Necessary Evils:
Strangers, Outsiders, and Outports in Newfoundland Drama

Introduction

Drama cannot be said to reflect cultural identities or historical events in a factual or comprehensive way. Nonetheless the dramatic expression of a culture is fundamental to an understanding of how that culture views itself, in relation to both its myriad member groups and the wider world. Regardless of the status or level of acceptance they are accorded within their home society, playwrights function as documentarians of a society's values and practices within a period of time. The interpretation of, or significance given to, these values and practices may of course be inaccurate or even spurious. In such cases a safeguard, though by no means foolproof, exists: the play's impact or level of acceptance within its own society as adjudged by critics, scholars, or the general public. A play which appeals to none of these constituencies is unlikely to endure through publication or a long production run. For this reason the plays featured in this dissertation, while selected for varying reasons, all share the link of possessing some degree of approbation, through publication, production, or the public profile of the playwright.

Newfoundland's dramatic literature can be traced back to the 1940s. In the time which has elapsed since, a few signal events have played a critical role in shaping the direction of Newfoundland society and its culture. Perhaps the most significant of these was the joining of Newfoundland to the Canadian Confederation in 1949, although the economic and demographic consequences of the loss of the fish stocks in the 1990s should not be underestimated. Confederation with Canada created the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, comprising the island of Newfoundland and the mainland territory of Labrador. (For the purposes of this study the term "Newfoundland" will be used to indicate the island entity, which will serve as the focus of analy

sis.[1]) Prior to this period, Newfoundland had been many things to many people, including, from 1855 to 1933, an independent dominion. Dating from the discovery of the cod stocks by Cabot in 1497, its fish were considered a critical resource to the economy of southern England, enough so that economic factors exerted a profound impact on settlement patterns and the development of the region's cultural identity. Settlement was at first actively discouraged, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and then allowed (though not encouraged) in the nineteenth. The region subsequently evolved into a colony regulated by non-resident English governors, a focus of Anglo-French territorial tensions in North America, a short-lived nation, and, currently, a province within the Canadian federation. The number and significance of these shifts in status, and the persistent sense of vulnerability to Outside forces, suggests a link between Newfoundland's history and its depiction of Stranger figures, Necessary Outsiders, and Insiders in the dramatic literature of the region.

As a vast island hundreds of kilometres from the eastern shore of North America, isolation has always been a defining fact of Newfoundland society. Outport life developed not only because the fishery eventually required land-based facilities near shore, but because the island's interior is a mass of rock, dense forest, and water masses which preclude easy settlement. Patterns of settlement therefore covered the long coastline of the island and the southern and eastern shores of Labrador. Settlers were isolated from each other, from their governing institutions, and, in most cases, from ready access to their home cultures. All of these factors have contributed to the development of a strong sense of local identity based, to some degree, on perceptions of otherness, as applied by Newfoundlanders to foreigners, and to themselves in relation to other individuals or polities.

The social and political history of Newfoundland is therefore critical to any understanding of how this cultural identity influenced by otherness has evolved in the region over the past four centuries. The intent of this dissertation is to illustrate how figures related to otherness—Strangers, median agents here termed Necessary Outsiders, and Insiders—populate the dramatic literature of the region and play a central role in depictions of the region's culture. It may be said that, to some degree, all cultures position themselves as others in order to create a distinct identity. The degree to which figurations of Strangers and Necessary Outsiders exist within a culture's dramatic literature differs, however, and the demarcatives employed to distinguish otherness will inevitably vary in nature and emphasis. The intention is therefore not to suggest that Newfoundland is the only culture which employs the Stranger figure in its dramatic literature, but rather to examine the particular ways in which its playwrights use such figurations in presenting a view of their culture.

The origin and usage of the terms mentioned above bear some explanation. Terms such as the Stranger exist within several modes of discourse, while terms which delineate degrees of Strangeness, such as Necessary Outsider, have been coined for the purposes of this study. In all cases I have used capitalization to indicate these terms. The theoretical sources which underpin the definitions of these terms as they are employed in this dissertation will be discussed in the first two chapters, but it should be noted that terms such as the Stranger, used within the context of this study, represent a compendium of associated meanings.

As with the notion of a culture defining itself through otherness, it may be said that all people exhibit behaviour regarded as Strange, though not every person who does would be considered a Stranger. An action regarded as Strange, when performed by an Insider, may be regarded as a momentary aberration, acceptable within the range of social latitude allowed to

such an individual. Moreover, each resident of a community, through their daily actions, exists in a continuum of estrangement, shifting ceaselessly back and forth along a *line of alienation* from acceptance to ostracization.[2] This line flows from an interior position, within a community's social order, to a border position, to a position exterior to the community (although a relationship with the community is maintained).

It is difficult to assign a concrete definition to the notion of the Stranger based on actions alone. Appearance and presence/absence also play a part in this determination. It matters crucially whether an individual is located within a "home" environment or within one that is "foreign". The perceived degree of deviation from the social norm, the number of transgressions, and the context in which they take place must also be taken into account. If all people exhibit Strangeness (i.e. Stranger behaviour) at varying times, the notion of the Stranger becomes one based on the degree of transgression and the status placement of the transgressor.

Many commentators, including Sara Ahmed in her book *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (2000), dispute this over-arching commonality of Strangeness, arguing that it devalues those who are truly disenfranchised within society, such as visible minorities and women. This is a politically charged debate. The perspective of this dissertation, however, maintains that all people estrange themselves from their home community at various times, or are subject to *estrangement*. This is a useful term, as it incorporates the actions of those who are not completely alienated from a community in addition to those regarded as Strangers. It serves to distinguish *Strangeness*—Strange acts by individuals residing on the continuum from Insider to Stranger—from *Strangerhood*, the figuring of a Stranger.

When this deviant behaviour is exhibited on a consistent basis, and is perceived as significant and as having negative consequences for the host society, any person may acquire Stranger[3]

status. Goode, in discussing typologies of deviance[4], posits a "pure conventional"—the Supreme Insider—who commits no acts of deviance, but surely this is a logical impossibility. The "pure conventional" is in fact a variation of Goode's "secret deviant", who engages in deviant activity that is unperceived (56).

What this position also assumes is an accompanying universal Insiderness. All people belong *somewhere*. When they cease to be unqualified Insiders, through behaviour or relocation, they begin to move along a line of alienation which may take them beyond the boundaries of acceptance in the society in which they live. What will here be called *circles of affiliation*—the numerous cells to which we belong which make up our interactive life within a community but which are not necessarily centres of shared belief or unified objectives—shift from moment to moment as individuals move back and forth between them and as their membership, norms, and status within the greater community evolves. The fact that their shifting occurs between circles, and that such circles frequently overlap in terms of subject, orientation and membership, creates the notion of a series of circles or organic units—micro- or macro-communities—which cluster together to form larger social polities. For even the disenfranchised possess Insider status in some context: devout religious gatherings or families, for example, and, above all, the fact of being native-born to a culture. The fact that individuals who are placed in such groups may not be treated as Insiders only indicates that they exhibit too many qualities regarded as other—skin colour, or distinctions in dress and manner for example—and have been placed on a more outward position on the line of alienation. The fact of their Insiderness, though of small comfort, remains.[5]

These smaller circles of affiliation become apparent when one looks within communal units of greater size, such as cities, into the microcosmic units which form their nucleus.

Strangeness—Strange behaviour—must thus be distinguished from the application of Stranger status. It would be relatively simple to assign a much more reductive definition of the Stranger when discussing Newfoundland's dramatic literature, one that deals only with the foreign element which visits, or is perceived to visit, a community and which threatens its identity in some way. This definition, while attractive in some respects, is ultimately unsatisfying in explaining the existential damage that communities visit upon themselves. Outside forces cannot explain every injury to a polity. There are Strangers within, and although a definition of such a Stranger is much more elusive to obtain, this examination will pursue this objective. It will be argued that Stranger status, as demonstrated in works of dramatic literature which primarily feature Newfoundland outports, is one which is not fixed, but which shifts. It exists within a continuum of acceptance determined by tacit or explicit societal consensus, and can be applied to both native-born and foreign-born individuals. The recurrence of the Stranger figure, in multiple forms and guises, speaks to its significance as a crucial element in the evolving self-definition of the region.

As theorists such as Erving Goffman, Sara Ahmed, Erich Goode, and Howard Hallman have noted, there is an inextricable link to the creation of community identity through discrimination and the use of demarcatives of difference. In modern North American society, a broadly consensual definition of Strangers at the local level has perhaps become more difficult to achieve, obscured by the general trend towards a depersonalized experience in urban life and increasing tides of immigration. Yet urban dwellers continue to create micro-communities with shared codes and implicit regulations regarding the recognition and treatment of Strangers, as Hallman describes in his book *Neighbourhoods* (60). Strangeness may be defined as any behaviour or expression which is dissonant with accepted norms and beliefs, as adjudged by Insiders.

Among the first sociologists, Georg Simmel established an emphasis on "proximity and membership orientation" (qtd. in Harman 17):

> The stranger will not be considered here in the usual sense, as the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather as the man who, although he has gone no further, has not quite got over the freedom of coming and going. He is fixed within a certain spatial circle – or within a group whose boundaries are analogous to spatial boundaries – but his position within it is fundamentally affected by the fact that he does not belong in it initially and that he brings qualities into it that are not, and cannot be, indigenous to it (143).

This furnishes a primary basis for understanding the phenomenon of alienation within a community, but a strict definition remains elusive. Subsequent theorists have endeavoured to expand the notion of what constitutes a Stranger. While Simmel concentrates on the foreign-born Stranger, he adds residency within a community (the "spatial circle") as a determinant. The Stranger characterized as a "potential wanderer" leads to the concept that a native-born individual can also transform into a Stranger, if they are perceived to "wander" too far from established social norms (or from the community itself). Lesley Harman suggests that the Stranger is produced only "in relation to what constitutes a member" (12). The idea of membership orientation as a factor in the assignment of Stranger status is central to this expanded notion of the Stranger. Where Simmel posits the idea of a Stranger who "is not orienting to join the group" (qtd. in Harman 17), a basis is established for Goffman's concept of *remedial interchanges*, undertaken chiefly in the form of accounts (explanations), apologies, and requests (assignment of expertise/status) (*Relations* 350-4). Remedial interchanges are actions undertaken by an individual who exhibits Strange behaviour and who seeks to avoid being typed as a Stranger.

Harman theorizes two axes which interact with each other to create the conditions for membership: proximity[6] and membership orientation (12). Proximity may be broken down into

three categories: *spatial*, or geographical proximity; *social*, or interactive proximity; and *cultural* proximity, which involves "communicative competence between cultures" (13). Membership orientation involves the interaction between Stranger and host/member(s). Does the desire exist to effect a change in status? What are the conditions established for this alteration? For the moment, it is sufficient to indicate that Stranger status, in contrast to Simmel's initial description, is not confined to external forces. Interestingly, Harman notes a pattern in the emphasis of sociologists in Germany and America who have examined the ramifications of the term Stranger over the past ninety years. In his view, the German Idealist school dealt with the "experience of the Stranger, with *negotiation*, coming to terms with Strangeness. The American school instead preferred to concentrate on *recognition*, the effect a Stranger produces on a host community—on how a Stranger can be demystified, and made more "like us" (14). Both of these perspectives bear examination in the work of Newfoundland playwrights.

Threats to communities are fluid and change over time because communities are constantly in transition, made up of various groups jostling for status—groups which themselves are in a constant state of flux. It is a truism that one person's Stranger is another person's friend. This does not diminish the significance of the term as it is applied in a social context. Nor does it diminish the need for Stranger figuration, which is constant (Ahmed 22). At different times the emphasis may be on foreign-born Strangers. At other times, native-born Strangers are perceived as a primary threat. In Newfoundland drama Strangers are identified from within and without, depending on the community that is the focus of a play. Examples range from the interiorized family nucleus of Michael Cook's *Jacob's Wake* (1973) to the exterior threat posed by the British and the French soldiers in his *Colour the Flesh the Colour of Dust* (1971). These examples will be extrapolated in Chapter 5.

This interior-exterior dialectic of Strangerhood, and the gaze which results in assignment of Stranger status, is therefore also a matter for study. In Newfoundland plays the gaze may be that of an estranged character. In Des Walsh's play *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* (1992) the perspective on events is primarily that of Eli Pallisher, the native-born boy who challenges the rigid orthodoxy of an outport riven with superstition and malicious gossip. Other plays, such as Grace Butt's *Goodbye, Your Excellency* (1970), are presented through the gaze of community Insiders. A departing Governor is ridiculed with the ironic gift of a model of a Newfoundland dog, and overmatched by the cagey working man who has arrived to present the gift.[7]

Strangers remain, at all times, a part of a community's social discourse. Not everyone in a community will assign Stranger status to the same person for a series of actions: there is a negotiation that takes place. Group assignment matters more, in terms of consequences, than individual assignment of Stranger status. Homans notes that society is inherently competitive (144). Groups and individuals compete with each other for status and the rewards that accompany high status. While elevated status can be assigned to Necessary Outsiders who are highly esteemed, the highest status can only be enjoyed by unqualified Insiders, those with no discernible blemish on their social record. Such *elevated status* requires a benchmark which determines *low status*. There is thus a social need for Strangers. They possess objective value, in providing an Outside to help define a community's Inside. They may even provide employment. Hawkins and Tiedeman note the large corporate and social services infrastructure devoted to eliminating or "curing" Strange behaviour, and how such infrastructures *create* Strangers (179-81).[8] Strangers and Necessary Outsiders may or may not be aware of their value to a society, but they are always aware when that value diminishes, as their status is set in play. Within a dramatic context, a text of enduring quality will present this social discourse and feature persuasive per-

spectives from characters whose views of appropriate Insider behaviour are contradictory. The reader must then participate in the critical process.

Finally, a play's structure represents, to some degree, a representation of accepted narrative practice within a community. Artists test the margins of this acceptability through the introduction of new or altered forms of presentation. The form may therefore be part of the commentary of a work of art. In examining the development of theatre practice in Newfoundland, this dissertation will touch upon the role narrative structure plays in a community's theatrical expression of its culture. For example, playwrights may decide that subversive, controversial, or contestable material is best encased within an unthreatening package. The work of Grace Butt and Tom Cahill is notable in this regard. In the vanguard of Newfoundland playwrights, such writers did not incorporate the stylistic conventions of works being produced in other centres contemporaneously with their own. Perhaps the writing of a play, in the early stages of a theatre culture, is adventure enough. Newfoundland playwrights of recent vintage, who have matured within a more developed theatre culture, demonstrate more confidence in introducing more overtly foreign or experimental styles. The recent productions of director Jillian Keiley's Artistic Fraud of Newfoundland theatre company, which feature her *kaleidography* notation method, serve as an example of material produced by community members who have become accustomed to variations in form.

The central aspect of this scholarly examination of the dramatic literature of Newfoundland, however, will be the figures of alienation, described within the parameters of the line of alienation traced between the Stranger, the Necessary Outsider, and the Insider. It needs be said that the dramatic literature of any culture is too great to be encapsulated within one theory or one dissertation. The plays selected for analysis here represent those which, first and foremost, have

become part of an emerging canon of Newfoundland plays through informal forms of public acknowledgement, publication, or subsequent influence. To this criterion is added the presence of Stranger figures within each play. As remarked earlier, there are many forms of the Stranger figure, but the definition is not amorphous, and Strangers described in each play will conform to the parameters established in the first chapter. To these two fundamental criteria may be added a third: the public recognition or seminal contributions of the playwrights themselves. A play included here may not have been accorded any significant notice, in terms of critical or public acclaim, when it first appeared. If, however, it was produced at a time when the landscape for dramatic literature was notably barren, by a writer who was acting as a pioneer in the field, such a play merits scholarly consideration. Finally, the overwhelming majority of the plays selected take as their setting the Newfoundland outport, perhaps the most resonant and evocative symbol of Newfoundland culture. Outports provide a link between the cultural past and present, having existed within a relatively incubated environment for hundreds of years. The outports provide perhaps the best examples of how Newfoundlanders present themselves to themselves.

That plays which meet all these criteria have been omitted must also be stated. In selecting plays where a Stranger character features prominently, there is no shortage from which to choose in Newfoundland drama—a fact which is one of the primary points of this dissertation. An attempt has been made to create a balance between the criteria described above, to cover all the different periods of development of Newfoundland drama, and to include a representative selection of Newfoundland's most influential dramatic writers.

The third chapter will describe a pattern of events in the social and political history of Newfoundland which acts as a basis for the significant presence of the line of alienation in its drama. Key events which can be linked to the evolution of this alienated perspective are de-

scribed, without pretence to an exhaustive socio-political history. The review of Newfoundland's theatre performance history which follows in the fourth chapter is not intended to pass as a comprehensive ethnographic or anthropological analysis, but serves, again, the purpose of highlighting important aspects of Newfoundland's history as it relates to a move away from foreign definitions of cultural value to the development of a distinct, home-grown expression of identity based largely on otherness.

Even though dramatic literature in Newfoundland is a relatively new phenomenon—plays written by Grace Butt and others involved in the region's active community theatre in the 1940s are the first evidence of a dramatic treatment of the island's society—no scholarly examination should assume to speak on behalf of an entire *œuvre*, or to ascribe overarching themes, tropes or motifs to every extant text. The dynamics of the interaction between the Stranger, his relative the Necessary Outsider, and their symbiotic corollary the Insider can, however, be found in some respect in a pronounced majority of the best-known Newfoundland works produced over the past sixty years. This suggests that notions of identity and alienation are never very far from the collective cultural consciousness of Newfoundland society. While it is true that in the past fifteen years playwriting (and playmaking) in Newfoundland has become more urban in its orientation and increasingly sophisticated stylistically, the focus on identifying the culture through a filter of degrees of otherness has not disappeared, as will be illustrated in Chapter Five. Plays which focus on outport life and culture, and which reflect a more specifically Newfoundlandic way of life, are becoming scarce as outports themselves decline in number. This, then, is an opportune moment to view Newfoundlanders as they see themselves, caught in a prism of past and present, belonging and alienation.

Chapter 1

External, Median, and Internal Figuration: Terms and Definitions

1.1 The Notion of Community

It is difficult to imagine how human beings might survive as isolated individual entities. We lack the ability to reproduce by ourselves, as single-celled organisms do; our infants are largely helpless against natural elements such as weather and predators. The notion of humans as social animals is therefore biologically derived. Fromm famously identified two fundamental human social needs in *Escape From Freedom* (1969): the need to "escape" the anomic consequences of being alone, and the need to create self-identity, as an individual within a comparative context. We require other humans around us to acquire the skills and qualities needed to survive. Several actions occur when humans gather together to form primary units of civil society. Sociologists generally agree on three critical elements in the formation of communities, as enumerated by Bonjean (5). The first is delineation of territory; a space is marked as belonging to the group. This action is essential in creating an entity which can be governed, and for which governing mechanisms are created. The creation of formal and informal codes of behaviour, and mechanisms for judgment, punishment, and protection, all take place within a territory, a defined space.

A second condition necessary in the creation of communities is an affiliation with this territory, a reason for acquiring it, protecting it, and maintaining it. The narrative of affiliation may be created prior to or after the fact of settlement; it may or may not be factual in nature. One group's creation myth may be just that, a myth. A "promised land" may have been promised to

more than one group. The perception of affiliation, strongly held and nurtured through oral and written history, is enough to engender a sense of membership.

Third, within each group of members a set of codes must be established to define the terms of membership. Within each created code, there is a continuum of acceptability, a range of behaviours and beliefs that fall within or which transgress established norms. When space has been delineated, and these various kinds of codes have been established, a matrix of interdependent relationships is established between the people who agree to adhere to these codes and delineations. This investment of belief in turn creates a sense of belonging, one which may be acquired (as in the case of immigration) or one which is derived from long-term residence (Bonjean, Clark, Lineberry 1, 5).[9] All citizens become participants, in an active or passive manner, in the maintenance of order within a community. They become border guards, charged with the protection of invisible borders, those involving appearance, expression, and activity (Foucault 200), exercising what Goffman calls "a very pretty capacity for dissociated vigilance" (*Relations* 238). Their implicit responsibility is to monitor those from Outside who enter the precincts of the community, and to monitor each other, making determinations of the nature and gravity of transgressions against community norms (though not always acting upon them). This chapter will examine how levels of Insider/Outsider status are determined in what Charles Bonjean calls the "eopolis" (7), the village community, and how status levels of identity are conferred upon the individuals who interact with each other in that environment.

Inevitably the concept of what constitutes a *home* environment must be addressed. "Home" is a term with multiple meanings and applications. Within this discussion, the host community (as defined in political terms) can be identified as a home unit, as can the nuclear family and the birthplace community of Exiles, who look nostalgically to "home" in maintaining

a sense of Insiderness in a foreign location. Jacob Mercer in David French's *Of The Fields, Lately* (1974) and *Leaving Home* (1972) provides an example of a character who continues to define himself through a home unit that is not the same as the community in which he lives. As Harman notes, "modernity demands that identity be portable" (89), and when place and membership cease to be fixed, home becomes a fluid concept. As outports and traditional ways of life diminish in Newfoundland, this concept of home will take on added significance. For the moment, however, it remains very much at odds with the more traditional concept of home at play in Newfoundland literature, and which features so prominently in every aspect of the cultural life of the region.

Communities can be said to be made up of members and non-members, comprised of three types of people: *Insiders*, *Necessary Outsiders*, and *Strangers*. Insiders, in this examination, are native-born individuals possessing a blood tie to the community, most commonly those who reside there in addition to being of local parentage. Necessary Outsiders are median figures who retain value to the community through the performance of skill-based tasks in short supply, or through protective affiliation with Insiders (such as through marriage). They are not accorded, or in some cases have lost, unqualified Insider status. Necessary Outsiders occupy a border position within their society, possessing neither the security of Insider status nor the more tenuous position of a Stranger. Of the three categories of status, Necessary Outsiders are the only individuals who are not born to their position; they comprise individuals formerly identified within one or both of other subject groups. There are also two sub-sets of the Necessary Outsider. *Demystified Strangers* possess mitigating qualities such as strong affiliative ties to the community, valued skills, or consistent remediative behaviour. *Transgressive Insiders* are native-born individuals who are perceived as having committed anti-social acts of significant, though not

extreme, consequence, or those who have returned from voluntary or involuntary *Exile* (departure being a transgressive act within the context of community norms).[10]

The "necessity" implied in the term Necessary Outsider indicates the value such agents retain within the community. All members or affiliated entities of a society, even Strangers, retain value, a social account which brings benefit to the polity. The nature of the value resides in an individual's contribution to the ongoing identity of the community. Value in this context involves levels of social approbation, and can vary, dependent upon an agent's pre-existing status within the community—a high status member who performs the same activity as a low status member is likely to reap a greater reward (Homans 146). Social value can be broken down into value assigned to actions and that assigned to an individual. This latter value is personalized, and rises or falls depending on the performance of the Necessary Outsider and the attitudes and characteristics they exhibit, which are part of what may be called a remediative relationship, one which implies the commission of acts which require corrective action (Goffman 350).[11] This explains to some degree the nature of transgression in a social context. Activity that is expected within conventional social parameters but is not carried out cancels the reward, and generates a debt, a hole in the social fabric. Non-conformism is not a neutral act.

Strangers, while adjudged on their actions, are also depersonalized in the value they retain. It is the figure of the Stranger that is of most value, rather than any particular action he or she undertakes, although these actions may serve as determinatives in the reinforcing of cultural norms. The Necessary Outsider is judged as a person who *acts*, if only by their presence; the Stranger as a figure who *represents*. The Stranger is denied the security of Insider status. Individuals marked as Strangers are ultimately perceived as a threat to the community, and are subject to expulsion or violence. The possibility of remediation exists, but this is undertaken

from a position that is alienated from the community, where the Necessary Outsider, in occupying a median position, may be said to be straddling the border between Outside and Inside, to have a foot in the door. Such a position is clearly more conducive to advancement further within the community's hierarchy of valued citizens. Furthermore, depersonalized units within a community's social discourse are easier to exchange. Other Strangers can always be found; the Stranger's individuality is denied and, as an object agent within a community, his or her survival is at risk.

1.2 Strangers

The earliest forms of human life mastered what psychologists call *differential behaviour* as a survival mechanism (Goodson 43). Simply put, this means that humans gradually learned to move towards energy sources which were of benefit to the human organism and to move away from energy sources which were detrimental. Felix Goodson avers that this indicates that humans can be seen as negative feedback mechanisms. Persons within a community who are perceived as lacking benefit to the whole do not occupy a neutral position, but one which is regarded as actively negative. This has implications for communities and their ability to tolerate difference: "Any organic system can tolerate lower energy levels of imbalance for longer periods than it can tolerate higher levels. Thus the tendency to respond with increasing rapidity to higher levels of imbalance has been a critical factor in survival" (44).

Once humans developed into reasoning beings, conscious selection—learned response—combined with Darwin's "natural selection" (66) to determine the level of action to be taken in the face of a perceived threat. Darwin's characterization of life as a never-ending "struggle for

existence," especially his dictum that the "struggle for life [is] more severe between individuals and varieties of the same species" (74), helps explain the existence of formal and informal codes in communities which are used to establish difference.

Selective discrimination enables creatures to survive in environments which are often hostile. Theories abound as to how the learning process develops and operates, from the *operant conditioning* of the Behaviourist B.F. Skinner to David Ausubel's theory of *meaningful learning* and Chomsky's *generative* models (Brown 74-82). What is consistent amongst all of these theories, buttressed by the observations of Darwin, is the idea that humans are impelled to discriminate in order to learn. By definition, learning involves the assimilation of symbols which have acquired meaning, and the ability to order these symbols. The act of ordering and selection can be categorized within a context of the familiar and the unfamiliar. The field of socio-linguistics, for example, has demonstrated that from our earliest cognitive development auditory familiarity is utilized as a tool in determining appropriate choices for survival. As Harman points out, "the social structure of a group is reflected in its language" (4).

From this background, the Stranger can be positioned as an alien body, related by contact or perceived contact with a community, but not generally accepted as being a member of that community, and one who has failed to assimilate and order the appropriate codes of membership. In post-colonial discourse the Stranger is a perceived entity but not a known entity; a *body* acknowledged as present (even when physically absent) and as a necessary part of the matrix of demarcative criteria by which a community defines and defends itself (Ahmed 88; Harman 41). The Stranger is not able to fully comprehend, manipulate, or adhere to the codes and symbols which define the community to its members. His/her transgressions are considered irremediable. These may not be consciously enacted; the transgressive "actions" may have to do with genetic

markers of deviance, as elaborated by Hawkins (20)—for example, dwarfism, blindness, or mental illness.

Stranger figures possess two possible ancestries, foreign or native birth. A native-born Stranger is an Insider who has committed, or has been perceived to have committed, a transgression of sufficient degree, or transgressions which are significant in both form and number, to merit the designation of Stranger. Foreign Strangers may be spectral, as in the figure of "the Bogeyman" which figures in traditional Newfoundland folklore,[12] but more often they are real people, with a presence in a community and few, if any, mitigating dyadic connections to its residents. The foreign-born Stranger's mere existence is itself a transgression, a repudiation of the essentiality of the community.

Strangers form the extreme Outside end of the line of alienation which extends from within the community to beyond its borders. This status is not fixed: in cases involving an especially severe transgression, they may also be Strangers or Insiders who had been located as Necessary Outsiders before this status was altered. A work which provides an example of such a reversal in status is Walsh's *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday*. The juvenophile Reverend McKim loses his evangelical flock and is forced out of town, though not before sundering its citizens into bitterly divided camps—damage which can be interpreted as the result of a Stranger's actions (McKim is not native to the town).

Under the terms of these definitions, it is possible, though unlikely, that a native-born Stranger can return to Insider status due to birthright, assuming sufficient acts of remediation are enacted. The status of such a Stranger-to-Transgressive Insider, however, seems especially fragile. The example of the character Christopher in Walsh's *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday* serves as an example in this respect. Christopher's initial transgression lies in having left the town of Caplin

Bight in order to further his education. This is a loss to the community of able manpower and intellect (and progeny), not to mention an act perceived as a repudiation of the community. Upon his return, despite his family ties, he has been conferred only a limited degree of inclusion, owing to the needed skills he brings as a teacher. He is therefore treated as a Necessary Outsider (of the subset Transgressive Insider) rather than as an unqualified Insider, subject to suspicion of his motives and a scrutiny of his remedial efforts to improve his status. The fact that the unapologetic Christopher fails to undertake sufficient remedial interchanges (expressing regret for having left, for example) demonstrates that his expiation for the "crime" of voluntary Exile is not complete. Christopher's second "crime," the accusation that he has had sexual congress with Eli, is sufficient to remove this median status and re-position him as a Stranger. Once Christopher has been so demarcated it is nearly inconceivable that the damage can be repaired and his status as an Insider restored.

Foreign-born Strangers may possess the means of altering their status, but the fact of their foreign birth dictates that they cannot achieve unqualified Insider status. It should be noted that early descriptions of the Stranger figure in human interaction, offered by the German idealist school of sociology, claimed that the Stranger's status could change from Outsider to Insider if they achieved "full communicative competence" (Schutz 507)—in other words, if they mastered the implicit codes of symbolic expression within a community. Harman claims that "strangers are tolerated if their mistakes stem from an attempt to change their status from outsider to insider" (38). One notes here the use of the word "tolerated". These scholars did not acknowledge a border category such as that of the Necessary Outsider, whose actions, in the case of the foreign-born resident, are continually mediated through the polarities of two opposing home narratives: that of the place from whence s/he came, and that of the place in which s/he is found to be. Such

unqualified status may not be significant, if the Necessary Outsider achieves the same level of approbation and security that accompanies Insider status.

An example of such a circumstance is provided in Ted Russell's *The Holdin' Ground* (1954), where the mysterious visitor Michael turns out to be the mainland-born son of former residents of a community near to Pigeon Inlet, the locale of the play's Inside voice, Grampa Walcott. Michael's parents had left, on good terms, as voluntary Exiles in search of a better life. As Michael's identity becomes clearer and the purpose for his visit to the community is revealed, he progresses from Stranger to Necessary Outsider—one who acquires a high degree of approbation. It is plausible that, should he request it, he would even be allowed burial in the community cemetery (and therefore posthumous Insider status). Russell never broaches this possibility, however, and Michael returns to the mainland where he dies in Exile, remaining, even in death, a Necessary Outsider.

The ability of the foreign-born Stranger to progress to Necessary Outsider status within society depends on the extent to which s/he demonstrates a willingness to assimilate (Ahmed 95). If s/he fails to master the local *lingua franca*, interpellative syntax or dialect (Harman 122), or to alter his or her appearance in order to adhere to expected levels of conformity, a Stranger will experience alienation dozens of times a day. A new or recent arrival struggles to acquire the community's socio-linguistic vocabulary and the implicit meanings of its signature verbal inflections. A foreigner remains psychically tied to his or her natal culture, even while laboriously assimilating the various regulations and behavioural patterns of the adopted community (125). The foreign-born Stranger may feel welcomed (or not), may love the new culture (or not), but is not considered *of* the new culture.[13]

Native-born Strangers are Insiders who are unable to conform, to an acceptable level, to communal expectations of appearance, behaviour, or belief. This also involves self-belief; as Goffman points out, a critical factor in belonging, and thus avoiding exclusion, is a belief in one's role (Presentation 16). A Stranger's transgressions occur at the level of taboo within a community's normative framework, beyond the level of remediation. The severity with which offence(s) are perceived, and the lack of sufficient mitigation in their relationship to the micro-community, is a defining link between foreign- and native-born Strangers.

The Stranger can be a fictitious construct ("the Bogeyman"), but in the dramatic literature of Newfoundland this construct is usually applied to a real individual rather than a spectral figure. An exception occurs in Ray Guy's *Young Triffie's Been Made Away With* (1985), after a series of sheep maimings produces no immediate local candidate. Soon after the town eccentric is recruited to fill this role. Strangerhood can be conferred upon any person, foreign- or native-born, who fails to conform to implicit and explicit codes of conduct and expression in a manner adjudged of sufficient significance to merit identification as a threat to the community.

1.2 Necessary Outsiders: Demystified Strangers and Transgressive Insiders

The Necessary Outsider occupies a mediated position between Insider and Stranger status on the line of alienation. The term is useful in creating lines of demarcation between the degrees of transgression and alienation experienced in a social organism. The Necessary Outsider exists within the community polity as a Transgressive Insider or a Demystified Stranger. The Transgressive Insider includes within its parameters the sub-set term of the Exile.

1.2.1 The Demystified Stranger

The Demystified Stranger is foreign-born, but resident within the community. Once within the community polity, this Stranger may acquire enhanced value in the form of mitigating dyadic relationships, through the execution of needed professional skills, formal affiliations such as marriage, or informal reciprocal interchanges. These relationships may alter the Stranger's status to that of Necessary Outsider. In *Young Triffie's Been Made Away With*, Dr. Melrose, the Ontario doctor who has lived and worked in Swyers Harbour for over twenty years, is a Stranger who has attained a level of toleration (as a Necessary Outsider), but not acceptance, within his adopted community. He is a Demystified Stranger, a status resulting from his long residence in the community, the need for his professional skill as a doctor, and common knowledge of his personal deficiencies, such as his fondness for alcohol. Through such knowledge the community is able to render him less Strange. By the end of the play, when his role in the death of a young, developmentally-disabled child is made clear, Melrose's situation within the community has become untenable. He has resumed the role of Stranger, having demonstrated that he was in fact *not* known, *not* demystified. He is killed, while attempting a remediative action, by another Stranger, the deranged child-abuser Pastor Pottle. An example of a more positive shift in status can be taken from Robert Chafe's play *Tempting Providence* (2002). The arrival of no-nonsense British nurse Myra Bennett in the isolated outport of Daniel's Harbour ruffles local feathers. However her sure sense of mission, professional expertise, marriage to a local man, and proven devotion to the community's well-being serve as sufficient remediation to mitigate her inability to entirely assimilate. In the end, Bennett has won respect and affection from the local communi-

ty as a Necessary Outsider, while retaining markers, such as a British accent, of her former status as a Stranger.

When a transgression is committed and identified, the Necessary Outsider's offence is considered within a larger context.[14] It can be posited that both the Transgressive Insider and the Demystified Stranger acquire a "record" or account. This record may be formal in legal terms; more often it constitutes an informal accounting that is periodically tabulated and considered in its entirety when judging the Strangeness of an individual (whereas an Insider's account may not be raised as an issue when a transgression is committed). Such record-keeping denotes that the individual merits further scrutiny and perhaps less tolerance. The value of such individuals to the polity is assessed against the consequences of the offence. A useful word in this context is *esteem*, used by Homans to distinguish rewards (or punishments) from status acquisition (149). Gains in esteem (from Insiders) may not lead to any immediate alteration in status, but they may be taken into account and lead to a future alteration. Esteem can thus be seen as an incremental unit in the ebb and flow of social capital, with unqualified, highly esteemed Insider status as the ultimate objective.

It can be hypothesized that offences committed by Transgressive Insiders which are of equal or greater degree than those committed by a Demystified Stranger may be forgiven by the polity, due to the indissoluble blood ties the Insider retains. There is a useful comparison in the treatment of *Triffie*'s Vincent, a Transgressive Insider whose shrieking profanities and sexual assaults are the result of post-traumatic stress disorder related to his war service, with that of Grace, the drug-addled, mainland-born wife of Dr. Melrose. Vincent lives on in the community without remark while Grace is steadily excluded from social intercourse, although their situations are in fact quite similar. The social value of blood ancestry or longstanding generational

residency would be diminished if similar offences by these two forms of Necessary Outsider were to be weighed equally.

1.2.2 Exiles

Exiles are a specific subset of the Transgressive Insider. They are denoted by their departure from the home community. The departure may be *voluntary* or *involuntary*; while this distinction may play a part in the amount of remediative action expected of a returning Exile, it is not the determining factor in the status they are accorded within the community. The returning Exile is an Insider whose departure serves to qualify his or her status. S/he carries back into the community the threat of contamination from Outside influences. Furthermore, a perception is created that the community has been rejected. Exiles who return to a home community are subject to several options of status conferral, dependent on the circumstances surrounding their departure. Involuntary Exiles who evince strong regret upon leaving or high levels of joy upon their return may be welcomed back as Insiders, having performed appropriate remediative interchanges. Such actions, it should be noted, need not be viewed strictly in remediative terms. They can be described as exchange actions undertaken in response to *aversive stimulus*, that is, the threat of punishment (Homans 24). The implicit assumption is that every interactive social activity has a *cost*. One accrues profit (esteem) or debt (transgression). There is a reward for undertaking positive action (68-9): further embedding within the community, a shift inward along the line of alienation, or at least the accumulation of incremental esteem units.

Voluntary Exiles are more likely to have difficulty shifting their status inwards, due to the perceived transgression of their departure, and to encounter a more limited range of amelioration in their status. In theory, such an Exile would be required to perform more exchange actions,

of greater value, to regain unqualified Insider status. The fact of their leaving remains, however buried it may become in an avalanche of good deeds. In strict terms, then, a voluntary Exile may not be able to resume unqualified Insider status. Furthermore, if sufficient remedial actions are not undertaken, and should the individual remain unrepentant or commit further transgressions, as in the case of the schoolteacher Christopher Simms in *Tomorrow Will Be Sunday*, Stranger status may be conferred. The knowledge offered by such a Necessary Outsider may be more threatening than his presence, for, while an Exile may remediate his way back into the daily orthodoxy of the community, knowledge that is at odds with established local beliefs works against the process of reassimilation. In disseminating foreign, heterodox influences to others in the community, the Exile risks a lowering in status from Necessary Outsider to Stranger. Christopher, while glad to be back in his hometown, fails to conform sufficiently, is stigmatized through rumour and malignant gossip, and finally leaves for good—a Stranger.

Exiles exist within the lexicon of diasporas and home narratives. Newfoundland drama teems with manifestations of the nostalgic idea of home and its accompanying romantic interpretation of Exile. In David French's *Salt-Water Moon* (1984), Jacob Mercer, a young man who has headed to the mainland for a year to try his luck, returns home to a world very different from the one about which he reminisced in the cold environs of Toronto. The prodigal Brad in Cook's *Jacob's Wake* is treated as a virtual leper by his family—an Insider who has abrogated his right to that status not only by leaving voluntarily, but by condemning the behaviour of his family.

The Stranger and the Necessary Outsider are linked through their utility to the community. They aid in its ability to define its values and norms; the Stranger from the Outside, as a demarcator of normative boundaries, and the Necessary Outsider, as Demystified Stranger or Transgressive Insider, from a border position, as agents with strongly qualified status. That their

status remains fluid, subject to the gaze of the community (as well as their own, self-regulating gaze), indicates the degree of control each community assumes in the creation and maintenance of its identity.

1.3 Insiders

Providing a base context against which the concepts of the Stranger and the Necessary Outsider are measured is that of the Insider. An Insider is a community member whose membership is not conferred, but is assumed (or re-assumed) as a birthright. Within the framework of this study it will be asserted that Insiders must be native-born. Certainly there are individuals in every community who have arrived as children or adults and who, through exemplary service and demeanour, are treated as Insiders. In such cases perception is equal to reality, in all but the most extreme tests of status; nevertheless in strict terms such individuals are not Insiders, but rather Necessary Outsiders who enjoy a high level of esteem, approbation and influence. Unqualified Insiders conform consistently to social regulations, actively uphold them, in formal or informal ways, and enjoy the highest level of status within a community. Qualified Insiders may be returning Exiles or other forms of Transgressive Insiders who have successfully maintained or regained Insider status. Insiders possess *received knowledge* of the shared semiotic codes and socio-linguistic markers which help to demarcate membership, and they conduct themselves in consistent conformity with the polity's precepts for *appearential behaviour* (Lofland 27). These individuals take upon themselves the informal enforcement of community values, and therefore the identification of Stranger behaviour and the enactment of corrective measures. Goode, in his discussion of deviance creation, describes the process of Stranger-making through the use of "deviant stereotypes": "Public stereotypes of deviants set deviants

apart from conventional people and at the same time group together all deviants of a certain type" (93).[13]

What can be observed from this initial examination of Strangers, Necessary Outsiders and Insiders is that their status is co-dependent and provisional. Assigned status is located on a line of alienation, a continuum that runs outward from Insider to Necessary Outsider to Stranger and inward from the reverse extreme. Changes in status depend upon the individual's ability to meet conditions of Insider behaviour, and a community's—or key individual's—willingness to alter entrenched perceptions. A change in behaviour does not guarantee a change in status. If an individual retains perceived value in his or her role as a Stranger or Necessary Outsider, no amount of assimilative behaviour may transform his/her status.

Notes

[1] It should be noted that, while the territory of Labrador has played a fundamental role in the history of the region, within the parameters of this dissertation the term "Newfoundland" will refer to the land and people of the island of Newfoundland and the islands within its boundaries. Labrador is possessed of a distinct history and culture worthy of its own dissertation.

[2] The term *line of alienation* has been coined here to describe the inward-outward status path taken by citizens and foreign elements in relation to a community.

[3] This distinction serves to acknowledge that not all deviance is considered socially threatening—is in the example cited by Goode (20), of a man seven feet tall. Statistical deviation from the norm is not, in itself, enough to pose a threat to a social polity. Thus the addition of the consequence of deviant action is critical to a definition of the Stranger – particularly if one considers *form*, as in, say, the form of a visible minority individual, to be an implicit action when it is perceptible to others.

[4] Deviance is defined by Goode and others as "something that, or someone who, departs significantly from a norm" (20). This definition is closely tied to the notion of the Stranger, so elements of it are used here.

[5] It is the fact of this Insiderness which furnishes the disenfranchised with their franchise, and which gives resonance to their campaign for equal rights.

[6] Goffman also deals with aspects of proximity in his memorably titled essay "The Insanity of Place", published as an Appendix in *Relations In Public.*

[7] Please refer to chapter 5 for further textual examples.

[8] For the purposes of this example, I have conflated the terms *deviant behaviour*, used in Hawkins and Tiedeman, with the term Stranger, used in this study. The example cited, which involves the assignment of a psychiatric inpatient as a latent homosexual with depressive tendencies, is a sobering account of how Stranger status can be assigned within conventional, highly-esteemed professional contexts.

[9] Charles M. Bonjean describes this as "more or less completely rooted in the soil", which is problematic, particularly within countries with large immigrant communities, such as the United Sates and Canada.

[10] I am aware that there may be many instances where a community sends away an Insider with their full blessing, such as to a competition, or on a scholarship. In such cases there is an implicit value to the community and a tacit

expectation that the Exile will manifest the desire, if not the action, to return home. Even is such cases I would argue that the returning Exile is expected to demonstrate some type of remediative behaviour.

[11] Goffman also makes the point that situations can be posited where the offending Stranger can alter perceptions of his act, causing the majority to "accept him on his new terms and to accept the new definition of the situation that this implies" (349). Clearly, for this to happen the act would have to create consequences viewed as positive within the community.

[12] There is a poem by Tom Dawe entitled "The Bogeyman" which perfectly encapsulates the insular fear and stigmatization of Strangers by rural Newfoundlanders (re-printed here in part):

And one day we were alerted
about a strange man
near the edge of the woods.
I could see his wolfish eyes
passing from the dark boughs
when my aunt warned us
that he might even be a Canadian
or something…

[13] The children of a foreign-born Stranger, if locally-born and reared, are Insiders, although they may not be perceived as such due to demonstrated demarcative differences. They possess a greater chance at being perceived as Insiders, however, as they possess numerous advantages in terms of knowledge of informal local history and codes, and unaccented speech.

[14] The elements of this stereotyping are too complex to thoroughly study in this context, but they involve several actions on the part of the Insider: *exaggeration*, applying the most extreme range of behaviour to individuals who have committed a deviant act; *centrality*, seeing the deviant behaviour in question as overwhelming any other aspects of the deviant's personality; *persistence*, belief that the behaviour is typical and repeated by the deviant on a continuing basis; *disjunctiveness*, the belief that deviants live in a separate world, governed by principles maleficent to the public good; *homogeneity*, belief that all deviants of a particular stereotype are alike, and *clustering*, the assumption that "trains" of characteristics can be applied to deviants across the board.