# THE NEWFOUNDLAND OUTPORT NOVEL: PERCEPTIONS OF PLACE AND IDENTITY. 1858-2014.

**by**

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis traces the development of a unique phenomenon in place-based literature identified as the outport novel genre. The Newfoundland fishing villages, known as outports, have inspired both insider and outsider writers. The cultural importance of the iconic outport is in evidence in the arts, literature and music of Newfoundland as expressions of the cultural nationalism of the island. However, the outport novel reveals a more nuanced and comprehensive overview of Newfoundland cultural identity over time. Individual and group experience of place have an impact on the formation of personal and communal identity. Bernice Morgan was the first local novelist to explicitly link Newfoundland identity to 'the culture of place' in 2003. In this thesis, the evolution of the genre is explored and analysed through five case studies at strategic points in time. The first Newfoundland novel, *New Priest in Conception Bay* (1858) by R.T.S. Lowell, established the outport as the setting for the local genre. The study ends with an analysis of Michael Crummey's *Sweetland* (2014). The academic field of literary criticism has generated considerable interest in the Newfoundland novel since Confederation with Canada from both insiders and outsiders. What the outport novels represent and why their themes are so important in cultural expressions of Newfoundland identity is their role in transposing the underlying norms and values of the outport community into a future Newfoundland consciousness.

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## Introduction:

> As with most children my initiation into reality took place in the kitchen of the house where I was born. Most of the talk in the kitchen concerned Cap Island and Random Island, those idyllic, beautiful outports my relatives had left behind forever. My Vincent uncles were merchant seamen, young men for whom Spain, Portugal, Boston and Barbados were familiar places….
>
> Layer by layer, layers of words, layers of paint, layers of music and dance, theater and film. Then, in the 1990s an explosion of creativity – a melding of history and landscape, myth and music - that astonished not just us but people all across Canada. For me it was as if the voices I heard in that long-ago kitchen had broken through, been reborn, become public, become place – and the place was Newfoundland.
>
> Bernice Morgan. 2003. Novelist.

The personal experience of Bernice Morgan's discovery of her bond with Newfoundland, as a young child, and its impact on her adult identity is a familiar phenomenon within her immediate community of writers. It is a voyage of discovery that she also shares with many other Newfoundlanders. Along with a significant number of her fellow writers, she has recorded her thoughts in terms that resonate with her readers. Her articulation of this process of self-knowledge is the departure point for my thesis on perceptions of place and identity in the local novels set in the Newfoundland fishing villages, known as outports, and published between 1858 and 2014.

Morgan has been a key figure in the politicisation of Newfoundland culture. Her focus has been on the legacy of the outport philosophy of life and a corresponding sense of place that is fundamental to an understanding of the underlying concepts that are inherent in contemporary Newfoundland cultural nationalism. In the printed version of her paper, 'The

Culture of Place' published in the journal *Newfoundland Studies*[1], she reflected on the significance of place for her identity as a Newfoundlander from the perspective of her 'initiation into reality' and her gradual awareness of 'a sense of place (2003, p.373)'. She traced her introduction into her world as a very young child growing up in urban St. John's but steeped in the culture of the outport way of life experienced by her parents in rural Newfoundland. As she grew up, Morgan recalls how it never occurred to her that Newfoundland had a culture, or 'that the place she lived in could be the subject of novels, of art, drama or poetry (2003, p.374)'.

Later, in her early thirties, during the emergence of the Newfoundland cultural renaissance in the 1970s (Gwyn, 1976), she became aware of her growing sense of place "being born – or reborn" that ultimately found expression in her novels and biographical writing (2003, p.375). The significance of Morgan's analysis of her experiences is not only that she underlines the importance of the past for the forging of a meaningful future but that she highlights how a sense of place impacts on our identity. She cites Wallace Stegner's view that fiction serves as well as fact to create a sense of place (Morgan 2003, p.376). In this way, Morgan stresses the important role played by Newfoundland novelists in articulating the link between place and identity and preserving

[1] Based on her presentation at the Historical Society's symposium on "The Idea of Newfoundland: Nationalism, Identity and Culture from the 19th century to the present." in March 2003.

past memories and experiences for future generations, as argued by Wallace Stegner in the context of the regional literature of the western United States (Newberry, 2011, pp.199-206, 520-533; Stegner 1989).

In her chosen metier, Morgan found the most effective means of sharing her ideas with a broader audience. The novel genre enabled her to give voice to her view that the local had value and also relevance for the wider world. Through her work, she became part of what she refers to as the 'critical mass' that generated the Newfoundland cultural renaissance (2003, p.377). Furthermore, she underlines that the culture of her place has been made visible because many thousands of individuals, as well as national and local organisations worked to make it happen (2003, pp.376-377). The focal point of this cultural revolution was outport Newfoundland. Morgan's novels brought the outport way of life to the attention of her many readers and her novels revealed the cultural nationalism that is a key concept in this study.

Although Morgan was the first Newfoundland novelist to link her Newfoundland identity to the culture of place so explicitly, this phenomenon should not only be seen as a consequence of the Newfoundland cultural resurgence in the last thirty years of the twentieth century. Its origins lie in the early nineteenth century in the decades culminating in self-government in 1832. Successive generations of writers from Newfoundland, the diaspora and empathetic outsider novelists have viewed 'the culture of place' as a dynamic vehicle for promoting and moulding their vision of what it signifies to be a Newfoundlander, initially within the context of the British Empire, and later from 1949, when Newfoundland joined

Canada[2], as a member of the Commonwealth[3] . The importance of Morgan's paper for my research is that it highlights the role of outport culture in the development of local identity.

Through the vocalisation of her experiences, Morgan has raised questions concerning the late twentieth century proliferation of outport literature and its suitability as a valid topic for academic research. A visitor to Newfoundland in the 1990s browsing in the bookshops of the provincial capital, St. John's, could be forgiven for musing why there were so many local novels for sale that were set in the outports. A spontaneous rationalising reaction that it was a combination of long dark winter evenings and the generous bounty of Canadian government grants to writers is clearly frivolous. However, Patrick Byrne's 1994 thesis *Folk Tradition, Literature and a Society in Transition* referred to the perception circulating locally that Newfoundlanders seemed to be moving away from their oral traditions in favour of writing books, and provides confirmation of a literary transformation in progress (1994, p.1). The formulation of satisfactory substantive answers to address the issue of why the outport has inspired so many novelists to put pen to paper is the motivation and foundation for the present study.

In this thesis, I argue that the ethos of the Newfoundland outport is the inspiration for the literary explorations of what it is to be a Newfoundlander through the medium of the outport novel. The outport functions as a touchstone for the politicisation of public opinion about Newfoundland's initial status as a self-governing country and its subsequent position as a province of Canada. A number of issues are raised by the main thesis. First, from a conceptual standpoint, there is the question whether an engagement with place as expressed in

[2] Newfoundland eventually joined Canada in 1949 after two close-run referenda in the previous year.
[3] In the present context, the use of the term 'Newfoundland' refers only to the island of Newfoundland and not to the present day Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The name of the province was officially changed to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2001.

the outport novels is intrinsic to perceptions of Newfoundland identity and, if so, what is its relevance for the understanding of notions of sense of place and identity, as expressed in these novels? Secondly, what is the significance, if any, of a distinction between 'insider' and 'outsider' writers of outport novels? What is the contribution that outsider writers make to an understanding of Newfoundland? Furthermore, to what extent are the outport novels representative of a wider Newfoundlander community, including the Newfoundland diaspora, or are the outport novels merely a reflection of long-standing social divisions within Newfoundland itself? A third and important consideration is, what is the role played by textual communities in fostering a creative environment that has fired the imagination of so many novelists to focus on the iconography of the outport?

The outport novel genre highlights the differences perceived at both the individual and group levels between mainland Canada and the island itself. In this respect it exhibits subversive characteristics. Newfoundland is Canadian but in many of the outport novels, there is a subversive undertone; a reminder to the federal government in Ottawa that Newfoundland is special. These sentiments reverberate through time, as instanced by the old Newfoundland anti-Confederation campaign song of 1869, in which Canada is warned "Come near at your peril, Canadian Wolf!" The Newfoundland experience of place was intensified by the existence of its neighbour, the Canadian Confederation. The continuing awareness of a Newfoundland identity since Confederation with Canada in 1949 and its concurrent sense of place is frequently apparent in many outport novels in this study.

The elevation of these coastal villages of Newfoundland to the status of cultural icons was a phenomenon of the latter part of the twentieth century and the term 'outport' became synonymous with the idea of a sense of place in the Post-Confederation Newfoundland narrative. The significance of this shift was recognised by Morgan in her 2003 lecture *The*

*Culture of Place*. She described how as a child and adolescent she used the word 'village' to describe an outport in her school essays, as the term 'outport' 'did not exist either in the printed word or in the world of my imagination (2003, p.374)'. How this evolution occurred is the *raison d'être* of this thesis through an analysis of the case study novels and the contexts in which they were conceived and written by their authors.

The term 'outport[4]' had its origins in the informal summer settlements on the coastal areas of Newfoundland used by the cod fishermen from the British Isles from the seventeenth century onwards. However, permanent official settlement of the entire island was not realised until well into the eighteenth century. The consequence of this colonisation was that the indigenous Beothuk inhabitants were displaced from their traditional hunting grounds on the island, and the last surviving Beothuk died of tuberculosis in 1829. The history of this tragedy is the subject of Michael Crummey's *River Thieves* (2001) and discussed further in the critique of Bernice Morgan's *Random Passage* in Chapter Four.

The Newfoundland outports differed from the fishing villages in Nova Scotia and New England in a number of respects, such as their remote locations often only accessible by sea and the truck method of payment of the fishermen[5]. A nascent local identity was observed by many visitors and missionaries to Newfoundland in the first half of the nineteenth century (Rompkey, 2010). In addition, nineteenth century accounts

[4]The outports are frequently referred to as rural Newfoundland despite their maritime location, as opposed to the urban areas, such as the capital St. John's. There is an increasing disparity in population distribution because of out-migration to mainland Canada and the drift to the towns within Newfoundland itself.

[5] The truck system did not involve payment in money but was based on a credit system. Fishermen received goods on credit and paid the debt back by giving their catch to the merchants at the end of the fishing season.

of life in Newfoundland also focused on the challenging climate and living conditions experienced by settlers on the island.

This thesis argues that outports are fixed points on the landscape that have acquired a deeper symbolic significance. As the analysis develops, it becomes evident that the term 'outport' has also come to hold a dual significance: it not only encompasses the coastal communities, but is a reminder that these settlements and their people are linked to other places, far away. To be part of an 'outport' is to experience a paradoxical everyday distance and isolation, while also remaining inherently connected to 'outside'. Moreover, it emerges from this study that the outport can also act as a metaphor for the fragility of cultural legacies. The outport operated as a subsistence economy. The outporters lived in wooden houses situated close to the shore and fish processing facilities with a church, one school for all the children and a store in the larger outports.

This duality of an innate self-awareness/self-confidence and forebearance in a challenging environment is also evident in the few surviving nineteenth century novels and novellas set in Newfoundland with their appreciation of the norms and values of the fishing communities and awareness of their difficult environmental living conditions. These circumstances fired the imagination of writers, at the time, and inspired plots that depended upon this duality for dramatic effect. Nineteenth century examples of these fictional works are the novellas by Stabb (1880) and Bond (1887; 1911) that are discussed in Chapter Two**.** Almost without exception, all the early novels and novellas were situated either wholly or partially in the fishing villages or outports, since the sole function of the colony of Newfoundland from the late sixteenth century until the late nineteenth century was to harvest and process cod principally for the European market. However, the underlying social tension between the inhabitants of the town of St. John's

and the outport settlements is not so easily observable in the early novels, although the expressions ‘bayman’ (literally, a man of the bay) for an outport inhabitant and ‘townie’ for a St. John’s resident are entrenched sociolingustic phenomena.

The depiction in fiction of the idiosyncratic outport communities has continued into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Although the authorial rationale underpinning these novels has evolved and changed, the essential elements of the fictional outport ethos has remained constant. In recognition of this phenomenon, therefore, I have referred to these novels as ‘outport novels’ throughout the thesis. In part, this decision is motivated to assist the reader but also because I regard the outport novel as a subgenre of the regional or place-based novel in much the same way as academics and commentators refer to Hardy’s Wessex novels. An understanding of the history and provenance of the outport novel genre is a major platform of this research and I believe makes a contribution to a deeper understanding of the literary record of the cultural life of the island of Newfoundland as a whole.

In this chapter, I describe the steps I have taken to structure and guide the study and identify the most important concepts underpinning the thesis, map the parameters that govern the thesis rationale and explain the terms that are intrinsic to them. In the first part of the chapter, Place, Identity and Sense of Place, the key concepts underpinning the conceptual framework of the thesis are discussed from an interdisciplinary perspective. The following part, The Newfoundland Outport Novel, explores the underlying philosophy of the regional or local novel in broad terms, in order to provide a context to the development of the outport novel sub-genre. In the third part, Methodological Framework: Five Case Studies – 1858-2014, I focus on how the thesis statement and its related questions are tested from different viewpoints, in order to validate them at three main levels of analysis; close reading of a

selection of novels with strong associations with the outports; the interpretation of the influence of social, political and historical factors on writers's motives and, finally, their relationship with local textual communities. The chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis chapters.

## Part One: Place, Identity and Sense of Place.

### Cultural Ambiguity of Place, Sense of Place and Identity.

The conceptual ambiguity surrounding the use of terms such as 'place', 'sense of place' and 'identity' and their problematic currency across a wide range of contexts and disciplines requires resolution as part of my justification for the acceptance of the outport novel as a sub-genre. These concepts are discussed in the chapter section on Place and Identity. An expression used frequently and less self-consciously is the phrase 'This Place', as used by Morgan in her address to the Historical Society's symposium in 2003.The semiotic significance of the phrase 'This Place' speaks for itself and encompasses the great significance place has for the islanders, regardless of any positive or negative connotations an individual may manifest towards the island. Newfoundland is also known as the 'The Rock' in popular parlance. The Newfoundland literary group, Burning Rock Collective, have even incorporated this idea into their name.

Another example of attachment to and engagement with place is the phrase 'Come From Away' or its abbreviation CFA. In the literary context, this is reflected in the importance attached to whether a novelist is an insider or outsider. As writer Claire Wilkshire has commented Newfoundland is a place where 'there's a firm divide between Newfoundlanders and CFAS (Come-from-Aways). To be a Newfoundlander means born

and bred, with family dotted around the island: living here for almost your entire life does not make you a Newfoundlander' (in Wyile, 2011, p.261; Wilkshire, 2003, pp.17-18.). However, this categorisation is not synonymous with exclusion or inward-looking attitudes, as borne out by the acceptance of outsider Newfoundland novelists, such as the British born Michael Winter. On the contrary, 'literary and artistic expressions of belonging can play a key role in the assertion of regional identity (Tomaney, 2013, p.511)'.

Such self-awareness is relevant to this research in terms of the response to writers and their novels by the reading public in terms of authenticity and provenance of their work. The phenomenon of insider and outsider novelists is explored in the case studies in Chapters Two to Six. It is further complicated by the growing numbers of Newfoundlanders now living outside Newfoundland. Given the massive out-migration of Newfoundlanders, particularly during the depression in the 1930s and after the Second World War, the term 'the Newfoundland diaspora' merits clarification because the theoretical study of diaspora communities has attracted considerable interest, particularly since the Second World War and during the twenty-first century with the dislocation arising from civil wars and economic inequalities.

Recognising this problem of definition in the Newfoundland context, Jennifer Bowering Delisle maintains 'Diaspora involves not just physical migrations from point A to point B, but the emotional experience of leaving a homeland behind, of finding oneself a foreigner. Affective responses to place and displacement are central to the construction of diasporic identities and the formation of diasporic communities (2013, p.4)'. Jennifer Bowring Delisle's analysis, with its emphasis on the experience of place, resonates with the approach adopted in the present research.

Furthermore, it is important to demonstrate the parameters or bounds within which these terms and concepts are used in the body of the thesis. First, the thesis is not a definitive history of the development of the novel genre in Newfoundland but it is both a diachronic and synchronic examination of a specific set of novels and their contribution to the island's literary profile. Therefore, through the synthesis of diachronic and synchronic elements, I examine their literary history (diachronic) and complement this account with five case studies of the novels at specific points in time (synchronic). I have adopted this strategy in the spirit of the distinction between the terms 'diachronic' and 'synchronic' made by Ferdinand de Saussure in his pioneering research on linguistic analysis in the early twentieth century, which can be fruitfully applied in the context of the evolution of the outport novel. Indeed, more recently, some branches of literary analysis and research have adopted Ferdinand de Saussure's terminology, particularly in support of their perspectives in discussions on the context of the primacy or not of the literary canon and the debate on whether the focus of literary research should be on the text itself or on their writers and the social and political environment that feeds their creativity (Bodoc and Tăranu, 2017; Kirchknopf, 2013).

The growing ambivalence to the idea of a literary canon and the debate over the primacy of the literary text over other variables, such as the influence of the writers' and the readers' world on the text itself have all contributed to a renewed focus on both place and identity in literary criticism during the twenty-first century. This development has led to greater curiosity concerning how fellow academics in other disciplines have approached issues, such as place and identity. This topic is explored further in the section on methodology**.** In addition, the focus on concepts such as place and identity in the

context of Atlantic Canada has also led to the examination of the effects of cultural stereotyping in the region, particularly in the case of the inhabitants**.**

In his seminal work, *Anne of Tim Hortons: Globalization and the Reshaping of Atlantic-Canadian Literature*, Herb Wyile explored the idea of the 'iconography of folk' that had been 'highlighted' and 'critiqued' by the historian Ian McKay (1994), James Overton (1996) and others (Wyile, 2011, pp.20, 42, 44, 46, 47, 49, 74 and 126). His use of the term 'iconography' not only endows an ironic twist to outsider perceptions of local culture in Atlantic-Canada but is one example of the creative utilisation of the term iconography in literary research. The work of the historian Ian McKay is an important source in informing Wyile's research into the discussions that occurred later at the turn of the twentieth century in the wake of neoliberalism. Herb Wyile frequently refers to the impact of the concept of folk on outsider images of regions, such as Newfoundland, particularly in the context of tourism (2011, pp.112, 133 and 170). These images of a quaint people promoted by tourist authorities are too simplistic (Wyile, 2011, p.183). He maintains that such perceptions have had an influence on cultural production in the region (2011, p.170). These insights into the nature of perceptions of place deepen our understanding of the origins and development of the Newfoundland narrative, highlighting the outport's role in Newfoundland cultural representation. The debate has been taken up by other commentators. Danielle Fuller's essay on place myths in two contemporary Newfoundland fictions reveals the complexity of factors at play in the novelist's exploration and depiction of these myths, for example (2004, pp.21-50).

The role of the novel genre in this unfolding narrative is the subject of this study but Newfoundland visual artists have also played their part in elevating the outport into a cultural icon. The artists David Blackwood and Gerald Squires, for example, principally

focused on etchings and paintings of rural Newfoundland. A recurrent theme in their work that has contributed to the development of the outport's iconic status is the contentious Resettlement Policy[6] of the post-Confederation provincial government that is discussed in the case studies in Chapters Four and Five. This interest in the iconic outport has not only been the preserve of Newfoundlanders but has also attracted artists from abroad, such as the American artist, Rockwell Kent (1882-1971), who appears as the protagonist in Winter's *The Big Why* (2004) set mainly during the First World War period. The iconisation of the outport has also been given cultural voice through music, the theatre, poetry, the short story and the novel. The concept of iconography in a range of art forms has thus enhanced and enriched the symbolic significance of the outport. However, it also lends depth to attempts to understand an intricate phenomenon that represents so many facets of Newfoundland life to a broad audience. Consequently, the idea of the outport and the social values it represents has become an umbrella term for Newfoundland cultural nationalism.

**Regional Cultural Production**.

The main focus in this introduction has been so far on the concept of place as envisaged through the Newfoundland outport. Equally significant, however, is the context that generates regional cultural production. Economic, political and social circumstances are a contributory factor, as discussed above. In addition, the nature of the creativity present in society is also important. Although writing is often perceived as a solitary undertaking, writers also participate in wider textual communities comprising, at the most basic level,

[6] A programme initially introduced by the Smallwood government to resettle inhabitants from the smaller outports to growth areas elsewhere in Newfoundland. The first voluntary scheme Centralization was established in 1954. The second programme the Fisheries Household Resettlement Programme began in 1965 and was renewed in 1970. There is a current Community Relocation Policy for communities wishing to relocate.

themselves and their readers. The concept of textual communities has enhanced our understanding of the dynamics operating between writers and other players and their bond with literary texts. In the case of Newfoundland, Danielle Fuller's insightful research on textual communities in Atlantic Canada[7] has contributed to our understanding of how and why local writers use fiction to put their message across to their readers (2004). In *Writing the Everyday, Women's textual communities in Atlantic Canada*, she states that 'A useful way of thinking about the textual communities described in this book is as groups of people engaged in dialogue and negotiation with one another in order to generate the best possible narrative expressions of their lives (2004, p.10)'. She also underlines that 'The articulation of these experiences is profoundly political (2004, p.4)'. Not only does Fuller's work illustrate the range of forces in operation in this process and the different people, such as writers, readers, publishers, reviewers and academics involved, but her findings are also important for my research in arriving at an understanding of why the outport novels have emerged as one of the agents of change in expressions of Newfoundland cultural nationalism. The concept of textual communities is revisited in the case study chapters. Through the examination of textual communities, I will examine the dynamics of the creative forces in the region in the period of this study and why the idea of the outport has been so attractive for insider, outsider and diasporic writers.

**Place, Identity and Sense of Place: Interpretations of the Concept of Place.**

The interrelationship between a sense of place and the development of personal and group identities merits clarification because the coinage of the term 'place' has acquired a broad range of interpretations across a number of disciplines in the latter half of the twentieth

[7] Atlantic Canada is described as a current political definition for the Maritimes and Newfoundland by historians Conrad and Hiller (2001 p2).

century. One illustration of the different perceptions of place is the use of the term ‘landscape’ as synonymous with rural places with aesthetic appeal but the term is seen as one property of place by cultural geographers (Tuan 1974, 1977; Relph 1976, 2008; Pocock 1981). Therefore, first, I outline the background to modern research on place and its associated concepts. Then the concept of place is examined from a number of perspectives that are relevant in understanding the nature of the outport novel, in order to locate the contribution of my research to the academic discussion.

The origins of a renewed interest in place and the sense of place by the academy are unclear but is often associated with globalisation. Although it is irrefutable that globalisation is accelerating, in itself it does not provide a satisfactory explanation for human engagement with place and its role in the forging of identity in the Newfoundland context. Until the 1970s very little consideration was given to the idea of place in modern academic study, according to the geographer Edward Relph. In the ‘Preface’ to the 2008 reprint of *Place and Placelessness*, he describes how, at the start of his own doctoral research, he tried to overcome the dearth of references in library indexes to place and the meaning of place by resorting to his own general reading, including novels, books of essays and course readings. The contemporary situation is reversed with search engines delivering many sources for the search terms ‘place’ and ‘sense of place’.

However, a point of agreement in many of these sources is that these preoccupations with place and sense of place are not a new phenomenon but were also topical themes in classical thought. In this context, the historian and cultural commentator J.B. Jackson alludes to the ‘much used expression’ “Sense of Place” with its ‘awkward and ambiguous modern translation of the Latin term *genius loci* in his 1994 book *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time* and later reproduced, in part, as an essay in *Design Quarterly* (Jackson, 1995, p.24). Although

Jackson is writing on the sociological and political impact of the urban landscape on our lives from the perspective of twentieth-century America, he is examining issues that are of concern to many contemporary Newfoundlanders in an era of change on their island. Their challenge is how to preserve the communal values of the past, while embracing a sustainable future, as is illustrated in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis.

An important component to the research on place has been the work of cultural geographers, such as Tuan (1974; 1977), Relph (1976, 2008), Pocock (1981), and more recently Tomaney (2013) on place and identity. Their differing approaches will be compared with those authorities, such as Anderson (1983), writing from the perspective of culture and power in society. The literary scholarship on the link between identity, place and the novel is examined, in general, through the work of Leonard Lutwack (1984) and from an Atlantic Canadian perspective through the work of Herb Wyile (1998; 2011), David Creelman (2003), and Danielle Fuller (2004).

Furthermore, since the millennium a new generation of cosmopolitan literary theorists, such as Lutz (2004), Schoene (2009, 2010) and Johansen (2014) have contributed to discussions about the post-Millennium novels and the further honing of perceptions of place in relation to personal and group identities. Among the reasons given for this scholarly interest in interpretations of place have been growing concerns about the balance between local and global interests and 'ecological fears', particularly in the last forty years (Lutwark, 1984, p.1-2). Lutwark stated 'In so far as the representation of place in literature has an important influence on how people regard individual places and the whole world as a place, it maybe concluded that literature must now be seen in terms of the contemporary concern for survival (1984, p.2)'. This prophetic comment in the literary context still has a contemporary relevance for cosmopolitan literary theorists such as Johansen (2014, pp.116-117).

**Place and Space.**

In any discussion of place, there is invariably reference to the related concept of space. For instance, the anthropologist Gerald Pocius describes the importance of the place-related identity of the outporters of Calvert and their bonds with their outport community. In addition, within the outport itself the communal sharing of space with its concomitant social obligations is a unique feature of Calvert life (1991; 2000: pp.18-19). Morgan's portrayal of outport communities is one fictional expression of how ideas of space and place were perceived in the outports and is addressed in Chapter Four (1992;1994).

In their research on place, the geographers Relph (1976) and Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) have written on the relationship between both the ideas of space and place. Their research contributed to a more nuanced understanding of space. Relph developed his ideas on place on strictly phenomenological lines, describing space as

> amorphous and intangible and not an entity that can be directly described and analysed. Yet, however we feel or know or explain space, there is nearly always some associated sense or concept of place. In general it seems that space provides the context for places but derives its meaning from particular places (1976, p.8).

Conversely, Yi-Fu Tuan's seminal work, *Space and Place*, provides a useful entrée into this complex subject (1977). He postulated that space and place were a continuum with space (abstraction) at one end and 'place' (experience) at the other (Cresswell, 2004; Pocock, 1981). By equating the idea of place with that of experience, Tuan opened up many vistas for the understanding and interpretation of the outport novels, as discussed in the five case studies in Chapter Two to Chapter Six, without ruling out the important abstract aspects associated with the idea of space. Furthermore, Tuan changed the parameters of the debate on space and place by highlighting the multi-faceted aspects of place, as revealed by human experience. This interpretation has been of interest and relevance to researchers from other disciplines,

such as anthropologists, as discussed above. In the present context, the focus is on experiential aspects of place.

**Place, Identity and Experience.**

In considering the nature of the affinity to place in the Newfoundland context, the pioneering work of cultural geographers such as Tuan and Relph on human attachment to place has provided an insightful theoretical foundation. I argue that the intellectual and emotional aspects of the idea of the outport are a departure point for many Newfoundlanders in their articulation of Newfoundland identity. Furthermore, it is a basis for an exploration of the role of Newfoundland writers in this process and their use of the outport as a setting in many local novels. This phenomenon is referred to above as the 'ethos' of the Newfoundland outport and the phrase 'the iconic outport' also encapsulates its innate complexity to the extent that the imagery provokes a reaction from many Newfoundlanders, regardless of whether they empathise with or reject the symbolism, This assertion is most explicitly put to the test in Chapters Three and Four that include analyses of novels by Margaret Duley, Harold Horwood and Morgan. All three novelists are insiders, born and brought up in Newfoundland. The first two have ambivalent but differing views on Newfoundland identity whereas Morgan identifies strongly with the outport ethos, as described earlier. Further evidence of the link between the experience of place and the impact on identity is also provided by the papers given by Morgan and Shane O'Dea at the Historical Association's Conference in 2003, referred to above and discussed more fully in Chapter Five.

Tuan has written extensively on individual and group experience of place. He linked place with concepts, such as 'value' and 'belonging'. In his seminal work, *Topophilia,* published in 1974, Tuan stated that the ideas of the 'centre' and 'periphery' in spatial

psychology and symbolism are for the most part ‘universal’ (1974, p.27), but, as individuals, human beings are ‘egocentric’in the habit of ordering ‘the world so that its components diminish rapidly in value away from self (1974, p.30)’. Tuan maintained that ethnocentrism, or collective egocentrism, is harder to sustain in the contemporary world. However, ‘the illusion of superiority and centrality is probably necessary to the sustenance of culture (1974, p.31)’. This approach to the concepts of the centre and the periphery and their link to attitudes to individual and communal perceptions of the world are relevant to the readjustments that Newfoundlanders have had to make to realign themselves following their loss of political autonomy. These sentiments still resonate in the age of globalisation in the Newfoundland context and their validity is pertinent in the critical analysis of the tone of the texts explored in Chapters Five and Six.

Furthermore, in the literary context, Tuan’s explorations of the complexities of topophilia also provide a departure point for understanding the work of insiders, outsiders and the Newfoundland diaspora, as well as the reactions of both critics and readers to their novels. The interplay between culture and egocentric and ethnocentric perspectives on place have generated considerable debate among Newfoundlanders, as is evident in the literary critical publications of O’Flaherty (1979) and O’Dea (2003). It is discussed further in Chapters Four and Five.

At the group level, Tuan argued that ‘culture can influence perception to such a degree that people will see things that do not exist: it can cause group hallucination (1974, p.246)’. This type of ethnocentric reaction, similar in some ways to certain aspects of the phenomenon known as collective memory, provides a tool for interpreting reactions in Newfoundland to the work of outsider writers, such as Annie Proulx and to diasporic writers, such as Donna Morrissey, as illustrated in the case study novels in Chapter Five. Similarly, Hernáez Lerena

has described how in Newfoundland there is ‘a prevalent model of collective imaginary’ founded on a cohesiveness with roots in its settler communities (2015, p.4).

At the individual level, Relph examines the elements that make up our sense of place,

> By taking place as a multifaceted phenomenon of experience and examining the various properties of place, such as location, landscape, and personal involvement, some assessment can be made of the degree to which these are essential to our experience and sense of place. In this way the sources of meaning, or essence of place can be revealed (1976, p.29).

He further maintains that location alone does not provide the basic meaning of place, our association with and consciousness of places of importance for us ‘seem to constitute a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security, a point of departure from which we orient ourselves in the world (Relph, 1976, p.43)’.

Relph makes an additional point underpinning his argument on the elements of a sense of place by recognising that it can exist on different levels, ‘…from simple recognition for orientation, through the capacity to respond empathetically to the identities of different places, to a profound association with places as cornerstones of human existence and individual identity (63)’. This classification of the range of reactions to place assists in constructing a more insightful understanding of the differing relationships of insiders, outsiders and diasporic writers and their readership to the outport as an icon of Newfoundland culturalism.

Relph takes his conceptualisation one stage further, discussing the juxtaposition of place and ‘placelessness’ and defining the reverse of a sense of place, such as is experienced at airports, or in some suburbs. Relph’s work on the complexities of human reactions to place may well cast light on the latent placelessness observable in some of the urban Newfoundland novels in the post-Millennium era, a topic explored in Chapter Six.

**The Novel and Perspectives on Place.**

The perspectives on place developed by literary criticism in the last two decades of the twentieth century also have an important role to play in conceptualising the connections between place, identity and literary representation. Leonard Lutwack's book *The Role of Place in Literature* (1984) has contributed significantly to current perceptions by the literary academy of the role of place in the novel genre. Writing in the 1980s, he stated that place had not yet been treated at length and was 'unresearched' in the preface to his research on place and the novel (1984, Preface p.vii). His standpoint was primarily an ecological one and he maintained that industrialisation and social change brought place into prominence (1984, p.20). His view was that 'Places are neither good nor bad in themselves but in the value attached to them, and literature is one of the agencies in attaching values to places (1984, p.35)'. In this respect, Lutwack's argument accorded with the main platform adopted by Tuan and Relph on place and experience, as described above. Lutwack moved the discussions of place in literary criticism onto a new level and away from a narrow perception of place being synonymous with landscape (Lutwack, 1984, p.37). He stated that depending on the genre of a specific work, place and its role will be different (1984, p.18). In this way, he recognised the important social and political role of the contemporary novelist in artistic expressions of place. This phenomenon has also been so noteworthy in the Newfoundland outport novel.

In addition, the work of the geographer, Douglas Pocock (1981) on place and literature forged an academic bridge with the work of literary critics, such as Leonard Lutwack. Both Lutwack and Pocock were interested in the broader issues of the link between a sense of place and identity (Lutwark, 1984; Pocock, 1981). Pocock and his co-writers analysed a number of place-based novels as part of their work as cultural geographers. He believed that 'Broadly, the geographer's engagement with literature in his study of place varies along a continuum

between landscape depiction and human condition (1981, p.12)'. The chapter on Mary Webb's novel, *Precious Bane,* set in rural Shropshire is one example. It had parallels with outport novels, such as Dohaney's trilogy, where the focus is on the fate of protagonists in an enclosed rural community. Furthermore, Seamon's chapter on newcomers, existential outsiders and insiders foreshadows subsequent developments identifiable in the outport novel context (1981). Both Lutwack and Pocock cite Tuan and Relph as sources relevant to their research**.**

In the present context, Tuan's analysis of the contribution made by novelists and poets to our understanding of place is significant. His affirmation that it is writers of fiction rather than social scientists with their surveys who have succeeded in providing us 'with the detailed and finely shaded information on how human individuals perceive their worlds' provides a useful approach to understanding the outport novel (1974, pp.49-52). Tuan also went on to describe how 'writers create fictional personalities; they are themselves personalities with voices that rise above the format discourse of their society (1974, p.49)'. The protagonists in Donna Morrissey's *Sylvanus Now* are examples from a contemporary Newfoundland outport novel of fictional personalities of the type described by Tuan. Both Morrissey's protagonists, Addy and Sylvanus Now, oppose the government version concerning the disappearance of the cod fish and the policy of re-settlement. The protagonists in many of the outport novels exhibit these self-same qualities of a resistance to the conflicting values of their society that I argue are, in turn, metaphorical expressions of the outport spirit that underpins the cultural nationalism of Newfoundland. Tuan's acknowledgement of the role of the writer and the value of the novel in understanding perceptions of place underlines the relevance of the debate for interdisciplinary research.

In the context of historiography in the 1990s, the Newfoundland historian Jerry Bannister also observed a similar phenomenon in the closing decades of the last century, when he stated that Newfoundland novelists had, in a sense, taken over the role of historians in writing Newfoundland history (2003, p.137). His contribution underlines the necessity for an interdisciplinary approach in understanding the role of the novel genre in exploring complex concepts. In addition, other historians, such as Conrad and Hiller (2001) and Cadigan (2013), have also contributed to our grasp of the political and social phenomena motivating novelists writing on Newfoundland issues. Recent historical research has endowed a certain gravitas to the beliefs of many of the fictional characters in the outport novels.

The interdisciplinary interest in place and its link to identity has been of great importance for an understanding of the attraction of the outport setting for the writers of the Newfoundland novels. The context of this interdisciplinary input, described above, is discussed more fully in the following part of this Introduction. In addition, the phenomenon of the outport novel genre is considered in more detail, offering a context for the analysis of the case study novels in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. I also examine ways of approaching local or regional literature and clarify my use of terms, such as ‘regional’ and ‘regionalism’ in this study.

## Part Two: The Newfoundland Outport Novel.

The choice of the outport novel genre bypasses much of the imprecision often associated with the terms place and sense of place, in part, because outports are fixed points on the landscape that have acquired a deeper symbolic significance. A close reading of a selection of outport novels reveals their importance for a more nuanced understanding of Newfoundland identity and cultural development, recognising the multifaceted aspects

associated with the experience of place and sense of place, as described above. In order to give some context to the Newfoundland experience, I first discuss, in general, the nature of the regional novel as envisioned by writers and commentators, such as Mary Austin (1868-1934), Phyllis Bentley (1894-1977) and Lisa Chalykoff and compare their opinions with perceptions of the role played by local literature in English-speaking Atlantic Canada. Finally, I analyse the Newfoundland literary context and trace how the outport achieved its iconic status.

**Defining the Regional Novel.**

Novels focused on the concepts of place and identity, as presented in the placed-based novel genre, are frequently assigned the terms 'regionalism' and 'regional' as overarching labels in literary criticism. There was a revival of interest in the regional novel in the mid-twentieth century on both sides of the Atlantic, as reflected in the literary analysis of the phenomenon undertaken by the American novelist Mary Austin and her English contemporary Phyllis Bentley in the 1930s. Both writers viewed the regional novel as an important constituent of nation building. The latter's 1941 publication *The English Regional Novel* was an appreciation of the genre and its position 'in the common motherland' (Bentley, 1941, p.7). However, the model implicit in her work was a top down one. She maintained that for historical and spatial reasons 'a firm and deep-rooted national culture' exists within a prolific and rich variety of regional novels demonstrating the diversity of England. Her novels portrayed the West Riding of Yorkshire with a complexity of feeling reminiscent of the outport novels.

Nearly sixty years later, Herb Wyile et al have also commented on the role that nation-building played in conceptions of regional literature earlier in the twentieth century in their

publication *A Sense of Place* (1998, pp.ix-xii). Similarly, writing on Newfoundland itself, Adrian Fowler explores the idea of Newfoundland nationhood based on 'a strong sense of place and a shared cultural identity (2002, pp.2-3)'. His observations are made in the context of the interaction between writers and society that is also one of the departure points for the present research. Other aspects of this approach are explored further on in the chapter.

The historian Keith Snell's *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland* (1998) provides a working definition of 'regional' in the literary context. He states, 'By 'regional novel' I mean fiction that is set in a recognisable region, and which describes features distinguishing the life, social relations, customs, language, dialect, or other aspects of the culture of that area and its peoples (1998, p.1)'. Snell's definition provides a good basis for exploring the realm of the regional novel and I have used it as the starting point in my selection of the novels that I analyse in the case studies in Chapters Two to Six.

In the first place, Newfoundland is a recognisable region of the world, and it does have distinguishing features coinciding with those outlined by Snell. However, Snell's approach does not fully embrace many of the elements that often make local or regional novels so vibrant and engaging for the reader and so motivating for the writer to create in the first place. His formulation, although helpful, does not place sufficient emphasis on the experiential element present in a successful regional novel, namely the strong bond and sense of place that initially caused the author to put pen to paper and the social and political imperatives arising from that connectivity, as is so evident in the outport novel sub-genre. These elements are implicit in Snell's original definition rather than deeply imbedded in it. On the other hand, in the same year that Snell published his study, Wyile et al were revisiting the concept of regionalism on the North American continent arguing that '…current global trends are investing the term with new significance, necessitating a new look at the way the term has

been and can be used to examine social, cultural and political relationships (1998, p.ix)'. Their approach problematises place and sense of place, underlining the experiential aspects of these concepts**.**

Snell subsequently refined and elaborated on his definition of regional fiction in the Introduction to his comprehensive book *The Bibliography of Regional Fiction in Britain and Ireland 1800-2000* (2002; 2017) that he described as 'the bibliographical counterpart to my edited volume *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland* (1998)'. He qualified his 1998 definition by stating in his bibliography that regional fiction should be 'wholly or largely set in a particular geographical region'. His qualification that such literature should be wholly or largely set in a particular area is appropriate in the case of the outport novels, where reference to urban settings as opposed to rural or outport Newfoundland ones is often employed by novelists as an important counterpoint , as discussed in Chapter Six of the thesis. In the context of a general observation on definitions of regional fiction, Snell also added that this genre 'makes use of ideas of locality in a great variety of imaginative or realist ways, and an accuracy of match between fictional portrayal of place and a social historical reality, however that might be judged, is not one that has been doggedly insisted upon (2002; 2017)'. This observation touches on a sensitive area in the literary criticism of some of the outport novels, where questions of representation and authenticity have led to sharp differences of opinion, especially evident in Chapters Four and Five.

Snell's reference above to portrayals of place indicate his awareness of the complexities of place. Furthermore, his advocacy of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of regional fiction by academics, 'whether they be literary and cultural critics, historical geographers, local and regional historians, anthropologists, or literary sociologists, or those working in media studies (2002; 2017, p.1)'. is particularly apposite in the Newfoundland

context. It also demonstrates that Snell concurs with Wyile et al's vision, described above, of the changing significance of regionalism and the necessity for new ways of looking at it across the disciplines (1998).

After consideration of the issues described above, I have adapted Snell's definition to include the experiential elements pertinent to an understanding of local identity and a sense of place, as discussed earlier. Therefore, in the case of the outport novel, the setting must take place to a greater degree in an outport community. It must also include the regional political, social and anthropological facets, that clearly inspire both insider and outsider novelists setting their work in the outports and simultaneously evoke empathetic reactions from their readers. Below, I briefly review the emergence of early local novels on the North Atlantic seaboard, in order to provide some context to the development of the outport novel.

**The Maritimes and Newfoundland Regional Novels.**

Regional novels in the Maritimes and Newfoundland are expressions of local identity Their focus is on the interests and values of the periphery in the face of the centres of power, as explored originally in the context of post-colonial literature (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffen, 1989). In the Newfoundland literary arena they are expressions of individual and group perceptions of identity and senses of place. James Overton discusses the way that efforts have been made to politicise the promotion of a Newfoundland culture since Confederation in the Newfoundland context. He observes that 'The quest for region and culture does express great dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs in society but it offers a populist and romantic critique of industrialism and development (1996, p.60)'. In the outport novels studied in this research, the former is clearly true but the latter is a point for discussion, as will be demonstrated through their analysis.

In the case of what is now known as Atlantic Canada (Conrad and Hiller, 2001, pp.1-2)[8], there are similarities in the local novels, as observed by Wyile (1998, 2011). First, they share a North American pioneer maritime culture but they also exhibit discernible local cultural variants arising from their portrayal of the extent of experiences of place that steer the discussion below. In the Newfoundland context, the nature of these differences can be benign, as explored in Chapter Three in Erle Spencer's outport novel *The King of Spain's Daughter* (1937) whose protagonist is escaping from a dreary lifestyle. New light is shed on Spencer's much neglected novel in this thesis. Alternatively, such novels can represent challenging moral dilemmas on a universal scale, as in the case of Michael Crummey's *Sweetland* (2014) discussed in Chapter Six, in which the eponymous hero struggles to defend his way of life, because he is about to be forced to leave his outport as part of a government resettlement programme. He identifies with the plight of a group of refugees that have been shipwrecked on his island, following their voluntary flight from poverty in their homeland. The circumstances informing these voices from a periphery vary depending on local political, social and economic experience, as illustrated above in the discussion on concepts of place. Furthermore, these expressions of protest in Atlantic Canada have attracted the attention of the academy in the last twenty years (Wyile, 2011).

The research undertaken by Herb Wyile and other Maritime and Newfoundland commentators on regional literature in Newfoundland and in the Maritimes is a good example of the redrawing of the parameters in interpreting regional literature (Wyile, 1998, 2011, pp.19-23). The term regional in itself is recognised as problematic in the context of the Atlantic provinces. David Creelman had maintained , 'Despite some shared thematic and formal similarities, the texts of Newfoundland embody a very different set of cultural and

[8] Conrad and Hiller discuss the use of the term 'Atlantic Canada' that is used to refer to the Maritime provinces and Newfoundland since Confederation.

ideological tensions and must be considered as a regional literature in itself (Quoted in Wyile and Lynes 2008, p.9)'. Although Herb Wyile accepted Creelman had made a good case for Newfoundland having its own regional literature, his counter argument was ' that there is much to be gained by viewing contemporary writing in the Maritimes and Newfoundland together, particularly because of the shared experiences of the four Atlantic provinces (2008, pp.9-10)'. One factor that Wyile believed was important was Conrad and Hiller's observation that the Atlantic provinces shared ' the deep sense of place that sets Atlantic Canadians apart from many other North Americans (Hiller and Conrad, 2001, pp.1-22).' However, the different histories of these four Atlantic provinces is significant because Newfoundland had enjoyed a political nationhood that is implied by Byrne (1994) and acknowledged by Fowler (2002) in their literary research into outport culture. Fowler states that 'Within the realm of creative literature, it is fair to say that cultural dislocation has been the major, although certainly not the only, preoccupation of contemporary writers choosing to write about Newfoundland (2002, p2)'.

The contribution literary criticism can make to a broader based interdisciplinary approach is being played out now in the Newfoundland context. An excellent example is *Pathways of Creativity in Contemporary Newfoundland and Labrador* (Hernáez Lerena. Ed: 2015). The editor has invited 'scholars and writers who are deeply engaged in the academic and artistic life' to describe this place from the perspective of their artistic, literary and academic creativity (Hernáez Lerena. 2015, p.xiv). The study has synthesized the turn of the century literary and artistic representations of Newfoundland, providing an opportunity for the contributors to revisit the cultural perceptions of what it is to be a Newfoundlander. One example is Noreen Golfman's chapter on the film industry and its cross fertilization with the work of leading regional novelists that included three of the outport novels, namely *The*

*Shipping News*, *Random Passage* and *Waiting for Time,* underlining the importance of the idea of the outport in projections of the iconic outport (Hernáez Lerena 2015, pp.211-230).

Further evidence of the centrality of the outport in the Newfoundland narrative is recognised in Jeff Webb's 2016 inter-disciplinary study *Observing the Outports – Describing Newfoundland Culture, 1950-1980.* It does not include a chapter devoted specifically to literary criticism; no doubt because the literary renaissance was still in its infancy by the end date of the study in 1980. Fowler confirms that 'strong works of prose fiction' were discernible from the mid-1980s (2002, p.7). Nevertheless, Webb's research has demonstrated the role an interdisciplinary approach to regional or local research can play in understanding local situations. Furthermore, it provides a historical context to the Newfoundland experience of place. Both approaches are important platforms in my research.

To this end, there follows a discussion on what the local or regional novel signifies in the Newfoundland context and compares this development with that of other regions of the North Atlantic. The inclusion of the American and Canadian experiences in this comparative overview is appropriate on a number of grounds. First, the cultural, social, commercial and political contact between Newfoundland, the Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, as well as the New England region of the United States provides the rationalisation for a comparison between developments in place-based novels of these regions. Their greatest cultural bond was a common language as the majority of the early settlers on the North American continent were from the British Isles. Consequently, there had always been close commercial and cultural links along the North Atlantic seaboard since the seventeenth century. This contact is also reflected in much of the early literature of the Atlantic region. These links between the regions survived the political upheaval of the

American Revolution and well into the nineteenth century, when Newfoundland first declined to join the Canadian Confederation following the general election of 1869.

In the early novels of the Atlantic Canadian provinces the focus was on affinity with place and an articulation of evolving local identities. This process of cultural relocation in the context of place occurred at the individual as well as the group level and the novel became one important medium of transmission of the phenomenon, as Tuan observed (1974; 1976). These key themes facilitate an examination of the development of local fictive prose in the area and are a natural progression in the formation of a settler identity. However, it is interesting to note that although the genesis of the regional novel in the Atlantic seaboard area, as a whole, shares the same affiliations with place, the timescales were different. The earliest evidence of published work occurred first in New England, followed by the Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in the early nineteenth century. However, the first novel set in Newfoundland did not appear until 1858.

The level of literacy rates is often perceived as relevant in this context. In the American situation, for instance, Lynch (2011) maintains that literacy rates in the United States in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries compared favourably with those in the former mother country. He has described how, in the early pioneer period after the American War of Independence (1775-1783), the acquisition of literacy skills had been given a high political priority and it was a task very often assigned to the women at home (Lynch, 2011). Therefore, the novel was well established as a genre by the middle decades of the nineteenth century. In the case of American regional novels, it could be argued that they tended to contribute to nation building in a bottom-up model. Sarah Orne Jewitt's *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896*)* is a New England example of particular relevance in discussions of the outport genre because of its coastal town setting. The American regional

novelist, Mary Austin (1868-1934), believed that regionalism had shaped American national identity and she wrote in her autobiography that through the regional novel she had 'seen America emerging (Austin,1932)'. Indeed, Elizabeth Klimasmith (2003, p.549) referred to this comment and also used it as the title to her paper on Mary Austin's regionalism.

The situation in the mainland Canadian context is more complex. Ricou argues that there was an ongoing debate concerning the idea of 'a homogeneous nation spreading from sea to sea' and Northrop Frye's idea that 'Regionalism and literary maturity seem to grow together. (Ricou, 2006; 2015)'. The idea of a homogeneous nation suggests a top-down nation building model but the Canadian case is complicated by the diachronic political process of confederation that was not completed until 1949. It also potentially raises the spectre of tensions between the federal government and the provinces. This situation makes a top-down model of nation building less clear cut. The federal government policy on the promotion of the arts since the 1970s has favoured the subsidisation of the arts at the provincial level through activities, such as grants to local writers and projects (Rompkey, 1998; Bill, 2009; Ricou, 2006, 2015). The background to this policy strategy is discussed in Chapter Four of the thesis.

One topic that attracted some literary commentators at the turn of the century was the idea of 'two solitudes' in the mainland Canadian context. It was argued that, as Canada is a bilingual country with two cultural and literary traditions or solitudes, it complicates the delineation of regionalism (Chalikoff, 1998). The issues that the two cultures raise were originally the focus of Hugh MacLennan's novel *Two Solitudes* (1945). His novel explored the idea of the cultural position of Quebec within Confederation. The idea of a cultural solitude has recently been adapted to further locate Newfoundland as distinct from mainland Canada, as discussed in Chapter Six that analyses Crummey's novel *Sweetland*. However, the

regional identity of Newfoundland rests on historical, political and sociological factors rather than linguistic issues. The French novelist Florence Delaporte 's novel *Terre-Neuve* (2010), partly set in rural Newfoundland, could have relevance for future studies on the outport novel.[9].

In the Canadian context, the important contribution of Wyile et al on identity and attachment to place, in *A Sense of Place,* rehabilitated the concept of regionalism, as described above (1998, Introduction iv). In addition, the exploration of the importance of place and its corresponding link to concepts of personal and communal identity has been taken to new levels of analysis in Wyile's seminal work *Anne of Tim Hortons* (2011). His focus was on the impact of globalisation on Atlantic Canadian literary discourse in an era of neoliberalism**.** Wyile's study refocussed perceptions of literary regionalism and underlined the importance of the economic, political and social context underpinning the development of regional literature, such as the outport novel. It also acknowledged the cultural impact of globalisation forging a bridge with literary cosmopolitanism.

His research complements the exploration of the importance for cosmopolitanism of the local in contemporary novels (Johansen, 2014) and the counter viewpoint on the universalising aspects of parochialism in literature by the British academic Tomaney (2013). All three perspectives have relevance for the outport novel. Johansen's idea of territorialized cosmopolitanism connects the local with the global. She maintains that local and global connections are always present in place and ways should be found to offset the inequalities of neoliberalism (2014, p.154). Her case study novel *The Heart of Redness* (2000) illustrates her argument of connecting the local with the global with the focus on the imminent decline of Ethiopian farming (Johansen, 2014, p.149). There are parallels with the fall-out from a similar

[9] French fishermen were permitted summer fishing rights between 1713-1904 on the French or Treaty Shore. The 1713 Treaty of Utrecht concession gave France fishing rights from Cape Bonavista to Point Riche.

malaise in the fishing industry in a number of the Newfoundland case study novels in Chapters Four, Five and Six, as global economic imperatives can impact negatively on local communities. Johansen maintains that 'in addition to allowing us to imagine global affiliations, territorializing cosmopolitanism similarly offers ways to reconsider local connections (2014, p.37)'. In the context of the regional novel it provides another platform for the local to influence the relationship between the periphery and the centre. The outport novels discussed in this thesis demonstrate how a vibrant cultural scene has brought Newfoundland into the foreground of Canadian consciousness.

## Part Three: Methodological Framework: Five Case Studies. 1858-2014.

Throughout this study, I maintain that the ethos of the Newfoundland outport is the inspiration for the literary explorations of what it is to be a Newfoundlander and that the outport functions as a touchstone for the politicisation of public opinion about Newfoundland's position as a province of Canada through the medium of the outport novel. My argument is tested through the five case studies developed in Chapters Two through Six. The overall approach in the thesis is diachronic but the case studies themselves are synchronic or snapshots at specific points in time, giving insights into the evolution of perceptions of place and identity, as envisaged in the novels selected.

The choice of novels to be included in this research has been a challenging task. The sheer volume of place-based outport novels published in the last decades of the twentieth century and still evident in 2014, at the time of the publication of Crummey's novel *Sweetland,* provided a surfeit of worthy candidates for Chapters Four to Six. A clear rationale for selecting them was required, given the small number of novels that it would be possible to analyse in the last three case studies. Relevant possible criteria for the selection range from

outport novels accepted by well-regarded local, national or international publishers, those novels perceived as worthy for inclusion in the Canadian literary canon, or novels with a particularly well-developed perspective on outport culture. Such considerations involve a balancing exercise between commercial success, perceptions of literary quality and, in the case of the third criterion, an evaluation of what are the elements present in successful representations of outport culture. While acknowledging the dangers of subjectivity and lack of objectivity inherent in the criteria discussed above, this approach was a useful tool in selecting the novels for each chapter. Nevertheless, a number of caveats concerning these criteria are explored below.

In terms of commercial success, referred to above in the first criteria, access to publishing outlets in the nineteenth century were limited for novelists in Newfoundland because technological advances and printing networks on the island were less advanced than those in major publishing centres, such as New York, Boston, Toronto and London (Whelan, 2002). The consequences of these logistical challenges for aspiring novelists in the early period in the Newfoundland context are explored more fully in Chapter Two.

In the modern period, there has been considerable deliberation in Newfoundland about the strategy writers should adopt in their search for publishers, especially in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Morgan's choice of a well-respected local publisher, Breakwater, was initially considered a disadvantage faced with the competition from the American novelist Proulx's choice of a global American publishing house for her contemporaneous novel *The Shipping News* (1993). It is noteworthy that the Burning Rock Collective members and other Newfoundland novelists, such as Morrissey, had their books published outside Newfoundland amidst a growing belief on the island during the late twentieth century of the importance of obtaining a foothold nationally for Newfoundland

literature. However, local publishing houses, such as Breakwater, had achieved considerable success in promoting the market locally, although they had not managed to make substantial inroads into the wider market. Nevertheless, local publishers were successful in stimulating interest in local readership. Therefore, including novels published by high profile publishing houses alone is not an entirely satisfactory case study book selection criterion. The Cape Random novels by Morgan published locally were well received by her local readers because they portrayed a version of Newfoundland history that was authentic and familiar to her readership. Furthermore, they not only immortalised the past but *Waiting for Time* (1994), for example, articulated the real concerns that locals were experiencing during the period of the collapse of the cod fishing industry and the role of the federal government during the crisis.

The second criterion of utilising eligibility for inclusion in the Canadian literary canon is problematic, as it is really only retrospectively that a novel can be judged to merit such a status. In addition, the very idea of the concept of the literary canon is controversial in some circles, not least because of the important question concerning who are the present-day gatekeepers for the canon. Currently, there are a considerable number of sources of literary analysis already in existence, not only in the conventional academic arena but also in the many book reviews, interviews and author web sites. More recently, there has been an upsurge in analysis and comment in social media, such as the proliferation of high-quality literary blogs. These developments have revolutionised accessibility to informed debate on literary matters. This latest development, in what Robert Darnton (2013) has described as the 'information landscape', is a complication that the academic world is having to come to terms with, especially in the context of quality blogging. The work of Ann Steiner (2010) and Beth Driscoll's paper on *Book blogs as tastemakers* (2019) are providing insight into the forces at play in the evolving interplay between readers and other players in the publishing world.

Moreover, the existence of an informed but ‘fringe’ network of literary criticism and activists is likely to have a further impact on perceptions of the concept of the canon. For instance, the more dynamic relationship between novelists and their readers and the potential networking and skills development offered to writers through the phenomenon of textual communities, writers’ workshops and university creative writing courses are subtly changing the literary scene. Textual communities have developed in unexpected and interesting ways and have a quite different approach to their progenitors, such as the London-based Bloomsbury Set in the first half of the twentieth century. They frequently flourish in environments, where local identity is strongest, such as in Newfoundland, where Danielle Fuller conducted part of her extensive study of textual communities in Atlantic Canada (2004).

Since the Millennium, the popularity of the novel genre remains robust, as observed in the continuing interest in book prizes, and the expansion of the Booker Prizes for novels. In addition, reader power is also strong, not only in the form of blogs but also in the further increase in literary festivals and television and radio programmes, forging new links between writers and readers. As the Newfoundland novelist Lisa Moore has written, ‘I try to read outside the literary canon to find the wildest innovation in form. New voices forge new modes of expression and narrative and result in new ways of thinking about the world (2017, p.33)’. Moore’s comments hint at the complexity of defining the use of the term ‘literary canon’ in a period of substantive change in the contemporary literary scene. In the context of the outport novels included in this study, I have endeavoured to select a range of novels that reflect the broad spectrum of literary portrayals of the outports. The third criterion under discussion is how representations of outport culture can be evaluated and judged to be authentic. This is a contentious issue that is explored at two levels; reactions among Newfoundlanders themselves

and secondly, the contextual and historical background. First, the questions of authenticity and representations of outport culture are explored in the close reading of the case study novels. In this context, a brief example of the type of debate surrounding what counts as an 'authentic' Newfoundland novel is exemplified by the outport novel *The Shipping News* (1993) which is featured as a case study novel in Chapter Five. The novel by outsider writer Annie Proulx was sharply criticised within Newfoundland for demeaning Newfoundland culture (Pierson, 1995, pp.151-153). On the other hand, Wayne Johnson's *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (1999), although it was also criticised for inaccuracies, was hailed as a great Newfoundland novel. Johnson was born in Newfoundland but has now acquired the status of a diaspora writer. However, his novel is not set mainly in outport Newfoundland and is written more in the fiction/faction novel genre. In this respect, it is closer to Johnson's biographical work *Baltimore's Mansion* (1999) than it is to a place-based novel, as that genre is understood and defined in this study.

At the second level, an important element in examining perceptions of authenticity in the present study is the contextualisation and historicisation of the outport novels chosen for inclusion in the case studies. The novels set in the outports were often written to memorialise the outport for both a home readership but also for a wider audience, before this unique way of life became intangible and, therefore forgotten. In addition, many of the writers had other social and political agendas, such as the examination of the nature of Newfoundland identity or prescriptions for the future in the light of the loss of sovereignty in 1949. These key questions cannot be ignored in any analysis of this literature but their full significance can be better appreciated by an understanding of the social and political context within which their authors are writing and an interpretation of the history behind these contexts. The Newfoundland novelist Lisa Moore supports this approach in her introduction chapter to

*The Democracy Cookbook*;

> The voices of fiction show us the way in which the political is felt in our lives; how we are shaped by, among other things, the social and political forces at work in society, how those forces infiltrate our most intimate moments and alter our notions of identity. Art is always political because it transforms us by awakening our imaginations and giving us access to the other's voice or point of view (2017, p.33).

These sentiments are matched by the reflections on place, sense of place and placelessness by a number of literary scholars and cultural geographers that are described in the previous sections in this Introduction Chapter. The multifaceted elements that enhance an understanding of the concepts of place and identity, as given voice in the outport novels, offer the prospect of a deeper understanding of local literature. Therefore, I supplemented my close reading of the outport novels with archival work and site visits to Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Boston, New England. I also carried out informal interviews with a number of Newfoundland novelists and academics at Memorial University as a preparation for my study. The outport novels chosen for the five case studies are listed below.

**Thesis Chapters Overview.**

Chapters Two through Six of this thesis trace the development of the outport novel sub-genre at specific moments in time in the period 1858 until 2014. As well as introducing the novelists themselves, each chapter focusses on aspects associated with the literary development of the outport novel subgenre and the political, social and economic circumstances behind its emergence and development.

In Chapter Two, the outsider fictional vision of the outport as home to a resilient people meeting the challenges of a hostile environment is introduced in Lowell's *New Priest*

*in Conception Bay* (1858). It is in contrast with the insider perspective of Anastasia English's novel *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* (1899) with its emphasis on the outport with its social and economic complexities at the turn of the century in Newfoundland. This duality of resilient outport communities and the unifying bond of attachment to place and awareness of Newfoundland identity is evident in these two early novels, alongside the gradual emergence of the phenomenon of textual communities in the nineteenth century.

The interwar years in Newfoundland were difficult times for the Dominion of Newfoundland and Chapter Three reflects this situation. Nevertheless, the outport novel genre continued to mature and although the vibrant textual communities of the turn of the century waned, there was sufficient literary cultural activity to foster a limited supply of published works during the Great Depression of the Thirties. The case study novels feature the work of a diasporic insider, Erle Spencer and his romance and thriller, *The King of Spain's Daughter* (1934), and the unsettling novel *The Eye of the Gull* (1936) by an 'agnostic' insider, Duley.

In Chapter Four, the case study novels, Horwood's *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* (1966) and Morgan's two novels *Random Passage* (1992) and *Waiting for Time* (1994), reveal the transformation of the outport from an interesting phenomenon of rural Newfoundland to contested cultural territory and its status as an iconic representation of cultural nationhood. It also demonstrates how different writers used the outport novel genre to proselytise their personal visions of 'this place' in the ongoing post-Confederation debate and problematizes the more traditional vision of regional or placed-based novel genres.

The outsider and diasporic perspectives are examined in Chapter Five. The input of novelists from outside Newfoundland, such as Proulx and her novel *The Shipping News* (1993), and diasporic novelists, such as Morrissey and her work, *Sylvanus Now* (2005), in

representing the numerically large group of diasporic Newfoundlanders has had an important role in influencing expressions of Newfoundland iconography. This chapter forges the link between the early roots of the subgenre and its emergence as an important element in Newfoundland literature in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Finally, Chapter Six focusses on the 2014 novel *Sweetland* by Crummey and its challenge to the readership concerning future presentations of Newfoundland sense of place and its cultural nationhood. The contemporary interest in regional literature from the perspective of a literary cosmopolitanism places localism as central to visions of globalism in the twenty-first century. The implications of this shift in emphasis is relevant for a future role for the outport novel.

Through the present analysis, it emerges that the ethos of the Newfoundland outport is the inspiration for the literary explorations of what it is to be a Newfoundlander through the medium of the outport novel. The first novel set in an outport was published in 1858. In Chapter Two, I trace the early development of the outport novel genre and what it revealed about nineteenth-century perceptions of place and identity.

# CHAPTER TWO: GOD GUARD THEE, NEWFOUNDLAND.

## Introduction:

> Up go the surges on the coast of Newfoundland, and down again, into the sea. The huge island, in which the scene of our story lies, stands, with its sheer, beetling cliffs, out of the ocean, a monstrous mass of rock and gravel, almost without soil, like a strange thing from the bottom of the great deep, lifted up, suddenly, into sunshine and storm, but belonging to the watery darkness out of which it has been reared. The eye, accustomed to richer and softer scenes, finds something of a strange and startling beauty in its bold, hard outlines, cut out on every side against the sky.
>
> *The New Priest in Conception Bay*. Robert Traill Spence Lowell. 1858.
>
> A beautiful sky of cloudless blue met the sea of a deeper shade on the one side as it sank into the horizon. On the other, hills red with berries of different descriptions, and interspersed with little rivers, brooks and ponds, with beautiful white water lilies gleaming on their surface, and, further off at sea could be seen the spires of the distant lighthouses, rising tall and straight to the sky, and the neighbouring hills looking blue in the distance.
>
> *Only a Fisherman's Daughter.* Anastasia English. 1899.

Robert Traill Spence Lowell's dramatic description of the '*Rock'* is believed to be Newfoundland's first appearance in the novel form. Lowell (1816 – 1891) is credited with being the first to represent the Newfoundland outport in a regional novel and the tone of this introductory paragraph of *The New Priest in Conception Bay* (1858) is characteristic of the centrality of the concept of place in this novel and its successors. The novel is heavily influenced by the Romantics in its descriptions of the Newfoundland landscape but it has also a didactic element, typical of novels of the period. The lifestyle of the local people is held up as a point of comparison with other urbanized parts of the North American continent, such as the New England of Lowell's youth and that of many of his readers. The next outport novel did not appear until the close of the century with the publication by Anastasia English (1862/3

- 1959) of her debut novel, *Only a Fisherman's Daughter,* in 1899. It is a romance novel but with a strong nationalistic undertone, using terminology, such as 'home' and 'native land', as well as exhibiting a sharp awareness of social class in nineteenth century Newfoundland. The two quotations above from these two case study novels illustrate the different approaches of Lowell and English to the importance of place in their novels. Lowell's descriptions tend towards the gothic, whereas those of English have a distinctly pastoral tone. Lowell's focus is on the gaunt rock that has been thrust up out of the ocean. In contrast, English describes a landscape that bears the imprint of humanity. The ecclesiastical reference to the marine lighthouses as spires equates with the outport church building that is often the most prestigious building in the land settlement.

In the first instance, this chapter will explore the enduring significance of Newfoundland the place and how it evoked an existential response in these pre-Confederation novelists, although they came from different generations and different backgrounds. Their experiences resonate with the work of cultural geographers on the importance of place, 'both as a concept and as phenomenon of experience (Relph, 1976, 2008; Pocock, 1981; Tuan, 1974)'. In an interesting development, particularly since the 1970s and 1980s, Tuan (1974) and Pocock (1981, 2015) also linked their place-based research to its importance for the novel genre, in reflecting these experiences. In this respect, the work of the outsider Lowell and the insider English illustrates how their experiences of place elicited empathetic reactions and impacted on their ideas about identity in their fictive representations of Newfoundland identity. Despite Relph's resistance to the relevance of fiction to his work, his model of categorising insider and outsider experiences of place does, nevertheless, provide a framework for analyzing this phenomenon through literature that is discussed in the Introduction to this thesis (Relph, 1976; 2008, pp.44, 49-55).

As well as exploring the role of both insider and outsider writers in the development of senses of place and identity in the Newfoundland outport novel sub-genre, another objective of this chapter will be to understand Lowell's motivation in writing a placed-based novel. In addition, to lay much speculation to rest, an examination of the possible reasons for the apparent rejection of the novel genre by nineteenth-century Newfoundland writers is undertaken retrospectively. Reconstruction of a past creative environment is hazardous after more than a hundred years, but there are sufficient surviving archival sources and a number of recent studies (Colton, 2007; Barker and Hannaford, 2009; Barker, 2010) to undertake an analysis of the surviving evidence of the extent and resilience of the cultural life on the island in the nineteenth century.

These two case study novels share a number of characteristics in common, despite being written more than forty years apart by two very different writers, working in dissimilar creative environments. In the first instance, the emotional impact on both writers of the Newfoundland landscape and the innate self-assurance of the Newfoundlanders is evident in their novels but its expression is rather different, as is demonstrated in this case study. Furthermore, both writers clearly felt driven to write about the island and its people's awareness of being Newfoundlanders. However, the historical literary legacy of these two writers is very different with Lowell's work perceived as biased, whereas the work of English is held up as an encouraging early example of local literature (O'Flaherty, 1979; Strong, 1994; Bulgin, 2009). Lowell the outsider, whose portrayal of Newfoundland was based on feelings of admiration and compassion, has largely been vilified on the grounds of religious bigotry, whereas English, the avowed Newfoundlander, is revered as one of its true daughters. The role of the provenance of these two writers, one an outsider and the other an insider, on

their perceived literary worth as envisaged by others is intriguing and invites closer examination.

Although English has always been seen as possibly the first Newfoundlander to write novels set in her birthplace, Rudyard Kipling (1865-1938), Robert Michael Ballantyne (1825-1894), Norman Duncan (1871-1916) and Theodore Goodridge Roberts (1877-1953), all outsiders, also published a number of high- profile novels and short stories about Newfoundland and other areas adjoining the Atlantic around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Kipling was most attracted to the North Atlantic seaboard by the lure of adventure at sea on the Grand Banks, as in his novel *Captains Courageous* (1897). Duncan, on the other hand, was more interested in the depiction of the lifestyle of the Newfoundlanders themselves (O'Flaherty, 1979), examples being *The Cruise of the Shining Light* (1907) and *Everyman for Himself* (1908), both of which were mainly set in the outports. Ballantyne's *The Crew of the Water Wagtail* (1880) is about life in the early pioneer days in Newfoundland in the hinterland, known as the Barrens, whereas Roberts wrote about the Atlantic coastal regions. An example is *The Harbour Master* (1911, 1913) set in Newfoundland in both St. John's and in the outports. Another of his novels, *Brothers of Peril. A Story of Old Newfoundland* (1905), is a historical novel with the main emphasis on the interaction between the Beothuk and the early settlers, echoing Ballantyne's *The Crew of the Water Wagtail*. These novels are significant in laying the foundations for an understanding of the symbolic importance of the outport as a place and as evidence of Newfoundland identity in literary terms. Novels, such as *The Crew of the Water Wagtail,* appeared in the library list

of the St. George Methodist Sunday School in St. John's in 1904, also demonstrating the lively interest taken in the nation's past by readers in the city at the time.[10]

The Atlantic seaboard 'triangle' formed by New England, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland has been an important social, cultural and economic arena of contact between these three regions for more than two hundred years. The bonds between the peoples of these maritime regions existed for generations, despite the reality of their belonging to three separate political entities for much of that time. Between 1832 and 1949, each of these regions was part of or affiliated to three different political governments, at least on the domestic front. By 1949, when Newfoundland joined Canada, many Newfoundlanders continued to perceive themselves as culturally separate from the rest of Canada. The link between these Americans, Canadians and Newfoundlanders was the shared maritime lifestyle of the North Atlantic seaboard. They traded with each other and also enjoyed contact on cultural, economic and religious fronts. This contact is also depicted in later literature, such as the children's literature on regional smuggling by Erle Rose Spencer in the 1920s (Rompkey, 2006, pp.6-9).

This contact is also evident from the archives of the various nineteenth century missionary societies, such as The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) based in London. The missionary and novelist Lowell reported to the SPG on the mission in Bay Roberts in Conception Bay (Rollman, 1990), depicted in his Newfoundland novel as the Peterport outport. In *New Priest in Conception Bay*, Lowell's fictional New Englander Mr. Bangs is in Peterport to set up a business (1858, 1974, p.92). Furthermore, Newfoundland depended on exports of fish and later minerals and timber but also imported much of her food stocks, for example American flour (Goudie, 2005; Talbot, 1882, pp.11-12; Tocque,1878,

[10] *Catalogue of Books in the George Street Methodist Sunday School Library.* 1904. Provincial Archives, St. John's, Newfoundland. Accessed and photocopied on 12/06/2014.

pp.358-361), as the island had little sustainable agricultural activity. The fishing grounds of the Grand Banks, the setting for Rudyard Kipling's 1897 novel *Captains Courageous*, brought American, Newfoundland and other regional fishing fleets in competitive contact with each other.

Given these close ties between the regions on the Atlantic seaboard, the slow development of the novel genre in Newfoundland is noteworthy, as both New England and Nova Scotia had a flourishing literary tradition by the late-nineteenth century. The novels of Harriet Beecher Stowe are examples from New England, and an early novel from Nova Scotia was *St. Ursula's Convent* (1824) by Julia Beckwith Hart. A popular response in Newfoundland itself to this situation tends to be that educational levels were so low at this time. It is indeed true that literacy rates in St. John's in the nineteenth century were lower than in other areas on the Atlantic seaboard (Alexander, 1980; L.M. English, 2011; McCann, 1994). Nevertheless, other factors, such as a thriving cultural scene and a small but reasonably affluent middle class, have historically often proved sufficient to ensure a reading public for the novel genre, as in the case of many industrial towns in nineteenth-century Northern England, such as the city of Manchester. It was epitomized by the novels of Elizabeth Gaskell, for example *North and South* (1855), which was written against a background of massive poverty but nevertheless, the city had a thriving Literary and Philosophical Society, a Mechanics Institute and also an Athenaeum in 1835. In fact, St. John's, Newfoundland also boasted a thriving Athenaeum from the mid-nineteen century onwards as is discussed below (Whiteway, 1970-71).

Part One of this chapter will examine the nature and parameters of Lowell's relationship with Newfoundland, as depicted in his 1858 novel, *New Priest in Conception Bay.* This early example of a regional novel illustrates the contradictory dimensions of the

genre and assists in an appreciation of Lowell's inspiration and motivation for writing a novel set in the outports. Part One closes with an analysis of the novel itself and its association with place and particularly with the significance of the outport, as discussed in the Introduction.

A second consideration in this chapter is to acquire a greater understanding of the apparent lack of empathy for the novel genre in general among Newfoundland creative writers in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, despite the evidence of a flourishing, albeit small, cultural life in St. John's and around Conception Bay in the larger outports at this time. Therefore, in Part Two, the literary world in which English lived and worked is re-constructed based on recent research on her work, particularly on *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* (Bulgin, 2009). In parallel, a collation of research carried out to date by the History of the Book in Canada Project and other recent research, as well as relevant evidence in archival records at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies will be compared, in order to establish a clearer image of the nature of the cultural scene. In this context, it will be interesting to explore to what extent and in what form early examples of textual communities existed at this time (Fuller, 2004) and their impact on local fiction, particularly in the case of English and Lowell. Part Two concludes with an analysis of English's novel and its importance for the outport novel genre.

## Part One: Robert Traill Spence Lowell: Prescience and Preconception.

> Religious novels there are many: this is not one of them. These figures of gentle, simple, sad, and merry, were drawn, (not in a Day,) upon the walls of a House of Exile. – Will the great World care for them.
>
> Lowell's dedication to *The New Priest in Conception Bay* 1858.

This dedication to the people of Newfoundland at the front of Lowell's novel has generated much controversy about his motivation in writing it. Reactions to this dedication and also to the novel itself have tended to take issue with Lowell's assertion that it is not a religious book but a book about a place and a people for whom he had a great affection and respect. Almost twenty years after the publication of the dedication, Lowell praised Newfoundlanders and British fishermen 'as kindly and loving' in a letter to Julius Hammond Ward in 1875. The characters in the novel belong to church communities and subscribe to the religious conventions of their day but these fictional Newfoundlanders are also fishermen and belong to that even more cohesive community of seafarers. It is this community that Lowell commemorated when he referred to their being drawn upon the walls of his 'House of Exile', most likely a reference to his new parish in Newark, New Jersey. Lowell himself remained loyal to the Newfoundlanders' memory. Not only did he raise money on his return to New England in order to help the Bay Robert's community survive the aftermath of the potato blight and the poor fishing season of 1846-47 (Rollmann, 1990), but he immortalized their values and way of life through his literary publications, including a short story about a Newfoundland fisherman stranded on an ice pan during a seal hunt, 'The Raft That No Man Made', published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1862. Furthermore, there is little substantial evidence that the earnest and scholarly Lowell had ulterior proselytising motives in embarking on this ambitious literary enterprise. Harold Blodgett rejected the idea of *The New Priest in Conception Bay* as demonstrating 'any desire for theological polemics (Blodgett, 1943, p.584)'. In his view, Lowell's imagination was so exercised by his memories of 'the wild, romantic, primitive region of southeastern Newfoundland,

and of the picturesque settlers he had lived among' that he responded in the Wordsworthian manner of artistic creation as emotion 'recollected in tranquility (Blodgett, 1943, pp.583-584)'. The study of Lowell's life and of the novel itself in this study will demonstrate the sincerity of his tribute to Newfoundland and its people. It will also help to provide insight into the topical religious issues in Lowell's lifetime, which will elucidate what he meant by the opening sentence to his dedication 'Religious novels there are many: this is not one of them', which has generated considerable debate about his true intentions in writing this novel and has deflected attention away from his great empathy for '*This Place'*.

In the first instance, it is essential to contextualize Lowell's reference to contemporary religious novels, of which there were many examples in nineteenth-century Britain, Canada and the United States. One example is Lowell's English evangelical Anglican contemporary Charles Kingsley, who had published an unashamedly proselytising religious novel *Westward Ho* (1855). A scholarly theologian such as Lowell would have known of, and probably have read, some of these novels. It is interesting to note that the Reverend Daniel Dulany Addison, writing in his survey of the impact of clerical writing on American nineteenth-century life and letters, includes the work of Robert Lowell as one example of clerical writing being 'distinctly literary in their tone' rather than theological (Addison, 1900, p.132).

These proselytizing religious novels were a response to lively, and at times heated, theological debates, which had social and political repercussions, occasionally resulting in physical violence. This phenomenon was also in evidence in Newfoundland (Little, 1990, pp.8, 23-25, 33; O'Flaherty, 1974, p.4; Talbot,

1882. pp.34-37; Sider, 2003. pp.229). The origin of such conflicts rests primarily with theological fissures within the Anglican Church over a period of more than a hundred years. Over time, many side issues emerged, for example the demands for religious tolerance of the dissenting Protestants, such as the Wesleyans, and of the Roman Catholics, prior to the passing of the 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act in Britain. In the course of the 1840s, the debate within the Anglican Church itself crystallised into a long-lasting and at times acrimonious debate emanating originally from the University of Oxford. It was at its most intense between the Low Church Evangelicals, such as Kingsley, and the High Church Tractarians, such as John Henry Newman, John Keble and Edward Pusey. Lowell, as an American Episcopalian, chose the Low Church with its emphasis on personal salvation and the centrality of the Bible, as opposed to the more universalist and ritualistic perspectives of the High Church. The controversy continued well into Lowell's old age and is fictionalized from a relatively objective perspective in Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers* (1857), the second in a series of six novels, known as *Barchester Chronicles (*1855–1867*).*

On the whole, reactions to these theological debates were mostly confined to the written word rather than sectarian violence. However, in the Newfoundland context, O'Flaherty instanced the unrest in Harbour Grace in Conception Bay in 1835 as an extreme example of sectarian feeling at that time (O'Flaherty, 1974, p.4). Sider has also described the sectarian emotions evoked in some outports in the nineteenth century (2003, pp.227-231). Contemporary accounts of the political and religious unrest in Conception Bay, Newfoundland are described by Talbot (1882, pp.34-37) and referred to by Tocque (1878, p.116).

An early and considered contemporary review of Lowell's first novel in the December 1858 number of the *Atlantic Monthly* supports Blodgett's later contention that the novel was not a religious book, although the reviewer did surmise that the novelist 'had lived a good deal in solitude, or at least removed from his intellectual peers, … [and that Lowell was a man] whose own observation had revealed to him some of the darker aspects of the Roman Catholic faith and practice (1858, Anonymous reviewer, *Atlantic Monthly*)'. Harold Blodgett's article confirms the veracity of this remark. His interpretation is that, despite Lowell's disclaimer, the sensational plot unintentionally pandered to the prejudices of many of his Protestant readers, even though the novel contains many sympathetic characters including the 'genial Father Terence (1943, pp.581, 583)'. However, as an analysis of the novel below will show, Lowell went to considerable lengths to underline his impression of a cohesive outport community. He would have had contact with the entire Bay Robert's community because of his appointment as relief commissioner in 1846/47, following the famine and terrible storms of that winter, which caused great distress to the Bay Roberts community. However, the anonymous *Atlantic Monthly* reviewer, referred to earlier, came close to the truth about the background of the writer of *The New Priest in Conception Bay.* Lowell's brother, James Russell Lowell, was the journal's editor at the time of the novel's publication and would undoubtedly been aware of his elder brother's academic leanings.

Robert Traill Spence Lowell was born in Massachusetts into one of the families known collectively as the Boston Brahmins, as Oliver Wendell Holmes Snr. referred to them in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1860 (Holmes, 1860, pp.91, 92-93). Lowell studied medicine at Harvard and embarked on a career in business, before

eventually finding a niche for his spiritual aspirations in a missionary vocation. He became a minister in the Episcopal Church and, after acting as domestic chaplain to his patron, Bishop Aubrey George Spencer, in Bermuda, he took the surprising step of requesting a posting in the missionary parish of Bay Roberts in Conception Bay in Newfoundland. His motivation for this move is not clear, but Bishop Spencer's previous posting had been in St. John's, Newfoundland (Rollman, 1990). Lowell and Spencer were both Evangelical Anglican Protestants and opponents of the Tractarian or Oxford Movement. Newfoundland, at that time, mirrored the religious composition of New England in many ways. Both Boston and Newfoundland had substantial Roman Catholic Irish communities, as well as large Protestant populations, both Anglican and Wesleyan in the 1840s and 1850s. However, Lowell's concern for the parish of Bay Roberts was material as well as spiritual, as witnessed by his work on famine relief during his ministry there. His concern for the welfare of his former parishioners continued after his return to United States in 1847. It has been said that stress and fatigue resulting from his experiences at this time, and the opposition of the merchant establishment, caused him to leave Newfoundland, but it is also likely that the appointment of a Tractarian successor to Bishop Spencer also had a great deal to do with Lowell's subsequent career moves (Rollmann, 1990).

Further evidence of Lowell's attempt to behave in an even-handed manner in a society where religious loyalties were far more polarized than today, are available in the archives. Blodgett refers to Lowell's 'friendly controversy with a Roman Catholic clergyman (Blodgett, 1943, p.581)' during his posting in New Jersey and originally published in 1853 in the *Newark Daily Advertiser* (Rollman,

1990). Later, his time as headmaster at St Mark's School in Southborough, Massachusetts were marked by his thoughtful and effective approach to his work (Benson, 1925). Other sources on Lowell are less accessible to the researcher because of interest in Lowell being overshadowed by the literary talents of his younger brother James Russell Lowell, and retrospectively by his eminent great grandson the poet Robert (Traill Spence) Lowell.

Although Lowell wrote a number of short stories and a considerable amount of poetry, he only wrote two novels both of which were inspired by life-changing personal experiences in varying degrees. The cathartic *The New Priest in Conception Bay* is significantly different to his more pastoral second novel *Antony Brade: A Story of a School* (1874), which is inspired by Lowell's four years as the headmaster of St Mark's School in Southborough, Massachusetts from 1869-1873. This period of Lowell's career was less emotionally challenging than his time in Newfoundland but nevertheless sufficiently motivating to result in a second attempt to write a novel. Lowell's engagement with place is evident in his writing. His first novel is an important source for exploring and understanding his motivation in embracing the more challenging novel genre and his contribution to what was to be later described as the regional novel genre with its focus on the concept of place and its present-day marketing nomenclature of 'sense of place' novels. In the American context, Nina Baym has explained how landscape description occupied a special place in the early American Antebellum novel but there was a fine line between achieving a balance and not erring on the side of an excess of detailed description in the opinion of many contemporary reviewers (Baym, 1984, pp.113-114). This point is developed later in the chapter in the analysis of the case study novel.

Lowell lived and worked in the Bay Roberts outport in Conception Bay as an Anglican minister from 1843 to 1847. Interpretations of his perceptions of Peterport, the fictitious Newfoundland outport setting of his novel, continued to be the focus of controversy within Newfoundland well into the last century (Gallant, 1980). However, the novel informed American opinion about life in the outports of Newfoundland for more than a generation, as the novel was reprinted in 1863 and in an abridged form in 1889.

Not only does this novel have the distinction of being the precursor of the outport novel genre, it is also an early example of the nineteenth-century American novel. Its initial publication in Boston by Philips, Samson and Company in 1858 coincided with the publication of a number of canonical American novels in the 1850s, such as Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) at a time when the American novel had not yet fully established its own voice. Consequently, Lowell's novel, with all its imperfections, was welcomed as an example of a contribution to a blossoming American literature. As late as 1867, Lowell's brother, the poet James Russell Lowell, scolded American writers for still looking outside the United States for justification for their existence:

> You steal Englishmen's books and think Englishmen's thought,
> With their salt on her tail your wild eagle is caught;
> Your literature suits its each whisper and motion
> To what will be thought of it over the ocean;
>
> *A Fable for Critics* (1848).

Despite the flowering of American fiction, James Russell Lowell accuses American imaginative literature of still lacking confidence (Lowell, J.R., 1848; c1890, p.69). However, his older brother's 1858 outport novel created a

considerable contribution to the depiction of the pioneer culture of the maritime North American continent. Although R.T.S. Lowell's manipulation of the plot lacks conviction, his exploration of the concept of place and identity is a great deal more assured than in Fenimore Cooper's maritime novel *The Pilot* (1824) that reads as if it were a somewhat crude nationalist pamphlet in places.

Lowell is considered a minor novelist in terms of the nineteenth-century American literary canon but his debut novel, with all its structural faults, articulates a clear North American continent cultural tonality. It steps outside the confines of the debate on what constitutes American national fiction, as implied by James Russell Lowell. However, it does exhibit characteristics of the second category valued by mid-nineteenth-century reviewers namely, 'regional novels in which the manners and customs of the people, especially as they were controlled by features of the region, were displayed (Baym, 1984, p.245).' Nevertheless, it is ironic that Lowell's placed-based novel was set in a foreign country, and that for all connections with place that it strives to depict, it remains a work considered as that of an 'outsider'.

## ***The New Priest in Conception Bay*: Anatomy of the Novel.**

Lowell's novel was reprinted twice within thirty years of its initial publication. This remarkable achievement for a minor nineteenth-century novel demonstrates its appeal to publishers and readers, who were willing to make both a financial and intellectual commitment to the book. Although contemporary reviews would indicate that the novel had an appeal for certain Protestants, part of its attraction may also have been the vivid recreation

of an outport community. Newfoundland began to attract visitors because of its untamed landscape as the nineteenth century wore on (Overton, 1996, pp.10-13). It is also probably the reason why there have been a number of reprints of this novel in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, Blodgett's comment that Dr Lowell's books 'are gathering dust on many library shelves' and '…are not likely to be disturbed now except by the scholar or the antiquarian' is largely true (Blodgett, 1943, p.583). Although this assertion is in one sense valid, the novel's real worth is as literary evidence of the early existence of a strong Newfoundland identity. This point is also supported by L.M. Anspach (1819), an Anglican cleric, who published an impartial account of life in Newfoundland in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. He observed the unique characteristics of the Newfoundlanders with particular reference to the lifestyle of the fishing communities in areas such as Conception Bay (Anspach, 1819, pp.461-477). His statement that 'nowhere can a race be found more remarkable for indefatigable industry, for contempt of danger, for steadiness of temper and of conduct, sincerity and constancy of attachment and a strong sense of religious duty' predates and authenticates the tone of Lowell's novel (Anspach, 1819, pp.477-478). Lowell's exploration of sense of place and of outport identity, as observed through the eyes of Lowell's outporter and outsider characters and the omniscient narrator, are mainstays of most analyses of the novel, as discussed below.

Chapter One, entitled 'A strange country in the waters', is devoted to an introduction of the fictional Peterport, the place and the life-style of its people, to the reader. Lowell's main focus in this chapter is on the landscape of Conception Bay and its importance as the backcloth to the story is maintained throughout the novel. He describes how the fish have found new homes to replace the 'old haunts that have been lifted up into the air out of their reach (Lowell, 1858, 1974 edition, p.6)'. These reclaimed bays and inlets are home to the

characters of this novel and Lowell gives a succinct description of the social and economic composition of his outport in just a few paragraphs that would be as familiar to present-day Newfoundland readers as any in the nineteenth century. Peterport is depicted as a pretty place with its cliffs and ridges and coves, whereas inland, 'surrounded by a fringe of small forests on the coast, is a vast wilderness of moss, and rock, and lake, and dwarf firs (1858, 1974 edition, pp.6-7)'. This hinterland is difficult to travel through and known as the Barrens, as well as being the agent of death for the character Mr.de Brie in the closing chapters of the book.

In addition, the symbolic importance of the landscape is also evident throughout the novel and provides a further dimension to the outport identity of its inhabitants. For instance, the narrator ascribes uplifting qualities to a summer sunset with its 'far-off heaped clouds, turned up and flecked with crimson, with the bright red of the furnace and the pale red of the shell', drawing the eye to the horizon and the sky and moving the observer to 'a tendency to mysterious musing (Lowell, 1858, 1974 edition, pp.244-245)'. Other examples of the imposing nature of the everyday environment of the outporters are found regularly throughout the novel. Not only do the descriptions of the settlements and the outporters at work in them (1858, 1974 edition, p.21), the experience of walking the tracks and pathways (1858, 1974 edition, pp.81, 212 and 317) and the sight of schooners and punts sailing into Peterport harbour (1858, 1974 edition, p.111) enhance the readers' understanding of outport life but they also mark points in the plot development. Examples include the sight of vessels of all kinds on the water awaiting the homecoming of Lucy Barbury after her mysterious abduction (1858, 1974 edition, pp.391-92) and the attempted nocturnal entrapment of the reformed smuggler Peter Ladford (1858, 1974 edition, pp.332-335). The latter incident has a gothic element that is highlighted by the outport terrain at twilight.

However, the term ‘outport’ also has a dual significance that Lowell is cognizant of and illustrates in his allusions to the seascape. It not only encompasses the coastal communities but is a reminder that these settlements and their people are linked to other places far away. This contact is important in the Newfoundlanders’ perception of their identity and self-assurance that Anspach observed in his reflections on the island (1819). One striking example in the novel itself occurs when the Reverend Arthur Wellon’s imagination is fired by the sight of the Spring-Bird leaving Bay Harbour for Madeira and he ponders the significance of departing ships and the secrets of the sea:

> Along the wharves, along the little beaches, around the circuit of the little coves, along the smooth or broken face of the rock, the sea, which cannot rest, is busy. These little waves and this long swell, that now are here at work, have been ere now at home in the great inland sea of Europe, breathed on by soft, warm winds from fruitgroves, vineyards, and wide fields of flowers, have sparkled in the many-coloured lights and felt the trivial oars and dallying fingers of loiterers on the long canals of Venice; have quenched the ashes of the Dutchman’s pipe, thrown overboard from his full, laboring trekschuyt; have wrought their patient tasks in the dim caverns of the Indian Archipelago (1858, 1974 edition, pp.111-112).

The passage refers to other voyagers and coastal dwellers with different relationships with the sea. It also underlines the hard life of the outporters compared with visitors to Venice and describes scenes that outporters will have seen on their trading voyages to the West Indies or Portugal. The allusions to more exotic places than Newfoundland are themes in other outport novels, such as *The Eyes of the Gull* by Margaret Duley which is discussed in the following chapter. However, Lowell’s novel explicitly documents the early self-awareness of the outporters and records their attachment to their place in fictional prose for the first time, thus establishing elements observable in later outport novels. Further on in the same passage, the Reverend Wellon compares these warmer environments with the harsh reality of the ‘mighty icebergs and

ice-fields' so familiar to most outporters. This link with the forces of nature also underlines and romanticizes the great chasm between the pre-industrial life in an outport and the urban lifestyle of many of Lowell's readers. His fictional link between the outport as place and the outporters' experience of it in their daily lives is also a phenomenon identified in the works of the cultural geographers Pocock, Relph and Tuan on concepts of place and experience described above. They maintained that place acquires meaning through an individual's experience of place. The outporters in Lowell's novel demonstrate the nature of their bond with place.

Lowell also uses other literary techniques to further his portrayal of Newfoundland identity, such as the use of Newfoundland English, whenever the outporters appear in the novel. The preliminary hearing held in Chapter Twenty-One to investigate the disappearance of Lucy Barbury, the daughter of Skipper George, is one of the most striking examples of the use of the vernacular in the whole novel. The fisherman Jesse Barbury is called as a witness (1858, 1974 edition, p.133) and launches into a detailed account of his movements on the day in question in the company of his fellow fisherman Isaac Maffen.

> I was wy over, t'other side, a-jiggin squids, I was; and Izik Maffen was along wi' I; and I says to un, 'Izik,' I says, 'ee knows Willum Tomes,' I says, 'surely.' 'Is, sure,' 'e says, 'I does,' to me, agen. 'Well, Izik,' I says,'did 'ee hear, now, that 'e 've alossed 'e's cow?' I says."… "'Izik,' I says to un, agen, 'Izik,' I says, 'do 'ee think, now, would n' the squids do better a little furderer up?' I says. With that we takes an' rows up tow'rds Riverhead, a bit. Wull, after bidin' there a spurt, I axes Izik what e' thowt sech a cow as that might be worth. I says" –
>
> You must remember, Mr. Barbury, interposed the Stipendiary, "that the time of the magistrate is valuable, not to speak of the time of others that are here. (1858, 1974 edition, p.133)

These extracts from Jesse's evidence and the response of the magistrate illustrate the care that Lowell took to record the vernacular but the entire chapter is also very revealing from a

sociological perspective, as well as representative of other dialogues throughout the novel. The dialogue recorded in the court hearing itself includes samples of speech from different groups. Lowell's dialect representation in his novel is also the focus of a paper written by the linguist Philip Hiscock (1974, 1982).

In the first instance, this use of both the vernacular and Standard English creates a microcosm of the social hierarchy in the outport itself and demonstrates the effects of education on the speech patterns of the outport characters. On the one hand, there are the outport fishermen and many of their wives and children using the vernacular, or moderated vernacular, and there are also the well-educated outporters, such as the planters Mr. Urston and his son James, Lucy Barbury's suitor, speaking Standard English; nevertheless, they too are true Newfoundlanders. The magistrate or stipendiary, the merchants and their families, the religious leaders and other outsiders are recognizable by their use of Standard English. However, within Skipper George's family there are variations in the variety of English spoken. Lucy and Mrs. Barbury speak Standard English, while his youngest daughter Janie aged four or five speaks a moderated vernacular. She is closer to the community with no formal education as yet. Lowell's use of the vernacular, therefore, serves a number of purposes. It is an expression of Newfoundland identity and the local colour of the outport but it also is used to demonstrate the positive value systems of the community, as the vernacular is associated with honesty, hard work and kindness in the novel. However, these outport values are shown to survive life changes, such as accessibility to education and material well-being, as represented by James, born into a comfortable planter's family, and Lucy, the star pupil of the outport school.

Lowell's overall literary strategy was accomplished at the expense of the plot, which is slow moving in places, as outlined below. The core issue is the cohesion of the local

community and its unsophisticated goodness. The sketches of characters, such as the outporter Skipper George and his relationship with his environment, are tools to illustrate Lowell's idea. However, it was precisely these descriptions of the landscape and the inclusion of the vernacular as a means of recreating the outport and its people that the 1858 anonymous reviewer in the *Atlantic Monthly* found the most tedious about the novel. He complained that '(W) hen human hearts and human passions are animating or darkening the scene, we do not want to be detained by a botanist's description of plants or a geologist's sketch of rocks'. He was equally dismissive of the use of the vernacular in the novel. Nina Baym describes how American reviewers in the 1840s and 1850s placed great emphasis on the centrality of plot in the novel genre. Therefore, many reviewers considered such description and devices as subservient to plot development (Baym, 1984, pp.108-109; 113-114). She also maintains that landscape description, however, 'occupied a special place', unless it undermined the narrative element (Baym, 1984, p113). Clearly the anonymous reviewer of the 1858 *Atlantic Monthly* considered that Lowell had crossed acceptable boundaries in placing so much focus on landscape and the vernacular as part of the creation of a strong image of Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders.

In the succeeding chapters of Lowell's novel, the reader meets the main characters, including the establishment figures, who are mostly outsiders and feature as advisers, emotional refugees from the outside world and even villains, in the case of the Jesuit priest, Father Nicholas Crampton. The upright and liberal Anglican, Reverend Wellon is balanced by the well-meaning and kindly Roman Catholic priest, Father Terence O'Toole. Lowell paints a picture of people from different faiths living together alongside each other relatively well but well aware of their religious differences. Skipper George's advice to his wife and daughter epitomizes the community's formula for co-existence when he comments that Roman

Catholics may belong to the wrong religion but they are not all bad (1858; 1974 edition, p.52). Lowell frequently tempers prejudice with a counter viewpoint. There are sympathetic as well as less sympathetic characters on both sides of the religious divide. The constable Gilpin's negative comments on his Catholic neighbours are rebutted by Reverend Wellon with the response, 'You're too severe upon Roman Catholics (1974 edition, p.113)'. Although feelings run high in the local press prior to the trial of those accused of having a hand in Lucy's disappearance, the local community remain calm (1974 edition, p.343).The mystery surrounding the abduction is the central theme of the novel, and depicts the threat to communal stability. James Urston, shortly to begin training as a Catholic priest, and Lucy Barbury, a Protestant, have fallen in love. Many of the Protestants believe that Father Nicholas, assisted by nuns from the Catholic convent are responsible for the crime. The trial of the suspected abductors of Lucy Barbury, Father Nicholas and Mrs. Calloran, ends in the charges being dismissed and the outport returns to its former level of bipartisanism.

Allowing for Lowell's personal religious convictions and the, at times, combative religious loyalties in society as a whole at that time, his portrayal of the outport community is a reasonably fair one. Leona English cites a real-life example of the attitudes among Protestants in the 1840s described in a contemporary Newfoundland School Society report, in which a teacher Mr. Bridge expresses delight at the conversion of an elderly Roman Catholic pupil to the Protestant faith, '…he has seen his way to a renunciation of the errors of Romanism (Newfoundland School Society, 1841-1842, p.8 in English, L.M. 2002, p.198)'.

The mingling of trust and suspicion in the ensuing mystery of the suspected kidnap of Skipper George's daughter challenge the robust community spirit of the fictive Peterport outport, similar to reactions also recorded by Anspach in 1819 in his publication. The novel's gothic elements, such as the way that Lucy Barbury vanishes overnight in Chapter Fourteen

and her ghostly reappearance on board the schooner the Spring Bird in Chapter Fifty Six, are well presented and had Lowell focused on developing these aspects, the novel may well have escaped many of the criticisms subsequently made against it. An anonymous contemporary reviewer for *The North American Review* makes mention of 'pictures of terraqueous scenery' and also refers to 'the collision of rival creeds', while maintaining that the 'lessons, not put into didactic form, but imbedded in the narrative, are of the highest and holiest (April 1859, pp.571-572)'. This partial review is a confirmation of Blodgett's view on the novel's appeal to certain branches of nineteenth century Protestantism.

Unfortunately, the combination of Lowell's inexperience in writing extended fictional texts and his publisher's apparent uncritical appraisal of the novel's literary merits appear to have resulted in the inclusion of a number of tedious and intrusive chapters that undermine the plot development. Their function appears to be a means of justifying a sub-plot involving the upright outsider characters, Mrs. Barré and her estranged husband Mr. De Brie, the new priest in Conception Bay, and their ill-treatment at the hands of the amoral Father Crampton some years beforehand. Lowell's insertion of lengthy theological discussions, particularly between the clerical outsider characters, deflects the reader from the real issues in the novel that are pivoted on the unique qualities of the outporters and their response to their living environment. Furthermore, such esoteric discussions were more relevant to Lowell's real world than the fictional world of his novel (Blodgett, 1943, p.581). In addition, as his publishers went out of business shortly after the novel's publication, perhaps there was an absence of critical editorial supervision of this debut book (Blodgett, pp.578-579). Lowell himself declared in a letter to Julius Hammond Ward in 1864 that he had no help from anyone (in writing the novel) except for some deletions in the second edition. An anonymous review of the Roberts Brothers' 1889 edition of *New Priest in Conception Bay* states that 'in its

original form the wild and picturesque beauty of the tale was marred by certain obscurities and infelicities of treatment, which made it difficult reading. These removed, the true quality of the story is revealed'. This sentiment is even more valid for the contemporary reader in a society where perspectives on religious tolerance have changed radically.

*The New Priest in Conception Bay* foreshadowed the eventual emergence of an outport novel. Lowell's focus on place in this novel was prescient and the importance of place has been developed and honed by subsequent exponents of the genre. It is characterised by a focus on the meeting of land and sea, creating simultaneously a sense of boundless liberty and of curtailment. In the outport communities there is both a reaching out to the wider world, which provides the raison d'être for the outport community in the first place, and a manifest introspection because of the inhospitable landscape and the physical and social containment of the scattered and idiosyncratic outport communities. This introspection was epitomized throughout the nineteenth century by a growing fascination with small communities, the simple life and rugged landscapes and seascapes (Overton, 1996, p.111). In this sense Lowell's novel is a reflection of that obsession, as well as being a rather remarkable fictional snapshot of nineteenth century outport life, local dialect and landscape. In the next section, it is possible to trace the shifting attitudes towards senses of place and outport identity in the debut novel by English.

## **Part Two: Anastasia English and her Literary Landscape**.

The centrality of the concept of place in English's first novel is symbolically underlined by her decision to publish in St. John's rather than in London, as was more usual at that time. This strategy may have seemed a logical one given that her family had strong links with the

printing business, but it also demonstrates her ingrained sense of Newfoundland identity and involvement with the cultural world of St. John's at that time. English grew up in St. John's but her affinity with the idea of Newfoundland as a place had two dimensions in her first novel: her appreciation of the beauty of the coastal areas and the unique identification with place as experienced by her readers through her protagonist Norrie's experience of Newfoundland as the 'homeland'. The use of landscape descriptions often function as backcloths to pensive moments of reflection by her heroine, Norrie Moore, on her own local outport identity. In *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* the main focus is on the culture and societal aspects of the outport and its relationship with St. John's and its inhabitants, who, in some cases, English depicted as arrogant and snobbish, in others as tolerant but unaware of life in the outports. Unlike in *The New Priest in Conception Bay,* her novel uses the vernacular in a less systematic fashion and the local outport fishing community itself is peripheral to the interaction of the main characters and to the plot. Nevertheless, this novel or novella has a distinctive regional identity to it. Norrie's pride in her outport identity is central to her experience of the wider world, as illustrated later in the novel by her confidence in embracing new experiences.

The conventional wisdom is that most Newfoundland writing recorded in the early nineteenth century consisted of non-fiction articles or essays, personal accounts of life in the colony and topographical material, mostly the work of outsiders (O'Flaherty, 1979, pp.60-65). At present, there is little evidence to the contrary of the existence of much imaginative prose writing in the early decades of the century (O'Flaherty, 1979, pp.92, 82-83). The question raised by the publication of *Only A Fisherman's Daughter,* is whether there really was a similar literary lacuna in the later decades, since English's formative years were spent in such a culturally vibrant environment. This situation was driven by an enormous concern about the

problem of illiteracy, a sustained drive to nurture a lively cultural scene, particularly in St. John's, and an underlying assumption by the cultural drivers that religion and politics did not belong in the cultural domain. These concerns motivated the different social groups throughout most of the latter half of the century in Newfoundland.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide substantive arguments in answer to the question of the dearth of early Newfoundland novels with a strong orientation to the concept of place throughout much of the nineteenth century. However, a greater understanding of the development of textual communities (Fuller, 2004) at that time will be attempted in order to appreciate the context within which poetry and shorter prose writing were preferred rather than the novel genre. By textual communities, Fuller's research includes all those parties involved in the production and enjoyment of fiction or prose, or in other words the writing, reading and publishing communities which form around texts (Fuller, 2004, p.8). Her study of textual communities in contemporary Atlantic Canada highlights the lack of research about similar textual communities in the Newfoundland of the nineteenth century and also underlines the great difficulty of undertaking such research retrospectively. One fruitful resource in the present context of this case study might be a study of fiction written in serial form for local newspapers and the fiction featured in Christmas Annuals, as well as attempts to uncover the literary networks of the time and the quantity of place-based literature, such as fiction set in the outports. Finally, a further objective in building up an understanding of the elusiveness of the novel genre at this time would be to gain some insight into the contribution of local writing on *This Place* to the early phases of the emergence of a Newfoundland cultural nationalism.

To this end, William Barker and Sandra Hannaford's paper, *'Towards a History of the Book in Newfoundland'* and Barker's subsequent article 'Three Steps towards a History of the Book*'* provide a survey of resources that form a record of departure points for future research in this field (Barker and Hannaford, 2009; Barker, 2010). The period under discussion in this chapter falls in the first part of Barker and Hannaford's 'Second Period – the Homogeneous Cultural Period' that spans the entire nineteenth century and through the twentieth century until Confederation. One great challenge for Newfoundland researchers in this History of the Book in Canada Project is the paucity of local records that is exacerbated by a succession of major fires in the city of St. John's in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the first in 1846 and the second in 1892. Nevertheless, Barker and Hannaford describe how the growth of a Newfoundland middle class resulted in the development in 'education, literary societies, and the like (Barker and Hannaford, 2009; Barker, 2010, p.29)'. Furthermore, they maintain that because of this development, the focus was not only on the individual but on groups as well (Barker and Hannaford, 2009). Therefore, in the present context, key areas of interest are the concentration of literate middle and working class groups in the nineteenth century and their impact on the cultural life of Newfoundland.

The absence of 'a critical mass of well-educated people' in the second part of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century was detrimental for the "transformation and liberation of the individual from the stultifying traditions of the past" was a point of agreement in the work of the economic and educational historians, David Alexander and Philip McCann (In Bulcock, 1995). On the other hand, Barker (2010) indicates that small effective groups of well-educated people

can energize cultural and intellectual activity despite high illiteracy levels elsewhere in the community, as witnessed in St. John's (Harvey, 1878) and towns, such as Harbour Grace and Carbonear in Conception Bay (Tocque, 1878, pp.115-117; pp.118-120). Alexander's prophetic concluding comment in his 1980 study on literacy and economic development in nineteenth century Newfoundland acknowledges the great need for 'some scholar to produce an intellectual portrait of the country (1980, p.34)'. Now that this challenge has been taken up by a growing number of contemporary scholars, it is becoming increasingly evident that nineteenth century Newfoundland supported a lively book culture for such a small population.

**The Crusade Against Illiteracy.**

Given the importance placed on literacy and book reading in this period by establishment figures such as the historian D. W. Prowse (1834-1914) and the cultural commentator and activist the Reverend Moses Harvey (1820-1901), it is surprising that the topic did not have greater priority in government circles beyond some financial aid in the 1830s and 1840s allocated to the establishment of schools and the regular collection of census data. Global estimates of literacy levels in Newfoundland were rather low compared with other countries. Despite the difficulties in determining these estimates, there seems to be a general consensus that in the early part of the nineteenth century they were around 25% rising to about 50% by 1900 (Rowe, 1952 in English, L.M., 2011, p.219; Barker and Hannaford, 2009; Barker, 2010, p.29). These estimates are mostly based on information from official government reports and the decennial census returns from the mid-nineteenth century

onwards. The Newfoundland figures contrast sharply with the higher estimates recorded for New England of about 90% for men of European origin early in the century (Lynch, 2011). Alexander's map showing global estimates of illiteracy levels in 1900 across the continents presents an enlightening rough comparison. It demonstrates that Britain, most of America and Scandinavia had illiteracy levels of up to 10% of the population, France and Germany between 10% and 20% and Newfoundland, Spain, Italy and Russia came into the lowest category with over 20% (Alexander, 1980, p.9). Although comparisons are problematic because of regional variations and differing measurement criteria in these examples, it does, nevertheless, provide an indication of the challenge faced by educationalists in Newfoundland.

One factor in applying a measurement criterion, is the problem of the definition of 'literacy' and whether writing as well as reading is included in the definition under discussion and what evidence or yardstick is used to support the research. J.F.C. Harrison's discussion on literacy levels in England in the period 1830-1860 using parish marriage registry records illustrates the point. Alexander's study on the similar period in Newfoundland also discusses this problem of definition. One obvious example is the weight that can be assigned to the ability to put a signature on documents (Alexander, 1980; Harrison, 1984, pp.286-287; McCann, 1994). The research of Alexander and McCann confirms similar inconsistencies existed in Newfoundland.

Harrison (1984) also stated that British middle-class educational reformers in the nineteenth century assumed that the root cause of illiteracy was inadequate elementary education. This assumption also heavily influenced thinking in Newfoundland, as has been pointed out by both Alexander and McCann with the result that provision for limited facilities

for secondary level education was not introduced until the Newfoundland Education Act of 1874. This strategy curtailed the development of more advanced levels of literacy throughout the island (Alexander, 1980; McCann, 1994). The response of politicians to the problem of illiteracy was also apparent among other groups with an interest in Newfoundland. A parallel concern about the religious and material well-being of the working people of Newfoundland ensured that church organisations outside the colony, such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), had established a foothold both in the capital and in many of the outports, particularly in the Conception Bay area. The SPG in London oversaw the Anglican missionary activities in many parts of the British Empire, including Lowell's Diocese of the West Indies. An important part of their work included the establishment of schools. At the local level, the Anglican Cathedral in St. John's was rebuilt in stone in 1843 and the foundation stone for the Catholic Basilica had been laid two years earlier in 1841. Both initiatives were evidence of the consolidation of St. John's as a major urban settlement and of the priority given to concerns other than the spiritual ones, including the provision of schools.

Efforts to raise the levels of literacy in Newfoundland were a high priority in this missionary work, particularly among the Protestants, who set great importance on individual study of the Bible. Recent studies have shown that there were systematic attempts to raise the literacy rates among adults in both St. John's and in the outports throughout the nineteenth century (English, L.M., 2011, pp.196-197). English has also described how the educational activities of the Newfoundland School Society for adults and children were partly funded by government grants in the years 1836-1843. However, after 1843 educational provision became a denominational activity run by the churches. This decision by the Newfoundland government placed the emphasis on local provision and initiatives but there was a danger that the development of overall strategic educational goals might be weakened.

By the mid-twentieth century, illiteracy rates in Newfoundland as a whole had improved considerably but were still three times as high as the rest of Canada, according to the 1953 UNESCO literacy report, despite the fact that schooling had been compulsory with the passing of the School Attendance Act in 1942. However, among the middle class in St. John's, levels appear to have been consistent with other urban communities in Britain and America. The cultural impact of this discrepancy between levels of literacy within the island had its roots in political decisions made throughout the nineteenth century (Alexander, 1980; McCann, 1996).

**Newfoundland Literature and the Development of Textual Communities.**

Despite the low literacy rate in early-nineteenth century St. John's, records confirm that there was a small educated middle class in the city in this period (English, L.M., 2011. pp.196-197). These citizens supported a number of local newspapers, such as the *Royal Gazette* (1807) and *The Public Ledger* (1820), as well as patronizing both theatrical and musical performances at the Amateur Theatre that opened in 1822 (Alexander, 1980; English, L.M., 2011; Colton, 2007; Barker and Hannaford, 2009; Barker, 2010). In addition, early support for the education of artisans resulted in the foundation of a Mechanics' Society in 1827 by the Catholic community. By the mid-century, there were also a number of other associations, such as The Mechanics Institute established in 1849, supported by the Anglican community, as well as an unsuccessful forerunner of an Athenaeum in 1851.

Both Mechanics Institutes and the Athenaii had their origins in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. There had been many initiatives to establish

private libraries and other educational and cultural clubs and groups during the eighteenth centuries. However, the prime-mover for the development of further education for artisans was George Birbeck, who organized lectures for workers leading to the foundation of the Glasgow Mechanics Institute in 1821 and the London Mechanics Institute in 1823. The idea quickly spread throughout the entire English-speaking world. A parallel movement was the Athenaeum Movement, which began in Liverpool in response to the perceived need of the merchant, commercial and professional classes for access to reading material, newspapers and other cultural facilities. Its Athenaeum building opened in 1799. Within fifty years, many cities had established their own Athenaeum to suit their local circumstances. As was the case with the Mechanics Institute Movement, one common feature was the adoption of non-sectarianism: religious and as well as political discussion was discouraged.

The impetus to encourage a range of literary activities led to the successful launch of the St. John's Athenaeum (1861-1898), as recorded by Louise Whiteway (1971). Its eventual function as an umbrella organization for many of the city's existing artisans' educational organisations, debating and literary societies, as well as a number of subscription libraries (English, L.M., 2011, p.199) helped to extend the use of scarce facilities, such as lecture rooms and facilities for events. The Athenaeum in St. John's was one of the earlier examples and its members built a fine building to house its activities. The establishment of the St. John's Athenaeum in 1861 was the culmination of more than fifty years' effort to give a cultural voice to a growing awareness of a Newfoundland identity and its sponsors included leading cultural figures, such as Moses Harvey, the historian, Dr Prowse, as well as representatives from the leading merchant families. Its existence provided support for the further development of cultural activities and this had spin-offs in that other literary societies

and groups sprung up to articulate and give voice to those sections of Newfoundland society not at home under the umbrella of the Athenaeum. The existence of competing organizations is confirmed in the presentation of the 1883 Annual Report of the St. John's Athenaeum in *The Newfoundlander* newspaper, dated 25th January 1884, that congratulates 'the members and the community of St. John's upon the fact that the Institute has maintained its position, notwithstanding the establishment of other societies of a somewhat cognate nature.'

The energy and enthusiasm of individuals and groups for the country of Newfoundland, especially throughout the second half of the nineteenth century is well documented but information is dispersed across a range of sources, both governmental and private. Nevertheless, a picture is slowly emerging of a proliferation of sectarian and non-sectarian cultural and literary clubs and societies, mainly concentrated in St. John's during the final decades of the century. Examples of such groups included the libraries and literary initiatives established by the churches, the Temperance Movement and local book clubs. One example was the George Street Methodist Sunday School Library in St. John's, referred to above. A copy of their catalogue of books, dated July 1904, reveals an enormous commitment to reading, citing the maxim that 'a good book is a good friend'. Borrowers are also encouraged to choose reading material from all five sections of the catalogue in turn, covering a broad range of both fiction and non-fiction works.

The main thrust of all these groups was initially on the promotion of reading and discussion rather than on the local production of fiction and non-fiction. As well as a continuing concern among many cultural activists about the need to improve provision of schooling throughout the entire nineteenth century, the drive for a wider access to books other than the Bible also gathered momentum from early on in the century as well. As there was apparently no significant difference between levels of

literacy among men and women in prosperous parts of the city itself, such as St. John's East (Alexander, 1984, p.17), there would seem to be sufficient numbers of the reading classes to encourage novelists and poets during the period in which English was young in the 1870s and 1880s.

This movement to encourage book reading and discussion in the first half of the century was not merely a St. John's phenomenon, as libraries and literary associations are also recorded in the Conception Bay area in the larger outport settlements, such as Carbonear, that still had small but active middle class communities in close touch with St. John's itself until their eventual decline by the end of the nineteenth century (Barker and Hannaford, 2009). In more prosperous times in 1834, citizens of Carbonear had contributed to the setting up of a public reading room in the town (Barker, 2010, pp.29-30) and also founded the Carbonear Literary Society (1835). In fact, some sources even suggest that in the outports the level of literacy among women was higher because of the disruption in education for men caused by absence at sea (McCann, Vol 1, 1994, in Bulcock, 1995). A literary allusion to this phenomenon is the education of Lucy Barbury in *New Priest in Conception Bay.* Lowell's heroine is a shining light at the Peterport local school and the local merchant's niece, Miss Dare, asks the Reverend Wellon to press the Newfoundland School Society to allow her to take over from the incumbent teachers so that the local school can benefit from her skills (1974, pp.17-18). As Lowell himself only spent four years in Newfoundland as an Anglican minister, this fictional reconstruction of a 1840s outport community is the only indication of Lowell's likely involvement in a textual community in Conception Bay.

Most research on early Newfoundland literature has tended to focus on non-fiction publications, such as histories, travel and exploration, political commentary and biography (O'Flaherty, 1979). However, the work of Agnes O'Dea (1986), the

first director of the Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS), on a bibliography of Newfoundland catalogues early examples of local fiction for both adults and juveniles, mainly poetry and short stories, but also lists forgotten late-nineteenth century novels about Newfoundland including local novelists, whose work also included placed-based novels. An examination of those placed-based works in the CNS collection has demonstrated the importance of access to cultural hubs, such as London, with their rapidly developing exploitation of the growing demand for fiction and outlets for the publication of Newfoundland novels in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. It also confirms claims made for *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* that it was not only the first novel written by a Newfoundland woman but also very probably the first place-based novel published in St. John's.

These other documented novelists, recorded by O'Dea, were not only active members of the St. John's cultural circuit from the 1870s and 1880s onwards but also often had close connections with its leading personalities. The most interesting example is William B. Stabb, a nephew of the eminent medical pioneer Henry Hunt Stabb. The former's father-in-law was the Honorable G.H. Emerson QC and was the member for Ferryland in the Newfoundland Assembly and the chairman of The Athenaeum in the 1890s. Both men were from Protestant backgrounds and the Stabb family was a prominent merchant family involved in the sealing industry. Stabb's first novel *Florimel Jones*, a socialite view of the island, appeared in 1876 and was followed by *Hard Hit in Newfoundland* in 1880. The latter was more place-based and was dedicated to 'the Hon. G. H. Emerson QC of Virginia Water, St. John's, Newfoundland'. Stabb wrote a third novel, *Wreaths of Smoke* in 1880. All three novels were self-published in London and printed by Gilbert and Rivington of St.

John's Square. Gilbert had links with the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) and was, therefore, a known contact in Newfoundland. In the present context, Stabb's most interesting novel is *Hard Hit in Newfoundland – A tale of Newfoundland* and the author was only identified by the initials T.U. Since the novel was quite critical of the St. John's establishment, this was an understandable decision.

Another local novelist was G.J. Bond, whose outport novel Skipper *George Netman* was first published in book form in 1887 and reprinted in 1911. He also came from a prominent St. John's family, being the brother of Sir Robert Bond, the first Prime Minister of the Dominion of Newfoundland. G.J. Bond was a Methodist minister in St. John's and moved to central Canada in 1902, where he worked for the Methodist Council and was editor of their publication *The Christian Guardian.* Among his papers donated by Bond's family in Nova Scotia in 1996 to Memorial University is an 1899 copy of English's *Only a Fisherman's Daughter.* The inclusion of her novel amongst the Bond family papers is an indication of the range of interest in St. John's at the time of its publication and also of the deep feelings of identification with expressions of Newfoundland culture.

A comparison of this novel with the novels of Stabb and Bond is interesting in showing the phases in the development of an outport novel sub-genre. From the perspective of this case study, Stabb's *Hard Hit: A Newfoundland Story (*1880) is an interesting document. It not only indirectly provides some insight into the opinions of the elite members of the St. John's Athenaeum circle around twenty years before the publication of *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* but also his characters include aristocrats, members of the middle classes and fishermen. The latter are presented as

noble and upright. Many of the important events in the book are set in outports and there are many references to the perceptions of the characters concerning the problems and situation in Newfoundland. Stabb also uses the vernacular for the dialogues of the fishermen and other varieties of Standard English for the aristocrats and middle-class characters. Bond, on the other hand, set his book *Skipper George Netman* (1887) entirely in a fictional outport, Caplin Bight, and it is more an extended story of the life of a devout fisherman, known as Skipper George and his fellow men and women outporters, rather than a novel. However, it corroborates events featured in many novels set in Newfoundland about the outports and their communities. Therefore, it acts as a point of confirmation and comparison concerning perceptions of the outport community in visualizing Newfoundland.

In the context of the reconstruction of the textual communities in the period being studied, the literary phenomenon known as the Christmas Annuals is a rich source in estimating levels of literary activity and the extent of the involvement of local communities. These annuals were produced from the 1870s until well after the Second World War. They included a wide range of literary genres from essays, fictional short stories through to poetry and their authors came from a broad social spectrum, from the Governor downwards. One celebrated contributor was P.K. Devine, whose publication *Devine's Folklore of Newfoundland in Old Words, Phrases and expressions, Their Origin and Meaning* was published in 1937. English herself edited *Yuletide Bells* for forty years until 1949 (Bulgin, 2009, pp.176, 184). This successful project is a testimony to the active involvement of English in a St. John's textual community, which drew together many citizens over a number of generations.

The significance of the Christmas Annuals was that they were the literary transmission of the Newfoundland oral tradition of story-telling, amateur theatricals, poetry and song, situated at the heart of Newfoundland cultural life and particularly strong in outport communities. The school concert in Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News* described in Chapter Five is a contemporary example. However, the pervasiveness of the oral tradition was not confined to any one social class, as the novelist Duley was famous for her witty cabaret-style performances performed for her friends at Government House in the mid-twentieth century.

The inventory of the Christmas Annuals collated under William Barker's supervision in 1984-1985 has recorded and facilitated access to the surviving sources on the annuals (Churchill and Monk, 1989). Their work has made extrapolation possible concerning the range of the literary genres in these publications and also some indication of the social and cultural networks of the contributors. Although there is much work to be done on this rich resource, it is evident that Newfoundland writers were producing non-fiction longer texts, such as essays and short stories, in addition to poetry, in considerable quantities from 1882 onwards (Churchill and Monk, 1989). Many of the contributors are unknown today but, besides P.K. Devine and English referred to above, there are representatives of many Newfoundland literary and cultural groups. The annuals were usually published as supplements by well-known Newfoundland newspapers, such as *The Telegram,* but also by local printers.

These developments took place simultaneously with the attempts to expand the number of newspapers. The crucial role played by the press at this time in both responding to the demand for information and generating opportunities for cultural and political dialogue is easily underestimated from the perspective of the digital age. Maudie Whelan's research on the newspaper press in nineteenth century

Newfoundland has provided a lively account of the history of the press at that time and considerable clarity concerning the religious, political, social and technological issues at play in the emergence of the medium (Whelan, 2002). Newspapers were usually rival family businesses and the inclusion of poetry and unsigned serial fiction took second place to political, religious and business material. She describes the newspaper fraternity in nineteenth=century Newfoundland as 'essentially a small but powerful group talking to itself. (Whelan, 2002, p.49)'. It is also noteworthy that it was a sector where both men and women played their part. Elizabeth Brown Winton was the proprietor of one of the older Newfoundland newspapers *The Public Ledger* in the 1860s.

Whelan's reference to the inclusion of poetry and serialized fiction is confirmed by a selective examination of newspapers and journals of the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. *The Evening Telegram*, founded in 1879, always published a poem on page three and serialized anonymous romance novels, as in the issue dated 3rd January 1899, the year of the publication of *Only a Fisherman's Daughter*. The temperance monthly *Water Lily* also included poems, specially composed for the journal and serialized novels by unnamed writers, short stories and literature for children from its first publication in 1904. With the exception of the literary contributions in the *Water Lily*, it is probable that many of the serialized novels in the *Evening Telegraph* were sourced from outside Newfoundland.

At present, there is no evidence that anonymous local novels were included in the serialized novels in the *Evening Telegram* and its competitors. One reason for this assumption is that technological investment in state-of-the-art printing presses

did not take place until after the 1892 fire, when all the newspaper offices were destroyed within a few days in the blaze (Whelan, 2002, p.43). Furthermore, the production of paper made from wood pulp rather than rags was not introduced until the second half of the nineteenth century. Therefore, it was most likely that newspaper editors imported newsprint with pre-printed items on foreign news and other subjects, possibly including serialized romantic novels and blank pages for the inclusion of advertisements and local news (Whelan, 2002, p.44). This strategy would have been the most appropriate financial solution for local newspapers, whose viability in the first half of the century depended on subscriptions, advertisements, income from public notices and private printing commissions.

Although much serialized fiction, such as the work of Charles Dickens and Elisabeth Gaskell appeared in more specialized weekly newspapers and literary journals in nineteenth-century Britain, the increase in the number of more popular urban daily papers and rural weekly papers in the second half of the century in the United States led to the formation of news syndicates, providing literary material 'through stereotype plates, galley proofs or ready-print sheets' from 1860 onwards (Támarkin, 2012, p.316). The daily newspapers in Newfoundland, such as the *Evening Telegram*, would have had the choice of purchasing the more popular and less expensive romantic serialized novels from either Britain or North American pre-printed mainland sources.

The impact of newspapers and journals in promoting the dissemination of longer fictional texts in the mid-nineteenth century has to be seen from present day perspectives as being early attempts to fill gaps in the market. In the second half of the century, printers and publishers in major centres, such as London, had also begun

to appreciate the additional profits to be made in publishing greater quantities of longer fiction themselves, becoming leaders in the establishment of modern literary marketing. Although Newfoundland had a only a small share of the literary output, the population of the island was not only small but there were only significant concentrations of the population in a few specific places, such as St. John's and the small towns in Conception Bay in the nineteenth century. Given that the digital revolution that has revolutionized our concept of the variations in the form textual communities can espouse over distance, the range and energy of the textual communities in existence in St. John's in the second half of the nineteenth century is noteworthy. The critique of English's novel below, bears witness to the lively interest in literary matters in general and also in fiction with a local focus.

**Anastasia English – *Only A Fisherman's Daughter.***

English's novel is a romance but its significance to contemporary readers is the insight it lends to an understanding of the mindset of middle-class Newfoundlanders with their attachment to the island and their awareness of a local identity at the time of the Gilded Age in the United States and the Belle Époque in Europe. English achieves this effect through the contrast between the outport St. Rose and urban St. John's but also by contextualizing Newfoundland in a wider world through Norrie Moore's travels to America and Europe. Norrie's strength in the novel is powered by an attachment to her outport and her awareness of her being a Newfoundlander. Joan Strong, for example, demonstrates how English's plot 'validates the Newfoundland culture, which Norrie inherently characterizes. (1994,

p.28)'. Her attachment to her place and her awareness of her Newfoundland identity are her compass in her orientation through life. This pride in herself enables Norrie to confront the social antagonism of Mrs. Branford at various points in the novel (Bulgin edition, 2009, pp.92, 123-125, 151). She possesses that same quality found in Skipper George in Lowell's outport novel and reflects an unassuming self-confidence. This fictional portrayal of the Newfoundland character by English is, at one level or dimension, situated in an idealized outport landscape and seascape. From another perspective, it finds expression as a form of topophilia in Tuan's terms, as discussed below. However, in the late nineteenth century, this love for one's native land was a familiar sentiment, particularly in the poetry and songs of Robert Burns, the Scottish novels of Sir Walter Scott and the short fiction of the Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen. As a well-educated Victorian, English was probably familiar with all three. However, her novel also reveals a considerable degree of social differentiation and even friction between the classes in Newfoundland, a process with its origins earlier in the nineteenth century (Sider, 2003, pp.232-234). This social differentiation is also in evidence in Stabb's novel *Hard Hit in Newfoundland* (1880). Norrie enters the middle classes through her marriage to Harry Brandon at the close of the novel, despite his stepmother's opinion of Norrie as 'a low-born fisher girl (Bulgin edition. 2009, p.89)'.

As in Lowell's outport novel, English uses the landscape of St Rose and St. John's to create an awareness of the outport and its people in reality and symbolically. The early chapters of the novel, coinciding with Norrie's outport childhood, take place in St Rose and the focus is on the beauty of the scenery and on the freedom the landscape affords the outport children. Norrie lures the other outport

children away from their hay-making by the seashore over a river and ‘away over hills and valleys, eating berries as they went, ‘til their lips were blue (Bulgin edition, 2009, p.12)’. Eventually they rested on a high hill and Norrie was moved by the view, as ‘with all her reckless ways, (she) was a dear lover of the beauties of nature, and the scene now presented to her enraptured gaze was certainly enough to arouse the artist’s soul within her (Bulgin edition, 2009, p.13)’. Norrie’s childhood experiences in the outport has instilled in her a strong topophilia, or empathy for her island country as also explored by Tuan (1974) that becomes the foundation of her adult Newfoundland identity. It is the prism through which she experiences her bond with the outport ethic that is her mainstay in life.

There are many examples of the attractions of the scenery in and around the outport, as well as in St. John’s itself. Norrie, now an accomplished young woman, and her friends organize a picnic trip further on in the novel that provides English with the opportunity to describe the landscape and coastal areas of St Rose and its mercurial climate. The reactions of the visitors from St. John’s and those actually living in the outport serves the dual purpose of exposing the social and emotional dynamics within this group of mostly middle-class friends and the sense of adventure felt by the outsiders. These friends discuss who should be the pilot, as they would not wish to be ‘lost in the woods and being food for the bears (2009, Bulgin edition, p.68)’. When they finally reach Rocky Falls, their picnic destination, the exertions of the climb are rewarded by the dramatic and also engaging scenery:

> A little distance on, they came to another fall of water, and the scene that met their gaze was like a dream of fairyland; the fall was about fifty feet, and down below, the water seemed suddenly to cease its deafening roar, and flow peacefully and tranquilly along: it ran some hundred yards like this. It was not deep, for the large, flat stones underneath

> could be seen, and a sure-footed person could cross without much difficulty from one side to the other. Wild flowers grew in abundance on either side, where there were several shady little nooks (Edition, 2009, p.77).

English records her visitors' evolving engagement with their new environment. They experience feelings of liberation and espouse their perceptions of outport life. The happy group of outporters and urbanites enjoyed their picnic and decided that they should form a little company and call themselves gypsies (Bulgin edition, 2009, p.78). Their identification with the idyllic and dramatic scenery underlines their experiential collective topophilia that equates with the ideas of Tuan (1974). Norrie's 'townie' friends from St. John's are demonstrating an egocentric reaction to their new environment (Tuan, 1974, p.30). The scenery that they appreciate so much also affords them a frisson of danger without incurring any great personal risk.

Later in the novel, as Norrie's world expands through an education in a convent in America and the opportunity to travel on tours of Europe in her early adulthood, her awareness of her Newfoundland identity becomes more important. English presents Norrie the Newfoundlander in a witty dialogue between her and Maude, the daughter of Norrie's American employer:

> Then Maude came forward and, as they were introduced, they smiled into each other's eyes. "And you are all the way from Newfoundland?" said Maude. "You are the first young lady I've met from there."
> "And you are the first Southern young lady I have met," answered Norrie.
> "Then we shall be a curiosity to each other," laughed Maude Varley (Bulgin edition, 2009, p.138).

This incident reveals Norrie's poise and confidence despite her official status as governess and companion to Alice Varley. Norrie's childhood empathy for her Newfoundland outport has enabled her to appreciate her travels and has influenced

the perceptions of other characters in the novel. In the final chapter, Maude Varley says farewell to Norrie with the words, 'I enjoy the beauties of nature more than ever I did before. In fact, I hardly gave them a thought 'til your description of them made me open my eyes and look (Bulgin edition, 2009, p.157)'.

However, the boundlessness of the outport countryside contrasts with the 'small, narrow lane' in St. Johns that Norrie encounters by chance on one of her early morning rambles during a visit to the city. 'It (the lane) was not of the cleanest sort either and, Norrie, always accustomed to the pure country air, felt sickened at the nauseous odour of the place, and turned to leave it, when a little boy came running out of a house, crying bitterly (Bulgin edition, 2009, p.51)'. This encounter with the urban poor is one of the few moments in the novel when English reveals a much less romanticized picture of her island. The poverty and hopelessness of the St. John's urban poor is in contrast with the hardworking life of the outporters and their resourcefulness in handling hardship (Bulgin edition, 2009, pp.9-10, 51). Norrie displays these very same qualities in the way she resolves her own financial worries by setting up a school for art and music in St. John's and later finds herself employment in America (Bulgin edition, 2009, pp.93, 97). However, much of her sharp criticism of aspects of Newfoundland society in the novel is reserved for her observations of class consciousness and attitudes, as personified in the behaviour of Mrs. Branford, whose sharply defined perceptions of urban class differences are alien to Norrie as a fisherman's daughter and an outporter. Her benefactors, Dr and Mrs Hamilton, in the St Rose outport send their daughter Lucy to the outport school and reject the social prejudices of Mrs Branford. Similar snobbish social attitudes are also

depicted in Stabb's earlier novel *Hard Hit in Newfoundland* (1880) as a means of highlighting the contrast between urban and rural or outport Newfoundland.

Not only does English highlight the societal differences between townies and the baymen but she also uses the seascape to frame and define the outport of St Rose, as an embodiment of Newfoundland and its outports. Schooners and the coastal steamer are the outport's link with St. John's and the wider world, while the fishermen's skiffs and dories are the mode of transport around the inlets and bays. The coming and going of the coastal steamer both separates and unites Norrie and those dearest to her. In her childhood, the sea is also an environment in which 'she had almost lived in the open air, rowing, swimming, drinking in the fresh invigorating sea breeze. …it was to result in the saving of a human life (Bulgin edition, 2009, p.30)'. Norrie's rescue of the drowning Lucy Hamilton is a turning point in providing Norrie with the chance of a better education and the development of the norms and values of her outport upbringing in her adult life.

English's involvement in the cultural life of St. John's is reflected in the importance she places on her heroine acquiring a good education and the ability to express herself through music and art. Therefore, Norrie is fortunate enough to be able to study, 'to paint places like these, and play and sing, and learn history and grammar and geography, and all about the great men who wrote all the beautiful poetry (Bulgin edition, 2009, p.13)'. Although this opportunity places her in a cultural juxtaposition with her guardians, her Uncle John Moore and Aunt Bridget Moore, and some of her own outport generation with their use of the vernacular and belief in practical skills and a basic education, Norrie epitomizes the modern Newfoundlander in her creator's mind with women, as well as men, taking charge of

their own destiny, illustrated by Norrie's resolute actions to earn her own living through teaching.

English developed the comparison between the urban life of St. John's with that of the fishing community of St. Rose in the early chapters of her novel. Her depiction of the outport is based on a strong work ethic and a greater degree of personal autonomy in the ordering of the working day. The impact of the outport environment and landscape on outport communities calling for resilience and ingenuity by the outporters is heightened in the later chapters by Norrie's European tour with her wealthy American employers. This early fictional depiction of the outport way of life was to shape visions of Newfoundland in the novel genre.

**Conclusion:**

This chapter has explored the enduring significance of Newfoundland the place and how it evoked an existential response in the novels under discussion. Lowell's *New Priest in Conception Bay* lifted the Victorian public image of rural Newfoundland out of the constraints of the academic and pseudo-academic catalogues or surveys of interesting features of Newfoundland, as documented by O'Flaherty, into a fictional vision of the outport as home to resilient people meeting the challenges of a volatile environment (O'Flaherty, 1979, pp.82-102). Furthermore, Lowell's novel was a reminder to his urban readers of the dangers of industrialisation and its attendant materialism; Lowell's extended family had built their fortune on a successful exploitation of cotton mills in New England.

There is, at present, no extant evidence of Lowell's novel circulating around the avid readers of either Conception Bay or St. John's. The early novels, described above, written by the Newfoundlanders Stabb, Bond and English in the period 1870-1900, and mainly set in the outports are a form of corroboration of the virtues of the fishermen and their families as extolled by Lowell. Whether Lowell had contact with the cultural and literary elite of Newfoundland during his years in Conception Bay is difficult to establish from present sources available but his subsequent links with New England textual communities are well-documented. Stabb, Bond and English were participants in the Newfoundland textual communities but these communities were often parallel groups based on social class to some extent. They did interact in some arenas, for example, through religious and other affiliations. Although religion was at times a source of potential conflict, it did also provide opportunities for the social classes to intermingle on cultural grounds, as in the case of the provision of library facilities for Sunday schools, as well as the provision of reading rooms, and in the formation of readership communities of the various daily and weekly newspapers, which often united readers through their political and religious allegiances.

The social class issue was another topic explored in all three nineteenth-century insider outport novels in varying degrees. It is a recognition of the *Bayman* and *Townie* friction and an attempt to articulate the latent conflict of interests in a society that only developed institutional strategies, such as trade unions and other political reforms well into the twentieth century. The friction between Baymen and Townies had an important political significance because it often overrode other tensions in the outport communities, such as religious differences, as Little has

demonstrated in her study on *Collective Action in Outport Newfoundland in the 1830s* (1990). The slow development of the novel genre in Newfoundland was significant as these issues could not be extensively articulated and explored in the safety zone of imaginative fiction, as was the case in the nineteenth-century literature of Jane Austen, Charlotte and Emily Brontë, William Thackery, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot. The range of textual communities in Newfoundland was also constrained by other factors, such as the underdevelopment of the Newfoundland printing industry that forced many writers of both fiction and non-fiction to look to publishers and printers overseas for outlets for their work.

The most noteworthy differences between *The New Priest in Conception Bay* and *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* were the clearly defined but more nuanced class divisions in English's debut novel and her stronger articulation of Newfoundland identity in terms of the idea of the country of Newfoundland. In contrast to *New Priest in Conception Bay*, there was a total absence of clerical characters in both *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* and in Stabb's *Hard Hit in Newfoundland.* This was not the case in Bond's *Skipper George Netman*, as he used the Newfoundland outport as a springboard for a history of Methodism in Newfoundland, although his emphasis was on the active participation of ordinary men and women in the religious life in the outport. All three Newfoundland novelists set their novels either wholly or substantially in outports and their interpretation of outport norms and values served as a platform for purveying visions of Newfoundland to their readers. These insider novelists and Lowell the outsider writing in isolation from one another temporally and socially, are discussing senses of place and interpretations of nineteenth-century Newfoundland identity spanning more than fifty years.

Finally, in terms of the nascent outport novel genre, the perceptions of Lowell and English on place and its significance for human life established the outport novel as most representative of Newfoundland. Lowell's outsider focus is on the outport and its landscape that provides a backdrop for his presentation of the outport community. In contrast, English, however, views place and identity as inseparable from each other. She illustrates this fusion by demonstrating how her heroine, Norrie takes her outport values with her, wherever she goes. This phenomenon is reminiscent of Relph's insider and outsider classifications of 'empathy' with place and is a characteristic of the outport novel genre in later outport novels. The further honing of the outport novel sub-genre by Duley and Spencer in the interwar years, is the focus of Case Study Two in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER THREE: AT HOME AND ABROAD.

## Introduction.

> The land had a wild unsettled look from the steamer, but every now and then the indented coast would open up to some smooth landlocked harbour, with little wooden houses set on its grassy slopes, and fishing boats, and sailing ships giving life to the sleepy scene.
>
> The steamer's siren would be the signal for the village suddenly to awake, and in a few minutes half the population would be approaching in boats of every conceivable description, some of which needed continual bailing to keep them afloat. As the trip progressed the scenery became more impressive, and there were glimpses of superb reaches and magnificent bays whose sweeping shore lines were rarely broken by any hint of man. Wild, primitive, even desolate they seemed at times, but with a beauty and grandeur that quieted the mind and left one unconscious of loneliness or solitude.
>
> *The King of Spain's Daughter*. Erle Spencer, 1934.
>
> The wind carried away whispers of orange, olive, palm, and pomegranate, calumus and saffron, of Helluland and Andalusia, of a gold tissue dress, of yellow-eyed gulls, and a winking eye, of Deadman's Cove, and a head like a copper kettle.
>
> *The Eyes Of The Gull*. Margaret Duley, 1936.

Erle Rose Spencer and Margaret Duley were both born in the closing decade of the nineteenth century. Their novels were published within two years of each other and after the tumultuous events leading up to the temporary surrender of self-government, following the collapse of the Newfoundland economy in 1931. The description above of the Newfoundland coast from on board ship by Spencer (1897-1937) is experienced through his protagonist Jeremiah Blake's eyes in *The King of Spain's Daughter* (1934). It is an outsider's impression of rural Newfoundland but written by an insider in self-imposed exile. Spencer spent most of his professional life in Europe and worked as a journalist in London. Margaret Iris Duley (1894 -1968) was also born and raised in Newfoundland and had also spent time in Europe, maintaining close cultural and personal links with Britain throughout her life. However,

Duley's home was in St. John's and the quotation from her 1936 novel, *The Eyes of the Gull,* reveals a complex mosaic of exoticism and menace. It is a description of the hallucinatory images racing through the protagonist's head, as she lay dying of pneumonia (1936, p.185). They are also symbols of Duley's life-long ambivalent but intense relationship with Newfoundland, which she renames 'Helluland[11] or The Land of Naked Rocks' (1936, p.10). The idea of Newfoundland the place is interwoven into her plot, as is the case in Spencer's novel, but conversely it is compared unfavourably with the heroine's daydreams about the prospect of being in the exotic but distant Andalusia. Spencer, on the other hand, does the reverse by presenting metropolitan London negatively and Newfoundland as an antidote, as is explored below. This chapter traces the emergence of the outport novel as an identifiable subgenre in Newfoundland literature. As the depiction of the outport and its communities in the two case study novels differ in their approach, the overall impression of outport life at that time is problematized for the reader through Spencer's and Duley's different responses, thus avoiding simplistic interpretations.

Both case study novels by Duley and Spencer were often initially categorized as romances by publishers and critics alike. Spencer's publisher described his novel as a 'Romance' in the sub-title. A book review by the novelist and critic, Doreen Wallace, described Duley's novel as a 'Simple Story' and another critic for the overseas edition of the *Daily Mail* refers to it as a "Helluland" Romance (Margaret Duley Book Review File and Biography File. Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives).

Since the romance genre encompasses a broad range of forms, from the canonical works of Jane Austen to the genre represented by commercial romances such as Mills and

[11] Helluland is popularly believed to be the name given to Newfoundland in the Greenland Sagas (Larsson, 1992).

Boon novels, the term frequently has negative connotations (Regis, 2003). Consequently, this nomenclature 'romance' appears to have had a number of unfortunate consequences for these two Newfoundland novels. In the first place, it meant that until the Seventies the works of Duley and particularly Spencer were either overlooked or perceived as not being real literature in the canonical sense (O'Flaherty, 1979, pp.83-84, 133; Rompkey, 1985, p.3). This fate had also been shared by the nineteenth century Newfoundland novelists William Stabb, G.J. Bond and Anastasia English, as revealed in Case Study One (O'Flaherty 1979). Therefore, it reinforced the idea that there was a dearth of local novels until Confederation.

However, the late Newfoundland nineteenth century novelists, Stabb, Bond and English, demonstrated that the writing of longer imaginative texts by local writers not only occurred but also reveals the existence of a high level of literary skills in terms of style and use of language, as discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, these texts also exhibited analytical capabilities in the expression of local sociological and ethical issues of the day, which were focused on the outport at that time. The expression of these ideas in longer fictional texts, such as the novella or novel, no doubt owed their inspiration to the existence of thriving, influential textual communities whether in St. John's, or in the larger settlements on the island, as outlined in the previous chapter. What appears to have been lacking, at least in the nineteenth century in Newfoundland, was the existence of a technologically advanced publishing industry with all the associated support services available to other writers in publishing centres, such as London (Whelan, 2002). It is beyond the scope of Case Studies One and Two to provide explanations for this circumstance, other than to point out that self-published work, such as the novels of Stabb, did not receive the same feedback on their technical quality or the likely reaction of readers because the usual economic imperatives

were non-existent. Therefore, obvious flaws were more likely to survive the novelist's own editing process. This situation was no longer the case in Duley and Spencer's lifetime.

By the early decades of the twentieth century, when Duley and Spencer were active, there was greater commercial demand for novels and an increasing globalisation in the world of literary criticism. This development is in evidence in the collection of literary reviews of Duley's first novel in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS), as referred to above. In addition, the concept of the professional celebrity novelist was firmly established by the 1930s and the use of literary pseudonyms was extremely rare. Notification of the newly published novels of an unknown writer, such as Spencer, were recorded and even reviewed across the world, as illustrated in the columns of the Australian regional press (Brisbane Courier, 1929; Brisbane Courier-Mail, 1934). The relationship between the writer, book publisher and literary critic became more formalized. Therefore, the chances of tapping into a worldwide market even for the less successful writers increased substantially. As a consequence, both Duley and Spencer had the opportunity to reach out to a wider audience for approbation. Both writers were published on both sides of the Atlantic.

In Part One of this case study, the exiled or diasporic vision of Spencer's outport will be analyzed and compared with parallel experiences in English language placed-based literature of the period with particular reference to Frank Parker Day's novel, *Rockbound*, set in a Nova Scotian 'outpost'[12]. In the first instance, the background to these literary developments in an era of economic decline and political upheaval following the Great War (1914-1918) and the Wall Street Crash (1929) will be discussed, in order to put the early literary environment of the young Spencer in context. In addition, an analysis will be made of

[12] Frank Parker Day uses the term 'outpost' to refer to a distant coastal fishing village in Nova Scotia.

*The King of Spain's Daughter,* its fictional representation of the outport and its people in a period of economic malaise in Newfoundland.

Part Two will include an appraisal of Duley's importance for the island's literary scene and a review of the evidence of textual communities of the 1920s and 1930s in St. John's itself and Duley's connections with them. It will also examine conflicted reactions to place as presented in Duley's first novel. In conclusion, the impact of the work of these two novelists on the symbolic importance of the outport will be evaluated in the context of the evolution of the outport novel genre. I will map the parallel development of perceptions of place and identity, as presented in the two novels by both Duley and Spencer and how their different viewpoints gave the outport novel a multifaceted dimension.

## Part One: Erle Spencer – An Emerging Vision of the Outport.

The importance of the work of Spencer for the idea of an iconic outport is his depiction of these settlements and the seafaring life of their inhabitants through his first-hand knowledge of outport life as an insider and former outporter. As a journalist he must have been aware of how this lifestyle might appear to outsiders. His professional life as a reporter for a major British newspaper honed not only his writing skills but also his empathy and understanding of his readers' perceptions. His literary career developed alongside his work as a journalist and these parallel trajectories undoubtedly enriched both, despite their being borne out of the physical necessity of his poor health, described below.

Spencer came from an entrepreneurial background. His father, Thomas E. Spencer, was a schooner owner trading from out of Fortune, a small town on the Burin Peninsula. Spencer's family came from a Methodist background and he attended their school in Fortune

and graduated from the Methodist College in St. John's. Because he came from a reasonably comfortable middle-class background, he was able to overcome the challenges of his poor health and develop his interest in the written word. After training in clerical and office work at the Canadian Business College in Chatham, Ontario, he had worked as an office clerk in Calgary between 1919-1922. Unsubstantiated evidence suggests that he may have had a chance meeting in this period with Lord Beaverbrook, then known as Max Aitken, who encouraged him to go to London (Douglas, 1976; Duley, 1956; Prior, 1980; Rompkey, 1986). Despite his extremely delicate health, caused by childhood tuberculosis, he went to London via Oporto in late 1922 and eventually worked as a journalist at Lord Beaverbrook's London-based newspaper *The Daily Express* until his early death aged 40 in November 1937 (Douglas, 1976; Rompkey, 1985; Riggs, 1993, 1998, 2006). His life experience had a significant influence on his fictional work. Not only was he an insider novelist but his work acquired a diasporic perspective because for most of his adult life he lived abroad. In addition, the imperative to become a published novelist resulted in the publication of nine novels. This feat was made possible because of his creative solution of working as a journalist in the summer months and recuperating and writing fiction in Switzerland in the winter.

His home-town, Fortune, is yet another example of the endeavours of the communities of the larger outport settlements from the mid nineteenth century onwards to improve the educational and cultural environment in the maritime settlements outside St. John's. Henry James Haddon, originally a Newfoundland School Society (NSS) teacher, was a prime mover in the Fortune area and his relative James Haddon, the schoolmaster at the Methodist school in Fortune from 1869-1915, was probably Spencer's tutor and teacher in his formative years (Rigg, 1993, 1998, 2006). However, despite the pedagogical efforts of organisations, such as the NSS, there is little evidence of the existence of thriving textual communities in this area of

the Burin peninsula. Alongside the support of the Haddon family and others for the schools and Sunday schools, the Masonic Society, founded in 1871, that initially met in Henry James Haddon's house may well have provided limited library facilities for their members. The collection of books from the former Masonic Lodge were donated to the first public library in Fortune that was founded in 1944 over twenty years after Spencer had left for Europe.

Despite local initiatives to establish cultural amenities, Spencer's decision to relocate to London was a sound one. The publishing world had undergone tremendous changes and radio and television national services functioned as important elements in the development of cultural hubs, such as London. Although such developments would have been both practical and beneficial to Newfoundland, because of the parlous state of the Newfoundland economy, the establishment of a radio broadcasting system, for example, was not introduced there until 1939.

The Newfoundland economy underwent successive waves of local recessions throughout the early decades of the twentieth century. These events culminated in the collapse of the Newfoundland economy that resulted in a further population drift to the UK, Canada and USA, and the temporary surrender of self-government in Newfoundland in 1931. Spencer's ambition to make writing his profession was impossible in such an impoverished country.

Although he eventually enjoyed considerable success as a journalist in London, very little documentary evidence has yet been uncovered about Spencer's life and professional career there. However, Morley Richards, a prominent journalist at the *Daily Express* and a colleague, provided a glowing eulogy to Spencer for Ewart Young, a Newfoundland *Daily*

*News* staff writer at the time, concerning Spencer's professionalism as a journalist (Young, 1939).

Richards, later a military correspondent for the London based *Daily Express* during the 1940s, is an important source in the reconstruction of Spencer's years in London. Ewart Young later editor of *The Atlantic Guardian* interviewed Richards in April 1939 for the Newfoundland *Daily News*, as Richards had arrived in Newfoundland two months earlier on an assignment for the London *Daily Express*, in order to investigate economic conditions in Newfoundland. This assignment may well have been inspired by his friendship with Spencer but probably also reflected Beaverbrook's cultural and financial interests in Newfoundland. Richards described how 'Erle Spencer was one of the best reporters employed by the *Daily Express* in the past twelve years. He could and did tackle any and every job that was going. In spite of his physical disability it was very seldom that he came back without his story (Young 1939)'. Two important stories attributed to Spencer by Richards in the same article were Spencer's interview with the exiled Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie onboard ship to London in the early summer of 1936 and an important series of articles in 1937, resulting from 'a long arduous tour of Britain enquiring into conditions (Young 1939)'. Reports by the *Daily Express* journalists were not always bylined but the paper's extensive digital archives include the daily editions of the *Daily Express* published in 1936 and 1937 referred to above by Richards.

However, in general, most of the often-cited anecdotes remain to be further verified by additional primary and secondary sources which is beyond the remit of this present research. Nevertheless, the present sources do corroborate the recognition of Spencer's stylistic skills, although his early death prevented any further development of his structural techniques in novel writing. His fiction always demonstrates evidence of careful planning but is concise,

possibly partly attributable to his journalistic background. In addition, his professional commitments and medical circumstances only allowed him time for his fictional work during the winter months. However, his move to London did enable his access to a major publishing circuit and he was remarkably successful in finding outlets for his nine novels (Rompkey 1985, pp.6, 9).

Although Spencer experimented with a number of genres, including maritime fiction, thrillers and children's fiction[13], *The King of Spain's Daughter* (1934) is his only novel set in outport Newfoundland written for an adult readership. Despite these works being accepted by leading London publishing houses, no contemporary literary reviews of *The King of Spain's Daughter* appear to have survived in contrast to the many surviving reviews of Duley's first novel, referred to above. Rompkey described how the modest but consistent sales figures for Spencer's novels that were 'routinely reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *New York Times* never aimed at a place on the best-seller lists (2006, p.2)'. They were also stocked by public libraries, such as the Limehouse Library in Tower Hamlets in London. It is, therefore, difficult to evaluate the reading public's reception of his literature, other than through the marketing statistics of his publishers. A survey of the Hodder and Stoughton ledgers for 1929-1935 revealed that 'press runs of 2,000 copies seldom sold more than fifty per cent of the stock (Rompkey, 2006, p.9)'. Although the sales figures were relatively low, they were on the open market rather than the home market in Newfoundland.

## **The King Of Spain's Daughter*:* An Expatriate's Perspective**.

*"I had a little nut tree,*
*And nothing would it bear,*

[13] Spencer wrote *A Young Sea Rover. (1925)* for children about an outport boy's adventures at sea.

*But a silver nutmeg*
*And a golden pear.*

*The King of Spain's daughter*
*Came to visit me,*
*All on account*
*Of my little nut tree."*

Spencer chose a hybrid genre for his novel, as it has elements of the thriller as well as being a place-based work. The use of two genres in the novel not only lends tension and excitement to the storyline but also enables the reader to appreciate the unique quality of the lifestyle of the outporters and their bonds with their place. Jerry Blake the protagonist leaves his monotonous London lifestyle, in order to claim his inheritance in rural Newfoundland. After nearly losing the mineral rights discovered on his estate to two land speculators, he marries a rich heiress and begins a new life with her in outport Newfoundland. Spencer dedicated this novel 'For Tomasina', choosing a two-stanza version of the King of Spain's Daughter nursery rhyme as an opening epigram. First of all, this historical rhyme is one that would be familiar to many among his readership. A shortened version similar to that used by Spencer is recorded in James Orchard Halliwell's nineteenth century *Collection of Nursery Rhymes* (1886) and is also described more fully in the *Oxford Book of Nursery Rhymes* (Opie, L. and Opie, P., 1951, 1997). It is a deceptively simple choice that poses many questions for Spencer's readers at a more literal level, such as the identity of the characters in the rhyme, the phenomenon of the extraordinary tree and where this meeting takes place. As well as preparing the reader intellectually for the story that is about to unfold, this well-known rhyme endows the novel with a mysterious quality.

Furthermore, the rhyme also highlights the importance of place through the implied exoticism of the idea of 'Spain' and a 'visit' to another unnamed place of little importance but in possession of sought-after riches both material and spiritual. As revealed in the novel,

Spencer uses the nursery rhyme as a metaphor for Newfoundland with its prospect of riches, such as mineral resources but, most important of all, its people and their moral and social values. Later in the novel, when it seems that the protagonist, Jerry Blake, may have lost both his inheritance with its valuable minerals as yet unexploited, as well as the love of his life, Jennifer Wills, he recalls the words of his childhood nursery rhyme:

> His smile was a little twisted as he thought of the silver nutmeg and the golden pear,… He saw in Jennifer the embodiment of his romantic fancy, a King of Spain's daughter, the visual presentation of a romantic ideal (1934, pp.299-300).

This observation also demonstrates Spencer's own perception of his island country as a forgotten part of the world with its old-fashioned values and unexploited wealth and developmental potential. It is underlined in the novel by Blake's recognition that he has been swindled out of his inheritance by the manipulative Sachs and his sophisticated accomplices and that, in addition, his feelings for Jennifer are rather naïve. However, Spencer's authorial vision of his country are those of the exile after an absence of fourteen years. In this respect, his life history is typical of the many Newfoundlanders forming part of the island's diaspora network (DeLisle, 2013).

Furthermore, similar perceptions on the nature of Newfoundland in the Thirties are described by another exile, the politician J.R. Smallwood (1931) in his book *The New Newfoundland*. Amongst his projections in 1931 for a future Newfoundland in the following twenty-five years, Smallwood predicted that Newfoundland would be 'one of the greatest mining countries in the world (1931, p.250)'. Another contemporary source, the American travel writer Don C. Seitz, describes Newfoundland as 'an old and new world in strange combination' in *The Great Island* (1926, p.251). These two examples of perceptions of Newfoundland in the 1920s and 1930s demonstrate the continuing interest of insiders and

outsiders in Newfoundland in the early twentieth century. Seitz's reference, in particular, to the old and new world in strange combination resonates with the reactions of commentators, such as the missionary Anspach (1819), to outport Newfoundland over a hundred years earlier, recorded in the previous chapter. Seitz prefaced his comment with the observation that he rarely desired to go over the same ground again.

> Not so with this journey. The call is ever sounding to once more turn toward the Great Island, to know its rivers, brooks, and bays in detail, to see more of the kindly people (1926, p.251).

This sentiment underpins the narrative of Spencer's novel with its emphasis on the landscape and the depiction of the 'kindly people' that is explored in the analysis of the novel below.

In addition, a more general interpretation of the epigraph heading the present chapter confirms the importance of the concept of place for Spencer and its link with an individual's identity with the main focus on landscape. He referred to there being in the Newfoundland landscape 'a beauty and grandeur that quieted the mind and left one unconscious of loneliness or solitude (1934, p.63)'. In the novel, he subsequently explored not only the idea of 'place' but also that of 'placelessness'. Outport Newfoundland represented place, as it was experienced and incorporated into the outporter's blueprint for his identity, whereas, as is discussed below, aspects of metropolitan London in the 1920s and 1930s exhibited characteristics akin to what would now be termed the concept of 'placelessness' (Relph, 1976).

Spencer introduced his empathy for Newfoundland in the opening chapter of *The King of Spain's Daughter* which is set in the isolated hinterland of a remote coastal area of the Newfoundland Burin peninsular. It is also the scene of the unexpected death of Billy Sloan, the protagonist's uncle, on his remote estate, Seldom Come By, in rural Newfoundland and

the pivotal event that launches Spencer's exposition of the iconic outport hinterland. Billy Sloan ironically calls Seldom Come By 'his little place' (1934, p.7). The outports such as the neighbouring Push Through, are referred to satirically as the 'outposts of civilization' in the novel (1934, p.11). Although the focus early on in the novel is on the impressive landscape of the region and its added leisure attractions for huntsmen because the terrain itself is inhabited by wildlife and bounded by the sea, Spencer's purpose is to demonstrate how important it is for personal happiness to feel at home with your environment.

Spencer used a similar contrastive technique to that employed by Annie Proulx in *the Shipping News,* described in Chapter Five*,* in that the action in each novel switches between the pressurized impersonal environment of a burgeoning twentieth century metropolis and a sparsely populated outport setting. Both writers underline the unique qualities of Newfoundland in a most dramatic fashion by a vivid description of a first sighting of Newfoundland on the horizon from onboard a ship. The description of Blake's approach to the harbour of St. John's in *The King of Spain's Daughter* (1934, p.42) has parallels in Proulx's *The Shipping News*, when the Aunt leans against the ship's rail and watches the island of Newfoundland drawing closer, in the latter case, to the town of Port aux Basques (1993, pp.32-33). In a similar vein, Lowell describes the view of the Newfoundland coastline from the sea in the introductory paragraphs of *New Priest in Conception Bay* (1974, p.6). The importance of the landscape and seascape in Spenser's diasporic memories of Newfoundland are underlined in his novel during Jerry Blake's adventures sailing up and down the Newfoundland coast to St. Pierre and Miquelon, the French islands at the end of the Burin Peninsula, reminding his readers of the outporters' exposure to the unpredictable elements. The development of the plot of the novel underscores the significance of life at sea and the

mastery of the outporters over this part of their domain to a greater extent than in other outport novels, many of which are more focused on the coastal community life.

Spencer's own Newfoundland identity and emotional ties with the place and its people are reflected by the crew member in conversation with Jerry Blake, as the S.S. Glenallen arrives in St. John's. 'A hard land to dig a living out of,' continued the supercargo. 'In fact, most of the people don't dig one at all; they fish. But a nice, friendly place for all that (1934, p.42)'. Spencer had a dual purpose here. It is over a decade since he had last seen the island himself. At one level, he is recalling his former life there as an insider but he was also portraying St. John's as a Londoner would perceive it. The supercargo possesses the natural confidence of someone used to coping with a challenging environment but with a quizzical sense of humour and openness to strangers, in diametric opposition to the defensive and individualistic behaviour of Mrs. Shorleigh's urban boarders. Spencer enabled his readers to discover these differences for themselves through the behaviour of the fictional Newfoundlanders.

The uniqueness of the place is further reinforced by Blake's experience of entering its harbour through The Narrows, the entrance to St. John's harbour (1934, p.42).

> As the Glenallen neared the coast it looked as though she were heading for an unbroken cliff-line. When the ship approached nearer, however, he saw that a slight indentation in the dun-coloured frowning cliff was opening up, and three-quarters of an hour later the ship passed through it and emerged into the harbour of St. John's (1934, p.44).

Spencer is describing a phenomenon frequently experienced when sailing along the Newfoundland coast and repeated later in this novel, when the coastal steamer taking Jerry Blake to the fictional outport of Push Through made its way down the coast calling in at a

number of outports on the way to deliver supplies and set down and take on passengers (1934, p.63).

Spencer uses the sea as the means of forging the existential link between place and identity in the outport context. The sea both unites and sets apart the outport communities. Not only did he describe the environment of these coastal areas and their hinterland and the way of life there but he also demonstrated the effect these circumstances had upon the mentality of its inhabitants. He achieved this effect through the reactions of Jerry Blake to these new experiences and the adjustment Jerry makes to them during his four-day stay onboard the steamer.

> Gradually as the trip progressed he felt himself losing his consciousness of his 'difference'. He learned to accept the friendly approach of total strangers, interested openly in his affairs. He noted the free, easy bearing of the men, most of whom betrayed their seafaring origin (1934, p. 64).

Spencer reveals the cultural chasm that Jerry has to bridge in the short voyage to his new home, shedding his defensive urban survival behaviour and learning to open up to those around him. He has to integrate into the Newfoundland communal way of life and learn their social mores. Although the outports are often isolated settlements, the outporters are both curious and friendly towards strangers, or people "From Away". Spencer demonstrates that the threats the Newfoundlanders face come from the sea, the terrain and the climate rather than their fellow human beings. What Spencer described as 'the four long days and nights of the trip' provide both Jerry Blake and Spencer's readers with a thumbnail sketch of outport life through the protagonist's contact with the passengers and crew during the course of the voyage, as remembered by the younger Spencer himself from the early 1920s.

For example, Jerry Blake observes how the outporters thrive on the telling of stories about each other and their life at sea and of how concerned they are about the falling demand for fish in Portugal and Spain and the drop in prices. He also learns about government corruption, fish being the lifeblood of the country and politics and religion the passions of the people (1934, p.64). By the end of the voyage, Jerry Blake has also absorbed the tenets of outport communal life, founded on the idea that 'every man is your neighbor and if you are hungry you could feed at his table' and that 'All work was honest and smuggling was no crime (1934, p.64)'. The effectiveness of Spencer's compact summary of the Newfoundland character is confirmed by other contemporary non-fiction accounts such as those of Seitz (1926) and Macdonald (1936). In addition, the American travel writer Don Seitz, comments that Newfoundland is 'a rich country being made poor through mismanagement' and states that '…the inevitable effects of a low dietary are visible in the aspect of the outport people, and the "hardy" race is anything but that, save, perhaps, in a willingness to endure discomfort and poor food;… (1926, pp.120, 159)'. Commenting on his visit to an outport in Conception Bay in the mid -1930s, J. Ramsay Macdonald declared that 'A fine stock, brave men and heroic women, were quite plainly abandoned to a degrading struggle with a poverty unmuzzled in fang and bare in claw (1936, p.189)'. The political undertones of Macdonald's comment highlights contemporary perceptions of years of neglect by the political establishment. Seitz and Macdonald paint a much grimmer picture than the diasporic Spencer's fictive account. Spencer's diasporic memories of the material hardship of outport life appears more idealized than that of Seitz and Macdonald but his recollection of the Newfoundland spirit is vivid.

These impressions are underlined by the outport personalities that Jerry Blake meets from time to time in the novel. The fictional outport of Push Through is the only outport

community featured in the novel. The community numbers about two hundred inhabitants and Neddy the mailman takes Blake to the house of the merchant Mr. Jennings. The embodiment of the outporters and their values are immortalized by Mr. Jennings and his bedridden elderly mother, who is heard but never seen by Jerry Blake, as she is an invalid in bed upstairs (1934, pp.66-73). Nevertheless, she joins in all the conversations and is a wise and empathetic presence in the small house. Despite being bedridden, the acoustics in the house enable her to join in the conversations below. Spencer uses her interjections to demonstrate the cohesion and communal nature of outport society. Her opinion and advice given from a bed upstairs at strategic moments in the plot help stiffen the resolve of fellow outporters and demonstrate the strength of communal bonds.

Jerry Blake's assumptions about social mores are transformed by the absence of the usual defensive behaviour in operation in urban environments. His luggage is left unattended on the quay overnight and he is immediately without question or hesitation afforded hospitality, such as food, accommodation and transport to his new home at Seldom Come By (1934, pp.65-75). The inhabitants of Push Through are also relatively poor. Jerry Blake observes the 'scant heavy furniture' and 'the couch, covered with sail canvas painted green, and stuffed with hay which protruded at the worn corners (1934, pp.66-67)' that was his bed for his first night in an outport. Over time he also realizes that outporters are used to improvising but have relative control over the ordering of their day to day planning of their communal working environment unlike their urban counterparts. They are also in harmony with their environment and respectful of the power of the elements both on land and at sea. This understanding of their surroundings is illustrated when Sam Harvey takes Jerry Blake to Come-By-chance for the first time. "No wind now" said Jennings, "but it's in the air. You'll have a fair wind in an hour or so (1934, p.75)". There follows a description of the sea and

landscape and Harvey's navigation of the waters that is typical of other passages in the text demonstrating the outporters' seamanship and the challenges facing them at sea (1934, p.181). This image of the outporters of Push Through contrasts with the late Billy Sloan and his companion and servant Come-By-Chance who lived outside the outport settlement of Push Through.

The protagonist's uncle Billy Sloan is an outsider and a longtime resident of Newfoundland. Sloan and his servant Come-By-Chance are loners and pose a challenge to the social mores of the community of Push Through. Although they do not participate in community life and preferred to live apart in a remote bay and keep mostly to themselves, they do respect their neighbours. Mr. Jennings summed up the community's tolerance of Billy Sloan's eccentric ways over twenty years, describing him as a "hard case, to be sure. Ah, a reg'lar terror" but acknowledging that there was something about him that made people take to him (1934, pp.69-70).

Although Spencer's novel is a hybrid genre containing elements of a romance and thriller, the successful denouement of the book rests to a great degree on its setting in the outport hinterland and the tenets underpinning outport community values, as depicted in Push Through. At the closing stages of the novel, Mr. Jennings, also a special constable, reappears as the leader of the posse, 'local men, rough and shaggy, and grim enough in appearance' sent out to investigate what has happened both at sea and in the hinterland of Seldom Come By Chance (1934, p.303). Mr. Jennings's natural dignity and confidence foils all attempts by the villain, Grantland Sachs, to subvert the law and Jennings declares that Jerry Blake is a free man.

The rural Newfoundland way of life described above contrasts dramatically with the metropolis of London, where Billy's nephew and heir ekes out a modest living. Spencer's fictional representation of London in the 1930s through the experiences of Jerry Blake and his fellow lower-middle class office clerks exhibits elements of placelessness (Relph 1976). Spencer explores the dehumanizing effect of urbanization from two perspectives. First, he considers the negative effect of the London commuter lifestyle travelling in the Tube. His presentation of the placelessness of London for these commuters is in sharp contrast with the outport of Push Through and Uncle Billy's Seldom Come By estate.

The downtrodden London office workers in the novel commute between their lodgings and their mindless clerical work with few opportunities to enhance their lot or shape their environment. The London Underground becomes a metaphor for urban anonymity. Its passengers, 'variously occupied with worry, fatigue, newspapers, parcels, and the advertisements which from the panels of the train, shrieked the merits of the goods they proclaimed (1934, p.15)'. Jerry describes himself and his fellow travellers on the London Underground as being 'cooped up underground, in this sweltering, clanging tube of metal, at the end of a tiring day, they seemed to him deplorably drab in clothes, expression, and appearance (1934, p.15)'.

A further point of comparison between Blakes' fellow commuters and the outporters is the difference in their perception of hearth and home. For unmarried commuters, such as Jerry Blake, a transient home is the norm unlike the outport saltbox family home[14] so central to outport culture, as discussed in Chapter Five (Fagan,1990). Spencer depicts the life-style of the struggling economic and social refugees in London's 1920s and 1930s boarding houses

[14] Traditional wooden house with a shape resembling the boxes used for transporting salt to Newfoundland.

that is reminiscent of the Parisian pension in Balzac's *Père Goriot* (1834). Many of them, as in the case of Jerry Blake are victims of the upheaval following the First World War. They are suffering from problems in reconnecting with society and coping with the economic uncertainty of the Great Depression. The boarders have no real autonomy over their lives. They are enslaved to the monotonous routine of their work in impersonal organisations with little spare time. This situation compares with the equally hard life of the outporters. Both are impoverished in economic terms, but the outporters' control over of the day to day ordering of their time and space is in sharp contrast with the entrapment of the metropolitan office workers in London, as presented by Spencer. Jerry Blake felt that 'London to him was not a city of delight, of pleasure, of culture, of luxury, of ease and enjoyment, such as it may be to the rich… (1934, p.40)'.

Jerry lives as a lodger at Mrs. Shoreleigh's boarding house that is equally placeless in the sense that she provided a good board and lodging but 'made no pretence of providing a home from home (1934, p.17)'. His description of Mrs. Shorleigh's 'shabby-genteel' paying guests at Blake's lodgings in Golders Green in London are epitomized by Jerry's 'quasi-friend', Dicky Fellowes (1934, p.20). Fellowes had fallen on hard times and sold 'gramophones and player pianos on the instalment plan (1934, p.20)'. The norms and values of these metropolitan 'city slickers' contrast sharply both with each other and with those of the outport Newfoundlanders depicted later in the novel. The evening meal was the one time of day when they all came together and the conversation portrays their latent differences and, in some cases, mild antagonisms (1934, pp.24-31). Jerry had become very dissatisfied with his quality of life,

> 'The smoke, the dust, the blare, the mechanism, the continuous rush, the poverty and injustice, the luxury and boredom, the commercializing of honest sentiment, the degradation of feeling, the cheapness and

> artificiality and all that is inherent in the complex life of the great human hive, he was sick and tired (1934, p.41)'.

The emotions that Jerry articulates are reminiscent of the motivation of many visitors to Newfoundland over the years, attracted by the thought of escape from the pressures of urban life (Overton, 1996). The feelings that he had held for so many years explain Jerry Blake's decision to embrace an unknown future in Newfoundland through his acceptance of his inheritance from his Uncle Billy. It also establishes Spencer's book as a regional novel, as the legitimacy of the ensuing plot is very much place dependent.

## Maritime Novels in 'Atlantic Canada.'

The regional novel genre was well established in other parts of what is now known as Atlantic Canada by the 1920s and 1930s compared to the paucity of regional novels in Newfoundland. Coincidentally, a parallel can be drawn with one particular area on the Atlantic seaboard, namely Nova Scotia, as this area was the fictional setting for Frank Parker Day's *Rockbound* (1928) set in a Nova Scotian 'outpost'. Day's novel made a deep impression on the Canadian reading public on its publication not least because it caused considerable controversy among local people, as they considered it to be a slight on their coastal community and a betrayal of their hospitality to the author during his summer visits, while writing his novel (Hirtle, 2005). Their outrage was in some respects justified, as the nature of the Nova Scotian fishing industry was in process of change and perhaps Day's fictional *Rockbound* had more in common with his youthful memories and his antimodernism (Davies, 2006, p.15). Davies has written a comprehensive literary criticism about the evolution of Day's novel that raises a number of interesting questions relevant for an understanding of Spencer's *The King of Spain's Daughter*. The broader aspects of her

argumentation and that of other commentators such as Wyile and Fuller are also explored in the introductory chapter to this thesis with particular reference to Newfoundland.

In the present context, the emphasis is upon the extent to which Day's novel sheds light upon Spencer's outport novel. Davis refers to the observation by the historian Ian McKay that *Rockbound* was possibly 'the most perfect regional expression" of antimodernist naturalism and essentialism (McKay,1994, p.224 in Davis, 2006, p.15). However, Davis maintains that Day puts his focus on 'mankind's potential for courage and selflessness', and the denouement of the novel ' confirms the universal values central to Day's work with the Nova Scotian outpost presented as the 'symbolic centre' of civilization (Davis, 2006, pp.15,28).' Dvorak and Howells underwrite Davis's argumentation by demonstrating that 'By his constant illusions to Chaucer and Shakespeare's Tempest, Day firmly situates his narrative of the harsh life of a Maritime fishing community within the English literary tradition (2006, p.9)'. The sentiments underpinning Spencer's novel are discussed in greater depth in the conclusion to this chapter, where the discussion examines the similarities and disparities between the two case study novels. Nevertheless, Day's *Rockbound* is interesting as a contemporary external point of reference.

A comparison of Day's in-depth fictional depiction of a Nova Scotian fishing community with the brief images that Spencer created of a Newfoundland outport in *The King of Spain's Daughter* in this case study may seem imbalanced. Day's *Rockbound* is a far more complex work, but a critical survey of both novels illustrates their similarities and significant differences. *Rockbound* had evolved from a short story into a complex work of literary stature (Davies, 2006). However, it confirms many of the characteristics of Spencer's *The King of Spain's Daughter* in terms of the challenges of navigation of the coastal waters and the effects of storms at sea on the coastal areas and their communities. In addition, the Nova Scotian

outposts, unlike the Newfoundland outports, were not economically based on the truck system of payment to their fishermen and their fish exports relied significantly on the local American market traditionally (O'Leary, 1994). Furthermore, another important difference between the Nova Scotian outposts and the Newfoundland outports was the steadily increasing degree of mechanisation present in the fishing industries in the 1920s and 1930s in Nova Scotia (O'Leary, 1994). Therefore, unlike the Newfoundland outports they were on the cusp of becoming more industrialised.

The Nova Scotian outposts were also far fewer in number and were clustered on the fringe of mainland Canada. On the other hand, Newfoundland outports numbered more than a thousand and the majority of them were located in remote locations all around the coast of an independent country. In spite of these differences, however, Day's novel contributes to an understanding of the developing outport genre because of its confirmation of the singular identity of these fishing communities and also a recognition of the frequently dissonant aspects existing in such communities. This aspect of outport community life is explored in the next part of the chapter.

## Part Two: Margaret Duley – A Troubled Newfoundland Identity.

> Duley, with all her sophistication, sensed this Newfoundland outport culture (too); she was the first of our writers to see the imaginative possibilities of the juxtaposition of outport with the merchant, professional and colonial society of St. John's, and its English prototype, into which she had been born: a backwater, as she once wrote wittily, 'where Englishmen go to consolidate'.
>
> G.M. Story (1975).

Duley was the first home novelist to devote an entire novel to a depiction of outport life. G.M. Story acknowledged the cultural and political significance of her artistic decision in

his address to The Newfoundland Writers Guild on the occasion of the Margaret Duley Fiction Awards in December 1974 (1975, pp.15-16). The juxtaposition of outport life and that of her fellow 'sophisticates' in the capital of St. John's was the inspiration for her embarking on the challenge of becoming a novelist. Although there is no evidence that she knew of or had ever read Lowell's *New Priest in Conception Bay,* her own debut novel is consciously or unconsciously a repudiation of Lowell's romantic vision of the importance for Newfoundland identity of the outport. She may well have also been unaware of the earlier novels of Stabb, Bond and English, all of whom painted an optimistic but more politicised picture of outport life and its relevance to the underlying social frictions in the Newfoundland of their day. Duley's focus on the outport as a pivotal driver in depictions of the island's identity in the novel genre legitimized the outport novel as a literary blueprint for the post-Confederation novels of the Newfoundland Renaissance epoch in the Seventies. The authors Stabb and English had expressed respect for the values underpinning outport communities compared with the class-conscious frictions of urban life in St. John's. Both English and Stabb highlighted the courage and humanity inherent in the outport community ethos. An outporter risks life and limb to save an urbanite from drowning in both *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* and *Hard Hit In Newfoundland*. However, Duley's depiction of outport values rejected such stereotypical tendencies.

In this section, there is an analysis of Duley's lament over the dearth of Newfoundland novels and her contribution to the idea of the outport novel through her somber depiction of an archetypical outport in her debut novel *In the Eyes of the Gull*. In addition, the nature of the textual communities existing in St. John's in the 1920s and 1930s is also examined, in order to contextualise not only her own literary output but also her place in St. John's cultural world in her lifetime.

Duley came from a wealthy, middle class commercial background with strong family ties with England and, as in the case of Spencer, was educated at the Methodist College in St John's. She had a prominent role in the social and cultural life of the city and was active in the 1940s and 1950s in community work and in the local Red Cross. Alison Feder's biographical and critical study has provided the context to her work, as well as a comprehensive analysis of her novels (Feder, 1983). Nevertheless, the most intriguing question remains unanswered concerning Duley's motivation for turning to novel writing in the 1930s. Feder states that why or when Duley began to write remains a mystery (1983, p.40). However, she cites publicity material that Duley sent her publishers in autumn 1941, in which she explains that boredom and her having attained maturity had motivated her writing in secret (1983, pp.40-41). Nevertheless, there may also have been a monetary incentive because of the financial crisis in Newfoundland and the decline of the family jewellery business (O'Flaherty, 1979, pp.131-132).

Furthermore, twenty years after the publication of *The Eyes of the Gull,* Duley wrote a brief article, *Glimpses into Newfoundland Literature*, for *The Atlantic Guardian* encapsulating her thoughts gathered over the years on local literature (1956). She concluded her state-of -the -art reflections on the various branches of local writing with the remark that 'Newfoundland novelists show the smallest output of all (1956, p.25)'. In broad lines, her comments on the lack of novels are justified but what is most interesting in the present context is the assumption that a Newfoundland novel would have a strong outport orientation. Her literary categories in the article range from essays and poetry to histories and exude a strong sense of place but make particular mention of Ron Pollet's 'nostalgic memories of sights, sounds and smells (1956, p.25).' Her enthusiasm and empathy for Pollett's own *Atlantic Guardian* articles reach a climax with her observation that 'His every word represents a rugged heritage

-codheads cascading through a trunghole – bannystickles, seatansies conners, tomcods and rounders, etc. He can make you *see* one and every outport, as you recapture the joy of youthful adventuring in places where the land and sea made mutual playgrounds (1956, p.25)'. It is a remarkable eulogy from a St. John's sophisticate, as Storey referred to her in his 1974 address. Moreover, it illustrates Duley's underlying passion for this unique dual characteristic of Newfoundland, namely the meeting of land and sea. Her use of phrases such as 'rugged heritage' conjure up powerful images in the reader's mind.

Over a period of more than twenty years, Duley had developed a strong vision of the Newfoundland literary scene and honed a critical perspective of its development and its place in a wider context. Her short 1956 article for *The Atlantic Guardian* could easily be dismissed as an entertaining but lightweight page-filler. However, a closer study of this journalistic piece reveals Duley's consummate skills as a communicator, her ability to conjure with words and her considerable knowledge of the field. Her reference to A.P. Herbert's writings on Newfoundland, for example, is revealing and sets her appraisal in a wider context. Not only had Herbert been a member of the parliamentary delegation sent from London in 1943 but he was also an Oxford don with a not inconsiderable reputation as a legal reformer, novelist and satirist. It provides an insight into the breadth of Duley's reading repertoire and is further evidence of her radical instincts. However, it also demonstrates Duley's own ingrained pervasive Newfoundland spirit. This robust attitude to life had made such an impression on Herbert that he was regarded as 'an unofficial spokesman for his islander friends' (Time Magazine, 1949).

Speculating on the dearth of Newfoundland novels in her review article, Duley also included the novels of Spencer but made no reference to the output of English or that of her niece Kathleen Mary English. The former was still living in St John's in 1956. In the

*Afterword* to the reprint of English's *Only A Fisherman's Daughter*, Iona Bulgin discusses other contemporary Newfoundland women writers and their work, although the only other novels published in the 1930s were the romance *Lover's Meeting* (1937) by Kathleen Mary English and *When the Dumb Speak* (1938) by English (Bulgin. 2009, p.187). The self-published novels of the English family are not only evidence of interest in the novel genre in the early decades of the twentieth century but also proof of a level of professional commitment (Bulgin, 2009, p.187). Bulgin has posed a number of rhetorical questions concerning Duley's silence. They include the fact that the English family came from a different social class and published their romance novels independently (Bulgin, 2009, pp.186-7). The latter is supported by circumstantial evidence from other sources that Duley regarded acceptance of a novel by respected commercial publishers as a mark of success and consequently legitimacy. Duley, in fact, saved all the reviews of her novel *The Eyes of the Gull* and they form part of the Duley collection in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies. In addition, Feder describes a number of incidents that verify the importance that Duley attached to publication by reputable commercial publishers. She wrote in a letter to Ellen Elliott at MacMillan's in December 1940, 'One of the things regarding a Newfoundland novel is that there are no writers from this country and I feel we must emerge sometime… (Feder, 1983, p.59)'. Duley inferred that publication of her novels would be evidence of this emergence. Furthermore, Feder surmised that Duley had destroyed the manuscript of her final novel *Octaves of Dawn* because the manuscript was rejected by her publisher and never returned to the genre. (Feder, 1983, p.106).

What role the contemporary textual communities played in assisting Duley with her reflections on the local literary scene is not completely clear. As in the case of Spencer, Duley's writing activities were a solitary pursuit. However, in this same 1956 article, she also

referred to ‘Florence Miller’s folksy poems’. This somewhat condescending reference is significant, as Florence Miller (1889-1979) was also a prominent participant in the cultural life of St. John’s in the 1920s, hosting regular ‘salons’ at her home on the outskirts of the city. It also suggests that Duley did not identify with this group, as discussed further below. However, the existence of grassroots cultural initiatives was particularly important in the decades between the two World Wars because of external factors that threatened the cultural development of St. John’s in general terms.

One concern was the lack of public investment in the cultural and educational infrastructure in the country. The provision of island library services, for example, was not fully implemented until 1942 (1970, Kent & Lancour, pp.116-118). The underfunding of public facilities and underdeveloped local authority infrastructure were among the challenges facing the interim Commission Government in the 1930s. Curiously, the increased levels of literacy recorded in St. John’s East (Alexander, 1980) were not reflected in the number of local novelists with published work between 1899 and Confederation in 1949. (Bulgin, 2009, pp.186-187; O’Flaherty, 1979, pp.84, 131). Nevertheless, the interest in literary pursuits among the middle classes continued in St. John’s at this period but at a reduced level, as described below.

Another cause for concern was the aftermath of the demise of the St. Johns’ Athenaeum at the turn of the century that had left a cultural lacuna in the capital that was still evident in the decades leading up to the Second World War. At a patriotic lecture given by the Reverend N. Powell in November 1924 the speaker recalled the best days of the St. John’s Athenaeum as confirmation of this situation (Evening Telegram, 12/11/1924). In addition, in the absence of a publicly funded library service, the private library facilities at the St. John’s Athenaeum had been one of the sources for residents to access books. As revealed in Case

Study One, in the closing days of the Athenaeum in the late nineteenth century, it had suffered a gradual decline in interest in its activities because of the growth in fringe textual communities. This trend continued into the twentieth century and was maintained during the interwar years. Other cultural clubs and associations perceived as more relevant to the aspirations of educated women, such as Duley, and to the different cultural and social priorities of the generation in the capital between the wars. Unlike the Athenaeum and the two Mechanical Institutes founded in nineteenth-century St. John's, these grassroots textual community groups did not necessarily exclude the discussion of religious and political issues. This situation may have been another reason why Duley, born into a Protestant family, knew of Spencer's novels but not about those of English and Kathleen Mary English, who were well known in Catholic circles. Although the collective activities of these small groups could not mitigate the impact for the community of the loss of the Athenaeum in a time of austerity as experienced in the 1930s, they did nevertheless play an important role in the city at this time of economic and political upheaval.

Despite the fact that local textual communities continued to flourish in the first part of the twentieth century, novels tended to be published outside Newfoundland with some rare exceptions, such as the novels of the English sisters as observed above. In addition, these textual communities also operated within narrow idiosyncratic circles with apparently little awareness of each other. In the main, Duley kept herself aloof from these literary endeavours and put her energies into political activities focused mainly on the promotion of women's suffrage (Feder, 1983, pp.24-25). Therefore, the full impact of Duley's debut outport novel was not really appreciated in Newfoundland itself until well into the literary renaissance period over forty years later. However, one significant and entrenched tradition in the community in St John's were the Christmas annuals that maintained their popularity well

beyond the 1930s. Moreover, the Christmas annual edited by English only ceased publication shortly after her death in 1958. These popular annual local publications not only attracted contributors from across the social classes, but they covered a range of literary genres from poetry to essays, as discussed in Chapter Two. It is unlikely that Duley had not heard of the Christmas annuals but they probably did not qualify as local literature in her eyes.

There was, in addition, an increase in the publication of new journals. A leading example was the *Newfoundland Quarterly* (1901) and latterly the *Atlantic Guardian* (1945). Another source of surviving literary print culture was the journal *The Distaff* that was published by the Red Cross Division of the Womens' Patriotic Association (WPA) and was founded in 1914 to support the 1914-1918 First World War effort. Tryphena Chancey Duley, the mother of Duley, was a leading light in this largely middle- and upper- class St. John's organization. It provided a forum for the younger generation of writers and poets. Duley also found an outlet for her early literary output through this publication, along with Florence Miller and other contributors.

There are few records at present on the growth of book clubs. However, the records of the St. John's Book Club in the 1920s provide an interesting glimpse into the reading tastes of middle -class readers. The membership included 'Robert Watson, accountant, manager of the Newfoundland savings Bank and secretary to the governor; Violet Cherrington, principal of Bishop Spencer College; and any number of business people… justices, lawyers, doctors and men of the cloth (Sparkes, 2011)'. The Avalon Book Club is another example (Centre for Newfoundland Studies archives). Duley was an influential member of The Ladies Reading Room and Current Events Club, as well as The Women's Franchise League (Rigg, 2004). This group had a strong political element but the Ladies Reading Room also provided much

needed library facilities at this time. Duley's personal interest in literature and her own creative and political writings led to a decade of novel writing.

**The Eyes of the Gull: Helluland and Andalusia.**

> The only thing she ever dreaded in her sanctuary were the ferocious eyes of the gulls! When they hovered low to the Head, she looked towards the horizon for fear of meeting their glittering gaze.
>
> *The Eyes Of The Gull.* 1936, p.10.

The interplay between a sense of place and human identity is the core of Duley's debut novel. Duley chose to write in the romance genre. Her novel is a classic tale of a provincial young woman, who falls in love with a sophisticated stranger and is later abandoned by him. All the characters in the novel are brought to life through the nature of their engagement with the outport, regardless of whether they are insiders or outsiders. Their experience of place colours their outlook on life. Her characters' rapport with the outport is central in Duley's novel from the opening paragraph in which she physically places her protagonist Isabel Pyke in her refuge. From the age of ten 'she had begun to grope her way towards her individual dream, and make the rock on the bare headland her lonely sanctuary: the one place where she could be alone in the stark outport of painted houses, straggling at haphazard spots and angles, on a zigzag road and many lanes (1936, p.9).' The headland or promontory, a short distance from her home, provides Isabel with both a physical and spiritual refuge from an outport society that she distanced herself from early on in her childhood and could not relate to as an adult. The fear and dismay experienced by Isabel is symbolic of her underlying despair throughout this novel and is manifest as a form of topophobia. Her distress was only relieved by the summer spent in the company of the artist Peter Keen, when she reached the age of thirty. He

was an outsider and tenant of the abandoned house on her headland, where no outporters trespassed near her sanctuary except in the partridge- berry picking season. She was only troubled in her haven by the ferocious eyes of the encircling seagulls.

The motif of the fearful gaze of the gulls is carried on throughout the entire novel and symbolizes Isabel's unease in her outport environment. From her childhood she feared 'meeting their cold glittering gaze (1936, p.10)'. Their eyes 'held the spirit of Helluland: savage, bitter, and chill (1936, p.10)'. The seagull is even captured by Peter Keen in his summer paintings depicting Isabel against the background of her headland (1936, pp.99, 104-105). When her mother suffers a severe stroke in the closing stages of the book, her left eye was not paralysed and its winking critical stare takes on the same significance as the eyes of the gulls. Isabel has been deserted by her lover Peter Keen by then. Despite his parting gift of money so that she can escape to Andalusia, her mother's reproachful eye robs her of the willpower to seize her opportunity, to keep her promise to Peter Keen and ultimately to retain the will to live.

The antidote to Isabel's topophobian feelings for Helluland is her other childhood discovery of Andalusia through her reading of a copy of Washington Irving's *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832), lying on a book shelf in the family home. Andalusian Spain is seen as a means of intellectual fulfillment and offering the prospect of physical escape from this backwater for Duley's protagonist. Whenever Isabel went to the headland to escape from her mother's house, she would mouth the word 'Andalusia' and 'inwardly change the granite garb of her own headlands to a soft bloom of olive, orange, palm, and pomegranate (1936, p.10)'. At first, the image of Andalusia is seen as a daydream but later it begins to evolve into a step towards a different future for Isabel. This escape route is closed to her after Peter Keen's

desertion. She fled to the Head and 'with her face on the granite rock she gave herself up to grief, while the sea beat savagely against the cliffs, and the wind blew its chill breath across her tormented body (1936, p.136)'. This emotion evoked by Isabel's personal grief is reminiscent of the impact of place on the passions of a Brontë character. It is followed by Isabel's resolution to rise above her fatalism and seek out, 'Andalusia! The word came back to her lips in smooth syllabication. It was what her soul had craved for before Peter Keen had dimmed the picture of olive, orange, palm, and pomegranate (1936, p.139)'. The outport setting and Isabel's reaction to her remote home attracted the imagination of the literary critics.

*The Eyes of the Gull* received at least twelve reviews in British newspapers and journals at the time of its publication from the late autumn of 1936 (Book Review File and Biography File.56372, 56374, 56376-53680). Many of them paid cursory reference to the novel. However, these reviews also included more insightful contributions from a number of highly regarded reviewers and important contributors to the British cultural scene, such as Charles Marriott of the *Manchester Guardian* and John Brophy in *Time and Tide*. Brophy was a literary friend of Vera Britain and Wallace, two of the Somerville novelists in the 1920s and 1930s (Marcus, 1991). It could be interpreted as an accolade to Duley's literary talents that her debut novel attracted the attention of literary critics of such standing. Most reviews recognize Duley's talent and her adept handling of two potentially predictable themes of unrequited love and rugged and untamed landscape captures the imagination of many of the reviewers. Furthermore, they are nearly all attracted by the Newfoundland location of the book and Duley's adroit depiction of a remote outport settlement.

However, these contemporary reviews in the 1930s and the later critiques of the novel at the turn of the last century have all missed the significance of the symbolism of the idea of

the familiar ‘Helluland’ and the illusionary ‘Andalusia’ running throughout this novel. Helluland represents the idea of isolation both through the physical landscape and Isabel’s personal feelings of disaffection towards outport life. In contrast, Andalusia offers the prospect of beauty and freedom of expression to the unhappy woman. The divided loyalties of the protagonist for these two places creates a certain unity throughout the novel and justifies Isabel’s, at times, unpredictable behavior, such as her initial refusal to recognise the pleasant outport summer days when challenged to do so by Peter Keen (1936, p.41). Duley has written a place-based novel but not as an example of topophilia but of topophobia. Her heroine has an abnormally intense aversion to the outport itself and all it stands for in her eyes. This extreme reaction is countered by her emotional communion with the headland with its solitary abandoned house. The novel genre thus provided Duley with the possibility of exploring her own loyalty as a Newfoundlander while maintaining a degree of critical objectivity.

Isabel’s romantic illusions about Andalusia are employed by Duley to explore the link between an individual’s attachment to place and the development of their identity. Duley achieves this aim by comparing Isabel’s relationship with her outport home with that of her other family relations and the outsiders Aunt Mary Ann and Peter Keen, explored below. Isabel’s perception of outport life is bounded by the drudgery of outport domestic routine and the tedious social round of her mother’s family and acquaintances. They are all members of the small middle-class clique living in the outport that includes the minister and the merchant and their wives. Isabel spends most of her waking life as an unpaid servant running the household and cooking the gargantuan quantity of food consumed by her mother Emily and her visitors.

Emily is the most unsympathetic, snobbish character in the novel and has a greater resemblance to a St. John’s townie than an outporter. In fact, her adult daughter’s only contact

with the fishing community itself, the rationale for the outport's existence, is through the supply it provides of paid domestic labour. (1936, pp.136, 142).

However, there is a great contrast between Isabel's view of outport life and that of her extended family, although it is not apparent how much contact they all have with the day to day outport activities, since most of them are no longer working and the men are all merchant seamen rather than fishermen. The most empathetic members of her extended family are Aunt Dorcas Penney and her husband Uncle Seth Penney. He is a retired successful mariner as was Isabel's dead father. Uncle Seth served port wine on Christmas Day and 'had a row of dusty bottles on a shelf, along with Guava Jelly and fresher looking bottles of Bay Rum (1936, p.10)'. Aunt Dorcas is a gentle but calming influence in the extended family but with a worldly knowledge of life beyond the outport, as does her husband. She also has good contact with the outport community at large and is a source of information about outport news for Isabel's mother (1936, pp.15, 26-27). Isabel is fond of her aunt and uncle and had discerned that 'Aunt Dorcas's mind might be chained to the limits of the small outport, but her spirit lay in profundity (1936, p.27).' She refers to her mother's voice as being like 'the granite rocks of Helluland: hard, sharp, and jagged', whereas that of her Aunt Dorcas 'flowed benignly over her. It held the roundness of Andalusia (1936, p.18)'.

The image of the small circle of outport middle class Newfoundlanders is nuanced further by the presence of outsider visitors. The most noteworthy is Aunt Mary Ann from Nova Scotia who is the sister-in-law of Aunt Dorcas. Aunt Mary Ann's husband had left the outport to sail in a Lunenburg schooner, eventually settling in Nova Scotia. She is regarded as a foreigner from Canada and unfamiliar with Newfoundland mores and customs. She drinks her tea 'with her little finger stuck out from the cup (1936, pp.14-15)'. Her low-cut dress is criticized by Emily and Aunt Mary Ann rejoins with, "Tis warmish of a summer in

Lunenburg (1936, p.18)". Aunt Mary Ann is constantly reminded of her difference by Emily's comments, "We may not live in a great country like Canada, but I hope we know the difference between right and wrong (1936, p. 21)?" Aunt Dorcas also displays her outport roots when she breaks the news that the deserted house on the headland has been let; she refers to the outsider Peter Keen's man-servant as the "foreign fellow" (1936, pp.16, 27).

As the portrayal of Aunt Mary Ann reveals, outsiders also have other visions of the sociological realities of the fictional outport. Although there are few references to the daily life of the fishermen and their families, Peter Keen asks Isabel what it is like down in the outport with its "huddle of whitewashed houses" and what the boats do when they go out in the morning but Isabel is only concerned with her daily life of drudgery (1936, p.46). Furthermore, she feels that she is perceived by the community at large as different and, in the meantime, her fellow pupils from her school days had married and had children. She sees this fate as unattractive as, "It means having false teeth, and being fat and ugly and working from daylight to dark (1936, pp.49-50)". Her introspection on her own situation does not allow for there being other reasons for her former school friends' fate. The outsider characters function as mediators in Isabel's internal torment over her relationship with her place of birth and her outport identity. Peter Keen presents the most insightful example of a mitigating outsider view of the outport settlement.

Isabel Pyke's obsession with Spain and Anadalusia in particular contrasts with the attraction. of the Newfoundland summer for the artist and outsider Peter Keen. Duley uses their first encounter in the novel to compare Peter Keen's attraction to Helluland as a place of inspiration for the painter with Isabel's ambivalent relationship to her homeland. The night prior to their initial meeting, Isabel had a strange dream in which she is surrounded by sea-gulls, 'hovering, soaring, swooping to the level of her eyes'. One gull flew close to her and

she saw that it had blue eyes ‘warm, vital and compelling (1936, pp.27-28).’ She forgets Andalusia and is gripped by Helluland. This incident is the first indication in the novel, with the exception of her bonds with Aunt Dorcas and Uncle Seth, that Isabel’s feelings for her outport home are more complex than an adolescent obsession with the idea of Andalusia that she articulates in public. The dream foreshadows the nature of her first encounter with Peter Keen the following day on the headland. Not only has Peter come to live in the abandoned house on the Head but he has taken over the spot where she usually sits on her special rock. Her message to the intruder is clear and reiterated throughout their first meeting, “This my rock. I’ve had it all my life. You’ve got to go (1936, p.28)”.

Isabel’s emotional immaturity and lack of experience of life makes her easy prey for the self-indulgent outsider Peter Keen. He mocks her topophobia for the outport and her irrational perceptions about her situation. As the summer sets in he teases Isabel that she should come with the wind. “This is surely not your Helluland today? It’s an Italian sky and a Mediterranean sea (1936, p.41)”. Isabel and Peter became lovers and he tells her that ‘Andalusia was all around them and even she marveled at the many summer days (1936, p.84)’. His intervention has an underlying sinister aspect because it is motivated by a self-indulgence that contrasts with the outport way of life represented by Aunt Dorcas and Uncle Seth. Peter Keen presents Isabel with the prospect of a hedonistic and selfish life view, although he confesses, “I wallowed a little, I’m afraid, in the stream of modern life (1936, p.78)”. He places the emphasis on individual rather than communal interests.

His philosophy also assumes a personal material wealth unknown among many of the fishermen and their families in the outport. The poverty confronting many of the outporters in economic downturns is hinted at but never explicitly explored in the novel. Isabel saw ‘inert slatterns in groups of children with smeared mouths (1936, p.87)’. As observed above, the

fishermen's wives are perceived as a potential labour force and when no one is prepared to clean the abandoned house on the head, the Canadian Aunt Mary Ann remarks, "Think a body would be glad to earn a few cents these days (1936, p.17)". As an outsider she has observed that the fishermen and their families are experiencing hard times. Isabel herself also acknowledges that the fisherman's wife who cleans her house will miss the money on her departure to Anadalusia (1936, pp.136, 142).

This phenomenon of the poverty gap between the fisher folk and their more affluent neighbours, as observed earlier in the chapter, was also witnessed by the British politician Ramsay MacDonald in the 1930s. He refers to the poverty he saw in the fishing villages in Newfoundland in the Great Depression. His experience of the first incident he recorded took place in one of the beautiful coves in Conception Bay, when he happened to turn down a rough road where people were living in squalor worse than in London slums. He recalls how 'slovenliness proclaimd misery and drudgery; the children looked neglected and were clad in the livery of destitution (1936, pp.188-189)'. Although Duley's focus in the novel is on the individual's relationship with place and its link with personal identity, the hand to mouth existence of the fishing community is nevertheless acknowledged and the recurring references to the affluence of Emily Pyke and her excessive consumption of food contrasts with the hard times among the fishermen and their families.

In this debut novel, Isabel's ambivalent relationship with Newfoundland is unresolved and the strong undercurrent of topophobia towards the place returns with the advent of the harsh winter and her early death. Her obsession with the qualities of place and their influence on her perceptions and mood is alluded to throughout the novel. Andalusia and Helluland symbolize her feelings of topophilia and topophobia that are an expression of her conflicted emotions about her home and family. At a superficial level, Duley depicts Isabel's

relationship with place as a reaction to the qualities she attributes to the landscape of the headland that she regards as her personal territory and her refuge. Her other sanctuaries are her bedroom domain and the solace she finds in the family outport gardens with their summer flowers during the endless tea parties (1936, pp.12, 60-61). Her affection for her aunt and uncle, the peace she enjoys on the headland, in the outport gardens and her personal space in her bedroom, as well as her love of books all indicate a certain level of enjoyment in her outport home despite her belief to the contrary. At another level, Isabel seems unaware of other possible roots of the intricacies of her conflicted view of the outport. She rejects Peter Keens' suggestions that part of her problem is her troubled relationship with her mother that he describes as 'psychic poison (1936, p.47)'. Peter Keen exhibits a more complex relationship with the concept of place more in alignment with Duley's own experiences, as discussed below. As a summer visitor to the bay, Peter Keen appreciates its charms but he is unable to alert Isabel to the dangers of her ingenuous obsession with Andalusia. She does not understand when Peter draws a parallel with his own mother's unhappiness, 'Poor little Isabel, beating her wings in Helluland! And my mother beat hers in better places, but beat them just the same (1936, p.81)!' The different perspectives on the vision of the outport presented in the two case study novels are evaluated in the concluding section of this chapter.

## Conclusion.

This chapter has examined the approach taken by Duley and Spencer in depicting the Newfoundland outport, its hinterland and seascape. Their visions of the outport were presented from different perspectives. Duley's debut novel is coincidentally a retort to the more romanticized tone of the exiled Spencer's penultimate work. Spencer's outport novel

was written after an absence from his homeland of more than ten years and is typical of the Newfoundland diaspora perspective (DeLisle, 2013). On the other hand, Duley's view of the outport or village way of life exhibits dissonant overtones and she is torn between her dual role as a Newfoundland 'nationalist' but also that of a 'a critic'. Nevertheless, she shares Spencer's view of the outport as typical of Newfoundland identity and illustrative of the place.

Unlike Spencer's *The King of Spain's Daughter,* in which the old-time values of the outporters and the impressive landscape and seascape surrounding their outports is attractive to the exotic outside world, the outport environment in Duley's *The Eyes of the Gull* is seen as harsh but impressive. Furthermore, its people and their lifestyle are frequently depicted as dreary compared with the protagonist's daydreams of Andalusia and all it represents to her. The focus of both case study novels is on the protagonists' individual reactions to place. Spencer's hero rejects the placelessness of London and embraces the landscape and outport community lifestyle of outport Newfoundland. In contrast, Duley's Isabel has an antipathy to the lifestyle of her immediate social circle and displays ambivalent feelings about the landscape encircling her home. Her response is to construct her own imaginary place as a counterbalance to her confused reactions to her daily reality. Duley's novel is a study in the complexity of reactions to place as opposed to Spencer's optimistic and diasporic portrayal of the outport as an antidote to the worst aspects of twentieth-century urbanisation.

By problematizing the reactions of their protagonists to their respective home places, both writers have added new dimensions to the understanding of the concepts of place and identity in the Newfoundland context. An important difference between the two novelists is their use of the natural environment in developing a multi-faceted vision of the outport. In Duley's novel, the dramatic nature of the landscape is encapsulated in its imprisoning hold on

her protagonist both physically and intellectually that alienates her from the community. Whereas Spencer's depiction of the outport world is focused on both the communal cohesion of the Push Through outport and its beautiful and primeval setting. The ensuing tension created by these conflicting approaches took the genre to a new level of creativity.

In *The Eyes Of The Gull*, Isabel, her Aunt Dorcas and her Uncle Seth represent respectively the states of topophobia and topophilia in the context of the outport settlement. In a similar but more worldly vein, Spencer's protagonist has rejected the placelessness of his London home and relocated to the place of origin of his maternal ancestors. Jerry Blake's acquaintance with outporters such as Mr. Jennings and his mother provide corroborative evidence of the relationship between a sense of place and the forging of identity. The two case study novels demonstrate how the multifaceted qualities of the outport reveal its potential universal appeal for novelists.

Both *The King Of Spain's Daughter* and *The Eyes Of The Gull* were not specifically marketed for a home audience and they both presented Newfoundland as an extraordinary place through a depiction of life on the coast and in the rural hinterland. As demonstrated by the two epigraphs at the beginning of this chapter and the titles of the two case study novels themselves, the exoticism of Spain is in juxtaposition with the unique Newfoundland environment and culture. Spencer emphasizes the grandeur of the Newfoundland scenery and the spontaneity of its people, while Duley compares the warmth and exoticism of an imaginary Andalusia with the bleakness and menace of Newfoundland with its rocky coves and the piercing gaze of its seagulls. Furthermore, these different perspectives were reflected in the two novelists' depiction of the outporters themselves. The warmth and harmony exhibited by the outporters of Push Through is in sharp contrast with the somewhat futile social life of Isabel's family circle.

Both novels were published in the mid-1930s in a challenging decade both economically and sociologically. One aspect of the appeal of their novels was possibly contemporary readers' appetite for escapism during the depression (Hammill, 2007), as was also witnessed in the cinematic industry at the time (Stacy, 2003). This element may also have been part of the appeal of Day's novel *Rockbound* (1926)**.** As discussed earlier, *Rockbound* with its focus on the daily life of Nova Scotian fishermen and the social tensions often existing within such maritime communities is an interesting counterpoint to both the case study novels. It is particularly evident in the case of Duley's problematic depiction of the outport *in The Eyes Of The Gull*. Spencer's more romantic vision of outport life is evident at times in the outpost life in Day's novel but is counterbalanced by Day's and Spencer's fictional but vivid accounts of the hazards of navigation encountered at sea. However, despite some superficial similarities between the three novels and their being set in the North Atlantic region, they were written for quite different markets.

Indeed Creelman has cautioned that although the four Atlantic provinces of present day Canada 'are linked by their common struggle against the economic hardships of underdevelopment and underemployment, yet, for all the political and economic similarities, the culture of Newfoundland has been shaped by historical, social, ethnic and religious forces very different from those which have moulded the three Maritime provinces (2003, p.3)'. The importance of the background to the emergence of the culture of Newfoundland is discussed in the Introduction chapter in the context of the regional novel. In a sense, Spencer's novel foreshadowed many of the characteristics of a late twentieth century Newfoundland outport novel with the authorial focus on the community life of the fishermen and their families, as discussed in the following chapters. However, by problematising the concept of the outport,

Duley heralds in a more nuanced perspective of the outport novel genre as revealed in Chapter Four with Horwood and Morgan's conflicting visions of the genre.

# CHAPTER FOUR: WHOSE NEWFOUNDLAND?

## Introduction:

> Most Newfoundlanders agree that a time has come when they must have some say in the handling of their affairs. Some (probably the majority) will vote for an immediate return to self-government. Others, remembering the depression years, may prefer a form of representative government whereby the cord with the mother country is not entirely severed. But representation without responsibility is not likely to be palatable to the country as a whole, nor to the British Government. A small clique favour union with Canada as a means to social security. But the majority of the people are too loyal to their traditions and too proud of their independence to consider the project seriously.
>
> Ludovic Kennedy (Secretary and aide-de-camp to the Governor of Newfoundland, 1943-1944 in *The British Empire*, 1947–48).

> After more than three centuries' existence as a remote and obscure codfishing country Newfoundland in the past decade or so has entered upon a new march that is destined to place her, within the next dozen years, in the front rank of the great small nations of the world. That new march is toward modern, large-scale industrialism.
> J.R. Smallwood. *Newfoundland*. 1931.

> Don't vote Confederation, and that's my prayer to you,
> We own the house we live in, likewise the schooner too;
> But if you heed Joe Smallwood, and his line of French patois
> You'll be always paying taxes to the men in Ottawa.
>
> Newfoundland Anti-Confederation song: The Hero of '48. Independent, 05/04/1948.

Ludovic Kennedy, later a celebrated human rights campaigner, spent a year of his long career at Government House in St. John's as the secretary and aide-de-camp to Governor Sir Humphrey Walwyn in 1943-1944. He immersed himself in the local cultural scene, socialising with leading citizens of St. John's, such as Ewart Young and Grace Butt (Soper,1945, pp.19-20, 31). His subsequent assessment of social and political aspirations in the country also confirm the broad sentiments of the members of the Parliamentary Goodwill

Visit[15], sent from London in the summer of 1943 with the remit to gauge the feelings of Newfoundlanders about their future sovereignty (Kennedy, 1947-48, pp.127-131).

The opinions expressed by Kennedy (1947, pp.130, 132) in the concluding sentence of his analysis of the situation concerning responsible government in the dominion demonstrate the rapidity of the subsequent seismic shift in popular opinion following the Second World War. The seeds of this division took root in a remarkably short space of time. It is interesting to note that Joseph Smallwood, later the leader of the post-war pro-Confederation campaign, had long regarded the island as potentially 'in the front rank of the great small nations of the world (Smallwood, 1931, p.1*).*' His dream to effect an industrial revolution in the Newfoundland was in gestation for many years and may explain his eventual abandonment of the country's political independence, as being the only way to make large-scale industrialisation a reality. The impact of Smallwood's surrender of Newfoundland sovereignty predictably evoked a fierce reaction on the island. The lyrics of the 1948 anti-Confederation song, published in the League for Responsible Government's newspaper, *The Independent*, on 5th April 1948, evoke the bitterness engendered among the opponents of Confederation with Canada after the two close-run Newfoundland referendum campaigns that continued for years.

In this chapter, we will examine how the impact of this seismic political shift challenged established preconceptions of the cultural significance of outport Newfoundland. We will argue in this chapter that within a single generation the image of the outport went from being an obscure but noteworthy 'rural' phenomenon to being contested territory and an iconic representation of a form of cultural nationhood. In the literary context, the debut novel

[15] See Chapter Five.

*Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* (1966) by Harold Horwood (1923-2006), functioned as a catalytic force in the early stages of this process and the Cape Random novels (1992; 1994) by Bernice Morgan (1935-) very strongly articulated the subsequent attitudinal transformation among many Newfoundlanders.

Furthermore, the number of outport novels increased dramatically in post-Confederation Newfoundland. The writers revealed the necessity for a more nuanced interpretation of the notions of identity and sense of place among the insider writers themselves concerning the cultural significance of the outport. As Pat Byrne (1994) has stated most writers at this period 'are marked by the attempt to describe, and to come to terms with, what is deemed to be a distinctive and relatively unique Newfoundland character and worldview, and in so doing to delineate what is perceived to be the traditional way of life of the outport (1994, pp.224-225)'.

The debut novels analysed in this chapter demonstrate how these differing interpretations of Newfoundland identity evolved in the years following the surrender of sovereignty in 1949. The two case study novels are discussed in Parts One and Two. In addition, this chapter examines the growing importance of the role that place-based novelists played in creating visions of Newfoundland identity and culture after Confederation as well as the resulting consolidation of the literary phenomenon of the outport novel. The nature of Newfoundland society and concepts such as culture, identity, nationhood and place were reinterpreted in the context of the new political reality of being Canadian. Finally, the chapter extrapolates how far the debates on culture and identity in the 1960s and 1970s had their roots in the unresolved political controversies surrounding the events of 1949.

**Part One: Harold Horwood: A Pro-Confederation exponent.**

The cultural renaissance, identified by Sandra Gwyn (1976), was the exuberant expression of a renewed Newfoundland, following the political and constitutional upheaval after Confederation. This regeneration had a long and challenging incubation powered by the importance of place for Newfoundlanders and the cultural expressions of this sense of place for their future perceptions of identity. Commenting on Newfoundland's cultural identity, Glenn Colton has suggested 'the term 'nationalism' (as opposed to 'regionalism') is not misplaced when describing creative responses to place that marked the emergence of a "Newfoundland Renaissance" (2014, p.12)'.

The bitterness of the political campaign preceding the two referendum votes on the sovereignty of Newfoundland in 1948 was also not extinguished on political union with Canada. Even prior to Confederation, there had been an acceptance of the desirability of change, as described by Smallwood in his account of the contemporary developments and economic future for the island, as outlined in *The New Newfoundland* (1931). Such sentiments appealed to Horwood in the post-Second World War era. The reverberations of this conflict are also evident in Horwood's debut novel, *Tomorrow will be Sunday* (1966). It encapsulates the Confederation vision of the need for a better future and the backwardness of pre-Confederation Newfoundland, particularly in the outports. Wayne Johnston's memoir *Baltimore's Mansion* published in 1999 bears literary witness to the enduring antagonism felt by both the winners and the losers. The relationship between the Johnston patriarchs is represented in this book as being permanently undermined by the Confederation experience (Johnston, 1999, pp.77-80, 272).

The Horwood brothers, Andrew and Harold, were in their early twenties when the Second World War ended, and they had already distanced themselves from the family business interests in the maritime world. The two brothers also produced a literary journal named *Protocol*[16] (Horwood,1997, pp.154-155). Alongside his early literary leanings, Horwood became involved in the Labour Party. His support of the interests of Newfoundland workers rather than their employers resulted in his work as a labour union activist (Horwood, 1997, pp.146-152). The politicised Horwood was an innate rebel and, consequently, he became deeply involved in the issue of what should follow Commission government (Horwood, 1997, p.158).

Initially, in the early Smallwood era during which Horwood served as Minister for Labrador from 1949-1951, the skirmishes continued between the two sides of the community and were expressed as feelings of recrimination and disappointment on the part of the losers. Gradually, over a period of twenty years, these negative and destructive reactions evolved into a re-examination of the status of Newfoundland in Canada. The common ground for both parties was the eventual acceptance of a cultural nationhood that could coexist in the political reality of a Canadian future. The analyses of the provincial arts and culture policies of post-Confederation Newfoundland by Ronald Rompkey and Roger Bill reveal the surrogate function of this hotly contested issue (Rompkey, 1998; Bill, 2009). The involvement of Newfoundlanders in the stimulation of the arts and culture in the province was important in promoting Newfoundland identity. The expression of a cultural placed-based identity became an important replacement for defunct political issues in Newfoundland, as also recognised by Colton (2014, pp.7-13).

[16] 1946-1948.

The outport and its lifestyle and values were central to this legacy from Newfoundland's past. In the literary context, the pre-war focus on the bayman lifestyle in the early Newfoundland novels re-emerged, as illustrated in the novels discussed in Case Study One and Case Study Two. However, Margaret Duley's appraisal of Newfoundland literature in 1955 was the first documented evidence of an awareness of a Newfoundland cultural nationhood after Confederation. In the following decades, there were a number of references to expectations of the imminent publication of the 'great Newfoundland novel' (Morgan, 1966, p.14; O'Flaherty,1974, p.5). These anticipatory sentiments implied a commitment to a place identity with the distinctive cultural characteristics associated with nationhood and were expressions of the sense of loss still experienced by many Newfoundlanders even today (Blackmore, 2003, pp353-355)[17]. Horwood was not party to these important local developments during the 1970s. Although he had left Smallwood's government and became part of the opposition, his longer-term interests lay in events in mainland Canada.

This is mirrored in Horwood's pride in having grown up in Newfoundland. Nevertheless, he felt more at home in mainland Canada, where he eventually settled in Nova Scotia in the 1980s. Although he was born an insider, he came to be regarded as a hostile insider to a certain degree (Seifert: 2002; Strong: 1993). Duley and Percy Janes, however, eluded this fate and were perceived as loyal insiders despite their negative representations of outport attitudes.

As a consequence, Horwood's two autobiographical books, *A Walk In The Dreamtime* (1997) and *Among the Lions* (2000), leave many questions unanswered about how the Confederates viewed Newfoundland identity in the first two decades after this union, and the

[17] Research Paper (2003): *Sense of Place: Loss and the Newfoundland Spirit.* Blackmore, ,G.C.. Addendum to the main report *Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada* (2003).

nature of the symbolic status of the outport for insiders. Although he was a committed Newfoundlander, Horwood himself saw his role as making a contribution to his new country. Following his withdrawal from the Smallwood government, he eventually found his niche in pursuing his youthful ambition of a literary career, becoming deeply involved in the mainland campaign to promote the status of Canadian writers in the 1970s (Horwood, 2000). In his memoirs, he portrays himself as a leading light in the establishment of The Writers' Union of Canada (TWUC) in 1973. Horwood came to view himself as a Canadian from Newfoundland in his two autobiographical books, writing: 'By 1970 the great Canadian literary renaissance was under way, though we didn't realise it at the time. The inauguration of The Writers' Union in 1973 was right on time to catch this great flowering and to become a major part of the nation's cultural awakening (Horwood, 2000, pp.117, 152-158)'. There is only a fleeting reference to Gwynn's 1976 article on the Newfoundland Renaissance (Horwood, 2000, pp.105-106)**.** This omission reflects Horwood's lack of affiliation with cultural developments in the province. Although he encouraged fellow writers from the mainland to visit the province, he did not subscribe to ideas of Newfoundland nationhood or bemoan its loss. His participation in mainland Canadian literary life was to later earn him the Order of Merit. However, it also set him apart from the local cultural groundswell movements to the degree that his debut Newfoundland novel, which was published in central Canada, had a mixed reception back home. Nevertheless, *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* had a great impact in Newfoundland on its publication in ways that Harold Horwood may not have expected at the close of the 1960s. Patrick O'Flaherty's sharp critique of the novel over ten years on in his seminal work *The Rock Observed* (1979) and reproduced in the epigraph below illustrates the point.

***Tomorrow Will Be Sunday.***

> To judge *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* as an interpretation of outport life in the 1930s – and we are justified in taking this approach, which might seem to some an unfair one in treating a fictional work, because Horwood himself boasted that his book 'managed to capture the essential nature of Newfoundland outports .' – if we take the book at this level, then it surely is a libel upon outport people.
> Patrick O'Flaherty, 1979, p.166.

> I got to know a lot of fishermen and a lot of fishing masters in those years. Some of them were men who devoted their lives to the fishery, and had invested a lot of money and effort in it. They had earned my deep respect, and I became very angry when I saw the fishery so grossly misunderstood, misinterpreted and mismanaged by "experts" in Ottawa and Mainlanders at St. John's.
> Harold Horwood, 1997, pp.208-209.

O'Flaherty's use of the word 'libel' in the context of Harold Horwood's debut novel is simultaneously provocative and interrogative (O'Flaherty, 1976, p.166). It reveals the fissures in Newfoundlanders's perceptions of their society and also raises questions about what it signifies to be regarded as an insider. This ambivalence is complex, as, in practice, it is not solely based on place of birth. Horwood, for example, was born into a prominent St. John's family and there were strong familial links with the Carbonear branch of the family still living in an outport. Although Horwood's credentials were clearly those of an insider, his debut novel led O'Flaherty to associate Horwood and his book with authorial adverse motives which were unbecoming in a fellow Newfoundlander. Whilst O'Flaherty conceded that the work under scrutiny was after all fictive, he clearly believed that the novel in question did not 'capture the essential nature of Newfoundland', as its writer had claimed (1979, p.66). What the outport represented to Newfoundlanders at this time forms part of the discussion below in the critical analysis of the case study novels.

Horwood's declaration, as seen in the second epigraph over twenty years later was conciliatory and measured. It also focussed on the outporters as professional fishermen rather

than on the concept of the outport itself. His debut novel had by then experienced further local criticism, especially after Tom Cahill's dramatization of his novel for the theatre in 1967 and Des Walsh's 1992 version (Gard,1992). It could be argued that he perceived his older self as a rebel metamorphosised into a guru. Moreover, by then it was very clear that much of Horwood's writing was didactic in nature and reflected his self-image as a purveyor of the 'gospel' of the New Age, rather than the religious conformity of his fringe Protestant upbringing (1997, pp.65, 66-67; Spracklin, 1990). His fictional portrayal of life in a remote outport exhibited satirical elements not dissimilar to that of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. In *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday,* the outport is depicted as an epitome of an isolated community cut off from mainstream society.

Conversely, these small communities encapsulate for Horwood all that is amiss with Newfoundland in the mid-twentieth century. The island is stifled by its past and its lack of development. In *A Walk In The Dreamtime*, he states that the 'Government by Commission… ran the country for fifteen years, providing what was probably the best government the country had ever enjoyed (1997, p.85).' He clearly believed that the establishment in urban St. Johns had been wanting, in this respect, but his literary 'outport' represents a microcosm of the island society that can provide the dramatic effect required in a work of fiction. Despite Horwood's great love of nature and his admiration for the courage and tenacity of those living in the outports, his allegiance to place and identity lay mainly with Canada. His debut novel is a conflicted vision of an outport without the iconic image accorded to it by many other novelists. Martina Seifert refers to the denial of the outport by writers, such as Duley, Horwood and Percy Janes, depicting 'the outport as a nightmare, a place of terror, dullness, and despair (2002, p.32).' While there is evidence in Janes' novel *House Of Hate* to support this interpretation, it is not supported by a close reading of either Duley's *The Eyes Of The*

*Gull*, discussed in the previous chapter, or Horwood's *Tomorrow will Be Sunday*. Their depictions of the outport were more nuanced.

Furthermore, it does appear that Horwood regarded *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* as a rite of passage book in the context of his own development as a prominent Canadian writer from Newfoundland. This is illustrated by his frequent references in his two-part autobiography (1997; 2000) to *Remembering Summer (1987)*, the sequel to *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday,* and an expansion of his vision of a Newfoundland society of the future. Direct allusions to the latter novel are almost exclusively concerning the process of completing and publishing the novel and later to his disappointment about the paperback edition (1997, p.239; 2000, pp.67-68).

He also regarded his writing activities as belonging to a hierarchy of literary categories and adopted a pragmatic approach concerning their intrinsic merits and financial value. In an aside in *Among the Lions,* Horwood comments that his novels were akin to 'some minor effort by Conrad, Lawrence*,* or Laurence (2000, p.142)'. The impression gained from his autobiographies is that Horwood saw his writing activities more in terms of their function in aiding his literary career and the ensuing financial security, rather than as contributions to contemporary cultural dialogue.

Although Horwood regarded his debut novel as a contribution to the Canadian nation's 'cultural awakening' rather than an expression of Newfoundland identity (Horwood, 2000, p.117), he may well have hoped that it would be regarded as the long-awaited great Newfoundland novel. This aspiration was articulated in the years after Confederation by a number of local cultural literary commentators, most famously, by Duley (1956), O'Flaherty (1979) and Morgan (1993). Morgan's comment in *Life Sentences* that 'Everyone is talking about Harold Horwood's *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* – it's only just out. I have not read it yet

but it's reputed to be THE Newfoundland novel – the one we've all been waiting for – and all secretly hoped we would write' is most apposite (1993, p.14).

Although Horwood does not state his motivation and inspiration in setting *Tomorrow Will be Sunday* in a remote Protestant outport in his two autobiographical volumes, his outport depicted in *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* is a backward place cut off from modern life and with little grasp of the workings of the outside world. He also simultaneously depicted his fictional outport as a unique place of natural beauty and inhabited by brave and self-sacrificing people. Horwood's focus is on a remote Newfoundland with 'few towns…little industry or manufacturing – just the outports strung along the coastline,…, and the great distant market city of St. John's, which sold the fish and brought the rum and molasses from the ends of the earth (1966, 1)'. Horwood's fictional Caplin Bight is 'the middle range of outports, with forty-six families, all but three or four of them fishing families (1966, 1).' On the other hand, he also describes how the Caplin Bight ships of over thirty tons,

> even took fish to Spain and Portugal and Greece, or even down through the trade winds to Jamaica and Barbados and Brazil, or into the steaming rivers of British Guiana, at such times as the merchants of St. John's had more orders than they could fill by using their own bottoms (1966, p.6).

This contact with the wider world of international trade links is typical of the image of remote outward-looking communities often described in outport novel genre.

Horwood's choice of place name 'Capelin Bight' for the outport in *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* would perhaps have resonated with older Protestant readers in 1966, as it had originally been used by G.J. Bond in his early outport novel *Skipper George Netman*, a fictional account of Methodism in the outports (1887, 1911). Whether Horwood's choice was deliberate or accidental is a matter of speculation, but the ambience of Horwood's novel was

considerably less uncritical than that of G.J. Bond. The original Caplin Bight illustrated the inherent goodness of the Non-Conformist outporters in the late nineteenth century, while the sociological construct of Horwood's twentieth century outport is far more complex and ambivalent. It is in one sense a parody of Bond's novel. Horwood's Caplin Bight has two intertwined elements to it, the outport community itself and the surrounding natural environment. The former is problematic and the latter is somewhat romanticised.

The reader's introduction to Horwood's outport community is through the youthful protagonist, Eli Pallisher. Life in the outport for the adults is rather joyless and grey. It is also a male-dominated environment, as the women are solely concerned with the mundanity of domestic activities with the exception of Virginia, the exotic daughter of the storekeeper. The community did not countenance their young daughters learning to swim in the cove but Virginia had learnt at her boarding school:

> After her return Virginia had made a few lonely trips into water, but all her female relatives frowned on the practice as unladylike, contrary to the laws of nature, and liable to turn her blood. So she gave it up and learned to do fancy work, as embroidery was called (1969, p10).

The perceptions of what were appropriate activities for the men and women of the community were strictly adhered to by the adults. Horwood uses ridicule to summarise the 'primitive, negative moral code,' concluding all would be well, 'So long as you didn't kill, steal, lie or blaspheme, and so long as you kept yourself "pure" (1966, p.4)'. The majority of the community belongs to a fringe Protestant sect, the Church of the Firstborn, led by their charismatic minister. Brother John McKim, assisted by the store-keeper, Solomon Marks, Thomas Gilmore of Matthew, the mill owner and first cousin of Thomas Gilmore of Thomas, and the protagonist's father Elias Pallisher.

The heretics or progressives are led by Joshua Markady, ‘a onetime merchant, ship-owner and worldwide trader (1966, p.40)’ and Peter Simms, the retired magistrate. Joshua Markady had retired to the Point in his beloved Caplin Bight. Horwood’s description of the community’s opinion of Joshua Markady portrays them as uneducated, naive and prejudiced:

> He was granted a large measure of respect in Caplin Bight, as befitted a man who had owned great wealth, had visited fabled lands on the other side of the world, and wore a heavy gold watch. But he was also regarded as a great sinner, an unbeliever, a blasphemer and irrevocably lost (1966, p.42).

This situation was greatly regretted by influential members of the Church of the First Born.: ‘“It is easier for a camel…” Thomas Gilmore of Matthew quoted and shook his head sadly, for he had a high personal regard for Mr. Markady (1966, p.40)’. Thomas Gilmore of Matthew’s reaction is indicative of the range of opinions within the Protestant community that becomes more apparent in the course of the novel. A great part of the tension in the early stages of the book is the unfolding conflict between the progressives and the fundamentalists that hinges mainly around the values and behaviour of the new schoolteacher, Christopher Simms, the son of the retired magistrate.

There are a number of incidents that belie Horwood’s representation of the church community’s lack of initiative in their initial dealings with Brother John and are another example of Horwood’s ambivalence about his fictive community. In the early chapters of the novel, the majority of the community appear to be mesmerised by the charismatic figure of Brother McKim. However, the sect members did not all follow their leader blindly when his behaviour conflicted with outport custom, or personal self-interest or opinions, such as their rejection of the principal of holding property in common. Solomon Marks the merchant, Thomas Gilmore of Matthew and Eli’s father, Elias Pallisher, opposed this move vigorously

(1966, p.70). Elias Pallisher's reaction to a terrible illness that began killing the most physically vulnerable in Caplin Bight, is also a gesture of defiance in the face of the failure of the outsider Brother McKim's prayer meetings to provide a practical remedy. Elias Pallisher decides that the only solution is to take out his boat, regardless of the severe winter weather around Christmastime, in order to bring nursing help for the sick children of Caplin Bight. (1966, pp.30-39). Finally, the Church of the Firstborn community discovered that Brother John McKim had sexually abused Eli, and later falsely charged the teacher Chris with abusing Eli. At the end of the novel after the flight of the now disgraced Minister McKim, the Church of the Firstborn community decide to take responsibility for running their church and appoint their own Thomas Gilmore of Matthew as their new minister (1966, p.344). These initiatives are evidence that undermines Horwood's representation, particularly in the early part of the novel, of the members of the congregation as supine adherents of the congregation.

There are several other important strands evident in the novel underlining other more favourable values in this small community that Horwood wishes to convey to his readers. The selflessness of all members of the community regardless of their background, as well as their high level of skills and capacity for hard work, is a theme throughout. One example is Mr Simm's donation of free milk from his cow to all the children under three years old (1966, pp.22-24), following an economic downturn in the outport. It is also an example of community cohesion despite significant social and religious differences.

The most dramatic illustration of this quality is the episode in the novel when the drowning sailors are rescued from a sinking ship off Caplin Bight during a massive storm (1966, pp.187–194). The fishermen and the minister set out in their small boats, with no regard for their own safety:

> There was no display of rejoicing as they landed – just a sense of dumb thankfulness for men, reunited on the stormy waterfront with waiting wives and children who might so easily have been left widows and orphans, returned from the maw of the sea. And there was also a deep, genuine sense of sorrow for the six men and a boy who, so the castaways told them, had disappeared when the ship had struck… They were strangers, it was true, but part of the worldwide community of those who risk their lives on the water, and hence part of the large family to which the people of Caplin Bight too belonged (1966, p.193).

The description of the fishermen's safe homecoming is deftly articulated, leaving the reader to imagine the scene on the 'stormy waterfront' and the dazed, cold women and children waiting there. Horwood's dramatic use of the image of the monstrous sea with its 'maw' waiting to devour all in its path underlines the bravery and skill of the fishermen. This episode is a pivotal moment in the novel, as it reveals another aspect of outport life and the feelings of fraternity between seafaring communities.

Ironically, the heroes of this rescue are the very members of the community that Horwood has portrayed earlier in the novel in a negative light, as supine backwoodsmen. The brave behaviour of the fishermen and their minister confirm them as candidates for rounded characters at that point in the novel. However, the fisherman Thomas Gilmore of Matthew most truly demonstrates the greatest depth of character throughout the novel and epitomizes the more familiar archetypal image of the Newfoundland fisherman. Later, it is left to him to heal the wounds created by circumstance and the behaviour of their former minister. His public gesture of reconciliation to Christopher Simms at the closing stages of the novel mark him as 'now the social leader of the settlement, ranking even ahead of the merchant in the hierarchy of church elders (1966, pp.353-354)'. In many respects, Horwood's storyline would fit as well in other maritime places. There is little emphasis on the outporters bonding with the

place or their perceptions of their Newfoundland identity. What makes his depiction of his outport unique is the Newfoundland backdrop, or setting of the novel.

Horwood's empathy for the natural history of the outport environment is an important element in the novel. His use of imagery to underpin this sense of place is illustrated by the presence of the eagle flying high into the sky above the outport and is repeated throughout the novel (1966, pp.31-32; 121-122; 200; 206; 375). Chris and Eli share an admiration for these birds and a belief in their symbolism of freedom and free-thinking. They are also representative of the power of nature and man's relationship with the wilderness.

In addition, Horwood uses the presence of the eagles as a weapon against the religious mores of Caplin Bight. Chris asks Eli to swear on the *Outline of History,* rather than the customary Bible, that he will never shoot an eagle. This episode marks an important development in the novel, as his teacher Chris initiates the process of weaning Eli away from the old fashioned values of his outport family. "I've always loved to watch eagles too," Eli said, looking up at the big birds, "but my father says they're sent from the devil". Chris goes on to suggest eagles may prove to be the noblest work of God rather than man after their two billion years of evolution. However, Eli refutes this and Chris encourages him to argue against things that seem unsound (1966, p.122). His missionary zeal also extends to the communities's mores, such as clothing taboos (1966, pp.12-127). In this respect, Chris is not only the outport schoolteacher but also the, at times, intrusive authorial voice. The dual role of a messianic figure and didactic role model undermines him as a credible character in the novel and is stylistically unsubtle. His mission to change the mores of the outport community casts him in the role of yet another extremist.

Horwood's ambivalence towards the outport appears to be based on his own conflicting visions of these communities. In the first instance, he displays a profound love for the environment in which the outports are situated and he has considerable knowledge of their natural history. He pays considerable attention to portraying the idyllic but seasonally harsh environment, in which the community play out their lives. An example is Horwood's description of the transition from winter to summer:

> March melted imperceptibly into the long agony of the Newfoundland spring. The grass pushed up bravely into the fog. The rhubarb grew long in the little dooryard plots. Storms howled. The snow returned and buried the rhubarb. But at last it was June and school was out and the fish were running and the nightmare of April and May was soon forgotten (1966, p.110).

Horwood sums up the climatic conditions and underlines with this description the tenacious character of the Newfoundlanders. The bond between the outporter and his place provides both a prologue and an ending to the novel. The opening sentence describes how in 'a little valley on the shore of a great bay, set between a beautiful sound and a chain of offshore islands, lies the village of Caplin Bight, where the boy Eli was born. He and his companions never called it a village. In Newfoundland it was an outport… (1966, p.1)'. In the closing chapter, Eli comes down to the shore to bid farewell to his outport,

> It was the low tide of August in the dark of the moon – spring low, when the sea sank down from its accustomed bourn into the caves and hollows of the shore, and a terrible pre-dawn stillness hung over Caplin Bight as Eli made his way along the rocks of the Point… (1966, p. 370).

The entire final chapter is a eulogy to the physical landscape of the outport Caplin Bight and the spiritual qualities of the place (1966, pp.370-375). It is an early literary expression of the iconic status of the outport in Newfoundland mythology but with little reference to the human imprint and experience of the outport life-style.

The natural environment enshrining outport life impressed Horwood, as is also evident in much of his non-fiction, such as his bestseller *The Foxes of Beachy Cove* (1967). In *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday*, Horwood describes the juxtaposition between the outporters and their surroundings in this pre-industrial environment in all its seasons in an informed manner. His empathy and passion for this aspect of outport life lies at the heart of this novel. It is articulated by the responses of Chris and Eli to the constant presence of the eagles,

> And as they ate they saw the eagles come home to their nest on the crag of the thousand foot-cliff, spiralling down out of unimaginable depths of the firmament, black spots edged aiming the with fire in the burning sapphire of the sky, soaring on motionless wings, claiming the remotest regions of the air as a part of the dominion of life (1966, p.121*).*

The existential element of this description is fired by the linking of the 'firmament' with the 'dominion of life' played out against the intensely dramatic skies. As Chris and Eli watch the eagles circling high above them, they are reduced in stature in comparison with the expansive domain of the eagles. The birds assume metaphorical significance, as they represent the superiority of the natural world over the imperfections of the human one.

Horwood's great empathy and passion for the natural world of the outport is very evident throughout the novel, but it does not translate into an equally intense bond with his fictive outport community. This ambivalence is reflected in the depiction of the protagonist Eli, who is portrayed from his early childhood as being different to the other outport children. Eli disassociates himself from the outport boys and their senseless games torturing frogs (1966, pp.1-2) and later he is adamant that he would never shoot an eagle, as he only ever shoots for food (1966, p.121). In the closing pages of the novel the young adult Eli unexpectedly has reservations about leaving Caplin Bight,

> Eli was now facing the unpleasant necessity of leaving his

> native village, at least for long stretches of time, and parting from the people who had shaped his life, and breathed into him the soul that he would carry with him for all time to come (1966, p.362).

This uncharacteristic comment by Horwood about the positive influence of the outport lifestyle upon Eli is in contrast with the tenor of much of the rest of the novel. Given that Eli left his family home and went to live with Mr and Mrs Markady after a bitter quarrel with his father, it is difficult to accept that these sentiments are those of Eli himself. They echo more the sentiments of an 'existential insider' or topophilic (Relph 1976, p.55), as is explored in the following section of this chapter on Morgan's *Cape Random* novels.

In his debut novel, Horwood displays both elements of topophilia and topophobia in his depiction of the outport, a phenomenon more recently described by Edward Relph as 'paradoxical topophobia' (2014, Placeness and Place: Web Blog). Relph cites the work of Beatriz Monoz- Gonzalez (2005) on the home as an evocative place of contradictory emotions as relevant in this context.[18] Horwood's focus on the religious tensions in Caplin Bight deflects the readers' attention from the outport community spirit nurtured through the challenges of the natural world in this fictive outport. Nevertheless, Horwood's use of the outport as a literary motif or trope underlines the cultural importance of the outport in Newfoundlanders' perceptions of place and community identity. However, his interpretation of the outport's relevance is contrary to prevailing thought on Newfoundland cultural nationhood – a cultural identity that is evident in the Cape Random novels of Morgan.

## **Part Two: The Cape Random Novels.**

> In tracking my own relationship with this place – a lost and found story – I come near to tracking a story common to most Newfoundlanders of my generation…. Just as much, and more, must continue if we are to maintain a place that will inhabit

[18] The interplay between topophilia and topophobia is also discussed in Chapter Three.

> the imaginations of our children – or will they have to repeat the lost-and-found story of my generation?
>
> Bernice Morgan: www.heritage.nf.ca

> Newfoundlanders in their little communities have built up something worthwhile, something not measured by the size of the churches or the material beauty of the homes. Those of us who are fortunate enough to be able to claim one of these little communities as our birthplace, look back with humble gratitude to what we owe them. Daily lessons in cooperation and kindliness, taught by rude fishermen who wouldn't know a vitamin if they met one, but who did know that 'man does not live by bread alone'.
>
> Scammell, Arthur. 1945. "Outport Heritage." *Atlantic Guardian.*

The leitmotif driving Morgan's writing is her determination to reunite people with their places of origin, as observed in the heyday of the outports. She has described her emotional reaction to 'the things people leave behind – those huge piles of rocks you see in Newfoundland outports…abandoned houses, dishes, tools, even clothing (Porter, 1994, p.12)'. Furthermore, in her second novel *Waiting for Time* the protagonist Lavinia visits the site of the old outport home of her ancestors,

> Down where the houses must have been there is only rock and low bush, no cellar, fence or barn, no lilac tree or wharf. It looks like Tennyson's land, Lav thinks, staring out over a landscape where nothing but the sea moves – a land where no one comes or has come since the making of the world (1994, p.204).

Morgan records here not only the physical eradication of her protagonist's family outport by the sea and the climatic conditions surrounding it, but also the fate of her own ancestral home, underlining the impermanence of the physical outport. Her main concern is for the memorialisation of the ethereal but unrecorded daily lives of previous generations of Newfoundlanders through the novel genre. Although some readers may see her as a writer of historical novels, it is not her primary objective but rather a case of recreating 'the time and place, ambience they (the outporters) lived in (Porter, 1994 23)'.

This interlacing of identity and place is also present in the epigraph by Arthur Scammell. Although Scammell's 1945 tribute to the outporters in the *Atlantic Guardian* is much more passionate than evidential, it fuelled positive reactions for their island country in many Newfoundlanders at the time of writing, particularly those of the diaspora. These local characteristics existed alongside other shared qualities, for instance selflessness. Scammell alludes to these qualities 'that were welded into the tradition of the village, told to wide-eyed children around crackling winter fires, sinking into the minds with the multiplication table and giving point to the Sunday school lessons (1945, p.13)'. These values were handed down to following generations in the family kitchens of St John's and beyond (Morgan, 2003).

In contrast to Horwood's contentious vision of the outport in *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday*, Morgan's Cape Random novels (1993; 1994) focus on the importance of the outport as a memorialisation of the past. They are also an acknowledgement of the contribution that the past offers to cultural representations of the country of Newfoundland in the future. She believes that the 'culture of place'[19] is a fundamental element in the DNA of Newfoundlanders and the outport is its cradle. This belief sets her novels aside from those by another Newfoundlander writer who found success in the 1990s, M.T. Dohaney's *The Corrigan Women* and *To Scatter Stones* (1988, 1992). Dohaney's novels are nominally set in outports but the focus is on domestic and personal conflict rather than on an exploration of placed-based issues.

Morgan's approach is significant because it contributed to the importance of the outport in the island's psyche for many Newfoundlanders in the late twentieth century. Her novels were published and circulated locally and then nationally at a time when the collapse

[19] Title of Bernice Morgan's paper to The Newfoundland Historical Society in 2003.

of the cod fishery was one of several factors contributing to a reaffirmation of a Newfoundland identity. Disparate social and political elements merged in an inclusive expression of Newfoundland identity, rather than a divisive one. In this period, unlike the mid-twentieth century, the outport offered Newfoundlanders a common ground for reimagining their collective identity. The outport was both a physical setting and simultaneously a form of 'collective memory' or an 'imagined nation' (Colton. 2014, pp.12,14). The outport novel played an important part in a broader literary movement that was disseminating this image through poetry and prose during the final decades of the last century.[20] This late-twentieth century phenomenon had its roots in the mid-1900s.

The pre-industrial outport communities had served as a source of inspiration for novelists writing about them in pre-Confederation times, as described in earlier chapters of this study. Later on, writers and commentators, such as Scammel, had kept the memory of the outport ethos alive at a time, especially in the years immediately after Confederation, when it increasingly appeared irrelevant (Byrne, 1994; Fowler, 2002). Subsequently, a growing number of post-Confederation novelists fictionalised the threatened outport in the closing decades of the twentieth century so that the outport became a byword for the representation of Newfoundland in the context of longer fictional prose.

A complementary development was how the political campaign for the promotion of Newfoundland culture gained momentum during the 1960s and 1970s (Bill, 2009). This process occurred simultaneously with the movements within mainland Canada itself about the nature of Canadian identity. It is difficult to assess to what degree the high profile cultural developments in Newfoundland at this time were the result of unease with its loss of political

[20] Gordon Rodgers books of poems, *Floating Houses* (1984) and *The Pyrate Latitudes* (1986) are examples of poetry about the outports..

nationhood and how much the cultural activities were a reaction to mainland concerns about political stability in Canada as a whole. However, financial funds, such as grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, were made available to promote Canadian national culture. The political fallout resulting from these strategies provided much needed financial support for the aspirations of Newfoundlanders for their own cultural and political ends. As Bill has argued, '…it would be fair to say that while the Government of Canada may not have overtly influenced the province's policy choices from the 1960s to the present, it certainly enabled it (Bill,2009, p.107)'. Furthermore, as the Smallwood attempts at modernisation successively failed throughout the post-war period, the shared values of the outport ethos gradually became a point of cohesion in the creation of a public image of Newfoundland's worth in the wider Canadian context, initially through the promotion of Newfoundland folk music (Colton, 2014, p.10).

Morgan's own literary reputation was established through the publication of her first two novels, *Random Passage* (1993) and *Waiting for Time* (1994), originally written as one book but eventually published as separate novels (Lerena, 2015, Interview with Bernice Morgan, pp.311-313). Her fictionalising of the outport records the outporters' story for posterity and illustrates the importance of these unsung heroes of Newfoundland. She also illustrated how these small communities catered for other disparate factors, such as differences of religion, class and settler origins through the social and cultural variety of outport communities.

An important spin-off of her writing career aspirations has been the active part she has undertaken over more than four decades in the St. John's cultural movement. Unlike Horwood, Morgan chose to devote her energies to building up grassroots organisations and networks in her own province, serving on local boards and as a member of the Writers'

Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (WANL). More importantly, Morgan was also a founding member of the Newfoundland Writers' Guild (NWG), 'one of the longest surviving writers' organizations in Atlantic Canada (Fuller, 2004, p.91)'. It was set up in 1968 as a break-away organisation from The Canadian Authors' Association and described in her paper 'The Marginalia of Life' in *Life Sentences* (1993, p.16). The NWG celebrated their twenty-fifth anniversary by publishing a collection of papers and personal memories of their literary experiences and activities, entitled *Life Sentences,* in 1993. This idiosyncratic publication is an important resource for building up an understanding of this prominent textual community and its cultural networks at that time and its publication was in part financed by a national grant from the Canada Council and at the provincial level by the Department of Tourism and Culture (1993, p.iv).

Danielle Fuller's work on textual communities in Atlantic Canada revealed new perspectives on the existence and importance of women's textual communities in the promotion of local writing and literary networks in Newfoundland (2004, pp.89-105). One of the textual communities that featured in her research was the NWG, a group that demonstrates the potential power of grassroots textual communities in shaping place-based identities. The NWG not only had a local impact as a forum for the promotion of a broad range of literary activities, but its objectives included the profiling of Newfoundland writing at a national and even international level. One example of the NWG's outward- looking attitude to the activity of writing was the contribution to their publication *Life Sentences* (1993) by Mary Langhout of the South African Writers' Circle but a former member of the NWG. She recorded the vibrance of their meetings in St John's and the encouragement she received that launched her on her writing career (1993, pp.27-28). Morgan has been active in the promotion of local writers through her participation within the network of textual communities in Newfoundland

throughout her career. She was involved, for example, in the establishment of the Margaret Duley Fiction Contest in 1974 (Fuller, 2004, p.94).

One example of links within these networks is the coincidence that Horwood was Morgan's creative writing tutor in the period that she began experimenting with the novel genre. She records that she started a novel about a young girl's 'coming of age' story, set in St, John's, but the teacher, 'Harold Horwood, says nothing is really *happening* in the book – and I think he is right (1993, p.15)'. However, the mainstay of Morgan's literary support came from her membership of the NWG and she eventually became a fulltime writer.

## ***Random Passage* and *Waiting for Time:***

One aspect of Morgan's literary approach is the vocalization of a considered response to a post-Confederation Newfoundland: an understanding of the *realpolitik* of her contemporary times and the importance of the preservation of past values and experience for future generations. At a superficial level, it could be misinterpreted as retrogressive posturing, but its great strength is Morgan's conviction concerning the contribution of the experiences of ordinary people in the development of place identity (2003). Her work represents a literary interpretation of the concept of topophilia, as initially developed by Tuan (1974). It also underlines the relevance of peoples' experience of place in the moulding of their identity and the nature of their empathy with places, as observed by Tuan (1974) and Relph (1976).

Morgan achieves her aim by tracing the story of one family of immigrants to Newfoundland. The reader is transported with the migrant Andrews family from a west of England early capitalist coastal town in the first decades of the nineteenth century to a bleak island with a semi-feudal society, based on a variant of a bartered goods system (1993, pp.65,

67). The starkness of these discoveries moves the protagonist, Lavinia Andrews, to begin her journal and provides a means for Morgan of inserting a chain of flashbacks in the sequel *Waiting for Time* (the main action of which is set in the late twentieth century) that link back to the events depicted in *Random Passage*. Moreover, the extraordinary, vertical black rock that the nineteenth century protagonist leans against, as she begins her narrative, marks the site of the family outport in both Cape Random novels (1993, pp.13, 30). The journal that is read by the contemporary Lav Andrews in *Waiting for Time* provides a link between the generations of the Andrews family. Morgan's depiction of the everyday experiences of the two protagonists demonstrates how their strong bonds with place evolve over time.

Morgan's reader experiences a sense of place through the eyes of the protagonist and her family and acquaintances. This experience is felt at several levels, initially physical and later through aesthetic, sociological and political dimensions. Her protagonist in *Random Passage*, Lavinia Andrews, a former housemaid to a West Country merchant, chronicles both her own reaction and that of her family to their alien refuge. Despite being numbered among the English urban poor making a meagre living in any way they can muster, they also fall victim to a financial misdemeanour, resulting in the entire family having to steal away in a boat headed for the New World. Nevertheless, ironically the family were originally financially better off than their new neighbours. By contrasting the physical and social differences between England and Newfoundland at that time, Morgan presents a robust picture of pioneer life that is skilfully developed throughout her first Cape Random novel.

The optimism of the settler and the confrontation of their expectations with the reality of a Newfoundland winter in a low-technology era are adroitly described in the opening chapter of the novel (1992, pp.27-30, 52). The Andrews family's first sighting of Cape Random dashes their optimism: 'the place is like another, larger ship, jutting out to sea – one

side grey cliff, the other grey sand. …There are people standing on the wharf …. Their faces, blank, unwelcoming, devoid of any human expression (1992, p.29)'. The newcomers have great feelings of dismay and a sense of being out of place. The dramatic impact of making contact with the landwash by boat underlines the singularity of the meeting of land and sea and is a motif frequently used in outport novels (Lowell, 1858; Spencer, 1937; Proulx, 1993; Morrissey, 2004). Its absence in the modern setting of *Waiting for Time* is a reminder that the settler culture is physically, but not necessarily spiritually, a past phenomenon by the late twentieth century (1994, p. 25). The evocative experience of a sea approach to an outport has been lost through the march of technology. Aviation travel has provided the traveller with a dramatic bird's eye view of the landscape, as experienced by the twentieth century Lavinia in *Waiting for Time.* The maritime traveller's experience in *Random Passage* is more immediate emphasising the spatial relationship between land and sea. Another appropriate example is Erle Spencer's evocative record of his protagonist sailing in a coastal ferry in *The King of Spain's Daughter* (1937). He is confronted by a swathe of cliff-face that suddenly opens up to reveal a narrow entrance into a hidden outport settlement.

Despite the harsh settler existence endured by the Andrews family in their new homeland, their aesthetic response to the place grows, as they become familiar with the pattern of the seasons. The long, severe winters and the months spent sealing are followed by their annual celebration of survival, heralded when 'out of the mist, caplin come rolling up onto the beach. Great living waves of silver that leave a spongy carpet of eggs on the sand (1993, pp.59, 100-101)'. This annual event is the physical manifestation of the arrival of the early summer and life-giving hope. After the hard work of processing the fish all summer, the late summer and autumn have a holiday feel as the children and sometimes women, 'spend whole days with buckets and pails, counting themselves lucky to be on the barrens or in the

autumn woods, away from the fish flakes for a day (1993, p.123)'. The seasonal rhythm of outport life gives their community a measure by which to achieve survival and even satisfaction.

The emergence of the Andrews family's bonding with their new place is evident in the changes in the family members. The contentment of the dying Jennie Andrews early in the novel demonstrates her strong ties with her adopted outport home and marks the settler's aesthetic bonding with Cape Random:

> From here she can see all around the point where the sea shimmers in a great, blue semicircle beneath a clear sky. Behind her, evergreen is splashed with the yellow of birch and dogberry… Jennie cannot see the bog, the barrens or the neck from the outcropping, nor can she see the hills beyond the neck where she has never been, where the men go in winter to cut wood. Once they worried her, those black hills, but now she likes to think of them there, all those dark, crowded trees between her and the world….She is overtaken by a rush of happiness (*Random Passage*. 1993, pp.97-98).

Jennie's transformation from a nineteenth century West Country English urbanite to a committed outport dweller is remarkable, given the tremendous hardships and many adjustments she has had to make in this process. The landscape is woven into Jennie's perception of her new outporter identity. As an old woman, her horizons are limited to the immediate environment surrounding her house, but the encapsulating blue sea and sky form a comforting, protective shell around her outport with its background foliage. Her former fears about her alien new home, represented by the landscape beyond the outport, were initially a cause of anxiety but those 'black hills' and 'dark crowded trees' have created a buffer between her and the world she had fled from and the new unknown world of Newfoundland itself. Jennie realises 'that each year she has grown softer, more pliable, until now hardly anything of what she once was remains (1993, p.97)'. She has acquired a new identity and become an outporter and her former life has no relevance or pivotal hold over her.

Morgan has used the novel genre to great effect through building up the emergence of Jenny's new settler identity chapter by chapter through the telling of her daily experiences. The reader also experiences Jennie's surprise and pleasure at the revelation. The characterisation of Jennie reflects Morgan's own topophilia for her place and her belief in its power in moulding local identity. Morgan's authorial voice relays her belief in the power of her 'place' as one facet of Newfoundland identity and her other characters in the two Cape Random novels are evidence that Jennie's experience and transformation are shared by the entire group from the West country. Jennie acknowledges her immigrant family's debt of gratitude to their Newfoundland neighbour Sarah, "we would ha'starved or froze a dozen times over without her help! Shared everything she had with us, Sarah did…" (1993, p.99). Morgan exploits the novel genre to relay images of Newfoundland and outport culture through the telling of her characters' life histories and their experiences of place.

The antidote to the challenges and tragedies that occur in Morgan's Random *Passage* novel is the memory of legendary summers:

> It has been a radiant summer – a series of windless, sun-filled days in which rains fall softly at dusk or just before glistening dawns. A generous season of plentiful catches, bountiful gardens, bushes heavy with berries and goats' milk of a creaminess that must be commented upon with each sip. A summer so splendid it will be remembered as the golden mean by which all summers to come must be measured (1993, p.135).

The description of the harvest of plenty gives a bacchanalian feel to the summer season. The reader experiences the wonderment of the outporters at such excess. Morgan achieves this effect by a growing list of ever amazing phenomena reaching the crescendo of the image of the 'golden mean'. This tribute to the settler mind-set, and the justification for their perseverance against so many difficulties, is an important element in the composition of Newfoundland identity for future generations, as articulated by Morgan in *Random Passage.*

She puts the accent on the resilience of the early outporters and their strong bonds with their challenging environment. There is a triumphant satisfaction evident in the outporters' achievements and the freedom their life-style gives them for personal fulfilment.

At first sight, Morgan's descriptions of the landscape and the celebration of the good times have created a romanticised vision of the life of the outport 'folk'. However, there is simultaneously a savage and harsh side to her portrayal of outport life in the grinding daily work regime of their lives and the constant prospect of violence. Dramatic examples include Ned's death as a consequence of the fatal attack by a polar bear, Peter's killing of the Beothuk and the ever-present threat to life from the sea and winter starvation. This dichotomy is delivered in an uncompromising fashion in the novel. Although these incidents are melodramatic, they do illustrate the unpredictability of the early settlers' lives. They also bring to life the close bonds of the outporters and add to our understanding of their characters (Fuller, 2004, pp.125-126).

In her sequel *Waiting for Time*, Morgan's approach is quite different and her authorial voice is directed at a contemporary audience. *Random Passage* functioned as a fictional reconstruction and critique of the life of the early outport settlers, but *Waiting for Time* challenges their present-day descendants not only to memorialise their cultural inheritance but, more importantly, to transpose its important aspects into their lives. This settler mindset is absent in the portrayal of the character Charlotte, the twentieth century war bride from Europe. The ferocity of Charlotte's life-long aversion to the Cape in *Waiting for Time*, contrasts with the empathy of the contemporary Andrews family with their outport. This bond is later experienced by Charlotte's daughter Lavinia. When the narrative is relayed through Charlotte, the Cape is far from a bountiful home place:

> It was the worst place – the very worst! Cold – dismal – the sea all around, pounding away day and night. A god-forsaken strip of sand

> sticking out into the ocean with four or five crazy families living on it. No electricity, no plumbing – not even clean water to drink because the whole place was sliding into the sea. Seawater seeped in underneath and the wells were all salty. I can taste it yet – brown and gritty, smelling of dead things (*Waiting for Time*, 1994, pp.18-20).

Charlotte's description of the outport in the 1940s not only underlines its changing landscape, but also represents a reversal in the expectations of quality of life among the wider population outside of outport Newfoundland in the post-war era. Once again, Morgan uses a stylistic listing technique to give the reader a thumbnail sketch of Charlotte's impressions. Morgan's use of the phrase 'a godforsaken strip of sand' and the allusion to the inhabitants as 'four or five crazy families' is arresting. Charlotte's allusion to the primitive facilities equates the living conditions with those normally found in underdeveloped parts of the world.

Her daughter Lavinia Andrews, known as Lav, is witness to the former outport's final surrender to the sea less than thirty years after her mother's first sight of it:

> Down where the houses must have been there is only rock and low bush, no cellar, fence or barn, no lilac tree or wharf. How could people have built anything amid these humps and hollows? (Waiting for Time, 1994, p.204).

In this description the outport is also a metaphor for the fragility of cultural legacies, as expounded by Morgan (2003). The forces of nature represented by the sea have totally annihilated all the traces of human existence in the old outport site. The outport of Cape Random only lives on in people's memories that must be recorded for posterity so that the Newfoundland spirit can flourish. Her strategy focuses on memorialising the way of life of previous generations of her own family, before the oral evidence is lost in time both materially and existentially.

The topophobia of Charlotte, the mother of the present day descendent of the Lavinia of *Random Passage,* highlights the topophilia of her daughter for the outport world. It also

demonstrates the fragility of experiential bonding with place. Charlotte's lifelong aversion to outport values has parallels with the landing of the nineteenth century Andrews family on Cape Random and the first Lavinia's initial reaction to the outport in the opening pages of *Random Passage* (pp.13-14). Despite Charlotte's antipathy to the Cape, the twentieth century Lavinia Andrews eventually develops the same emotional bonds with outport life and values as Donna Morrissey's Addy and Sylvanus and Annie Proulx's protagonist, Quoyle. Relph's categorisation of insider and outsider bonding with place demonstrate its complex mingling of emotional, intellectual and physical elements (1976, pp.49-55). The nineteenth century Lavinia and the twentieth century Lav embrace their environment at many levels of intensity (insider bonding), in contrast to Charlotte's closed repulsion of her new life.

Another important aspect of Newfoundland identity captured by Morgan is the sociological dynamics of the outport way of life because the novels demonstrate the cohesion of these small and scattered isolated communities. The outporters' norms and values are to some extent purely practical responses to the conditions of the place. The first two chapters of *Random Passage* function as an introduction to the rough life and mores of the Cape community. Survival in a challenging environment depends on the men and women of the community working together and on establishing the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. When Mary Bundle and Ned Andrews seem about to infringe upon the sexual mores of the community, Mary's future as a new member of the community is put in jeopardy, for example (1993, pp.95-99).

Morgan's goal is to achieve a social balance in her reconstruction of a Newfoundland past for all Newfoundlanders. The Cape Random community are most probably non-conformist Protestants, no doubt heavily influenced by the eighteenth-century Wesleyan

movement.[21] Engagement with the Catholic community in Newfoundland is through the character of Hutchings, a political, fugitive Catholic priest. The contrast between the life-style of the capital of St John's and the Cape Random outport is illustrated by Hutchings' mission of mercy to the city in the closing chapters of *Random Passage.* The inclusion of accounts of the building of the Catholic basilica in 1838-1855 and references to Bishop Fleming, the driving force behind its construction, provide a time-marker for readers, as well as some perspective and balance on perceptions of social and political differences. Morgan uses Hutchings' visit to the city of St. John's to provide some context to the differences in attitudes between urban and rural Newfoundland. Hutchings meets up again with Captain Alex Brennan, who comes twice a year to Cape Random. Hutchings questions him about friction between the West Country Protestants and the Irish Catholics in the city. His inquiries are dismissed with humour by Captain Alex Brennan:

> Not usually, though you'll hear a lot of that kind of name calling. It don't come to much unless it's stirred up by merchants lookin' for cheap labour or by the political crowd wantin' to set one lot against the other for their own reasons. (1993, p. 242).

This relativist view of religious tolerance in Newfoundland society has a very contemporary timbre to it and is also woven into the 2010 novel *Galore* by Michael Crummey in his depiction of a nineteenth century outport before the arrival of organised religion. In the early days, settlers rarely saw ministers of any religion in the more isolated outports, as is demonstrated in *Random Passage*, where the outport women gave the moral lead.

In her historical reconstruction of outport life in the early days of settlement, Morgan also demonstrates that the outport communities were isolated but not uninterested in the

[21] The televised version of the Random Island novels portrayed the Andrews family as Irish immigrants.

outside world. In *Random Passage*, the outporters are keen to hear political news about England; talk of another treaty with the French and the building of a large house for the Governor in St. John's are again markers of the passage of time and of great interest to the community (1993, p.56). News is relayed through crews of passing ships The sea is both a link with the outside world and a cause of isolation. Furthermore, the focus of the outporters has to be on their own survival in a pre-industrial society. However, they are daily made aware of the outside world beyond the horizon and Morgan uses the outport genre to remind readers that the outporters are intellectually open to that world. Morgan demonstrates that the physical isolation of a place does not mean that its inhabitants lack knowledge or curiosity about other worlds. The life stories of the Andrews family, Mary Bundle and Hutchings are proof of this connectivity.

However, Morgan fully embraces the contemporary political issues of late twentieth century perceptions of identity linked to this place in her second novel *Waiting for Time.* She explores the new threat to Newfoundland identity and the current generation's relation to their place initially because of the decline of the cod fishing industry but, most of all, through globalisation (Wylie, 2011). Morgan explains how important it was to her that this second novel reflected the political realities of what happened at the time before the introduction of the cod moratorium (Hernaez Lerena, 2015, Interview with Morgan, p.313). The friction and concern felt by people in Newfoundland is symbolised through Morgan's use of imagery and metaphor in the novel.

The image of the fish in Lav's dreams throughout the early part of this sequel alerts the reader to the enormity of the threat to the Newfoundland way of life because of the 1992 cod moratorium (1994, pp.34, 35, 40, 59), as well as to Lav's growing identification with the potential threat to its people. The sinister manoeuvrings behind the scenes in both St John's

and Ottawa are the intellectual backcloth to Lav's emotional response to her dilemma as a civil servant. Mark Rodway, her youthful research assistant, leaks their internal report to Ottawa in an attempt to prevent a cover-up, also giving Lav access to the Journal written by her ancestor Lavinia Andrews (1993, p.47). The rediscovery of the original Lav's journal provides the literary possibility of the introduction of a series of flashbacks to previous points in the Andrew and the Vincent families' history and enables Morgan to reveal more about the early outporter story.

Morgan's point in *Waiting for Time* in 1994 is clear that the next generation is close to having 'to repeat the lost-and-found story' of her generation. This turning point in the novel triggers a significant train of events that reunites Lav with her outport past and what she perceives as her rightful place as part of her rediscovered Newfoundland family links. In this respect, Lav becomes a champion of the Newfoundland legacy of the 'culture of place (Morgan, 2003)'. Lav may have failed in her battle with the politicians and the Ottawa bureaucracy but she has demonstrated her solidarity with the localists rather than the globalists (Wyile, 2011). Morgan is making the point to her readers that Newfoundlanders have to decide how they are going to reconcile the legacy of the past with an uncertain future.

The prologue to the novel *Random Passage* is dedicated to the island of Newfoundland itself and its symbolic importance for all the generations that have lived out their time on the island throughout the centuries. In the Introduction to this thesis, reference was made to the tragic history of the Beothuk in Newfoundland. *Random Passage* is set in the early days of the nineteenth century, when the Beothuk population were threatened by disease and displacement. Morgan depicts a group of Beothuk who have come down to the shore to hunt for seals. The grandmother Ejew recalls 'an old wise woman telling the children that even in ancient times strangers… considered the cape holy (1993, Prologue)'. Morgan is not

only demonstrating an awareness of the Newfoundland settlers predating the Europeans but also the bond that people throughout time have had with the place. It is not simply an articulation of post-colonial re-interpretations of the imperial age in the late twentieth century. On the contrary, Morgan's approach focusses on the common humanity shared by the different sets of settlers, including their interest, caution and fears about each other. The Beothuk woman Ejew in *Random Passage* is looking down at her place and 'thinking that her people are disappearing, that the place is no longer theirs (Lerena, 2015, Interview with Bernice Morgan, p.312)'. One problem with the positioning of the prologue is that the two Cape Random novels were originally one novel with an intricate interweaving of the stories (Lerena, 2015, p.312). Morgan succeeded in creating a link between her first and second novel, *Waiting for Time,* when Lav discovers her Newfoundland roots and finds her place with her ancestral outport family. Morgan's story of the Beothuk connection with Newfoundland is not so clear for readers of her second novel *Waiting for Time*. The inclusion of Ejew and her grandson does highlight the fears of each successive wave of settlers. The Beothuk bonds with Newfoundland are symbolised in Morgan's first novel by the iron rod cast away into the sea by the Beothuk in the prologue to this novel, and later retrieved from the sea by Thomas Hutchins and Josh Vincent (1993, p.57). Throughout *Random Passage,* there are constant references to the concealed presence of the remaining Beothuk (1994, pp.53-55, 104, 190-194, 218, 230). Credence is given to these incidents to the Vincent and Andrews families by the discovery of Fanny Bundel's pregnancy and the birth of her son, given the Beothuk name Toma (1993, pp.192-194). The name-giving bestows a continuity to the impact 'this place' imprints on all its settlers throughout time. In this way, Morgan draws the Beothuk into the Newfoundland story.

**Conclusion.**

This chapter has explored aspects of the development of the outport novel as expressions of sense of place and its correlation with Newfoundland identity in the post-Confederation era, with the focus on the debut novels of the insider writers Horwood and Morgan. Their novels marked important milestones in the creation of the iconic outport in fiction. Horwood was the first Newfoundland novelist to set a novel entirely in an outport in the period after the Second World War . His fictional community was flawed in its creator's eyes but its very existence in such an unforgiving natural environment was a tribute to the human spirit and to the attractions of the place itself. A superficial examination of the novel suggested that Horwood had a topophobic attitude to the outport communities. However, his depiction of the heroism and good will of the fishermen both at a group level and as individuals at strategic points in the novel displays of elements of topophilia, as already discussed earlier in the chapter. In reality, the theme of his novel in the context of topophobia appears to have much to do with Horwood's rejection of his religious roots and his embrace of the changing mores of the Sixties era.

Another consideration in an analysis of Horwood's fictional outport was his support for Confederation with Canada and his support in the early post-Confederation years of Prime Minister Smallwood's government. As a consequence of his political leanings, his focus in *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* was on the pre-industrial outport with its impoverished inhabitants lacking the benefits of modern life. He illustrates these drawbacks through the incidents in the novel when the outporters experienced periods of sickness and malnutrition. The future development and prosperity of Newfoundland, as he saw it, lay in other directions that were more likely to occur if Newfoundland joined Canada. This view of a future way forward for Newfoundland is the likely source of the ambiguities in Horwood's depictions of Caplin

Bight in *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* with its conflicting array of elements of both topophobia and topohilia

On the other hand, a further point is the recognition by Horwood in his debut novel that the outport played a significant part in the creation of images of Newfoundland identity. This viewpoint is underlined by the closing chapter of the novel, when Horwood links Caplin Bight with the primeval origins of life on earth and hints at the importance of the outport ideal for Eli's future life. The lyrical description of Eli's last early morning swim in the sea is Horwood's eulogy to the exceptional environment of the outport setting with its fishermen setting sail on the cusp of the dawn 'seeking permission, hesitantly to intrude upon the privacy of nature. Three generations of fishermen had made its voice as much a part of the sea as the mewing of the gulls (1966, pp.373)'. What the protagonist Eli was mourning on his departure from the outport was his loss of a way of life lived out in an extraordinary natural environment.

Morgan's outport is a fictional reconstruction of the daily existence of the outporters in an isolated coastal settlement over more than a hundred and fifty years. While her account is not uncritical, it is based on the belief that their story is worthy of being told and is bound up closely with the future of Newfoundland. The values of the outport communities honed over generations of survival in a challenging environment with meagre resources have left a lasting legacy that the present generation have a right to understand. She achieves her aim by her fictional reconstruction of the daily lives of early Newfoundland families. Her topophilia is the keystone to an understanding of her Cape Random novels and demonstrates the importance attached to place in fiction, as also observed by Tuan (1974), Pocock (1981) and Lutwack (1984) . The most important criterium for Morgan is that the real story of the Newfoundland people and their culture is paramount and located in the outports. The lived

experiences of generations of Newfoundlanders is the evidence of their attachment to place**.** This chapter has demonstrated that, by the late twentieth century, the outport had become contested territory and an iconic representation of a form of cultural nationhood.

An interpretation of the cultural significance of the outport in the novels written both around the Millennium and in the early years of the present century is considered through an analysis of Morrissey' *Sylvanus Now* (2004) and Proulx's *The Shipping News* (1993) in the following chapter. The focus will be on the depictions of home and homeland. The depiction of the outport as contested territory, as explored in Chapters Three and Four is contrasted with the outport as an iconic representation of a form of cultural nationhood. The discussion is augmented by outsider perceptions of the outport in the period immediately before Newfoundland joined the Canadian Confederation.

# CHAPTER FIVE: SENSES OF PLACE THROUGH DIASPORIC AND OUTSIDER EYES.

## Introduction:

> "The relationship between place and people is a reciprocal one. (Alan Sillitoe's description) of people being 'impregnated' with landscape, …emphasize(s) differing positions along the continuum of a place-person symbiosis."
> Pocock (1981, p.341).

This fourth case study will examine the 'place-person symbiosis' as epitomised in two contemporary Newfoundland place-based novels set in the outports. The outport novels of Donna Morrissey and Annie Proulx have both reflected and shaped senses of place in Newfoundland, despite the fact that Morrissey's work is written from a diasporic perspective and Proulx's viewpoint is that of an outsider. Both Morrissey and Proulx explore senses of place through their visions of the outport and their treatment of place and identity, which are consciously or unconsciously linked to the idea of individuals being at home with themselves and their immediate environment. Morrissey's outport is written with insider knowledge: she grew up in an outport herself. In local parlance, the American novelist Proulx comes 'From Away' and her fictional version of the outport is constructed from observation and intuition. A characteristic which they appear to share, however, is an awareness of the symbolic importance of the outport and how it might be understood as an intrinsic element in the composition of the *cultural DNA* of Newfoundlanders.

In this chapter, the focus will be on the phenomenon of the iconic outport itself. I will argue that by the late-twentieth century the outport had acquired a symbolic status. It represented the values of hard work, perseverance, neighbourliness and a strong bond with place as characteristics of Newfoundlanders. This analysis of Morrissey and Proulx's fictional outports is undertaken at three levels through an exploration of the nature of the outport as a

concept in Newfoundland mythology. In Part One, the perception of Newfoundland as homeland, both before and after Confederation, is discussed mainly through the prism of Newfoundland political history, illustrating the philosophical basis for the late twentieth century perceptions of cultural nationhood. The focus of Part Two is on the depiction of the nature of the outport community, as portrayed in the two case study novels. The significance of the literary sketches of outport community life in the two novels are that they complement the memoirs of many contemporary Newfoundlanders (Buss, 1999; Murray, 1979). The iconography of the outport is presented in Part Three through a study of the importance of house and home in the outport, developing arguments introduced in earlier chapters on the iconic outport.

In *The Shipping News* (1993), Proulx uses the literary device of a traumatised and troubled diasporic family arriving in Newfoundland to rebuild their lives, whereas in Morrissey's novels *Kit's Law* (1999), *Downhill Chance* (2002) and *Sylvanus Now* (2005) the protagonists are outporters, wrestling with the challenges of life in small communities. In this case study, the main focus will be on Morrissey's third novel, *Sylvanus Now,* although the influence of the experience of writing the first two novels has resulted in a far more nuanced depiction of the complexities of outport life in her third novel. Reactions to *The Shipping News* and *Sylvanus Now* at the time of their publication varied considerably and have continued to be a source of interest and sometimes controversy ever since, in the context of an ongoing debate about the political, social and cultural future of Newfoundland (Pierson, 1995; Rompkey, 1994).

Initial reactions in Newfoundland to Proulx's Pulitzer Prize winning novel were, on the whole, expressions of indulgent irritation, or sharp criticism, as reflected in Stuart Pierson's review in *Newfoundland Studies* (1995). *The Shipping News,* a global bestseller,

brought the existence of the outport way of life to the attention of an international reading public. In July 1996 in a letter to the *New York Magazine*, the Communications Vice-President of Simon and Schuster, the novel's publishers, claimed to have sold a million copies (1996, p.5). This publicity, as well as the success of the 2001 cinematic adaptation of the novel, coincided with a new surge in interest in the phenomenon of the outport in the work of local novelists, emanating from concerns about the potential loss of cultural and historical knowledge about Newfoundland's past. The rise in the publication of novels set in outports, including the 1993 novel *Random Passage* by Bernice Morgan, was discussed in Chapter Four. In addition, the legacy of the post- Confederation Resettlement Programme and the crisis in the fishing industry, highlighted by the Moratorium in 1992, sharpened local awareness of these dangers, as I discussed in-depth in the previous chapter.

When *Sylvanus Now* was launched in 2005, Morrissey was already an established best-selling writer, whose first two novels had been published by Penguin paperbacks. Reviews of her books had been positive and by 2000 *Kit's Law* was on English syllabus booklists at the Memorial University of Newfoundland. However, the historical and nostalgic arguments around the issue of the semiotics of the outports appeared less relevant, as Newfoundland struggled to cope with the economic, political and social challenges of restructuring the fishing industry and the prospect of becoming an oil economy. The issues of senses of place and personal and communal cultural identity, as represented by the outport, seemed less relevant precisely at the point that Newfoundland was confronted with the prospect of what the cultural geographer Edward Relph (1976) has termed *placelessness*, as found in the wake of commercial enterprises, such as the global oil industry. Edward Riche's satirical novel *Rare Birds* (1997) was a minor prescient masterpiece, which recognised the

dilemma facing the Newfoundland community of developing a viable future while retaining the cultural importance of *This Place.*

In the present context it is noteworthy that although the work of Yi Fu Tuan and Relph on place developed in some respects in different ways in the1970s, they both believed in the importance of human attitude or intentionality to place and experience of place. It is this shared focus on the philosophical aspects of place, together with the more recent work of cultural geographers, such as Doreen Massey (1995), Gillian Rose (1995) and James Duncan and David Lambert (2004), which provides form and perspective for the discussion in the following three parts of this case study. Insightful analyses of the local literature of the Maritime Provinces, including Newfoundland, by Herb Wyile (2011) and Danielle Fuller (2004) and others have also added new dimensions to the understanding of the contribution to Newfoundland cultural deliberations by novelists and their outport novels. The importance of these literary academic studies is their examination of the wider social, economic and political contexts of contemporary Atlantic Canadian literature, which is particularly apposite in the case of the Newfoundland research of Fuller (2002; 2004; 2008) and Wyile (2008; 2011).

## Part One: Senses of place and senses of nation.

### The symbolic and metaphorical role of the outport.

> Then we must consider the nature of the country itself. In size Newfoundland is the size of England and Wales. About one-third of it is water and somebody has suggested that if you fly over it in an aeroplane it looks much like what the world must have looked like when the dove went out from the ark after the great flood. The population, as I have said, consists of 283,000 people in normal times distributed over the whole country in 1,300 settlements which gives an average of 183 persons in each settlement. Over 40,000 of these people are centred in St. John's, and St. John's is both the capital of the island and also an object of suspicion by the rest of the island because the people have a fear that they are

> dominated and ruled by the people in St. John's – which seems perfectly true – with little or no regard for the rest of the population.
>
> Lord Ammon: Hansard 03 May 1944 vol 131 cc 576-616.

In May 1944, Lord Ammon, a member of the 1943 parliamentary goodwill mission sent by the Department of Dominion Affairs to Newfoundland, made a forthright appeal to the House of Lords to take immediate steps as preparation to restore representative government to the country of Newfoundland. His uncompromising address reflects the concerns of a number of government members in London about the need to prepare for the post-war status of Newfoundland as a country within the Empire. Not only does Lord Ammon's motion serve as evidence of the importance of their nationhood to ordinary Newfoundlanders in the 1940s, but also it is external corroboration of the strength of feeling among the outporters about the self-interest of the governing classes in St. John's in the pre-war period. These opposing sentiments, popularly characterised as the 'Baymen versus Townies', are part of the backcloth to much of Newfoundland literature, including the novels in this case study. In the first part of this case study, an argument is made that the outport was and still is an integral element in Newfoundland's cultural manifestations of nation as home. Furthermore, novelists writing on Newfoundland and its outport tradition have played an important role in preserving and promoting Newfoundland identity and cultural nationhood in the post-Confederation era. Therefore, the objective of this part of the case study will be to pursue at a more philosophical level the contribution of both Morrissey and Proulx to an understanding of the Newfoundlander's relationship to the outport as part of the iconography of the Newfoundland nation.

The position of Newfoundland as a self-governing country and the trauma of relinquishing that status in 1949 is a theme that is frequently present in late-twentieth-century Newfoundland outport novels. Although not explicitly dealt with in either *Sylvanus Now or*

*The Shipping News,* the two novels underline the idiosyncratic nature of the island, as represented by the outports, and demonstrate their contribution to the groundswell of cultural nationalism in the decades around the millennium. In any case, Morrissey had already written about the period immediately before Confederation in her outport novel *Downhill Chance* and, therefore, readers familiar with her outport chronicles would be aware of her standpoint on the issue.

However, in the context of Newfoundland's political status as a dispossessed nation, it is not particularly remarkable that the case study novels are characterised by an implicit resistance to the narratives of the central government in Ottawa that runs counter to the philosophy behind many of the American and British regional novels in the context of nation building, as described by Mary Austin (1932) and Phyllis Bentley (1941) and referred to in the Introduction. Both Austin and Bentley perceived regional novels as important vehicles for the expression of a national identity.

In contrast, the outport novels since Confederation are centres of resistance to the idea of a Canadian national narrative, or, more precisely to the political dominance of Newfoundland by Ottawa. This tension is evident in the accompanying documentation of the Royal Commission Report *Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada* published by the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador (2003). These research papers included Gerard Blackmore's contribution 'Sense of Place: Loss and the Newfoundland and Labrador Spirit', which epitomises the emotions about Confederation still felt by many Newfoundlanders in varying degrees of intensity. In his paper, Blackmore (2003, p.345-346) underlined the importance of a sense of place to Newfoundlanders even now and the need for them to mourn the loss of independence, following Confederation. He also believed that the Newfoundland spirit would ensure the island's future and quoted the Newfoundland proverb as evidence:

‘You can take the man out of the bay, but you can’t take the bay out of the man.’ For ‘bay’ we should read ‘place’. A vexed question in this context, therefore, is at what point a regional, or local, novel becomes part of a nationalist narrative. It would seem curious to maintain that Newfoundland literature would become regional in 1949 on purely political grounds. However, given the ongoing debate in Canada as a whole concerning the future shape of its national narrative, it is interesting to speculate how the dynamic cultural awareness of Newfoundlanders contributed to this dialogue in the context of their own lost nationhood.

In fact, what appears to have occurred in Newfoundland literary circles in the years following Confederation is that the typically pragmatic Newfoundlanders have redefined the parameters of the debate and subscribed to a form of cultural nationalism. This development has prompted reference being frequently made to Anderson’s notion of imagined communities in the Newfoundland context (Delisle 2008; 2013, p.17). However, as Newfoundland was self-governing from 1855 and was regarded as a country in its own right, albeit with colonial status, Anderson’s concept of imagined communities is perhaps most apposite in understanding the great importance of the Newfoundland diaspora’s contribution to Newfoundland cultural nationalism (Delisle 2008, pp.17-24). Newfoundland’s past history is also the reason why it does not entirely conform to the concept of Atlantic Canada either, as pointed out by Wyile (2011, p.7) and by the assertions of Hiller (2007) that Newfoundland is more like Quebec than any other Canadian province. In their study of the making of Atlantic Canada, Conrad and Hiller (2001, p.1) state that the term ‘Atlantic Canada’ became ‘the convenient shorthand term’ for all four Canadian easternmost provinces in the second half of the twentieth century. In reality, Newfoundland does not fit neatly into any of the above interpretations. Anderson’s concept of an imagined community comes closest to the

Newfoundland situation. The fact is that Newfoundland was a nation for generations but is now part of Canada.

In his book *Imagined Communities,* Benedict Anderson (1983) ha*s* developed a case concerning the roots of the rise of nationalism in the Americas from the eighteenth century onwards, focussed on the rise of a literate population and the role of the printed word in creating awareness about the common interests and mutual identities among the settlers in the Americas. Furthermore, he pointed out that, unlike the emergence of European nationalism in the nineteenth century, language was not an issue in the Americas. However, in the Newfoundland context, Anderson's historical interpretations, although interesting for comparative purposes, could not be expected to anticipate the impact of vernacular English on the forging of identity within Newfoundland in the period after Confederation, as evident in many of the outport novels, including the novels in this case study. Furthermore, the works of folklorists and applied linguists at Memorial University have contributed to a greater understanding and an appreciation of the cultural importance of vernacular language in literature, as acknowledged by Sandra Clark (2010).

The historians Hiller (2007) and Bannister (2002) have examined the rise of a form of Newfoundland nationalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which has been more fully discussed in the introductory chapter. These historical sources have provided a useful background to an understanding of the post-Confederation mind-set of Newfoundlanders. They have also provided scenarios for an understanding of contemporary developments of post-millennium island nationalism and the impact of the growth of the media on the artistic expressions of nationalist feeling by the turn of the last century. An outstanding local example is the film 'Secret Nation' (1992), directed by Michael Jones and scripted by Edward Riche. This film was a fictive dramatization of an alleged plot to steer the

result of the 1949 pre-Confederation referendum to decide on whether Newfoundland should join Canada or not. It was a tightly directed documentary genre. Its symbolic importance was that it fuelled local feelings of loss of nationhood.

These sentiments of loss of nationhood and of the Newfoundland way of life found expression through the outport ideal. The exact role of the outports in the iconography of Newfoundland nationalism is difficult to define but Pocius' work on the outport community of Calvert delivers some interesting perspectives on this role (Jackson 1991, pp.208-209). As Jackson, in reviewing Pocius' study, astutely points out the significance of Pocius' outport work is the evidence it provides of the survival of 'a kind of 17th-century North American pioneer spirit' in the contemporary Newfoundland character. This theme is picked up in Blackmore's 2003 research paper, where he reminds fellow Newfoundlanders of the importance of understanding 'the fierce and distinctive spirit that is our heritage, what it was, whence it came, what it has accomplished and the value it can afford us in the future (2003, PP. 345-346).' This call to arms is reflected in the reactions of the protagonists in both *Sylvanus Now* and *The Shipping News,* demonstrated by Sylvanus' and Adelaide's insistence on building their future in their outport and the Quoyles' rejection of their American roots in favour of a new life in an outport.

In Part Two, the utilization of the vernacular in *Sylvanus Now* is discussed in order to illustrate the identity and cohesive nature of the outport community. However, its use in the novel is also an element in the implicit nationalist narrative of the novel. Although language does not play a part in the Newfoundland nationalist agenda, the deployment of the vernacular in the outport novels does underline the unique quality of Newfoundland culture and identity. Furthermore, the vernacular functions as means of marking cultural territory and sense of place, which excludes outsiders in mainland Canada. It is interesting that although Proulx

does not employ the vernacular to the same extent as Morrissey, she does conjure with the exotic nature of place names, such as 'Killick-Claw' and 'Gaze Island' and the names of characters, such as 'Tert Card the local newspaper editor' and 'Alvin Yark the boat-builder' in order to create a similar linguistic exclusivity.

One element of Newfoundland identity, which is almost largely absent in both Morrissey's and Proulx's representations of outport life is the role of religion in the outport and its wider implications for Newfoundland. This aspect of Newfoundland life, both in the urban setting as well as in the outports, is dealt with more fully in my introductory chapter and in some of the other case studies, for example in Chapter Two and Chapter Four. In this respect, its almost total absence in *The Shipping News* is quite remarkable, although its lack of 'maudling religiousity*'* is welcomed by Ronald Rompkey (1994, p.130). Morrissey's approach to religious life is presented as a personal matter, as instanced by Addy's use of the outport church as a refuge from her turbulent home life as a young girl and her therapeutic reading of a book about the saints in times of stress, or for emotional escape after her marriage and also following the death of her first three infants. This treatment fits with the nationalist image of Newfoundland of the last twenty years, in which, in the words of the historian Sean Cadigan (2009, p.40), 'we are not setting aside our differences. Instead, nationalists ask us to pretend that these differences do not exist, or that they are somehow much less important than their goals.' The undermining effect of the unresolved religious divide was a factor historically in Newfoundland society, as is demonstrated in the case studies referred to above.

The importance of place in representations of Newfoundland as homeland is also addressed in the present case study novels. The juxtaposition of sea and land are physical realities clearly defining the homeland. The world beyond is far away but also, viewed from

another dimension, only a boat ride away and open to everyone to reach out to, should they wish to do so. In fact, as Addy recognises in *Sylvanus Now* despite her feelings of entrapment, if she had dared, she could have left the outport at any time. Both Morrissey and Proulx identify with and promote the importance of the landscape and the sentiments it evokes in them and in their characters. They draw comfort, excitement and inspiration from it. In *Sylvanus Now,* both Addy and Sylvanus display a spiritual relationship with their environment that defines them as independent Newfoundlanders, as is the case with Sylvanus' feelings for the sea (2005, pp.320-321). Proulx also recognises the significance of this phenomenon, as illustrated by Quoyles' gothic-like experience on the stormy headland close by the family ancestral home (1993. pp.208-209).

Another aspect of outport life which traditionally epitomises national values is the Newfoundland ideal of humanity working with and against the elements. This Newfoundland characteristic encouraged a strong community spirit rather than an overemphasis on individualism. This ideal is touchingly articulated in Blackmore's 2003 paper on *Sense of Place; Loss and the Newfoundland and Labrador Spirit* as a 'tradition of benevolence'. This tradition among Newfoundlanders of helping other people is also referred to in Lord Ammon's speech (1944), where he comments, rather anecdotally, on 'a curious difference in their attitude towards the community', which shows itself in the outporters' total support of neighbours in need but which stops short at the prospect of mending a bridge because it is a government responsibility.

In fact both novels represent outports as centres of political resistance to centres of power, such as the commercial and political interests in St John's and the politicians and fishery bureaucrats in Ottawa. From a historical perspective, this resistance is reinforced by an unlikely source in the person of Lord Ammon in his address to the House of Lords in 1944,

when he states that many of the people he had spoken to outside St. John's harboured a strong suspicion 'that some of the old politicians were still alive, and the people were afraid that these persons might get back into position again. That idea was voiced very freely, and it was pointed out that in view of this suspicion, the people were not prepared to go right back to the conditions that had obtained immediately before the war (Hansard 3 May 1944)'. This tradition of outport resistance is evident in both case study novels, for example, in the talk among the fishermen in Cooney's Arm in *Sylvanus Now* and in the ridicule of Joe Smallwood's efforts to generate new industries in *The Shipping News.* It is also developed further by Morrissey as an environmental and social issue. She depicts the frustration of the local fishermen at being ignored by the government when important local matters are under consideration (2005, pp.120-124). These emotions hark back to the sentiments expressed by Lord Ammon.

Morrissey's decision to use ecological and social engineering considerations as rallying points in *Sylvanus Now* results in the portrayal of the outporters as champions of Newfoundland interests. Sylvanus himself is portrayed as an epic figure of resistance, when many of his family and friends have lost hope. Although Sylvanus and Addy accept that some degree of change is necessary they continue the struggle to preserve the values of outport life in the face of the undermining and individualising effects of provincial, national and global politics. In *The Shipping News* this spirit lives on in the unlikely persona of Buggit, who will not tolerate jokes about 'Newfies' [22].

Both *The Shipping News* and *Sylvanus Now,* in common with much of Newfoundland literature of the last twenty years, maintain a form of nationalism as their default position. As a former dominion of the British Empire, the political status of Newfoundland was precisely

[22] A derogatory term used to refer to Canadians from Newfoundland.

the same as that of Australia, Canada and New Zealand until 1949; it had full responsible government but its foreign affairs were handled by the Foreign Office in London. However, culturally, it was far more cohesive than the other three dominions, being an island and having a far greater historical pedigree as a settler region. Culturally and historically, it had more in common with Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the sense that it was, in some senses, spiritually still a far-flung island of the British Isles rather than part of the American continental mainland. It could be argued that when faced with three alternative future scenarios in 1949, the Canadian and American options were both perceived as foreign mainland continental possibilities and that substituting Ottawa for London was a much greater cultural and political chasm to cross than Newfoundland collective memory would care to admit more than fifty years on.

This scenario is also borne out by the Hansard records relating to the opinions of the 1943 parliamentary goodwill mission. As the champion of Newfoundland national interests, lifelong unionist and labour peer Lord Ammon reported to the House of Lords, after his visit to Newfoundland nearly seventy years ago, 'It is like going back a chapter to the time before the Industrial Revolution in this country. However, a finer people never existed than the Newfoundlanders and, much as I think they have cause to complain of neglect by the Mother Country, more loyal people do not exist anywhere (Lord Ammon. Hansard. 1944)'. In the face of the political changes since Confederation in 1949, Lord Ammon's findings are interesting historical evidence in the case for the cultural importance of the outports themselves in any appreciation of the moulding of contemporary Newfoundland cultural nationalism. Morrissey's and Proulx's fictional outports are part of this process of re-locating the country of Newfoundland.

In Parts One and Two of the chapter, the literary outport as depicted in *The Shipping News* and in *Sylvanus Now* is discussed at the communal and the individual levels, illustrating the similarities and differences in Proulx's and Morrissey's representations of the outport as home, and of its resilience in the iconography of the Newfoundland cultural scene.

**Part Two: The outport as home: Representations of community and home**.

> And it is not just the identity *of* a place that is important, but also the identity that a person or group has *with* that place, in particular whether they are experiencing it as an insider or as an outsider. (Relph 1974, p.45)

The traditional outport way of life was strongly community-orientated and this aspect of outport society is portrayed in the two novels examined in this part of the case study at two different moments in time, in the decades immediately after Confederation and during the last decade of the twentieth century. Both Morrissey, as a diasporic writer, and Proulx, as a writer from outside Newfoundland, pursued their own visions of outport communities through their experiences of them. Their novels, *Sylvanus Now* and *The Shipping News* are frequently seen in terms of being an insider and an outsider viewpoint of outport community life. Morrissey, now resident in Atlantic Canada, is regarded as a diasporic writer by Jennifer Bowering Delisle (2008). In her research on Newfoundland diasporic literature, she uses the term 'diasporic' in the context of Newfoundland out-migration, in cases where the cultural bonds with the homeland are still strong. Conversely, Proulx's awareness of her status as an outsider and her revelation in her first public lecture, at Memorial University in 1997, of her Newfoundland roots were recalled by Noreen Golfman (2008) as demonstrating the apparent complexities of what constitutes the 'other' in this context. Golfman (2008) also made the point in her paper that Newfoundlanders were open to empathetic outsiders. Her use of the term resonates with Relph's categorisation of insider and outsider attitudes to place. She also

argued that Proulx's last-minute decision to change the topic of her public lecture from 'The Outsider's Eye' to 'House Leaning into the Wind', for fear of offending her audience, demonstrated her empathy as an outsider.

In this respect, Relph's work on 'the different levels of intensity of the experience of outsideness and insideness' questions received perceptions of what constitutes an insider or outsider (1976, p.50). His work is relevant in the present case study as one possible approach to evaluating the images of outport community life envisioned by Morrissey and Proulx in the two novels, as well as the often complex perceptions of how novelists are seen by a Newfoundland readership.

Relph's model was not specifically intended to be applied in the literary context. However, other commentators have put more importance on the contribution of literature to our understanding of the impact of place on people's lives. Unlike Relph, they have focussed less on the intensity of the experience and more on its complexity. The cultural geographer Hugh Prince has observed: 'Both region and writer, person and place, are unique and it is in their distinctive qualities that we find their essential character (1961, p.22)'. As much of Prince's work was as a historical geographer with an interest in placed-based fiction, his terminology is somewhat dated today, but it encompasses a broad spectrum of interpretations. In the case of the outport communities and their representation in these outport novels, the interplay between the writer and '*this place'* has resulted in an idiosyncratic image of a maritime community. This unique aspect of these novels can be better appreciated, if they are compared with other maritime narratives. One classic example is Charles Dickens' depiction of the Peggotty family employed in fishing and boat-building on the English east coast. Dickens places the main emphasis on the good functionality of the Peggotty family itself rather than the family's relationship with other fishermen in their East Anglian community. It

could be argued that the distinctive qualities of region, writer, person and place, described by Prince (1961) and also by Pocock (1981) and Tuan (1974) facilitate a greater understanding of community perceptions of place.

Although Relph has dismissed the approach of Prince and others interested in the impact of literature in this process as being too general to provide a satisfactory understanding of the notion of place identity, both approaches provide important insights into the nature of the perceptions of outport communities in these novels. On the one hand, Relph's definition of being an insider or an outsider is more nuanced than an everyday understanding of these terms in that he categorizes the levels of experiential involvement with place of insiders and outsiders, albeit in a somewhat mechanistic way from a literary perspective. For instance, Morrissey, as a diasporic writer, exhibits the characteristics of an existential insider, according to Relph's model.[23]

On the other hand, Prince (1961), Pocock (1981) and Tuan (1961, 1974)) provide a more intuitive and multi-layered approach to the examination of the relationship of people to place. They also recognise the challenges of defining the link between people, place and identity, but they see the work of the novelist as a means of understanding this connection and of revealing its multi-layered complexity in the process of building a literary image of place. Tuan (1974, pp.49-52), for instance, has used the examples of novels, such as *War and Peace* (1869), *Anna Karenina* (1877) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927) as illustrations of this phenomenon. In this part of the case study, the two strands of the focus on the nature of connectivity to place, as outlined by Relph, and the focus on the input of the novelist in revealing communal perceptions of place, as maintained by Prince, Pocock and Tuan, are explored through the case study novels.

[23] A fuller consideration of Relph's model is included in the introductory chapter.

***Sylvanus Now:***

In Morrissey's outport novels the life of the outport people is depicted mainly, although not exclusively in this case study novel, through the eyes of the women, who stay at home. The representation of home and memory is strongly place-based. However, in these outport novels, the idea of the outport as home is also a metaphor for identity and fulfilment. Morrissey develops the idea of the symbolic meaning of home and community for the men and women of the outports in a linear fashion throughout her three outport novels, *Kit's Law* (1999), *Downhill Chance* (2002) and *Sylvanus Now* (2005). There is a gradual shift in the way her outport characters perceive home and their role in relation to the idea of home and community. This shift in perception is also a reflection of the informal historical timeline running through the three novels, which can be seen as an outporters' view of the history of the outport. For example, in *Sylvanus Now*, Morrissey covers the period between 1949 and 1960, after Confederation and up to the beginning of the implementation of the resettlement programme and the introduction of new technologies in the fishing industry. In her two earlier novels, the outporters accept outport life as a given, but in *Sylvanus Now,* Morrissey records the slow erosion of the classic outport and the outporters' gradual realisation that their way of life and even their link with their place is under threat.

In *Sylvanus Now*, Morrissey depicts the nature of this pre-industrial society, where work is divided among the family and community members on a purely practical basis in terms of economic survival. If circumstances dictated, these apparently gendered roles were reversed, as in the case of Sylvanus Now's practice of processing his own catch, initially on account of his mother's extreme age, but also because he understood this task to be part of his work as a fisherman. Traditionally, before the 1960s, the preparation of the catch preservation

and storage was generally perceived as work for the women and children (Antler, 1977; Buss, 1999; Davis, 1986; Murray, 1979; Pocius, 1991).

Morrissey's memories of daily life in a small outport reveal how hard everyone worked together and how important it was to make sure all the routine tasks were shared among family members and the wider community. She also recalls the leisure times after the work was over for the day (Publisher's interview with author 2005). Entertainment in an outport would include activities, such as story-telling and singing. Patrick Byrne's comprehensive study of folk tradition and literature in a society in transition in Newfoundland explores the importance of cultural creativity in Newfoundland, in particular the link between the outport oral tradition of story-telling and the development of a written literature (1995).

As in many working class societies, education is valued for both girls and boys in outport communities, but does not have direct relevance to the business of fishing. One example of the value ascribed to education is the many references to the problems of finding appropriate schoolteachers for the outport school in many outport novels, including Morrissey's second novel *Downhill Chance.* However, frequently educational aspirations were often victim to economic realities*,* as is illustrated in *Sylvanus Now,* when Addie has to leave school in order to work on the flakes and later in the fish plant in Ragged Rock. Suze Brett, one of the outport women, expresses great surprise that Florrie, Addie's mother, has taken her out of school, adding 'Cripes, brains like you got, I'd keep you there somehow (2005, p.37)'.

Morrissey contrasts the two outports of Cooney Arm and Ragged Rock in order to highlight different aspects of outport life, for example, the lack of privacy in a small community and Addy's negative response to this aspect of outport life, such as her initial refusal after her marriage to join in the social activities of the other women (2005 pp.106-

109). However, Bonaventure Fagan (1990) describes how 'the house was really a source of support and strength to the community' and emphasizes the positive side of the unlocked doors and outport hospitality 1990, p.21). Morrissey also highlights this aspect of community life through the positive attitudes of the other outport women to this aspect of their lives.

In addition, the badinage between the Morrissey's outport dwellers highlights the close personal relationships between them. As the women process the fish at the fish flakes, or trestles, on the sea-shore, their light-hearted banter in the Newfoundland dialect illustrates their intimacy to each other, but the use of dialect is potentially exclusive to the non-outport reader. The traditional method of preparing the fish for preservation through salting or drying is boring but skilled work. Therefore, gossip and teasing provide a diversion or 'razzing', as illustrated below:

> Make sure they lays them skin side up," Gert hollered to Suze from over beside the faggots."Yes, lord jeezes, hard thing to learn, laying out a fish," Suze hollered back. "How long was you in training for that, Gert? Cripes, the mouth on her – foghorn," Suze declared as Gert carried on hollering over the quips and chortles of those others enjoying a good morning's razzing (2005, p.38).

There are similar examples illustrating the bonding between the men of Cooney Arms on the occasions that they are working or relaxing on the shore after fishing expeditions (2005, pp.121-124).

As these scenes suggest, the inclusion of vernacular dialogue is important in Morrissey's depiction of the nature of the cohesion of the outport community and the creation of a sense of place. She uses the vernacular in the dialogues between the outporters in order to depict the inter-communal tensions, as well as the bonds between her characters. Newfoundland English is very distinctive and the vernacular in local fiction is an important element in the creation of a sense of place and in establishing the complexities of the distinctiveness of Newfoundland, as is discussed in depth in the Case study on Lowell's

novel, *The New Priest in Conception Bay*, in Chapter Two. Its use in *Sylvanus Now* is as a cultural marker rather than a contribution to the nationalist debate propounded in the work of Anderson (1983, 1991). However, its crucial role in the novel also carries risks for Morrissey's status as a writer, because there has always been the danger that the use of informal dialogue may offend the guardians of the literary canon, or become a linguistic barrier to her readers. Morrissey herself is aware of what the likely impact of the Newfoundland dialect, or variety of English in her novels might be on both her first language and second language readers, but the dialogue between her characters is an essential element in her novels in conveying the atmosphere of the outports. In an interview for the *January Magazine* in 2002, she discussed how important the relationship between her German and Japanese translators and herself had been 'in getting that Newfoundland feeling and touch' into the published translated text of her first novel *Kit's Law* (Richards, 2002).

***The Shipping News.***

The depiction of outport community life in the 1990s in *The Shipping News* complements the setting of Morrissey's *Sylvanus Now* in the period after the Second World War. Therefore, the reader acquires considerable insight into the post-war outport and the outport before the northern cod fishery moratorium in 1992. Proulx's vision of the Newfoundland outport is much more stereotypical than that of Morrissey. It mirrors the images of Newfoundland often promoted by the Newfoundland tourist industry with outports described as 'picturesque fishing villages' and their residents as 'happy, generous, proud and independent' (Newfoundland and Labrador heritage web site 2012). This marketing strategy has been frequently criticised by cultural commentators, such as in Danielle Fuller's article on the phenomenon of 'place-myth', in which she demonstrated how *The Shipping News*

endorsed the tourist industry's image of the island as a place of solace for urban dwellers (2004, p.24).

Whereas Morrissey uses a comparison of the two communities of Ragged Rock and Cooney Arm as a means of presenting differing facets of outport community life, Proulx uses the depiction of the domestic life of a selected number of her outporters to show how life in the outports operates in the wider community. The dysfunctional outport in *The Shipping News* is represented by the historical pirates and wreckers of earlier generations of the Quoyle clan. Proulx also uses Nutbeam's column in the Killick Claw local newspaper on asocial activities to illustrate contemporary challenges to the outport ideal. However, this negative image is in sharp contrast to the very positive outport community image projected by Proulx through the two generations of the Buggit family and their extended family and friends, the Yarks, Burkes, Wavey Prowse and Billy Pretty. The after-effects of the resettlement programme and their psychological impact on contemporary outporters in this novel are represented by the ghost outports of Gaze Island and Capsize Cove. The poignant annual pilgrimage of Billy Pretty to his childhood home on Gaze Island, in order to tend the graves of his deceased family, is an illuminating vignette of the suffering still felt by the outport communities because of the resettlement plan to move the population of the smaller outports between 1954 and 1972 (1993, pp.160-172).

Furthermore, Proulx purveys the sense of community in Killick-Claw and its surroundings through her descriptions of the marking of social milestones, such as the wake for Jack Buggit. The whole community has come to pay their respects, making their way into the kitchen 'where there were cakes and braided breads, the steaming kettle, a row of whiskey bottles and small glasses. The talk rose, it was of Jack. The things he had done or might have done (1993, p.332)'. This is a community without a complex maze of social conventions.

There has been a death in the outport. Therefore, everyone comes to empathise with and support the family.

However, it is the accumulative effect of the many small acts of kindness and support between members of the community that best illustrates Proulx's vision of outport social cohesion. Her descriptions of the cosy interiors of Beety and Dennis Beety's home and that of Jack Buggit and Mrs Buggit's domicile, where 'everything was tatted and doillied (1993, p.213)', forms a background to the hospitality of the ever open door in the outport, described by Bonaventure Fagan (1990, p.21). This aspect of communal life is enjoyed and appreciated by the returning Quoyles. Proulx's depictions of Newfoundlanders' hospitality may seem to be over idealised, but in small remote communities having good relations with your neighbours is more important for social harmony than it is in an urban environment. In Morrissey's *Sylvanus Now,* Addie upsets her neighbours by keeping her distance from her neighbours and not wishing to receive visitors (2005, pp.107, 115)

Proulx also highlights other idiosyncrasies of outport community life, such as local customs and traditions including the practice of knitting amongst the outport men. When Quoyle becomes editor of The Gammy Bird, he finds that he 'couldn't get used to the sight of Benny Fudge knitting. Wolf down his sandwich and haul out stocking, ply the needles for half an hour as rapidly as the aunt.' His colleague Billy Pretty explains that young Benny is also a champion net mender, while Jack Buggit still knits a little (1993, pp.308-309). A further example of the strong outport community bonds, towards the end of the novel, is the enthusiastic preparation for the annual Christmas school concert and the enjoyment of the audience of the songs and comic turns by the adults and children at the concert itself (1993, pp.276-280). By the 1990s, the image of the outport community described in *The Shipping News* has extended from a spatially close phenomenon to a spread-out reality because of road-

building programmes: the fictional outports of Flour Sack Cove and Killick-Claw that formally functioned as two separate communities, accessible by boat, are brought yet closer together by the combustion engine.

Both Morrissey and Proulx demonstrate great empathy with the ideal of the outport community. Furthermore, their novels created an arresting image of outport social cohesion to a wide readership throughout the world. There is, of course, a discernible note of positive nostalgia in both novels. John Su (2005, p.10) describes novelist Ishiguro's recognition of this phenomenon as being 'something that anchors us emotionally to a sense that things should and can be repaired. We can feel our way to a better world because we've had an experience of it'. This approach reflects the attitudes to their fate of the protagonists in both writers' novels. Nevertheless, it would be inappropriate to dismiss both writers as projecting an overly romantic image of the outport community, as they both exhibit a sharp edge to their fictional outports through their use of characterisation, most notably in Morrissey's two protagonists, Sylvanus and Adelaide, and in *The Shipping News* in the person Jack Buggit, the editor of The Gammy Bird newspaper.

This sharpness is also reminiscent of Tuan, Pocock and Prince's views on the engagement of writers with place at different levels and of Relph's stress on the experiential intensity of individual and group relationships with place. However, attempts to categorise these writers is problematic. Both writers possess experience of life outside Newfoundland. Proulx, the outsider, is in some respects an honorary insider, or in Relph's terms an 'empathic outsider'. On the other hand, Morrissey, the exile and part of the Newfoundland diaspora, through her experiences in Toronto and elsewhere in Canada brings a clarity and sharpness to her representations of outport community life, which is not evident in the same way in Proulx's novel. Morrissey makes the complexities and intensity of the outport as a place and

outport life explicit, whereas Proulx's outport is an insightful description of a very distinctive community. In this sense, *Sylvanus Now* mirrors the complexities of the debate about cultural nationalism in contemporary Newfoundland, while the image of the outport in *The Shipping News* is somewhat one-dimensional and simplistic. In Part Three, the emphasis will be on the iconic status of the outport house itself and its literary depiction in Morrissey and Proulx's work.

## Part Three: House and 'Home'.

> The outport house embodied the values associated with settler independence – self-motivation, strength, safety, and the more rounded values of family life, love, warmth, relaxation, story, song, and prayer. (Fagan, 1990, p.21).

Writing on images of the Newfoundland Resettlement in art and literature, Fagan emphasizes the importance of the saltbox house, the dory, the seagull, the outport church and the graveyard, as symbolic of the outport as home (1990). He develops his ideas through a discussion of Resettlement literature and art using Helen Porter's short story 'Moving Day' and a selection of the outport engravings and paintings of artists, such as David Blackwood, Conrad Furey and Christopher Pratt, in order to illustrate his argument. Although the objective of his paper was to highlight the range and strength of feeling about Smallwood's policy of population movement from the smaller outports to the growth outports, the sentiments and images he includes in his paper have a far greater significance because they formed an informal archive of outport life and culture. This imagery of the outport as home was reflected in outport novels at that time and also later. An early 1993 paperback edition of Proulx's *The Shipping News,* for example, even featured David Blackwood's *Hauling Job Sturge's House* on its front cover, underlining the cross fertilisation of artistic and literary representations of the outport. This part of the case study will explore how Morrissey and

Proulx have developed their individual ideas of the outport as home through their representations of the outport house and its surroundings from both insider and outsider perspectives, their approaches both supporting and colliding with Fagan's vision of the outport house as a symbol of settler values.

Although the outport house did indeed epitomise individual and social ideals symbolic of settler independence as described by Fagan (1990), unfortunately, the outport way of life itself had also become a symbol of the barrier in the path of the march towards modernisation in the minds of reformers, such as Smallwood, in the mid twentieth century. In the tough economic and political environment after the Second World War, radical social solutions were frequently seen as a panacea for challenging problems calling for short-term remedies. It is against this background that local poets, writers and artists formed the centre of resistance to these political developments. Such opposition might ostensibly seem to be a rear guard action against progress, it was also a recognition that economic and social problems usually require a more nuanced and less mechanistic approach. The policies of countries, such as Norway, concerning the management of their Atlantic cod fishing industry provide examples of such alternative models, as demonstrated by the Lofoten Fishing Village Museum established in 1989, providing some justification for the cultural resistance to government policies in Newfoundland in the second half of the twentieth century. Novelists also played a prominent role in this wave of resistance. At a more existential and phenomenological level, both Morrissey and Proulx, made the house as a physical structure and also its location pivotal to the exploration of the concept of feeling *at home* as outport Newfoundlanders in their outport novels.

A 'house' itself is a neutral term, but as is the case of the term 'place', it acquires emotive significance through the way it is perceived by human beings. People often compare

the house where they used to live with their present home: they indicate their emotional distance to their old residence as opposed to their bond with their present one. The endowment of value to the house as a place also often extends to the surrounding location or neighbourhood. This relationship between the house as space and the house as place has been of particular interest to both philosophers and geographers since the 1970s. However, some of the most apt research in the context of this study has been undertaken by social geographers, such as Duncan and Lambert (2004) as well as by both Valentine (2001) and Rose (1995). Their approach to notions such as house or household, home and neighbourhood reveal a number of positive and negative noteworthy differences, which enrich an understanding of the recurrent existential notion of being at home with yourself in the case study novels in the present chapter.

Valentine, for example, has described this notion of home as capturing a sense of belonging, identity and rootedness, not only experienced at the scale of the individual home (2001, p.64). In this part of the case study, the converging and diverging ideas of Morrissey and Proulx on the relationship between place and home at the individual level will be examined with relevant examples to illustrate this relationship and its contribution to representations of identity in these novels. This approach equates with Duncan and Lambert's (2004, p.383) 'notion of home as the house or homeplace.' They discuss the problems of defining the idea of home because of its ambiguity and link to the emotions. Furthermore, they also refer to the contribution made to research in this area by the phenomenologists and the tendency of this approach in the philosophical and literary fields to be 'empirically light (Duncan and Lambert 2004, pp.383-384)'. However, current literary analysis with its focus on the social, economic and political context in which a literary work is created has enriched contemporary understanding of the sentiments of being *at home,* as depicted in works of

fiction. Wyile's work on Atlantic Canadian novels, including the novels of prominent Newfoundland novelists, has been of great importance in this field (2011).

Duncan and Lambert also developed ideas concerning the link between house and neighbourhood, which is an important theme in the work of both Morrissey, as a diasporic writer, and Proulx, as an outsider or Come From Away. As writers, they share an appreciation of how the physical landscape surrounding the home contributes to the intensity of feelings of being *at home* and has preserved freedoms, more usually associated with a pre-modern society, in Newfoundland until very recently. In Proulx's *The Shipping News*, this theme in the novel is underlined by the contrast between her depiction of life in modern urban America and that of the pre-industrial outport, reminiscent of Tuan's reflections on 'carpentered' landscapes and those landscapes which are untouched (1974, pp.75-76).

This contrast between the two fictional life-styles is a conscious artistic decision on Proulx's part and reflects her outsider perspective on Newfoundland. Proulx's protagonist Quoyle, an inexperienced sailor, coming from a life in the States was particularly sensitive to these differences in lifestyle, but unaware of the undermining of the traditional outport ways through the impact of modernity, such as the increasing use of cars and building of highways, rather than the more traditional modes of transport by sea. His aunt, Agnis Hamm had her memories of life before the car, so as they search for the old Quoyle family home, she observes,

> They show this road on the map, but in the old days it wasn't there. There was a footpath. See, folks didn't drive, nobody had cars then. Go places in the boat. Nobody had a car or a truck. That paved highway we came up on is all new (1993, p.38).

There is a fundamental difference in approach between the two writers' novels. Proulx is the empathetic and more romantic observer, while Morrissey has a down-to-earth understanding of outporters and their ways combined with experience of the effects and opportunities

offered by the terrible beauty of the surrounding landscape. Furthermore, the social dynamics of her characters reveal great affection between the outporters but also the frustrations of familiarity in a small community. This aspect of Morrissey's novel was dealt with more fully in Part Two. These degrees of engagement have produced two quite different visions of the outport home. Proulx presents the Quoyle's outport home as a private space, where people come to visit more akin to attitudes described by Valentine, in a suburban context (2001 p.63). This aspect of Proulx's presentation of outport life is also covered more fully in the previous section on representations of outport communal life.

Morrissey, on the other hand, demonstrates how different perceptions of privacy are in small maritime communities such as the Newfoundland outports, where people are unlikely to lock their doors. Visitors simply step into the kitchen, as confirmed in Pocius' research on Calvert (2000, p.6). Therefore, the boundaries between domestic and community spheres are more blurred than in the urbanised, or even the rural environments studied in the work of Valentine (2001). The response of Morrissey's protagonists to this situation is to create alternative outdoor spaces where they can be *at home* outside the family house, an option not normally available in most post-industrial societies (2005 pp.180-181).

***The Shipping News.***

The Quoyles's discovery on their second day in Newfoundland that the Quoyle family house is still standing as a derelict property after 44 years marks the end of the introduction and the launch of the story in Proulx's novel, *The Shipping News*. An important aspect of the Quoyles being at home in their new environment is to find a roof over their heads. The misgivings of Quoyle and his young daughters, Bunny and Sunshine, contrast starkly with the fanatical enthusiasm of the aunt in her determination to find the house on Quoyle Point,

reflecting the differing reactions between the new arrival and the home-comer. These responses to the derelict house are reflected in Proulx's use of language. Her skilful use of words, such as 'the green of grass stain'; 'gaunt' and 'paint flaked from wood' suggest dereliction, but her metaphoric description of the windows suggesting an adult with 'protective arms round children's shoulders' project an image of homeliness.

> The house was the green of grass stain, tilted in fog…. The gaunt building stood on a rock. The distinctive feature was a window, flanked by two smaller ones, as an adult might stand with protective arms round children's shoulders. Fan lights over the door. Quoyle noticed half the panes were gone. Paint flaked from wood. Holes in the roof. The bay rolled and rolled (1993, pp.42-43).

The emotions aroused in the aunt by the sight of the old house evoke long-forgotten memories of her life in this place and its significance for her outcast Quoyle family are described in almost gothic terms. She was remembering her former life as she gazed at '(t)he old place of the Quoyles, half ruined, isolated, the walls and doors of it pumiced by stony lives of dead generations (1993, p.47)'. There is a sense that not all her memories of life there are pleasant. Quoyle and his daughters, however, are appalled by the isolated place where the house is sited with no signs of human contact. Occasionally, the wind lifted the fog revealing the bay beyond. It puts Quoyle's daughter Bunny in mind of her dead mother Petal and she asks her father when Petal is coming back (1993, pp.45-46). This phenomenon is also mirrored by the reactions of the aunt on entering the old abandoned house,

> There's the table, the blessed table, the old chairs, the stove is here, oh my lord, there's the broom on the wall where it always hung," … Now she roved the rooms, turned over pictures that spit glass. Held up a memorial photograph of a dead woman, eyes half open, wrists bound with strips of white cloth.
> The wasted body lay on the kitchen table, a coffin against the wall.
> "Aunt Eltie. She died of TB." Held up another of a fat woman grasping a hen.
> "Auntie Pinkie. She was so stout she couldn't get down to the chamber pot and had to set it on the bed before she could pee. (1993, pp.44-45)

This is an example of the darkly humorous tone running through Proulx's novel. The aunt's memories reveal how hard life was in her youth with the spectre of death never far away. The

importance to the aunt of discovering these abandoned family photographs in the old house has been described by Rose (2011, p.287) as part of a complex process of 'making meaning, of recording and interpreting the world by creating images of it. And because photographs always show something that has passed – a pose no longer held, a place no longer looking like that, a person no longer alive - they have persistently been associated not only with what has been but with death itself.' As becomes clear by the close of the novel, the aunt's emotional ties to the house and its contents are more open to interpretation than it appears at first. The aunt's obsession about the house itself contrasts with the misgivings of the rest of the family. Quoyle and his daughters are not at ease in the old house, which compares unfavourably with the cosy interiors of the homes of other outporters, such as Jack and Mrs. Buggit and their son and daughter-law, Dennis and Beety Buggit.

> The landscape of Quoyles Point also seems unwelcoming, to Quoyle,
> At last the end of the world, a wild place that seemed poised on the lip of
> the abyss. No human sign, nothing, no ship, no plane, no to animal, no bird,
> no bobbing trap marker nor buoy. As though he stood alone on the planet.
> The immensity of sky roared at him and instinctively he raised his hands
> to keep it off. (1993, p.209).

The intensity of Quoyle's fearful reaction to the rugged landscape of Quoyle's Point contrasts sharply with that of Addie's exhilaration, which is discussed in the analysis of Morrissey's *Sylvanus Now* discussed below.

In the penultimate chapter of the novel, Quoyle discovers that the old family home has been washed away by a severe storm:

> The great rock stood naked. Bolts fast in the stone, a loop of cable curled like
> a hawser. And nothing else. For the house of the Quoyles was gone, lifted by
> the wind, tumbled down the rock and into the sea in a wake of glass and snow
> crystals (1993, p.322).

The gothic references are in evidence again in this passage, as in the phrase 'the house of Quoyles' and its annihilation sets Quoyle free to search for a more conventional outport

family home. At this point, the reader becomes aware of the complexity of the aunt's motives in taking ownership of the Quoyle family house. It is clear that she wanted to lay claim to the old family home on behalf of the rejected Quoyles, but she is also settling old scores within the Quoyle family itself because of the abuse she suffered at the hands of Quoyle's father in her early youth. Earlier in the novel, Mr Buggit the proprietor of the local newspaper, The Gammy Bird, explains to Quoyle that he knows what his readers want to read. His newspaper includes the usual stories along with a column on the shipping news and Nutbeam's weekly reports on car crashes and sexual abuse (1993, Pp 67-.69). The latter is a perplexing depiction of the marketing of sexual abuse as consumer entertainment even in a novel with a darkly comedic tone. The community life of the main characters in Proulx's novel is also far removed from tales of the pirates and wreckers of previous centuries, such as the old Quoyle family (1993, pp.171-172). As also discussed in the context of Harold Horwood's *Tomorrow will be Sunday* (1966) in the previous chapter, literary representations of outport life occasionally conflict with the contemporary visions of the past. However, as discussed earlier, in the case of Proulx's novel, most criticism focussed on linguistic aspects and on an excessively romanticised vision of outport life (Pierson, 1995).

***Sylvanus Now.***

In contrast to Proulx, Morrissey gradually developed her vision of the outport in her first two novels *Kit's Law* and *Downhill Chance* but it was only really perfected in her third outport novel *Sylvanus Now.* In all three novels, Morrissey's protagonists, unlike Agnis Hamm in Proulx's *The Shipping News,* have a more ambivalent relationship towards the

house as home and are frequently reduced to seeking existential refuge in the landscape surrounding their home and the outport itself.

*Sylvanus Now* (2005), Morrissey's first outport novel in the Now family trilogy[24], changes perspective somewhat by the introduction of an ecological element, as observed in the previous section. However, the relationship between home, memory and the Newfoundland outport remains the central theme. In this novel, Morrissey maps the decline of the smaller outports in a much more nuanced fashion than previously. Her account of the changes in the fishing industry and the controversial political decision to relocate the population of the smaller outports to larger settlements is the backcloth to the attempts of Sylvanus and Adelaide to reconcile their individual perceptions of home and their relationship with the outport landscape and seascape.

However, Addie's past experience of *home* is a negative one and initially she feels most at home in the outport church in Ragged Cove and later in the novel in the open country around the cluster of outport houses of Cooney Arm. She rejects the hard life of the outporters and wants to leave the outports behind her, in order to pursue her latent ambitions,

> But in this place of antiquity, where a woman's worth was determined by the white of her sheets flapping on the line like an early-morning flag, announcing the hard-working souls inside, there was little thought for reading and writing and planning out dreams. Other than an act of leisure on a Sunday afternoon and the half hour set aside in the evenings, each moment's study was a thing to be stolen, fitted in between the dishes and diapering, and the mopping and the sweeping (2005, p.29).

Addie's teenage dream of leaving her childhood outport home in Ragged Cove is ended by her being forced to leave school and stay home to help her mother in the home and later working at the new fish processing plant. This discordant representation of the outport home belies Fagan's description at the beginning of this part of the case study and is more in tune

[24] The second novel *What They Wanted* was published in 2008, and the third *The Fortunate Brother* in 2016.

with the approach of Rose and Valentine. However, it underplays the power exercised by women working at home in working class communities of this type, as highlighted by Helen Buss (1999), and, in this context, is more an example of Addie's frustration and disappointment. Sylvanus, meanwhile, stands for the old outport values and wishes to preserve the traditional outport ways, in the face of increasing mechanisation in the fishing industry and the vision of politicians about the future of Newfoundland. He is at home with himself on land and at sea. His work and home life are woven into a harmonious entirety.

However, Morrissey's presentation of the two viewpoints on feeling *at home* represented by Addie and Sylvanus is more complex than a cursory examination of their roles might suggest in this novel. In the context of house and home, Sylvanus is the most concerned about the home front and the importance of providing a feeling of being *at home.* This initiative is first revealed in the care that Sylvanus takes to build a home for Adelaide in her adopted outport that would help her to live more happily at Cooney Arm:

> He started building her a house on the meadow, door facing the woods, facing the neck, and a solid wall facing the houses and flakes of Cooney Arm – not that she asked for a wall with no windows. No, sir, she never said nothing about that, but he knew how she hated the sight of the flakes, how she liked being by herself, feeling alone, and no doubt if he'd asked, she would've wanted it (2005, p.106).

Sylvanus' solicitous concern seems to have been rewarded after they move into the finished house:

> Her comfort was all he wanted, and she seemed comfortable. Even when their first winter came, and the ice entombed most of the falls and the brook, and snow buried the meadow, she appeared as contented as he, listening to the wind yodelling outside, the stove crackling cheerily, and nothing but a handful of dishes waiting to be done. Truly his heart nearly burst one evening when she looked up from her supper of corned beef hash, a startled look widening her clear blue eyes, and told him he had become her first best friend (2005, p.117).

This initiative by Sylvanus is in conflict with the life-style of the Cooney Arms community and sets Sylvanus and Adelaide apart from the other outport households, which conform to the pattern described by Fagan (1990). Despite the best efforts of her neighbours, the death of Adelaide and Sylvanus' first three infant children at birth traumatises Adelaide and leads her up the widow's walk[25], seeking shelter and consolation away from the house in a hollow in the tuckamores on the top of the cliffs. Addie, in company with other typical Morrissey heroines makes herself at home outside the house. Unlike Quoyle in *The Shipping News*, she is stimulated by the wild landscape,

> "There, scream all you wants," she bade the wind and the haunts. "And if I goes mad, I'll scream with you." Digging farther into this womb, she fashioned her shawl as a pillow and that's how she spent the morning and (many others to come), lying comfortably amongst the tuckamores, sometimes dozing, sometimes gazing unseeingly out over the cliffs. … Cocooned. She felt cocooned, with no desire for anything outside herself and no will to act upon what others desired for her (2005, pp.180-181).

In this passage above, the landscape becomes a metaphor for the protection the womb affords to a vulnerable and developing unborn child. The comfort that Addie finds in the land around the outport is mirrored by the release that Sylvanus enjoys from the seascape. The sea, however, is also dangerous and *home,* his house and hearth, is where Sylvanus seeks sanctuary.

By the end of the novel both Addie and Sylvanus choose to compromise in order to preserve the way of life they have created together in the outport. Addie buys Sylvanus two gill nets and Sylvanus puts in a large window in the blank wall of their house, overlooking the other outport houses and the fish flakes (2005, pp.319-320). In doing so, they acknowledge and accept that the 'outport as home' ideal is being eroded and becoming part of the collective

[25] Ironic use of the term '*widow's walk'.* More usually used to describe a balcony on the roof of a house for women to watch for the safe return of the fishermen.

memory of Newfoundland as homeland but they are *at home* in their house in Cooney Arm. Their resolution of the difficult issues raised by the Resettlement policy is a strategy chosen by a number of outporters and bears witness to the images analysed in Fagan's paper.

It is interesting to compare the way both Morrissey and Proulx use the outport house to represent outport values. Proulx's presentation of the symbolic importance of the saltbox house is very insightful, although the values that she assigns to these aspects of life in her fictional outport for her protagonists fit better into a suburban model of the home as a private space, where friends are invited round for a meal, for example (1993, pp.151-152). Furthermore, her protagonists lack the rootedness of her Newfoundland characters, possessing a more transient, less engaged relationship with the idea of house and environment. On the other hand, Morrissey's depiction of these issues is more complex and less stereotypical and neither of her two protagonists in *Sylvanus Now* fit into the traditional roles generally assigned to outport people. In this respect, they conform to what Tuan describes, in the literary context, as characters 'with voices that rise above the format discourse of their society (1974, p.49)'. The protagonists, Addy and Sylvanus Now, oppose the new fishing techniques that are contributing to the fall in the cod population around the shores of Newfoundland. Their stance puts them in opposition to their outport family and neighbours. They also refuse to leave the outport and be resettled in a larger outport elsewhere. In this sense, Morrissey's novel is making a social and political statement about the outport that is absent in Proulx's book.

In this part of the case study, the focus has been on personal engagement with the outport ideal through representations of the outport house. Fagan's description of the outport house as an embodiment of settler values is only partially realised in both these case study novels. The endowment of the outport house with the properties of an outport settler home are

dependent on individual experience of the outport way of life, regardless of gender. However, the protagonists in both *The Shipping News* and *Sylvanus Now*, with the notable exception of Agnis Hamm, ultimately find peace of mind by deciding to settle permanently in an outport home with all this implies in the context of the plots. Furthermore, the great difference in the life experience of Morrissey and Proulx influenced the emphasis they both place on the different aspects of settler values, as in the case of the importance of prayer for the protagonist Addie and Morrissey's appreciation of biblical language and its cultural significance for the outporters (Morrissey Author Interview. Penguin Group Canada Reader Guide 2005-2006).

**Conclusion:**

As stated in the chapter introduction, the semiotic importance of the outport in both *The Shipping News* and *Sylvanus Now* was the main platform for this case study. Although the novelists, Morrissey and Proulx, come from different backgrounds, they do share an awareness of the symbolic importance of the outport and how it could be argued that the outport is an intrinsic element in the composition of the cultural DNA of Newfoundland. This position is just one side of an ongoing debate about the nature of Newfoundland identity and its implications for cultural expressions of contemporary local identity.

The role of the outport house and the nature of communal life in the fictional outports of Morrissey and Proulx have revealed both the strengths and the tensions of outport life. However, the overall impression is a positive one, not only historically, but also the legacy of the iconic outport has produced a contemporary reality, which is still tangible to outsiders today. Fagan's assertion that the outport house embodied the values associated with settler independence is borne out by the case study novels to a great degree, as demonstrated by the efforts of the protagonists in both novels to overcome their personal inner emotional

challenges and find some kind of peace in their outport homes. The arresting image of outport communal life and the robust nostalgic tone in these novels have contributed considerably to an understanding of the iconic outport. Finally, the transformation of a political nationalism into a cultural nationalism has been nurtured in no small part by the twin phenomena of the legacy of the outport spirit and the enduring sense of place, which still pervaded most literary and artistic output in Newfoundland at the time of publication of Morrissey and Proulx's novels.

The fourth case study has demonstrated that the ethos of the Newfoundland outport played an important role in the literary explorations of what it is to be a Newfoundlander through the medium of the outport novel. The outport novel genre has functioned as a touchstone for the politicisation of public opinion about Newfoundland's status in present-day Canada alongside the contributions of the arts in general on the Newfoundland cultural scene. The challenge in the nine years that followed the publication of Morrissey's *Sylvanus Now* in 2005 and the publication of Michael Crummey's outport novels *Galore* (2010) and *Sweetland* (2014) would be the response of Newfoundlanders to nine years of rapid change. The changes on the literary front and their likely consequences for the outport genre are discussed in Chapter Six.

# CHAPTER SIX: THE 'RESILIENT OUTPORT' IN A COSMOPOLITAN WORLD.

## Introduction:

> Many Newfoundlanders reflect on their rural heritage by purchasing framed photographs of houses being floated from one bay to another or paintings of wharves and stages. This shows that the cultural residue of the past can be made into commodities that find new resonances as badges of identity.
>
> Jeff Webb. 2016.[26]

> Working together, government, business, the unions, and rural communities could develop the long-term infrastructure and sustained investment that would create a multi-skilled "fisher of the future" – the emphasis changed to take society, not industry, into account. Such people would be imbedded again in a local community and culture evolved into a twenty-first-century extension of the old outport.
>
> Rosemary Ommer. 2002.[27]

These comments by the academics Jeff Webb and Rosemary Ommer reflect their mutual concern about the future role of the outport in twenty-first century Newfoundland. Webb's 2016 publication, *Observing The Outport – Describing Newfoundland Culture, 1950-1980,* both records and analyses the pivotal status of the outports in post-Confederation research at Memorial University. He charts the development of the university's Newfoundland Studies movement in the second half of the twentieth-century and its reciprocal relationship with the broader cultural movement described by Sandra Gwyn (Webb, 2016, pp. 24-25) that is discussed in

[26] Observing the Outport. (2016, p. 331).
[27] The Resilient Outport. (2002, p. 347).

Chapter Four of the thesis in the context of the Newfoundland Renaissance in the 1970s.

Ommer, on the other hand, takes the Newfoundland Studies movement into the twenty-first century, confronting the rising tide of cosmopolitanism. This phenomenon is a cultural and political response to the acceleration in the growth of globalisation with its neoliberal economic strategies, resulting in a realignment of localism (Johansen, 2014, p.54; Schoene, 2010, p.186; Tomaney, 2013, pp.507-516). In the Newfoundland context, the focus of this realignment is the outport because of its former economic importance and its current symbolic status. As editor of *The Resilient Outport,* Ommer and her co-writers frame new scenarios for contemporary outport Newfoundland within economic, sociological and anthropological parameters set by the scope of their project (2002, p.347).

Ommer's approach is not new or unrealistic, as is demonstrated by Rögnvaldur Hannesson (1996) in his comparative study of the approach to the management of the North Atlantic Cod fisheries in Norway, The Faroe Islands, Iceland and Newfoundland. Norwegian government policy in the 1990s, for example, reduced the negative impact of the fishing crisis on its local economies (Hannesson, 1996). The success of the Norwegian governmental intervention demonstrates the viability of handling economic and environmental threats to local communities. The Newfoundland sociologist Sider maintains that, rather than being a drain on resources, Newfoundland subsidizes the mainland through its provision of low paid workers to other areas of the country but with a loss to Canada of a well-functioning community life (2003, p.322). Taken together, these studies legitimise the frustrations felt by many Newfoundlanders about the Canadian management of the Newfoundland fishing

crisis, fictionalised in many outport novels, most notably in Donna Morrissey's *Sylvanus Now* (2005) and Bernice Morgan's *Waiting for Time* (1994). Both novels are tinged with regret at the erosion of the outport life-style and the apparent unsustainability of the local eco-system.

In coming to an understanding of the significance, or otherwise, of the outport for contemporary Newfoundland perceptions of identity, the placed-based novel still functions as a barometer of cultural nationalism, albeit in an existential and more cosmopolitan fashion. In this chapter, literary interpretations of the significance of the outport, as reflected in Newfoundland novels published in the last thirty years, demonstrate its continuing relevance for the iconography of a Newfoundland identity embedded in this place. However, there are questions that require answers concerning the nature of a future cultural identity and how the past will influence the perceptions Newfoundlanders have of themselves.

These issues are addressed in Part One. The methodological foundations of the relation between place and identity and how the critical framework developed by cultural geography fits with the contemporary concepts of globalisation and cosmopolitanism, in the case of the outport novel genre, are explored in this section. The work on perceptions of place and identity by cultural geographers, such as Douglas Pocock (1981, 2014), Edward Relph (1976, 2008) and Yi-Fu Tuan (1974, 1990; 1977, sixth printing 2008), are revisited and compared with new shifts in focus on the 'local' in current thought on cosmopolitanism, in the work of, among others, Emily Johansen (2014) and Berthold Schoene (2010).

Part Two begins with an investigation of post-Millennium Newfoundland literary culture and the emergence of the urban novel, alongside the outport novel subgenre. There follows an assessment of the contribution of Michael Crummey's novels to the debate

concerning Newfoundland identity and its outport past in general. The discussion of the case study novel *Sweetland* (2014) informs the reader of the challenges to the outport way of life and its consequences for the present day outporters. The wider issues for perceptions of Newfoundland identity and its likely expression in a future Newfoundland cultural nationalism are raised in the novel.

## Part One. Place, Identity and Cultural Nationhood in the Literary Outport.

> What can the past mean to us? People look back for various reasons, but shared by all is the need to acquire a sense of self and of identity. I am more than what the thin present defines. I am more than someone who at this moment is struggling to put thought into words: I am also a published writer, and here is the book, hardbound, resting reassuringly by my side.
>
> Yi Fu Tuan. 1977.[28]

> Cosmopolitanism encourages us quite literally to dis-close ourselves and to abstain for good from globalisation's agglomerative practices of segregation, partitioning and self-enclosure. What is needed to accomplish this feat is first and foremost an act of imagination, informed by an understanding of how literature, critical theory and politics might coalitionally come to (re-)create the world.
>
> Berthold Schoene. 2010.[29]

## Place, Identity and Cultural Nationhood.

Both Tuan and Schoene maintain that 'literature' in the broadest sense of the word plays an important role in shaping visions of our place in the world. Tuan refers to the 'thin' present that is enriched and enhanced by past experience. Schoene exhorts us to employ innovative strategies to shape or mould society, the medium being the book and, in Schoene's case, specifically the novel. Their objectives are in harmony, although their approaches differ

[28] *Space and Place – The Perspective of Experience*. (1977, p.186).
[29] The Cosmopolitan Novel. (2010, p.181)

in emphasis. However, the relevance of their focus on the importance of the broader context in honing the writer's message to the reader are pertinent in contemporary Newfoundland writing, particularly in regard to the outport novel.

This part of the chapter reviews the methodological foundations of the relation between place and identity and how this framework fits with the contemporary concepts of globalisation and cosmopolitanism in the case of the outport novel subgenre. To state that the outport novel is inherently place-based at multiple levels: physically, existentially and emotionally is perhaps self-evident, as the term 'outport novel' speaks for itself. However, in the context of the novel genre, it is important to analyse the tenets of the arguments propounded concerning place and its relationship to the viewpoints presented by authors to their readers and the interpretation readers articulate in response.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the geographers Pocock, Relph and Tuan explored ideas about place and identity that are relevant in the context of those Newfoundland novels set mainly in the outports. Pocock and, particularly, Tuan maintained that the novel was a literary genre that deepened our understanding and experience of the importance of place for the individual human being, perhaps, in a more effective way than through the conventional social sciences (Tuan, 1974, p.49). Relph, on the other hand, believed other more structured approaches linking 'place, person and act' were more helpful. This approach would be a more structured methodology than literary interpretation appeared to be to Relph but he maintained would be less narrow than a systematic and objective description of individual categories of place (1976, p.44). These studies on place and its role in the development of both personal and communal identities are still relevant today, as evident in the post-Millennium publication of the classic works of the geographers Pocock (1981; 2014), Relph (1976; 2008) and Tuan (1974; 2001). In 1984, Leonard Lutwack's *The Role of Place in Literature* added a new

dimension to place studies on the literary front through his belief that representations of place in literature were important for aesthetic and ecological reasons (1984, p.2).

The post-Millennium work of Schoene (2010) and Johansen (2014) and, to a lesser degree that of Tom Lutz (2004), on the novel and cosmopolitanism have moved the place-based debate onto a new plane of interpretation through their focus on the cumulative effect of the many local community visions on the local and global arenas. Concrete examples of the eventual efficacy of this approach in the context of the global oil industry bear witness to the potential of this approach, as highlighted in Lisa Moore's novel *February* (2011). Her novel is set in modern day urban St. John's. It focuses on the dangers facing the Newfoundland oil rig workers at sea, as also experienced by past generations of cod fishermen. In *February*, the protagonist's husband is drowned in the 1982 Ocean Ranger oil rig disaster. The novel genre is the medium through which these local political, economic and environmental issues contribute to a cosmopolitan debate on what Schoene (2010, p.13), John Tomaney (2015, p.511) and Johansen (2014, pp.1,7) perceive as a form of literary crusade to confront the worst excesses of globalisation. Johansen sharpens the message with her emphasis on the importance of place in this process through her concept of 'territorializing cosmopolitanism.' This concept 'makes possible forms of cosmopolitical engagement that rework existing hierarchies and acknowledge the complex intersections of locality, globality, and the zones in between that occur every day in place (2014, p. 37).' Her argument forges a link with the work of Tuan, Pocock and Relph on the experiential importance of place and with earlier literary research by Lutwack on place and the novel and later by Keith Snell (1998) and Herb Wyile (2011) specifically on regional literature.

Localism, regionalism and cultural nationalism are all terms that are particularly relevant in the context of the Newfoundland novels written and published between 1966 and

the present day. In the Introduction and Chapter Three, developments in the regional novel genre during the mid-twentieth century in both North America and Europe were discussed as a means to contextualise the work of the Newfoundland novelists, Earle Rose Spencer and Margaret Duley, both writers with international profiles. However, since the Millennium, other local literary ramifications have come to the fore against the background of new forms of economic and political scenarios. The acceleration of globalisation and the emergence of neoliberalism in the last twenty years have contributed to these developments, as explored by Wyile in the context of the cultural impact on Atlantic Canada of the dominance of the market economy (2011). Consequently, the question of what constitutes regional literature is yet again increasingly relevant. Implicit in these ongoing discussions is the relationship between the local and the global and, most importantly, the role of 'place' with its link with perceptions of identity. This debate has also had reverberations in Newfoundland, especially as both international market forces and environmental issues arising from these activities have had a direct impact locally. The decline in the cod fishing industry is an obvious Newfoundland example.

The emphasis in the regional novel has been on locales and their inherent or 'particularist' interest and often imbedded in the process of building a 'national' literary canon, as in the case of Newfoundland. The definition of the term world literature has proved to be problematic but, in general terms, literary critics have taken a comparative approach to the importance of the 'local' on a global stage, encouraging an appreciation of literature from other locales rather than a focus on the value attributed to place, as is the case in placed-based literature. However, the more radical developments in contemporary cosmopolitanism, in the literary context, has shifted from the hierarchical, top-down perception of the somewhat vague term 'universal values' to a bottom-up appreciation of the importance of the local in

moulding a tolerance of diversity in a cosmopolitan world view. The cosmopolitan novel, as envisioned by both Schoene (2010) and Johansen (2014), is increasingly an exploratory tool in the process of defining what it is to be cosmopolitan. It is the means to '(re-)create the world (p.181)' in Schoene's terms and to end the peripheral status of many places for Johansen. Seen in these terms, the cosmopolitan novel offers Newfoundland novelists the opportunity to reach out beyond the local and national arenas to global audiences. This latter approach will be explored further, in the Newfoundland context, in Part Two in the discussion on the post-Millennium outport novel with the focus on Crummey's novel *Sweetland*.

However, the critical framework supporting much of late-twentieth-century imaginative prose in Newfoundland with its place-based or regional focus, is best appreciated through the prism of the research of cultural geographers, such as Tuan. He linked place with concepts, such as 'value' and 'belonging' and further honed his ideas in *Space and Place – The Perspective of Experience* by, for example, reflecting on the relevance of the past in the anatomy of our image of ourselves and the link with identity (1977, 2008, p.186). His musings on the importance of the past are a challenge to his readership, as they impel readers to consider their present condition and to arm themselves for an uncertain future.

The historian Webb also underlines the significance of the past in his allusion to the 'compelling case' made by the anthropologist Gerry Pocius (1991) 'that culture persists even as its material trappings become 'modern (Webb, 2016, p.343).' In the present context, this recognition of the relevance of the past in the evolution of cultural mythology, not only complements Tuan's philosophical position but holds out a future for the continuing relevance of the 'outport' for Newfoundland. This challenge, concerning the role of the past in contemporary cultural identity, is mirrored in the creative context that contemporary Newfoundland novelists have been grappling with for the last two decades, in considering the

iconography of their ‘place’ and its role in the evolution of both their individual and collective identity. However, an important difference between the geographers Tuan, Relph and Pocock and cosmopolitan researchers, such as Schoene, is enshrined in the prominence given to the role of place in shaping engagement with a wider world in their work. The underlying notions envisioned by Tuan, Relph and Pocock, are, in the main, explorations of individual experience and interaction with place. Tuan and Pocock, in particular, have recognised the relevance and dynamism of the novel in understanding the interaction between place and self-identity. As noted in the Introduction, it is this link with place-based literature that has resulted in a cross fertilisation between the academic disciplines of geography, literature and cultural theory, as illustrated in the work of Lutwack (1984), and Snell (1998) on regional literature. For Schoene, the novel is an agent for change – a means of shaping a future worldwide (2010, pp16-17). The role of concepts of place is implicit rather than explicit, as in the work of Tuan, Relph and Pocock.

The importance of perceptions of the outport was used in poetry, short stories, as well as novels in the Newfoundland Renaissance Era, demonstrating evidence of engagement with place or topophilia and the opposing emotion of topophobia (Tuan, 1974, p.20). In addition, an appreciation of the different levels and intensities of engagement with place facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the meaning of the terms ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ in discussions about writers and also their readership. For example, Harold Horwood and Morgan are regarded as ‘insider’ novelists but their engagement with the idea of the outport and the outport lifestyle is perceived as being different because of the nature of their engagement with the outport on the topophilian – topophobian spectrum. Furthermore, the reactions locally to the outport novels written by outsiders also underline the complexities of defining what constitutes an outsider. Stuart Pierson’s sharp criticisms of Annie Proulx’s *The*

*Shipping News* were warmly received by many locals, despite his own status as an immigrant (1995). Ironically, the success of Proulx's novel exploded the myth widely held both in Newfoundland and beyond that there was no market for novels written by insider writers (Fuller, 2004, pp. 114-115). In this context, Relph's categorisation of the different degrees of engagement with place assist in a more nuanced interpretation of these perceptions of local bonding and legitimacy (1976). These subtle changes in the perceptions of what constitutes an insider and an outsider may be a response to the growing interest in Newfoundland literature beyond the island itself, as in the work of Martina Seifert (2002) and more recently that of María Jesús Hernáez Lerena (2015).

Moreover, Tuan had added another dimension to the debate in his seminal work, *Topophilia*, published in 1974, through his assertion that the ideas of the centre and periphery in spatial psychology and symbolism are for the most part universal (1974, p.27). As individuals, human beings are egocentric, in the habit of ordering 'the world so that its components diminish rapidly in value away from self (1974, p.30)'. Tuan maintained that ethnocentrism, or collective egocentrism, is harder to sustain in the contemporary world, adding rather enigmatically that 'the illusion of superiority and centrality is probably necessary to the sustenance of culture (1974, p.31)'. Tuan developed these ideas in *Space and Place* (1977) through the prism of experience. Human experience of place through time is an important element in developing our identity and place in the universe. As discussed below, the experiences of Moses Sweetland, the protagonist in Michael Crummey's novel *Sweetland* is a good illustration of this notion. Tuan has emphasised the importance of fictive prose in representing the link between identity and place, stating that 'a function of literary art is to give visibility to intimate experiences, including those of place (1977, p.162)'. In Horwood's *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday*, as I discussed in Chapter Four, this visibility is only one-

dimensional and does not embrace the multi-layered perception of place envisaged by Pocock (1981; 2014).

The early work of both Tuan (1974) and Pocock (1981) on the creative possibilities of literature would seem to be more applicable traditionally to local or regional experience and perceptions of place. However, the experience of place is changing and with it the perceptions of the relationship between the local and the global is shifting as well. The experience and perceptions of place in literature reflect these shifts in emphasis, as is explored in Crummey's *Sweetland*. In an interview with the Newfoundland writer Michael Winter in 2010, Herb Wyile gives voice to the earlier tentative visions of Pocock and Tuan when he describes Winter's *The Architects Are Here* (2007) as '…more expansive and global than the more localised though still fairly cosmopolitan sensibility of *This All Happened* (2000) (Wyile, 2010 p. 132)'. The post-Millennium novels of the 'townie lit' writers, such as Winter, who belong to the Burning Rock Writers' Collective and their perspectives on place and identity are discussed in the Part Two below.

## Part Two. The Post-Millennium Literary Outport and the *Sweetland* Legacy.

### Contemporary Literary Culture:

> Hard times and a sense of shared adversity used to be one of the things Newfoundlanders had in common. But the map is being radically redrawn these days and we are, increasingly, a province of two solitudes. Traditional Newfoundland – a world of isolated, tightly knit communities that relied on the fishery and each other for survival – is still at the heart of our conception of ourselves, of how we present ourselves to the world. But with every passing year, that conception has less to do with reality on the ground. A generation from now, what it means to be a Newfoundlander will be something altogether different. Michael Crummey. 2014.

Crummey's phrase 'a province of two solitudes' is, in part, a reference to discussions arising around Hugh Maclennan's 1945 novel *Two Solitudes.* This post-Second World War novel was initially influential in generating discussion on Canadian attitudes to the cultural and political challenges of having two linguistic communities in mainland Canada. The novel concludes with the message that '… for nearly a hundred years the nation had been spread out on the top half of the continent over the powerhouse of the United States and still was there; that even if the legends were like oil and alcohol in the same bottle, the bottle had not been broken yet (1945. p. 412)'. A renewed interest in this novel resurfaced during the 2013 CBC Canada Reads Contest, as part of the ongoing ruminations nationwide on the nature of Canadian identity. This annual literary event involves readers in the selection of fictional prose, in order to select the best book to read, either a contemporary or past publication, in the current year. The revival of interest in MacLennan's novel at a national level reopened the debate on two solitudes. Jennifer Delisle, writing from the perspective of the Newfoundland diaspora, has described how the various cultural groups in Canada 'constantly challenge(s) and redefine(s) traditional representations of Canada as the home of 'two solitudes,' as a place bound by a 'survival' or 'garrison mentality', or as a multicultural 'mosaic' (2013, pp.185)'. As discussed in the thesis Introduction, it has also been argued that this duality also holds for Newfoundland and its profiling of itself within Canada in the twenty-first century but on cultural rather than linguistic grounds.

However, the point that Crummey is making does not only apply to the relationship between Newfoundland and mainland Canada, as Delisle suggests (2013). *Sweetland* is the mirror that Crummey holds up to his readership, challenging his fellow Newfoundlanders to consider what is happening within Newfoundland itself and what might be the consequences of becoming 'a province of two solitudes'. The ideological basis for this challenge is

presented through the placed-based novel and Crummey is clearly aware that it should be addressed by audiences of readers at three levels, namely the local, national and the global. Furthermore, there may well be a subconscious connection for Crummey with the idea of 'solitude' as reflected in the title of Gabriel García Márquez's novel *A Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967); a book in the magic realism genre that clearly has had great significance for Crummey in his writing. One of the epigraphs in Crummey's previous novel *Galore (*2010) is a quotation from Gabriel Garcia Márquez and Crummey's novel also has strong elements of magic realism. As in Márquez's 1967 novel, *Galore* traces the rivalry between two families over several generations. In his Nobel lecture on December 8th 1982, Gabriel García Márquez had defined 'solitude', in the South American context, as being deprived of a 'utopia of life'. Although not on anything like the same scale as the hardships and difficulties experienced by the populations of South America, Newfoundland has not enjoyed a utopian existence in its long history, as illustrated in many of the outport novels studied in this project.

The political, sociological and economic challenges that are described in many of the recent outport novels are the means of highlighting what role the iconic outport will play in the future. One example is Newfoundland's re-engagement with the global economy in the further exploitation of local natural resources, concurrent with the collapse of the centuries old cod fishery. Recent Newfoundland novels illustrate how contemporary writers are exploring the impact of oil being the 'new fish'. The discovery and exploitation of offshore oilfields in the closing decades of last century have had a considerable impact on the local economy. Parallels can be drawn with the situation in Aberdeen on the east coast of Scotland, where the economic effects of a declining fishing industry were temporally alleviated by the discovery of offshore oil (Miller. BBC. 2016).

One response to the role that the outport might play in future configurations of Newfoundland identity is provided by members of the writing group known as The Burning Rock. Their literary interpretations of the position of the outport in Newfoundland mythology reflect the importance accorded to the preservation of Newfoundland identity for future generations. The urban St. John's novels of among others, Lisa Moore's *February* (2002) and Michael Winter's *This All Happened* (2000) are one reaction; the post-Millennium novels *Galore (2009*) and *Sweetland* (2014) by Crummey, with their outport settings, are another.

The discussions concerning the literary way forward in the context of the Newfoundland novel have a significant resonance in the age of globalisation. Although many novelists in the last twenty-five years have envisioned outport Newfoundland as the setting for their oeuvre, a significant number of writers have moved to an urban St John's setting for their literary depictions of twenty-first century Newfoundland. Of course, urban Newfoundland has always had a place in the island's novel genre. Percy Janes' *House of Hate* 1970) and *Eastmall* (1982) are two early examples. The former was a study of domestic violence and the latter a protest novel against the building of the first shopping mall in St. John's.

However, the new wave of urban novels, such as *February* (2011) by Moore, and the post-Millennium works of Edward Riche, Kenneth J. Harvey and Winter are more representative of a 'Granta'[30] variant of the modern novel with its focus on contemporary issues and more cosmopolitan urban perspectives. Schoene's study of the contemporary British cosmopolitan novel covered the work of a number of those writers on the Granta list

[30] Granta is a literary journal with a focus on new ground-breaking British writing and, more recently, writing from overseas.

of Best Young British Writers that have explored these issues (2009, 2010). In the Newfoundland context, Wyile's interview with Winter, published in the same year, also discussed the more cosmopolitan tinge to recent Newfoundland urban novels (2010, p.132). Adrian Fowler argues that the 'townie' literature of Moore and Winter 'exposes both the meaning and the strength of cultural values associated with Newfoundland society and questions to what extent these values have relevance or power in the modern world (2016, p.119)'. Crummey's *Sweetland* (2014) demonstrates that the debate is still ongoing concerning the role of the iconic outport in representations of Newfoundland.

Winter's *The Big Why* (2004) had an outport setting in his revision of an episode in Newfoundland outport history. A similar reversion to an outport theme, but through a form of magic realism, is found in *The Town That Forgot How To Breathe* (2003) by Kenneth J. Harvey and more obliquely in the earlier satirical novel *Rare Birds* (1997) by Riche. These novels emphasise differing aspects of the urban Newfoundlanders' search for a contemporary mutation for Newfoundland identity and their bonds with this place, while not rejecting the solace of their outport roots (Wyile, 2008).

Conversely, the post-millennium novel and recent Commonwealth Prize winner, *Galore* (2010) by Crummey, is a more mainstream interpretation of outport tradition but, as noted above, with its roots in magic realism. Crummey's most recent outport novel *Sweetland* (2014) depicts the dissonance evoked by an evolving Newfoundland identity and its relationship with the outport culture. However, although this novel belongs to the outport subgenre, there appear to be subtle shifts in emphasis suggesting the existence of new influences in its evolutionary imprint. In order to explore this possibility, it is important to analyse approaches to place and the formation of local identities that have developed in the

last decades in the broader academic arena. Wyile (2011), for example, has examined the effects of neoliberalism and globalism on Atlantic Canadian literature.

Subsequent work on the re-emerging cosmopolitanism discussed earlier in this chapter show how the present conceptualisation of cosmopolitanism has developed a strong link between the local and the global in the novel genre, as can be found in the work of Vinay Dharwadker (2001), Antony Appiah (2001), Lutz (2004) and Johansen (2014). Concurrent with Schoene's work on cosmopolitanism in the first decade of this century, the current debate surrounding the perceived threat from globalisation has resulted in a renewed interest in the place-based novel as a means of giving voice at the global level to the local perspective. Dharwadker (2001), Lutz (2004), and Johansen (2014), among others, maintain that the importance of place in forming a dialogue between the local and the global will radically change the relationship between the periphery and the centre, as well as being an agent for future change. The question of the evolution or demise of the outport novel sub-genre also appears to be at a crossroads, and the novel *Sweetland* provides a means of exploring the implications of this development.

## ***Sweetland*: The Structure of the Novel.**

The structure of *Sweetland* is very intricate and consists of four stories that are intertwined and interact with each other throughout Parts One and Two. From the readers' perspective, there is little signposting to guide them through the twists and turns of the four narratives but Michael Crummey's approach echoes the often random fashion through which newcomers to a community learn about the life histories of their new neighbours.

Crummey's strategy offers readers the opportunity of engagement with the issues that he raises in the novel. His main emphasis is on the individual's experience of place and the role these experiences play in the evolution of both personal and group identities. He contextualises this phenomenon of attachment to place with the contemporary issue of displacement through migration, represented in *Sweetland* by the story of the Sri Lankans and the narrative of Moses Sweetland's direct and indirect experience of placelessness outside outport Newfoundland. This interaction of the local with a distant and impersonal world is a recurring theme in post-millennium cosmopolitan novels, such as David Mitchell's *Ghostwritten* (1999) and Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* (2004). However, the main focus of *Sweetland* is the local and regional rather than the global theatres, as Crummey's novel underlines the consequences for ordinary people of conflicting social and economic forces at play worldwide in the digital age. There are three elements in the early twenty first century that are a cause for concern and have implications for Newfoundland, namely shifting employment patterns, resource management and community issues that result from the first two factors. These challenges are reflected in cosmopolitan literature and also in Crummey's *Sweetland*. Chance Cove on the island of Sweetland no longer relies solely on the fishing industry. The community relies on help from outside the outport and is declining in population. Moses Sweetland and his friend Duke Fewer were migrant workers in Alberta years beforehand and the Priddle brothers are examples of the present generation who work in mainland Canada as casual labour.

In Part One, *The King's Seat*, the seven chapters focus on the nature of the Chance Cove outport and the effects of the threat to its existence through the government plan to relocate the outport community. A sub-plot is the story of the Sri Lankan boat people rescued from drowning by the protagonist, Moses Sweetland, that unfolds in seven unmarked sections

preceding each chapter in Part One. The Sri Lankan sub-plot functions as a contemporary parable that foreshadows the eventual fate of the outporters of Chance Cove on the island of Sweetland.

The Second Part, *The Keeper's House*, describes in seven chapters what follows after the island is evacuated, leaving Moses Sweetland voluntarily stranded alone on the island. It is also a study of Sweetland's courage and determination in carrying out his desperate mission to save his outport and legitimises his belief in the worth of the outport philosophy of life. Chapters Two to Six are also preceded by six unmarked sections, detailing Moses Sweetland's failed courtship of Effie and his time as a migrant worker. This sub-plot deepens the readers' understanding of the protagonist. However, more importantly, it also presents the reader with the spectre of placelessness as depicted in Moses Sweetland's time spent in the province of Ontario, first outside Toronto, and later near Hamilton. Moses Sweetland and Duke Fewer as migrant workers have no contact at all with the local population in sharp contrast with the care shown by the people of Chance Cove to the Sri Lankans on the island of Sweetland. The migrant workers, '(E)conomic refugees mourning the anachronistic little world they'd abandoned,' sleep and work well outside Toronto and only have time to haunt the twilight areas of the city at weekends (2014, pp. 234-235). A similar situation pertains later in the Hamilton area. This dramatic description of the Hamilton steel works has a lyrical but intimidating effect and contrasts sharply with the peace and quiet of the island of Sweetland:

> The steel mill was a city unto itself. Massive coke ovens, storage tanks and elevators, engine rooms, stock houses the size of city churches, miles of train tracks and gas lines and elevated piping that criss-crossed the blackened acres … , (2014, pp.251-252).

In both places where Duke Fewer and Moses Sweetland work, there is no local community to support the migrant workers. Their only social support is the transient contact they have with other migrant workers and access to alcohol and soft drugs. The destruction and loss of the migrants' social support and home communities highlights the true cost to the wider national community of these economic developments. Tragically, Moses Sweetland witnesses this socially destructive legacy passing onto the next generation in the rootlessness of Effie's sons, the Priddle brothers, who work in the oil sands industry in the Athabasca River area of Fort McMurray in Alberta (2014, p.56).

In both Part One and Part Two of the novel, two main themes are central to the argument in the present context: the juxtaposition between a sense of place and personal and group identity, and the phenomenon of placelessness and displacement. Crummey's challenge to the Newfoundland reader might be articulated as: what does the outport symbolise for the present and future generations and how does the legacy of their past fit with future perceptions of what it signifies to be a Newfoundlander?

**Place and Identity.**

The passage of time has demonstrated that the novelists Morgan and Morrissey shared similar objectives to those of Crummey in their novels *Waiting for Time* (1994) and *Sylvanus Now* (2005). They have recorded the intangible history of outport Newfoundland and exposed the ecological and sociological dangers to community life through the apparently ineffective response of local and national governmental policies in countering these threats. However, Crummey's mission reaches beyond the important task of chronicling of the past towards the generation of a groundswell of local concern for participation in shaping the future in an era

when ideas can travel across continents in hours via social media. He is, however, concerned not to appear overtly prescriptive despite his strongly felt convictions about place identity. In an interview in August 2014 published in *The Toronto Star*, Crummey maintains that the novel is 'about mortality' and while 'he doesn't want to speak for all Newfoundlanders'. He believes that 'you could argue that the entire planet is facing the same thing and we don't know how that's going to affect us as a species'. In this respect, his outport is a developing concept with the potential to adapt to rapid change triggered by global economic and sociological forces. The story of the outport has significance far beyond Newfoundland as it represents contemporary endeavours to balance the demands of economic growth with the maintenance of robust local communities. As Crummey has admitted himself in the epigraph to Part Two, '(A) generation from now, what it means to be a Newfoundlander will be something altogether different (2014)'. Nevertheless, his standpoint has much in common with that of Morgan in *Waiting for Time* (1994) and in Morrissey's *Sylvanus Now* (2005). The message of all three writers is based on the premise that the phenomenon of the outport is part of the Newfoundland cultural DNA and characterised by a strong bond with place and identity.

To this end, Crummey highlights aspects of outport Newfoundland that contradict the accepted narrative of isolation and backwardness frequently associated with the image of Newfoundland, a technique also employed by Winter (Wyile, 2010), in order to demonstrate the importance of self-knowledge and resourcefulness exhibited by the outporters. Crummey achieves this through an exploration of the complex interaction between the outport environment and the moulding of identity by demonstrating how the qualities of self-knowledge and ingenuity are instilled into both the individual and the wider community from an early age through the acquisition of survival skills in a challenging landscape.

Another aptitude of Moses Sweetland is his interaction with the island as a place that is more representative of the experiential approach of the geographers, Tuan (1974), Relph (1976; 2008) and Pocock (1981; 2014). Furthermore, Cresswell (2004) and Seamon (2008) refer to Relph's concept of 'a practical knowledge of place – the everyday and mundane fact of our knowing where to enact our lives' in their surveys of developments on geographical thought on place. Moses Sweetland's daily routine reflects this idea of a practical knowledge of place and also has a ritualistic tone. He goes out hunting or fishing of a day and takes an evening walk. The depth of his bonding with the place and his fellow outporters is evident in Crummey's descriptions of the land and seascapes, the images of the island community and Moses Sweetland's reaction to them. Every step of the way on his walks reveals places of significance for him; 'his room and stage on the waterline', 'the metal bell of the old garbage incinerator on the point', ' a container ship on its way seaward' and ' the white Church on the opposite arm (2014, p.29)'. This approach is reminiscent of Morrissey's use of outport topography, and its calming effect on her protagonists in *Sylvanus Now* (2005). There are parallels in both Crummey's *Sweetland* and in Morrissey's *Sylvanus Now* in the descriptions of the everyday experiences of both the eponymous protagonists Moses Sweetland and Sylvanus Now at sea in their small crafts, making their way through the invisible navigational fairways concealed beneath the waves. Similarly, the hunting trips of Moses on the island of Sweetland and the walks taken by Addie on the cliff tops of Cooney Arm take them both into the wilderness surrounding their outports. In both novels, the vibrant social interaction within both fictional outport communities reflects the nature of small communities in isolated environments, reinforcing the impact of places on them.

In Part One of *Sweetland*, Crummey successively builds up a mental map of Chance Cove and its surroundings for his readers so that they can construct for themselves an image

of the layout of the challenging landscape and also the seascape that surrounds Sweetland and its neighbouring islands. His initial technique is to use the landmarks to establish an idea of the length and breadth of the island and the significance of these specific points on the island for Moses Sweetland in his daily routine and the shaping of his image of himself and that of his community. The starting point is a routine expedition made by Moses and his nephew Jesse. They begin at Moses' house situated above the harbour. The trail over rugged terrain by ATV leads to the King's Seat via Vatcher's Meadow and over the mash to the lightkeeper's house, the beacon tripod and helipad at Burnt Head and onward to the decommissioned winchhouse and cliff ladders at Fever Rocks (2014, pp.14-16)**.** A walk through the scrub forest and the ravine leads to the south-end light above Mackerel Cliffs and a further two hour walk leads to a clearing beyond the valley, where 'the peak of Priddles' cabin' can be glimpsed, 'half-hidden among the spruce and birch below (2014, p.17)'. They stop for lunch with the 'racket of gannets nesting on the Music House headlands drifting up to them where they sat (2014, p.17)'.

These landmarks are the parameters for the daily round of Moses's outport existence and give significance to pivotal moments in the narrative, particularly in Part Two, when Moses Sweetland is alone on the island. An example, in Part One is the harrowing episode when Moses is strapped to the cliff ladders at the Fever Rocks, clasping Jesse's corpse, while Barry Priddle goes to get help (2014, pp. 156-157). An option open to Crummey would have been to include a sketch map of Sweetland and its surrounding islands for the reader. However, he chooses instead to employ a literary approach. Crummey's focus on Sweetland the place and its community going about its daily life draws the reader into a mental map of the place, not only stimulating their imagination but also giving the reader an opportunity for an enhanced emotional and poetical grasp of Moses' bond with the outport.

In Part Two, Crummey's device of a mental map for his readers acquires a special significance for Moses himself, as he wrestles with the isolation of his self-imposed exile on the island:

> Most nights he pictured a map of the island and set about naming every feature and landmark from the south-end light to Chance Cove and on to the Fever Rocks, before he did the same thing along the lee side. The litany started at the Mackerel Cliffs… He took his time, being careful to include as much detail as possible, as though the island was slowly fading from the world and only his ritual naming each nook and cranny kept it from disappearing altogether (2014, p.239).

The language used to describe Moses Sweetland's naming of the landmarks has a spiritual tone to it, emphasised by Crummey's use of the terms 'litany' and 'ritual' and the naming of the landmarks is reminiscent of the chanting of the liturgical offices or hours. It fits with the biblical quotations heading Parts One and Two of the novel itself and gives gravitas to Moses Sweetland's crusading zeal to save the outport ethos for future generations. It is as if his action is a eulogy to Jesse and all the generations of outporters preceding him. Sweetland experiences the acute sense of loss but believes that the legacy will be handed down to future generations.

Furthermore, in the closing chapters of the novel the first procession of ghostly apparitions on the hill up to Fever Rocks (2014, pp.263-264) are described as an 'unlikely congregation' and later on as Sweetland relives his memories of these events he refers to 'the world rumoured beyond the island's ark (2014, p.273)'. He also recalls the apparitions on the cliffs 'in their cathedral silence (2014, p.273)'. This ecclesiastical reference to the nature of the gathering of the deceased outporters resonates with Morrissey's description of how the landscape around the outport 'with the birds, the trees, the rocks, the rivers' created 'a cloister' for the tormented Luke in *Downhill Chance* (2002, p.421). The second appearance of

the apparitions in Crummey's novel, meanwhile, is apparently a part of the hallucinations experienced by Moses Sweetland, as he struggles sick and dying alone on the island (2014, pp.317-318). Their appearance in the later chapters contrasts starkly with the social realism used in much of the text to illustrate the physical and emotional demands of outport life. However, the apparitions reveal the spiritual basis for the importance of Sweetland Island itself and all it represents as a memorial for the previous generations of Chance Cove outporters. This theme of the importance of the living retaining links with past generations of the outports has engaged Crummy for most of his creative life (Wyile, 2007). Moreover, Kenneth J. Harvey's portrayal of the fictional outport Bareneed in *The Town That Forgot How To Breathe* (2003) also uses the appearance of apparitions to memorialise the power of the outport legacy. The preoccupation of novelists such as Crummey and Harvey with the outporters both in the past and carrying on into the present day underlines the importance of historical perspective in an understanding of the bond of Newfoundlanders with their place.

In Harvey's *The Town That Forgot How To Breathe* (2003) the sea surrenders its dead from previous generations physically untouched by the process of drowning. Crummey resurrects the outport's dead in *Sweetland* and they march to the headland. Both novelists play with the idea of a supernatural bond of former generations of outporters with place and by implication their link with the living. The respiratory illness that afflicts Harvey's contemporary outporters in *The Town That Forgot How To Breathe* only vanishes when the present day outporters remember their traditions and roots and 'came to recognise who they truly were and, through the turmoil of calamity, reclaimed their lives as their blessed own (2003, p.471)'. In the present context, by the close of the novel *Sweetland,* it is difficult to separate out Sweetland the man from Sweetland the island, as he appears to have become one and the same in the company of all the ghostly generations of Chance Cove outporters.

Harvey's outport novel is written as a modern-day parable but Crummey shifts the burden of a resolution to his novel onto the shoulders of his reader:

> A press of silent figures with their faces turned to the open sea.
> They seemed resigned and expectant standing there, their eyes
> on the fathomless black of the ocean. Sweetland anonymous
> among that congregation. He felt of a sudden like singing. (2014, p.318).

Both novelists underline importance of the seascape and the landscape as a physical and spiritual influence upon the outporters. Crummey takes the bond between outporter and place a step further. The novel ends in a surge of joy and with Sweetland and the rest of the ghostly congregation gazing with expectation out to sea. Sweetland 'felt of a sudden like singing' expresses his happiness at being at one with his fellow Sweetland ancestral outporters, looking forward into the future.

Sweetland's identification with the crowd of apparitions on the headland is endorsed by the sighting of Jesse, his dead nephew with his distinctive 'seashell whorls of a double crown, a rogue lick of hair' in the penultimate paragraph of the novel (2014, p.318). Jesse had also had close bonds with the island and had wanted to stay there. Earlier in the novel, Crummey had developed the metaphor of landscape further in Moses Sweetland's understanding of the workings of his autistic nephew Jesse's state of mind during their time together exploring the island. He observes Jesse singing a song that Moses Sweetland perceives as 'part of a private landscape that surfaced now and then into the wider world (2014, p.18)'. Later on, as they eat their food together, Jesse brings up the issue of resettlement. Moses is surprised, as he thought it 'had never registered in the peculiar peaks and valleys of the youngster's mind (2014, p.18)'. Crummey is demonstrating how deeply embedded the idea of place is in the mindset of Moses at a communal and public level but also at an individual and private level. There are worlds within worlds. This viewpoint

enables Moses to use his daily experience of the outport world to put his grandson's autism in perspective by applying his daily experience of place to understand the complexities of his grandson's condition.

Crummey's *Sweetland* explores notions of displacement and place. This metaphor of the mind as a landscape is also reflected in the reader's understanding of Sweetland himself and his outport identity and affinity with the norms and values of outport life**.** It assists the reader in understanding Moses Sweetland's subsequent acts of defiance in the case of his threatened eviction from his birthplace and home. Crummey develops this idea of the importance of place at a more existential level in the course of the novel through an exploration of the link between place and identity through his depiction of the outport community itself in Part One, before the island is abandoned. The depiction is further enriched in Part Two by Moses Sweetland's memories of his life on the island in its heyday. The Sweetland outport community displays strengths often missing elsewhere. It is not dysfunctional, as might be construed by outsiders, but is caring and resilient and endowed with everyday survival skills and the ability to support its own disadvantaged members of the community, such as, Jesse, the only child still living in the outport at the time of the government re-settlement plan. Despite his autism, he finds his level in the community and is accustomed to driving his great uncle's ATV (2014, p. 39). When the Reverend retires to Sweetland, he 'began volunteering at the school, where he took on Jesse as a pet project, developing a remedial program to help the boy to do his sums and to curtail his outbursts and his spells of mindless rocking and chanting (2014, p. 52)'.

Similarly, Jesse's grandfather Pilgrim, blind from birth, was watched over as a very young child and 'became a ward of the community…, wandering from house to house. Every sighted person taking it upon themselves to steer him clear of the flakes, the wharves, the

water. (2014,p. 72)'. In the same way but years later, the hapless Loveless is also supported, after the death of his elderly but practical sister, by the entrepreneurial Glad Vatcher, Moses Sweetland and others in the community of Chance Cove. The outport is itself an island and the families living there have spent their lives together for generations. The community's sole means of sustenance comes from a mastery of the sea and a tolerance of human eccentricity and difference. As a consequence, they display an extraordinary degree of social cohesion. One example is the social interaction between the group of men that meet up most days at Duke Fewer's shack. Despite their different personalities they have developed a good rapport together. Duke 'gossiped with the men who dropped in for a cup of tea, a gander at the chessboard, moving a piece here or there. Duke played the white and never lost (2014, p.21)'.

How well these individuals function as a group is further testified at regular intervals throughout the novel. The reception of the Sri Lankan boat people typifies the practical goodhearted outport community:

> They were small, slight men, wide-eyed and unsteady on their feet. Sweetland climbed in to lend a hand as they were lifted up onto the dock. From there they were helped along to the Fisherman's Hall where the women swaddled them in blankets and set about spooning soup into their mouths (2014, p. 42)

Later the Sri Lankans 'were divided up among the houses in the cove and taken off to be stripped of their filthy clothes and bathed and put to bed (2014, p. 71)'.

The generosity of outporter communities to outsiders, especially those in need, is a recurring theme in outport novels, as I explored in my discussion of Horwood's *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* (1966), Earle Spencer's *The King of Spain's Daughter* (1934) and initially in Winter's *The Big Why* (2004). The continuity over time of references to the generosity of outport communities to the needy confirms that this characteristic is a deeply ingrained

feature of tradition in Chance Cove. Crummey tests the strength of the Chance Cove community's social cohesion through the challenge of achieving the consensus of the entire community concerning the acceptance of the government's offer of a re-settlement package. Despite the high stakes, the outporters avoid direct confrontation with Sweetland and the other opponents of the scheme. The tradition of neighbourliness in outport communities is important in the context of challenging environments, as is revealed in the Calvert study (Pocius, 1991, 2000). In the fictional outport of Chance Cove, quiet chats to the dissenters is the norm, while guerrilla tactics, including the mutilation of rabbits trapped in Moses Sweetland's snares, are the resort of only a desperate clandestine minority in the Chance Cove community.

In the second chapter of Part One the community maintain an attempt at keeping up appearances, as Moses Sweetland goes for his evening walk, passing children playing road hockey: 'Sweetland counted seven or eight kids, just about the entire school-age population, save Jesse who had no aptitude for sports (2014, pp. 29-30)'. This is not an uncommon sight in outport communities on a summer's evening, where children acquire a sense of community at an early age. He then passes by Queenie Coffin's house and has a chat with her and she teases him playfully about the resettlement controversy (2014, pp. 30-33). Jesse visits her sometimes and she displays 'endless patience (2014, p. 33)' with him. Her reaction is further evidence of the tolerance of difference in the community as a whole.

The outporters are sketched in a realistic fashion, ranging from Sweetland's complex relationship with his niece Clare, Jesse's mother, to his lifelong friendship with Duke Fewer, later revealed as his blackmailer and possibly an arsonist (2014, p. 293). Nevertheless, the Chance Cove dwellers display all the normal human foibles and eccentricities to be expected in such a tight community but the cohesion of the community, built up over generations,

although put under extreme pressure by the conditions attached to the government deal, is surprisingly robust at first. However, the hard feelings about the resettlement project, do have their darker aspects. A strategy of patience and persuasion rather than a community boycott is ostensibly employed by the outporters towards the three dissenters, Moses Sweetland, Loveless and Hayward Coffin. Gradually, over a six-month period, however, the most entrenched rebel Moses Sweetland becomes aware of the guerrilla tactics directed at him, as described above:

> Sweetland drew his hand back when he caught sight of the folded sheet of paper propped inside the cupboard…. He turned off the tap and took the sheet down, held it at arm's length. YOU GET OUT, the message read, OR YOU'LL BE SOME SORRY (2014, p. 12).

The messages contained 'vague threats against his person and his property' and used 'words and letters cut from print headlines and glued to the paper (2014, p. 13)'.

Later, at Duke Fewer's barber shop and informal club house, Duke, who is the only one that appears to have never pressurised Moses, broaches the subject of the dispute with his old friend Sweetland:

> "There's some saying they'll burn you out if you don't take that package."
> "Some who?"
> "It was just talk."
> "You heard someone saying they was going to burn me out?"
> "Not direct, like", Duke said. "There's people have heard it spoken of." …
> Sweetland stood up. "Needs to have a think on it," he said.
> "I got plenty of newspapers to get through yet (2014, pp. 22-23)".

Duke's parting comment on this occasion finally makes sense to Sweetland when he discovers the evidence of Duke's duplicity in using his newspapers to make the threatening notes at the denouement of the novel (2014, p. 293).

As time passes, Sweetland begins to find yet more threatening anonymous notes in his house, the rabbits in his traps are mutilated and eventually an arsonist does fire his 'room' and 'stage' on the harbour. However, the guerrilla tactics of the perpetrator of the anonymous notes and the sabotage of Sweetland's rabbit traps is acting in a fashion inconsistent with the conventions normally adhered to in Chance Cove. The usual tactic for dealing with conflict is speaking your mind and coming to a compromise. An example is the visits made to Sweetland on a regular basis throughout the conflict by Reet Verge, the former town mayor. She acts as an emissary from the community with a brief to negotiate with Sweetland (2014, pp. 12; 45-49). It is left to her to voice the hard feeling building up within the community. Her parting remarks at the conclusion of her last 'official' visit have a certain pathos to them, as she points out to Moses: "Someone is going to end up getting hurt in all this," she said. "And you'll have no one but yourself and God to blame for it. You mark my words (2014, p. 48)". However, Moses Sweetland and the community close ranks during the police investigation of the arson attack on Moses' room and stage (2014, p.122) and throughout Part One, amongst other social contact, the older men continue to meet and play chess at Duke Fewer's barber's shop (2014, pp.20-23; 49-51; 123). The bonds that tie the outporters together are very strong, as some of the older men and Glad Vatcher even accept Moses' invitation to a few beers at his house after an attempt to get Loveless' cow back on its feet (2014, pp. 87-89). Nevertheless, the majority of the Chance Cove community have accepted the eventual break up of their outport and its conventions but their experience of place still influences their observable behaviour.

The outporters's philosophy of life contrasts with outsiders, such as the 'government man' assigned to oversee the Sweetland resettlement project. Looking down towards the harbour, the young official is reduced to the inane comment, "That's a

beautiful view", followed by "I can see why you don't want to leave (2014, p. 11)". This remark is met with a savage rebuttal by Moses Sweetland. The incomprehension of outsiders concerning the complexities of the outporters' identity and ties with place are also demonstrated by the comment on outsider Newfoundland novels by Queenie Coffin, who complained that 'she felt insulted by their claim on her life (2014, p. 32)'. As I discussed in both Chapters Four and Five, Newfoundland book reviewers were very hostile to 'outsiders' fiction about outport life in the Newfoundland Renaissance period. It is still a sensitive issue but less relevant now that there is such a strong school of home literature, such as the Newfoundland Writers' Guild and the Burning Rock Collective (Fuller, 2004, pp.97-98).

However, Crummey's description of how Moses Sweetland tries to read another of Queenie Coffin's novels set in 'authentic Newfoundland' before tossing it into the ocean symbolises the frustrations of contemporary Newfoundland writers concerning outsiders, such as the publishing barons, and their hold on the market. The poet in Crummey makes the point with the simile of a bird in flight and the revenge of the devouring nature of the ocean as it consumes the book:

> The pages made a small fluttering explosion as he let it go, like a partridge flushed out of underbrush. It was too dark to see it land, but he heard it strike the water's surface (2014, p. 207).

Throughout the novel, the outporters are depicted as very pragmatic people that are open to new ideas. Crummey demonstrates how the printed word is augmented by the digital revolution in the contemporary outport on the island of Sweetland through his portrayal of its impact on the outporters' relations with the outside world. Crummey's outporters have strong bonds with their place but are conscious of their place in the world. In his study of

the outport of Calvert, Pocius observed that the inhabitants of Calvert embraced technology alongside their traditional way of life, if they considered it useful (1991, 2000, pp.290-291). Although the sea has always simultaneously isolated outport communities and linked them with far away trading places, now the world wide web brings the world into their very homes.

Ironically, the importance of an affinity with place is reinforced by the intrusion of the digital global community on the perspectives of the outporters of Chance Cove. Alongside the traditional radio and television services and Duke Fewer's 'three-day-old newspaper' (2014, p. 20), the computer plays an important role in connecting the outport community in an immediate fashion not available in the past. Crummey develops the placed-based metaphor in referring to the internet: 'The web was like the ocean, Sweetland thought, there was no telling what lived in the murkiest depths (2014, p. 61)'. Jesse, for example, is able to tutor himself via Google and television, alongside his official schooling. As Great Uncle Moses and Jesse drive across the island, Jesse identifies 'erratics. Dropped there by retreating glaciers at the end of the last ice age (2014, pp. 14-15)'. The cerebral – digital metaphor is further developed, as Sweetland marvels how Jesse, 'could lecture a body on a hundred different topics – aircraft, the digestive system, moon landings, Mount Everest, ping-pong, whales… as if there was a tape in the youngster's head just waiting for some-one to press Play (2014, p. 15)'. This access to a global depository of knowledge often undermines Moses' fund of local stories, as in the case of the agricultural experiment with bison, when Jesse interjects on a technicality about the difference between bison and buffaloes that Moses attributes to 'some Google search the boy was quoting, a universe of facts at his fingertips (2014, p. 37)'.

The impact of the digital revolution, in many respects, enhances rather than undermines a sense of place in the novel, as illustrated by the semi-jocular reference to Bin

Laden during a discussion in Duke Fewer's barber's shop about the Reverend and God's work.

> Duke stood at the window to watch Pilgrim make his blind way up the hill in the driving rain, waiting until he'd seen him in through his door.
> Turned back to the room. "He've got an unnatural interest in that youngster," he said.
> "Who?" Sweetland asked, though he'd heard Duke make the accusation a hundred times over.
> "The Reverend."
> "Jesus, Duke."
> "It's not normal, is all I'm saying. Trying to get him alone down to the house all summer."
> "I imagine he thinks he's doing God's work."
> Duke shook his head. "What's-his-name Bin Laden thought he was doing that, for chrissakes (2014, p. 54)".

The exchange between Duke and Sweetland demonstrates how the outport community has embraced the outside world while retaining their outport identity. Even communities living on remote islands share the topicality of world news and take part in the current discourse. Michael Crummey provides a context to the local community and underlines the value of what they have created over time and how their lives are touched by changing values and world events. Such a viewpoint is supported by Winter during an interview with Wyile, when he comments on the widespread acceptance of the digital world by the stereotypical 'old guy in a little shack (2010, p. 133)'. In the present context, Duke Fewer's remarks about the Reverend reflects attitudinal changes towards organised religion in Western society as a whole. In their own individual ways, the remaining outporters on Sweetland, with their ATVs and digital back-up, have responded to sociological and technological change, demonstrating the potential for innovation and expertise in an evolving outport.

Reet Verge has even set up a Chance Cove museum that demonstrates an awareness of the community's identity and place in history. However, the museum also exhibits satirical

and opportunistic aspects, as it is left to the readers' imagination whether the museum is there for the outporters themselves or for potential tourists. The idea that tourism may present Chance Cove with a new future role is also suggested by the Priddle brothers' wild scheme to set up a tourist sightseeing business once the island is finally abandoned by the community during one of their drunken bouts. Keith Priddle dreams of painting "the whole place up with ochre and whitewash, puts out a couple of dories behind the breakwater. And we sells package tours to a vintage Newfoundland outport (2014, pp. 67-68)". Crummey uses the incident as means of presenting the dangers of commercial exploitation of the importance of place in future representations of Newfoundland cultural identity.

Such commercialised initiatives are in conflict with the idea of sustainability as in the concept of the 'resilient outport', as outlined by Rosemary Ommer and her co-writers in *The Resilient Outport* (2002) and also in the work of Sider (2003). As Morgan and Morrissey made clear in *Waiting for Time* and *Sylvanus Now* these sustainable options have not been on offer to date in the political arena. However, as Johansen's concept of 'territorialised cosmopolitanism' has maintained, faced with the spectre of displacement and placelessness, the world community may find value in the contributions that the 'local' have to offer (2014, pp.10-11). The community of Chance Cove are pragmatists and open to change because living at the interface of the volatile elements of the land and sea, they have learned to be flexible in order to survive. Crummey is reminding his readers that there are options open to them to preserve a community's underlying values and bonds with place for future generations.

**Placelessness and Displacement:**

Crummey's *Sweetland* explores notions of displacement and placelessness. The themes are developed throughout the novel. The idea of displacement is introduced in the beginning of the novel with the arrival of the Sri Lankans and examined further in a flashback, when Moses Sweetland and Duke Fewer worked in mainland Canada. Their life there also contrasts the placelessness of the migrant existence with their bond with their outport. The irony is that Crummey's outport community is about to be uprooted and separated from each other. *Sweetland* is a study in living with change and making choices about passing on community values to the next generation. Although the circumstances in Newfoundland are very different both in scale and origin, this topic has some factors in common with the current debate concerning economic migrants and immigration control policies of many governments in the richer countries in the world**.** The trope of economic and political migrants is one theme in contemporary literary cosmopolitanism with its exploration of social injustice in the age of globalisation. This concern is the focus of a number of contemporary novels, such as *The Year of the Runaways* by the British writer Sunjeev Sahota (2015). As Schoene argues the 'novel has always been a superb instrument for capturing the spirit of the age, as well as anticipating the imminent future, without resorting to facile projection or crass proselytising (2010, p.183)'. In his novel *Sweetland*, Crummey recognises that the trauma of displacement at the individual level is shared by many different groups of the displaced, albeit at different levels of intensity. However, his primary concern is the further erosion of the outport ethos and its consequences for how Newfoundlanders will profile themselves in the future. Implicit in this concern is the wider effect these changes may have on perceptions of Newfoundland in the global arena.

The importance of these endangered qualities are evident in the compassionate reception of the Sri Lankan migrants by the Sweetland community in the parable story. The outporters are concerned not only for the welfare of the survivors but also to know who they are and where they are from. This typical Newfoundland reaction is evidence of the deeply felt sense of place and belonging experienced by these local communities (Book One. The King's Seat – unmarked sections 1-7). Crummey uses a biblical source to emphasize the importance of the outport culture of support and hospitality for each other and for outsiders. The epigraph on the title page to Book One is a quotation from the Book of Isaiah, 'Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name'. The use of the epigraph emphasizes the strength of feeling about their place demonstrated by outport communities. However, Crummey also links the experience of the Sri Lankan migrants with the wider issues that are raised by this incident through the sermon given by the Reverend after the Sri Lankans' departure. He wanted his congregation to imagine themselves in the position of the unfortunates in the lifeboat…'adrift without warning or explanation…,' concluding that they 'could see it as a metaphor… for our own place in the universe, for the questions we ask about our own lives. (2010, p. 143)'. This passage has a distinct cosmopolitan tone to it. The Reverend is not only asking for empathy with the migrants but also to look beyond mere sympathy to identification worldwide with individuals and groups forced from their homes by economic and political factors. Johansen's study on 'territorialized cosmopolitanism' reveals that 'local and global connections are always present in place (2014, p.154)'. The irony is that the residents of Chance Cove themselves will also be moved from their ancestral home on economic and political grounds but the minister does not appear to have seen a possible future parallel with the Sri Lankans' fate.

The ultimate fate of the Sri Lankan migrants remains shrouded in mystery. After a short stay on Sweetland Island, they are evacuated and never heard of again. This mirrors the dispersion of the Sweetland outporters and the destruction of their community after their eventual resettlement both within the province and in some cases in mainland Canada, joining the growing numbers of the Newfoundland diaspora. Later in the novel, Moses Sweetland will himself finally become an illegal immigrant in his own outport, when he hides in the uninhabited part of Sweetland Island and does not join the other islanders on the last boat out.

## Conclusion.

At the end of the second page of his preface to the 2008 reprint of his seminal work, *Place and Placelessness,* Relph observes that 'the distinction between place and placelessness is much less obvious now than it was thirty years ago (Preface to Reprint. No pagination)'. He goes on to conclude, at the end of the preface, 'Place, both as a concept and as phenomenon of experience, therefore has a remarkable capacity to make connections between self, community, and earth, between what is local and particular and what is regional and worldwide (Preface to Reprint. No pagination)'. These comments share common ground with the recent work on the importance of literary interpretations of the importance of place in the contemporary cosmopolitan novel. As stated above, Johansen introduces her research on her study novels with a consideration of the importance of place in the proverbial truth of the slogan "think global, act local (2014, p.1)". Both Relph and Johansen are stating that our experience of place does not only have implications for individuals and their communities but also for the world at large.

This pivotal focus on the centrality of place and its significance is interwoven throughout *Sweetland*. The depiction of Moses Sweetland's losing battle for survival on the island and its effect on Sweetland himself in Part Two of the novel is the main focus of many of the academic and literary reviews of the novel (Brinklow, 2016; Polic, 2018; Rae, 2018). Sweetland's personal struggle for the future of his outport is indeed explored very skilfully in Part Two. However, taking the novel as a whole, Crummey's concerns have more to do with the necessity for intergenerational dialogue about outport values. His focus has always been on history of this place and its importance for Newfoundlanders in the future. This theme has remained with him during much of his writing career. His oeuvre is mainly characterised by topophilian sentiments but there is also an underlying cosmopolitan element in *Sweetland*.

Crummey's contemplative approach to Newfoundland contrasts with the reaction of another member of the Burning Rock Collective Winter who maintains that 'everything is connected everywhere; there is no such thing as a regional, small, local thing any more. (2010, p.133)'. Both writers identify the spectre of a 'two solitudes' scenario in a future Newfoundland, as stated explicitly by Crummey in an article on 15th August 2014 in the *Globe and Mail*, where he states that 'we are, increasingly, a province of two solitudes' In the same article, Crummey also describes the outport Francois,

> as a microcosm of Newfoundland's place in the world before Confederation: singular and inaccessible and largely unknown. Francois, and hundreds of other outports like it, are the crucible in which the linguistic and cultural character of Newfoundland was formed (Crummey, 2014).

The Francois community successfully resisted attempts at resettlement by the Smallwood Resettlement programme. It is as if Crummey is challenging his readers to think imaginatively about a future Newfoundland. The key phrase in Crummey's description of Francois and other outports like it is that he alludes to them as 'the crucible in which the linguistic and

cultural character of Newfoundland was formed (Crummey, 2014)'. This statement reveals Crummey's personal opinion on the iconic outport and why it will retain this status in Newfoundland mythology.

Winter takes a more direct approach to a future Newfoundland in an interview with Wyile in the Antigonish Review (2010, pp. 128-129). His scenario is that there are three reactions to the categorisation of what is a to be a Newfoundlander. He maintains that the town of Corner Brook Newfoundlanders 'want to be safe and plan for their pensions' and exhibit mainland Canadian characteristics, whereas the 'bayman's' view is, 'I'm just working to the bone, skin of my teeth, I'm broke, I got nothing, but life's pretty good – that kind of devil-may-care bravado (2010, p.129)'. On the other hand, the St. John's 'townie' still remembers political independence and the days of the 'outport fisherman' and the 'town merchant (2010, p.129)'. There is no reference to an attachment to place and the role of the experience of place in the formation of identity.

The important difference between Crummey and Winter is that Crummey is not prescriptive on the subject of the place of the outport culture in Newfoundland mythology. His aim in *Sweetland* is to energise the contemplation of a changing world so that Newfoundlanders can preserve and develop what they feel the past has to offer their future. Crummey's enduring belief in the importance of the iconic outport in *Sweetland* endorses its iconography. In the context of the theme of belonging, Tomaney refers to the role of novels in expressions of a local sense of belonging – 'One form in which the regional narratives are given expression – and which, in turn may contribute to a local sense of belonging – are literary and artistic activities (2013, p.511)'. The novel *Sweetland* is Crummey's literary contribution to the process of a cultural redefinition of a Newfoundland sense of place and

identity. The legacy of the iconic outport will be the keystone in the process of redefinition from Crummey's perspective.

# CONCLUSION.

In this thesis, I have traced the development of a unique phenomenon that I have identified as the outport novel genre. The work of numerous novelists writing in English has been associated with particular places, but what is remarkable in the Newfoundland context is the numbers of writers that have chosen to set their novels on this island over a period of more than one hundred and fifty years. The novelists come from a wide range of backgrounds. Many are insider writers who were born and raised on the island itself, but a significant group of these novelists are outsiders inspired by their experience of the place to put pen to paper. The motive fuelling my endeavours has been the desire to discover why so many novelists have chosen to write about a remote but impressive island in the North Atlantic Ocean.

My quest for an answer to the question "Why Newfoundland?" led me to consider such existential questions as the importance of place to human beings and the nature of the phenomenon of a sense of place. Simultaneously, further questions have presented themselves concerning the formulation of identity both at an individual and community level. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the search for answers has been the passion that has steered my personal search and the commitment in terms of time that I have dedicated to the enterprise. The experience of these years of research has underlined the impact of place, whether positive or negative, on each and every one of us from birth. It is an enigma that will generate research for many of us for years to come. My study is one small contribution to the work of the many academics who have explored the nature of place and its link with individual and community identities.

My initial question “Why?” eventually translated into a more considered thesis statement based on better acquaintance with Newfoundland literature and a deeper grasp of the research of others on the concepts of place, a sense of place, and the phenomenon of identity. My early research focussed on the role of literature in visualisations of concepts such as sense of place and identity with the focus on the outport novel and its development through time. My argument is that the ethos of the Newfoundland outport novel is the inspiration for the literary explorations of what it is to be a Newfoundlander: explorations undertaken by various writers through the medium of the outport novel. My observations of the cultural importance of the iconic outport are, of course, in evidence in the arts, literature and music of Newfoundland as expressions of the cultural nationalism of the island. As I have argued in the course of the thesis, the outport novel, a subgenre of the regional novel genre, reveals a more nuanced and comprehensive overview of Newfoundland cultural identity centred on the outport than is possible in other literary forms.

The emergence of the outport novel mirrors changes that have taken place over decades in Newfoundland itself. The role of history in understanding what has happened to the country of Newfoundland over a period of more than a hundred years is important diachronically. We need to understand what happened over time and what these events have signified for the idea of Newfoundland and for the bonds that Newfoundlanders have built up for their place. In addition, it is important to obtain a more nuanced picture of the stages in this process. The study of specific outport novels has provided us with a synchronic measure as well, or as I stated earlier in the thesis, with snapshots in time revealing the intensity of engagement with place and the emergence of a regional identity.

How the outport novel became identifiable as a genre is the focus of the case study novels in Chapters Two to Six of this thesis. A key concept in the thesis is the emergence of a

Newfoundland cultural nationalism based on outport Newfoundland. Bernice Morgan was the first local novelist to explicitly link Newfoundland identity to 'the culture of place (2003)'. Her approach became a dynamic vehicle that moulded and promoted what it signified to be a Newfoundlander for a post-Confederation Newfoundland. Morgan was arguably the first contemporary writer to formalise this viewpoint through the novel genre. Earlier case study novelists had tended to put greater emphasis on the impact of landscape and seascapes in their work, rather than draw more universal conclusions for their observations of outport society, as described below.

A parallel and important focus of the thesis is the tracing of the evolution through time of the outport novel genre. In the Introduction chapter of the thesis I explained how I structured the thesis and discussed the key concepts of place and identity which underpin the conceptual framework of the project. The basis for the argumentation has been on the late-twentieth-century research undertaken on interpretations of an understanding of place and the associated concept of identity, as explored chiefly in cultural geography and in literary criticism in the late-twentieth century and into the first two decades of the present century. The argumentation underpinning this research on the Newfoundland outport novels was further enriched by the exploration of the phenomenon of the regional novel in the latter half of the Introduction, chiefly inspired by the work of the academics Keith Snell (1998) and Herb Wyile (1998). Their work has provided a context for the analysis of the development of placed-based fiction. A parallel, but crucial, consideration was the provision of a framework for observing the development of the outport novel subgenre in my thesis. The logical solution seemed to be to allow the writers to speak for themselves in support of my argument through a close reading of a selection of outport novels in the period 1858- 2014. I supplemented the critical analysis in each chapter with a brief account of political and social

history, as well as biographical and literary information relevant to a deeper understanding of the case study novels and their writers.

The succeeding five case study chapters gave me the opportunity to provide the reader with an impression of the political and social context surrounding the publication of the novels and, in addition, revealed an understanding of the writers' perceptions of the Newfoundland outports at specific moments in time. The importance of the five case studies was the fact that these snapshots in time revealed how the idea of the outport grew from a curious, but interesting, social construct in a challenging and dramatic landscape, to a national representation of Newfoundland identity. In this way, the image of the outporters and their social and physical milieu revealed how much urbanisation had undermined a sense of community and had destroyed the natural environment in many areas of the industrialised world beyond Newfoundland.

As a consequence, the picture painted by the outsider Robert Traill Spence Lowell of life in a nineteenth-century Conception Bay outport in Chapter Two was inevitably a romanticised one. Lowell's focus on the impact of the landscape and the naive fisherfolk was the predominant factor in the depiction of place in *New Priest in Conception Bay* (1858). The influence of the early Romantics School on Lowell's outport meant that issues such as poverty and hardship were eclipsed by the rigours of the physical challenges of a maritime fishing village. The insider Newfoundlander, Anastasia English, perpetuated the idyllic picture of life in an outport which she contrasted with the somewhat futile and leisurely existence of the townies in St. John's. English's novel *Only A Fisherman's Daughter* (1899) was more politicised than Lowell's *New Priest in Conception Bay* (1858) but in both novels, it was usually the outsiders who were in in the greatest awe of the dramatic landscape. Their fictional perspective aligns with a historical fact: most outsider visitors to outports in the

nineteenth century were either professionals or tourists and both categories of visitor tended to come from industrialised urban conurbations within or beyond the island.

The case study novels featured in Chapter Three were Erle Spencer's *The King of Spain's Daughter* (1934) and Margaret Duley's *The Eyes of the Gull* (1936) set in outports between the Great War and the Second World War against the background of austerity and social inequality. However, the accent in both novels was on the reaction of the individual to place. The introduction of Tuan's concept of topophilia and its converse, topophobia, provided a platform for a deeper analysis of the complexities of the nature of individual reactions to place and to the formation of personal identities. This approach demonstrated the complexity of human reactions to place and problematised the underlying message of these two outport novels. It revealed the range of reactions that are experienced by people towards place, the intensity of their experiences and the formation of personal identities. One contribution of my research in Chapter Three has been my detailed analysis of Spencer's forgotten novel *The King of Spain's Daughter*. His novels and those of the English family novelists are proof that there was, in fact, interest in the novel genre in the 1920s and 1930s in Newfoundland. The romanticised diaspora vision of the outport was observed in Spencer's protagonist in *The King of Spain's Daughter*. This reaction was tempered by the confused and emotional reaction of Duley's heroine in *The Eyes of the Gull.*

Both case study novels in Chapter Four were ostensibly historical reconstructions of outport life. Harold Horwood's *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* (1966) featured life in a remote outport earlier in the last century and was in part a eulogy for the natural history of rural Newfoundland and a critique of outport identity as a backward and reactionary phenomenon. In contrast, Morgan's two Cape Random novels, *Random Passage* (1994) and its sequel *Waiting for Time* (1996) were set in the early years of the nineteenth-century and the latter

during the beginning of the cod moratorium era in the late twentieth-century. Both books saw a further development of the outport novel as a tool in propagating visions of Newfoundland imbedded in outport traditions and values. The outport novel genre in the late-twentieth century was an important vehicle for the development of cultural nationalism, as well as the challenging process of finding a niche for Newfoundland as a province of Canada.

The case study novels in Chapters Five and Six cover the 1990s and into the first part of the present century. In Chapter Five, the most well-known of the outsider novels, in terms of book sales, was Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News* (1993). Proulx's outport is portrayed as a form of antidote to the placelessness of modern urban America. The insider Donna Morrissey's *Sylvester Now* (2005) was published a decade later in the literary heyday of the outport novel and also introduced an ecological element into depictions of the outport ethos. Both books are centred on contemporary outport life before the cod moratorium of 1992 and are evidence of the further development of the outport novel genre. Morrissey's novel depicted a vivid and more nuanced vision of life and the social interaction between the outporters than is observable in Proulx's *The Shipping News.*

Michael Crummey's *Sweetland* (2014) in Chapter Six reveals the dilemmas facing the future of the outport ideal. As revealed in that chapter, the physical role of the outport is changing rapidly. Many of them have either been abandoned, become dormitory suburbs for centres such as St. John's, or are in process of being abandoned, or redeveloped as tourist attractions, thereby acting as living or static museums. Crummey's *Sweetland* raises rhetorical questions about the significance of the outport ethos for Newfoundland's cultural nationalism in the future, placing the responsibility for a resolution of the dilemma firmly with his readers.

Although the theory of place is important in a number of disciplines, I have mainly focussed on the relevance of the academic fields of cultural geography and literary criticism for the present research into the role of the outport novel. Achieving a deeper insight into how an attachment to place operated in the context of the outports is demonstrably less complex than in urban environments. Not only has the fictional reconstruction of everyday life in the outports been an invaluable resource in the recording of the experiences of previous generations of outporters, but the outport novels have also been a means of recording for posterity an approximation of the daily lives of people who would otherwise be overlooked by historians. Two outport novels, where the accent on recording daily life on shore in the outport has been most prominent were Morgan's *Random Passage* (1994) and Donna Morrissey's *Sylvanus Now* (2005), as discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

The focus on the 'experience' of place has also been the foundation for an understanding of human relationships with place in this study. In addition, the earlier work of the geographers Tuan (1974) and Relph (1976), as outlined and discussed in the thesis Introduction demonstrated the important role of human experience of place in assigning meaning to a place. Tuan's (1974) interest in the role that novels have played in understanding the relationship of people with place was referred to earlier in the thesis. Relph (1976) has stimulated my interest in the varying degrees of intensity that people exhibit in relation to individual places.

The academic field of literary criticism in Newfoundland has generated considerable interest in the Newfoundland novel since Confederation with Canada. Many papers and research projects by outsiders have also contributed to this wealth of research (e.g. Creelman, 2003 ; Fuller, 2004; Lerena, 2015; Wyile, 2011). My thesis is yet another contribution. My approach has been to step back and examine how the outport novel genre developed in

Newfoundland and how it has differed from regional novels in other places. What the outport novels represent, and why their message is so important in cultural expressions of Newfoundland identity, can be identified as their role in transposing the underlying norms and values of the outport community into a future Newfoundland consciousness. The fusion of a rugged environment and the outport norms and values has created the idea of 'This Place'. The outport novels are inspired by this phenomenon and are the legacy of previous generations to those to come, as well as a blueprint for how to escape the threat of placelessness. The novels are not backward-looking and nostalgic, as frequently assumed, but rather they inspire an incentive for a resilient future.

The outport as a physical entity may be vanishing, but the idea of the outport is still very much present in representations of what it is to be a Newfoundlander. The annual schools Heritage Fairs project web site at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, for example, is witness to the contemporary interest in the experiences and values ascribed to grandparents and the lives they led in outport Newfoundland (Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador)[31].

Another contribution of this research to the complexities of reactions to place has been the further development of the topophilia – topophobia spectrum by building on the idea of topophilia and discussing its potential for understanding the bonds between Newfoundlanders and their island. Conversely, forms of the opposite reaction, topophobia, have been identified in Horwood's *Tomorrow Will be Sunday* and a combination of both reactions was observed in the protagonist of Duley's *The Eyes of the Gull*. In these two examples, this research has built on studies of attachment to place in the works of Relph and Tuan, referred to above,

[31] Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador: https://www.historicsites.ca. Accessed 09/06/20.

throughout the analysis of the case study novels. In addition, the present study has provided a reconstruction of the literary, political and social contexts which have moved authors to write place-based novels.

Since the Millennium, there have been changes in the way the impact of regional literature is perceived and this study has intimated ways that this development may affect perceptions of Newfoundland and the outport novel. This shift in emphasis is in part a consequence of how writers have responded to globalisation, as maintained by Berthold Schoene (2009, 2010), Emily Johansen (2014) and John Tomaney (2013). Johansen's concluding comments, in the context of her study of territorialized cosmopolitan novels, maintain that 'local and global connections are always present in place (Johansen 2014, p.154)'. Crummey's *Sweetland* does indeed merit further research in this respect. The future significance of the iconic outport for a Newfoundland sense of place and perceptions of identity is part of the current cultural discourse on the island.

Although a significant number of novels with links to the outport story have been published since 2014, the end of the study period of this thesis, the emergence of what Adrian Fowler has described as 'Townie Lit' in the 1990s raises a number of interesting questions about perceptions of the iconic outport. Fowler describes the novels of Lisa Moore and Michael Winter as presenting 'a view that is cosmopolitan and sophisticated (2015, p.93)'. He also describes writers as 'myth-makers' and 'myth-breakers (2015, p.95)'. Fowler concludes in his paper that the urban writing of Moore and Winter 'exposes both the meaning and strength of cultural values associated with Newfoundland society and questions to what extent these values have relevance or power in the modern world (2015, p.119)'. My analysis of Crummey's *Sweetland* (2014) underlines his stand that the jury is still out on this verdict.

History will reveal whether Moses Sweetland should be understood as a martyr or a prophet of hope for the preservation of the outport values.

In one sense research can never be complete. There are always further questions that come to mind and avenues of enquiry that offer challenges to be met or call for a better understanding of their relevance. The present study is no different in this respect. There are three topics arising from this present research that remain unanswered. The first is specific and concerns textual communities in nineteenth-century Newfoundland. Barker and Hanniford's work on the history of the book in Newfoundland (2010) led to my own necessarily brief exploration of this aspect of the Newfoundland experience in nineteenth-century St. John's. As I noted in Chapter Two of the thesis, I found evidence that the range and energy of the textual communities existent in St. John's in the second half of the nineteenth-century are noteworthy and merit further archival work at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies. Further research on the social and cultural networks existing at the time will enhance understanding of literary initiatives and attitudes then. The findings would be essential groundwork for a study of the nineteenth-century novels by Stabb, for instance. Another potential source for a greater insight into the textual communities of the twentieth century and the use of literary genres would be the archives of the Christmas Annuals.

The other two areas of interest for future researchers resulting from this present study are more philosophical in nature but stem from my work on representations of place and identity through time in the outport novel. The first question for future novelists and Newfoundlanders in general is whether the iconic outport needs to have a physical presence in order to exert an influence on what it means to be from Newfoundland? Finally, arising from the early modern research on the nature of place discussed above, there is a second question regarding whether the island of Newfoundland is condemned to placelessness. Do

contemporary Newfoundlanders' experience of 'this place' still inform their perception of their identity?

A concluding thought to be considered is the relevance of the present study for places beyond Newfoundland. This research connects the important work of Tuan, Relph, and later that of Wyile, undertaken on the phenomenon of the experience of place, with the contemporary research on cosmopolitanism of Johansen, Schoene and Tomaney on the diverging interpretations on the spectrum of globalism and parochialism. It is further complicated by the emerging new avenues of importance for research in the digital age. New perspectives on meanings that can be ascribed to a place are being brought into focus. These new networks demonstrate the feasibility of meaningful interaction across distances that were considered unbridgeable less than a generation ago. This situation has given a renewed significance to the experience of many communities that would never have had close contact in the past. The present research on the outport novel is just one example of how the experience of place and the nature of identity, both individual and at a community level, can have resonance for other people and their places. Digital networking delivers a yet more nuanced comprehension of place and identity providing a deeper insight into ideas of place and enabling communities in peripheral places to be partners on a global scale. The outport novel subgenre has a role to play in the understanding of the human bond with place and its link with individual and group identity in a wider arena.

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