The poet’s vision of Canada as a pioneer country in which man stands face to face with nature is bound to be superseded by a vision of Canada as a settled and civilized country, part of an international order, in which man confronts the social and spiritual problems of men.

- Northrop Frye

The Marginalised Minority
Chapter Four

The Marginalised Minority

Reaney has been a University teacher. Education is one of his important themes. Being a teacher he stands for the minority, the weak, the oppressed and the marginalized. His writings reveal his sympathy. There is no writer more energetic than Reaney. He never misses a chance to demonstrate his educational concerns, which reach from the minutely local to the all-embracing universal.

Reaney sees what as a pioneering work that has yet to be done for Canada – connecting local culture with the universal. It makes us aware that Canadian culture had remained marginalised and in minority for such a long time that it might have been sidelined and thrown into oblivion by the American and European occupants of Canada. Reaney is a regional poet with international fervour and outlook. He wants Canadian literature independent of colonial or international interference. The 1947 Dominion Drama Festival showcased amateur theatre in Canada, and yet was dominated by foreign adjudicators, foreign scripts, foreign standards and thus it seemed difficult for Reaney to compete with everyone from Moliere to Saroyan. This shows Reaney’s minority position as a writer in his own land. According to Stewart Reaney, “Life in Ontario is filled with American annexationists, confused loyalists, politics, love and the beautiful countryside” (PCD 4).
Reaney's plays pose a problem, a resolution and an apocalypse. The characters move from one world to another and end in self-realization and victory over their enemies. Each character is sidelined as minority and is marked with a weakness either intellectual or cultural. Sometimes, it may be caused by jealousy, inequality, superiority and inferiority complexes. In plays for children each child is troubled by a parent, teacher, hiredman, or highlight the marginalisation of minority in any form. Mrs. Gardner (KD) is a strict mother. She treats her son Harry Gardner as a child. Rebecca is troubled by Madam Fay (KD). Eli Fay is harassed by the hiredman Clifford (KD). Even the harsh treatment of a mother may make an adult feel as a minority. It deprives him of his freedom of movement or love for a woman. Mrs. Gardner's desire for knowing everything about her son is revealed here: “I wish you’d open your heart to me. Show me your heart. We used to be so close” (211).

Harry (KD) attends a party given by the Manager of the bank where he works. The manager’s daughter proposes to marry Harry. But he dislikes it. Harry’s mother Mrs. Gardner compels him to marry her. Harry expresses his minority position with his mother in his selection: “That’s what you want me to do, “Go back and say ‘I’ll marry you’? Because I’ll do what you want me to do simply to show you what you’re like” (230).

Madam Fay, the mother of Eli Fay, feels herself as marginalised minority because of her moral and professional culture:
My son hates me because I ran away on him
And his father once. He can’t stand me.
So I cleared out and became a saleslady
And I don’t go near the farm. (204)

Mrs. Budge (KD) is the friend of Mrs. Gardner. She does not like Madam Fay. Social status can be determined by one’s moral and professional history. Madam Fay is marginalized by Mrs. Budge for her behaviour “your cup is overflowing like a psalm / I have seen a small pot of vanishing cream / Sold by a famous adulteress!” (215).

Eli Fay is the son of Madam Fay. She does not like Eli Fay keeping company with Harry and Rebecca. They are branded as good people. Eli Fay’s remark about his mother pushes her to a minority position:

I think because he really loved her.
I think because he wanted to see if he could
Take her down with him into the dark.
It should be you hiding in
Swamps or ditches, not Becky. (263)

Eli Fay continues in the same vein:

I can trust them. I’ve never been so happy in my life as in helping them hide from you. Afraid of you. Miserable, weak. I couldn’t tell them. But you’ll have to kill me now to stop me, mother. (263)
True friends may be separated after marriage. Harry may abandon Eli Fay after his marriage to Rebecca. Then Eli Fay may find himself a marginalized minority. So Madam Fay says:

Not if Rebecca loves,

He’ll want to sleep with her. They won’t want you.

You’ll have to sleep in a room somewhere alone.

May be out on the farm. (264)

Madam Fay oppresses her son. She wishes to trouble him at any cost. She wants to keep him under threat: “I’ll be the wind moaning in the pantry / Whistling for some stale pie / I’ll be the backdoor tapping like a blind man” (268).

It is true that the marginalised position makes one a rebel. Eli Fay is tortured by the hiredman Clifford. Eli Fay’s animosity towards the hiredman and his attempt to escape from the minority position finds expression here. He intends to kill him. But something prevents him from doing it:

Harry, I could have killed him.

I suddenly knew my father alive in me.

I sneaked out with butcher’s knife to the gate.

He came down the lane to the Swamp

Whistling. But when I jumped out he just laughed.

Did something to make me fall and the knife

Cut my hand, cut me – not him. (273)
Man wants freedom to move about freely and when he is restricted by external forces like society, family and customs, he feels himself sidelined as minority. Bethel (EE), the stepmother of Kenneth, keeps him in the attic as a mentally retarded child. He is helped by Polly (EE). Bethel shouts at Kenneth for his laziness to work. She ridicules him as useless with the absurd male appendage. She expresses her thwarted ambition and the suspicion that she keeps for others. Her behaviour makes one recall the theory of Carl Jung’s “Collective Unconscious – by which he means a certain psychic faculty shaped by the forms of heredity” (182). Bethel cries out:

To tell the truth I was rather hoping
While I was away, that you’d do in Polly
Rape would do, but murder, preferably
With mutilation, would serve her so right,
Serve him so right. Rape’s too pleasurable
That silly Lucrece woman didn’t know
What a good time she was having stupid. (7)

Ira (EE) wants to change the character of Kenneth. But Bethel wants to keep Kenneth low in society. He is called a mental case by Bethel. It is refuted by Ira thus “It is. But it’s not a good place for Kenneth. He’s not a mental case. He’s something else again” (18). Again Bethel’s wish to keep Kenneth marginalized from others finds outlet in her statement, “No one’ll knock me down. None of you have the strength. I’m king of the castle now” (19).
Sometimes Reaney tries to point out the poor condition of a region for marginalisation, identification and comparison. George (EE) tells Polly of the barren nature of Canadian ecology, particularly in some parts of Manitoba:

And sometimes there isn’t too much water. There’s a small old mountain nearby. In the spring time everyone goes up, in April and collects every bit of snow they can. You store it in your cistern so you’ll have something to drink in July. (48)

George keeps a snuffbox that shows the drought of the area which contains wheat “[ . . . ] that’s all one farmer got off about five hundred acres he’d sowed. He gave it to me – for a joke” (49).

George is weak and indecisive. One may be made a minority by physical or mental weakness. George wants Polly to get permission from her stepmother for marriage. Polly’s argument shows her independence of and alienation from her stepmother, “Bethel was my guardian. But not now. I’m of age. For Heaven’s sake, I’m her godmother. She’s my god-daughter” (51). The reply of George shows the existence of certain social norms which make one marginalised while opposing them. “Polly yes! You’ve had your way. Now I want my way. I happen to be a stickler for rules and etiquette. They’re the invisible skeletons of society” (51).

Parents should not be too strict with their children. Such marginalisation may lead to hatred towards parents. George reveals the treatment of his parents.
They have sterilized and numbed his senses and good temper, “He killed all the love in me and paralyzed all the will – like a glow-worm and a nail” (58). George talks about his mother, “She’d never wait till I could start my meal. She’d pitch in and feed it to me like a baby till I was twelve. She just shovel- ed it into my mouth” (58).

Bethel is a sexy woman. She wants to be young always to keep intimacy with young men. She fights for gender justice. She considers a woman to be equal in sexual conduct to man. There is no gender marginalisation:

During the act of love what the man really meets – do you know what the man really meets? He meets another man with even breasts like his only what he meets is simply inside where he is outside. What the woman meets is another woman who just happens to have got her/his womb displaced somewhat. You ever been at an autopsy. Well, I have so there’s no difference between us. It’s just a convention. (60)

A neurotic cannot accomplish things. His defect injects into him a marginal feeling of inferiority complex. George is a neurotic. He proves a failure in love. He meets with defeat and disgust when he attempts to love, “I’ve tried to love and I can’t. I’ve tried to have a nervous breakdown and I can’t find there is a difference” (61). George cannot adjust with hunger. He forgets everything when he is hungry. He even forgets his love. It is his physical
and mental defect. "No one I think. When I get hungry, and I’m really hungry, I can’t think. I can’t think who even I am. Who am I? I’m just an oblong blur” (80).

One is made a minority by his disease or physical handicap. Such a person cannot move freely in society. Owen (LW) is an example. He is comforted by his father but forsaken by the mother. One’s imagination or perception of the super powers in nature may sustain his life. Owen tells his father, "You don’t have to talk. I just like to lie here and listen to the night winds” (83). His friend Harriet prays for Owen, "Owen, I’d give the whole world if she’d stay tho’ I don’t really like her [...] And if you’d get better [...] (83). A person affected by a dreadful disease cannot marry and enjoy the bliss of marital life. Harriet expresses her doubt about marriage, "Isn’t it funny [...] Because I’ve always felt or used to feel when I was quite small that when we grew up we’d get married” (84). Owen hopes that he can escape from his disease and death if his parents are united.

Mother and father. It is time that you are together again. I felt you both touching me [...] Like rain. I’m not very old yet, you know. I still want to be held. If you keep on letting go of me, I’ll slip away. (109)

Owen’s father asks his mother to stay with Owen. “I want you to stay. Tonight, Owen [...] I have a feeling [...] that he’ll go tonight” (132). Mother’s reply shows the marginalisation of her husband and son, “I can’t stand sickness and
death” (133). The father replies that if there is unity between the son and 
the mother, the disease will fly away. “As I’ve said before woman, when I 
was his age I had these attacks too. When the crisis came, I called for my 
mother. She held me to her arms for a day and a night. Bu the next morning I 
was better” (133).

Reaney’s plays deal with different types of marginalised minority 
positions. Like Reaney, France Henry in his book titled The Demographic 
Correlates of Racism in Toronto 1978) says:

Racism can take several forms. Individual racism refers to 
conscious personal prejudices: institutional racism is that which is 
carried out by an individual because of others who are prejudiced; 
and structural racism has its base in the inequalities rooted in the 
operations of society at large. (385)

This racist feelings can be traced in Canada among teachers of foreign and 
native origin. Niles, Jacob Waterman and Edward Durelle are foreigners 
employed at Rupertsland College (TD). Sandy and Mia (TD) are Canadians. 
The students, practice of wearing woolen slacks is distasteful to Sandy. The 
comment of Niles is pertinent here. “Drop the hem a wee bit. I should say. To 
think – you’re about the only Canadian in this paradise for eggheads and you 
have to dress up like one of your Scotch ancestors” (123). Sandy speaks in a 
depressed mood. He feels stunned, “If you don’t like our ways why don’t you go 
home?” (123). Again Niles insults Sandy saying, “I’d like to see you down
under. Even boys would tear that skirt off you so fast” (123). Thus the Canadians are members of a society which has given them the appellation “Visible minorities” (Mukherjee 59).

Niles condemns the Canadians as minority. They are culturally backward and act like mad people. “Everywhere you go there’s either a bunch of religious fanatics or old country failures or French Canadians” (129). The native teachers often taunt the foreign teachers as outsiders. It is echoed in Sandy’s words to Durelle, “Take the tie off. You have absolutely no right to wear it” (125). The hostility of Sandy towards Durelle is retaliated by Durelle, “I’ve heard about you. I don’t care whether I have a right to it or not, you mad man. I’ll not take it off” (125). It leads to a scuffle between Sandy and Durelle, “Then I’ll take it off for you” (126).

There exists barriers among teachers in the name of nationality, culture and nativism. Everyone feels a minority in an alien land unless belongs to the ruling class or domineering group. Niles says that, “Durelle’s mother was a Stuart. He has a right to wear the Stuart Plaid, Sandy” (126). Sandy reveals his hostile nativism, “Look. It’s a spiritual thing. I can’t bear to see people wearing sacred patterns that don’t belong to them. If you’re Ukranian or English wear your own folk costume” (126). Niles asks, “What’ll we poor Aussies wear?” (126). Sandy’s remark indicates the existence of hatred towards outsiders who are branded and relegated to minority status. “Wrap a Kangaroo skin
around your middle or make yourself some sorts out of some of the rusty fetters that litter the landscape” (126).

Sandy represents native fanaticism. The words of Niles about Sandy is a proof that even women are not spared by him:

Durelle, you’ll never believe this, but Sandy here has ripped off falsely worn plaid from ten people in this town. One was a young lady who was wearing a McGregor tartan. Her name was McIntyre. (127)

Durelle keeps intimate relations with Mia, a native teacher. It is not liked by Sandy. He tries to warn Durelle with threats. He lives in fear: “I am not going to accept this. And I’m going to keep on going out with Miss Mia Dubrovinc. Why are you getting so close to me? It’s as if I’m in an airplane about to land in a gravel pit” (127). Sandy is pacified by Niles with a satiric comment about his mother’s culture, “I think there’s one member of the Classics Department would be very interested in your mother, Sandy; well, Durelle, I got rid of him for you” (128). Durelle expatiates on the minority condition of the college, “Masturbation coloured walls. Enema coloured floors” (133).

There exists minority among teachers. Niles is supported by Sandy. Waterman is supported by Durelle. The desk pushing habit of teachers (185) marks their narrow-minded outlook.

Foreign intrusion reaches its climax and native lecturers are denied their fundamental rights at the University of Toronto (Dil). The sons of the soil are
stripped their freedom of speech, thought and expression. The natives act like rebels and fight against their minority position. We see the formation of clubs and a meeting by a free-thinker:

Sir, The political science society has rebelled and smuggled the atheist red Thompson into the college buildings. Their large little shell ears filling up with anarchist filth! Save their innocent minds, sor – save their intelligent virginities before it’s so late. (10)

Sir Daniel Wilson (Dii) is the president of the college. He is a foreigner. William Dale (Dii) belongs to Canada. Sir Daniel is against the formation of an alumni society. Dale asks Sir Daniel, “Are there reasons other than sentimental ones for forming an alumni society?” (11). Dale asks Daniel the reasons for the suppression of meetings. He cancels the meeting without any notice, “you gave us permission. Why are you in such a fury?” (11). Dale continues further to give expression to their minority status and inner longing:

To be candid, Sir Daniel – we were just wondering if there wasn’t something wrong with a college in which after a generation of foreign teachers it is said to be impossible to find Canadians to fill any chair in the University. (11)

Sir Daniel speaks in a derogatory sense. It establishes the cultural and educational superiority of the foreigners. “Nothing wrong with the college at all in that respect – the best humanists and scientists, quite naturally, come from abroad” (11). The superiority of the ruling class and the inferiority and minority
status of the ruled and oppressed finds expression in Sir Daniel’s words, “You’re not foreign, you count yourself a Canadian, what are you complaining about? You’ve a job at the college, Dale” (11). The natives are denied job opportunities in the college. They do not get admission for higher study. The native students and teachers cannot have the freedom to express their demands. “Besides Sir Daniel, we alumni feel that by this policy the college alienates itself from the people of Ontario” (11).

The authoritative questions of Sir Daniel point to the status of the native. He asks questions like, “Who are you?” (11). He continues “You’re Edward Simpson – I gave you a third class in Ancient History – your passing in logic was hotly debated in Senate” (12). Obviously what it implies is that the conferring of a degree to a native depends upon the charity of the foreigners. Dale’s longing for a native president is expressed here, “If Sir Daniel’s successor as president were going to be another stranger from abroad with no interest in the country, but I gather that [. . . ]” (12).

James Tucker, Willie King and Greenwood are the students there (Dil). They stand on the side of Dale. They fight for equality and justice. The existence of poverty makes the people feel marginalised into a minority. Willie King says, “I also want to help the poor and the suffering. What really can you do for them with just your ministerial training and 1000 or less a year”(23). He adds, “What I want to do now, is to make a careful study of the poorer classes –
even the very worst of social evils – and that science of poverty will give me
power and with that power I’ll be able to some day to do more than just
hold their hands while they die” (23). James Tucker and Willie King are
expelled from the college for questioning the Authority and for conducting
meetings. Dale is dismissed for his participation in the student strike. Dale
parodies the authority as, “They spend most of their time in committees and
intrigues” (Dil 24).

Vice-Chancellor Mole’s speech is an attack on the Canadian
culture and region, “yeah, you icy windbag, and before I fly to higher regions I
swear by Harry I am going to find some way of forcing you to resign; what about
a [ . . . ]” (25). Dale, Pike and Squair are found to be high academicians. Mole
comments that they must be paid more (25). Dale reveals that the Canadians are
not paid on par with their European counterparts. “But the money never comes.
So give us the rank without the money or does it seem that only” (25). They feel
like strangers in their motherland. Their passion is echoed by Dale. When he
says that. “and travellers from other lands control our fate. “Do you not see how
humiliating that is to us?” (25).

James Fury (Dil) is the native president. He sides with the foreigners and
tries to curtail the rights of the natives. They are labelled as culturally and
economically belonging to minority status. Mole’s speech clears it: “You know,
Mr. Chairman, this could easily get into the newspapers. Native teachers hew
wood and draw water while teachers from abroad idle away the golden hours" (25). Dale points out Prof. Right’s appointment and his salary, “Prof. Right has been given the lecturership in History at twice the starting salary for a lecturer” (25). Dale’s seniority is not counted for higher pay. He reveals it sadly, “So was I at Quebec before I became a lecturer here, but they made me start at 800” (26). The comments of Dale points to the fact that the appointments and salary are decided by influence, relation and backdoor politics. Dale bursts out, “And we’re not the Chancellor’s sons-in-law” (26).

President Fury warns Dale with serious consequences, “Dale, I warn you, a remark like that could get you into a great trouble” (26). The native teachers are denied any freedom of speech. Dale retorts, “If I can’t speak my mind, what must I do then!” (26). Fury’s reply that he should “earn a living” (26) implies that they must remain minority without asking for their rights. Fury reminds them of Dale’s selection to the senate by the students. Dale is anguished that money and power play a key role in taking decision-making:

It has no jurisdiction over anything that matters – what does have jurisdiction is as usual power and money and if that man goes on to get the chair while we still remain humiliated then I carry the war in to Africa. (26)

Right says, “I do not care what people say. After a decent interval I applied for full rank and the chair at 2500. And got it” (26).
James Tucker talks sadly about their marginalisation in their native soil. He rebelliously states:

The college is supposed to be the head, the mind of our society, right? Some of us have been saying – both teachers and students – over at the Dean’s house – Instead of a head what we’ve got sitting uselessly on the shoulders of our merchants who sit on the shoulders of our workers and farmers is more like a puffball. A puffball filled with [ ... ]. (27)

Dale criticizes the poor intellectual background of the foreigners, “Nepotism, lazy teachers and lazy students anti-intellectual administrators” (27). The former students call for a reunion and a speech by a social worker. Their efforts are thwarted by politics and religion. Such happenings perpetuate their status as minority. Murchison (Dil), a student says:

On the toil of the labouring classes, we should never deny their spokesman a hearing in our halls. We should never be accused of parasitism and exploitativeness. Mr. Thompson, who as a journalist, has devoted his life to the cause of the working classes. (29)

Prof. McQualid, the Honorary President, erases the name of Thompson and gives reasons for the same. It shows how the foreigners restrict the rise of the natives rising from their minority position to a higher level: “Can I help it if ecclesiastics infest this colonial backwater think tank and, a dying breed, thrash
their saurian tails at every sign of growing intellectual freedom? Almost in tears I erased his name” (29). Students protest it exclaiming, “that’s not really why the council objects at al. The real reason is, you cowards [ . . . ]” (29). Pike says, “‘T’s not the anti-religious atheist views of Mr. Jimuel Thompson that offend us” (29). Dale questions Pike, “Are we a secular college pursuing independent paths, or are we not?” (29). Their meeting is cancelled at the interference of religion and politics.

Tucker is worried about the cancellation of the meeting and complains against the denial of the “freedom of speech” in the varsity (30). Mole tells of poor funds that they cannot raise the infrastructure of the college. Dale’s apt comment reveals the forces that keep them as a marginalised minority. The money-minded selfish foreigners have kept them in suppression, Science and medicine have emptied the treasury and religious leaders have become an impediment in the way to free-thinking:

I expected that perhaps it will help if I tell you what we feel like – we’re slowly being smothered by the materialists on one side – science and medicine who get money anyhow it seems, on the other side – super spiritualists won’t let the students think for themselves even when their lecturer has had enough time to stimulate them into some thought. (31)

Mole reminds Dale to mind his business (31). Dale attacks him with words of irony, “I was thinking all you care about, you old skinflint is that whiskey and
power (31). When freedom of speech is not given, it is slavery. Mole says that a
government servant being a minority cannot raise his voice against the
oppressive class:

A professor is a civil servant. He can’t criticize the government
publicly – he’s in the same cleft as the stack boy in the
Parliamentary Library or the long rows of pen pushers ink to the
heel in the Taxation Office. (32)

Frances Dale, William Dale’s daughter, tells Reaney of her father’s fate at the
University of Toronto. She says:

That her dad had gone back to farming after being dismissed from
University. Again Reaney asked, “Why was he dismissed? Oh!
For a letter he wrote to the Globe and Mail about the student strike”
What were they striking about? Oh! The same thing as today –
foreign professors, freedom of speech. (qtd. in Parker 17)

Calling names is another heinous form of marginalisation. Will (Don)
complains to his mother Mrs. Donnelly about some boys calling him nicknames
in the church premise. “Yes. They threw stones at me and they called me
cripple. I’m used to that, mother, but there was a new boy there and do you want
to know what he called me, mother? Blackfoot” (15). Will wants to know what
is meant by Blackfoot. Mrs. Donnelly explains to her son Will why they were
called Blackfoot. “In the old country, Will, where your father and your brother
James and your mother were born – you were called a Blackfoot if you wouldn’t
join the Whitefeet” (16). Will asks, “Who were the Whitefeet?” (6). Mrs. Donnelly replies, “who indeed. They were a faction, they were a secret society, a secret people” (16).

The English landlords are behind the secret society. They create disorder to disrupt peace so that one group of people would remain a marginalised minority. A girl’s voice echoes it, “The landlords are tyrants – English robbers and murderers that rob the people of their little spots, and turn’em out to perish. ‘Tis justice to punish the bloody robbers” (16). The English landlords destroyed the peace and happiness of the settlers if they did not nod their heads acquiesce to their wishes. For the disobedient, alienation and marginalisation were considered just deserts.

Oh indeed it was justice and the Whitefeet rode around at night dressed up like ladies, mind you, so they couldn’t be recognized. They made it hot for landlords and bailiffs. The trouble was they made it hot for everybody. Will, there was one family – the Sheas – they lived twenty miles off, they said no to the Whitefoot society, no they wouldn’t give up the farm they’d just rented, and a good farm it was in those hard times, just because the Whitefeet wanted nobody ever to rent that farm at all to spite the landlord. So, no, says the Sheas, well, what the Whitefeet did to the Sheas one night is so terrible I’m going to whisper it to you and don’t ever talk about it again. (16)
The faction burned the house of the Sheas. Mrs. Donnelly tells her son Will, how the minority were intimidated and liquidated by the English mafia of hooligans.

Despite all the mother did she would have had to drown it altogether to save him from the fire and that baby died, Will, because his father wouldn’t join the secret people, because his father would not do what they done, do what they told him to do. (17)

Will jokingly tells his mother, “It’s better to join them then? (17). Mrs. Donnelly is the only courageous and virtuous woman created by Reaney. Her speech shows her determination to fight against injustice and tyranny. When one’s freedom is questioned and checked, he or she is a minority in any society. However she would defy them rather than: Help burn whole families alive in their beds then? She continues:

Sure, Will, terrible and filthy as the name of Blackfoot is – worse than scab, or leper or nigger or heretic have they made it. They, the clean, just and secret people – I’d rather be called scab, or leper or nigger or heretic or Blackfoot than do what they did to the Sheas. At first they’d ride by and you’d find a note at your doorway that said – “signed by Matthew Midnight”. (17)

Will asks his mother, “who was he? (17). Mrs. Donnelly explains, “Oh, the pretend name of their chief. The Great Chief of the Secret Society and the
note would say" (17) is explained by a Male voice, “If you don’t help us cut off the bailiff’s ears tomorrow night you are a Blackfoot and we’ll cut off yours and fill a barrel first with thorns and nails and then – with – you. Mrs. Donnelly proceeds with the story of the Mafia to her son, “Yes, so if you were afraid, Will, you joined them and they made you kneel down and swear and drink – faith to them forever” (17).

The Secret Society had visited Mr. Donnelly and tried to intimidate him, “Did you not know, Jim Donnelly, that no Whitefoot is to have any dealings with the Protestant and the heretic Johnson?” (18). They offered two lighted candles to Donnelly and command, “kneel, Donnelly. Get down on your knees. Swear by the holy evangelists that you will always be joined to this society known as the Whitefeet and that you will forever and forever obey” (18). The independent and courageous reply of Mr. Donnelly antagonized them surely. “But you see I won’t kneel. And I won’t. I will not swear that” (19).

Mr. Donnelly was threatened repeatedly by the members of the Society, “If you refuse, Jim Donnelly – if you refuse, Donnelly, you won’t know the day nor the hour nor the night nor the hour when we’ll come to” (19). It is a terrible example of the murder of democracy and one’s fundamental right. However, Mr. Donnelly roared again like a lion, “No, I’ll not! Kneel! No! Swear! No! I will not kneel” (19). Mrs. Donnelly continues with her story, “So they cursed your father and called him a Blackfoot” (19). Thus, he was marginalised as minority for not joining them. Will Donnelly tells his birthday wish to his
mother like a lion-cub, "Well, mother, 'tis something other than a prayer book. I'd like a horse – a black stallion. And a sword. Then I'd ride up and down the line and I'd cut the heads off all those who call me – us – names" (20). Will is given two gifts by Mrs. Donnelly. One is "Lord Byron. But he wouldn't be lame, you see" (20). And the other is "a fiddle" (19). They are the symbols of courage to fight against the threats of the majority. Will is again consoled by Mrs. Donnelly, "You won't know the day nor the hour nor the night when we'll come to −" – Aye, yes – come to a tap with our fists on their chests at our gateway that'll send them rolling down the line like ninepins" (21).

Will is curious to know everything about their past. Mrs. Donnelly narrates the story of how they lived in fear and what they expected in the New land, "Not in Ireland, No, not there. With old names – Blackfoot, Whitefoot, slavery and fear" (21). Colour makes one a minority. Another leader of a mafia gang called on Mr. Donnelly:

Darkie, if you don't sell me that corner five acres you've squatted on there I'm going to heat it hotter than hell, and something else so serious might happen they'll have to erect a gallows for me. Pinned by a ladder, the Negro cannot prevent them from burning his property. (26)

Mrs. Donnelly talks of their social and economical backwardness. They were so hard-pressed for money by such threats and dangers that they had to sell or pawn their valuables:
James, I’m walking down to the town to see this landlord of ours. I’ll take our fifty pounds and the ring on my finger and my last gold earring and I’ll curse him at the pawn-shop, him that’s forcing me to haggle a pawnbroker. (41)

Harassments came in other forms like name calling. One Farl (Don) used to call Mr. Donnelly names. He also took away fifty acres of Donnelly’s land. Mr. Donnelly pleaded with him, “By your heart cease calling me Blackfoot you’ve been calling me and my children that ever since you arrived here two years ago” (44). Farl did not oblige. Mr. Donnelly felt his marginalisation intensely when he was ridiculed with names. So, he said, “Don’t call me that in front of the others and start all that over again” (44). When Farl persisted Mr. Donnelly killed him, “He was on my shoulders with words in my ears and blows – with the handspike makes a furious upward motion and kills” (51).

Mrs. Donnelly tries to save her husband. She was very much worried about their being alone. “No, who could we trust – not our landlords or our neighbours. We’re alone” (61). Local politics also joined the conspirators to frighten the Donnelly family. Tom Cassleigh reminded Mr. Donnelly that there was still hope of a reconciliation:

Donnelly, there’s one more turn. Come and join us again, Jim. We can use your seven sons. Don’t count on your protestant friends. It could have been stub who burned you out. They use you, Jim, don’t you see? Already your sons are blamed for things they do to
us. And when we do things to them we’re operating the world it’s you. (91)

When Donnelly turned down the offer, Tom Cassleigh said in resignation: “We’ll let you out of Biddulph, Jim. Follow your other Blackfoot friend to Michigan if you like” (91).

Mr. Donnelly was not cowed down by threats. He was ready to stand alone and fight against the majority:

No, this is a new country we live in, it’s not back in the old country we’re living. Mrs. Donnelly and myself are free to do as we please. No one has to be afraid of secret societies, secret people; we’re not in Ireland, do you hear Tom Cassleigh. (91)

Jennie, the daughter talks proudly about their minority, “[ . . . ] so that I am proud to be a Donnelly against all the contempt of the world” (93). Mrs. Donnelly tells Jennie, “your father and I will never leave Biddulph” (94). One Donaldson, after meeting Will Donnelly, admires the politeness of the Donnelly boys:

It’s strange that young men so good looking and so polite as I’ve always found the Donnelly boys to be, should be so much run down and set on by all parties, Romanists, Protestants and Secretists, when they are so very polite and strive so hard to live down all this opposition, by attention to business and kind treatment of all who favour them. (107)
Tom, the son of Ned Ryan, loves the Donnelly boys for three reasons. "Because they're brave. They are not afraid. They're so little afraid of living here among you that this morning they started sowing their fall wheat" (168). Father Girad is of the view that, "The Donnellys are like lions attacked in the desolate wilderness by a pack of wild dogs" (210). Finally they are handcuffed and killed by the mob. Orlo Miller's The Donnellys Must Die reveals the existence of other such orders like "White boys", "Right boys", "Defenders" and "Ribbonmen" who shared a common principle and took similar oaths (25).

Reaney's aim is to teach posterity the divisive forces that existed in the past in Canada through his plays. The marginalised minority brought into existence by gender, race, power, politics, religion and other socio-economic factors has honed his skill in myth making in the artistic process of transformation of history into myth and drama. The future sons of the soil must realise the resentment of the natives who received only a step-motherly treatments "The average salary of a Canadian is $1700. The average salary of a foreigner is $27000" (Dil 39). This is intolerable and humiliating. The native Dale's voice is a warning to posterity:

Battles are not the most important things in life. The cursed monopolies are crushing the young life out of Manitoba. The rage for wealth curses every profession and every class on this continent. (39)
Thus, Reaney, the most reputed Canadian professor of English, has recorded slavery, monopoly, foreign exploitation and other illegal measures that affected the settlers and natives alike and drove them to a minority status.