

María Jesús Hernández Lerena, ed. *Pathways of Creativity in Contemporary Newfoundland and Labrador*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015. isbn 978-1-4438-7745-9

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really count on that in the contemporary Canadian political community — with its trends towards multiculturalism, neo-liberalism, globalization, and urbanization? For good or ill, the provinces matter less in national politics now than they have at any point since 1945.

In sum, this is an important book, not only for its historical analysis of Newfoundland's relations as a Canadian province and for documenting the prevalence of a signature style of Lion-like (not Jellyfish) leadership, but also for what it says about the nature of conflict and accommodation in the Canadian federation.

Douglas Brown
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María Jesús Hernández Lerena, ed. *Pathways of Creativity in Contemporary Newfoundland and Labrador*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015.

ISBN 978-1-4438-7745-9

Pathways of Creativity in Contemporary Newfoundland and Labrador is, as the title conveys, a collection of essays on recent creative activity in the province. Edited by Spanish scholar María Jesús Hernández Lerena, the book is a good reflection of the growing international interest in Newfoundland and Labrador and constitutes an essential addition to scholarship on the province for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it offers a detailed and expert view of the range of creative activity in Newfoundland and Labrador over the last few decades (most, though not all, of the contributors are associated in one way or another with Memorial University). The principal emphasis of the collection is on writing, with chapters devoted to poetry, fiction, drama, travel writing, autobiography, and memoir, but there are also chapters devoted to

the visual arts (one of which is accompanied by a quartet of colour reproductions), filmmaking, and storytelling. (If there is a palpable absence in this fairly comprehensive view of culture in the province, it is music, which is touched on by some of the contributors but is perhaps too expansive a topic to be included here.) Second, most of these pieces situate the cultural production of the present in a longer historical perspective, highlighting how current creative activity in Newfoundland and Labrador represents an evolution rather than a break with the past and with what is considered as traditional Newfoundland culture. A good example is Adrian Fowler's chapter on fiction writers Lisa Moore and Michael Winter, which stresses how their very cosmopolitan and urban sensibilities, reflecting an increasingly mobile and globalized popular culture, are nonetheless thoroughly grounded in and shaped by their local milieu. While it is practically a commonplace observation that the vitality and distinctiveness of traditional Newfoundland culture had much to do with its isolation and insularity, Fowler makes the compelling point that Newfoundland was never as isolated as is so often assumed and that "the vitality of a culture depends not on some sterile 'purity' but on its ability to be open to outside influence and embrace positive change." This insight points to another important element of *Pathways*, which is that, collectively, these essays offer a timely contemplation of the delicate position of contemporary, post-moratorium Newfoundland and Labrador, the eclipse of whose traditional way of life presents both a sense of crisis and the opportunity for redefinition and revitalization.

A refreshing feature of *Pathways* is the sustained attention given to the work of Inuit, Innu, Mi'kmaq, and Métis writers and artists, a conscious intent of the book, as Hernáez Lerena notes in her introduction. As a couple of the contributors point out, Newfoundlanders have devoted a good deal of sentiment and ink to the Beothuk, an Indigenous people extinct since the early nineteenth century, while largely neglecting or dismissing the other (less conveniently existing and persisting) Aboriginal groups, but a number of the essays in *Pathways* are devoted to the perspectives of one or more of these groups,

either entirely — as is the case with Robin McGrath’s “The Diarist Tradition among Labrador Aboriginal People” — or partly — as in Roberta Buchanan’s reading of representations of Inuit in celebrated novelist Wayne Johnston’s *The Navigator of New York* against the diary of Abraham Ulrikab, an Inuk man exhibited in Europe in the late nineteenth century, whose perspective, Buchanan argues, very much reverses the white gaze that is recognized, but ultimately replicated, in Johnston’s novel.

While the accomplishment of the book is largely the accumulated effect of this series of studies of specific kinds of creative activity, that effect is also fortified by the way in which those studies are bookended. Following Hernez Lerena’s introduction is probably the most important piece in the collection, “Newfoundland: A Story of Loss and Forgetting,” by writer and academic Maura Hanrahan, which provides an overview of the province that ranges through history, anthropology, geology, geography, and economics, thus offering a highly useful framework for the more focused contributions that follow. The book closes with an innovative mosaic of interviews conducted by Hernez Lerena with a wide range of writers, snippets of exchanges grouped under different headings that, while at times a bit entropic, lead to some very interesting complementarities and contrasts of insights on topics such as national identity, sense of place, and the importance of the past. This conversational tapestry helps to reinforce what is one of the most crucial thematic threads of the collection as a whole, which is a challenge to the widespread impression of Newfoundland and Labrador as culturally vibrant, but monolithically and homogeneously so.

Pathways of Creativity in Contemporary Newfoundland and Labrador is not the most . . . well . . . creative title for a book that is, after all, about creativity. But I have to admit that the further I delved into the book the more apt the title came to be. Pathways are, for starters, trajectories, and the book follows a number of creative and artistic trajectories in recent cultural practice and production in the province. Pathways, furthermore, are shaped by the contours of the land as well as being a kind of inscription on it, and many of the essays emphasize the

importance of a sense of place to the creative life of the province. Finally, pathways routinely intersect, and in many of these essays we witness different forms of creative activity crossing with and influencing each other, reinforcing the view of an intimate but complex cultural milieu.

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James McLeod. *Turmoil, as Usual: Politics in Newfoundland and Labrador and the Road to the 2015 Election*.

St. John's: Creative Publishers, 2016.

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The cottage industry of Newfoundland and Labrador political writings is a very small but passionate market. Every so often, one of the local presses publishes a work that fulfills a broader purpose of being both entertaining and of historic value. The splendidly named *Turmoil, as Usual* is one such book.

Turmoil, as Usual is a fun, easy read while simultaneously acting as a repository of information. James McLeod is a *Telegram* reporter who has been covering the province's political scene since 2011. The book, his first, is a compendium of events that transpired between 2012 and 2015, a tumultuous period resulting from a leadership vacuum after populist Danny Williams retired as Progressive Conservative Party leader and Premier. The politicking that McLeod describes would be laughable if it were not such strong evidence of the elitist and antiquated nature of Newfoundland democracy.

It is only by living through the political instability of that time that one can truly appreciate its absurdity. The list of events is too long to get into here. Suffice it to say the cast of characters included multiple