STORYING HOME IN ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

HEATHER ANNE CREIGHTON READ

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-33448-5
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-33448-5

STORYING HOME IN ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

For the record, no pitcher plants were used in the writing of this thesis.

By

© Heather Anne Creighton Read

A thesis submitted to the

School of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Folklore

Memorial University

October 2007

St. John's Newfoundland

ABSTRACT

Many of Newfoundland and Labrador's master narratives of culture, identity and home celebrate the Irish and English fishing heritage of the province. These narratives, created largely by presentations of history and reinforced through tourism development, are explored here in conjunction with alternatives that have not received the same attention: specifically, stories from ethnoculturally diverse people, disadvantaged youth and people with disabilities. Primarily, these alternative stories are drawn from six residents of St. John's, and their contributions to a community art display about their visions of home, *Urban Archaeology*, which occurred at The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery in 2006. This thesis suggests that in Newfoundland and Labrador there is too much promotion of master narratives; as a result, those telling alternative stories can experience social exclusion. Additionally, *Urban Archaeology's* merit as a community arts project is explored, and the importance of such work in alleviating feelings of exclusion is discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Memorial University, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery and the Cultural Capitals of Canada Program for funding and in-kind support for various aspects of this thesis research, for both myself as a student, and for the *Urban Archaeology* project.

Thanks to the staff at The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery for your work and assistance throughout *Urban Archaeology*. Thanks especially to Jason Sellars for your support, and Karen Hewett for yours, and for the chance to do the work in the first place.

Thanks to all the participants of *Urban Archaeology* who shared your stories.

From the ILRC: George Adamchik, Chantelle Bailey, Angelina Clarke, Cyril Conway, Dougie Dunne, Carlos Escobar, Elizabeth Eustace, ILRC staff, Leah Nanayakkara, Tristan Nanayakkara, Joanne Peyton, Joey Power, Steven Quinn, Doug Stagg, Heather Tapper, Ashley Tucker, Jamie Weeks

From BTIM: Steven Abbott, Mike Butler, Nicole Button, Allison Collins, Katie Hawes, Evan Hebberman, Jeremy Howard, Louise Hudson, Christa Knight, Holly Madden, Ryan Morrissey, Erin Power-Granter, Sarah Rowe

From MWONL: Parvin Ansari, Ayesha Fiech, Yamuna Kutty, Tabinda Khan, Felvita Perez, Lloydetta Quaicoe, Kaberi Sarma-Debnath

From RIAC: Gabuya Godfrey, Benoit Mukendi, Esteban Rivera, Elena Sizov,

Special thanks to Trudy Marshall, Louise Hudson, Yamuna Kutty, and Tabinda Khan for your organizational assistance and enthusiasm.

Thanks to Amber Ledrew-Bonvarlez, Leanne Ivany, Logan Wood, Samantha Fletcher, Kristin Newman, Vanessa Sage, Kristine Nolte, Mitchell Grieg, and Mum and Dad and Hugh and Heather, for listening, and talking, and understanding, and pretending to understand even when you didn't, and most of all, for making me laugh.

Thanks to the people I have lived with throughout the writing of this thesis, Pam Hall, Jordan Canning, Rob Langridge, Michael Ivany, Leonie Renwrantz, Jacqui Moffatt, and Lyanne Quirt, for your cheerful presence, and for keeping me fed with stimulating conversation, tasty meals, and therapeutic distractions.

Thanks to Lynda Daneliuk, for Tuesdays.

Thanks to Dr. Diane Tye for your constant support, advice and encouragement.

STORYING HOME – TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

PROLOGUE

We are walking up a slick trail. Rocks crumble beneath my feet, and my boots are caked in mud. I am taking my time while he runs ahead. He could do this in his sleep, I think. His dog is out of sight, but within earshot, exploring the world with his nose.

He tells me about the place when I catch up, noting which rocks are where teenagers make-out and which are best for jumping. He says I should come back this summer. It will be teeming with people then, and if I am brave enough, I can jump off the waterfall at the trail's end. We stop and watch the waterfall and he describes the secluded pool behind it. He says when his dad was growing up he would hitchhike from town to get here. And then, he stops talking. He takes a deep breath, and the conversation changes. He has seen what he needed to see.

When we were getting in the car to come here, all he had said was, "We're going to Nan's, but we've got to make a stop first." I know him well enough to know not to ask too many questions. I had asked if I needed boots. He said yes, and we set off.

As we pulled into the parking lot, he said, using the dashboard as his confessional, "You know how there is one place, that if your parents' house burned down, and your grandparents' house burned down, how there's one place in the world that would still feel like home? That would still ground you? This is mine."

> The impulse to return to the old places can be a kind of restlessness, or an instinct that lies long dormant and is suddenly awakened by a gust of wind, a bit of careless storytelling, the scent of a green apple.... It doesn't take much, after all, to evoke the desire to partake of one's origin, to glimpse the beginning places.... But such places are provisional stops; they point ever backward, to other foundations.... Everyone is a nomad, an exile waiting to return home. And home is any place we choose.... (Laird 235)

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the multifaceted meanings and political implications of the word "home" on both a personal and a socio-cultural level. It is intimately grounded in my experiences of moving to and living in St. John's, Newfoundland, as well as the those of six residents of the city who were participants in *Urban Archaeology*, a community arts project I ran at The Rooms[1] Provincial Art Gallery in the summer of 2006. In *Urban Archaeology,* participants were asked to create personal pieces of art exploring what the word home means to them. Over sixty people from four community organizations in the city of St. John's participated in the project. Two of the four organizations assist immigrants and people of diverse cultural backgrounds with life in the city, the third aids people living with a variety of disabilities, and the fourth helps young adults facing economic and educational challenges. In this thesis, I will explore some of the themes present in the artwork created by these participants. In particular, I will consider how these themes, which originated from people whose lives are not aligned with the master narratives in the province, are both connected to and disconnected from the master narrative's common themes about home. And finally, I will discuss the importance of considering alternative narratives.

In *Chapter One – Home,* I consider the ideas of a constructed 'Newfoundland culture' and 'Newfoundland identity[2]', their conceptual development throughout history,

---

[1] The Rooms is a tripartite institution in downtown St. John's that opened in June 2005. It houses the Provincial Art Gallery, Archives and Museum in one building; each institution has its own dedicated space within the larger building, and then there is a common public area that connects the three together.

[2] This use of quotation marks surrounding Newfoundland and culture and Newfoundland and identity is a deliberate stylistic choice. An explanation of the reasoning behind this choice, and what I am referring to when I use these terms is discussed in Chapter One.

and some of their influences on life in the province. I also introduce and contextualize the *Urban Archaeology* project, and discuss relevant theoretical literature about sense of place, home, identity and marginality. In *Chapter Two – Space,* I focus the discussion on the importance of physical space in the development of an individual's sense of home. In this chapter, I use the stories and artwork of *Urban Archaeology* participants Gabuya Godfrey and Doug Stagg, two men who participated the project, as the alternatives to the Newfoundland master narrative. *Chapter Three – Identity*, considers social and relational aspects of the concept of home, with a focus on the stories of Yamuna Kutty and Sarah Rowe. In *Chapter Four – Belonging*, I examine the importance of traditions and of a sense of belonging upon an individual's ability to feel at home in a given place. The stories of Trudy Marshall and Elena Sizov provide the texts for this section. Finally, *Chapter Five – Cultural Models,* synthesizes the preceding chapters. In it, I consider what six somewhat atypical stories about how people define and create their homes in St. John's suggests about the meaning of home in Newfoundland and in 'Newfoundland culture.' I also consider the implications of opening up space in cultural institutions for non-mainstream narratives.

CHAPTER ONE - HOME

It begins on an airplane, early in the morning. I am on the airplane, looking out the window, watching the ocean below me, in the process of moving to Newfoundland from Ontario. In reality, this moment is the beginning of two stories, that of my thesis and its exploration of home in Newfoundland, and one of my own transition to make a life in the province. Try as I might to extricate these stories from each other, given the subject of my thesis, my experiences of living in the province as a relative outsider became an inevitable subtext to my analysis of the experiences of others. And so, bound together as they are, the stories begin on this airplane, and continue in parallel tracks from here on in.

While on the plane, I listen as flight attendants speak to other passengers, and find myself eavesdropping. I hear what seem to me, at the time, to be remarkable stories. The woman in front of me is going home for the first time in two years. She has been living in Alberta. She calls her sister from the plane when she first sees the island, barely able to contain her excitement. She says she cannot wait to be home.

The man behind me has also been living in Alberta. He commutes between Fort McMurray and St. John's every three weeks. When I ask him about it, he says life is okay up there, because there are so many expatriates to support each other. "But," he says, "there is no place in the world like Newfoundland. There's no place like home."

I wonder if anyone has ever felt that way about Ontario.

***

1.1 – Downhome[3] in Newfoundland: Defining 'Newfoundland culture'

In 2006, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador unveiled a new provincial logo, replacing an image of the provincial flag with an image of the provincial flower, the pitcher plant. In some ways, this visual semiotic shift is relatively insignificant. However, within the province this shift was accompanied by a significant publicity campaign promoting the new symbol; there were television and radio commercials, pamphlet drops and mail-outs, press conferences and newspaper advertisements. This entire body of media contained thought-provoking rhetoric. According to the government's promotional website for the new icon, the use of the pitcher plant will apparently help "the world know and recognize Newfoundland and Labrador... for our pride and passion. Our unique way of looking at the world. And our creativity. Creativity that runs deep within our culture and in our DNA" ("Brand Signature"). The provincial government, with the aid of advertising agencies and marketing research, determined that this single image, the pitcher plant, "[a] plant so odd, yet so comfortable in its own skin..." is the symbol that best "reflects who we are and what we stand for" ("Brand Signature"). It is a symbol that apparently unites all people living in Newfoundland and Labrador: "One symbol, one voice" ("Brand Signature").

[3] The phrase *Downhome* is a direct reference to a store and a magazine in Newfoundland that bear the name. The store carries a wide variety of Newfoundland themed souvenirs, and the magazine is widely distributed throughout the province and to many people living in mainland North America. An exploration of their website - www.downhomelife.com - will provide more information about the brand. I use the word here in the title for this section in an ironic sense. One of the most heavily promoted images of the tourism industry in Newfoundland and Labrador is the abstract sense of home and community that is supposed to exist here; to me, the heavy promotion of this aspect of the province almost detracts from its actual presence in the culture of the place.

Maybe this next thought betrays my background as a CFA[4] who grew up in a Toronto suburb, but I wonder whether there is really "one voice" among all people living in Newfoundland and Labrador.[5] Certainly, it is an idea that is not without precedent. Author Michael Crummey writes in *Newfoundland: Journey Into a Lost Nation*, that the province of Newfoundland and Labrador has long been considered unique in Canada (31). Anthropologist Joanna Rummens concurs in a review of literature about Canadian research on the subject of identity. She notes that "Newfoundland" is a specific regional identity that has been studied as separate from "the Maritimes...the North, the Northwest Territories, Ontario, the Prairies, Quebec and the West" (12). Although there are regional identities across Canada, the sense of identity is purported to be particularly strong in Newfoundland: "Newfoundlanders ...seem to know exactly who they are, [and] have a sense of identity rooted in a place that is a kind of nationalism, culturally speaking at the very least" (Crummey 31). Assuming for a moment that the government, Crummey and Rummens are correct, and that there are in fact nationalistic concepts of a 'Newfoundland identity' and 'Newfoundland culture,' several questions arise. What are these nationalistic concepts based on? Moreover, what are the meanings and impressions communicated by these labels, when they are used? In the discussions of home that this

[4] CFA is an acronym referring to the vernacular phrase "come from away." According to Ron Young's *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador*, a "come from away" is a "1.a person from elsewhere now living in Newfoundland and Labrador. [or] 2.a tourist." (Young 54). Although I am aware that the use of this word is an informal linguistic choice, especially in a thesis, I use a vernacular expression here as a rhetorical device of my own. In my use of the term, I am intending to suggest that although I was not born and raised here, I have acquired enough knowledge about the culture to comment on it.

[5] It should be noted that reaction within the province to the logo was mixed, as a brief examination of local media from the time reveals (Bell; "Brand Reaction"; "Branding Reaction"). Reaction to the increased attention being paid to tourist promotion in general has also been mixed (Curties). This suggests that the cultural nationalism that I am discussing is an imposed, rather than a grassroots phenomenon.

thesis will eventually move to, these identity-based questions are significant; what an individual describes as his home depends greatly upon who he considers himself to be.

That being said, it should be noted that the meanings and interpretations of the words "culture" and "identity" are quite subjective. Therefore, it is difficult to locate a concrete definition of either the concept of 'Newfoundland identity' or 'Newfoundland culture.' Additionally, since the sources of this sense of cultural nationalism in Newfoundland are, in all likelihood, quite wide-ranging, concrete definitions become even more challenging to produce. The best that can be done is to establish definitions for the terms as they will be used in the context of this thesis.

Before proceeding to definitions, however, I first want to suggest that the concepts of 'Newfoundland culture' and 'Newfoundland identity' exist in the province (and in the country) as cultural patterns: namely, what noted anthropologist Clifford Geertz would describe as "abstractions from experience that function as both models 'of' and models 'for' what they represent" (91-94). Working from the beginning of Geertz's phrase, it is enlightening to examine the two terms more deeply. What are the experiences that 'Newfoundland culture' and 'Newfoundland identity' are abstracted from? Cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan notes that in any given place, a united national consciousness (like that of Newfoundland), is slow to develop, "[e]ven where the people share a common culture" ("Place" 160). Further, he observes that nations are typically only conceptually known through "the flag, national anthem...[and] ethnocentric history and geography" (Tuan, "Place" 160). It is in the last of Tuan's points that I suggest that a significant source of 'Newfoundland culture' and 'Newfoundland identity' exists: the dominant historical and geographical narratives of the province. Certainly, it is

reasonable to suggest that in Newfoundland and Labrador, as in much of North America, the public narratives of history and geography have been fairly ethnocentric in nature (Stanley 33). With respect to Newfoundland, these will be examined later in the chapter. Additionally, a significant source of information about 'Newfoundland identity' and 'Newfoundland culture' is material produced to market the province as a tourist destination; in the process of commodifying Newfoundland, the culture of the place becomes divorced from reality, and becomes, instead 'culture,' a set of symbols that can be remembered by potential buyers. This, too, will be explored in more depth shortly.

Before that though, I want to continue with Geertz's model. Assuming that 'Newfoundland identity' and 'Newfoundland culture' are abstracted cultural models based on the dominant histories of the province and the developing commodification of the place, what are they models *of* and models *for*? I suggest that these twin concepts of identity and culture become models representing how people *have* lived in the province in the past, and more significantly, how they *should* be living in the province today. And it is in this latter, more prescriptive, sense that the cultural model can become exclusionary to those who are not willing or able to follow its guidelines. The potential for exclusion that exists in these models, I believe, renders them worth exploring in more detail.

This idea of a cultural model shares much with historian Timothy Stanley's descriptions of a grand historical narrative that pervades Canadian culture. Stanley writes: "If certain people are thought of as being Canadian and others not, it is because lived histories have associated particular representations and particular physical characteristics with being Canadian. Indeed, this has occurred to the point where these associations have become normal and taken-for-granted, part of our frameworks for

understanding the world" (34). I propose that a similar sensibility exists in Newfoundland; here, some people are thought of as being Newfoundlanders and others are not, and this is widely considered to be normal. Granted, some scholars do recognize that, as folklorist Pamela Coristine observes, "the assumption that Newfoundland encompasses a 'distinctive homogenous cultural identity' descended from a few areas in England and Ireland is simplistic" (78). This scholarly recognition notwithstanding, the perception of a homogenous 'Newfoundland identity' is a prominent one. And more importantly, this perception of homogeneity should perhaps not be considered normal, because conceptions like this are based on, as Stanley notes, "grand narratives" that exclude alternate stories (35). Alternatives to the 'Newfoundland culture' and the 'Newfoundland identity' are important to explore; the exclusion of alternative narratives from the master narrative of a place can either foreshadow or reveal other, forms of exclusion of the people to whom those narratives belong (Stanley 38).

Before examining alternatives to the master narrative though, the master narrative itself should be considered. That being said, I will now move on to define the concepts of 'Newfoundland culture' and 'Newfoundland identity' as they will be used in this thesis.

1.1.1 - Master histories and 'Newfoundland culture'

Throughout this thesis, my use of the term 'Newfoundland culture' will refer to aspects of so-called traditional ways of life in Newfoundland and Labrador that are perceived to come from Irish and English settlers of the province. Irish and English settlers are generally the central characters in the grand historical narratives told about Newfoundland, because the majority of European immigrants to Newfoundland in the

16th and 17th century *were* of English and Irish ancestry, and in particular, were from "highly localized source areas in the southwest of England and the southeast of Ireland" (Mannion 5). So, based on sheer numbers, it is understandable that their stories have formed the master narrative, and that they eventually became the dominant cultural voices in Newfoundland (Story 24-27). The predominant narrative tells the story of these settlers, their work in the fishery, and the challenges they faced in settling the land and working on the ocean.[6] And it is from this history that I suggest many ideas about 'Newfoundland culture' have developed.

It is significant to note that even in the consideration of the older stories about Newfoundland, there are many stories that could be told about non-English and non-Irish people who came to the province, such as the Norse Viking explorers, and traders and sailors from Portugal, Spain, and various ports throughout the Caribbean (Mannion 5-11). Additionally, the First Nations people of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Beothuk, the Innu, the Inuit and the Migmaw, are important characters in the story of the place who are often not given much space in historical accounts, once the arrival of European settlers is established. In some cases, when stories from these atypical communities are present, they are linked to the more official history; for example, stories are told of new immigrants to Newfoundland that strove to assist in the fishery, or help out with the churches. In this way, through linking their lives to "some overarching narrative of a collective" stories of immigrants told in this fashion, in a sense, are fulfilling, "the dream

[6] For further information about what I am describing regarding the central histories of Newfoundland and Labrador, the following books are useful references: Kevin Major's *As Near to Heaven if by Sea,* Paul O'Neill's *The Oldest City: The Story of St. John's, Newfoundland*, and D.W. Prowse's *A History of Newfoundland.*

of leaders...who wish to create committed, loyal members of an 'imagined community'..." (Rowe, Wertsch and Kosyaeva 97). Some immigrant communities, on the other hand, did not make efforts to link themselves to the official story and culture of Newfoundland. They, for whatever reason, did not feel a sense of belonging to the place, or felt a stronger sense of home towards their place of origin. For example, two major diasporic communities in the city of St. John's, the Jewish and Chinese communities, while they have ties to mainstream Newfoundland culture, at the same time have their own stories and traditions, both unique to Newfoundland as well as to their respective diasporic groups (Kahn; Liu; Thomson). The stories of these people, however, are not often related to the master narratives of 'Newfoundland culture.'

So, what *are* those stories? What exactly do I mean by my continued reference to a 'Newfoundland culture'? When I use that term, I am intending to refer to what Timothy Stanley would describe as the grand master narrative of Newfoundland and Labrador, namely, the sum total of the history of Irish and English settlement in the province, as well as the traditional practices that are based in the Irish and English experience of fisheries and all associated ways of life. It is difficult (for me in particular as an outsider, but also in general) to assess the extent to which these histories and practices influence the daily life of people in Newfoundland. However, I argue that the existence of entities in the province and the city such as the St. John's Folk Arts Council (SJFAC), the Memorial University Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA), the Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS), and The Rooms,[7] in part, serves to reinforce the

[7] Further information about each of these organizations and institutions can be found on their websites: SJFAC - http://www.nlfolk.com/

dominance of those stories. Additionally, the existence of not just one, but *several* editions of the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English,* in addition to the less scholarly versions of similar books, such as the *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador,* are additional examples of the iconic status of 'Newfoundland culture.'

A cultural model in and of itself, a dictionary both documents a language for posterity, and becomes a teaching tool for future generations; dictionaries are often both descriptive and prescriptive of language (Hughes 222-234; Lichtenberk 390). Furthermore, dictionaries are also cultural artifacts and identifiers, solidifying the existence of the language of a group of people, and in a sense, their status *as* a separate group (Kuiper 164; Lichtenberk 390). This solidifying function was part of the intent of many of the earliest lexicographers of the English language: "The desire to stabilize language... and the notion that the dictionary can be the means to achieve that end, have been linked in our culture since the late seventeenth century..." (Wells 95). This cultural affirmation continues to occur in contemporary times. Many tribal nations in the South Pacific want to have their linguistic traditions documented to gain status as legitimate cultural groups (Lichtenberk 389, 391).

This group affirmation is a significant component of both the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English,* and books like the *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador.* Though the former was created with a greater lexicographical attention to detail and accuracy than the latter, since it was intended for academic, not popular use, the existence of *both* of these tomes is significant. The introductions to both discuss the history of the

---

MUNFLA - http://www.mun.ca/folklore/munfla/
CNS - http://www.library.mun.ca/qeii/cns/cns_main.php
The Rooms – www.therooms.ca

province primarily with respect to the Irish and English inhabitants (Story, Kirwin & Widdowson; Young 14-21). In particular, in the *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador,* the historical section is entitled "How we all got here" and disregarding brief mentions of First Nations people and others from "European nations" in the first and last paragraphs of the section, it exclusively follows a narrative of Irish and English fishermen (Young 14, 21). Granted, since the majority of the words defined in the books originated from these groups of people, it makes sense that the histories are presented in this fashion.

However, it is also worth noting that the state of integration between a dominant culture and its minorities can be measured by the amount of linguistic blending in a dictionary (Ossleton 90). Case in point: in Australia, where there is a long history of poor relations between English speaking groups and Aborigines, almost no Aborigine words are present in national dictionaries (Ossleton 90). In contrast, dictionaries from New Zealand, where more peaceful relations have been maintained between English speakers and the native Maori, contain more Maori words (Ossleton 90). The relative lack of the words of cultural outsiders in the Newfoundland dictionaries, which supposedly document the language of the province, is potentially revealing of the status of people who do not fit models of 'Newfoundland culture.'

1.1.2 - On finding a 'Newfoundland identity'

It is mid-November, near the start of my second year in Newfoundland. I have just returned from Central Newfoundland where I went moose hunting, and ate jigg's

dinner,[8] *seal heart, turr,*[9] *seal flipper, and pea soup. For reasons that do not become clear until later, I feel compelled to tell everyone I know about the experience.*

I force photographs of moose panch[10] *and bloody knives under the noses of my friends in St. John's. Some are disgusted and many are surprised. Others give me the responses I am looking for – they say things like "Oh, you're a true Newfoundlander now, girl!" and "My, who'd have thought a mainlander'd be doin' things like that?" One man punches me on the arm, calls me "Li'l hunter," and gives me cookies. I walk around beaming for days, proud of my newfound insider status.*

As folklorist Michael Owen Jones writes "many people... draw upon tradition to... fabricate a personal identity and social role for themselves" (116). Through engaging in a series of what I had been told were traditional Newfoundland customs, moose hunting and the eating of a variety of traditional foods, I had, in a sense, managed to change my personal identity. As Jones notes, this use of tradition is common: "individuals often self-consciously adopt and adapt tradition as an element in their discourse about who they are or want to be" (134). I had (and have), though I do not always admit it, long desired to feel a stronger sense of belonging in Newfoundland. The existence of the label 'CFA' in vernacular speech, while not always meant in a derogatory sense, is indicative of the status I, and others like me, have here. No matter how hard I try, when the label is applied to me, it reaffirms my sense that I do not belong.

---

[8] Jigg's dinner, or boiled dinner, is a traditional meal in 'Newfoundland culture.' Its ingredients are salt beef, split peas, potatoes, carrots, turnip and cabbage; all of these cooked by being boiled together for several hours. The meal is usually served on Sunday afternoons, and is hearty and filling. For further information about traditional Newfoundland meals, Pamela Gray's thesis, entitled *Foodways* is a recommended resource.

[9] A turr is a seabird common to Newfoundland.

[10] 'Panch,' as I learned that weekend, is the Newfoundland word for 'guts,' or, for the non-hunter, everything inside the animal you do not eat, and instead, leave in the woods to be eaten by other animals.

***

Having established that in my use of the term 'Newfoundland culture,' I am primarily referring to the master narrative of the province, I will now move on to define my use of the sister-term, 'Newfoundland identity.' Throughout this thesis, when I use the words 'Newfoundland identity,' I am referring to the main characters inhabiting the master narrative of 'Newfoundland culture.' Generally, these characters are versions of the stereotypical fisherman and his wife; however, they have nuances that are worth understanding. In contemporary times, since the demise of the fishery, many aspects of 'Newfoundland culture' have become more symbolic than practical in nature, and as such, so too has the 'Newfoundland identity.' Economic change has drastically affected the province, and as folklorist Pat Byrne notes, there has been a cultural shift in Newfoundland in the latter half of the twentieth century (238). Gradually, the reality of the cultural world of the "fisherfolk" has shifted to become the world of the "Newfie," an artificially created identity that has proven to be commercially viable on the tourist stage (Byrne 238). Additionally, increasingly common diasporas in mainland North America inhabited by people born and raised in Newfoundland have also influenced the 'Newfoundland identity' as it is presented to the wider world. As cultural geographer Theano Terkenli notes, "most exiled adults remember...their homeland" in a more symbolic fashion, and become nostalgic when they think of those symbols, as well as the specifics of the actual spaces they used to inhabit (329). Newfoundland-born men and women living away from the province tend to look to symbols to ease homesickness.

All of these elements (the characters in the narrative, the commodified "Newfie," and the symbolic representations of Newfoundland) are layers of what constitutes

'Newfoundland identity.' In teasing apart the layers of this identity, as I am defining it in my thesis, I first want to consider the stereotypical characters in the master narrative, and the commodified aspects of those characters. Then, I will consider the ideas of belonging and symbols of belonging, as they relate to Newfoundland and the 'Newfoundland identity' for people living inside and outside of the provincial boundaries.

1.1.2.1 – 'Newfoundland identity' and commodification

As an outsider, it is challenging to separate the realities of Newfoundland culture from its commodification and promotion for tourists. Finding the reality of this place (and of any place) is difficult, because an insider is rarely prompted to look for it, and an outsider often finds commodification of a place more easily than reality. However, in some cases, as in Newfoundland, the commodification of a place is simply impossible for anyone to miss. Michael Crummey observes:

> "The Past" is big business in Newfoundland these days. *St. John's: City of Legends* is awash in tourist kitsch: "Newfie" stores selling Viking memorabilia and plastic sou'wester hats, faux screech-ins at George Street bars, fiddle music blaring from storefronts. People have to eat, I guess, and you give tourists what they want or they stop coming. But there's something about the undertaking that feels unhealthy and dishonest to me...(31-32).

Indeed, this text, written in 2004, is increasingly resonant three years later. A brief examination of the main tourism website for the province[11] reveals a well developed marketing campaign that is in place, designed to lure travellers to Newfoundland. In addition to this website, there are prominent national television commercials and newspaper advertisements, all of which promote Newfoundland as being a rustic,

[11] The main page of the website is: www.newfoundlandandlabrador.com. A particularly interesting page within the website is the one containing the television commercials: http://www.newfoundlandlabrador.com/SightsAndSounds/VideoClips.aspx.

welcoming place. The marketing of the province has not changed much; folklorist Gerald Pocius notes it was widely promoted to American tourists as a rustic wilderness retreat in the early half of the twentieth century (Pocius, "Tourists" 49).

In addition to the marketing of the elements of the place itself, a major aspect of the commodification and branding of Newfoundland in the latter half of the 20th century has been the "Newfie" persona: the happy-go-lucky, but somewhat simple fisherman, who wears a sou'wester, and sings sea shanties. As historian Kevin Major notes, this persona has received considerable stimulation from the provincial tourism industry, which created and marketed a series of what he describes as "idiotic" souvenirs and joke books based on this character (439). While the persona is valuable, in that it is easily recognizable and humorous, it creates a skewed vision of the province. The place inhabited by "Newfies," what Pat Byrne describes as "Newfieland," by extension, becomes known as backward, impoverished, and physically unattractive (238).

It should be noted that in general, aspects of 'Newfoundland identity' that relate to the "Newfie" persona are widely recognized as being commodified, and therefore, not truly prescriptive for people living in the province. However, there are some aspects of 'Newfoundland identity' that are more strongly tied to the grand narrative of the place. These aspects tend to perform this more prescriptive function in the culture. In particular, within the context of 'Newfoundland culture' there tend to be very specific gender roles. For males who claim a 'Newfoundland identity,' their place is typically regarded as being in the woods and at sea; for females, their place is in the home, tending to family and maintaining domestic life. Social worker Leslie Bella, in her study of expatriate

Newfoundlanders living in Southern Ontario, notes that the men whom she interviewed strongly revealed this aspect of 'Newfoundland identity:'

> The factor differentiating men and women, is the strength of the men's attachment to the landscape of their home community in outport Newfoundland and their longing to participate once more in traditional land-based activities on that land. Women's interviews showed more enthusiasm for Newfoundland culture.... (Bella xvi-ii)

As sociologist Marilyn Porter relates, this is likely because in the master historical narrative of 'Newfoundland culture,' the men bore the primary responsibility for obtaining food from the land in far away places; women, on the other hand, "had the prime responsibility for feeding, cleaning, and caring for themselves, the men and the children" (37). Now, this does not mean a woman claiming a 'Newfoundland identity' had (or has) no knowledge of how to survive in Newfoundland, and had (or has) less knowledge of the land than men. While the typical outport Newfoundland woman of 'Newfoundland culture' tends to monitor domestic life more than the commercial fishery, she does not lack knowledge of the land and the world around her; she often maintains crops and has a vast understanding of the local plant life, and is active in the onshore maintenance of the fishery industry (O'Brien 81-2).[12]

1.1.2.2 - Identity and Belonging

In addition to the roles delineated by commodification and history, one important aspect of what I am terming the 'Newfoundland identity' is, as Gerald Pocius notes, intimately tied to a sense of *belonging*: "[i]n Newfoundland, generally, you do not live in

[12] A very useful volume that contains more detail about women in Newfoundland is *Their Lives and Times: Women in Newfoundland and Labrador, A Collage,* edited by Carmelita McGrath, Barbara Neis and Marilyn Porter. In particular, there are several sections that deal with the role of women in the fishery, both historically, and in more contemporary times. Complete information about the volume is contained in the bibliography.

a town, you 'belong to' a place; you are not asked where you live, but rather, where you belong to. Belonging...is directly tied both linguistically and experientially to place..." (*Place* 3). This more abstract sensibility is also an important element of the concept of home that will be discussed later in this thesis. In the context of Newfoundland though, the "six degrees of separation" game described by Pamela Coristine, where residents of the province establish connections with strangers through a network of family, friends and acquaintances, is a direct example of the perceived importance of belonging:

> I first encountered the complexity of this sense of belonging soon after my arrival in St. John's.... It was while attending various social events...that I often observed people participating in a kind of six degrees of separation game - a game or discussion in which the participants establish themselves in the network of acquaintances and places with whom, or with which, they are all indirectly connected. People who did not know one another at all or very well were always able to establish some sort of connection either through a family member, friend, or acquaintance. Most often the connection was made through a family name and place, e.g. the Blackmoors in Grand Falls. In establishing these connections between themselves, these individuals were also demonstrating where they belonged in the area's geographic and social fabric. (33-34)

Virtually any Newfoundlander I meet who hears my last name attempts to play this game with me. It always fails. My name, Read, is a homonym for the common Newfoundland last name, Reid; however, my spelling of the name belies my English ancestry, separating me from the Irish Reids who settled this province. These conversations serve, as Coristine writes, to establish and identify ties of belonging, and as such, have reinforced, both to me and to those I meet, my identity as an outsider here. As folklorist Elliot Oring notes, personal identities affect the sorts of experiences that are possible in a given environment: "[one's i]dentity...stands 'behind' [one's] experience" (213). I have no doubt that my experiences of Newfoundland would be different if I was born into a family of Reids, or if I had a familial connection to the island. But I do not

have such connections and so, am not rooted in Newfoundland. Terkenli observes that "[r]ootedness is another inherently geographical concept and is central to the notion of home.... [Its core meaning] is found in the sense of literally belonging somewhere" (329).

In trying to identify social connections with strangers through this game of who knows whom, Newfoundlanders establish that they belong to a wider community. They are not outsiders; they are at home, among family. They have a 'Newfoundland identity.' As Michael Crummey observes, people born in Newfoundland often have a "connection to the place...that seems more filial than simple citizenship" (18). Newfoundlanders who move away from the province for economic or personal reasons reinforce the existence of this sense of identity and filial connection. Leslie Bella notes that when the Newfoundland born people in her study move away, they tend to congregate in communities, behaving like new migrants who move to places where they are cultural minorities. They create a Newfoundland diaspora, which functions similarly to other culturally diasporic groups living in minority situations.

Newfoundland diasporas and enclaves have existed at various times in various places throughout the country, "resulting from chain migration as Newfoundlanders followed one another to specific neighbourhoods, apartment blocks and jobs" (Bella 43). Many of the migrants in Bella's study, even after living away from the province for decades, buying property and raising children in Ontario, still describe Newfoundland as being home (Bella 93). Studies of Newfoundland diasporas can provide unique insight into the elements of culture that Newfoundlanders consider to be important (Thorne 4). They miss many elements of Newfoundland and experience homesickness when they engage in person-centred cultural experiences like the preparation of family meals;

additionally, many living outside the province feel longing for the island when they encounter physical elements that remind them of the land itself, such as the "ocean, with Lake Ontario seen as a poor substitute" (Bella 89). As previously noted, Bella observes, especially among male respondents, a significant attachment to the landscape of Newfoundland: "...feelings of connection to the Newfoundland landscape are not transferable to the Ontario terrain..."(99). In many cases, these feelings of homesickness and attachment to Newfoundland can become overwhelming. For many of Bella's respondents, "returning home, either for summer holidays, or to live, [is seen] as the ultimate solution to missing home" (89). In the meantime, until such a solution is economically viable, they subscribe to the *Downhome*[13] magazine, socialize at bars playing Newfoundland music, and prepare traditional Newfoundland meals.

Some people born in Newfoundland who are living out of the province work hard to maintain their 'Newfoundland identity' while living on the mainland. One young man I interviewed for this thesis, Steven Abbott,[14] has observed the strong persistence of this cultural identity in his father, who has been working in Alberta for many years: "He would not say he's living in Alberta right now. He'd still say he lives in Newfoundland..." (Abbott). For Newfoundlanders living on the mainland, as opposed to the individual community where they grew up, the entire island is often perceived as home. These former residents feel a connection to Newfoundland that is similar to the connection that new immigrants feel to their home countries.

---

[13] The magazine and store were, until recently, known as the Downhomer. I am not sure why they changed their brand-name, but I have chosen to refer to the magazine and the store using their most current moniker.
[14] Steven Abbott, from the BTIM, is a participant from the *Urban Archaeology* project. He was born and raised in Newfoundland.

Newfoundland is able to instil a strong nationalistic pride in its residents (Morgan 374-377); the province's corollary in Canada in this respect is Quebec, which is widely recognized as having a distinct identity and sense of nationalistic cultural pride (Letourneau 74-5). In both provinces, the identity and the nationalistic master narrative tend to privilege the cultural majority in the population and seem to exclude those who do not fit in. There is a need in both of these contexts for the nationalistic narratives to be expanded, and alternative stories exposed, because not all residents of these two places are able to see themselves reflected in the master narratives.[15]

1.2 - The Urban Archaeology project

Having established, then, the concepts of 'Newfoundland culture' and 'Newfoundland identity' that are present in the province, I will now move to consider the *Urban Archaeology* project, which attempted to expand on both of these concepts by considering alternate vernacular narratives of residents of the city of St. John's. As described in the introduction, this project was a community-based art display that I worked on at The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery in the summer of 2006. For the project, I asked participants to create memory boxes representing their personal concept of home. Participants were drawn from four community organizations: the Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador (MWONL)[16], the Brother T.I. Murphy

[15] A notable example of the tension between those who are perceived to belong to the distinct society of Quebec (Francophone residents), and those who do not (Anglophones and immigrants of diverse ethnicities), occurred following the 1995 sovereignty referendum. Following his narrow loss, then Premier Jacques Parizeau memorably declared that the results, which indicated that the residents of the province wanted to maintain their status as residents of Canada, rather than separate and form a new country, were caused by "money and the ethnic vote" (Mackie).

[16] At the time of writing, MWONL does not have a website. Contact information for the organization can easily be found in the phonebook for the city of St. John's.

Youth Arts Collective (BTIM), the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council (RIAC) and the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC)[17]. These organizations were chosen to bring a range of contemporary stories into The Rooms and highlight what I considered at the time to be the unexplored diversity of the city.

Funding for the *Urban Archaeology* project was received through a national initiative that identifies certain cities each year as being "Cultural Capitals of Canada."[18] St. John's was one of these cities for 2006, and as such, various cultural institutions throughout the city received funding for special projects. The objective of this program is to "promote the arts and culture in Canadian municipalities, through recognition of excellence and support for special activities that celebrate the arts and culture..." (Canadian Heritage). Cities apply each year for funding, and government committees decide which cities will be highlighted each year. Once the city of St. John's received this designation, senior staff at the art gallery devised projects and applied for portions of the overall funding. When the gallery received its allotment of this money, I was working part time in the education department, and was offered the opportunity to coordinate the *Urban Archaeology* project. According to the application, the only mandate of the project was to encourage residents of the city to explore their personal cultural heritage through the creation of time capsules. Other than that basic guideline, I was given relatively free reign. Once I agreed to run the project for the summer, the involvement of

---

[17] For further information about each of these participating organizations, please refer to their websites:
BTIM – www.murphycentre.nf.net
RIAC – www.riac.ca
ILRC – www.ilrc.nf.net

[18] For further information about the initiative, see the following website:
http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/ccc/index_e.cfm

the staff at The Rooms decreased substantially. My immediate supervisor remained involved in an advisory capacity, and as liaison with The Rooms technical staff. She also handled the majority of the budgetary aspects of the project.

Having perceived some elements of the monolithic status of 'Newfoundland culture' and the 'Newfoundland identity' within The Rooms, in my graduate folklore education, and in the city at large, I decided to use *Urban Archaeology* as a vehicle to explore some of the alternate stories that might be present here. I surmised that an effective way to discover alternate stories might be by contacting community non-profit organizations; often, these exist specifically to help people who have difficulties navigating in the mainstream world. My supervisor and I decided that *Urban Archaeology* could be an effective addition to the gallery's outreach programming. We determined that I would run workshops for interested community organizations and facilitate a display of their time capsules, or what I later began to call their memory boxes.[19] The workshops were informal; I introduced the concept of the project, facilitated discussion regarding possible ideas for what could be included to represent home, and then allowed participants time to be creative. During the workshops, I also discussed my thesis research, and the ways in which people could participate if they were interested.

I contacted a wide range of organizations for this project. As already noted, four organizations were full participants; however, to better illustrate the diversity of the population that I found to be present in St. John's, I want to briefly describe some other

[19] I eventually stopped using the words 'time capsule' because I found they contained a great deal of cultural information that I did not want to deal with in this project. People expect that time capsules will be buried in the ground, not displayed in an art gallery. Moreover, it is assumed that time capsules are only supposed to contain found objects. I wanted the *Urban Archaeology* project to prompt more creative action, and so I switched to using lesser-known words that describe an object very similar to a time capsule – a 'memory box.'

groups that expressed interest. Following this, I will provide more detailed contextual information about the actual participant groups.

The First Nations Friendship Centre expressed strong interest in having their youth members participate. Located in downtown St. John's, the centre works to "promote the social, cultural and economic development of Aboriginal people" predominantly in Newfoundland and Labrador, but also across the country (Friendship Centre). They offer a variety of cultural programs celebrating Aboriginal art, as well as a shelter for Aboriginal people. Contemporary stories of First Nations people would have added significant dimension to the project; however, I ran into scheduling conflicts when trying to plan workshops with them. At the time, most of the resources and energies of the Friendship Centre were devoted toward their own Cultural Capitals project, the Aboriginal Youth Arts Gathering. This event, in August 2006, drew youth from across the province to St. John's for an art show and community building workshops.

Another potential participant group was the Seniors Resource Centre of Newfoundland and Labrador. They are a non-profit group in St. John's devoted to "promoting the independence and well being of older adults in Newfoundland and Labrador" (Seniors Resource Centre). Their participation would have provided a strong sense of historical depth to *Urban Archaeology*. Scheduling conflicts are largely what prevented this partnership, but in addition, there were not enough memory boxes to meet the participant demand they would have posed. The number of boxes was limited to 40, due to budgetary constraints.

I also approached several smaller, non-mainstream religious communities in St. John's: the Avalon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, the Baha'i Community of

Newfoundland and Labrador, the community of Beth-El Synagogue and the community of the Hindu Temple of St. John's. All four groups expressed interest. In one incarnation, the project appeared destined to highlight religious diversity in the city; however, as with many religious communities, the groups experienced depleted attendance at their services throughout the summer and were unable to round up enough participants to render workshops viable.

1.2.1 - The Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC)

The ILRC responded early to my offer to participate in the *Urban Archaeology* project, and responded quite eagerly. Prior to conducting workshops, I was invited to visit the facility and look at art made by the "paint group" (the potential participant body). It was not until later that I learned why my phone call had been met with such enthusiasm. Peer Support/Volunteer Coordinator Trudy Marshall elaborates:

> About...a month...before you came, we did...a focus group at paint group and we talked about what some of our goals for the year [were]...and reviewed things that we had done.... And one of the things was to talk about seeing whether we could have some of our paintings put in a show. So, we ended up...in the end of June, doing an art show for our AGM [Annual General Meeting], for ILRC's AGM.... And then you came along. And it was so exciting, just really exciting that people would be able to...have things at The Rooms. It was just exciting. (Marshall)

The ILRC is a "consumer controlled organization committed to providing supports, resources and opportunities..." and thereby "enable[ing] persons with disabilities to make informed choices about their lives" (ILRC). They offer a wide variety of programs and services to clients, from recreational experiences like paint group and dinner club, to assistance in obtaining adaptive technologies like wheelchairs and

Braille machines. Most importantly, though, as Trudy Marshall describes, the ILRC provides participants with a safe community where they can begin engaging in the world:

> Some people [who] come here...say "It's like I'm coming home. It's...the first time I've ever felt safe coming out of my house." And we want to encourage people.... One of our principles is full participation in the community. So, we encourage people, make them safe. Make them feel safe about going out to dinner. We have a dinner club. About being able to find an apartment that works for you.... Or...going to activities at fitness clubs. (Marshall)

For the workshops I conducted with the ILRC, I went to the centre during Thursday afternoon paint group throughout the summer. Initially, I introduced the project and talked about my research; in later sessions I assisted participants with their artistic efforts. There were several regular paint group members who made boxes, and Trudy also passed on boxes to participants unable to come to the centre. In total, ILRC participants created fourteen boxes. To this day, I am not sure how many *people* participated in the creation of the boxes; the ILRC staff box, in particular, received contributions from a large number of individuals.

1.2.2 - The Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador (MWONL)

Coming from Southern Ontario, where large ethnic minority populations are more common, I noticed a lack of ethno-cultural diversity in the city when I moved to St. John's. As a result, when considering potential groups for *Urban Archaeology*, I made an effort to pay special attention to multicultural organizations. MWONL was the first of these to respond with interest in the project. A single day workshop at The Rooms was

arranged for the women, and they were able to take their boxes home afterwards to complete if they did not finish on that day.

According to an informative pamphlet, MWONL works to promote "positive relationship[s] among the ethnic minorities and the local population" (MWONL). The president of the organization, Yamuna Kutty, later informed me that the organization provides support to women of diverse backgrounds through regular social gatherings, as well as assisting new immigrants with integration into the community (Kutty). When the women came to their workshop at the art gallery, it was clear that they drew a lot of support from each other. Each woman was welcomed warmly into the gallery classroom as she arrived. I noticed, in many cases, that some of the women were not speaking English to each other. Yamuna told me that for many women, their relationships in MWONL provide them with another means to keep the use of their native language alive, outside of their immediate families (Kutty). Unique among this group, many memory boxes were joint creations between mothers and daughters, or two close friends. Though only seven boxes were created by MWONL, there were twelve participants in total.

1.2.3 - The Brother T.I. Murphy Youth Arts Collective (BTIM)

Because *Urban Archaeology* was a project being run through the Provincial Art Gallery, and because artists tend to be interested in making artistic creations, I contacted several local arts groups about the project. Of the groups I contacted, the BTIM was the one I hoped would be willing to participate because of their unique community focus. The Youth Arts Collective, a sub-program of The Brother T. I. Murphy Centre in St. John's, gives young people with artistic inclinations who have had challenges in their

lives assistance in moving out into the world. Although one of the main goals of the project is to establish a community among participants, they also try to spend time focusing on each participants' personal growth. The coordinator, Louise Hudson, saw the *Urban Archaeology* project as a chance to empower the participants by showing their work at The Rooms; she was, in her own words "very, very, very excited, and very excited for the group" after she and I talked about the project (Hudson).

According to their mission statement, The Brother T. I. Murphy Centre is a centre designed to provide "individuals with opportunities for growth through the integration of creative learning experiences designed to achieve academic, career and life goals" (Murphy). The Murphy Centre offers a variety of programs, such as: assisting adults with high school completion, promoting positive life skills, and developing and pursuing employment opportunities. One of their most unique initiatives is this Community Youth Arts Project, or the Youth Arts Collective, which "offers youth aged 18-30 an opportunity to become members of an arts collective" (Murphy). While in the collective, participants develop "artistic and employability skills" working both on their individual artistic projects and community arts projects (Murphy). Steve Abbott, peer mentor and former participant, describes the type of people for whom the program is intended:

> People...should be...creative people, and people that have faced different various types of barriers...could be drugs and alcohol, [but] doesn't have to be. It could have been just, you weren't ready for school or you haven't finished school. You had problems at home. You've been homeless. And it's not just charity case type stuff; it's people that are at a turning point. (Abbott)

The program provides, as Steve relates, "a very encouraging environment to be a creative person" and in the end, participants typically finish the program "on track for either education or a job" (Abbott). *Urban Archaeology* was a unique project for the

group. Louise notes that they often spend most of their time "doing community service work...to an end result for a community..." but that in *Urban Archaeology,* "this time our contribution was something that was...back to ourselves" (Hudson). After my initial meeting with the collective participants, we arranged for them to spend four days at The Rooms working on their memory boxes. All twelve participants in the collective completed their boxes during that time. Steve and Louise finished theirs early in the fall, making fourteen boxes in total from BTIM.

1.2.4 - The Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council (RIAC)

My aforementioned predisposition towards organizations celebrating the ethno-cultural diversity of the city of St. John's is largely what led me to contact RIAC. They were initially interested in the project, but compared to the other three organizations, it took a considerable amount of time to arrange for a workshop. In the end, a single day workshop was held at The Rooms for participants.

According to their mission statement, RIAC's goals are as follows:

> To advise and assist in the adjustment, integration and development of refugees and immigrants in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Canada and provide services designed to increase the refugee's and immigrant's participation in Canadian society by assisting our clients to overcome barriers. (RIAC)

They work to accomplish their goals through a number of programs and services, such as conversational language classes and translation services, as well as assistance in finding employment, and in advocating cases to governments and other social agencies. They also provide recreational services, like the Friday morning adventure group, through which participants explore the city by shopping on Water Street or visiting museums.

Four participants from RIAC completed memory boxes; two of them had to return to the gallery following the workshop so that they could use the art supplies in the classroom. This experience was eye-opening for me; I did not anticipate that refugees and new immigrants to the country would not be able to spend money on art supplies, and so would need extra access to the art gallery's resources. All four participants also mentioned they did not have much to put in the boxes, because they did not bring much with them when they moved to Canada.

1.2.5 - Memory Boxes and the Display

The dimensions of the *Urban Archaeology* memory boxes that participants worked on are approximately 19 inches long by 19 inches wide by 4 inches deep. Made of pine, each box has a hinged door, with a clear glass panel insert. Participants were all given the same basic frame as their starting point, and within reason, were given access to the same set of supplies from the gallery: paint, glue, and assorted decorations. The range of images and stories generated from this simple starting point is remarkable. In total, 40 boxes were constructed, and 39 were completed and returned to the gallery for display.

Once all boxes were returned, they were displayed in the vitrines[20] on the second floor of The Rooms, near the elevators. At one point in the project, I had hoped to occupy vitrines throughout the public spaces of The Rooms, on the third floor and on landings between floors. However, once the ILRC signed on to participate, those vitrines were no longer a possibility because some are completely inaccessible by wheelchair.

[20] The vitrines are display cases embedded in the walls of certain areas of the public spaces in The Rooms. They typically house a wide variety of display material from all three institutions.

The official display of the memory boxes began in mid November 2006, and continued until early January 2007. There are nine vitrines out of 24 on the second floor that are controlled by the art gallery; those nine were the primary display site. I divided the 39 boxes into four thematic groups and planned on rotating the boxes until all had been displayed. Midway through the display time, the other 15 vitrines in that space were made available for me to use. At that time, eighteen boxes had already been on display; so the remaining two thematic groups were collapsed into a single display. Following the display, I contacted selected participants for informal interviews.

1.2.6 - The Urban Archaeology Reception

The project culminated in a participant reception held in January 2007, in the theatre at The Rooms. In planning the event, I intended it to be a celebration, where participants would have the opportunity to meet each other and see all the boxes. I wanted it to be relaxed and social in nature, since I had not come far enough in my analysis to present research findings. I spoke briefly at the event, welcoming everyone, thanking the city of St. John's for its funding support, The Rooms for the opportunity to do the project, and participants for sharing their stories. The memory boxes were laid out on tables and across the front of the theatre space. Chairs were set up around the tables and lining some of the walls. I placed a summary of the project and some early research ideas throughout the space for people to read. Some light refreshments were provided.

I spent most of my time at the event attempting to speak to every participant I could find. Several participants gave me gifts; Yamuna gave me a set of earrings she had brought back from a recent trip to India, and Trudy, on behalf of the ILRC, gave me a

hand painted wooden box – my own personal memory box. There was very little structure to the afternoon; other than repeated questions about whether there would be a movie shown on the large screen in the theatre, no one seemed to mind the lack of structure. The afternoon had a positive, happy tone; people were excited to see all the boxes displayed under the flattering lights of the theatre.

When I began working on *Urban Archaeology*, I did not realize the effect it could have on the groups I was working with. The response to the project I received was, to be honest, slightly overwhelming. Throughout the afternoon, people thanked me for the opportunity to participate in *Urban Archaeology,* because it got them out of the house, or allowed them to meet some wonderful people, or simply because it made them feel good about themselves for the first time in a long time. For me, *Urban Archaeology* was always first and foremost my thesis research project. Interacting with participants forced me to reconsider it; for me, it was a folklore project, but for the gallery and for the participants, it was a community arts project. The two are linked, but have subtle differences worth considering; this will be done in detail in Chapter Five.

In considering *Urban Archaeology* as a folklore project, my focus was naturally on gathering information to prepare this thesis. However, separate from the stories that were drawn out in the memory boxes and in my interviews, the process of participating in *Urban Archaeology* and of being recognized and celebrated in The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, affected the project's participants. And, while the long-term effects of *Urban Archaeology* are likely to be negligible, it serves to illustrate the transformative potential of community arts work and applied folkloristics in the city of St. John's. Because there is often an emphasis in the city on the telling of stories related to 'Newfoundland culture,'

people who have other stories to share can sometimes feel left out. Their stories, however, are well worth hearing. My experiences in conducting the practical aspects of this research, while initially sparked by a desire to explore stories that are alternatives to the grand narratives in Newfoundland, only served to heighten that interest.

1.3 - Considering the margins – Analyzing Urban Archaeology

Each individual's memory box in *Urban Archaeology* contains enough information upon which to base a thesis; as would be expected, there are far too many stories embedded in the totality of the 39 memory boxes to do them all justice in the scope of *this* thesis. And so, I have chosen to focus on six of the memory boxes and use them as case studies. These boxes highlight three common themes that have appeared in both my research about 'Newfoundland identity' and in my theoretical research about sense of place and home. Although six particular boxes were chosen, I want to note that all boxes contained beautiful stories, and important information about the sense of place and home that participants feel. Any combination of six boxes could have been used in the following discussion to make valid and significant points; I chose these boxes because they both exemplified themes I want to highlight, and I had the opportunity to experience ethnographic interactions with their creators. I use a seventh box at the end of this thesis to highlight a point about the importance of hearing non-master narrative stories; this box was chosen because of its poignant and relevant use of two visual images.

The analysis of the sense of place and home of these six stories that is being conducted in this thesis was rendered more complex because of the nature of the groups that participated; they all are comprised of members who, in very particular ways, are not

well represented by the master narrative of Newfoundland. Stanley observes that it is common for people who are not represented by the master narrative of a place to feel excluded, and not completely at home (37-8). Moreover, as previously stated, this sense of exclusion from the story often suggests that there are other, more problematic exclusions taking place (Stanley 38); as such, it is important to consider these stories, and hear the lessons they have to teach. Folklorist Elaine Lawless' work with women who are victims of violence stresses a similar need to hear lessons of atypical narratives (50-1).

Folklorist Cory Thorne, in his exploration of 'Newfoundland culture' among expatriate Newfoundlanders living in Ontario, notes that through studies of the inverse (Newfoundland culture as it is used in a non-Newfoundland context), deep understanding of the primary (Newfoundland identity) can be achieved (4). He writes that this understanding, in terms of Newfoundland, can "only be achieved through the study of Newfoundlanders living outside of Newfoundland" (4); I suggest that my thesis as an expansion of, or parallel, to that argument. Through the study of residents of Newfoundland whose life stories do not align with the master narratives of 'Newfoundland culture,' much can also be learned about the nature of the constructed entities of 'Newfoundland culture' and 'Newfoundland identity.' Moreover, this exploration of the stories of outsiders living *inside* Newfoundland is uniquely valuable.

Indeed, in much discussion of 'Newfoundland culture' as a unique and distinct entity, an unmentioned comparison is being drawn between people who live in

Newfoundland and people who live on mainland[21] North America: the local versus the global. As folklorist Amy Shuman notes, the celebration of locality usually is done with good intentions: "those who promote the concept of local culture often have an agenda of protecting local groups against the incursions and interferences of global economies and claims for universal truth" (345). However, she continues, the extreme valuation of local cultures "can and does serve opposing interests" and the label of local "is never a neutral category," however much it appears to be (Shuman 345). There is an irony to the promotion of 'Newfoundland culture' that I will probe in this thesis; the defence of 'Newfoundland culture' against deterioration and interference from outsiders raises 'Newfoundland culture' to the level of the dominant culture within the province. As a result, little space is left for the telling of atypical stories. So much energy is spent defending Newfoundland as a distinct society that there is little room to consider the distinctions that exist *within* this society.

1.4 – Theoretical considerations

Before proceeding to examine the six stories from *Urban Archaeology* a brief theoretical exploration is required to ground the research in relevant discourse. Firstly, since I asked participants to visually describe their sense of home, I will consider what other researchers have learned about the multifaceted nature of the word. There are three elements of home - space, identity and belonging – that will be probed in detail.

[21] In the context of Newfoundland, usage of the word "mainland" typically refers to any place that is not the island part of the province. Therefore, it should be noted that discussion of residents of the "mainland" may also refer to residents of Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island, relatively nearby Atlantic provinces.

Secondly, an individual's sense of home is closely related to the geographical concept of sense of place; as such, a brief examination of literature on that subject is also beneficial.

1.4.1 – With thoughts of home

In its most basic incarnation, a person's home is often described as a physical space where they can retreat to and prevent others from entering into if they so desire. Whether it is a corner of a shelter, a room in a dormitory, a house on a suburban street or a piece of land, a physical home provides a space of security, ownership and control. Some people belong in that space, and some do not, as Tuan relates:

> Home is a place.... Home has boundaries that need to be defended against the intrusion of outsiders. Home is a place because it encloses space and thereby creates an "inside" and an "outside." The more the storm rages outside, the more cozy the home feels inside.... ("Place" 163)

Often, people do not even think about their home until it is disrupted in some manner, as Terkenli observes: "[m]ore often than not, home does not become an issue until it is no longer there, or is being lost, because the concept of home is constructed on the division of personally known worlds into home and non-home contexts" (328). Here, the idea of belonging is again being suggested by Terkenli; the division of the world into home and non-home contexts suggests that there are people who belong in the one context and not in the other. Folklorist Timothy Cochrane echoes this, noting that: "[m]ost commonly [people] become aware of their strong attachment to place when it is disrupted and they begin to reflect on what their homes, neighbourhood and neighbouring friends mean to them..."(7). Disruption of home occurs when a person moves, or life changes such that they do not belong where they once did.

A person's concept of home and their sense of belonging in a given place are very personal aspects of their lives, and are developed through various different types of human experiences and relationships. Further, all of these experiences that create a sense of home can be and are often used to *express* feelings of home and connection. For example, if a person feels most at home among her family, when asked to describe her home, she will most likely talk about her family.

There are many common themes, such as family, that come up when people are asked to describe their sense of home. As sociologist Shelley Mallett describes, in a survey of contemporary research about human conceptualizations of home: "[h]ome is variously...conflated with or related to house, family, haven, self, gender and journeying..."(65). Tuan also attempts to describe the multifaceted nature of home, wondering how we cope with absence from and return to our homes:

> After a long trip, when do we feel that we are finally home? Is it as we approach the city, as we step inside the house, as we gather around the family dining table, as we sit down in our favourite armchair – or is it, finally, as we snuggle between the sheets of our own bed? ("Place" 153-4)

Here, Tuan describes home in a series of concentric circles. The city is the first realm entered into that feels familiar, like home. The city surrounds the house, the place of shelter, which in turn, surrounds the dining table, the place of communal eating with family. Finally, the personal property of the armchair and bed are central, suggesting that self-identity and objects used to support and maintain identity lie at the root of our conceptualization of a home. Arguably though, before identity, what really lies at the centre of 'home' is land and space.

1.4.1.1 - The importance of space

The physical space in which a person lives is important in establishing a sense of home. As folklorist Kent Ryden relates, identification with physical aspects of a place is one of the strongest feelings humans express:

> ...when our meaningful places are threatened, we feel threatened as well. Along with the other elements of the sense of place, this feeling of identity helps give order, structure and value to the geographical world. Experience, memory and feeling combine with the physical environment to push peaks of human meaning above the abstract plain of space. (40)

The aspects of place that contribute to a person's sense of home can be physical elements that surround a person, such as weather, and superficial landscape. Additionally, physical homes can also describe housing structures. As Tuan writes, the "primary meaning of home is nurturing shelter," and psychologically, the home is (or should be) "the one place in which we can openly and comfortably admit our frailty and our bodily needs" ("Place" 154). Terkenli notes that though this is frequently true, there is often a "contraction and expansion of home depending on a person's physical location at the moment [of definition]" (329). Sometimes, physical homes can be houses, sometimes they can be pieces of land, and sometimes they can be something else entirely.

Sociologist Richard Stedman observes that, in considering the experiential nature of place, it is significant to remember that the physicality of the place affects the types of experiences possible there: "[l]ocal community culture influences place meanings, but so might the nature of the physical environment influence community culture" (673). He concludes that "although social constructions are important, they hardly arise out of thin air: the local environment sets bounds and gives form to these constructions" (671).

Experiences, caused directly by the land, are often significant in the development of an individual's sense of place and home, and by extension, their identity.

Indeed, identity and place are difficult to separate from one another. As archaeologist Christopher Tilley relates, the kinds of places we construct and imagine living in "are inextricably bound up with the politics of identity" (15). Ideas about place and identity "both relate to whom we want to live with and whom we want to exclude, who belongs and who does not, to issues of class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality" (Tilley 15). The discussion, then, returns again to the idea of belonging. Whether consciously or not, many of us hold beliefs that certain people belong in certain spaces. Those beliefs are especially strong when they relate to the place that we consider home.

1.4.1.2 - Considering identity

Personal identity is another important theme to examine in the context of home; what a person considers their home depends greatly upon who they consider themselves to be. One of the most significant ways that personal identities are developed is through close social relationships. Indeed, Terkenli breaks down the concept of home into three elements: physical, temporal and social, noting that the social component "becomes salient in the development of the idea of home by establishing a circle of social relations that validate an individual as a human being" (326). In many cases, the birth family is the first circle of relations that provides this validation. Anthropologist Shelley Mallett notes that many researchers have described a strong connection between home and family, "however, the nature and significance of this relationship for the meaning of home remains keenly contested..."(73). Typically, the conflation of home and family, "is [an] ideologically laden [idea]... premised on the white, middle class, heterosexual nuclear

family..."(Mallett 74). However, even noting that "the significance of the relationship between home and family can change over the course of an individual life or in different spatial contexts" (Mallett 74), most of us have people who, whether blood relations or not, we consider as family. Quite often, if we are separated from these people, their presence in our lives becomes symbolicized, through material culture items they have given us or that remind us of them. These symbolic items are often part of a larger collection of personal treasures that, in a sense, constitute a material autobiography:

> Bric-a-brac, folk altars, mantles covered with snapshots, scrapbooks and albums, and china cabinets filled with family heirlooms...offer access to the interior of the lives they signify and as such constitute a kind of autobiographical archaeology (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 331).

We need a strong personal identity to feel at home in a given space. Granted, personal identities often come *from* feeling at home somewhere, but stable self identity can also *make* a person feel at home wherever they may be. Memory objects referencing life events can help stabilize identity; research into the effects of Alzheimer's disease indicates that autobiographical memory is a significant contributor to self-identity, and as such, "a loss of this memory will affect one's identity" (Addis and Tippett 58). Studies conducted in both nursing and gerontology consistently reveal that gaps in autobiographical memory are frightening, threaten patient's self-identity, and make them feel confused about their current living situations. Patients then often require the assistance of memory objects, and family and friends who know their important life narratives. Indeed, "it becomes necessary for others to assist the individual who is experiencing cognitive loss to continually recall and reconstruct her self-identity" and regain feelings of comfort (Shenk et al 411). Patients who do not receive this assistance

are left confused, without a sense of self, and often, without a sense of home. Viewed in this light, decoration of living spaces with personal effects, as described by folklorist Ian Brodie (2005) and psychologist Samuel Gosling et al (2005), becomes important in maintaining a sense of personal identity.

1.4.1.3 - Belonging and community

A third important avenue through which self-identity and a sense of home develop is an individual's sense of belonging to a community. Folklorist Lucille Guilbert records that: "[a]n individual's feeling of belonging to a community develops in tandem with the capacity that he or she has to express personal needs, expectations and suggestions"(23). In particular, for people moving to a new place, "[a] solid mastery of the language of the host country is an essential building block for successful integration"(Guilbert 23). Linguistic difference is a significant challenge that new immigrants face in transitioning to a new home; however, language is just one element of the amorphous concept of "culture" that new immigrants must learn about and cope with. In a study of Filipino immigrants and their use of traditional Balikbayan gift boxes when travelling between the Philippines and the United States, folklorist Jade Alburo notes that the immigrants:

> ...encounter numerous hardships and have to make...adjustments in their adopted countries. They may have to become accustomed to dissimilarities in terms of the basics, such as living arrangements, diet, climate, and transportation...[and] immigrants face an even greater challenge when it comes to lifestyle and convention.... In addition to adjusting to different living conditions, immigrants suffer tremendous loneliness and homesickness (140-1).

As Alburo describes, there are a myriad of components in what we call culture. Language, food, and living arrangements are some of the basics. Add to that music, arts, dance, costume and dress: all of these, and more, are avenues through which values are

transmitted, and which bind people together in shared experience and collective identity. To know the practices of a given culture, and to choose to engage in them is to adopt elements of this identity as your own, even though the identity may not be related to a culture in which you have genetic ties. And, as folklorist Henry Glassie notes, although these avenues and their broader cultural label often seem static, they are actually in a constant state of fluctuation (181,188). Sociologist David Jacobson elaborates:

> ...social and communal groupings...can be marked through language, ethnic markers (clothes, speech, associations), body language, codes...and disciplinary distinctions.... What is striking about this form of boundedness is that it is fluid, portable – a constantly shifting, yet defined road map. It can be group-based, or it can be individual.... (17)

Michael Owen Jones concurs, describing the multihued identity evident in the life and art of his informant, Gary Robertson. Born to a Scottish immigrant and raised as an English Canadian in Winnipeg, Robertson chooses instead to live his life according to "rural, peasant, Ukrainian, Orthodox traditions" (Jones 121). He paints Orthodox icons on his walls, has been a cantor at the Ukrainian church, and is effectively living the life of a lay monk in the Orthodox tradition. As Jones notes:

> He *chooses* from tradition those behaviours, activities and objects with which he can symbolically construct an identity. This identity is dynamic, multifaceted and even at times contradictory. The ethnic and religious traditions upon which he draws, however, bring moments of insight, of calming and attempts at reconciliation lacking in his troubled childhood.... (133)

Such a blending of traditions into a cultural identity is uniquely possible in the contemporary world, and in particular, in contemporary Western European and North American societies, where large minority populations add diversity to the traditional practices that can be drawn upon. There are, as activist and author Jean Vanier describes, many positive aspects to contemporary Western life, where "people of different cultures,

backgrounds and religions can and do live 'peacefully' side by side" (18). Vanier observes that "[t]here is often mutual respect, civility, and acceptance of laws that protect the rights of each person and each minority group," and that "[t]here is no civil war" (18). However, he notes that the peace of contemporary Western society contains problems:

> This respect for each other and for the law can, nevertheless, harbour certain prejudices and forms of racism. People can, and often do, avoid one another. Immigrants are allowed to live in certain areas, but not in others. People with disabilities can be looked down upon. Subtle forms of anti-Semitism or anti-Arabism are practised. Even though there is a certain respect for difference among neighbours, there is rarely any desire to enter into personal relationships. People close themselves off, ignoring or avoiding others. (Vanier 18)

This distancing that Vanier describes can prevent a person from feeling at home within a cultural context, because it does not foster a sense of belonging. With nothing concrete to unite people of disparate backgrounds, communication becomes difficult, and isolation is easier. Feelings of home then develop in ethnic villages or enclaves, rather than in a larger context, where people often feel isolated and indistinct. Terkenli elaborates on this phenomenon, writing that "[a]s contemporary humans realize that they belong to an interconnected and interdependent world, they turn to their ethnos, their region, their community or their ancestral place to secure their distinctiveness" (333). He notes that where physical space is less defined, culture is often used to create the differentiation required, because, he feels modern humans are "...look[ing] for ways in which they are different and unique to protect their identity.... They divide the world into us and them..." (333). Cultural homes, in this sense, can be very exclusionary.

1.4.2 – Getting a sense of place

All of this discussion of home and belonging ultimately relates to the more abstract geographical concept of a person's sense of a given place and how that is discovered, developed and maintained in individuals and wider populations. Places are widely regarded as important elements in human experience. Jacobson describes place as a means through which human beings situate themselves: "Place locates individuals and societies of people in a point in time and space, and in doing so resolves – potentially – the (infinite) stream of space and time by *orienting* human beings in a given society, culture or civilization, *placing* them in the cosmos" (194). A place, rather than a space, can provide a sense of being rooted. A home, then, is a kind of place.

Tuan observes that places are known "not only through the eyes and mind but also through the more passive and direct modes of experience, which resist objectification" and that they are the "centre[s] of meaning constructed by experience" ("Place" 152). Places, like homes, are constructed of an amalgam of physical space and human memory. Cochrane concurs, noting that "[p]lace then, is not synonymous with location.... [P]lace is...less...a physical location than a deeply affective characterization crystallized from an individual's emotions, experience and cultural background" (9-10). And so, *home* is just a place with a particularly deep layer of meaning.

Assuming then that home, in human consciousness, is a place, and that this thesis therefore is exploring sense of place, it is useful to consider some of Cochrane's theoretical framework in research on the subject. In describing his study of residents of Isle Royale, an island in northwest Lake Superior, Cochrane highlights three cornerstones

to conducting research on sense of place. It is a very experiential model of research; first, there is the inquiry into residents' subjective experiences of the place, in his case Isle Royale. Then, through that inquiry, Cochrane, the researcher, comes to an understanding of each resident's individual experience of the place, and of other related places. Finally, a synthesis of many individual inquiries into a larger body of research allows for an understanding of the perceived essence of a given place (Cochrane 5-7). My thesis is roughly constructed along Cochrane's theoretical framework; in research conducted at The Rooms, I explore the real world experiences of people living in St. John's as they depicted them in memory boxes. Through the experiences of these people, I analyze how they understand what they describe to be their homes.

1.5 - What's next...

The analysis of the six participant stories I have chosen to tell from *Urban Archaeology* appears in the following three chapters; it is not until the conclusion in *Chapter Five – Cultural Models* that I will reflect on the totality of the project, and attempt to synthesize what the material revealed by *Urban Archaeology* suggests about the complexity of the sense of home in 'Newfoundland culture.' In *Chapter Three – Self,* I examine various elements of personal identity that contribute to an individual's sense of home in Newfoundland, as expressed in *Urban Archaeology*, with a focus on the stories of Yamuna Kutty and Sarah Rowe. In *Chapter Four – Belonging*, I consider the importance of the concepts of belonging and imagined community, both in Newfoundland and as expressed by the project participants. In this chapter, these themes are considered in relation to the stories of Elena Sizov and Trudy Marshall. And first, in *Chapter Two –*

Space, I explore the importance of connection to physical space and land with respect to home in general and to Newfoundland in particular. The work of project participants Doug Stagg and Gabuya Godfrey expresses this theme.

***

I see the father of an old friend on the first Christmas after I move to Newfoundland. I grew up with this man's son, so seeing him is especially comforting to me. The father is a familiar person who has some idea of what my new life in Newfoundland is like. He hugs me when he sees me, saying, "There she is. The only one of the old crew who had the sense to move to The Rock!" I laugh, and he asks me how things are going. I talk about Signal Hill and the ocean and MooMoo's Dairy. I tell him about the music and the art I have found in the city of St. John's. He listens approvingly, teaches me the 'proper' way to pronounce the name of the city (Sinjawns), and then gives me a warning that resounds in my ears long after our encounter: "Be careful," he says. "It gets in your blood, that place. If you stay too long in Newfoundland, you won't ever want to leave."

> ...people with profound attachment to place... are the most unaware of that relationship.... [N]arratives that at first glance appear to be devoid of sentiment toward place may imply, in fact, the opposite. The strongest positive response to place is not easily put into words. (Cochrane 9)

***

CHAPTER TWO - SPACE

She lived in the city once, when we met. And she will live in a city again, a few months after this. But in this moment, she is in her element, traipsing through the dense green woods and walking along the sandy beach. A dog is her constant companion.

I am visiting her for a few days during this time in her life, shortly after she moved away from the city. We spend our time together wandering in the forest behind her house, biking on logging roads and swimming in icy rivers. We buy snacks from the local bulk food store and eat them on the beach. I collect stones and she collects driftwood; we wander like children, relishing in the feeling of sand between our toes.

When I first met her, she was a ball of energy. She was always encountering new people and drawing them into her circle of friends. As I got to know her better, she occasionally would confess to feeling frantic, overwhelmed, and not herself in the city. I always listened and nodded sympathetically, but a part of me never really believed her. She always seemed to be in such a good mood.

Seeing her in her element though, I now understand what she meant. She may have always been in a good mood in the city, but she was not rooted there. She was surrounded by people and places that she loved, but she was not home. Here, she is home. *And home, for her, is being outside, and making afternoon magic in a freezing cold river under an early summer moon.*

> Following the little brook as it trickles to the shore/In the autumn when the trees are flaming red/Kicking leaves that fall around me/Watching sunsets paint the hills/That's all I'll ever need to feel at home. (Chaulk 40)

***

2.1 – Introduction: It's all about space

In considering human interaction with spaces, whether it is a young adult working to own her first home, an elderly person negotiating personal space in a public nursing home, or a refugee coming to a strange new country, the ability to have some control over a space is vital to the establishment of a home. A physical home in or on a piece of land that a person can control provides a sense of security and stability upon which all further mental, emotional and social development is based. Additionally, a person's feelings towards the elements of the natural world and the landscape of her home are also important, in that they often stimulate emotional connection, memory, and land-based attachments. In this chapter, both of these aspects of space and land as home will be explored as general concepts, and with reference to the specificities of 'Newfoundland identity.' Throughout the chapter, the stories of Doug Stagg and Gabuya Godfrey will provide alternative narratives that highlight some complexities of the relationship between the physical space of the island and the wide variety of people who call Newfoundland and St. John's home.

2.1.1 - Godfrey's memory box

I am in the process of arranging all the Urban Archaeology memory boxes into their display groupings. I pull them into the middle of the gallery's classroom and sit with them and let them talk to me. I think about all the different stories I have learned in the past few months; though the room is audibly silent, for me it is filled with voices.

Some of the people who created these memory boxes were born and raised in St. John's, and some were not. Some of the people are newly arrived here and to me, at

least, it shows in their artwork. Some have paintings and photographs showing other places, other people and other cultural traditions. Others are simpler. One box, in particular, is very simple, but very evocative of change and conveys a strong sense of rootlessness. Painted in dark greens and browns, Gabuya Godfrey's[22] *box shows a long road, ascending into the mountains on the horizon. There are a few sugar cane bushes near the road, but for the most part, the road cuts through a dense field of green plants. There are rough brown mountains in the distance. There is little diversity in the landscape, and the road looks far from friendly.*

Godfrey grew up in a mountainous region of Africa, and has moved around a great deal since his childhood. He now lives alone in a small apartment in St. John's. He has not lived in St. John's for long, and has few possessions with him. When he comes to the art gallery to work on his memory box with the other participants from RIAC, he shows me two photographs he wants to include; both have been taken since he moved to the city. One shows a deep crevice in Signal Hill, and the other shows a frightened looking calf in a plastic pen.

I stay with him as he begins to work on his box. He paints first, and he tells me stories about the land as he works. He tells me about how the land where he is from is luscious with food. How it is like the Garden of Eden. How he misses it there. How he misses seeing stars. How he's not sure that St. John's is the right place for him. How in some ways though, he does like it here, because it is smaller, and there is opportunity,

---

[22] On his consent form for the Urban Archaeology project, Godfrey wrote his name as "Gabuya Godfrey." According to English conventions, his first name appears to be Gabuya; however, I was introduced to him as Godfrey, and have called him that in all interactions since. To be honest, I do not know which is his first name and I feel awkward at this point, contacting him to ask. For the purposes of this thesis, I will continue to refer to him as "Godfrey" as I have always done.

and the people are nice. How he misses the sunshine. How he is glad to have the ocean. "At home," he tells me, "there are not even lakes, really." There are rivers and streams for drinking water, but no large bodies of water to look at. He tells me that he does not understand why North American people live independently. He finds it lonely here. He is accustomed to communal homes and communal life, and finds it hard to cook only for himself. I think he would change things here considerably, if he had his way.

As I look at his box and the careful painting of a road that he created, I remember our conversation vividly. And the work, though simple, seems replete with strong messages. Maybe I am reading information into his artwork that does not exist in reality, but maybe I am not. The image of an empty road is not the first thing that comes to many people's minds when they are asked to consider their homes. It is an image that, to me, suggests that Godfrey does not have control over his present surroundings, and wishes he could move on to somewhere new. He is still searching for something.

***

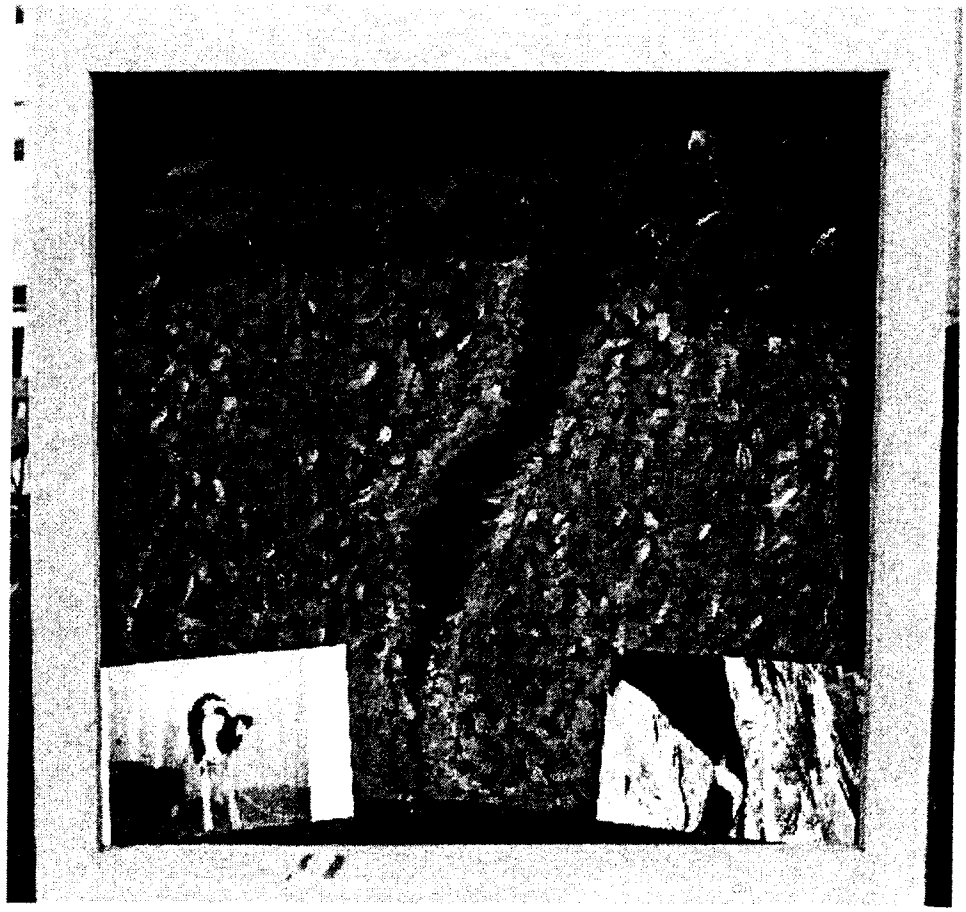

Figure 1 – Gabuya Godfrey's memory box.

2.2 – Homes and the control of small spaces

The establishment of spatial control is an important aspect of developing a sense of home in a given place. People such as Godfrey, who are not in stable living situations, often feel personally unstable. A stable living space, whether it is a small space like a bedroom, or a larger space like a community, is one of the foundational components of home; however, whether the space is large or small, the establishment of a stable living space is a process requiring considerable negotiation. Folklorist Ian Brodie describes the tensions surrounding the establishment of spatial control in his exploration of the material culture of the hospice room of his father, Bernard:

> In most other studies of the relationship between people and the objects they choose to surround themselves with, the presence of an object may be said to be a consequence of a deliberate action, as can its placement... Bernard had no control over the presence or placement of objects within the room. By the time he was able to assert some control, the objects had become part of the sense of place, if not for him then for others, which he could not bring himself to disturb.... [And, s]ince he could not leave the room...[a]nything that was brought in...came at the discretion of someone else. (196)

Brodie notes that this lack of control over his living space was often frustrating for Bernard: "the opportunity to exercise choice was what was most crucial" in making him feel comfortable in the space, and also in stabilizing his health (201). Later in Bernard's story, once the room is organized to his liking, and he feels that he has "some control" over the space, he begins to feel better, and starts to make future plans (209). Having his home established frees him to consider the possibility of more permanently regaining his health. Bernard remains stable for a time, and in denial of his ultimate prognosis. And, Brodie notes, the "greater his denial...the more greatly he modified his environment" (213). The more he thought of living, the more control he exerted over the immediate

physical space that he was living in. Bernard's story is an example of the psychological importance of controlling the physical features of one of the smallest forms of home.

Psychologist Samuel Gosling and a team of researchers, in a more empirical study of elements of room decoration as related to personality, call these small forms of home 'Personal Living Spaces' (PLS). They are, according to Gosling et al, "more than a bedroom, but less than a full-fledged house," and afford "primary territory for a designated individual" (52). Moreover, according to these researchers, personal living spaces are holding "increasing importance within contemporary urban life" (Gosling et al 52) due to the increase in mass housing units, like dormitories, apartments and long term care facilities in urban environments. As such, the human use of these environments is an important and revealing subject of study.

Gosling et al note that there are multiple meanings associated with the contents of a personal living space, from the anthropological (revealing information about class, gender, and historical time period) to the more psychological (revealing the "entirely subjective and autobiographical significance of each object of a PLS for its inhabitant") (54). Strangely, in spite of observing that a person's "possessions may be used in the construction and maintenance of autobiographical narratives" (54) Gosling et al never conduct any interviews. Instead, they reduce the living spaces of their participants to data points and statistical tables, through their use of surveys and a pre-designed room inventory system. This quantitative approach lies in marked contrast to Brodie's qualitative, narratological study of personal living space; however, both come to similar conclusions regarding our need for control. This need is important on both the small scale, as Brodie and Gosling et al determined, and a larger scale, which will be explored.

2.2.1 – Significant spaces in St. John's, and in Newfoundland

As noted in Chapter One, Richard Stedman writes that the physical features of a place affect the experiences that are possible there, and therefore affect a resident's sense of the place (673). Social constructions that define a place are important, but, as Stedman observes, "the local environment sets bounds and gives form to these constructions" (Stedman 671). Perhaps because they are two of the most significant physical features in the city of St. John's, Pamela Coristine observes that in particular: "at the local level...the sense of place evoked by Signal Hill[23] and Cabot Tower[24] is...keenly felt" (4). Signal Hill is an important place in the city, providing both a setting for often significant experiences, and a sense of being protected from the outside world. The emotions Signal Hill evoke are so strong that, as one of Coristine's informants describes, "No matter where you are in the world, if you're from Newfoundland, you know what Signal Hill and Cabot Tower is... and if you were anywhere, you'd go 'That's home.'..." (4).[25]

Although, as Coristine writes, "one does not have to be born in a place in order to belong to it," the longer a person lives in a physical environment, the more familiar and comfortable with it they are bound to become (78). Signal Hill is the largest physical landmark in St. John's; people who were raised in the city are more likely to have

[23] Signal Hill is a large rocky cliff that lies at the easternmost edge of the city. It is a National Historic site, marked at the top by the presence of Cabot Tower. Further information about the site can be found through the Parks Canada website, at this address: http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/nl/signalhill/index_e.asp.

[24] Cabot Tower is a large castle-like structure at the top of Signal Hill. Historically used to signal ships coming in and out of the harbour, it now contains a museum celebrating the inventions of Guglielmo Marconi and the history of the first trans-Atlantic radio communication.

[25] For a more complete discussion on the impact and influence of Signal Hill upon residents of St. John's, Coristine's thesis, entitled *The Landscape of Home: The Role of Signal Hill in the Emergence of a Sense of Identity and Place in St. John's, Newfoundland* is an excellent reference.

significant memory associations with the space. However, notably, Godfrey includes in his memory box a photographic reference to Signal Hill.

More generally, people who have lived in Newfoundland for a longer period of time are more likely to have developed a deep understanding of the place, simply because they have more experience with its physical features. Many participants in *Urban Archaeology* who I interviewed mentioned the hills, the wind, the sky, the trees and the ocean as being significant aspects of Newfoundland and St. John's that made them feel at home. The connections these people felt seemed strong; separate from the connections that they have with people who live here (family and friends), and separate even from iconic places like Signal Hill, something about the physical space of Newfoundland itself seemed to resonate with these particular residents.

The connection people feel to Newfoundland can be profound. Steve Abbott remembers observing this connection on a family vacation, where he watched his father on the return ferry to Newfoundland:

> I went on vacation with my family to Prince Edward Island, and on the trip back, on the ferry, my father was out on deck on the ferry breathing in the salt air. And just that was making him, like, high. That was like, he was...not jittery anymore. He wasn't stressed. He was like, "Smell that. We're home".... I'm sure I will do that when I come back [if I ever leave], and I'll probably cry and kiss the asphalt. (Abbott)

While this reaction may also have been related to his father's preference for rural, rather than urban environments, Steve genuinely feels that there is a difference between how people in Newfoundland connect to the natural world, as opposed to people living on the mainland: "Over here, I think we really connect to a tree, or like a lake, or a big, big forest in front of us, rather than a huge skyscraper.... There's definitely a connection with

people who live here to the land, 'cause we've lived off of it for so long" (Abbott). Though the physical environment and the land itself can be unpredictable, the province's long history of European settlement and the presence of large, stable elements like Signal Hill creates a sense of control over the physical spaces of St. John's, and possibly helps to make the place feel like home for its residents.

***

2.2.2 - Godfrey's story

Godfrey comes back to the gallery a second time to finish working on his memory box. When he comes the second time, he brings some photographs with him; he does not have many, he tells me, but the ones he does have are very special. There is one photograph that he shows me that contains every member of his immediate family. He talks to me about his family, then. He comes from a family of ten. His father is still alive, but his mother died ten years ago. He has many nieces and nephews. He does not know them all, because some of them have been born since he has been in Canada. He tells me that he misses his friends and family and that he went home last April, after more than a year away, and then was depressed all summer because of it.

He eventually decides not to include those photographs in his memory box. Instead, he returns to painting the landscape and the road. He is doing his best, he tells me, to depict the land where he grew up as a child. And, like before, as he paints he talks to me about his experiences of living in Canada. He tells me that he does not like the fact that people lock their doors in Canada. He likes to leave his door open until he can go to bed at night, because he likes open spaces so much. He also says that he does not like

how we treat our old people. He tells me that in Africa children take in grandmothers when they are too old to take care of themselves. He tells me he is scared of getting old here, because his life will become something that he cannot control.

He tells me he thinks about leaving St. John's sometimes, but at the same time, he feels like he is done with travelling and he really wants to try to make this his home.

***

2.3 – Spatial control on a larger scale

Sometimes the desire for spatial control occurs on a larger scale than in personal living spaces, and, significantly, sometimes is not rooted in personal desires, but instead in cultural pressures. In North America, and in "advanced capitalist countries such as Britain, Australia...and New Zealand," Shelley Mallett notes that there has been an active "conflation of house, home and family as part of a broader ideological agenda aimed at increasing economic efficiency and growth" (66). Because of a variety of socio-political changes in the world since the 1950s, Mallett writes that in North America and other economically advantaged places, "owner occupied housing has increased, public housing has decreased and housing tenure has increasingly featured in the meaning of home" (66). Home, in addition to being a physical space that can be controlled, is also a building that can be *owned.* Author Kalle Lasn, in his book *Culture Jam*, describes a portion of a stereotypical North American person's ideal life story, as it relates to the importance placed on home ownership in contemporary culture. He notes that what he labels *American* cultural goals strongly correlate success with the amount of money and the number of possessions that a person has, including a beautiful house:

> After graduating you begin to make a little more money, and it's quite seductive. The more you have, the more you think about it. You buy a house with three bathrooms. You park your BMW outside the double garage. When you grow depressed, you go shopping. (Lasn 55)

This concept is, in many ways, incongruent with some of Godfrey's ideas about the meaning of home and family, and may be the source of some of his disconnected feelings towards Newfoundland and North American culture. The idea of possessions seems to be assuming a central role in the meaning of home in North America. Ronald Paul Hill, a professor of marketing, concurs. In his study about the material possessions of homeless women, he observes that: "[s]ince the industrial revolution, our society's conception of the home has changed. Today home is much less a place where living and work are interconnected and much more a symbol of our relative affluence..."(Hill 298). Indeed, the social power granted to people who possess houses and the material things found therein becomes even more apparent when considered in relation to those who are homeless, and without those possessions.

Author J. Edward Chamberlin notes that most middle class North Americans are frightened by homeless people's lack of status: "[h]omelessness haunts us all. One of the reasons we walk so nervously around the homeless on our streets is that we don't want to get too close to something we fear so deeply" (78-79). As a result of this fear, we tend to exclude those who are homeless from our day-to-day realities. Social geographer Catherine Robinson describes the arenas from which homeless young people in Australia are excluded, but her words can apply to homeless people of all ages and in all developed nations: "...for young homeless people being excluded from home also means institutional exclusion – from education, work and community life...also...from needed

periods of potential rent-free living," as well as "from the richness and ongoing support of home-life." (48). Because of these continual exclusions, as well as life challenges presented to young homeless people before they have skills to manage them, Robinson suggests they experience considerable grief, and are perpetually homesick.

Hill observes similar grief among homeless women in his study, and reports that one manner of mitigating some grief was the establishment of a sense of home within the confines of the shelter. This was done by the careful arrangement of personal possessions that often had significant symbolic value. And, as Hill writes, "[w]hile this symbolic value exists for many individuals in our society, poverty and unhappy current circumstances cause such "things" to have special significance for the homeless..."(308). For those who did not have special memory possessions, Hill observes that fantasy regarding possessions becomes important "as a coping mechanism" (308). Indeed, fantasy and imagination are coping mechanisms for dealing both with the reality of homesickness and homelessness, and the threat of it; in *If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?* English professor J. Edward Chamberlin observes, "all of our literatures are filled with images of homesickness" (86). The stories these literatures record are accounts both grand and small: "[t]he sad fact is that the history of settlement around the world is a history of displacing other people from their lands" (Chamberlin 78).

2.3.1 – Godfrey and life in Newfoundland

Throughout our conversations, and in some ways, through his artwork, Gabuya Godfrey expressed a particularly strong connection to the land that he grew up in. He described to me how the land where he is from is luscious with food, likening it to the

Garden of Eden. Though he did not need to say this explicitly, he told me that he greatly misses Africa, and that he is not sure whether St. John's and Newfoundland are good fits for him. He had been living in Newfoundland for about a year at the time of our conversation. In the places he has lived in Africa, he told me that you can always see the sun during the day, and that you can always see the stars at night; he finds the overcast, cloud-filled days of Newfoundland challenging. Godfrey seemed to be experiencing grief when reflecting upon his home. He does not feel rooted in Newfoundland yet, and instead is dealing with feelings of exile. Jacobson notes the relative commonness of this feeling: "[t]he ache, aimlessness, and despair of exile, to be outside one's country, to be banished in the wilderness, is a deep and lengthy literary theme in human history" (8).

Godfrey is, in many ways, similar to Newfoundlanders living away from their home province. In particular, there are similarities between the intensity of Godfrey's feelings of homesickness and that of Newfoundland men in Leslie Bella's study of Newfoundlanders living in Ontario. She notes in her study that, "Men from outports become particularly eloquent about their connections to the Newfoundland landscape as experienced in their youth" (Bella 89). In particular, one of her informants, Wilfred, expresses longing in discussing memories of land-based experiences in Newfoundland:

> But you never forget where you came from, you know...I remember as a teenager, going in the woods and all that.... And it always comes back to you, and it always comes back to you, you know, how much you'd love to be able to do that instead of going to work, or something like that. And you know, you pass along a river or something here, and your memory goes back to when you were a kid.... That's what I miss now when I look back, especially when it gets into fall and you'd like to go back and do that, you know. (Bella 99)

Obviously, Godfrey is not a native-born Newfoundlander who is embedded in this particular landscape. But, in many ways, his experience and his story are not far from the stories of Newfoundland-born-and-raised males who are drawn to the land. The connection to the land for those Newfoundlanders, and for Godfrey, is strong; however, since Godfrey has lost control over his experiences with the land, he has developed feelings of longing and nostalgia. These feelings are intensified in Newfoundland. He now lives in a land that he does not relate to, where he has no sense of control, and he cannot even get much comfort from the cultural life here to compensate.

In considering Godfrey's story, one begins to wonder if perhaps he would not feel so isolated if he felt like he had control over his physical home, in the way that he understands culturally that physical homes should be controlled. For instance, he mentioned to me that it was strange to him that doors were locked here. Though the threat of crime had been explained to him, it seemed that he interpreted the locked doors as representative of the lack of community connection in North American society. Maybe if he were able to live in a situation such as an ethnic enclave where cultural norms could be maintained, he would have a stronger sense of home (Qadeer and Kumar 13-15).

2.4 – Home and imagined spaces

2.4.1 - Doug's story

I hire a sign language interpreter before running one of the workshops for the ILRC. I have never before worked with a sign language interpreter, and I am nervous and curious about the experience. When I arrive at the ILRC for the workshop, Trudy

shows me around, and introduces me to the participants. The names and faces are a blur at first, but I make an effort to remember Doug. He is the reason I hired the interpreter.

Doug uses a wheelchair to navigate the world, and to the best of my knowledge, he has no hearing. Typically, when he is out, people write messages to him in order to communicate. I write a few short notes to him when I meet him. I say hello, and mention my name, and why I am here. Then, I chat with some of the other workshop participants, waiting for the interpreter. As we wait, Trudy shows me some of Doug's paintings. Doug is a gifted artist, creating detailed, delicate paintings and drawings about a variety of subjects. He clearly loves painting; the level of detail in his work requires great patience.

When the interpreter arrives, Doug's face lights up and he sits up straighter. As soon as she walks in the door, he begins gesturing frantically. It is as if he has had a thousand stories in his head all day that are bursting out of him at once. The interpreter talks to him for a few minutes and then I start talking to the group. Most of them sit and listen politely. Some do not make eye contact, so I am not sure they understand, or are interested, or are even listening to me. Doug, however, is a firecracker, gesticulating furiously, causing the interpreter to interrupt me continuously. "This is a fabulous project," he says, "You can learn so much about how people view the world, where they come from. Learning their stories will be amazing."

I am, to be honest, stunned at the level of insight that Doug brings to the discussion of Urban Archaeology that afternoon. Moreover, I am ashamed that I was stunned; clearly I misjudged him because of his disabilities. Perhaps because of this initial experience with him, I make an effort to spend more time with him in subsequent workshops. And this is not the last time that Doug will surprise me.

Many other participants at this workshop create boxes that depict houses. For these participants, home is a concept that centres on their place of residence. As Terkenli notes, "the strongest sense of home commonly coincides with a dwelling," (324). For Doug, however, his home is something I do not anticipate.

***

2.4.2 - Imagined spaces and landscapes

In addition to the physical space we inhabit, we all live with imagined spaces in our minds that contribute to our sense of home. These imagined spaces are the larger communities we claim to be a part of, such as cities, regions and nation-state, that are too large for us to completely comprehend through personal experiences. A nation-state is a kind of home that is very different from a home centred in the land. Tuan relates:

> The nation, too large to be known personally by a majority of its citizens, is known conceptually through the flag, national anthem, army uniform and ceremonial parades, ethnocentric history and geography. Even where the people share a common culture, national consciousness develops slowly, long after the leaders have trumpeted a new state. ("Place" 160)

Even though it does develop slowly, eventually the nation is established as an entity in the minds of the population living within its boundaries. Significantly, the nation-state is an entity that can affect all residents of a given space, no matter their physical capabilities, and once developed, the nation is a powerful symbolic structure. Tuan notes that the "[n]ation, rather than the region, is commonly spoken of as home..." and that it has "sacred boundaries and compelling demands on loyalty" ("Place" 159). As Jacobson describes, nations and territories are structures where "...land is personalized, becoming the locus of historical memories and future hopes and expectations" (43). As

already discussed, the sense of home that comes from a nation state has little to do with the physicality of the space, and much more to do with these historical memories. Here, land "...is conceived of as in 'moral sympathy' with the people" who live there (Jacobson 43). This personification of physical space reflects a distance from it; people who construct land in this manner are doing so for a purpose unrelated to the maintenance of that land. It is, rather, about power, and the maintenance of that power.

Separate from the moral power that a nation has over its people, one of the most inspirational and powerful symbols of a nation is its landscape. Celebrated by artists, a country's landscape seems to reveal the soul of the place. With respect to Canada, the typical visions of the landscape portray, as Coristine describes, "a country of vast, natural beauty through its images of coastlines, forests, rolling prairies, high mountains and frozen tundra" (2). Coristine goes on to write that these grandiose national landscapes "are representative of the country, as well as of the identity of the people who live in it" (2). The extent to which the landscape *actually* represents the identity of the people, or rather, is a particularly potent *symbol* of identity for the people remains unexamined. However, the constructed idea of a landscape is not unique to Canada. Jacobson records a similar symbolic resonance with regards to the American national landscape:

> AMERICA. The very word conjures up desert landscapes, broken by temple-like rock formations and perhaps the Marlboro cowboy riding by on his horse. Or the plains with their "amber waves of grain." Geological marvels are pictures: the Grand Canyon, the Yellowstone geysers, the Dakota Badlands, or Niagara Falls. The human presence is also felt in places like Mount Rushmore, Gettysburg, and the Alamo. Americans – and indeed people across the world – tend to imagine America in terms of its landscapes. Of course there is that *other* America: Disneyland, New York, Hollywood, Las Vegas, urban blight, rural poverty, highways, crime, and violence. But if the allusion is to the *soul* of the country – that is the myths, symbols, images and ideas that bind Americans and makes them

> think of themselves as one people – it is the landscapes, the land and places that are most often evoked. (59)

These visceral connections between people and a constructed, idealized landscape that Coristine and Jacobson write about, are reinforced by the continued use of modern media images. Tourist brochures, magazine spreads and television documentaries, full of idealized nature photography and cinematography, have altered our relationship with the land. Rather than a physical space, nature and landscape are now experiences often mediated through a screen. Patricia Johanson, an environmental artist, elaborates:

> Most peoples' idea of nature seems to be formed by nature photography. We fall in love with the scenic view and then expect nature to be a succession of golden moments – spectacular, poetic moments of perfection, with a blazing sun setting over the ocean, or the purple shadows on the majestic mountains. (27)

In Canadian art history the idealized national landscape was defined, in many ways, by the stars of the early 1900s, Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven. When the group began to paint together, their intent was to explore the relationship between Canadian people and the wilderness around them: they wanted to articulate the Canadian national landscape in a new way (Blodgett et al 14-15; Carr 252-260). Influenced by Scandinavian art and eager to separate themselves from the English landscape painting tradition that they felt did not define Canada's spaces well, Thomson and the Group of Seven began to paint the Northern Ontario wilderness in a bold fashion, attempting to define a new Canadian style (Blodgett et al 14-15). Their vision of the landscape was different, and as such, was exciting for Canadians in the early 20th century (Carr 252-260). Still a new nation, Canada was struggling to find a cultural voice, and the Group of Seven articulated Canadian wilderness like no one else (Blodgett et al 14-15; Carr 252-

260). For early Canadians, they are widely credited with revisioning terrifying wild spaces of the new country into a more enticing land for outdoor adventures.

Interestingly, the actual physical spaces explored by the Group of Seven in no way amount to the entire country. The bulk of their paintings were created in and around Northern Ontario and Algonquin Provincial Park. Though they also documented the Rocky Mountains well, they painted few scenes from the Pacific coast, the Prairies, or the Maritimes. That paintings originating mainly from central Canada are touted as national icons, and as representative of the national landscape reflects of the lack of grounded reality in the concept of a landscape, and in some ways, of a nation-state.[26] Landscapes, and symbols of nationhood, like flags, anthems and maps, are abstract means people use to connect to a greater unity, and to establish a sense of being at home in the world. They help to establish a sense of place that in turn, helps to formalize a person's sense of identity. This then helps establish a sense of control over physical space.

2.4.3 - Imaginary landscapes – The Newfoundland experience

Evident from the branding of the province with the pitcher plant, as discussed in Chapter One, and from the plethora of tourist paraphernalia attempting to draw people to Newfoundland, there is a version of life in Newfoundland that is somewhat disconnected from the land. There are many imaginary landscapes here. As Gerald Pocius writes in his study of community use and manipulation of space in Calvert, Newfoundland, there exists in contemporary Newfoundland a 'Newfoundland culture,' which has already been

[26] Additionally, this marking of the Group of Seven as being national icons is also reflective of the fact that central Canada is the source of political and economic power. Because power is located in central Canada, landscapes and other symbols of nationhood are more likely to be representative of the culture and geography of that place, since that is what decision makers are most influenced by on a daily basis.

discussed. Significantly, Pocius notes that this concept has little, if anything, to do with the reality of life on the island:

> As long as you eat cod, know songs like "I'se the Bye," own a daybed or a sideboard, and live in a mansard-roofed nineteenth century house, you are living the essence of Newfoundland culture. The belonging of place has given way to the objectification of culture onto certain expressive forms. As the ties of place generally weaken in any region, people perhaps increasingly create objectified signs of their culture, promoting item-oriented activities under rubrics like "folklore" and "heritage." (*Place* 23)

Pocius describes life in Calvert as strongly connected to the land and the sea. Much of his study explores how people in the community organize themselves and share the use of these two important spaces. For the men, especially, existence in Calvert (and their 'Newfoundland identities') is strongly connected to their work on the land[27]:

> Calvert's livelihood is primarily dependent on the sea. Men fish in small boats...interspersed with fishing, some families keep livestock, set vegetables and tend gardens. In the winter months, nets are mended, fishing gear repaired, and the necessary boat built. Wood is cut, as well, for next year's building projects and next year's heat. Rarely do men work outside the community.... Many Newfoundland communities have similar histories.... (Pocius, *Place* 16)

As noted Newfoundland historian George Story records, Calvert's dependence on the land and sea, and the dependence of other similar communities, has a strong historical background. In the early days of European settlement on the island, only one industry was really developed: the cod fishery. As a result, throughout much of the history of settlement on the island, "all the communities in Newfoundland were alike in their dependence, direct or indirect, on the fisheries: both fisherman and merchant were involved in a single, dominant industry" (Story 39).

---

[27] Pocius' book was published the year before the cod moratorium in 1992, and was based on research conducted several years before that. Obviously, there have since been significant changes as to how men in Calvert connect to the land and sea that are, at this point, unrecorded. That being said, though the physical work has changed, the belief in the importance of land-based work is likely still present.

When this industry was effectively collapsed in 1992, great change came to the island. Many people left to seek work on the mainland, and the connection between the people and the land began to diminish. As Kevin Major notes, many people who moved away, finding themselves unable to enact the comfortable roles of their 'Newfoundland identity,' instead donned the "Newfie" persona as a coping mechanism. This persona was, of course, fed by the "tourist industry" which had created a series of commodities based on the character of the "Newfie:" "'souvenirs,' joke books, and that ceremonial embarrassment, the 'Screech-in'" (Major 439). The "Newfie" persona, however offensive it seems to some people born and raised in the province, is not without its political uses. It is, in fact, quite powerful as an element and an icon of what is considered to be a common 'Newfoundland culture' and 'Newfoundland identity.' Sociologist James Overton observes the potential impact of the establishment of a common culture in the province:

> The assumption of a common culture and character and the argument that this needs to be defended against outside destructive forces has a number of political implications. The search for and embrace of Newfoundland culture in many cases goes hand in hand with a rejection of all that is held to be alien to the Newfoundland essence.... [T]he question of who is a Newfoundlander becomes important when the benefits of oil-related development are to be handed out.... ("Newfoundland" 14-15)

In reading his observations, one wonders whether there is truth in that idea. Are the true Newfoundlanders the ones that Pocius describes: those who understand the land and how to interact in it? Or are true Newfoundlanders now members of the latter category, those who understand the increasingly asserted cultural life of the province and its degrees of stereotype? Where, then, does that leave people such as Doug Stagg?

***

2.4.4 – Doug's memory box

Doug creates his art with a sense of great confidence. In creating the memory box, he is no different. As soon as I am done talking at the first workshop, and it is time to begin working, he motions to Trudy and has her bring out one of his paintings that he wants to use. It is a painting of the globe, in delicate blues and greens. He points out the island of Newfoundland to me, and touches his chest. He looks directly in my eyes as he does this, wanting to make sure I understand.

Once I nod my understanding, he proceeds, much to Trudy's chagrin, to cut the circle of the earth out of the painting. He places it in the box, nodding with a smile on his face when he sees that it not only fits in the box, but that it fits well. It is as if he had unknowingly created the painting for this very purpose. Then, he takes the painting out of the box and starts to put a coat of paint on the box itself. He carefully mixes greens and browns, coordinating the exterior of the box with the painting. I help get him colours when I can, and we work out a sign language that makes us laugh each time we use it.

He finishes painting the box in two workshops. When he puts the last coat of paint on the box, he makes a motion that looks like he is shaking a saltshaker. I write him a note, asking what he means; this is a new word in our lexicon. He writes back – glitter – and I laugh. I pass him the gold glitter, which he takes with a grin and shakes over the box. As his final act of creation, he carefully glues the picture of the earth into the centre.

Months later, I am looking at pictures of Doug's box in Vancouver. I sometimes look at pictures of the boxes when I am struggling to write; it reminds me of the people I have met, and the stories that I want to share with the world. I show the pictures to the

people I am staying with and we talk about the images. One of them stops me as I scan through the images, and asks me to go back to Doug's box, so he can check the orientation of the continents. "Yup," he says, nodding, "that's what I thought I saw. Newfoundland is in the centre. That's not a typical orientation of the globe." I stare at the photograph with new eyes. "Not that it means anything, necessarily," he notes. "No, of course not," I say. Or, I think to myself, maybe it means everything.

***

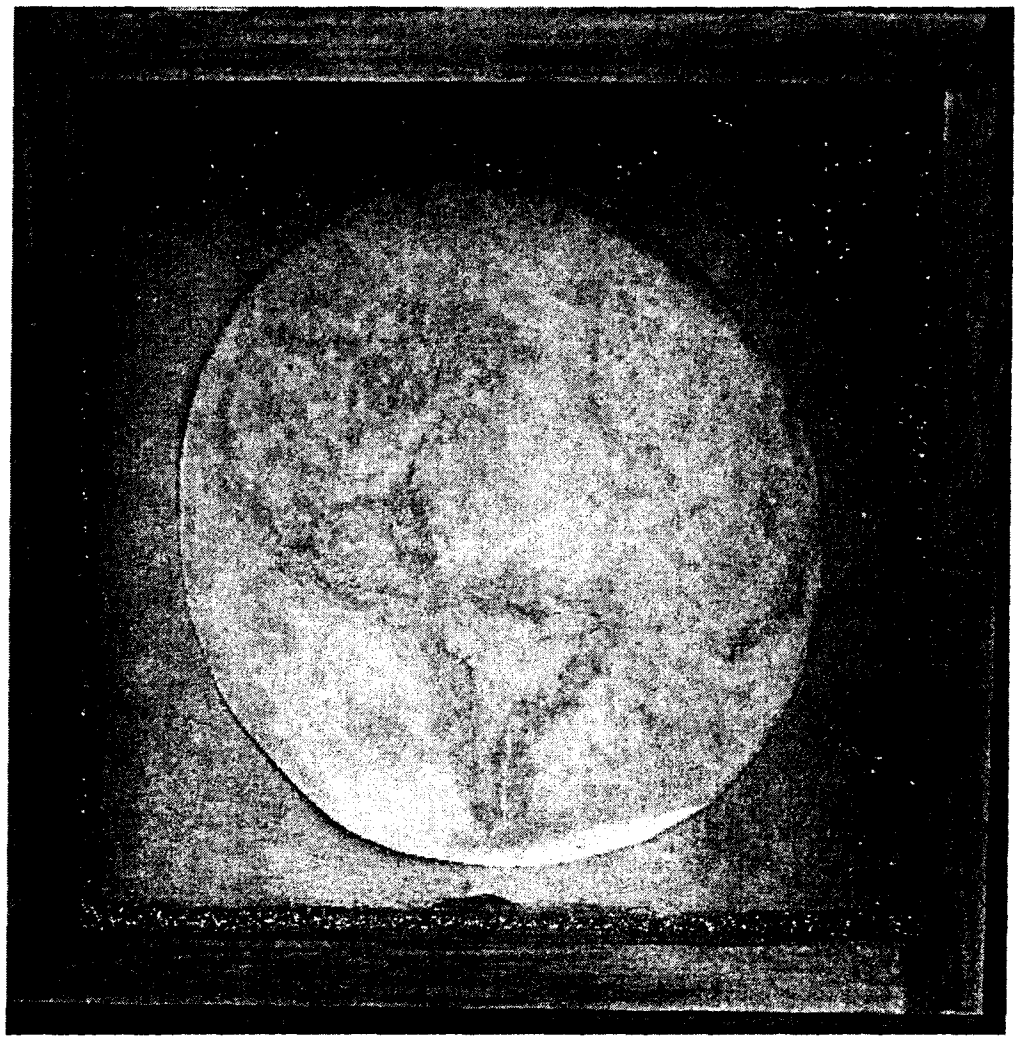

Figure 2 - Doug Stagg's memory box.

2.5 – Conclusion: Why Doug and Godfrey?

I chose to include Godfrey and Doug in the chapter about land because they are both men living in Newfoundland, whose sense of home and way of relating the landscape expands the narratives of maleness bound up in the concept of 'Newfoundland identity.' According to Leslie Bella and Kent Ryden, men in rural places have a specific sort of relationship to the land, because their livelihoods are so dependent on it. In discussing the sense of identity that woodsmen have Kent Ryden elaborates, noting the importance of the physical land to these men:

> These woodsmen define themselves in terms of their life and activities within the woods, an environment they know intimately through years of work and play. Their sense of self – as people and particularly as men – is determined almost exclusively by what they do, and what they do is determined almost exclusively by where they are. (77)

Godfrey and Doug do not have this relationship with the land they presently live on, and yet both expressed strong connections to land (far away, and more imagined). Godfrey painted the land that he used to know intimately, but does not any longer, because he has moved away from it. He feels a lack of connection to his current landscape. This lack of connection that Godfrey feels is not surprising. In general, people who have lived in Newfoundland for a longer period of time will have developed a deep understanding of the place, simply because they have more experience with its physical features. As Ryden describes, the physicality of a space is strongly related to emotional and intellectual constructions that humans use to make spaces into places:

> A knowledge of place is grounded in those aspects of the environment which we appreciate through the senses and through movement: colour, texture, slope, quality of light, the feel of the wind, the sounds and senses carried by that wind. This is literally a *sense* of place.... (38)

Godfrey will likely feel more at home with the land in time, but for now, he remains connected to the land of his birth, much in the way that Newfoundland-born people living away from home still feel connected to the island. Doug, on the other hand, drew a map of the world with Newfoundland at the centre. He is limited by his physical disabilities in his capacity to know the Newfoundland landscape in the way that is prescribed for males according to the province's master narratives. In creating this piece of artwork, he suggests to me that *despite* this inability, he still claims elements of a 'Newfoundland identity.' In his depiction of home, Doug seems to be purposely drawing attention to the fact that he is proud of his province by where he locates it on the map. Newfoundland, literally, is at the centre of his world. In his memory box, he does not depict fields, rocks or bodies of water because he does not relate to the province in that way; instead, he depicts a more global sense of connection to the island.

Since I did not conduct an interview with Doug, it is possible that I am reading messages into his artwork that he did not intend to express. This is a potential problem with visual based research materials. Sociologist Douglas Harper notes that photo elicitation research, and indeed, most research based on the creation of visual images: "...mines deeper shafts into a different part of human consciousness than do words-alone interviews..."(22-23). It is possible to observe considerable subtle information in visual images created by research participants, whether they were created for research or personal purposes. However, narrativity is still a vital consideration in visual research, in part because it can be easy to misrepresent one's inner self in images (Walker and Moulton 169). Significantly, this misrepresentation can be both intentional and

unintentional. Outsiders can easily misunderstand visual images, even if the artist creates them with careful representational accuracy. That being said, the positioning of Newfoundland in the centre of the globe is a particularly evocative image, which requires revisioning of standardized images of the globe for its creation.

Thinking more generally, anthropologist Victoria Strang, in exploring the cross-cultural symbolism of water, asks important questions that are also applicable in considering a symbolic structure like home among a diverse range of people:

> How and why do broad themes of meaning recur cross-culturally? And what leads to cultural differences in meaning? It may be that the recognition of some degree of cross-cultural similarity is useful partly because it also serves to elucidate cultural differences. (93)

Given the diverse backgrounds of the project participants, analysis of the common themes that have appeared in the memory boxes with respect to land is challenging. Even reducing the number of stories explored to two – Godfrey and Doug – does not remove the challenge from this analysis. The meaning of the concepts of home and land are, of course, very different for people with disabilities and recent immigrants living in Newfoundland; I am, in no way, attempting to come to any concrete conclusions through sharing the stories of these two men. Rather, their stories are meant to serve as examples that highlight the diversity of stories that exist within the context of St. John's, Newfoundland. As folklorist Jane Dunsiger relates in her thesis about immigrant stories of home, there are difficulties in drawing generalizations and conclusions from personal information. For this thesis, as it was for hers, "it became clear that any comparative study...had to be based on individuals" rather than pools of data (Dunsiger 13-14).

The one thing that does link these two men in their descriptions of home is the connection that they expressed to land. As Cochrane notes, the people with the strongest connection to land do not typically draw attention to the connection (9). In his work with the residents of Isle Royale on Lake Superior, he observes that people who are deeply connected to where they live:

> ...are the most unaware of that relationship.... [N]arratives that at first glance appear to be devoid of sentiment toward place may imply, in fact, the opposite. The strongest positive response to place is not easily put into words. Rooted individuals lack interest in other places.... (Cochrane 9)

The artistic nature of the *Urban Archaeology* project may have allowed for rooted individuals to express feelings about their home that they would not have expressed in verbal interviews alone. As anthropologist Christopher Tilley notes, "[a]n essential part of the process of making self and social identity is non-verbal" and relates instead to the process of making things (17). However, it is also possible that visual expression functions similarly to verbal expression, and that Doug and Godfrey express connections to land so vividly in their art because they lack a deep connection to it in their lives.

It is difficult to come to a conclusion. Cochrane suggests that people who feel more verbally expressive may not feel a strong connection to place: "narratives...self consciously assert[ing] the striking beauty and importance of place...are an indication of a better articulated, but less heartfelt attachment to place" (9). I do not entirely believe in the truth of this statement; people who are more verbally expressive may simply be more articulate, and may feel just as strong a sense of attachment as someone who is unable to relate experiences well in words. Doug's memory box, for example, comes strongly to mind. Even without this more extreme example of someone who physically cannot use

words to express his sense of place, the very concept of sense of place is personal and subjective, and in many ways can only be truly measured on an individual basis. Every participant in *Urban Archaeology*, when asked about the physical space of the province, had an opinion. Generally, those who felt at home here were people who had grown up here, and had an emotional connection to the province. The physical surroundings, of course, were an element of home for other people as well, both positively and negatively.

For Godfrey and Doug, considering their stories in relation to the narratives of the male relationship to land, and to the narrative of 'Newfoundland identity' in general, reveals that in some ways, they are congruent with the master narrative of the place. Both men display strong connections to land that they have lived on, or are living on presently, as men should according to 'Newfoundland culture.' However, these connections are not expressed in a manner that would be typical in the context of 'Newfoundland culture.' Godfrey knows and loves a land that is far away from this island; Doug knows and loves this island, but not in the manner of someone who has worked on the land. Neither man's narrative is represented fully in the grand narrative of 'Newfoundland culture.'

2.6 – Summary and what's next...

In this chapter, I explored the importance of space and physical experiences to a person's sense of home. In particular, according to the expression of maleness within 'Newfoundland identity,' there is supposed to be a strong connection to the natural world. The participants of *Urban Archaeology* revealed a complexity in this portrait of men in Newfoundland. Godfrey expressed a deep connection to a physical piece of land, but he was not born in Newfoundland, and so does not feel a deep connection to this land. Doug expressed a deep connection to this land, but because of limitations on his physical

abilities, has likely not experienced it in the manner in which, as a Newfoundland-born male, he is 'supposed' to have done. Still, both men are making their home here, albeit with considerable assistance from RIAC and the ILRC respectively. One wonders if they would have an easier time if their sense of home with respect to the land were more congruent with dominant models.

Nevertheless, having explored some of the nature of land and space based connections that people make with the places that they call home, it is now time to move on to consider the social connections that are often bound up in these places as well. For, while the boundaries of the land and environment mitigate the experiences that are possible in a given space, and therefore the place based attachments, they are not the only mitigating factor. Social connections can serve a similar function, which is what will be examined in *Chapter Three: Identity*.

***

I am sitting on a bench, looking at the ocean. A sign, reading "Mile 0" is a few feet away, marking the end of the road that unites the country, from one island to another, across a continent in between. The air is cool as it usually is near the ocean.

This is not a rare experience for me since moving to Newfoundland, to be near Mile 0, looking at the ocean. At this moment, however, I am not looking at the Atlantic. In a fit of extravagance, while working on my thesis I decided to take a working vacation in British Columbia. I am in Victoria, looking at the Pacific Ocean. There are mountains across the way, part of the Olympic mountain range that surrounds Seattle.

At the base of the sign that marks Mile 0 there is a tiny plaque. This plaque notes the location of the Atlantic terminus of the road: 4860 miles away, in St. John's,

Newfoundland. My *Mile 0. I have been in British Columbia for a month now, and when I see the sign, I am hit by an unexpected wave of homesickness. After taking obligatory photographs by the sign, my companions and I sit on a bench overlooking the ocean and talk. As we talk, we stare at the mountains across the water, and in my mind's eye, I can see the South Side Hills in St. John's. And more than anything, I long to be there.*

Most of the time, when you leave a place, you miss the people. For some reason, Newfoundland has been different. I would be happiest, at this moment, to feel wind whipping around me and to be walking down an impossible hill toward Water Street. My friend's father was right. Something about the place has begun to seep into my blood.

> Place enfolds relationships; relationships shape memory; memory sparks stories; stories cling to place, with such tenacity that the destruction of place threatens the entire structure – the fear is that the stories will fly away unanchored, memory will dim, emotion will fade, identity will become tenuous if the geographical root is cut.... (Ryden 94)

CHAPTER THREE - IDENTITY

The night is clear and the stars are shining. I leave the front door of the house I grew up in and start walking. I pass my old bus stop, the ghost of my cat following me, and see my mother waiting. I head up the street to where an old friend used to live, and I see us taking pictures before prom in grade twelve and having water fights to chase away the hot Ontario summers. I stop at the school where I attended kindergarten, and I see myself looking wistfully out the window, wishing to be at the other end of childhood.

I am in my hometown for Christmas. While here, I spend time walking the streets. They are different from what I remember. Rapid development is changing my old world.

My brother comes over to pick up some boxes. He finds his old hockey sticks, and gives them to some boys on the street. He says it is good to see kids on the street again. I agree, and I blink, and for a second, the kids with the new hockey sticks are our old neighbours who moved away ten years ago, and we are getting ready to play with them. I blink again, and my brother is married, and I live in Newfoundland, and this house will probably not belong to our parents by the end of the year.

In some ways, my parents' house will always be my home, but, in others, it will never be my home again. And although I know that in some ways, in St. John's I will always be an outsider, I feel at home in St. John's now. And so, I am left in a liminal space, with two separate homes, no homes, and home all around me, always.

> Home is a place. The family is the smallest political unit.... Home has boundaries that need to be defended against the intrusion of outsiders. Home is a place because it encloses space and thereby creates an "inside" and an "outside." The more the storm rages outside, the more cozy the home feels inside, the more the family is united, and the more the home itself is a unit.... (Tuan, "Place" 163)

3.1 – Introduction: Self identity and family

As Terkenli observes, "[p]eople construct their geographies of home at the interface between their self and their world" (325). Therefore, to develop a stable home geography, people require both a stable physical space they can control, as discussed in Chapter Two, and a relatively stable self-identity.

Identity is in many ways deeply bound up in our relationships to places, and in turn, developing our identities deepens our relationships with places. Kent Ryden observes that identification with place and the components of a given place (physical, social, emotional, and so on), is one of the strongest feelings human beings express:

> ...when our meaningful places are threatened, we feel threatened as well. Along with the other elements of the sense of place, this feeling of identity helps give order, structure and value to the geographical world. Experience, memory and feeling combine with the physical environment to push peaks of human meaning above the abstract plain of space. (40)

As Ryden suggests, identity and place are difficult to separate from one another. As Christopher Tilley describes, this is because the kinds of places we construct and imagine living in "are inextricably bound up with the politics of identity" (15). Ideas about place are strongly related to issues "of class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality" (Tilley 15). Personal identity is an important theme to examine in the context of the broader exploration of home; as previously discussed, what and where people consider their homes to be depends greatly upon *who* they consider themselves to be.

Many participants in *Urban Archaeology,* when asked to describe what gives them a sense of place and home, included references to self-identity in their memory boxes. The identities the participants described revolved around themselves as individuals, as

well as their relationships to their closest social networks (family, close friends and romantic partners). This was an expected split in the exploration of identity. As Terkenli notes, the self is important in the establishment of a home geography (325). However, additionally, the social component of home, the "circle of ... relations that validate an individual as a human being" is also important, in that its presence in someone's life validates that person's right to *create* a home (Terkenli 326). In this chapter, I will explore how constructions of social and self identity influence the degree to which people feel rooted in place, and in particular in Newfoundland. The stories of two participants from *Urban Archaeology*, Yamuna Kutty and Sarah Rowe, will help expand on typical narratives of how relationships contribute to self-identity for Newfoundland residents.

***

3.1.1 - Yamuna's memory box

Yamuna comes in one afternoon with a bag of objects she wants to include in her memory box. She wants to use the adhesives at the gallery to ensure her that box is well constructed; I am helping, manning the glue gun. As we work, she tells me stories. She tells me about herself and the things she is putting in the box, where they come from and what they mean to her. She is from India, but has lived in St. John's for 38 years with her husband, son and daughter. Most of the rest of their family is still in India.

In her box she puts cards from her children, statues signifying her ethno-cultural heritage, mementoes representing other places that she has lived, and tokens of thanks from places she has worked. An ebony figure near the bottom represents time she spent living in the Sudan. A statue of Ganesh in the centre reveals her Hindu beliefs. There are

drawings from her children and photographs of her family: her husband's parents, her daughter, her husband, her mother and her mother-in-law. There are older pictures too, from when her family first returned to India on a visit, before her daughter was born.

She includes two owls. One is a stained glass owl made by her son at the stained glass store on Duckworth Street; the other is a felt owl, made by her daughter. She tells me she has to include both "so I don't get in trouble." Her daughter's owl used to hang in a window at her house, so the colour has faded.

She also includes one of only two photographs of her father that exist in the world. In the one she includes, he is wearing a hat and sitting on top of a motorcycle. She tells me he was not fond of having his photo taken; he didn't allow it often. She places a flute next to the photo - his flute – this seems to be one of the most precious objects in the box to her. About the flute, she only says that it was her father's, and that he always played it when she was a girl. We do not secure it into the box permanently, so we do not damage it and she can access it later.

***

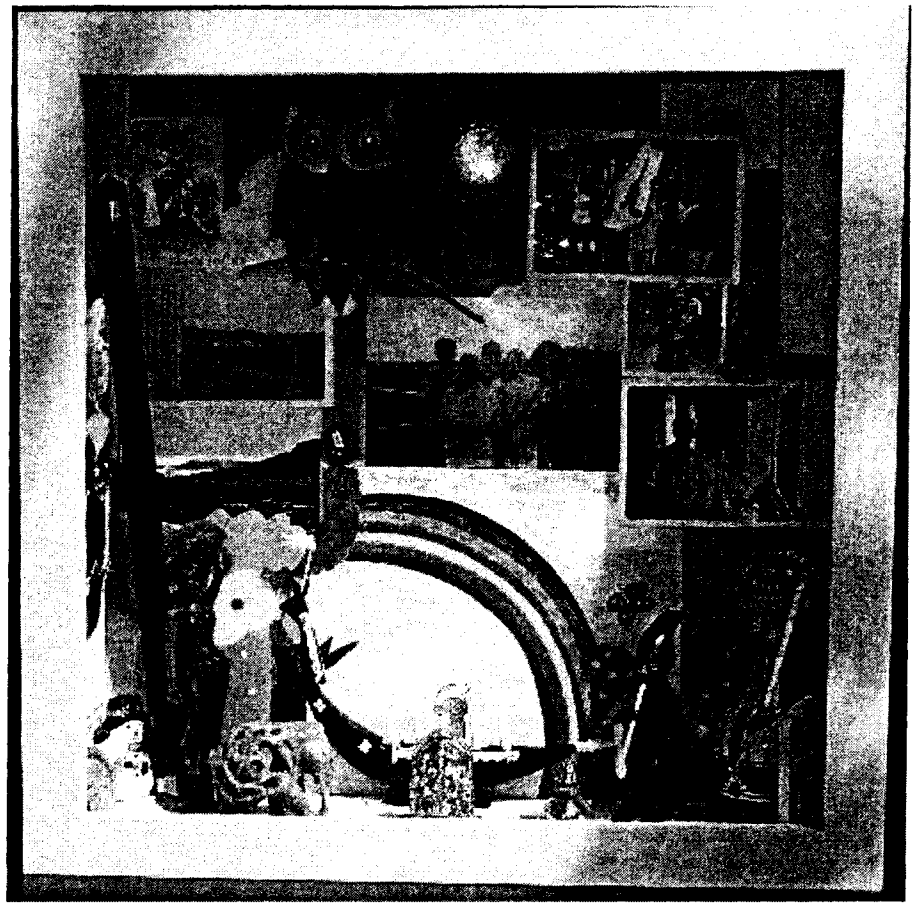

Figure 3 - Yamuna Kutty's memory box.

Figure 4 - Detail of Yamuna Kutty's memory box, showing her father, his flute, and the two owls made by her children.

3.2 – Objects of memory: representing self and social identity

As Christopher Tilley notes, "[i]n modernity, identities are no longer ascribed but are instead achieved" and the certainties of "knowing and accepting one's place" in the world no longer exist (10). Therefore, Tilley suggests, we fashion our own identities. One way in which we reinforce this creative process is through documenting significant life moments and important people who participate in them. We tend to accumulate objects to assist us in remembering these moments and in turn, these objects serve to reinforce our identities. As Kent Ryden elaborates, the artefacts we accumulate in a place then become an important part of what makes our sense of that place. The place becomes imbued with memories and therefore becomes a part of our home:

> The notion of sense of place would be impossible without memory, the recollection of personal history grounded in a particular landscape or set of landscapes. Anything that awakens such memories or keeps them alive – even a stick of wood whittled and manipulated until meanings, as well as chain links, are released from their confinement within its grains and fibres – can be understood as an expression of sense of place. (Ryden 75)

These memory objects that we use to decorate our living spaces function as souvenirs in our lives. They collapse time and space, linking the owner to his or her past or to a far away place or person. As folklorist Susan Stewart observes, "the souvenir...contracts the [physical] world in order to expand the personal" (xii); keeping certain objects around you creates the sense that the events or people they represent are around as well, even if they are not. The personal world is thus enlarged. And as Terkenli notes, a full personal world is important in order to navigate the physical world, and a sense of home is established where those worlds intersect (325).

Interestingly, while Stewart acknowledges the importance of souvenirs, she seems to suggest that they should be used only in moderation. According to Stewart the possession of too many souvenirs can reflect disconnection from the physical world:

> As experience is increasingly mediated and abstracted, the lived relation of the body to the phenomenological world is replaced by a nostalgic myth of contact and presence.... [T]he memory of the body is replaced by the memory of the object, a memory standing outside the self and thus presenting both a surplus and a lack of significance. The experience of the object lies outside the body's experience – it is saturated with meanings that will never be fully revealed to us. (133)

Yi-Fu Tuan provides a different sort of challenge to the importance of memory objects, relating that their inherent focus on self-identity is a very Western centred concept: "More than people in other cultures, Western thinkers have pondered the basic question of how self and group are related" (*Segmented* 3). The personal memory object is designed to be used primarily by one person, privileging one person's experiences over another; this is distinctly individualistic thinking.

To exemplify the Western centred nature of the concept of individuality, Tuan describes the Kaingang tribe, a tribal culture in Brazil where men sleep together, wrapped in each other's arms on long hunting trips. He notes that they do not do so for reasons of sexual attraction, but rather to "establish mutual trust and group cohesion" (Tuan, *Segmented* 15). He observes that the Kaingang have a strong group identity rather than an individualistic one: all action is oriented towards the betterment of the whole social group rather than each group member (Tuan, *Segmented* 16). This is in contrast to the, "common image of America...[the] land of individualists" (Tuan, *Segmented* 19).

For people from Western cultures, the heavy emphasis on individuality means that reflection on self-identity is a common practice. Tuan notes that this tendency can do one of two things for people in this cultural environment:

> ...[a]s a person reflects on who he is...he may well improve his self understanding and achieve a firmer hold on certain facets of his personality. On the other hand, he may be distressed to discover that he has no centre – that he is a multitude. (*Segmented* 9-10)

Participants in *Urban Archaeology* who included significant descriptors of their personal self-identity in their memory boxes tended to be either people from North America, or people in a younger age bracket. There were, of course, variations in this trend, but in general, the North Americans tended to make reference to aspects of their life that strengthen and highlight their individuality. The theme of individuality appeared especially often in the youth participants' boxes; this is not surprising given their age, and their North American (and generally Newfoundland) origins. As noted, typical Western cultural models tend to focus on the development and maintenance of a strong sense of self, and tend to suggest that this should happen at a young age.

Yamuna's box, however, is different, and reveals her to be a person deeply embedded in close social relationships. Her sense of home is strongly related to her immediate family. It is possible that this relates to her different cultural background, her status as an immigrant in Newfoundland, the stage of life she is in, or some combination of these factors. For a moment, though, focusing on cultural differences as a source of this trend in Yamuna's box, it is interesting to examine the work of Jade Alburo. As a result of the focus on individuality in the West, she notes in her study of Filipino immigrants that many people who move to North America have trouble with cultural

immersion: "immigrants face an even greater challenge when it comes to lifestyle and convention...the American penchant for individualism and independence often runs counter to the Filipino emphasis on family closeness and loyalty" (Alburo 141). The immigrants who participated in *Urban Archaeology* generally did not include many references to their personal self-identity in their work. Instead, there was a distinct primacy given to memory objects related to family members.

3.2.1 – The symbolism of family in Newfoundland

Somewhat counter to the trend toward individualistic thinking in Western cultures, according to 'Newfoundland culture,' family is an important symbol, both in an immediate sense and in a larger collective way. For Yamuna, family connections to India are one of the few remaining reasons that she might consider moving back to her native country (Kutty); similarly, Leslie Bella notes that immigrant Newfoundlanders living in Ontario cite family connections to Newfoundland as one of the only reasons they might consider moving back to the island (134-5). Other writers, such as Michael Crummey, note that among Newfoundlanders, there is almost a filial connection to other islanders; the entire island, in a way, is a large family group. As Kevin Major writes at the end of his Newfoundland history book *As Near To Heaven If By Sea*, this sense of community in the province contributes to the sense of home people feel here:

> [This is a place w]here to a stranger you're 'buddy,' or 'sweetheart.' Where a stranger's first question is, 'Where you from?', meaning where in Newfoundland and Labrador did you grow up and I'm sure to know someone who knows you. Freshly caught lobsters cooked in seawater on a beach, tea brewed in the winter woods. Cod. The wit, the humour, the laughter that is part of every day. The optimism. Home. (464)

The "where you from" question refers, of course, to the six-degrees of separation game noted earlier by Pamela Coristine. And in many ways, this game and this form of social questioning are effective because of the relatively small gene pool from which the bulk of the island's population is drawn. As George Story notes, historically, Newfoundland has been a fairly homogenous place, in terms of its population:

> ...the smaller communities, indeed, whole stretches of the coast, were frequently homogenous in both religion and racial origin – a fact frequently observed by nineteenth-century writers on the Island. (39)

The homogeny, or perceived homogeny, was present at least until Confederation, as Major describes. And, he suggests, this cultural makeup rendered the province attractive to Canada; Newfoundland would not bring new ethno-cultural conflicts to the union, because they had all been "worked out:"

> ...when Ottawa saw the homogeny in our population, the picture of a tenth province brightened even more. Nowhere else in North America could such a vast majority of a population be traced to a small geographic area. The innate discord between the English and the Irish seemed to have been worked out.... The census of 1945 showed that more than 98 percent of the population had been born in Newfoundland and Labrador. Of foreign cultures there was but a scattering, immigrants mainly of Lebanese and Chinese background. (Major 385)

With the idea of homogeny in a culture and a population, whether that idea is perceived or real, comes a sense of rigidity about class divisions and gender roles within that population. This is true of Newfoundland, especially with respect to gender. As mentioned in Chapter One, for a man living according to 'Newfoundland culture,' his place is in the woods and at sea; for the woman, her place is in the home, tending to family and maintaining domestic life. Marilyn Porter elaborates:

> The outport communities were always (up to the influx of federal money in 1949) on the brink of survival.... [At that time] it was women who, as always had the prime responsibility for feeding, cleaning, and caring for themselves, the men and

> the children. It would have been hard in those wild conditions even in prosperity; in poverty it was an enormous task. (37)

Again, as discussed in the first chapter, this aspect of female identity in Newfoundland does not limit women in their knowledge of how to survive in the province or their knowledge of the land. While women in 'Newfoundland culture' tended to monitor domestic life more than the commercial fishery, they were in no way lacking knowledge of the world. Folklorist Andrea O'Brien relates:

> For women of my grandmother's generation, knowledge of the woods in particular was necessary as a means to contributing to family subsistence. Women planted vegetables in the woods and often pastured animals there during the summer as lands within the community proper were used to cultivate hay for winterfeed.... (81-2)

Indeed, culturally, women in Newfoundland can be perceived as equal to men in many ways; they are as strong and able as men, but their strengths and abilities may be slightly different.[28] As a result, their work is different, but it is often recognized as being just as important as that of the man's and just as valued:

> Whenever they are asked, Newfoundland men unhesitatingly credit women with at least half the work of the family. There is an air of something like awe in the folklore descriptions older men give of the women of their youth. (Porter 41)

For the woman in 'Newfoundland culture,' the family is the centre of her world. She is capable, strong and intelligent. She is a good hostess, embedded in her community and wise to the world around her. The symbol of the Newfoundland woman, and of the family she controls is a powerful one.

---

[28] I do not mean to suggest that women in Newfoundland have not had struggles similar to many women in the context of Canadian, North American and Western culture. Indeed, women in Newfoundland have shared many stories with women across the world; however, each locality creates different experiences, and different sets of challenges. For more information on the complexity of gender relations in Newfoundland, McGrath, Neis and Porter's book, *Their Lives and Times*, is an excellent reference.

3.2.2 – Family and photography: Yamuna in Newfoundland

Though not a primary theme in all boxes, images of family did appear in many of the boxes; this is perhaps due to its importance in 'Newfoundland culture,' perhaps because family is a universal theme when talking about home and belonging, and perhaps because well over half of the boxes were created by women, and many of those are women from Newfoundland. Indeed, the heavy use of photographs of family groups was one of the few common threads that linked these boxes created by people of very diverse origins. Whether the focus of the box was on the family or not, many participants included at least a nod to a group of people who function as a family in their lives; for some participants from other countries, the family was a central theme, as it was for many people from Newfoundland. For participants from other parts of North America, the family was a more secondary note in their memory box.

Photography was, by far, the most common means through which the family was represented. As folklorist Pauline Greenhill describes, this heavy reliance on photography to safeguard memories is typical of contemporary North American culture:

> Just about every North American family has a collection of photographs. These images may be the work of professionals or amateurs, and may show family members or outsiders, familiar scenes or exotic ones. They may record events of accepted significance: rites of passage such as wedding ceremonies, or ones which become important mainly because the camera was there to record them, such as Sunday picnics. Since the advent of Polaroid cameras, the images may be only a few minutes old, or they may have been around for over a hundred years. This diversity of form and content is circumscribed by the relevance of each image to the family or someone in it, but otherwise seems at times to be unlimited. (3)

As with objects, these photographs all carry significant sets of narratives with them. Sometimes these narratives are implied in the photograph, and sometimes they come in

the form of verbal descriptions as the images are shown to another person, in what Greenhill describes as a "multi-media evocation of the family" (3).

Helping Yamuna with her memory box, I knew I was experiencing her family in a unique way. In many cases, she was using the items in her box as Susan Stewart suggests, collapsing both physical and temporal distances. Her careful choice of items representing family members currently living in India helps to collapse physical distance from them, and to reinforce her self-identity as an Indian woman in the absence of their presence. Yamuna's use of items made by her now adult children in their youth, and of items and photographs of her deceased father serve to collapse temporal distances, and reinforce the relationships she has had in the past, and therefore the people she has been in the past: a mother and a daughter. Her memory box highlights her relationships and her status as a member of a close family group.

For Yamuna, her family is clearly one of the most important aspects of her life. Intriguingly, regardless of why she has prioritized her life in this manner, she reveals herself to be very similar to the typical woman who might claim a 'Newfoundland identity.' Yamuna's story and memory box expands this concept of femaleness that is bound up in the 'Newfoundland identity;' clearly, it is not only native-born Newfoundland women who feel strongly connected to their families and have their personal identities reinforced by those connections. And yet, as mentioned, despite sharing this value dominant cultural value, Yamuna's story and those of other immigrants like her are rarely discussed in relation to narratives about 'Newfoundland identity.' Despite this strong similarity, her story remains somewhat excluded from mainstream Newfoundland, because of her different ethno-cultural background. In some ways, this is

not surprising; she speaks a different native language and practices a different religious tradition from the majority of Newfoundland-born people. However, she has lived in St. John's for decades, and knows the city better than some younger people who are born here. Should her story be told separately from others?

3.3 – Social identity and cultural models

3.3.1 – Sarah's memory box

Sarah's box is decorated in a bright and cheerful colour scheme, filled with memory objects from her girlhood. The back wall of the box is plastered with a collage of childhood photographs, showing what appears to be a vibrant network of family and friends. The exterior of the box is decorated in feathers, and a set of curtains covered in silver stars shields some of the contents of the box from view. The box depicts Sarah as a girl grounded in her history. From what I know of her, she does have those qualities, but they have come to her through sources not apparent in her box.

I begin my interviews by asking participants their gut response to the question: "Where is your home?" When I ask Sarah, she responds by saying "Newfoundland," nodding and smiling broadly. I ask why and am surprised by what she says next:

> *Just the fact that I've lived in Newfoundland my whole life.... I didn't have much of a home life, like family wise, I was in like foster homes and shit like that so, Newfoundland is basically what I call home. Because, y'know, I can't really say I that I had much of a family life, because my life wasn't whatcha call typical. Home, actually like wanna go there and sit down, it wasn't like [that], I dunno, family wise, so Newfoundland is basically what I call home. (Rowe)*

Looking at her memory box, I would never have guessed that Sarah had experienced a difficult childhood. Many people who have seen her memory box

commented similarly, noting that she seems to have had a happy upbringing. Visually, the bright, bold colours and playful use of materials in her box evoke happy emotions, and the presence of so many old family pictures suggests that those emotions are associated with her early family life. In truth, it quickly becomes apparent in our interview that Sarah has largely been denied what social geographer Catherine Robinson describes as "the richness and ongoing support of [stable] home-life" (48). However, Sarah does seem to have adapted somewhat to living in a state of upheaval:

> *I'm used to this, this is my life so it's nothing, nothing new to me.... [T]his is my life, I'm used to it. I've been all over everywhere and just y'know getting placed here and here when I was a kid and stuff.... This is nothing different. This is what my life is.... This is life, by's, this is how I live. (Rowe)*

***

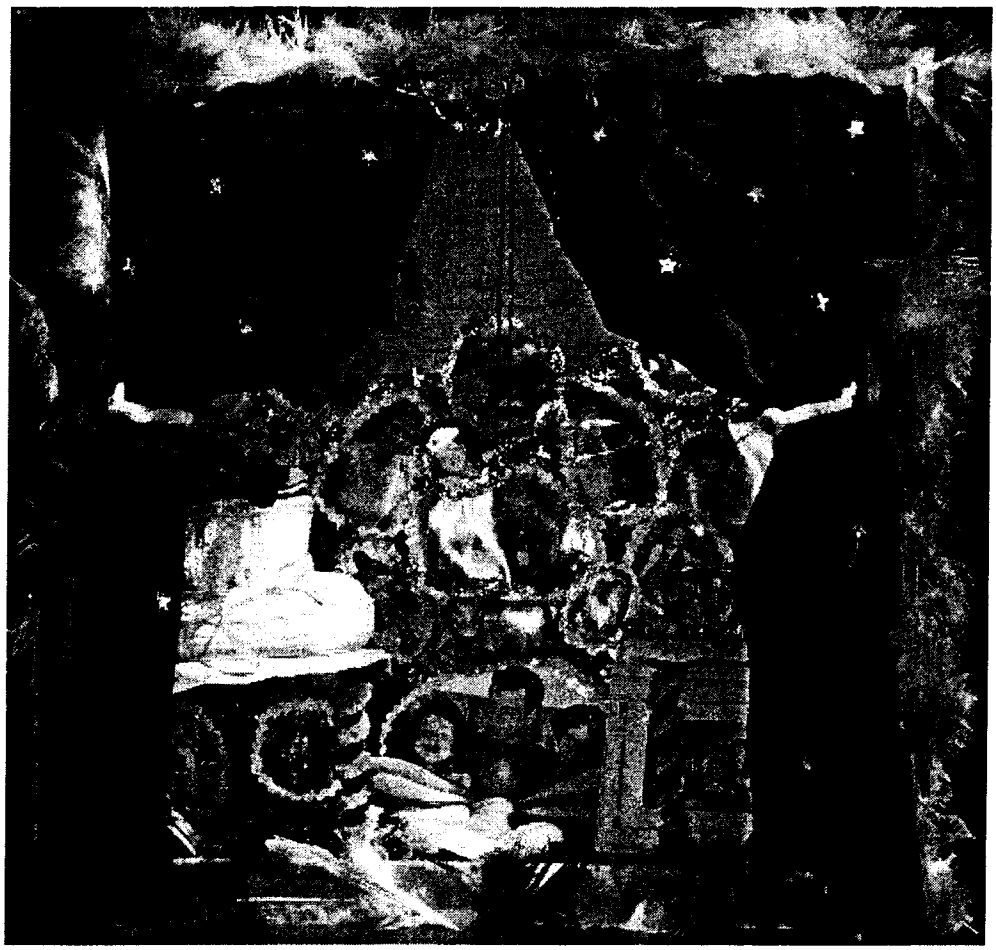

Figure 5 - Sarah Rowe's memory box.

3.3.2 – Cultural models and the importance of family and friends

Assuming that the objects included in participants' memory boxes do indeed function as life souvenirs, it is revealing to note the age at which these were collected and that they are intended to represent. As Susan Stewart observes, childhood is the time period most often longed for in souvenir collecting:

> The souvenir is used most often to evoke a voluntary memory of childhood, a motif we find either in souvenirs such as scrapbooks, or the individual life history or in the larger antiquarian theme of the childhood of the nation/race. This childhood is not a childhood as lived; it is a childhood voluntarily remembered, a childhood manufactured from material survivals. Thus it is a collage made of presents rather than a reawakening of a past.... (145)

As geographer Robert Hay describes in his exploration of the sense of place of residents of a New Zealand peninsula, a child's perspective on the world creates a very narrow sense of home. As people on the peninsula age, from childhood and adolescence through to early adulthood, their sense of place naturally shifts. In childhood, "most of a child's time is spent with the family, the local school, and playing with other local children" and their primary 'place' is in the family home (Hay 17). In adolescence, the physical sphere grows wider, and self-identity becomes a more primary concern; sense of place is most concrete at this age when a person's self identity is validated by their primary social peer group. This phase can extend well into adulthood, especially if the adolescent moves away from the place they grew up in. By the time people in Hay's study were older, he again notes a change in the sense of place as experienced by the residents. In older phases of adulthood, Hay observes that there is a distinct connection formed between residents and physical aspects of the place that they live in (17). Elderly residents, in particular, felt the strongest connection to place:

> The sense of place among such respondents is of profound importance; they were also very willing to talk to me about it, and were pleased that someone wanted to hear about their lifetime experiences. They displayed a deep sense of place, through autobiographical insideness and being embedded in both their homes and in a well-developed social network. (Hay 17)

In exploring the memory boxes created by *Urban Archaeology* participants, Hay's observations seem particularly applicable. Several of the youngest participants created memory boxes depicting their houses and immediate family members. Participants in their late adolescence and early adulthood tended to make memory boxes that described their experiences with family and friends. Psychologist Dan McAdams, in a book about personal narrative and mythmaking, notes that it is very common for adolescents and young adults to have a life focus on friends:

> The imago[29] of the friend is a relatively common one in the life stories of both men and women in their twenties. As young adults make provisional commitments in the realms of work and love, friendship links them back in time to experiences that are more familiar and comfortable.... Friendships remain important, but the character may fade somewhat in prominence as people move into their thirties and begin to consolidate their identities in the realms of work and family. (167)

Several of the older participants in *Urban Archaeology* also created art that deals with their family and friends; however, many of the older participants in the project were not from St. John's, and most were not from Newfoundland. As a result of this they were likely unable to express a sense of place that dealt more heavily with the space that they currently live in; as Hay notes, "an assessment of the development of a sense of place by age stage in the life cycle is appropriate [only] if a person has spent more of his or her lifetime in one place..." (17). Applying the life cycle analysis to the immigrants and

[29] An imago is, according to McAdams, a "personified and idealized concept of the self," or, an archetypal role in a personal narrative that helps to define self-identity (McAdams 122-132).

refugees who participated in *Urban Archaeology* seems fruitless at first thought; most participants in *Urban Archaeology* who were older and were immigrants would naturally have been unable to express or experience a deep sense of place with respect to St. John's. One would assume that they have not experienced enough time in the place to feel at home here. However, it is significant that many of the members of the multicultural community in the city, like Yamuna, have lived in St. John's for decades, but still Newfoundland and St. John's did not figure heavily in their boxes. She has experienced quite a bit of time in the city. This suggests that although she, and they, have lived in the city for a substantial portion of their lives, they still are not quite at home here. Importantly, though, when I spoke with these participants who have lived here for a long time, many of them did describe it as home. This observation both reflects the multifaceted nature of the concept of home, as well as the subtleties that can be read from visual research data. Verbally, these participants describe St. John's as 'home.' In their visual contributions to *Urban Archaeology* however, other information can be observed.

Indeed, a particular kind of depth can be found in visual data, both on an individual and a group level of analysis. As folklorist Sabina Magliocco observes in her study of Pagan folk art and altars:

> ...the study of folk aesthetics can sometimes yield greater insight into the appeal of a particular culture and its politics that socio-political analyses: we may learn more about why people become Neo-Pagan by studying their artistic creations than we might by administering sociological surveys. (x-xi)

By extension, the study of the vernacular celebrations of self and place expressed in the *Urban Archaeology* project can reveal some subtle psychological underpinnings of the sense of home of the participants, which may not be articulated in other forms of

communication. Of course, these messages are not always easily found. The analysis of visual art is challenging due to often ambiguous symbols and meanings that are present with in it. Pauline Greenhill notes that photographs "usually suggest more than they actually tell. The event, the moment itself is recorded, but the photograph alone cannot indicate what happened before or after..." (3). The photograph only hints at a narrative; much about the actuality of the events that it supposedly documents remains ambiguous. For other forms of visual art, there is often a similar lack of objectivity about the messages that are conveyed.

Despite this ambiguity, however, there are usually models and forms common to all cultural modes of communication within a given group that can be observed and commented on. This is true for both verbal and visual forms of communication, and was touched upon in the discussion of cultural models and master narratives in Chapter One. A return to these ideas is important to consider with respect to Sarah. Psychologists George Rosenwald and Richard Ochberg elaborate on the nature of cultural models:

> When people tell life stories, they do so in accordance with models of intelligibility specific to the culture. Without such models, narration is impossible. These models are consonant with the forces that stabilize the given organization of society. Stories that comply with such cultural models are generally recognized as sensible.... By contrast, stories that fail to conform to the models are more or less alarming. (265)

3.3.3 - Cultural models: Sarah in Newfoundland

In considering Sarah's box, I wonder if she has included so much information about her family because of her exposure to ideas of family that are present in 'Newfoundland culture.' Is there a cultural model that she has unconsciously used in the

creation of her memory box that highlights the importance of the family? Separate from messages she may have received from Western cultural media that tend to promote individuality and separation from the family group, Sarah has been raised in an environment that has likely stressed the importance of family, especially in the description and establishment of a home environment. Whether that was the truth of her experience or not, if she wants to generate what Rosenwald and Ochberg would describe as a "sensible" story in the context of 'Newfoundland culture,' it is possible that Sarah would want to positively frame her experiences with her family.

I also wonder, in considering Sarah's box to what degree she has internalized some of the cultural messages inherent in the cultural models that are predominant in Newfoundland: family is important here, especially for women. If you do not have a family, or a place to belong, can you claim a 'Newfoundland identity'? Can you be at home here? McAdams notes that often the reality of a person's situation is not important to consider; rather, what should be considered is the way individuals narrate the situation:

> ...your description of the most significant people in your life represents an autobiographical decision, indicative of the way in which you have defined who you are. You need to ask yourself why you chose the persons you chose, and why you chose to remember them in the way you have. (260)

In her memory box, Sarah appears to be defiantly claiming a female 'Newfoundland identity,' narrating the story of her childhood in a very happy tone. She wants it to be known that her childhood was full and vibrant, like Newfoundland cultural models say it should have been. Though she may not have been deliberately articulating this in her memory box, she does have an affinity to Newfoundland that became apparent throughout our interview, which, I suggest, may have affected her creative process.

Home for Sarah, as she described it to me, is not really about her family; home, for her, is about Newfoundland. Even though she admittedly wants to "travel the world" she tells me in our interview that if she ever decides to settle down and raise a family, she "would definitely stay in Newfoundland" (Rowe). Moreover, if she were to stay in Newfoundland, she would want to raise a family in the more traditional 'Newfoundland' way. She is adamant that she would not raise a family in the city of St. John's:

> If I was gonna have family, it'd be around the bay, it wouldn't be so much in St. John's. Public schools aren't very...[pauses, unsure of how to say it].... They're good, but, I went to public school...[and] there's peer pressure and stuff like that.... Around the bay...there's less of a chance for them to get involved with, y'know, shit, 'cause I've been through it all.... They're not goin' to public school in St. John's.... They'll be little bay kids. They'll go fishin' an' have four wheelers and stuff like that ...the ol' bay life.... I lived in Witless Bay.... Totally different life around the bay than it is in St. John's.... Kids are a lot different. They're just...free spirits...out there.... (Rowe)

As discussed previously, women are the stable, domestic figures in Newfoundland culture;' they keep the home running, and remain there through the year while men come and go. Sarah's life, as she described it to me, has not been lived according to that model thus far. Instead, it has been inherently unstable, and is beginning to make her tired. At the time of our interview, Sarah was preparing to see a potential apartment, which would be her fourth "one bedroom apartment in the last year" (Rowe). She was only eighteen years old. She hoped this place would work out, because she was looking forward to having a stable place to live: "Somewhere that I can actually be like...get off work walk to my house and just lie down and (snoring noise)" (Rowe). I wonder to what extent Sarah is trying in her memory box to re-story her past, and establish a foundation to move forward, so she can finally find a peaceful place to sleep at night.

***

3.3.4 - Sarah's story

Sarah describes the contents of her memory box for me in a breezy narrative:

"[I included] all my friends from when I was younger. And lots of me, me, me, me, me, me. And oddly enough...that one down there on the bottom...that's my Dad, and he left when I was three, so, when I found that.... And he came back like three times, like to visit me three times since I was three. So, when I found those pictures I was like "Whoa!".... Mom says he's an asshole, but you can't always take Mom's word... Actually he did fight with my ex-boyfriend. He got in a fight with my ex-boyfriend...but y'know he calls on my birthday...sent me 200 bucks.

And [pictures of] my Aunt. She's wicked. She's been, like, all over the world. She lived in Paris for four years. And she's one of the nicest people like I've ever met in my entire life. She like, if she had 2 bucks, an' that's all she had to her name to live on, she'd give it you.... Really kind.... Just like, help anyone, kinda, nice person. She had three boys and she did have a daughter, but she died when she was like a baby, and I was the only girl in the family, so she loved me.... I was just wonderful.... My Aunt, when she'd come in town...when I was a tiny little girl she bought me like 400 dollars worth of clothes!.... The only aunts and stuff I know is my Mom's side really. My Aunt Dolores is good, too. She, she's really, really nice and down to earth... in a strict way, but she's good. Like she helped me pay my damage deposit on my apartments, like she paid it and I'm paying her off. That kinda thing. Very strict and stable, but cool at the same time. She's not too, like, "Oh, she's a bitch."..... But, she knows what she's doin'...

Lots and lots of pictures in there from my friends... 'cause, I had so many different friends from so many different places.... So that was pretty cool, I found all those pictures.

My Nan, my Nan died when I was three years old. So, there's a picture in there somewhere of her...I can't really remember much of her, but I'm sure she was great....

My brother and me never ever got along really.... I would like a family home, y'know what I mean?...So he's in there somewhere.

And, I dunno, lots of pictures of friends. And that's a birth certificate from when I was born. I lived in Long Pond, but I don't remember that, 'cause I was just born. And we lost the house when my Mom and Dad got divorced..."

Throughout our discussion, I have a sense that if I wanted to, I could probe a little, and receive a narrative with a much darker tone than the one that Sarah is choosing to tell me. I choose not to, instead letting Sarah tell me the story that she wants to be heard.

***

3.4 – Conclusion: Why Sarah and Yamuna?

In many Western cultures, a person's self identity is based first on their profession and achievements, and then on their intimate relationships. As Ryden describes, sense of self is determined in many cases by what a person does, and further, whom they are surrounded with (77). Both of these factors are significantly related to geography. The geographical features of that space influence occupations that exist within a given physical space, and even taking into account recent enhancements in Internet based

communication, people tend to interact with those who are physically close at hand. Especially on an island like Newfoundland where there is a limited population, a person's immediate family typically comprises the people they are surrounded with most often, at least in their formative years. As such, the family has a huge role to play in determining a person's sense of self. As McAdams notes, it is natural that themes of family would be readily apparent in a project such as *Urban Archaeology* that asked participants to delve deeply into their personal histories and senses of self: "Social scientists often point to the family unit as the major vehicle for cultural transmission in childhood..." (60).

The stories of Sarah and Yamuna add depth to the understanding of the significance of the family as a symbol in 'Newfoundland culture.' In general, sometimes family is important because family members are present in a person's life, and because they can provide a uniquely stabilizing support structure. Sometimes, though, a family unit or family member is important in a person's life because they are absent, because the sense of home that a family can provide has been disrupted somewhere along the line. Yamuna, though she notes that she feels at home here (Kutty), and has lived in Newfoundland for nearly four decades, has a greater potential to be excluded from mainstream Newfoundland because because of her ethno-cultural differences. In some ways, in her memory box, she articulates that this is unfounded. She followed the instructions for the project very literally, and chose to focus strongly on family, just like one would expect an older Newfoundland-born woman to do.

Sarah, on the other hand, does call herself a Newfoundlander, and claims 'Newfoundland identity' but also experiences narrative exclusion within the context of St. John's. Her sense of home and belonging in Newfoundland has been disrupted by her

scattered early childhood and current unstable home life. She does not share the strong family connections that are stereotypical of the experience of 'Newfoundland culture.' In her memory box, however, this is not at all apparent. Instead, in her box, Sarah recreates her childhood experiences, rendering them in technicolor, and daring anyone to question the happiness of her childhood. It should be noted that this is not uncommon behaviour, as Michael Owen Jones notes about his informant Gary Robertson, who crafts an identity for himself based on a range of cultural influences (133).

In contrast to Sarah, many of the other young Newfoundlanders who participated in the project created boxes with significant references to family members, and then corroborated their importance in follow up interviews. Very young participants drew pictures of immediate family members, and adolescents and young adults portrayed friendship groups. As Steve Abbott, one of the participants from the BTIM, describes, family is important to him because his family creates a place where he feels safe. His memory box contained several important objects that refer to his close family and friends:

> Home to me is not just residence; it's not a physical, established place. It's safety, to me. Safety and love, and it sounds cheesy, but it's true. Just, where you can go and be the person, sometimes, that you're not in front of everyone else. And even, even sometimes just to lick your wounds, sometimes to be a complete fool, y'know? But, home is *family*. And that's why Newfoundland will always be home to me. Home to me...is that safety net, that offering of a warm, a warm place.... Even when you're that person that...you can't exactly be around your friends, or in school or even at work.... When you go home you can be contrary, you can be whatever, 'cause your family's gonna almost have to accept you for who you are. That's what's great about home to me. (Abbott)

Clearly, descriptions of home in this section are less tied to the physical land than they are to the accumulation of experiences. However, as mentioned at the start, self identity based on intimate relationships is intimately connected with geography. As

Terkenli notes "[p]eople construct their geographies of home at the interface between their self and their world" (325). The family group, whatever it is comprised of for a given individual, is a huge and vital component of an individual's self-identity. For Yamuna and Sarah their connections to their families both align them to and disconnect them from the master narratives of 'Newfoundland culture,' and, in this way, affect aspects of their self-identity that they are able to claim.

3.5 – Summary and what's next...

In this chapter I explored how social identity can help make a person feel at home, and in particular, how close social relationships with friends and family are used to define a person's social identity. In the context of 'Newfoundland culture' I observed in Chapter Two that for men, identity is strongly related to land and sea-based experiences, and in Chapter Three that for women, identity is strongly related to family relationships. For Yamuna, family relationships were very prominent features in her sense of home; however, despite this congruence between her story and the dominant cultural model of female behaviour in Newfoundland, it is surmised that her story has the potential to remain excluded from the master narratives of the province. For Sarah, on the other hand, family relationships are a prominent feature in her sense of home, but the type of relationships that she experiences are unexpected. For both of these women living in St. John's, Newfoundland, family relationships are important to their sense of home, but their families for various reasons are somewhat atypical. Would they be considered more mainstream if that was not the case? As in the preceding chapter, it is difficult to come to a conclusion. However, it is important to open up space for such discussions.

Asking people to define their homes is similar to asking them to define themselves; Christopher Tilley separates the notion of identity into two segments, local and global, calling them "two poles in relation to identity construction" (18). According to his rubric, thus far, I have explored 'local' constructions of home expressed by *Urban Archaeology* participants, that which is "anchored in specific places and relationships" (Tilley 18). In Chapter Four, I examine a more global form of identity construction, which is, as Tilley describes, something "abstracted, mediated, generalized and [involving] multiple points of reference subsuming the specific..." (18). In *Chapter Four – Belonging*, I consider the concepts of belonging and tradition, as well as the importance of symbols of community as these relate to a person's sense of home in St. John's.

***

My grandmother is making dinner, bustling around her kitchen, chopping cauliflower, steaming salmon, and peeling potatoes. I sit at the table drinking tea. This is the first time my grandmother has ever cooked for me. It is Christmas. In a few days, I will return to St. John's, and start writing my thesis.

My mother is near, pretending to examine a decorative plate, and anxiously watching her mother. My grandmother, whom I am supposed to call Barbara, is in her eighties, and my mother is concerned about her ability to function in the kitchen. My mother asks Barbara if she can help. In text, it is a typical conversation for my mother to initiate; in tone, I am amazed to hear the voice of my 15-year-old self speaking. I see my grandmother, at best, once or twice a year, so I do not know my mother well in her role as a daughter. Barbara refuses to let my mother help. Barbara and my mother bicker

about the refusal in the way that mothers and daughters do, and they come to the sort of understanding that mothers and daughters do. Neither one moves.

And then, Barbara looks at me, her eyes flashing. She loves a good fight. And I realize then that I know those eyes in the way that I knew my mother's voice: they are surprisingly mine. And I see in those eyes the eyes of my brother and my cousins, and when I look more closely, I see the eyes of my great-grandmother and my ancestors before her, and I see the eyes of the children I might have in the future. Although I do not know her well, just being around my grandmother on this night makes me feel at home.

It occurs to me, then, that in the experience of this meal, I am being fed in ways that I did not expect and for which I will be forever grateful.

> As I make my own family, as I shape the lives of my children, together we choose what to reclaim – and discard – from our familial stories. Every day, we entertain an important question: What must we preserve? (Laird 14)

CHAPTER FOUR - BELONGING

I am in a pub in Victoria, British Columbia, with two friends, one from Germany and one from Ontario. I have been feeling homesick for Newfoundland, and so we have come to the 'Irish' pub in Victoria, which promises nightly Celtic music.

The band plays "Sonny's Dream" by Ron Hynes to start and I sing along, a smile on my face. As the performance progresses, the band also plays songs by the Beatles, REM, and Van Morrison. I quickly become cranky at the lack of what I consider to be 'Celtic' content. I tolerate the music until they play contemporary folk-rock songs by Great Big Sea, and call them 'traditional' Newfoundland music.[30] *At that, a latent irate Newfoundlander awakes in me. My companions and I leave shortly afterwards.*

Later, back in St. John's, I tell this story to another friend who is not from the province. She laughs, noting that she too has often found herself defending Newfoundland on the mainland. But then she says, no matter how much you defend it while you are gone, "when you come back it's like 'Welcome back, Ontario.*'"*

We laugh ruefully. No matter how much we love it, we often both feel like we will never really belong here.

> As contemporary humans realize that they belong to an interconnected and interdependent world, they turn to their ethnos, their region, their community or their ancestral place to secure their distinctiveness. They look for ways in which they are different and unique to protect their identity.... They divide the world into us and them. (Terkenli 333)

***

[30] Much of Great Big Sea's repertoire does consist of traditional Newfoundland songs, and so, in some ways, the singer was not incorrect in his labelling. However, the songs that he chose to perform that evening were not part of the traditional repertoire, so, in other ways, he was incorrect.

4.1 – Introduction: Thoughts on belonging...

Although it is more abstract than a concrete relationship with a physical space or a concrete relationship with a close family network, a sense of belonging is an important aspect of feeling at home in a given place. Establishing relationships with land and people can *develop* a sense of belonging, but sometimes a sense of belonging can also just *exist* due to a congruence of values with a given population, a similarity in traditional practices or beliefs, a feeling of connection to a landscape, or something even more intangible. This intangible sense is the sense of belonging that people feel when they move to a new place and they say it just fits; like falling in love, feeling an instant sense of belonging is a response to numerous tiny cues in a given environment that are almost impossible to tease apart. Regardless of why it occurs, however, a sense of belonging is, as already stated, an important part of feeling at home somewhere, and bears a special significance in Newfoundland (Pocius, *Place* 3). As has been the model in previous chapters, the stories and memory boxes of two participants from *Urban Archaeology,* Trudy Marshall and Elena Sizov, will serve as entry points into the exploration of various elements of the Newfoundland sense of belonging, as well as probing its positive implications and possible limitations.

***

4.1.1 - Trudy's story

Trudy is a busy woman. Every time I see her, she is surrounded by a crowd of people. When she is finally able to sit down and tell me about her home, a peaceful look comes over her face. This is some of what she tells me:

"Home is on Woody Island...that's in Placentia Bay, that's where I was born. Well, I guess I was born in Come By Chance, but that's where my parents lived. My parents had a cabin, and because of health reasons, and job, and stuff like that, I haven't been there for two years. But when I go there, immediately my blood pressure goes down. And just the sounds and smells, I mean I'm fine in October to sit out on the deck and listen to the wind blow. Y'know, like that's...am I glad that we were resettled and moved? Yes. I mean my opportunities certainly would have been very limited. And I'm glad that happened. [But] Arnold's Cove where I grew up is not really home.

I would say that now, right now, St. John's is home. Like a realistic home where I can be, *and be comfortable, and work, and have friends, and...y'know what I mean.... It's a good home.... I've lived in United States, in Virginia. I've lived in Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia at different times, but I would say that Newfoundland is home, and St. John's is, y'know, is.... Y'know, when I came here when I was 17 to go to university alone, it was such a culture shock. And it was a bigger culture shock than when I went to Montreal first. Y'know, Montreal stank because of the pollution, it was difficult for me, but... it wasn't as much of a culture shock. I think when you're in a smaller town... out around 'da bay'... you feel a lot safer, and you have a lot more freedom. And in here, although I had freedom in terms of not being around my family, the freedom of being able to go out at night.... Just, it was very different.*

But, I think one of my fondest memories...besides being on Woody Island, but being with my mother, is on Easter Sunday, walking down on, I guess, Military Road...goin' into Lemarchant and goin' into the Basilica. The Basilica was blocked so we couldn't go to church, but we didn't, we walked down and we had coffee and stuff.

And I had just come off of - I guess I've had severe bouts of depression - but I was really sick, and just feeling safe *for the first time in a long time, it was really [touches her chest]...it was good. That was home, it was really nice.*

It's really [pauses] it's a really comfortable city to live in. And you can get the best of a lot of worlds. Like you're close to seeing the ocean and going out in the ocean, and you're close to going in the woods, or there's a lot of green space. It's nice to, y'know, you're close to a lot of places, and walk your dog and...it feels, it feels pretty safe, y'know? It really does. I don't know if I should be going out at three in the morning to see, y'know walk my dog, but sometimes I have to, and it's not bad. It's not bad."

***

4.2 –Tradition and belonging

North America, and Canada in particular, is widely touted as the land of ethnic diversity and freedom. However, the veracity of this belief is questionable; many minority groups still often feel that their beliefs and practices are not respected here, and indeed, that their differences are at risk of disappearing due to exposure to the majority culture (Stern 12-13). They do not feel a strong sense of belonging. In contemporary times, many people are resistant to the perceived effects of globalization. People fear assimilation and acculturation, and this fear in part accounts for the predominance of ethno-culturally specific labels and activities throughout North America. As Steven Stern writes, "...modern ethnic folklore need not function only as entertainment, or to promote ethnic identification, but may have other functions which relate to religious, familial and social spheres..." (30). In many cases, the contemporary use of traditional folklore serves

to establish and strengthen ties of belonging in a given community. William Bascom observes that traditional culture, while it can educate and provide an outlet for the transmission of cultural values, also aids in maintaining cultural stability:

> ... folklore is an important mechanism for maintaining the stability of culture. It is used to inculcate the customs and ethical standards in the young, and as an adult to reward him with praise when he conforms... Here indeed is the basic paradox of folklore, that while it plays a vital role in transmitting and maintaining the institutions of a culture and in forcing the individual to conform to them, at the same time it provides socially approved outlets for the repressions, which these same institutions impose upon him. (349)

Through the interaction with a shared set of symbols, people practicing traditional activities establish a sense of belonging to a community, and therefore, a sense of being at home in a given place. Terkenli elaborates on this phenomenon, noting that distinctiveness is a commonly sought goal for contemporary humans, and that distinctiveness is often defined by place (333). He notes that where physical space is less defined, culture is often used to create the differentiation (Terkenli 333).

Cultural homes, in many ways, can be quite exclusive. Sometimes, especially in North America, all that serves to unite a larger population in a sense of home is shared identification with symbols and traditional practices. We all have our physical homes, where we live with some sort of family grouping. Sometimes, this family group exists in a larger enclave that shares a culture, which in turn, engages in a set of traditional behaviours imbued with meaning. And, of course, groups and cultures can be based on a variety of factors in addition to ethnicity, such as economic status, gender, physical ability, age and occupation, to name a few.

For every person who feels a strong sense of belonging and commitment to a place, there is someone who does not fit in, who feels excluded from it. As Jacobson

notes, place attachment is "necessary in order to be oriented to the world;" moreover, place based attachment is not just a geographic fact, it is also:

> ...a moral statement about communal affiliations, ties, political beliefs, associations and claims. And as a moral statement it is a form or category of knowledge, of knowing the world and one's place in it, literally and metaphorically. (190)

The knowledge of one's place in the world comes easily through the knowledge and practice of shared traditions. Costumes, gestures, foods, language: all these and more can combine to comprise a person's self-knowledge, and by extension, their place-knowledge and their sense of home. Moreover, people of a similar ethnic background need not be the only ones to share the traditions. Traditions can also be shared across occupational-based groups, age-based groups and gender-based groups, to name a few. There are a wide variety of groups in the world that people can belong to; it is in situations where people do not have membership in a communal group that isolation can develop and a sense of home can be disturbed. Jacobson elaborates:

> ...social and communal groupings...can be marked through language, ethnic markers (clothes, speech, associations), body language, codes...and disciplinary distinctions.... What is striking about this form of boundedness is that it is fluid, portable – a constantly shifting, yet defined road map. It can be group-based, or it can be individual; in a multicultural world, it is predicated on the discourse of "rights".... Rights are about personal distance – from government, but also from one another. Rights accentuate ethnic, cultural and gender distinctions...[a]nd rights ultimately – as in human rights – are portable and are not predicated, as is nationhood, on territoriality. (17)

If identity is as strongly based on rights as Jacobson suggests, and identity is connected to home, then people have the right to feel at home in a given location, and to feel a sense of belonging. Moreover, if Canadians consider human rights to be as significant as we think we do, or as much as we are told that we think we do, then

significant efforts should be made to ensure that people have the right to express their identities in whatever manner they choose. The belief that Canadian citizens have the right to express their unique identities has been challenged several times in Canadian history. This is not surprising. In any contemporary country, there will be times when people do not feel a sense of belonging because ethno-cultural expressions of self are limited, or because their physical abilities are challenged by the environment, or because they do not fit into typical models of behaviour. Whatever the cause, it is, I imagine, fairly common that some people do not feel like they can do what they need to do in order to feel at home in a place. For a country like Canada that prides itself on being welcoming, the times when people express that they do not feel like they belong are surprising, however, and can sometimes develop into national debates. These debates are most intense when they relate to symbols that people use to define their national identity.

One notable such episode occurred in 1989 and involved the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and a recent graduate of the police academy, Baltej Singh Dhillon (MacGregor 297). Dhillon, a Sikh man, wanted to be able to wear a turban instead of a Stetson with his dress uniform, as he is religiously prescribed to wear a turban at all times (MacGregor 298). Initial media coverage surrounding this debate aroused significant public outcry. Dhillon was eventually granted the ability to wear the turban by the court system, but there was significant protest among Anglo-Canadians at the thought that the iconic image of the RCMP officer might change. For Anglo-Canadians, the image of the RCMP was a symbol of their national identity, and affirmed their sense of belonging to the country. Notably, this outcry was not present among Franco-Canadians, and in minority populations throughout the country; in many ways, the

RCMP uniforms are reflective of Canada's British heritage, and as such, are not as meaningful for people who do not share that ethno-cultural background. This discrepancy reflects the fact that, "symbolic resources [such as the RCMP uniform] may speak in different languages to different people and may even be contested between groups of different social identities" (MacGregor 306). The RCMP uniform, for some Canadians, is apparently an important symbol of their nationality; for others, it is simply a uniform that some people wear when they are working. The question is, when and if that symbolism should take precedence over an individual's rights?

Navigating between different realities, and interpreting differences between the significance of cultural symbols can be challenging. For all of us, no matter where we are navigating, episodes like this are important to consider. Discussing the meaning of cultural symbols like the RCMP uniform allows us to understand their importance in our lives and our corresponding emotional reaction to them. Sometimes, symbols of belonging are not as important and unifying as they appear to be.

4.2.1 – Belonging to 'Newfieland'

There are several cultural symbols and traditions that are widely touted as iconic representations of 'Newfoundland culture;' people who understand those symbols and with whom they resonate are part of a select club that has achieved some sense of belonging to the island culture. This nationalistic island culture in Newfoundland, it has been argued, is partially based on the experiences of the people living in the place, and in part is a more artificially created identity that began to emerge in the latter half of the twentieth century (Byrne 238). The economic makeup of Newfoundland changed

significantly after the Second World War, and the entrance into Confederation with Canada; naturally along with those political and economic changes, the sense of identity felt by the people living in Newfoundland changed as well. For a variety of reasons, as Pat Byrne observes, "what began to emerge to replace the traditional culture of the fisherfolk was 'Newfieland' peopled by 'Newfies'" (238).

This newly emerging place, "Newfieland," was perceived to be largely a backward, low income space, peopled by the stereotypical "Newfie" of the joke, a person "too stupid to realize his own ineptitude and alien status vis-à-vis mainstream North American society, but eternally happy, embarrassingly hospitable, and...fiercely proud of his homeland and his way of life" (Byrne 238). As Byrne describes in an article exploring the invented tradition of the Screech-In in Newfoundland, once that persona had been established, many residents of the province began to adopt it as their own. The adopting of such personas is, he writes, "a calculated survival technique," that is "born of expediency" (Byrne 238-9). It is safer to be *something*, even if the something is the butt of a joke, than to be without identity. In a community, it feels better to adopt at least a portion of the communal identity rather than to reject it completely. Trudy, in her descriptions of home, occasionally adopted a thicker version of the Newfoundland accent; in addition to verbally expressing that she belongs in Newfoundland by identifying places like Woody Island as home, she expresses it through choosing to use local expressions and accents.[31] She adopts a version of the 'Newfoundland identity.' Several participants in *Urban Archaeology* demonstrated similar choices when talking about Newfoundland.

[31] Trudy's story will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

However, as will be explored later, there is more to their sense of belonging to Newfoundland than the use of an accent.

The provincial government, attempting to draw more tourists to the province, has even been promoting 'Newfoundland culture;' as discussed in Chapter One, there are a plethora of tourism brochures and commercials full of pictures of smiling, welcoming people playing fiddles and eating codfish. This promotion has been occurring in this manner for decades. It all began, as sociologist James Overton records, in "the mid-1960s [when] the provincial government was heavily involved in promoting...tourism" (Overton, "Coming" 95). In 1966, a 'Come Home Year' was celebrated in Newfoundland. The event was both an effort to draw expatriates home for a visit, and to draw new tourists; many events were scheduled that highlighted the unique culture of the province (Overton, "Coming" 95). Training sessions were held for workers during the 'Come Home Year' that emphasized the importance of being welcoming to tourists, because it is an important part of 'Newfoundland culture.'

However, as mentioned in Chapter One, there have been populations of people living in Newfoundland for many years who have not necessarily lived in congruence with the dominant cultural models that are promoted in tourism and through activities like 'Come Home Years.' These people, despite the so-called welcoming atmosphere of Newfoundland, and "Newfieland," and the strong sense of belonging that is bound up in the 'Newfoundland identity,' have not always felt welcomed here. I suggest that this is perhaps because they often bear an allegiance to a *different* set of traditions and cultural symbols than those in 'Newfoundland culture.' In her ethnography of the Jewish

community of St. John's, folklorist Allison Kahn considers the question of whether the Jewish community felt a sense of belonging in Newfoundland:

> The first European Jews to settle in Newfoundland were met by a people keenly aware of their separate identity...[and] they also entered a culture in which social conflict was deeply seated: between merchant and fisherman, Protestant and Catholic. How then, did the trickle of Yiddish speaking, Eastern European Jews – themselves products of a rigid class system and cultural isolation – fit into this landscape? (60)

One of her informants mused on the reasons why this seemingly unlikely community might have developed in St. John's, suggesting that perhaps no feeling of belonging was felt towards the province, and that instead, the Jewish community developed in the city almost by chance:

> Yeah, why did anybody come? Some people fell in by accident. Some people stopped off here on the way to somewhere else. There were some Jewish people here. Very few, some of the old-timers, Perlin, is a name that comes to mind... somebody had to come here first and, you know, God forsaken place like this in those days especially. In the early nineteen hundreds, I imagine, things were pretty rough here. They're bad enough now. But why anyone came I don't know. I think that if somebody might have come to the first place they came to, and it's the first on this side of the Atlantic, probably they got off the boat and just stayed. And then it grew from there. (Kahn 151)

But where and how did the community grow? The Jewish population of the city is quite small today. Like most of Newfoundland, the group of Jewish people remaining in the city is suffering from an out-migration of its young people (Kahn 321). Moreover, the cultural isolation that the Jewish community has felt here over the years has not been conducive to the development of a thriving population; they have not been able to establish themselves as being at home here (Kahn 60). In a province where until recently the public school system was heavily influenced by Christianity, this is not too surprising. For a community that shares neither the ethno-cultural background nor the religious

background of the dominant population in the city and in the province, feeling a sense of belonging to St. John's and to Newfoundland would be challenging, to say the least (Kahn 60). The Jewish community's stories were not and are not reflected in the master narratives of the province; whether this is as a result of other social exclusions, or a potential indicator of them is unclear.

Now, taking into consideration this discussion of symbols and belonging, it is perhaps because of the nature of the groups I was collecting stories from that there were not many symbols of 'Newfoundland culture' used in the memory boxes. The boxes created by members of the multicultural community, especially, likely reflect experiences similar to those had by members of the Jewish community; home for these people contains no deep connection to symbols of 'Newfoundland culture,' but instead, a heavy emphasis on their unique ethno-cultural background and family. This does not mean, however, that the people who made these boxes do not feel a sense of community and belonging to this place; it does mean, however, that as for the Jewish community, there may be other symbols that are more relevant to these groups that convey a message of belonging. Moreover, that sense of belonging might not be towards Newfoundland, but may instead be related to their ethno-cultural background, or to even more abstract concepts that cannot be represented symbolically. Indeed, as Overton notes, it is natural for people to want to conglomerate in groups based on shared experiences: "Like wants to be with like and identity comes from being part of a cultural community associated with a particular homeland" ("Newfoundland" 15). A shared sense of community and belonging is very important in determining where a person feels at home; however, the manner in which it is developed, according to the *Urban Archaeology* participants, appears to be

largely unrelated to the sharing of cultural traditions and symbols. There were other, more esoteric themes that seemed more important to some of these participants.

Above all else, many participants expressed their home as a place where they felt safe and included, which was an important theme for Trudy in talking about home. This expressed notion of safety is a unique theme, especially when considered in relation to the elements of 'Newfoundland identity' that relate to friendliness, hospitality and welcoming people in. Though the friendly nature of the province is often promoted as a reason to visit Newfoundland, whether all residents of this space feel this sense of welcome remains to be seen. I find it interesting that although Trudy should feel completely welcomed and at home according to birthright-based customs of the island, she focused heavily on the concept of safety in talking about her home. Because she feels a need to continually articulate the sense of safety, this suggests she does not *really* feel safe in the context of Newfoundland. It is likely that some of her co-workers and the people with disabilities that she works with do not feel safe either. Home, for most of the people from the ILRC, does not have much to do with Newfoundland directly. Home, for them, is simpler, more often related to their immediate dwelling than a larger scale nation state.

***

4.2.2 – Trudy and ILRC's memory box

Trudy described the memory box she created with her workmates:

"...the idea is to have the inside of the box kinda what's accessible, what's home, what's comfortable.... And then on the rim of the box is like, words like hate, and...intolerance.... Jane even did Braille...in the back, and the inside the house.... Jane

mentioned [home is] having, for her, is to have a lot of windows...and to have an accessible house, so we actually built a house out of Popsicle sticks, and we're going to have a veranda on the front and a ramp down. And someone...put a like a key in there, 'key to accessibility'...and so there's a lot of different things that sort of make people feel comfortable and at home.... [S]o everybody came...either contributed by coming up with words or ideas and putting things in.... So, it's really about the fact that here at ILRC, or in some of our homes, it's accessible, or comfortable or safe, but when you go outside sometimes it's black, it's unsafe, it's uncomfortable, it's...people may call us names, words that are not very nice, and that's what we get from outside...

...People come to ILRC and say 'It's like I'm coming home. It's...the first time I've ever felt safe coming out of my house.' And we want to encourage people - one of our principles is full participation in the community. So, we encourage people, make them safe...about going out to dinner.... About being able to find an apartment.... Or going to activities at fitness clubs and whatever.... So...sometimes outside does feel unsafe, but... you gotta feel safe somewhere, so that you go out and feel safe enough outside. And we're trying to spill over into the community, so that we're affecting other people's views of people with disabilities.... So, that's the box...the word 'safe' [was my personal contribution]...the fact that the outside world is sometimes scary, y'know?"

***

Figure 6 - The ILRC staff's memory box.

4.2.2 – Belonging not to 'Newfieland,' but Newfoundland

As Pocius writes, when speaking of life in Newfoundland a person "belongs" to a place, they do not merely live there (*Place* 3). But, in reality, what does that mean? To belong to a place, is that to have lived in a town for your entire life? Is it to have worked the land there? Or is it to understand the stories and the songs and the culture of the place - the symbols of belonging? Or instead, is it to have a sense of safety and comfort? Pocius asks similar questions:

> Are the newly objectified symbols of Newfoundland culture really reflective of indigenous concerns? Or is knowing where to place your cod trap or harvest your wood – knowing where, in short, to *place yourself* – the fundamental framework for so much of everyday life? (*Place* 24)

He notes that this sense of knowing where to place oneself is not often considered in relation to Newfoundland life in contemporary times. Instead, a basic form of place knowledge and sense of belonging has given way to the prominence now placed on knowledge of history and culture, and preoccupation with heritage (Pocius *Place* 23). With the change that has occurred in Newfoundland's occupational landscape and its demographics, the ability to know where to "place" oneself and others has become challenging. Focusing on 'Newfoundland culture' and its symbols is easier.

As Pat Byrne notes, some of these cultural tropes that are trotted out under the headlines of history and culture, no matter their origin, often become "perceived by their originators as an affirmation of local and national cultural identity" whether they began that way or not (242). This is the case with the Screech-In ceremony, where newcomers to the province are sworn in as honorary Newfoundlanders after they recite a few phrases, eat a candy, kiss a codfish and drink a shot of rum. For some people born in

Newfoundland, the Screech-In is almost offensive, for others, it is a no more than a joke, and for still others, the ceremony is "one way to affirm the newly emerging 'Newfie' identity" (Byrne 242). Whatever one thinks of this identity, at the very least it is a significant aspect of the culture of the island as has already been discussed. At the very least, the "Newfie" stereotype is a source of economic gain for people from Newfoundland. Unfortunately, in some ways, the same is true of many stereotypical cultural expressions throughout the world.

Folklorist Tad Tuleja, in the introduction to a collection of essays about traditions and group expressions of culture in North America, notes that traditions such as the Screech-In are becoming increasingly important in the contemporary world. Rapid technological development is changing much of North America, and these changes are mirrored in the changing landscape of Newfoundland, as it moves from a subsistence economy to something more diverse. According to Tuleja, invented traditions are important for places undergoing this sort of transition, because, "invented traditions...[respond] to rapid social repatterning by fixing some areas of social life as comfortingly 'invariant.' Thus 'customary traditional practices' [are] revived, and new ones devised, to provide a refuge from the dizzying pace of modern life" (1). In the absence of more detailed knowledge about what makes people belong to a place, it is easy and comforting to rely on symbols.

In addition to being comforting, in terms of place-based attachment, many of these traditions do encourage the development of a sense of belonging to a group. Moreover, because they take place in a given location, they mark that location as special, and encourage the development of a sense of belonging to that location. As many writers

have noted, "the essence of home lies in the recurrent, regular investment of meaning in a context with which people personalize" (Terkenli 325). In other words, "[i]dentifying with place does not just happen. It requires work, repeated acts which establish relations between people and places" (Tilley 10). This work creates meaningful spaces, which become places, which ultimately are where people begin to feel like they belong and are at home. Significantly though, the spaces do not need to be identified through marketed cultural traditions. A place like the Independent Living Resource Centre, where Trudy works, creates a welcoming environment for people with disabilities, where they get a sense of belonging and where they feel safe. Over time, with the accumulation of positive experiences there, the place becomes laden with meaning, and eventually it becomes home, as Trudy described in our interview (Marshall).

For many who live in St. John's, or perhaps anywhere, "[w]here one belongs to, the place of home, is fundamentally a series of emotionally based meaningful spaces" (Pocius, *Place* 7). Those spaces can be centred in a small location, or spread across a wider area. For someone like Trudy, who primarily resides in Newfoundland, although she has lived in a variety of other places, the emotional spaces have built up here and she feels attachment to this specific space. It is the accumulation of meaning in this space that means she feels a sense of belonging here and feels at home. For others, though, in more transitory life stages, a sense of home becomes more global, almost out of necessity. The story of Elena Sizov exemplifies this more global emotional response.

***

4.4 – Belonging to something more

4.4.1 – Elena's story

I open an email from the Avalon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, and skim it quickly. I used to attend Fellowship church services when I first moved to the city. I have not attended a service in almost a year, but I am still on the email list, maintaining a tenuous toehold into the community that initially welcomed me.

Unitarianism is a spiritual tradition concerned with social justice; through attending services in St. John's I learned about poverty, hunger, homosexuality, racism and environmental issues in the city. Frequently, they welcome speakers from community organizations, including the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council (RIAC). In this latest email, because of their RIAC connection, I read news of one of my Urban Archaeology participants, Elena Sizov, for the first time in months. She and her family have been deported. The author of the newsletter writes that Elena is unsure of what the immediate future holds, and that she wishes to return to Newfoundland and Labrador. I understand, now, why I have had trouble contacting her recently.

Prompted by this news, I take some time to look at the photographs I have, remembering the afternoon I spent with her. She came late to the workshop, because she had been dropping her son at school, but she was enthusiastic about the project from the start. I can see her clearly in my mind's eye, happily painting, and saying she felt like a child. She told me about art lessons she had taken as a girl, and showed me some of her paintings. She said she thought it was important to give people opportunities to express themselves creatively. She said it was good for the soul.

We spoke as friends that afternoon, rather than as interviewer and participant, and I have not spoken to her since that day. Shortly after the workshop, I began to have trouble contacting her. As a result, I do not know many details of her life, other than that she was born in Russia and has lived in many other places throughout the world. She said she hoped Canada, and Newfoundland, would be the end of her journeying.

Thinking about Elena's story and the dominant image in her box of a boat, containing what she told me were, "all the hearts of people in the world, together, in peace," puts all these thoughts of home, and of sense of place into a particular perspective. Presented with a chance to send a message to the wider world, she decided she wanted to spread a message of peace, ecological balance and intercultural understanding. Elena is, from what I recall of our conversation, and from what I can imagine based on news of her deportment, in a state of extreme rootlessness and relative homelessness. She has been in that place for years, and likely will be there for several more. As a means of coping with having no home, she chooses instead to view herself as being rooted in the world itself. Home, for Elena, is everywhere. 'Earth is my home.'

What would the world be like if we all thought like she did?

When she left the gallery, she thanked me for the chance to make the box. She said that she felt lighter, having spent the day painting. That her life, as it was then, did not often allow for moments of creativity and reflection.

***

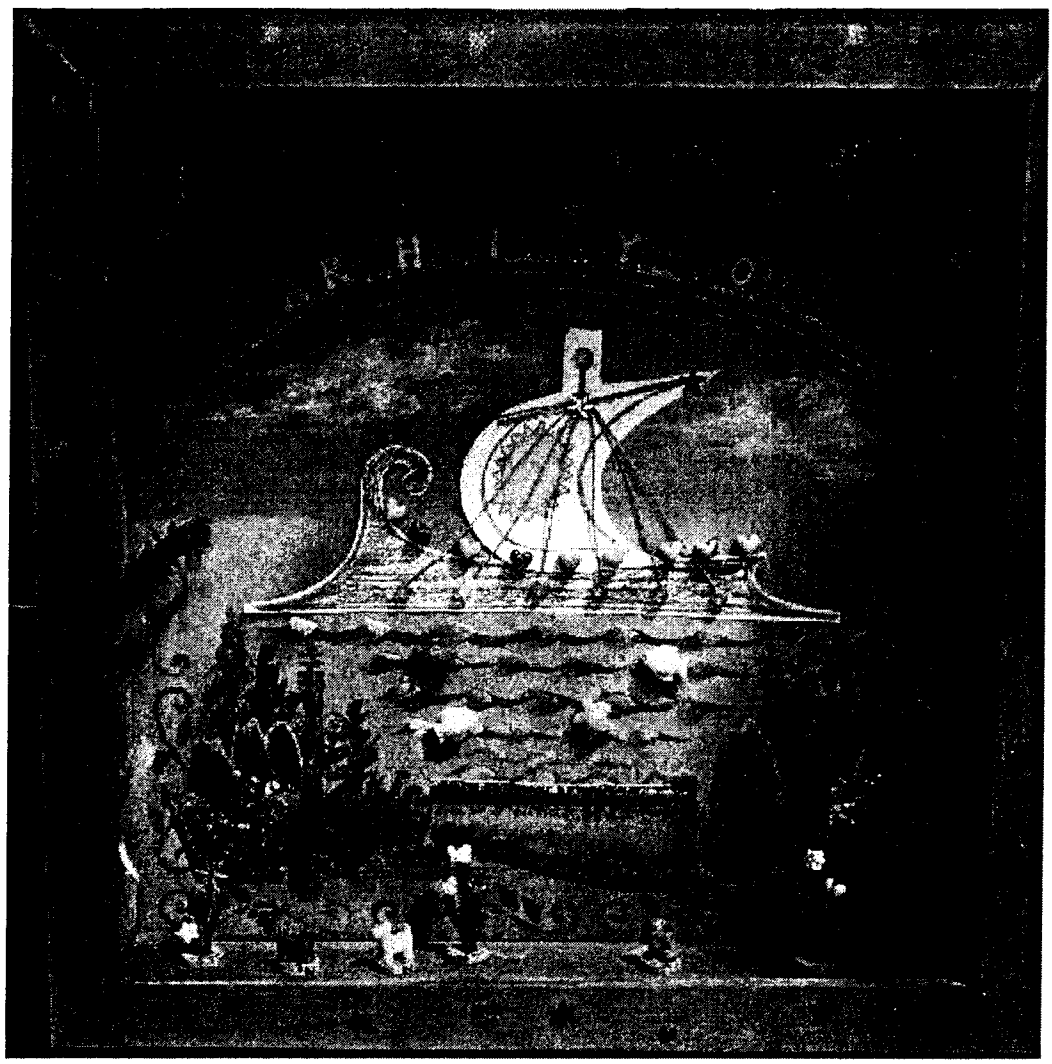

Figure 7 - Elena Sizov's memory box.

4.4.2 – Spirituality, belonging and 'Newfoundland culture'

Similar to the image of the road in Godfrey's box from Chapter One, the image of the boat in Elena's box is very evocative. Both images suggest travel and motion, which are not ideas typically associated with the concept of home. In Elena's case, the image of the boat is particularly poignant, since a boat provides a very mobile sense of home; wherever a person is in the world, if they are on their boat, then they are at home. Her choice of image conveys a deliberate meaning:

> Like our very identities, imagery is both discovered and made. To a certain extent, children, as well as adults, make their own images. But the nature of the making is strongly dependent on the available raw materials, and the raw materials are to be discovered in and through culture.... Every person is exposed to and draws upon parts of the catalogue in a unique way. (McAdams 60)

When she came to work at the gallery, Elena asked if the box she created had to reflect her Russian cultural heritage. I told her no, and encouraged her to simply answer the question "Where is your home?" in her memory box, as best she could. In so doing, Elena appears to have drawn more from her experiences in the Unitarian Universalist church rather than her cultural background, and also is expressing, like Trudy and the ILRC staff, the importance of a sense of acceptance and safety in describing home. As McAdams suggests, people draw upon raw materials that are present in a cultural catalogue when they are choosing imagery to use in a creative situation. Magliocco concurs, noting in her examination of pagan altars and their artists that "while each artist or small group of artists...works individually, their vision, iconography and aesthetics are not private or individual, but communal and shared. Their works reflect a shared worldview that is intimately related to the politics of the movement as a whole" (65).

Whether intentionally placed there or not, artistic creations often contain references to some aspects of the artists' ideologies.

In depicting her home as earth and moreover, in including a representation of all the people in the world in her boat (through the multicoloured hearts), Elena clearly reflects many of the inclusive beliefs of the Unitarian Universalist faith to which she is becoming connected (Eddis; Hewett). Notably, despite its inclusive nature, Unitarianism is not a dominant religious force in Newfoundland, in Canada, or really anywhere in the world. Especially in Newfoundland, where the Christian religious roots are quite strong, Unitarianism is a faith tradition that caters to people who feel marginalized from that tradition, and is itself, a somewhat marginalized religious group. As an example of the marginal spaces to which the Unitarian Universalist faith caters, there was a recent campaign within the tradition to create congregations that are officially welcoming to gay, lesbian and transgender individuals (Brewer).

Like Trudy's story, Elena's story serves to expand the concept of a sense of belonging. It is not only based on affiliation and identification with symbolic traditions and practices related to ethnicities. For some people, cultural traditions that traditionally unite a group are not valuable and do not resonate. Elena chose not to depict her Russian cultural background, which incidentally would only serve to isolate her in the context of Newfoundland by emphasizing her ethnic differences. Instead, she chose to display elements of her personality that are more in line with her Unitarian spiritual beliefs. Unitarianism, while it seems to share many values with the cultural model of the welcoming person with a 'Newfoundland identity,' is in fact a tradition that is quite

marginalized here. So, despite her best intentions, Elena seems destined to exist outside of the mainstream culture in Newfoundland for a while longer.

Moreover, with respect to Newfoundland, she does not display identification with the place directly, or with symbols of 'Newfoundland culture.' This is not surprising; as Tilley notes, "[i]dentifying with place does not just happen. It requires work, repeated acts which establish relations between people and places" (10). Elena, in all likelihood, did not live here long enough to develop those feelings for Newfoundland.[32] More generally, Elena's box reflects that she does not feel an attachment anywhere, unlike Godfrey, who was deeply connected to Africa. Elena's home, according to her box, is the whole world. In this way as well, her narrative does not align with that of someone claiming a 'Newfoundland identity,' who would supposedly feel connected to a specific community and the environment around that space. Perhaps, on the other hand, Elena's rootlessness and abstract sense of belonging may draw her more inline with the 'Newfoundland culture' perspective than initially expected, if what Pocius writes is true:

> Many Newfoundlanders wonder whether they indeed belong anywhere, whether they have a place to call home. Not surprisingly, the idea of nostalgia originally meant a feeling of homesickness – the desire for home space – and the nature of Newfoundland's cultural identity has become linked inextricably to that experience of place. (*Place* 18)

Elena's box reflects uncertainty about where her home is. She declares that the whole earth is her home; by being unable to name a particular place, person or thing, she both reflects her broad, liberal religious beliefs, and seems to also be expressing feelings related to her uncertain status in Canada. If what Pocius describes is true of people born

[32] I do not recall the exact amount of time that Elena had lived in the province, but I think it had been two years, at the most.

and raised in Newfoundland, that they have a deep desire for a home that is not being fulfilled, maybe Elena is more similar to the cultural model than she initially seems.

4.5 – Conclusion: Why Trudy and Elena?

I chose Trudy and Elena for this chapter because their descriptions of home, both visual and verbal, reveal a desire to be included. This surprised me because they are both women living in Newfoundland, which according to models of 'Newfoundland culture' and 'Newfoundland identity' is supposed to be a very welcoming place. Trudy is a woman born in Newfoundland who at times admits she has felt isolated here; moreover, in her work with the ILRC, she works with people with disabilities in the city and on the Avalon peninsula who feel a similar sense of social exclusion. Many buildings in the city of St. John's are not easily accessible for people with disabilities. In particular, it is worth noting that Trudy and many of the other members of the ILRC were not sure whether they wanted to participate in the *Urban Archaeology* project with The Rooms, because there are several places in that building which are not wheelchair accessible. Trudy elaborates:

> There was also a discussion around whether we should be involved because The Rooms is not fully accessible. And there certainly was a discussion around that, whether you can catch more flies with honey or stand outside with posters and picket.... We did decide to be involved...I think...right now, the issue is there's a couple of display areas that are not accessible. I think...if there had've been more than that, I think we would have been [pause, clears throat] a resounding no.... To me, I think that if, in this day and age, if you are building... something that's going to represent our province and going to work for our province, I think you really have to think hard about [making sure] that everything is accessible, y'know? I mean, right now, I think...the Arts and Culture Centre...there are a lot of problems there. It was built a long time ago, when the codes weren't in affect. If they built another one, and they had the same issues, y'know, shame. Right? So, y'know, I guess what we decided is that, y'know, let's go in and say, "Can I get up there?" [laughs]. (Marshall)

Problems involving people with disabilities feeling welcome and feeling a sense of belonging in the community are not unique to Newfoundland, of course. However, there are higher population bases of people with disabilities in other provinces and so their voices are more easily heard. Moreover, in other provinces like my native, wealthy Ontario, there are more resources available to devote to assisting people with disabilities. That being said, the presence of a body of people in the city and in the province who, despite being born here, experience feelings of not belonging adds another dimension to the concept of the welcoming 'Newfoundland culture.' They are often unable, for a variety of reasons, to share in the cultural practices that solidify group membership here. Many are *physically* unable to engage in these practices, many are *mentally* or *emotionally* unable to engage in them, and many simply do not feel safe leaving the known environment of their house, and so never get the chance to participate. And, tellingly, their stories are not contained in master narratives of 'Newfoundland culture.' Significantly though, despite feeling unsafe at times in St. John's, some people with disabilities, like Doug Stagg, still display extreme loyalty to the province.

Elena's story also provides an interesting dimension to the concept of 'Newfoundland culture' as being a very welcoming one, by revealing an atypical experience of being welcomed onto the shores of the island. Because I have had the opportunity to meet her, and to meet people in some of the social circles she was associated with while she lived here, I do know that she was welcomed very kindly on the small scale into various communities. I do not know her full life history, so I do not know the reasons behind her deportation; it is possible that that decision had nothing to do with the Newfoundland government, and was instead made at a federal level.

Especially given the government of Newfoundland and Labrador's recently developed immigration strategy intended to draw newcomers to the province,[33] it is difficult to blame her deportation solely on a lack of respect for outsiders in Newfoundland. And that is not what I intend to do in drawing attention to her story. Rather, in drawing attention to Elena's story, and the contents of her memory box, I want to draw attention to the fact that her situation in life has given her an extremely broad sense of home. I have not met many people born and raised in Newfoundland, or anywhere else, really, who, when asked to describe their home, would write what Elena wrote in her memory box – 'Earth is my home.' As has been noted elsewhere in this thesis, Timothy Cochrane argues that people with extremely strong attachments to places do not need to articulate those attachments. The corollary to that argument is that people with weak attachments to places have a strong need to articulate those attachments, however tenuous they may be. Elena seems to fall into the latter category. She states, in her memory box, a desire to live in a world without boundaries, which, as Kent Ryden notes, are a significant, if often overlooked component of a person's sense of place:

> Nevertheless, boundaries – not those drawn by surveyors and cartographers and marked by fences and signs but those superimposed on the land and inscribed in the mind through the daily experience of inhabiting a locality; not those erected fiercely from without but those pushed out gently from within – are frequently an important component of people's lived sense of place. (69)

According to master narratives of 'Newfoundland culture,' the province is supposed to be a, in a way, a land without boundaries, where strangers act inclusively towards outsiders. It is supposed to be, of all places in Canada, the one place where everyone is welcome. In many ways, it is a very welcoming place. However, there are

[33] Further information about this strategy can be found on the government's website: www.gov.nl.ca.

boundaries here that, as Ryden says, are "pushed out gently from within." Elena Sizov's story is an extreme example of an experience with these boundaries, but there are others with stories like hers in Newfoundland. Trudy and Elena reveal that the experience of living in Newfoundland is quite diverse, though it is not often described in that manner. While culturally it can be a welcoming, inclusive place, the heavy emphasis on placed on tradition and 'Newfoundland culture' can become isolating for people who physically or culturally are not able to participate in the acts that solidify these traditions. In addition, there is little space given for the articulation of their alternate narratives. Finally, although the traditions of 'Newfoundland culture' are often touted as significant aspects of the place that promote a sense of belonging, Trudy and Elena's stories illustrate that it is often more subtle things like feelings of safety that are more important.

4.6 – Summary and what's next...

In this chapter I examined how a sense of belonging can be fostered through the use of cultural symbols and traditional practices, and how at times, a sense of belonging can come from other, more abstract locations instead. In the context of Newfoundland, there is an abundance of shared traditional culture that is widely promoted; however, for the two participants from *Urban Archaeology* whose stories appeared in this chapter, those items of traditional culture were not important. Indeed, for many participants of *Urban Archaeology*, a sense of belonging seemed to be unrelated to traditional culture. For Trudy, and for the rest of the ILRC staff, a sense of belonging and of being at home in a given space seemed to be strongly related to safety. For Elena, a sense of home was about inclusiveness and a broad, open spirituality. As with the other participants in the preceding chapters, I wonder if they would experience more integration if their sense of

home and belonging were more in line with master narratives of 'Newfoundland culture.'

Having probed the general themes that emerged from the *Urban Archaeology* project in the preceding three chapters, (land, identity and belonging, with respect to the unique Newfoundland experience and the experience of the six *Urban Archaeology* participants) I will now synthesize these chapters and discuss what can be learned from the consideration of these alternative stories. The project developed as it did, in part, because as a new resident to Newfoundland, I noticed some of the tensions that have been explored here; in Chapter Five, I will examine how the project attempted to explore these cultural tensions, as both a community based art project and as an applied folklore research project, and what it suggests about the nature of living, belonging and making a home in Newfoundland in the contemporary world.

***

She was born here, but raised in Ontario. Sometimes we talk about Ontario together and things we miss, like summer sun, farm fields and produce. Tonight, we are at a bar, making conversation with the strangers around us. I tell them I am a graduate student from Ontario and we talk for a while about what they know of my province. We trade stories about how Toronto is busy, how this place is not, and how we both like that. Then, the strangers ask me if she is from Ontario as well. I start to answer yes, because to me, she is, and she jumps in and says no, that she is from Gillams[34]*. She looks me dead in the eye, daring me to contradict her. I cannot. Gillams is where she was born.*

Later, she apologizes and explains that she does not like to mention that she is from Ontario. She always felt like an outsider growing up in Ontario because of the

[34] Gillams is a town in Newfoundland on the west coast of the island, near Corner Brook.

aspects of her upbringing that marked her as having a Newfoundland parent; since moving to Newfoundland, she has continued to feel like an outsider when she says that she is from Ontario. "So," she tells me, "I just don't say that anymore."

Still later, when the alcohol has weakened the inhibitions of the people in the bar, and the band has warmed everyone into a frenzy, I look at her and see her singing along proudly to the folksongs being played. I am singing, too. As we head out onto the dance floor to join in the fun, she catches my eye and winks and yells in my ear: "See? We know all the songs now. We belong here." Maybe she is right? Maybe not. Maybe, for the moment at least, none of that really matters.

> Rootedness is another inherently geographical concept and is central to the notion of home.... [Its core meaning] is found in the sense of literally belonging somewhere. The notion of rootedness is important in understanding how home contexts expand spatially as a person's distance from home increases (Terkenli 329).

CHAPTER FIVE – CULTURAL MODELS

I spend a full day with several members of the BTIM group, talking to them about their memory boxes, and all related topics: culture, family, home, and how they feel living in Newfoundland. We talk about mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers. We talk about the wind, the rain and the snow. We talk about pets and trees and having adventures on beaches and boil-ups[35] *in the woods. We talk a lot about music and we talk a lot about tradition. It is a good day, full of good conversation.*

When I ask how the traditional culture of Newfoundland affects their sense of home, each young person there describes how they feel that there is more to Newfoundland than the traditional culture. Many describe having a monthly jigg's dinner with older members of their family, or learning to play a traditional song on a guitar. Then, in the next breath, they describe how they feel those traditions are on the decline, and that new traditions are taking their place. They sense change in the air.

In spite of that sense of change, and the feeling that the traditional culture is becoming less relevant to them personally, all the young people that I talk to express a strong affection for Newfoundland. They all love living here. Some are planning on leaving for a time, but when the conversation moves towards making a long-term commitment to a place, all of the young people I speak to describe wanting to live in the province. They want to make their homes here.

---

[35] A boil-up is a term referring to a custom in Newfoundland of having a cup of tea, and sometimes a simple meal, cooked on a fire in the woods. For further descriptions and analysis of the custom, see Andrea O'Brien's article, *'There's Nothing Like a Cup of Tea in the Woods' – Continuity, Community and Cultural Validation in Rural Newfoundland Boil-ups,* cited in the bibliography of this thesis.

When I am ready to leave, I walk out of the studio and stare at the harbour for a while, processing the day's discussions. These youth work out of a studio that is right on the harbour's edge in St. John's, in the heart of the downtown, with a clear view out the to the ocean. I stand there a while and think. I am overwhelmed with the sense of change that these young people described today. Talking to them, it is hard to deny that change is coming to the province. Talking to these young people was almost like looking into a crystal ball. I realize, as I stand there looking out at the ocean, that 25 years from now, Newfoundland and Labrador is going to be a very different place.

And I know that it, like everything in the world, has been changing constantly, and that 25 years ago, had I been standing in this same spot, I would not have known what it would be today. That is not the point though. The point is that it is something to see a wave of change coming in the distance, and to meet some of the people who likely will be at the forefront of creating that change.

> One of the things about Newfoundlanders is "Oh, you're so friendly!" And it's something I take pride in when I can tell somebody that I'm a Newfoundlander, and they'll say, "Oh well, geez, y'know every Newfoundlander I've met has been so nice." That would be more of a cultural stereotype that I would be happy to embrace, moreso than jigg's dinner and lobster pots.... It's just, that's almost like, y'know you go into the Downhomer and you buy your yellow hat and your miniature dory and your rubber boots and stuff like that. And fine, that, it's a part of our past, we can't forget that. But, as a cultural thing to continue on and on, it seems like the commercial side of it. It would be like the sombrero of Mexico, or the wooden clogs of Finland.... There's a lot of aspects of our culture that are entirely unique and wonderful on their own that aren't commercialized and aren't stereotyped. (Button)

***

5.1 - Models of living and public stories

As this thesis process draws to a close, I find myself returning in my mind to my initial flight out to Newfoundland, and the people on the plane that felt such a strong connection to this place. Although I do not doubt the depth of those emotions, and that there are similarly strong feelings in the hearts of many people who were born here, I find myself questioning where that feeling comes from. The sense of home in 'Newfoundland culture' is a public story; people who live in Newfoundland are supposed to love Newfoundland, and live their life according to this particular model, in order to claim a 'Newfoundland identity.' Rosenwald and Ochberg mention the binding effect of public stories and how they can be used to craft collective social identity:

> ...accounts bind individuals to the arrangements of the society enforcing the models, whether the accounts feature circumscribed reactions to situations or an entire life course. The political and other arrangements typical of a society are implicated in the conventions of its discourse.... Through such narratives, people are brought to the point of wanting what they must want in their society, as well as to regard these wants as reasonable. (265)

This 'Newfoundland identity' and sense of home is very inclusive for many people living in the province, and can be a significant source of strength and purpose. Especially for people born in Newfoundland who are living away from the province, the identity and all that is bound up in it (music, food, vernacular language, and so on) is a touchstone for everything that is considered to be home-like. However, something that is *inclusive* for some is, by extension, *exclusive* for others. And, something that is inclusive and important in one location can become isolating in another. That being said, we return to the main questions being considered throughout this thesis: what does the strong sense of 'Newfoundland identity' mean for people who do not fit into it, but who nevertheless

choose to live in Newfoundland? Do they feel rooted on the island? Do they fit in, even though their stories are not often part of the cultural narratives of the place? And what do we learn about life in Newfoundland by turning our attention to alternative narratives? This is what the *Urban Archaeology* project, and this thesis explore.

Life in Newfoundland, when lived according to 'Newfoundland culture' is supposed to be about relating to the land through fishing or logging, having large, close-knit families, and having a greater sense of belonging to the island. Of course, as with any cultural model, life is not like that for all people who live in Newfoundland. Not everyone is a character in this public story; nor should everyone be. As discussed in Chapter One, present conceptions about what comprises a person's sense of home and therefore, their identity in Newfoundland, have become what Clifford Geertz would describe as a cultural pattern. According to Geertz, a cultural pattern is a system of symbols common to a group of people: "...abstractions from experience that function as both models of and models for what they represent" (91-94). The 'Newfoundland identity' and its corresponding sense of home is, in some ways, a model *of* what has occurred in the past in the province's history, and therefore represents some aspects of the reality of the place; however, it has also begun to function as a model *for* what a Newfoundland home should be, and what a person in Newfoundland should be like. In this function, the sense of home becomes more exclusionary. Some people whose stories do not align with master narratives have difficulty enacting the cultural models.

An important set of questions arises from this: according to this model, who exactly is being excluded? Why is this occurring, who benefits from it, and how can any

negative effects be mitigated? In the preceding chapters, I deliberately related a series of dichotomous stories that I heard from participants in the *Urban Archaeology* project, which when probed further, suggest possible answers to some of those questions.

5.1.1 - Space

In *Chapter Two – Space*, I considered the stories of two men who currently live in St. John's, Newfoundland, Gabuya Godfrey and Doug Stagg. Godfrey was a participant in *Urban Archaeology* through the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council (RIAC), and Doug was a participant through the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC). When their stories are explored in conjunction with those of the typical male from 'Newfoundland culture' who hunts and fishes for a living, neither of these men seem like they would fit into life here. Godfrey, although he has felt a strong connection to a piece of land and has hunted and fished, is literally out of his element in Newfoundland. He was not born here, and does not share the culture of the place, so even though he knows what it is like to know a space intimately, he feels isolated in *this* particular space. Doug, in contrast to Godfrey, is a native-born Newfoundlander; however, he has been unable to experience the land in the manner that the cultural models suggest he should. Yet despite this potential disconnection between place and self, according to his artwork, and his gesturing to the island and then to his heart, Doug seems to feel a strong connection to Newfoundland. He might not have been able to fully experience the wild spaces of Newfoundland, but for other reasons, he claims a 'Newfoundland identity.'

I do not know for certain, but I anticipate that if both Godfrey and Doug were to wander through the streets claiming openly and loudly that they felt at home in

Newfoundland, one would be believed and accepted more easily than the other. In all likelihood, Doug's story would be more accepted, because of his birthplace. Although as Coristine notes "one does not have to be born in a place in order to belong to it" (78), in most places, including Newfoundland, birth typically secures belonging and acceptance in a place more easily than not. The question of whether it *should* remains to be answered, a question that is raised by considering the stories of Godfrey and Doug.

Indeed, there are several lessons that can be learned from considering their stories. The alternative narratives that Godfrey and Doug express through their memory boxes do not directly challenge the master cultural narratives about life in Newfoundland with respect to land based attachments; however they *do* expand these narratives. Their stories are a reminder that not all men who are living in the province are necessarily working on the land. Also, their stories are a reminder that there are many different ways that people experience deep connections to physical spaces, in addition to physical labour: notably, through memory and symbolism. Finally, land connections expressed in the memory boxes of Godfrey and Doug reveal that their deep values are in some respects congruent with those of the province's master cultural narratives.

5.1.2 - Identity

In *Chapter Three – Identity*, I examined the stories of Yamuna Kutty and Sarah Rowe, two women living in St. John's, Newfoundland, from the Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador (MWONL) and the Brother Murphy Youth Arts Collective (BTIM), respectively. Similarly to the stories of Godfrey and Doug, when considering their narratives in conjunction with the model story for women in

Newfoundland, which suggests that women are deeply embedded in locally-centred, close social networks, neither of these women completely fit into the model. In some ways, this is not surprising; stereotypes and cultural models are images painted in broad brushstrokes. Almost by definition, a stereotype or model will not completely describe any single person's experience. That being said, the points of disconnection between their stories and the dominant ones are important to consider.

Yamuna, a woman not born or raised in Newfoundland, created a memory box that revealed her to be deeply embedded in a close social network of family and friends, most of whom were connected to India in some way. This box contained a large number of items that related to her immediate family members, especially to her father and her children. In this way, she is similar to many people who immigrate to a new place; memory objects help to draw those who are far away into an imaginary proximity to the self, and thereby collapse the extreme distances that exist in the physical world (Stewart xii). Significantly, in placing this primacy on her family, she is actually similar to many Newfoundland-born women, whose lives are more closely linked to the dominant cultural model of femininity. In spite of this similarity, Yamuna's story (and any similar to it) is likely to remain excluded from discussions of master stories of 'Newfoundland culture' because of her different ethnocultural background.

Sarah, born and raised in Newfoundland, created a memory box that also reflects close relationships with her family and friends. However, when talking to her about her memory box, it became clear that the images suggested in the artwork were not completely representative of her life. The reasons for this discrepancy are not clear; however, I suggest that in part, Sarah is (consciously or not) adopting a cultural model of

womanhood that she has grown up with to express her story. Like Gary Robertson in Michael Owen Jones' article, Sarah "*chooses* from tradition those behaviors, activities and objects with which [s]he can symbolically construct an identity" (133). In choosing to describe her past in this manner, according to the models present in Newfoundland culture, it is possible that she experiences a sense of "reconciliation lacking in [her] troubled childhood" (Jones 133).

Significantly, like the contrast between Godfrey and Doug, I have a sense that if both Yamuna and Sarah were ever in the situation where they were both claiming to feel at home in the context of Newfoundland, Sarah's claim would be more readily believed and accepted. Even though Yamuna appears to actually have a life story that is similar to those of many women born and raised in Newfoundland, and Sarah is only able to *tell* her story in that manner, Sarah's place of birth likely makes all the difference. In a lot of ways, and in a lot of contexts, that makes sense. Historically, birthplace signified membership in a family, and in a tribe, and so there would be genetic ties to a given location. There would be a direct connection to a home-space. But, in an age of ever increasing travel and migration, simply because birthplace *has* been a primary indicator of a person's home in the past, should it be today?

Like Godfrey and Doug's stories, the narratives of Yamuna and Sarah do not directly challenge constructions of self-identity and womanhood that exist in 'Newfoundland culture.' However, like those from the men in Chapter Two, the memory boxes created by these women suggest areas where the master narrative needs expanding. Their stories reveal that not all family relationships are grounded in intimate local experiences; instead, some are maintained over great distances. Additionally, their stories

are a reminder that not all family relationships are positive in nature, and suggest that space should be given to recognize diverse constructions of the family group, rather that forcing a sense of cultural conformity upon residents of the province.

5.1.3 - Belonging

Finally, in *Chapter Four – Belonging*, I explored the stories of Trudy Marshall from the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) and Elena Sizov from the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council (RIAC), two women who lived in St. John's, Newfoundland last summer, while *Urban Archaeology* was underway.[36] I considered their stories in counterpoint to the sense of belonging that exists in and towards Newfoundland, and found that this belonging comes with a set of limitations not often discussed. I suggested that belonging for many residents of the province has little to do with the symbolic cultural totems that are often so significant for those living *away* from the province. Rather, the sense of belonging for some people who are living here seems to have more to do with abstract notions of feeling safe and at peace.

In particular, Trudy, who was born and raised in Newfoundland, does not choose to identify with symbols that are supposed to connect her to Newfoundland. For her, feeling at home has nothing to do with puffins and flags and pitcher plants, and everything to do with the ability to walk her dog without feeling threatened, and being out near the ocean, away from the busy life of the city. Though in many ways, of all the participants considered in this thesis, her story seems to align most closely with that of the models of 'Newfoundland identity' (in that she grew up in a town around the bay, and

[36] As noted in Chapter Four, subsequent to her participation in the project, Elena was deported to the United States.

loves being outdoors) her narratives suggest that she has at times felt somewhat isolated from her community. She does not always feel like she belongs here. She does not always feel safe in St. John's, and she does considerable work with other Newfoundland-born people who have felt unwelcome as well.

Elena, in contrast, was born in Russia, and attempted to immigrate to Newfoundland. She admittedly does not feel a strong affinity to symbols of belonging that would tie her to the cultural life of Russia, and was not in Newfoundland long enough to develop a close affinity with the Newfoundland symbols either. Instead, she uses elements of a very inclusive, welcoming spiritual worldview to express feelings of belonging everywhere at once in her memory box. It seems like something she needs to express, and something that she needs to believe, in order to function in her life as it is at the moment. Looking at her memory box, with its touching expression that 'Earth is my home,' one instantly assumes that Elena would be a welcoming person, able to fit in almost anywhere, and able to feel a sense of belonging easily. From what I remember of our conversation, she *had* found Newfoundland to be a welcoming place while she lived here. She felt at home here. Yet, she was told by outside forces that she did not belong. Had she been born here, for obvious reasons, her story would have been very different.

Again, the importance placed on birthplace becomes apparent, and hopefully, worthy of being questioned. Of course, this study does not mean to imply that the people born in Newfoundland who, perhaps, do not fit into what I am describing as the dominant cultural models are any better or worse than the people who were *not* born here, but who *do* seem to fit. Rather, these dichotomies are meant to challenge the primacy placed on birthplace by showing that sometimes when you are born in a place, you do not feel close

ties to it. And, on the other side of that metaphorical coin, sometimes when you adopt a place to live and make a home, you *can* feel strong ties to it. Unfortunately, even if that is the case, if you are in that situation, your sense of home will sometimes be questioned. Maybe that questioning no longer needs to occur.

The stories of Trudy and Elena obviously do not directly challenge the master narrative of belonging in 'Newfoundland culture' and like those told in the preceding chapters, instead expand on it. They suggest that for some people residing in the province, symbolic representations of the place are insignificant. These narratives imply that feelings of belonging to a place are instead related to experiences of safety and acceptance that accumulate in that place. Moreover, the narratives of these women also reveal the importance of spirituality in the construction of a welcoming community.

If Cochrane is correct in his suggestion that the strongest experiences in a given place are those not easily expressed (9), the fact that Trudy and Elena both expressed a desire to feel safe and included in their homes suggests that they do not currently experience those feelings. Assuming that in Canada, and in Newfoundland, it is undesirable to foster feelings of exclusion in others, their stories highlight the importance of considering alternatives, in order to learn what people are actually experiencing. It is not enough to assume that all people feel represented by master stories.

5.2 – Dismantling the master narrative of 'Newfoundland culture'

In each of the three preceding chapters, I told the story of a person who should fit into the Newfoundland cultural model of being, assuming that birthplace is the deciding factor, but for some reason, does not quite fit. In each chapter, I also told the story of

someone who should not fit into the dominant model because they were not born on the island, but other aspects of their character suggest that they fit the dominant cultural pattern more than the person born in Newfoundland.

Though birthplace is important in terms of where and how a person feels at home, it is not always the most significant factor. That is something new to the mainstream versions of Newfoundland history, and the history of many places with a small population base. Change seems to come more slowly to smaller places. Moreover, it is a significant concept to consider, especially since those people who identify as Newfoundlanders are (usually) themselves technically outsiders to the land, like all North Americans of European ancestry. Birthplace is an intriguing concept to explore in the context of these groups that participated in *Urban Archaeology,* since many members of those groups have had the experience of feeling excluded from the master cultural narratives of the province, even though they were born in Newfoundland.

As mentioned in Chapter One, considerable noise is often made within the province about Newfoundland's isolation with respect to the rest of Canada; for people born and raised in Newfoundland living in diasporic situations, holding fast to the totems of 'Newfoundland identity' is a necessary act to provide relief from homesickness. In looking at the stories of people making homes within the province, though, it is significant to realize how easily the oppressed can become the oppressor, when granted a majority position in a given population. Holding onto the totems while outside of Newfoundland is useful, but holding onto them too tightly when in the province can be unintentionally harmful to people here who might not fit into the mainstream culture.

That being said, among several *Urban Archaeology* participants born in the province, I noted that some of the dominant patterns and symbols of 'Newfoundland culture' are beginning to lose resonance. This is especially true for younger generations. People are becoming less inclined to hold onto the symbols of belonging, and the local culture of this place is changing. Nicole Button, participant from BTIM, explains:

> I think Newfoundland culture is very unique on its own, but I think that there are parts of it that are pointed out regularly that are starting to fade in our culture. Yes, I go out around the bay and Nan on Sunday will make us a jigg's dinner... but she doesn't do that regularly. It's because we're her grandchildren and we're coming out and it's a special occasion and we had to drive three hours to go see her and...it's something...almost like a family tradition.... My Mom is...forty-nine, so she hasn't cooked jigg's dinner a day in her life.... Those things are very stereotypical culture. (Button)

Other participants, such as Steve Abbott from BTIM, were concerned about the increased commercialization of Newfoundland, and what it means for the province's future:

> People get this ignorant view of Newfoundland and who can blame them, what's the alternative, where's the other message, where's the full story? It's not being presented. So I think that...my parents love fish and brewis[37] and jigg's dinner and stuff like that, but they're also assimilated enough to not be so...foolish at heart to think that that's it.... Right now there's lots of like social programs, outreach programs that are on their knees because, where's the money? The money's going into tourism. I understand it, I see it, but I don't feel it. And I feel like there's much more to Newfoundlanders. (Abbott)

What is the local culture, then, if what is suggested by these participants is true, and the reality of Newfoundland's local culture is being distorted through the lens of tourism? Is there a true local culture in Newfoundland? Is there a particular way of being? How do people really make their homes in this place, in contemporary times? These are challenging questions to answer.

---

[37] Brewis is a hard bread, also called "hard tack," that is soaked in water to soften it, and then cooked and served with salt cod to comprise the dish "fish and brewis."

5.3 – Moving forward: future work with alternative narratives

As was explored in *Urban Archaeology* and in this thesis, for some more than others in Newfoundland, there is an incongruity between the dominant cultural model and the models that they base their lives upon. For people with disabilities, of other ethnicities, 'come from aways' and those who simply have not grown up according to the master narrative of 'Newfoundland culture,' there can often seem to be no place for their unique sense of identity and home. They often have the sense that they do not belong, no matter how welcoming people are and how much they themselves care about the place.

Interestingly though, despite feelings of isolation, many of these people do report feeling a strong connection to Newfoundland, and appreciate the land for its unique beauty. The people I spoke to in *Urban Archaeology* generally did not express a strong desire to leave the province; and if they did, that desire was followed in the next breath by an assurance that they would one day return to make a permanent home here. There is something which seems to draw these people to Newfoundland. When given the opportunity to share stories through *Urban Archaeology*, participants were flattered; they felt they had been given a platform, however small, to talk about how they do and do not feel at home in St. John's. Every person I spoke to, when they completed their boxes, told me they were surprised they had so much to say, and that they could have filled up several boxes with their ideas.

For these reasons, it is beginning to seem to me that non-mainstream narratives in Newfoundland should be discussed more frequently than they are presently. It is important for the people of the province to hear the stories of the diverse people that live

here, and thereby deepen the understanding of how people connect to this place and how we all connect to each other. If what some of the *Urban Archaeology* participants suggest is true, that the dominant cultural models and symbols of Newfoundland are beginning to lose their resonance with contemporary young people, then new things need to be explored that could take their place. As such, it is valuable to direct money towards increasing tourism and preserving the cultural heritage of the province; however, the focus need not always be on the past as it is described in history books.

This message is especially relevant moving out of a year during which the culture of Newfoundland and Labrador was being highlighted as an important community resource, with the provincial government's widely promoted plan to invest time and resources into cultural development and the designation of the city of St. John's as a "Cultural Capital" of Canada (*Creative*; "Minister"). Though both of these initiatives were worthwhile and provided great benefit to the city and to the province, more attention and, in conjunction with that, more funding should also be directed towards groups like the ones I worked with in *Urban Archaeology*, because their stories are an important part of the mosaic of Newfoundland that is not often considered. Increased efforts should be made to support aspects of Newfoundland that rather that furthering the stereotypical aspects of Newfoundland culture, broaden it. Perhaps this can help to present a more truthful picture of the reality of life in Newfoundland to the world, and more importantly, can mirror a more truthful picture of life in Newfoundland back the people who live here.

***

5.3.1 – New possibilities: Community arts and Urban Archaeology

Sociologist Gillian Rose, in a study of social identity, notes that people who feel marginalized, or who are identified as being marginalized in a community, often suffer from a form of silence: "...to be marginalized is understood as the absence of the self-esteem necessary for speech" (8). People who feel marginalized do not feel like their stories are worth telling, or worth hearing. To listen to someone tell a story is to give him or her worth and value in the world.

The art of listening and of instilling value is a skill that both folklorists and practitioners of community arts share. James Bau Graves, folklorist and artist, notes that there are many similarities between these two disciplines, but that they rarely intersect in the realm of public culture (Graves). Moreover, this is, as he writes, "a shame, because both sides of this equation have much to offer and learn from each other" (Graves). In particular, artists need to better establish "the intimate connection to community that is the pride of folklife" and folklorists "need to adapt to the [funding] infrastructure [mastered by the art world] if the champions of tradition are ever going to have a moment in the spotlight" (Graves). Both forms of research and practice are relevant in the contemporary heritage landscape. Both folklore and community arts are able to draw out vernacular stories that are increasingly prized; artist and activist Arlene Goldbard writes:

> The museums can't get away anymore with exhibiting only the art of white men or the artefacts of the wealthy. PBS runs programs about civil-rights movements, Latino histories, Asian cultures, and countless little stories are featured side-by-side with "Masterpiece Theatre." (Goldbard)

The *Urban Archaeology* project was intended to draw a particular range of vernacular stories into The Rooms, and out of the residents of St. John's. There are

several ways that vernacular narratives are used in museum and gallery displays in combination with official ones. Sometimes, the vernacular narrative is a window to a larger story. An example of this might be a firsthand account of an event from a diary displayed next to more objective historical text. In this way, "the former give[s] new meaning to – but do[es] not fundamentally challenge – the latter" (Rowe, Wertsch and Kosyaeva 100). Alternately, the vernacular narrative can be used to "broaden the meaning of the larger narrative," but again, not challenge it (Rowe, Wertsch and Kosyaeva 102). For example, placing firsthand stories about a peasant's life next to stories about the life of a rich man broadens understandings of the social world of a given time, but does not generally challenge commonly accepted knowledge.

Sometimes vernacular stories are used to directly challenge an official story, and sometimes, displays of vernacular stories use the "official culture as a starting point to engage in private memory musings...poaching on the official cultural representation but neither taking it up as one's own nor challenging it fundamentally..." (Rowe, Wertsch and Kosyaeva 106). This is similar to what I intended for the *Urban Archaeology* display at The Rooms. The Rooms provides an official story of what home is for people born in Newfoundland; it is a significant contributor to the master narrative of the province. *Urban Archaeology,* in a small way, provided vernacular responses to this dominant story, and invited visitors to engage in the consideration of their *own* personal stories.

This is another arena where folklore research overlaps with arts-based research projects: both engage members of the public in the consideration of *their* heritage and culture. Through listening to vernacular stories and putting them on display, folklorists and community artists give their participants a sense of self-worth. Through the

generation of art, and the engagement and exploration of creative action, both folklore and community arts projects can be transformative (Westerman 118). In part, transformation and self worth come from artistic action; folklorist William Westerman notes that the effect of creation is powerful:

> The feeling that creative people experience when participating in a traditional, artistic activity is seldom well articulated, because it is fundamentally non-verbal. Usually the words break down [when they talk about it] and people only speak in general terms: "It does something for me," "I feel something," "I feel great"... [T]hat creative process not only makes us feel more human, it connects us socially. (118)

Westerman observes, however, that in contemporary Western culture, creative action "is usually treated as merely a recreational activity rather than something of primary importance" (118). This is an unfortunate state of events, especially since, as researchers Douglas Blandy and Elizabeth Hoffman relate, "art [is]...a means through which children, youth and adults communicate their values and beliefs to one another" (25), much like folklore and traditional culture. Moreover, as community development researchers Philip Carey and Sue Sutton relate, the arts are an important component of development; the arts "encourage personal development as well as social cohesion" (124). Community based art projects serve both to provide "a means for people to express their relationship with their social and physical environment," as well as "encourage[ing diverse] groups to work together" (Carey and Sutton 124). Encouragement of individual self worth, and promotion of group action are cornerstones of community development.

However, of course, as Carey and Sutton observe, "...the real value of community development is only served if projects are sustainable" (133), and the primary way that sustainability is achieved is through detailed community partnerships and planning. As

Westerman describes, in discussing his personal experiences running larger-scale community projects, this is where community arts projects and folklore projects tend to drift apart. Folklorists are typically not trained in sustainability:

> My academic training...had not prepared me to deal with problems of this range or scope.... On issues such as problem solving, organizing community groups, and handling artists' personal, psychological, and legal difficulties, the folkloristic literature was mute; therefore, I had to rely on oral tradition, seeking out other public folklorists who had similar experiences, and then turned to social work theory, particularly that dealing with community organizing.... I kept asking myself, "If the field of public folklore wants to create long-term community impact, then why haven't we found a dialogue with social workers and community organizers?" (Westerman 113)

Urban Archaeology was not, at its core, a sustainable project. The relationships sparked at the reception likely will not flourish; the disparate sections of the city of St. John's that I was able to draw together have no reason to contact each other in the future, nor do they have a long-term relationship with The Rooms. Moreover, while valuable stories were drawn out of a variety of residents throughout the project, many people did not hear their stories. While this does not, in any way, mean that the project was unsuccessful, it saddens me. Now that I am at the end of the project, I find I see the start with renewed clarity. If I had the opportunity to go back, I would plan more carefully. I would work to make the project a regular event, or to facilitate more regular communication between the groups, or between the gallery and the groups. Or, I would have attempted to garner more publicity for the project, because I see now that publicity for some of these organizations is valuable, and can lead to more members and more funding. Overall, as the project progressed, I saw a great potential for community transformation, especially as it came to a close. This was surprising, and leaves interesting possibilities for similar work in the future.

***

The next time I see Steve Abbott, one of the participants from the Youth Arts Collective, is a week after the Urban Archaeology reception, at the opening for the Brother T.I. Murphy Youth Arts Collective's show. He is dressed in black, in a suit jacket with a rose in his lapel. I ask how the show looks; he beams at me, answering without words. He tells me the memory boxes are on display up in the gallery, too, and says they look great. We start to head upstairs to see them, but he stops midway and thanks me for my project. He says that meeting the other participants was really moving, and that it gave him some much-needed perspective on things happening in his life right now. "It made me shut the hell up," he says, and I laugh.

He confesses that he spent a long time talking to the mother of one of the participants from the Independent Living Resource Centre. She showed him pictures of her family. He says that her family is one of the most beautiful he has ever seen, and that they were rendered moreso by her openness about their struggles to get pregnant. He seems overwhelmed, and thanks me again for the chance to make a connection like that with another person. He says that such chances are rare in life.

I smile and tell him to lead me to his work. Internally, I am dancing. "There," I think to myself, recalling the moment on the plane where I decided some time ago that this all began, "this is how it ends."

> Transformation can become one of the criteria by which we evaluate the success of our work. It may be a modest transformation; not every project can change the world, or need attempt to. But when planning programs, we can ask ourselves, "What will change, or be changed, by this project?" If the status quo remains after we have produced a concert or exhibition or documented a tradition, to what extent have we really succeeded? (Westerman 122)

5.3.2 - Ryan's memory box

I remember watching Ryan work during the BTIM workshop, and noticing that he did not talk much with other participants while he was working. He and I did not talk much throughout the workshops either. I was making a concerted effort not to interfere with people's working processes and Ryan always seemed to be productive. Even if he was thinking about something and not doing any work, he seemed like a person who should not be interrupted. In one of the few exchanges we had, he noticed, almost apologetically, that his box seemed relatively empty compared to those of his peers. And, he is right. His box contains a graphically vivid painting of the St. John's Narrows, a few photographs, and some small trinkets at the bottom. Compared to some, especially some of the boxes made by the young women in the group, Ryan's box is sparse. I do not remember what I said in response to his comment; I am sure I muttered something incoherently encouraging and wandered on to talk to someone else.

Sometimes the shortest proverbs contain the deepest meanings and the simplest songs stick in your heart. The same is true for artwork.

Possibly because of what he said, for several weeks, I focused only on what was 'not' inside his box and I did not see what he painted on the outside. I was surprised when I noticed this decoration. In two small graphics, Ryan (unintentionally?) succinctly captured what I had hoped would be the spirit of the whole project. On one side of his box is a stereo, with the word 'Listen' written under it. On the other is a cartoon character holding a microphone; underneath are the words 'Be Heard.'

Listen. Be Heard.

I never asked him why he painted those images and those words on his box. He is someone that I never got around to interviewing, so I do not know what those mean for him. I do know that for me, they crystallize my summer of 2006. I listened, and I tried to give a platform, however small it might have been, to a body of people who I think deserve to be heard as loudly as anyone else who lives in this city.

> The story revolution, the one that is transforming our world this very minute, is fuelled by a democratic counter-assertion: that everyone contributes to culture; that the knowledge sorely needed by future generations must come from every ethnic group and region and social class, from men and women of infinite variety; and that everyone has something to teach and something to learn. (Goldbard)

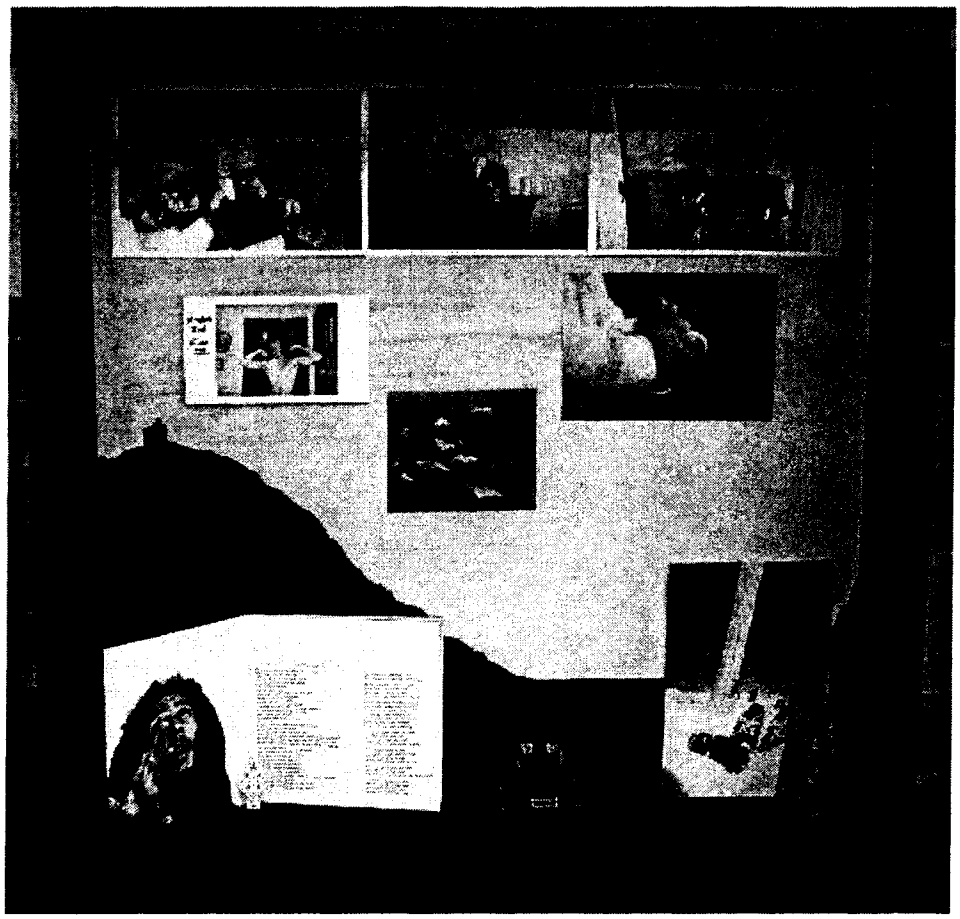

Figure 8 - Ryan Morrisey's memory box.

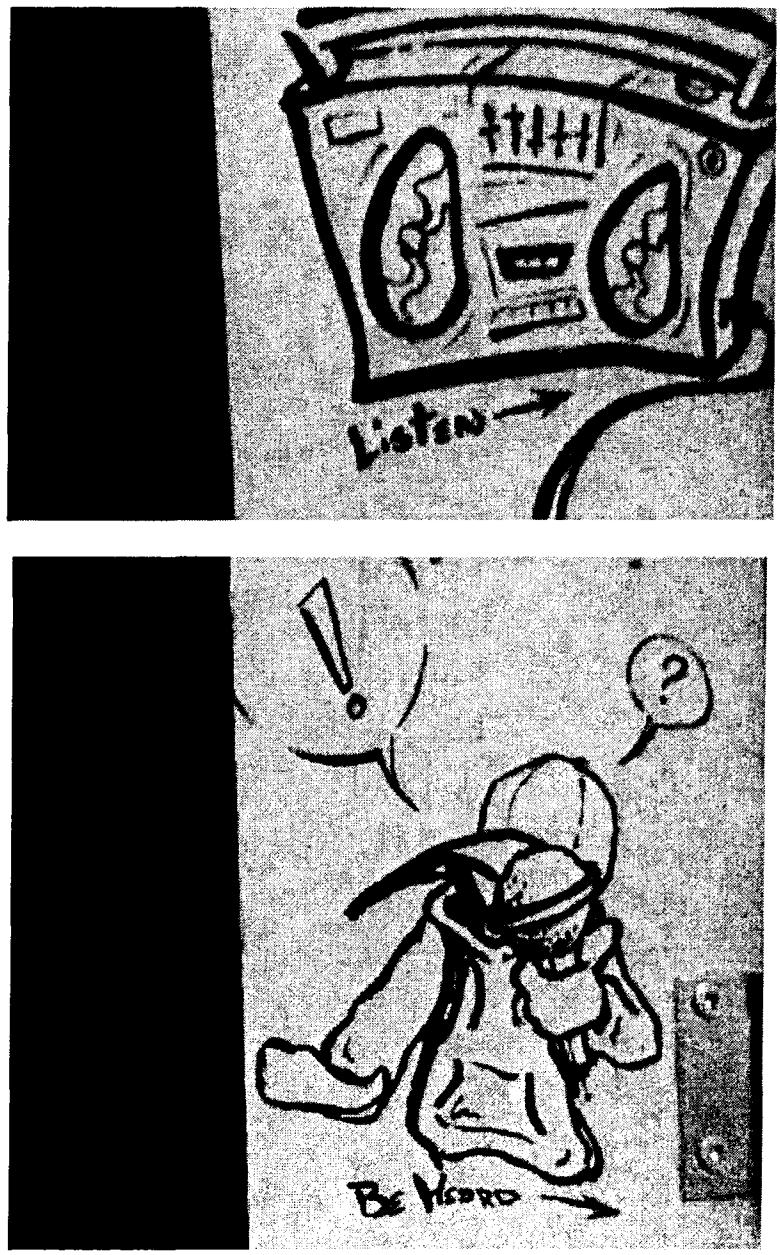

Figure 9 - The outer edges of Ryan Morrisey's memory box.

CONCLUSION: On pitcher plants...

To close, I would like to return to that recently birthed provincial symbol, the pitcher plant. As I mentioned in Chapter One, the provincial government has recently determined that this plant is symbolic of "who we are and what we stand for" as residents of the province, and that it can serve to unite all people living in Newfoundland and Labrador: "One symbol, one voice" ("Brand Signature"). According to the government's website, "[i]t's a symbol that speaks our language" and is "as unique as the people who live here, in every corner of Newfoundland and Labrador" ("Brand Signature"). Though I understand the need for symbols of belonging with which people can associate themselves, both for the purposes of marketing the province as a tourist destination, and to foster a sense of community, I question the effectiveness of dealing in symbols that are presented in a homogenizing fashion.

Expanding slightly on the metaphorical use of the pitcher plant as a representative for the residents of the province is potentially enlightening. Basic environmental science dictates that the strongest ecological systems are those that are diverse. The typical suburban front lawn made entirely of grass is one of the most fragile environmental systems; it is vulnerable to disease, and in the event of a drought of resources, requires a high degree of outside assistance. A forest full of a wide variety of plants, in contrast, is stronger and able to thrive without the aid of watering cans and fertilizer. An ecosystem comprised entirely of pitcher plants, no matter how "tough" and "adaptable" they may be, will not survive long ("Brand Signature"). By the same token, a society made of one type of individual, based on one type of economy or one cultural stereotype is also vulnerable

and fragile. If for some reason, that single aspect of the society is damaged then there is nothing else to take its place.

Newfoundland and Labrador, as a province and a place that has what is often interpreted and presented as a distinct cultural identity, seems at times to be running the risk of becoming a suburban lawn full of pitcher plants. And so too does any place that has what is described and marketed as a distinctive cultural identity. Distinct identities, while they have their positive aspects, can also easily become models for behaviour and action, and thereby hinder the development of societal diversity. The tendency to market a single facet of identity is growing in contemporary times; it is an effective and easy way to increase tourism. Brand names and marketing were perceived, by the creators of the Newfoundland logo, as important assets for places to develop (Bell).

This promotion of 'Newfoundland culture' and indeed, of the local culture of any small place, is often a reaction to a feeling of being pressured to conform to a more distant mainstream cultural identity: "the local has become the site of resistance to the dominant culture" (Shuman 350). In the case of Newfoundland, the dominant culture that is being resisted, and has been resisted for decades, is that of mainstream North America. The present day promotion of fishing based traditions and folklore, despite the significant downsizing of the fishery that birthed them, may be perceived as a direct act of resistance to tides of globalization. Life in Newfoundland is somehow more authentic and real than life in mainland Canada, because of the existence of these traditions. Somehow, in being here and trying to maintain a certain way of life, people in Newfoundland are resisting the tide of sameness in Western culture.

Ironically, in performing this act of resistance against the North American mainstream, the local culture of Newfoundland has itself become a hegemonic culture, drowning out smaller stories that could add depth and scope to its central narrative. Increased recognition of other stories such as those discussed here is important. However, as Amy Shuman notes, "[although] recognizing that groups are not homogenous entities is an important step toward developing a larger-than-local model of culture...it is *not enough*..." [itals in original] (351). Recognizing that a group is not homogenous is vital, but too often is just done by pointing out that there are even smaller constructions of locality within the group. As noted previously, the concept of local culture is not a panacea for problems of homogeneity (Shuman 345); rather, the concept of local culture is linked to a larger-than-local context:

> Whenever we assert that some form of folklore functions to affirm group solidarity or to provide a sense of coherence, we are promoting a naturalized local, supported by an unquestioned preference for solidarity and the preservation of particular cultural boundaries over dissension, change or whatever might threaten those boundaries. The alternative is not only to investigate those boundaries that are explicitly contested, but to see that any definition of the local is marked and involves a contest with something outside it; even claims for homogeneity serve larger-than-local interests. (Shuman 356)

In the context of Newfoundland, it should be recognized that the local culture is not homogenous; rather there is great diversity, though it is not often described. There are alternatives to the master narratives. It should be recognized that the construction of a homogenous group of people making a home in the province is a deliberate device, used to create an entity that will draw visitors, and that will be a force on the national stage. Care should be taken, however, to ensure this device does not become a prescriptive model of how to live in the province. Space needs to be made for other ways of being,

and other stories of how to make a home here. It is important for the health of this place that the human ecological makeup of it is not comprised of a single species.

When the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador adopted the symbol of the pitcher plant, and moreover, adopted it using rhetoric describing the symbol as one that unifies the province because everyone who lives here is hardy and resourceful, in many ways, they only served to further Newfoundland cultural stereotypes. Granted, these stereotypes may be more favourable than many that have been applied to the province (like the drunken, lazy "Newfie"), but they still are stereotypes. When stereotypes are adopted to represent a group, those who do not fit the mould are, by definition, marginalized. Some people in Newfoundland may actually *be* like pitcher plants, but, as exemplified on a small scale by the stories in this thesis, and on a slightly larger scale in *Urban Archaeology* as a whole, many are not. While government developed symbols are often positive in intent, in that they are trying to unite a group of people, there is a danger, as has been noted, that they can be prescriptive. And, when master narratives are too heavily promoted, there is a danger that those who do not see themselves reflected in the story will feel a sense of exclusion from, rather than inclusion in, the group as a whole.

ENDNOTE

I am at a Seattle market. A vendor asks where I am from and I say "Newfoundland." She looks confused and I explain that it is a province on the easternmost edge of Canada. I motion to the people beside me, and tell her, "We're all kinda from there, actually." She smiles, unsure of what to say, and we move on.

We move on physically, but mentally, the conversation stays with me. I feel like I lied to the vendor. I am not from Newfoundland, not really, anyway, but while on the west coast of the continent for my thesis vacation, I am surprised at how often I am introduced that way. This is the only time I introduce myself that way. It feels false.

My companions, in some ways, are not from Newfoundland either. The younger man has never lived in the province for more than a few months at a time, was raised in Ontario, and presently resides in British Columbia. The older man and woman, parents of the younger man, currently make their primary home in Ontario. But, all that being said, I cannot escape the reality that in other ways, the ways that matter on the island, they are definitely from Newfoundland, and I am definitely not.

The older man and woman were born and raised in Central Newfoundland; if this does not grant them the status of being from Newfoundland, nothing does. The majority of their extended family lives in the same town, and they come back for yearly visits. Their son genetically and culturally speaking is from Newfoundland. More than most people from mainland Canada, he can legitimately claim a Newfoundland identity.

As for me, I am the only one who lives in the province. Literally, I have come from *Newfoundland to the west coast of the continent. And yet, somehow, I feel false in*

making the statement that I am from Newfoundland. I know my claim of residency, valid in some other parts of the world, is tenuous at best with respect to this province.

In many parts of the world, some people are thought to belong in certain places, and not in others. Sometimes, like in this market, those articulations of belonging do not really matter. Sometimes, though, those articulations of belonging are deeply significant. What we consider to be home can be as simple as a bed and a warm pair of slippers; however it can also be complex, equally a source of strife and strength, depending on how it is used and challenged in that usage.

Am I from Newfoundland? So far, I do not like the answers to that question that I have been receiving, so it is a question I think I might stop asking. Is it my home? Yes, for now. For me, when I walk to the grocery store, look over my left shoulder and see the sun sparkling on the ocean, I feel at home. My sense of place will change, in time, whether I live here forever or not. For now, though, that is a my sense of home, and for now, that, *my personal definition of my home, is all that really matters.*

> And where is home? Home may be where we hang our hat, or where our heart is... which may be the same place, or maybe not. It may be where we choose to live... or where we belong, whether we like it or not. It may be all of these things, or none of them. Whatever and wherever it is, home is always border country, a place that separates and connects us. (Chamberlin 3)

***

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbott, Steven. Personal Interview. 20 October 2006.

Addis, Donna Rose, and Lynette J. Tippett. "Memory of Myself: Autobiographical Memory and Identity in Alzheimer's Disease." *Memory* 12.1 (2004): 56-74.

Alburo, Jade. "Boxed In or Out? Balikbayan Boxes as Metaphors for Filipino American (Dis)location." *Ethnologies* 27.2 (2005): 137-157.

Bascomb, William R. "Four Functions of Folklore." *The Journal of American Folklore.* 67.266 (1954): 333-349.

Bell, Nicole. "Branded." *The Independent.* 11 June 2006. St. John's, NL. 30 July 2007. <http://www.theindependent.ca/article.asp?AID=1128&ATID=2>

Bella, Leslie. *Newfoundlanders: Home and Away.* St. John's, NL: Greetings from Newfoundland, Ltd., 2002.

Blandy, Douglas and Elizabeth Hoffman. "Toward an Art Education of Place." *Studies in Art Education* 35.1 (1993): 22-33.

Blodgett, J., M. Bice, D. Wistow, and L. Martin. *The McMichael Canadian Art Collection.* Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1990.

"Brand Reaction." Int. Suzanne Woolridge. *The St. John's Morning Show.* CBC Radio One. 5 October 2006.

"Branding Reaction." *The St. John's Morning Show.* CBC Radio One. 4 October 2006.

Brewer, Art. "Welcoming Congregation Program" *Canadian Unitarian Council.* 25 April 2007. Pamphlet, available online at: <http://www.cuc.ca/pamphlets/cucbrochures_welcomingcongregation.pdf>

Brodie, Ian. "'The Very Environment Militates Against Denial: Negotiating Place Through Material Culture." *Ethnologies* 27.2 (2005): 189-217.

Button, Nicole. Personal Interview. 12 September 2006.

Byrne, Pat. "Booze, Ritual and the Invention of Tradition: The Phenomenon of the Newfoundland Screech-In." *Usable Pasts: Traditions and Group Expressions in North America.* Ed. Tad Tuleja. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1997. 232-248.

Canadian Heritage. "Cultural Capitals of Canada." *Canadian Heritage Website.* 2007. 5 May 2007. < http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/ccc/index_e.cfm>.

Carey, Phil, and Sue Sutton. "Community Development Through Participatory Arts: Lessons Learned From a Community Arts and Regeneration Project in South Liverpool." *Community Development Journal* 39.2 (2004): 123-134.

Carr, Emily. *Growing Pains: An Autobiography.* Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1946.

Chamberlin, J. Edward. *If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?* Toronto, ON: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2003.

Chaulk, Wayne. "Saltwater Joys." *All Together Now: Songs of Newfoundland & Labrador Vol. 3.* Ed. Eric West. Ladle Cove, NL: Vinland Music, 2000: 40-41.

Cochrane, Timothy. "Place, People and Folklore: An Isle Royale Case Study." *Western Folklore* 46.1 (1987): 1-20.

Coristine, Pamela E. "The Landscape of Home: The Role of Signal Hill in the Emergence of a Sense of Identity and Place in St. John's, Newfoundland." MA thesis, Memorial University, 2002.

Creative Newfoundland and Labrador: The Blueprint for Development and Investment in Culture. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. 2006. <http://www.tcr.gov.nl.ca/tcr/publications/2006/culturalplan2006.pdf>

Crummey, Michael and Greg Locke. *Newfoundland: Journey into a Lost Nation.* Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 2004.

Curties, Ben. "Targeting Ontario." *The Independent.* 5 February 2006. St. John's, NL. 30 July 2007. <http://www.theindependent.ca/article.asp?AID=1024&ATID=8>

Dunsiger, Jane C. "A Comparative Study of Narrative Accounts of Visits Home Drawn from the Immigrant Ethnic Community in St. John's, Newfoundland." MA thesis, Memorial University, 1983.

Eddis, Charles. "What Unitarians Believe." *Canadian Unitarian Council.* 25 April 2007. Pamphlet, available online at: <http://www.cuc.ca/pamphlets/cucbrochures_whatuusbelieve.pdf>.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures.* New York: Basic Books, 1973.

Glassie, Henry. "Tradition." *Eight Words for the Study of Expressive Culture.* Ed. Burt Feintuch. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois, 2003. 176-197.

Byrne, Pat. "Booze, Ritual and the Invention of Tradition: The Phenomenon of the Newfoundland Screech-In." *Usable Pasts: Traditions and Group Expressions in North America.* Ed. Tad Tuleja. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1997. 232-248.

Godfrey, Gabuya. Personal Interview. 15 September 2006.

Goldbard, Arlene. "The Story Revolution: How Telling Our Stories Transforms the World." *Community Arts Network: Reading Room.* 2005. 20 February 2007.

<http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2005/01/the_story_revol.php>.

Gosling, Samuel D., Kenneth H. Craik, Nicholas R. Martin, and Michelle R. Pryor, "Material Attributes of Personal Living Spaces." *Home Cultures* 2.1 (2005): 51-88.

"Brand Signature." *Government of Newfoundland and Labrador website.* 2006. 20 February 2007. <http://www.gov.nl.ca/brand/brand_gallery.htm>.

Graves, James Bau. "Folklife, Meet Community Arts." *Community Arts Network: Reading Room.* January 2004. 21 February 2007. <http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2004/01/folklife_meet_c.php>.

Greenhill, Pauline. *So We Can Remember: Showing Family Photographs.* National Museum of Man Mercury Series. Ottawa, ON: National Museums of Canada, 1981.

Guilbert, Lucille. "The Migratory Experience and the Feeling of Belonging." *Ethnologies* 27.1 (2005): 19-32.

Harper, Douglas. "Talking About Pictures: A Case for Photo Elicitation." *Visual Studies* 17.1 (2002): 13-26.

Hewett, Philip. "How Do I Become a Unitarian?" *Canadian Unitarian Council.* 25 April 2007. Pamphlet, available online at: <http://www.cuc.ca/pamphlets/cucbrochures_becomeaunitarian.pdf>.

Hay, Robert. "Sense of Place in Developmental Context." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 18 (1998): 5-29.

Hill, Ronald Paul. "Homeless Women, Special Possessions, and the Meaning of 'Home': An Ethnographic Case Study." *Journal of Consumer Research* 18 (1991): 298-310.

Hudson, Louise. Personal Interview. 23 October 2006.

Hughes, G. "A Short History of the Dictionary: Varieties of a Genre." *Textus* 2 (1997): 215-242.

Independent Living Resource Centre. *ILRC website.* n.d. 15 February 2007. <http://www.ilrc.nf.ca/>

Jacobson, David. *Place and Belonging in America.* Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.

Johanson, P. *Art and Survival: Creative Solutions to Environmental Problems.* Vancouver, BC: Gallerie Publications. 2002.

Jones, Michael Owen. "'Tradition' in Identity Discourses and an Individual's Symbolic Construction of Self." *Western Folklore* 59.2 (2000): 115-141.

Kahn, Alison J. "The Jews of St. John's, Newfoundland: A Rhetorical Approach to a Community Autobiography." MA thesis, Memorial University, 1984.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. "Objects of Memory: Material Culture as Life Review." *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: A Reader.* Ed. Elliott Oring. Utah: Utah State University Press, 1989. 329-338.

Kuiper, K. "Review: Ethnocentrism and the English Dictionary." *International Journal of Lexicography*, 15 (2002): 164 -169.

Kutty, Yamuna. Personal Interview. 27 August 2006.

Laird, Ross, A. *A Stone's Throw: The Enduring Nature of Myth.* Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart, 2003.

Lasn, Kalle. *Culture Jam.* New York, NY: First Quill, 2000.

Lawless, Elaine. *Women Escaping Violence: Empowerment Through Narrative.* Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2001.

Letourneau, Jocelyn. "Remembering Our Past: An Examination of the Historical Memory of Young Quebecois." *To the Past: History, Education, Public Memory and Citizenship in Canada.* Ed. Ruth W. Sandwell. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2006. 70-87.

Lichetenberk, F. "To List or Not to List: Writing a Dictionary of a Language Undergoing Rapid and Extensive Lexical Changes." *International Journal of Lexicography,* 16(4) (2003): 387-401.

Liu, Jianxiang. "Continuation and Acculturation: A Study of Foodways of Three Immigrant Chinese Families in St. John's, Newfoundland." MA thesis, Memorial University, 1991.

MacGregor, Robert M. "'Kamell Dung': A Challenge to Canada's National Icon." *Usable Pasts: Traditions and Group Expressions in North America.* Ed. Tad Tuleja. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1997. 293-310.

Mackie, Richard. "The Referendum: No Side Holds Rest of Canada to Promise Constitutional Change needed, Federalists Say, As Johnson's Nightmare of Divided Quebec Comes True." *The Globe and Mail.* 31 October 1995. Nat. ed.: A9.

Magliocco, Sabina. *Neo-pagan Sacred Art and Altars: Making Things Whole.* Jackson, Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, 2001.

Major, Kevin. *As Near to Heaven if By Sea.* Toronto, ON: Penguin Books, 2001.

Mallett, Shelley. "Understanding Home: A Critical Review of the Literature." *The Sociological Review* 52.1 (2004): 62-89.

Mannion, John J. "Introduction." *The Peopling of Newfoundland: Essays in Historical Geography.* Ed. John Mannion. St. John's, NL: ISER, Memorial University, 1977. 1-14.

Marshall, Trudy. Personal Interview. 23 September 2006.

McAdams, Dan P. *The Stories We Live By: Personal Myths and the Making of the Self.* New York, New York: Guilford Press, 1996.

"Minister Frulla Announces Cultural Capitals of Canada for 2006." 23 November 2005. *News Release – Canadian Heritage.* 15 April 2006. <http://www.pch.gc.ca/newsroom/index_e.cfm?fuseaction=displayDocument&DocIDCd=5N0321>

Morgan, Bernice. "The Culture of Place." *Newfoundland Studies* 19.2 (2003): 373-377.

Morrissey, Ryan. Personal Interview. Summer 2006.

The Murphy Centre. "Programs." *The Murphy Centre: A living investment.* 2003. 21 February 2007. <http://www.murphycentre.nf.net/programs.htm>

MWONL. *Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador.* St. John's, NL: MWONL, 2006.

Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism. "Newfoundland and Labrador Welcomes You." *Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.* 2007. 8 May 2007. <http://www.newfoundlandlabrador.com/>.

O'Brien, Andrea. "'There's Nothing Like a Cup of Tea in the Woods' – Continuity, Community and Cultural Validation in Rural Newfoundland Boil-ups." *Ethnologies* 21.1 (1999): 65-83.

Oring, Elliott. "The Arts, Artefacts, and Artificies of Identity." *The Journal of American Folklore* 107 (1994): 211-233.

Ossleton, N.E. "Review: Lexical Images. The Story of the Australian National Dictionary." *International Journal of Lexicography*, 17.1 (2004): 89-90.

Overton, James. "Coming Home: Nostalgia and Tourism in Newfoundland." *Acadiensis* 14.1 (1984): 84-97.

---. "A Newfoundland Culture?" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 23.1&2 (1988): 5-22.

Pocius, Gerald. *A Place to Belong: Community Order and Everyday Space in Calvert, Newfoundland.* Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1991.

---. "Tourists, Health Seekers and Sportsmen: Luring Americans to Newfoundland in the Early Twentieth Century." *Twentieth Century Newfoundland: Explorations.* Eds. James Hiller and Peter Neary. St. John's, NL: Breakwater Books, 1994. 47-78.

Porter, Marilyn. "'She Was Skipper of the Shore Crew': Notes on the History of Sexual Division of Labour in Newfoundland." *Their Live and Times: Women in Newfoundland and Labrador, A Collage.* Eds. Carmelita McGrath, Barbara Neis and Marilyn Porter. St. John's, NL: Killick Press, 1995. 33-47.

Prowse, D.W. *A History of Newfoundland and Labrador.* Portugal Cove-St. Phillips, NL: Boulder Publications, 2002.

Qadeer, Mohammed, and Kumar, Sandeep. "Ethnic Enclaves and Social Cohesion." *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 15.2 (2006): 1-17.

RIAC. "About Us: Vision Mission Value." *RIAC: Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council.* 26 June 2006. 21 February 2007. <http://riac.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=33>

Robinson, Catherine. "Grieving Home." *Social & Cultural Geography* 6.1 (2005): 47-60.

Rose, Gillian. "Spatialities of 'Community', Power and Change: The Imagined Geographies of Community Arts Projects." *Cultural Studies* 11.1 (1997):1-16.

Rosenwald, G.C. and R.L. Ochberg (eds.). *Storied Lives: The Cultural Politics of Self-understanding.* Grand Rapids, MI: Yale University, 1992.

Rowe, Sarah. Personal Interview. 12 September 2006.

Rowe, Shawn M., James V. Wertsch, and Tatyana Y. Kosyaeva, "Linking Little Narratives to Big Ones: Narrative and Public Memory in History Museums." *Culture & Psychology* 8.1 (2002): 96-112.

Rummens, Joanna. "An Interdisciplinary Overview of Canadian Research on Identity." *Metropolis.* 2001. 20 February 2007. <http://canada.metropolis.net/events/ethnocultural/publications/identity_e.pdf>.

Ryden, Kent. *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing and the Sense of Place.* Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1993.

Seniors Resource Centre of Newfoundland Labrador. *Seniors Resource Centre website.* n.d. 21 February 2007. <http://www.seniorsresource.ca/>.

Shenk, Dena, Boyd Davis, James R. Peacock, and Linda Moore. "Narratives and Self-Identity in Later Life: Two Rural American Older Women." *Journal of Aging Studies* 16 (2002): 401-413.

Shuman, Amy. "Dismantling Local Culture" *Western Folklore* 52.2/4 (1993): 345-364.

Sizov, Elena. Personal Interview. Summer 2006.

Stagg, Doug. Personal Interview. Summer 2006.

Stanley, Timothy J. "Whose Public? Whose Memory? Racisms, Grand Narratives and Canadian History." *To the Past: History, Education, Public Memory and Citizenship in Canada.* Ed. Ruth W. Sandwell. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2006. 32-49.

St. John's Native Friendship Centre Association. *First Nations Friendship Centre website.* 2005. 21 February 2007. <http://www.friendshipcentre.nf.net/>.

Stedman, Richard C. "Is It Really Just a Social Construction?: The Contribution of the Physical Environment to Sense of Place." *Society and Natural Resources* 16 (2003): 671-685.

Stern, Stephen. "Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity." *Western Folklore* 36.1 (1977): 7-32.

Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984.

Story, George M. "Newfoundland: Fishermen, Hunters, Planters and Merchants." *Christmas Mummering in Newfoundland.* Ed. Herbert Halpert. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1969. 7-33.

Story, G.M., W.J. Kirwin, and J.D.A. Widdowson, "Dictionary of Newfoundland English Online." *University of Toronto Press.* 1999. 8 May 2007. <http://www.heritage.nf.ca/dictionary/>.

Strang, Victoria. "Common Senses: Water, Sensory Experience and the Generation of Meaning." *Journal of Material Culture* 10.1 (2005): 92-120.

Terkenli, Theano S. "Home as a Region" *Geographical Review* 85.3 (1995): 324-334.

Thomson, Jillian. "To Let the Children Know: The Traditions and Adaptations of the Chinese Community of the Avalon Peninsula." MA thesis, Memorial University, 1993.

Thorne, Cory W. "Come From Away: Community, Region, and Tradition in Newfoundland Expatriate Identity." Diss. University of Pennsylvania, 2004.

Tilley, Christopher. "Introduction: Identity, Place, Landscape and Heritage." *Journal of Material Culture* 11.1/2 (2006): 7-32.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. "Place: An Experiential Perspective." *Geographical Review* 65.2 (1975): 151-165.

---. *Segmented Worlds and Self.* Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

Tuleja, Tad. "Introduction - Making Ourselves Up: On the Manipulation of Tradition in Small Groups." *Usable Pasts: Traditions and Group Expressions in North America.* Ed. Tad Tuleja. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1997. 1-20.

Vanier, Jean. *Finding Peace.* Toronto, ON: House of Anansi Press, 2003.

Walker, Andrew L. and Rosalind Kimball Moulton. "Photo Albums: Images of Time and Reflections of Self." *Qualitative Sociology* 12.2 (1989): 155-189.

Westerman, William. "Wild Grasses and New Arks: Transformative Potential in Applied and Public Folklore." *Journal of American Folklore* 119.471 (2006):111-128.

Wells R.A. *Dictionaries and the Authoritarian Tradition.* Mouton: The Hague. 1973.

Young, Ron. *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador: A Unique Collection of Language and Lore.* St. John's, NL: Downhome Publishing, Inc. 2006.