OCCUPATIONAL NARRATIVES OF PULP AND PAPER MILL WORKERS IN CORNER BROOK, NEWFOUNDLAND: A STUDY IN OCCUPATIONAL FOLKLIFE

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by

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ABSTRACT

In this study I present and address the occupational narratives collected from the workers of the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill. Through an analysis of these narratives, I discuss the physical and social issues and challenges which arise in mill work. Through the narration of accident, prank and conflict stories, mill workers not only address issues and vocalize their fears, frustrations, opinions and social expectations, but through the narrative process they also deal with, and sometimes resolve the physical and social problems they encounter on the job. I claim that occupational narratives not only illustrate work techniques, but do so as a means of providing workers with solutions to their occupational problems, such as danger in the workplace and conflict between co-workers and management. In this study, I present occupational narratives as a tool that mill workers use for survival in their work environment. Using occupational folklife concepts and research methods, I provide an extensive representation of Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill worker narratives and present a unique look into the occupational lives of industrial workers in an attempt to understand industrial work, its consequences, implications and relationships.

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Tremendous thanks is given to all seventeen of my informants. It is through their lived experiences, wonderful words and outstanding generosity that this thesis was made possible. I want to thank them greatly for their kindness and their willingness to share with me the wor(l)ds of mill workers.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill has been the center of economic and industrial life in Corner Brook, Newfoundland since July 8, 1925, when the first roll of paper was produced and the mill was officially opened. Throughout its history and development, the mill has welcomed and supported many Newfoundland men and their families, especially those of the Bay of Islands region. With the transfer of ownership of the mill from Bowater to Kruger in 1984, Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited has undergone many critical technological, social and economic changes (Horwood 32). While the mill once employed over two thousand workers at one time, it now operates with a staff of approximately seven hundred employees in Corner Brook and seven hundred and fifty woodlands employees in more than forty Newfoundland communities (Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited 1). However, the pulp and paper mill still remains the most significant employer in the city of Corner Brook. Corner Brook is first and foremost, as Percy Janes observes in his novel *House of Hate*, a mill town.

This thesis will present and address the occupational narratives collected from the workers of the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill. Through an analysis of these narratives, I will discuss the physical and social issues and challenges which arise in mill work. Within this thesis I will illustrate that through the narration of accident, prank and conflict stories, mill workers not only address issues and vocalize their concerns, but through the narrative process they also deal with, and sometimes resolve the physical and social problems they encounter on the job.

Interaction and communication among workers while on the job is crucial to working in a mill with over seven hundred workers. Expressive behaviours, such as narratives, provide the basis for this daily occupational interaction and communication. With regard to narration as a process of communication, Michael Owen Jones writes:

> Narrating is certainly one of those fundamental processes of communication in which all human beings engage. We describe what happened on the way to work, what occurred at work, and what transpired after work. We tell stores about our colleagues: what they accomplish or failed to do, and how they were rewarded or punished. We narrate about our managers or administrators: how their actions support professed values, or how something they did suggests other attitudes and agendas. We tell stories about ourselves: our success and accomplishments, failures or problems, and feelings of self-worth or diminished self-esteem. ("Folklore Approach" 279)

It is through the narration of occupational stories that workers communicate, interact, educate, entertain, socialize, articulate concerns, vocalize fears, address and resolve workplace problems and develop a sense of community. Since "stories, argument goes, are the main way we make sense of things" (Culler 83) and "stories are able to adapt themselves to any local and social climate" (Dégh, "Folk Narrative" 53), it is not surprising that we find narratives to be a predominant form of expressive behaviour in the workplace.

Not only are narratives a part of the occupational experience, but these stories are intrinsically woven into their environment and rooted in their workplace contexts. Richard Bauman suggests that narrative "like all human activity, is situated, its form, meaning, and functions rooted in culturally defined scenes or events" (3). As well, Robert S. McCarl observes that "occupational contexts shape expression in distinctive ways by both influencing and reflecting the working knowledge upon which they are

based" ("Occupational Folklife" 153). In other words, occupational narratives reflect both the immediate work environment and the behaviours of the workplace that are of concern to workers. By collecting the mill workers' stories and analyzing them, I am attempting to illustrate how occupational narratives, as a form of expressive behaviour, address challenges as well as help workers cope with their environment and their work relationships.

Occupational and Community Context

Built by Armstrong-Whitworth, a British arms manufacturer, and officially opened in 1925, the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill was incorporated in 1927 as the International Paper Company of Newfoundland Limited. The pulp and paper mill was acquired in 1938 by the Bowater Corporation who operated it until 1984 when it was sold to Kruger Incorporated of Montreal[1]. This take-over was due to a major business recession throughout various paper mills in North America. Because paper was not in demand and profits were being lost, companies such as the Bowater Corporation were making the decision to sell or close out.

Considered to be a specialist in "taking over, operating and making a profit from mills that other companies considered uneconomic" (Horwood 173), Kruger operated other successful mills such as the mill in Bromptonville, Quebec and the pulp and paper mill at Trois Rivieres, Quebec. Because there was no other substantial industry in Corner Brook or in the region, the closing of the mill would have meant a significant blow to the

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[1] For a historical look at Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited, see Harold Horwood's book, *Corner Brook: A Social History of a Paper Town*. St. John's, Newfoundland: Breakwater Books, 1986.

economic life of the city. Horwood writes, "without it, the city would rapidly become a ghost town" (173). However, Kruger's success in Corner Brook did not come without temporary setbacks. Within their first month of operation, 144 mill workers were laid off due to machine upgrading. As well, more workers were laid off when Kruger closed down the sulfite department. According to Kruger, the company "undertook a massive investment program. The four paper machines were rebuilt to modern standards, new thermo-mechanical pulp refiners were added, and in 1992, a recycling system was installed to reprocess magazines and office paper waste" (Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited n.p.). This upgrading, improvement and investment did, however, have a positive effect on both the mill and the city of Corner Brook. Managing two million hectares of land on the island of Newfoundland and owning a hydroelectric generating facility in Deer Lake which supplies approximately 75% of the mill's electricity needs, Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited has benefited from nearly $450 million of investment by Kruger and now serves an international customer base where "quality newsprint is delivered to major ports on the Eastern seaboard of North America, and to key ports in Europe, Asia and Latin America" (Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited 7). As well, the owners now boast that the mill is one of the lowest cost manufacturers of newsprint in North America.

However, most important to the people of Corner Brook is that the mill remains the primary economic source and principal employer in Corner Brook and continues to be "a pillar of the Western Newfoundland economy" (Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited n.p.). Since its opening, the mill has been the center of work life in Corner Brook, now a

city of approximately 22,000 residents. Despite the near shut down of the mill in 1984, mill workers have continued to work in the mill for several generations, enabling them to create both formal and informal ties with one another. As a working class, mill workers have formed an occupational folk group where individuals simultaneously assume roles of fellow worker and residential neighbor. This is the occupational folk group I have studied and the community context where I have based my research.

The Work Site and The Process of Paper-Making

As the site of one of the world's largest pulp and paper mills, the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill is composed of many essential industrial departments all of which are located on the south shore of the Humber Arm at the mouth of the great Humber River. The location of the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill also marks the entrance to the Bay of Islands. For the purposes of clarity, the following is a basic description of the process of paper-making including a list of the major departments which compose the mill's work site. For a complete layout of the mill, please refer to Appendix E.

Beginning with the woodlands operation, balsam fir and black spruce logs are transported by truck to the mill. Once transported, the wood enters the woodroom where it is prepared by being debarked, chipped and washed. The chipped wood then begins the process of refinement in the Thermo-Mechanical Pulp (TMP) department. Once cooked, cleaned, screened, and bleached with sodium hydrosulfite, the refined TMP pulp is combined with recycled pulp (which is generated from the recycle plant). The mixed pulp is then placed onto screens and sent to the paper machines in the paper mill where is it is formed at the wet end of the paper machine, pressed and dried. The Corner Brook

Pulp and Paper Mill operates four paper machines (#1, #2, #4, #7). The paper is then wound into rolls and sent to the finishing room where it is wrapped for shipping. It is then moved into storage until it is delivered – twenty percent by road and eighty percent by sea.

Along with the key departments mentioned above is the steam plant which supplies steam for the mill; the effluent treatment plant which clarifies all of the process wastewater from the mill; and the hydroelectric generating facility located in Deer Lake. These operations are essential to the production of paper, as are the mill's electrical department, engineering department, technical services, and maintenance shop. The Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill is composed of many departments such as these which work and function together to produce a total of 1060 tonnes of paper a day (Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited 8).

Most of the workers I interviewed now work or have worked in the existing departments listed above. However, several other informants have had experience working in a sulfite department which is no longer in operation. With recent upgrading and the addition of new thermo-mechanical pulp refiners, the sulfite department was eliminated. The Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill now produces high quality standard newsprint made of TMP and recycled pulp which is "recognized for outstanding printability and is extensively used for four-colour reproduction" (Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited 5).

Research Data and Methodology

While participant-observation is considered to be the preferred form of research for occupational folklore by some scholars, such as McCarl ("Accident Narratives" 35), Santino ("Characteristics" 201), Byington ("Strategies" 185), and Nickerson ("Antagonism" 308), I did not have this option or opportunity. Therefore, much of my data was obtained through personal interviews conducted with mill workers in Corner Brook through the summer of 1997. This form of research allowed me to interview seventeen informants and collect approximately 27 hours of tape recorded interviews. To protect the anonymity of my interviewees, I have used pseudonyms throughout the thesis. A list of these informants and their job positions are as follows: Ern Kennedy (retired Industrial Relations manager), Frank Sheppard (retired sulfite worker), John Peddle (5th hand paper maker[2]), Joe O'Brien (retired safety superintendent), Gord Coombs (retired mill supervisor), Tim Shears (paper mill superintendent), Kevin Pike (steam plant supervisor), Al Humber (assistant Thermo-Mechanical Pulping [TMP] operator), Tony Hancock (intake worker), Bob Saunders (steam plant power engineer), Sara Cook (tour guide), Kim Brake (tour guide), Rebecca Wells (tour guide), Jim Power (TMP worker), Mike Piercey (6th hand paper maker), Harry Mercer (5th hand paper maker) and Susan Wheeler (senior TMP operator). See Appendix A for further informant information regarding age and occupational status.

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[2]Each paper machine is operated by six workers, called hands. The sixth hand is the bottom worker who helps the others in their jobs and cleans up. Moving up in status and pay is the fifth hand, the fourth hand, the third hand, the back tender and the machine tender.

As indicated above, the people I interviewed comprise a cross-section of mill workers. This cross-section is based on three occupational differences. First, four workers are retired and thirteen are active. As well, four of the individuals I interviewed were part-time summer employees as compared to the other full-time, permanent workers. These include the tour guides and student, Mike Piercey. Second, these workers come from many different departments of the mill. Represented are three TMP workers, one steam plant worker, three paper makers, five managerial positions, one intake worker, one sulfite worker, and three tour guides. It is also important to note that some of the retired or more experienced workers have held several different mill positions throughout their careers. This list was based on the position the worker was occupying prior to retirement or during the time of the interview. And third, these informants represent both union workers as well as management. However, it is important to mention that four of the five management/supervisors I interviewed originally began their mill careers as regular mill workers who worked their way up in the company. This may help account for the fact that the majority of narratives I recorded, outside the collection of conflict narratives, are worker oriented.

It is important to mention one more difference in this cross-section of workers. Besides the three occupational differences, the cross-section also illustrates an important gender difference. While I interviewed four female employees out of seventeen informants, this statistic may be misleading in terms of the actual percentage of female employees. Besides the three female tour guides who are hired seasonally and a small staff of female office workers, Susan Wheeler is the only female employee currently

working in the mill as a mill worker. Now working in the TMP department as a senior operator with Kruger. Wheeler began as a cleaner in the Bowater Corporation. When Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill Limited changed hands, she lost her job with the cleaners due to lay offs and sought other work within the mill. While there is no company policy which discriminates against female employees, Wheeler is the only woman currently operating as a mill worker.

During each interview, my goal was to collect the occupational narratives that form the repertoire of stories that workers tell each other on the job, during lunch breaks, at organization meetings or at social gatherings and that originate out of the relationships and interactions that are part of their occupation and folk group. Most of these interviews were conducted in informants' homes or in my family's home while five interviews were conducted within the mill. Two of these five particular interviews were held in management offices (Pike; Shears), and the remaining three were held in the Human Resources building (Brake; Cook; Wells).

Overall, each of the seventeen interviews I conducted was successful. Not only was every informant generous with his/her time, but each worker was also very eager and willing to share with me his/her stories and experiences in the workplace. Every informant seemed pleased and content with his/her interview, and I did not encounter any major problems before, during or after each interview. However, while most informants were completely willing to discuss a variety of narrative topics, I observed that due to the to the age and gender differences between two informants and myself, there was some hesitation and slight embarrassment concerning the particular topic of sex and women.

When I addressed the topic of narratives about women in the workplace (which I did with every worker I interviewed), these two men did not seem comfortable discussing the issue with me. They did not get angry or upset with me, they simply avoided discussing it any further. While I feel that their response was due to our age and gender differences, I also feel that their long time acquaintance with my father also had a possible impact on their behaviour.

It is particularly important to mention the two informant's connection to my father, because it was my father (a local barber and business owner in Corner Brook) who provided me with their names as possible informants. Not only did my father help me in arranging these two interviews, but he also supplied me with most of the names of the people I interviewed. Outside of my father's connections, I arranged several interviews with workers I met while touring the mill. With the help of my father and Rebecca Wells, the tour guide who introduced me to a number of mill employees, I had a great number of interview possibilities available to me which I then narrowed down to seventeen.

I would like to add that I explained all of my research interests and interview intentions to my informants. I described my project clearly and offered them options pertaining to anonymity and privacy. As well, on no occasion did I conceal my microphone or tape recording intentions as at least one well-known folklorist has acknowledged: "To prevent such artificial, often grotesque distortions, I usually kept the microphone out of sight" (Dégh "Narratives in Society" 14). While I may be one of

Dégh's "ethics-sensitive colleagues," I did not operate under any false pretenses. Ethics and respect were always my guide.

While I did not actually record any of these narratives in their natural context, I believe that the narratives presented in this thesis are valuable, credible and accurate representations of mill worker narratives. I am not, however, suggesting that my recorded narratives are equivalent to narratives recorded in a natural environment. For example, I am aware of McCarl's argument that "the same expression told to an outsider (or to another audience not indigenous to the work setting) requires greater elaboration and explanation that extends the account and radically alters its form and refocuses its function" ("Occupational Folklife" 156). However, from my own experience, I fully agree with William S. Clements that "in both natural and interview contexts, an audience is required for a performance to take place. Often, even in the natural context, the impetus for performance comes from the audience. . . . Similarly, in the interview context, an informant may create narratives in response to specific questions from the interviewer" ("Personal Narrative" 111). In other words, while I am aware of the obvious elaboration or explanatory quality which accompanies the interview narrative, I want to make it clear that I did make an effort to ask my informants for stories that they tell each other in or around the work context. Most importantly, I analyzed these narratives from the perspective of their true function and as originating out of their true workplace context. And finally, like Richard Bauman in his book *Story, Performance, and Event*, I want to point out that every narrative I have presented in this thesis as text "reflects conscious attention to form on my part" (ix). In other words, in each narrative text

provided in this thesis, I have been careful in the transcription of audio taped interviews to represent the tone of the informants' narrating speech.

As another form of research for this project, I took the advice of Bruce Nickerson who recommends "that the fieldworker have an intimate, preferably firsthand, acquaintance with the factory" ("Factory Folklore" 122), and toured the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill on several occasions. Having a friend who was a mill tour guide benefited, as she personally guided me on two separate occasions, without other tour group members. I also conducted two interviews in the mill in management offices which gave me additional experience with the mill. My goal was to get as familiar with the mill environment and its operations as possible.

Few words can describe the intensity of these personal experiences. Even though I had lived in Corner Brook most of my life, I had never toured the mill or even visited the grounds. Because my father was not a mill worker, I never had the opportunity or reason to visit. When I finally did tour the mill, I was absolutely amazed at the work being performed and the environment it was being performed in. Besides experiencing the environmental conditions of the mill, such as the heat, the noise and the dirt, I experienced and was overwhelmed by the massive, intimidating quality of it all. The mill does not provide an easy, quiet, or clean environment in which to work. Many of my informants described the mill environment in these terms. For example, Al Humber, a TMP worker, said:

> I'd say it is the most dangerous place because you've got so much equipment more so than anywhere else, and heat wise, for temperature, you're talking about one hundred degrees and better. . . . And then the sound, you get such high noise there that that would throw you off too, you know, because of the safety aspects.

> So, you got heat and noise really affects a person's judgment and affects what they are doing. . . . So, you're talking about very dangerous, a lot of noise, dirty, it's a dirty place to work, you can see that.

John Peddle, a paper maker, added:

> The heat is a killer. In the summer times it's madness down there. You're up in 120, 130 degree range all the time. You got up on the press it's even hotter than that again. You can actually feel your pores open in your skin, it's that hot. You can feel them open! That's a fact. You can feel your pores open. I mean I couldn't believe it when I first walked up there, I mean the first time I went up on top of the press. And the heat is just so immense, it's not funny, right? And there's some fellows that couldn't handle it, couldn't work there because of the heat. They just couldn't handle the heat. And, the noise and stuff. That's always there now. I mean, you know, I can't hear as well as I used to. I mean if you talked with someone from the mill, I mean, usually they're louder than average. They talk louder than average people. Like you'd be talking away to them and, "YEAH," right? Especially the older guys. But now I mean, but I mean, you know, but I do find that I can't hear, like I miss stuff.

These kinds of words are often used to describe the mill environment. Until I visited the mill and experienced the environment myself, I did not fully comprehend the significance of their words. Seeing, hearing, smelling and feeling the mill work site provided me with an additional understanding regarding the workers, the context in which their narratives occur, as well as a new-found respect for mill workers.

Review of Literature and Personal Contribution

In 1978, Archie Green wrote that "the term industrial folklore is hardly used in the United States, nor is a large body of writing subsumed under its rubric" ("Industrial Lore" 213). Unfortunately, while this claim was true then, it is still true now. Up until the 1970s there was little written in the field of occupational folklore and even less written on industrial, factory and mechanized work. Michael Owen Jones writes that earlier publications "were largely collections of stories, songs, and beliefs rather than

lengthy analyses of these and other expressive forms" ("Folklore Approach" 280). Jones adds that these collections "focused on the more romantic occupations: cattle herding, lumbering, seafaring, mining, oil drilling, and railroading (280). Most importantly, these studies of occupational folklore failed to focus on industrial, waged labour.

It was not until the 1970s that academic literature pertaining to occupational folklife significantly developed and an interest in industrial lore began. For example, in 1978 a special issue of *Western Folklore*, "Working Americans: Contemporary Approaches to Occupational Folklife," was devoted to the study of occupational folklife in order to supply appropriate materials to satisfy the growing interest in occupational folklife. Therefore, this issue included such articles, such as, "Industrial Lore: A Bibliographic-Semantic Query" by Archie Green and "Strategies for Collecting Occupational Folklore in Contemporary Urban/Industrial Contexts" by Robert H. Byington. Recognizing this growing interest in occupational folklife, other special issues followed suit. Also in 1978, *Folklore Forum* published the special issue, "Occupational Folklore and the Folklore of the Working," and in 1988, *New York Folklore* published the special issue, "Folklore in the Industrial Workplace." Along with these special issues, Richard Dorson's *Land of the Millrats*, published in 1981, also illustrates how industrial folklife research was intensifying and topics were broadening during this time. In this folklore study of Gary, Indiana, Dorson credits the growing interest in industrial folklore to the changes in folklore research: "The old long-accepted model directed fieldwork to the marginal culture of village peasants and interpreted the resulting data as a mirror on

the remote past. The recent revised model directs fieldwork to the mainstream culture of urban centers and interprets the data as a mirror on the present" (2).

It was in the 1978 *Western Folklore* special issue that Robert McCarl offered a definition of occupational folklife which scholars such as Robert Byington accepted (185). McCarl's operational definition of occupational folklife, which I also accept, is as follows: "The complex of techniques, customs, and modes of expressive behavior which characterize a particular work group comprises its *occupational folklife*" ("Occupational Folklife" 145). It is also from McCarl that we get the phrase "work technique" which I make frequent use of in my thesis. He defines work technique as "the pattern of manipulations, actions, and rhythms which are the result of the interaction between an individual and his or her work environment and which are prescribed by the group and used as criteria for the determination of membership and status within it" ("Occupational Folklife" 149). However, McCarl did not actually apply his definition of work technique to much industrial research . After his 1974 article, "The Production Welder: Product, Process and the Industrial Craftsman," he abandoned studies in industrial lore for further occupational folklife research in areas such as smokejumpers (1976) and firemen (1985). Therefore, returning to the published literature of industrial folklife, I refer to Bruce E. Nickerson.

In 1974, Nickerson, who graduated from an apprentice program with a diploma in mechanical engineering and worked in a factory for more than ten years, asked the question in his article, "Is There Folk in the Factory?" in which he argues that the answer is yes. In 1983, Nickerson wrote the article "Factory Folklore" and then in 1990 wrote

"Antagonism at Work," both of which explore the issue of industrial folklife. While Nickerson's work has helped me, his work does not emphasize occupational narratives – the topic of my thesis. It is Jack Santino who has helped me the most in this area. However, while Santino offers articles which discuss narratives in the workplace, such as "Characteristics of Occupational Narratives" (1978) and "The Outlaw Emotions: Narrative Expressions on the Rules and Roles of Occupational Identity" (1990), his work largely includes non-industrial workers such as flight attendants and Pullman porters. It is my study on the occupational narratives of industrial workers that I believe to be my biggest contribution to the field of occupational folklife. Narratives of industrial mill workers have not been explored in folklore studies.

I also believe that I have contributed to the field of occupational studies by my synthesis of McCarl's theory of work technique and my study of occupational narratives. Within the thesis I maintain that occupational narratives not only illustrate the physical and sociological challenges that mill workers encounter while on the job, but, as a form of work technique, actually provide a means of dealing with and sometimes resolving these problems. Through various illustrations of mill worker narratives within each chapter, I support this assertion. I also make the observation that through occupational narratives, mill workers promote a mediocre or moderate standard of working conditions which they consider to be the optimal for their physical, social and economic security.

As mentioned above and originally observed by Archie Green, the literature pertaining to industrial folklife is not abundant. This statement not only proved to be true in 1978, but it is also true today. While today there does exist an extensive body of case

studies within the field of occupational folklore, there fails to be a significant quantity of research pertaining to industrial or factory studies. For example, the growing interest in occupational folklore in the 1980s and 1990s has mainly produced non-industrial, non-wage labour interests, such as Meg Luxton's *More Than a Labour of Love: Three Generations of Women's Work in the Home* (1980), Timothy C. Lloyd and Patrick B. Mullen's *Lake Erie Fishermen: Work, Tradition, and Identity* (1990), and Mark Ferguson's MA thesis "Making Fish: Salt-Cod Processing on the East Coast of Newfoundland: A Study in Historic Occupational Folklife" (1996).

I would like to conclude by mentioning the work of Michael Owen Jones. Jones' work is valuable to this study as it is Jones who illustrates the significance of industrial research. While Jones is not industrial specific, he does, however, explain how occupational folklife research can be used as a method of applied folklore within the workplace context. Jones suggests that scholars move away from descriptive, academic writing and into the realm of applied research and offers ways in which to do this. Most importantly, Jones explains possible objectives of occupational studies in terms of organizational development (OD): "The objective might be to improve morale, health and safety, group interactions, interdepartmental communication, the effectiveness of an organization, or a combination of these or other goals" ("Organizational Behavior" 168). While my study is not an illustration of applied folklore and may be described as "descriptive" and "academic," Jones' comments at least illustrate the significance of my work as well as point out new directions and possibilities for my research in the future.

I will, however, point out that while Jones' research goals and perspectives tend to illustrate the benefits of working for management, similar research may be carried out for workers and their unions. For example, Robert McCarl worked on behalf of South Carolina textile mill workers by collecting and publishing their brown-lung narratives for their lobbying effort to gain better working conditions. In this case, McCarl illustrates how folklorists may use their research to benefit workers, and provides a "fine example of a kind of activist approach, a direct application of one's scholarship to the needs and problems of the people with whom the scholar works" (Santino, "Overview" 104). While Jones and McCarl may disagree concerning in whose hands their research should be placed, I want to emphasize how the application of their research holds value and significance in the field of applied folklore.

Overview of Thesis Structure

Within this thesis I have addressed three categories of occupational narratives of Corner Brook Pulp and paper Mill workers – the accident narrative, the prank narrative and the conflict narrative. While my research indicated and my interviews exemplified many more narrative types, I specifically chose these three types because they were of greatest significance to my informants. Each of the three main chapters (2, 3 and 4) I address one narrative type. As well, for purposes of clarity I have subdivided each chapter.

In chapter two, "Words of Warning and Wisdom: Accident Narratives in a Pulp and Paper Mill," I discuss three subcategories of accident narratives in the workplace. These include the death narrative, the injury narrative and the close-call narrative. In

chapter three, "Pranks, Tricks and Practical Jokes: Humorous Narratives in an Industrial Workplace," I divide the analysis into three separate discussions pertaining to initiation pranks, safety in the workplace, and vulnerability as a source of humour and a target for pranks. In this third discussion on vulnerability, further division is also made regarding: sleeping on the job; pride; personal views and politics; and personality, incidents and behaviours. The fourth chapter, "Conflict and Resistance in an Industrial Workplace," is divided into two main forms of conflict – co-worker conflict and management/worker conflict. Co-worker conflict is then thematically subdivided into: reckless behaviour; stealing; avoiding work; and violation and violence. As well, management/worker conflict is subdivided into issues involving: unreasonable workloads; slowdowns and sabotage; stealing from the company; and dissatisfaction and pranks. And lastly, my final chapter, the conclusion of the thesis, provides a summary of my work and a review of my findings.

As indicated above, this thesis addresses only three types of occupational narratives which by no means provide a complete illustration of "the fluid and diverse meanings, changing perspectives, the meshing and the unmeshing of connections, confusions, and contradictions, and the tensions and the energies" within these workers' lives (Frank 26). However, since many of the narratives presented in the three chapters often illustrate more than one theme, issue or concern, I believe that the following work still provides a valuable representation of Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill worker narratives as well as a unique look into the occupational lives of industrial workers.

Chapter Two

Words of Warning and Wisdom: Accident Narratives in a Pulp and Paper Mill

This trade we're in, it's a dangerous trade, you know. Anything can happen and sometimes does happen. (Saunders 1997)

The Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill is an industrial factory consisting of high-speed production equipment and demanding jobs which create a high risk occupation for its workers. Many mill workers I interviewed commented on this aspect of mill life. For example, John Peddle, a sixth hand paper maker, said: "There is a lot of danger down there, because you're taking about ten or twelve tons of paper above your head on a crane and two pieces of chain. Let's face it that could fall like that" (Peddle 1997). As well, Harry Mercer, fifth hand paper maker, said: "People say we are over paid, but we work in the heat and we work long shifts and it can be pretty dirty and it's dangerous. That's what we are paid for, I think, the danger and the heat and the dirt and everything else" (Mercer 1997). As indicated in these quotations, mill workers acknowledge the reality of danger in an industrial workplace. They also employ techniques through narrative processes which help them physically and emotionally to deal with this potential danger. In his study on the steel workers of the Calumet Region of northwest Indiana, Richard M. Dorson writes:

> Mill laborers, working among mammoth machines and volcanic cauldrons, know that a slight misjudgment or careless action invites disaster. Prominent signs inside the mills remind the workers to be cautious; signboards on the outside proudly announce the number of accident-free days since the last casualty. Yet accidents and fatalities do occur, in strange and unpredictable ways, and they become a staple theme of narration. (50)

This chapter will address occupational accident narratives and will introduce issues related to death, danger, safety, and survival in the workplace.

While Jack Santino uses the broad definition of "cautionary tales" to describe all accident narratives ("Characteristics" 202), Robert McCarl categorically divides occupational accident stories into three types of narrative sub-genres: the death narrative, the injury narrative, and the close-call narrative ("Accident Narratives" 35). I will use McCarl's suggested classification as a manner of introducing and discussing each narrative type.

The Death Narrative

> *We had a real bad one many years ago again in what we call number seven beater which was a type of repulper that was a big revolving cylinder with blades on it. It was called a beater and we had a fellow go through that one time and he basically, he came out in eleven inch pieces. I don't mean to be gruesome now. (Gord Coombs, Retired Mill Supervisor)*

The first type of narrative I will discuss is the death or fatality narrative. Reflecting on several deaths which occurred during his employment at the mill, Ern Kennedy, a retired Industrial Relations manager, said:

> We had a fellow in the wood preparing, for instance, and we found him down in the pits of the drum barkers. He drowned and we don't know why. We had another man who went to sleep underneath number one machine and he got cooked. He was gone all day and we couldn't find him and when we did find him he was cooked like you do, like you do a bird in the oven. You couldn't touch him, everything would fall apart.

As well, Carl Leggo, a Corner Brook poet whose father worked in the mill until retirement, acknowledges the danger and the presence of death stories in his poem "Nan's Note":

> in the mill behind the pulp grinders

> where, my father insists, men sometimes melt
> and all that gets sent home is a shoe box
> of teeth and finger-nails and toe-nails. (*Growing Up Perpendicular* 63)

For both management and employees, a fatality is the most serious occurrence in the workplace. An occupational death brings fear, frustration, confusion, and anger to the surviving workers. And it is feelings such as these which lead to the presence and sharing of fatality stories within the workplace. No other kind of accident narrative equals their severity for a time. Stories involving the death of a co-worker take priority and dominate conversation among workers. According to Santino, these unusual or extreme accident narratives only dominate conversation "for a few days and then fade from the forefront of group awareness" ("Characteristics" 202). However, this is not to suggest that these narratives and their messages are never to be shared again. While Santino claims that they may fade from the forefront, I have observed that these narratives never completely disappear from the occupational environment or from the hearts and minds of the workers. They continue to be told, even in detail, throughout the years. What follows is an example of a fatality narrative which was vividly recalled after many years by Frank Sheppard, a sixty-five year-old retired sulfite worker:

> **F.S.:** But, bad accidents. How many men have been killed down there? I mean I had to work with a man one night and had to dig his body out of the sulfur pile, you know. I mean it's about the hardest thing you could do, a fellow you worked with a long time.
> **C.S.:** What happened to him?
> **F.S.:** He was, he was shoveling sulfur. There was a fellow working in the acid plant and I was working on the digesters and we had a man there shoveling sulfur, like I said, we burned sulfur to get the gas off of it for to make acid. Anyhow, this fellow was in the acid plant, a bit of a coward, he's coming to me, he said, "Frank," he said, "I can't find Bill anywhere." I said, "What do you mean you can't find Bill?" Bill Green, the fellow that was working with us. And I said, "What do you mean you can't find him?" He said, "I looked everywhere for

him," he said, "he's not out in the sulfur bin," he said, "he's not upstairs." And I said, that, and usually if we were going to leave the department you'd go and tell somebody that you were going somewhere so that they didn't have to worry about you. So, I said, "Didn't he tell you he was going anywhere?" "No," he said, " he never told me he was going anywhere." I said, I said, "When was the last time you seen him?" "Oh," he said, "about an hour ago." He said, "The sulfur is after foundering out there," he said. And I said, "Did you look?" And he said, "No," he says, "I was afraid to." Well, see, sulfur, the density of sulfur is like I said is so dense that you can start shoveling the bottom and you can knock it down, it would almost stay straight up and it wouldn't founder, it was packed that tight. And some fellows had a way of making their job easier, because you had to shovel that into a wheel barrel, dump it into an elevator to take it to a holding bin upstairs. And what they'd do, they'd shovel away at the bottom until they get it straight up and then they'd founder it and when it would founder it would go right on out across the floor and almost out to the elevator. They wouldn't have so far to wheel it. So, I went out and I said, "Did you look?" He said, "The wheel barrel is tipped over there." I said, "Well, did you look?" "No," he said, "I didn't look." I said, "Well, come on." "No," he said, "I'm not going out there." So, I was afraid to use the shovel to dig so I got down digging with my hands. I only dug about, oh, eight or ten inches of sulfur off of him. But, he was, he was, dead then because he tried to run away from it, that's the way it looked like to me because his forehead was cut. And when it started to founder he tried to run away from it, hit him in the back of the legs, knocked him down and knocked him out when his head hit the floor. And, like I said, the density of the sulfur, well, you couldn't breathe through it anyhow.

C.S.: When something like that happens it is pretty shocking.

F.S.: Well, it's something I tell you that.

C.S.: And so do people talk about that?

F.S.: Oh, yes, oh, yeah, they still talk about it today, every now and then, like down, a bunch of us gather at the mall in the morning and have a coffee. All the old fellers who have retired, spin a few yarns, and all those things comes up.

C.S.: At the time when it happened, would you tell that story to warn people?

F.S.: Oh, yes, you'd emphasize the fact that you don't do that, so and so done that and look what happened to them. You just, you know, now look it might make your job a little bit easier, but you're still alive now, but you're going to be dead for a long time.

Even though he is no longer working in the mill, Sheppard still tells this story among his retired friends as a way of remembering the past and remembering the individual who was killed. However, Sheppard also says that this story was also told while he was a mill employee to emphasize the fact that "you don't do that." The message was clear: on the

job you do not cut corners at the risk of getting injured or killed. As Sheppard states, "some fellows had a way of making their job easier;" there are obvious risks and penalties when doing this. In the narrative Sheppard has provided, the man who was shoveling sulfur attempted to make his job easier, and so was careless and lost his life in the process. In his article, "Characteristics of Occupational Narratives," Santino suggests that the narrative sequence of a story such as this one "can be compared to the stories told in a great number of occupational ballads, in which a taboo is broken and an accident results" (203). In this case, the attempt to make a job easier at the unnecessary risk of endangerment is the taboo both present and broken in this narrative. This narrative teaches and warns the worker that the breaking of safety rules can and does result in accidents such as this one.

The following fatality narrative told by fifth hand paper maker, Harry Mercer, also illustrates the occupational education and warnings promoted though storytelling.

> I heard tell of a story first when I went there about, well, back in the earlier days when not so much automation. And when the winder was slowing down, this guy, like, when it slows down almost to a stop he is suppose to throw a sling in over the roll of paper so that he can pull it off the winder. Now this is all done by automation now, of course. But, one time he was sleeping on the backside and he jumped up and thought the set was slowing down so he grabbed the sling threw it in, but the set wasn't slowing down at all. And, of course, it was going full speed and it just pulled him right into the winder and killed him. This was before my time, like you say, but things like that happen.

Like Sheppard's narrative which teaches the mill worker not to take unnecessary risks, this story also educates the worker not to sleep on the job when performing a demanding and dangerous task. The educational function of the accident narrative will continue to be illustrated throughout the chapter.

Returning to the topic of the narrative process or cycle of the death narrative in terms of its detail and narrational frequency, I will provide three versions of one fatality narrative. The first version was recorded in 1968 in a Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA) student manuscript. In this manuscript, William Gerard Gushue writes about his personal experiences while working at the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill. William worked for three years during the summer months while on break from Memorial University of Newfoundland where he was studying. Included in William's manuscript are stories such as this one where he describes a death he witnessed while working in the mill. I have provided William's narrative verbatim, as written in the manuscript (and continue to do so throughout the thesis), but changed the names in accordance with the author's wishes:

> Another story about deaths in the machine room happened 2 years ago. I was on hand to see it. It was on the 12 to 8 shift that it happened. Just before going on (to work) I was talking to Bruce Parsons -- the man to be killed. He was the best kind to work with and could talk to you. Not like some old fellows who don't say a word to anyone from the time they come on till the time they go off. Phil Brooks is an example of this. Anyway Bruce went backtender on number 3 and I went truck driving on number 6, the sulphite machine. It happened the overhead hoist got jammed. The five men on the dry end of the machine, winder end, all started to pull on the chain to see if it would move. It jammed sometimes. This time however the rollers had crystallized and snapped with the reel of paper on it. It was jammed and the boys were pulling and pulling on the chain. All of a sudden one side slipped loose and started to fall. Everybody under the hoist ran, in all directions. The end swung from about 40 feet up, it weighed about 2 tons, all steel . . . The hoist reversed which side it was supposed to be up as it fell. It landed about 30 feet away from where it would have fallen if it had dropped straight down.
>
> Bruce was running for the alley way between number 4 winder and machine when the edge of the hoist struck him in the middle of the back. It continued through him and ripped out his stomach and insides. Then it knocked him to the ground with one leg buckled under him. The weight of the hoist then smashed the leg at the joint (broke it). Blood was pouring all over the concrete floor. His guts were hanging out. Somebody put paper over this. His body was

> still jumping and his leg was all buckled up. About a half an hour later a doctor said he died instantly so they took him to the funeral parlour. The hoist landed on the edge of number 4 and this and number 3 were shut down for the rest of the shift. A fellow, Haynes, got his arm broken by falling wood that was on the hoist. Mac Kelly almost got hit by the hoist as it landed about two feet away from him. He got such a fright that he started to run and they caught him at the mill gate, I think. When he came back he was shaking. The poor sixth hand on number 3 never came back to the mill afterwards, he quit then and there. (13-14)

This story was written only two years after the death of Bruce Parsons by someone who witnessed the accident which may account for its detail. However, in 1997 I collected this narrative from a man who was also working on the paper machines at the time of the incident. Here, forty-five year old mill worker, Al Humber, narrates his version of the story:

> Bruce Parsons got killed. I was there when that happened. I was on that night. I wasn't there exactly when it happened, but we knew we had trouble with the crane at that time, hey? I don't know if you knew about the story about him getting killed. That was back in '65 I guess he got killed or '66 or something like that. Anyhow, a big crane up overhead and he was the backtender and he was on number three and pulling on the crane and the crane let go and came down on him and smashed into him and cut him almost in half. And at that time Rex Haynes was there and Rex seen it coming and he ran but Bruce ran towards number four paper machine and it caught him and it killed him. And Rex went down to the wet end of number three and he crawled down. I don't know if he had his leg or his arm broken, I believe his arm was broken at that time. And somebody else got hurt and a young fellow was there that was on the paper machine. I think he was the sixth hand. He was only a new young fellow. He wasn't there that long and I was over testing so I ran over. By that time you couldn't help anybody so you had to, the machine was down and everybody was trying to get it stopped and get the crew in and see what was going on, the ambulance and everything else. So, the young fellow that was sixth hand, I don't know, what happened to him, I believe he was a Oxford, they found him over in the canteen and he was just standing up and he was in shock because of what happened, because he seen it. I mean, he was right there and he ran back and Bruce got killed and he was along side of him and I guess he was no more than two or three feet from him and he seen him getting cut in half. And he ran over there and he was in shock and that's where he was and took him out. I don't think that he ever came back to work. I believe he just quit and never bothered to come back. They let him be off a

> couple of weeks sick but he never came back to work. But that's all fuzzy in your mind. That was a big incident there that happened.

I have provided both narrative versions because of their striking similarity even though they were recorded almost thirty years apart. These narratives share many descriptive details such as the name of the deceased, his position, the specific machine he was working on when he was killed, the type of machinery that caused his death, other individuals who were also injured and how they were injured, the specific manner in which the man's body was mutilated, and the young sixth hand who went into shock and never came back to work at the mill. What is important to notice is that while the first narrative was written in 1968, the second narrative recorded in 1997 retains many of the same details. The retention of detail over a long period of time may be due to the fact that as teenagers both men were working in the mill when the death occurred. Therefore, while the occurrence of telling death narratives may decrease or "fade from the forefront," the details of the accident retained by men who were either personal witnesses or just worked at the mill at the time of the accident do not necessarily fade with the diminishing frequency of the story's narration. The fact is that both men had to deal emotionally with the death of a co-worker, as well as face the implications and meanings of this death in their workplace. Some men, like the sixth hand paper machine worker who was described in both narratives, never get over the psychological trauma and never feel emotionally capable of returning to such a potentially dangerous occupational environment.

In an interview with another paper maker, Harry Mercer refers to the sixth hand and his reaction to the tragedy compared to his own fortune of not having had such a personal experience:

> Fortunately, I've never seen anything serious down there, like I wasn't even working down there the day that this young fellow got hurt. It was on my shift but I was off that day. But people react differently. Talking about that accident where that man got killed, well, I talked to the guy who lives down the road from me. He works in the post office actually now. And the day it happened he was working with that man and he seen it happen and he started running, he said. And he ran all the way home and he never ever went back in the mill. So, it's quite a sight I guess.

Here, Mercer not only acknowledges the difficulty of the experience, but he also acknowledges the different ways in which men react to and deal with a death in the workplace due to the stress and emotional difficulty. However, not all men after they have experienced an accident in the mill choose to quit their jobs or have the privilege of doing so. Timothy C. Lloyd and Patrick B. Mullen in their study of Lake Erie fishermen suggest that the occupational accident narratives told by workers "reflect the many hazards they face in doing their job, but despite the risks involved, they continue in their chosen occupation" (124). Most men remain in employment and deal with the situation by talking about it and sharing their narratives with fellow workers. It is the sharing of narratives, like the two provided above, that result in an awareness of an occupational death and its related hazards for workers who did not even witness the death scene or work in the mill at the time the death occurred. For example, the third version of this fatality was told to me by Bob Saunders, a power engineer steam plant worker who was not even working at the mill at the time of Bruce Parsons' accident. He remembers, "Once there was a man down there who got killed by one of them big cranes, overhead

cranes, came off its track, came out and it cut him in two. You probably heard of that one. Parsons I think his name was, Mr. Parsons." While Saunders' version is not detailed like the versions of Gushue or Humber, the main story and its tragedy are remembered.

This third version illustrates the life cycle of the death narrative. While fatality narratives and their details seem to dominate conversation for the first few days after a death and later fade out, the narrative itself is never really forgotten. The first two narratives were told by workers who emotionally experienced the death while working in the mill at the time of the accident; however, the third narrative was told by a worker who did not even know of Bruce Parsons or work in the mill at that particular time. As these narratives are passed on, most details are eventually omitted while the main plot of the story remains to be told to other workers for various reasons such as dealing with potential occupational hazards or teaching a lesson. Therefore, in addition to Santino's earlier claim that extreme accident narratives "tend to dominate conversation for only a few days and then fade from the forefront of group awareness." ("Characteristics" 202) I argue that in the beginning the details of the death narrative dominate conversation, but are then dropped while a summary version of the narrative continues. The fact that Bruce Parsons' story is still being told among old and new workers proves this.

The Injury Narrative

Dave Pike. I think it was, was walking along by a cleaner, nothing wrong with them, and just as he passed along, the cleaner busted open and it sprayed everything. And he had spots on his back for about a month before they were gone. (Humber 1997)

The second type of narrative that I will address is the serious injury narrative. According to McCarl, this type of narrative reflects a more "detailed description of the cause and the final method of escape," than the fatality narrative does ("Accident Narratives" 37). To illustrate this point, Ern Kennedy narrates a story involving an accident where a co-worker's arm was torn off:

> I worked with a man on number four machine that lost his arm. Just suppose, that round thing there is a pulley, turning. There is a belt on it. The belt goes right around it. Let's say it goes around it this way. And there's what they call an in-nip and an out-nip. The out-nip is where the belt comes off the pulley and the in-nip is where it goes on. Now, he had to put dressing on it every once in a while so that it would have lots of frictional contact with the pulley. And this fellow put the belt dressing on this particular day and instead of putting it on down here where the belt was coming off, he put it on up here and it caught his hand. And it tore his arm right off.

As well, Frank Sheppard provides a personal experience injury narrative:

> What I'd use to have to put the gaskets in was a, a plate, I'd open up and clean it out to seep the valve and I was doing that and one of the boys turned on the steam upstairs. Of course, when they turned the steam on upstairs, it hit me smack in the face and flattened me right out across the floor. I used to wear the bone rim glasses and they turned right white and the only part of my face that wasn't burned was around the eyes. The rest of it was nothing only a mass of blisters.

My research and data regarding serious injury narratives, such the ones provided above, support McCarl's statement. To further illustrate this I will draw upon one of the most recent serious injuries which occurred in the mill. It happened in 1996 to a man named Jim Power who was working in the Thermo-Mechanical Pulping (TMP) Department and had both of his lower legs submerged in hot paper pulp stock when the floor grating came loose under him. His legs were severely burned, and at the time of his interview he had not yet returned to full time work. Because this accident was so recent, all of my informants who were actively working in the mill told Jim's story in some

detail, even if they did not witness the accident, work in his department, or know him personally. I have collected many versions of this accident, but I have decided to include Al Humber's version because in his narrative Humber provides a very good example of the story telling technique of stringing together thematically linked occupational narratives.

While telling his story about Jim Power, Humber interjects another similar narrative into the frame of his first narrative. As well, when Humber concludes the narrative about Power, he further narrates several other burn victim stories including his own personal close call with hot stock. This integration of a personal experience narrative into an ongoing storytelling session for the purposes of expression of sympathy or understanding will later be addressed in the close call narrative section of this chapter. Humber's narrative is as follows:

> We've already had a couple of incidents down the mill you might have heard of that different people like, well, Jim Power, he got hurt. He got his two legs scalded. He might never be any sense because he's still not walking. It's hard for him to walk. You never heard of Jim Power? He was over on the TMP filters and the grating give out and his feet went down. Now he had it down ready to start up so it was down for a little while when he fell in it and he went up to his knees in hot stock and he burned his legs. And that was over a year ago and he's off and, he's still off. He came back and eased back but his legs haven't healed, you know, when you got them all scarred up you got no control of it, hey? So his legs is hurting still. I don't think he will ever be better but maybe he will. I hope so. And then Kevin Smith got burned and he was off for a couple of months. That was, that was six months ago, he got scalded on the side and he just had blisters come out on his legs. That was just hot stock and the conveyor just bounced, just seeped out, blew out through the side and got him and he just got away, but he got water on him right away so he wasn't too bad. Jim was trapped for a few minutes with his legs in the hot stock. It's just like you boil soup on a stove and you got it on you and the soup will stick more than tea will just burn you and it's gone in, but the hot stock sticks there and all the heat gets transferred out of it into you. So, he was bad. So, you're talking about very dangerous, a lot of noise, dirty, it's a dirty place to work, you can see that.

I would like to call attention to the narrative technique Humber uses which structurally enhances the desired tone and message of the story. Through the use of narrative interjection, two stories are told in order to strengthen the overall effect and impression of the danger and injury in the mill. For example, with the brief interjection of Smith's injury narrative into Power's longer injury narrative, Humber compares the degrees of their burns, the duration of their burning, their treatment and how long they were unable to work. The effect is a narrative collage of opinions and comparisons which heighten the awareness of potential danger and bodily harm in the workplace.

To further illustrate the injury narrative, I have included another version of this accident by Bob Saunders:

> Jim Power, I guess you heard the accident that Jim had last year? I don't think Jim is back to work yet. Jim almost went down in a tank of hot stock. So, the only thing that saved Jim now, he was turned cross ways. If he had been turned this way he would have went on down and within minutes he would have been dead. But he went this way. His armpits brought up in what metal was left there, right? And he burned, I think it was to the knees, practically to the knees and both feet and he had very bad burns and I think it took him close to a year to get, I don't know, I'm not sure if he's back to work yet, right yet.

Not only did I collect this type of narrative about Jim Power, but I also conducted an interview with Power and recorded his own personal experience narrative. This narrative will not only help to illustrate McCarl's earlier statement, but will also help support my own conclusions about the serious injury narrative. This narrative is exceptionally long; therefore, I have omitted the introduction of the narrative which gives the detailed workings of the piece of machinery Power was in the process of checking when he had the accident. What follows is Power's continued narration of this accident:

> . . . that's the best way of describing it. That's exactly what that piece of equipment does. But, anyway, so I was going and I was lifting the covers on a couple to check them and I was on a stainless steel walkway and when I lifted one up, I just dropped. Okay, like I was on a ninety degree angle to it and lucky I am about six foot, so lucky I was, some of the shorter guys would face the filter and use two hands to lift the cover, right? But where I am a little bit taller I used one hand, I give it a flick up and because I was on a ninety degree to this piece of equipment which was about a foot and a half wide by four foot long. When I dropped my armpit brought up. If I was facing the equipment like I would have went on in. So, it was just, loads of time you're facing it. And what happened is underneath this stainless steel, which is a stainless steel plate, underneath it there is angle iron on both sides that this plate sits on. Okay, so there's angle iron and that's running along and this plate that sits on it, one of the pieces of angle iron wasn't there. It either corroded and fell off, although it's stainless, or the bolts give out or whatever. So, you had this door, this floor just sitting there, just barely lipped when I stood on it, and I guess my torque from just lifting the cover, it flipped and I just dropped. And if you ever think that you can react, catch yourself, whatever, forget it, you don't. You drop the length of your body in one fifth of a second or whatever I mean, once you reach full speed depending on your weight. So, it just, I was just in the right position that I was ninety degrees, I went down and my armpit brought up which stopped me from going on. If I had been, if it had struck my arms say six inches out it probably would have broken it and it probably would have just went up and I would have went down. Any number of things, I just, lucky I was in the right position. And my two legs dropped into the hot stock. The stock is all under steam pressure and stuff now so it's really hot. Been told different temperatures, not exactly sure, been told 160 degrees Celsius. Water boils at 100 but it's under steam pressure, that's how it's done, so I don't know if it's, it'll cut the flesh off of you so it doesn't matter what temperature it is. And, so, what I did then, very quickly I pulled my hands back and I pushed my, like I pressed myself back up and I got up on the floor.

While Power's personal experience narrative is very descriptive in terms of cause and escape, the majority of serious injury narratives I collected about Jim Power and other injury accidents in general resemble the narratives of Humber and Saunders. However, even though most third person narratives are not as finely detailed as Power's narrative, we still understand what caused the accident and how Power managed to escape alive even though he suffered serious injury. The fact that Power's narrative is a personal

experience accident narrative explains why it is more detailed than the others, and also because as Power said, "I've described this like a hundred times, at least."

I would also like to add here an important comment that Power made to me before he began his accident narrative which addresses the question concerning why so many men not only knew about his accident but also had particular sympathy for him. He said:

> One thing I am going to jump to so I don't forget, is that once I had the accident and I made it to the hospital like I had a lot of people who visited me, a lot of people. And I was in hospital for a full four weeks and even the nurses would say, "Jim, we are going to get you a bigger room to put the cards in." Like, it was like really good, like I had it, there was a lot of people that visited me and stuff. And I think what happened was that there was a lot of people who actually have walked in the same area that I walked and like, they know it could have easily happened to them and it wasn't something that, it wasn't a stupid thing that I did, it just, something gave out.

This quote helps to provide us with an understanding about how men deal with death and danger in the workplace. Power speculated that he received so much support and sympathy because the accident "could have easily happened to them." It was not Power's fault nor was it another individual's fault. The accident occurred because of a piece of damaged flooring, something that no worker has control over. Therefore, by showing support and telling Power's story, workers attempt to emotionally deal with the situation and the potential danger in the workplace. Unlike other accident narratives, such as close-call narratives which teach how to avoid accidents by emphasizing work technique and the awareness and responsibility of one's own actions, this narrative type cautions the worker to be aware of the things he has no immediate control over and the potential danger which lies in an occupational environment.

While all mill workers benefit from lessons such as these, new workers in particular benefit from educational narratives. Because new workers represent an extremely fragile or vulnerable group of young people exposed to the potential dangers of an unknown mill environment, they not only benefit from educational stories, but they are also well represented in them. Injury narratives that involve new workers or "greenhorns" often promote messages pertaining to safety and survival in the workplace. For example, in the next narrative Frank Sheppard tells of a "young fellow" who didn't leave the premises when a sulfur leak occurred:

> **F.S.:** I remember one time we had a bad leak inside and when it started to escape you had to get out of it because you couldn't breathe. And the places it would hit you was between the legs, up under your arms, these parts of your body it would burn them. Now, this one young fellow we always told him time and time again that if you smell it too strong and your mask won't take care of it, never mind the big mess, get out, find out what the problem is after. No, he had to go and find out and we looked for him and we found him, unconscious across the toolbox. Couldn't get his eyes open, couldn't breathe, in the hospital for about a week, and you know, breathing sulfur.
> **C.S.:** Did he want to know for himself?
> **F.S.:** Well, I guess it was curiosity. Instead of finding the shortest way out, he wanted to know what was going on, curious about what was going on that caused it to be so bad.

This injury narrative represents a critique of inexperienced, inappropriate, nonprofessional occupational behavior and work technique. Acknowledging the 1970s shift from the study of folklore as things, items or texts to folklore as event or process, McCarl suggests that the term technique "reflects the 'working knowledge' (what you need to know to do the work) of any work group, and as it is passed from one worker to another through imitation and instruction, it begins to reveal a pattern of interactions that is unique to that particular group and almost invisible to the outside observer

("Theoretical Hypothesis" 148). McCarl later defines the "canon of work technique" as the "body of informal knowledge used to get the job done; at the same time, it establishes a hierarchy of skilled workers based on their individual abilities to exhibit that knowledge" ("Occupational Folklife" 72). He also furthers this definition in 1988 by stating that work technique comprises "the actions, rhythms of accomplishing work based on an inherited body of technical and social expectations" ("Accident Narratives" 36). Based on these statements, it becomes clear that accident narratives act as critiques of the violation of these work techniques. For example, in the story provided above, the work technique is the ability to sense a sulfur leak and the knowledge to leave as quickly as possible. The failure to acknowledge and obey this technique and to comprehend the immediate danger is a sure way to cause an accident. As Sheppard says, they found the new worker, "unconscious across a toolbox," and therefore having to spend a week in the hospital.

Another narrative dealing with injury, new workers, and work technique comes from a young student who works on the paper machines when he is not in school. Mike Piercey tells this narrative about another relatively inexperienced student worker:

> I seen one day, a guy was at a winder, that's a mechanical machinery where it cuts smaller rolls from one big, one big roll into smaller rolls. And there is two rolls that roll together causing a nip point and a man reached in there to grab a piece of paper. And at the same time his hand reached in, he got squat, right up to his shoulder. The safety device was initiated after his hand had got up to his wrist but by the time it stopped it was up to his shoulder. And when he hauled his shoulder, he's a student as well, out it was just like a pancake. He had his bones all shattered, all muscles detached from the bone, bones into the muscles. Operated and the doctor said about a month ago that he'll probably never be able to straighten his arm out again.

It was not until I heard the following comment from an experienced paper maker that I understood what the work technique actually was and the significance of its skilled application:

> That's like Danny House. I mean, he didn't know what he was doing. He was tucking a sheet in the nip there. And we all do it, we're all guilty of it but I guess, if I were doing it I'd be more cautious. I'd know not to go too close, close enough but not too close. Well, his finger just touched the drum and it went in and the next thing you know he is right up to his arm. One of the other students actually reacted pretty good and shut the winder down to free up the arm and got some pry bars, because you got two or three tons of paper resting on your arms, and nipped between there. So, it can happen in an instant. You have to be careful all the time. (Mercer 1997)

This narrative illustrates a challenging, dangerous and prohibited work technique that the inexperienced young worker failed to achieve successfully. The complexity and difficulty of "tucking a sheet in the nip" is illustrated in Mercer's traditional working knowledge: "I'd know not to go too close, close enough but not too close." It is such a finely tuned technique that only cautious and experienced workers are able to perform it successfully and risk doing so despite it being disapproved by the company.

However, Mercer not only speaks of the young worker's failed and unfortunate attempt at a difficult work technique, but also mentions the reaction of the other student on the scene. This reaction can also be considered a work technique. Mercer describes his reaction as "pretty good" and continues to describe what that "pretty good" reaction and behavior consisted of. Therefore, through Mercer's critique, it is understood that the desired and professional reaction to an accident situation is to be calm and controlled, and it is this performance which suggests the knowledge of an informally learned work technique.

The Close-Call Narrative

> *There are dangers down there. We had a guy that was on a wash up when the machine was down for repairs. He got down this pit, he was washing things and he didn't know that there was a big hole in the bottom for a drain and he almost went down in it. He got burned a bit. There are so many things that we don't know about. (Mercer 1997)*

The third narrative type I will now discuss is the close-call narrative. McCarl claims that this type of narrative "parallels the serious or fatal account in that it emphasizes processes and techniques that could have had fatal consequences if followed to their logical conclusion" ("Accident Narratives" 38). My collection of close-call narratives and observations correlate with this statement. For example, Bob Saunders narrates a close call:

> Terry Young had a close call. One of the super heater tubes ruptured and he was in the close vicinity that he came very close to being probably burnt to death, scalded to death. But he was just lucky enough that he was far enough away that he was able, able to run and the only entrance out was through the window. So, he climbed out the window and he was hanging there on the window ledge above the ground, I'd say maybe fifty to sixty feet, and he was there for a while until the boys saw him and they were able to get the boom truck in and get him out of it. So, it was a close call for him because if he had of fallen he would have undoubtedly, probably broken his legs, arms, maybe probably his head, who knows.

I have also observed that personal experience close call narratives typically begin with a statement which introduces what "almost" happened and then continue with the description of the situation or occupational environment. Equipment, setting, atmosphere, positioning, and other details crucial to the understanding of the narrative are explained. The story is then furthered by returning to the narrator's personal experience and providing the listener with specific reference to what went wrong or what was witnessed. The story then often concludes with what could have happened to the narrator

if he had acted differently or if some other fatal consequences had been "followed to their logical conclusion." For example, in the following narrative, Saunders describes a situation in the steam plant when a boiler exploded and he was almost killed:

> I've had a number of close calls but one I will never forget. Like the old saying, ten seconds from death. It was in 1974. It was on the Canada Day shut, July 1st shut, and we were on, we were on the start up. We went in, we were doing the old three shifts like four to twelve. We were on the twelve to eight. We were starting up for the next day. And, pressurizing the boilers and like, okay, Keith Hynes was relief foreman. That's the guy you were talking with in the control room the other day? Larry Simms, Ross Brake, myself and another guy who is not there right now, Ben Stone and, okay, we were starting up the boilers to get everything ready for the paper machines to produce paper the next morning. So, like, I was checking around, I was the first operator on that end, I was checking around. And I was up, unfortunately I was sat on this big non-return valve that's bolted to the boiler. It's probably the size of a barrel, I guess, close to it. I was sat on that and leaning over shutting off what we call a little air cock. That means a air bleed valve, you know, when a boiler starts to producing steam you bleed off the air from the boiler because what happens the oxygen cools the boiler, causes damage. So, I was leaning over that and that's about an inch valve, inch, inch line and valve, so, and being sat on that valve, you know, like the boiler was up to about 100 psi[3] right then. So, I just off of the valve, came down, just looked back, came on down to the bottom of the stairs and when I reached the bottom of the stairs, just as I started to speak to Hynes, it let go. It erupted. It was the most ear splitting noise you will ever hear in your life. So, within seconds the boiler room was filled with steam because all the steam from the six boilers came back through this one. It had an opening. It had an escape, right? It came right back through and I guess the steam was just replacing all the oxygen, so we couldn't breathe. Myself and Ben Stone was on that end when all the steam was coming out and we couldn't breathe. So, we held our breath and we just, we knew we were close to the control room so fortunately I went straight at the control room and fortunately I hit the door and I got in through. But meantime, Ben Stone, he missed the door on the back. He had to pound out the window with his fists and he got in through the window and I got in through the door. And when we were, when we went around to the back of the panel, inside was an escape hatch. So, he was going through it and I was going through it behind him, fast. [Laughter] Really fast. So, we got out on the roof and got down and went in the basement and shut the boilers off in the basement. Just shut the oil off so the boilers wouldn't be still producing steam or producing a more explosive situation, right?

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[3] "psi" refers to pounds per square inch.

> But, it was so loud, the noise was so loud, we didn't know what was going to happen next. We didn't know if the whole steam plant was going to, was going to explode and just kill everybody. We came close. Like I said, I was within probably fifteen seconds from being blown up while I was sat on the valve, right? So, like the other guys in the other end came out and they were trying to talk to us but you couldn't, it was that much noise that you couldn't hear anything. Nothing. We'd stick our heads out through the window and try to talk with one another even then it was just the same as you were just whispering. No sound. And all the steam it tripped out the fans and the boilers and the steam got out in the substation. It tripped out the substation and, now consequently it tripped out Deer Lake so the mill was nothing but a graveyard it was so black. Just the little emergency lighting that was there, right? So, it was probably one of the worst situations in the mill ever I would imagine, you know. I don't know it was just sheer luck that we weren't killed I guess, you know. And not only that, there's a big ten inch metal line that comes from the boiler and the steam that comes from the boiler goes out to the main header. Okay, that let go and that's shaped like a rainbow, the way the curve is into it and that just flapped about like this until it brought up by a big steel column. That is the only thing that saved that from tearing, from being torn out and probably the only thing that saved the steam plant because it probably, if that got loose God knows what damage it would have done and who it would have killed. Like, when, remember I was telling you about the inch line air cock on the top of the boiler for bleeding off the oxygen? Okay, when I was closing that valve I was leaned over it and that was pointing at my chest. Right at my chest. So, if that had of let go when I was, when I was on, sitting on the valve that would have went through me like a rocket and, you know, I mean, with the valve exploding I wouldn't had a, you know, I would have probably end up out in Wee Ball[4] somewhere. I would have got killed definitely, you know. I guess it's just timing I suppose and I guess you're not meant to go, thank God, at that time. But I think according to the reports, they did some testing on the metal on the valve, they sent away a portion of the valve, of the valve metal. And I think it was a year, a few months, a year after I was in talking with the superintendent and the report was on the desk. They discovered it was metal fatigue. Well, you know what that means? That means the metal is gone. It's changed and it's gone weak and it just gave out. It just couldn't stand the strain anymore I suppose . . . But that's, that's the most critical one that I was ever involved in.

This account is typical of the near-miss narratives involving death and the general narrative pattern or structure described above.

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[4] Wee Ball is a small rocky island located in the Bay of Islands.

Heard in Saunders' narrative are several references to "if" possibilities, such as: "if that got loose," and "if that had let go." I will refer to this narrative feature as the "if" factor or the "if" characteristic in close-call stories. Many injury narratives also have this characteristic. For example, Power's injury narrative can also be considered a close call with death narrative because repeated over and over again are comments made that Power would have been killed if he had not been in a certain position when he fell though the grating. Power states, "If I was facing the equipment I would have went on in." As well, in a discussion about the effect that the accident had on him, Power says:

> But that was a really traumatic experience. And then for the next two days it was really bad because every time I closed my eyes I could picture stock going in my eyes, up my nose and in my ears. You know, like, it was really close, like if I had been turned ninety degrees I would have went on. Then everyone coming in saying, "Gees, Jim, if that was me I would have went because I would have been facing the other way." The pipe fitters who were working with me couldn't go back on the job there. And then I find out like, an hour and a half after I'm gone, they went over and they screwed down all the plates so that they can't move.

Not only do we hear the "if" characteristic in Power's conclusion to his narrative, but we also hear the psychological trauma Power suffered in his near death experience. The "if" factor is the most genuine and obvious sign of emotional difficulty and stress in a close-call narrative as it is probably this particular type of narrative, out of all other accident narratives, which most reminds the worker of the danger in the workplace, their own mortality and their personal responsibility and obligation towards safety and their own lives. Even in the above quote, Power describes how other men contemplated what would have happened to them "if" they had been in Jim's situation.

So, how do workers deal with these kinds of stories, warnings and reminders? Many workers deal with close-calls and the potential danger in their jobs by rationalizing

the event or discovering the cause of the accident through narratives. Being confident in yourself as a cautious, competent, safe worker is another means of living with this potential danger. However, not only is having confidence essential to a worker's safety and job performance, but it is also essential to have confidence and trust in the performance of other workers. Sharing narratives is a way of sharing occupational education and creating this confidence. After recounting several accident narratives and three personal close-call narratives, I asked Saunders how he dealt with this potential danger in the workplace, how he rationalized danger, and how he was able to continue working after experiencing these close-calls. His response provided me with a new understanding of these men and their work:

> **B.S.:** So, I don't know, I guess your time is not come. You know, I guess other guys have as many, you know, hair-raising experiences as I did, probably more. I think it all boils down to luck and timing, you know, sometimes. Hopefully, your time is not up. There's been a number of years now since I had a close call so.
> **C.S.:** How did you deal with something like that?
> **B.S.:** Then yes, when that one, when that one, that big explosion, okay we were, well, first of all the mill didn't get back into operation until the next day two o'clock because everything was tripped out, Deer Lake, substation. We had to come on again the next night so I think if somebody sneezed, you know, your hair came up on the back of your neck, you know. You were more or less, for a while it was more or less, you were really tense and on pins and needles. To realize what can happen, you know, but the other ones I think I just took with a grain of salt, you know, I mean, so I didn't get killed and they weren't big. So I guess that was the difference. And I suppose over the years, you learn to be really confident in yourself. So today it would really take something to make me, make me scared or really panic, you know, I hope. We all want to think we are cool in times of, you know, stress and all this stuff but who knows when it really happens, right? But the point is we have a crew of competent operators and everybody does his job so, and the boilers and kept in good shape. Hopefully it never happens again. Now I don't want to see it happen again. Because, you know, the next time might be your last time.

To further illustrate the importance of relying on the competence of co-workers in the workplace, Al Humber provides a personal close-call narrative in which he was almost injured through the fault and carelessness of another TMP worker:

> Myself, I was up on a "toon," and that's a machine that pushes the hot stock through it and makes it, consistency goes right thick, so it becomes thick and it comes out as thirty-five to fifty percent consistency. But sometimes the "toon" will plug up so you got to speed it up and open a valve so that all the stock will come through it and push it out, but you got to do it slower. You open it at about fifty percent, the valve, and then you open it a bit slower. But I was on with one person in particular, and I was up on the "toon" and I usually stand back from it, so I stood to the side but he opened the "toon" right away one hundred percent. So, when he opened the valve one hundred percent all the stock just came through and it blew right through, blew up every where and sprayed me on the side. But I was back from it so I only got a little bit on the side and I hauled it off and I fired water on myself. And then I ran down to the bathroom and fired water and then I went and I almost got into a fight with him because he knew the difference. He's a pretty smart fellow and he knew the difference and he shouldn't have done it. But then I left because I was angry, so I just left and I didn't say nothing, then I came back and told him what I felt. And he was sorry that he done it and that he knew that he shouldn't have done it, but he didn't realize that he had to tell me to get back right out of the way. So, he drowned everything so we had to spend an hour or so up there cleaning up to get the stock washed out of the walls and everything else, but he got the "toon" working.

With this narrative, we can further understand what Saunders said about being confident in the performance and responsibility of other workers. Here, Humber gets angry and almost violent with the person who was responsible for his close-call because he "should have known the difference." This narrative is not just a means of expressing anger, but functions as a way of discussing and bringing the working public's attention to the importance of individual responsibility for others in the work place. It also warns co-workers to be aware of their actions and not to make the same mistakes. Mistakes like these are communally frowned upon by the workers since a sense of responsibility for one's self as well as others is critical to the successful operation and safety of the mill.

By making the potential danger known and illustrating co-worker responsibility, these narratives help to provide a degree of control over co-worker behavior and situations which may prove to be unsafe. As McCarl states, "through accident narratives a narrator can critique and articulate those aspects of the work process that remain at least partially under informal control" ("Accident Narratives" 38). In this case it is co-worker behavior which is critiqued and modified through narrative.

As mentioned in my previous discussion on the injury narrative, I will now draw attention to the specific usage of Humber's close-call personal experience narrative. This personal experience narrative follows Humber's previous story involving Jim Powers and Kevin Smith. Besides combining and comparing two injury narratives to illustrate and emphasize the danger in the mill, Humber also uses the technique of providing his own personal experience narrative in order to express sympathy for the injured, relate understanding towards their situations, and further his own opinions about the hazardous environment and dangers in the mill.

Unlike the narratives in the death section which emphasized not cutting corners, not falling asleep on the job, and not taking unnecessary risks, other narratives like the following personal experience close-call narrative also teach the worker to avoid unnecessary risk by not working too hard or too fast. The message in the next narrative, as told by sixth hand paper maker John Peddle, suggests that over-eagerness to complete a job leads to carelessness and unnecessary risk-taking.

> Well, I almost fell in the beater one day when I was up on the rails and I was trying to get the hook to let go. And just as I got the hook let go, I started to fall and I was almost ready to fall right down in the beater and Gord, this guy Gord Jones, I think it was Gord, I'm pretty sure it was actually, grabbed me by the arm,

> no, Sid Wheeler it was. Sid Wheeler grabbed me and hauled me back. If he never caught me, if he never grabbed me I'd be down in the beater. I wouldn't be here now. That happened to me up on the rails. He said, "It's not worth it, is it?" And I said, "No." Trying to hurry, right? Trying to hurry, hurry, hurry, rush, rush, rush. The boss is there, trying to get this done, the paper, get the paper back on the machine, see? And I was rushing trying to do it and [snaps fingers] I almost went for a swim. And you ain't coming up out of that. It's like a, it's a beater that's about water temperature and it's got stock and stuff in it. And the water temperature is up about 160 degrees or something like that. And it's got beaters. It's like a beaters that chew up the paper. It's a bunch of knives, round, it's about, it's about this big around, okay? About say two feet by two feet and it's got all these big sharp knives on it. And it's spinning constantly all the time. It's got two on this side and two on the other side. And you ain't coming back from that. No way. And the heat alone will kill you. And there's a lot of nip points down there that are like nips between rolls, big steel rolls. You just get your hand caught and stuff like that, you know. It's a dangerous place to work. You got to be very careful.

When reviewing these particular narratives and their occupational messages, we get an understanding that among mill workers working too little or working too hard is detrimental behavior. As Santino writes, "the stories teach that it is dangerous to try to do too much work, to be reckless, or to be careless" ("Characteristics" 203). Both extreme working styles involve dangerous and obvious deadly risks. These working patterns are seen as unnecessary risk-taking behaviors which need to be modified. And it is through narrative expression that this modification takes place and the redefinition of a safe and cautious worker emerges. What is therefore desired is a worker with a moderate working style. In other words, a moderate worker is a safe worker. Further discussion of this working style of moderation will be presented in both of the upcoming chapters on pranks and conflict.

Safety Issues

> *Well, I mean, where you are working around machinery, it's going fast and you got to be careful all the time. You got to be paying attention, you got to be alert.*

> *So, many things can go wrong. When you're using an air hose and you stick it in a dryer that could pull into the dryer and if you're not standing properly the hose can wrap around you and can pull you in and you're finished. (Mercer 1997)*

Due to the potential danger involved in their occupational workplace, mill workers are forced to acknowledge this potential and address the issue of safety. For example, Saunders said:

> Machinery is so unpredictable sometimes, you know, like, you think you are safe by all standards as you think you are, but sometimes the littlest flukiest things happen and you may just put your hand there. You might have put your hand there on a piece of machinery a hundred times, but this one time you may just be a little bit too far one way or the other and your hand is caught in the machinery. And it will probably take the hand off of you or if not it will drag you through the machinery and kill you. (Saunders 1997)

As well, retired safety supervisor Joe O'Brien added: "You go in that mill and everywhere you turn or everywhere you put your hands or whatever there is high-speed machinery. There is a hazard every two feet." Throughout this chapter I have suggested several functions of the accident narrative ranging from helping to deal with emotionally difficult situations to teaching and cautioning workers about dangers in the workplace. However, through interviews I have also observed the ways in which the Kruger Pulp and Paper Company have also recognized the power of the narrative and used it as a tool to educate their workers in company safety programs and meetings. For example, every worker who is hired at the mill is required to take a safety training program where narratives are told as a means of making them aware of the dangers in the mill as well as their responsibility for their own life. Even the three female summer tour guides had to take the safety program. The following is an example of the kind of narratives that are told at these meetings, as related to me by eighteen-year-old tour guide Sara Cook:

> I've heard, well, when we were in training, Bud Colbourne, he did the training, he told us a few stories about accidents and just dumb things people have done. And one of them was, this was like a few years ago now, I think, but this man was in an area of the mill where there was a saw and you have to like feed it in with your hand. And as he was feeding it in he put his hand in too far and he chopped off the top of one of his fingers. And anyway, there was an investigation, as there is after every accident and when the investigators were asking him, you know, like, "What did you do?" They went over to where he had the accident, he was like, "Well, I'll just show you what I did." And he started showing them and he chopped off another top of one of his fingers. [Laughter] Just showing them what he did. [Laughter] And that was just like really, really funny. I thought it was funny anyway, you know. It sounded pretty dumb.

Cook also said that the safety advisor "told us different accident stories in order to, you know, to enlighten you on what can happen when you are in the mill, the dangers, what's in there and stuff."

I also collected a similar version of this narrative from a retired safety superintendent, Joe O'Brien:

> I can tell you one humorous one. This is a humorous one. We had a fan and we had a guard over the fan but the holes in the guard weren't small enough. So, this fellow, he poked his finger in through the guard and the fan cut off the top of his finger. So, he was off for a while and when he came back they were stood up by this fan, him and his buddy. And his buddy said, "Where did you loose your finger?" He said, "In there." [pointing with index finger] And sling goes the top off the other one!

Even though, Cook's and O'Brien's stories represent versions of a humorous accident narrative, it is still through narratives like these that workers are taught that it is their own responsibility to be safe in the workplace. Other company safety materials, such as posters, also send the same message. Bob Saunders describes one of these safety posters he saw in the mill:

> It's like another little thing I saw one time. They say well really machinery don't kill. It don't. We kill, don't we? If we go too close to it and we get tangled up in it. The machinery is not there to kill us. It is there to perform a certain function

> in industry whether it is to run a boiler, pump to run a boiler or compressor to supply air in the mill or whatever it's there for a purpose, you know. But if it's not respected in a healthy respect it can, it can harm you.

However, the message promoted through such mechanisms as narratives, posters and monthly meetings is that in an industrial setting like the pulp and paper mill, the worker is responsible for his own safety. Saunders further illustrates his awareness of safety and the responsibility for his own life in the following narrative:

> We had to be our own best friend I guess when you're talking about safety. Like one little thing I heard one time, a long time ago has always made me very, very cautious and safe on the job. This guy, he had never had an accident, right? And his boss asked him one day, "How come everybody has had accidents," he said, "except you?" He said, "I got ten of the best reasons in the world not to have an accident." He said, "Ten?" He said, "Yes, my wife and my nine kids." So, I guess I have one reason in the world not to have an accident, too, my wife. You know what I mean?

It is no surprise that any company would want its employees to think and act this way. It is more beneficial for the company's image and public relations, their productivity, and their insurance costs to promote safety and keep injuries and fatalities down rather than have accidents in the mill. One skeptical mill worker commented on the insurance benefits which he believed to be the only reason Kruger promoted safety:

> Human Resources will always do accident reports. They'll investigate it, show what was the cause, show the problems or the reasons, how to avoid it in the future and recommendations of what to do in the future if such a thing should happen. That's a big trend now that has been happening in the company. It has for safety reasons but not only that, but insurances for major companies like Kruger costs in the millions of dollars, so the less accidents they have the less their insurance is. So, that's why they are so big on insurances now more so than anything. (Piercey 1997)

Despite Piercey's skepticism toward what he regards as the company's true motive behind their safety programs, accident reports and formal safety education initiated by

Human Resources do benefit mill workers and have positive effects on their work. For example, while walking through the mill I did observe some obvious company safety rules in practice. Depending on which department they worked, most workers were wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) such as hard hats, safety goggles, safety boots, earplugs and fluorescent vests. As well, the mill was riddled with warning signs which indicated such things as mandatory hard hat areas, and the amount of time you could spend in a particular area before one's hearing becomes damaged, such as the wood room and the paper mill floor. Posters indicating that employees are responsible for their own safety hang in the control rooms. As well, new workers, including tour guides, all have to take the safety training program and meet once a month for departmental safety meetings. Written and/or verbal reprimands are also issued when a worker fails to comply with the safety regulations. As a steam plant technician mentioned, workers are "under penalty of verbal warnings and written warnings and if we don't comply to it they'll send you home" (Saunders 1997).

However, as indicated in the many death, injury and close-call narratives provided in this chapter, accidents are not always prevented or avoided by issuing rules or following regulations. Mill workers work in a hazardous environment where "anything can happen and sometimes does happen" (Saunders 1997). Sometimes only the worker's experience on a job and his traditional occupational knowledge and work techniques can prevent an accident. Therefore, if accidents are to be averted, a degree of awareness pertaining to insider worker knowledge is required by organizers. Retired safety superintendent Joe O'Brien suggests that in order for management to create and

implement successful safety features in a mill, first hand job experience is essential. He says:

> I've worked out in the mill and I've seen people come in off the streets or come in from a big office job or something and try to talk about safety. But, then you got to be, that's no good, it's something that you have to experience, safety. And you got to get out in the mill, you got to know all the hazards and in fact, I suppose, I'm lucky to be here myself. I wasn't the safest fellow in the mill until I got the safety job.

O'Brien not only expresses the need for a safety promoter to be formally educated with previous mill experience, but he also expresses the need for the informal, insider knowledge and work technique that only comes from the experienced or seasoned mill worker. According to O'Brien, it takes this knowledge to really understand the hazards in the mill and the ways in which realistic precautions can be made.

Whether or not mill management knew what they were doing when they hired a former mill worker to take over the safety program in the mill is unknown. However, these men believe that the lesson promoted in safety education is that with caution a worker can have an accident free life in the mill, while a careless worker invites accidents. When working in an industrial setting, such as the pulp and paper mill, the workers are ultimately responsible for their own safety.

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed several types of accident narratives: the fatality narrative, the serious injury narrative, and the close-call narrative, all of which have specific functions in the workplace. Most importantly, I have stressed the educational aspects of accident narratives. As Richard Dorson writes:

> Millworkers relate with precise details industrial accidents that have befallen them, or that they have witnessed, or that happened on their turn, or that they have heard others relate. They repeat them as cautionary tales warning listeners against ever-present dangers, and as true stories with dramatic and startling elements. (50-51)

Santino also adds: "These cautionary tales share a certain didacticism, despite their differences" ("Characteristics" 204). I have illustrated how accident stories educate and warn workers about the obvious and not so obvious dangers and hazards in the workplace and how they help to create an awareness of worker responsibility for their own selves as well as for their co-workers. Within the examples provided, we see that accident narratives warn against the two working style extremes of under-working and over-working. Cutting corners and rushing a job are both viewed as unnecessary risk-taking which often result in injury or death. Moderation is promoted as the safest mode of working action.

In essence, what these workers are being taught and are teaching themselves are work techniques for survival that are unique to their occupation. Within a worker's occupational life, one learns both formally and informally how to perform the job and through the narration of accidents a worker learns ways to remain safe on the job. These issues represent the single, most important form of education when pursing an occupation in a dangerous environment such as a pulp and paper mill.

Chapter Three

Pranks, Tricks and Practical Jokes: Humorous Narratives in an Industrial Workplace

> *One night, some of the b'ys, we were in the old steam plant then, some of the b'ys had a ten speed bike down there and during the night each guy would take turns riding back and forth the floor, you know, on the bike. And we missed one of the b'ys. He got some sort of dirty water or something over him and he went to take a shower. And anyway, we had forgotten about the bike, we were just doing our job, and just talking to one another. And all of a sudden we sees him coming on the bike, riding on the bike, going as hard as you can go with just his shoes on! Nothing but the shoes. Nothing only a smile and the shoes. (Saunders 1997)*

In this chapter I will address the topic of pranks, tricks and practical jokes in the industrial workplace of the pulp and paper mill. More specifically, through the narratives of mill workers, I will look at practical jokes as enacted fabrications as well as narrated fabrications. According to Richard Bauman, both forms of fabrications "represent a fertile field for the exploration of the interrelationships binding together the narrated event, the narrative itself, and the event in which the narrative is recounted" (33).

However, before I begin this fertile field of exploration I will define the specific form of humour that will be addressed and exemplified in this chapter. While there exists a variety of humorous behaviours in an occupational environment, such as kidding, verbal jokes, teasing and put-ons, I am specifically interested in the performance and narration of pranks or practical jokes. Bauman defines practical jokes as "enactments of playful deceit in which one party or team (to be called trickster) intentionally manipulates features of a situation in such a way as to induce another person or persons (to be called victim or dupe) to have a false or misleading sense of what is going on and so to behave in a way that brings discomfiture (confusion, embarrassment, etc.) in the victim" (36).

Richard S. Tallman also provides a definition of the practical joke. According to Tallman, the practical joke can be considered traditional folklore both as an event and as a story of the event:

> The practical joke, as a folklore form, is first an event, a competitive play activity in which only one of two opposing sides is consciously aware of the fact that a state of play exists; for the joke to be successful, one side must remain unaware of the fact that a play activity is occurring until it is "too late," that is, until the unknowing side is made to seem foolish or is caused some physical and/or mental discomfort. The practical joke, as a folklore form, is also an oral narrative, traditional to the community and/or to the teller, which recounts the event and thus is a local or localized anecdote. (260-261)

In these two definitions, both scholars acknowledge that the practical joke as an event involves the dupe's unawareness of his/her participation in a play activity. Tallman writes that the victim "remains unaware of the fact that a play activity is occuring" (260), while Bauman claims that the dupe has "a false or misleading sense of what is going on" (36). The dupe's unawareness of play participation evokes Roger Caillois' definition of play. According to Caillois, play is both free and separate. He writes: "There is no doubt that play must be defined as a free and voluntary activity, a source of joy and amusement. A game which one would be forced to play would at once cease being play" (6). He continues to state: "In effect, play is essentially a separate occupation, carefully isolated from the rest of life, and generally is engaged in with precise limits of time and place" (6). When participants remain unaware of their play involvement, they are unable to freely choose to play or separate themselves in time and place from their work activity. Therefore, unlike pranksters who knowingly choose to play and separate themselves from their work into play, dupes do not occupy the role of player, but are essentially played on or played with. This observation is essential to the following

narratives and analysis presented in this chapter. However, returning to Bauman's and Tallman's definitions, it is the practical joke as both enacted fabrication/event and narrated fabrication/story of the event that I will be addressing throughout the chapter.

In researching and analyzing prank narratives, I have come to several general conclusions about how mill workers regard humour and pranks in their industrial workplace. The first observation is that humour and joking traditions are understood by workers to occur in the workplace. Through social interaction, workers expect joking behaviours to exist and pranks to be performed. Secondly, workers understand that those who play or organize pranks on fellow workers expect to be the butts of pranks in retaliation. In other words, if you are willing to prank, then you must also be pranked. As one worker said, it is "tit for tat" (Coombs 1997). A failure to accept this understanding results in a breakdown of social expectations and informal work relations. A worker is then either ostracized by the group or victimized further with pranks for having broken this understanding. Thirdly, while it is understood that performing pranks in a mill can occur anytime and anyplace, it is also understood that these pranks are not to endanger the lives of others or create an unsafe work environment for the victim or their audience. Workers understand that there is a line drawn which attempts to prevent dangerous situations and environments. The fourth observation has to do with the occupational context in which the jokes or pranks take place. An audience is essential either to the witnessing of these pranks at the time of their performance or to the later discussion of them. As well, because pranks and tricks involve behaviours and distractions which are not formally permissible in the workplace, the audience is

normally composed of co-workers who have no one they can legitimately complain to if these behaviours offend or disturb them.

Initiation Pranks: Educating the New Worker

> *In the millwright department one year, this new guy came on there and one of the guys sent him over to get a sky hook or something for him, right? And there's no such thing as a sky hook. He went over looking for some big superintendent looking for a sky hook. (Saunders 1997)*

In his article, "Factory Folklore," Bruce E. Nickerson writes, "Initiation rites are common in the shop. The wild goose chase, where the new worker is sent to look for a left-handed monkey wrench, ten yards of pipe thread, or a bucket of steam has historical precedent dating back at least to the middle ages" (125). However, while Nickerson acknowledges initiation rites in the workplace, he fails to explain why these rites are considered to be initiation rites and why they are so common in the workplace. Keeping in mind Arnold Van Gennep's rite of passage system, where rites of passage are subdivided into rites of separation, transition rites, and rites of incorporation (10-11), Gennep states that it is transition rites which play an important part in initiation (11). Initiation rites in the workplace can therefore be considered transitional rites as they mark the new worker's passage from the inexperienced occupational world into a world of knowledge and experience. This transition is something every new worker must experience no matter what their occupation.

However, when attempting to understand initiation pranks in the mill, Gennep's system proves to be inadequate because, as McCarl in his study on smokejumper initiation suggests, "it provides no insight into the unique communication of this particular initiation; it is externally derived and offers little more than superficial

classification of the mechanism involved" ("Smokejumper" 50). Therefore, by looking at a series of prank narratives, and the actions and the expectations involved, "we might gain a more useful understanding of the initiation event and its relationship to other avenues of communication" ("Smokejumper" 50-51). Within the following narratives, the initiation prank event will be illustrated in an attempt to understand the occupational messages that are communicated.

When reviewing a collection of initiation prank narratives, it becomes clear that many of the pranks involve playing on the new worker's inexperience and lack of occupational knowledge. In the following example, Jim Power narrates his first day on the job which involves two pranks that were played on him:

> I still remember my very first shift. I got called to go in on the paper cutter. And I walked down, it was a twelve to eight shift, and I walked down and I met some guys coming out of the wood room and I said, "Can you tell me how to get to the paper cutter?" And they said, "Well, I think you go down there and go in the door and up the steps." So, I went down and walked in and I went into what they call the mechanical department where all the millwrights and machinists and stuff work, but they work day shift. So, I'm in a place that looks like a ghost town, all this equipment and like, nobody is in there. So, I say, this can't be the place. Then I walk out somewhere and I'm walking down a long area. That's where the trains use to come in. There where flat cars used to come in. And they, a couple more guys were coming and I said, "Do you know where the cutter is?" "I don't know. I think it's over in the wood room somewhere." And I said, gee, all these guys working here for years and they don't know where this cutter is. And, so, anyway, I went upstairs and then I saw the paper machines. It was the first time ever in the mill, like there was no orientation program, right? So, I go down and get on the, meet the foreman, he puts me on the paper cutter. And that was where the rejected rolls would be sliced up and put back in the pulp. Now they have a guillotine type of thing, but this time it was just a knife thing used to go through. And when you get down to the end you'd have to cut it off with a hand cutter. So, I was here and after three or four hours I was sort of getting the hang of it. We used to have to manually, this thing would, you'd turn the water on, let it fill up and you'd turn the water off, like you would be mixing the pulp up like you would in a cement mixer, where now it's all automated, like you puts in the same amount of water and all this kind of stuff, right? So, anyway, best kind. I guess it

> was five in the morning, no it was earlier, it was about two in the morning, the paper cutter dropped from my hand and went down in the pulper. It was only a little piece of wood, right? Well, I went white! Like, I didn't know what to do. All I envisioned was, this stock was going right back to the paper machines. That's all I could envision, this cutter coming out. If you've toured the mill you'd see how the paper machines work. But unbeknowst to me this goes down through a pump, goes back and through a whole pile of filtering systems, goes out to the broke tank where four or five percent of it is mixed with good stock and, like, there is a whole process before it goes. And the guy next to me, I said to him, I said, "I dropped my cutter. What do I do?" And he was like, "Holy shit! I've never seen anyone do that before! All I can tell you is take your basket and go on home. It's the best thing." I said, "What?" He said, "I'd go on home now," he said, "because," he said, "if they know you did it. Just say you got sick and you went home or you got dizzy and you dropped it." He said, "Because if you break that paper machine, the next thing is going to happen," he said, "if she loses thirty, forty thousand bucks, they'll bill you for it." "What?!" I was like petrified, right? And the foreman came over and at that time my dad worked in what they called the bull gang, he used to do repairs on the paper machines. And, so, the foreman came over and I should tell him what to do, I mean, I was really, I didn't know what to do. And I wasn't overly gullible but what buddy said made sense. So, I said to the foreman, I said, "I got something to tell you," I said, "I think we are going to have trouble." He said, "What do you mean?" And I told him, I said, you know, "I dropped it in." And I guess he could detect how panicky I was and he just said to me, he said, "Don't worry," he said, "you're not going to do anything in this mill haven't been done before. Don't worry about it." And I was like, whoa, [breathes sigh] perfect.

This narrative illustrates two pranks which were played on Power on his very first shift. In both instances, experienced workers took advantage of Power's inexperience and lack of occupational knowledge. In the first incident, a group of men played on Power's lack of knowledge regarding the work site. Power was trying to get to the paper cutter area but was continually given the wrong directions until he located it on his own. Asking these men where to go was an obvious sign that Power was a new worker who was ripe for initiation and practical joking. The second prank illustrates the lack of knowledge and understanding Power had regarding his job and the specific workings of the machinery he was operating. A fellow worker gave Power the wrong impression and

led him to believe that his mistake was going to result in serious damage as well as a possible fine. Like Power said, he wasn't "overly gullible," but what his co-worker said, "made sense." This narrative is a perfect example of the ways in which experienced workers prey on the inexperience of new workers, and use the form of a prank to act as an initiation rite into the occupational world. According to Tallman's classificatory checklist for the study of the practical joke, this particular prank may be classified according to its initiative intent, where "the primary function is implicit in the intent of the prank, i.e., to initiate one or more persons into an esoteric group" (264).

These types of initiation pranks are found in abundance in an occupational environment like a pulp and paper mill. For example, I collected narratives where new workers were asked to obtain a bucket of steam (Hancock), a bundle of rags to wipe the sweat off a crane (Sheppard), a can of shell starters (Piercey), or a bucket of blue steam, sky hooks, and left handed wrenches (Saunders). I also recorded several other narratives where newcomers were given the wrong directions. One experienced worker even described a prank which lasted a week before the new worker realized an easier route to take. He explains:

> I remember a buddy of mine, we were training this other guy, he came in, he was really overweight. And we were down in the lab and we had to get some chips and we'd have to go to the wood room and pick up a bucket of chips. And of course, the wood room was probably about a hundred yards from the lab. But, there used to be stairs going up to the old towers in the sulfite mill and it would take you about a half an hour to walk to the top of the stairs, you know. And then you'd walk down a conveyor and you'd eventually get to the wood room, but it would probably take you three quarters of an hour. So, when we trained him the first thing we did, we took him up the long way and it took him about three quarters of an hour. I guess it was a week before he realized all he had to do was go out the door and go around the corner. He was in the same building! (Shears 1997)

Pranks like these are common in an occupational workplace because there are so many details and information to initially learn and understand pertaining to the environment and the job. Not only is the mill composed of many separate departments, but each department also consists of a large number of individual duties and technical equipment. To walk into the mill is to walk into a maze of noise, machinery, confusion and fear. As one student worker said, "After the first day they took us through a tour of the mill and I was terrified when I got around the machines. I was really nervous. I said, there is no way in hell I'm going to learn this job. That's the first thing I thought" (Piercey). As well, the only female pulp and paper mill worker, Susan Wheeler, said:

> The first day I went in there, I tell you, if somebody had a gun to my back, I wouldn't have felt any worse because, you know, it's a lot of pressure doing something like that. And, you know, not knowing what you're getting yourself into. . . . Like, first when I went in the mill, there's no windows or anything and like, I couldn't get my bearings of where I had to go, if it was north or south or east or west. I was just sort of lost. And like, when I worked with the other guys and they were training me, they'd go all over the place. Well, they knew the way and like, instead of going this way and you getting your bearings or something, they'd go everywhere and then you didn't know where you had to go.

I later learned that another experienced worker who was working in the mill at the time when Wheeler was hired, played a prank on her by giving her directions to the men's washrooms instead of the department she was looking for. Tim Shears narrates the story:

> I know the first day she came to work I, she was trying to find her way to the position she was in then. She was looking after reject refiners, the control room. And I said, "ah, hell, I'll take her up in the men's washroom." She asked me where to go and I said, "Just go up those winding stairs." She went up those winding stairs and was in the men's washroom where the showers and everything were.

For obvious reasons, because new workers are vulnerable to the occupational experience and knowledge of other workers they are also vulnerable to a variety of initiation pranks.

Narratives such as Power's and the ones provided above illustrate how the success of the initiation prank is dependent on the embarrassment felt by new workers. Their accounts of personal embarrassment can reflect a social dimension, for they sometimes stand helplessly in front of others, such as a boss. The following narrative provides an example of this.

> A real big thing down there is pocketknives, you know, like the bosses down there are given pocketknives to give to employees or do what they want with them. Now usually the trend is to give them to employees who did something beyond their job duty as a favor for them. And as a result it's always been the trend that whoever gets a pocketknife down there deserved it because they worked hard or you're a suck-hole or whatever, right? One day I seen a fellow go in and he said, he had two or three pocketknives, the boss did, and handed them out to the boys for doing a job. So, all the boys were over there saying, you know, a certain fellow was over there giving out pocketknives. And buddy runs over and asks him for a pocketknife and the boss says, "Get back on the job. Who do you think you are?" (Piercey 1997)

Here, Piercey describes an incident where a new worker is given the impression that the boss is freely handing out pocketknives. However, in actuality, the pocketknife is a symbol of hard work and acts as a reward given to deserving workers. The humour of this prank is derived from the new worker's lack of knowledge pertaining to this object and his asking the boss if he could also have a pocketknife. Therefore, this narrative is not just an illustration of the inexperience of the newcomer regarding the specific job, equipment or occupational environment, but it is also about the insider knowledge and understandings among mill workers pertaining to such things as job rewards. It

represents the level of insider knowledge which the new worker lacks and the experienced worker possesses.

Within initiation pranks such as this one, the embarrassment of the situation is also derived from urging new workers to unknowingly say something offensive to an experienced, usually older, worker. A student worker explained that seasoned workers would often request young workers "to go up and ask a certain fellow about a certain thing that will offend him" (Piercey 1997). However, he also continued to say that "people are wise to it. They'll say, 'Well, he's only young, someone must have told him to do it.'" This statement refers to the fact that workers usually do not take this kind of practical joke seriously or personally. They often let it pass because they are aware that they are a part of an initiation prank being played on a new worker, despite the fact that the joke is at their own expense. Some experienced workers even quickly and cleverly turn the initiation prank around on the instigators themselves. In the following narrative, John Peddle describes this very situation:

> Oh, yeah, well you could, you'd probably send them down to the wet end for a bucket of press wrinkles or something like that, right? You know what that's like, there is no such thing, you know. But anyway, they got me on it one time too when I, I guess I was there about a month, I guess. So, anyway, I walked down to the wet end with this chocolate chip bucket from out in the cafeteria. This chocolate chip white bucket with chocolate chip on it or something. So, anyway, I walks down to the wet end and opens up the door to the machine shack and says, "Tim," I said, "I'm here to pick up some press wrinkles." And he said, he said, "I think they got you my man." I said, "Oh, very good." And then Tim, Tim Squires, it was, he's retired now, he went over to the number, number three which has been shut down for a long time and had all this old water and that was in the hoses. It really stunk, right? So, he give me a half a bucket of water and he said, "Now, go up," he said, "and get them." So, I went up with the water and I drowned the three of them, three of the b'ys I got with this old water. They had to go take off all their clothes and they had to go and get a shower and everything, right? Oh, I always get them back.

In this narrative, the experienced worker Tim Squires seized the chance to play a joke on the original pranksters by advising the new worker what to do. With Squires' advice and Peddle's actions, Squires was able to pull a joke on his co-workers, while Peddle was able to turn the prank around and successfully seek his revenge on his victimizers.

These prank narratives establish that "kidding is used as a means of initiating newcomers into the working community" (Green, "Only Kidding" 62). By performing practical jokes on new workers through their lack of occupational knowledge, experienced workers achieve two things. First, they introduce the understanding of the social relations between experienced workers and new workers, establishing and asserting their own awareness and knowledge in comparison to that of the inexperienced worker. Alan O'Connor points out that prank narratives such as these, "involve an understanding of the social relations in the workplace between experienced workers . . . and apprentices" (151). Secondly, through the use of initiation pranks, experienced workers help to bring the new worker into the sphere of the experienced, knowledgeable employee. They are, in fact, bringing the outsider "inside" by teaching them techniques and knowledge they will need to know in order to operate in the workplace, such as where departments are located, and how the machinery functions. In his investigation of smokejumper initiation, McCarl says that initiation rites "precipitate and compound the transition of an outsider to insider in a modern occupational group" ("Smokejumper" 49). A. E. Green, in his study of joking among coal-miners, best describes this dual function of initiation pranks as "an education concerned not merely or even primarily with the nature of the pit and its material culture, but rather with the social meaning of

being a miner" ("Only Kidding" 62). Jack Santino also says that for this reason, pranks "are often seen as rites of passage that not only identify a new worker who is ignorant of the ways of the group, but also help to effect the transition into the group" ("Outlaw Emotions" 321). Keeping this dual function in mind, we can further understand Roger D. Abrahams' comment that "by developing situational joking on the job, hierarchy can be celebrated at the same time as status is somehow equalized" (168). Through the organizing and performing of initiation pranks, experienced workers illustrate their own knowledge and assert group held expectations, as well as invite new workers into a new world of work, knowledge and shared experiences regarding their work environment.

Practical Jokes and Safety in the Workplace

> *Sometimes, like one particular time that really stands out in my mind was the time that Bill Ford, he's a really big, he's a big man, and he was running, he had a fire in the hood, up in the hood of number one paper machine in the dryers. . . So, we have to go and get the hoses and try to put it out. Now, usually on number one, between number one and number two, there was a hose, like a normal fire hose, that was usually two lengths, okay? So, it would be really long. So, anyway, someone, without anybody knowing, took one of the hoses and brought it over on number four and we, all of a sudden, we only had a short hose there. So, anyway, this big guy, Bill, picks up the hose and he's barreling down to the end of the machine room with a hose ready to fight this fire. And when he comes, where the hose is so short, he comes to the end of the hose and he's [laughter] bump, bump, bump, bump, like bounced about five times across the floor. It was one of the funniest things I'd ever seen. . . Anyway, he went into the foreman's office and made a formal complaint that someone went and took it because it's supposed to be there. Well, it was dangerous. I mean the guy could have got hurt or whatever, but, I mean, it was funny. (Peddle 1997)*

Regarding his own collection of occupational narratives, Santino observes that "a major theme is safety, obviously a central concern of workers" ("Outlaw Emotions" 321). Like any behaviour or action performed in the mill, practical jokes such as the one provided above, can sometimes involve unintentional danger and risk. There is, however,

a shared view and attitude among mill workers which indicate that humour and practical jokes must be approached with consideration and caution when carried out. Throughout my interviews, I recorded several "unwritten" rules regarding safety and practical jokes held by the workers. For example, Gord Coombs, a retired mill supervisor, said: "And one thing that we never did was pull a prank or a joke where anyone would get hurt. Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no. Never would never take off say, a sewer cover, now for instance, where a man could fall down in the sewer. Oh, no, no, no, no, my goodness, no. No, or tamper with any kind of a tool someone was using, oh, no, no, no, no, no." Sixth hand paper maker, John Peddle, also said:

> Well, you don't go around mess around, you don't go around the beaters and you don't go around, this is where the paper is already chewed up and recycled and put back through the system. You don't fool around there. You don't fool around with the machine itself, you know, you don't do nothing like that. I mean, that's just, you're talking about a man's welfare, you know, and all his life too, you know. That's just, that's just common sense.

Many of the workers I interviewed expressed comments similar to these. However, despite harmless intentions and innocent pranks, some incidents involve danger and close-calls. To illustrate the fine line between safe and unsafe joking behaviour, I will refer to a narrative by Frank Sheppard:

> Looking back, we played pranks that we shouldn't have been, that wouldn't be tolerated today. You'd get fired for it right off of the bat. [Like what?] Well, you take a water hose, somebody walking along, now we wouldn't do it in the winter when the water was icy cold, but in the summer time it would be no trouble to hide away with a water hose and watch for somebody coming, somebody you knew and the minute you see them you give it to them with the water hose and wash them right off their feet. I don't mean a little water hose like you'd have outside the house, I mean a two inch hose, high pressure. You could knock them right off their feet. Well, we got so bad at it one night that, well, it was the last time I think that I played with a water hose. Our elevators are 550 volts, open switches, and we were at it all night and one of the boys was trying to

> get me and he never, he could never get at me with the water hose. And in the morning when it was time for me to go off of work, I went down, took my basket and walked down towards the elevator. Got in the elevator, going down, when I got part of the ways down he turned on the water hose and stuck it out through the gates, it has those accordion type gates on the elevator, and the water was coming down around my head everywhere and I was frightened to death. It was like I said 550 volts, all open switches in those elevators. And I was scared to death all the way down. And now that night I went in I told them, I said, "Now b'ys, I will not wet anyone else with the water hose." and I said, "Don't nobody put water on me because I'll report you." Oh, they got some mad at me. Oh, goodness! Well, I was afraid enough, scared enough, you know, that I could have got electrocuted in that elevator. You know, I mean, you can go so far with your fun, but you got to draw the line somewhere.

In this narrative, Sheppard illustrates the line that was crossed when a co-worker attempted to soak Sheppard with a water hose and endangered his life in the process. Because Sheppard was almost electrocuted, he decides that he does not want to continue participating in this potentially dangerous prank and informs the others about his decision. In order to be taken seriously, Sheppard gives his co-workers an ultimatum: if they continue to endanger his life, he will report them to their supervisor.

Steam plant worker, Bob Saunders, also recounts a personal experience where a prank performed on him while he slept proved to be unsafe:

> One night I was sort of having a little cat nap, right? Not suppose to say this now, you know what I mean? But, I think during the shift work everybody in that mill has fallen asleep at some time, not intentionally but regardless, you know, moods of your body, I suppose you're overtired or something. And one night I know I was, I fell, I was in the chair and just fell asleep there and the b'ys got outside. First what they did, they come in and they wired my legs to the chair. My two legs they wired to the chair and so, anyway, they ran out and they rang the alarms. So, when the alarms went off I just jumped up and anyway, when I jumped up my legs, not being able to move. I went on and my two elbows brought up on the concrete. I almost broke the two elbows off of me. It was a bad joke in a way because I could have broke my two arms, you know.

Narratives such as these not only educate the worker about potential danger in the workplace, but also illustrate the fine line between a safe prank and an unsafe prank. When pulling a prank, a worker cannot ignore all rules and common sense regarding safety and danger in the mill, but has to consider the environment, the situation, and the individual. Prank narratives such as these teach workers to be conscious of their occupational environment. (Narratives involving unsafe pranks which result in confrontation and/or violence will be discussed in the next chapter dealing with conflict issues.)

As a comparison to the unsafe narratives given above, Sheppard provides two illustrations of "safe" pranks which also involve the theme of sleeping on the job. I have decided to include these narratives because they provide the distinction between safe and unsafe pranks, as well as illustrate the attitudes of workers which accompany safe pranks. The first narrative is as follows:

> The headman on our shift was a little small man, way smaller than I am, he wasn't near as tall or near as heavy. But he use to smoke a pipe all the time. And on the twelve to eight shift, see, everybody had, jobs were all done by steps, like you know, a cook had so much to do with a digester, second cook had so much to do with a digester and all was down the line until the job was completed. Well, Billy Brake was cook and when he get the digester finish and she was empty then, he had to wait for the next one, so he'd go in and haul out the desk drawer and stick his two feet into it, lay back in his chair and have a little nap on the twelve to eight shift. Of course, now after his ten minute nap he was wide awake again, grabbed his pipe and, I'm ahead of my story again now, he filled his pipe up and laid it on the desk before he'd go to sleep. So, when he'd wake up he'd grab his pipe and shove in it, light it up and have a smoke. So, one night when he did this and just as he got to sleep, Terry Mitchell took all the tobacco out of his pipe and filled it up with shavings out of the pencil sharpener. Now, you know the shavings out of a pencil sharpener are just, only a puff and it's gone. And I can see Billy's face now when he woke up and he jumped up and he grabbed his pipe and when he stuck the match it went poof, you know, only a puff of smoke over his head. He jumped up and started to dance and he started to swear.

Sheppard immediately continued with another narrative which also involves the same victim, Billy Brake:

> Another time, poor old Billy Brake, we played some tricks on him too. Every Sunday morning we use to be shut down. We worked six days a week, never use to work Sunday. And when you'd be shutting down on the midnight shift Saturday night, it was only so much, by half the night because it took so long to cook a digester and get it out, by half the night they stopped cooking them on four to twelve. We just had to finish them up on the twelve to eight. But a cook's job was finish by four o'clock in the morning. He had nothing else to do but wait until eight o'clock to go home. So, what old Billy Brake used to, Billy used to go in behind the panel board where all the controls is to and lay down and have a nap. And then he'd get up and he'd go and have a shower and he'd go on to mass before he'd go home. So, one night he said, "Now, b'ys I'm going to go for a nap," he said. "Don't let me sleep too late," he said, "I wants to go to church before I goes home." "Okay, Billy, we'll have you up." Mitchell said, "Anybody that calls him tomorrow morning," he said, "is going to answer to me," he said. He said, "We're not going to call him." He never woke up till ten o'clock, we were all gone home. It was ten o'clock when he woke up. He was suppose to go off eight. When he come back Monday morning, b'y, oh, b'y, was he mad. See, there's not much you can say because he could only say it to us, he couldn't say it to no one else because you weren't suppose to be asleep. They knew you were asleep and they didn't mind it, but you weren't suppose to be doing it just the same. So, you couldn't complain about it. You couldn't go to a boss or anything.

While these narratives differ in terms of what was actually done to the victim while he was sleeping (substituting pencil shavings for tobacco in the first story, and just letting him sleep in the second), these two narratives introduce two important issues concerned with joking behaviour and safety in the mill. The first relates to the attitude and the actions of the prankster. In both stories, Sheppard considers these pranks to be safe because they did not involve actual danger to the victim, unlike his personal experience with the water hose and the electrical switches in the elevator. Sheppard later explained that "We kept it at the level where it wasn't harmful to anybody or anything like that. . . . We played tricks so long as no harm would come. Letting Billy Brake

sleep, there's no harm going to come. He just over slept. Lighting the ashes, lighting the shavings in his pipe, you know, it was no big deal. He wasn't going to hurt himself." Sheppard considers these pranks to have been safe because they involved no risk or harm to the victim. The second issue involves the context or situation that the victim established which allowed these pranks to be played. Within both narratives, the victims were particularly vulnerable to practical jokes because, as Sheppard points out, they "weren't suppose to be asleep," and therefore "couldn't complain about it." By engaging in behaviours which are not deemed permissible in the workplace, workers made themselves vulnerable to others, and essentially placed themselves in the hands of their co-workers. (Vulnerable behaviours, such as falling asleep on the job, will be further discussed and illustrated in the following section.)

While this discussion has addressed the fact that pranks in the workplace can sometimes involve dangerous physical activity, the narratives have illustrated the concern and shared attitude workers have towards practical jokes and safety in the mill. By sharing stories such as these, a worker helps to define, as well as acknowledge, the boundary which divides safe pranks from unsafe ones. Due to the management's concern for their workers' safety as well as their concern with their workers' decrease in job performance and productivity when engaging in pranks, practical jokes are not permitted or regulated. Because of this, it becomes even more important for workers to share and enforce their group held beliefs and understandings regarding safety through prank narration. These narratives teach the worker to take into consideration their work

environment, the victim, and the possible risks involved when performing a prank in the workplace.

Vulnerability as a Source of Humour and a Target for Pranks

In this section I will provide three separate discussions about prank narratives which illustrate how and why worker vulnerabilities often become sources of humour and targets for pranks in the mill. By demonstrating or exposing their weaknesses, such as sleeping on the job, being proud or boastful, calling attention to one's own political or personal beliefs, being involved in a revealing or embarrassing incident, or having certain character flaws, workers become victims to co-worker pranks and occupational humour.

Sleeping on the Job

> *This old oiler, he was a fine old feller, and he used to always sneak in behind what we called the rotary screens and have a little nap. And, of course, he used to always wear his pants tucked in underneath his socks. And, of course, he always wore a belt and the belt was always tight. Anyway, I went in early this morning and he was, Cliff was in there having his little nap. And he had a hole in the back end of his pants, so we got the hose, the couple of us, we got the hose right over where the hole was to, in the back of his pants, see? And it was one of those quick opening valves on the hose, what you call a quick opening valve that comes open full. You just pull the lever and it comes open full. It's not like a hand valve that you got to turn and it takes time, see? And, of course, you've seen the Michelin Tire Man? . . . Charlie blew up like the Michelin Man because his pants were tucked in and the belt and there was no way for it to get out. So, needless to say, he came up in a hurry. (Coombs 1997)*

As previously mentioned, falling asleep on the job is a common theme found in prank narratives. This theme is a common one because a sleeping worker in an occupational environment like a pulp and paper mill, presents an ideal situation for potential pranks. When a worker falls asleep on the job, they become vulnerable to both their occupational environment and their co-workers. This is not to suggest that practical

jokes were performed on every sleeping person. Sometimes, during a "good" job, mill workers relieved one another by taking over the other person's duties while they slept and then switching places. In one man's words: "They'd cover your back" while you slept (Peddle 1997). However, if the worker fell asleep on their own and another co-worker or a group of co-workers discovered them to be asleep, then the sleeping person often became the victim of a prank. Based on the narratives I collected pertaining to sleeping on the job pranks, these practical jokes usually involved one of two types of desired victim response and situational humour. The first prank type relies on the victim's immediate response to the situation, while the second relies on the victim's delayed response to the joke. To further explain this distinction, I will present two discussions and their corresponding narrative illustrations. The following story, as narrated by Tim Shears, exemplifies the first prank type:

> If you go down to the wet end of the paper machines, the machine tenders stay in a little booth and they got windows all around. And, of course, every now and then in the night they're sitting there, they'd nod off and go to sleep. And I remember one night the guys went down, they put cardboard, the guy who went to sleep and they put cardboard all around the windows and then they turned out the lights. And then they blew, when you have a break on a machine this horn just goes off like, loud and everybody runs, then of course, they blew the horn. And the machine tenders, they think the machine is breaking and they get up and gees, everything is pitch black. A couple of guys down there nearly killed themselves at it.

In his study of practical jokes in the Newfoundland seal fishery, John R. Scott suggests that playing pranks on a sleeping co-worker is "probably universal to occupations which use a watch system, having some men sleep while others are working, that the sleeping men will be the objects of the pranks of the other watch" (280-281). He adds that this is undoubtedly because "people who are startled out of sleep usually react

violently and are, therefore, splendid victims" (281). The first type of prank narrative, such as the one provided above, illustrates this point. In these stories, pranksters perform a variety of tricks where they proceed to abruptly wake the victim, exposing them to a deceptive, fictional situation. The prank and the reaction of the victim usually rely on where the worker is sleeping and what they were doing before they fell asleep. For example, in Shears' narrative, the paper machine tender falls asleep in a glass booth room while he waits for the paper to run off. While asleep, the pranksters cover the windows with cardboard and turn out the lights in order to obstruct his view and confuse him when he suddenly awakes. The prankster then wakes him by blowing a horn which indicates a paper break. I personally had the opportunity to witness a paper break while touring the mill. Not only did I experience the sound of the paper breaking as well as the blowing of the horn, but I was astonished, as well as impressed, by the immediate reaction of the men. They responded to the break with both incredible speed and single-minded urgency. The humour in this prank stems from the response the pranksters evoked from the victim when he thought there was a paper break and found himself in the dark. Therefore, it can be suggested that the prank not only relies on the victim's immediate response to the situation, but also on their knowledge of and reaction to their work environment. Recognizing the sound of paper breaking and identifying the blowing of the horn are part of a worker's knowledge and work technique, which the prank depended upon in order to fool and confuse the victim.

As previously mentioned, the second "sleeping on the job" prank type relies on the victim's delayed response to a joke. The following narrative by John Peddle illustrates this type:

> **J.P.:** We had one guy, I won't say his name, but we had one guy he was, like, see, when you're waiting for the paper, if we got a good run of paper, like you can usually, like, what happens is our back tenders, they haven't got much to do once they set everything up. They just got to wait for the reel to get big enough then they, we can kick it off. We got a big roll of paper, right? It comes out into a big roll and it's about fifteen feet wide, let's say. And after that it gets big enough or so big to the dimensions that we need to cut it and to make out the certain number of rolls that we need to get off, he'll go to sleep. He'll lie back and just go to sleep and then the light will flash and the horn will sound and he'll get up and roll his paper. So, anyway, we had this gentleman, and he was asleep. And what we use to do, when we splice two pieces of paper together we put this powder, like this talcum powder on it so it doesn't stick to the sheet above it or below it. So, anyway, a friend of mine, Glenn, took this powder and went over and start sprinkling all this powder over the top of his head. This guy is not the smartest guy in the world, but he's a nice guy, right? So, anyway, someone went over and kicked him after that. And he took his hands and start going like this, right? [rubbing hands through hair and over face] You know, when you wake up you put your hands up through your hair and back down over your face, like this. Meanwhile, his face was feather white and his hair and everything and he's still there trying to get back to sleep with his head up on a big roll, a big wad of paper. So, this is fine. So, meanwhile, we were all just busting our guts over in the kitchen, like, you know, over watching him. So, anyway, someone went over and kicked him again and then all of a sudden everybody in the machine room walked by and had to laugh at him, you know. Everybody had to walk over to him and had a laugh and left and went on back. So, that was fine so then we went in and told the boss. So, the boss came out and had the biggest kind of laugh. So, anyway, we said to him, "Be right serious now and go over and tell him to get up and check his reel." So, anyway, he went over and he got him up and said to him, "Get up and check the reel," like that, right? So, anyway, he went over and started patting and here he was walking across the big set of paper pounding his hand and the powder and everything coming off of his hands and everything. Okay. [laughter] He still didn't realize that he had his face covered, covered in powder and stuff. It was so funny.
>
> **C.S.:** Did he realize after?
>
> **J.P.:** Oh, yeah, after he realized and he thought, well, he didn't know what to think of it. He was really, really, really pissed off. Oh, yeah, really pissed off. Well, the first thing he said, you know, "What about if this stuff eats up my scalp? We don't know what that is!" It's only talcum powder, come on, right? And he

> was going right out of his mind figuring that it was, you know. But his face was feather white, I mean, it was so funny. It was unreal. That was about the funniest thing that happened down there.

In this narrative, the victim is dusted with talcum powder by a co-worker while he sleeps. The humour of this particular prank is developed out of the victim's initial ignorance and his delayed response to the prank while fellow workers watch and laugh at the situation. As Peddle explains, each worker in the machine room came out to observe and laugh at the victim with the powder over his head and face: "Everybody had to walk over to him and had a laugh and left and went on back." Also, even the boss, when he was told, observed the worker and took part in the joke by getting him up and telling him to check his paper reel. At this point, because the victim is still not aware of his predicament, the humour of the situation is heightened even further for the observers.

Crucial to pranks such as this one and many others is the use of the materials and tools which are a part of the occupational environment. As Bauman says, practical jokes "are elaborate and highly orchestrated fabrications and involve manipulation of the victim's immediate social and cognitive environment beyond the verbal, including objects, actions, other people, and social relations" (36). Out of a total of 64 references to prank narratives I collected, 76.6% (49 out of 64) involved the use or manipulation of the occupational materials found in the workplace. While Peddle explains that the original occupational use of talcum powder in a mill is for preventing sheets of paper from sticking together when a splice is done ("And what we use to do, when we splice two pieces of paper together we put this powder, like this talcum powder on it so it doesn't stick to the sheet above it or below it"), his narrative also illustrates an additional function

of talcum powder, used for the humorous purpose of dusting a sleeping worker's head. Many other narratives I collected also describe a variety of occupational items, materials and tools used for similar purposes. Some of these materials include: water and water hoses to soak unsuspecting victims (Peddle, Saunders, Sheppard, Shears, Coombs, Humber); paper stuffed in clothes to scare someone, a torch to weld tool boxes together, nails to secure mill baskets to the floor, pulp stock to fill up boots, glue to stick undesired items to lockers and receivers to the cradle of the telephone (Coombs); wood chips to fill mill baskets (Shears); steel to fill mill baskets (Humber); paper towels used to replace the oil in an oil gun (Sheppard); cement in a favorite coffee cup, screws to secure a mill basket to a bench and paint to paint the basket and make it wet (Saunders); talcum powder used as fake cocaine (Piercey); and tubing blown up and popped to frighten a worker (Mercer). Each of these pranks and their associated items involve the worker's imaginative manipulation of work objects to suit the situation as well as the individual. Referring to McCarl's definition of work technique where "the worker must make decisions and manipulate objects to produce the desired result" ("Occupational Folklife" 147), the manipulation of workplace objects for the purpose of pulling pranks also constitutes a form of work technique unique to mill workers.

Prank narratives which include a worker's occupational material culture not only illustrate the workers' awareness of their occupational environment, but also illustrate a work technique that is performed for purposes other than job production. The manipulation of tools and materials available to a worker constitutes a form of play rather than work. Besides the fact that for the prankster play is a freely chosen activity and is

"something we do because we *want to* rather than because we *have to*" (Dandridge 256), what distinguishes play from work in this context is that pure play "lacks a productive goal other than personal enjoyment" (Dandridge 256).

Also, in many of my interviews, informants often claim that the reason they take part in tricks and pranks is to pass the time and break up their twelve hour shifts. One paper maker said: "It makes the shift go. That's the way I look at it. You joke around, you fool around, nothing to endanger anybody. And it helps, you know, we work 12 hour shifts, and it helps pass the time" (Mercer). Joseph Alan Ullian, also adds that prior studies on joking behaviour in organizations have found that joking is employed "to reduce boredom among workers" (30). As well, David J. Abramis, in his article "Play in Work," notes that "under conditions such as boredom, when activation is below normal, play may act to increase activation to normal" (357). Creating entertainment in order to pass the time and reduce boredom on the job are obvious functions of these pranks and their storytelling. But there are other functions. As William R. Bascom, in his essay "The Functions of Folklore" writes, "Amusement is, obviously, one of the functions of folklore, and an important one" (290). Bascom then continues: "but even this statement cannot be accepted today as a complete answer, for it is apparent that beneath a great deal of humor lies a deeper meaning" (290). Therefore, it can be suggested that pranks and the manipulation of materials in a workplace are also performed in order for the worker to gain a certain occupational control over their work environment and surroundings. Within a worker's job and assigned duties, a worker is taught and required to shape and/or use his materials in a particular fashion for a particular function. Formally, a

worker rarely has the opportunity to exercise personal control over these materials or redefine their usage. However, by exercising work technique through the performance of certain pranks, workers create and apply their own unique methods of using, defining, and manipulating the materials and tools of their workplace. In other words, pranks as play, like ceremony as play, also provide the worker with "an important controllable dimension in a work setting" (Dandridge 259). The "controllable dimension" is the pranking/play dimension where workers often use pranks to address uncontrollable working conditions. This phenomenon was similarly observed by Scott in the practical jokes of Newfoundland seal fishermen: "The butt of the jests was most often the living conditions aboard the ships" (279). Scott adds that by making their environment the subject of humour "the sealers could cope with these conditions better than if they succumbed to swearing at them" (279). Therefore, in both occupations the workers used humour and pranks to cope better with their occupational environment and to shape and affect their uncontrollable working conditions.

Pride

> *I remember one time, the first lunch basket ever I had. I was some proud of my lunch basket. I went in there and I was up working on those tanks, washing the stock out of them. And on the top there were big pieces of timber. We used to hop over that. And one spot, you'd come along and you could hop up over it. One of the b'ys went and took my basket and put it there one day and I hopped over it and went right on down through my basket. Bang-oo! Smashed my basket! I was some proud of my lunch basket too, first one I had. (Sheppard 1997)*

While sleeping on the job is an obvious form of vulnerable occupational behaviour, there are many other vulnerabilities represented in prank narratives. These behaviours often deal with an individual's personality or a particular behaviour which

sets them apart from the rest of the group. These vulnerabilities, weaknesses and sensitivities often become prime targets and sources of humour for pranksters in the mill. I recorded a series of prank narratives which presented the victim worker as having a certain character flaw on which the prank is played. According to my research, pride seems to be regarded as a character flaw by workers and is therefore targeted. Whether it is jealousy, resentment, attempted control or humour which fuel these pranks, the fact is that hidden messages are sent out to the victims of the joke. For example, in the following narrative, steam plant worker Bob Saunders narrates a story in which a worker is tricked into believing the windshield of his car has been smashed:

> Another night, another time we had, we played a good joke on two guys too. Myself and this guy called Fred Wells, he was from out west, he's not here with us anymore now. So, me and him were working together and one of my best buddies, his name was Jack Cook, he's also gone now, he's out to the east coast, he had bought a new, a new car from Chrysler. It was sort of like a robin egg blue. Now, we didn't know it but one of the other guys in the steam plant had also bought a brand new car and was identical, was identical. And two of them were very, more or less, you know, very, oh, they loved their cars. So, myself and Wells were, were discussing, well what can we do to play a trick on those guys? So, anyway, we figured it out. When Wells saw Jack come in the control room talking to me, he went outside on the other phone, out on the other extension and phoned in. And as he was talking I was writing down the license number of Jack's car and he was telling me, you know, it was a big piece of ice from the wood room had fallen on the car, you know, that's the part, the gist of the joke, now, right? I was writing down, I was talking out loud what I was writing, "License number, blah, blah, blah." I said, "I don't know who owns that car," because I was pretending it was the watchman was taking to me, right? I said, " I don't know who owns that car but this is the license number." I said, "I'll check with the boys in the steam plant." And he said, "What did you say happened?" And I just repeated, "Oh, a big piece of ice fell down and broke the windshield up." And I never had the words out of my mouth when he took off through the door just like a rocket, Jack did. And I didn't know it but the other guy working on, who had the car identical, was working on the electric boilers and he had picked up the phone at the same time as it rang in the control room because they were both on the same extension. And he had thought it was his car. So, when Jack went down and ran down the stairs, buddy was running in from the electric

> boiler and the two of them met below the stairs and ran into one another and almost killed one another. And there they were trying to claw their ways off the floor to get up and run out to the car. So, we were watching the whole ways now. We were killing ourselves laughing. So, when they got out to the car and looked all around they realized they'd been had! They'd been had, you know. The other guy came in cursing on us and swearing on us, you know, telling us for playing jokes. So, we said, "You weren't suppose to be listening into our conversation." "Oh," he said, "that's true too." But he went on. But we laughed. The boys were laughing at that for months and months and months. They got a good kick out of that. It was set up beautiful.

This prank was initially set up to fool one man because of his love for his car, but accidentally involved another man who also owned the same kind of car and, most importantly, also demonstrated the same affection for it. As Saunders said: "Oh, they loved their cars." With this knowledge established, the two pranksters set out to devise a plan to "pull the leg" of their co-worker based on his love of and pride in his car. Ironically, another worker who owned the same style of car and who overheard the conversation was also fooled into believing the information. The second victim reacted to the fictional situation in the same manner as the first dupe and also ran for his car. As Bauman describes the prank victim's fictional or false sense of the situation, "engineered fabrications, crafted deceits, practical jokes involve by their very nature a differential access to and distribution of information about what is going on, with the trickster having a more 'real' sense of the situation, while the victim has a 'false one'" (36-37). While watching the reaction of the men as they run, fall and make their way to their cars, the pranksters laugh at the outcome of their prank: "We were killing ourselves laughing." Like accident narratives which teach the worker to be aware of dangerous, unsafe behaviour, pranks and prank narratives also caution the worker to be aware of socially inappropriate behaviours in a workplace, such as bragging and pride.

Narratives such as this one also illustrate the ways in which mill workers tailor their pranks to suit the individual who is being fooled. With proper attention, thought, planning and patience, workers often craft finely tailored pranks which target someone's particular character or personality traits. The following story narrated by Gord Coombs illustrates this premeditated approach:

> Another time we, there was an old guy down the sulfite mill and he was a very conscientious worker, very, very good, really took his job to heart. And there was a phone along side the acid accumulators where he use to work and, of course, when he'd be down in the digester building and the phone would ring he'd have to come back to answer the phone, naturally because it would be the control room upstairs. So, one day we, we got epoxy glue, of course, that dries rather quickly with a hardener into it, like that. And, of course, we put the epoxy glue onto the phone receiver and he was working away down below and, of course, in no time, by the time he had his lunch the epoxy glue was set up and the receiver, of course, there was no way you could pry it loose from the phone. And we'd go in the shop and we'd ring that number and, of course, you'd see him running, he was so enthusiastic about his job and, of course, he'd grab the phone and he'd say, "Hello, hello, hello, hello, hello." [Laughter] He'd be right down with his head right down on the phone. And we were inside just letting the phone ring, see?

According to Tallman, this kind of prank clearly fits the standard or ideal pattern for the practical joke because "the butt of the joke was a traditional dupe for jokes played by members of a group because he was in certain ways different" (265). In this narrative Coombs and his partner create a prank which specifically plays on the conscientious and enthusiastic worker who is considered to be different from the rest of the group. Based on their knowledge of the individual, and their anticipation of his response to a ringing telephone, they craft and carry out a trick which involves a simple task he can not achieve. With their prank in place, their conclusions are verified by the victim's quick, dutiful and eager response to a ringing telephone and his ever-continuing attempt to pick it up. Bauman suggests that this predictability is essential to the prank because it allows

the victim to "play into" the prankster's hands. He says: "part of the setup for the joke, part of the resources mobilized by the trickster in its enactment, was the expectation that the others would react in this predictable way to a particular action on his part. The fabrication was designed to elicit this reaction, and the others are playing into his hands. When they respond as expected, the implication is that they are contributing to their own victimization" (39-40). When a victim reacts in the way that a trickster expects, the victim is, in fact, playing into the instigator's hands and following through with their own victimization.

As the instigator of the prank mentioned above, the narrator revelled in his success, which could only have been fully achieved and appreciated by creating a prank which was well suited to the victim and his response. It is also important to add that in this case, the victim's eagerness and enthusiasm for his job is generally viewed as deviant and abnormal compared to that of the average mill worker. Therefore, playing a prank on this man can also be viewed as a critical comment on his irregular behaviour and a critique of his working style. Referring back to the theory of moderate work first introduced in chapter one, this narrative can also serve as evidence that the narratives of mill workers promote a moderate working style in the workplace. This theory will also be discussed further in the next chapter.

Personal Views and Politics

> *We were down the union hall last year and there was a provincial election coming up. Anyway, Paul Dicks was running for Humber West, and I'm known to be with the Liberals, right? So, anyway, we were there and somebody makes a motion that this guy Pat Callaghan who is running for the PC's wants to rent the union hall for his office. . . So, anyway, there were three or four guys saying, "This is a good opportunity. We can make a few dollars for the club and have him in here*

> *for the two weeks and blah, blah, blah." . . . So, anyway I stood and I said, I said, something to the effect that, "What are we now? If we are here just to make money, I can't believe it. I thought that we were a union and this was a union hall. We should not be associated with any party, any group, no matter who they are. There is five empty buildings here on Broadway, either one of them, because who ever comes in here wants to stand on the steps and take their picture that their headquarters is at Local 64 because they want the union vote." . . . And then I said, "Technically, if it's only for the money, then fine, next week when Dr. Morgentaler wants to come to Newfoundland to kill babies, but he's willing to give us a thousand bucks a week, we'll let him operate from here. Because we don't care, we're not moral anymore. We just want the money!" Well, I've been called Dr. Morgentaler[5] now for about two years, right? [laughter] (Power 1997)*

The personal views and beliefs held by mill workers provide another obvious emotional target area for pranking and kidding, as illustrated in the narrative provided above. "Letting on" regarding one's personal views or bringing them to the attention of others in the workplace can prove to be an invitation to becoming a victim of a prank. Open knowledge of someone's attitudes, views or beliefs, such as one's political convictions, is often taken advantage of in the form of the prank. Paper maker Harry Mercer comments on the way a person has to be cautious not to expose their personal life and opinions to fellow workers: "You got to be careful of what you say. We've had guys say things about what they've done on the outside or in their personal life which they have been sorry for saying because, like I say, the guys will remember and they won't let you forget about it. You've got to be careful of what you say because guys are not going, you know, they'll jump on it right away." As Mercer indicates, personal views have to be kept silent in the workplace because when this information is exposed, it acts as a

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[5] Dr. Morgentaler is a well-known Canadian pro-choice advocate of abortion clinics who has established such facilities in every Canadian Province through successful changes in Canadian law. His controversial activities have prompted numerous appearances in the news media.

weakness or vulnerability to the victim which others then "jump on." For example, in the following narrative, Coombs illustrates what happened to a worker because of his well-known political views:

> Now in the mechanical department, which was a bigger department and you were out in the mill, I mean that's where you, you know, you'd really have a lot of fun. I remember one night, well it was during the IWA strike, 1959, and, of course, I was in the machine shop then. And at that time Joey Smallwood, of course, had come out against the union and against the IWA, be that right or wrong, but that is what happened at the time. And, of course, at that time there was a big calendar out with Joey Smallwood's picture onto it surrounded by all his cabinet ministers. And this guy that we used to work with, he was a die hard Liberal, but he was a stronger union man. So, when Joey turned on the unions, he turned on Joey. And he was, oh, he was, really, really vicious with Joey because he had turned. So, anyway, we were on night shift, another chap in the shop and myself and we thought about it, and we got one of those Joey Smallwood calendars and we cut out Joey's picture and we went up in the machine room, ah, not the machine room, the finishing room then and they use to have buckets of glue. Then at that time, like, you'd have a bucket of glue with a brush for putting on some of the wrapper and that. And, of course, we got this bucket of glue and we glued it on this fellow's cabinet where he used to keep his clothes and his tools and stuff like that. And, anyway, about every half hour we'd give it another coat of the glue and, of course, about six o'clock in the morning there was maybe a thirty second thickness of this glue and when it had hardened and was just like glass. It was like flint! Like that! So, of course, in comes this friend of ours, God bless him, he was killed in a car accident after, ah, he came in and he looked around, came over and spoke to us and when he wheeled around and he looked and he saw Joey Smallwood plastered on this. The first things he could reach, there was a brass bearing along side and he picked up the bearing and he worked himself such and he beat the cupboard and he beat the whole thing right down on the floor. [Laughter] Of course, now by this time we had run away and we were hid away over in the other end of the shop and he beat himself, he wore himself right out. He just kept beating and pounding, because first he clawed at it and he couldn't get it off, like that, and then he decided that I can't tear it off, I'll beat it off. He beat the cupboard door, the whole cupboard right down. [Laughter]

In this story, the narrator is the trickster who plays a prank on a man because of his well-known political views towards Joey Smallwood[6]. Coombs describes the victim as "a die hard Liberal," and even "stronger union man," whose opinion of Smallwood turned negative when Smallwood opposed the IWA strike and the union. As Coombs says, "When Joey turned on the unions, he turned on Joey." Because this man's views were publicly known in the mill, it made him an easy target for harassment and pranks. As well, by responding the way he did, he played right into the hands of the tricksters which Bauman says contributes "to their own victimization" (40).

Another worker who is both politically active in the mill and also a brother of the industrial relations manager said: "I personally set myself up for a lot of stuff because I am politically involved. So, if anything happens on a political level, I take crap for it. Anything happens with the company, I take crap for it. Anything that happens, if I succeed at something I tried, I take crap for it. If I fail at it, I take crap" (Power 1997). This quote provides valuable insight into the kinds of personal behaviours and actions which result in joking and tricks being played on the victim. In this example, Power explains that it is his political position as well as his personal situation with his brother which "sets him up" for victimization and for taking "crap." As if occupying these two positions were not enough, Power continues to explain that it is just about "anything" he does that calls attention to himself which makes him a victim to his peers.

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[6] Joseph Roberts Smallwood was a Premier of Newfoundland. While he had been instrumental in the organization of Newfoundland workers' unions in the 1940's, he changed his political views when he became the premier. Once considered to be "a man of the people," during the International Workers Association (IWA) strike, Joey was viewed by the Newfoundland public as an "ex-union organizer, ex-labour agitator, and ex-socialist" (Gwyn 222).

Personality, Incidents and Behaviours

> *There was a millwright down in the ground wood. He was up on the scaffold and while he was trying to get down, he was shimmying down this scaffold, it was all rough lumber then, he drove a splint in his scrotum. Now, there was a nurse out in first aid and there was no way in the world he was going there. So, what he did, he talked another millwright in to going in on the back of the grinder with him and he, they had a first aid kit with them anyway, so they had a pair of tweezers and that. So, the fellow went in on the back, Ross Buckingham, his name was, the fellow who had the splinter in his scrotum, and Dave Halfyard went in with him. And they had a light. It was in on the back of the grinders. It's all real dark in there anyway. But, they went in and had this heavy flashlight and they had it just stuck up and Bucky was there with his pants down around his ankles and Dave was there with the tweezers trying to get hold of the end of this splinter. And in the meantime, another one of the millwrights, I believe it was Jim Haynes, I'm not sure, saw. Of course, he didn't say anything, he went and got all the millwrights, the whole works out of the shop, "Come out, come out." And when he got everybody there, of course, they all sung out, "Dave, what are you doing to Bucky?" He got accused, you can imagine what he got accused of. This is what happened. He wouldn't go out to first aid because there was a girl nurse there of course at that time, Nurse Pratt, I think it was. I believe it was Nurse Pratt. But anyway, he took a bad ribbing on that one, him and Dave Halfyard. (Hancock 1997)*

Certain well-known personal beliefs, views and attitudes often become the source of humour and pranks in the mill. However, as indicated in the narrative provided above, a worker's personality or particular behaviour or action can also become a source of amusement among other employees. Some workers become known for certain incidents and/or behaviours which result in humorous responses from their co-workers. These humorous responses often take the form of pranks. For example, in the following story, Wayne Stuckless becomes a victim to a variety of pranks stemming from an incident in which he was arrested for drug possession. Mike Piercey narrates:

> One big joke I seen was, Wayne Stuckless have you heard tell of him? Called Stucky. He was the feller caught here in Corner Brook last year, caught with $30,000 dollars worth of cocaine. . . . Anyways, he got caught, right? And you knows once he got caught the men were not going to let this go. No one can stand

> him. He's one of those workers down there no one can stand. Always got his mouth going, complaining, don't do his work, right? Always screwing the system, right? So, when he came back to work that was it. The b'ys were not going to let this go, right? So, this guy, Bruce Maynard, now he's one of those guys who really plays jokes on him, right? He's always tormenting him about it. I seen one time when he first come back on the job, the b'ys, like, when we do splices and stuff we always got this chalk powder, right? I seen the b'ys going around when they start working with him putting chalk on their mouth or going around acting like they were stoned. He'd get right crazy upset, right? Another time they filled up little baggies which they had their sandwiches made in, filled them up with little bags of coke and tie it on to his locker. All this stuff done to him, right? He'd walk by and they'd razz him, "Look at the coke addict!" Stuff like this, right? That was really funny. He really got, he took a real bad razzing for that.

Because the victim has involved himself in an incident which proved to be a scandal, it places him in a vulnerable position, ideal for teasing, joking and pranking. As indicated in Piercey's narrative, other workers take advantage of this particular humorous situation and pull several pranks on Stuckless, such as pretending that chalk powder is cocaine and putting it on their faces, filling up baggies with powder and tying it to his locker, and acting stoned around him. Particular behaviours and incidents such as these invite pranks and victimization in the workplace.

The next narrative is similar to this one in that it also involves an embarrassing incident which results in pranks being created, shaped and played on the victim. In this story, Dan Snow becomes the victim of co-worker pranks because of an embarrassing situation in which he fainted and proceeded to urinate on his boss's chair. Jim Power narrates:

> There's this guy at work, used to play broom ball, Dan Snow, I used to play against him, a big mouth sook[7], best way to describe him. Had something to say

[7] The term "sook" is defined in the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* as "a babyish child" (505). In this case, the informant uses the term as a metaphor for childish behaviour by an adult.

> about everything. Red hair, so you know what he's like, right? Had everything to say and he was like, if you broke up with your boyfriend he'd rag you all the time and say, "He's got some cute girl now. What are you doing home now? You're not doing nothing Friday night are you? Loser." Aghhh! And so, Dan went and was working, he was a millwright and he was working, started with modernization, and he was working on a piece of equipment, cut his finger. Had this cut on his finger, right? Grabbed his finger, say his index finger whatever, was holding it and went back to the foreman's office to get a band-aid. So, he like knocks with his elbow and the foreman lets him in and the foreman at the time used to be one of our broom ball coaches. So, anyway, Dan, big burly man, I mean, [outstretching his arms] I'd say he's six four and he's probably four, well not four feet across the shoulders, but he's BIG, right? Big guy, not fat, big guy. So, anyway, he goes in and he says, "Larry," he says, "I'm here to get a band-aid. Got any band-aids?" And he said, "What's wrong?" He said, "Well, I cut my finger." And he said, "Let me see?" So, when he took his hand off and showed the cut, Dan, the injured guy, lost it when he saw the blood and he passed out. I don't know if you're familiar with this, but when you pass out like all you're muscles relax and your bowel releases, okay? And his bladder released, right? So, anyway, he shows his finger, passes out, well, in Newfoundland talk, he pisses himself on Larry's leather chair, right? And, it was like a little cut, but because it was in the heat and all this stuff, blood was going everywhere. It didn't even require stitches. I don't think it required stitches. Larry threw the chair out, right? Had to get it steamed and all this stuff. And anyway, Dan took a ragging for that, like they had, guys were awful. They brought Pampers in, they did, you name it. He'd open his basket and there would be Pampers in it. There'd be Pampers up on the wall, like say thirty feet up on the wall. They'd get a ladder and put it up so no one would get it down. Like, you know, "spare parts for Dan" and all this stuff, right? Because he was a guy that ragged everybody, that's the worst type of person to have something happen to. Oh, it was wild! (Power 1997)

In this narrative, Power describes a humorous account of a man who embarrasses himself when fainting and urinating on the foreman's leather chair, all because of a cut on his finger. As a prank, co-workers then proceed to target and torment the victim by giving him Pampers or placing them in his vicinity. This narrative is a perfect illustration of incidents and behaviours that stand out in the workplace and which evoke humorous responses from its listeners.

Another important element of these two narratives is the personalities of the victims. In both cases, these two men were known for a particular unfavorable or negative behaviour. In the first narrative, Wayne Stuckless is described as "one of those workers down there no one can stand" because his mouth was "always going, complaining" and was "always screwing the system" by not doing his work. In the second narrative, Dan Snow is described as a "big mouth sook" who always "had something to say about everything" and who would "rag you all the time." As well, Power's obvious frustration with this kind of person comes out in his release of "Aghhh!" when he finishes describing Snow and his personality. Both of these narratives present men who are considered among workers to have character flaws. This is important to point out because it indicates another function of the prank and the prank narrative in the workplace. As illustrated in both narratives, workers took advantage of, as well as a great deal of pleasure in, the fact that these men had done something embarrassing which could be made fun of through pranks and humour. Because of this, pranks and their narratives act as a form of retaliation or resistance to these men and their negative personalities. The co-workers take the opportunity to get back at these men and inflict the same measure of discomfort on them as the workers themselves endured as a form of punishment. I hypothesize that other workers like Power and Piercey would also equally enjoy telling this story due to the humiliation each man suffered. In other words, not only are the stories humorous because of what happened to each man, but also because of who it happened to. This concept will be further elaborated on in the next chapter on conflict and resistance.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the mill workers I interviewed revelled in their humorous and brilliant ideas involved in the creating, conjuring and carrying out of successful pranks. Mill workers consider the execution of well-thought out, finely crafted prank to be a pleasurable and significant achievement. This pleasure as play is made obvious in a number of stories where workers laugh hysterically, revel in their recollections, and even gloat about their "perfect" prank performance. For example, self-congratulatory or complimentary comments, such as, "it was set up beautiful" (Saunders 1997), are often satated after the completion of the narratives. As well, in the following narrative, Peddle proudly describes a prank which not only involved tricking the victim, but also tricking his unsuspecting accomplice:

> But there is some good times down there I'll tell you that. We have a lot of laughs down there. Like, I mean, myself and Pete White, like we were, like one day we were sitting down on the smoke bench and we were having a cigarette and this other guy Jason Adams was there and I said, "Pete," I said, "let's get Jason." Like that, right? And he said, "How?" I said, "I don't know. Just give it a second now. I'll think of something." So, anyway, I said, "I got it." So, we started smacking hands, like give me five and that there, right? And he was giving me five back again like this, right? So, I said, "Pete," I said, "make sure Jason notices us now giving each other five." He said, "Yeah." But little did Pete know I was getting him at the same time. So, anyway, I said, "Pete," I said, "take a cigarette now, take your cigarette," I said, "and just pop it up through your hand right there and just put the fiery part up." And I said, "Give me five in this hand," I said, "then put your hand out like that to Jason and see if Jason will tap you on the hand." I said, "I bet you fifty bucks he'll do it." So, anyway, he tapped my hand and he put his hand out and Jason was walking by, right? And he put his hand out like this and here's Jason, [claps hands together loudly] come down and the flame, obviously it just broke, right? [laughter] You know what I mean? On the top of the cigarette it just busted. [laughter] It went on his hand and burned his hand and Jason's. I almost busted a gut! [laughter]

In this story, Peddle tells of a time when he tricked two men into hitting their hands together on top of a cigarette, so that both men were burned by the flame. Peddle not only introduced his narrative by stating that he has lots of "laughs down there," but continued to take so much pleasure in his narration that he could barely contain his laughter during the conclusion. As Peddle said, he "almost busted a gut" laughing.

As indicated above, the telling and retelling of pranks is obviously crucial to joking in the mill. This is in keeping with Bauman's observation that the sharing of pranks through narrative helps to create and encourage more pranks. He writes: "in a general sense the compound knowledge gained by both doing and telling helps give shape to each new joke. In this sense, the stories in general contribute proactively to the constitution of new practical jokes" (51-52). When reading the narratives provided in this chapter, it becomes clear that along with their entertainment value, comes the instruction, creativity and encouragement for future possibilities. Through humorous storytelling and the accompaniment of non-verbal communication, pranks are methodically described, encouraged and critiqued. The worker learns what behaviours constitute a prank and, most importantly, what behaviours provoke a prank to be initiated, all of which is used to help form and shape his or her next prank.

As this chapter has demonstrated, "on-the-job pranking is itself a tradition" (Santino, "Outlaw Emotions" 321). Humorous situations and pranks provide a wealth of topics and materials for storytelling. These narratives "replayed the original experiences" (Bauman 36). By reifying the original experience of the prank, humorous narratives

provide entertainment as well as an outlet for the workers on the job. Regarding narratives in the workplace one worker said,

> The job is boring, it's repetitive. The atmosphere, the heat, the loudness of the machinery. It's a dull atmosphere and it's very dreary, not exciting, it's boring. And I guess it's this people escape from, the reality of working by telling stories, causing practical jokes and listening, and anything that they know they shouldn't be doing adds excitement to their life. (Piercey 1997)

According to this worker, due to the boring and repetitive nature of the job, workers engage in pranks and storytelling to add some "excitement" to their occupational life in the mill. The desire to add excitement to one's occupation through the use of humour and play have long been understood by scholars to provide "a means of socializing, stimulating creativity and releasing tension" (Dandridge 256-7), as well as increasing "job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and social performance... [and] reduce anxiety and depression" (Abramis 356). Tallman also adds that practical jokes help provide workers with a "release from suppressed tensions in a manner acceptable at least to the esoteric group" (260). In other words, when workers choose to escape from "the reality of working by telling stories, causing practical jokes and listening" (Piercey 1997), they are engaging in a form of group socialization which is then believed to improve their occupational experience in the workplace.

Thus, it is not only the prank which creates the excitement and breaks up the boredom of the job, it is also the narration of these pranks which provides the entertainment. Like the practical jokes of workers in the Newfoundland seal fishery, the pranks of mill workers serve several functions where "the most important and most common of these is general entertainment" (Scott 283). Clearly, these narratives

illustrate that talking about a prank is as important and as humorous as the enactment of the prank itself. As Bauman explains, within a sociable group of workers "what counts is the cleverness and effectiveness of the trick and the expressive opportunity afforded by telling about it" (47). In other words, because there is often so much effort, skill or cleverness involved in the prank, its narration becomes an important mode of expression and social interaction in the workplace.

The narratives provided in this chapter have also illustrated many characteristics and functions unique to an occupational mill environment. For example, pranks as initiation rites help establish an experienced worker's knowledge, assert group held expectations, as well as bring the inexperienced new worker into the realm of occupational knowledge, work technique and group acceptance. Also, narratives about pranks involving risk help a worker to acknowledge and define the boundary which separates a safe prank from an unsafe prank, as well as teach workers to take safety and their work environment into consideration when performing any activity in the workplace. As well, prank narratives illustrate how workers become the victims of pranks by demonstrating or exposing their vulnerabilities and weaknesses, such as sleeping on the job, having particular character flaws, calling attention to one's own political or personal beliefs, or being involved in a revealing or embarrassing incident. Most importantly, the stories provided in this chapter illustrate how significant and meaningful pranks and prank narratives are integral to the operation and functioning of an occupation.

Chapter Four

Conflict and Resistance in an Industrial Workplace

> *Fighting, one time there used to be a lot of that on the go down there. Well, I mean, you've got to think about it too, you're in that small space for a long time, hot, and tensions are up and stressed out and everything else, you know. I've heard of fellows getting punched in the face and stuff like that and big rackets, because of tension, tension and fellows not doing their job basically. (Peddle 1997)*

In this chapter I will discuss the ways in which conflict, resistance and subordination are experienced and demonstrated in the industrial mill context. This chapter will introduce the conflict which exists among co-workers as well as the conflict which exists between workers and management. It will address reasons for tension and hostility in the workplace and question how it is dealt with and regarded by mill workers.

Due to the nature of an industrial workplace like a pulp and paper mill, workers not only have to interact and communicate with one another, but their form of work demands that they rely upon one another. It is this co-worker dependence which often leads to various forms of conflict. When workers are not dependable, do not know their job, are lazy or steal from their peers, they create situations of conflict where their behaviour has to be addressed and/or modified. As well, due to status differentiation, workers as subordinates and management as superordinates, both occupy positions which heighten tension, resentment and antagonism in the workplace. Regarding the complexity and network of work relationships in an occupational environment, Jack Santino writes:

> The network of relationships a worker has is complex: he must relate to and work with subordinates, peers, bosses, management, outside agencies, and the general public. Narratives arise along each of these relationships, and allow aggressive

> feelings fictive release. People working with each other will conflict. ("Characteristics" 212)

Keeping this in mind, as well as the fact that the workplace is where we spend "over one-third of our waking lives" (Nickerson, "Antagonism at Work" 317), it is not surprising that workplace conflict is ever present in a variety of subtle as well as obvious forms.

The first section will address co-worker conflict in the workplace and deal with issues regarding reckless behaviour, stealing, avoiding work and personal violation and violence. Through the presentation and analysis of occupational narratives, I will illustrate how these behaviours create conflict in the workplace. With further analysis I will also show how these conflicts are mediated while, at the same time, confrontation is largely avoided. The second section will address conflict between workers and management. This section will discuss how unreasonable workloads, dissatisfaction, job uncertainty and unfairness create resentment in the workplace and ultimately result in sabotage, slowdowns, stealing and pranks.

Co-Worker Conflict

> *There was an incident and I'm sure you heard of this; there was one jerk who works down in shipping, still a jerk. . . . But anyway, something happened one night and there was a guy that was divorced and Rick had said to him, called him a family wrecker or told him, "You can't hold nothing together anyway. You can't even keep your marriage." I don't know, whatever it was buddy lost it and poked him. So, that was fine, everything was hushed up because the thing is, when Rick gets poked, it's like, good. (Power 1997)*

Reckless Behaviour

As introduced in the first chapter on accident narratives and safety in the workplace, workers often rely on one another to insure safety. Because of the high risk of danger in an industrial workplace, workers rely on their co-workers to know their jobs

and to perform their duties with care and caution. In the close-call narrative provided by As cited in the first chapter, Al Humber depicted how he was burned by hot stock and could have been injured badly when his co-worker failed to open a stock valve slowly and cautiously. He explained, "I almost got into a fight with him because he knew the difference. He's a pretty smart fellow and he knew the difference and he shouldn't have done it." The conflict of this situation erupted not only because of the co-worker's reckless behaviour and his lack of skill and caution, but also because, as Humber perceived, "he knew the difference." Humber was angry with the worker because the worker knew how to safely open a stock valve, but did not do so. In other words, the worker was aware of the work technique, but failed to operate by it. When working with other workers in an occupation which often involves danger and risk, it is essential that workers operate under the safest means. Otherwise, conflict such as verbal or physical violence will erupt in an attempt to curb or modify the unsafe behaviour.

To further illustrate the reckless behaviours which provoke conflict among workers, I include a narrative from William Gerard Gushue's MUNFLA manuscript. As previously mentioned, I present Gushue's narratives verbatim. This narrative describes an incident in which an operator fails to shut down a drumbarker correctly and consequently almost kills another worker. Gushue writes:

> This story was told to me by Paul House, a student, who worked on clean-up, washing the old bark from around the drains into the sewer. One shift, he said, one of the drains coming out of from under one of the drumbarkers got plugged. It was his job to clean it out. He went up and asked the operator, who runs the motors for the machine, in the bark plant, to stop the drumbarker. This he did but didn't haul the switches on the electrical circuit to the drumbarker. Before one goes in under a drumbarker the switches are supposed to be hauled out, these weren't. Paul went in with a pitchfork to unplug the bark and scattered log that

> slips out of the drumbarker. He was in there digging away at the bark when he noticed water dropping on him. He looked up and saw the drumbarker turning, it was supposed to be stopped. He said he got the hell out of there as fast as he could. He went up and gave the operator old hell for starting it up. "The no good miserable bastard of an operator could have killed him," he said. One log dropping out of one of the drumbarkers could have fallen and killed him easily. (40-41)

As illustrated in this narrative, knowing the job is extremely important to the safety and lives of mill workers. Because the operator failed to "haul the switches on the electrical circuit to the drumbarker," he endangered the life of the worker. Not surprisingly, the worker reacted to his close-call with death by giving the operator "old hell for starting it up." By engaging in this verbal conflict a worker attempts to condemn the incompetent behaviour of the worker while expressing his or her own anger, frustration and shock. Circulating narratives such as these among co-workers also has the same effect. Like accident narratives, these narratives about reckless behaviour have an educational function that cautions workers about their job performance and teaches them not to be reckless or careless. As well, the re-telling of these narratives ultimately promotes adherence to safe work techniques when on the job.

Stealing from Co-Workers

In the industrial environment of a pulp and paper mill, stealing from co-workers is considered an offensive and intolerable action. This behaviour goes against the social workings and expectations of the group and creates a sense of tension and hostility among the workers. As members of an occupational group, workers not only rely on the skill and knowledge of their co-workers when on a job, as illustrated in Humber's and Gushue's narratives provided in the previous section, but they also rely on their co-

workers not to take advantage of or abuse them. Maintaining a sense of trust is crucial to the performance and comfort of any worker who operates in a potentially dangerous and exposed workplace. Several workers suggested in their interviews that stealing from another worker's lunch basket is one of the ways in which this trust is broken. Retaliation, which often takes the form of a prank, is then initiated in order to deal with this conflict.

As illustrated in chapter two, practical jokes can be used for purposes other than humour and entertainment in the workplace. They can, in fact, be performed for the purposes of sending a message to the targets of the practical jokes. As McCarl states, "'actions speak louder than words' in many industrial contexts and the prank of tying a man's sweater to the lath and plastering it into the wall or nailing a lunch bucket to the floor or workbench illustrates the humorous manipulation of this language of the concrete" ("Occupational Folklife" 147). Messages are often sent when a worker encounters deviant or problematic behaviours from co-workers. Sending disguised messages provides a means of addressing the issue indirectly in an attempt to avoid unnecessary conflict. According to Pamela Bradney, joking helps to avoid conflict in the workplace where, from society's point of view, "the relationship should not become strained" (183). The following narrative is an illustration of this specific form of conflict in which a prank on a thief sends a message to curb his deviant behaviour:

> I remember one time, I had this feller working with me and he'd never ever bring in a tea bag, always forever going around bumming a tea bag off of this one. And what he couldn't bum he'd go to the desk drawer and he'd steal from one of the boys. And he used to be stealing my tea bags all of the time. I didn't mind if he asked me for a tea bag, I'd give it to him, but he used to be watching and when nobody was looking and he'd grab a tea bag. And what he used to do when he

> made a cup of tea, put the tea bag in the cup, pour the boiling water into it, lay it on the heater and go on out and have a look, and let it steep real good, come back and have his cup of tea. So, one night this Ern Clark I was telling you about now, myself and Ern Clark, we took the tea bag and we took all the stitching out of the gauze tea bag. Took all the stitching out of it, took it all out and dumped all the tea out of it and we filled it up full of pepper and soap powder, sewed it back up again. I'll tell you, we worked harder at that than we worked at what we were getting paid to do. And I went down and I laid it right on the top of the rest of the tea bags and we watched in. He took the tea bag and went to put it to steep and he went to get his cup. And we left a little tea in it so it would color up the water when he steeped it. And he took the great big gulp, he took the great big mouthful and he almost gagged. All he had was soap powder and pepper. (Sheppard 1997)

In this narrative, Frank Sheppard describes the way in which he and a fellow worker dealt with another co-worker who stole tea bags from them as well as from other workers. As Sheppard states, "I didn't mind if he asked me for a tea bag, I'd give it to him." However, what Sheppard and the other workers did mind was that he was stealing from them, and "he used to be watching and when nobody was looking and he'd grab a tea bag." Therefore, Sheppard and his co-worker decide to teach the thief a lesson by filling up a tea bag with pepper and soap powder in an attempt to stop his actions. The extent to which these men went and the detail and effort they put into this prank is illustrated by Sheppard's statement, "I'll tell you, we worked harder at that than we worked at what we were getting paid to do." However, what was important to these men was their attempt at addressing the matter and sending a specific message to the thief in the form of a tampered tea bag – the very item he used to steal.

The next narrative further illustrates the way workers craft pranks to discipline problematic workers and the situations they create. Tony Hancock narrates:

> Like in the mill there were certain people who used to always be coming to another shop and robbing [lunch] baskets. They'd be robbing baskets and having

> tea and, you know, using the other fellow's stuff. So, there was always people in the mill like that, did that. And this fellow, he made it a habit all the time of coming to a tinsmen shop, actually. I believe Chuck May was the fellow that, Chuck May and Mick White were the two tinsmen. They'd figure they'd get this fellow, Henry Newhook it was. So, what they did, Henry was very, sort of particular too, so, what they did is take, they got this French letter or French safe, as we always called it, and they poured some Carnation milk in it and they tied a knot in it and put it in the kettle. Knowing that Henry was going to come, so, when Henry came, he couldn't get the water to pour out of the kettle and, you know, this thing had it blocked off. So, he said, "What's wrong with this kettle?" And somebody said, "Well, you know, it's tea leaves gone out in the spout." You know, there's a strainer at the entrance of the spout. "It's probably tea leaves blocked up there." So, he got rooting around and then he pulled this thing up out of the kettle. And they never ever had a problem with him after. That was his last trip there.

Again, this narrative illustrates how mill workers deal with co-workers who steal from them. Both pranksters knew that the thief was "sort of particular," so they targeted a weakness in an attempt to disgust and deter him from coming back and stealing again. By filling a condom with Carnation milk or filling a tea bag with pepper and soap powder, workers craft pranks to specifically meet their needs and address uncomfortable or hostile situation created by the thief. Pranks such as these function as a critique of socially inappropriate or deviant behaviour, as both the victim and the workers who observe the prank also understand its meaning. Therefore, the success of this kind of prank is achieved through communicating a message of reprimand to the thief and thus avoiding conflict between workers.

Workers often resort to pranks when dealing with potentially hostile situations because they send a message and still avoid conflict. Because the message is communicated in the form of a joke, a difficult worker gets the message without having to experience the embarrassment of public confrontation. As Joseph Allan Ullian writes,

"often the aim of the joker is simply to implant the consideration of a socially risky intention in the mind of the target without being attacked. While the uncertainty about the existence of an ulterior intent in joking protects the joker, the consideration of the intent even as a possibility by the target of the joke accomplishes the joker's aim" (130). By performing pranks on thieves, thieves understand the message while co-workers protect themselves from further conflict with them. As Hancock says, "And they never ever had a problem with him after. That was his last trip there."

This particular form of conflict avoidance has also been observed in other occupations. For example, John R. Scott says that practical jokes among workers in the Newfoundland seal fishery function as a "means of releasing hostility and of controlling behavior. while at the same time maintaining the all-important and basic social rule of isolation occupations: avoiding confrontation" (283). While mill work is not an isolated occupation like seal hunting, avoiding direct conflict is still essential to the successful operation of a workplace.

But what is it about jokes and pranks that allow these forms to communicate without fostering more conflict? Ullian suggests that according to the expectations associated with the pranks as play "the normal social rules of behaviour are suspended. Persons are not held accountable for their actions. . . . The joker may take advantage of the uncertainty of the situation" (130). As well, Peter Lyman suggests, that "joking is a special kind of social relationship that suspends the rules of everyday life in order to preserve them. Jokes indirectly express the emotions and tensions that may disrupt everyday life by 'negotiating' them (Emerson, 1969, 1970), reconstituting group

solidarity by shared aggression and cathartic laughter" (87). Therefore, through the guise of humour, laughter and pranks, such as filling a tea bag with pepper and soap powder and a condom with Carnation milk, workers attempt to control the deviant behaviour of thieves while avoiding direct conflict with them. In the two narratives provided above, pranks become tactics for modifying co-worker behaviour, thereby helping to stop mounting conflict, rather than encouraging it further.

Avoiding Work

Due to the specific operation and nature of industrial work, each mill worker's job becomes dependent upon the job of another worker. Workers do not so much operate on their own as they operate in joint partnership with one another. Therefore, essential to the successful social and economic functioning and operation of a mill is the performance and cooperation of each mill worker. If a worker fails to complete his or her duties, another worker suffers. Work that is not performed has to be taken on by another worker which ultimately affects the rhythm of work as well as the rate of production. This is not to suggest that mill work has to be both constant and strenuous. There are exceptions as well as understandings among mill workers which take workloads, personal situations and camaraderie into consideration. However, when a worker demonstrates his or her laziness or tendency to avoid work, resentment among co-workers is usually felt and techniques to deal with the conflict are employed. For example, in the following narrative, Gushue describes the technique he used when dealing with men who were not doing their work:

> The bunch working on the long belt are as miserable as can be. There is one fellow who was on who I never once saw take a dirty log off the belt. All he did

> was be down on the bench by the working area. Sometimes he would drag someone off the belt to talk to. This meant the two men left had to do all the work. . . . If you saw 2 of the men up chatting you just took your time and let a nice few dirty logs go through. Then the boss would get a report on too many dirty logs and get the boys back to work. (39-40)

Gushue's dislike for workers who never did their job is obvious as he describes the men who did this to be "as miserable as can be." He explains that their behaviour caused the remaining workers on the job to do all the work. Gushue then describes how he dealt with the situation by indirectly making the workers go back to work. Letting "a nice few dirty logs go through" called the attention of the boss who then told the workers to go back to work. Instead of dealing with the problematic worker personally, Gushue's technique creates a situation where the boss has to deal with the lazy worker, and the situation is resolved without heightening co-worker conflict.

Creating a situation where the boss confronts the lazy worker is also illustrated in a comment made by Harry Mercer:

> We have our ways of dealing with people who don't want to do their job. Like I say, if it's something you're not normally doing we'll cover for you because we know, but if this person is continually trying to get out of doing his job, you know, like I say we can all say, "Okay, when you're ready to work, we'll go to work. We'll shut down the winder, you want to have a nap, you have a nap, but we're not going to do your job for you. So, when you wake up your work is still going to be there." And so, they'll smarten up because the boss will come along and say, "How come that paper is not running?" And you can't just, you know, say, "Well, I decided to have a little nap."

Here, Mercer provides an example of what is typically done when a worker continually tries to get out of his job. If a lazy worker fails to heed the initial advice of his or her co-workers and continues to sleep, co-workers will then stop doing the lazy worker's job and allow it to come to the attention of the boss, so that the situation can be resolved.

However, in other instances, workers will deal with the problematic worker on their own even if it is still indirect. Mike Piercey provides examples of how this is done. First, Piercey begins by describing how lazy workers create more work for others due to the hierarchical system of paper makers. (For example, there are six workers, called hands, who operate each paper machine. The sixth hand is the bottom worker who helps the others in their jobs and cleans up. Moving up in status and pay is the fifth hand, the fourth hand, the third hand, the back tender and the machine tender.) Piercey then continues to provide an example of how co-workers respond to lazy workers and how, through their response, they ultimately send a message of dissatisfaction while avoiding direct confrontation:

> The interesting thing is working on a job with five hundred men you're always going to get somewhere down the line, you're always going to get one person who don't want to do their work, who is lazy. And there is always, he thinks he is screwing the system and he won't do his job. So, the way it is down there, it seems like the bottom guy, the sixth hand, always got to pick up the slack if someone's not doing their work, right? So, you know, the sixth hands down there know who the worst workers are. What you do, for example, like a guy above me now, like his job might be putting on rolls and I'm suppose to assist him when my job is done. Now, if he's not helping out or is not helping other people, then there's ways of getting around and not helping him. Like you take your time putting the rolls on. There are all these other systems to screw up the other feller too if he's trying to screw you. So, if someone's not doing their job, there's other ways that people will, you know, for example, just say, there might be certain times in a run of a night that certain job destinations or depending on what a person's doing, might be bad. So, everyone will chip in and give him a, you know, like, say for example, if there is a snap off I got to clean up probably a ton of paper, you know, a couple of people will probably come down and help me. But, if I'm not helping out the rest of the crew they'll just leave you alone, not even help you, right? Don't even ask, you know, type thing, right? And it's like, not verbally said, but you follow the system.

Piercey continues to describe several more techniques for handling problematic workers:

> You learn the ways in which you could screw someone in their job. So, if they screw you then you screw them, right? If the third hand is hard on the rest of the crew cause he's just being an asshole as such, you know, which there are down there, you know, there are ways of getting him back. From the littlest, tiny things from taking your time doing a splice, right? If the paper breaks off you got to splice it, you know, tape the sheets together with a type of splice. Take your time, right? It gets him agitated, you know, like, and then he learns like, you know. Or if he's giving the crew a hard time, everyone will walk away from him, you know? Do their job but then walk away from him and not assist him. That's the big thing. If someone's not pulling their weight down there, when his job is bad no one assists him, right? Now, it might be the whole one night in which his job is never bad but always somewhere usually in a twelve hour shift someone's job is going to get bad at certain points.

Within Piercey's discussion we learn several techniques which are employed for the purposes of getting lazy or problematic workers to work. These techniques fall into one of two main categories. The first involves slowing down a task such as putting on a roll or doing a splice, and the second involves not helping a worker out when his or her job becomes difficult and they are overwhelmed by the amount of work to be done. In Piercey's words, "if they screw you then you screw them." Again, because of the way in which the ranking system or working order operates, it creates a dynamic where workers are not only working with each other, but are also dependent upon the pace, quality and skill of the worker who operates above them. It also creates a situation where tactics or techniques can be used to keep everyone in line if the system and the mill workers are abused.

Piercey continues to explain the ways in which a worker has the power to control the behaviours and actions of another worker through technique:

> Like the guy up top, the bottom guy, like, it seems like, the higher up you are the worst you can make the jobs for the people down below. Like, a back tender decides how big the paper can be made, the roll of paper. And if he don't like you, he can make that shell so big that you got a ton of paper and you could be

> cutting it up forever, right? And the third hand, like, he can cause the winder to snap off or anything. Just little things, right? But I'm saying this in one sense, but in one sense they'll never do it. That'll jeopardize their job. Like, you know, they'll never screw up the system, like, the paper will still be made and everyone's jobs will be done, but jobs can be made harder, right? That's what I'm trying to say. It'll never be done so that it jeopardizes a person's job.

As indicated in Piercey's words, it is important to point out that while mill workers will often use techniques and tactics, such as making a big shell of paper, to modify a lazy worker's behaviour, they will rarely do something so significant or dangerous as to risk their employment. Jobs will still be performed and the paper will still be made; however, the difficulty of the job can be increased for the problematic worker without actually confronting the worker.

It is also important to mention that these extreme techniques are usually only used when a worker continues to lazily avoid work. It is when a worker has the reputation of being a "slacker," who does not want to do his or her job, that these tactics are implemented. If, however, a worker is known to be a good worker and has a good reputation, then allowances for any deviant behaviour will be made. For example, in the following narrative, Mercer describes an incident where he fell asleep on the job and his co-workers performed his duties while he slept:

> We all fall asleep on the job. I can remember falling to sleep and I'm not known for falling to sleep, you know. And a set of paper comes off the machine, the paper is made, it would be ready to put it on the winder and run it off, which is my job. And I probably had a little nap there waiting for the next set and never heard a thing. All of a sudden I jump up. I hear a noise and the boys have already got a set of paper run off, you know. I didn't even know. Probably instead of being asleep for two or three minutes you ended up asleep for a half hour. Now, if you are in the habit of sleeping on the job, the guys will wake you up and tell you to get back to work. But, somebody might say, "Well, he must really be tired because he don't usually sleep on the job." They will leave you alone and let you sleep. Guys are pretty good that way, too, you know, depending on who you are

> and what kind of reputation you got. If you got a reputation of doing your work guys will, if you have a bad night, they'll help you out. But, if you're one who naturally tries to get out of work, well they are going to make sure you do your job, wake you up or make sure you're there, shut down the winder and wait until you come back. And you get the picture, you'd better be there or else.

In this narrative, Mercer points out the differences between a worker with a bad reputation who is always "in the habit of sleeping on the job" and himself as a good worker with a good reputation who is "not known for falling asleep." "Depending on who you are and what kind of reputation you got" different work styles or habits will evoke different responses from co-workers.

Through informally learned techniques or methods for social critiquing and controlling deviant work behaviour, such as being lazy and avoiding work, messages of discontent and aggression with co-workers are communicated. However, as illustrated in Mercer's narrative when his co-workers allowed him to sleep, messages of understanding and generosity can also be sent. In either case, the messages are understood by both the sender and the receiver. As Mercer says:

> What goes around comes around. You help me, I'll help you. You don't want to help me, I'm not going to help you. We have some guys come in and they cut up some paper and you need a bit of help sometimes, but if they aren't there to help you when you're doing work, well when it comes time that they need you, you're not going to do it. It's not because you want to be that way, it's just, they'll get the message and they'll change their attitude.

Mercer's words best describe the working relationship and understanding which exist among mill workers. Messages regarding work and responsibility are relayed for the purposes of changing behaviour as well as attitudes.

Due to the nature of industrial work, mill workers rely on one another to do their jobs and perform their duties, so that the rhythm and flow of work is maintained without

any extra work or unnecessary obligation. If, however, this rhythm and flow is broken by a lazy worker who does not want to do his or her job, then co-workers are forced to deal with the conflict and implement techniques which modify and control the lazy worker's deviant behaviour. As described by the mill workers, these techniques may include: creating situations where the boss notices and handles the problem and the lazy employee, such as letting dirty logs pass through the system and letting a sleeping worker get caught; slowing down a task; making a job more difficult than it has to be, such as making a big shell of paper so that it is difficult to cut; and not helping out when the worker has a big job to do. Mill workers use these techniques and tactics in order to create a better working situation for all workers. It provides a means of keeping workers active and workloads manageable without encouraging a hostile work environment.

Violation and Violence

Many of the narratives provided in this chapter, as well as in this thesis, have dealt with the constraint and containment of hostility in the workplace. While the narratives prove tension and sometimes resentment exist among mill workers, most of the stories have introduced issues of control and conflict avoidance, and discussed techniques used by mill workers to maintain order and achieve a stable, functioning workplace. However, within a work environment, situations sometimes arise where order is lost and lines are overstepped. This section will deal with such instances and the narratives which result from vicious, vulgar and sometimes violent behaviour.

The following narrative illustrates the kinds of tensions and behaviours that sometimes result in physical fights:

> I heard of one fight. It was between, actually it was the guy you interviewed, John Peddle, and Dan Peddle, another man. He's off now. He injured his foot there actually two months ago. A roll ran over his foot and his foot was crushed. So, he's off now. I never seen the fight but this is what I hear happened. John was blowing up the alley with an air hose and there must have been, the way I hear it, there must have been some hatred between the two men building before this happened. But anyways, Dan Peddle is kind of a prankster but he's hot tempered. He's one of those that can give it but not take it. Anyways, John was blowing up the air hose and sometimes when you are hauling an air hose around a corner or something it might get caught up in things. So, it did, so John assumed that it was caught up. But what it was, Dan was playing a bit of a joke on him in front of all the men who were watching. He was standing on the hose cutting the air off, right? So, John let out the big yank. And when he yanked, it hauled Dan Peddle right off his feet. They are of no relation by the way. It hauled Dan right off his feet and he landed on his back. And all the men laughed at Dan. In response he jumped up, went over and tapped John on the shoulders and turned around and hit him flush right in the nose. Broke all the cartilage in his nose. Shattered his nose. He had plastic surgery and everything done to his nose. That was one fight. Apparently there was blood everywhere. I never seen it. A funny thing that that fight was probably one of the worst fights that was ever happened down at the mill. Most fights down there is just a shove and maybe, or one punch in the face type thing. But this was really, this went really up to management. This went up management level and management were going to fire these two men over that incident but they said, you know, "These two men, one man had been in there twenty five years. If he got fired he would have nothing." And they didn't want to see any men fired. Other management defended, while the head guy, he wanted these two men fired. But other management decided no, it wouldn't be right. But policy came out after that, that any fighting occurs after that, no if, ands or buts, they are fired. This came out about three years ago, maybe even four. But before that years ago you'd always hear, you know, someone telling someone to f--- off or make a prank and a guy go over and smack him in the mouth or something, right? That's about the only thing you hear now like a smack in the mouth, you know. Some fellers down there can give it, say stuff, like if someone came up and say stuff to you but when you say stuff back to you they can't deal with it. Like that's another social aspect I've noticed about a lot of men down there. It seems like they can give it, you know, but they can't take it, a lot of them.

The violence in this narrative occurred when a worker had a prank backfire on him. According to Piercey, Dan Peddle is "hot tempered" and "one of those that can give it but not take it." These characteristics, along with Piercey's suggestion that "there must have

been some hatred between the two men building before this happened," contributed to the explosion of physical violence and confrontation. As well, combined with Dan Peddle's inability to "give and take," is the fact that Dan Peddle not only failed to achieve his prank, but made himself the butt of his own joke, "and all the men laughed at Dan." These circumstances heightened Dan Peddle's frustration and increased the tension of the situation until he physically attacked John Peddle.

The characteristics of not being able to give and take, and of going too far with a particular behaviour, are viewed negatively among mill workers. The following personal experience narrative by Bob Saunders illustrates this point:

> But, like another one of the guys, one night when they played a joke on me, and I saw him coming. And we use to have those fire extinguishers, those big old fire extinguishers. So, in the meantime I had it brought over by the desk making out I was asleep. So, he come in and he come and stood right by me, looking at me and he was going to pour the water in my eyes and I just tipped it up and shot the, what's it called? A carbon, what's it called? It's like ice. It's like ice particles, right? You know what I'm talking about. And I just let it go and shot at his face and it scared the hell right out of him. He really got mad. He really got mad. He was one of those guys loved, you know, doing things to you but don't dare do anything back to him. Like us guys it would be give and take, you know, you get me, I get you, you know, some other day, some other time. You know, it's all in fun. But some guys, like, you know, they sort of didn't want to be jokes played back at. But, you know, you had to do it.

While this particular incident did not result in violence, Saunders makes it very clear that "he got really mad" because of his retaliation. Again, as heard in the narrative by Piercey, we hear the distaste for workers who play jokes on others, but are not able to have a joke played on them in return. Because of this, aggression, tension and hostility exist among workers and sometimes culminate in physical and/or verbal conflict.

A distaste for workers who give others a hard time and who have the reputation of verbally picking on workers is also illustrated in co-worker conflict narratives. For example, in the following narrative, the first man is verbally insulted by the second man because the first man was giving him "a hard time," by forecasting that he will be sodomized in the near future. It is important to add that the second man verbally insults the first man by targeting his personal situation. In this case, the first worker has recently been charged with possession of cocaine with a possible jail sentence in his future.

> He was giving one of the b'ys a hard time one day and one of the guys took a dime out of their pocket and a loonie. And he said to him, he said, "You see that?" And he was right pissed off at the time, right? "What's that suppose to mean?" "Well," he said, "you see that dime?" He said, "That's your asshole before you go in prison." He pointed to the loonie, "This is your asshole when you come out of prison." He told buddy to f--- off, walked out of the kitchen, right? I thought that was really funny, right? Another guy came up and asked him, you know, when he goes in, can he make him a set of plates for his car. He didn't like that. (Piercey 1997)

As illustrated in this narrative, verbal conflict is a topic predominant in narratives. Verbal disagreements among mill workers are based on various personal disputes and insults, such as questioning one's work ability or making fun of situations in their personal life. One worker elaborated on some of these reasons: "I've heard words said, you know, like, come verbally face to face to each other but they backed away. Over just, one questions the other person's abilities to do his job, saying, 'You don't know your job.' Or could be anything from called his wife a whore to anything, right? I've seen it all, like, numerous, you know." (Piercey 1997)

I have recorded several narratives where verbal insults regarding personal situations result in mounting conflict, violence and sometimes even severe emotional

instability or breakdown. For example, in an unrecorded interview, a mill worker told me a story about a man named Dave who could not bear any children. On one particular occasion, another man, Sam, entered the mill boasting of his wife's becoming pregnant yet again. When another worker teased Sam about the fact that he got his wife "knocked up" again, Sam responded by pointing at Dave and saying that at least he did not have "two old dried up nuts like Dave over there." Upon speaking these words, Dave went into a rage and began to physically attack Sam. The narrator of this story then added that Sam had even gone as far as to attempt to strike Dave with an ax in their struggle, and that several other workers had to intervene to stop the fight.

Obviously, Dave experienced extreme emotional difficulty and rage when he was verbally attacked and personally insulted by his co-worker, Sam. Many of the physical fights described in occupational narratives are the result of personal insults. Even Percy Janes, in novel *House of Hate* which is based in Corner Brook and the mill, recognized the spirit of this situation when he wrote:

> About a month before her wedding was to take place, she heard, as an item of backstairs gossip, that a fellow named Saul Stone had nearly killed a man down in the mill with a shovel; and when she tackled him with the rumour that same evening, he was at first quite evasive. . . . At last, after more prodding on Gertrude's part, he came out with the kernel of the story: the man he had attacked had mentioned her name. (27)

Insulting a co-worker about extremely sensitive personal matters, such as the inability to have children or a cheating spouse, was regarded by many of my informants as inappropriate behaviour and an example of going too far. Several mill workers expressed their distaste for this type of behaviour. Frank Sheppard expresses feelings such as these in the next narrative:

FS: But I'm going to tell you how bad some people can be. Now you asked me a story about men and women, I'll tell you how bad some, this fellow that I was telling you, him and his father used to carry on their conversations with, this fellow that was carrying on a conversation with his father and the fellow that won the two dollars off of me, on the train bet, them two drove a man crazy. And I'm not telling you a word of a lie! When I say they drove a man crazy they drove him absolutely off his head! They had to take him away in a straight jacket. Because he knew, you were talking about women and that, he knew his wife was out running around on him, cheating on him when he was working. But they used to rub it into him all the time when he was working. They were digging at him all the time, those two fellows constantly at him, digging at him. And I'm just as I'm born to die, he went right up the deep end and after they had to take him away, but them two done it to him. They had no respect from nobody after that because all the respect they had from the other fellers was there, even when they died, nobody didn't care. You don't do stuff like that, goodness gracious. But they did. They took that man away in a straight jacket and they did it to him.
CS: And everyone else also thought that?
FS: Everybody never thought it, they knew it. And neither one of them never died easy. The two of them are dead now, but neither one of them never died easy.
CS: Do you think this was the reason why?
FS: Could be. If there's a God up there, that's the reason, and them two is in hell if there is such a place as that. I can't help it.

According to the narrator of this story, the father and son workers were wholly responsible for the emotional unbalance of another man and for even driving him crazy. Because of their inappropriate behaviour, reiterating the gossip that his wife was unfaithful, the two men caused the other worker to be taken "away in a straight jacket." Sheppard explained that this was not permissible behaviour on the part of the father and son, "you don't do stuff like that," and also claimed that they "had no respect from nobody" after the incident. Like many of the men I interviewed, Sheppard felt that this type of behaviour was a personal violation. It was considered to be cruel and callous, an illustration of complete disregard for fellow workers. Sheppard was so distraught over the incident and adamant about his convictions, even though it had occurred many years

ago, that he religiously interpreted that their behaviour was the reason why the two men did not die easily.

Narratives such as these not only condemn the extremely insensitive worker, but also illustrate and warn against what happens when the boundaries of the personal are overstepped and violated in the workplace. As well, these stories demonstrate how the workplace teeters on the edge of potential disorder and violence when workers respond inappropriately to group held expectations, such as being able to take a joke as well as give one, or when they insensitively cross the boundaries of the public into private and personal realms.

Management and Worker Conflict

> *We'd get those towers filled up early and the bosses didn't take, even back then, too kindly when your job was finished and you were sitting around doing nothing, you know. There is always something to do, you could be cleaning up. So, what we'd do we'd take the elevator and go up to the top of the tower and we'd haul the switch. Nobody else would be able to use the elevator and we'd sit down and have a big game of cards and enjoy the rest of the evening. They knew we were doing it but there wasn't much they could do about it. They couldn't catch us at it because if someone rang the buzzer... we'd close the gate and put the cards away and if anybody come up, we wasn't playing cards, we were just finishing up. (Sheppard 1997).*

Unreasonable Workloads

Conflict between management and workers in a workplace develops out of many situations and takes numerous expressive forms. In this section, I will discuss the conflict which is experienced between mill workers and management when workers feel that they are overworked or given an unfair workload. The first narrative told by Al Humber, illustrates this type of conflict. Humber's narrative not only describes the way in which a worker resisted his demanding tasks, but also continues to describe how the worker

resisted a second time and avoided his punishment. The double subversion makes this narrative an excellent example of resistance and conflict in the workplace. Humber says:

> And I'll tell you another incident but I can't give you any names because the guy might not want you to know about it, but there was a feller worked in the lab. You had to check your sewers all the time and there was a lot of cheating at the time because they use to put a lot of work on you and you couldn't get all of your work done in eight hours. So, a lot of people marked in certain things, like you do the test. say you're on eight to four. you do the test nine o'clock and you're suppose to do another one eleven. So, nine o'clock you do it, maybe eleven o'clock you never had time to do it so you write it in. So, some people was cheating because you never had the time to do it. So, anyhow, on night shift this guy, this particular feller was on night shift, no, yeah, he was on four to twelve. This particular feller was on four to twelve. So, day shift, the shredder was going through the sewer, that's the ground room shredder and it used to be all old chips and everything used to come out and go to the sewer. So, you had to mark down how long it was going through the sewer and it was a chart that they had in the office, they use to bring it into the office every morning and tell you how long the shredder was going, for two hours, four hours, six hours. So, you'd get a sample and you'd find out the consistency of it and you'd find out how much tonnage was going through the sewer. So this particular time I was on twelve to eight and whoever was on day shift wrote down that the shredder was going for the last four hours he was on. So, the four to twelve guy, he didn't write it down. So, I was on twelve to eight and I come in and the shredder was going through the sewer and I wrote down that the shredder was going through the sewer. Never looked at four to twelve or nothing. Done up my report in the morning and all of it was done. So, in the morning they had it down, looked at the chart, the shredder was going from twelve o'clock that day until sometime that day it stopped. So, four to twelve, he never wrote in anything with the shredder, he wrote in the sewers were perfect because he never went over there and he never looked at them. So, that was all right. The guy was after getting caught before doing something wrong, so he had a bawling out. So, anyhow, they said to him, they called him in the office and asked him. He said, "Oh, yeah, I got the sewers. I got the pads are there." He made up a pad and everything and was nothing in the pad and it's suppose to be. They said, "Now, day shift got the pads there. The two pads they got for their sewers show that the shredder was going there. The chart shows the shredder was going there. You're turning around and lying to us saying that you done it. You never done it, so, now we are giving you two weeks off." Because they were really strict then. So, they gave him two weeks off without pay. So, he left when they told him, then he went on out to the office to get his holidays. So, he went and went out in personnel and said, " I want to get two weeks off," he said. "Can you give me two weeks holidays?" So, they gave him two weeks holidays. So, now also, the department gave him two weeks off without pay. He wasn't

> suppose to get no pay, but he was smart enough that he went on out and they gave him two weeks holidays. So, now, he was off for two weeks and he got paid from them because he had his holidays! And they didn't know nothing about it until months later they came in. So, he was after playing a trick on them. They gave him time off and he couldn't get his time off, couldn't get holidays because it was in the summer time, but they give him the two weeks off when they did, but he was smart enough, he went out and took his two week holidays and nobody knew the difference. The one who give him the holidays didn't know that he was suppose to be off without pay. So, he got paid for it. He was pretty good, you know. And I said to him after, I said, when I heard about it, I said, "Man that was pretty good," I said, "you're pretty smart."

The first incident in this story involves a worker who tries to get out of a heavy workload by not doing his assigned tasks and falsifying an observational report. However, it is important to observe that the worker was only unable to complete the reports because it was too much work for the shift he was working. Humber explains: "there was a lot of cheating at the time because they use to put a lot of work on you and you couldn't get all of your work done in eight hours." He adds, "some people was cheating because you never had the time to do it." Again, it is important to note that according to Humber, cheating in this fashion was an acceptable thing to do because of the unreasonable and demanding workload. Therefore, it was permissible by logic. In a parallel story about a Lake Erie fisherman who also breaks a particular "unjust" fishing law, Lloyd and Mullen write, "They see the law as unjust and therefore feel no compunctions about breaking it" (151). This similar sense of injustice is also illustrated in Humber's narrative. As indicated by Humber, many other workers found it easy to break the rules of the job and falsify the reports because it was an unfair or "unjust" amount of work to do.

The second part of Humber's narrative also further parallels Lloyd and Mullen's fisherman story, when they write: "In this case, the outlaw when caught uses the law to go free. Part of the satisfaction for fishermen in this story is using the warden's own laws against him, and as in several other stories the wardens are seen as not too bright" (151). In Humber's narrative, we also experience the sense of satisfaction when the worker uses his wits and manipulates the rules, working around his punishment and turning unpaid time into paid holidays. Not only does Humber state that the worker's actions were smart, "he was smart enough, he went out and took his two week holidays and nobody knew the difference," but he also refers to the fact that it was the ignorance of the management that allowed the worker to divert penalty. Humber thus demonstrates both classic elements of management/worker conflict narratives where we see "the conflict arising out of the status differentiation, and the trickster strategy of reversal" (Santino, "Characteristics" 210).

Slowdowns and Sabotage: Collective and Individual Conflict

Slowdowns and sabotage in industrial workplaces are obvious indicators of conflict between workers and management. As forms of subversion, slowdowns and sabotage reflect a unique and sometimes drastic heightening of worker dissatisfaction and resistance within an occupation. Public or private acts of this sort are almost always accompanied with specific employee concerns and irritations regarding their jobs. By slowing down their pace of work, workers attempt to accomplish a variety of tasks, such as cutting down their workload and efforts, prolonging employment, or seeking certain contractual agreements or benefits. While slowdowns are considered to be "less

effective" as a threat to management and owners, and "less drastic" as a form of action (Graves 423), than full-blown strikes or wobbles[8], slowdowns still send out messages to employers and accomplish certain individual and collective occupational goals. This section will deal with three forms of slowdowns illustrated in mill worker narratives – the slowdown as sabotage, the slowdown as job prolongation, and the slowdown as collective power.

The first narrative deals with the slowdown as deliberate sabotage. But more than deliberate sabotage, the narrative illustrates the slowdown as a form of individual resistance to power and "the tradition of beating the system" (Nickerson, "Antagonism at Work" 314). Al Humber narrates:

> You can't do much today because it's not so many people around but when you had the charging floor and it was a lot of people, they done a lot of things to the bosses, you know. The boss would go around and they'd fire metal down in the, in the charging, in the, I forgets the name of it now. Can you remember what they called it? Anyhow, when the wood would come down, it'd go down in, through the conveyor, it'd go down in the, I lost the words, well, anyhow, they use to fire steel in it. And the stone would be down below grinding up the wood so the stone would hit the pockets of the grinders, the pockets of the grinders and they'd fire down. It's a big stone down below and it use to go around and around and the wood would come down and all the pressure of the wood would be pushing against it. And the stone is really sharp and they use to just grind it up and that's how they use to get their ground wood one time. That was like the TMP today, but it was just grinding it up. So, they didn't want to work hard, so what they'd do, they'd fire in lumps of steel or something like that and it'd get against the stone and it'd be grinding against the stone. And the stone wouldn't be sharp so then the wood wouldn't go down so fast. So, they'd have lots of time. Instead of every half an hour to keep the grinders up, it'd take them an hour, an hour and a half sometimes before it'd go down. And the boss would be wondering what was going on, "They're not getting nothing out of this." So, then he'd have to go and sharpen the stone. So, that's the tricks they played on the foreman, you know.

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[8] A "wobble" occurs when a group of workers walk off the job. For a historical look at the term "wobbly," see Archie Green's book, *Wobbles, Piles Butts, and Other Heroes: Laborlore Explorations*. Urbana: University Press, 1993.

In this narrative, Humber explains how sabotage was used as a technique for slowing down work. When workers threw metal objects into the stone grinder, the grinder became dull and this made it impossible to process and grind the wood at the usual speed. With the speed of the grinder and wood processing slowed down, the mill workers were not required to work as hard or as fast. and thus "they'd have lots of time" when "they didn't want to work hard." This sabotage permitted the men to slow their work, decrease their work efforts and resist mandatory labour exertion.

Another example of this type of resistance is found in the narrative by William Gushue. But before I present this narrative, I would like to add the several comments made by Gushue before the narrative. These remarks may help to explain some of the reasons why the men engaged in the extreme sabotage of the next narrative.

> On hot summer days there is always someone fainting from the heat. They say he drank too much water and this caused it. No wonder when the temperature is over 100 [degrees] F and you have to work and work. You take your lunch when you can. There is no break as the machines run 24 hours a day. Rarely will the winder keep ahead of the machine but if it does then you have it easy. You only use 2 shells then, the one of the machine and the one on the winder is put back on the machine before the reel is ready to come off. (17)

Gushue continues with the following narrative:

> The wires on the machine last for about 2 weeks and cost $3000 each, number seven's cost $5000 each. Here is a story or two how these get damaged. I was working on number 3 one night and when I came on there were 2 scrapers for #3 and 4 for #4 machine. As the night progressed I broke one and went to use one from #4 as my other one was a little ways away. I noticed that there were only 3 scrapers. As the night wore on there were 2 then 1 scraper. A scraper is like a rake only where the rake is there is but a flat piece of wood with rubber on each end, top bottom. They are easily broken and many are broken each day. They are made out of old lumber and a stick from the woods for a handle. I asked the sixth hand there if he knew where all the scrapers were gone. He shook his head and said he didn't know, maybe someone took them. He had that guilty look. I knew

> they had all gone into the beater. If anything other than paper goes into the beater, ex. a scraper, it is supposed to be pumped out and not allowed to go back to the stock tanks. If it gets into the stock tanks it is splinters only, some large pieces though. These are feed back to the machine to be made into paper. There is one filter on the stock tank and that is where the stock, the mixture before it is made into paper, is filtered to break up any lumps at the screen – round stainless steel filters that are rotated by a motor at high speeds. The wood or one time a nail, another a screw and a safety helmet, plus a flashlight, smashed up the screen. And went into the wire where the press roll drove them into the wire. This caused holes into the paper and wire, and when they were noticed the wire had to be changed. When inquires were made who lost the safety helmet, the flashlight, etc. everyone denied it. It wasn't theirs. The place must have ghosts. (17-18)

This narrative describes how workers attempted to slow down production in order to slow down their own working pace. Keeping in mind Gushue's earlier description of mill work, "there is no break as the machines run 24 hours a day," we can begin to understand why some mill workers wanted or needed a break. Throwing objects, such as scrapers, nails, screws, safety hats and flashlights, into the beater increased the potential of the wire breaking. When a wire breaks, the machine has to be shut down in order to replace the wire, thus allowing time for the men to have a break.

Not only does this narrative illustrate how sabotage creates a break in work for mill workers, but Gushue continues to point out that it also meant overtime for bull gang workers. He says: "The Bull gang – the repair crew for the machine room, has to be called in to change the wire. This means overtime for the men. It takes them about 2-3 hours to change a wire and this is lost production" (18). As indicated in this quote, slowing down or losing production not only gives the workers a break, but it also provides overtime pay for some workers. This function of sabotage ties into the next discussion on the slowdown as job prolongation.

The second form of slowdown – the slowdown as job prolongation – is illustrated in the words of a man who worked in the mill as a summer student employee. Because part-time summer mill work for students was not always guaranteed, student workers had to hold onto whatever jobs they were assigned for as long as they could. Slowing down their work meant prolonging their employment. Referring to his study on steel workers, Dorson explains that "the workers sometimes deliberately slow down their output so they can lengthen their jobs" (89). As well, Nickerson refers to a similar situation in which he was personally involved: "One of the more interesting folk customs illustrating worker cohesion in opposition to management that I was involved in was informal rule. The company had the legal right to send an individual home if there were not enough work. We decided, however, that no one would be sent home for lack of work, or we would all leave" ("Antagonism at Work" 314). While experienced mill workers did not threaten to walk out in the following example, they did, however, advise the student workers how to prolong their employment and subvert management's intent to send them home. William Gushue writes:

> We would take frequent breaks when raking. When we were raking out by the wharf, away from everyone's sight we would spend a lot of the time throwing rocks at objects in the water, for example sticks or bottles. The boss didn't care so long as the work was done. If some of the old fellows saw us working hard they would come over and tell us to slow down. There was never much work to do so you had to take your time. Just look like you were working was the main thing. (44)

Students, however, were not only told by older workers to slow down their work for the purposes of prolonging their jobs, but they were also told to slow down their work

for the purposes of maintaining a moderate group working style and rhythm. One time student mill worker, Carl Leggo, wrote:

> I once worked in a paper mill. I dug holes for the pipefitters. Because I liked hard work, I dug the holes quickly – until Frank took me aside and explained that the union did not like to see students work too hard because it made everyone else look lazy. I soon dug holes at the appropriate rate. The important principle I learned is that a worker must strive to reach the level of mediocrity his co-workers have achieved, and must do nothing to jeopardize his secure position at that level. ("Half a Bear" 5)

As indicated by Leggo, experienced workers did not want young workers increasing the management's expectations regarding quality, pace and style of work. Student workers were advised by older workers to slow down their work, such as digging holes for pipefitters, because they did not want any deviation from or tampering with the moderate working level, incisively referred to by Leggo as the "level of mediocrity," which was set by the other workers. Unless informally deterred, energetic young workers risked the long established standard of work effort held by workers and accepted by management.

Maintaining this standard of work is crucial to workers as a group. It not only helps to monitor and prevent overwork, heavy workloads, unfairness and high expectations, but it also helps to assign the workers a degree of control. Again, maintaining moderate work performances allows the workers to control their job and their efforts in an uncontrollable occupation where duties are set and enforced. Each illustration of the slowdown presented so far in this section also performs this function. The slowdown as sabotage and the slowdown as job prolongation are examples of worker resistance to prescribed work and duty. The third and final example of the slowdown also supports this idea.

The third form of the slowdown – the slowdown as collective conflict – is illustrated in a comment made by paper maker, Mike Piercey. In an interview Piercey referred to an actual slowdown that was performed throughout the entire mill by all mill workers. He states:

> I've seen a slowdown in the mill two years. The machines where men wouldn't work as such, they did their work but did it at a slow pace. It was because they wanted their ten percent back. The company was bragging about all the profits they were making, you know, huge millions of dollars and here they asked to borrow ten percent from the men's wages, you know. So, men slowed down their work. That really affected management and caused a lot of change around and things. They started listening to the union then.

As indicated in Piercey's words, this particular slowdown was performed collectively and performed for the purposes of reclaiming ten percent of their wages back from mill management. This ten percent was taken when the company suffered a economic setback and the additional money and lower wages were needed in order to remain in operation. However, when the economic difficulty proved to be over, the workers slowed down their work in order to send the message that they wanted their full wage returned. As added incentive, this worker claimed that the company was "bragging" about their profits. This intensified the whole situation and made the workers feel both frustrated and insulted until they sought to get their money back. As Piercey points out, the workers not only achieved their goal, but also "really affected management and caused a lot of change around and things," so that the mill management finally "started listening to the union."

Throughout this discussion, I have attempted to present industrial slowdowns as forms of control, resistance and subversion in the workplace, representing both individual

and collective conflict and power. As well, the occupational narratives presented in this section have illustrated that specific employee dissatisfactions lead to, encourage, and accompany the performance of a slowdown. Some of these dissatisfactions include having to work harder or faster than desired, not having guaranteed or permanent work, and wages and contractual agreements perceived as unfair. In addition, a slowdown functions as a way of maintaining a mediocre level of accomplishment. Whether public or private, collective or individual, the slowdown as subversion ultimately provides the worker with a sense of some control in the workplace. Through the performance of a slowdown that workers, as subordinates, vocalize their concerns, conflicts and irritations with superordinates. It is also in the recognition and acknowledgment of the slowdown by management that the voices of mill workers are sometimes heard and changes are made.

Stealing from the Company

Unlike stealing from co-workers, the act of stealing from the company is not always considered among workers to be a deviant or problematic behaviour. Since co-workers are not personally violated by this act, stealing bulk industrial items from the mill is expected as well as understood by mill workers to be their right. One worker claimed that "the fellow with the biggest basket was carrying the most home" (Sheppard 1997). While stealing does formally constitute a risky behaviour, subject to reprimands or dismissal, it does not seem to be of concern to workers. In his study on steel mill workers, Dorson explains:

> Working in a vast arsenal of mechanical equipment and valuable metals, with no visible proprietor save the impersonal corporation, mill people could easily adopt

> the attitude that they were only helping themselves to materials that they owned jointly with their employers. The code condoned taking for one's own needs, but condemned theft for resale or personal profit. (67)

Like Dorson's steel mill workers, the pulp and paper mill workers I interviewed also regarded stealing for one's own needs as permissible and stealing for profit as inappropriate. As well, the basic idea and understanding communicated to me by mill workers in their interviews was that everyone, including management, is aware of stealing in the mill. In a study on factory folklife, Nickerson observes that "theft of company property occurs frequently enough to have become a standard line item in many company budgets" ("Antagonism at Work" 313). One mill worker also explained that "everybody was doing it. Nobody told on anybody else because everybody was doing it" (Sheppard 1997). The attitude held by mill workers regarding this issue is reflected in the following humorous narrative told by John Peddle:

> When I first got there the b'ys was, this feller went down and he had his big load of nuts and bolts. He was going to stock his house up with nuts and bolts and all this, like all different sizes, stainless and all of this. And he had a big pile of nuts and bolts in his basket. So, what the b'ys did was took out the nuts and bolts and put in these two big irons, these two big pieces of iron that we used one time for putting up slices. We use to have to heat up the irons and then put it across the paper to seal the slice. So, anyway, they're no good no more, no good for nothing actually. So, the b'ys took out the nuts and bolts and put in the two irons back in his basket and he went on home figuring he had his big pile of nuts and bolts and he had these two old irons. He was livid the next night when he came in. Oh, yeah, livid! Livid!

By its humorous content, this narrative illustrates how mill workers consider stealing workplace items, such as nuts and bolts, as an insignificant act. It even illustrates how this behaviour can be a source of humor to the worker. This humorous element and lack

of concern for company loss is illustrated again in the following narrative. Frank Sheppard narrates:

> I remember one time there was a feller stealing nails. He was coming out and he had all the nails in his basket and he was coming out, we used to have to punch in and out, used to use punch cards then. You'd have to punch in when you go to work and punch out when you come out and you had to go through the main office, the clock was right in the main office. And he come out and when got out going through the office the bottom fell out of his basket. Nails going everywhere! [laughter] He kept right on walking, just kept right on walking, never turned his head at all, just kept right on walking.

It can, however, be suggested that the humorous content of these two narratives reflect more than just humour in the workplace. The humour of these stories is deceptive in its deflection of meaning and purpose. The bottom line is that stealing from the company is a form of occupational resistance. By stealing from the mill the workers are disregarding company loss and taking more economic reward out of their job other than just their pay. By referring to a Johnny Cash song, Sheppard describes how workers took advantage of their industrial environment and benefited:

> Did you, you must of heard of that song Johnny Cash sings, "I got it one piece at a time"? His car. That's not the only place it was used. That's how he got his car, he brought it home from the plant one piece at a time. There was more trailers, anchors made down in that mill that was made in some factories. Boat trailers, skidoo trailers, anchors for boats, more made down in that mill at one time than you can shake a stick at. It was constantly at all the time. The fellers down there spent all their lunch hour going to one place getting iron cut up, going to another spot getting it weld together, going to another place getting it drilled. Nobody wouldn't buy a trailer to carry a boat or nothing on. It was all made down there in the mill.

As Sheppard indicates, the workers not only stole hardware from the mill, but also used the material to build personal items such as boat trailers, skidoo trailers, and boat anchors while on the job. Not only does the stealing constitute a form of resistance to

company power and ownership, but building the objects while on the job and using up company paying time and further resources, such as cutting and welding tools and drills, are also forms of subversion and resistance. In essence, the workers were getting paid for the labour involved in making equipment for themselves.

Dissatisfaction and Pranks

Previously in this chapter under the heading "Stealing from Co-workers," I posited the idea that pranks often reflect and deal with conflict in the workplace. In this discussion I would like to further this notion and assert that pranks performed on management also are obvious signs of counter-hegemonic resistance to authority. When subordinates perform pranks on superordinates and cross status lines, workers not only attempt to resist power, but they also attempt to make a statement about their feelings towards that power. The narratives in this section provide illustrations of this type of counter-hegemony. I would like to begin by providing several brief stories told by workers about pranks pulled on management, bosses, or foremen.

The first example is told by a mill worker who is a son of a manager. Because this prank is based on playing with the spelling and the letters of a manager's name, I have edited the narrative in order to protect the name of the individual.

> As things done to management, I've seen people not like bosses and I've seen them go out to their car, break into their car and probably open a gas can and pour water into their cars or open the radiators. I've heard stories about that, you know. For example, my father's name is U. Larsons, right? So, I've seen them take the L off of Larsons and the N and the S and you got U. Arso (you arsehole), right? I've seen that done to my father's name on his office door. The other ones scratched out, right? And just U. Arso. And little stuff like that and always playing jokes, right?

He also adds:

> I've seen one joke down there done to a foreman. He got a bad habit of walking by a garbage can and he'll step in the garbage can and push the paper down, right? And men didn't like him because he'd always be picking, picking, you know, at people over the littlest things. So, one day they filled up the garbage can full of water and they put the top of it all filled up with paper, right? And he walked around and people watched normal, right? And everyone spread away because they knew, you know. And sure enough, he walks over and puts his foot down in it and went right up to his knee in water. Well, you know, we all laughed! We didn't laugh at the moment but when he left we all laughed. That was really funny.

Tim Shears also explains: "We had a boss down there, a German fellow used to work with us, he always wore these big gray flannel pants. So, there was always somebody pouring water on the chair so every time he sat down he get up and his pants was always full of water." Shears continues to describe another prank sometimes performed on a foreman, "Or if you're up washing around the machines and you saw the guy coming around, you'd accidentally drown him, you know, with water. Of course, the boss always wears the white hats here in the mill so you always recognized him." In this case, the white hard hat worn by supervisors and foremen not only "expressed a sense of separateness from the company" (Nickerson, "Antagonism at Work" 312), but was also used to indicate who was approaching from behind the paper machines and who should be deliberately soaked with water.

Based on the understanding that "with subordination comes resentment and hostility; with superordination comes perhaps a degree of arrogance and condescension" (Santino "Characteristics" 211), it is not surprising that pranks such as these take place. Piercey even explains the reason for the workers' resentment towards the boss when he says, "And men didn't like him because he'd always be picking, picking, you know, at

people over the littlest things." While it is obvious that tensions like these exist in the workplace between workers and management, it is important to consider that the expression of hostility towards a boss is risky behaviour. Santino writes: "These pranks, such as throwing a pie, are risky. A worker can be dismissed for daring to cross the boundaries of status from subordinate to superordinate in the occupational setting" ("Outlaw Emotions" 321). When performing these pranks, workers risk penalty and gamble job security for the chance to assert their feelings and vent their frustrations in a disguised fashion. And they do so because it is safer than venting physical aggression and violence. The following narrative is an example of a provoked worker who crosses over from pranks disguised as play into physical violence and assault:

> In all the years I worked down there, I only had one bad boss. . . . The same boss use to pick on two fellers. One deserved to be picked on now, not all hands was innocent down there either. But one man did no more deserved to be picked on by him then I don't know what. But the fellow that deserved to be picked on, one morning this boss came in and laid into him and he left him in a cold junk on the floor, knocked him a cold junk on the floor and left him there on the floor and walked out in the office and quit after working there for over thirty years. Well, he knew he was going to get fired anyhow. He hit him four or five times so hard as he could hit him. The last time he hit him, he went down and left him on the floor. He took all that he could take from him and instead of giving him a blast verbally like I done, he took it out physically. And you know, you don't. He left him on the floor. He said, "If you wants to know what happened," he said, "go in and wake him up," he said. "He's in there on the floor."

Even though the narrator of this story claims that the boss "use to pick on two fellers," this narrative illustrates violence as an inappropriate manner of dealing with a difficult boss as the worker was consequentially fired. While the worker who punched the boss was considered to be a hero afterwards, Sheppard still give emphasized that it was wrong for him to do so because the worker lost his job after thirty years of

employment: "Oh, he was a hero. Oh, yeah, he was a hero. There's no doubt about that. They couldn't give him a medal but they wished they could. But you see you couldn't do stuff like that." Sheppard continued to explain how to properly send a message of discontent and still remain employed:

> You wouldn't deliberately do anything most times, you wouldn't deliberately, but you wouldn't go out of your way to do anything for him either, you know. I mean, he'd get the message that he wasn't well liked. You could always do that without kicking up any fuss or causing any disturbance. They get the message that they weren't, like I said I've had bosses down there that I'd work harder for if they were home, that I wouldn't than they were there. But I had bosses that I wouldn't do nothing when they were there, like that feller there. I would only do what I could get away with, that's all. You know what I'm saying? You reap what you sow.

Like pranks, not going "out of your way" for the boss also sends a message of resistance without risking dismissal. Ultimately, by being able to argue the prank as play, the worker is better protected from punishment than when he or she is outright aggressive or eager to engage in verbal or physical confrontation.

Due to status differentiation, workers as subordinates and management as superordinates often engage in conflict. Bosses who are difficult to get along with or who "pick on" workers (Piercey and Sheppard), become a source of worker hostility and resentment in the workplace which ultimately results in vented frustration. As illustrated in this discussion, subordinate frustration often takes the form of a prank. When played on the boss, a prank becomes more than a simple act of comedic humour; it becomes a form of resistance – sometimes disguised and sometimes not. Most importantly, for the worker it becomes an outlet as well as a recognized statement of dissatisfaction and aggression towards management in the workplace.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have illustrated the forms of conflict that are experienced and expressed in an occupational workplace. By analyzing mill worker narratives, two main categories of occupational conflict emerge. First is co-worker conflict and the second is management/worker conflict. Within these two categories I have discussed some of the major problems and irritations which lead to conflict and resistance in the workplace. Narratives regarding co-worker conflict illustrate how reckless behaviour, stealing, avoiding work and personal violation in the workplace create hostility and conflict. As well, narratives regarding management/worker conflict illustrate the following: how unreasonable workloads result in subversion; how dissatisfaction, job uncertainty, and unfairness result in sabotage and slowdowns; how resentment results in stealing; and how difficult bosses prompt in pranking behaviours.

However, not only do conflict narratives illustrate the particular tensions and hostilities present in the workplace, but when told, these narratives also act as a method for venting frustration. In his study on Pullman porters, Santino suggested that the "men in this job worked through their anger and frustration in conversational narrative with each other" ("Outlaw Emotions" 328). Regarding the stories told in the mill, a mill worker also said, "You got a lot of frustrations out that way. You know, you couldn't let it eat at you all the time" (Sheppard 1997).

Ultimately, in an environment where working relationships "should not become strained" (Bradney 183), the conflict narrative provides a worker with a cathartic release of aggressive emotion for the purposes of maintaining order in a working environment.

Santino explains that: "occupational narrative, by allowing the fictive expression of negative emotions, is a kind of lubricant that reduces the friction between the parts and allows the operation to function more smoothly" ("Characteristics" 212). The fact is that while a few of the narratives presented in this chapter have illustrated what happens when the line of violation is crossed and violence erupts, most of the narratives have illustrated how workers avoid conflict and confrontation with one another. Therefore, it can be suggested that occupational narratives which illustrate conflict serve several purposes: to avoid co-worker conflict, to maintain worker cohesion, to protect job security and to provide a catharsis for everyday tension, resentment, and hostility experienced in the workplace.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Within the chapters of this thesis, I have addressed three main types of occupational narratives told by Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Mill workers. These three types include the accident narrative, the prank narrative, and the conflict narrative. While I have grouped the narratives into these categories, I am by no means suggesting that they are limited to these classifications. As a mode of presentation I have thematically grouped these narratives because these analytical themes most prominently emerge from my data; there are areas of imbrication, however. This has been demonstrated throughout the thesis. I have provided many narratives which overlap categories – prank narratives which are also conflict narratives; accident narratives which are also prank narratives; and conflict narratives which are also accident narratives. However, to fit the given theme of each chapter, I selected the narratives which best illustrated and reflected the main concerns, challenges, working conditions and traditions of mill workers.

As well, I have presented in this thesis only three of the many thematic occupational narrative types. In his article, "Characteristics of Occupational Narratives," Santino defines several other narrative categories, such as, cautionary tales (202), the first day on the job (204), the good old days (204), and characters and heroes (204). However, readers will notice that versions of these narrative types are also provided throughout the accident, prank, and conflict narrative chapters. This further illustrates the overlapping quality of occupational narratives and the limits of categorization. The following conclusions comprise the observations made in each chapter based on the thematic

groupings described above. I will provide a brief summary of the narratives and their functions and will further discuss two main issues regarding work technique and moderate working style which were illustrated and discussed in each of the chapters.

In chapter two, "Words of Warning and Wisdom: Accident Narratives in a Pulp and Paper Mill," I introduced accident narratives and subdivided them into three groups: the death narrative, the serious injury narrative and the close-call narrative. Each one of these story types illustrated how occupational accident narratives serve as a means of educating and warning mill workers about the immediate danger as well as the potential danger in the workplace. These narratives also demonstrated an awareness of worker responsibility regarding personal and co-worker safety in the workplace. While some retired mill workers tell accident narratives as a means of remembering the past or an individual who was killed, active mill workers create and narrate accident stories as a means of reminding themselves of the dangers which constantly surround them and to help them to deal with this potential danger. As emphasized in this chapter, these narratives help provide education regarding the most important mill worker concern – safety in the workplace.

The third chapter, "Pranks, Tricks and Practical Jokes: Humorous Narratives in an Industrial Workplace," discussed the prank narrative in the industrial workplace context. Within this chapter I discussed three main topics regarding pranks. First, pranks as initiation rites were explored. Initiation pranks and their narratives function as a means of bringing new workers into the realm of occupational knowledge and acceptance, while at the same time establishing the experienced workers' knowledge and the social

expectations. Second, prank narratives and safety issues were discussed. In this presentation, prank narratives were viewed as a means of bringing safety concerns to the attention of the mill workers. Through these narratives, workers teach themselves, boundaries of safety, to distinguish a safe prank from an unsafe prank and to recognize and acknowledge what prank behaviours constitute "going too far." Third, prank narratives warn against the demonstration of vulnerabilities in the workplace, as these weaknesses become ideal targets for pranksters. Some of the vulnerabilities which were illustrated through the narratives of mill workers include sleeping on the job, pride, personal views and politics, and embarrassing incidents and behaviours. Throughout these three discussions, it became clear that pranks as enacted and narrated fabrications serve an educational function as well as an entertainment function in the workplace.

The fourth chapter, "Conflict and Resistance in an Industrial Workplace," established the forms of conflict which are experienced and expressed by mill workers in their occupational workplace. Conflict narratives in this chapter illustrate how reckless behaviour, stealing, avoiding work and personal violation invite hostility and create co-worker conflict while on the job. As well, these narratives illustrate how unreasonable workloads, overwork, lack of job security, unfairness, and dissatisfaction with bosses invite counter-hegemonic subversion, sabotage, slowdowns, stealing, and pranks and create conflict between workers as subordinates and management as superordinates. However, due to the fact that mill workers have to work with one another every day and operate under the obvious economic necessity of keeping a job, many mill workers use narratives to release frustration and to avoid confrontation. Most of the conflict

narratives in this chapter illustrate how conflict and confrontation can be both resolved and ameliorated at the same time in order to maintain worker cohesion, protect jobs, and supply a cathartic release for frustration, resentment, antagonism, and hostility in the workplace.

Within this thesis and through the use and analysis of occupational narratives, I have attempted to provide and illustrate what Santino refers to as "an index of the specific challenges and problems that arise in a job" ("Characteristics" 212). Santino furthers this by stating that the two kinds of problems that occupational narratives indicate are: "(1) the kind of physical challenges requiring the skills a worker in that job would expect to have, and (2) the sociological problems of responsibility, status, and authority" ("Characteristics" 212). The narratives and analysis provided in these chapters have both supported and illustrated Santino's statement.

Firstly, accident narratives indicate the physical dangers which surround a mill worker during daily operation and provide them with a vocalization of their fears. As well, accident narratives indicate the sociological problem of responsibility encountered between workers when a worker fails to respect and regard safety issues and risks the lives of co-workers. Secondly, prank narratives indicate the physical challenges of new workers and the physical dangers involved in high-risk pranking. Prank narratives also indicate sociological problems regarding initiation, the establishment of status by experienced workers, the responsibility of safety when performing pranks, as well as the problem which develops out of exposed vulnerabilities in the workplace. And lastly, conflict narratives indicate the physical challenges of work and overwork, as well as the

sociological problems regarding issues of trust, dissatisfaction and antagonism encountered between co-workers and between management and workers.

However, most importantly, these narratives have illustrated the ways in which mill workers deal with the physical and sociological problems described above. In this thesis I have furthered Santino's observation and made the connection between the occupational narrative as an illustration or "an index" of workplace problems and the occupational narrative as a form of "solution" to these problems. Through the expression and sharing of occupational narratives, mill workers not only present the problems and challenges they encounter daily, but through these narratives they voice their fears, frustrations, opinions and social expectations as a means of dealing with these problems and asserting some control over an uncontrollable, unpredictable environment.

Work techniques which accompany many occupational narratives have a direct influence on this phenomena. While Robert McCarl has defined work technique as "the pattern of manipulations, actions, and rhythms which are the result of the interaction between an individual and his or her work environment and which are prescribed by the group and used as criteria for the determination of membership and status within it" ("Occupational Folklife" 149), I would like to include in this definition the work techniques which provide mill workers with the means for dealing with the physical and the sociological problems in the workplace. In each of these chapters, I have shown how various forms of work technique are communicated through mill worker narratives. These accounts of work techniques educate workers and help them to deal with and resolve specific situations and difficulties which arise on the job. For example, in chapter

two many of the accident narratives promote work techniques for survival and for avoiding accidents while on the job, such as the ability to sense a sulfur leak and the appropriate way to "tuck a sheet in the nip" when working on the paper machines. As well, many of the accident narratives illustrate how to avoid the unnecessary risk of underworking or overworking as a work technique. In other words, the narratives provided in this chapter promote a moderate working style as a work technique for physical and social survival in the workplace.

In the third chapter, prank narratives also promote work techniques that are needed for a successful work experience. For example, initiation pranks bring the new worker into the sphere of the experienced, knowledgeable employee by teaching work techniques and knowledge that novice workers will need to know in order to operate and survive in the mill. Some of these educational techniques include: the location of departments, the functions of machines, and the status system of workers. Prank narratives also illustrate work techniques which teach the worker how to separate safety from danger. As well, by exercising work techniques through the performance of certain pranks, workers create and apply their own methods of defining and manipulating the materials of their workplace, thereby providing the worker with an element of control over their environment and their work. Most importantly, by performing certain pranks on individuals, workers critique deviant working styles such as overeagerness and overwork and promote a moderate working style. Again, prank narratives such as these illustrate moderation as a work technique in the workplace.

Conflict narratives in the fourth chapter also promote work techniques which help workers deal with physical and social problems in the workplace. Conflict narratives illustrate how pranks, subversion, sabotage, slowdown and stealing can be used as work techniques for dealing with and resolving various workplace conflicts such as reckless behavior, lazy co-workers, overwork, employment uncertainty, unfairness and difficult bosses. These work techniques help mill workers deal with some of the conflict that arises while, at the same time, maintaining worker cohesion and keeping their jobs. As well, within these narratives are illustrations of work techniques which workers use as tactics and maneuvers in order to balance and control a workload. Workers learn how to affect their co-workers and punish them if their actions are deemed inappropriate or selfish, such as stealing, not knowing a job, being careless, or working too little or too hard. These tactics act as leveling agents and promote a moderate working style and rhythm.

Keeping this chapter overview regarding work technique in mind, I make the claim that occupational narratives not only illustrate work techniques, but do so as a means of providing workers with solutions to their occupational problems. Occupational narratives help workers survive in the workplace and provide a variety of solutions to some of the physical and social problems encountered on the job. While McCarl states that occupational narratives reflect "a middle point (or central) concern for incidents that stop the flow" of work ("Occupational Folklife" 156), my research suggests that occupational stories describe work techniques which attempt to maintain and sometimes re-establish the flow of work. For example, they teach workers how to avoid accidents

and injury, how to educate the inexperienced, and how to deal with lazy workers and difficult bosses.

As well, it is through the narration and sharing of work techniques such as these, that occupational narratives promote the mill worker's ideal form, style and rhythm of work which is generally moderate. Moderation is the key to work flow, rhythm and safety. Through the suggestion of a moderate norm of work, mill workers promote the optimal working conditions for physical, social and economical security. As well, illustrated in all three chapters is the idea and belief that the safest worker is the moderate worker. Given the potential danger, the degree of strenuous work, the intensity of interpersonal working relationships among workers as well as between workers and management and the importance of job security in the workplace, it is not surprising that physical, social and economic safety and moderation is emphasized in the occupational narratives of mill workers.

By researching occupational narratives, folklorists can begin to explore many occupational issues and workplace relationships which affect workers, their job performance and their work technique. Because the occupational narrative "arises out of and deals with each of the relationships and interactions that are part of the occupation" (Santino, "Characteristics" 211), and is "inextricably linked to the work processes and micro-environments in which it functions" (McCarl, "Occupational Folklife" 146), folklorists can begin to examine the relationship a worker has with a co-worker or a boss, as well as examine the relationship and interaction they have with their work environment. By observing these two forms of occupational relationships through

narrative, a researcher can gain the information needed to "help develop better working relationships between management and the workers" (Nickerson, "Factory Folklore" 125), as well as function in "enhancing communication and co-operation, easing organizational changes, and helping members cope with the vicissitudes of work life" (Jones, "Folklore Approach" 284). Folklorists, therefore, possess the concepts, the research methods and the research questions which can be used to help in the understanding of industrial work as well as its consequences, implications and relationships.

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Appendix A

Occupational Biographies of Informants

Due to the contentious and sometimes private nature of the narratives presented in this thesis, I have given each informant a pseudonym. However, also due to the direct connection between narrative and narrator, I feel it is necessary to provide some biographical information for each informant regarding age, status (retired or active) and job position at the time of their interview.

Name: Kim Brake
Age: 19
Status: Summer employment only
Position: Mill tour guide

Name: Sara Cook
Age: 18
Status: Summer employment only
Position: Mill tour guide

Name: Gord Coombs
Age: 62
Status: Retired
Position: Mill supervisor

Name: Tony Hancock
Age: 57
Status: Active
Position: Intake worker

Name: Al Humber
Age: 54
Status: Active
Position: Assistant TMP operator

Name: Ern Kennedy
Age: 78
Status: Retired
Position: Industrial relations manager

Name: Harry Mercer
Age: 47
Status: Active
Position: Fifth hand paper maker

Name: Joe O'Brien
Age: 79
Status: Retired
Position: Safety superintendent

Name: John Peddle
Age: 31
Status: Active
Position: Sixth hand paper maker

Name: Mike Piercey
Age: 23
Status: Summer employment only
Position: Sixth hand paper maker

Name: Kevin Pike
Age: 52
Status: Active
Position: Steam plant supervisor

Name: Jim Power
Age: 39
Status: Active
Position: TMP casual worker

Name: Bob Saunders
Age: 51
Status: Active
Position: Steam plant worker

Name: Tim Shears
Age: 51
Status: Active
Position: Paper mill superintendent

Name: Frank Sheppard
Age: 65
Status: Retired
Position: Sulfite worker

Name: Rebecca Wells
Age: 22
Status: Summer employment only
Position: Mill tour guide

Name: Susan Wheeler
Age: 55
Status: Active
Position: TMP senior operator

Appendix B

Supplementary Texts: Accident Narratives

And another incident on a cleaner, I don't know who it was exactly now, it was a couple of fellers over there. The cleaner was leaking so they were going to get it fixed. So, they walked over to see which one of the cleaners it was. And a cleaner is a coned shaped thing with a long body on it and the stock is in a cyclone effect. It comes down around, and the good stock is sucked out through the top and all the bad stock which is rejects is pushed down through the bottom and goes out in a conveyor and it goes down in a big pipe and that's the rejects. So, before they shut it down they had to find out which one was leaking. So, he passed along and he just walked passed and when he walked passed and got on the other side, the body busted and blew out. And the whole body blew across the floor and it hit the other cleaner across from him about five feet away. So, he just missed getting hurt. I think it was Jeff White, I'm not sure which guy it was, you know, so, that was another incident. (Humber 1997)

Then there were things that almost happened on the paper machines when I worked there. It was so hot and dusty, now they got a klondike on paper machines now, it's really good. One time you never even had time to eat, most of the time. It was only eight hour shifts then but you never had much time to eat on the paper machines and then you'd eat and you never had no place to eat and you were out in the open. And the dust and the dirt was blowing around and you'd try to get something to eat but many times I took my basket in and I carried the same basket home and was never opened. For eight hours you're just steady on the paper machine. And then you had to get up behind and there is a beater down below and all the stock is going around and you got big knives down there that cuts up all the broke, the old paper. And you got a little guard on the back but you can't hardly see anything, especially if you got glasses on. There's so much steam and water coming up and you're behind the stack trying to get the paper through and it blows up and that. And a couple fellers just barely got out of it. They fell over and landed on the walkway below and they just about went into the beater. And there was one incident when one feller was there and he fell over and he was holding onto the rail and the b'ys heard him singing out and they went in and helped him and hauled him back up. And he almost fell into the beater. I don't know if you've seen the picture, *The Rowdy Man*, well, Gordon Pinsent, that was the kind of beater a feller went and fell in and got killed. Well, that's where we almost fell, like I almost fell in a couple of times behind it. But we didn't know the difference at that time because safety wasn't emphasized so much as it is today. Today we have training. We have a safety meeting once a month and we have a lot of, they try to really emphasize that somebody could get hurt and be disabled for life so watch what you are doing down there. (Humber 1997)

Now I had one more close call. I almost had my two eyes burned out. I was working on number six boiler at the time and I went, okay, they had little side doors what they call observation doors. You'd open the door and check in to see if your furnace was smoking because environmentally you didn't want any smoke getting out and coming over the town. So, we use to have to check those periodically and as luck would have had it, just as I started to open the observation door which was on eye level, I mean you had, you had to reach, you had to sort of bend over a little to look in. And as I was opening the door, I didn't know, but the fan was tripping out at the same time. Now that's the big fan that hauls all the gases through the boiler and pulls them out the stack, the big stacks you see there on the mill. And so when the fan stopped that meant the boiler pressurized. So, all the fire blew out through the door for about ten feet and it just went over and hit the wall. When it happened I was about a second, maybe a second away from having my eyes right in the direct path! And then my eyebrows, my eyelashes and all the top of my head all burned off, the hair, it burned off. When I came home my wife looked at me. She was just, "What happened to you? What happened?" And like I said I had to go to the barber the next day and try to get it straightened out. She was trying to get it straightened out. She was trying to paint eyebrows on me. Everything was burnt, was burnt to a crisp off there, right? The skin was all singed and scorched there. So, one more second, another second I would be in the direct path of it and I would have had my eyes burned out, you know, without a doubt. Well this, you know, this trade that we're in, it's a hazardous trade, you know, anything can happen and sometimes does happen. You know, like, you're under pressure, you're talking about that boilers down there now, you're talking 250 psi[9]. That's on each square inch of that boiler. If that gets loose, that's in comparison to probably a million tons of TNT blown up. So, you don't stand a chance if you're in a direct path, you know, like, number six boiler use to have 600 psi, so you can imagine that on each square inch. (Saunders 1997)

B.S.: Dan is an electrician. Dan came very close to having his head taken off a few months back. Now, I don't know too much about what happened, so I won't go into it because I could have it all, you know, tangled and garbled and you wouldn't get the true story out of it, right? But from what I've heard I just, you know, I've heard so many conflicting stories I don't know which is which, so, but I'm sure Dan Bennett would be, you know, probably more than willing to tell you exactly what happened. And then, only then, can you get the true story, so it was a bad experience for him.
C.S.: What did it involve?
B.S.: The essence of it, I think, over there in the mechanical shop, I'm not sure if you're aware there's a stairway that leads up to the offices. And there is sort of a

[9] "psi" means pounds per square inch. In this case, Saunders is referring to the psi or amount of pressure on the boiler unit.

stairwell beneath the stairs where, you know, you can go in there. You can walk in there or, you know, in a bent position, right? So, Dan was operating I think the forklift and he was backing back, getting out of the way for something and he didn't realize, but all of a sudden he, you know, the forklift was taking him under the stairwell and there wasn't enough room there. It was grabbing his head and bending his head over. I think he had a couple of crushed ribs out of it and he came close to getting killed. So, this sort of thing, you know, like, in industry you got to expect where you got so many men working so many different jobs and it only takes one little wrong move sometimes to make, you know, to make you realize I almost got killed or some people don't live to tell about it. (Saunders 1997)

I heard about one guy down there, I guess it's about thirty, thirty-five years ago this happened. In order to make paper you got to have a shell that you put back and the shell is spinning. A shell, I mean, is like a long narrow round tube. And what happens is that the paper comes up and hooks on a shell and that's how the paper goes right on the shell. The shell is probably three tons and to transport it back and forth you use a crane with two hooks on each side, one hook on each side. Apparently years ago, this shell was elevated at probably about at a height of twenty feet, twenty-five feet and one of the hooks let go and there was two or three men there and they all shouted, "Move, the hook is going to break." And they all moved and one man moved and then he all of a sudden turned around and ran back underneath it. And as he ran back underneath the shell, it let go and come down and killed him. It squat him. (Piercey 1997)

Another story down there too, Piercey, no relation to me, but they work down there now in shipping, two Piercey brothers. They worked there when they were young, only twenty and their father worked there and I guess he was forty-five or fifty at the time. And I believe he got squat using a forklift or, somehow he got squat anyway and the two sons witnessed their father getting squat right in front of them. That was a bad incident down there. (Piercey 1997)

Another incident down there, I guess it happened five or six years ago. A guy was in a forklift downstairs and the forklift, anyway, he hit somehow in which the forklift tipped. And while you're in a forklift you're suppose to be seated, you're suppose to have your seat belt attached to you. But no one does it, it's like a, you know, no one does. You're told that if the forklift goes to tip over, do not try to, if you can not help it, do not try and evacuate the forklift, stay on, hold on to the wheel, brace yourself and let the forklift fall. Or if you got to jump out of it, jump the way that it's not falling, see? So, if it's falling on a side, to the right side, you jump out left. Apparently he jumped out, but he jumped out the side that the forklift was falling, so when the forklift fell, he got caught and squat. I think that happened five or six years ago. (Piercey 1997)

Well, I heard about the guy that, well, I wasn't there, well, since I've been working there there's been only one guy that got killed. That was the guy, he was down in the sheds. He was on the forklift. He went across the crane, he went across the, what they use to do one time was, paper used to roll on out through the sheds. And when they'd get on down to the end the b'ys would pick them off and stack them all up with this. So, anyway, he tried to go across this conveyor, let's say, right? And when he did he went across it and the crane tripped him over, like the wheel went on the conveyor and it tipped him over and it crushed him. (Peddle 1997)

And then we had some people electrocuted. We had a very good friend of mine electrocuted. And then we had another chap electrocuted out on number two substation, a fellow from Deer Lake. And we had another old gentleman killed out on shipping. A roll of paper fell on him. And we had the barge overturned on the wharf one day and we had another fellow killed out there. And then we had the overhead crane fell down in the machine room and killed a friend of mine one night. Those things happen and nobody wants it to happen. (Coombs 1997)

Oh yes, and we were weary of most of the things that can happen because I had a few accidents down there myself, nothing real serious. The most serious I had was, how do you explain it now? Like I said, we cooked pulp in big digesters about twenty-five or thirty cord of chip wood, thirty thousand gallons of acid into it and we'd bring that up to a boiling point of 330 degrees under pressure for cooking. And all those things were barred up, barred tight, even when, after you emptied it, you had to put new gaskets in, you'd make sure that all your bolts and everything was set up tight. What I'd used to have to put the gaskets in was a plate. I'd open up and clean it out to seep the valve and I was doing that and one of the boys turned on the steam upstairs. Of course, when they turned the steam on upstairs it hit me smack in the face and flattened me right out across the floor. I use to wear the bone rim glasses and they turned right white and the only part of my face that wasn't burned was around the eyes. The rest of it was nothing only a mass of blisters. And that was the first time that ever happened to anybody down there like that and that was the talk for a nice while. (Sheppard 1997)

Appendix C

Supplementary Texts: Prank Narratives

Well, like I went in one day, myself personally, I went in. There is a lot of jokesters down there, okay? I went in and this guy I was telling you about, Glenn, I think he done it but I can't prove it, but anyway, I went into the bathroom and there is a hall that goes down by the bathroom and it has all the stalls. So, I was in sitting on the toilet, using the washroom, okay? And I was reading, had my paper there and I was having a cigarette and I was very, very comfortable. And I was on the furthest stall out next to the hall and up about the top of the hall the wall goes up so far and it just breaks off, okay? So, some person or persons, I don't know, took a garbage bucket, the big grey garbage bucket, filled it with water and over the top and drowned me. So, here I was with the cigarette hanging out of my mouth and paper all soaked and pants down to my knees. I had my shoes taken off and everything. I was trying, like, to get really comfortable. So, here I was then trying to run down the hall slipping and falling, trying to catch whoever it was that threw the bucket of water over me, right? So, anyway, I ended up running out into the machine room where all the machines was to and all the b'ys was there, like, "What's wrong?" You know? So, anyway, it was pretty funny. (Peddle 1997)

There's been stuff done to me too. They'll get a big wad of wet paper and they'll stick it right close to you and it'll, the water will just eventually seep out of it. It'll get you soaked when you wake up and no one is around, right? You know what I mean? You know what I'm saying to you? So, little things like that. (Peddle 1997)

We had shut downs Sunday mornings, at that time we went on a six day week, we had shut downs Sunday mornings, so, like I said, you're in a rush eight o'clock to get out. So, seven o'clock in the morning they starts to shut down the machines. So, you got to wash them up and clean them up and you only got an hour and you got to get out. And if you went and worked a little after eight o'clock, you wouldn't get paid for it, you know, you worked til eight o'clock. So, how many times did somebody have, and it happened to me sometimes, but once in particular I went over, my basket was on the table, like I said I was out on the floor, basket was on the table, eight o'clock whistle was after going and I was late getting over. I wanted to get over and get washed up and get home. So, I ran up to the table, grabbed my basket and went on. When I grabbed my basket, all I had was the handles! Somebody was after leaving the basket on the table, taking four inch nails and nailing my basket down on the table, so when you grabbed hold of it you just pulled the handles out of it. (Humber 1997)

A.H.: And then another thing they would do is, ah, another time it happened to me, I had my basket on the table and I did the same thing, rushing to get out. Four o'clock, my buddy was in, but I was down on the press section. So, my buddy was in four o'clock, because you're never relieved until right on the hour then, five to four or four o'clock, not like today, most guys would leave a bit early. So, four o'clock came and my buddy wasn't down for me and he was busy up in the other end. So, finally I got pissed off and I walked down which was about five after four and he was there and I asked him why he didn't come up. And he didn't, he said, "Well, I got busy here." So, I said, "You're suppose to relieve me up on the press." So, anyhow, I ran over and grabbed my basket and picked up the basket and I went to go with it and the basket went down to the ground. Right down on the floor. And when I opened the basket all my lunch was taken out and they had blocks of steel put in it. So, you had about twenty pounds of steel in your basket, and as soon as you lifted it up it went right to the floor. It was that heavy, you know, a big block of steel.
C.S.: So, would they watch you do this?
A.H.: Oh, yeah, the b'ys would be over there, you know, they knew I was late getting away, they knew it was my basket because most everybody had their name put on their basket. So, they were over there standing up watching and they laughed at you and they wouldn't help you, you know, they just, it was just a bit of devilment, you know, stuff like that. (Humber 1997)

So, anyhow, then I worked in the lab for seven years, I guess. I worked in it, so I went up so far as relief inspector. But when I worked in the pulp lab there used to be the mixers next door and Macky Wells, Robert his name is, but Macky Wells, he'll soon be retiring too, he works in the wood room. I don't know if you've talked to him or not. So, Macky worked next door to the mixers and Stephen Ryan worked with me and a couple others, so we use to have a little bit of fun. We'd go spraying each other. But I would never get into it, very seldom, because like I said, anything that happened would happen to me. So, if I went and picked up a hose to spray somebody, the superintendent would walk right around the corner and catch me. That's the type that I was, I'd always get caught if I ever did anything wrong. So, I never use to do much. But after a while of getting drowned, you get fed up with it. So, I said, "I'm getting tired of getting wet. I'm not going to get wet no more." Macky got me now, he sprayed me. So, Macky came out through the door from the mixers and it's like twenty feet from the mixer door to the pulp lab door. So, he came out and I was waiting for him to come out. So, I picked up the hose and I turned it on him and drowned him. Now, when you gets drowned you usually run away, but Macky didn't. He started running towards me. And here I was, couldn't get back, about ten feet away was the shut off value for the hose and I couldn't get back, because I couldn't drop the hose because it's that much pressure on it, it could flick all over the place and could hit you or something like that. So you couldn't drop it or it could hit one of the pieces of machinery. So, I kept backing up trying to get to it and he kept

running up. And he ran up towards me and he grabbed hold of the hose, and I was holding on, and he started turning it on me. So, it was the first time it ever happened that, you know. I said, "Man, oh, man, he had to be smart to do it." Then finally I went and ran back and got the hose turned off and took off and he ran over and turned it on to try to finish drowning me. I was drowned anyhow. But I mean, you know, it was a good idea. I said, "I'll never forget that. If it ever starts again to do it, well, that's what will happen, I'll do the same thing. I'll run for the person and grab the hose and drown them." I wasn't going to get wet but I did. I picked the wrong fellow. (Humber 1997)

So then another time we were in the lab and, like I said, they use to play tricks on each other and water was a lot of it because water is suppose to be harmless. So, Bob Pike, down the mill, I don't know if you know Bob Pike, he is superintendent there now in the recycle and he use to be superintendent in the sulfite. So, Bob Pike was on this weekend. So, the boys, in the evening it was, late in the evening, I think it was Stephen, it was Stephen and somebody else, was three or four of us there anyhow and they decided they were going to get whoever. Stephen was out, I think, out picking up his stock. Whoever was out with his stock they were going to get him. So, you had swinging doors, you push them open, they are just two doors together and they just swing open. So, you push them open as you come back with your stock, you had your hands full of stock, like that, and you turned back on and go against the door and come on in. So, they put a half a bucket of water up on the top where the arm is that holds the door to all the time. So, they did that waiting for Stephen to come back. So, I knew it was there, you know, and I said to the boys, I said, "Now," I said, "you got to watch somebody don't come, Derek Huxter or somebody like that or Rex May." So, never had it out of our mouths, Bob Pike walked through the door, superintendent. He walks in the door but he is so fast, he's usually fast when he is doing anything, he was that fast he walked through the door and he come right on in that fast the bucket tipped over and come down splash right behind him, just missed him. And he looked at me, he said, "Boys, you're having fun are you?" And he went on. So, he never said nothing about it, you know, to anybody because he looked at it, I guess, well, the boys said, "Well, we weren't trying to get you. We were trying to get somebody else." So, he just kind of forgot about it. That was that incident, you know, just funny things. (Humber 1997)

One night I was sort of having a little cat nap, right? Not suppose to say this now, you know what I mean? But, I think during the shift work everybody in that mill has fallen asleep at some time, not intentionally but regardless, you know, moods of your body, I suppose you're overtired or something. And one night I know I was, I fell, I was in the chair and just fell asleep there and the b'ys got outside. First what they did, they come in and they wired my legs to the chair. My two legs they wired to the chair and so, anyway, they ran out and they rang the alarms. So, when the alarms went off I just jumped up and anyway, when I jumped up my

legs not been able to move. I went on and my two elbows brought up on the concrete. I almost broke the two elbows off of me. It was a bad joke in a way because I could have broke my two arms, you know. The three guys who where there I got, you know, I eventually got even with the three of them. Because at the time I was about 190 pounds on the weights, you know, solid. I ran after one guy when I got up and I caught him. He was sort of a thin guy. I took him under my arm and brought him down and shoved the hose down his pants, with the cold hose. And he was screaming with cold water and I was keeping it there and spoiled his cigarettes and everything, right? And the other guy, I ran, the kettle was boiling, I got the kettle of hot water. It wasn't really boiling, right? And I was chasing him and pouring it over his back and he was howling and screaming all the way. And then only one more guy I had to get and he was watching me all night. That was my best buddy, James Fisher, that I was telling you about, I had to get him. I said, "I don't know how I am going to get him." So, then every move he watched me. So, when we went down to the washroom to get ready to go home, he was there dressed, you know, he was watching every move and there was no way I was going to get him. So, this young casual guy came in and he was wearing his hard hat. So, when James wasn't looking I motioned to him, "Okay, leave your hard hat there by the sink." So, that's what he did. He didn't know what was going on, but he knew I wanted his hard hat for some reason. So, I took out the lining and I filled the hard hat full of water, just walked over towards my locker with the hard hat. So, James looked at me and couldn't see nothing out of, you know, nothing amiss, right? So, he went on putting on his shoes and I just put the hat on his head, water and all. So, he was with all his new clothes on. He got half mad over it even though he was my best friend. He practically almost got mad over it, right? But when he realized what he had done to me, you know, he laughed at it, right? (Saunders 1997)

We done that to Teddy Randell one time. We screwed it on with two big screws, plus the fact that we painted it with wet paint, all wet paint, handles and everything. When he came back to get the basket, he grabbed up the handles, here he was with his hands all full of paint and all he had in his hands was the handles. Now he was cursing for a week on us. He didn't know who. (Saunders 1997)

Appendix D

Supplementary Texts: Conflict and Resistance Narratives

I've heard words said, you know, like, come verbally face to face each other but they backed away. Over just, one questions the other person's abilities to do his job, saying, "You don't know your job." Or could be anything from called his wife a whore to anything, right? I've seen it all, like, numerous, you know. And there is always somebody down there trying to cause trouble. Always trying to cause trouble for other people, right? Like if someone said, you know, if I was standing up to a certain guy and I said, "See that guy down there? He's not worth a God damn." He might say, "Yeah, yeah." An hour later now he might go over to that guy and say, "Well, this guy Mike went up and told me that he thinks you're not worth a fuck." So, this is what he'd say. And, you know, it causes bad feelings, right? And there's a lot of people down there that's all they do. They want to see people causing trouble. I've seen that so many times that, that seems to be the biggest thing, like, causing trouble. There are certain individuals down there, I don't want to say any names, but that's all they do. (Piercey 1997)

I've seen where this guy, Rick Simon, I've seen, he wanted to go to a stag party, the one I was telling stories about him earlier. And he tried to get off work and no one could work for him. So, he come into work, got his case of beer, figured he'd say he was stomach sick, right? And so, he went up to the boss and told him he had in his chest, pains, to the boss, you know. He's always screwing the system, like I was saying. So, the boss sent him down to the hospital and once he told the boss that he had chest pains, you knows what happens, don't you? He got stayed in over night. Anyways, the b'ys, he had his dozen beer left in his truck down at the mill, the b'ys breaks into his truck, steals the dozen beer and drinks it on him. So, that was funny, right? That was a real joke going through the mill, how a man tried to get off work, told them he had chest pains and they kept him in the hospital over night. That was real funny. (Piercey 1997)

J.P.: First thing they ask you when you walk in the mill is, "What's your father's name?" Right? Because usually you have a relation working. I'm the only one that got hired on down there in the last little while, as far as I know, up on the machines that didn't have a father or an uncle. But Dad use to work there for years, then he give it up and now he's gone with the Co-Op Insurance. It's all, it's all family. It's all family oriented, you know what I mean? Your uncle will get you on or your father will get you on or something like that.
C.S.: Do you ever see a father and son together?
J.P.: Oh, yeah.
C.S.: What is that relationship like?
J.P.: It's good. It's fine at the mill. We haven't had any problem with it. There hasn't been any problem with that. Usually these guys are usually, no, they get

along well. That's why they are still there obviously, I guess. And, you know, sometimes you get, like, we had one guy came there first and when he first came there he was, figured he could do what he wanted and not work and not do this and not do that because his dad was a boss. But, anyway, we straightened that out.
C.S.: How?
J.P.: Well, you know, we just kept bugging him, kept picking at him, kept going to the boss about him and stuff. Playing jokes on him and making him feel like, you know, "I got to do something or else they're not going to leave me alone." Shit or get off the pot. One or the other, right? So, anyway, he straightened up. (Peddle 1997)

It's the attitude that comes there first because, you know, "My dad's boss and big," you know. We had a lot of problems like that in the summer times too with the kids coming in. Their dads were bosses or mill managers or superintendents, and these are all the students that got hired on down there. And, well, I mean, we just treated them like anybody else. We didn't care who they were, you know. They were working along side of us so they had to be treated like us. They weren't going to be treated any better and they had to realize that up front. (Peddle 1997)

J.P.: I'd seen, well, I was actually there one night when a boss went and punched a guy in the mouth.
C.S.: What happened?
J.P.: Anyway, he called him Pumper or something.
C.S.: Who called who?
J.P.: This guy called the foreman, Pumper. He got caught jerking off in the bathroom, right? Okay? So, he got caught having a wank in the bathroom. And everyone called him Pumper. So, anyway, that was fine. So, he said, "Get out on the job," you know, "you've been in here long enough having your meal and that stuff. Get on back, get out on the job." And it was a very frustrating job, okay? And you're suppose to be out on the job doing the best you can to help everybody out so that the job becomes easier and then everyone can relax. And he wasn't pulling his weight. So, the boss when he said something to him, he said, "Go fuck yourself, Pumper." And then he just, [makes a loud knocking sound] darting him. Like some guys, like I would be able to say it to him and get away with it no matter what the situation was, you know, because that's my character. I mean, like, he knows it's only me and him and it don't go no further and it's just, you know what I mean? But the kitchen was right full of people, right? And you don't do that, you know what I mean? That's, you know what I mean, that was just, but he shouldn't have punched him either. Not as a boss, right? Well, he crossed the line, right? But he had to formally apologize to the other feller and he smarted up a lot since then. (Peddle 1997)

And then prank wise, well we had a lot of people, well they still do have pranks and that, but when we worked on the paper machines way back then everybody was full of devilment. They used to do things. We had fellers that were bad. They stole stuff from us. You carry in a bottle of drink at that time and you never had no fridge, no place to put it. So, the only place to put it was where the water runs out of the glands or runs out from the stack and you had a drain there, so you just put your bottle of water down in it and it would keep it a bit cool, a bottle of drink I mean. So, you have your bottle of drink there and some of the older fellers, they figured they were king of the place and you never talked back to them because they were the top fellers and they could tell you you're fired or you're gone or get rid of you, you know. So, you're kind of scared of them and you're only a young feller then and you never had much time. So, they'd go and steal your drink on you and you'd see them walking around taking your drink, or if you had cookies in your basket, they'd go and take your cookies, eat your lunch, because they were up, top dogs. So, they knew that they could do stuff like this and get away with it, for the junior fellers, the fifth hand and the sixth hand. But after a while some guys they knew they could get away with it and other fellers would fight with them. They would go over and take it from them and give them a punch in the head. Oh, really, yeah. A long time ago, back in the sixties, you used to have to stand up for your rights. If you didn't, they would be always shitting on you or telling you, "Okay, I want this," and they were kind of bullies. The older ones, they were kind of bullies because they were up making the money and they were the machine tender, the back tender and the third hand and they were in their own group and they didn't really associate with the bottom people, you know, they said, "You do your work," and that's it, you know. (Humber 1997)

And then some things that was a bit funny but they could hurt you. We were down in the basement and, like I said, we were rushing to get cleaned up in the basement and get out from the shift. So, in the basement of the paper machines it's not like it is today, it was hot just like in the TMP. You're talking the temperature in the basement then was about 120, 140 degrees, and you couldn't stay down there no more than five to ten minutes because there was so much dry heat. So, we get into the basement, now the machine was down, so you get into the basement and you're cleaning up, pulling wads of paper out from underneath the dryers and down in the basement by the felts, so you're blowing it down and cleaning her up a bit. So, in this one incident that I know of, we were rushing to get ready and there was four of us in the basement. One guy was, I'm not sure who it was now, so long ago, but he was full of fun all the time, you know, always playing tricks or always doing something. So, he grabbed the hose, took it up, and it was myself and I don't know if John Butt was with us or not, seems like it was John Butt, but anyhow, there was three of us there. And whoever it was, he picked up the hose and he turned the hose on him, you know, not real full force, but he opened it half way and he got him, drowned him. But in the meantime the

hose was down in the basement and you're talking about 120, 140 degrees and the heat up all the pipe goes all around the basement and all that pipe is hot. So, the water that came out of it was hot. You're talking the water was 120 degrees, pretty near scalding, you know. So, he turned the hose on him and drowned him and he started screeching. Like I said, I can't remember who it was now because we were all in a rush to get out. So, I went over and I turned the hose off right away and I told him, I said, "You know the hose," I said, "it's not so bad to get drowned," I said, "but that hose is hot for the first two or three minutes. You got nothing but the heat in it." And I said, "You're scalding the guy." So, anyhow he took after him and if he caught up to him, he would have punched him in the head because that's the way you were then and you'd rather, you'd get really angry, even though it was a prank. But they didn't like horseplay down there and things like that. It's not dangerous when you start off, right? But, it's just a prank, but danger could come out of it you don't even know about, like I said, that's hot water. It's the same now, we turn on a hose in the TMP now, the first bit of water comes out is really hot for the first minute, you know. It's really warm because the hose is laying around in 100, 110 degrees, so it is warm. (Humber 1997)

B.S.: I remembers another time down there we had a foreman, his named was Marvin Snow, and he had a little Volkswagen, right? So, we happened to be working on clean up that day, doing maintenance. He was in and myself and another guy. Now, Marvin Snow, you had to know him, was a sort of a guy, his temper would just fly off the handle in about two seconds flat. And he had one of those little Volkswagens. So, before he went to go to lunch, myself and another guy went out and we lifted up the rear of it. The two of us were strong enough to lift up the rear of the Volkswagen and we put planks and boards under her and blocks. So, when he got in and turned the key in his Volkswagen and put it in gear, you know, it just lifted up like that, the rear of it just lifted up like that and wouldn't go. And I can see him now, getting out and scratching his head and swearing and looking all around and cursing and swearing on the Volkswagen. And anyway, when he looked at the rear of the Volkswagen and saw it all jacked up on blocks, oh, he lost it! Oh, the oaths and the curses coming out of him was unreal! He jumped in the old Volkswagen and put it right down dead low gear and rammed it and she come off of the blocks and squealed its tires. And he was looking all around, but he couldn't see us. We were just hidden away looking through the seams. Oh, we did some laughing at that.
C.S.: Did he find out who did it?
B.S.: Never did. Never did. And we never ever mentioned it after, no way would we have mentioned that, probably get in trouble. (Saunders 1997)

I hired on some people as a tour guide to take tours through the mill. And this young fellow, he was about seventeen or eighteen, I suppose, it went to his head with the importance we gave him. We gave him a white cap and a uniform. Now, a white safety hat denoted that you were some kind of a boss, you know,

foreman or if you went above foreman, you wore your white while the other workers wore red or a different kind of safety hat. So, we gave this to a young fellow three white hats and it went to this young fellow's head. And he went into the canteen and there was a line up, people waiting to get served. And so he walked in the door and walked up to the head of the line and he looked up to this big fellow who was going to be served next, and he said, "I got to go up here. I got a white hat." And this big guy, he picked him up with one hand and sat him up on the counter. Now, he said, "When everybody else here is served, you're next." So, that quieted him down. (O'Brien 1997)

I had an experience down there when I was trying to get the job superintendent of the sulfite mill. And, so, I gets this call from the mill manager, "O'Brien, come out and see me." I said, "This is it. I got the job." So, I went out and walked in his office and he looked at me. "O'Brien," he said, "I'm going to fire you." And I said, "That's pretty good. I thought I was going to get a promotion when I came out." "No," he said, "I'm going to fire you." And I said, "Do you mind telling me what it was?" Well, we were taking some tests of stock and that and my figures weren't agreeing with the fellow who was checking on me. So, I said, "Why are you going to fire me?" And he said, "Your figures didn't check with the other guy." I said, "By the way, who has been testing stock the longer?" I said, "Me or that guy you were taking the figures from?" And he said, "I guess you have." And I said, "What makes that other fellow an expert and me stupid?" "Well," he said, "I never looked at it like that." (O'Brien 1997)

C.S.: Does sleeping take place on the job?
K.P.: I think that it does, but I'm not suppose to know it. Well, I heard one story that, like one time I was off, the supervisor over in the paper mill said he came over and everybody here was asleep. Of course the paper machines were all losing paper production because the paper was wet because there was no steam, everybody was asleep and nobody knew what was going on. But that's pretty dangerous. (Pike 1997)

That reminds me of a little story of a guy who wanted to get the evening off. So, he came to work, he had a party to go to or something, he said, I'm going to tell the boss I'm sick and go in the hospital and they'll send me home for the night. But he made one little mistake, he went in the hospital and told them he was having chest pains. So, instead of getting that evening off, they booked him, kept him in there overnight. That was a little, you know, it backfired. He wanted the evening off, he got the evening off all right, but he ended up spending the evening and overnight in the hospital. So, he didn't get what he wanted. He had his beer in his truck ready to go to a party and he didn't get there. (Mercer 1997)

I watched a guy come on the job and he stood on the air hose that the guy was using, and buddy just yanked on the air hose and of course the guy who stood on

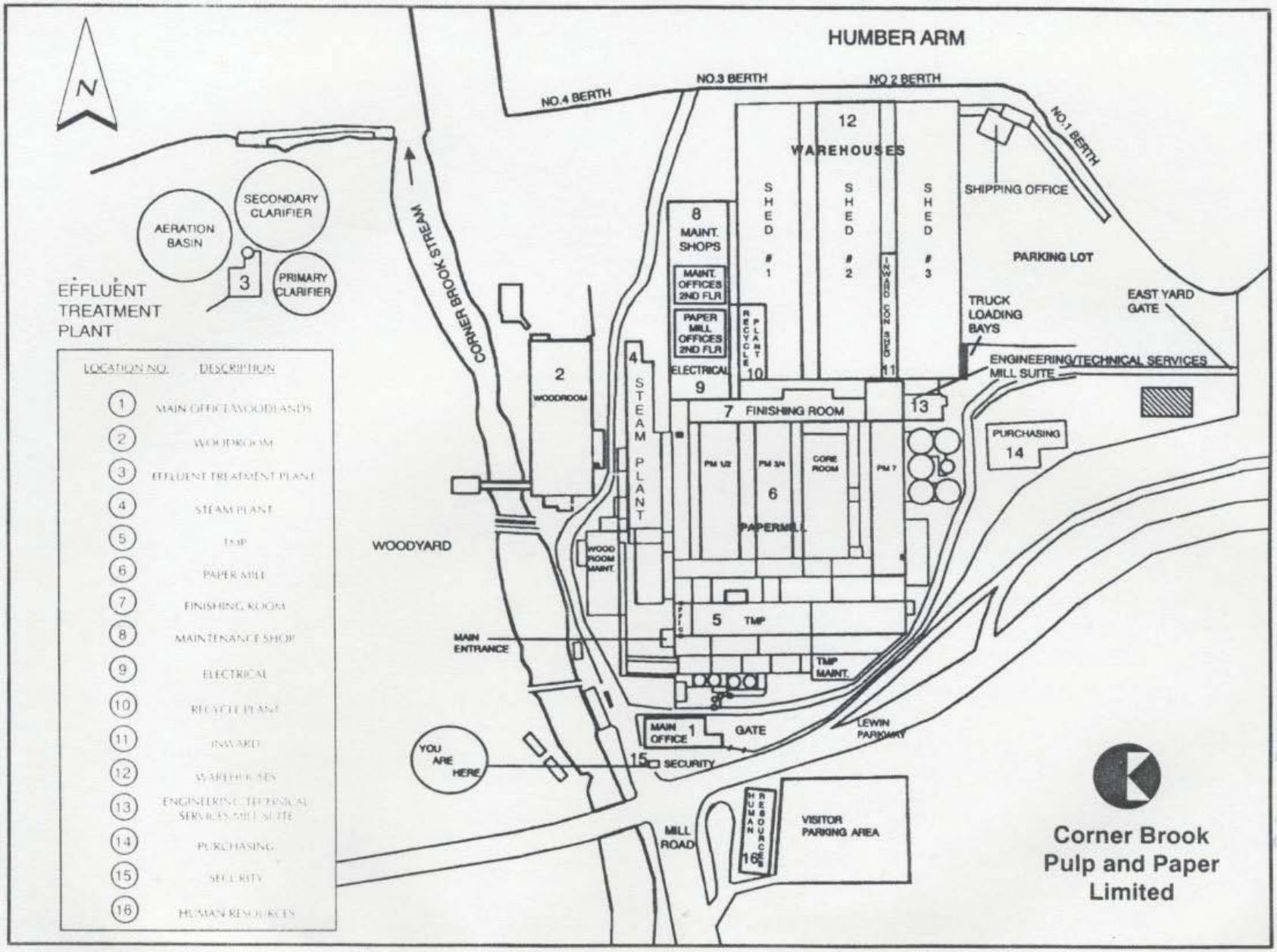
the air hose fell down, and he got up and went around and promptly broke the guy's nose. Uncalled for, but I didn't see it happen. But I seen what happen when I went around and I seen a crowd gather and I went around and looked and there was this guy with his nose broken on the side of his face and blood pouring down. It's a rare occasion. I mean, technically the guy should have lost his job, but the few guys who seen what happened wouldn't admit to seeing it. (Mercer 1997)

It was a lot of pressure first then after, and like a lot of the other men, they were really helpful but now some of the younger ones were threatened by me being there because I was senior to them. And, you know, well, we don't want her, she's going to be ahead of us. So, that didn't go over too well with them I guess. Some of them were really not nice. But, like I told them, I'm like you guys, if I go out of here, I got to go to work for $4.75 an hour. Well, on the other job I was getting over $13 an hour when I worked with the cleaners and when I went into this job it was a lot more money. And they figured that I went in and took it for the money, but it wasn't that, you know, I had thirteen years in the company and I just didn't want to throw it all down. Even my pension would have been gone. So, anyway, after the years went on they sort of, you know, accepted the fact. (Wheeler 1997)

First when I went there to work, he wasn't even foreman then, he was just working and like I wasn't familiar with the system and I was just learning. And one day he told me to start up a pump and I went to start up a pump and what we call in the computers, pages, like, instead of going right to the page I went back to main system and went in and found it. He said, "Not that way, stupid." And I said, "My husband don't call me stupid," I said, "and I'm darn well sure you're not going to call me stupid." And I went down and I went to the superintendent about him and he got him down and he talked to him. Anyway, first when he applied for the job foreman he never got it because of his attitude towards people, because the superintendent called me down and told me about it. And he said, he spoke about it and he said he applied and he wanted the job of foreman and they wouldn't give it to him. And I said, "Well, if he don't give me no problems, okay, but if he do, I'll be the first to tell it." And then after a while they gave him the job of foreman, but there were people who had all kinds of troubles with him. And he used to do stuff to people on shift too and they'd just get really upset about it and wouldn't say nothing. (Wheeler 1997)

I can remember one time there was a six day thing coming up, the casual, like the lower your number, if you're 6001, you have way more seniority than 6050, okay? So, at the time I was 6080 and this guy was like 6009 and always wondering who was working, who else was working, where they were working and all of this stuff. So, he came in this day and said, all pissed off because he was going to be canceled out the next day because it was an overtime day it's

been canceled out. And I said, "That's funny, I'm working." And he said, "No, you're not." I said, "Okay." And a couple other guys said, "B'y, I think he's going to work." And he said, "It's not up on the board." And I said, "No, they're not going to put that up on the board. Harold told them, 'Don't be so stupid and put it up on the board. Wait until later on.'" Right? He said, "I'll see about that." So, anyway, the next morning I got called in to a different department. I went in to the sulfite department, but after two hours in there they didn't need me and at that time if they send you home they had to pay you for four hours, but on the way out they said, "No, they needs you out on shipping. Go on out to the shipping." So, I ended up going on out to the shipping to complete the shift. And the shipping department paid me the full eight hours, time and a half. Needless to say, Monday morning, when the guy, 6009, came back in, checked the time sheets, he, well, he was going right to the mill manager. Right? Oh, yeah, he was going to have me fired, Harold fired, everybody fired, you know, the whole sha-bang. It had nothing to do with Harold, it was just something, you know, we had started bullshitting about, but it just so happened I got called in for it, right? Lots of times I get in the middle of stuff but I'll just say, "Don't ask me b'y, ask my brother." And there's other guys who will say, "Well, I'm safe anyway as long as Jim's working because I'm senior to Jim and as long as Harold is working, I'm okay." (Power 1997)


HUMBER ARM
NO.4 BERTH
NO.3 BERTH
NO.2 BERTH
NO.1 BERTH
N
AERATION BASIN
SECONDARY CLARIFIER
PRIMARY CLARIFIER
3
EFFLUENT TREATMENT PLANT
CORNER BROOK STREAM
12
WAREHOUSES
SHED #1
SHED #2
SHED #3
SHIPPING OFFICE
PARKING LOT
8
MAINT. SHOPS
MAINT. OFFICES 2ND FLR
PAPER MILL OFFICES 2ND FLR
ELECTRICAL
9
RECYCLE PLANT
10
INWARD
11
TRUCK LOADING BAYS
EAST YARD GATE
ENGINEERING/TECHNICAL SERVICES
MILL SUITE
2
WOODROOM
4
STEAM PLANT
7 FINISHING ROOM
13
PURCHASING
14
PM 1/2
PM 3/4
CORE ROOM
PM 7
6
PAPERMILL
WOODYARD
WOOD ROOM MAINT.
5 TMP
TMP MAINT.
MAIN ENTRANCE
MAIN OFFICE
1
GATE
LEWIN PARKWAY
YOU ARE HERE
15
SECURITY
MILL ROAD
HUMAN RESOURCES
16
VISITOR PARKING AREA
LOCATION NO.
DESCRIPTION
1 MAIN OFFICE/WOODLANDS
2 WOODROOM
3 EFFLUENT TREATMENT PLANT
4 STEAM PLANT
5 TMP
6 PAPER MILL
7 FINISHING ROOM
8 MAINTENANCE SHOP
9 ELECTRICAL
10 RECYCLE PLANT
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