Western CBC Radio Dramas of 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: Regionalism, Postcoloniality, and the Western Canadian Myth of Beginnings

Graça Maria de Sousa

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

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), these playwrights are able to "elevate [their] environment to expression" 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, 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 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 Sounds Real: Radio in Everyday Life, 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.

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". This postcolonial
analysis addresses this precise question by considering the role of radio in reflecting, creating, and shaping a Western Canadian myth. It approaches 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 myth¹⁴ (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 (consciously¹⁷
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)\(^8\) 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"1", 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 Prothoe 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* and

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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) 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"21.

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"21.
NOTES - Preface


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.


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 The Lovely Treachery of Words.


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.

The Lovely Treachery of Words 159.

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


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 *The Modern Century*, 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).


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 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". 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". 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".

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". 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*. 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".

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) 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. Historians such as L. H. Thomas, Donald Swainson, and J. E. Rea argue that during this settlement period, the Prairie provinces were treated as colonies of a Canada dominated by two central provinces: Ontario and Quebec. 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
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 romantic¹⁶ myth of Western
potential. 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. 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 enthusiasm, 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.

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.

Dick Harrison explains that this romantic social vision of West as archetypal garden and new and ideal society 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.
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 discontent²⁵ 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 consciousness²⁹ 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 pride39 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 return42:

I think that a great many people who grew up as we did in the prairies could hardly wait to get
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 origins46 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": "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 beginnings49 fuelling Prairie poetics50 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
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 origins57 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. 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 scruffy little
place. But as a remembered place, as a dreamed
place it has great resonance.

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.

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

* * *

As a boundless dream world with a poetic affinity, 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
turn inward 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 much as Suknaski is able to recover an indigenous mythology by returning, in memory, to record and re/invent his ancestral home, Wood Mountain.

These CBC radio playwrights explore a Western postcolonial expression through this magic realism 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
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.\textsuperscript{71}

At the imaginative level, this mythic form de-centres the Western narrative into Frye's defining sense of story as a retelling.\textsuperscript{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."\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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).”

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"."
NOTES - Chapter 1


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.


12. Thomas 63-64.

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


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.


18. Owram 3 and 57.


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).


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.


32. Harrison, Unnamed Country 34-35.


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."


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.


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.


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.


45. Harrison, Unnamed Country 189.


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.


49. Munton 88.


52. Harrison, Unnamed Country 179.


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


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.


60. Enright and Cooley 29.


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


65. In "Magic or Realism: The Marvelloius 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.


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


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).


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.


77. Kroetsch, Creation 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.

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". 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" (broadcast in 1975) and George Ryga's "Seasons of a Summer Day" (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.

The first play, Margaret Hollingsworth's "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). But Jess, who returns from the
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 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 of 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
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...
JESS-g. Sssssshh. 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)

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:

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.
BRN. 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
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 "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 centering 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 fueled 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. 16

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
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 \textit{internally} through Tim and Jan's urban house
whose funeral-parlour smell betrays their dying marriage
and \textit{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". The sense of an unordered urban wilderness, a "wild West,"
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 representation 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 centering 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
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 legacy 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.


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


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.

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


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 *Jake and the Kid* serial has become part of what Harry Boyle describes as "broadcast mythology". Mitchell's popular tales about small-town Prairie life made their Canadian debut in *Maclean's* 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 *Maclean's*, he discovered the dramatic potential of CBC radio with a national audience "already trained in radio listening" during the war years.

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 *Maclean's* episodes. Mitchell subsequently developed a new *Jake and the Kid* radio series which featured over 200 original episodes broadcast over the next ten years, some of which were also adapted for television. 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.

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_. The Mitchell sub-series was produced by Fred Diehl and directed by Esse Ljungh who had produced the earlier highly successful _Jake and the Kid_ radio stories from 1954 to 1956 as well as sporadic episodes from 1957 to 1963. 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 which had "commanded faithful audiences of over half-a-million".

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, 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." 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.\(^\text{15}\)

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

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"\(^\text{18}\):
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 fictional town filled with what Yates describes as "false-fronted" buildings and citizens²⁰, 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 fronts²¹; 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 genealogy24 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, 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.

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," 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," "Hearts and Crocuses," and "Woman Trouble." The Jake and the Kid serial is not about telling new stories, but rather about retelling old ones through a new regional perspective.

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
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)

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 Godfroy 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
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.
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:

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. Mmmhm.

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:
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
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 "fella' 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
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) Just 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". 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 Henshaw'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 Henchraw 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.
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 Saskatchewan's public schools, he also
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:

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 'n winter here. How hot it gets in summer. i a dry. We're snobbish about our dust spots. 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:

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

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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 Canadian 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.
NOTES - Chapter 3

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


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.


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.


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).


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 cow pasture 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).


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 V:.:lvanizin' an' put a foundation..
REPEAT.  Enterprises.  New enterprises....
JAKE.  Not that I noticed. (7)

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


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."


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)


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."


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.


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

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 Firewod 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. 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 inherited Canadian history seems to compel these playwrights to turn to myth. In *Labyrinths of Voice: Conversations with Robert Kroetsch*, 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 of 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". 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" (broadcast in 1966), Fraser's "The Romance of Coal" (broadcast in 1971), Fred Diehl's "Alberta Calling" (broadcast in 1967), and Frank Dabbs' "The Something For Nothing Gang" (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
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
history is a thing made to be rewritten by ordinary mortals" (35)\textsuperscript{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 deconstructs 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 Sacred 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
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, 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 shuttered 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).
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. 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" (broadcast in 1973), Le May's "The Midwife" (broadcast in 1973), Le May's "Frontier Doctor" (broadcast in 1973), and Ken Mitchell and Bev Koester's "The Bald Eagle" (broadcast in 1976). Bonnie Le May's 1973 two-part
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 tenth "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 *Narrating Our Past: The Social Construction of Oral History*, 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
two generations and that within these two generations lies the entire framework for story-making.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{23} In his literary anthropology, Fernando Poyatos describes the voyage in terms of its settlement function: "voyages establish borders, turn physical space into geography"\textsuperscript{24}. Poyatos also defines it as "a first language, a first signification"\textsuperscript{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\textsuperscript{26},
departure and return, roots and motion, horse and house, 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 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...."

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 *Magic Realism Rediscovered 1918-1980*, Seymour Menton suggests that magic realist art and literature aim at affecting the intellect rather than the emotions. 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." 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 Alcians:

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
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. This renewed name also attests to a regenerative cultural resettlement process. Marty eventually resettles in Edmonton and has two more children
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.
NOTES - Chapter 4


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.


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


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.


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


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.


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,"


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 radio play "The Exiles' Catalogue: A Poem for Voices" (broadcast in 1978) is structured like Robert Kroetsch's "Seed Catalogue" (published in 1977), a long poem Mandel describes as "the central poem of the Canadian West". "Seed Catalogue" is part of Kroetsch's continuing poem "Field Notes". 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 Patterns of Isolation in English Canadian Fiction, John Moss describes exile in postcolonial terms, as part of "our emergence into national being," into a "self-determining, self-defining nation". Moss identifies four patterns of exile which have defined Canadian historical development and shaped the imagination of Western and other regional writers: the garrison, the frontier, the colonial, and the immigrant experience. 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".
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)

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." O'Connor further notes that the sea is part of the personal memory of many European settlers who came West by ocean voyage.

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. 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 accommodate 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.

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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 reflect 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: 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". 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
logically in time and that have a beginning and an end". 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 Pronunciation," "voice over, confident," "lovingly, 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 rhythmic 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 accommodate 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."

These fragmented voice patterns, layered within thematic movements, 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."
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 all them things you brought me. Still got 'em in my drawer in the bedroom. I used to love pretty things. Like them pearls. And the little rings. Just look at these hands. Can't even touch

Bangles from Africa and gold pins. The long rope of amber fetched from the Baltic seabed. The star of sea pearls from Japan. Rose silk scarves from, from.....

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them scarves now. They snag so easy. Things aren't like that out here. 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 Myth and Meaning: Five Talks for Radio, 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 movements28, 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".10.
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
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:

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
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 futed 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-

(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

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 centering 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 ain't no one home. (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
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)

*

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.32 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 of 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.3

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


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.


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).

10. Moss 11.


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


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.


27. De Lone 231 and 234.

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


32. Scoggan 39.


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)
CONCLUSION

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

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". 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


WORKS CITED

(A) Western CBC Radio Dramas:


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


(B) Secondary Sources:


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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: The Truth and Other Stories (1972); Interstices of Night (1979); Wild Man's Butte (poetry, with Anne Szumigalski, 1979); The Last Hiding Place (1982); Uprooted: The Arts and Life of Ernest Lindner (1983); and Journey/Journée (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


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.P.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 (pla' , 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

BONNIE LE MAY (b. 1931)
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
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).
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
Sake (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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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 17, 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
ANNE SZUMIGASKI (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: B0000m (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 focusing 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

APPENDIX B

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

"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

"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

"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.,

"Hip, Thigh and Shinbone" (radio play script),
directed by Esse W. Ljungh, produced by Fred Diehl,
broadcast 24 February 1970, Calgary, National AM Network,

"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,

"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.,

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 C

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

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.,

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.

--- 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.

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