Catholic Integralism and Marian Receptivity in Wayne Johnston's Newfoundland: *Baltimore's Mansion* and the Catholic Imaginary

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Until 1949, many Newfoundlanders perceived their home as a sovereign "country" with the potential to become the "Republic of Newfoundland" (Johnston 43; Richardson 16-17). While technically still a colony of Britain, Newfoundland effectively gained self-rule in 1832 when the House of Assembly was established. It was not until 1855 that Newfoundland achieved a "full grant of Responsible Government" (Prowse 471). Still, between 1855 and 1934, Newfoundland established a legacy of self-determination; indeed, the colony was on the verge of developing into a republic before it settled to become a province of Canada, or so the losing party tells it. In Wayne Johnston's memoir, *Baltimore's Mansion* (1999), Aunt Freda describes this political context:

> "Once we had a country, but because we made a mess of it, the British took it back." Freda's words. She said that from 1855 to 1934, Newfoundland was a self-governing colony of Britain. "Just a fancy phrase for a country," his father [Charlie] said. Since 1934 when it had, because of helping Britain win the war, not a penny to its name, the British were "in charge.". . .
>
> "Things might not be any better if we get it back," his father [Charlie] says. "They might be worse."
>
> "They'll be better," he [Arthur] says.
>
> "Will they? You got it all figured out?"
>
> He nods solemnly.
>
> His father laughs. (43)

It may surprise some of Johnston's readers to learn that Confederation almost did not happen: the independence movement was defeated by less than one percent. Johnston's memoir, which is haunted by the

spectre of the Republic of Newfoundland, is a political lament that cannot be understood unless readers engage with the family's profound sense of religious loss. This literary act of mourning, voiced through Johnston's family history, grieves the ruptured imaginary of Catholic integralism.[1] Catholic integralism is an ideological strategy for maintaining a cultural-religious synthesis under which "all human activities, especially political and social activities, [are understood] to be impregnated by a Catholic inspiration" (Kogan qtd. in Kertzer 101). Integralist cultures assume a monologic approach to the social sphere by attempting to mount an entire political framework on one religious system. By constructing a totalizing Catholic social imaginary, these cultures minimize or exclude all competing social and political forms. Johnston describes the shift from an integralist to a pluralist mode by contrasting the political views of his grandfather, Charlie, and his father, Arthur. In the course of the narrative, Johnston discloses that while Arthur was vocally opposed to Confederation for integralist reasons, Charlie likely voted for it, causing a rift between father and son. To express the depth of this rift, Johnston constructs a philosophical impasse between Arthur and Charlie — a "grievous wound" — which operates as a symbolic locus of trauma originating from their contending theological and political self-understandings (77):

> It would be years before I understood the nature of that wound: on July 22, 1948, in a referendum ordered by Britain, in which the choices were independence or confederation with Canada, Newfoundlanders voted by the barest of margins for confederation. On the Avalon, the vote was two to one for independence, and outside the Avalon two to one for Canada. "Forgive them Lord, they know not what they did," my father said. (13)

When read in the context of Johnston's writing to this date, *Baltimore's Mansion* marks an important point of development, and central to this importance is Arthur's theo-political wound. Johnston has focused on a father's soul sickness before, in his novel *The Divine Ryans* (1990), where the mysterious allegiance of the dead father — his homosexual desire — lies hidden from the son — the narrator, Draper Doyle. As with Johnston's memoir, this site of mystery produces a sense of tension that draws the reader through the story. In *Baltimore's Mansion*, however, this father-son tension is situated in the context of Johnston's family history, where it is doubled, providing narrative space for exploring the

difference between Charlie and Arthur, as well as the less pronounced divide between Arthur and Wayne. As the narrative structure becomes more complex in *Baltimore's Mansion*, Johnston utilizes the memoir form to address the liminal space between recollected family history and mythology. Critics gave intense scrutiny to a similar exploration of genre in *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* (1998), where Johnston spices up his biographical narrative about Joey Smallwood by introducing Sheilagh Fielding, a fictional romantic interest and subversive historian.[2] Both *Colony* and *Baltimore's Mansion* return to the psychic wound of Newfoundland's loss of nationhood. Yet while *Colony* is an ironic treatment of Smallwood's well-known political career, *Baltimore's Mansion* invites the reader to contemplate and explore the many ways that Smallwood's political success affects the Johnston's religious imaginary.[3] Thus, in *Baltimore's Mansion*, Johnston returns to the topic of the Catholic family, as well as the device of a father's mysterious taboo allegiance: Charlie's "closeted" vote for Confederation (58).

The religious discourse that Johnston associates with this turn to the family, however, is far from closeted in contemporary Atlantic Canadian literature. The Catholicism of *Baltimore's Mansion* is an example of what Jose Casanova calls the "deprivatization of religion" (211-35) which re-publicizes the interpenetration of theological and political ideologies, and demonstrates a shift in the configuration of the secular-religious binary in the Western social imaginary. Moreover, the deprivatization of religion in Johnston's story shares many literary and theological similarities with David Adams Richards's fictional exploration of Catholicism, a central theme in his writing since he began publishing the Miramichi trilogy in 1989. Johnston's theo-politics also resonate with Ann-Marie MacDonald's complex critique of Catholicism in *Fall on Your Knees* (1996) as well as Lynn Coady's dark comedy about a Cape Breton Catholic family in *Strange Heaven* (1998). Moreover, Johnston is not the only Newfoundland author to revisit this particular legacy of Catholicism: Patrick Kavanagh, in *Gaff Topsails* (1996), and Michael Crummey, in *The Wreckage* (2005), also attempt to unravel the interpenetrating discourses of theology and politics that underwent a tectonic shift when Newfoundland joined Confederation.[4]

Catholicism is, thus, a significant discourse in contemporary Atlantic Canadian literature, a discourse associated with a number of important issues for the region, including political sovereignty, place,

epistemology, semiotics, sexuality, human flourishing, and emancipation. Specifically, Catholicism in Newfoundland literature is symbolically linked with Confederation. In addition to its important role in the political disputes portrayed in the memoir, Catholicism influences the form of *Baltimore's Mansion*, as Johnston explores the spectrum of subject positions that are internal to Catholicism through the family dynamic of grandfather–father–son, which mirrors the form of the Trinity: Father–Son–Holy Spirit.

I argue that the theo-political visions of Newfoundland represented in Charlie (democratic Catholicism) and Arthur (integralism) advance contending accounts of modernity and the rise of technocracy. After establishing the centrality of Catholicism to the pre-Confederation Ferryland of Arthur's youth, I describe the double bind that defines Arthur's tragic sensibility. The central irony of Arthur's life is that while he resisted the erosion of the integralist framework, he was at the same time complicit with its destabilization. In spite of this irony, Arthur's lament, as seen through the eyes of Johnston's autobiographical persona ("Wayne"), should be understood as a legitimate form of neo-localist resistance to an invasive political movement and episteme.[5] Lastly, I describe how the relationship of the Johnston males — Charlie, Arthur, and Wayne — is analogous to the Trinity. In this context, the mysterious ending of *Baltimore's Mansion*, Johnston's speculation about Charlie's pro-Confederation vote, is crucial because it allows Johnston to register the legitimacy of his father's spiritual wound while also locating the salve for this wound in Charlie's prayerful vote for change. What Arthur sees as an inauthentic mode of being — a betrayal — is, from Wayne's perspective, the authentic voice of tradition.

This imaginative remapping of Catholic tradition allows Johnston multiple levels of commentary on the demise of the theo-political integralism of pre-Confederation Ferryland. The loss of Ferryland's comprehensive economic-theological-social imaginary — signified by Charlie's shattered anvil — is a cause of great anomie for Arthur, in part because it unhinges the family legacy of blacksmithing, but also because it destabilizes the central Catholic doctrine of the analogy of being (*analogia entis*), which is implicit throughout the text. This doctrine claims that humanity's relationship with God is understood to depend on a fundamental similarity of being between God and humanity, a similarity that is maintained across the ontological differences

between an eternal Being and temporal beings (Hart 242-49). This analogy also signifies a reluctance in Catholic thought to affirm the total rupture between the signifier and the signified, thus preserving the potential for language to access reality and, moreover, the ability for humans to receive the Word of God through the realm of material and semiotic existents — the lowercase human word. In Catholic thought, this reception of the Word of God is primarily conceived as a Marian mode, whereby the Church receives Christ into its sanctuary-womb and "ponders" the materialized message of God (Balthasar 338-42, 362-64).

Johnston positions the appearance of the Virgin Berg at the beginning of his memoir, inviting the reader to consider how it is that the receptive Marian mode of Newfoundland Catholicism is destabilized by the loss of meaning that occurs through Confederation. I argue that if we do not attend to Johnston's emphasis on this "enchantment" of original goodness in a receptive Marian Newfoundland, we fail to see the theo-political depth implicit in Arthur's grievous wound. This wound is inflicted by the deconstructive impact of the modern nation-state on cultures that maintain an intimate imaginative connection with the land. The land undergoes a topographical conversion from one set of imaginary correlates, Marian Newfoundland, to another, Canadian nationalism. By attending to the narrative structure, the critique of instrumental reason, and the overall "inculturation" of Catholicism in the Newfoundland imaginary, I demonstrate that theological themes pervade the entire texture of Johnston's memoir such that they cannot be seen as any sort of expendable "residue of particularity" (Laclau 143).

Incarnation

Baltimore's Mansion begins, like Genesis, with two myths: the myth of the Virgin Berg (a Marian apparition in the form of an iceberg) and, secondly, the Arthurian legend. These myths frame the stories of Charlie, Arthur, and Wayne. Wayne describes the integralist imaginary of Charlie's household: "My father grew up in a house that was blessed with water from an iceberg. A picture of the iceberg hung on the walls in the front rooms of the many houses I grew up in. . . . My Grandmother, Nan Johnston, said the proper name for the iceberg was Our Lady of the Fjords, but we called it the Virgin Berg" (Johnston 2). Charlie's house is blessed with "droplets of water that thawed after ten thousand years" and were later consecrated in the church basement by a

bishop (5). According to Catholic doctrine, nature can be invested with grace; Thomas Aquinas wrote that "grace does not destroy nature but perfects it" (*Aquinas* I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2). Nature is, thus, a venue through which God can manifest himself, and the central figure of this Creator-creation unity is Jesus Christ. The material existence of God is received and cultivated in the Virgin Mary, a paradoxical figure who represents, among many things, the ability for humans to receive the Word of God as mediated through flesh, material, particularity, and locality.

Johnston's narrative of the iceberg that bore an "undeniable likeness to the Blessed Virgin Mary" (2) is told with great humour, but this humour does not take away from the enchantment of the natural world that Mary represents. For those "thousands" who caught a glimpse of the mammoth "apparition," the primary response was awe. Charlie was among the crowd that fell on their knees to honour this living replica of a Marian statue on 24 June 1905: "Charlie imagined that, under the water, was the marble pedestal . . . and her head was tilted down as in statues to meet in love and modesty the gaze of supplicants below" (3). For the generation of Catholics of Nan and Charlie's age and social stratification, this event was seen as evidence that the divine creator of the world was invested in Newfoundland and speaking to Newfoundlanders. Charlie's mother fell on her knees and said "the Hail Mary over and over and blessed herself repeatedly, while his father stared as though witnessing some end-of-the-world-heralding event" (3). The twelve-year-old Charlie was terrified. When he saw the puff of smoke rise from the photographer's flash he thought the Virgin had had the "mechanism confounded": "Even then it seemed to him that the Virgin must have lent the man's machine the power to re-create in black and white her image on the paper, the same way she had willed the elements to fashion her image out of ice" (4). Fisherman attended to the apparition, collecting ice and water that was later stored in the church basement and "used sparingly as holy water in the sacrament of Extreme Unction and in rare cases, in baptisms and the blessings of houses" (5). The family forge was blessed with some of this invested water: "My father told me this as if it were self-evident why a blacksmith should be so honoured" (5). Nan claimed that the stains from the Holy Water lasted for thirty years (5).

Young Wayne, who was told of this story at Catholic school by nuns, had vivid daydreams about the Virgin Berg (6). The iceberg

had appeared on the feast day of St. John the Baptist, after whom the city of St. John's was named, which was also the day Cabot discovered Newfoundland in 1497: "That June 24 was also the day of Cabot's discovery of Newfoundland left no question in the minds of Catholics that the iceberg was a sign in confirmation of the fact that God was one of them and a sign to Protestants of God's disfavour" (6). This symbolic unity of religion and politics confirmed the integralist imaginary, and also acted as a confirmation of God's ontological connection to Newfoundland's natural surroundings. Through such signs and wonders, the temporal world becomes the stage of an overarching analogy of the eternal realm. For Arthur, who grew up with the "certainty" of this miraculous event, the Newfoundland Catholic imaginary was endowed with a sacred aura and a false sense of eternal stability. In the revelatory light of the Virgin Berg, the signs of the Republic of Newfoundland, Ferryland, Avalon, blacksmithing, and the train, seem to glow red-hot with enchantment and purpose. In celebrating this organic integration of society, the citizens of Ferryland were not as unique as they might seem; integralism was a popular political form in the West.

In Johnston's world, the Incarnation — a sign of graced nature — is the primary fact of this imagination, a fact that influences his political view and has structured his family's relationship to work, land, and self. Moreover, the Marian capacity to receive the Word of God is caught up in this cultural imaginary, such that radical shifts in the political sphere destabilize Arthur's sense of spirituality. Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai claims that "the image, the imagined, the imaginary" are all terms that have become central to life in globalized modernity, where subjects have to negotiate new sites of agency amid shifting semiotic fields:

> the imagination [is now] a social practice . . . the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work, and a form of *negotiation between sites of agency . . . and globally defined fields of possibility. . . .* The imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order. (31)

When Arthur's enchanted Ferryland is ruptured by the loss of Newfoundland nationhood and the differentiated spheres of modernity, Johnston compares him to King Arthur, claiming that he has suffered

an analogous "grievous wound." This wound is aggravated by the fragile state of an exclusive Catholic integralism that requires a broad, unified social consensus. Arthur assumes a melancholic position to prolong his love for the lost unity of Catholic Ferryland; he sublimates his imaginary Ferryland in order to avoid his loss of love for it in the present.[6]

Arthur is dealt his grievous wound while living in a land named the Avalon Peninsula — Avalon being the mystical land where no suffering is supposed to enter. Lord Baltimore (George Calvert), who first christened his new-found-land "Avalon," commissioned the building of a mansion in Arthur's hometown in the 1620s. Baltimore's conversion to Catholicism put him on the wrong side of ecclesiastical battles in England, so his new colony was intended to be a Catholic colony, yet one that tolerated Protestants. After one scurvy-ridden winter in Newfoundland, 1628-29, Baltimore (who also founded the colony of Maryland) left Avalon "to fisherman, that are able to encounter storms and hard weather" and sailed for the "warmer climate" of Virginia (Baltimore). The analogy between the ideal Avalon and the material Avalon Peninsula frames the narrative that Johnston tells of his father's wound, "So there were two Avalons, the Avalon where we lived and the Avalon to which, like King Arthur, we would travel when we died" (10). Baltimore's wishful naming of Avalon signifies a desire for the eternal in earth, a desire Arthur Johnston manifests when he critiques the movement to enter into Confederation with Canada. Arthur's desire for the eternal realm causes him to collapse the difference between *Being* and *being*. Theologian David Bentley Hart argues that when the two poles of the analogy of being are confused we are left captive to the anthropological turn that Kant's theory of subjectivity represents; accordingly, "the most eminent truth of our being is inverted to the ground of the I," from which "springs all the grandeur, melancholy, and cruel impotence of metaphysics in its 'nihilistic vocation'" (Hart 245). The "I" that is divorced from transcendental meaning in the cosmos is faced with the sublime potential of overcoming obstacles through inward resources, and also the converse truth — that these inward resources in humanity are the only hope of humanity. Johnston perceives this nihilistic doppelgänger of theology and correlates these positions with his two Arthur types: his father (Arthur), who desires a fixed eternal essence for Newfoundland, and his grandfather (Charlie), who recognizes that while moments in Newfoundland may be consecrated, the eternal exists beyond.

Epistemology and Instrumental Reason

How the relationship between the immanent and the transcendent is conceived influences the form of rationality that is embraced by a culture. Charles Taylor argues that with the loss of classical views of reason, which he calls "ontic logos," the enlightenment world shifted its focus from teleological causes to efficient causes, thus permitting the technological culture we have today (*Sources* 186-87). By severing the final cause (telos) from the efficient cause, the innovators of the inductive method — Galileo, Francis Bacon, Descartes, Newton — created an episteme that gives, through empiricism, an aura of certainty to the immanent and a ghastly, confused cast to the transcendent (Eze 25-37). Taylor claims that as the imaginative connection to transcendent reason (*logos*) is severed, reason becomes increasingly instrumental. Reason as the ontic logos is conceived as something that has an ontological status: "The Ideas . . . are not just objects waiting to be perceived; they are self-manifesting; the Idea of Ideas is itself a source of light, following his master image. The logos is ontic" (*Sources* 257). According to Aquinas, this "Reason" is Christ himself, and when the mind interacts with material, it reflects on its representations through the illumination of Christ (Maritain 70-74).

In Johnston's narrative, the shift from integralism to modernity changes the norms of rationality and efficiency. Canadian federalism and the automobile are innovations that create new modes of being-in-the-world. Johnston's grandfather, Charlie, was Ferryland's blacksmith, a vocation that Johnstons had held since 1848 (Johnston 29-30); however, on a memorable day in Arthur's childhood, Charlie goes to the blessed forge (5, 32), strikes the anvil, and it shatters under his blow. Arthur accompanies his father to St. John's, where they buy a new anvil, and as they return to Ferryland, Charlie tells Arthur that "[t]here'll be no more need for blacksmiths soon"; Arthur will have to fish for his living (36). Instead, he leaves Newfoundland to study agriculture in Nova Scotia. When he returns to Newfoundland, he discovers that farming is impossible in Newfoundland and finds himself working for the Canadian department of fisheries, compiling arcane knowledge of fish.

Arthur despises the fact that he is a civil servant working for the "Fisheries Research Board of Canada Biological Station" (124). Johnston tells us that Newfoundlanders intuitively knew what such bureaucratic officialdom meant: "The Station was regarded with scornful amusement

by the people of St. John's, who, while they had no idea what went on inside it, were sure it was a variety of high-flown nonsense never heard of in Newfoundland before Confederation. Its long, ponderous name alone was proof of that" (125). This "high-flown nonsense" was strange to Newfoundlanders because of its ideological underpinnings: scientific progress and instrumental reason. The "dis-embedded" gaze of scientific method clashed with the "embedded" habitus of the fishermen and their sense of unquestioned ontological security (Taylor, *Secular* 447). Moreover, certain technologies had blended into the "ancient" structures of the outport lifeworld, such as Arthur's beloved train, but the broad-scaled launch into "progress" that occurred under the name of Canadian nationalism grated against that lifeworld and gave rise to a strong response. In this political debate, as Johnston relates it, organic "authenticity" is pitted against apostasy and "inauthentic" reinvention or, according to Arthur, those who support the maintenance of the train are pitted against those who want to replace the train with the progressive bus. When confronted with his opponent, the "fact facing bus-boomer" (Johnston 79) dressed as a mummer, Arthur's theo-political resistance to "progressive politics" takes up the endangered train as a political symbol:

> "We're a country of fact-facing bus-boomers," my father said, grinning, looking out the window [of the train].
>
> "A province," the fact-facing bus-boomer said. "We're a province now, not a country. Never were a country, really. If you know your history." I heard in his voice a politeness that was meant to be transparently insincere, patronizing, the tone of someone who held in reserve a trump card he need never play. I could just see it. A riot on the train fought over a matter decided twenty years ago.
>
> "I know *my* history," my father said. "A province of progress, is that what we are?" "A province of progress" was once of Joey's last slogans.
>
> "Better than a backward country," the fact-facing bus-boomer said. (79)

Having redoubled his effort to reverse history, Arthur internalizes the theo-political debate and refuses to accommodate himself to the new (Protestant) Newfoundland in a way that might give rise to a fuller experience of being. This, the story implies, is up to Wayne.

The resistant Newfoundlanders, like Arthur, sensed that they were losing the traditions that keep a culture rooted. As federalism remade Newfoundlanders into Canadians, modernity threatened to alienate them from the land they knew, loved, and blessed. This technocratic federalism challenges the tightly knit conceptions of tradition, place, creation, and grace that are at work in the Catholic imaginary of Arthur's Newfoundland. Ironically, Arthur internalizes both federalism and modernity as he attempts to resist Confederation, and while he feels that his plight is a particular evil brought on by Joey Smallwood, he is not able to see that the loss of autochthony is a general condition in modernity that springs from the differentiation of spheres and the pluralization of cultures. In this imaginary, change does not emanate from a political centre like St. John's; instead, the acentric global market facilitates significant cultural shifts that appear to have no origin or first cause. Still, the effects of a liberal market have existential ramifications. Arthur is condemned to the freedom of an individual identity, a mode of subjectivity that endangers the group cohesion of rural Ferryland yet allows the individual to self-create. In his political mythology, however, Arthur is certain that the Marian receptivity of Ferryland is destabilized by its anti-Christ premier, Joey Smallwood, and his minions: the modern economy, technocracy, and federalism.

Arthur's polemical posture disguises his double bind: he cannot opt for what he desires, which is a sense of rootedness and vocation, but he doesn't want another traditional job either. He ends up choosing to study fish in order to avoid the fishery, but in making this choice, he is complicit with the federalism that he adamantly opposes. As much as he wants to preserve his rural imaginary, he does not want a rural job. The narrator claims that Arthur's choice to study fish was his method of avoiding fishing itself:

> It was some sort of an escape from fishing itself, this knowledge that he shared with me and whose acquisition was not required by his job. Sometimes it seemed that he was contriving a fascination with the ocean that he did not feel, as if he was trying to fool it into thinking that it didn't really have him, or that it did but that he didn't mind, that even if he were free to choose he would live the way he did and his lack of choice was therefore irrelevant. (126)

Ironically, Arthur's freedom to self-create restricts him from experiencing a sense of vocation. Arthur longs to have a calling that is "voiced"

by deep, even eternal, continuity with the past, but instead he is simply technologically efficient. The forces behind the economy, which to Arthur are federal forces, enact a ban on vocation while celebrating freedom. However, the scientific episteme that comes with the federal fisheries is problematic for Arthur because his knowledge alienates him from his people, even as he attempts to use it to fit in with the local fishermen:

> My father always took great pride in answering no when the fishermen asked him if he would like to have his fish cleaned and filleted. He would always do something to impress the fishermen, demonstrate some skill or knowledge that even they did not have. By lifting it by the gills with one hand, he would estimate a cod's weight within a few ounces. He was usually so close to the weight that showed on their scales that the fishermen shook their heads in disbelief. (135)

Technological efficiency, in Arthur's case, is not practical: the fisherman have no need for the cod's weight. This type of knowledge is disembedded from the habitus of the folk practice. As Arthur uses this abstract knowledge to impress the fisherman, he projects an aura of bureaucratic expertise into a lifeworld that was previously mapped by a simple economy.

Taylor argues that modern technological knowledge practices are not innocent, as they either cause, or develop from, a loss of belief in the correspondence between inwardness and the external cosmic order (what Taylor calls "ontic logos"). The Marian receptivity of the Catholic imaginary is, thus, severed from a holistic relationship with the cosmos; certainty, in the technological scheme, is transplanted from the cosmos to the efficient particular datum — the fish's mass. The episteme that Arthur performs with the fisherman on the dock is a wager in a complex and ongoing power game; he thinks his knowledge increases his charisma, casting him as a deflated leader of fishermen:

> Then he would overdo it, and tell them how old the fish was, and how you could tell how old it was, and in what depth and temperature of what it had lived and been caught. "You know your fish, sir," they'd say more politely than admiringly, for this was not fisherman's knowledge that he was displaying, not knowledge that would be of any real use to a fisherman. (136)

This game of supremacy that Arthur plays is overdetermined by his loss of rootedness and his double bind: "He had been one of them once, and a part of him really did want to impress them and win their admiration and acceptance" (136).

Wayne senses Arthur's liminality, and the consequential loss of meaning, and starts to manifest a similar desire for authenticity. He begins to romanticize the young boys who sell cod tongues for a dime a dozen, but the older narrator unmasks this illusion: "they were selling the tongues for their fathers and probably did not have a cent to call their own, but I either didn't know this or didn't stop long enough to consider their existence" (134-35).

Arthur's crisis of tradition, nation, and vocation is a spiritual crisis common in cultures of modernity, where it may seem that the only strategy of resistance is to "live in denial of [the] contradictions" of such a double bind (124). After leaving the dock, where Arthur faced the fruit of such contradictions directly, he experiences the pain of rootlessness: the grievous wound. Johnston tells us that the trips to Petty Harbour were "painfully awkward," as Arthur "tried to be both things at once and could not completely pledge himself to either, the lab man of the 'New Newfoundland' and the fisherman he used to be. The drive home was always made in silence" (136). Because Arthur was not given to his world as his father was, notions of divine presence and vocation, which cohered in Charlie's integralist imagination, were unstable for Arthur. The shift from the church-centred imaginary to the social reality of the post-Confederation marketplace produced conditions whereby resistant moderns, like Arthur, were pulled apart by the contradictions in which they came of age.

Trinity

While the destabilization of Marian receptivity is central to *Baltimore's Mansion*, Johnston adds another layer of complexity to his use of Christian analogical forms: his family myth mimics the form of God's social configuration in the Trinity. Johnston's analogy of the Trinity in his description of father, son, and narrator is similar to Augustine's hermeneutic device in *De Trinitate*, where he locates traces of the Trinity in human psychology. A brief description of the Christian Trinity helps to show how a version of it operates in Johnston's memoir:

> The Father forever sees and infinitely loves the whole depth of his being in the Son, illumined as responsive love in the fullness of the Spirit, and in the always determinate infinity of his triune being God begets all the riches of being — all that all things might ever be — in the image and light of his essence; and thus God himself is already his own analogy, his own infinite otherness and perfect likeness. (Hart 248)

Johnston's memoir is underwritten by a shadow of this peculiar structure, a structure that is already inwardly analogical. Beginning with what are as close to creation stories as a new *found* land can sustain (the genealogy, the Virgin Berg, the Arthurian legend, the first settlers of Newfoundland and Ferryland), Johnston proceeds to unfold his memoir through the stories of his grandfather and his father with what Lawrence Mathews calls a "self-effacing" technique. Mathews claims that Wayne takes "centre stage only when it becomes absolutely necessary for narrative coherence." He then adds, "in places, though, [Wayne's] own position crystallizes" (222). This leads me to question whose story *Baltimore's Mansion* is — Charlie's, or Arthur's, or Wayne's? The story could be said to live in the inter-subjective spaces of family and community, which seems appealing and yet misleading. Why, for instance, is the rest of Wayne's family given so little narrative space? After all, Johnston does mention that he had at least three brothers and a sister, all of whom remain absent from the narrative (174, 234).

The structure of Johnston's memoir comes into focus only when read as an analogy of the Trinity. Like the Trinity, it consists of three distinct persons who are paradoxically unified as one. The story, moreover, primarily explores the relationship between the Father, Charlie, and the Son, Arthur (13). Wayne, as Mathews claims, appears to float through the text. In the temporal analogy, Wayne is to Charlie and Arthur what the Spirit's bond of love is to the Father and the Son: he is the unifying, "synthetic" presence of love and communication. The story's development also follows the trajectory of revelation in the Bible: the father, first; the son, second; and the spirit, third — while all three are eternally co-equals. But before asking too much of Wayne, it is important to remember that the Johnston Trinity is an analogy of the divine Trinity. It is a fallen shadow of the real.

Although this reading could be sidelined as mere conjecture, I believe there is textual evidence for it. For one, Arthur's wound is simi-

lar to Christ's Passion. It is an excruciating, vexing struggle that has personal as well as collective effects. Arthur must work through his spiritual crisis so that Wayne does not inherit the burden of his father's contradictions. Secondly, the story of Arthur's ice accident (108-121), which fuses the mythic time of the King Arthur narrative with the temporal norms of realism, encodes the wound the son receives with the wounds of Christ. Arthur ruptures his spleen, obtaining a grievous physical wound but, against all odds, he makes it home. Consider the analogy with the crucifixion in the following lines:

> His father will not leave him, not even if he dies. He will tell himself his son is only resting and sit beside him in the snow. And so he can only save his father if he saves himself.
> He feels himself rising.
> He must be lifting me . . . (120-21)

The story also seems to encode the typological narrative of Abraham and Isaac embodied in the Crucifixion. The father and son go into the wilderness with horses, the son comes under trouble, and, miraculously, the father and son make it out alive.

Likewise, Wayne's experience in the church on the abandoned island makes little sense except as a localized retelling of the Holy Spirit descending in the form of the dove (Matt. 3:15-16, John 1:32-34). Wayne has decided to weather the coming "storm" in the dilapidated and destabilized church not far from his cabin. After the storm has been raging for some time, "a seagull glides down from the choir loft," flies out the window, and then back into the church, where he rises until he lands beyond the balustrade in "a show of grace, a show of force" (224). The bird repeats the action, and Wayne interprets his thoughts:

> He thinks that like him, I have taken refuge here and lack the sense to join him in the loft, where it must be warmer and where there is no snow, which he wants me to do, not out of any concern for my welfare but because he knows that sooner or later I will discover the loft. He is telling me, before I try to chase him off, that he is willing to share it.
>
> I have no intention of spending the night in here, but I accept his invitation. (225)

Wayne sits near the gull but not so close as to send him off. Then he falls asleep. When he awakes, he is frightened at the danger of freezing to death. He descends the stairs with haste, startling the gull, who flies among the rafters again. Wayne's experience strangely reverses the story of the Holy Spirit that reveals the Son of God. Instead, Wayne is associated with the Spirit, which is localized as a seagull like the symbolic blackbird from Wallace Stevens's "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird." Because Wayne dwells with the Holy Spirit, rising to sit with the gull rather than the gull descending to him, we understand, if we are thinking analogically, that he is the Spirit of this Trinity. This analogy fits the particularity of Johnston's narrator because it allows Wayne to "float" through the text and also to appear as a "person" — a third presence or hypostasis — when the narrative focuses solely on him.

That the gull descends at all must, in Trinitarian fashion (*perichoresis*), have some relationship to Christ as well. Because his father's search for identity is also his own, there is a sense in which grace will vouchsafe Wayne's future and bring about a restoration of identity, a certain revitalization of the Catholic imaginary. This humble restoration is the work that Johnston's memoir accomplishes. The seagull is, thus, a sign of providence. It also re-establishes a link between the Johnstons and enchanted nature. The gull's presence signifies that Wayne can once again sense the spirit in (an already graced) nature: receptivity is restored after integralism is ruptured. This is why it is Wayne, filling his grandfather's shoes, who flies to Avalon to welcome his "heartsick" father home from Alberta (248). Somehow he is able to heal his father — at least this is his role as the bond of love between Father and Son.

Politics of Theological Realism

As I have demonstrated, this thoroughly Catholic memoir is done an injustice if it is read without a conception of incarnational enchantment and Marian receptivity. The incarnation frames the story from the outset but also runs through the whole. My purpose has been to demonstrate that Arthur's existential crisis of identity is rooted in a theological shift that occurs as modernist patterns of thought, politics, and aesthetics colonize the pre-modern imaginary and its rendering of incarnation. A final consideration of the interwoven constellations of Catholicism and politics leads us farther into this problematic.

Because the land and its traditions have, for Arthur, a latent eternal-spiritual quality to them, change becomes almost heretical. Arthur's desire for Catholic integralism feeds his deep-seated resentment of shifting social forces, even while these social forces allow him to escape the determinism of traditional economies (that is, fishing, blacksmithing). When his resentment turns to resistance, Arthur's first cultural weapon is the spliced form of kitchen party humour and Catholic catechism that he performs with Wayne (65-66, 179-81). The object of these revised "Baltimore" catechisms is always to defame Joey Smallwood. "The Enemy was 'Joey'," Johnston claims:

> To us, he was a bow-tie wearing despot, who by the time I started school had been ruling Newfoundland for fifteen years. He was regarded with a mixture of terror and scornful amusement. He was the only premier Newfoundland had had since Confederation. Confederation had entered the world with Joey; he had led Newfoundlanders to it and tempted them to partake of it as surely as the serpent had led Eve to the apple. And we had thereby fallen from a state of grace that could never be recovered, been banished forever from the paradise of independence. (182-83)

At Smallwood's resignation in 1972, Aunt Eva claims, "It's a happy night in heaven" (184). They celebrate because Smallwood is figured as both the anti-Christ (245) and Satan himself, ruling over Newfoundland from his "secular basilica" (242). The only method of overturning his legacy is to be revealed by a Newfie Messiah:

> Q [Arthur]: Does he, pretender, occupy the throne?
> A [Wayne]: He does.
> Q: Has he who will displace him yet come into the world?
> A: He has.
> Q: In what most favoured region of the country does he dwell?
> A: Avalon.
> Q: Is he known to us?
> A: Perhaps.
> Q: He knows his destiny?
> A: Not yet.
> Q: Who might he be?
> A: He might be anyone. He might be me. (180-81)

To Arthur, the messianic presence is an undisclosed signifier, a being ready to overthrow the confederacy's hegemony, but he hopes for "the

perhaps" to come from his line. And yet Arthur's word of resistance is not eternal. His father, Charlie, whom Wayne imagines voting for Confederation, sees the voting booth as a sacred place where he enacts a sort of sacrament: "He wondered later if his hand was God guided to do what to him seemed and always will seem wrong" (245). Charlie felt divinely moved to make a shift that would rupture his community's imaginative understanding of the world. Johnston's speculation about his grandfather's vote for Confederation is extremely important for understanding how the ideology of tradition functions in the text. While Arthur sees himself as the great defender of tradition against the modern turn that Smallwood initiated, Johnston circumvents his father's appropriation of "the voice of tradition" through his grandfather. Charlie's vote for Confederation is seen as the legitimate, authentic choice of a traditional man, the symbol of Ferryland's connection to the colony of Lord Baltimore. However, Johnston leaves Charlie's choice open, forever a mystery, which is in opposition to his father's attempt to definitively locate the divine gift in the republic of Newfoundland.

Charlie's enchanted vote, the *x* that mimics the Priest's *x* with water from the Virgin Berg (267), is central to Johnston's theological interpretation of such a monumental change: "Something, some thing, a shift, a swing, a fall took place that would have taken place no matter which side won" (239). At the point of Arthur's exodus from federal Newfoundland, both he and Wayne renounce their nostalgia for integralism: "There is no point, in his case, trying to remember, or in mine to imagine, how things used to be. No path leads back from here to there" (239). Indeed, it is Wayne who narrates his grandfather's voting ritual as a choice baptized in prayer: "Bless me, Father. In one hand he holds a pencil" (244). Johnston's mythical ending allows for a new interpretation of the violent cultural shift that occurred at Confederation; he speculates on the mysterious occurrences that link his father's wound to the hand of God. Johnston accomplishes this retrieval through storytelling, through reconfiguring the imaginary and thereby restoring the theo-logic. Perhaps Johnston's greatest redeeming act in this mythmaking is his narration of how his Grandfather, having died with what Arthur labels the unforgivable sin (apostasy of the nation), passes into heaven. Johnston rediscovers God's blessing for him and his family by reaching into his father's chaos, retrieving order, and promising eternal stability in the afterlife. The last words of the memoir narrate

Charlie's intimate localities: "All are fixed in a moment that for him will never pass" (272). The afterlife has, thus, become the territory for the Johnston family's fervent geo-piety and the locus of fulfilment for all unrequited dreams.

Notes

[1] I am using the term *integralism* to denote an anti-pluralist ideology that permits no separation between politics and religion. This political-religious fusion, in the context of nineteenth-century Spain and France, has also been called "integrist." John Milbank defines *integrist* as "a totalizing theology which presents a complete system, whose details cannot be questioned without compromising the whole" (206-07). Against this proto-fascist understanding of integrist, Milbank defines integralism as a view of the human person as "always already . . . worked upon by divine grace" (206). He attributes this position to the theology of Maurice Blondel, Henri de Lubac, and Hans Urs von Balthasar, three thinkers whose writings are commonly considered to represent the core of *la nouvelle théologie* and an impetus for Vatican II. In this article, I am calling Milbank's subjective understanding of integralism "Marian receptivity." In contrast to Marian receptivity, which can be "reconfigured" after the fall of an imaginary, integralism, as I use it here, is what the attempt to maintain Christendom (not Christianity) turns into after the demise of Christendom and the pluralization of the religious sphere.

[2] Several critics have taken issue with Johnston's use of history. Rex Murphy publicized his distaste for Johnston's Smallwood in the *Globe and Mail*, claiming that Johnston did an injustice to Smallwood by deviating from the historical record (MacLeod 69-73). A month later, the *Globe and Mail* printed Johnston's defence of his use of fiction to engage history (69-73). Johnston's long-time critic Stuart Pierson also decried Johnston's fictionalization of "history" in his essay "Inexactitudes: Wayne Johnston, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*" (Pierson 216-45). Herb Wyile sees a degree of critical self-consciousness and comical resistance in what he suggestively labels Johnston's "historical strip-tease" (Wyile 85-100). As inspiration for Johnston's playful approach to "fictional/historical plausibility," Johnston lists Don DeLillo's *Libra* (1991), a "historiographical metafiction" on the topic of John F. Kennedy's assassination, and Salman Rushdie's magical realist *Midnight's Children* (1981) ("About this Author"). Both Rushdie and DeLillo are also considered to be influential in creating a postsecular discourse in the contemporary novel. Johnston's engagement with Catholicism, like DeLillo's, should not be overlooked when considering his rational for supplementing the historical "real" with the mythical "real." For more on the similarities between Johnston and DeLillo's Catholicism, historical play, and postsecularism, see John McClure's *Partial Faith: Post-Secular Fiction in the Age of Pynchon and Morrison* (2007) and Amy Hungerford's article "Don DeLillo's Latin Mass."

[3] Those familiar with Newfoundland's literature may recognize Percy Jane's *House of Hate* (1970) as a precursor to Johnston's mythology of the family. Jane's novel is a thinly veiled fictionalization of his family life in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. John Steffler also plays with the synthetic third position between fiction and the historical record in his novel *The Afterlife of George Cartwright* (1992).

[4] In *Gaff Topsails*, Kavanagh revisits the Catholicism of the outport a short time before Confederation. He explores the interfusion of Catholicism with the myriad daily movements of the rural fisheries-based economy. In contrast, Crummey's *The Wreckage* describes

a Methodist outport, where Wish, his Catholic protagonist, visits and falls in love with one of their most eligible young women, Mercedes. After Wish seduces Mercedes, the story tells of her eventual conversion to Catholicism; this Catholic-Protestant affair — a microcosm of Newfoundland's politics — soon leads to tragic circumstances and a lifelong "dark night of the soul"; this spiritual crisis is only concluded by a miraculous wedding, conducted in 1994, by Wish's enchanted Aunt Lilly.

[5] Jaro Stacul argues that some forms of integralism could be understood as "neo-localism": "the commitment to locality stems from growing anxiety at a globalized world in which peoples and things move, and are no longer in their proper place[;] . . . thus, while the principal ideologies of modern times imply the idea of society having a centre . . . when such ideologies decline in significance, locality emerges as a focus of attachment because of its concreteness, as opposed to the abstractness of some political doctrines" (174). This variety of integralism goes some way to diagnosing Arthur's particular problem.

[6] Freud argued that melancholy develops when the loved object of identification disappoints the subject. The subject does not permit this rejection, sublimates it, and represents her crisis as a failure of the self (Freud 248). Arthur's dissatisfaction with the federalist he has become is, perhaps, repressed desire for the Catholic state that will not be. According to Freud's logic, Arthur critiques the federal system that he represents because he is dissatisfied with the Catholicism that could not accomplish his desired state of integralism; thus "by taking flight into the ego, love escapes extinction" (Freud 257). To put it another way, Arthur's overly political Catholicism could be a disguise for his loss of faith in a transcendent God.

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