

# Making History: Cultural Memory in Twentieth-Century Newfoundland

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WHEN I WAS THINKING about how I would structure my paper, I kept coming back to something I recently read about Russia. It is said that there is no present in contemporary Russian culture: there is only the past and the future.<sup>1</sup> It struck me that the same can be said about Newfoundland: we tend to be either captured by our past or fixated on our future, but we have difficulty imagining the present. Much of the recent discussion and debate over the province's history and culture remains focused on the Terms of Union and Confederation, and this was reflected in the terms of reference for the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada. We seem to have become obsessed with the question of whether or not we received a fair deal in 1949. While this debate certainly has some merits, it overlooks many important issues. By re-fighting the political battles of the 1940s, we have lost sight of major cultural shifts and, as a result, we have ignored salient changes that have taken place in our collective memory.

Part of the problem has been that historians have become increasingly marginalized, as poets, novelists, and other writers have taken the lead in shaping how we view our past. What I want to do in this paper is explore some of the ways in which cultural memory has evolved during the twentieth century. Using a historian's perspective, I want to examine our changing conceptualization of history. Our view of the past profoundly shapes our culture, and to understand recent developments such as the rise of Newfoundland nationalism, we need to consider the use (and misuse) of history. In taking a broader perspective of Newfoundland history, several themes stand out. The first — and certainly the most important — is the theme of struggle and conflict.<sup>2</sup> This conflict takes two basic forms: a struggle between different groups of people in Newfoundland, as well as the battle between Newfoundlanders and the forces of nature. Despite the work of some university

scholars, our history remains a story of oppression and neglect at the hands of outsiders, whether English merchants or bureaucrats in Ottawa.<sup>3</sup> We tend to see ourselves as unique and isolated, with an untapped wealth of natural resources. One of the constant themes has been that the province is rich in resources but poor in political leadership: *if only* we had local control over our resources, so the argument runs, then we would break out of our cycles of economic dependence.

At the heart of this perspective is the notion of loss. Our view of the past is essentially a history of bereavement.<sup>4</sup> We commemorate our battles against nature by remembering events such as the Trinity Bay disaster of 1892, the *Newfoundland* disaster of 1914, and the sinking of the *Ocean Ranger* in 1982. We mourn our national struggles by remembering Beaumont Hamel in 1916, and the loss of democracy in the 1930s.<sup>5</sup> We grieve the loss of our traditional culture by remembering resettlement and, more recently, the cod moratorium of the 1990s. And we commemorate our economic failures by refusing to forget the Churchill Falls deal, which casts a long shadow over our political culture, as people worry about new giveaways.

In commemorating our melancholy sense of loss, we generally assume that it was always this way. We tend to presume that this sense of communion with the past has always dominated our culture. But I want to argue that this simply is not true. What I would like to suggest is that our entire way of conceptualizing history has been transformed in the post-Smallwood era. Prior to the 1970s, our view of the past — the essence of our collective memory — was radically different. This transition in our idea of history is a crucial yet misunderstood turning point in Newfoundland culture.

## II

In considering Newfoundland historiography, we have to begin, not surprisingly, with Judge Prowse and his *History of Newfoundland*. For over a century, D.W. Prowse's *History of Newfoundland* has been the island's most widely read historical study. It is difficult to overestimate the influence of Prowse's work.<sup>6</sup> Published to widespread acclaim in 1895, it has inspired generations of scholars and shaped the way Newfoundlanders see their past. Although Judge Prowse favoured joining Canada, he advocated, in George Story's words, a "sturdy nationalism."<sup>7</sup> The story of Newfoundland was, according to Prowse, a narrative of the long struggle for control over the island between the tyrannical West Country merchants along with their allies in the British government, on the one hand, and the humble settlers and their political champions, on the other. In the 1970s this traditional interpretation received its first systematic reappraisal at the hands of academic historians, but Prowse's view still dominates popular history. In his acclaimed novel, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, Wayne Johnston goes so far as to depict Prowse's *History* as the secular Bible of the island's people.<sup>8</sup> And with the publication of a new edition in 2002, it is enjoying a remarkable renaissance.

The tenacity of Prowse's interpretation has perpetuated many of the stubborn nationalist legends which professional historians have worked to debunk and, as Eric Hobsbawm has argued, challenging such myths represents one of the most important responsibilities for historians.<sup>9</sup> But attacking the veracity of Prowse's assertions has revealed little about how or why his work has remained so popular for so long. By fixating on the task of overturning the misconceptions inherited from Prowse, historians have overlooked a key issue. The reason Prowse remains so popular is not due to the power of myth per se; rather, it is because his entire idea of history has been turned on its head. He was a Whig historian in the classic sense of the term, and his *History* is an account of how Newfoundland had triumphed in the face of adversity. For Prowse, a crucial break separated the past (backwardness) from the present (progress). In using the past to show how far Newfoundlanders had come in transcending a legacy of repression, he approached history as both a series of enlightening lessons and an entertaining narrative, dividing the past into distinct periods which advanced teleologically.

Since the 1970s successive writers have drawn heavily on Prowse's evidence and interpretation, but with the notable exception of Kevin Major, they have replaced his basic outlook with their own philosophy of history.<sup>10</sup> This new framework takes a radically different approach: it collapses the distance between historical periods into a single master narrative which deliberately blurs the line between the past and the present. Rather than triumphing over their history of oppression, according to this view, Newfoundlanders are haunted by it. This outlook grew out of the cultural revival of the 1970s, emerged in one form in Peckford's economic nationalism of the 1980s, and has resurfaced in the wave of historical fiction since the 1990s. According to this view, we are not free from our past but trapped by it, forced to endure seemingly endless cycles of economic failure and social misery.

Although Prowse organized his chapters according to the reigns of British monarchs, he envisaged Newfoundland history as encompassing four distinct periods. The first, which he called the "early or chaotic era," ran from John Cabot's voyage in 1497 to John Guy's colony in 1610. This was an age of anarchy, when the island was ruled, according to Prowse, "in a rough way by the reckless valour of Devonshire men, half pirates, half traders." Following this was the "Fishing Admirals period," from 1610 to 1711, which Prowse also termed "the colonisation period." This "dismal time" was marked by the bitter struggle between the humble settlers and the predatory adventurers from the west of England. The third era, referred to as "The Colony under Naval Governors," began with Captain Crowe's tenure as commodore of the Newfoundland station in 1711 and ended with the appointment of the first civil governor, Sir Thomas Cochrane, in 1825. Prowse called the final period simply the "modern era, the struggle for autonomy," which continued from 1825 to his own day.<sup>11</sup> He reported that he had initially intended to terminate his book in 1713 and decided to extend it to 1895 only after much of it was already written. Yet he devoted ten chapters — about 40 percent of the book's en-

tire length — to events after the reign of George III. The latter chapters included special essays on topics such as the French Shore problem, railway construction, and advances in telegraphic communication.

The first three periods together form a single coherent section, while the modern era comprises its own separate study. The chapters covering the pre-1825 era share the common themes of mercantile oppression, imperial neglect, and local perseverance. Prowse followed the traditional interpretation first established in 1793 by John Reeves and propagated by nineteenth-century political reformers, most notably William Carson and Patrick Morris. A trained jurist who served as the island's first Chief Justice, Reeves saw Newfoundland history through the lens of conflict. In what is the single most influential statement ever written about Newfoundland, Reeves began his book by setting out the heroes and the villains:

I intend to give a short history of the Government and Constitution of the island of Newfoundland. This will comprise the struggles and vicissitudes of two contending interests — the planters and inhabitants on the one hand, who, being settled there, needed the protection of a government and police, with the administration of justice: and the adventurers and merchants on the other; who, originally carrying on the fishery from this country, and visiting that island only for the season, needed no such protection for themselves, and had various reasons for preventing its being afforded to others.<sup>12</sup>

As Patrick O'Flaherty and others have noted, by establishing the paradigm of repression, Reeves spawned the nationalist outlook which so greatly influenced Prowse.<sup>13</sup> Prowse's portrayal of the West Country merchants echoed Reeves's perspective: "Newfoundland settlers of all kinds, from Guy and Baltimore down to the poorest waif from the west of England, had to fight for their lives with the dire hostility of the ship-fishermen or western adventurers from England."<sup>14</sup> On the question of government policy, he took an even harsher view than Reeves.

In Prowse's hands, Newfoundland's early history became a tale of conspiracy, as mercantile interests blocked political reform and stunted social development. "There can be no doubt," he concluded, "that it was the influence of these West Country merchants that retarded the grant of a local legislature."<sup>15</sup> Without local control over resource allocation, the island remained economically backward and socially embryonic. Though Prowse referred to the need to stamp out the last vestiges of the credit system, there is a telling absence of historical villains in his final assessment. After dominating the earlier chapters, the West Country merchants are no longer to be blamed for the colony's misfortunes. "The prejudice against the merchants," Prowse noted, "however reasonable and natural in olden times, should not exist now; employers and employed are mutually dependent on each other."<sup>16</sup> The contrast between the chapters on the pre-1825 era and those on the modern period reflected his nationalist convictions. Prowse was a tireless enthusiast of Newfoundland who did not disguise his efforts to promote the island's development,

particularly its tourism industry. The theme of economic progress figured prominently in Prowse's later writing, such as his *Newfoundland Guide Book* (published in 1905), which emphasized economic growth. He was in the business of "booming Newfoundland," as he termed it in a letter to Sir Edward Morris.<sup>17</sup>

For three-quarters of a century, Prowse's view of history remained basically unchallenged. The major studies completed in the pre-Confederation period — most notably A.H. McLintock's *Establishment of Constitutional Government in Newfoundland* — focused largely on how British policy had stunted the island's economic and political development. Like Prowse, McLintock explained how the settlers had eventually persevered in the face of adversity to build a successful society. He concluded that no student of Newfoundland history "can set it aside without feeling strangely moved at the wonder of creating an amazing colony which, in spite of inherited weaknesses and economic disabilities, stands to-day as a testimony to the power of people to nullify Britain's greatest experiment in retarded colonisation."<sup>18</sup> Joey Smallwood also took up Prowse's themes in his *Barrelman* radio program, which often presented a nationalist perspective, and in his copious writings in Newfoundland history.<sup>19</sup> Smallwood followed the conventional framework by dividing history into the dark age, before the advent of representative government, and the enlightened era ushered in by industrialization and later Confederation with Canada. Amplifying Prowse's grand narrative of struggle, he created an epic tale which veered into hagiography. Smallwood's book on William Carson placed him at the top of the pantheon of Newfoundland's heroes. As the founder of the Newfoundland nation, Carson represented the successful revolt against the régime of the naval governors and the West Country merchants.<sup>20</sup> Like Prowse, Smallwood saw no contradiction between his advocacy for Confederation and his Newfoundland nationalism. And as premier in the 1950s and 1960s, Joey Smallwood embarked on a crash program to usher in the era of industrial progress which Prowse had championed a half-century earlier.<sup>21</sup>

The influence of Prowse's *History* reached its height in 1968 with the publication of a new provincial textbook. Leslie Harris's *Newfoundland and Labrador: A Brief History* inculcated tens of thousands of Newfoundland schoolchildren with what was essentially Prowse's view of history.<sup>22</sup> Harris adopted the traditional cast of villains and heroes, as well as the familiar storyline of perseverance in the face of political repression and economic adversity. Harris asserts that "Neither the rule of the fishing admirals, nor the French wars, nor the bad treatment of the Irish made the Newfoundlanders give up hope."<sup>23</sup> With the arrival of William Carson, described as a "brave and unselfish man," the great reform movement finally defeated the old tyrannical régime in 1825. "At long last, after more than three hundred years of struggle," Harris concluded, "Newfoundland had become a colony."<sup>24</sup> The textbook extends Prowse's interpretive format into the post-1949 era: the First World War, the Depression, and Commission of Government are explained as obstacles which delayed the progress which Confederation finally bestowed. Harris ends on

essentially the same point that Prowse made about resource potential in the conclusion to his *History*. Like Prowse, Harris separates the legacy of the past from the promise of the future. He espouses an optimistic variant of nationalism which presents Newfoundland history as a story of struggle but not of loss.

### III

While schoolchildren like myself were still being taught the traditional view of Newfoundland history, the province was undergoing a remarkable cultural transformation. Beginning in the late 1960s, a cultural revival began to change how Newfoundlanders viewed their past. The provincial government had facilitated this process, and the celebration of local heritage became linked with the tourism industry.<sup>25</sup> By the 1970s the province was in the midst of what Sandra Gwyn termed "The Newfoundland Renaissance."<sup>26</sup> Gwyn charted the remarkable expansion of new work in a wide range of fields: theatre groups such as Codco; artists such as Gerry Squires and Mary Pratt; and writers like Ray Guy and Harold Horwood. Yet mixed with Gwyn's enthusiasm was a lament for a lost heritage. "The old order that produced all of us," she noted, "is being smashed, homogenized, and trivialized out of existence."<sup>27</sup> She quotes Patrick O'Flaherty as saying that writers such as Ray Guy were "the last of the real Newfoundlanders."<sup>28</sup>

With this renaissance came a critical shift in the way we looked at our past: the passage into industrial modernity which Prowse had trumpeted as a national victory was now mourned as a cultural loss. At the heart of this perspective was the belief that the island's golden age lay not in a modern future of material wealth but in an idyllic past of outport culture. Ray Guy himself has admitted that this romantic view drew in large measure on nostalgia for a past that never actually existed, but he claimed that it was necessary as a way to combat the propaganda of the Smallwood régime.<sup>29</sup> The province's cultural renaissance was part of a much broader phenomenon which has swept western societies over the past thirty years. As Gerald Pocius has argued, Newfoundland has followed a broader pattern whereby the weakening of traditional communal ties engenders a drive to recapture (and reinvent) local heritage.<sup>30</sup> Within the university community, this process manifested itself in the burgeoning fields of historical anthropology and folklore. Customs like mummering, which Prowse dismissed as quaint traditions, were now treated as serious topics for scholarly research.<sup>31</sup>

Folklorism has also been used to promote the expanding tourism industry, and it has helped to fuel the rise of nationalist sentiment. As James Overton points out, government agencies and business elites have supported the fabrication of "traditional" cultural commodities — i.e., tourist-friendly myths and stereotypes — in order to further their own socio-economic interests.<sup>32</sup> Equally important, folklorism in Newfoundland, as elsewhere, has tended to embrace an anti-modernism which divides society into the authentic (traditional, rural, plebe-

ian) and the counterfeit (modern, suburban, middle class). In other words, this has produced an artificial distinction between real and fake Newfoundlanders. As Ian McKay argues, “the national identities created through the use of such categories could not and did not include everyone. Treating some people as ‘Folk’ only worked if there were some who were not ‘Folk.’”<sup>33</sup> With this approach came a philosophy of history that contrasted the unspoiled past with the corrupted present. Change became equated, as McKay notes, with degeneration and deviance, creating a static vision which views economic development with fierce hostility. As a result, the teleology which had been so central to the liberal conception of history had fallen out of intellectual fashion.

In the 1970s the position of Prowse’s *History* transformed from an authoritative text into an unreliable source. In the first sustained challenge to the prevailing orthodoxy, Keith Matthews argued that the fish merchants did not conspire to prohibit settlement or stunt the colony’s growth.<sup>34</sup> Although Matthews’s work constituted the most important challenge to Prowse’s reputation as a historian, it represented only one element of a much larger movement in academic scholarship. The 1970s saw the emergence of new schools of research in a variety of areas — historical geography, economic history, maritime studies, and anthropology — sponsored by agencies such as the Institute of Social and Economic Research.<sup>35</sup> The new perspectives rejected not only Prowse’s specific arguments, but also his entire Whig interpretation and its bias in favour of high politics, great men, and the march of progress. Part of the reaction against Prowse stemmed from a broader debate over nationalism in Canada during the late 1970s, as scholars discussed radical regionalism and worried about the potential breakup of the federation.<sup>36</sup>

Yet Prowse’s *History* remained a popular and influential book. In spite of its savaging at the hands of scholars, outside of academia it was still included in the canon of Newfoundland history.<sup>37</sup> As the province witnessed a surge in nationalist sentiment in the 1980s — culminating in the Peckford administration’s battle with Ottawa over offshore resources — politicians drew on historical sources, including Prowse, to justify their policies. As Harry Hiller notes, this rise in nationalism emanated from a sense of cultural uniqueness and economic disadvantage.<sup>38</sup> Although Hiller hesitated to categorize Newfoundland nationalism as a manifestation of a distinct ethnic identity, he concluded that separatist rhetoric could not be dismissed as merely political flirtation or elite manipulation. While groups such as the Party for an Independent Newfoundland attracted publicity, Brian Peckford was without question the leading political figure in the nationalist movement.<sup>39</sup>

At the height of the province’s campaign for ownership over offshore oil resources, Peckford published a political manifesto, *The Past in the Present*, which outlined his view of Newfoundland history. Peckford was certainly a populist, but he was also well read, and he quoted liberally from scholars such as James Hiller, Peter Neary, and David Alexander.<sup>40</sup> He followed Alexander’s basic argument that the federal government was largely to blame for the failure to develop a viable

economy in post-1949 Newfoundland.<sup>41</sup> Yet he combined his secondary research with an eclectic mix of personal history, political rhetoric, and statistical analysis. The thrust of his argument was to “show the extent to which the monumental mistakes of the past have resulted in our Province’s being one of the poorest regions of Canada, and ... to demonstrate how the situation has been aggravated by recent policies of the Federal Government.”<sup>42</sup> To achieve this goal, Peckford drew on Prowse’s *History*, which he quoted approvingly at the beginning of his historical section.<sup>43</sup> In many respects, *The Past in the Present* was a recapitulation of Prowse’s interpretation of the island’s past, complete with repressive government officials and merchants trying to deny Newfoundlanders their natural rights. Peckford saw no evident contradiction in citing both revisionist scholars and Prowse, whom he seemed to follow closely in rhetoric and argumentation.

However, a subtle yet crucial difference separates the outlooks of Prowse and Peckford. Unlike Prowse, Peckford did not imagine history as a series of discrete eras moving teleologically toward modernity, nor did he see the distant past as part of a quaint “olden time” removed from the present. When he considered Newfoundland’s experience as a colony, dominion, and province, he viewed it as a seamless web of incessant struggle. His manifesto declared that real progress is a dream which could only be achieved by overcoming powerful political and cultural obstacles.<sup>44</sup> In Peckford’s mind, history had inflicted a debilitating psychic wound from which it was not certain that Newfoundland could recover. The past haunted the present, making it difficult to break from historic patterns of subjugation and failure. In other words, Newfoundland history came to represent a type of post-traumatic stress disorder.

In the mid-1980s, the wave of new scholarship was integrated into the province’s school curriculum. In a new high-school course on Newfoundland culture, students in the 1980s (myself included) were assigned *Our Newfoundland and Labrador Cultural Heritage*, a hybrid textbook designed to bridge the gap between history and social studies.<sup>45</sup> It included a short commentary on Prowse: he was cited as simply one of the nineteenth-century authors who “recorded many of the myths and descriptions of Newfoundland and its people which are deeply imbedded in folklore — the oral tribal memory of the people.”<sup>46</sup> The text summarized Prowse’s career briefly, noting that his *History* “has been reprinted several times and still makes interesting reading.”<sup>47</sup> As for the nature of Newfoundland history, the authors tried to strike a balance between progressive optimism and cultural relativism. While claiming that contemporary culture “is both the result and a reflection of the past and experiences of generations who have lived here,” they also concluded that there never existed a “golden age, and certainly old Newfoundland culture has little relation to contemporary life.”<sup>48</sup> This dichotomy between the remote past and the modern present appears similar to Prowse, but the authors expressed doubt over the prospect of progress, asserting that “it is difficult to decide what kind of people



we are, and what kind we might be in the future.”<sup>49</sup> By the end of the 1980s, Newfoundland seemed to be at a cultural crossroads.

#### IV

With the decline in traditional historiography came a wave of new approaches based on literary interpretations of the island’s past. This work includes a range of authors, from E. Annie Proulx and Bernice Morgan (both of whom saw their novels adapted into films), to John Steffler, Gordon Rodgers, and Michael Crummey.<sup>50</sup> What these writers have in common is the goal to create a sense of what it was like to live in a certain time and place in Newfoundland. To varying degrees they base their fiction on historical research, and they usually acknowledge the sources on which they rely. In cases such as David Macfarlane’s literary memoir, the line between fact and fiction is fairly clear.<sup>51</sup> But in other works the construction of the past is deliberately skewed to serve a literary purpose. The practice of purposefully merging the present into the past was part of a broader movement in post-modern literature and, as elsewhere, it has been heavily criticized.<sup>52</sup> As A.S. Byatt noted, “The idea that ‘all history is fiction’ led to a new interest in fiction as history.”<sup>53</sup> Byatt argues that the appeal of historical fiction is the allure of the forbidden: it gives writers a chance to challenge conventional wisdom and to ask the type of difficult cultural questions that people habitually avoid.

The 1990s also witnessed a noticeable surge in nationalist sentiment within the province’s arts community. Nationalism was central to works such as the popular film *Secret Nation*, based on the screenplay by Ed Riche, which suggests that Newfoundlanders are not free citizens of a province in Canada but rather captives in a nation occupied by a foreign power. According to this view, Canada, Great Britain, and some Newfoundland turncoats had colluded to rig the referendum on Confederation. Following literary trends, Riche blended together elements of history and fiction into a new version of the old conspiracy myths.<sup>54</sup> The theme of mourning the loss of nationhood became increasingly prevalent as the fiftieth anniversary of Confederation approached. In the poetry of Des Walsh, for example, Confederation is depicted as severing the Newfoundland folk from their true identity.<sup>55</sup> For Wayne Johnston, joining Canada forced Newfoundlanders to forsake their own past.<sup>56</sup>

The medium through which Johnston chose to address these issues was his acclaimed novel, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, a fictional biography of Joey Smallwood.<sup>57</sup> The novel has provoked much interest and debate, but lost in the discussion over the accuracy of Johnston’s portrayal of Smallwood has been his treatment of Judge Prowse’s *History*. Prowse’s *History* was a central plot device — in the scandal which forces Joey Smallwood from Bishop Feild School, it is used to write the incriminating letter — and Smallwood’s rival is the grandson of Judge Prowse, whom he visits. Johnston depicts Prowse as an old man possessed by his-

tory. This possession infects Smallwood himself after he leaves Bishop Feild. His father informs him that they were now all ruined because of Prowse's *History*, which he called *The Book*. While his father rages against "That cursed Book," Smallwood compulsively carries it with him throughout his journey of self-discovery.<sup>58</sup> Over the course of the novel, *The Book* transforms into a type of secular Bible that impels him to seek the truth about the past. The exiled Newfoundlanders are also compared, through the voice of the character Hines, to the wandering Jews.<sup>59</sup> Smallwood is depicted as a type of prophet: his arduous journey across the island enlightens him about the plight of his own folk, instilling in him the mission to see them through to the promised land, i.e., Confederation.

The key to the novel is Johnston's conception of Newfoundland history. In place of religion, he gives Smallwood a conscience based on his relationship with history. When readying himself to return from exile, Smallwood experiences the epiphany that he had been *yanked back by the past*.<sup>60</sup> In Johnston's portrait of both Smallwood and Prowse, history is not a temporal space but rather a spiritual inheritance from which they — and, by extension, all Newfoundlanders — cannot escape. Smallwood assumes the guilt for their collective failure to live up to the greatness of the land, and the scar of history becomes a type of original sin. *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* is, in many ways, similar to Edmund Morris's controversial biography of Ronald Reagan.<sup>61</sup> Like Morris, Johnston was criticized for projecting too much of himself onto his subject and veering into autobiography.<sup>62</sup> Yet as important as the problem of whether he accurately represents Smallwood is the question of whether he got Prowse right. Prowse might have been haunted in his old age, but his *History* certainly was not: in it he affirmed the capacity of Newfoundlanders to transcend their legacy of oppression and forge a new age of progress. Prowse's cultural memory was not eclipsed by the blurring of the past into the present, and he would have rejected the notion that we are yoked to a tortuous history of misfortune.

With the recent publication of Kevin Major's survey of Newfoundland history, Prowse's legacy has come full circle. Major was careful to integrate recent historical research into his book, but he adopts an essentially traditional framework of virtuous settlers and battling against long odds to build a successful society.<sup>63</sup> Like Prowse, his narrative becomes more journalistic as he discusses recent issues, such as Clyde Wells's administration, and he offers an optimistic appraisal of the future. Where Prowse took pains to show that the colony was rebounding from the great fire of 1892, Major seeks to show how the province has successfully dealt with the cod moratorium of 1992. He stresses the benefits engendered by offshore oil exploration, but this is not really the same as Prowse's belief in railways and the telegraph. Though they both believe in progress, for Major the primary engine of change is culture, not technology. As he explains in his preface: "There's a new confidence at work in this province. We are thankfully past the era of looking over our shoulders for direction."<sup>64</sup> Despite the differences in emphasis and style,

Prowse would have approved of the faith in progress. Prowse's legacy as a historian has been attacked and misrepresented over the past century, but it is still alive and kicking.

The enduring popularity of Prowse's *History* is due to the fact that it has entered the realm of heritage. Whether it is factually accurate or relies on nationalist legends matters less than its iconic place in Newfoundland culture. The role of Prowse's work in the propagation of popular myths is not, in itself, particularly alarming: all societies need myths to sustain them. The problem is that the book exists in a type of cultural no-man's-land, where the line between history and heritage has become muddled. Heritage and history may be members of the same cultural family, but they are not the same thing. As David Lowenthal has explained, heritage involves a type of communion with the past and a celebration of history; it offers a clear vision of cultural memory. However, history is quite different: it is an inquiry into a past which grows more opaque with each passing year.<sup>65</sup> Historians tend to be wary of the notions of truth and certainty. As Simon Schama explained, being a historian in search of certainty is like running after someone who is always one step ahead of you: just as you get a glimpse of them, they turn around the corner and run away.<sup>66</sup>

## V

This brings me back to my opening comment. At the beginning of this paper I suggested that in both Newfoundland and Russia, there is a sense that the present does not really exist: all that matters is the past and the future. I would like to take this analogy a bit further, and suggest that there are other ways in which the two cultures are similar. Wayne Johnston's novel compares Newfoundlanders to Jews, but I would suggest that Russia might be a more interesting comparison. Russia is currently undergoing a cultural transformation which has produced something like an identity crisis. There is a confusing array of different political and cultural elements, as symbols from the old Communist era are mixed with those from the new political order. The red star is used by some institutions, such as the military, while the old communist anthem has been brought back. In some ways, Newfoundland is quite similar: anyone visiting the province will encounter at least four different political symbols: the official provincial flag; the coat of arms, used widely by the provincial government; the Union Jack, which still flies in front of almost every government building; and the pink-white-and-green. And if you add the red ensign, the maple leaf, and the Labrador flag, we actually have seven different symbols. Like Russia, Newfoundland is a relatively old society but has a surprisingly young political culture.

Newfoundlanders have also lived through a strong central government that made massive attempts at social engineering. The resettlement plan was, in many ways, similar to other state-sponsored efforts to remodel societies during the 1960s.

Smallwood's idea was to smash the old economy and culture, and build a new modern society from scratch. His crash program of industrialization depended on state-run enterprises, and was similar to the five-year plans imposed in many socialist countries.<sup>67</sup> Smallwood promised to yank Newfoundlanders kicking and screaming to the modern age, and he was true to his word. He still casts a long shadow over our collective memory and, like Russians, Newfoundlanders have yet to come fully to grips with a leader who has become a cultural icon. Newfoundlanders still react emotionally when Smallwood's name is mentioned, and we are only now starting to assess his legacy. I want to make one point clear: I am not suggesting that Smallwood was in any real way like Stalin. But like the Russians, we have had a difficult time facing up to our past and deciding what kind of present we want to have. And like Russians, we continue to be fiercely attached to our homeland, although it has given us little economic prosperity. I could take this analogy further: I could suggest that St. John's occupies a similar place in Newfoundland as Moscow does in Russia; that rum is to Newfoundlanders what vodka is to Russians; that we have the same blind faith in our natural resources; that out of our troubles has emerged a rich literary tradition; that we have a similar fatalism; and that the Confederation Building is an excellent example of Stalinist architecture — but it is time to turn to the final part of my paper.

## VI

In the last part of this paper, I would like to explore the issue of Newfoundland nationalism, which is one of the themes of our Symposium.<sup>68</sup> Nationalism in Newfoundland, as elsewhere, has depended on creating the cultural means through which diverse peoples can unite behind a single political goal. And as in other societies, the foundation of Newfoundland nationalism is a view of the past rooted in historical certainty.<sup>69</sup> Ask a nationalist a question about the province's past, and he or she will rarely express any doubts about who is right and who is wrong. Nationalism has necessarily entailed the masking of social cleavages — e.g., rural versus urban and, perhaps most importantly, Newfoundlander versus Labradorian — in order to sustain the political coalition and image of unity needed to make the case for constitutional reform. Since the early nineteenth century, elites have relied on nationalism when it served their economic and political interests. Their interest in nationalism has ebbed and flowed in cycles according to the changing political currents and, as our business leaders again take a leading role in advocating constitutional reform, their motives and strategies need to be critically evaluated.<sup>70</sup> We must remain wary of rhetoric which seeks to gloss over systemic social problems by attacking outsiders.

However, Newfoundland nationalism should be taken seriously as a real force in the province's political culture. For post-colonial societies like Newfoundland, the problem is that nationalism has often provided the socio-political force needed

to confront the effects of imperialism. Liberation movements in many former British colonies have used nationalism to fuel resistance to systemic exploitation. As scholars have pointed out, a blanket contempt for all nationalisms tends to slide over the question of imperialism.<sup>71</sup> For many third-world countries, nationalism has been a necessary tool in the struggle to overcome colonial rule. While the recent spate of separatist sentiment will no doubt decline, there are no signs that nationalism will dissipate anytime soon. Opponents of nationalism have tended to separate its rhetoric from the reality of Newfoundland history; this creates a false dichotomy of illegitimate (invented current mythology) versus legitimate (genuine past reality).<sup>72</sup> If we are going to come to grips with nationalism, we must recognize that it cannot be dismissed simply as a sham. While much of nationalist historiography is indeed a recent creation, we cannot assume that other kinds of history are not social constructions as well. Debunking myths is an undeniably important task, but we must not miss the essential point that nationalism is a significant part of Newfoundland's past, rooted in the history of its political and intellectual culture.

One of the shortcomings of the Royal Commission is that it employed an unusually narrow definition of nationalism. The commissioners seemed to have defined nationalism almost solely in terms of separatism. They based their assessment of nationalism largely on the question of whether Newfoundlanders support the political goal of separating from Canada. According to the research presented in their report, only 12 percent of those polled supported the idea of separation. The commissioners concluded that this percentage constituted a politically inconsequential proportion of the electorate, though it is significant that one out of eight respondents actually supported separation.<sup>73</sup> By framing the question of nationalism in such limited terms, the commissioners failed to explore the many different ways in which nationalist sentiment is expressed beyond the political aim of separation. As in Quebec, Newfoundland nationalism involves a wide range of social values and activities that are not predicated on a specific constitutional agenda. Between acceptance of the current federalist structure and advocacy for separation exists a vast cultural terrain that includes many nationalist features. By viewing nationalism only through the lens of separatism, the Royal Commission marginalized an important segment of the province's culture. Much of the public discussion following the release of the report focused on the fact that it said "no" to separation, but this is an inaccurate representation of the Commission's mandate, which was to examine, among other things, "the expectations of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador prior to joining Canada, and how Newfoundland and Labrador has changed since Confederation, with a review of how the prosperity and self-reliance of our people has been affected over time."<sup>74</sup> Nowhere in the Terms of Reference does it state that separatism should be the determinant for assessing the province's political culture.

In assessing Newfoundland nationalism, we must be careful not to replace one set of myths based on cultural traditions with another drawn from quantitative research. Historians work in the realm of probabilities — not absolute certainties —

and the facts which we learn about the past are almost never beyond dispute. We need to recognize that the twentieth century witnessed dramatic changes in not only our understanding of past events, but also our entire conception of history. While Judge Prowse had celebrated Newfoundland's progress in the face of adversity, we now tend to see ourselves as trapped by history. The cultural reaction against modernity is part of a broader international trend, as societies continue to grapple with the historical ruptures of the twentieth century.<sup>75</sup> With the line between history and heritage becoming increasingly blurred, it is imperative to avoid seeing research as a substitute for political debate. Studying the province's history is absolutely critical to understanding our current challenges, but we must keep in mind that the past is as messy and complex as the present. I would like to end my paper by borrowing a suggestion made recently by Neil Postman in his provocative book, *Building a Bridge to the Eighteenth Century*.<sup>76</sup> Those who forget their history, we are often told, are doomed to repeat it. And there is no doubt that forgetting past mistakes is a dangerous practice. But I would suggest that forgetting our achievements is just as risky. As we continue to assess our place in Canada, we need to find a way to balance our pessimism with our hope, in order to live in the present.

*This paper is a revised version of a public lecture presented to the Newfoundland Historical Society Symposium "The Idea of Newfoundland: Nationalism, Identity and Culture, from the Nineteenth Century to the Present," St. John's, 28 March 2003. Parts of this paper are based on a research study completed in 2003 for the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada. The material is used here with permission.*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Gary Shteyngart, "Teen Spirit: Capitalizing on the rise of Post-Soviet youth," *The New Yorker* (10 March 2003), p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>On the historiographic paradigm of conflict, see Keith Matthews, "Historical Fence Building: A Critique of the Historiography of Newfoundland," *Newfoundland Studies* 17.2 (Fall 2001), pp. 143-65.

<sup>3</sup>This issue is discussed in two excellent review articles: Olaf U. Janzen, "Newfoundland and the International Fishery," in M. Brook Taylor, ed., *Canadian History: A Reader's Guide, Volume 1: Beginnings to Confederation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 280-324; Peter E. Pope, "Comparisons: Atlantic Canada," in Daniel Vickers, ed., *A Companion to Colonial America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 489-507.

<sup>4</sup>On the issue of loss in Newfoundland culture, see Gerard Blackmore, "Sense of Place: Loss and the Newfoundland and Labrador Spirit," in *Collected Research Papers of the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada: Volume 1* (St. John's: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2003), pp. 311-41.

<sup>5</sup>Unlike Canada, where the memory of the First World War contributed to a sense of national accomplishment, in Newfoundland the war has been seen increasingly as a senseless slaughter that crippled the country's future. On the Canadian context, see Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

<sup>6</sup>D.W. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial, and Foreign Records* (Belleville, Ontario: Mika Studio, 1972 reprint of 1895 ed.).

<sup>7</sup>George Story, *People of the Landwash: Essays on Newfoundland and Labrador*. Melvin Baker, Helen Peters and Shannon Ryan, eds. (St. John's: Harry Cuff, 1997), p. 120.

<sup>8</sup>Wayne Johnston, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (Toronto: Vintage, 1998).

<sup>9</sup>Eric Hobsbawm, *On History* (London: Abacus, 1997), chs. 1-3 & 21.

<sup>10</sup>Kevin Major, *As Near to Heaven by Sea: A History of Newfoundland and Labrador* (Toronto: Penguin Viking, 2001).

<sup>11</sup>Prowse, *History of Newfoundland*, pp. xv-xvi.

<sup>12</sup>John Reeves, *History of the Government of the Island of Newfoundland* (New York: John Reprints, 1967 reprint of 1793 edition), p. 1. For examples of nineteenth-century works influenced by Reeves, see Lewis Amadeus Anspach, *A History of the Island of Newfoundland* (London: T. & J. Allman, 1819); William Carson, *Reasons for Colonizing the Island of Newfoundland* (Greenock: William Scott, 1813); and Patrick Morris, *Remarks on the State of Society, Religion, Morals, and Education at Newfoundland* (London: A. Hancock, 1827).

<sup>13</sup>Patrick O'Flaherty, *Old Newfoundland: A History to 1843* (St. John's: Long Beach Press, 1999), pp. 109-11, 133-34. For an attempt to rehabilitate Reeves's reputation as a historian, see Mark Warren Bailey, "John Reeves, Esq. Newfoundland's First Chief Justice: English Law and Politics in the Eighteenth Century," *Newfoundland Studies* 14.1 (Spring 1998), pp. 28-49.

<sup>14</sup>Prowse, *History of Newfoundland*, p. xviii.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 428.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 530.

<sup>17</sup>Quoted in Story, *People of the Landwash*, p. 122. On this point, see also Neary, "The Writing of Newfoundland History," pp. 4-7.

<sup>18</sup>A.H. McLintock, *The Establishment of Constitutional Government in Newfoundland, 1783-1832: A Study of Retarded Colonisation* (London: Longmans, Green, 1941), pp. 191-92. Despite the similarities in their interpretations, McLintock termed Prowse's *History* "The standard work on Nfld. but a very poor history."

<sup>19</sup>Jeff A. Webb, "Constructing Community and Consumers: Joseph R. Smallwood's *Barrelman* Radio Programme," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* New Series 8 (1997), esp. pp. 165-67. For the broader context, see Peter Neary, *Newfoundland in the North Atlantic World, 1929-49* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988); James Hiller, "Newfoundland Confronts Canada, 1867-1949," in E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, eds., *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation* (Toronto & Fredericton: University of Toronto Press and Acadiensis Press, 1993), pp. 349-81.

<sup>20</sup>Joseph R. Smallwood, *Dr. William Carson, The Great Newfoundland Reformer: His Life, Letters and Speeches* (St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers, 1978), pp. 9-10. Most of this book was written in 1938.

<sup>21</sup>See Richard Gwyn, *Smallwood: The Unlikely Revolutionary* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972); S.J.R. Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), ch. 17.

<sup>22</sup>Leslie Harris, *Newfoundland and Labrador: A Brief History* (Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1968). I was assigned this book in grade five. I can still vividly recall my history teacher ranting against vile merchants, dastardly fishing admirals, and untrustworthy Englishmen.

<sup>23</sup>Harris, *Newfoundland and Labrador*, p. 67.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>25</sup>James Overton, "Sparking a Cultural Revolution: Joey Smallwood, Farley Mowat, Harold Horwood and Newfoundland's Cultural Renaissance," *Newfoundland Studies* 16.2 (Fall 2000), pp. 166-201.

<sup>26</sup>Sandra Gwyn, "The Newfoundland Renaissance," *Saturday Night* 91.2 (April 1976), p. 45.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>According to Guy, "After Confederation and before it, there was an inferiority complex in Newfoundland — especially when the Yanks marched in here, and they all had teeth and were plump. After Confederation, Joey and his crowd harped on it for their own aggrandizement. The world started in 1949 (according to Smallwood) — before that, there was only depravity, poverty and corruption." See Mark Paddock, "The Ray Guy Philosophy," *The Express* (3 February 1993), p. 9.

<sup>30</sup>Gerald Pocius, *A Place to Belong: Community Order and Everyday Space in Calvert, Newfoundland* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), pp. 21-24 & 272-79. For an overview of the international context, see David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), esp. ch. 1.

<sup>31</sup>See, *inter alia*, John Szwed, *Private Cultures and Public Imagery: Interpersonal Relations in a Newfoundland Peasant Society* (St. John's: ISER, 1966); Melvin Firestone, *Brothers and Rivals: Patrilocality in Savage Cove* (St. John's: ISER, 1967); Herbert Halpert and G.M. Story, eds., *Christmas Mummie in Newfoundland: Essays in Anthropology, Folklore, and History* (2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

<sup>32</sup>James Overton, *Making a World of Difference: Essays on Tourism, Culture and Development in Newfoundland* (St. John's: ISER, 1996), esp. chs. 5-7. On the concept of folklorism, see Elke Dettmer, "Folklorism in Newfoundland," in G. Thomas and J.D.A. Widdowson, eds., *Studies in Newfoundland Folklore: Community and Process* (St. John's: Breakwater, 1991), pp. 169-76.

<sup>33</sup>Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press), p. 13.

<sup>34</sup>Keith Matthews, "History of the West of England — Newfoundland Fishery" (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1968); Keith Matthews, *Lectures on the History of Newfoundland, 1500-1830* (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1988), pp. 181-84; Keith Matthews, "The Class of '32: St. John's Reformers on the Eve of Representative Government," *Acadiensis* 6.2 (Spring 1977), pp. 80-94; Keith Matthews, "Historical Fence Building: A Critique of the Historiography of Newfoundland," *Newfoundland Quarterly* 74 (Spring



1978), pp. 21-30. Matthews's "Lectures" were originally written and distributed in the early 1970s.

<sup>35</sup>See, *inter alia*, F.W. Rowe, "Myths of Newfoundland," *Newfoundland Quarterly* 74.4 (Winter 1979), pp. 3-16; Eric Sager, "Newfoundland's Historical Revival and the Legacy of David Alexander," *Acadiensis* 11.1 (Autumn 1981), pp. 104-15; Neary, "The Writing of Newfoundland History," pp. 3-13; Janzen, "Newfoundland and the International Fishery," pp. 280-324; Hiller, "Is Atlantic Canadian History Possible?," pp. 16-22; Jerry Bannister, "'A Species of Vassalage': The Issue of Class in the Writing of Newfoundland History," *Acadiensis* 24.1 (Autumn 1994), pp. 134-44; Ingrid Botting et al., "Evolutions in Research on Resource Development in Newfoundland, 1960 to the Present" (paper presented to the Atlantic Canada Studies Workshop, October 1999).

<sup>36</sup>See David Alexander, "New Notions of Happiness: Nationalism, Regionalism, and Atlantic Canada," in Eric Sager, Lewis Fischer and Stuart Pierson, eds., *Atlantic Canada and Confederation: Essays in Canadian Political Economy*, by David Alexander (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), ch. 5. Matthews's review article had, rather fittingly, appeared in a special issue of the *Newfoundland Quarterly* (Spring 1978), which featured ten papers by prominent local scholars (including George Story, Harold Paddock, and David Alexander), on the problem of Newfoundland's place in Confederation.

<sup>37</sup>Even within academic circles, Prowse's status as a historical authority had not dissipated. George Story's biographical sketch of Prowse asserted that his *History* "remains the most comprehensive history of the Colony almost a century later. Prowse's *History* retains its value both for its pioneering use of primary original sources and for its stamp of authorship: human insight, learning and style." See *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*, Robert Cuff, Melvin Baker, and Robert Pitt, eds. (St. John's: Harry Cuff, 1990), p. 280.

<sup>38</sup>Harry Hiller, "Dependence and independence: emergent nationalism in Newfoundland," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 10.3 (July 1987), pp. 257-75.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 270-72. For overviews of politics in the 1980s, see E.R. Forbes, "Epilogue: The 1980s," in E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, eds., *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation* (Toronto & Fredericton: University of Toronto Press and Acadiensis Press, 1993), pp. 512-14; Margaret R. Conrad and James K. Hiller, *Atlantic Canada: A Region in the Making* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), ch. 11.

<sup>40</sup>A. Brian Peckford, *The Past in the Present: A Personal Perspective on Newfoundland's Future* (St. John's: Harry Cuff, 1983), pp. 42, 44, 60.

<sup>41</sup>David Alexander, *The Decay of Trade: An Economic History of the Newfoundland Saltfish Trade, 1935-1965* (St. John's: ISER, 1977), esp. pp. 1-19.

<sup>42</sup>Peckford, *Past in the Present*, p. 79. On Peckford's use of rhetoric, see James Overton, "Oil and Gas: The Rhetoric and Reality of Development in Newfoundland," in R. Clark, ed., *Contrary Winds: Essays on Newfoundland Society in Crisis* (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1986), pp. 150-75; Robert Paine, *Ayatollahs and Turkey Trots: Political Rhetoric in the New Newfoundland* (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1981), ch. 1.

<sup>43</sup>Peckford, *Past in the Present*, p. 35.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, p. vi.

<sup>45</sup>Keith Matthews, E. Rex Kearley and Paul Dwyer, *Our Newfoundland and Labrador Cultural Heritage* (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall, 1984). When I took the New-

foundland culture course in 1985, no one (including the teachers) took the curriculum very seriously, despite the textbook's grand tone.

<sup>46</sup>Matthews, Kearley and Dwyer, *Our Newfoundland and Labrador Cultural Heritage*, p. 302.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 304.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 336. This section of the textbook was titled in Peckfordian language as "The Past Points to the Future."

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 336.

<sup>50</sup>E. Annie Proulx, *The Shipping News* (New York: Touchstone, 1993); Bernice Morgan, *Random Passage* (St. John's: Breakwater, 1992); Bernice Morgan, *Waiting for Time* (St. John's: Breakwater, 1994); John Steffler, *The Afterlife of George Cartwright* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992); Gordon Rodgers, *A Settlement of Memory* (St. John's: Killick, 1999); and Michael Crummey, *River Thieves* (Toronto: Doubleday, 2001).

<sup>51</sup>David Macfarlane, *The Danger Tree: Memory, War, and the Search for a Family's Past* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1991).

<sup>52</sup>See Stuart Pierson, "Review of John Steffler, *The Afterlife of George Cartwright*," *Newfoundland Studies* 8.2 (1992), pp. 202-20; Gordon Inglis, "Truth and Fiction," *Newfoundland Studies* 16.1 (2000), pp. 67-77.

<sup>53</sup>A.S. Byatt, *On Histories and Stories: Selected Essays* (New York: Vintage, 2001), p. 38.

<sup>54</sup>*Secret Nation*. Director: Michael Jones, Screenwriter: Ed Riche, Producer: Paul Pope. Newfoundland Independent Film-makers' Co-Operative and Telefilm Canada, 1992. 109 minutes. On the use of history in the film, see John Edward FitzGerald, "Newfoundland Politics and Confederation Revisited: Three New Works," *Newfoundland Studies* 9.1 (Spring 1993), pp. 103-24.

<sup>55</sup>Des Walsh, "March 3, 1999: Notes on an Upcoming Anniversary," *TickleAce: A Journal of Literary and Visual Art* 37 (2000), p. 85. The poem was part of a "Special Confederation 50 Issue," edited by Bruce Porter. Walsh's nationalist view of history is not exceptional in the local arts community. In the screenplay "Power of the Unemployed," for example, Chris Brookes and Kathryn Welbourne portrayed the suspension of responsible government in 1934 as the means through which a tyrannical ruling elite oppressed working-class Newfoundlanders. Directed by David Ferry, "Power of the Unemployed" was performed in St. John's by the Resource Centre for the Arts Theatre Company in May 2001.

<sup>56</sup>Wayne Johnston, "A History of Newfoundland — D.W. Prowse [and] *The Newfoundland Journal of Aaron Thomas, 1794 — Aaron Thomas*," in Michael Ondaatje et al., eds., *Lost Classics* (Toronto: Knopf, 2000), p. 140.

<sup>57</sup>Wayne Johnston, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (Toronto: Vintage, 1998).

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 65. See the following chapter titled "The Book."

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>61</sup>Edmund Morris, *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan* (New York: Random House, 1999).

<sup>62</sup>Stuart Pierson, "Johnston's Smallwood," *Newfoundland Studies* 14.2 (1998), pp. 282-300.

<sup>63</sup>Major had participated in the wave of historical fiction in the 1990s with his novel *No Man's Land* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1995), which blended together factual and fictitious accounts of the Newfoundland Regiment in the First World War.

<sup>64</sup>Kevin Major, *As Near to Heaven by Sea: A History of Newfoundland and Labrador* (Toronto: Viking, 2001), p. xiv. Major's proclamation of a new age of confidence should be taken with a grain of salt, since similar pronouncements have appeared regularly over the past 40 years. In 1969 Premier Smallwood himself had declared, "The old inferiority complex is gone ... and our people now are ... bold and self-confident, perhaps even cocky" (quoted in Paine, *Political Rhetoric in the New Newfoundland*, p. 7).

<sup>65</sup>David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. xv.

<sup>66</sup>Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties (Unwarranted Speculations)* (New York: Vintage, 1991), p. 320.

<sup>67</sup>See Richard Gwyn, *Smallwood: The Unlikely Revolutionary* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972); S.J.R. Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), ch. 17; Miriam Wright, *A Fishery for Modern Times: The State and the Industrialization of the Newfoundland Fishery, 1934-1968* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), esp. chs. 5-6.

<sup>68</sup>Newfoundland Historical Society, annual symposium, "The Idea of Newfoundland: Nationalism, Identity and Culture, from the 19th Century to the Present," St. John's, 27-29 March 2003.

<sup>69</sup>E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), esp. ch. 2; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (2nd ed. New York: Verso, 1991), pp. 198 & 204-06.

<sup>70</sup>See John Ibbitson, "Newfoundland Looking out to Sea," *The Globe and Mail* (7 October 2000), p. A3; Craig Westcott, "New found nationalism: Political and Business elite making the case for a new deal with Canada," *The Express* (25 February 2001), p. 3.

<sup>71</sup>Aijaz Ahmad, "Culture, Nationalism, and the Role of Intellectuals," in Ellen Meiksins Wood and John Bellamy Foster, eds., *In Defense of History: Marxism and the Postmodern Agenda* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997), p. 53.

<sup>72</sup>For the argument that Newfoundland nationalism is based on a skewed historical outlook, see, *inter alia*, James Overton, "Towards a Critical Analysis of Neo-Nationalism in Newfoundland," in Robert J. Brym and R. James Sacouman, eds., *Underdevelopment and Social Movements in Atlantic Canada* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1979), pp. 219-49; James Overton, *Making a World of Difference: Essays on Tourism, Culture and Development in Newfoundland* (St. John's: ISER, 1996), p. 147; James Overton, "Poverty, Dependence and Self-Reliance: Politics, Newfoundland History and the Amulree Report of 1933," in Garfield Fizzard, ed., *Amulree's Legacy: Truth, Lies and Consequences Symposium, March 2000, Papers and Presentations* (St. John's: Newfoundland Historical Society, 2001), p. 65.

<sup>73</sup>*Our Place in Canada: Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada: Main Report* (St. John's: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2003), p. 143. The Report is available on-line at: <http://www.gov.nf.ca/royalcomm/finalreport/pdf/Final.pdf>

<sup>74</sup>See the Terms of Reference posted on-line at: <http://www.gov.nf.ca/royalcomm/terms.html>

<sup>75</sup>On the impact of modernity on traditional ways of looking at the past, see Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), pp. 398-99.

<sup>76</sup>Neil Postman, *Building a Bridge to the 18th Century: How the Past Can Improve Our Future* (New York: Vintage, 1999), p. 6.