a result, he takes to literature in fostering an understanding of the world and his place in it. This opens up for Michael the possibility of new, non-national identifications. And this, I argue, is ultimately where he ends up: "we," he says, "are part a large corporeal and spiritual partnership, much greater than the sum of its partners, a large living breathing organism carrying the precious burden of the race's seed" (319). The "race" to which Michael refers is, of course, the human race. But it is an important point to make in that it counters Miles's earlier uses of the word "race" to refer to Newfoundlanders as members of a distinct ethnicity. Thus, I read Michael's narration as an attempt to perform an identity that maintains an awareness of the influence of national Newfoundland discourse that is not bound by that discourse. Michael manages to do so through orienting his novel's conclusion towards the future. By assuming the role of adoptive father after Anton leaves Miranda pregnant and on her own, Michael invests his own future in the child's. Further, he, as adoptive father, will, presumably, affirm for the child a kind of identity that is non-essential, that is based on the needs and resources of the contemporary moment rather than any genetically-determined understanding of family, community, or nation. Michael's transcription of Miles's recitation of T.S. Eliot's "Ash-Wednesday" in the novel's final lines should be read as reflective of this understanding:

*O my people, what have I done unto thee*



“We love the place, O Lord. Forgive us but we do.”

*Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood*

*Teach us to care and not to care*

*Teach us to sit still*

*Even among these rocks . . . (346)*

The “we” that Miles here articulates is not the same “we” that Fielding articulates at the end of *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* when she tells readers that “we are a people in whose bodies old sea-seeking rivers roar with blood” (555). This is a “we” in which there exist no essential or necessary traits. Miles fosters a sense of community through performances such as the kind at work in these concluding lines. As Miles deploys it, the poem recognizes a certain absurdity—“*what have I done*”—at work in the affirmation of the Newfoundland nation. The refrain offered by Miles’s audience asks for forgiveness for their attachment to “the place,” and as such implies that there is a fundamental deceit or falsehood at work in the process of the nation’s formation. Michael interprets Miles’s communal performance as constitutive of an open-ended, non-exclusionary model for Newfoundland sovereignty in a post-Confederation context. By recording this event, Michael participates in this process and encourages readers to do the same.

The ellipsis that *Gallery* ends on registers a willingness to embrace this situation—that is, to live fully in the juncture between past and present and acknowledge the unknowability of the future. Finally, then, the spectral Newfoundland nation is a process of mediation. Newfoundland “*is*” as Stan Dragland reminds us, “in story” (206). By acknowledging and embracing the narrative structure underlying the concept of “Newfoundland,” we equip ourselves to revise and rewrite it so that we—whomever *we* are—may navigate the shifting, post-Confederation terrain of the present.

## A Conclusion From the Depths of the Sea

In this thesis I have shown that the spectral Newfoundland nation is not a unified concept but one that authors use to divergent ends. At its best, the spectral challenges us to reconsider what we might otherwise take for granted as common sense. As Avery Gordon writes in *Ghostly Matters*, “being haunted draws us affectively, sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into the structure of feeling or a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition” (8). One way that we might think about the spectral Newfoundland nation, then, is as a challenge, or series of challenges, for us to engage critically with the full complexity of Newfoundland today. By way of conclusion, I have drawn up a list of the three most important challenges mounted by the spectral Newfoundland nation in these novels:

- 1) The spectral Newfoundland nation challenges Confederation. In some ways, we could see the spectral Newfoundland nation as a useful tool for anti-Confederates such as Fielding of *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* and Miles of *The Strangers' Gallery*. When Fielding claims that “the river of what might have been still runs and their will never come a time when do not hear it,” she implicitly claims that Newfoundland will never truly enter into a post-Confederation period (560). That is, the lost possibility of political autonomy will forever hang, like a specter, over Newfoundland’s place inside of Canada. Similarly, in *Miles*, we see a mobilization the spectral Newfoundland nation that functions as a direct challenge to Confederation. Michael describes the anti-Confederate Miles Harnett as a ghost, lurking around St. John’s, reminding people of what was and what could have been. Miles is “like Hamlet’s father’s ghost, *doom’d for a certain term to walk the night . . . Calling upon [his son] to avenge the foul crimes—not against the*

father, but the fatherland—his dead country . . . New Founde Lande” (8). By promising to “avenge the *foul crimes*” of Confederation, the spectral Newfoundland nation maintains a hope for the possibility of Newfoundland’s future independence.

- 2) The spectral Newfoundland nation challenges nationalism. In *Galore* and *The Strangers’ Gallery*, the spectral challenges many of the assumptions of Newfoundland nationalism—namely, that Newfoundland exists as a rock-solid, rigidly-defined, and cohesive entity. By imagining a pre-national Newfoundland, *Galore* brings to light the many cultural, linguistic, religious, and political influences at play in Newfoundland society. The novel shows Newfoundland to be a “mash,” a “scatter” of divergent forces all interacting in an undetermined cultural space (57). As such, the idea of a monolithic Newfoundland nation emerges as untenable. Similarly, in *The Strangers’ Gallery*, hauntings work to infuse multiplicity and hybridity into what might otherwise be an oppressively monolithic public space. Michael rejects the idea that Newfoundland can be adequately represented by a “single solitary bottle of cod liver oil” (67). His narration shows that beneath the surface of everyday life there exist innumerable ghosts waiting to be uncovered which, collectively, work to undermine the univocity of Newfoundland nationalism, and, for that matter, all ideological systems.
- 3) The spectral Newfoundland nation challenges the concept of nation itself. Most radically, *Galore* and *The Strangers’ Gallery* use the spectral to challenge the very concept of nation. Both novels show that the nation emerges only through of a series of mediations. By drawing explicit attention to this process, the nation emerges as a phantasmal construction. As Justin D. Edwards explains, because a nation is “a precarious fabrication that is built upon questionable cultural narratives, then a nation is also haunted by the

spectral figure of its own fabrication” (xix). To be sure, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* also recognizes this fact. In that novel the tension between Fielding’s print journalism and Joey’s radio broadcasts reveals an awareness of the nation as a product of mediation. *Galore* and *The Strangers’ Gallery* incorporate this recognition more fully into their final vision of Newfoundland. In those novels, there is no binding affirmation of a people genetically bound to each other and to the land. There is no “people in whose bodies old sea-seeking rivers roar with blood” (*Colony* 556). In *Galore*, a dynamic folk tradition transmits and transforms Newfoundland in open-ended and non-essentialist terms. In *The Strangers’ Gallery*, the Newfoundland nation emerges following Miles’s performance of it. By using the spectral to draw attention to the nation’s constructed status, these two novels refuse any kind of easy, uncritical acceptance of the concept of nation. The question of what should take the place of the nation is a valid one. *Galore* and *The Strangers’ Gallery* look to forms of community that are based not on essentialism but rather the need to form strategic bonds that ensure survival.

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Consider once more the epigraph from *Psalms* that Crummey uses at the beginning of *Galore*: “I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea” (n.p.). In *Psalms*, this passage continues as follows: “That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies” (68.24 *KJV*). The omission says much about the kind of Newfoundland that Crummey is trying to articulate in *Galore*. He looks hopefully towards the possibility of God’s people—that is, of Newfoundlanders—being brought back from the depths of the sea, of their articulating some form of genuine sovereignty. Crummey’s desire for sovereignty stops short, however, when the nation becomes oppositional and violent, when it actively seeks others—“enemies”—to defeat

and destroy. As such, Crummey truncates the quotation to serve the needs of his hope for Newfoundland. The act of truncation speaks to a willingness to operate in an unfinished state, to, like the ship that Abel travels on at the end of *Galore*, move imaginatively *towards* Newfoundland while never finally arriving there. The epigraph, then, privileges the liminal: it creates “a *tabula rasa*, through the removal of previously taken-for-granted forms and limits” (Szakolczai 149). The liminality that the spectral offers works as a strategy for re-imagining the parameters of Newfoundland nationhood. It removes that which is taken-for-granted and insists on a continuous renegotiation of the concepts of identity, community, citizenship, and nation.

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