Western CBC Radio Dramas ·f the 1960s and 1970s:
Regionalism, Postcoloniality, and the Western Canadian Myth
of Beginnings

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ABSTRACT

Western CBC Radio Dramas of the 1960s and 1970s:
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Many Western CBC radio dramas broadcast during the
1960s and 1970s allow local and national audiences to
rediscover their Western culture by mirroring back their
shared history and their shaping myths and metaphors.
Central to this emerging cultural awareness is the Western
Canadian myth of beginnings, a regional myth of origins
reflecting a Canadian genealogy grounded on multiple
regional identities and a historical and mythic sense of
beginnings ingrained in the Western consciousness. Some
Western CBC radio playwrights appropriate this myth for
postcolonial expression: to deconstruct colonial versions
of self and past, and to recreate new identities. By
dramatizing the myth in radio stories and by structuring it
into dramatic patterns of story-telling, these playwrights
shape a postcolonial Western Canadian identity.

This thesis undertakes a cultural study of the
remapping of the Western self and place through the medium
of radio, and approaches the analysis of radio drama via
literary anthropology. After tracing the historical
development of a Western regional consciousness, it
examines the dramatic structures of some Western radio
plays as forms of postcolonial expression.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis subject evolved gradually during my three years as a researcher on the "Western Radio Drama Project" of the Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies (CCBS). I would like to thank Dr. Howard Fink, the Centre's founding director and my thesis supervisor, for his guidance through this formative cultural journey, his enthusiastic support of my research, and his valued counsel throughout the preparation of this thesis. I would also like to recognize the importance to this thesis of Dr. Fink's contribution to the study of Canadian radio drama, in recovering traces of our cultural past (previously-neglected CBC radio scripts) and in cataloguing the development of a "Canadian National Theatre on the Air" in an important series of descriptive bibliographies by that title.[1]

I am pleased to also acknowledge the following: first, Dr. John D. Jackson, Concordia Professor of Sociology and

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[1] Howard Fink, ed., <u>Canadian National Theatre on the Air: 1925-1961 - CBC-CRBC-CNR Radio Drama in English, A Descriptive Bibliography and Union List</u> vol. 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983) 3 vols.

---, ed., "Canadian National Theatre on the Air II: 1962-1985 - CBC Radio Drama in English, A Descriptive Bibliography and Union List," vol. 2 (Kingston: Quarry Press, t.b.p.) 3 vols.

An ongoing electronic bibliography of CBC radio drama in English from 1986 onward is also available at the Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Tim Glover, for his love and encouragement, and to my family for their support.

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The cultural insanity of Western Canadians consists partly in trying to live within foreign mental space, within the shadowy outlines of a mythology which does not adequately order and explain their own experience.[1]

Dick Harrison

You know, things are actually shaping, being shaped, before our eyes in Canada. You're literally discovering your landscape, literally discovering your myth.[2]

Robert Kroetsch

PREFACE

In his 1989 survey of writings on the intellectual and
cultural history of the Prairies, historiographer Douglas
Francis notes that despite many books and articles on
Prairie Canada, the West remains, in some respects, a *terra
incognita*. Francis explains that while we know a lot about
early Western settlement, we know very little about the
mental ethos, the "intellectual mindset and cultural
milieu" of the region.[3] Many Western[4] CBC radio dramas
broadcast during the 1960s and 1970s allow local and
national audiences to rediscover their Western culture by
mirroring back their shared history and their shaping myths
and metaphors.

In the 1960s and 1970s, radio also serves as a
postcolonial instrument for Western writers. During these
years critical for regional apprehension and expression,
many CBC radio playwrights are resettling a foreign mental
space filled with European, Eastern Canadian, and American
social mythologies which do not adequately explain nor
order the Western experience. By unearthing a buried
Western Canadian past (lived history)[5], these playwrights
are able to "elevate [their] environment to expression"[6]
and to begin shaping a Canadian mythology of West.

Vital to the expression of this indigenous Western
mythology is what Robert Kroetsch identifies as a new

Western Canadian myth of beginnings[7], a regional myth of origins reflecting a Canadian genealogy grounded on multiple regional identities and a historical and mythic sense of beginnings ingrained in the Western consciousness. Some Western CBC radio playwrights appropriate this myth for postcolonial expression: to deconstruct colonial versions of self and past and to recreate new identities.[8] By dramatizing the myth of beginnings in radio stories and by structuring it into dramatic patterns of story-telling, these playwrights shape a postcolonial Western Canadian cultural identity.

This thesis undertakes a cultural study of the postcolonial remapping of the Western self and place through the medium of radio. In <u>Sounds Real: Radio in Everyday Life</u>, G. S. Higgins and P. D. Moss define the cultural studies position and its aims:

> Cultural studies seeks to understand the meanings people place on human experience as it exists in the present, to interpret its significance and provide some illumination about how culture as a system of shared beliefs is created, presented and re-presented. Such a position seeks to reveal the impact of the mass media (as *one* influential element) on culture in the broadest sense....The cultural studies position views mass media communication as a process whereby a shared culture is created, modified or maintained.[9]

Higgins and Moss note that while many studies approach radio from sociological and other perspectives, few consider "the role of radio in the creation and dissemination of cultural messages"[10]. This postcolonial

analysis addresses this precise question by considering the role of radio in reflecting, creating, and shaping a Western Canadian myth. It approaсіes the study of radio drama via literary anthropology since, as Rosemary Sullivan notes, a process of cultural anthropology is involved in unearthing cultural memories and shaping myths and metaphors.[11] Sullivan highlights the cultural significance of myth by suggesting that "We create and are created by our social myths; it is impossible to act outside the universe of myths"[12].

My myth criticism draws upon the fundamental meaning of *mythology* and *myth* as elaborated by Northrop Frye and translated into the Western Canadian postmodern language by Kroetsch.[13] When I refer to a *mythology*, I mean a series of interconnected stories linked by underlying shared communal experiences, beliefs, and worldviews. Frye asserts that every culture produces such a mythology which typically begins with a creation myth[14] (in this case, the myth of beginnings). My analysis defines and approaches this myth not simply as story (as narrative of Western Canadian settlement), but also as structuring principle of Western story-telling.[15] My aim is to capture the process through which this narrative of settlement "matures"[16] from a social myth (*reflecting* shared historical experiences, beliefs, and views) into a literary myth (consciously[17]

ordering and *shaping* Western Canadian imaginative expression).

The most significant catalyst in this maturing process is Western regionalism as a postcolonial sentiment. While a study of this limited scope cannot thoroughly identify all elements of this regionalism, it can examine some of the most significant of these elements shaping many Western CBC radio dramas broadcast during the 1960s and 1970s. Chapter one traces the historical development of a Western regional consciousness and a postcolonial expression, beginning with the two most critical periods for Western regionalism and for a Western colonial awareness of self and past: the period of Western Canadian settlement (1870-1920)[18] and the Depression (1929-39).

Chapter two examines the legacy of these Depression years on the Western imagination. Chapters three through five then illustrate how the recovery of a regional myth of origins allows some CBC radio playwrights to transcend a tragic narrative and to resettle the Western self and place through several serial and documentary narrative forms well-suited to postcolonial expression on radio: the serial, the documentary-drama, the catalogue, and the musical structure of theme and variation.

The radio plays selected for analysis are drawn from the universe of English-language CBC radio dramas catalogued in volume II of Dr. Howard Fink's comprehensive

bibliography, entitled "Canadian National Theatre on the Air II: 1962-1985 - CBC Radio Drama in English, A Descriptive Bibliography and Union List"[19], but are limited to scripts available in the archives of the Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies (CCBS).

While I initially reviewed radio plays produced in various Western CBC regional centres (Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, and Regina) during the 1960s and 1970s, I chose, for several reasons, to focus on radio dramas produced in CBC Calgary. One reason is that during the 1960s and the 1970s, Calgary produced a significant volume of material. Another major consideration is the distinctive nature of the regional postcolonial expression which emerged from this Western production centre. Since many of the Calgary radio plays were broadcast to both local and national audiences, playwrights writing for CBC Calgary have had to reconcile Western regionalism with Canadian nationalism and, in so doing, some of them appropriated various serial and documentary-drama forms to shape a Western Canadian postcolonial identity. I excluded other CBC regional centres for reasons mainly related to production size and regional distinctiveness. Despite the focus on one production centre, the radio dramas from CBC Calgary reflect shared cultural experiences that shape Western regionalism as a postcolonial expression.

The plays selected for analysis are representative of CBC Calgary radio producers such as Fred Diehl and Irene Prothroe who have made a significant contribution to Western radio drama, in terms of both volume and quality of production, and their authors include a wide variety of playwrights, writers, and poets such as George Ryga, W. O. Mitchell, Frank Dabbs, Bill Fraser, Bonnie Le May, Terrence Heath, and Anne Szumigalski, many of whom also wrote for other Western CBC production centres. Some of these playwrights were born and bred in the Prairies, and others re/settled there to work. Appendix A features brief biographical notes on some of the playwrights whose radio plays are examined in greater detail in this thesis. What all these playwrights share through their radio plays is the recovery of a real, remembered, and imagined West which resonates in the minds of regional and national CBC radio audiences.

Since sound recordings of radio broadcasts are not available for many of the selected plays, I examined the written radio scripts, including the playwrights' and producers' production notes and directions, as well as any further ancillary material contained in archival CCBS files. Despite the foregoing, my textual analysis also considers the performance element of radio drama in addressing the role of radio in ritualizing myth[20] and

engaging the active participation of the listening audience in shaping a communal myth.

Some further remarks need to be made about my own narrative of Western cultural and literary settlement. Since I use the term *settlement* to refer to a fragmented continuing process of Western regional awareness and expression, I am engaged, through this text, in archaeology (in unearthing a buried identity[21]) rather than in history (in transcribing a coherent historical narrative). In preparing this thesis, I often shared Kroetsch's archaeological sense that "every unearthing is problematic, tentative, subject to a story-making act that is itself, subject to further changes as the dig goes on"[22].

Lastly, I hope that this cultural study captures the remapping of the Western self and place by CBC radio playwrights and listening audiences during the 1960s and 1970s and the significant role that radio plays in this cultural and literary re/settlement. As Kroetsch asserts: "In a sense, we haven't got an identity until someone tells our story. The fiction makes us real"[23].

NOTES - Preface

1. Dick Harrison, "Cultural Insanity and Prairie Fiction," Figures in a Ground: Canadian Essays on Modern Literature Collected in the Honor of Sheila Watson, eds. Diane Bessai and David Jackel (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1978) 279.

2. In Russell M. Brown, "An Interview with Robert Kroetsch," The University of Windsor Review VII.21 (1972): 1.

3. Douglas Francis, "In Search of a Prairie Myth: A Survey of the Intellectual and Cultural Historiography of Prairie Canada," Journal of Canadian Studies 24.3 (1989): 84.

4. Following the precedent of other critics, I use the terms West/Western and Prairie interchangeably since the Prairie provinces share a Western regional culture shaped by a common colonial history, climate, environment, and regional consciousness reflected in their cultural and imaginative expression. Like these critics, I too exclude British Columbia from this analysis of Western writing for historical, literary, and cultural reasons.

    See, for example, Edward McCourt, The Canadian West in Fiction (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1949) vi and Dick Harrison, Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1977) xv.

5. Rudy Wiebe suggests that "the principal task of the Canadian writer is not simply to explain his contemporary world, but to create a past, a lived history, a vital mythology." See Rosemary Sullivan, "Summing Up," Crossing Frontiers: Papers in American and Canadian Western Literature, ed. Dick Harrison (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1979) 154.

6. William Carlos Williams as cited by Robert Kroetsch in "The Moment of Discovery of America Continues," The Lovely Treachery of Words: Essays Selected and New, by Kroetsch (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 1989) 6.

7. Ann Munton, "The Structural Horizons of Prairie Poetics: The Long Poem, Eli Mandel, Andrew Suknaski, and Robert Kroetsch," Dalhousie Review 63.1 (1983): 88 and 118.

8. Sullivan 154.

9. G. S. Higgins and P. D. Moss, <u>Sounds Real: Radio in Everyday Life</u> (London: University of Queensland Press, 1982) x.

10. Higgins and Moss 32.

11. Sullivan 154.

12. Sullivan 147.

13. For example, against Northrop Frye's unifying sense of myth, Kroetsch foregrounds a fragmented, archaeological sense of the Western Canadian story and story-telling language. See such essays as "Disunity as Unity: A Canadian Strategy" (21-33), "Beyond Nationalism: A Prologue" (64-72), and "The Exploding Porcupine" (108-16) in Kroetsch's <u>The Lovely Treachery of Words</u>.

14. Northrop Frye, <u>Creation and Recreation</u> (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980) 27-30.

15. Frye argues that as a society develops, its myths become structured into principles of storytelling. See <u>The Educated Imagination</u> (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1963) 1; "Conclusion," <u>A Literary History of Canada</u>, eds. Karl F. Klink et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965) 836; <u>The Modern Century: The Whidden Lectures 1967</u> (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1967) 106; <u>The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination</u> (Toronto: Anansi, 1971) 232-33; <u>The Critical Path: An Essay on the Social Context of Literary Criticism</u> (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971) 36; <u>Creation and Recreation</u> 28; and <u>A World in a Grain of Sand: Twenty-two Interviews with Northrop Frye</u>, ed. Robert D. Denham (New York: Peter Yang, 1991) 70.

Kroetsch finds a postcolonial value in Frye's focus on myth as a structuring principle of story. In "Learning the Hero from Northrop Frye," Kroetsch elaborates:

> To resist, to aspire toward a condition now described as post-colonial, asks for a radical act of imagination. Frye, in his offering of 'myth as a shaping principle', offers a place to locate and to release that imaginative energy. Simply put, by the act of retelling we can tell ourselves both out of and into story.

<u>The Lovely Treachery of Words</u> 159.

16. In <u>Creation and Recreation</u>, Frye refers to a literary myth as a "matured" myth (28).

17. Frye uses the expression "conscious mythology" to refer to literature and how it develops. See Frye's "Conclusion" to <u>A Literary History of Canada</u> 837-38 and <u>The Bush Garden</u> 232.

18. Lewis Thomas, "Prairie Settlement: Western Responses in History and Fiction; Social Structures in a Canadian Hinterland," <u>Crossing Frontiers</u> 61-62.

19. Howard Fink, ed., "Canadian National Theatre on the Air II: 1962-1985 - CBC Radio Drama in English, A Descriptive Bibliography and Union List," vol. 2 (Kingston: Quarry Press, t.b.p.) 3 vols.

These descriptive bibliographies represent the main reference and locator of English-language CBC radio drama scripts, sound recordings, microfilm, and other related ancillary material available at the archives of the Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies and elsewhere.

20. Higgins and Moss note the close relationship between rituals and drama and make a further observation on theatre as a place where "myths and rituals of our culture were [once] explored and represented, and either re-invested with meaning or exploded and discarded" (75).

21. In <u>The Modern Century</u>, Frye raises the idea of a buried Canadian culture and an "uncreated" ideal or identity (122-23). See how Kroetsch unearths this idea and adapts it to a postmodern context in "The Moment of Discovery of America Continues" (1-20).

22. Kroetsch, "Disunity as Unity: A Canadian Strategy" 24.

23. Brown 2.

Chapter 1: The Historical Development of a Western Regional Consciousness and a Postcolonial Expression

In an interview with Donald Cameron, Manitoba-born writer Dave Godfrey describes the West as the archetypal region of Canada, pointing to a distinct Western settlement experience through which a land's history and a people's history become indelibly *burnt* into one another:

> In the West everybody got cut free. You sort of moved from Ontario to the West as a sort of second confrontation, like a conquest almost, that sort of battle. Then partly because of the Depression and the real harshness, the dust storms and what not, you just got sort of burnt. I have an uncle who was born in Saskatchewan and he went back to England and he fought in the battle of Britain, but he is burnt into the land the same way that Newlove is and in the same way that you can live in Ontario for six generations and not be.[1]

Many Western CBC radio plays broadcast during the 1960s and 1970s dramatize Western settlement in similar parameters: not only as an external historical event, but also as an internal experience with profound psychological and imaginative consequences. They depict the development of Western identity not as a static event, but rather as a dynamic and continually evolving process. At the very core of this Western cultural settlement and shaping Western social and literary mythology is regionalism.

I use the term *regionalism* to refer to a collective sense of self defined not only by a physical place, but also by its cultural and social context which evolves

through time. In "Identity Through Metaphor: An Approach
to the Question of Regionalism in Canadian Literature,"
Arthur Adamson expresses regionalism as a "nexus of place,
time and culture," adding that "geographical implications
cannot be isolated from historical and cultural
realities"[2]. Diane Bessai, in her formative essay "The
Regionalism of Canadian Drama," describes regionalism as
"rooted, indigenous, [and] shaped by a specific social,
cultural and physical milieu"[3]. In identifying a tradition
of regionalism in Canadian drama, Bessai argues that this
regionalism originates not only with geographical
realities, but also with the "cultural conditions of the
colonial and post-colonial era"[4].

Western regionalism has been shaped, in part, by
colonial and postcolonial sentiment, by a Western feeling
of alienation from Eastern central Canada. Roger Gibbins
defines this alienation as an "attitudinal regionalism"
which encompasses "a sense of political, economic, and to a
lesser extent, cultural estrangement from the Canadian
heartland"[5]. During the 1960s and 1970s, some CBC radio
playwrights dramatize Western cultural alienation as a
product, in part, of a colonial history and exploit this
sentiment to unearth and begin shaping an indigenous
Western Canadian mythology.

These playwrights' radio drama constitutes a
postcolonial literature as defined by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth

Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures[6]. To draw upon the framing words of these postcolonial critics, this radio drama "emerges out of the Western experience of political, economic, and cultural colonization by Eastern central Canada, asserting itself through the regionalism of the 1960s and 1970s by foregrounding its differences from the assumptions of a Canadian centre"[7].

These Western playwrights repeatedly return to two historical periods critical for the development of a Western regional consciousness and a Western colonial awareness of self and past: the period of Western Canadian settlement (1870-1920)[8] and the Depression years (1929-39). Historiographer Douglas Francis asserts that Westerners have been obsessed with searching for their regional identity and maintains that that identity was formed within the first generation of Western settlement.[9] Historians such as L. H. Thomas, Donald Swainson, and J. E. Rea[10] argue that during this settlement period, the Prairie provinces were treated as colonies of a Canada dominated by two central provinces: Ontario and Quebec.[11] In "Prairie Settlement: Western Responses in History and Fiction; Social Structures in a Canadian Hinterland," Lewis G. Thomas describes the nature of Prairie society in these critical years:

> In the first place, it was a colonial society
> living in a colonial policy, living with a

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colonial economy. Important decisions were made by people who saw the development of prairie west as a creative exercise of Canadian power in an empty hinterland, at its best in the interests of the people of Canada as a whole, at its worst in the interests of the business community of central Canada. Only secondarily, and generally very secondarily, were the immediate interests of the people of the west given any recognition in major matters of national policy....The fact that Canada was a democracy, and that the central government was concerned to provide democratic and representative local governments in the West was of little consequence. The weight of the population was always with Ontario and Quebec and the sphere of local government was limited and especially limited in the prairie region while control of land and resources remained at the centre. [12]

Historians suggest that this Western position of dependence preceded Confederation and was the result of an expansionist policy strategically designed to maintain the West as central Canada's economic hinterland and perpetuate its colonial status. [13] This heartland-hinterland model has been useful in defining Western Canadian imaginative expression. In "Adams Mad in Eden: Magic Realism as Hinterland Experience," Stanley McMullin superimposes the historical model on Western literature in order to argue that in contrast to Ontario which, as heartland, has celebrated its imperial identity in a mythology shaped by Canadian nationalism, the West, as a "hinterland striving for cultural survival," [14] has sought a mythology expressing its regional identity. [15]

The early roots of a Western regional identity can be traced to an optimistic romantic [16] myth of Western

potential.[17] In his full-scale study Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900, Doug Owram argues that in 1869-70 the idea of the West as hinterland was replaced by the notion of West as potential to nation and to [British] empire.[18] In "The Western Press and Regionalism, 1870-96," Paul Rutherford explains that this myth of Western potential was not anti-Canadian, but rather foresaw a vital role for the Western region in shaping the Canadian nation:

> Even with its obvious regional bias, the myth was not anti-Canadian - rather the opposite. Western newspapers maintained that the Prairie community was thoroughly Canadian. They presumed that the community would remain an integral portion of the nation; more important, that this community would revitalize Canada. Its energy and enthusiam, its very wealth, would foster a liberal nation, equal in stature to the United States. The West was the new hope of Canada. Prairie journals had equated their regional ambitions with the national destiny.[19]

Owram maintains that this myth was largely rooted in British agricultural values and traditions of rural nineteenth century England, explaining that expansionists, primarily English-speaking Protestants, sought to settle and shape the West in their own cultural values by creating a British society.[20]

Dick Harrison explains that this romantic social vision of West as archetypal garden[21] and new and ideal society[22] shapes the fiction of late nineteenth century and twentieth century writers such as Nellie McClung, Ralph Connor, Arthur Stringer, and the early R. J. C. Stead.[23]

It also continues to impress itself on the Western

mythology of contemporary CBC radio playwrights. In

"Cultural Insanity and Prairie Fiction," Harrison ties this

foreign mythology to a persisting Western colonialism:

> The connection between the Garden Myth, the
> Spirit of Empire, and the tendency to impose the
> culture of the dominant Ontario-British minority
> on the West is equally important, since it
> engendered some of the most harmful and
> persistent of the cultural anomalies that have
> plagued the West.[24]

A distinct Western regionalism emerged out of the

bitter disillusionment and discontent[25] that ensued when

expansionist ideals were not met and the West maintained

its colonial position at the turn of the century.[26] Owram

explains that by 1885, Westerners, including "transplanted

easterners"[27], were beginning to view their region and

themselves as distinct from an Eastern Canada they

perceived to be responsible for many of their problems.[28]

What resulted from this shift in sensibility was a Western

Canadian consciousness[29] which some CBC radio playwrights

of the 1960s and 1970s attempt to recover for postcolonial

expression.

Rutherford explains that this new regionalism was

grounded on two seemingly opposing sentiments: Canadianism

(a regional identification with national ideals) and

Western alienation (a distrust of Eastern Canadian

interests).[30] Replacing the optimism of the early

settlement years was a "reserved scepticism"[31] which finds

its way into the Western literary imagination. Harrison notes that the works of mid-1920s writers such as Martha Ostenso, Frederick Philip Grove, and R. J. C. Stead, mark a new realism in Prairie fiction with these writers' novels reflecting a disillusionment with a previous romantic expression.[32]

The Depression years transformed a Western Canadian scepticism into a Western stagnant realism impeding imaginative expression. In The Canadian Prairies: A History, Gerald Friesen identifies the 1930s as *the* turning point for the Western regional consciousness.[33] Chroniclers of the Depression recognize that no Canadian region was more affected by the Depression than the Prairies.[34] In How the Depression Hit the West, Janice Patton suggests that Westerners were once again disillusioned with political and economic policies that had "let them down so badly"[35].

Most damaging to the Western imagination was a twelve year drought which fragmented Westerners' sense of historical and imaginative continuity with a pre-drought past.[36] This fragmented sensibility compelled Westerners to internalize their history as a recurring colonial cycle of hope and disillusionment, a stagnant repetitive pattern of illusory beginnings. It also trapped Western writers between romanticism (an attempt to deny lived history) and realism (an inability to escape a degenerative and tragic

narrative). The Western rural Depression experience ultimately reflects the consequences of a missing social and imaginative vision of the Western self and place.

In order for Western writers to shape an indigenous mythology enabling them to re/tell the Western story, they had to return not to an idyllic past, but rather to a real one which evoked both ambivalence and anger.[37] McMullin suggests that from 1960 to 1984, Western writers were "curving back" into the past in search of continuity.[38]

*   *   *

This Western search for a historical and imaginative tradition was fuelled by a *local pride*[39] that was part of a larger widespread renaissance of Canadian arts - including literature, dramatic theatre, and radio - during the 1960s and 1970s.[40] An important feature of this postcolonial awakening was that Canadian creative expression developed along regional rather than national lines.[41] During these critical years, regionalism compelled Western writers, playwrights, and poets to return "home" to the Prairies in search of ancestral roots. In a discussion with Robert Kroetsch, Margaret Laurence describes this homecoming in archetypal terms, as part of a larger Western journey of departure and return[42]:

> I think that a great many people who grew up as
> we did in the prairies could hardly wait to get

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out. And it took a long time to see the value of
that experience or to see it in some kind of
perspective....People always want to get out and
yet profoundly want to return. It always seems
that people have to go through the process of
learning about the rest of the world, and then
they have to return. But whether or not they
return in the flesh is not always important. It
is a return in a spiritual way....it really is a
coming back in the mind, a coming to some kind of
terms with your ancestors, if you like, with your
gods.[43]

Dennis Cooley affirms that writers such as Robert Kroetsch,

Margaret Laurence, Eli Mandel, and Dorothy Livesay were not

only returning West, but also discovering in that

homecoming journey a "mythic core"[44].

Harrison suggests that this creative turn inward

altered writers' imaginative perception of their Western

region: "The Prairies became less a thing 'out there' which

must be shaped physically as well as imaginatively and more

a territory within the psyche which must be explored and

understood"[45]. A local pride and a search for roots led

Western writers to explore a regional myth of origins[46] as

the beginning of a recreated social and imaginative vision

of West. Kroetsch identifies the central concern born to

man in Canada as this "dream of origins"[47]: "The memory not

of real places, but of remembered places, a dreamed

condition, a remembered condition, an explanation of where

we come from"[48].

These regional origins are expressed in what Kroetsch

defines as a new Western Canadian myth of beginnings[49]

fuelling Prairie poetics[50] and shaping some Western CBC

radio dramas broadcast during the 1960s and 1970s. The
sense of multiple beginnings reflects a Western Canadian
genealogy which Kroetsch argues is archaeological (multiple
and fragmented), rather than historical (unified and
pointing towards one origin). In "Disunity as Unity: A
Canadian Strategy," Kroetsch explains that in contrast to
the United States that has one story of place and originary
moment pointing to a unified mythic vision, Canada has
multiple origins multiplying its connections into the past:

> In Canada we cannot for the world decide when we
> became a nation or what to call the day or days or,
> for that matter, years that might have been the
> originary moments. If we can't be united, we can be
> disunited. Our genealogy is postmodern. Each move of
> a generation back into time doubles the numbers of
> ancestors instead of refining itself toward a sacred
> moment.[51]

This regional myth of origins also reflects a Western
historical and mythic sense of beginnings. In Unnamed
Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction,
Harrison asserts that "The habit of beginnings; of starting
again, is deeply ingrained in the Western consciousness"[52].
This habit is rooted, in part, in the Western settlement
experience. In a review of Harrison's Unnamed Country,
Kroetsch explains:

> Among Harrison's first words: basically, rooted,
> first, new. Not origins. But beginnings.
> Origins recede into history, history into myth.
> Beginnings recur. We often begin again in our
> culture by moving from one place to another. The
> homesteaders, we now know, were often people who
> had, before that, homesteaded. Prove up. Sell
> out. Head west.[53]

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Kroetsch describes the creative impulse of Western Canadian writers in terms of a need to begin, grounded on an illusory hope of origin/ality:

> This is a new country. Here on the plains, we confront the hopeless and necessary hope of originality: constantly, we experience the need to begin. And we do - by initiating beginnings. We contrive authentic origins. From the denied Indians. From the false fronts of the little towns. From the diaries and reminiscences and the travel accounts. From our displaced ancestors.[54]

By foregoing the illusory hope of "one origin" and embracing the regenerative possibilities of multiple beginnings, Western writers were able to recover a sustaining creative rhythm allowing them to continually remap and redefine the Western self and place.[55] This Western remapping was intimately tied to the recovery of a useable past. In Creation and Recreation, Northrop Frye asserts that "the vision of a social future is connected with the vision of the creativity of the past"[56].

Western poets such as Robert Kroetsch, Eli Mandel, and Andrew Suknaski are able to recover creativity and originality by returning to remembered origins[57] and carrying their rural past forward into a contemporary social and imaginative vision of West. Kroetsch describes a new vision of rural beginnings evolving within urban Prairie centres: "the urban dream that our roots are just over the horizon, in the small towns and the rural communities of the prairies"[58]. Through this renewed sense

of place, Western writers recover a new poetic resonance, a creative rhythm liberating them from the imaginative constraints of static realism.[59] Kroetsch explains:

> When these towns were the actuality of our lives,
> we had realistic fiction and we didn't have any
> poetry at all. But now that it's a dreamed
> condition, an explanation of where we come from,
> a kind of myth, now suddenly we get poetry about
> that. You know Wood Mountain is a scrubby little
> place. But as a remembered place, as a dreamed
> place it has great resonance.[60]

In "Images of Prairie Man," Mandel describes this new poetic vision of home in terms of a Canadian tradition of magic realism:

> ...the overpowering feeling of nostalgia
> associated with the place we know as the *first*
> place, the *first* vision of things, the *first*
> clarity of things. Not realism, then, but rather
> what in painting is called magic realism, the
> qualities we associate with Alex Colville's
> paintings.[61]

Critics link magic realism not only to such mythic moments of revelation, but also to creative moments of self-transformation[62], moments of true renewal and authentic beginnings.

*   *   *

As a boundless dream world with a poetic affinity[63], radio is able to capture the magic realism and poetic resonance of remembered Western Canadian beginnings as moments of cultural revelation and transformation. During the 1960s and 1970s, radio compels some CBC playwrights to

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turn inward[64] and begin exploring the Western regional

identity in mythic terms. By mirroring back to listeners

their regional myths and metaphors, these playwrights are

actively shaping a Western Canadian identity.

This cultural reshaping begins with a return to

Western Canadian origins: to historical beginnings (i.e.

the settlement of Western Canada, the rise to power of the

Social Credit in depression-time Alberta, and the discovery

of coal); to the beginnings of Western Canadian

institutions (i.e. the North West Mounted Police); and to

the lives of real/legendary Western folk heroes who have

shaped Western regionalism (i.e. "Bible Bill" Aberhart,

Louis Riel, and Northwest Territories representative,

Nicholas Flood Davin, dubbed "The Bald Eagle").

For these CBC radio playwrights, the magic realism of

these remembered Western beginnings of self and place is

not a retreat to an idealized romantic Prairie past, but

rather the recovery of a buried genealogy which allows them

to unearth a useable past and tradition by dreaming

backwards[65] much as Suknaski is able to recover an

indigenous mythology by returning, in memory, to record and

re/invent his ancestral home, Wood Mountain.[66]

These CBC radio playwrights explore a Western

postcolonial expression through this magic realism[67] and

also through various serial and documentary-drama forms

enabling them to resettle a foreign mental space filled

with European, Eastern Canadian, and American social
mythologies which do not adequately explain nor order the
Western Canadian experience. Rosemary Sullivan describes
the postcolonial value of such forms:

> The poetic or fictional forms the [Western]
> writer turns to are often catalogues or
> documentary narratives because a process of
> cultural anthropology is involved in the effort
> to recover cultural memory. Such forms are used
> to strip away a false overlay of received
> versions of self in order to find what is true
> and what is false; or as Kroetsch explained it
> "de-mythologizing the systems that threaten to
> define [you]."[68]

The forms examined in individual chapters of this
analysis - the serial, the documentary-drama, the
catalogue, and the musical form of theme and variation -
all reflect "beginnings" as a mythic shaping principle of
the Western story and as a defining sense of Western
Canadian identity. As serial narratives, they incorporate
what structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss
describes as the "layered structure" of myth: "myth as a
matrix of meanings which are arranged in lines and columns,
but in which each level always refers to some other level,
whichever way the myth is read. Similarly, each matrix of
meanings refers to another matrix, each myth to other
myths"[69]. Some CBC radio playwrights are interested in the
postcolonial and regenerative possibilities of this
layering: in myth as Sartre's "naming ceremony" allowing
these playwrights to deconstruct colonial versions of the
Western self and place and to regenerate new identities.[70]

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Underlying this layering is a multiplicity of identity reflecting a Western Canadian genealogy grounded on a resistance to and an escape from one defining name.[71]

At the imaginative level, this mythic form de-centres the Western narrative into Frye's defining sense of story as a *retelling*.[72] In "Learning the Hero from Northrop Frye," Kroetsch agrees with Frye's conviction that "a story to be a story at all must be a retelling of itself, and, at the same time, a retelling of a story that it can no longer be, because of that very retelling"[73]. This creative story-retelling rhythm allows these radio playwrights and their listening audiences to tell themselves out of a Western colonial cycle of hope and disillusionment and into a creative postcolonial pattern affirming multiple cultural deaths and rebirths as our Western Canadian myth of beginnings.

Radio critics and producers such as Peter Lewis, Frances Gray, and Wayne Schmalz point to the intimate nature of radio as a verbal art penetrating the listener and engaging him in imaginative co-creation with the playwright.[74] Through the listening ritual, local and national audiences are compelled to re-enact, internally, the personal and collective drama of Western Canadian settlement as a continuous "giving birth" to self and place.[75]

During the 1960s and 1970s, some Western CBC radio playwrights structure the myth of beginnings into their narratives in order to displace regional and national sensibilities towards a postcolonial Western Canadian identity. This cultural resettlement reflects, in part, the playwrights' concern with reconciling the tension between the CBC's conflicting mandates of Canadian unity (which is national) and Canadian cultural expression (which is regional).[76]

By returning "home" to multiple Western Canadian beginnings in story and in story-telling patterns, these CBC radio playwrights and their audiences were undergoing what Kroetsch describes as the *Doppelganger* thing: the "exciting and painful process of meeting themselves"[77].

1. Donald Cameron, "Dave Godfrey: Myths and Gardens," Conversations with Canadian Novelists - 2, ed. Cameron (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1973) 39.

2. Arthur Adamson, "Identity Through Metaphor: An Approach to the Question of Regionalism in Canadian Literature," Studies in Canadian Literature 5 (1980): 86.

3. Diane Bessai, "The Regionalism of Canadian Drama," Canadian Literature 84 (1980): 7.

4. Bessai 8.

5. Roger Gibbins, "Western Alienation," The Prairie West: Historical Readings, eds. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1985) 585-87.

6. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures (London: Routledge, 1989).

7. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2.

8. Lewis Thomas explains: "These were the years in which the political, institutional and economic structures of the prairie west were established and the relationship of the region to the central government was firmly maintained." Thomas, "Prairie Settlement: Western Responses in History and Fiction; Social Structures in a Canadian Hinterland," Crossing Frontiers: Papers in American and Canadian Western Literature, ed. Dick Harrison (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1979) 61-62.

9. Douglas Francis, "In Search of a Prairie Myth: A Survey of Intellectual and Cultural Historiography of Prairie Canada" Journal of Canadian Studies 24.3 (1989): 45-46.

10. Douglas Francis, "Changing Images of the West," The Prairie West 633.

11. Thomas 61.

12. Thomas 63-64.

13. See, for instance, Donald Swainson, "Canada Annexes the West: Colonial Status Confirmed," The Prairie West 120.

14. In "The Roots of Prairie Society," J. E. Rea asserts that "the most persistent social theme of the prairies has been the struggle for cultural dominance." See _Prairie Perspectives_, ed. David P. Gagan, Papers of the Western Canadian Studies Conference (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1969) 46.

15. Stanley McMullin, "Adams Mad in Eden: Magic Realism as Hinterland Experience," _Magic Realism and Canadian Literature: Essays and Stories - Proceedings of the Conference on Magic Realist Writing in Canada_, eds. Peter Hinchcliffe and Ed Jewinski (Waterloo: Waterloo University Press, 1986) 15-16.

16. Francis, "Changing Images of the West" 634.

   In his historiography of the Prairies, T. D. Regehr confirms that many of the early historiographies of the Canadian plains share this optimistic and romantic vision of the golden age of western settlement as years of progress, growth, and development. Regehr further notes that this optimism "did not die easily." Regehr, "Historiography of the Canadian Plains After 1870," _A Region of the Mind: Interpreting the Western Canadian Plains_, ed. Richard Allen (Regina: Canadian Plains studies Center, University of Regina, 1973) 88.

17. Francis, "In Search of a Prairie Myth" 53 and Doug Owram, _Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900_ (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980) 4.

18. Owram 3 and 57.

19. Paul Rutherford, "The Western Press and Regionalism, 1870-96," _The Canadian Historical Review_ LII.1 (1971): 292.

20. Owram 4-5. See Lewis Thomas, _The Prairie West to 1905: A Canadian Sourcebook_ (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975) 1; Thomas, "Prairie Settlement: Western Responses in History and Fiction" 64 and 68; and Rutherford 291 and 293.

21. Owram notes that between 1856-1869, the image of the West was transformed from a "semi-arctic wilderness" to a "fertile garden" (3).

22. Francis, "Changing Images of the West" 637-38.

23. In _Unnamed Country_, Harrison links the garden image in the fiction of these writers to a time of boom and optimism and agrarian ideals (30-33).

24. Dick Harrison, "Cultural Insanity and Prairie Fiction,"
<u>Figures in a Ground: Canadian Essays on Modern Literature
Collected in the Honor of Sheila Watson</u>, eds. Diane Bessai
and David Jackel (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie
Books, 1978) 291.

25. Owram 179-80.

26. Francis, "In Search of a Prairie Myth" and McMullin 14.

27. Owram 206-07 and Francis, "Changing Images of the West"
635.

28. Owram attributes this shift in sensibility to economic
conditions and collapsed romantic ideals (177-78).

29. Francis, "Changing Images of the West" 635.

30. Francis, "Changing Images of the West" 635.

31. Owram 173.

32. Harrison, <u>Unnamed Country</u> 34-35.

33. Gerald Friesen, <u>The Canadian Prairies: A History</u>
(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984) 416.

34. See, for instance, Janice Patton, <u>How the Depression
Hit the West</u> (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973) 7 and
D. Francis and H. Ganzevoort, Introduction, <u>The Dirty
Thirties in Prairies Canada</u>, eds. Francis and Ganzevoort,
11th Western Canada Studies Conference (Vancouver: Tantalus
Research Limited, 1980) 5.

35. Patton 43.

36. McMullin 18.

37. In a 1976 interview, Robert Kroetsch locates the
historical roots of this Western ambivalence towards lived
history:

> ...we are intrigued by history, by our past and
> sceptical about it. There is a terrible
> scepticism about it, especially on the Prairies,
> where there was a kind of renunciation of the
> past by the people who came out here as
> immigrants. The landscape itself denied a
> repetition of earlier experience. Then in the
> '30s the past seemed to betray the immigrants
> even further so that they became "next year
> people."

Robert Enright and Dennis Cooley, "Uncovering Our Dream World: An Interview with Robert Kroetsch," Essays on Canadian Writing 18-19 (1980): 21.

38. McMullin 17-18.

39. Kroetsch identifies a *local pride* as a starting point from which Prairie writers began experimenting with new forms in order to arrive at an indigenous language. See Enright and Cooley 28-29 and Robert Kroetsch, "The Moment of Discovery of America Continues," The Lovely Treachery of Words: Essays Selected and New, by Kroetsch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 6.

40. For a discussion of the contributing factors to this renaissance, see Alan Filewod, Collective Encounters: Documentary Theatre in English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987) vii.

41. Northrop Frye characterizes the question of Canadian identity as a cultural and imaginative issue. Frye, The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination (Toronto: Anansi, 1971) i-ii.

42. Margaret Laurence specifies that while she does not know if this journey is a totally Canadian experience, it is "very Western." See Creation, ed. Robert Kroetsch (Toronto: New Press, 1970) 53.

43. Kroetsch, Creation 53-54. Rudy Wiebe responds to Laurence's suggestion that a physical return is not necessary by insisting on its necessity in order for the Western writer to write "authentic" Western literature which breaks out of the stagnant pattern of Depression stories:

> To write a genuine literature beyond the stereotype of the poor kid growing up in the Depression people are just going to have to live out there longer than just their childhood. Only one or two known novelists still live here. The rest have moved out and write recollections of their childhood and that's it. Even novelists like Margaret Laurence and Robert Kroetsch say it's not necessary to go back to the west. That makes the west seem static, but it isn't, as I've said before. I think it's a profoundly ignorant thing to say that it's not necessary to come back and live here because I've done that trip and that's that. There is an authentic kind of

western Canadian experience and I took it upon
myself as a prairie writer.

George Melnyk, "The Western Canadian Imagination: An
Interview with Rudy Wiebe," A Voice in the Land: Essays By
and About Rudy Wiebe, ed. W. J. Keith (Edmonton: NeWest
Press, 1981) 208.

This thesis views the Western writer not necessarily
as the one who physically returns West, but, more
importantly, as the one who makes the creative journey to
recover a real, remembered, and imagined place which
resonates in the minds of regional and national CBC radio
audiences.

44. Dennis Cooley, "RePlacing," Essays on Canadian Writing
18-19 (1980): 10.

45. Harrison, Unnamed Country 189.

46. Kroetsch, "The Moment of Discovery of America
Continues" 6.

47. Eli Mandel also locates this central concern as a
regional myth of origins. Mandel, "The Border League:
American 'West' and Canadian 'Region'," Crossing Frontiers
118.

48. Mandel in Ann Munton, "The Structural Horizons of
Prairie Poetics: The Long Poem, Eli Mandel, Andrew
Suknaski, and Robert Kroetsch," Dalhousie Review 63.1
(1983): 118.

49. Munton 88.

50. For a description of "beginnings" in Prairie poetics,
see Eli Mandel, "The Long Poem: Journal and Origin," The
CEA Critic 50.1 (1987): 74; Robert Kroetsch, "For Play and
Entrance: The Contemporary Canadian Long Poem," The Lovely
Treachery of Words 117-34; and Munton, "The Structural
Horizons of Prairie Poetics" 69-97.

51. Robert Kroetsch, "Disunity as Unity: A Canadian
Strategy," The Lovely Treachery of Words 27. See also
Shirley Neuman and Robert Wilson, eds., Labyrinths of
Voice: Conversations with Robert Kroetsch, 3rd vol.,
Western Canadian Literary Documents Series, gen. ed.
Shirley Neuman (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1982) 117.

52. Harrison, Unnamed Country 179.

53. Robert Kroetsch, "The Disappearing Father and Harrison's Born-Again and Again And Again West," Essays on Canadian Writing 11 (1978): 7.

54. Robert Kroetsch, "The Fear of Women in Prairie Fiction: An Erotics of Space," The Lovely Treachery of Words 82. In Unnamed Country, Harrison notes the "illusory moment of renewal" in Prairie fiction (185ss and 104-06).

55. See Kroetch's "The Disappearing Father and Harrison's Born-Again And Again And Again West" 7-9.

56. Northrop Frye, Creation and Recreation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980) 17.

57. Frye suggests that "the original writer is the person who returns to origins." Frye, A World in a Grain of Sand: Twenty-Two Interviews with Northrop Frye (New York: Peter Lang, 1991) 278.

58. Kroetsch, "The Moment of Discovery of America Continues" 6-7.

59. Geoff Hancock defines magic realism as an aesthetic movement. Hancock, Introduction, Magic Realism: An Anthology (Toronto: Aya Press, 1980) 7.

60. Enright and Cooley 29.

61. Mandel, "Images of Prairie Man" 206.

62. See, for instance, Geoff Hancock, "Magic or Realism: The Marvellous in Canadian Fiction," Magic Realism and Canadian Literature 41.

63. See Donald McWhinnie, The Art of Radio (London: Faber and Faber, 1959) 37 and Wayne Schmalz, ed., Studio One: Stories Made for Radio (Regina: Coteau Books, 1990) vi.

64. Many critics describe radio as a "theatre of the mind." See, for instance, Elissa S. Guralnick, "Radio Drama: The Stage of the Mind," The Virginia Quarterly Review 61.1 (1985): 79.

65. In "Magic or Realism: The Marvellous in Canadian Fiction," Hancock describes magic realism in creative terms, as "an anticipation, a projection into the future" (48).

66. Suknaski explains:

> On the West Coast, I imitated other people, I was
> trying to find some voice - also, to find some
> sense of place and I couldn't find it there. But
> I did find it when I returned to Wood Mountain,
> because then I started to write those larger
> narrative poems. I was working with memory -
> what I remembered and what other people
> remembered. Also, digging in certain archives, I
> extended that information, sometimes melded myth
> and reality. As they say, I re-invented people's
> lives and certain events.

Doris Hillis, Interview with Andrew Suknaski,
Plainspeaking: Interviews with Saskatchewan Writers
(Regina: Coteau Books, 1988) 109.

67. McMullin ties magic realism to a Western postcolonial
expression (14).

68. Sullivan, "Summing Up" 154.

69. Neuman 125.

70. Kroetsch in Labyrinths of Voice 128.

71. Robert Kroetsch, "The Veil of Knowing," The Lovely
Treachery of Words 188.

72. In Labyrinths of Voice, Kroetsch links this retelling
narrative impulse to a Western Canadian "marginal"
existence (130).

73. Kroetsch, The Lovely Treachery of Words 157.

74. See Peter Lewis, "Introduction," Radio Drama, ed.
Lewis (London: Longman, 1981) 9-10; Frances Gray, "The
Nature of Radio Drama," Radio Drama 49-51 and 76; and
Schmalz, Studio One x.

75. Munton 87.

76. In The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination,
Northrop Frye notes the contradiction between the CBC
mandates of Canadian unity and Canadian identity:

> Thus when the CBC is instructed by Parliament to
> do what it can to promote Canadian unity and
> identity, it is not always realized that unity
> and identity are quite different things to be
> promoted and that in Canada they are perhaps more
> different than they are anywhere else. Identity
> is local and regional, rooted in the imagination

and in works of culture; unity is national in reference; international in perspective, and rooted in a political feeling.

Frye, <u>The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination</u> (Toronto: Anansi, 1971) i-ii.

77. Kroetsch, <u>Creation</u> 59-60.

Chapter 2: The Imaginative Legacy of the Depression:
Margaret Hollingsworth and George Ryga

In "Adams Mad in Eden: Magic Realism as Hinterland Experience," Stanley McMullin describes the physical, psychological, and imaginative impact of the Depression on the Western region:

> While the rest of Canada reeled under the economic hardship of the Great Depression, the prairies suffered from an unprecedented drought which made crops impossible for the next twelve years. Little gets written during the Dust Bowl period. It was a trauma of the worst kind, which forced people to question their most basic beliefs about God and life.[1]

It took years before Western writers could come to terms with this legacy. In "Fiction of the 1930s," Dick Harrison asserts that the literature *about* the Depression was published when the "painful immediacy" of these years had passed, and largely as a "retrospect taking shape as a part of the inherited private mythologies of the present generation"[2]. During the 1960s and 1970s, some CBC radio playwrights take a retrospective view of the rural Prairie Depression years with a certain "painful immediacy," with a very real sense of how this past continues to impress itself on the contemporary generation of Westerners.

Radio plays such as Margaret Hollingsworth's "Wayley's Children"[3] (broadcast in 1975) and George Ryga's "Seasons of a Summer Day"[4] (broadcast in 1976) dramatize the

continuing psychological impact of the "dirty thirties" on Westerners and foreground the effect of the rural drought on the Western historical and imaginative sensibility. They also highlight the playwrights' consciousness of how colonial gaps frustrate their ability to tell themselves out of a tragic rural Depression story: to recover a creative rhythm, a narrative structure, and a social mythology necessary for renewed Western imaginative expression.[5]

The first play, Margaret Hollingsworth's[6] "Wayley's Children," broadcast in 1975, spans the pre-drought years to the present and examines whether Wayley's children, the children of the rural Prairie and the children of the Depression, have been able to create a fulfilled life for themselves out of and despite their tragic past. The drama is set on a deserted Prairie gas station where a reunited middle-aged half-brother and sister, Ben and Jess, reminisce on their childhood years spent on their father (Wayley)'s farm. Through the story, Hollingsworth highlights the difficulty Westerners' have had overcoming their past: Ben having remained in the rural Prairie and bought a gas station with the fruits of Wayley's toil and Jess having escaped the consuming Prairie sky for Toronto and married Arthur, a post office worker she admits is "no changer."

The Western story of the Depression lies hidden
beneath the surface narrative of Ben and Jess listening to
the wind and filling in the silent spaces between them with
romantic childhood reminiscences. The real Western story
is that of the forbidden ties that continue to bind
Wayley's children to each other and to their rural Prairie
past. This tragedy gradually unravels through the Wayley
reminiscences as Ben and Jess trace their awakening
adolescent attraction to each other; their respective
attraction to Fritz, a German prisoner of war; and Jess'
discovery of Ben's homosexual encounter with Fritz.
Underlying Jess' return to the Prairie is a romantic hope
of consummating her relationship with Ben. But in order to
do so, Jess must retell their Western story, and bring the
story of their past attraction to each other forward to
sexual fruition, despite countless gaps that threaten to
unravel the creative and sexual rhythm of this Western
story-telling.

The play highlights how Westerners have internalized
gaps inherent to their Prairie climate, environment, and
historical experience as part of their regional
consciousness. For Ben, who remained in the rural Prairie,
these internal sensings have become an unconscious part of
his second nature, like "rolling your tongue around in the
gaps. Used to be a pleasure, like feeling for the bumps of
your second teeth" (2)[7]. But Jess, who returns from the

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city to a now unfamiliar Prairie, is more vulnerable to these regional sensings, no longer able to see or feel her way to Ben.

The drama opens with Jess asking Ben to close the blinds because the sun has smoked her eyes. She later observes to Ben: "We need some rain. Two weeks here and I'm parched. Dried out. Wind but no rain" (8). These rural sensings are reminiscent of the drought experience and the Western sense that the Prairie elements were conspiring against Westerners[8] as they now seem to conspire against Ben and Jess' sexual re/union. Most compelling is Jess' impression of the Prairie sky and the formidable Prairie space that can never quite be consummated: "That old sky. Keeps walling you in and you never quite reach it. Sometimes seems so close you could touch it. Sometimes seems so far away" (1).

In order to consummate the formidable space separating her from Ben, Jess must close the gaps between a rural Prairie past and present through the act of story-telling. To do so, Hollingsworth exploits the internal possibilities of the radio medium in order to structure this Western narrative (Ben and Jess' retelling of their Western story) so that the rising internal sexual tension of the Wayley reminiscences, mounting to a climax, mirrors the external building of the wind into a consuming tornado. Despite Jess' multiple attempts to bring their innocent childhood

games to sexual fruition, the rising sexual tension
repeatedly unravels into a familiar rural emotional
sterility and the wind repeatedly dissipates into an
equally barren rural silence.

Through a knitting metaphor, Hollingsworth dramatizes
how a missing sense of historical continuity - a legacy of
the Depression years - frustrates Westerners' ability to
retell their Western story:

> BEN. You're always knitting. And it never
>   grows.
> JESS. I unravel it. That's why, then knit it up
>   again. Got no wool to finish it off. (8)

Underlying the persistent unravelling of a creative story-
telling rhythm is the levelling force of realism which
erodes Jess' romantic hope of consummation much as it
erodes the playwright's effort to consummate the Western
story. Jess' repeated attempts to recover a historical
story-telling rhythm by tracing the reminiscences of Wayley
childhood games in a seasonal order from spring to summer
to fall to end in a winter consummation are repeatedly
disrupted by the advent c· an early winter disillusionment,
a premature climax.

The larger effect of this fragmented story-telling
rhythm is to structure the Western narrative on a recurring
cycle of hope and disillusionment patterned on the
fragmented Western historical sensibility. This cycle is
present from the very onset of Ben's first recollection of

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himself as a young boy catching snowflakes on the tip of his tongue and Jess readying herself to take them from him. As the two edge towards a kiss, Jess closing her eyes to taste his snowflower, Jess' tongue is too hot and Ben's is burning cold. A premature winter disillusionment parches Ben's tongue in much the same way that an early snow dries out Wayley's thirty acres of new breaking Red Bob Wheat planted in the summer.

The playwright attributes this recurring disillusionment to the Western Depression experience and dramatizes this link in the next memory of the Wayley children playing hide and seek in the flourishing Prairie wheat at the age of twelve. This reminiscence reflects an attempt to recapture an idyllic rural pre-drought creative past when the Prairie wheat stood above Ben and Jess' heads. Yet, this imaginative retreat to a romantic Prairie as protective rural garden is frustrated by the sudden appearance of wheat rust prophesizing an impending drought:

> BEN-b[oy]. See how it spreads through the wheat Jess?
> JESS-g[irl]. Where - show me.
> BEN-b. Up through the stem, see how the head falls, bang like the guillotine. Tomorrow we'll be burning.
> JESS-g. What does it?
> BEN-b. Rust.
> JESS-g. Like that old wheel out in the grass.
> BEN-b. No. Not like that.
> JESS-g. What then?
> BEN-b. Like the locusts in the bible. Like the grasshoppers, like army worms, like colorado beetles, like the plague and the black death...sudden-overnight...

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JESS-g.  Ssssshhh.  I don't want to hear that.
BEN-b.   Like dying.
JESS-g.  It's not, it's pretty, it's only rust on
    the wheat.
BEN-b.   Oh you don't understand.
JESS-g.  Can't we save it?
BEN-b.   It's past saving.
JESS-g.  I don't want it to burn.
BEN-b.   It'll burn like a two tailed devil.
JESS-g.  Two-tailed?
BEN-b.   Yes - one tail for you, and one for me.
(10-12)
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This compelling image of burning wheat captures the
Depression as a historical and creative fall from which
Westerners have had a difficult time recovering.

The ensuing memory of Ben and Jess at the wishing
stone dramatizes how Westerners have internalized the
Depression as a missing sense of historical continuity.
Ben and Jess' conflicting historical wishes prevent them
from finding a common creative momentum to move their
relationship forward and to advance the Western story
beyond the Depression narrative. Jess wishes for an a-
historical present while Ben wishes for a creative pre-
historical, now mythical Indian past:

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BEN-b.   ...The middle of the sun is black like a
    black eyed Susan, and the middle of this rock
    is black.  We have to wish, and if we wish
    right it gets through the black eye, not many
    people wish right.
JESS-g.  What should we wish?
BEN-b.   Whatever we like.
JESS-g.  I wish it'll always be the same as now,
    you, me, everything.
BEN-b.   I knew you'd wish that.  That's no good,
    things get older, things progress, there's no
    stopping them without doing.  You know what I
    wish?  I wish that I'll have the power to do -
JESS-g.  To do what.
```

> BEN-b. To make us go backwards, and there'll be
> grasses like there used to be, and Indians,
> and buffalo, if we want to go back that far,
> herds of buffalo. (18-19)

In order to recover a creative (historical) rhythm,
Wayley's children must overcome a rural Prairie past that
continues to bind them as it once bound their father
Wayley. Between a stagnant Prairie marriage to Jess'
mother Sara and a covert liaison with Ben's mother, "the
wickedest lady for miles around," Wayley never quite found
the creative ground for sexual fulfilment. In retrospect,
Jess faults Wayley (her Prairie past) for drying up the
creative rhythm between her and Ben by exiling the
adolescent Jess away from her half-brother:

> JESS. No more could I come home.....I felt some
> kind of a cold curse on me when we were in
> touch.
> BEN. That mirror talk who needs a telephone or a
> mailman when you've two mirrors and the sun
> and not a hill between you?
> JESS. And a new love to flash. I burned that
> message to you over and past the boundary.
> BEN. And I caught it and mirrored mine back.
> JESS. Did you know that's what I said?
> BEN. Looking back it seems that way.
> JESS. And now it's all dried out.
> BEN. All?
> JESS. All the love? (PAUSE) He put a stop to
> that. (26-27)

The mounting sexual tension of the Wayley summer
reminiscences draws to a premature climax in the fall when
Jess catches Ben "down on his knees" before Fritz. This
discovery erodes Jess' romantic hope of sexual fulfilment
and precipitates her premature departure from the rural

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Prairie amid a black blizzard symbolic of the devastating

levelling force of Prairie realism and the drought

experience. Ben's description of Jess after the dust storm

foreshadows how this realism and drought will eventually

dry up her womanhood and rob Wayley's children of any

future creative impulse:

> And when it was over and the light started back,
> that shadowless light, I looked at her face and
> all I could see was grey - and your hair turned
> white, and your eyes staring out. Then I drove
> into town losing the road and not caring. It was
> a wonder the engine still went. (38)

The degenerative rhythm of Prairie realism runs

through Ben and Jess' retelling of the Western story as

they knit their tragic rural past to an equally tragic

present. This rhythm binds Jess, the hopeful girl from

hide and go seek, to "the girl who lived those last days"

at Wayley to that "dusty creature on the way to the

station" to the barren middle-aged fat woman now married to

Arthur and living in Toronto. Jess has been unable to knit

herself out of her Depression Prairie past and a marriage

as stagnant as her own mother's. Jess reveals to Ben the

truth about her life in Toronto:

> BEN. Is it lonely in Toronto?
> JESS. They're always faces to look at and
>   stores. The store windows are full
>   with.....full
> BEN. With more wool than you could ever knit.
> JESS. Yes, it's lonely.
> BEN. Even with Arthur?
> JESS. He phones every day at eleven, and again
>   at three.
> BEN. There's still common ground?

> JESS. He's a good man.
> BEN. Good for warming your hands, on cold winter
>   nights?
> JESS. He has his own room.
> BEN. And do you stand outside his door and howl?
> JESS. I've never been inside.
> BEN. And he in yours?
> JESS. No. A stick has more life at night.
> BEN. Rub two sticks, you get fire.
> JESS. There's no part of us that touches. (30-
> 31)

Like his half-sister, Ben is equally compelled to repeat Wayley's past, burned like a two-tailed devil between his desire for Fritz and for Jess in much the same way that Wayley was torn between his love for Jess' mother and his lust for Ben's mother.

As the erotic energy of the Western story dissipates and an external wind blows itself out, Ben and Jess remain very much Wayley's children, still bound to their rural Prairie past and still unable to tell themselves out of their tragic Depression story. The play concludes with Ben and Jess again unable to "wish right": to reconcile their wishes in order to generate a sustaining creative rhythm of future change. Ben is resigned to a stagnant a-historical present and Jess is desperate to rekindle a creative, now almost mythical, Prairie past:

> BEN. He'll [Fritz] be back.
> JESS. Call him up, send him a cable. I'll do
>   the same for Arthur. Don't draw away.
> BEN. I can't do that.
> JESS. You were mine first.
> BEN. He'll be back. I can't.
> JESS. Not after all these years.
> BEN. Because of all these years.

JESS. But the wishing stone Ben. Don't you
              remember what you wished?
          BEN. Wind's dropped.
          JESS. So it has.
          BEN. Won't peak after all.
          JESS. It'll blow itself out. It always does.
          (39)

     The next play, George Ryga's[9] "Seasons of a Summer

Day" (broadcast in 1976), examines the continuing legacy of

the Depression years in terms of a missing social

mythology. Set in a contemporary urban-industrial Prairie

environment, the play dramatizes a universal experience of

particular resonance to Western Canadian listeners: the

change in mindset from romanticism to realism and the

gradual loss of a personal and imaginative social centre.

Like Hollingsworth, Ryga exploits the internal nature of

radio to depict how the Depression experience soured a

pastoral ideal at the heart of Prairie mythology. In this

play, Ryga returns "home" in memory to an idyllic rural

Prairie and a precarious garden myth of continuing

relevance to the Western Canadian imagination. Underlying

this imaginative return is a nostalgic longing for a

unifying social mythology and a centring seasonal rhythm

allowing Westerners and Western writers to re/tell the

Western story.

     The drama begins with the meeting of two men who

haven't seen each other in a while: Joe Devlin, a popular

social writer and humanist poet, and Tim McNamara, a

criminal lawyer, land speculator, and the consummate politician. Tim, who sits on a public commission to streamline legal processes and make them more "human," invites the principled Joe to translate his reforms into ordinary language, privately counting on Joe's public support to bolster his popularity and help elect him mayor. Through these two central archetypes - Joe the rural socialist and Tim the urban capitalist - Ryga examines whether it is possible to reconcile opposing idealist and realist sensibilities, social democratic and conservative political ideologies, and individual and collective values in order to build a larger social project. This challenge is brought to the foreground when an armed escapee, Larry Kunz, holds Joe and his wife Evelyn hostage in their own home. The crisis ultimately highlights the social and literary consequences of a missing mythology of self and place.

Ryga's drama begins on the degenerative social rhythm of Prairie realism: with a profound disillusionment pervading Joe and Tim's professional and personal lives. For these two middle-aged men, disillusionment expresses itself in a mutual resentment of each other and a sense of personal insecurity. As a middle-aged city councillor, Tim resents Joe for publicly discrediting him and blames him for his own disappointing career:

> Twenty-five years ago I was an honors graduate
> from law school.   I fought cases in the supreme
> court against lawyers twice my age. . . and won!
> There were some who predicted I'd make it as a
> federal cabinet minister before I was
> forty. ...The highest public office I attained was
> that of council member in this goddamned city!
> (21-22)

Tim also regrets never having had a family and fears he may

never have one now that his second marriage, to Jan, is

falling apart.

Joe is similarly disillusioned by a personal and

social impotence: his inability to make a social difference

through his writing, his inability to earn enough from his

novels to promote them out East and to keep his family

solvent, and his inability to recover a creative rhythm

missing from his writing.   While Tim manifests his

disillusionment in self-destructive drinking, Joe expresses

his in a profound lament:

> I'm tired....I'm not afraid.   But I am tired and
> discouraged.   I'd like to tend my garden for a
> season... read all the unread books... I feel
> like a peasant in a Dostoyevsky novel... groaning
> with anxiety. (12)

Underlying Joe's anxiety and Tim's excessive drinking

is a gradual loss of self through urbanization.   Joe

recalls his father's insistence that he remain close to the

land and he realizes how he has gradually distanced himself

from an original centring pastoral vision:

> I brought my first published novel into his house
> and left it on the kitchen table while we had
> coffee. He lifted it, he adjusted his glasses,
> turned a few pages this way and that and

said..."whatever you do son--always stay close to where food's growing"... Then he put the book among his collection of veterinary and dairy manuels and never looked at it again! (19)

For Tim and Jan, whose lives are filled with all the modern industrial conveniences, Western urbanization has meant a progressive exile not only from the rural land, but also from self and other:

TIM. ... You've got everything you need here - all kinds of machines to do everything from peeling your potatoes to moving the sprinkling system across the lawns. What else is it you want?

JAN. You!... We've been married four years... I've become like furniture in that time... living in your shadow.. smiling, entertaining gangsters, politicians and fools. The past year I haven't seen you, even when we're alone, without a glass in your hand. You're killing yourself and you're killing me, Tim! (21)

Ryga dramatizes this progressive exile through Joe and Evelyn's symbolic picnic journey from a rural Prairie garden to an increasingly urban Western "jungle." This journey conveys how a myth of expulsion gradually replaces a pastoral ideal at the heart of a Prairie social consciousness. Underlying this transition is a change in Western sensibility from romanticism to realism. The Devlins' imaginative journey begins with Evelyn's nostalgia for an idyllic Prairie associated with her childhood. Evelyn attempts to recapture, through memory, a protective sense of place by evoking the romantic sounds, smells, and tastes of her warm summer season: "The scent of hot pines

is the scent of days from my childhood. In the sun, my mother's skin and hair smelled of pines... This is the only place I know well" (18).

Inherent in Evelyn's pastoral dream is a social ideal which fuelled the Devlins' earlier struggle for world peace. In his "Conclusion" to A Literary History of Canada, Northrop Frye defines the pastoral myth in terms of a nostalgic social ideal associated with childhood:

> The pastoral myth in its most common form is associated with childhood, or with some earlier social condition - pioneer life, the small town, the habitant rooted in his land - can be identified with childhood. The nostalgia for a world of peace and protection, with a spontaneous response to the nature around it with a leisure and composure not to be found today, is particularly strong in Canada.[10]

In retrospect, Joe dismisses this pastoral ideal as an illusory dream trapping Westerners in a precarious romantic rural past in much the same way that it now land-locks Evelyn. An eroding Prairie realism inevitably frustrates the Devlins' attempt to recapture this idyllic past through memory. Evelyn's warm scent of hot pines turns into the rancid smell of cheap imported perfumes on Kay Murdoch's mother just as Joe's remembered fresh smell of early milk days turns sour: "On my father's dairy farm, everything had the odour of milk... fresh milk... day-old milk... milk turning sour. In August when he made cheeses, even his clothes reeked of whey" (19). Through Joe and Evelyn, the playwright attributes the souring of this precarious garden

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myth and its centring seasonal rhythm to the reality of the

Western Depression experience:

> JOE. (POIGNANTLY) Where in hell has it all gone -
> the simplicity of living from one season to
> the next? Or did we just imagine it made
> more sense once?
> EVELYN. It wasn't simple... don't talk like a
> fool! There was malnutrition... and people
> with running sores... The depression
> years... how could I forget that? My father
> died, broken and desperate.... Memories of a
> raspberry patch in summer will never erase
> all that from my mind, Joe! (24)

As the summer heat intensifies into temperature extremes

reminiscent of the Depression years[11], Joe begins linking

the disillusionment of these early rural Prairie years to a

continuing social and creative impoverishment: "How few the

times when I wasn't afraid of poverty.. Tina was still a

child at home... I developed a lung infection and couldn't

write for three months. Strange how I remember that...."

(25).

With the erosion of a pastoral ideal and a natural

seasonal rhythm, the drama centres on the accelerated pace

of a socially decaying urban Prairie. Ryga dramatizes this

decay both *internally* through Tim and Jan's urban house

whose funeral-parlour smell betrays their dying marriage

and *externally* through the vulnerable social Prairie

fabric, threatened when Larry Kunz, an armed escapee

accused of murdering a nightwatchman and shooting a police

officer, encounters Joe and Evelyn in the forest and

compels them away from the safety of their rural garden

towards the dangerous urban highway, eventually trapping the couple in their own home.

Through this exile and the events which follow, Ryga foregrounds the social and imaginative consequences of a missing Western mythology. The Kunz crisis compels the Devlins' to reflect on the extenuating circumstances of Kunz's criminal acts (drugs and fear) and to account for them in terms of the gradual loss of a larger social ideal. As Evelyn remarks to Joe: "individual acts mean nothing unless they reveal a social phenomena [sic]" (35).

The urban crisis also highlights the imaginative dilemma of the new urban Prairie narrative: How do contemporary writers tell the Western story without a social mythology ordering their imaginative perceptions of the new urban Prairie environment and without a creative (historical) rhythm moving the new story forward? Telling this Western story means not only resolving Kunz's personal situation, but also finding a social vision able to generate the sustaining rhythm of future social renewal.

Ryga suggests that the personal social visions of his Western characters - Joe Devlin's romantic idealism, Tim McNamara's realism, and Police Chief Peter Wishlaw's "wild West" mentality - are unable to resolve Kunz' situation nor generate a historical rhythm of future social change. The playwright relegates their corresponding social myths - Joe's garden myth, Tim's myth of exile, and Wishlaw's

frontier myth - to the level of impotent private myths. The characters' receding garden views are symbolic of individual social visions which are unable, alone, to reactivate and shape a mythology allowing Westerners to carry their consciousness of a rural past forward into an urban Prairie present.

Joe's backwoods farm, virtually untouched by industrialization, is symbolic of a rural social idealism which is impractical in the contemporary urban milieu. Joe's initial response to the crisis - his suggestion that Kunz give himself up for the greater social good and his belief that he can be involved in legal reform on his own terms, as an active social critic - reveals a vision grounded on a precarious romanticism, on an idyllic belief in personal and social accountability. Joe fails to consider the private interests of Kunz, Tim, and Police Chief Wishlaw. Evelyn warns Joe against relying on a social vision that land-locks him in the past: "There's a point at times, when your idealism becomes a paralysis, Joe. I don't think the boy should call the police....He should call Tim McNamara!" (56). Joe eventually recognizes that his past struggle for social justice was an ill-considered act unable to generate the creative rhythm of change and that if he wants to achieve social reform, he'll have to work with Tim.

While Joe's social idealism paralyzes him in the past, Tim's self-serving realism traps him in a stagnant a-historical present. Most revealing are the Police Chief's remarks uncovering Tim's private garden view as a Prairie false front, a social vision void of personal accountability and the future promise of social justice:

> You're living well, McNamara... a beautiful view... Garden that reminds me of something I saw during the war when we marched through Italy. Belonged to a fascist colonel... Even though we were winning we weren't allowed to look around the garden. Why is it guys like that aren't accountable for what they do? (14)

Like Joe, Tim must also acknowledge that nothing will move forward in his life unless he works with Devlin and that "maybe there's something to group sensitivity. To being human first... putting less stress on achievement" (5). Tim insists to Wishlaw that "A [private] view isn't all there is to life" (14).

Wishlaw counters Tim's suggestion with a resentment of his own missing garden view: "There's no view from my house... One of my neighbours is a plumber, the other is a truck driver" (15). Underlying Wishlaw's urban setting is a frontier myth which shapes his private social vision. In Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction, Dick Harrison defines a frontier as "the meeting point of advancing civilization and untamed nature, where civilized order confronts unordered wilderness"[12]. The sense of an unordered urban wilderness, a "wild West,"

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fuels Police Chief Wishlaw's growing resentment of having "social workers" like Joe and criminal attorneys like Tim frustrate his creative efforts to order this new urban Prairie society. Wishlaw blames Tim for his own inability to generate social change: "I got injured bringing in the human scum you defend and sometimes set free... knowing it's guilty" (15). In order to reactivate the creative rhythm of social reform, Wishlaw also finds himself having to collaborate with both Joe and Tim: Joe to recover a past rural social ideal and Tim to ensure a future urban progress.

At the imaginative level, Wishlaw's frontier myth cannot resolve the Kunz crisis nor consummate the urban Western story because, like Tim's realism, Wishlaw's private social vision ignores a fundamental pastoral ideal indelibly forged in the Western consciousness. Harrison suggests that the frontier mythology was more suited to the American historical experience and literary tradition than the Western Canadian agrarian past which compelled a rural social and literary mythology.[13]

In the end, a sentimental bittersweet rhythm, produced by the imaginative friction of romanticism against realism, moves the urban Prairie narrative forward to a conclusion artificially constructed from the fragments of Joe, Tim, and Wishlaw's personal social visions and private myths. The social crisis is momentarily resolved when Joe betrays

Kunz's whereabouts to the police, while securing for him the best legal represencation possible: Tim McNamara.

Joe's bittersweet gesture does not, however, consummate the Prairie narrative, nor does it allow the playwright to tell himself out of the Depression narrative. In order to "give up" Kunz and convince McNamara to represent him, Joe has to betray his social idealism, a centring sense of self he admits "matters very little to the problems facing young Larry Kunz" (60). For Joe, this means accepting to be involved on the legal reform commission not entirely on his own terms. Joe's concluding comments to himself, in response to one of Tim's remarks, reveal a continuing disillusionment which will eventually frustrate the creative rhythm of future social change:

> (To Himself) Can you make it?....What the hell
> sort of question is that for a pillar of the
> community to ask? There's enough of us to
> disobey...but who'll be around to give the orders
> - men like Kunz?...And Peter Wishlaw? Does it
> always come back to that? Is there no other
> choice, really? (62)

Joe and Evelyn's concluding bittersweet memories of their childhood illustrate Westerners' continuing impotence to overcome the souring pattern of hope and disillusionment forged into the Western historical and imaginative consciousness by the Depression experience:

> EVELYN. I was dreaming...I dreamt I was a
> child... my uncle Bill came to visit. He
> played the piano ....We went out for a walk,
> and we saw this milkwagon which someone had

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lifted into a tree. It hung there on a heavy
rope, it's a pole hanging down like a phallus.
(LAUGHS) My uncle said the milkwagon horses
had done it, as a protest against long working
hours and poor pay. (58)

JOE. Over the years, I've never been able to get
my fifth birthday party out of my mind...On my
fifth birthday, my mother threw a birthday
party for me ...About twenty kids came...we
had a lot of kids in our neighborhood
then....I had to go to the bathroom but I
couldn't get out from behind the table....I
peed myself and sat there behind the long farm
table, my hands cupped over my fly with every
kid left....(LAUGHS) I was trapped by my own
celebration!...My mother did it all for
me....so I'd be happy...and I've never been
able to forget my fifth birthday since! (60)

In order to transcend the imaginative le~acy of the

Depression - a degenerative bittersweet story-telling

rhythm, a narrative pattern grounded on a repetitive cycle

of hope and disillusionment, and fragmented inherited

private myths - Western CBC radio playwrights had to

retrieve a creative past. By unearthing a regional myth of

origins, some of these playwrights were able to recover a

sustaining creative story-retelling rhythm and to reclaim a

useable tradition. Underlying this tradition was a renewed

social vision in which the past is continually carried

forward into the present to regenerate new future

identities of self and place. This renewed social vision

shapes some Western serial and documentary-drama narratives

broadcast on CBC radio during the 1960s and 1970s.

1. Stanley McMullin, "Adams Mad in Eden: Magic Realism as Hinterland Experience," <u>Magic Realism and Canadian Literature: Essays and Stories - Proceedings of the Conference on Magic Realist Writing in Canada</u>, eds. Peter Hinchcliffe and Ed Jewinski (Waterloo: Waterloo University Press, 1986) 18.

2. Dick Harrison, "Fiction of the 1930s," <u>The Dirty Thirties in Prairie Canada</u>, eds. Douglas Francis and H. Ganzevoort (Vancouver: Tantalus Research Ltd., 1980) 80-83.

3. Margaret Hollingsworth, "Wayley's Children" (radio play script), produced by Irene Prothroe, broadcast 9 November 1975, Calgary, National AM Network, 40 pp., 30 mins., Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies (CCBS) script no. M11 1932.

     The script number is the main reference and locator of CBC radio drama scripts available at the Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies' archives.

4. George Ryga, "Seasons of a Summer Day" (radio play script), produced by Irene Prothroe, broadcast 11 November 1976, Calgary, National AM Network, 62 pp., 60 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1982.

5.   These Western cultural and imaginative trends are also compellingly dramatized in Claudia Gibson's "We Don't Need Another Widow McEachern" which is set in the rural Prairie during the Depression years and explores the effect of the drought on the Western historical and imaginative sensibility.

     Gibson, "We Don't Need Another Widow McEachern" (radio play script), produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 13 October 1973, Calgary, National AM Network, 43 pp., 60 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1907.

6. For brief biographical notes on Margaret Hollingsworth, see Appendix A. While Hollingsworth isn't centrally a Prairie writer, having been born in England and having no apparently strong roots in the Prairie West, her radio play "Wayley's Children" captures the Prairie experience through the themes of exile, isolation, and alienation characteristic of her plays, and perhaps rooted in her own sense of exile from her native England.

7. The page references for each play are marked in brackets following the direct quote.

8. Janice Patton, <u>How the Depression Hit the West</u> (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973) 33-35.

9. For brief biographical notes on George Ryga, see Appendix A.

10. Northrop Frye, "Conclusion," <u>A Literary History of Canada</u>, eds. Karl F. Klink et al., 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965) 840.

11. Patton 33-35.

12. Dick Harrison, <u>Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction</u> (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1987) 73.

13. Harrison, <u>Unnamed Country</u> 73.

Chapter 3: Retelling the Western Story:
W. O. Mitchell's *Jake and the Kid* Serial

Spanning some twenty years of radio from the 1950s to the 1970s and reaching millions of Canadian listeners, W.O. Mitchell's[1] *Jake and the Kid* serial has become part of what Harry Boyle describes as "broadcast mythology"[2]. Mitchell's popular tales about small-town Prairie life made their Canadian debut in <u>Maclean's</u> Magazine in 1942 where they were serialized. In his PhD thesis examining "The Canadian Popular Radio Play as Art and Social Comment," Alan Yates notes that when Mitchell left the Prairie and arrived in Toronto in 1948 to become fiction editor for <u>Maclean's</u>, he discovered the dramatic potential of CBC radio with a national audience "already trained in radio listening" during the war years.[3]

The first radio appearance of Mitchell's stories came in May of 1949 with a one-hour broadcast of "The Liar Hunter." A later half-hour version of "The Liar Hunter" was part of a summer *Jake and the Kid* series based on the initial <u>Maclean's</u> episodes.[4] Mitchell subsequently developed a new *Jake and the Kid* radio series which featured over 200 original episodes broadcast over the next ten years[5], some of which were also adapted for television.[6] Over the course of a twenty year period, a number of CBC radio producers have worked on various

productions of *Jake and the Kid*, including Andrew Allan, Peter Francis, Arthur Hiller, Esse W. Ljungh, and Fred Diehl.[7]

The *Jake and the Kid* serial analyzed in this chapter is part of a revival sub-series featuring twenty half-hour episodes broadcast regularly to both local and national radio audiences from 1969 to 1970 in the series *Theatre 10:30*.[8] The Mitchell sub-series was produced by Fred Diehl and directed by Esse Ljungh who had produced[9] the earlier highly successful *Jake and the Kid* radio stories from 1954 to 1956 as well as sporadic episodes from 1957 to 1963.[10] Yates suggests that underlying Ljungh's return from retirement to direct this revival was an attempt to recapture the magic of the earlier *Jake and the Kid* series[11] which had "commanded faithful audiences of over half-a-million"[12].

The 1969-70 *Jake and the Kid* radio production is rooted in an emerging regional awakening which, during the 1960s and 1970s, was evolving into a postcolonial sentiment. While the earlier 1950s radio productions of *Jake and the Kid* reflect an existing Canadian rural social reality[13], the later 1969-1970 revival series journeys backwards to the magic realism of that reality in order to compel a postcolonial regional and national cultural transformation.

The *Jake and the Kid* productions ultimately illustrate the potential of regional drama to affect and cohere national sensibility through the reaffirmation of a collective lived experience. The dramatic success of the *Jake and the Kid* revival serial depended on its ability to recover the fictional reality of Crocus as a remembered rural small-town experience. In "The Magic Lie," Mitchell suggests that the persuasive magic of fiction "depends upon the writer's ability to prospect a unique, stored past: The writer's own. The living, not the reading past"[14]. Mitchell believes that this living past, as a documentary "actuality source," has dramatic value:

> Even though you start out with live models - you love someone or you hate someone - it becomes fictional, an illusory character. There's some particular point in the long haul of the novel where it happens: you hear the voice of a person who didn't ever exist. You con yourself into willing suspension of belief. There's a magic about it; even though it's fiction, it takes over.[15]

Yates argues that Mitchell prospected his own memories of the small Prairie town in order to mythologize Crocus[16] as a place "loosely rooted in a specific region but aimed at wider application and identification"[17].

The playwright captures the magic realism of Crocus by mapping out a place and people that are both fictional and real at the same time. Yates defines this "dramatic lie"[18]:

> The town was fictional but was precisely located
> in "South-Central Southern Saskatchewan" and its
> people types were just as specifically
> identified. However, the people and situations
> might have been found almost anywhere on the
> prairie. Listeners to the radio series said they
> identified many of the Crocus people and
> situations as having been inspired by Mitchell's
> birthplace of Weyburn, Saskatchewan, or his later
> home of High River, Alberta.[19]

While Mitchell charts out a ficticnal town filled with what

Yates describes as "false-fronted" buildings and

citizens[20], he also creates the dramatic illusion of an

actuality of place through a complex layering that sets the

Western place and self within a larger regional and

national context.

The *Jake and the Kid* radio stories not only

progressively map out Crocus' landmarks and monitor changes

to its false fronts[21]; but also set these landmarks

geographically and culturally in relation to larger

surrounding regional districts such as Brokenshell and

Tiger Lily, regional cities such as Foxhole and Saskatoon,

and other Western cities such as Winnipeg, Calgary, and

Vancouver, which all contribute to defining Crocus'

regional perspective. Similarly, Mitchell not only defines

the town citizens as "Crocus products," linking them to

their regional landmarks and professions as Malleable Brown

is linked to his Crocus blacksmith shop, but also sets

these characters against the larger regional and national

sensibility of Crocus visitors such as Sam Gatenby's niece from Foxhole, Saskatchewan.

The playwright locates Crocus both within historical time and beyond it. Yates explains that while the historical dating is never clearly established, nonetheless, specific events allow listeners to set the serial within the early 1940s.[22] This temporal mapping highlights the postcolonial value of Crocus as a town built on the pioneer dream of settlement and emerging out of a colonial historical experience. Yates elaborates on these roots:

> The towns that Crocus represents were made from economic interdependence, the desire to fight prairie solitude, and from "railroad politics;" but they were the particular product of "colonialization," the influx of Eastern Canadians and immigrants with a pioneer dream. The driving force as suggested by Stegner, was once an American faith: that a new society striking boldly off from the old would first give up everything but axe and gun and, then, as the pioneering hardships were overcome, would begin to shape itself in new forms.[23]

These nostalgic pioneer roots are embodied in Crocus "old timers" such as the hired man Jake Trumper, his friend the dirt farmer "Old Man Gatenby," and Mayor Mactaggart - all archetypes of the Western Canadian settler who has survived both the frontier experience and the Depression. What Trumper, Gatenby, and MacTaggart all share is a thirty-year genealogy[24] tying them to regional beginnings rooted in a national settlement experience. The Crocus

settler bears witness and participates not only in the geographic, urban, and historical mapping of the town[25], but also in a more profound and continuous regional settlement: what Grove describes as the dying out of one culture in order to be reborn into the next.[26]

Mitchell is able to engage a national listening audience in this cultural resettlement in part by appropriating, for postcolonial expression, sentimental story genres popularized during the 1930s and 1940s in radio programs, serialized magazines, and part of the Crocus literary and film culture (i.e. the sentimental romance, the historical romance, and the adventure-romance). While Margaret Laurence criticizes the published collection of *Jake and the Kid* short stories for containing "a large measure of sentimentality,"[27] Mitchell is first satirizing the genre in order to progressively replace it by an indigenous regional language. This satirizing motive informs *Jake and the Kid* episodes such as "Love's Wild Magic"[28], "Hearts and Crocuses"[29], and "Woman Trouble"[30]. The *Jake and the Kid* serial is not about telling new stories, but rather about retelling old ones through a new regional perspective.[31]

Underlying Mitchell's appropriation of the sentimental genre is an attempt by the playwright to tell himself out this genre's "colonial" narrative pattern of hope and disillusionment (romanticism and realism) and its

bittersweet story-telling rhythm - a continuing legacy of
the Depression years. This colonial pattern informs a
revealing passage which the Widow Bowdry repeats from the
sentimental story she is reading entitled The Unmarried
Wife: "After the bright rapture of the honeymoon comes the
dawn of understandin'"[32].

In order to tell himself out of this tragic
sentimentality, Mitchell patterns the serial on a layered
"symphonic structure"[33] which repeatedly affirms the hope
of new beginnings. Each episode evolves from a regional
discontent or disruption towards a moment of communal
affirmation, from disillusionment to hope. Through this
structure, Mitchell attempts to transcend romanticism,
realism, and satire, to affirm a larger postcolonial
pattern of multiple cultural deaths and rebirths and a
humanist rhythm of growth and change. Yates describes the
Jake and the Kid stories in terms of this rhythm:

> In his Jake stories, as in "The Wind," Mitchell
> does not romanticize the struggle with prairie,
> with death and entropy, or with the darker side
> of the soul. Wind, snow and gophers do their
> worst with crops and comfort; relatives, friends
> and pets die and are grieved; small-town people
> commit moral crimes against each other and
> indulge in vengeance. There is, however,
> redemption, reconciliation, forgiveness and, most
> importantly, growth and discovery. Things nearly
> always come out all right in the end and on the
> side of what might be called a neutrally moral
> acceptability. For lack of a better definition,
> his works might be described as those of a
> Christian humanist.[34]

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This creative rhythm captures beginnings as a shaping principle of the Western story and as a defining sense of the Western Canadian identity. The *Jake and the Kid* serial is structured on a mythical re/settlement voyage, featuring multiple re/visits to remembered rural beginnings. Each of these visits compels the listening audience to regenerate new regional identities of self and place as a response to magic realist moments of communal revelation and affirmation orchestrated within each episode. Yates and T. J. Collins highlight Mitchell's vision of the reader or listener as a responsive "creative partner" with the writer.[35] The *Jake and the Kid* serial engages both playwright and listening audiences in unearthing and actively shaping a buried Western Canadian identity. Episodes such as "One Hundred Per-Cent Canadian"[36] (broadcast February 20, 1970) and "And So Is the West"[37] (broadcast July 10, 1970) map the emergence of a postcolonial awareness of self and place and the shaping of a regional myth of origins.

In "One Hundred Per-Cent Canadian," Mitchell examines the genealogy of beginnings which defines regional and national identity. The major issues explored within the play - regional bloodlines, Indian roots, citizenship, the communal settlement experience - evolve creatively from thematic fragments, remaining traces of Western Canadian identity, buried in successive *Jake and the Kid* episodes

such as "Woman Trouble" (broadcast February 16, 1970),
"Love's Wild Magic" (broadcast February 17, 1970), and
"Nature's Got Her Flags Flyin'" (broadcast February 18,
1970).

"One Hundred Per-Cent Canadian" begins not with the
hope of new beginnings, as a sentimental story would, but
rather with the disillusionment and disruption of a hopeful
seasonal communal rhythm:

> JAKE. Spring's kinda nice around Crocus where we
> live. Snow gone--wheat spring up real green.
> Meadah Larks all over the place. Folks got
> their storm windahs off. I guess Spring she's
> about the nicest time of the year around our
> place. Prairie sky traded her grey for blue.
> Calvin'...chicks....colts. Oughta bring out
> the best in folks. Spring. (PAUSE) But this
> Spring was a little differnt around
> Crocus....differnt. (PAUSE) It didn't bring
> out anythin' to be proud of in some of the
> Crocus Folks. (PAUSE) Not in George Ricky
> anyways. (1)[38]

This disruption arises when George Ricky is "up in arms"
over Indian Lefthand's resettlement with his family from an
Indian reservation into the Crocus district. Ricky alerts
Mayor Mactaggart and the Hanley Indian reserve to the
Lefthands' squatting in the Old Hunt house and succeeds in
obtaining an eviction order. This Indian resettlement
raises issues of regional identity and allows the
playwright to deconstruct false myths of self and place
which underlie the expression "One hundred per-cent
Canadian": the myth of one genuine bloodline and the myth
of citizenship.

The play opens in Repeat Godfrey's barber shop and picks up the rhythm of the preceding episode with Godfrey "repeating" the bloodline slogan ingrained in him by his father, a shorthorn breeder, and Jake again calling him on its meaning. The ensuing discussion reveals Godfrey's myth of one "authentic" traceable origin as a false-fronted social vision unable to sustain a continuing future regeneration of self and place and one which land-locks Godfrey in a confining regional past. Underlying Repeat's myth of origin is a marginalizing regionalism which defines individuals as "born and bred" small-town products and denies them the possibility of creating other regional genealogies:

> REPEAT. Gladys Ridge. (NATCHERLY) You take
> your run of the mill Gladys Ridge beard. She
> grows faster. She's thicker -- more hairs to
> the inch. She's tougher. Meadow Bank
> district don't do too bad. But they aren't a
> patch on Gladys Ridge. (PAUSE) Where does
> Ricky hail from the beginnin'?
> JAKE. You oughta ask him, Repeat.
> REPEAT. I wouldn't be surprized [sic] if that
> man was born an' brought up in Gladys Ridge.
> Wouldn't surprize [sic] me a bit.
> JAKE. He ain't a Crocus product anyways.
> REPEAT. Fine citizen. Credit to the town.
> Credit to the community. (5)

In order to reclaim Ricky as a Crocus product, Godfrey must appropriate other myths defining the regional self and place: citizenship and community.

Mitchell dramatizes the myth of citizenship as a myth of origin grounded on the common settlement experience as a

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unifying and defining moment for regional identity. Indian

Moses Lefthand appropriates this myth in resettling from

the Hanley Indian reserve into the Crocus district.

Underlying his claim of Canadian citizenship is the hope of

new beginnings severed from a regional past and a regional

identity:

> MOSES. ....Know what I am now?
> JAKE. What?
> MOSES. Canadian. I am altogether Canadian. The
>   educated, one-hundred per cent citizen. Read.
>   Write.
> JAKE. Can yuh?
> MOSES. Sure. I learned it. Read -- write --
>   vote -- I can vote when they elect. Go in the
>   beer parlor all right -- buy scotch -- rye.
>   There's a great thing.
> JAKE. Yeah.
> MOSES. Doesn't cost much. Treaty money, we give
>   that up. Waited till treaty day then we
>   turned her down. Be a Canadian, cheap.
> JAKE. How does your wife like it?
> MOSES. She likes it fine. All of us. My kid
>   likes it too. All them Indians back there
>   should quit. All of them should do like us.
>   Stop it. My wife an' me an' my kid we feel
>   sorry for them Indians.
> JAKE. Them other Indians.
> MOSES. Them Indians. (PAUSE) We quit.
> JAKE. Oh.
> MOSES. We got out of the sack. We untied the
>   sack. We ain't in any sack any more. Now we
>   know it's good because we got out of it.
>   We're Canadians. We ain't Indians. We
>   stopped it! (19-20)

Moses Lefthand's denial of his Indian roots is really an

attempt to tell himself out of the degenerative rhythm of

life on the Hanley reserve, a rhythm which is rooted in the

colonial treaty experience:

MOSES. Mmmh-hmmh. Tough on Hanley. Dirt's no
    good. All bush. Raise a couple head of beef.
    That's no good. No grass. Raise a potato.
    That's no good. Crop. No crop. Can't live
    on treaty money an' blue elk.
JAKE. Guess you can't, Moses.
MOSES. Winter you get deep snow an' the Kid gets
    his feet wet out of it. He gets his moccasin
    wet out of it. Then his nose run. Then he
    gets a bad cold out of it. Then he coughs.
    We lost a kid that way.
KID. Your boy you had here last fall?
MOSES. 'Nother kid. Before that.
JAKE. That's too bad, Moses.
MOSES. No more. No more wet mocassin [sic] when
    they cough some. Then they cough some more.
    Then they cough some blood. Then they cough a
    lot of blood -- a lot of blood. Then they die
    out of it. All outa wet mocassin [sic]. (18)

Jake's subsequent discussion with the Kid highlights

how illusory Moses' moment of renewal really is:

KID. Gee, Jake, can a fellah stop bein' a
    Indian?
JAKE. Why -- no -- kid.
KID. But Moses -- he was talkin' about stoppin'
    bein' a Indian.
JAKE. Yeah -- well --
KID. Is he ashamed of it? Is he ashamed of
    bein' -----
JAKE. Moses. No -- no. With Moses -- I guess
    he's jist tickled bein' a Canadian citizen
    now, he's kind of forgot. More important to
    him than bein' a Indian. I guess she's that
    way with Moses, Kid.
...

JAKE. Can't take a kid off his mother's milk an'
    give him bannocks an' a elk bone to suck, keep
    him hungry the rest his life under a canvas
    tent. Can't do that an' raise no noble
    redskins, Kid.
KID. Mmmmh.
JAKE. Moses he's makin' a stab at it. Seems a
    shame folks ain't givin' him a hand -- 'stead
    of hinderin' him. (20-22)

This discussion places Moses' call to citizenship in the context of a larger postcolonial awakening which evolves towards the unearthing of a communal myth of beginnings grounded on the recognition of multiple regional identities (resettlements) within a larger unifying (national) genealogy. This social vision emerges when the Kid asks Jake to account for the source of people's physical differences:

> KID. Look different. I don't see how it
>   happened. (PAUSE) I don't see how folks got
>   differnt ways if we all come out of Adam an'
>   Eve.
> JAKE. Well, Kid - - -
> KID. Yellow folks like Wong in the Sanitary
>   cafe -- white folks an' black folks an' red
>   skins. If we all had the same great-great-
>   great-great grampa an' grama --
> JAKE. (ALL THIS IS IDLE REFLECTION BETWEEN THESE
>   TWO -- NO GREAT CONCERN -- JUST WONDER)
>   Differnt folks packed up an' moved to differnt
>   districts, I guess. Wanted more land -- mebbe
>   drouted out -- poor crops. Sort of home-
>   steaded differnt parts of the world. Some of
>   'em got more tanned than others. Et differnt.
>   Taller. Shorter. (11)

Mitchell engages the listening audience in appropriating this communal myth when Jake traces Ricky's hidden bloodline to reveal an original Indian genealogy shared by other Crocus community members such as Doc Fotherin'ham whom Jake reveals is partly Woods Cree "an' proud of it." Jake suggests that, unlike Moses and Ricky, Doc Fotherin'ham acknowledges his Indian regional roots and is able to grow from them. The play ends not on disillusionment, but rather on the hope of a new beginning:

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on an emerging local pride tied to the appropriation of
Indian roots as an integral but distinct part of the
Western Canadian identity. Mitchell dramatizes this
awakening collective consciousness as an impetus for a
postcolonial transformation.

Yet, this moment of renewal cannot happen without a
prior awareness of and willingness to die out of the old
colonial culture entrenched in the local language and
reflected through expressions such as "blood'll tell" and
"Crocus product," which do not die easily in Crocus.
Jake's earlier discussion with the Kid on the reasons for
Ricky's attitude towards Indians suggests that in order to
appropriate his Indian roots, Ricky will have to
acknowledge a betrayed and denied colonial Indian past as
part of his own personal and collective experience:

> JAKE. I noticed when a fellah's done somebody
> dirt, he ain't too fussy about him. Kind of
> reminds him every time he looks at him,
> somethin' he's done he's ashamed of.
> KID. That the way you figger she is with Indians
> and white people, Jake?
> JAKE. Could be. Dirt we're walkin' on --
> growin' beef an' crops off of -- belonged to
> the Indians. We took her. (21)

This postcolonial awakening is dramatized in "And So
Is The West" (broadcast July 10, 1970) where the playwright
continues to define and shape a regional myth of origins.
Like the preceding episode, this story also begins with the
disruption of a natural communal rhythm when a notice
appears in the town paper, the Crocus Breeze, announcing

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the arrival in Crocus of "Miss Nancy Gatenby of Foxhole, Saskatchewan, niece of Sam Gatenby and daughter of Urban Gatenby, who came West with his brother to be among the first settlers" (2). Nancy's arrival resurrects questions of regional and national origins raised in preceding episodes and allows the playwright to explore a renewed postcolonial vision of self and place.

This social vision evolves from Uncle Gatenby's objection to his niece dating Gerald Nixon, the new Crocus bank cashier he suspects is a transplanted Easterner from Toronto - a "fellah never dug a goose pit -- curled a curlin' rock -- [or] knocked over a prairie chicken" (4). Mitchell frames this Western story as an exploration of Old Man Gatenby's regional psychology and sensibility and invites listening audiences to make the leap "outa one person's hide into another person's hide" in order to explore the West as a region of the mind. This exploration reveals Gatenby's provincial snobbery, his intolerance of "anything and everything and everybody East of Fort William" (6), as the product of a lived colonial experience central to the developing Western regional identity.

The Crocus local language reflects this colonial past. Underlying a simple exchange between Nancy and Jake is a discourse shaped by colonial power relations between White man/Indian, American Uncle Sam/Canadian Louis Riel, and Easterner/Westerner. While the conversation begins with

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Nancy's attempt to tell herself out of a colonial narrative
by equating Indian with Uncle Sam, it immediately reverts
back to a familiar discourse patterned on a repetitive
cycle of conquest and surrender:

> NANCY.   What have you and that other Indian Uncle
>   Sam, been plotting agin' the whites?
> JAKE.   Oh -- nothin' serious. (PAUSE) Lately.
> NANCY.   Not since you rassled down Louis Riel
>   with one arm tied behind your back.
> JAKE.   Uh-huh.
> NANCY.   At Cut Knife Crick.
> JAKE.   Mmmh..
> NANCY.   Made him say uncle.
> JAKE.   Sure...sure.
> NANCY. Once in Cree -- once in English -- once in
>   French. Oh -- Jake -- it's nice to see you
>   again!
> JAKE.   Mutual. (clears throat) You taken any
>   scalps lately?
> NANCY.   Nothing serious.   Lately.
> JAKE.   Way you -- ah -- filled out there -- ah --
>   figgered you'd have quite a few hung on your
>   belt -- young fellahs' scalps.
> NANCY. (LAUGHS) No -- I just get them crep' up
>   on, then my Gatenby temper spooks them off.
>   (PAUSE) No scalps, Jake.
> JAKE.   Uh -- mmmh -- any likely prospects? (HE'S
>   FISHING)
> NANCY.   Give me time. I just got here, Jake.
> JAKE.   Ah-hah. (PAUSE) Local?
> NANCY.   No local.
> JAKE.   Ah -- local -- young fellahs don't have
>   quality scalp your fussy about?
> NANCY.   None of your business, Jake. (PAUSE) Or
>   Uncle Sam's.
> JAKE.   No. Guess it ain't. (PAUSE) Jist got to
>   wonderin'.
> NANCY.   About what, Jake?
> JAKE.   Smoke signals.
> NANCY.   Smoke signals!
> JAKE.   Yeah. (PAUSE) Way off to the East. (10-
>   12)

This appropriation of the colonial language must be
seen as a stage in a postcolonial transition from a

language of conquest to a language of regional pride able to "elevate an environment to expression"[39]. A compelling example of this emerging indigenous language is Jake and Ma's description of Old Man Gatenby like a Prairie fire "shiftin' four directions at the same time" "with no grass to feed on" (1). In order for this postcolonial cultural resettlement to happen, there must first be an awareness of how the colonial past continues to impress itself on the present. A conversation between Jake and the Kid on the need to "get out from under another person's power" highlights such a postcolonial awakening:

> KID.   You know, Jake -- I was wonderin' -- uh --
> how long does it take for a person to get out
> from under another person's power?
> JAKE.   Huh?
> KID.   Well -- way it is with kids -- you're under
> somebody's power all the time -- like your
> folks' -- or when you're in school Miss
> Henchbaw's always tellin' you what to do next
> an' how to do it -- if you're a kid then
> everybody that's grown-up figgers they're the
> boss because they're grown-up an' you're a
> kid...
> JAKE.   Yeah?
> KID.   Seems like humans are either one thing or
> the other...
> JAKE.   Kids or grown-ups.
> KID.   No -- the ones that get bossed and the ones
> that boss them.
> JAKE.   Oh...
> KID.   So I was wonderin' -- when does -- do you
> -- well, about what age would you say was the
> time for a person to tell folks they can quit.
> JAKE.   Quit what?
> KID.   Quit bossin' them around.
> JAKE.   Oh -- I -- I don't know, Kid --
> KID.   I spose there are some folks get bossed
> around all their lifes.
> JAKE.   Yeah -- I guess so.
> . . .

> KID. Sure be awful if a person went right on and
> on and on bein' a kid -- or bein' bossed the
> way he was when he was a kid -- (PAUSE)
> Wouldn't it? (16-19)

Through this simple conversation, Mitchell explores how a
region and a nation "grow-up" through the dying out of a
colonial consciousness in order to be reborn into a
postcolonial one.

The continuing discussion between Jake and the Kid
suggests that what impedes this cultural development are
limiting social visions of the past - myths about a
region's childhood years. For the Kid, whose childhood
years emerge out of the Depression experience, this social
vision is shaped by realism; whereas for Jake, whose
childhood years are tied to a frontier ideal, this vision
is defined by a romanticization of the remembered past:

> KID. Way I look at it -- bein' a kid -- that's
> somethin' you want to do as fast as you can.
> Get it over with...
> JAKE. Oh now -- it ain't so bad bein' a kid, is
> it?
> KID. Most the time it's all right -- but
> sometimes it isn't any Sunday School picnic.
> I guess humans forget a lot.
> JAKE. How's that?
> KID. Oh -- lots of times you hear them talkin'
> about how wonderful it is to be a kid -- how
> they wished they were a kid again -- Miss
> Henchhaw crackin' the whip over them because
> they got their decimal point outa place or
> they didn't haul in the wash water or they
> didn't say please -- why do people say that
> all the time?
> JAKE. What? Please?
> KID. Happiest days my life was when I was a boy.
> JAKE. Look, Kid, you take the bitter with the
> sweet. Maybe they mean -- when you're a kid
> there's more the sweet than the bitter.

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KID.   Or else maybe they just remember the sweet.
JAKE.   Mebbe.
KID.   All the same -- serve'em right of some --
     if some giant say -- took a magic swipe at 'em
     and they were a kid again.   You know what,
     Jake?
JAKE.   What?
KID.   That'd really torture'em.
JAKE.   (PAUSE) Yeah -- guess it would.
KID.   I was Nancy I'd say to Mr. Gatenby...
JAKE.   Kid -- you ain't Nancy an' you...
KID.   But if I was....
JAKE.   You bein' what you are -- your Ma bein'
     what she is -- I'd say you got no worries,
     Kid.   Not a worry in the world. (19-20)
```

While the passage begins with the kid's attempt to tell

himself out of a colonial narrative linked to his childhood

years, it reverts back to an entrenched bittersweet

repetitive cycle of hope and disillusionment, of

romanticism and realism, as Jake repeatedly maintains that

these years were sweet and the Kid repeatedly insists that

they are bitter.   Growing up means transcending this

bittersweet rhythm by recovering a larger humanist rhythm

of communal affirmation.

The defining moment of communal affirmation in this

play emerges during a supper discussion with Old Man

Gatenby, his niece Nancy, and her suitor Gerald Nixon in

which Gatenby's limiting and recapitulative regional social

vision is set against Nixon's regenerative national one.

Most significant to the developing regional identity is

Nixon's revelation of his hidden Western Canadian

genealogy.   While Nixon was born and bred in the West,

raised in Saskatcnewan's public schools, he also

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established ties with both East and West, having been
transferred to multiple Canadian cities through his banking
work. His genealogy incorporates the Western Canadian myth
of beginnings: a regenerative social vision which places
regionalism within a larger ongoing national settlement
experience. Nixon's social vision deconstructs a
marginalizing regionalism shaped by a colonial
consciousness. Through Nixon, Mitchell suggests that this
colonial attitude is reflected in provincial snobbery such
as Winnipeg's historical "first family" type of snobbery,
Calgary's cattle snobbery, and Vancouver's blanket brand of
snobbery against "prairie people."

Nancy transcends this colonial regionalism by
appropriating it as part of her lived experience in a
moment of personal and communal affirmation:

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GATE.   Can't say Saskatchewan folks are snobby...
NIXON.  I'm afraid I can, Mr. Gatenby.
GATE.   Well, then you're wrong.
JAKE.   We ain't snobby...
NIXON.  Saskatchewan folks are snobbish about...
NANCY.  Jerry -- let me tell them -- this is...
GATE.   Nancy you...
NANCY.  I've lived it -- with Dad and Uncle Sam
          here.  Uncle's worse than Dad ever thought of
          being...
MA.    Now just a moment, Nancy -- Sam Gatenby
          hasn't got a snobbish bone in his...
NANCY.  He has the Saskatchewan kind.  Bad.
          Saskatchewan folks are snobbish about how far
          below zero it goes in winter here.  How hot it
          gets in summer. i ʌ dry.  We're snobbish
          about our dust sto; s.  Grass-hoppers.
          Saskatchewan boasts she has the biggest hail
          stones -- the worst drought -- the most
          gophers and the biggest.  The strongest alkali
          -- rust -- saw-fly -- wind...
```

```
(JAKE.
(GATE.   We have!
NANCY.   See what I mean.
JAKE.   Why -- I seen the wind...
GATE.   Durin' the depression years...
MA.   I think I do, Nancy.
NIXON.   The point's been made, I think.  If you
    want to find snobs -- you don't have to go to
    the East, Mr. Gatenby.  (PAUSE) You stay
    right where you are -- out here in the West.
    (28-29)
```

Jake's concluding comments indicate that while Nancy

is prepared to transcend the old colonial culture, her

Uncle Gatenby is not yet ready to die out of it - to make

the leap from self-revelation to self-transformation:

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JAKE.   I guess -- like them wimmen's stories -- I
    guess most of us threw ourselves sobbin' onto
    our beds that night.  An' I guess Sam he was
    sobbin' the loudest.  First he was pleased
    when he found out Nixon was a Westerner.  Told
    me he figgered he'd overlook that about bein'
    a banker.  Says everybody can't be perfect.
    Then when the shock wore off I guess she sunk
    home to him what Nixon said about Gate's two
    fav'rite provinces.  Manitoba -- where he was
    born -- Saskatchewan where he lives. (PAUSE)
    Not that it makes much difference now -- Nancy
    an' Nixon's all married an' they're lookin'
    for a new nurse to replace her at the
    hospital. (PAUSE) Gate's lucky they ain't
    gonna live in Crocus to git under his hide.
    Long ways from Crocus -- (PAUSE) to Victoria.
    (29)
```

This passage suggests that while Jake and Gatenby's Western

story remains structured on a continuing colonial cycle of

hope and disillusionment - the same narrative pattern as

"them [sentimental] wimmen's stories," Nancy's new regional

story is structured on a hopeful pattern of personal and

communal rebirths and tied to a larger national cultural

resettlement. This episode concludes on the creative
rhythm of this renewed social and imaginative vision, with
Nancy and Nixon marrying and resettling in Victoria - a
"long ways from Crocus."

The *Jake and the Kid* serial illustrates the emergence
of a renewed social vision of self and place, a communal
myth which will later be defined as the Western Canadiar
myth of beginnings. During the 1950s, when these *Jake and
the Kid* stories initially aired on radio, the listening
audience, like the older Crocus community members, was not
quite ready to die out of its colonial culture in order to
be reborn into a self-defining postcolonial one. The *Jake
and the Kid* serial reflects this persistent colonial
consciousness through the continued presence of a
sentimental bittersweet rhythm and a narrative cycle of
hope and disillusionment entrenched within individual
episodes. It is not until the local pride and postcolonial
regionalism of the 1960s and 1970s that some Western CBC
radio playwrights are able to transcend this legacy.

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1. For brief biographical notes on W. O. Mitchell, see Appendix A.

2. Alan Yates, "W. O. Mitchell's 'Jake and the Kid': The Canadian Popular Radio Play as Art and Social Comment," Diss. McGill University, 1979, 320 and 331.

3. Yates 20 and 22.

4. Yates 24.

5. Yates 22-26. Some scripts and microfilm holdings of these early *Jake and the Kid* broadcast episodes are available in the archives of the Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies.

6. Catherine McLay, "Novels Are Difficult Here: W. O. Mitchell's Unpublished Fiction," Essays on Canadian Writing 37 (1989): 87.

7. Yates 224.

8. See Appendix B for a list of the *Jake and the Kid* episodes broadcast as part of the revival serial (1969-70).

9. From the 1930s to the 1960s, responsibility for CBC radio drama production and direction was principally concentrated in the producer. From the early 1960s onward, these responsibilities were increasingly separated between producer and director.

10. Yates 224.

11. Yates 338.

12. Yates 9.

13. Yates cites Harry Boyle, responsible for CBC programming during that time, who explains that: "In those days, Canada was still a series of relatively small cities, towns and hamlets with a majority of people living in rural areas. It was connected by two railroads and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation" (321).

14. W. O. Mitchell, "The Magic Lie," Canadian Author and Bookman 61.3 (1986): 20.

15. T. J. Collins, "W.O. Mitchell," Canadian Authors and Bookman 66.1 (1990): 16.

16. Yates elaborates on Mitchell's inspiration for *Jake and the Kid*, suggesting that:

> It came from memories of his harvesting experience and specifically, from an old homesteader "whose hobby was 'figurin'." With the stub of a pencil the homesteader passed his evenings working out how many cups of tea it would take to fill the south cowpasture slough, or how many grains of wheat would be required to lay an unbroken line of them from Regina to Saskatchewan. (19)

17. Yates specifies that while the plays were universal in application, they were "inescapable prairie, not West, nor foothills, but 'flat as pea-soup prairie'" (32).

18. Mitchell uses this term in "The Magic Lie" 20-21.

19. Yates 29.

20. Yates 80.

21. In "Hip, Thigh and Shinbone," for instance, both Jake and the Kid catalogue false-fronted changes to the town:

> REPEAT. Jake -- how often you been in town the past four or five months?
> JAKE. Why -- uh -- once -- twice a week, I guess -- four times -- four -- five -- twenty -- I guess we been in twenty times -- round here.
> REPEAT. Noticed anything new?
> KID. They moved the first War Memorial Plank from in front of the Post Office to in front of....
> REPEAT. Commercial. Commercially speaking.
> JAKE. Magtaggart's put in that new vegetable thing -- glass -- fresh fruit....
> REPEAT. No -- what I had in mind --
> KID. There's a new front on Pill Brown's Drug store....
> JAKE. They lifted Barney's Vulvanizin' an' put a foundation..
> REPEAT. Enterprises. New enterprises....
> JAKE. Not that I noticed. (7)

W. O. Mitchell, "Hip, Thigh and Shinbone" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 19 February 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 24 pp., 30 mins., Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies (CCBS) script no. M11 2007.

The script number is the main reference and locator of CBC radio drama scripts available at the Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies' archives.

22. Yates 39.

23. Yates 47.

24. This buried genealogy resurfaces in an episode entitled "Watch Them Arteries" where Gatenby announces to the Crocus Breeze, the town paper, his plans for retirement from farmin' in the Crocus community and the paper 'eulogizes' him as a "transplanted Easterner."

W. O. Mitchell, "Watch Them Arteries" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, Produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 12 August 1970, Calgary, National Am Network, 30 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 2005.

25. In "Somethin's Gotta Go," Mayor MacTaggart declares:

> Bin Mayor of Crocus going on thirty
> years..(PAUSE) Last four terms... Seen a lot of
> things come and go, since I been in business and
> in public life here in Crocus...Yep. Not just
> political either! I've seen steam give way to
> gas for thrashing. Board walks give way to
> sidewalks..(PAUSE) Main Street far as Bison
> avenue anyways. Seen the binder give way to the
> self-propelled combine, and some day I hope to
> see every home in Crocus with running
> water..sinks and bathtubs and folks so's they
> won't have to trot out to the....I've seen the
> time the Maple Leaf Hotel could've been bought
> for a song. I seen drought, and I've seen us get
> beer by the glass... (8-9)

W. O. Mitchell, "Somethin's Gotta Go" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 11 August 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 25 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 2006.

26. Robert Kroetsch, "The Grammar of Silence," The Lovely Treachery of Words: Essays Selected and New, by Kroetsch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 90.

27. Margaret Laurence, "A Canadian Classic? W. O. Mitchell. Jake and the Kid," Canadian Literature 11 (1962): 69.

28. W. O. Mitchell, "Love's Wild Magic" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 17 February 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 25 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1999.

29. W. O. Mitchell, "Hearts and Crocuses" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 10 July 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 29 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1995.

30. W. O. Mitchell, "Woman Trouble" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 16 February 1970, Calgary, National AM Netvork, 28 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1982.

31. See, for instance, Mitchell's retelling of the sentimental romance in "Hearts and Crocuses" and his retelling of the adventure romance in "Woman Trouble."

32. Mitchell, "Hearts and Crocuses" 7.

33. Collins notes that it was Mitchell's mentor, Professor F. M. Salter, who "alerted him to the possibility of a symphonic structure" (15).

34. Yates 61.

35. Yates 28 and Collins 15.

36. W. O. Mitchell, "One Hundred Per-Cent Canadian" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 20 February 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 27 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 2001.

37. W. O. Mitchell, "And So Is the West" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 10 July 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 29 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1994.

38. The page references for each play are marked in brackets following the direct quote.

39. William Carlos Williams as cited by Robert Kroetsch, "The Moment of Discovery of America Continues," The Lovely Treachery of Words 6.

Chapter 4: The Western Documentary-Drama:

Shaping an Epic Myth of Settlement -

Frank Dabbs, Bill Fraser, and Bonnie Le May

In a 1976 interview with Robert Enright and Dennis
Cooley, Robert Kroetsch suggests that regional pride led
Prairie writers to begin experimenting with new forms able
to articulate an indigenous language.[1] One such form vital
to Western regional expression on radio during the 1960s
and 1970s is the documentary-drama.   In Collective
Encounters: Documentary Theatre in English Canada, Alan
Filewod links the Western documentary tradition to a
colonial regional awareness:

> A concern for regional culture and identity is
> characteristic of documentaries (as well as other
> dramatic forms) from the Western and Atlantic
> provinces which have traditionally perceived
> themselves as colonies subordinate to centralized
> economic and political power in Ontario.[2]

Some Western CBC radio documentary-dramas broadcast during
the 1960s and 1970s reflect an emerging postcolonial
regional sentiment and expression.

An important feature of this expression is the
appropriation of the documentary-drama as indigenous
dramatic language able to authenticate regional
experience.[3] The documentary-drama enables some Western
CBC radio playwrights to dramatize a shared Western
Canadian historical experience in the interplay between
historical record and creative impulse. By recovering and

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documenting oral traces of lived history, these playwrights are educating local and national audiences to the larger significance of a shared past and actively shaping a postcolonial Western Canadian cultural identity. The dramatic impact of these radio documentary-dramas ultimately depends upon the extent to which the audiences identify with and actively respond to their projected communal vision. These radio playwrights are able to engage a national audience in a communal myth of beginnings by drawing on a shared historical and mythic awareness of self buried in the collective consciousness.

There are twelve CBC Calgary productions among the Western CBC radio documentary-dramas broadcast during the 1960s and 1970s.[4] These plays were directed by two regional CBC Calgary producers, Fred Diehl and Irene Prothroe, and ten of them were broadcast on two national CBC radio series. The first of these series, *Between Ourselves*, aired dramas and documentary-dramas from 1965 to 1971. The second series, *The Bush and The Salon*, spanned the years from 1971 to 1977, with broadcasts of dramas and documentary-dramas recreating the life and times of early Canada and, in the case of documentary-dramas, often returning to the years of Western Canadian settlement as the early roots of a Western regional consciousness and a Western Canadian cultural identity. These documentary-

dramas illustrate a Western postcolonial development from regional exploration to national re/settlement.

The *Between Ourselves* series (1965-1971) foregrounds an initial period of regional exploration when Western documentary-drama playwrights such as Fred Diehl, Bill Fraser, and Frank Dabbs are articulating their regional differences from a national centre and, in so doing, re/Placing the Western story from a Canadian centre to a Western self-defining margin. Distrust of inheritea Canadian history seems to compel these playwrights to turn to myth. In <u>Labyrinths of Voice: Conversations with Robert Kroetsch</u>, Robert Kroetsch accounts for the Western mythic sensibility partly in terms of a colonial experience:

> I think that our history in the past has been
> created by the [Canadian] Eastern Establishment.
> Even the kind of religious activities in the West
> are [sic] symptomatic of a longing for a mythic
> resolution. Social credit with its quasi-
> religious basis was prophetic and did try to
> speak mythically....No, the West doesn't think
> historically. If the West accepted history, then
> its whole relationship to the country would have
> to change radically. I don't think that the West
> wants to move into a historical role, or to
> accept history, Myth is more exciting.[5]

Also underlying this shift to myth is an imaginative turn inward undertaken by Western writers in order to explore regionalism in terms cf their internal responses to the Western environment, and to begin articulating indigenous shaping myths and metaphors. In "Identity Through Metaphor: An Approach to the Question of Regionalism," Arthur Adamson defines cultural identity in

terms of these internal responses, explaining that
"Culture... must be in intimate relationship with the land,
the land as a correspondence to inner vision, as numen"[6].
This imaginative turn inward allows some CBC radio
playwrights to appropriate the Western documentary-drama as
indigenous language and to transform it from a historical
genre into a mythic one.

These regional trends in the Western CBC radio
documentary-drama are reflected in several plays broadcast
on the *Between Ourselves* series: Bill Fraser's "But, We've
Come a Long Way"[7] (broadcast in 1966), Fraser's "The
Romance of Coal"[8] (broadcast in 1971), Fred Diehl's
"Alberta Calling"[9] (broadcast in 1967), and Frank Dabbs'
"The Something For Nothing Gang"[10] (broadcast between 1965-
1971). Of these radio plays, two make particularly
significant contributions to an evolving Western regional
identity by recovering beginnings as a shaping principle of
Western history and of the Western story: Frank Dabbs' "The
Something For Nothing Gang" and Bill Fraser's "But, We've
Come a Long Way."

Frank Dabbs' "The Something For Nothing Gang" is a
two-part documentary-drama about the rise of William
Aberhart and the Social Credit movement in Alberta during
the summer of 1934. Dabbs uses radio, one of the very
instruments that elevated "Bible Bill" Aberhart to the
level of local folk hero, to document and convey the larger

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communal significance of this regional movement. The playwright attempts to explain not only Social Credit as a cultural phenomenon (how it was able to spread its ideas into local communities), but, more importantly, the Western psychology and mythic sensibility that allowed these ideas to take root in Western minds during the Depression years - that is the Western story.

This documentary-drama suggests that while other major groups were using radio to transmit ideas, Aberhart exploited radio to preach an economic and religious dream-promise of deliverance. Dabbs conveys the larger significance of the Social Credit crusade by structuring the play on Aberhart's Sunday sermon radio broadcasts filled with intensifying prophetic scriptures, spirituals, and economic preachings, and by resurrecting the fragmented voices of Albertans during the summer of 1934. By recreating depression-time Alberta as a chaotic internal frontier "ripe for agitation," the playwright hopes to convey Albertans' need for mythic resolution and the unifying force of Aberhart's "crackling radio voice" promising Westerners the hope of new beginnings.

What motivates Dabbs to unearth the buried agony of the Depression years is a need to retell history, an impulse which the playwright claims as part of the Western regional sensibility. The narrator makes a revealing reference to the "peculiar Western self-assurance that

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history is a thing made to be rewritten by ordinary

mortals" (35)[11]. In response to this regional impulse,

Dabbs rewrites a historical documentary-drama account of

the Depression years into a psychological and mythic vision

rooted in the colonial incongruity of economic devastation

in a "province of plenty." By dramatizing a Western sense

of betrayed history, Dabbs compels listeners to internalize

the Depression experience through a Western mythic

sensibility: as a prophetic revelation of the future

downfall of a capitalist system under Dominion control and

as a sign to turn to Aberhart's Socreds for mythic

resolution. Through the narrator, Dabbs explains

Westerners' faith in Aberhart's dream-promise of

deliverance in terms of their internal responses to their

regional environment:

> But in Alberta, the summers drip sweat in the
> shade before noon, and the opulent sky is a clear
> presentment of the rarefied mountain air to the
> west. In such an atmosphere it is possible to
> dream of folly and speak of it earnestly with
> one's fellows, and even to win for it the
> approbation of the people. It is even possible
> to see, as Aberhart saw, the hand of Jehovah, God
> with us, the active agent of history, moving
> across the land. (16)

This dramatic turn inward has postcolonial value for

the playwright in that it allows him to deconstruct false

myths and metaphors shaping listeners' perceptions of the

Western region. The narrator suggests that this story is

fuelled by the Western sense that the lived history of the

Depression years has been forgotten and replaced by a

social myth that threatens to define the Western self and place:

> Popular myth now has it that in 1934, this province was a quaint religious place where a slightly eccentric high school principal duped a gullible population of cheerful illiterates with a travelling medicine show that most of all promised $25 in rubber money. (13)

Dabbs gradually decontructs this foreign myth, attempting to transform the documentary-drama from a narrative of Western economic defeat into one of political and humanist triumph. From the very onset, the narrator reframes the Socred story, progressively re/Placing it from an [Eastern] Canadian centre to a Western self-defining margin:

> This is the story of how the Something for Nothing Gang persuaded the voters of Alberta to kick out the reformist United Farmers of Alberta for a chimera of guaranteed income. It is the story of how one compassionate man read in the misery of his people, the raw material of the revolution at the ballot box. (4)

The "failed" social myth of Aberhart as a mendicant rainmaker is replaced by the more fertile metaphor of Aberhart as a Western farmer sowing the seeds of a great political and humanist triumph in a fermenting regional ground.

Underlying this postcolonial replacement is an attempt by the playwright to tell himself out of the Depression narrative cycle of hope and disillusionment and to activate a new creative historical movement from disillusionment to hope. In order to do so, Dabbs structures the documentary-drama on a cyclical and linear sense of beginnings. The

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story is compelled cyclically ahead from spring to summer and back, from economic and social disillusionment to a hopeful vision of new beginnings and back. This momentum ultimately refines itself toward one defining and recapitulative moment of renewal consummated beyond the play's narrative scope: Aberhart's election to power in 1935. In order to both dramatize and activate this sustaining historical rhythm of renewed hope, the playwright aptly appropriates the very elements that seemed to conspire against Westerners during the Depression years[12], depicting the popularity of the Social Credit like a Prairie fire sweeping over the province and the confidence of Aberhartism "sweeping like a whirlwind, overcoming every obstacle in its path" (9).

Despite the foregoing, the Western story remains grounded an illusory rather than a redeeming vision of renewal. The narrator's use of the word "wolf" in his concluding remarks hints at the false Western hope of humanist redemption:

> To this kind of Albertan, in 1934, Aberhart and
> Edith Rogers spoke softly and with the simple
> promise of $25 per month. Perhaps more
> important, they said nothing until they had first
> entertained his children at their mammoth picnic,
> and fed up the entire family on potato salad. No
> one should have been surprised that of this raw
> human stuff, Aberhart was able to wolf his mass
> crusade of the Almighty God of Heaven. (66)

This mention of "wolf" recalls an earlier reference to the most desperate times of the Depression, during the spring

and summer months of 1934, when "Suddenly the wolf was at the door for the prosperous rancher, as well as the squatter and homesteader" (53). Through these references linking Aberhart to other "wolves" during depression-time Alberta, the playwright compels listeners to revert back to the failed myth of Aberhart as a mendicant rainmaker.

The narrator also foreshadows that Aberhart's electoral victory of 1935 will be followed by Western moments of disillusionment - repeated "falls" in 1936 and 1937 - and highlights the precariousness of Westerners' hopeful vision of deliverance: "But in this province, winter closes cruelly around the chill-packed bones of the dreamer and the vision shatters in cacophony with the shattering ice in rivers and sloughs" (16). Dabbs is unable to tell himself out of the colonial cycle of hope and disillusionment because he structures the documentary-drama on beginnings as a recapitulative mythic form rather than a regenerative one.

In contrast, Bill Fraser's 1966 pre-centennial piece "But, We've Come a Long Way" is structured on a regenerative myth of beginnings. Although labelled a "fantasy" piece, this play is a mythic re/vision of Alberta's history, fuelled by Western postcolonial sentiment. Through the assistance of roving interplanetary reporter Z5-7, listeners are guided through an exploratory mythic journey backwards in time in order to move forward

through space and revisit defining Western originary moments buried in the collective memory. This re/settlement journey is patterned on a cycle of multiple cultural deaths and rebirths which listeners are intended to internalize as they are guided from prehistoric dead geological formations to the rebirth of regional gas, oil, and coal reserves; from the colonization of the Blackfoot Indian population to the advent of trade and progress; from the Airdrie Prairie fire to the birth of Calgary; and from the Depression years to a concluding hopeful vision of modern-day Alberta.

Each of these homecomings captures the magic realism of remembered beginnings as moments of self-revelation and self-transformation. By layering these fragmented historical moments within a larger mythic (cyclical) creative pattern of multiple deaths and rebirths, the playwright compels listeners to internalize the myth of beginnings in terms of its regenerative possibilities for self and place. This mythic pattern reveals a Western Canadian genealogy defined by a home place and self in constant process and filled not with one but rather with multiple moments of renewal. This renewed Western Canadian sensibility is reflected in the concluding prophecy of change echoed by a young girl: "...and the face of the earth shall become altered for nothing remains constant in time....And it shall be so!" (24).

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The Bush and the Salon series (1971-1977) highlights an important stage of Western national re/settlement when CBC radio documentary-drama playwrights such as Bonnie Le May, Ken Mitchell, and Bev Koester rediscover this regenerative regional myth of beginnings by returning to the frontier period to document a shared Western Canadian past and to recover a useable historical and imaginative tradition. The frontier period, as the roots of Western regionalism and a Western Canadian identity, offers these playwrights the potential of resettling a shared regional and national colonial sensibility into a Western Canadian postcolonial consciousness.[13] During the 1970s, these playwrights are involved in re/Placing the Western story from the margin to a renewed Western Canadian centre and thereby continuing to transform the Western documentary-drama into an epic genre reflecting a formative stage in a developing culture.

These regional trends are reflected in the following documentary-dramas broadcast on *The Bush and The Salon* series: Bonnie Le May's "North West Mounted Police"[14] (broadcast in 1973), Le May's "The Midwife"[15] (broadcast in 1973), Le May's "Frontier Doctor"[16] (broadcast in 1973), and Ken Mitchell and Bev Koester's "The Bald Eagle"[17] (broadcast in 1976). Bonnie Le May's 1973 two-part

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frontier play on early Western Canadian medicine, featuring

"The Midwife" and "Frontier Doctor," is most representative

of a Western Canadian epic documentary-drama tradition and

the postcolonial possibilities of the regional myth of

beginnings.

Spanning the years from 1869 (during the smallpox

epidemic) to 1905, the period preceding the division of the

territories into provinces, these two documentary-dramas

chronicle a historical, cultural, and imaginative Western

Canadian settlement. My analysis concentrates on Le

May's[18] "The Midwife," which illustrates a Western

postcolonial transition from regional exploration to

national re/settlement. Le May's story is about the

recovery of a buried past through fragmented traces of

"family" history: the history of self, the history of

frontier medicine, and the history of a place (the city of

Edmonton). In the course of story-telling, the playwright

is also story-making - weaving threads of these fragmented

Western histories into a larger shared story: a communal

myth patterned on a recovered Western Canadian genealogy.

Le May begins shaping an indigenous mythology by

recovering remembered traces of lived history. The Western

story is the narrative of Marty's reminiscences of early

Western beginnings of self, place, and medicine. The

playwright uses Marty's narrative "I" not only as a

dramatic vehicle for Western self-exploration, but also as

an instrument of Western postcolonial self-relocation. In
<u>Narrating Our Past: The Social Construction of Oral</u>
<u>History</u>, Elizabeth Tonkin explains the regenerative
possibilities of the life story as genre:

> ...life stories and autobiographies create
> personae, not transparent self-portraits, and
> they may encourage reflexive self-consciousness
> too, since the genre itself contributes to the
> development of self-presentation by providing
> models to follow or modify.[19]

The playwright begins her Western self-representation
with Marty whose ambiguous origins (an absent family name,
an absent father, and shifting family homes) embody an
unsettled frontier and an unshaped cultural identity. Yet,
hidden within these origins is a buried Western Canadian
genealogy grounded on the creative possibilities of
multiple beginnings. Marty's reminiscences of self at
twelve, at fourteen, and at twenty-four, related through
the informing present consciousness of a thirty-one year
old narrator, are aimed at compelling a listening audience
to unearth and appropriate this Western Canadian identity.

These reminiscences dating back some one hundred years
from the time of broadcast capture traceable memories of a
shared past buried in the collective consciousness of
contemporary listeners. Le May's radio plays suggest that
the playwright recognizes the cultural and imaginative
significance of recovering this receding history. In "The
Moment of Discovery of America Continues," Kroetsch
explains that oral history is unlikely to go back more than

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two generations and that within these two generations lies the entire framework for story-making.[20]

The documentary-drama form allows Le May not only to recover this history, but also to offer it back to Westerners retold in their own words and reshaped by indigenous myths and metaphors. One of the stories the playwright appropriates for postcolonial reshaping is the odyssey, an epic poetic genre able to convey dramatically a formative stage in a developing culture.[21] Le May deconstructs the Odyssey as a sea journey, a part of the personal and ancestral memory of many European listeners who came West by ocean voyage[22], and reconstructs it into a land journey - the Western Canadian myth of beginnings as an "epic tale" of settlement.

"The Midwife" is structured on a mythical settlement journey featuring Marty as the archetypal Western Canadian explorer, wanderer, and mapmaker.[23] In his literary anthropology, Fernando Poyatos describes the voyage in terms of its settlement function: "voyages establish borders, turn physical space into geography"[24]. Poyatos also defines it as "a first language, a first signification"[25]. Marty's settlement voyage is grounded on the myth of beginnings as a narrative movement which indicates a renewed sense of language rooted in a postcolonial dialectic of place and displacement[26],

departure and return, roots and motion, horse and house[27], vertical exploration and horizontal settlement.

Marty's exploratory mapping of geographic borders on horse, vertically from North to South and horizontally from East to West embodies the creative topography of West grounded on multiple national beginnings. Marty tags along with missionary John McDougall, goes hunting and fishing up North with Uncle Bruce, runs away to work in a mining camp, drifts[28] south to the Cypress Hills to break horses for the North West Mounted Police, drifts east with the North Saskatchewan river, and finally works his way west laying railroad track across the Prairie. Between each of these departures is a return journey "home" to Uncle Bruce and Aunt Emily who are also individually and jointly engaged in an exploratory/settlement journey through Aunt Emily's doctoring, Uncle Bruce's whiskey trade with the Indians, and their shifting regional homesteads.

Through these layered journeys, the playwright depicts multiple departures and returns as creative impulses innate to the Western Canadian sensibility. Unable to depart, Marty feels "chained up like a Madman" (20) and making his way west, he feels as if he cannot travel fast enough: "I could feel it like it was going to blow up inside me. I had to get back right away...I couldn't travel fast enough and the closer I got the more I pushed to get there" (28).

Western Canadian creation happens on the margin. In "Disunity as Unity," Kroetsch defines the region as a source of national creative strength:

> It was this very decentering that gave a new energy to countries like Canada. Canada is supremely a country of margins, beginning from the literal way in which every city borders on wilderness....The centre does not hold. The margin, the periphery, the edge, now, is the exciting and dangerous boundary where silence and sound meet. It is where the action is...[29]

Edmonton becomes this regional borderland of action bearing witness to a home place in constant process. Marty's national explorations and Aunt Emily and Uncle Bruce's shifting regional settlements create a circumference around Edmonton as centre. On Marty's return to Fort Edmonton, he witnesses a centre being built with all the mapping that has occurred, the frequently shifting regional centres, and the gaps remaining to be filled:

> Edmonton sure was different. It was a big town. In fact, it was several towns all separate but together. There was St. Albert, where the nuns still were; the Hudson's Bay post, which used to be the center of everything, the Mounted police post which considered itself the present center, and all the land for miles around tied up. But not in Edmonton. In the East. Nobody in Edmonton knew who owned Edmonton from day to day. Edmonton sure had changed since my small pox [sic] days. (27)

Layered into this external mythic settlement of place is an internal mythic re/settlement of self. By journeying backwards to Indian beginnings as the roots of a buried original Western Canadian genealogy, both Marty and the listening audience are engaged in displacing regional and

national sensibilities towards a renewed Western Canadian centre. These multiple homecoming journeys capture the magic realism of Western Canadian beginnings as true moments of self-revelation and self-transformation.

Le May dramatizes these moments through a blurred and sharp clarity of vision, a close and distant perspective, which creates the illusion of a fictional reality. Critics define the objective of this magic realist vision in varied ways. In his preface to <u>Magic Realism Rediscovered 1918-1980</u>, Seymour Menton suggests that magic realist art and literature aim at affecting the intellect rather than the emotions.[30] In "The Spiritual Eye: Magic Realism in Art," Nancy-Lou Patterson refers to an ethical and spiritual moment of revelation and a "mood of contemplative realism"[31]. In this play, Le May depicts magic realism as multiple moments of intellectual, ethical, and spiritual awakening.

The first of these moments arises when Marty returns to the memory of a remembered self at the age of twelve when he was plagued by smallpox and left to be cared for by the Grey Nuns. A magic realism surrounds Marty's feverish vision of first Western self as Indian:

> I heard but it didn't mean anything. We were standing at the door and it was dark inside. I felt like I was looking down from a cloud. It wasn't me at all. I could make out people lying on the floor. There was a young Indian woman near me. She had a baby in her arms. A nun took the baby away and I knew it was dead. (3)

This mythic vision of a dead Indian baby captures a lost and betrayed original genealogy tying the Western self to place.

Underlying this sense of a betrayed genealogy is an increasing awareness of a widening colonial gap between a "false" given or inherited history and an "authentic" lived history. Given history is the one Marty "inherits" from the missionary John McDougall: the history that teaches of Indian betrayal and devastation, the history that denies the smallpox as the "white man's weapon," and the history that preaches the redemptive power of faith to convert the savage Indian. Against this version of the Western self and place, is Marty's personal witness of Indian devastation from disease and whiskey: a lived history that testifies to the white man's betrayal of his Indian roots and one with which he is repeatedly confronted and encouraged to deny and to bury within himself.

Through these mythic moments of personal and collective revelation, the playwright compels a listening audience to unearth this buried lived history and begin healing the gap between Western self and past. Reclaiming this genealogy means not only assuming collective ethical responsibility for severing an original Western rootedness to land, but also appropriating the Indian as part of the Western Canadian identity. Such a postcolonial appropriation underlies one of Marty's mythic moments when

he witnesses an Indian smallpox devastation and begins
identifying himself with the .rdians:

> We found them down by the stream, where they'd
> jump in to get away from the fever. I knew how
> they had felt. The fever and the clouds and how
> you're not really there. It's not really you. I
> knew how it had happened. (6)

The creative rhythm of magic realism compels this epic
forward towards a settlement journey home. The city of
Edmonton, the history of Western Canadian medicine, Uncle
Bruce, and Aunt Emily all succumb to the horizontal
levelling force of Western Canadian settlement. Marty also
makes the transition from explorer to settler, from horse
to house. In meeting Nancy, he admits that: "A few years
ago, I wouldn't have noticed unless she was a horse" (34).
For Marty, settling down within the rural Prairie house
means creating, accepting, and sustaining ties with the
Western land. Marty eventually secures steady employment,
marries Nancy, and settles on the margins of Edmonton, this
borderland of action where creation once again happens.

Marty's reminiscences culminate in the birth of his
first child, who comes into the world through the
collective effort of Nancy, Marty, and Aunt Emily as
midwife. Paralleling this birth is the emergence within
the listener of a renewed Western Canadian consciousness.
The most significant part of this birth is the naming
process through which an identity is re/claimed. In Le
May's documentary-drama, naming not only records the

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history of Western Canadian settlement, but also sets a Western Canadian genealogy. Naming the baby "Marty" ties the new Western regional self to a genealogy of multiple Western Canadian beginnings: to the beginnings of a place (the mapping of Fort Edmonton, Fort Benton, Fort MacLeod, Fort Walsh...); to the beginnings of settling institutions (the missionaries, mining, the North West Mounted Police, the railway); to the beginnings of frontier medicine (Marty's survival of smallpox and typhoid, the Grey Nuns, Aunt Emily's "home" ministry to her ill son Jimmy and her external midwifery, Dr. Nevitt's doctoring to the North West Mounted Police..); and to multiple regional and national "family" origins (Marty's mother, Uncle Bruce and Aunt Emily, and original Indian roots).

Naming the baby "Marty" does not mean a retreat to the past, but rather a reclaiming of past in order to recreate the Western self and place anew. It represents the renewal of an "old" name. Aunt Emily in fact insists that the baby be named after Marty who survives the frontier experience and retains historical ties to it, rather than after her own son Jimmy who succumbs to it and represents a severance from this lived history. The new Marty illustrates what Grove describes as the dying out of one culture in order to be reborn into the next.[32] This renewed name also attests to a regenerative cultural resettlement process. Marty eventually resettles in Edmonton and has two more children

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with Aunt Emily's assistance as midwife. These subsequent births bear witness to a continual giving birth to self and place.

By recording lived history and shaping an epic myth of settlement, these CBC radio documentary-drama playwrights of the 1960s and 1970s recover a useable tradition which enables other playwrights to continue retelling the Western story, regenerating new identities of the Western self and place, and transforming a social myth of beginnings into a literary myth, consciously ordering and shaping Western Canadian imaginative expression.

1. Robert Enright and Dennis Cooley, "Uncovering Our Dream World: An Interview with Robert Kroetsch," Essays on Canadian Writings 18-19 (1980): 28-29.

2. Alan Filewod, Collective Encounters: Documentary Theatre in English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987) 22.

3. Filewod describes the Canadian documentary:

> The Canadian documentary has tended to be anti-ideological; it does not try to explain the significance of the matter it documents in an intellectual scheme, but rather suggests the significance of a shared historical communal experience by transforming it into art. In all the plays in this study the fact of that transformation is as important as the textual context of the performance. The preference for community affirmation over ideology suggests that the Canadian documentary is ultimately a moralistic genre. (6)

4. See Appendix C for a list of the Western CBC radio documentary-dramas broadcast by CBC Calgary during the 1960s and 1970s.

5. Robert Kroetsch, Labyrinths of Voice: Conversations with Robert Kroetsch (Edmonton: NeWest Publishers Ltd., 1982) 135.

6. Arthur Adamson, "Identity Through Metaphor: An Approach to the Question of Regionalism in Canadian Literature," Studies in Canadian Literature 5 (1980): 88.

7. Bill Fraser, "But, We've Come A Long Way" (radio play script), produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 22 June 1966, Calgary, National AM Network, 24 pp., 30 mins., Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies (C.C.B.S.) script no. M11 1881.

The script number is the main reference and locator of CBC radio drama scripts available at the Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies' archives.

8. Bill Fraser, "The Romance of Coal" (radio play script), produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 17 November 1971, Calgary, National AM Network, 19 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1984.

9. Fred Diehl, "Alberta Calling" (radio play script), produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 4 January 1967, Calgary, National AM Network, 21 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1983.

10. Frank Dabbs, "The Something for Nothing Gang" (radio play script), produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast between 1965-1971, Calgary, National AM Network, 66 pp., 60 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1882.

11. The page references for each play are marked in brackets following the direct quote.

12. Janice Patton, How the Depression Hit the West (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973) 33-35.

13. In Patterns of Isolation in English Canadian Fiction, John Moss defines the frontier as a historical period "when the physical world has yet to be mapped out in the consciousness of man, and the need to do so has become necessary." Moss, Patterns of Isolation in English Canadian Fiction (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973) 13.

14. Bonnie Le May, "North West Mounted Police" (radio play script), produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 13 May 1973, Calgary, National Am Network, 94 pp., 120 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1864.

15. Bonnie Le May, "The Midwife" (radio play script), produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 17 June 1973, Calgary, National AM Network, 52 pp., 60 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1862.

16. Bonnie Le May, "Frontier Doctor" (radio play script), produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 24 June 1973, Calgary, National AM Network, 50 pp., 60 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1863.

17. Ken Mitchell and Bev Koester, "The Bald Eagle" (radio play script), produced by Irene Prothroe, broadcast 29 August 1976, Calgary, National AM Network, 46 pp., 60 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1869.

18. For brief biographical notes on Bonnie Le May, see Appendix A.

19. Elizabeth Tonkin, Narrating Our Past: The Social Construction of Oral History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 57.

20. Robert Kroetsch, "The Moment of Discovery of America Continues," The Lovely Treachery of Words: Essays Selected and New, by Kroetsch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 6.

21. Ruth Finnegan, Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance, and Social Context (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 4.

22. John J. O'Connor, "Saskatchewan Sirens: The Prairie as Sea in Western Canadian Literature," Journal of Canadian Fiction 28-29 (1980): 159-62.

23. For a discussion of this Western Canadian archetype, see Frank Davey, "The Explorer in Western Canadian Literature," Studies in Canadian Literature 4.2 (1979): 91-100.

24. Fernando Poyatos, Literary Anthropology: A New Interdisciplinary Approach to People, Signs and Literature (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co., 1988) 313-14.

25. Poyatos 313-14.

26. For a discussion of "place and displacement" as a feature of postcolonial literatures, see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature (London: Routledge, 1989) 9-11.

27. In "The Fear of Women in Prairie Fiction: An Erotics of Space," Robert Kroetsch identifies this horse/house dialectic as part of the story-line (energy-line) of Prairie fiction. Dick Harrison, ed., Crossing Frontiers: Papers in American and Canadian Western Literature (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1979) 76.

28. Marty's drifting conveys a sense of wandering through space which is also present in Bill Fraser's "But, We've Come A Long Way." In an interview with Donald Cameron, Dave Godfrey refers to this wandering as a Western experience:

> Certainly I think a lot of my sense of wandering is from being a Westerner. Space is something you move through, a hundred miles is nothing. When I went back to work on the railroad out there, a certain part of me really fell in love with it.

Donald Cameron, "Dave Godfrey: Myths and Gardens,"

Conversations with Canadian Novelists - 2, by Cameron
(Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1973) 2 vols. 38.

29. Robert Kroetsch, "Disunity as Unity," The Lovely
Treachery of Words 22-23.

30. Seymour Menton, "Preface," Magic Realism Rediscovered
1918-1980 (London: Associated University Presses, 1983) 21.

31. Nancy-Lou Patterson, "The Spiritual Eye: Magic Realism
in Art," Magic Realism and Canadian Literature: Essays and
Stories - Proceedings of the Conference on Magic Realist
Writing in Canada, eds. Peter Hinchcliffe and Ed Jewinski
(Waterloo: University of Waterloo Press, 1986) 24-25 and
27.

32. Robert Kroetsch, "The Grammar of Silence," The Lovely
Treachery of Words 90.

Chapter 5:   The Catalogue and Theme and Variation:

The Myth of Beginnings as Creation and Recreation -

Terrence Heath & Anne Szumigalski's "The Exiles' Catalogue"

Terrence Heath and Anne Szumigalski's[1] radio play "The

Exiles' Catalogue: A Poem for Voices"[2] (broadcast in 1978)

is structured like Robert Kroetsch's "Seed Catalogue"[3]

(published in 1977), a long poem Mandel describes as "the

central poem of the Canadian West"[4]. "Seed Catalogue" is

part of Kroetsch's continuing poem "Field Notes"[5].

Structured in ten parts, "Seed Catalogue" develops through

variations on the theme of creation, progressively building

with layered questions: How do you grow a gardener? How do

you grow a lover? How do you grow a prairie town? How do

you grow a past? How do you grow a poet? The poet grows a

Prairie past, a Prairie self, and a Prairie place by

cataloguing surviving oral and written traces of lived

history. Through this cataloguing, Kroetsch discovers a

regenerative mythic form able to sustain the creative

rhythm of a continuous creation and recreation of self and

place - our Western Canadian myth of beginnings.

Patterned on this regenerative mythic structure, "The

Exiles' Catalogue" unearths an exile myth which binds the

Western region to the Canadian nation. This dramatic radio

poem chronicles the exile of European settlers, First

Seaman Andrew Britten and his daughter Kelly, a British war

bride who married Tom and resettled in Western Canada. By recovering and documenting remaining oral and written traces of their lived history - reminiscences, hearsay, tall tales, idioms of speech, gossip, a last will and testament - the playwrights begin creating genealogies that tie self to place and healing the colonial gap between self and past. What emerges within regional and national listening audiences is a postcolonial Western Canadian identity.

In <u>Patterns of Isolation in English Canadian Fiction</u>, John Moss describes exile in postcolonial terms, as part of "our emergence into national being," into a "self-determining, self-defining nation"[6]. Moss identifies four patterns of exile which have defined Canadian historical development and shaped the imagination of Western and other regional writers[7]: the garrison, the frontier, the colonial, and the immigrant experience.[8] Heath and Szumigalski return to the frontier period, as a time of unmapped consciousness, in order to remap a postcolonial sensibility within Western Canadians. Underlying the mapping of a lived exile is a profound dispossession of origins, a nostalgic longing for a unifying, healing vision of home associated with a lost Eden. Dick Harrison notes that "Rather than Adams, they [Canadians] could more appropriately be called Exiles"[9].

Moss defines exile not only in terms of a

dispossession, but also as an internal dislocation:

> One is isolated *from* something and conscious of the state of separation, although not necessarily of its dual antecedents: except in the most limited of its literal senses, isolation does not describe a state of mind or a locale, but the effect of both.[10]

The playwrights convey this sense of psychic dislocation by

drawing on a prairie-sea metaphor predominant in Prairie

writing and buried in the imagination of Western Canadian

listeners.[11] In his formative essay "The Prairie: A State

of Mind," Henry Kreisel elaborates on this analogy:

> The prairie, like the sea, thus often produces an extraordinary sensation of confinement within a vast and seemingly unlimited space. The isolated farm-houses, the towns and settlements, even the great cities that eventually sprang up on the prairies, became islands in the land-sea areas of relatively safe refuge from the great and lonely spaces.[12]

In this radio poem, the Sea and Land voices bear witness to

the shared exile of Andrew and his daughter Kelly who

become, in this new land, as two separate islands in "great

and lonely spaces":

> SEA VOICE. The old man comes out of the shack
> And sits, squinting across the wide, long valley
> Of flat land. He has disembarked
> Every morning and sat here in sea boots,
> Roll-neck sweater, tasting the wind.
> Behind him the house rides at anchor,
> Jibs against the steady half-gale.
> And he calls out to the circling gulls.
>
> He likes to eat outside: back to the wind,
> He makes a lee and takes wrapped bread
> From his pocket, eats it quickly and cleanly,

But he has no delusions that the land is the
sea.
He knows the slight taste of salt
On the air is dry-blown from the alkali
slough.
. . .

LAND VOICE. She too comes
out her door every morning
Carrying the pail of the night and
Yawning on the sun. Ten years married
And no pressure system yet. Her soft skin
Now hardened to leather; her fingers knuckled
With chores. Her fingernails are thin
Black parings in the slop pail. The
White clothes grey
In the wind and the hard ground water
The roll down tops of the white socks are darker
grey.

She pours out the pail behind the rusty binder
Her eyes crinkle against the sun,
Look bluely out across the land
She yawns again and goes back into the '27
trailer. (3-4)[13]

Through this prairie-sea analogy, the playwrights are

trying to awaken in audiences of European immigrants and

their descendants an ancestral and personal memory of

receding European origins intimately tied to the sea. In

"Saskatchewan Sirens: The Prairie as Sea in Western

Canadian Literature," John O'Connor identifies in Prairie

literature a sense of the sea as a "racial inheritance, an

enduring blood-tie that lures the landlocked descendants of

Englishmen and other settlers."[14] O'Connor further notes

that the sea is part of the personal memory of many

European settlers who came West by ocean voyage.[15]

The play dramatizes this first Western Canadian

settlement experience when the pioneer was confronted by

two main obstacles: the new land and the old culture.[16] In

Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie

Fiction, Harrison elaborates on some of the cultural and

imaginative challenges of re/settlement:

> The known order was naturally the old culture.
> It constituted the only names the pioneer knew,
> the only maps he had brought with him. When he
> attempted to take inventory of the unnamed
> country, his choices were limited by the
> vocabulary of another place and another life.
> This was inevitable of course, and not
> necessarily a handicap, but the English-speaking
> settlers, most of them bred in the sheltered
> towns and farms of Britain and Ontario, were
> drawing upon a culture that was ill-adapted to
> the life of the landscape of the prairie. Their
> efforts to capture it in their known world, in
> everything from land survey to literature, tended
> to distort, to obscure, to isolate them from the
> plains.[17]

This cultural dispossession is dramatically captured

in Kelly's attempt to raise sheep against Prairie dust

storms, twisters in summer, hail, tornadoes, heat, bleached

summer sky, and winter blizzards - to impose a known

cultural order on a new land ill-adapted to accomodate it.

The artificiality and madness of this first ordering

project is conveyed through the gossip and tall tales of

the Town voices:

> TOWN VOICE 2. Well, what didya expect raisin
>   sheep? This is cattle country.
> TOWN VOICE 1. Sheep poison the water and ruin
>   the land. Give the cattle blue tongue.
> TOWN VOICE 2. Tom thought he was pretty big,
>   comin back with his English war bride and
>   all them fancy English ideas bout raisin
>   sheep. You can see where it got 'im.
> TOWN VOICE 1. They doan even have a proper
>   house.

TOWN VOICE 2. Jes' as well. She keeps them
    sheep as much in that trailer of theirs as in
    the barn.
...

TOWN VOICE 2. Oh, them sheep lovers is a strange
    lot.
TOWN VOICE 1. So I heard.
TOWN VOICE 2. Heard? I bet ya sneak down there
    every night.
TOWN VOICE 1. I doan have to. I get lots at
    home.
TOWN VOICE 2. Did ya hear the one bout the sheep
    farmer that had the lambs with the human
    heads?
TOWN VOICE 1. The way I heard it was a woman
    that had twins already done up in sweaters and
    booties. (8)

In order for these early settlers to order and name

their new environment, they first had to grow out of the

old culture, to gradually begin replacing their former

European names with a vocabulary able to refle   and shape

this new Western Canadian life. In "The Grammar of

Silence," Kroetsch links this erasure of names to the exile

experience:

> The erasure of names is part of the experience of
> migrating peoples and part of the narrative of
> that experience. And that erasure becomes
> palimpsest, it leaves its trace-as it did when
> [Frederick Philip] Greve changed his name to
> Grove, at once concealing and changing who he was
> and leaving a trace that would enable us to
> complete the task of renaming that he had
> initiated.[18]

*   *   *

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During the 1960s and the 1970s, many CBC radio
playwrights face the equally daunting task of resettling a
regional and national sensibility filled with European
myths and metaphors which do not adequately reflect nor
order the Western Canadian experience. In order to
resettle this foreign sensibility, Heath and Szumigalski
turn to poetic and musical forms well-suited to the
postcolonial task of renaming and to the aural radio
medium[19]: the catalogue long poem and the musical form of
theme and variation. Radio playwrights, directors, and
critics have compared radio not only to poetry, but also to
music, describing the radio play as an "orchestration of
voices"[20]. BBC director Michael Bartlett elaborates:

> At its best, a radio play is orchestrated, it
> works like a piece of music, it's actually
> composed like a piece of music. You don't toss
> your lines off; you choose your words and you
> build - you build very carefully.[21]

In "The Exiles' Catalogue," the playwrights begin with
the fragmented exiled voices of Andrew, his wife, his
daughter Kelly, the Town, the Sea, and the Land and slowly
build them into a textured aural design shaped by two
principle components: time and space, creating respective
vertical and horizontal voice patterns. In his study of
Music Patterns and Style, Richard P. De Lone describes time
as a vertical musical element, explaining that listeners
should picture a musical composition "as a succession of
uniquely related tonal and rhythmic patterns that proceed

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logically in time and that have a beginning and an end"[22].

These time elements are woven into this radio play through
detailed voice directions which indicate the playwrights'
careful attention to tone, pace, and rhythm: "more quietly
and quickly," "very clear, Firm Pronounciation," "voice
over, confident," "lovirgly, exasperated," "measured pace,"
"begins softly, then takes over," and "slowly and
staccato." Through these time elements, the playwrights
create not one unifying rhythmic voice and story pattern
affirming a beginning and an end of the exile mythos, but
rather multiple rythmic patterns affirming multiple
beginnings and endings of story.

The playwrights also manipulate voice direction (i.e.
through similar, contrary, and parallel voice motions) and
voice placement (i.e. through varied marginal and centred
positions, backgrounded voices, voice unders, voice overs,
and interpenetrating voices) in order to create the
illusion of frequently shifting horizontal space, and to
foreground the depth of space alienating the exiled voices
from each other. In "Canadian Radio Drama in English:
Prick Up Your Ears," Ann Nothof elaborates on the ability
of radio to accomodate this creative vertical and
horizontal layering of voices:

> It is possible to stack sound on a tape: as the
> sound moves horizontally, it also moves
> vertically, opening up many diverse ways of
> dealing with a subject: events can occur
> simultaneously, evoked through a layering of

sound. The use of vari-speed facilitates new
ways of hearing sound patterns and speech.[23]

These fragmented voice patterns, layered within
thematic movements[24], are not just random sound-complexes,
but rather ordered designs intended to compel listeners to
re-enact, internally, the personal and collective drama of
exile as a repetitive cycle of hope and disillusionment.
For Western Canadian listeners, this cycle captures the
colonial legacy of the Depression years which fragmented
Westerners' sense of historical and imaginative continuity
with a pre-drought past and compelled Westerners to
internalize their history, including the romantic frontier
ideal, in terms of a recurring disillusioned hope. For
many listeners who shared this romantic frontier ideal as
early European settlers to Canada or retain it as
descendants of these European immigrants, the cycle also
expresses both a disillusionment with romantic new
beginnings and a persisting colonial attachment to European
cultural roots.

Listeners internalize this colonial cycle within the
silent pause intervals set between each movement. In The
Art of Radio, Donald McWhinnie elaborates on the creative
potential of this silence:

> Indeed, it is in silence that the listener is at
> his most creative: if he does not depend on
> visual stimuli, it is at these moments of pause
> that he will evolve, out of the creative act and
> his own experience and potential, the most
> compelling moments of insight and realization.[25]

These "moments of insight and realization" are orchestrated in part by rhythmic patterns which dramatize a shared fragmented regional and national historical continuity with a pre-exile past. In movement four, for instance, Andrew's hope of awakening a creative (romantic and historical) rhythm within his daughter after years of separation, he at sea and she on land, progressively dissipates as a barren realism and its degenerative rhythm reinforces their widening physical, emotional, and spiritual isolation:

```
          ANDREW.  And when I came ashore
             you'd be waiting for me, your
             soft hair blowing and your
             skirts billowing in the wind.
          KELLY.  (MEASURED PACE) Swillpail
             scrub pail
             chore pads
             lye soap
             bleach
             scouring powder
             liquid detergent
             (FASTER) grit - carbolic soap - cut the
             water with lye - scarred arborite
             dish pan - dish rag - dish towel
             flour sack - sugar sack - gunny sack
             grease
             mud
             dust
             top soil - black
             greyish black
             grey
             greyish
             brownish
             sour
             swell - slop - slop pail
          ANDREW.  Flotsam and jetsam
          KELLY.  If you pick up a handful of dust,
             It runs through your finger like salt.
             If you burn out ten acres of scrubs,
             The heat of it blisters the sky;
             What if you burn out a soul?
```

```
          If you drench the sheep for flukes,
          It runs through their wool like oil.
          If you freeze your fingers through mitts,
          It leaves your hands blistered red;
          What if you freeze your soul through?
     ANDREW.  If you love someone more than the sea,
          It will twist your heart to its cords. (5)
```

Layered into these rhythmic patterns are space voice patterns which further entrench the colonial cycle. A compelling example arises in movement four where the frequently shifting positions and directions of Andrew and Kelly's voices, set in relation to each other, again dramatize the sense of a widening physical, emotional, and spiritual isolation. The voices begin in similar centred positions with the hope of a centring dialogue, both moving in similar directions: backwards to recapture the romantic memory of Andrew's letters and the creative energy of a pre-exile past able to heal Andrew and Kelly's ten-year separation:

```
     KELLY.  I doan know.  I doan write nobody.  Seems
          like there's never anytime.  Where would I get
          the time?
     ANDREW.  I wrote to you every Sunday.  Once a
          week for ten years.  That's a hold full of
          letters.
     KELLY.  They're out in the shed.  Didn't have
          time in summer to read'em.
     ANDREW.  That's a hold full of letters.
     KELLY.  Used to pick them up in town.
     ANDREW.  Wrote to you from every port on the sea.
          (4)
```

However, this creative momentum ultimately dissipates as Kelly recalls Tom's reaction to the letters. Kelly's voice is marginalized to the left on the script page and

orchestrated at a distance from Andrew's voice in order to

convey the bittersweetness of an irreconcilable space

between father and daughter, between past and present,

between romanticism and realism:

KELLY.   Used to like gettin them
    letters. Sometimes two, three at
    a time. Tom got hold a'em once and showed
    'em round the hotel. They
    all had a good laugh. But I liked them. (4)

From there, Andrew and Kelly's voices are set side by

side, beginning once again with the renewed hope of

reawakening the creative rhythm of a romantic pre-exile

past. The voices move in parallel directions, maintaining

a close distance from each other. Yet, once again, the

romantic hope of consummating the gaps that alienate father

and daughter dissipates as the voices fragment into

opposing directions. Andrew's voice remains land-locked in

the romantic past tied to the sea "out there," and Kelly's

voice returns to the realist present of the land "out

here," the two voices only meeting in their growing

isolation from each other:

ANDREW. Remember the presents
I brought you when you were a
girl?
Those silver rings for your
soft smooth toes.

KELLY.I liked 'em a lot.Kept   Bangles from Africa
all them things you brought   and gold pins. The long
me. Still got 'em in my   rope of amber fetched from
drawer in the bedroom. I   the Baltic seabed. The star
used to love pretty things.   of sea pearls from
Like them pearls. And the   Japan. Rose silk scarves
little rings. Just look at   from, from.....
these hands. Can't even touch

them scarves now. They snag
so easy. <u>Things aren't like
that out here</u>. Here...

> Turquoise from Mexico. The
> silver belt. (4A)

Through these fragmented rhythmic patterns and frequently

shifting space patterns, the playwrights begin

deconstructing Kelly and Andrew's hope of recovering a

unifying vision of home.

*   *   *

The myth of exile can only be fully understood if we

consider these fragmented time and space voice patterns not

only within individual movements, but also as part of a

larger rhythmic and story pattern. In <u>Myth and Meaning:</u>

<u>Five Talks for Radio</u>, structural anthropologist Claude

Lévi-Strauss explains that myth, like music, must be

appreciated as a totality:

> ...my main point was that, exactly as in a
> musical score, it is impossible to understand a
> myth as a continuous sequence. This is why we
> should be aware that if we try to read a myth as
> we read a novel or a newspaper article, that is
> line after line, reading from left to right, we
> don't understand the myth, because we have to
> apprehend it as a totality and discover that the
> basic meaning of the myth is not conveyed in the
> sequence of events but - if I may say so - by
> bundles of events even although these events
> appear at different moments in the story.
> Therefore, we have to read the myth more or less
> as we should read an orchestral score, not stave
> after stave but understanding that we should
> apprehend the whole page and understand that
> something which was written on the first stave at

the top of the page acquires meaning only if we
consider that it is part and parcel of what is
written below on the second stave, and so on.
That is, we have to read not only from left to
right, but at the same time vertically, from top
and bottom. We have to understand that each page
is a totality.[26]

Listeners internalize the "totality" of the exile "mythos"

through the musical form of theme and variation and its

cataloguing rhythm.

De Lone defines this musical composition:

It [theme and variation] consists of successive
elaborations of the theme statements; such
elaborations usually retain the phrase structure,
melodic contour, and basic harmonic changes heard
in the theme....Each variation will reveal a
formal design identical to that of the
theme....Variations such as these exploit the
possibilities of contrasting treatments of a set
of compositional materials. The means of
variation include modifications of texture,
dynamics, and melody. Each variation involves
the revamping of one or more aspects of
compositional design but the underlying structure
of the statement is retained.[27]

The play's theme and variation is layered in eleven

movements[28], with each variation building on the theme of

exile and compelling listeners to reorder the "colonial"

cycle affirmed in fragmented time and space voice patterns

until it reflects a postcolonial vision of self and place.

In Myth and Meaning, Strauss asserts that "there is a kind

of construction taking place in the mind of the listener to

music or the listener to a mythical story"[29].

Underlying this layered thematic structure is a

renewed social vision in which the past is continually

carried forward into the present to regenerate new regional identities of self and place. The play's theme and variation is structured in three related mythic story patterns defined by accelerating and abating one to three second pause intervals separating individual movements: a first pattern spanning movements one to six, framed by the town voices and defined by escalating one to three second pause intervals; a second story pattern covering movements seven to nine and defined by decreasing three to one second pause intervals; and a final story pattern which includes movements ten and eleven and is defined by an increasing pause interval from one to two seconds.

Through these mythic patterns, the playwrights shape a Western Canadian myth of origins. Each pattern represents a successive retelling of the exile myth transforming it from a degenerative story patterned on a repetitive cycle of hope and disillusionment into a creative myth of origins structured on multiple deaths and rebirths - our Western Canadian myth of beginnings. Individually and serially, these narratives dramatize what Grove describes as the dying out of one culture in order to be reborn into the next, and they catalogue what Kroetsch defines as a "changed sense of language": "a movement from the old language through silence (a silence that might be imagined even as a death) into a new language"[30].

The first story pattern, spanning movements one through six, begins with a cultural death and rebirth. By cataloguing Andrew and Kelly's exiled European origins, the Town voices are also shaping a Western Canadian genealogy grounded on an escape from name and a multiplicity of name: Was Andrew a pirate, a murderer, or a smuggler? Are Andrew and Kelly British exiles or transplanted Easterners? Is Meg his daughter, his sister, or his lover? Is his daughter named Kelly or Meg? Is Kelly a first name or a last name? a man or a woman's name? Through the gaps in this receding past, between the fragmented oral histories, emerge traces of a buried Western Canadian myth of exile.

The playwrights begin recovering this communal myth by cataloguing, in successive movements, variations on the theme of physical exile introduced in the first movement, so that exile becomes progressively defined and layered as a physical, psychic, emotional, spiritual, and imaginative dislocation. In movement two, for instance, the physical exile mapped out in movement one evolves into a psychic dislocation catalogued by the Sea voice who witnesses Andrew as an island in a "great and lonely" land, and it evolves into an emotional exile conveyed through the letters Andrew's wife writes to her unresponsive husband announcing Kelly's birth. In movements three and four, this exile further evolves from a physical, psychic, and emotional isolation recorded in the second movement into a

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spiritual erosion as Kelly asks, "What if you burn out a soul?...What if you freeze your soul through?" (5).

This creative cataloguing rhythm transcends an internal degenerative naming rhythm set within individual movements. This degenerative rhythm is present from the very onset of movement one when Kelly first tries, unsuccessfully, to name her new regional environment using former European maps and drawing upon names of grasses shared by Britain and the Prairie[31]:

> KELLY. I name the wild
> grasses; the wild grasses
> have names like mine.
> The noxious weeds can be
> counted and named;
> Lupine, larkspur, deathcamas.
> . . .
> (as if reading, voice under)
> Anthraz, Braxy,
> Bluetongue, Blackfoot,
> scours, bloat, fleece
> worms. (2)

This naming attests to the mapping of a new region, an artificial ordering which is limited by the vocabulary of another place and another life and only results in further isolating the pioneer from the plains. In movement five, for instance, while Kelly and the Land begin naming slough grasses and sedges in marshy ground, they end up cataloguing needlegrasses in dry ground, unable to elevate the new environment to expression:

> KELLY. sea of grass
>
> KELLY. slough grass

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```
LAND VOICE.  (VERY CLEAR, FIRM PRONUNCIATION)
    water sedge - awned sedge
    douglas sedge
    low sedge
    thread-leaved sedge
    sun-loving sedge
    woolly sedge
    blunt sedge
    graceful sedge
    beaked sedge
    awned-nut grass
    (MORE QUIETLY AND QUICKLY) spike rush
    needle spike rush - creeping spike rush
    tall cotton grass - bullrushes - scirpu -
    (IN BACKGROUND) viscid great bullrush
    three-square bullrush - river bullrush -
    small fuited bullrush - navada bullrush -
    prairie bullrush - great bullrush -
    common nettles - wood nettles -
    (dying out)
    duckweed (6-7)
```

Yet, this naming rhythm mirroring the building of a tornado which dissipates into a Prairie dust storm suggests that Kelly begins to discover and internalize the new Prairie environment through an increasingly regional perspective.

Movement six places this degenerative rhythm in the context of a larger redeeming postcolonial pattern of death and rebirth. Through an indigenous planting metaphor expressed by the Land voice, the playwrights suggest that the old culture and its former European names must be buried, as wild grasses are "turned over," in order to be reborn into the vocabulary of a new place and of another life:

```
LAND VOICE.  The land can love;
    It can kill;
    It waits and receives.
    The gulls follow in the plough's wake
    . . .
```

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In the bottom of the land,
The wild grasses are turned over in
The wake of the plough. (10)

Movement six culminates on the hope of authentic

beginnings dramatized through a renewed creative naming

rhythm and a poetic voice able to elevate the new

environment to expression:

KELLY. (SOFTLY PERSEVERING, A
BIT "POETIC")
awned northern wheat grass-
Baker's wheat grass-crested
wheat grass-northern wheat grass
-Griffith's wheat grass-beardless
wheat grass-couch, quack, skutch,
twitch or devil's grass-blue-
bunch
wheat grass
slender wheat grass-

LAND VOICE. (SLOWLY, BUT
RISING IN INSISTENCE)
Hooker's oat grass-
slough grass-side-oats
grama-blue grama-purple
reed grass-pine grass-
sand grass-brook grass-
Parry oat grass-poverty
oat grass-one spike oat

(SOFTER,QUICKER,IN BACKGROUND)
spike red top grass-creeping bent
grass-rough-hair grass-red-top-
big blue stem-little blue stem-
red three awn

grass-tufted hair grass-
alkali grass-nodding
wild rye grass-variable
glumed wild rye-Macoun's
wild rye-blue-bunch
fescue-six's weeks
fescue-sheep fescue-
rough-fescue-tall manna
grass-

KELLY. Shepherd's purse, sheep's
laurel, sheep's bit,
sheep sorrel

small-flowered manna grass-
sweet grass (10)

Orchestrated after the planting metaphor, this naming

ritual is structured on a recovered seasonal rhythm which

traces the gradual dying out of a former European culture

with its old names and the subsequent rebirth of a renewed

regional sense of place and language conveyed, in part,

through such references as "Macoun's wild rye." In The Flora of Canada, H. J. Scoggan explains that as founder of the National Herbarium of Canada, John Macoun was instrumental in the decision to open up the West for settlement. Scoggan elaborates: "Macoun's conclusions were based on his fortunate opportunity to see the prairies in the full bloom of their original spectacular flora"[32].

This hope of rebirth is conveyed through the vocabulary of this flowering Western Canadian life: the "tall manna grass," the "small-flowered manna grass," and the "sweet grass." The unison between Kelly and the Land's naming rituals suggests the healing of a colonial gap between self and place. The first story-telling pattern ends on the slowly quickening pace of a sustaining creative rhythm of beginnings which listeners are compelled to internalize and complete as a creative response to the play's story pattern.

*

The second retelling of the exile myth, spanning movements seven through nine, begins in movement seven with a unifying storytelling rhythm which dissipates with Kelly's realization that "there ain't no one home." Kelly's passage is structured by a theme and variation form which carries forward the widening sense of exile catalogued in the preceding story pattern (the layered physical, psychic, emotional, and spiritual dislocation)

and builds on its thematic pattern with the introduction of a new variation: exile as the alienation from a centring and unifying vision of home:

> KELLY. (BECOMING PASSIONATE, THEN ABATING AND
>   BUILDING UP MORE SLOWLY)
>   You! You never loved no one but
>   yourself. Never home. That's what I remember
>   from being a kid. I had a father who was
>   never home....I cried in the bed you got out
>   of an old ship they wrecked. I cried on the
>   brass fittings. (QUIETLY) I cried myself dry,
>   so now I don't cry no more. Because I never
>   had no mother or father....You was always
>   sailin, up and down, rollin with the swells on
>   this sea, never at home, never at home.....I
>   know you're still sailin somewheres. I see
>   you sometimes lookin out over them hills.
>   You're still sailin and I says, go on sailin
>   away again. Sail high, sail low, but leave me
>   alone now. Leave me alone. I ain't got no
>   one an' I doan want no one. You can't come
>   home to me. Your ten year old little girl is
>   gone somewhere else - to Aunt Beth's or Aunt
>   Rosa's or Aunt Christine's. The blue-eyed,
>   pink-toed little girlself is gone and
>   (SLOW HARD VOICE, RISING TO TEARS)
>   there
>   a i n ' t
>   n o
>   o n e
>   h o m e. (11)

The above passage captures Kelly's growing out of her old European culture (associated with her former "little girlself" and her receding family origins) in order to mature into a new Western Canadian self. This new cultural identity is grounded on the self as centre from which multiple genealogies are constructed like Kelly's shifting resettlements with Aunt Beth, Aunt Rosa, and Aunt Christine. Andrew recognizes this cultural rebirth in his

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daughter when he says to her: "You're not a little girl anymore. It's you that's a home yourself now. More home than I've ever known" (12). Despite this recognition, Andrew is unable to die out of his old culture. Unlike Kelly who appropriates a home "in here," Andrew continues to cling to the possibility of a home "out there," to a unifying myth of origin which, like the relationship between father and daughter, can never be fully consummated:

> Andrew. ...The sea can love; it can kill; it can be a heart pumping you full. But it's not a home. You're the land and and [sic] I'm the sea. Let me find a place next to you and let us lie like the land and the sea, father and daughter, close together, but never joined. Oh, Kelly, if I could have that I'd ask for nothing more in this world. (12)

Andrew's reticence suggests that this "dying" happens gradually as part of an evolving cultural re/settlement. This cultural process is structured into the second story pattern as a degenerative rhythm which unravels the layered exile pattern catalogued in the first story to redefine the Western Canadian exile experience in terms of a progressively receding unifying vision of pre-settlement cultural roots. The playwrights dramatize these receding origins as a de-centring loss of horizon which claims Andrew on the raging sea as it once claimed Kelly's ninety-three sheep "smothered in their snowy wool."

The second story-telling reinforces a pattern of
multiple deaths and rebirths and recurring beginnings,
which Andrew and Kelly gradually appropriate as part of
their past experience, compelling listeners to follow suit:

> ANDREW. Once in the China
> Seas, we rode out a blow
> three days before we could
> put into port.
> . . .
> ANDREW. I've seen a ship frozen
> in eight months in
> 75 degrees North Latitude. And
> when the channel cleared,
> she cut out and sailed
> away like on her maiden
> voyage.

LAND VOICE. Sheep piled up in
the dug-out bottom, ten deep.
Sheep piled up like snow drifts.
Snow drifts over the sheep.

KELLY. Lost ninety-three one
winter. Smothered in their
snowy wool. At break-up, the
stink! Bull-dozed them in.
Start again. Start again with
nothin. (14-15)

<center>*</center>

The last story-telling suggests that despite Kelly's
last words, we never quite "start with nothin." There is
always some remaining trace of the past that can be used to
rebuild the future.[33] The third story pattern, which
includes movements ten and eleven, dramatizes the idea of
trace through the repeated line: "She will spit out her
grief/And feed the in-lamb ewes" (18). The radio poem ends
on a postcolonial cycle of disillusionment and hope, death

and rebirth, on an artificial social vision shaped from the gaps between the realism of the present and the romanticism of the past:

> LAND VOICE. She will spit out her grief
>   And feed the in-lamb ewes
>   Her only regret will be the touch
>   of silk, silver, amber and turquoise. (18)

*   *   *

Through these gaps, the playwrights unearth an indigenous regional language and shape a new cultural identity tied to a national genealogy or beginnings. In "Beyond Nationalism," Kroetsch describes this re/constructed language:

> Canadian writing takes place between the vastness of (closed) cosmologies and the fragments found in the (open) field of the archaeological site. It is a literature of dangerous middles. It is a literature that is compulsively seeking its own story (and to be prophetic after all: this will still be the case of a century from now) comes compulsively to a genealogy that refuses origin, to a genealogy that speaks instead, and anxiously and with a generous reticence, the nightmares and welcome dream of Babel.[34]

Through the form of theme and variation and its cataloguing rhythm, the playwrights begin shaping a Western Canadian identity and resettling a former European culture. This erasure of name leaves a lasting trace in the collective regional and national consciousness of listeners who are compelled to continue the postcolonial task of renaming

activated by the playwrights, much as readers of Kroetsch's

continuing poem "Field Notes" are invited to compose

further sections.[35] In this sense, "The Exiles' Catalogue"

becomes like Kroetsch's continuing poem: "not the having

written, but the writing. The poem as long as life. The

lifelong poem....Homer's The Odyssey, forever being

translated into new versions of the poem"[36].

1. For brief biographical notes on Terrence Heath and Anne
Szumigalski, see Appendix A.

2. Terrence Heath and Anne Szumigalski, "The Exiles'
Catalogue: A Poem for Voices" (radio play script), produced
by Irene Prothroe, broadcast 4 March 1978, Calgary,
National AM Network, 18 pp., 30 mins., Concordia Centre for
Broadcasting Studies (C.C.B.S.) script no. M11 1985.

The script number is the main reference and locator of
the CBC radio drama scripts available at the Concordia
Centre for Broadcasting Studies' archives.

Given my margin and print limitations, it was not
always possible, when citing references, to remain
completely faithful to the original text. See the original
play for a more accurate appreciation of the voice
orchestrations as they are directed on the radio script.

3. Robert Kroetsch, Seed Catalogue: Poems by Robert
Kroetsch (Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1979) 13-35. This
collection was first published in 1977.

4. Eli Mandel, "The Border League: American 'West' and
Canadian 'Region'," Crossing Frontiers: Papers in American
and Canadian Western Literature, ed. Dick Harrison
(Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1979) 119.

5. Robert Kroetsch, Field Notes: The Collected Poetry of
Robert Kroetsch (Don Mills: General Publishing Co. Limited,
1981).

6. John Moss, Patterns of Isolation in English Canadian
Fiction (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973) 7 and
13.

7. Moss elaborates: "A great many writers of the Maratimes,
the Prairies, and British Columbia have shaped their
separate visions out of a common experience of an immense
northern landscape, its aggressive climate, and the sparse
distribution of its populace" (109).

8. Moss specifies that none of these phases "precludes the
simultaneous presence of the others" (9).

9. Dick Harrison, Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a
Canadian Prairie Fiction (Edmonton: The University of
Alberta Press, 1987) 11.

10. Moss 11.

11. John J. O'Connor, "Saskatchewan Sirens: The Prairie as Sea in Western Canadian Literature," _Journal of Canadian Fiction_ 28-29 (1980): 157.

12. Henry Kreisel, "The Prairie: A State of Mind," _Contexts of Canadian Criticism_, ed. Eli Mandel (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989) 259.

13. The page references for this play are marked in brackets following the direct quote.

14. O'Connor 161-62.

15. O'Connor 162-63.

16. Harrison, _Unnamed Country_ ix.

17. Harrison, _Unnamed Country_ ix-x.

18. Robert Kroetsch, "The Grammar of Silence," _The Lovely Treachery of Words: Essays Selected and New_, by Kroetsch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 92.

19. Wayne Schmalz, ed. _Studio One: Stories Made for Radio_ (Regina: Coteau Books, 1990) vi.

20. See Ann Nothof, "Canadian Radio Drama in English: Prick Up Your Ears" _Theatre History in Canada_ 11.1 (1990):61; Elissa S. Guralnick, "Radio Drama: The Stage of the Mind," _The Virginia Quarterly Review_ 61.1 (1985): 90-91; and Donald McWhinnie, _The Art of Radio_ (London: Faber and Faber, 1959) 106.

21. Guralnick 90-91.

22. Richard P. De Lone, _Music Patterns and Style_ (London: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1971) 174.

23. Nothof 60.

24. I have identified eleven thematic movements defined by pause intervals:

Movement 1:   from page 1 (line 1) to page 2 (line 10)

Movement 2:   from page 3 (line 2) to page 3 (line 8)

Movement 3:   from page 3 (line 9) to page 3 (line 12)

Movement 4:   from page 4 (line 1) to page 5 (line 6)

Movement 5:   from page 6 (line 1) to page 8 (line 4)

Movement 6:   from page 8 (line 4) to page 10 (line 5)

Movement 7:   from page 11 (line 1) to page 12 (line 1)

Movement 8:   from page 12 (line 2) to page 17 (line 2)

Movement 9:   from page 17 (line 3) to page 17 (line 3)

Movement 10:   from page 17 (line 4) to page 18 (line 3)

Movement 11:   from page 18 (line 4) to page 18 (line 7)

My play analysis makes reference to these movements.

25. McWhinnie 90-91.

26. Claude Lévi-Strauss, Myth and Meaning: Five Talks for Radio (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978) 44-45.

27. De Lone 231 and 234.

28. See note 23 for a description of these movements.

29. Lévi-Strauss 49-50.

30. Kroetsch, "The Grammar of Silence" 91.

31. See, for instance, a cataloguing of the Lupine in Britain and the Prairie region in D. M. Moore, gen. ed., Plant Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 106 and H. J. Scoggan, The Flora of Canada, Part 1 - General Survey (Ottawa: National Museum of Natural Sciences, 1978) 36, 4 Parts.

32. Scoggan 39.

33. In "The Moment of Discovery of America Continues," Robert Kroetsch asserts that "There is always something left behind. That is the essential paradox. Even abandonment gives us memory." The Lovely Treachery of Words: Essays Selected and New 2.

34. Robert Kroetsch, "Beyond Nationalism," The Lovely Treachery of Words 71.

35. In Seed Catalogue: Poems by Robert Kroetsch, Kroetsch writes of his continuing poem "Field Notes": "Readers are invited to compose further sections." (inside cover)

36. Robert Kroetsch, "Robert Kroetsch: Seed Catalogue," The Long Poem Anthology, ed. Michael Ondaatje (Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1979) 311-12.

CONCLUSION

How do we tell the Western story?   How do we begin to create in the West?[1]

The CBC radio playwrights examined begin by reciting the colonial gaps between Western self and place, place and language, and inherited history and lived history (the land's history and the self's history) which is hidden and awaiting unearthing. The gaps give rise to creative urges: the archaeological urge to recover historical traces of a buried identity, the documentary urge to catalogue these discoveries, and the urge to re/tell the Western story.

Radio playwrights such as W. O. Mitchell, Bill Fraser, Bonnie Le May, Terrence Heath, and Anne Szumigalski begin re/telling the Western story by unearthing traces of a shared Western Canadian past buried in the collective consciousness. And, as Kroetsch explains in "The Moment of Discovery of America Continues": "individuals in a lifetime become characters. Events become story, become folklore, edge their way towards myth"[2]. The myth of beginnings is not an end, but rather a beginning, a place to begin again and again and again giving birth to an uncreated Western Canadian identity.

Notes - Conclusion

1. See Robert Kroetsch, "The Moment of Discovery of America Continues," <u>The Lovely Treachery of Words: Essays Selected and New</u>, by Kroetsch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

2. Kroetsch 6.

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Fraser, Bill. "But, We've Come a Long Way." (radio play script) Prod. Fred Diehl. bcast. 22 June 1966. Calgary. National AM Network. 24 pp. 30 mins. C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1881.

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[1] The script number is the main reference and locator of CBC radio drama scripts available at the Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies' archives.

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APPENDIX A

SOME PLAYWRIGHTS' BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES (alphabetical list)

TERRENCE HEATH (b. 1936)
Poet, Novelist, Biographer, Critic of Western Canadian Art

Terrence Heath was born on August 25, 1936 in Regina, Saskatchewan and studied at The University of Saskatchewan, the University of Oregon, Oxford University, and the University of Munich. In 1986, he was awarded the National Magazine Awards Silver Medal for Poetry.

His works include: <u>The Truth and Other Stories</u> (1972); <u>Interstices of Night</u> (1979); <u>Wild Man's Butte</u> (poetry, with Anne Szumigalski, 1979); <u>The Last Hiding Place</u> (1982); <u>Uprooted: The Arts and Life of Ernest Lindner</u> (1983); and <u>Journey/Journée</u> (poetry, with Szumigalski, 1989).[1]

Heath's contributions to CBC radio drama include the following plays co-written with Anne Szumigalski for CBC Calgary and CBC Regina and focussing on Western Canadian themes such as the settlement experience and the shaping of a mythology: two poems for voices - "Wild Man's Butte" (broadcast 1977) and "The Exiles' Catalogue" (b. 1978), as well as the radio play "The Chrome Paps" (b. 1978).[2]

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[1] Gordon Ripley and Anne Mercer, "Terrence Heath," <u>Who's Who in Canadian Literature 1992-93</u>, by Ripley and Mercer (Teeswater: Reference Press, 1992) 158-59.

[2] See the "Terrence Heath" entry in Howard Fink, ed., "Canadian National Theatre on the Air II: 1962-1985 - CBC Radio Drama in English, A Descriptive Bibliography and Union List," vol. 2 (Kingston: Quarry Press, t.b.p.) 3 vols.

MARGARET HOLLINGSWORTH (b. 1942)
Playwright (for stage, radio, and CBC television),
Short Story Writer, Teacher, Journalist

Margaret Hollingsworth was born in 1942 in London, England; immigrated to Canada in 1968; and became a Canadian citizen in 1978. She has travelled extensively abroad. Hollingsworth obtained a B.A. from Lakehead University and a M.F.A. in Theatre and Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia in 1974. Her education includes university training in psychology. She received ACTRA Awards in 1982 and 1989 and the Chalmers Award in 1978.

Hollingsworth's work treats such themes as the female condition, identity, the immigrant experience, alienation, isolation, and exile. Her publications include: Alli Alli Oh (play, 1979); Ever Loving (play, 1980); Mother Country (play, 1980); Operators and Bushed (plays, 1981); Islands (play , 1983); Willful Acts (plays, 1985); Endangered Species (plays, 1988); and Smiling Under Water (stories, 1989). Her plays have been published in several anthologies of Canadian and West Coast plays and produced on stage Canada and in England as well.

Many of Hollingsworth's plays have also been broadcast on radio not only in Canada, but also in England, West Germany, Australia, and New Zealand. Her radio drama contributions to CBC Calgary and CBC Vancouver productions include: "Join Me in Mandalay" (broadcast 1973); "Prairie

Drive" (b. 1974); "Wayley's Children" (1975); "As I Was

Saying to Mr. Dideron" (1976); "Webster's Revenge" (b.

1977); "Operators" (b. 1978); "War Games" (b. 1979); "The

Apple in the Eye" (b. 1979); "Alli Alli Oh" (b. 1980);

"Responsible Party" (b. 1985); and "Woman on the Wire" (b.

1986).[1]

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[1] See the "Margaret Hollingsworth" entry in Howard
Fink,ed., "Canadian National Theatre on the Air II: 1962-
1985 - CBC Radio Drama in English, A Descriptive
Bibliography and Union List," vol. 2 (Kingston: Quarry
Press, t.b.p.) 3 vols.; "Margaret Hollingsworth," The Brock
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170-71; "Margaret Hollingsworth," Directory of Canadian
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eds. Eugene Benson and Leonard W. Conolly (Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 1989) 272; Dorothy Parker, "Alienation
and Identity: The Plays of Margaret Hollingsworth,"
Canadian Literature 118 (1988): 97-113; Gordon Ripley and
Anne Mercer, "Margaret Hollingsworth," Who's Who in
Canadian Literature 1992-93, by Ripley and Mercer
(Teeswater: Reference Press, 1992) 167-68; and Ann
Saddlemyer, "Two Canadian Women Playwrights," Cross-
Cultural Studies: American, Canadian, and European
Literatures: 1945-1985 (Ljubljana: Filozogska Fakulteta,
Edvard Kardelj University of Ljubljana, 1988) 251-56.

Playwright (for stage and radio), Writer for CBC Television
and Film

Bonnie Le May was born in 1931 in Chicago and grew up
in its suburbs. She graduated from the University of
Colorado with a B.A. in Education and Science and was
trained in geology. Her geological work in the oil and gas
industry brought her to Alberta where she married and
settled in Western Canada to take up playwrighting in the
1960s and 1970s during the Canadian renaissance of regional
artistic expression.

Le May's writing has focussed on such subjects as
Western Canadian history and identity as well as the Indian
condition. Her stage plays include "A Thistle Full of
Seed" (a creative collection about the settlement of
Western Canada, produced for the Centennial celebrations);
Boy Who Had a Horse (1970); and Roundhouse (1975).

Some of Le May's most significant contribution to
Western regional expression was as a radio dramatist. From
the late 1960s to the early 1980s, Le May wrote about a
dozen dramas and documentary-dramas for CBC Calgary.
Almost all of them were produced by Fred Diehl, whom she
credits as a creative influence in her life, and several
were produced for the national CBC radio series *The Bush
and the Salon*. Her CBC radio dramas include: "Hit and Run"
(broadcast 1967); "The Strange One" (b. 1967); "The Cypress
Hills Masquerade" (b. 1973); a two part series on early

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Western Canadian medicine featuring "The Midwife" and

"Frontier Doctor" (b. 1973); "Laying Down the Law, the

Hatchet and the Railway" (b. 1973); "The North West Mounted

Police - Parts I and II" (b. 1973); "Souls Preserved" (b.

1975); and the serial "Long Lance" (b. 1983).[1]

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[1] See the "Bonnie Le May" entry in Howard Fink, ed., "Canadian National Theatre on the Air II: 1962-1985 - CBC Radio Drama in English, A Descriptive Bibliography and Union List," vol. 2 (Kingston: Quarry Press, t.b.p.) 3 vols; Bonnie Lemay, Personal Interview, by Susan Miller, Concordia (University) Centre for Broadcasting Studies, Calgary, 28 April 1993 (tape); "Bonnie Le May," The Brock Bibliography of Published Canadian Plays in English 1766-1978, ed. Anton Wagner (Toronto: Playwrights Press, 1980) 202; "Bonnie Le May," Directory of Canadian Plays and Playwrights, ed. Jane Cunningham (Toronto: Playwrights Canada, 1981) 38-39; and Gordon Ripley and Anne Mercer, "Bonnie Le May," Who's Who in Canadian Literature 1992-93, by Ripley and Mercer (Teeswater: Reference Press, 1992) 180.

WILLIAM ORMOND MITCHELL (b. 1914)
Novelist, Playwright (for stage and radio), Journalist, Teacher, Editor

W. O. Mitchell was born on March 13, 1914 at Weyburn, Saskatchewan, where he spent his childhood. Mitchell studied at the University of Manitoba and the University of Alberta where he obtained a B.A. in 1942. His studies include training in the areas of education and creative writing. Mitchell has received many awards and distinctions including the Stephen Leacock Medal for Humour in 1961 for Jake and the Kid; the Chalmers Award in 1976 for "Back to Beulah;" several honorary degrees; and the Order of Canada.

Mitchell's best known published works include : Who Has Seen the Wind (novel, 1947); The Alien (novel typescript, c. 1953, in The W. O. Mitchell Papers, University of Calgary Archives); Roses Are Difficult Here (novel typescript, c. 1958, The W. o. Mitchell Papers); Jake and the Kid (short stories, 1961); The Kite (novel, 1962); The Black Bonspiel of Wullie MacCrimmon (stage play, 1965); The Vanishing Point (novel, 1973); The Devil's Instrument (stage play, 1973); How I Spent My Summer Holidays (novel, 1981); The Dramatic W. O. Mitchell (stage play anthology, 1982); Since Daisy Creek (novel, 1984); Ladybug, Ladybug (novel, 1988); According to 'Jake and the Kid': A Collection of New Stories (1989); and For Art's

<u>Sake</u> (novel, 1992). His themes include rural small-town Prairie life and Western folk culture.

Mitchell's stage plays feature many adaptations of fiction written for other media. His contributions to CBC radio span over twenty years of broadcasts and hundreds of radio plays, including the *Jake and the Kid* series which aired from 1950-56 featuring over 200 episodes and numerous subsequent revival productions[1]; radio dramas in the *Foothill Fables* series; original radio dramas; as well as adaptations of his fiction.[2]

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[1] For a list of these *Jake and the Kid* episodes, see Alan Yates, "W. O. Mitchell's 'Jake and the Kid': The Canadian Popular Radio Play as Art and Social Comment," Diss. McGill University, 1979, 342-53. See also the "W. O. Mitchell" entry in Howard Fink, ed., "Canadian National Theatre on the Air II: 1962-1985 - CBC Radio Drama in English, A Descriptive Bibliography and Union List," vol. 2 (Kingston: Quarry Press, t.b.p.) 3 vols.

[2] Roger des Ormeaux, "The Sounding Board: W. O. Mitchell's Fiction on CBC Radio," M.A. Thesis Concordia University, 1994, 107-15; Michael Peterman, "W. O. Mitchell," <u>Profiles in Canadian Literature - 16</u>, series ed. Jeffrey M. Heath (Toronto: Dundurn Press Limited, 1980) 9-16; Gordon Ripley and Anne Mercer, "William Ormond Mitchell," <u>Who's Who in Canadian Literature 1992-93</u>, by Ripley and Mercer (Teeswater: Reference Press, 1992) 244; Jerry Wasserman, "W. O. Mitchell," <u>The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre</u>, eds. Eugene Benson and Leonard W. Conolly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 343-44; and Yates 342-53.

For a more complete list of Mitchell's radio dramas, see the "W. O. Mitchell" entry in Fink, ed., "Canadian National Theatre on the Air II;" des Ormeaux 111-15; and Yates 354-56.

GEORGE RYGA (1932-1987)
Playwright (for stage, radio, television, and film),
Novelist, Poet, Short Story Writer, Teacher

George Ryga was born on July 19, 1932 in Deep Creek,
Alberta, a Ukrainian farming community where he spent his
youth. Ryga received numerous awards and distinctions
including scholarships to the Banff School of Fine Arts in
1949 and 1950.

His writing has focussed on such subjects as the
Indian experience, social justice, social and political
structures, and Canadian history and colonialism. Ryga's
novels include: "The Bridge" (written 1960, unpublished);
"Wagoner Lad" (w. 1961, unpublished); "Poor People" (w.
1962, unpublished); Hungry Hills (1974); "Sawdust Temples"
(w. 1963, unpublished); "Old Sam" (w. 1963, unpublished);
Ballad of a Stonepicker (1966); "Nothing But a Man" (w.
1967, unpublished); and Beyond the Crimson Morning (1979,
about Ryga's trip to the People's Republic of China).

Ryga has been active in the regional theatre movement
and his stage plays have been produced both nationally and
internationally in Canada, England, and the United States.
His career in radio began in a commercial radio station in
Edmonton during the 1950s as a copy writer and producer of
the Sunday poetry and music show Reverie. Ryga's writing
for radio spans over twenty years and includes the
following CBC radio dramas, some of which are adaptations
of novels or stage plays: "Indian" (broadcast 1963); "Masks

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and Shadows" (b. 1963); "Departures" (b. 1963); "Bitter

Grass" (b. 1965); "Bread Route" (b. 1965); "A White Dog on

a Green Lawn" (b. 1965); "The Tulip Garden (b. 1966); "Men

of the Mountain" (b. 1966); "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe" (b.

1969); "Captives of the Faceless Drummer" (b. 1972);

"Miners, Gentlemen and Other Hard Cases" (b. 1974);

"Seasons of a Summer Day" (b. 1976); "George Ryga Extracts"

(b. 1976); "Ploughmen of the Glacier" (b. 1977); "Advocates

of Danger" (b. 1977); "The Addict" (b. 1985); "The Legend

of Old Charlie" (b. 1985); and "A Letter to My Son" (b.

1985).[1]

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[1] Eugene Benson, "George Ryga (1932-87)," _The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre_, eds. Eugene Benson and Leonard W. Conolly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 479-80; Gary Boire, "George Ryga: A Tribute," _Canadian Literature_ 116-19 (1980): 189-90; the "George Ryga" entry in Howard Fink, ed., "Canadian National Theatre on the Air II: 1962-1985 - CBC Radio Drama in English, A Descriptive Bibliography and Union List," vol. 2 (Kingston: Quarry Press, t.b.p.) 3 vols.; Gordon Ripley and Anne Mercer, "_Who's Who in Canadian Literature 1992-93_, by Ripley and Mercer (Teeswater: Reference Press, 1992) 294; Don Rubin and Alison Cranmer-Byng, "George Ryga," _Canada's Playwrights: A Biographical Guide_, by Rubin and Cranmer-Byng (Toronto: Canadian Theatre Review Publications, 1980) 154-58; "George Ryga 1932 -," _The Brock Bibliography of Published Canadian Plays in English 1766-1978_, ed. Anton Wagner (Toronto: Playwrights Press, 1980) 278-79; and biographical notes on George Ryga contained in the following Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies CBC radio drama archival file: George Ryga, "Seasons of a Summer Day" (radio play script), produced by Irene Prothroe, broadcast 11 November 1976, Calgary, National AM Network, 62 pp., 60 mins., Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies (CCBS) script no. M11 1932, 1-3. The script number is the main reference and locator of CBC radio drama scripts available at the Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies' archives.

ANNE SZUMIGALSKI (b. 1922)
Poet, Teacher, Editor

Anne Szumigalski was born on January 3, 1922 in London, England and has contributed extensively to the Saskatchewan literary and artistic community. Her numerous awards and distinctions include: the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild Founders Award (1984); two nominations for the Governor General Award for English Language Poetry (1984, 1986); the Silver Magazine Awards (1986, 1991); the Writers' Choice Award (twice); the Saskatchewan Order of Merit (1989); the Saskatchewan Arts Board Lifetime Award for Excellence in the Arts (1990); and a life membership in the League of Canadian Poets (1990).

Szumigalski's poetry explores subjects such as the natural world and relationships. Her publications include: BOooOm (children's poetry, with Terrence Heath and Eleanor Pearson, 1973); Woman Reading in Bath (poetry, 1974); Wild Man's Butte (poetry, with Terrence Heath, 1979); A Game of Angels (poetry, 1980); Doctrine of Signatures (poetry, 1983); Risks (poetry, 1983); Instar (poetry, 1985); Dogstones: Selected and New Poems (1986); Journey/Journée (poetry, with Terrence Heath, 1988); The Voice, the Word, the Text (essays, 1990); Raptures of the Deeps (poetry, 1991); Why Couldn't You See Blue? (with Caroline Heath, 1994). Her poems have also been published in several anthologies and journals.

Szumigalski's contributions to CBC radio drama include the following plays co-written with Terrence Heath for CBC Calgary and CBC Regina and focussing on Western Canadian themes such as the settlement experience and the shaping of a mythology: two poems for voices - "Wild Man's Butte" (broadcast 1977) and "The Exiles' Catalogue" (b. 1978), as well as the radio play "The Chrome Paps" (b. 1978).[1]

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[1] Elizabeth Allen, "Interview with Anne Szumigalski," Waves 14: 1 & 2 (1985): 54-59; the "Anne Szumigalski" entry in Howard Fink, ed., "Canadian National Theatre on the Air II: 1962-1985 - CBC Radio Drama in English, A Descriptive Bibliography and Union List," vol. 2 (Kingston: Quarry Press, t.b.p.) 3 vols.; Gordon Ripley and Anne Mercer, Who's Who in Canadian Literature 1992-93, by Ripley and Mercer (Teeswater: Reference Press, 1992) 328; Anne Szumigalski, Doctrine of Signatures (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1983); and Anne Szumigalski, Dogstones: Selected and New Poems (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1986).

W. O. MITCHELL'S *JAKE AND THE KID*
REVIVAL SERIAL (1969-1970)(alphabtical list)

"And So Is the West" (radio play script), directed by
Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 10 August
1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 29 pp., 30 mins.,
Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies (C.C.B.S.) script
no. M11 1994.[1]

"Cabin Fever" (radio play script), directed by Esse W.
Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 27 November 1969,
Calgary, National AM Network, 28 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S.
script no. M11 1991.

"Crocus Under the Microscope" (radio play script),
directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl,
broadcast 6 July 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 22
pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 2007.

"Hair Is Here to Stay" (radio play script), directed
by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 13
August 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 27 pp., 30
mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1997.

"Hearts and Crocuses" (radio play script), directed by
Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 10 July
1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 22 pp., 30 mins.,
C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1995.

"Hip, Thigh and Shinbone" (radio play script),
directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl,
broadcast 24 February 1970, Calgary, National AM Network,
24 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 2000.

"King of All the Country" (radio play script),
directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl,
broadcast 24 November 1969, Calgary, National AM Network,
27 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1988.

"Little Did I Know" (radio play script), directed by
Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 9 July
1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 27 pp., 30 mins.,
C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1996.

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[1] The script number is the main reference and locator
of CBC radio drama scripts available at the Concordia
Centre for Broadcasting Studies' archives.

"Love's Wild Magic" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 17 February 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 25 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1999.

"The Man Who Came to Rummy" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 26 November 1969, Calgary, National AM Network, 27 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1990.

"A Man's Best Friend" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 7 July 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 25 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 2003.

"Mind Over Madam" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 25 November 1969, National AM Network, 27 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1989.

"Murder Will Out" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 8 July 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 26 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 2004.

"Nature's Got Her Flags Flyin'" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 18 February 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 30 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 2002.

"One Hundred Per-Cent Canadian" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 20 February 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 27 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 2001.

"Somethin's Gotta Go" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 11 August 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 25 pp. 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 2006.

"Unfinished Business" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 14 August 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 28 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1993.

"Watch Them Arteries" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 12 August 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 30 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 2005.

"Well, Well, Well" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 28 November 1969, National AM Network, 31 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1992.

"Woman Trouble" (radio play script), directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 16 February 1970, Calgary, National AM Network, 29 pp., 30 mins. C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1998.

WESTERN CBC RADIO DOCUMENTARY-DRAMAS BROADCAST
BY CBC CALGARY DURING THE 1960s AND 1970s[1]

Stewart Boston, "Problem in Judaea" (radio play script), produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 11 April 1971, Calgary, National AM Network, 29 pp., 30 mins., Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies (C.C.B.S.) script no. M11 1949.[2]

Frank Dabbs, "The Ramberg Trial" (radio play script), produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 26 March 1976, Calgary, National AM Network, 31 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1879.

- - -, "The Something for Nothing Gang" (radio play script), produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast between 1965-1971, Calgary, National AM Network, 66 pp., 60 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1882.

Fred Diehl, "Alberta Calling" (radio play script), produced by Diehl, broadcast 4 January 1967, Calgary, National AM Network, 21 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1983.

Bill Fraser, "But, We've Come a Long Way" (radio play script), produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 22 June 1966, Calgary, National AM Network, 24 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1881.[3]

- - -, "Massacre at Frog Lake" (radio play script), produced by Irene Prothoe, broadcast 9 May 1976, Calgary, National AM Network, 49 pp., 60 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1873.

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[1] See the preface for further details on the universe of Western English-language CBC radio dramas selected for analysis.

[2] The script number is the main reference and locator of CBC radio drama scripts available at the Concordia Centre for Broadcasting Studies' archives.

[3] Although this play is labelled as a "Fantasy," it shares many of the cultural and imaginative features of the Western CBC documentary-drama genre.

Bill Fraser, "The Romance of Coal" (radio play script),
     produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 11 November 1971,
     Calgary, National AM Network, 19 pp., 30 mins.,
     C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1984.

Bonnie Le May, "Frontier Doctor" (radio play script),
     produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 24 June 1973,
     Calgary, National AM Network, 50 pp., 60 mins.
     C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1863.

---, "The Midwife" (radio play script), produced by Fred
     Diehl, broadcast 17 June 1973, Calgary, National AM
     Network, 52 pp., 60 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11
     1862.

---, "North West Mounted Police" (radio play script),
     produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 13 May 1973,
     Calgary, National AM Network, 94 pp., 120 mins.,
     C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1864.

Ken Mitchell and Bev Koester, "The Bald Eagle" (radio play
     script), produced by Irene Prothroe, broadcast 29
     August 1976, Calgary, National AM Network, 46 pp., 60
     mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11 1869.

Elsie Park Gowan, "The Men in the News" (radio play
     script), produced by Fred Diehl, broadcast 4 March
     1967 (1st broadcast 12 March 1941), Calgary, Local
     Network, 25 pp., 30 mins., C.C.B.S. script no. M11
     1851.