

Heather Gogacz O'Brien: Colonial-National Identity and Women's Literature in Late Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland¹

Newfoundland's identity in the late nineteenth century has proven difficult for scholars to define for several reasons, not the least of which is because of its unique colonial position and the wide variety of denominations, classes and cultures of which Newfoundland society was comprised. One consistent trait, however, which until recently has been largely downplayed, is the strong connection that all Newfoundlanders felt between themselves, their country and the British Crown. Newfoundland, like other colonies, clung patriotically to the notion that it belonged to and was a vital part of an extended British community, and also like other colonies, it held a "sense of belonging to a shared British culture, not simply by ties of commerce and trade" (Buckner and Francis 14). During the same time period, a noticeable rise in "nationalism" has also been noted by historians (O'Flaherty 2005, 189); however it is debatable whether this patriotism to Newfoundland was largely an expression of imperial loyalty.² At the end of the nineteenth century, at a time when the colony was "intellectually alive" (O'Flaherty 2005, 196), Newfoundland hybrid colonial-national sentiment found its expression through a variety of mediums including music, historical texts, travel literature, and imaginative literature. Fiction, but most especially poetry, became a popular medium for men and women to express their patriotism to both the Crown and to Newfoundland.

The rise of a nationalist-sentiment in the nineteenth-century has been documented through a variety of studies. For example, popular music and ballads

1 This paper is a much-revised version of a lecture prepared for The Newfoundland Historical Society entitled, "Pre-Confederation Women Writers and Mythologies of Empire". I would like to extend a warm thank-you to Dr. Valerie Legge for her helpful suggestions regarding this first paper. I am also grateful to the School of Graduate Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Government of Canada (the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) for scholarships awarded in order to conduct the research necessary for this paper.

2 Carl Berger's description of Canadian imperialists may be applied in this instance to Newfoundland's imperialists. The idea of a hybrid Canadian imperial-national identity where "Imperialism was one form of Canadian nationalism" (259) describes many Newfoundlanders' loyalties from this time period when, it seems, allegiance to the Crown by the comparatively homogenous population was even more ubiquitous than in Canada. Also similar to Canada's identity, a sense of optimism about Newfoundland's potential pervaded the time. Again, like Canadian imperialists, this may help to explain the multiple identities that Newfoundlanders held. Canadians, for example, who were loyal to the Crown, "Far from denigrating Canadian things...were positively utopian in their expectations and it was exactly this overestimation of Canadian capacities which enabled them to believe that their country would become the future centre and dominating portion of the British Empire" (Berger 260-1). This would be in line with Newfoundland's late nineteenth-century optimistic notion of itself as containing unlimited potential in natural resources and technological progress (see below, Note 4), mainly because of its close connection with British heritage which was assumed to have the highest position in the Great Chain of Being (Boehmer 29).

of the time have been examined to find common identity themes.³ Local and national politics have also been examined (see esp. O'Flaherty 2005). Historians have identified several nineteenth-century nationalist events as the catalysts in forming the colonial-national identity of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the creation of a politically-influential Native Society in the 1840s (O'Flaherty, *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*), the 1857 French Shore Treaty crisis, and the 1869 Confederation debate, as identified by James Hillier ("Robert Bond" 5-7). Social interests have also been analysed. In one study, Jiri Smrz researched the influence that imperial discourses had on Newfoundland's national identity through examination of the Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee and the national John Cabot celebrations of 1897. He clearly shows how British imperial notions, such as those of race and Providence, "exported uncommonly well into the white self-governing colonies," including Newfoundland (6). Empire was, he concluded, very influential to the multiple nationalisms of Newfoundland society in the late nineteenth century.

What has been absent in describing the nineteenth century identity of Newfoundlanders is the use of imaginative literature by women who also participated in the creation of a Newfoundland colonial-nationalistic identity through repetition of popular imperial discourses mixed with a newer, national discourse. This literature helped continue the myths, contradictions and racism that all imperial discourse engaged in. As well, it bolstered pride in the country of Newfoundland, which had so often been portrayed as poor, victimised and blighted (O'Flaherty 2005, 188). Close analysis of these texts, which have heretofore stood in the margins, could prove invaluable to the understanding of this period. As Adele Perry observes in her study of Frances Herring, we need not "treat literature as simply mimetic, but instead approach it as we would any other source—as a necessarily problematic and narrative fragment of the past that both reflects and constitutes the social world" (Perry, 2005, 159-60). Two significant authors in early Newfoundland society, Isabella Whitford Rogerson and Anastasia Maria English contributed to the growing body of published literature about Newfoundland that appeared during this period. These texts, as Elleke Boehmer states of colonialist literature in general, "did not simply articulate colonial or nationalist preoccupations; [they] also contributed to the making, definition, and clarification of those same preoccupations" (Boehmer 5). This essay attempts to introduce these two authors' work and provide a brief example of how an in-depth

³ See Gregory for a study on this period and MacDonald for references to it.

study of similar literary texts, used as historical documents, could prove valuable in further understanding Newfoundland's nineteenth-century identity.

These texts repeated, expanded upon and perhaps even created new myths surrounding Empire (as viewed through the colony of Newfoundland) as well as of Newfoundland's place in the British Empire. Edward Said and other scholars have observed that the *idea* of Empire (Said 11)⁴ was paramount to the forming of British and, one could add, colonial identities such as Newfoundland's. The "myths" are those stories that Newfoundlanders told themselves to motivate and support both imperial and national practices and ideologies, such as: the idea of civilising missions (Lorimer 115); the idea of progress (Boehmer 80); Britain as benevolent coloniser (Buckner and Francis 9); images such as the hero (Boehmer 24); and the creation of the other (Boehmer 76, Hall 24, and Lorimer). In addition, and unique to Newfoundland, was the popularity of Newfoundland's history and the creation of myths surrounding it, such as Cabot's landing which Smrz examined, and the myth of Newfoundland's unknown and untapped riches and potential,⁵ both of which emphasised the superiority of British achievements and technology and the importance of Newfoundland within the British Empire. As Robert H. MacDonald observes, Newfoundland's historical preoccupation and nineteenth century trumpeting seems to have been a trend the world over in British colonies or ex-colonies when "the desire to remember the past was driven by a need to validate the present" (49). It is also important to note that, similar to literature produced throughout the Empire at this time, these texts often included contradictions and ambivalences (Perry 2008, 235).

In an interesting study of contemporary folk poetry in southern Ontario, Pauline Greenhill makes a case for the academic study of "folk poetry", that is, texts which place prominence not on the "technical aspects of literature," but focus on the conveying of subject matter (4). "Folk poetry," as she terms it, is a general category, referring to any indigenous verse that is directed to a group or a community of peers (10); "divorced from its context, apart from its intended place in the culture, it has little interest" (8).⁶ Greenhill focuses on the medium and the content of the texts

4 For the importance of the idea of Empire to the continuation of the British Imperial project, see also, Boehmer; MacDonald; and Kitzan.

5 See especially O'Flaherty's extensive historical and literary examination of this topic in "Chapter 4: The Triumph of Sentiment" in *The Rock Observed*.

6 Although Greenhill labels this type of literature "folk poetry", I have decided to avoid labelling and thus dividing (and unintentionally applying notions of hierarchies to) Newfoundland's body of literature. Labels such as "high," "popular," "folk," "regional," etc. have many connotations which do not apply to the scope of this study. All genres of Newfoundland literature, regardless of the supposed academic literary achievement of it or the socio-economic class of the author that produced it, have the potential to contribute to our understanding of early Newfoundland society. In addition, I agree with the sentiments that MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston have about the canonisation and study of early Canadian women writers in general: "As feminist critics before us have noted, some fiction writers have been ignored or dismissed by the critical academy not because they were naive, awkward, or coarse, though popular, but because the academy itself in the early twentieth-century—teachers, editors, and reviewers—was an all-male group, unable to see or appreciate the language, concerns, and structures of women's writing" (11). Application of a term such as "folk literature" to early Newfoundland women's writing may perpetuate its marginalisation in some circles of academic study

themselves, rather than on the individual who produced them, to define the genre. These poems are local, often occasional, and may celebrate people, events and scenes, or are often about nature, the seasons, everyday matters, or religion (6). They can also criticise what the poet sees as inapposite (4-5). Greenhill believes that “the most socially significant feature is [the folk poetry’s] concern with what the community considers to be appropriate activity and behaviour” and, that “folk poetry imparts and expresses aspects of [that] culture; it praises what is valued by some [...] or condemns what they ideally should avoid” (4-5). This genre of poetry could be extended to include prose fiction, which can include the same themes, scenes and historical or current events as defined by “folk poetry”. One could also broaden Greenhill’s examination of this genre to consider the various authors that produced this type of poetry and how “successful” they may have been in influencing society’s notions of “appropriate behaviour.” In very class-conscious nineteenth-century Newfoundland, it may be assumed that well-liked authors from the upper-classes who published local, didactic poetry and fiction in popular mediums would have had at least some influence on their peers as well as on those from other social groups in defining socially appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. By examining Newfoundland’s regional literature, scholars have the potential for greater understanding into early Newfoundland society. Throughout early Newfoundland literature one can trace what some members of society (through the authors and intended audience) considered appropriate behaviour for a colony of the British Empire, and expression of Newfoundland’s colonial-national identity.

Isabella Whiteford Rogerson could be considered one of Newfoundland’s earliest and most prolific poets. She published two texts while living in Newfoundland: *Poems*, published in 1860 and *The Victorian Triumph*, published in 1898, in addition to publication of many poems in local newspapers and periodicals. The vast majority of her poetry involves an expression of her Methodist and missionary beliefs; many of her poems are didactic in nature, urging the reader to go forth and do likewise (which was also a common mode of expression in literature from the Imperial age [Green 3]). Her poetry, similar to how Martin Green describes imperial adventure fiction in his book entitled *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*, is meant to be energising and motivating (3).

Rogerson was born in Fair Head, County Antrim in Northern Ireland in 1835 to a long-established Methodist family. She began writing poetry in her childhood, mainly about the scenery around her. In 1850 she emigrated with her family to St. John’s, Newfoundland. Her father worked in a lay capacity with the Methodist Church as circuit steward and trustee. She published her first collection of poetry

only ten years after living in Newfoundland. It is most interesting as a study in Imperial discourse in early Newfoundland literature and, although Empire had not yet reached its height, and government and public support for the Imperial project were not as they would become in the late 1800's, support for English expansion, especially in terms of Christianity, is apparent in many of her poems. She supports missions abroad, thereby participating in the assimilation project of the "other".⁷ Many other pieces include international topics: the British/French battle in which Nelson dies, the discovery of the North-West passage, the death of Wellington in Quebec, Harriet Beecher Stowe and slavery, the battle at Alma, the death of Wolfe, and the Indian Mutiny of 1857. However, Rogerson (like other imaginative Newfoundland writers of the time) did not always promote Empire by trumpeting it in her texts; more commonly, as Boehmer explains of most of the literature produced in Britain during the height of Empire, Rogerson supported Empire by taking it for granted and through the use of familiar imperial images, themes, symbols and myths (24). Her work, like other texts, reflect "the assumption that with Britain at the helm all was right with the world" (Boehmer 24).

Rogerson's second collection (1898) includes the same imperial discourses and international themes that her first collection did; if anything, they are even more overt; the title, *The Victorian Triumph*, is but one indication of her continued loyalty to the crown. Nevertheless, this second collection differs in that it also reflects the colonial-nationalism that had grown over the last thirty or so years in Newfoundland. Rogerson had lived in Newfoundland for forty-eight years by this time and had married a native Newfoundlander, J.J. Rogerson, a member of the merchant class, a popular philanthropist, and temperance man. Rogerson had adopted Newfoundland as her new home as can be seen through the use of the possessive "our" throughout her text, and because much of the subject matter is local in content and the target audience is predominately her peers: the Methodist community, politicians, and generally those of the upper-classes. The famous Judge D.W. Prowse, for example, wrote the introduction for *The Victorian Triumph*.

Rogerson wilfully adopts Newfoundland identity-myths such as the Cabot myth in her poetry. Smrz believes that the Cabot myth "introduced a new racial dimension into the Newfoundland identity discourse" because this myth "claimed Newfoundland for the British race and the British race established a superior social, political and economic system there" (46) than the one that was already in place by the indigenous peoples. This racial discourse can be seen in Rogerson's poem "John

⁷ For an in-depth study of the assimilation verses exclusion debate in regards to Britain's racial other, see Lorimer.

Cabot's Discovery" (68-70) which recounts Cabot's initial voyage and his interactions with the indigenous people of Newfoundland.²⁸ As several post-colonial theorists have observed, "The British World... is defined by its outsides: without the Empire there was no England, without barbarism there was no civilization" (Hall 36).²⁹ In Newfoundland, the other were most often (but not exclusively) represented by the Beothuk. Because these indigenous people were extinct, a variety of identities and myths could be easily imposed upon them without challenge; mainly the elite populations of Newfoundland, to define their own British-Newfoundland identities, used the Beothuk people as "other". Not only does Rogerson's poem "John Cabot's Discovery" demonstrate racial myths where the British are assumed to be the superior race to the "New World's" other, but it also illustrates how conveniently this myth was able to incorporate other imperial myths into Newfoundland's history, such as Britain as a benevolent and peaceful coloniser.

The first six stanzas of this poem are related through the perspective of a (Europeanised) Indigenous man, or, as Rogerson writes, a "red man:" "A silent, stately, statuesque form, against the sun's first light, / Clad loosely in rich dainty furs, his quiver by his side ..." (2-4). Use of diction that would normally describe Europeans, such as "rich dainty" and "statuesque" make this exotic, new Beothuk race both familiar and non-threatening for the audience (which, as it would have been commonly known at the time of publication, had been extinct for over sixty years). In the poem, this "red man" stands watching Cabot's *Matthew* laying anchor in the bay; diction such as "wondrous" impose upon the Beothuk the idea that "primitive" societies stood in awe of the superior white man: "Across the waters deep and blue he saw a wondrous thing / Come landward like a mighty bird borne upon witchcraft's wing..." (5-6). The native man then watches white men come ashore, plant a flag and then approach him. The perspective then abruptly switches to Cabot's:

...John Cabot saw, not without fear, the hand upon the bow,
But came with gentle, kindly look, and clasped the red man's hand,
Unspoken language yet the best to make him understand.

He understood, and from that hour the pale-face was a brother,
How quickly heart to heart responds, if true to one another!

⁸ According to Ingeborg Marshall, it is doubtful that Cabot ever made direct contact with the Beothuk (14-15).

⁹ For a thorough discussion of the concept of "other" and their representation in British and colonial literature, see Boehmer 75-85.

The red man brought their treasures forth and gladly passed them o'er;
 John Cabot gave them all they sought from out the *Matthew's* store.
 (18-24)

The phrasing of the last few line of this passage is quite important. Cabot gives the Beothuk "all they sought", as if they had been wanting and waiting for such gifts. It also gives the impression that "colonial rule...is accepted by the colonised himself" (Boehmer 42). Similar rhetoric is used in other poems where Rogerson states that non-Christians are simply waiting in "darkness" to be taught proper British morals and to be shown the "light" of Christianity, a similar notion in much imperial missionary literature. Her description of Cabot as a benevolent British man (that he was not British was overlooked by the fact that it was the British, of all the nations, who appointed Cabot to sail to the New World [Smrz 9-10]) who, with one look, can win friends from other races, demonstrates the myth of the benevolent British as peaceful colonisers. Earlier, Rogerson wrote a sentimental poem entitled, "The Song of the Last Red Indian" ("Poems" 139-42) which recounts a Native man's final breaths in Newfoundland. However, in "John Cabot's Discovery", there is no hint of the violence and sickness to come to the Beothuk who succumbed to disease or were eradicated through murder or starvation by the end of the 1820's (see Marshall). Rogerson does not see this hypocrisy. The imperial racial attitude towards indigenous peoples had exported itself well into Newfoundland colonial-national discourses, as did the contradictions. Rogerson, throughout her body of work, also never acknowledges the fact that if Native people existed on the island when Cabot arrived there, he could not have "discovered" Newfoundland nor "owned" the resources there.

A few stanzas later in the "John Cabot's Discovery" poem, when the *Matthew* returns to Bristol Bay, the English residents rejoice and claim ownership to the newly discovered land:

... 'tis ours, this New-found-land."
 Again and yet again he tells of treasures rich and grand;
 Of wondrous wealth in sea and lake, of all the choicest fish,
 Of noble woods and game to suit a hunter's utmost wish. (33-36)

The "red man" is not mentioned again in the poem. There is no acknowledgement that because someone else was on the land, it might belong to them. The "discovery" is reserved for the British alone (the British Empire was often described by its "firsts" [Boehmer 24]) and Newfoundland is effectively erased of all except that which Britain might need for itself. The poem ends with a motivating stanza which states emphatically that,

And yet the whole was not half told, our wealth is yet unknown;
And Newfoundlanders still can say, the best has not been shown.
We'll honor Cabot with the best our Newfoundland can give,
Though without monumental stone John Cabot's name will live. (41-44)

The poem implies that Cabot, as someone who assisted in the Imperial project, should be praised as a hero (the hero being a well-documented and powerful Imperial symbol [Boehmer 24]). This poem, it can be assumed, was used to convince St. John's and out harbour residents that Newfoundland's European founder was as worthy of commemoration as the Queen. Rogerson's opinion in this may, of course, have something to do with the fact that her husband was involved in the committee formed by D. W. Prowse to organise Cabot celebrations alongside the Diamond Jubilee ones. Her Cabot poems embrace a Newfoundland nationalist discourse about the importance of Newfoundland in the history of the Empire and try to convince her audience that commemorating Cabot is appropriate behaviour for the colony. It seems, however, that Rogerson took the side of the anti-monument debate. Some residents wanted to celebrate Cabot without the expense of building Cabot Tower on Signal Hill.

The last stanza incorporates another Newfoundland colonial-national identity myth which gained strength in the nineteenth century, and that was the myth of Newfoundland's unknown and untapped potential—the minerals to be mined, the cattle to be raised on vast fields of grazing land, the crops to be cultivated, and the factories to be built to manufacture these products. It was believed there was unlimited potential in the largely unknown interior of the island. O'Flaherty, in his seminal text on some of the literature produced in Newfoundland's history, *The Rock Observed*, documents well the attitude that some of the elite of St. John's had towards Newfoundland's potential in the latter half of the nineteenth century (68-81). He outlines how men, whom he calls "Boomers," Moses Harvey and D. W. Prowse predominantly, "indefatigably brought the wondrous potential of Newfoundland to the attention of outsiders" (74). This potential, however, was also not lost on Newfoundlanders and a sense of optimism in Newfoundland's future seemed to have pervaded the artistic community of the time. Women writers of imaginative literature also participated in this "triumph of sentiment" as O'Flaherty calls it. The myth of Newfoundland's promise or potential is, of course, intimately linked to the imperial notion of "progress" (Boehmer 80); the Victorian orthodoxy, as O'Flaherty describes it, that, "science, education and technology were leading the world forward to higher levels in virtue and happiness" (73-4).

The colonial-nationalist myth of Newfoundland's promise is found throughout many of Rogerson's poems in her second collection. One, however, that speaks directly to this theme of progress and the utopian-like potential of Newfoundland, is the poem "Our Future" (135-7):

We are rolling onward
 With the wave of Time,
 And see a glorious future
 In the age of sublime;
 See our city crowning
 All the hills around,
 See the railways rushing
 Over, under ground;
 See our noble harbour
 Bearing mighty ships,
 See the sky we cannot
 With the smoke eclipse
 From the mighty chimneys,
 Telling tales of power—
 Wealth, the mead of labor,
 Wealth, the toiler's dower.
 Everywhere our churches
 Everywhere our schools,
 Learning and religion
 Making all the rules.
 Vanished jail and court-house,
 Hospital and pain,
 Done with all elections—
 Hail the golden reign! (1-24)

There are several motifs here which link Newfoundland to the Imperial project: one is the British notion of technological progress (the ships, chimneys, railways, great cities); second is the diction which links the image of Newfoundland's progress to the Monarchy (crowning, golden reign); and third is the connection of Newfoundland to the imperial notion of "Time" (capital "T") which revolved around the idea of the inevitable progression and advancement of human civilisation under tutelage of the British race (Boehmer 80). A fourth image is that of making order out of chaos:

Freight on freight of iron,
 Copper, silver, gold,
 All our mineral wealth become
 More than can be told;
 Borne on railways flashing
 Through our wildest woods,
 Nothing lone or sacred
 Commerce e'er includes.

 Steam mills grinding, grinding
 Wealth of golden grain,
 And harvest-home resounding
 Over hill and plain; (25-32, 37-40)

Here, she easily overlays the Newfoundland landscape with images of British industrialisation and implies that this is an improvement. Cultivation is better than "wild woods." The Newfoundland landscape that she praises the most tends to be land that is ripe for exploitation. One can see that even though Rogerson has adopted the Newfoundland colonial-nationalist discourse of the time, she has not accepted Newfoundland for what it *is*—only for what it has the potential to become or, as O'Flaherty states, "The colony could not be just itself; it could not be loved for itself" (2005, 38). Newfoundland's wealth is equated with its natural resources and its potential only:

 Dashing through rich sheep-farms,
 Where wild deer once ran,
 Stopping at the stations
 Named by the red man; (33-36)

Here is another reference to the native people of Newfoundland, where again she effectively erases them from the land in all but memory. She thereby adopts the typical nineteenth century attitude towards indigenous people, that is, that they have no claim to the land, that it is a pity that they have died out, and that they should be remembered as a "noble" race through such things as naming railway stations after them. She continues the poem by creating images of abundance and riches wrought from the Newfoundland countryside and sea and ends by referring to temperance, which, at the time, was also linked to the Imperial project and was a popular movement throughout Newfoundland (175):

Not a drop of poison
 Throughout all the land—
 Prohibition left it
 Far too weak to stand. (53-56)

Rogerson's husband, in 1851, stated that with temperance, "Ignorance & dishonesty will disappear and Health, Peace & Plenty will pervade our Land" (O'Flaherty 2005, 30). Drunkenness was thought to impede progress in Britain, so it was only natural that the connection be made in a colony that was, in the inhabitant's opinion, on the brink of progressing into a viable, wealthy and responsible colony of the British Empire. The last line in the poem reinforces the link between Newfoundland and the British monarchy:

Vanished sin and sorrow,
 Poverty and pain,
 Done with all elections,
 Hail the golden reign! (56-60)

Rogerson's poetry collection is a reflection of the sentiments of the time, but in its creation, publication and distribution, it also helped perpetuate and normalise what she sees as appropriate behaviour for a colony of the British Empire. Rogerson, through her praise and optimism about Newfoundland, used her poetry as a mobilising effort to garner Newfoundland nationalism and thereby promote patriotism towards the British Empire. It helped contribute to the growing number of myths that motivated Imperialism and adopted common Imperial myths of discovery, racial superiority, and British notions of progress for Newfoundland. Because her work is local, occasional, and relevant to the whole population of Newfoundland, it would have appealed to and motivated the colonists, regardless of class and religion, in a way that popular verse that came out of Britain, America or Canada might not have.

Another author of the late nineteenth century is a native Newfoundlander of Irish Catholic descent, Anastasia Maria English, who published mainly in prose. English, it is interesting to note, is the first native Newfoundlander to write and publish a novel in Newfoundland. This novel, entitled *Only a Fisherman's Daughter*, was published in 1899. She was also the first to write about love and romance in a realist style in Newfoundland settings, especially an outport.¹⁰ English (who often signed her name as "Maria" or "Statia") was born in St. John's in 1862 and raised in

10 The notion of the "outport" is complex in Newfoundland society. Strictly speaking, an outport is a Newfoundland village or town located by the sea. Throughout Newfoundland's history, however, there has always existed an "outport-St. John's" dichotomy because of the prominence and perceived hegemony of the capital city in cultural, political and economic aspects of life.

a respected, devout Roman-Catholic, middle-class family. Her father, Joseph English, was the proprietor of the *Terra Nova Advocate* from 1880-1892, a newspaper dedicated to advocating the views and championing the causes of Newfoundland's Roman Catholics (Ellison). Despite her Catholic religion, familial ties to British culture were tight and her political beliefs at the turn of the century were very patriotic to the British Empire. For example, in a 1916 edition of *Yuletide Bells*, the Christmas annual that she edited for forty years, she comments on the war:

Let the world of honourable men rise in their might and join the ranks of those who are fighting to preserve the liberty of the British Empire and the purity of their women, fighting, that tyrants who have broken through all laws, human and divine, and trampled honour in the dust, may never again have power as a nation to perpetrate such sacrifices against God and humanity as have scandalised the Christian world during the last two years. (English 7)

This quote shows both her complete allegiance to Britain as well as her Christian morals. Her editorials bear the mark of a devout Christian (they often sound like sermons), and address, among other local subjects, the denominational school system and the Commission of Government, both of which she abhorred. English was very patriotic to Newfoundland and this can also be seen through the plots of her novels, which all take place in Newfoundland (in St. John's as well as the outports) and through the unique Newfoundland dialect and culture that are represented there. English published four novels and one short story collection between 1899 and 1938; all were published locally, were sold in local bookstores, and targeted the local population. Unlike Rogerson, English's love of Newfoundland seems to stem both from what Newfoundland currently *is* as well as what it may become. Although she is optimistic about its potential and illustrates its progress in her novels, her Newfoundland characters, even after they become rich and well-travelled, always return to live or at least carry out the majority of their business in Newfoundland—and not just in St. John's, but in the outports, too. However, despite her obvious love of Newfoundland and its people, her nationalist biases are often subsumed by her loyalty to the Crown and British culture. Imperial rhetoric, especially in regards to hierarchies of gender and class, supersedes any initial attempts to challenge it. Imperial classist discourse, it seems, was as easily transported to the colonies as racial discourse was.

Only a Fisherman's Daughter centres on a poor orphan, a fisherman's daughter nicknamed Norrie, who grows up in the outport of St. Rose. She is considered a wild, uncontrollable and independent girl. The novel details her journey to find

love and happiness in marriage. Through her attention to duty, self-sacrifice and determination, Norrie climbs the social ladder to marry Harry Brandford, the rich, upper-class bachelor of her hometown. She overcomes some adversity in the form of Harry's step-mother, Mrs. Brandford, who loathes Norrie and the "ill-bred" class that she represents. Norrie's complete devotion to her best friend Lucy, however, wins the affection of Lucy's father, Dr. Hamilton (a well-liked and well-to-do doctor) who decides to help Norrie in "bettering" herself, despite the stern warning he receives from Mrs. Brandford. Norrie is sent away to finishing school with Lucy, returns to St. John's and opens her own music school, inspires friends to live better lives, and becomes a governess with a rich family from the United States who travel throughout Europe. Eventually she marries the love of her life, Harry.

On the one hand this story demonstrates, through Norrie, what English sees as the independence, moral aptitude, and intelligence that ordinary Newfoundlanders, including women, possess. However, these traits are proven merely latent—only with the correct British education and upper-class company are they able to be fully realised. English may present a more sympathetic portrait of the outport people, life, and dialect that few other writers did at this time, but she does so in a way that "others" the outport people. The novel can be viewed ambiguously as both a challenge to late nineteenth-century class hierarchies and women's roles, but also an affirmation of these hierarchies and supposed superiority of British social systems, especially education. By the end of the novel all of the characters conform to their assigned roles and duties as prescribed by Victorian England. Norrie, once an isolated yet independent orphan, eventually submits to the role assigned to her as a typical, upper-class British married woman. The didacticism of the novel does not fail to teach the reader the importance of a British education and of the rewards one will reap if one does one's duty to God, king and family. This type of national pride mixed with subservience to British culture was what helped create and maintain a colonial-national identity within Newfoundland until, some might argue, even after Newfoundland's confederation with Canada in 1949.

One example of Newfoundland pride in this novel can be seen through the descriptions of the scenery. It is described as "beautiful"—a term not often applied to Newfoundland until the last part of the nineteenth century. Norrie and her friend Lucy are sitting "on top of one of the highest hills to rest" (18) after a little walk and the scenery before them is described in detail:

A beautiful sky of cloudless blue, meeting the sea of a deeper shade on one side, as it sank into the horizon. On the other, hills, red with berries

of different descriptions, and interspersed with little rivers, brooks and ponds, with the beautiful white water lilies gleaming on their surface, and further off at sea could be seen the spires of the distant light-houses, rising tall and straight to the sky, and the neighbouring hills looking blue in the distance. (18)

When Lucy asks what she is looking at, Norrie replies, "Oh, how beautiful it all is, Lucy." Excerpts such as these demonstrate English's patriotism towards her island country and describe for the reader what Newfoundland has to be proud of. Here, English illustrates the beauty in Newfoundland as it *is*, not merely as what it has the potential to be. Norrie says that she understands that Newfoundland is beautiful and that "there are people who paint these things" (18), but this is followed by saying that her aunt made her give back a book of art she borrowed because she "said it was nonsense and not fit for [her]" (18). English's pride in Newfoundland's beauty is therefore subsumed by the classist discourse that English interweaves throughout the entire book which places Newfoundland culture (e.g. ideas regarding beauty) beneath British culture—outport people are portrayed as not able to appreciate how an "educated" person would express their appreciation of the beautiful. Throughout the novel, the outport people are portrayed as having "backward" opinions compared to the British-cultured residents; the word "refined" is often used in connection to the educated upper-class Newfoundlanders and that the outport people are not "refined" is made obvious. In fact, when Dr. and Mrs. Hamilton are debating whether or not they should help pay for Norrie's British education abroad, Mrs. Hamilton states: "...do you think giving her a taste of these things when her life must be spent amongst far different occupations, a wise proceeding. Might it not, in a manner, unfit her for that life, and give her more pain than pleasure?" (28) Assumed here is that there is a hierarchy of pleasure and that the pleasures that an English education and exposure to cultured English life bring, are of a higher order than the beauty or pleasures of outport, Newfoundland life. Dr. Hamilton does not disagree with his wife's notions of class and pleasure. He agrees with her, but says that it is only "a reasonable and natural" (28) desire for Norrie to want to obtain knowledge of these "refined" subjects. He does not want Norrie to not be able to obtain something "that is forever beyond [her] reach" (28) when she wants it with such intensity.

A second way in which English demonstrates a pride in Newfoundland is the generally sympathetic treatment of the outport people. They are depicted as morally upright; there are no mischievous, malicious or mean outport people in the novel like the upper-class character, Mrs. Brandford. Outport citizens are

hardworking almost to a fault; for example, even when Norrie comes back to St. Rose after four years at the British school in the United States, her aunt and uncle go to bed at sunset in order to be up early for the farm-work:

Mr. and Mrs. Moore always retired at sunset in the summer days, for they should be up before sunrise; and on this night they made no difference. Just for an instant the thought crossed Norrie's mind that her Aunt might have remained up for a little, on this, the first night of her home-coming, to speak a few words to her before retiring; but the next she called herself selfish, for she thought of course they must be tired after their hard day's work. (87)

Outport people are also shown to be very knowledgeable in their field of work. For example, one of the fishermen, Jerry Malone "could foretell rain forty-eight hours in advance, and he was seldom wrong in anything he said about the weather" (10). Sympathetic perhaps, but also stereotypical.

Although some positive qualities of the labouring classes are portrayed, the novel ultimately succeeds in portraying the outport people as "other" to the type of Newfoundlander that English feels is ideal. This, along with the marginalisation of the Native people by other authors, is another manifestation of imperial racial discourse in the Newfoundland colonial-national discourse. In literature from this time, the other was often reproduced in metaphoric and stereotypic ways, and always as lesser (Boehmer 75-6). Although the notion of the other has largely been applied to native and colonised peoples of occupied colonies or indigenous peoples of settler-invader societies, I believe that outport people are often portrayed in early Newfoundland literature (which was largely written by middle or upper-class St. John's citizens) as Newfoundland's "other" to the St. John's hegemony.¹¹ Although outport people in some ways are shown sympathetically in English's novel, they are always perceived as "other" to the main characters of the novel. The outport people appear different, outside the norm, backward or quaint—except Norrie, the novel's protagonist. Norrie, from the outset, is portrayed as different to the outport people; she has "rare, natural talents" (48) in reading, music and other "ornamental requisites" (48) and is more independent and curious about matters outside of daily outport life. At the beginning of the novel, the narrator describes Norrie's character:

¹¹ This may be, in part, because there were so few indigenous populations who existed on the island after the last known Beothuk died in 1829. I have not found any other application of the concept of other to the outport people of Newfoundland in published scholarly research. Application of this concept is complex as the image of the fishing populations of Newfoundland in written texts was always ambiguous, depending on the writer's purpose and bias. For a thorough discussion of the often-contradictory image of the fishing populations in written texts about Newfoundland, see O'Flaherty's *The Rock Observed*, especially pages 86-92. I believe, however, that because even sympathetic portrayals of the outport people stem from a condescending and paternalistic point of view, the concept of fishing populations as other to the nineteenth century St. John's upper-classes is valid.

"If she had been of a quiet, yielding disposition, she would have fallen into the [outport people's] ways and lived their plain humdrum life" (9). This implies that outport people are quiet, yielding and humdrum—opposite to Norrie's outgoing, determined and exciting, more upper-class British-like personality.

Outport people also appear inferior in the realm of education. Although it is made clear that the outport children of St. Rose receive an education (13),¹² there is clearly a difference between a Newfoundland education and that of an English education. In fact, the concept of a "good, solid English education" (48) is crucial to the novel's plot regarding overcoming adversity—in this case, part of Norrie's adversity is her lack of a British education. This education (obtained abroad) teaches Newfoundland girls all that is "good, useful and beautiful" (48). Therefore, every upper-class character receives his or her education abroad; this class of society does not question an English education and assume it is the correct way to raise one's children. The outport people, however, are portrayed as having a different, backward, opinion regarding higher education. Dr. Hamilton confronts Norrie's guardians, Mr. and Mrs. Moore, about allowing Norrie to go to a convent with his daughter, Lucy, which provided a British education, in the United States of America. When Dr. Hamilton asks John Moore if he has told Norrie about the money Norrie's mother left to her, John replies (in dialect, as only the outport people speak in the novel):

No, sir, we've never told her, on account of her idle habits, thinkin' 'twould, perhaps, give her notions not fit for her, for she's got enough of 'em already, she'd rather be readin' rhymes any day than milkin' cows or cardin' wool, and since she's commenced larnin' the piana it's little time she gives to anything else; but we meant to tell her of it in a year or two. (47)

Dr. Hamilton's reaction to this speech shows what he thinks of John's notion of a British education: "Doctor Hamilton could not help smiling at John Moore's troubled face, as he summed up the account of Norrie's shortcomings" (47). By creating a narrator who adopts the attitude of the educated classes and their Victorian notions of natural hierarchies of class and taste, English thereby "others" the outport people: "But all the persuasions of the good Doctor were of no avail; John remained obstinate, he could not be satisfied that he would be doing right in allowing Norrie's money to be squandered, as he called it, in this way" (49). The

¹² For a thorough handling of education and literacy in nineteenth-century Newfoundland society see, McCann; and Alexander. According to both scholars, because of the seasonal nature of work in outport life, only about 50% of this population was literate at the turn of the century. Also interesting is the fact that more females than males were considered literate in some years.

reader is persuaded also to see John, who is not mean or malicious and who has the best of intentions towards Norrie, as foolish and obstinate, and, therefore othered in terms of what is considered appropriate behaviour for an outport person. The novel implies that Newfoundlanders, especially from the labouring classes, who are given the opportunity to receive a British education should never turn down the chance.

These seemingly ambivalent and contradictory loyalties towards Newfoundland and its people and the British Empire were not outside of the norm at the time when English was writing. They are part of the imagery, ideology and symbolism that made up the colonial- nationalism of late nineteenth century Newfoundland. Newfoundland identity has been examined in various aspects of society, such as through music, politics and organisations, but a literary analysis has yet to be performed. Newfoundland's hybrid nationalism continued well into the twentieth century, with women writers becoming more common and more prolific in genres other than imaginative literature.

Women have traditionally been seen as marginal and not as participants in the spread of Empire, but recent studies are painting a different picture.³³ These studies demonstrate how women actively and passively participated in or contributed to the Imperial project. They went abroad as settlers, missionaries, nurses, teachers, travellers; they were scientists, writers and political promoters of Empire. In addition, the average British woman, as a target of domestic advertising and as consumer of the products sold based on pro-Empire notions, also helped maintain Imperial discourses and practices.

Women living in the colonies, despite their doubly or even triply marginalised positions, also actively helped to maintain the Empire through their unquestioned loyalty to British culture and global endeavours, as well as through the creation of a nationalism which incorporated British norms and ideals, including gender, class, race, and religious hierarchies.

Rogerson and English are but two examples of Newfoundland authors of imaginative literature from the nineteenth-century who optimistically helped create, as well as maintain, the notion that Newfoundland would yet take its "rightful" place in the Imperial world, thereby participating in the formation of a Newfoundland colonial-nationalism. Both writers left their nineteenth-century readers with a new hope that this poor, backward, blighted place would become respected, successful, and autonomous—within, of course, the notions of progress popularised by the British Empire.

13 For in-depth analysis of women as participants in the Imperial project, see, Blunt and Rose; Foley; Levine; McClintock; Midgley; Mills; and Strobel.

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