EARLY EXPLORATIONS: NEW FOUNDE LANDYS (1496-1729)

Sandra Djwa

> And before Columbus his discovery of the continent, Sir Sebastian [John] Cabot, at the charges of K. Henry the seventh, with two Carvels, in the yeere 1496 . . . sailed to the New-found-land, which he called Prima Vista, and the Iland S. Johns, because it was discovered on the Feast of S. John the Baptist; from whence he sailed Northerly to 67. deg. and a halfe, hoping by that way to passe to Cathay, but his mutinous company (terrified haply with Ice and cold) forced his returne.
>
> "Virginia Verger," *Purchas His Pilgrimes*[1]

In the beginning, as Francis Bacon writes in his essay "Of Gardens," "God Almightie first planted a Garden . . . the Greatest Refreshment of the Spirits of Man."[2] It is this lost Edenic garden, metamorphosed into the Promised Land, the Hesperides, the El Dorado, and the riches of Cathay or the Indies which dominates some of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century accounts of the New World reported in Richard Hakluyt's *Divers Voyages* (1582), *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1598-1600), and the subsequent *Hakluytus Posthumas or Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625). References to what is now Canada are considerably more restrained than are the eulogies to Nova Spania and Virginia; nonetheless, there is a faint providential and even Utopian strain in the early reports of the first British settlement in the New World.

The providential view of the "new-founde-landys" as a garden reserved by "God . . . for us Britaines,"[3] or alternately, if one journeyed far enough, the northern passage to the golden Indies, underlies several abortive attempts to plant the island of Newfound-land. This view of the new world was also to result in a

---

[1]Samuel Purchas, B.D., *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes, 1625 (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1906) XII, pp. 225-226.*

[2]Francis Bacon, "Of Gardens," *Essayes on Counsels, Civill and Moral* (London: J. M. Dent, 1897) p. 167.

[3]Sir William Vaughan, *The Golden Fleece* (London, 1626) part 3, p. 5.

modest body of writings from or about Newfoundland: contained among these is an early Tudor drama, John Rastell's *The Interlude of the Four Elements* (1519), two seventeenth-century books, Sir Thomas Vaughan's fantastic prose allegory *The Golden Fleece* (1626) and Robert Hayman's *Quodlibets, Lately Come Over From New Britaniola, Old Newfound-land* (1628) and two from the 18th century, Bertram Lacy's "A Description of Newfoundland" from his *Miscellaneous Poems* of 1729 and George Cartwright's "Labrador: A Poetical Epistle" an appendix to *His Labrador Journal* of 1798.

Discovered by John Cabot in 1497, Newfoundland was Britain's oldest colony and for over one hundred years her only connection with the New World. A full century before the sailing of the *Mayflower,* West Country merchants carried on a flourishing fishing trade along the coasts of the "new-found-landes." As early as 1550, the harbour at St. John's was a meeting point and a provisioning centre for ships of the English, French, Spanish and Biscayans. It was a bustling port when Sir Humphrey Gilbert visited in 1583 to exercise his Royal Charter claiming Newfoundland for Queen Elizabeth. Gilbert advocated English colonization of North America and petitioned Queen Elizabeth with "A discourse to prove a passage by the north-west to Cathaia and the East Indies" (1574). But if the primary impulse of the voyages of exploration was the desire to find a passageway westward to fabulous Cathaia, this impulse was quickly and soberly re-defined. Cabot failed to find a passage westward to the east, Gilbert was lost at sea off the coast of Newfoundland and the northern voyages of Sir Martin Frobisher, John Davies and William Baffin were fruitless. Moreover, the several attempts to plant the Newfound-land in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were to prove abortive. To understand the reasons for this failure, and with it the failure of the first original English poetry in the New World, it is necessary to consider that uneasy combination of providential vision and economic gain which characterized the English attitude to the New World, and especially to Newfoundland between 1497 and 1630.

One of the first attempts to plant the Newfound-land is recorded in an early example of Tudor drama, John Rastell's *The Interlude of the Four Elements* of 1519: "Westward he founde new landes/ That we never harde tell of before."[4] Here Newfoundland is viewed

[4]"*The Interlude of the Four Elements:* An Early Moral Play," ed. James Orchard Halliwell, F.R.S., *Early English Poetry, Ballads, and popular Literature of the Middle Ages* (London: Percy Society, 1847), p. 28.

through the Utopian eyes of the Renaissance: in 1516, some six months after the publication of *Utopia* by his brother-in-law, Sir Thomas More, Rastell, a lawyer, dramatist and man of affairs, attempted a voyage of discovery to the "new founde landys," very possibly as A. W. Reed speculates, in emulation of that redoubtable scholar and traveller, Hytholodaye. The Utopians were grateful to Hytholodaye for "the scyence of imprintyng, and the crafts of makynge paper," and not surprisingly Rastell, like Hytholodaye, brings with him on his voyage to Newfoundland, his servant, "Thomas Bercula, printer."[5]

The Four Elements, described as "declarynge many proper poyntes of Phylosophy Naturall, and of Dyvers Straunge Landys" (p. 1), unites morality play with cosmography for the purpose of scientific instruction: in this regard, it anticipates Bacon's *The Advancement of Learning* (1605). Rastell's allegorical Nature Naturata informs her child, Humanyté of the necessity of coming to understand the many "connying poyntes" of the universe through the agency of a third character, Studyous Desire and a fourth, Experyens. In the speeches of Experyens we find reflections not only of Humanist learning of Caxton and Angelicus but also reports of Rastell's own abortive 'experyens' of a voyage of exploration to the "new founde landys":

> But yet not long ago
> Some men of this contrey went,
> By the Kynges noble consent,
> It for to serche to that entent. (p. 14)

But as he goes on to tell us, "venteres/ Have cause to curse their maryners,/ Fals of promys, and dissemblers,/ That falsly them betrayed" (p. 29). Rastell's mariners rebelled off the coast of Ireland, urging him to turn pirate: "to gyff up his viage and to fall a robbyng uppon the sea." When he refused, he lost control of his ship and was forced to return to England without having established a Newfoundland colony.[6]

In Rastell's interlude Experyens laments the opportunity lost to the King of England who might "have had his domynyan

---

[5]A. W. Reed, *Early Tudor Drama: Mediwall, the Rastells, Haywood, and the More Circle* (London: Methuen, 1926) pp. 11-12.
[6]*Early Tudor Drama,* p. 11 and pp. 187-201.

extendynge/ There into so farre a grounde," and who, by so doing, might have brought Christianity to the natives:

> And what a great meritoryouse dede
> It were to have the people instructed
> To lyve more vertuously,
> . . . . . .
> And also to knowe God theyr Maker,
> Whiche as yet lyve all bestly;
> For they nother knowe God nor the devell,
> Nor never harde tell of hevyn nor hell,
> Wrytynge, nor other scripture. (pp. 29-30)

References to the copper habitually used by the Newfoundland Beothics and to the abundance of codfish indicate that Rastell had access to the oral reports of the West Country fishermen before attempting his own expedition. The view of the New World as a passage to Cathay is also clearly present: "But from those newe landes man may sayle playne/ Eastwarde, and cum to Englande againe" (p. 32).

Expressed in vigorous but halting verse, this early Tudor interlude has a naive charm. Aside from its intrinsic interest as the first extended reference to the New World in English literature, *The Four Elements* has some importance in a history of English-Canadian poetry because it clearly indicates the early Renaissance ethos of the voyages of exploration which led to the discovery and colonization of Newfoundland and America. We also find in Rastell's moral passion for learning and his somewhat Utopian plans for the "new found landys" an extension of his concern for the health of the "common-weal": a forerunner of attitudes to be expressed in verse a hundred years later by Sir William Vaughan in the *Golden Fleece* and by Robert Hayman in *Quodlibets*. Furthermore, Rastell's concluding remarks on the economic "cosmogryfy" of the westward isles, "Nowe Frenchemen and other have found the trace" (p. 30), were to prove prophetic. The French were shortly to become the primary rivals of the English for possession of the "new-found-landes," a general term which in the seventeenth century embraced not only Newfoundland but the greater part of the North American continent.

To judge from the early literature of exploration many of the first planters saw themselves, at least initially, from the sixteenth and seventeenth century view of new Adams beginning again in the

garden of the New World, reserved by "God . . . for us Britaines."[7] In 1610, James I had given to a Company of Adventurers, consisting of the Earl of Northampton, Sir Francis Bacon and forty-six associates, a Royal Patent for a colony in Newfoundland. A young Bristol alderman, John Guy, was appointed leader of the new plantation at Cupar's Cove. After a winter's residence in Newfoundland at the "Sea Forest" plantation, he wrote to John Slany, a treasurer of the adventurers, reporting that the climate encouraged "healthfulness," that the fishing proceeded well and that the "Savages" were tractable.[8] The following year he complained of pirates. His letter makes it clear that he expected the Newfoundland colony to thrive but that he had some suggestions of procedure that he would impart "privily" to the Gentleman Adventurers on his return to England.[9] The fact that Guy did not make his comments explicit suggests that they related to the activities of the West Country fishing merchants whose hostility to the gentleman planters was becoming increasingly apparent. As early as 1480 — we now know even before the "discovery" of Newfoundland by John Cabot — the West Country fishermen had found a commercial, if mundane, substitute for the gold of the Indies in the codfish which abounded along the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. These merchants had come to consider Newfoundland a vast fishing preserve and had no intention of surrendering their prerogatives to colonization.

In his original charter to John Guy's adventures in 1610, James had subordinated colony to codfishery, stressing his "inten[tion] by such Plantation and inhabiting, both to secure and make safe the said Trade of Fishing to Our Subjects for ever," an aim which does not exclude the providential view of such plantation: "it is a matter and action well beseeming a Christian King, to make true use of that which God from the Beginning created for mankind."[10] This faintly providential strain also appears in Sir Richard Whitbourne's delightful "A relation of the New-found-land" (1620), which eloquently describes the new land:

---

[7]*The Golden Fleece,* part 3, p. 5.
[8]A letter from John Guy to John Slany and the council of the London and Bristol Company for the plantation of Newfoundland (May, 1611), *Purchas His Pilgrimes,* XIX, pp. 410-416.
[9]John Guy to John Slany and the council (29 July 1612), *Purchas His Pilgrimes,* XIX, pp. 417-424.
[10]*Purchas His Pilgrimes,* XIX, pp. 406-407.

> There the Summer naturally produceth out of the fruitful wombe of the earth, without the labour of man's hand, great plentie of greene Pease and Fitches, faire, round, full and wholesome as our fitches are in England. . . .
>
> Then have you there faire Strawberries red and white, and as faire Raspasse berrie and Gooseberries, as there be in England; as also multitudes of Bilberries, which are called by some Whortes, and many other delicate Berries (which I cannot name) in great abundance.[11]

As is typical of the period, there is some sense that the invocation of the providential is inseparable from the purpose of persuasion. Significantly, Whitbourne's main praise is reserved for "the chiefe commodity of New-Found-land yet knowne . . . the codfishing upon that Coast, by which our Nation and many other Countries are enricht"[18] (p. 435).

Fish was the staple winter food of the Elizabethans and Jacobeans during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and Newfoundland dried cod, or "Poore-John," became one of the mainstays of the English economy. (Its appearance in the diet of the ordinary seaman is pungently remarked upon by Trinculo in *The Tempest* when he first spies Caliban: "What have we here? . . . A fish — he smells like a fish, a very ancient and fish-like smell, a kind of not of the newest Poor John!") Because the annual hazardous voyage to Newfoundland provided the training ground for the English navy and because cod was a vital exchange cargo for the salt and wines of Portugal and Spain, Newfoundland, the oldest of Britain's overseas possessions, quickly became the most valuable. Bacon, in a pamphlet on colonization, writes of "the Gold Mines of the Newfoundland Fishery, of which there is none so rich,"[12] and there is the testimony of Sir Walter Raleigh that "a successful attack on the Newfoundland fleet would be the greatest misfortune that could befall England" (p. 70).

This deepening infusion of the commercial spirit into a somewhat providential view of the planting of the new-found-lands provides a background for Sir William Vaughan's long prose allegory, *The Golden Fleece* (1626). Vaughan, a poet and a colonial promoter, describes Newfoundland as a "golden fleece" sufficient to restore the

---

[11]Richard Whitbourne, "A Relation of the New-found-land," *Purchas His Pilgrimes,* XIX, p. 432.

[12]D. W. Prowse, Q.C., *A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial and Foreign Records* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1895) p. 54.

health of the commonwealth and to show the "*wayes to get wealth,* and to *restore* Trading."[13] If references in Rastell's *The Four Elements* suggest a somewhat Utopian view of the "new-found-lands," the dedicatory verse of *The Golden Fleece* proclaims an opposite view:

> A little Part *a wise King* will preferre
> Of *Practick* Art before all Dreames, that erre.
> . . . . . .
> This no *Eutopia* is, nor Common-wealth
> Which Plato faigh'd. Wee bring Your *Kingdomes* health.

In this passage, Vaughan reveals his indebtedness to a passage in More's *Utopia* ("If so be that I shoulde speake those thynges that Plato fayneth in his weale publique, or that the utopians do in theires . . .")[14] and indicates that his aim, equally with that of More and Rastell, is the general health of the commonwealth. His contention that a distinction must be made between "fayning" Utopias and his own ideal kingdom is a reminder that Vaughan considers his own remedy for the ills of the commonwealth to be based upon demonstrable truth — the "golden" codfishery of Newfoundland.

Divided into three parts, his treatise is a convoluted prose allegory demonstrating "the Errours of *Religion,* the *Vices and Decayes* of the *Kingdome,* and lastly the *wayes to get wealth,* and to *restore* Trading." Through the device of having a series of petitioners present bills of complaint at the court of Apollo in Parnassus (a transparent compliment to James I), Vaughan expresses his opinions, as did More in his *Utopia,* on a variety of defects in the English commonwealth.

The central argument of *The Golden Fleece,* developed in an extended biblical conceit, is that all of the spiritual and material defects of the English commonwealth may be remedied by the planting and fishing of Newfoundland:

> I saw that *God* had reserved the *Newfound-land* for us *Britaines,* as the next land beyond *Ireland* . . . (part 3, p. 5)
>
> This is our *Colchos,* where the Golden *Fleece* flourisheth on the backes of *Neptunes sheepe,* continually to be shorne. This is *Great Britaines Indies,* never to be exhausted dry. (part 3, p. 9)

---

[13]*The Golden Fleece,* title page.

[14]*Sir Thomas More's Utopia,* ed. J. Churton Collins (London: Oxford Press, 1904) Book I, p. 41.

As this excerpt partly indicates, the implicit polemical basis of *The Golden Fleece* is the attempt to counter the earlier, now untenable, view of Newfoundland as a passage westward to the riches of the East with a new and apparently factual description of the island's real economic potential. As Vaughan reminds King James in a didactic dedication, "Though we no Gold nor Prescious Stones present,/ The value notwithstanding here is sent."[15] Through publication of *The Golden Fleece,* Vaughan undoubtedly hopes to popularize his Newfoundland plantation, Colchos Cambrioll, and to associate it in the popular imagination with the golden vision of the Indies. In this aim, Vaughan was unsuccessful and two years later he transferred his interests to the more hopeful colony of Virginia.

Between 1617 and 1618, several members of the Society of Merchant Venturers of Bristol under the mastership of Alderman Barker "did forward the plantation of land in Newfoundland called Bristol Hope,"[16] a territory acquired from the gentlemen adventurers of John Guy's colony. Robert Hayman, a native of Devon, was 'Governor' or overseer of this plantation from 1621 to 1627. According to Anthony à Wood, Hayman studied law at Lindoln's Inn where his "Genie was well known to be poetical."[17] However, Hayman's vocation as a merchant seems to have provided little leisure for literary interests until his time at Bristol Hope, where he wrote and translated epigrams (possibly from an earlier commonplace book) publishing the collection at London in 1682 under the title of *Quodlibets, Lately Come Over From New Britaniola, Old Newfound-land, Epigrams and other small parcels, both Morall and Divine.*

Hayman provides some information about his residence in Newfoundland in a letter written to King Charles I, "A Proposition of Profitt and Honor" where he urgently requests support for the Newfoundland plantation: "Unless your majestie suddainely assist, this worthie business is like to vanishe lamentablely and ridiculously."[18] This letter is not dated and was not indexed until

[15]King Philip of Spain had established the Order of the Golden Fleece and in one of John Owen's contemporary epigrams this Order is associated with the riches of the Indies.

[16]A note in one of the books of the Society of Merchant Venturers of Bristol during the mastership of Alderman Barker (1617-1618), G. C. More Smith, "Robert Hayman and the Plantation of Newfoundland," *English Historical Review,* XXXIII (January, 1918) 25.

[17]Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (London, 1691) I, p. 494.

[18]"Robert Hayman and the Plantation of Newfoundland," p. 31.

1630 but internal references indicate that it was probably written in 1627 or early 1628.[19] The difference in tone between the dedication of this letter where Charles is addressed as "Dread, and Gratious Soveraigne Lord" and the Epistle Dedicatory of *Quodlibets* where he is most cordially addressed as "the Kings most Excellent Majestie . . . King of *Britaniola,* or *Newfound-land* . . . Father Favourer, and Furtherer of all his loyall Subjects right Honourable and worthie Plantations"[20] would suggest that Hayman had received some encouragement from Charles. However, it is doubtful that the struggling colony received any tangible support because the function of the dedication is to flatter King Charles into more active patronage. Indeed there is considerable evidence that the primary function of *Quodlibets* was political rather than literary.

Historically, the Stuarts had inherited the Edenic or Utopian vision of new-found-lands from the Renaissance: More's *Utopia* is based on Vespucci's *Quartour Voyages* and as we have seen the Utopian flavour of Rastell's references to the "new-foundeland," in turn, reflects More. But Vaughan in 1626 refutes the Utopian ideal, for by 1611 Renaissance optimism had given way to the recognition of the real difficulties of planting a new land. In *The Tempest,* that primary imaginative reflection of the impact of the voyages ("O brave new world that has such people in't"), we also find that the Utopian and providential visions of good old Gonzales ("Had I the plantation of this isle . . . all things in common nature should produce") are relentlessly pilloried by the cynics, one might say realists, Antonio and Sebastian. Disillusionment came earliest with reference to Newfoundland simply because it was the oldest and first explored of the colonies. Guy spent only two winters in Newfoundland and by 1614, after dissension with the Newfoundland company, he was writing bitterly that his "adventure, personall imployment, & hazarde hath bred nothing but a [law] suite.[21] Lord Baltimore, another of the Royal Patentees, who attempted to establish a haven for Catholics in Newfoundland, wrote similarly to his friend, Sir Francis Cottington, describing "much sufferance in this wofull country, where with one intolerable wynter were we almost undone. It is not be be

[19]"Robert Hayman and the Plantation of Newfoundland," p. 30, n. 21.
[20]Robert Hayman, *Quodlibets* (London, 1628) dedication.
[21]John Guy to Henry Crout (December, 1614), Gillian T. Cell, *English Enterprise in Newfoundland 1577-1660* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969) p. 71.

expressed with my pen what we have endured."[22] He then wrote to King James of his intention to shift to "some other warmer climate of this new world" and by 1629 was granted a patent for settlement in Virginia.

Hayman knew much of this. He censures each of these individuals in turn in a series of reprehending epigrams contained in *Quodlibets.*[23] As all of the poems dealing with Newfoundland are blocked together at the end of Book Two and, as there is some typographical evidence to suggest that these poems were printed on a press other than that used for the body of the work,[24] I suspect that the Newfoundland epigrams were very probably added to Hayman's occasional verse in 1628 when the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham, Hayman's intercessor at court, made direct political action by Hayman himself essential.

The titles "Quodlibets . . . epigrams and other small parcels both morall and divine" sets out the function of the book: it is basically a verse medley with satiric intent. Hayman's view of the epigram is generally sententious and most clearly set out in the Fourth Book: "Sermons and Epigrams have a like end,/ To improve, to reprove, and to amend" (Book IV: epigram 1). In the latter half of the Second Book of *Quodlibets,* he is clearly employing the satiric epigram for social purposes, in particular for the political advancement of the Newfoundland plantation. He had seen to his sorrow that the prose treatises of Whitbourne, of John Mason and of Vaughan had had little practical effect; however, the epigram provided a new and, in some ways, ideal vehicle. Through its recognized conventions, the honey and the vinegar (or gall), he could "flyte" or chastise with impunity those who had not advanced the cause of the Newfoundland plantation while praising those who had.

The didactic function of *Quodlibets* is most evident in "parcels" 74 to 106 of Book Two which refer to Newfoundland. Throughout this section of the text Hayman draws an antithesis between the wise and the foolish; those who support the Newfoundland plantation are wise but those who do not lack wisdom. Characteristic is epigram 86 involving *"The right worthy, learned and wise,* Master William Vaughan, *chiefe Undertaker for the Plantation in Cambrioll."*

[22]Sir George Calvert (Lord Baltimore) to Sir Francis Cottingham (18 August, 1629) and Sir George Calvert to James I (19 August, 1629), *Ibid.,* p. 94.
[23]*Quodlibets,* second book, epigrams 1-81 (in particular, epigram 81: "to a worthy friend who often objects to the coldness of the winter in Newfoundland").
[24]I am grateful to David Galloway for this suggestion.

Epigram 87, *"To the same industrious Gentleman, who in his golden golden-fleece stiles himselfe* Orpheus Junior." This epigram urges Vaughan to travel to the Newfoundland colony in person:

> Goe on, wise Sir, with your old, bold, brave *Nation*
> To your new *Cambriolls* rich *Plantation,*
> Let *Dolphins* dance before you in the floods,
> And play you, *Orpheus Junior,* in his woods.

Sir George Calvert, *"Baron of Baltomore, and Lord of Avalon in Newfoundland,"* is admonished to continue with his "halfe done" plantation: "If you give over what hath so well sped,/ Your sollid wisedome will be questioned" (II: 84).

The whole didactic intent of *Quodlibets* is most effectively summarized in epigram 101, *"To the First Planters of Newfoundland."*

> What ayme you at in your *Plantation?*
> Sought you the *Honour* of our *Nation?*
> Or did you hope to raise your owne *renowne?*
> Or else to adde a Kingdome to a *Crowne?*
> Or Christs true *Doctrine* for to propagate?
> Or drawe Salvages to a blessed state?
> Or our o're peopled *Kingdome* to relieve?
> Or show *poore men where* they may *richly live?*
> Or poore mens children godly to maintaine?
> Or aym'd *you at your owne sweete private gaine?*
> All these you had atchiv'd before this day,
> And all these you have balk't by your delay.

Hayman summarizes the arguments for plantation which had been earlier put forward by Whitbourne and Vaughan; in addition, he advances what appears to be a personal view in *"A Skeltonicall continued ryme, in praise of my New-found-land."* There he presents the island as a haven of sober peace and industry; in Newfoundland, as in More's *Utopia,* one is free from "taxings, ill newes, lawing, feare."

> Did some know what contentment I found there
> Alwayes enough, most times somewhat to spare,
> With little paines, lesse toyle, and lesser care,
> . . . . . .
> If cleane, and warme, no matter what you weare,
> Healthy, and wealthy, if men carefull are,
> With much-much more, than I will now declare,

> (I say) if some wise men knew what this were,
> (I doe beleeve) they'd live no other where. (I:117)

In general, the epigrams and translations collected in *Quodlibets* are fairly modest in quality. They are praising epigrams addressed to old friends in Bristol; to the worthies of Church and State; and to writers of Hayman's acquaintance. He addresses a riddle to *"his loving Friend, Master Robert Burton,"* and comments upon the "pure, faithfull, true Divinity of *the Reverend and divinely witty,* John Dun . . . *Deane of Saint Pauls"* (IV: 9). There are conventional epigrams on types — *"To Sir Peirce Penny-less"* (V: 35), *"To a weak brain'd good fellow"* (II:27), on morals — *"to a hansome Whore"* (II:47), and many epigrams on religious schism — *"A Descriptione of a Puritane"* (I:32) and *"Poperies Principal Absurdities"* (I:46). And there are passages of conventional invective on usury, exaggerated dress and quarrelsome couples. Occasionally, we find a flash of Elizabethan bawdy as exemplified by the retort of "A *lusty Widdow, to one of her Sutors":* "Ile have no *doting,* but a *dooing* man" (II:69), or by the epigram to "Sir *Senix Fornicator":*

> *But thou most like unto a Leeke* dost seeme:
> For though thy head be *white,* they tayle is *green* (II:57).

But on the whole, Hayman's attitude is moralistic and is best exemplified by the piety of "A Christian Meditation":

> I hope, and I doe faithfully beleeve,
> That God in love will me *Salvation* give:
> I hope, and my assured firme faith is,
> God will accept my *Love* to him and his.
> I hope, by faith his *Love* will me afford
> All this only, through Jesus Christ our Lord. (II:33)

Seen in historical context, *Quodlibets* is at once a literary curiosity, "The first fruits of Britaniola,"[25] and a political document intended to propagandize the settlement of Newfoundland. Its significance is not to be found in the quality of Hayman's verse, which is admittedly minor ("When I doe read others neate, dainty lines,/ I almost doe despaire of my rude rimes") (III:2), but the fact that it is the most important literary expression of Newfoundland in the seventeenth century.

[25]M. H. M. MacKinnon, "Parnassus in Newfoundland, The First Fruits of Britaniola," *The Dalhousie Review,* XXXII, no. 2 (Summer, 1952) 110-119.

In providential vision and in literary propaganda Newfoundland was a God-given island, but in geographic and economic fact much of the upper half of British North America was not so much a garden leading to the east as it was a highway for commerce. Newfoundland was a largely rocky and fog-bound island, no Eden for the soaring flights of the seventeenth-century imagination. Sometimes, even in *Quodlibets,* we find Robert Hayman versifying with bluff honesty (much like Touchstone describing his Audrey) when he describes Newfoundland as "wild, savage . . . rude, untowardly." As a remedy, Hayman proposes the "neat husbandry" required to transform a "plain, swarth, sluttish Jone" into that paragon of virtue, a respectable matron, "pretty pert, and neat with good cloathes on" (I:94).

This loving cultivation of the land was not to take place. In 1638 King Charles revoked the earlier Royal patents for plantation and granted the whole island of Newfoundland to a court favourite Lord Hamilton, to Sir David Kirk a privateer who had captured Quebec in 1629, and to several others. Kirk's first successful action off "the coast of Canady"[26] that is, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence between Quebec and Newfoundland — took place in 1628. As the wars with France and Spain had been previously going very badly, the exploits of "valiant Captain Kirke" were cheerfully and uncritically celebrated in a popular ballad of the day, "Englands Honour re[v]ived."

> Oh had we many like to him,
> Then *England* would in credit swim,
> And *France* nor *Spaine* could not against us stand. (p. 19, II. 124-126)

However, Quebec was shortly after returned to the French by the Peace of St. Germain (1632).

In this action and by the Star Chamber rules of 1634 Charles clearly repudiated Hayman's plea for official settlement of the new-found lands. It is the anti-settlement policy of the West Country fishermen which was expressed in the Star Chamber rules: settlers were no longer to dwell within six miles of the shore and most of their rights of possession to houses and fishing stages were to be handed over to the ship fishermen from the west of England. Not all of these provisions were put into execution; nonetheless, these regulations had the effect of changing the character of Newfoundland

[26]*News from Canada, 1628,* ed. J. Stevens Cox, F.S.A. (Beaminster, Dorset, England: The Toucan Press, 1964) p. 16, 1.14.

from that of an infant colony, like Virginia and New England, to that of a fishing station. Officially cut off from the sea on which their livelihood depended, many settlers retreated to the isolated coves and bays of the island where the larger vessels of the fishing admirals could not pursue them. Deprived of English support, without merchant, doctor or priest, harassed by the fishing admirals, their settlements devastated by successive waves of attack launched by the French and their Micmac allies from a newly established fishing base at Placentia, those settlers who remained experienced great difficulty in merely surviving.

Our last look at the early Newfoundland colony itself comes in 1729 in the satiric couplets of Bertram Lacy's verse, "A Description of Newfoundland" from his *Miscellaneous Poems.* Here Lacy turns the satiric eye of Restoration comedy on the bleak land and its inhabitants:

> Some fifty Cottages or more do stand,
> Lock'd up within each rugged Creek of Land,
> Not built of lasting Stone or well-burnt Brick,
> But rear'd on Poles which in the Ground do stick,
> And cover'd over with new-fashion'd Thatch
> Of Birchen Rine, or what they first can catch.
> Within which Sties themselves at night they shelter
> From both Extreams of sultry and cold Weather;
> And lodge upon the Skin of some Wild-beast,
> On whose rank Flesh they first had made a feast.[27]

The Newfoundlanders live in a Burkean state of nature: they are analogous to the animals which provide their subsistence. Lacy's verses were written during an official expedition to Placentia, now returned to the English. As he tells us in his versified introduction, "the Ship *Kinsale* was by the King's Command/ Order'd to sail forthwith to *Newfoundland.*" Lacy's official post as chaplain to the ship, is reflected in the moderate tone of his verse:

> Most that inhabit are a fearful Tribe,
> Whose Characters I cannot well describe;
> Who, like *Siberians,* lonely here reside,
> And, in a willing Banishment, abide.
> It is this sottish People's common use
> To warm their Veins with an Infernal Juice,

[27]Bertram Lacy, *Miscellaneous Poems, Compos'd at Newfoundland,* on Board His Majesty's Ship the Kinsdale (London: Author, 1729) p. 14.

> Both Men and Women do this Liquor choose,
> And rarely keep the Bottle from their Nose. (pp. 13-14)

His further observations on the inclement weather, the barrenness of the soil and the wealth of the cod-fishery, recapitulate the reasons for the failures of the first attempts at 'planting' the New-Foundlands.

It is hardly surprising that by the first quarter of the seventeenth century the economic and providential visions which had led England to foster settlement in Newfoundland were quickly diverted into settlement of the more promising colonies of Virginia and New England. By the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the first stirrings of a written literature from the island of Newfoundland had withered and died; only the folk tale and ballad of the oral tradition remained. For the next hundred years the emerging literature of Newfoundland, like that written elsewhere in British North America, was to come from the pen of the visitor rather than that of the settler.

Simon Fraser University