SLASH ROMANCE: AN ETHNOGRAPHY AND OCCUPATIONAL
FOLKLIFE STUDY OF AN ONTARIO TREEPLANTING CAMP

JOHN M. BODNER

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

.

Canada

Slash Romance: An Ethnography and Occupational Folklife Study of an Ontario Treeplanting Camp

by

John M. Bodner

A thesis submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Folklore
Memorial University of Newfoundland

December, 1998

St. John's   Newfoundland

Abstract

This thesis is an ethnography and occupational folklife study of a treeplanting camp in northwestern Ontario. Two main areas of inquiry are pursued. Robert McCarl's concept of "technique" is used to understand the culture and social relations of treeplanting as products of the work process. Liminal space/time is investigated as both a structuring principle of treeplanting and a product of the lived relations of planters. The position of liminality in relation to complex society and work culture is investigated and a study of liminality in praxis is proposed as a methodology for approaching treeplanting. Finally, issues of personal and occupational identity construction are examined in relation to both technique and liminality. Throughout this thesis the contexts of youth and wage work, and issues surrounding gender, sexuality, class and age are integrated into various aspects of the occupation. Two broad conclusions can be extrapolated from my research: piecework and liminal space/time are the two main structures affecting the lives of treeplanters; and the use of the occupation as an instrumental site of experimentation affects both the labourer and occupation's identity. These conclusions remain provisional because a lack of data makes a comparative study of other treeplanting camps impossible at this time.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

Introduction

I have heard tales of treeplanting since starting my undergraduate degree in 1988 at

Trent University in Peterborough Ontario. As friends and acquaintances became

involved in the summer work, stories about bear attacks, clouds of bugs, fantastic

parties and pockets full of money became increasingly familiar to me. A job in a

union shop and part-time studies kept me out of the clear-cuts of northern Ontario

until my partner and I shed our skins, quit dead-end jobs, moved towns and found

ourselves with the opportunity to treeplant. That was 1996. At 26 I was older than

most first year planters but no less foolish, hopeful or proud of my accomplishments.

The following summer I was a graduate student in folklore at Memorial University and

this same camp was now both my work site and my research area.

This thesis is an ethnographic exploration of an enclavic work-camp engaged in

resource related "bush work." Treeplanting is defined by two forces: the work process

and the camp's existence as liminal space/time. In understanding the way in which

work structures occupational culture I will use Robert McCarl's theoretical construct of

"technique."[1] Planting is more than work; understanding the camp is vital to

appreciate its unique nature. I have chosen to look at the way that planters organize,

---

[1]McCarl, Robert S. "The Communication of Work Technique." *Culture and Tradition* 3 (1990): 108-17.
---. *The District of Columbia Firefighters Project: A Case Study in Occupational Folklife* (Smithsonian Folklife Series No. 4. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office) 1985.
---. "Occupational Folklife: A Theoretical Hypothesis." *Working Americans: Contemporary Approaches to Occupational Folklife*, Ed. Robert H. Byington (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Publication) 1978: 3-18.

adapt and use space—space understood as both the perception of it without its material

reorganization, and its manipulation through built structures—in order to read social

and cultural relations. In the final chapter I will attempt to understand how both space

and technique are coupled with personal and occupational identity in an intricate dance

of identity formation. Throughout this thesis particular attention will be paid to

diachronic forces acting upon the occupation as well as the way planting adopts and

critiques, through a process of carnival and bricolage, the sociocultural edifices of

what its workers call "the real world."

The Setting

Every summer thousands of mainly young workers head into the clear-cuts of

Canada and plant trees on the denuded mountain slopes, dry dusty foothills or thin soil

of the Canadian Shield. Hélène Cyr provides a short list of the physical nature of the

job:

> [Treeplanter] lifts a cumulative weight of over 1000 kilograms; bends
> more than 200 times per hour; drives the shovel into the ground more
> than 200 times per hour; travels about 16 kilometres on foot. . . .
> Treeplanters register exertion levels at 75 percent of that of an Olympic
> runner. (5)

Rising to the challenge of the punishing physical nature of the work creates a sense of

pride by the workers in the occupation. Its what planters call "hard core": life lived at

the extreme limit of a person's physical, emotional and, in some cases, spiritual self.

Since the birth of independent contract reforestation in 1970, treeplanting has

exploded. Today more than forty companies, along with an equal number of small

"mom-and-pop" contractors, employ over ten thousand people annually. Most of the

work takes place, logically, in provinces with large forestry sectors: British Columbia,

Alberta, Ontario and Quebec.[2]

This thesis is an ethnographic study of one camp for one season in Northern

Ontario. I use the word "treeplanting" throughout as a form of shorthand. I am not

talking about planting in general, nor am I extrapolating broad conclusions about the

industry from my data. I am using the term treeplanting to refer to one camp at one

time. This distinction is important for two reasons. First, there is large variation in

the industry from province to province, company to company and even camp to camp.

Second, there are few secondary sources that would allow me to compare and contrast

my data with other research. My study, therefore, specifically concerns a Brinkman

and Associates operation northeast of Thunder Bay in 1997.

Because of environmental factors such as late thawing of the topsoil and soil

moisture content, Ontario planting is a short season operation. In 1997 work started

May 13 and ended June 27. Despite starting this late, the ground was still frozen in

some places and the temperature at night often fell below freezing. A treeplanting

camp is similar to the traditional lumber work-camp. A retrofitted school bus

converted into a kitchen and several tents provided planters with eating, bathing and

---

[2]This number is a rough estimate from surveying a list of contractors on two treeplanting Web pages and the periodical *Silviculture*.

other shelters; planters bring their own tents for sleeping, and the entire operation is set up close to the work site in less than twenty-four hours. In 1997 the camp was first located off Highway 527, whose common name is the "Armstrong highway" a 1.5 hour drive north-east of Thunder Bay. Figure 1[3] shows a map of the area around Thunder Bay. There are several overlapping ways to describe our precise location. Following the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) discourse we were located on the McConnel block[4]. The MNR uses the most prominent lake in the region to give an area its name. Few people at the camp knew or used this name. It was commonly called "mile 82" because of the mileage marker before the turn off to the camp. The camp's physical appearance earned it a third name, "gravel pit" or "the pit." After planting this area we moved to the Kershaw block. Figure 2 is an aerial photograph of part of this block; our camp sight is indicated by the white circle. This area was also called "the cariboo cut" because the larger than average size of the clear-cut was "officially" designed to reintroduce the woodland cariboo. It was in this massive clear-cut that we finished the season.

The Group

Ontario treeplanting is known for its large camps. The reason for this is that

---

[3]All photographs and have been digitally manipulated to improve picture quality and for ease of reproduction. No aspect of content was effect by this process.

[4]Block: The deforested area, usually a *clear cut*, but sometimes selective logging practices. This is the work site of the planters. Officially it is the "cut-block" but in treeplanting register it is "the block."
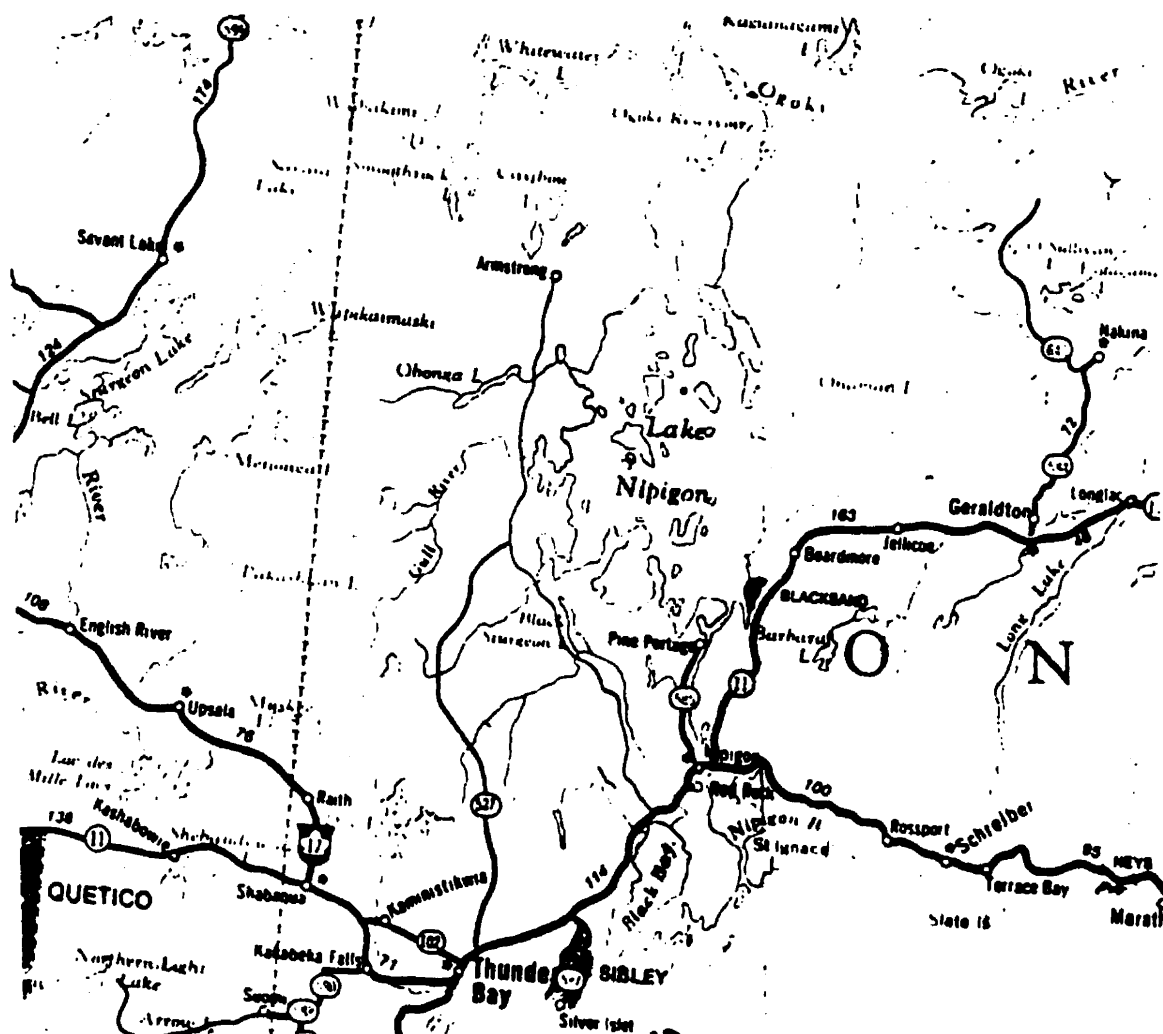
Figure 1. Road map showing Thunder Bay, Highway 527 (the "Armstrong Highway") and surrounding area (Allmaps 1990).
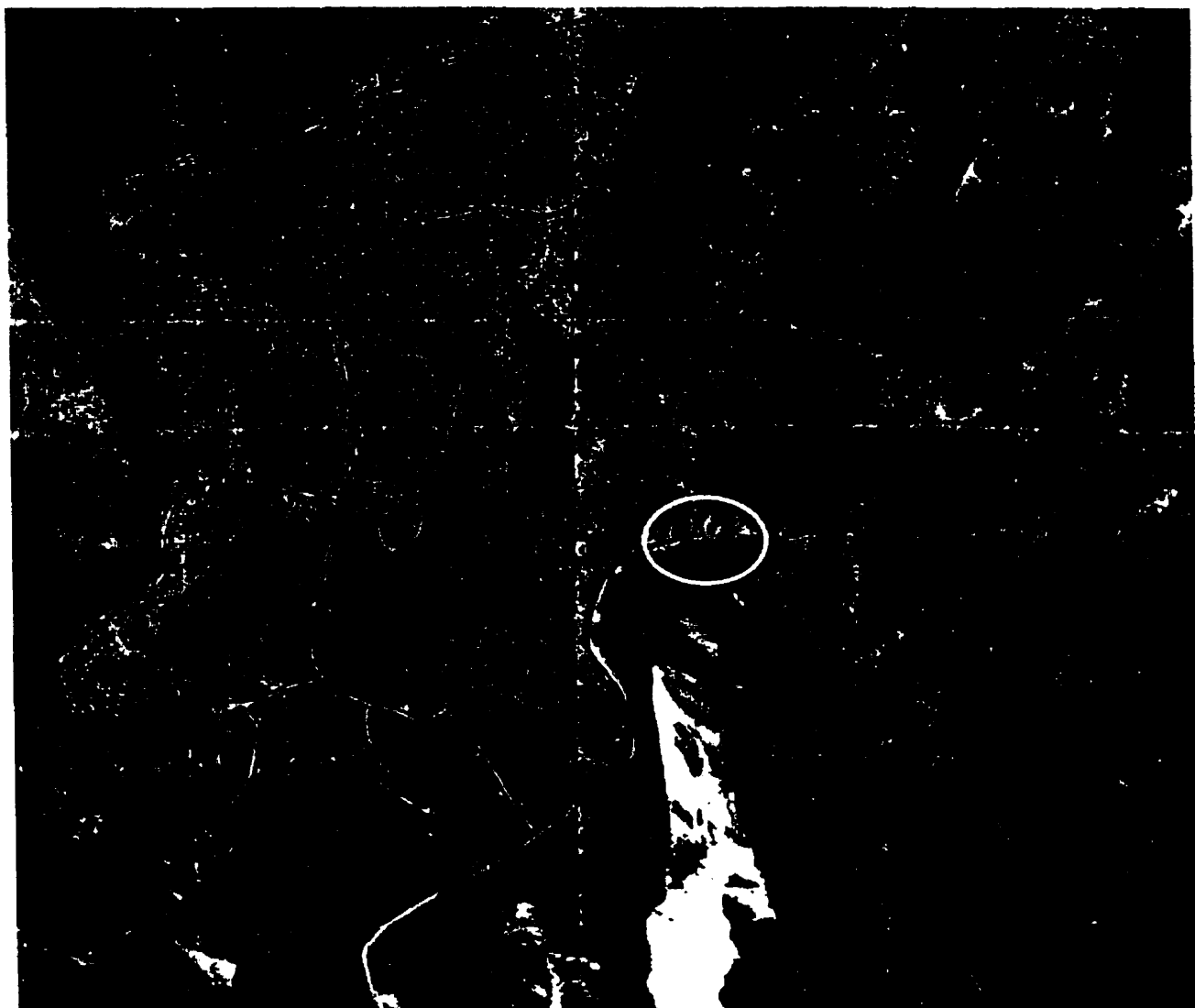
Figure 2. Aerial photograph of the Kershaw ("Cariboo cut") block. The white circle indicates the position of the camp

good road access into most areas of the province (Timmins is a notable exception)

makes the movement of large amounts of people and equipment possible. The camp

where I conducted my fieldwork is the largest Brinkman operation in Ontario. Camps

are named after their supervisor—this was JL's camp. A youthful man of thirty-eight,

JL is the director of Brinkman in Ontario and has been involved with treeplanting

since the mid-1970s. Figure 3 gives a composition of the camp. The +/- ratio is used

to account for planters who came or left the camp during the season. The largest

group was ten experienced planters from other companies who were hired for the last

two shifts of the contract (eight working days). The addition of these two groups into

Total Labourers:	69 +/- 10
Non-Labouring Individuals:	5
Female Labourers:	30 +/- 2
Male Labourers:	39 +/- 8
First Year Planters:	14
Brinkman Experienced Planters	43
Non-Brinkman Experienced Planters:	12 +/- 10
Staff:	9

Figure 3. Camp Composition

the camp affected the gender ratio since women composed only 20 percent the new

planters.

In order to gather qualitative data of the camp thirteen informant profiles were

assembled. This number constitutes 20 percent of the camp and should be considered

19≤	0
20 – 25	5
26 – 31	5
32≥	3
Total Age Range:	20 – 38
Average Age:	26

FIGURE 4. Age Graduation for Sample Group

representational. Figure 4 provides an age breakdown of the sample; by removing the

high and low ends of the scale the average age of the camp is 26. During the course

of my research the issue of age and planting was a minor theme. From these

discussions several informants gave me their estimates of the average age of the

workers. In every case their guess was between 22-24. This information is important

because, although the qualitative data shows little change in the average age of

planters since my preliminary research in 1996, it is the presence of a small group of

older planters (32≥) which kept the average up. The perception of the planters that the

camp was "younger" was, therefore, accurate.

1 – 2	6
3 – 4	3
5 – 6	1
7≥	3
Average:	2.5

FIGURE 5. Number of Years Planting for Sample Group

Figure 5 displays the number of years' experience for planters, while Figure 6

is a geographic survey of where planters lived in 1997. What is not indicated in

Figure 6 is the high mobility of this group. Only one person continued to live in the

community where she was born. Since leaving home the informants had moved an

average of 3.5 times.

Figure 7 is an attempt to measure the two groups who occupy this

camp—students and workers. Various criticisms have been levelled against this

common economic categorization which is used by Statistics Canada (*Globe and Mail*

Quebec (Montreal):	2
Ontario:	6
British Columbia:	3
New Brunswick:	1

FIGURE 6. Place of Residence of Sample Group

Student:	5
Worker:	8

FIGURE 7. Economic Position of Sample Group

1998). The problem of dividing students from the work force is that students are not

listed in employment statistics and are positioned as consumers rather than producers.

The result is that both the picture of students and the Canadian economy are skewed

by this biased measuring device. Further complicating this picture are the thousands

of students who work *and* go to school. At the same time this distinction does

delineate two groups of workers with sometimes dissimilar goals and aspirations.

What these two groups share is that they occupy the modern economic phenomenon of

a school-work transition period within which individuals move between school/training

programs and wage work depending on socio-economic conditions (Bowlby et. al.

231-3). Because of their common position I have tended to highlight the similarities

of treeplanting's workforce and grouped them under the rubric school/work throughout

this thesis. The members of the worker group were all underemployed; some received

income support from either family or the government. Income from treeplanting made

up 20 to 30 percent of their estimated yearly income. The final statistic, Figure 8,

documents the level of education.

Bachelor of Arts, Incomplete:	6
Bachelor of Arts, Complete:	4
Graduate Studies:	2
Certificate or Advanced Training:	1

FIGURE 8: Level of Education for Sample Group

Taken together the data shows that treeplanting is composed of a highly

educated, young, urban workforce with almost equal gender representation.[5] The job

occupies a central place in an annual cycle of work/school and is a necessary

---

[5]During follow-up research in 1998 the average age fell by one year and the gender ratio changed to 55 to 45 women to men.

component in a year long economic strategy. There are other socio-economic indicators which are suggested by this data. Thomas Dunk has convincingly outlined the difficulty in measuring an individual or group's class position (5-7). Survey results of parental occupation as an indicator of socio-economic and class position were abandoned because mediating factors, such as divorce, death of spouse, remarriage and lack of accurate income information made the data suspect. However, the high number of professional positions which planters' parents hold does suggest an inheritance of a middle (petty-bourgeoisie) and upper-middle class (bourgeoisie) station. Likewise, the high level of education and mobility indicate access to capital which is incongruous with the working class. This picture is further complicated when class is considered as both an economic and cultural position. Many worker/students live a precarious economic existence. The debt being accumulated by students in the form of federal and provincial loans averages $35,000, making their debt to income ratio daunting. For those planters who are listed as workers every indicator suggests that they are not replicating their parents' socio-economic position; in fact, many planters continue to be supported by their families. Despite the economic indicators most planters culturally replicate their habitus as either middle or upper-middle class individuals. Chapter One will specifically address Pierre Bordieu's concept of habitus" as a way of understanding the class position of the workers at treeplanting.

°Pierre Bordieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP) 1991.
— and J. Preston, *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage) 1977.

Methodology

While conducting my research I would often be asked why I chose treeplanting as my thesis topic. My self-deprecating joke in reply was often: "When you don't get funding you do occupational folklore." My choice of topics was mediated by two factors: the first, implied in the above quote was that I needed to make money for both my family and education obligations; second, my feeling that a folkloristic investigation of treeplanting would be of benefit to both the discipline and the occupation. Being an experienced planter and wanting to plant again in 1997, my research position was clear—I was a participant observer. Along with everyone else I worked a regular day and full shifts. I conducted some interviews on the block but only if the planter was willing to stop working and I was not having a productive day. The only difference between other workers and me—and I do not suggest that this difference is inconsequential—is that I carried a camera, tape recorder and note pad along with my tools, lunch and rain gear. Having worked in this camp in 1996, I had several friends who helped me in my research; these people and later the rest of the camp considered me a planter first and a researcher second.

The composition of the group make this kind of assimilation possible. Since planting is a temporary existence and a partial identity, everyone in the camp is something other than a treeplanter. The inclusion of several first year planters ("greeners") each year has created a group which is flexible in absorbing new members into itself. Planters' experiences with university education means that they are familiar

with the role(s) of a researcher and the goals of fieldwork. The fact that many planters are university students meant that I was doubly an insider, both a planter and a student. Finally, since the beginning of the occupation, planters have used their experiences for their own purposes back in the "real world." Fine art shows, photography exhibits, 'zines, and creative writing are just some of the media that treeplanting has been translated into.[7] The ephemeral nature of these media, coupled with the amateur or marginal position of the artists, ensure that planting has remained relatively unknown to the general population.

Joseph P. Goodwin has raised several important points about the position of the insider as researcher (88-92). His arguments center on two themes. First, there is a bias which states that insiders can not be objective.[8] Like Goodwin I am not interested in deconstructing the role of objectivity; my position has been to gather, organize and analyze my data with the intent of objectivity. I have attempted to make my subjective position clear to the reader. At the time of my research I was a second-year veteran of Ontario treeplanting. For those who may find it important, I like my job and the culture which surrounds it. I also agree with Goodwin that the insights

---

[7] With its high quality arresting photographs and anecdotal, personal experience narratives, Helen Cry's book, *Handmade Forests: The Treeplanting Experience*, is a good example of the more advanced creative and documentary projects that planters have created (cf. Austin).

[8] The debates concerning the researcher's subject position and the dynamics of "objectivity" remain active debates in the social sciences. An alternative reading of subject positioning can be found in Donna Haraway's concept "situated knowledges." Since it is not the intention of this chapter to explore the issue of objectivity, the constructed subject and the role of scientific discourse on the social sciences I have highlighted Goodwin's cautionary position as a working model within the more pragmatic necessities of modest research project.

which an insider can bring to research far outweigh the risks. Insider researchers have the advantage of understanding some of the basic mechanisms of the culture in which they travel; their questions and their ability to understand the nuances of the responses are greatly enhanced. Moreover, an insider folklorist can act in the capacity of translator and explain their position and their discipline in ways that their informants can understand (cf. Mills 8-12). This rapport builds trust and mutual respect which is vital to successful fieldwork .

On the first evening of each new season there is the introductory meeting. JL takes this opportunity to explain the basics of camp life, the work and anything which may be different about this year. I took this opportunity to introduce myself to the group, outline my research, my role and the basic guidelines of research on human subjects which I would be following. At this time I received permission to spontaneously tape record around camp and on the block, with the understanding that I would not document any event if asked not to by an informant. This was not surreptitious tape recording. It was agreed that when I was in possession of the large bright blue tape recorder carrying case, I was considered to be taping. To ensure that my informants were comfortable with the arrangements I held two more information sessions, and I received positive feedback from both. In conjunction with these sessions I also made my thesis proposal and preliminary research available to anyone who was interested. I received some valuable information from informants who took the time to read this material and, where applicable, I have used these comments to

inform my writing. In 1998 I returned to the same camp to work and conduct follow-up research. At this time I brought early drafts of Chapter One and what was to become Chapters Two and Three. Ten planters read these rough copies and made valuable suggestions, some of which I have directly quoted, while others have provided me with important insights into the material.

Informants are represented in this paper by either their first name or a name that they themselves used at camp. JL, JP and AC are not pseudonyms; likewise Bicycle-Helmet Andrew was a planter's adopted name during the contract. I have abandoned the traditional use of pseudonyms because my informants insisted that they were comfortable with their names being used and—more importantly—they would be able to figure out who people were despite the use of false names. Despite their reassurances I contacted as many informants as I could; I read them the parts of the thesis in which they appear and asked if they would like me to assign them a pseudonym. Everyone declined.

During the season I collected over fifty hours of tape which included both on-the-spot taping and thirteen formal interviews. Supplementing this data is a field journal and 130 photographs. This data can and was combined with the growing body of occupational folklore studies to provide the researcher with valuable insights into: aspects of youth and employment; technique and occupational culture; contemporary festival; identity construction. It can also contribute to the long history of the study of work and folklore.

Occupational Folklore and Treeplanting: *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*[9]

Treeplanting is of interest to the occupational folklorist for many reasons, the

most important being the way that one can recognize the main historical and

theoretical themes of the discipline in the occupation itself. Treeplanting takes place

in an isolated locale where labourers are gathered together in a work-camp, wages are

based on piecework, relations are multiplex and primary, and the job itself is a manual

labour full of subtle applications of skill. The fact that it takes place outside, in

extreme conditions, and has an element of danger and adventure, marks treeplanting as

a member of a group (loggers, seamen, coal miners, fire fighters, to name just a few)

who folklorists have often studied. Robert Redfield, writing decades before

contemporary treeplanting, could not have produced a more accurate description of

JL's camp:

> There are little communities to be found in frontier regions: the lumber
> camp, the settlements of labourers drawn to some mine or dam or
> plantation. These last communities are small, perhaps, and distinct, but
> they are in many cases heterogeneous. (*The Little Community*: 5)

It is the heterogeneous nature that excluded the work-camp from consideration as the

ideal little community. Nevertheless, folklorists were drawn to the work camps, in

part, because they were similar to a Redfieldian folk society (as they had begun to be

---

[9]Marcel Proust

called) (*Folk Society*).[10] The move to study these isolated communities is the result of

the discipline's history which partially defined folklore as the study of survivals

(Dundes: 227-8; cf. Doucette: 130-1). What drew early folklorists into the woods and

mines was the ballad hunting that resulted from the famous collection of Francis James

Child (1882-1898). Spurred on by Child's assertion that he had gathered "every

valuable copy of every known ballad" other collectors began searching in earnest (qtd.

in Brunvand: 150). The success of Cecil J. Sharp in documenting English and

American ballads inspired others. Franz Rickaby was drawn into the woods to hunt

for ballads and gives a revealing indication of the kind of attitude that these early

collectors brought with them: "One could travel from camp to camp for an entire

season and not find anything of interest" (7). Other researchers were more generous

and their efforts led them to expand the field of folklore into a serious investigation of

occupations. Alan Lomax's work with cowboys challenged both the canon of ballad

scholarship and marked the beginning of ethnographic research into an occupation In

Pennsylvania George Korson was drawn to anthracite miners because of their

similarity to a Redfieldian community; his collecting extended beyond ballads into

narratives, legends and beliefs, and occupied his efforts for forty years (cf. Green 72-

3). As the quest for ballads waned and folklore moved into other genres the

---

[10]See also Foster's adaptation of Redfield's model: George M. Foster, "What is Folk Culture?"
Anthropologist 55 (1953): 159-73. For a study of the consequences of the Redfieldian model on folklore see:
Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* (Madison: The U of Wisconsin P, 1988) 52-
81.

occupational group remained a field of research because it continued to mimic the ideological underpinnings of the discipline and geographically defined groups that folklorists were accustomed to studying.

The social and cultural upheavals of the 1930s gave birth to a new kind of singing folk, the industrial unionized worker. This worker fractured the Redfieldian model but not the basic assumption that the folk were a different social class—low compared to the scholar's high (Green *Industrial*: 82; cf. Dundes *Who*). Archie Green, the great collector and writer on labour lore—as this area of research began to be known—defined the lore of trade unionists as expressive acts which held "ideological or symbolic content, which compliments the functional lore of work" (*Industrial*: 83). It is Archie Green's contribution to folklore that he recognized the interrelationship between the actual process of work and the lore which surrounded it.[11] This is an important shift in our understanding of occupational folklore because it acknowledges that work is not merely context, but produces both commodities and lore.

Occupational folklore throughout the 1960s and 1970s had two uncomfortably coexisting positions. Bruce Nickerson's essay "Is There a Folk in the Factory?" is an expression of the long Redfieldian tradition in occupational folklore studies which I have outlined. The folk have moved into the factory; more precisely, workers in the factory can be seen as a kind of community that folklorists have been studying for a

---

[11]In talking about the change in his idea of occupational folklore he credits suggestions by Richard Bauman (79).

hundred years. This view stresses the continuity of folklore scholarship, or in the

words of Green: "old lore in new settings" (*Industrial:* 74). The second view is a

radical departure from traditional work studies; it asserts that "work itself is a process

which generates lore" (*Industrial:* 80). The most vocal proponent of this approach is

Robert McCarl. His idea that the actual task of working and the techniques of

accomplishing these tasks constitutes the "central shaping principle of the occupation,"

foregrounds the work process itself (*Industrial:* 15). In the same year Jack Santino, as

a first step to understanding this new field, produced a preliminary catalogue of

common areas of occupational lore. However the debate over the nature of

occupational folklore remains fractured and divergent. Freed from earlier assumptions

about who the folk are, studies have been conducted on the humour of mushroom

collectors (Fine); the use of art in the work place (MacDowell); and send-off parties

at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Narváez *I've Gotten*). Into this arena came

Michael Owen Jones adoption of an organizational paradigm for occupational study,

asking researchers to change their focus from the shop-floor to the boardroom.[12]

In my Redfieldian community there were no singing and dancing peasants.

This quasi-Redfieldian community had a satellite phone, two lap-top computers, and

---

[12] Michael Owen Jones and D.M. Moore, et al, eds., *Inside Organizations: Understanding the Human Dimension* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage) 1988.
---. "Why Folklore and Organization(s)?" *Western Folklore* 50 (1991): 29-40.
---. ed. "Special Issue: Emotions in Work: A Folklore Approach." *American Behavioral Scientist* 33 (1990). See also: Robert McCarl, "Response to Michael Owen Jone's Article, 'Why Folklore and Organizations?'" *Western Folklore* 51 (1992): 187-189.

workers who would come up to me and say: "So I thought that you might find this use of media in different contexts and the recycling of information helpful" (Journal, May 23). I did find it helpful. I also wondered aloud sometimes about how far folklore has moved from Jacob Grimm's idea of *Volkskunde*. The recognition of the history of occupational folklore in treeplanting does not mean that each aspect is of equal importance. Surprisingly, it is the enclavic community aspect of planting which provides the greatest challenge to the theoretical tools of contemporary occupational folklore. Having abandoned the idea of the Redfieldian community, folklorists have accepted the social model of fractured time/space regimes and atomized micro-community studies. The clearest expression of this is Dundes' definition of a folk group: "Folk can refer to *any group of people whatsoever* who share at least one common factor" (italics in original 242). In relation to occupational folklore this kind of focus has generally limited investigation to the work site itself and not extended the study to include the worker's pluralistic roles as spouse, father, friend, son, etc. This list is gender specific because several studies on women and work have focused on the multiple roles that women retain despite entering the work force: mother, spouse, maid, daughter, chauffeur etc. (Oakley; Luxton).

The issues surrounding the workplace, context and group share many similarities with a debate in cultural geography over the reevaluation of the spatial hierarchy of scale, ie. the hierarchical organization of human relations, "body, home, community, urban, regional, national, global" (Smith 101). Folklorists use two similar

scales, one we call context, the other is the traditional way in which we understand culture. Local culture, whether occupational folk groups or small group interaction, like early geographic models, "were understood as locally produced systems of social interaction and symbolic meaning" (Massey *Spatial*: 123). The problem with scales is that they are a linear hierarchy that deform the complex interconnections between different aspects of the scale. A study of a temporary enclavic community, whose workforce is drawn from an urban setting, cannot ignore issues of simultaneity and the way in which work and nonwork bend into each other to form a larger socio-spatial regime.

It is this heterogeneity of the work camp that caused Redfield to reject it as an ideal little community. Essentially he could not locate the community within an isolated, hierarchy of scale. Beverly Stoeltje in *Making the Frontier Myth: Folklore Process in a Modern Nation* notes that folklorists often find elements of national ideologies within their seemingly hermetic folk group. While she recognizes the issue of interconnectedness she still retains the ideal of scale by delineating element which are nation from those which are inherent to the folk group. As such she misunderstand the way in which scales are interconnected, overlap and reinforce each other. This thesis, therefore, understands the workplace not as the center of concentric contextual rings but more as a "constellation of temporary coherence" (Massey *Spatial*: 125). Because of this the very geography of the space is open to investigation as is the composition and culture of the workforce. As an enclavic quasi-Redfieldian

community the study of treeplanting also cannot ignore the camp as an important aspect of the occupation. Planters organize space into two main areas, the block as the site of work and the camp as the site of non-work. This thesis is organized along similar lines.

Organization of Thesis

Chapter One provides a context for contemporary treeplanting by placing it within the broader resource extraction industry and the history of reforestation and silviculture. A broad history of Brinkman and Associates and early contract bidding, development of tools, and historical and environmental forces that have made Ontario planting unique from its west coast roots is discussed. The writing of this company history raises issues surrounding oral history, oral tradition, identity, and material culture. Finally, the wage system of piecework is explored in both its historic and contemporary manifestations.

Chapter Two uses Robert McCarl's idea of technique to understand the way in which social relations and culture are the result of the actual work process. The canon of work technique is subdivided into three sections: macro-level, "mental game" and micro-level in order to emicly understand the way in which techniques are used by planters. Of special interest is the way in which the isolation of the work confines technique to narrative. My position is that work narratives are used by planters to overcome the isolation of the block and create a simulacrum of a shared work

experience.

Chapter Three builds on the preceding chapter and outlines the techniques which are particular to each staff position. I also explore how staff positions require not only a broader canon of work technique but also the use and negotiation of authority appropriate to the cultural expectations of treeplanting.

Chapter Four explores how boundary crossing, travel, economic ideology and lived relations construct treeplanting as liminal space/time. This chapter also problematizes the nature of liminality in the context of Victor Turner's metaphoric adaptation of liminality to complex, capitalist, urban societies.[13]

Chapter Five looks at the spatial organization of treeplanting as a way of reading social relations. It is argued that the division between the block and the camp is a way of insulating the camp from economic concerns. The block itself is explored as a site which is constructed as an economic sphere. The last half of the chapter is concerned with the way in which the camp is an expression of liminality in praxis and outlines examples of carnival, festival, and counter-cultural social organizations.

The final chapter revisits some of the narratives and subjects in order to discuss the ways in which occupation and personal identity are important forces in treeplanting. It will be argued that the liminal nature of the camp as well as its counter-culture tradition allow for personal identities to influence the occupational

---

[13]Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: Aldine De Gruyter) 1969.

identity itself. The interaction of these two forces results in an environment of identity experimentation and fluidity. The interrelation between the two forces of personal and occupational identity are explored, as are the dynamics of temporary identities of planters. Important issues surrounding the subject positions of gender, age and sexuality are also discussed.

The conclusion will revisit some of the main themes of this thesis and suggest areas of further study. I will also outline my goals and continuing obligations as a member and writer of the treeplanting community. These issues will be tied into current occupational folklore debates surrounding the role of informant and researcher in a work environment where power is uneven and unmeditated.

Chapter 1

The Historical and Structural Context of Contemporary Treeplanting[14]

One of the divisions among treeplanters is that greeners and less experienced planters

call what they do "treeplanting" while those who have worked for many seasons,

especially staff (crewbosses, supervisors, tree-runners) often call treeplanting an

"industry" or the "silviculture industry." This division is more than just a question of

workers engaged in a limited activity while managers and experienced planters have a

broader view of their occupation; it is the particular nature of treeplanting as both a

vital part of the powerful forestry industry and an isolated work camp in which people

participate in primary relationships both on and off the job. The goal of this chapter is

to situate one camp within the history of the relatively young silviculture industry,

examine its association with the megalithic spectre of the forestry industry in Canada,

and outline some of the structural components of the job—such as the piece work

system—which directly affect the lives and culture of contemporary treeplanters.

Early Logging and the Crown

In a country that has long suffered from a form of history that views the trials

and travails of Upper and Lower Canada as the only site where our nation was formed,

---

[14]Historical aspects of this chapter have benefitted from interviews with Dirk Brinkman (July 25; August 10, 1998), JL (Aug 5, 1998) and Mark Kuhlberg (July 15, 1998).

it is dangerous to claim that any one material product or adventure is fundamental to the creation of a nation. The sheer size and scope of the lumber industry, its concentration of capital, the partnerships between industry, and a colonial/domestic government has shaped much of the Canadian landscape—a landscape both material and metaphoric. The scope of Canada's forest products throughout our history cannot be underestimated. The massive colonial expansion from the 15th through the 19th century relied on the creation of large naval armadas; whether these were privateers or later professional national navies the dreams of an empire rested upon the strength of a country's navy. It is because of the rise of naval power and shortages of wood through the exhaustion of domestic supplies in England that British North America was brought into the fold of the Commonwealth. During the 16th and 17th century England's supplies of lumber were threatened by several factors: the suspension of supplies from the Baltic countries because of warfare (the Seven Year and the Napoleonic War being the two most significant) and the rebellion of the American Colonies which suspended access to the New England wood supply.

In the tradition of both French and British Civil law, the Crown has always controlled, through either direct monopoly exploitation or a tithe system, all mineral resources, specifically the "noble minerals" (gold, silver and copper). During times of war or crisis, the Crown's control over the land was extended to timber rights. This system of land control was initially transferred to the North American colonies without much modification. In both Canada (British North America) and the Americas, timber

deemed important to the building and maintenance of ships (red and white pine, oak) was under the control of the Royal Navy. The attempt in the Americas of controlling timber on private land was one of the complaints which helped fuel the American revolution/rebellion. Following this disaster the British designed a new policy for the maritime province of New Brunswick and what was then know as the Canadas: "Freehold Grants would be made for agricultural purposes only; all lands valuable for other reasons were to be vested in the crown" (Kneels 5-6).

This early system was meant to limit the antagonism between settlers and the interests of the crown by inventorying large tracts of land in the Canadas and laying aside areas for navy lumber. The policy would appear to have been successful. By 1815 the maritime provinces had almost exhausted their supplies of lumber suitable to the Royal Navy but Upper and Lower Canada now supplied over 70 percent of the oak planks and over 60 percent of the masts used by the British. This important shift brought Canada into the colonial mercantile trade system and made it a formal partner in the colonial trade of the day (Nelles 10).

In 1826 the Executive Council of Upper Canada extended the right to cut timber to the expanding civilian trade. The crown, however, continued to own the land where civilian companies were now permitted, by payment of a licensing fee, to cut timber. Small changes over the last half of the nineteenth century retained this basic system into the creation of Canada. Under the new division of powers responsibility for timber land shifted from the British government to the new

provinces. For the new provincial governments of the late 19th century timber was a vital resource for their treasuries. Some years saw a quarter of Ontario's income secured through timber dues (payment at the time of cutting) and ground rent (annual payment for area under license) (Kneels 18-19). It is this period of the lumber industry's rapid expansion, mainly along the Ottawa valley, that is immortalized in works like Charlotte Elizabeth Whitton's saccharin account of the Gillies Lumber Company logging on the Ottawa River:

> The story of Canadian development has been one, on the whole, of
> great ventures against great odds, of vision, of energy, of courage, of
> determination and sacrifice, often as not, shot through with the glint of
> the gambler's choice and chance. Timber making and lumbering have
> been as characteristic of that story as the Canadian beaver is of the
> Canadian woods. (10)

The coupling of the goals of the lumber industry and that of the birth of Canada in Whitton's account is also one of H. V. Nelles' main theses in *The Politics of Development*. Nelles argues that an accident of geography called the Canadian Shield meant that the two competing land use forces of agriculture and the timber industry were not early competitors (45-47). In fact, it would take the exploitation of the wilderness for recreation by wealthy southern urbanites in the post-war period and the related birth of the environmental movement in the 1970s before any serious land use challenges to the crown and the lumber industry became a sociocultural force in Canada (Wilson). Prior to this the industry's major change would come from the influx of a new kind of worker: socialist Finnish and Swedish immigrants (1900-1920).

These new workers infiltrated the woods of northern Ontario, Quebec and Michigan, changing the character of the work and causing one of the more famous documenters of the life of the shanty-boys, Franz Rickaby, to complain bitterly about the lost innocence of the old lumbering days (12-15).

During the early days lumber and agricultural expansion often worked together Lumber companies were encouraged by the Crown to cut an area as quickly as possible so that the land could then be granted (homesteaded) to the ever expanding farming community. Under this joint land exploitation system reforestation was unnecessary. It was not until the 1880s that some people began to express concern over denuded land and ecosystem restoration. Unfortunately a series of technological and global circumstances delayed the full expression of these concerns for another seventy years (Larson 20).

Pulp and Paper, the Changing Forest and the Rise of Reforestation

From 1870 through 1890 a new form of lumbering was taking shape with the invention of the processes for producing paper from wood pulp. Pulp and paper created a radical shift in forestry practices. Gone forever was select logging of the biggest and best trees. Yield was now measured in volume rather than diameter and the type of trees being cut changed. With the Ottawa River and its tributaries almost logged out, and the St. Lawrence log-drives over, logging and processing shifted north. Road and rail in the early decades of the 20th century opened up towns like Sault St.

Marie, Espanola, Kapuskasing, Iraquoi Falls and Thunder Bay (then two separate towns, Port Arthur and Fort William). Mills were placed close to the supply of black spruce and jack pine. Red and white pine and the massive oaks that were felled for the Royal Navy a hundred years earlier were replaced by six inch diameter black spruce, what the industry now calls "pecker poles." The first to exploit this change was Francis Clergue, who acquired a long term lease on fifty square miles of crown forest; with this capital he built a pulp mill at Sault Ste Marie and began exporting pulp and paper into the United States (Radforth 247). By 1930 the area under lease had increased to 35.6 million acres. It was during this period that Abitibi Power and Paper, as it was then known, rose to dominate the industry in Ontario. Following the depression many companies failed or restructured; Abitibi survived and with the financial power of Olympia York Developments, the former corporate masthead of the Bromfman brothers empire, it has become the world's largest paper production and retail corporation. In 1997, Abitibi posted another name change when it merged with Arizona-based Stone Consolidated to become Abitibi Consolidated (Hoovers).

The technological improvements of machinery (chain-saw and later mechanical harvesters) and road construction, coupled with the measure of wood by volume, changed the style of logging and the "clear cut" was invented. The clear cut is the stripping of all forest cover, in order to use mechanical harvesters. The clear cut has been justified by foresters as mimicking forest-fire destruction, however, most recently the models of justification have been couched in economic language (May 143-5).

Despite the growing practice of forest management in Europe at the turn of the century

and Franklin Delanor Roosevelt's adoption of several European models as part of his

massive depression era programs for the federal forest reserves, World War One and

Two, like the Napoleonic War before them, exploited Canada's forest resources as an

international vital commodity and delayed any serious consideration of sustainable

forestry management (Larson 20).

The idea of sustainable forestry—that is, that the area under regeneration would

be equal at the end of its development to the biomass that existed before an area was

cut—was not implemented in Canada until the post-war boom years of the 1950s. This

was a time of great expansion and profit in the Canadian forestry sector and some of

that money began to find its way into reforestation projects.[15] The early model was a

set amount of the fees the government collected from the forestry companies would be

used to finance reforestation projects. In the case where the government did the work

the cost would be financed from the same fund. It is in the act of reforestation that

some of the contradictions of the Canadian Crown land system become apparent. As I

have outlined, the fundamental nature of the forestry industry is that the industry pays

---

[15] Kuhlberg working with Abitibi Price Consolidated company archival material in Espanola has uncovered several company projects to research and begin reforestation practices as early as 1920. His conclusion is that companies were thwarted by invasive government practices and that is why private reforestation and conservation land management practices were never widely adopted by the industry. Although research at this point is tentative, one would have to place this information in a broader context then that currently exposed by Kuhlberg. The existence of reforestation projects and the hiring of staff must be set against the bulk of the company's operations and the trajectory of its future planning. Of vital importance is to realize the difference between research and development and implementation when dealing with a company that has access to massive capital and is one of Canada's first multinationals.

a set fee to the government to exploit the resources on the land. There is a legal but essentially environmentally untenable division between the product (in this case wood, in other cases nickel, gold or water) and the land itself. To the timber industry, reforesting land that they do not own—land which may be leased to a different company or turned into a park before the trees that they planted reach maturity—is unacceptable. The government, for its part, has traditionally used Crown land as a "cash cow" which it would then turn over to other kinds of taxable development (farming, mining, recreation); as such it has been loath to spend money on reconstructing what it did not destroy (Kuhlberg). It is partly because of this shared responsibility that early reforestation practices failed miserably.

Early Reforestation

Through the 1950s and 1960s several overlapping systems of reforestation were in place in Ontario. Abitibi Consolidated at this time was replanting its own land and then billing the Ontario government for its costs. Unionized forest and mill workers had won the right through collective agreements for first employment on these reforestation contracts. In other areas of the province the Ministry of Lands and Forests was replanting. The early reforestation projects often employed forestry cutters working on the off season. They worked regular shifts and were paid a similar wage

as their other work. Essentially reforestation was seen as a make work project.[16]

What the term denotes is a job with little value to either the employer or employee; it

is often associate with government projects and has its anteceedents in Depression era

relief projects. The "make work" view, coupled with lax government enforcement

assured that these early plantations were unsuccessful at producing a self-regenerating

forest. This era has come to be known by some treeplanters as the "fantastic invention

period" (Johnny G., May 28). In order to cut the spiralling costs of reforestation the

timber industry and government spent a great deal of money to build machines and

planting systems which would replace their unionized work gangs. The most infamous

invention was the "flying tree." Johnny G. tells a tale which constitutes an oral folk

history of treeplanting. By folk history I mean those narratives which locate

treeplanting in a temporal continuity of discrete events. Folk histories can take many

forms, and I will discuss some of them below, in this case the histories contained in

the following narratives tell about the period before contract treeplanting. The

negative impression of the tales is part of the occupational identity formation that is

often integrated into any group's history.

> They were trying to do aerial seeding but using seedlings not seed and
> so they'd throw them out of planes and they'd land on their sides and
> dry out in the sun. This guy came up with this idea of putting
> propellers on the pods to act like helicopter blades or those maple keys
> and this seems like a good idea to him. So they start throwing these

---

[16]See Lara Maynard's study of the cultural meaning of "make work" in the Newfoundland context which is applicable to other facets of Canadian labouring experience: Lara Maynard, "The Make Workers: Behind the Label," Unpublished conference paper (Folklore Studies Association of Canada) May 26-8, 1998.

out of the planes and they gently fall to earth, beautiful—fall over and dry out in the sun. So the next thing he does is to put a weighted cone around the plug so it'll drive into the ground. They wasted more money on this. (Johnny G., May 28)

Treeplanters tell these tales often, while planters who have not heard them

before look on in horror and amazement. Planters continue to tell these stories

because of several interlocking reasons. First, it confirms the hubris and stupidity of

the lumber giants who most planters openly scorn and ridicule. Sitting around the

vans at the end of the day Nadya told about her experience with Ryan, a "checker,"

which sums up some of the opinions of planters towards the forestry companies.

Checkers are employed by the forestry company to monitor activities on the block to

make sure that they conform to the company's standards. Such things as wearing of

safety equipment, tree handling and other quality issues fall under their jurisdiction.

> We fought today for about twenty minutes. He was following me as I was planting and I was like, "fine let's fight about forestry." He had this long spiel about how Canada needs it and it's really trying and we're leaders in the forestry industry. And I'm like, "buddy"—he's at the bottom of the heap too in his company and I'm at the bottom of the heap in the forestry industry anyway, I don't care how much money I'm making or what, we have to be critical of these systems. . . . (May 22)

A second example of the opinions of planters toward the logging companies is related

by Nancy:

> Some days I feel good about planting trees. A friend wrote me a letter saying "Have fun treeplanting the air already smells fresher." or something like that. Yeah. Ok. I'm putting trees in the ground and that's a good thing but I work for a logging company. We might as well be cutting them for what we're doing. We're promoting the same

industry. (June 18)

Like Nancy, many planters are troubled by their relationship with an industry that they

think is badly flawed and environmentally unsound. Greeners are especially prone to

believing that their actions are a contribution to environmentalism. Older planters tend

to treat this view as naive. For their part, experienced planters highlight their

culpability in environmental destruction while reserving the right to stand in judgement

of the process as a whole. A brief exchange between a crew boss and a greener

exposes the main difference:

> Greener: What kind of trees are we planting anyway?
> Crew Boss: Toilet paper. (Journal, May 15)

Figure 9, depicting graffiti on the school bus, provides a second example of the

complex—often ironically expressed—environmental ideology of planters. The failed

fantastic invention stories are part of the narrative theme of treeplanting and logging.

Besides being tales about the hubris of those who control the forests these oral

occupational histories reinforce the group's belief that treeplanters are the experts in

their field and that they, in some small way, are responsible for saving the northern

forests from the ineptitude of both government and industry.[17]

These narratives are not only occupational histories; they are also an exercise in

identity formation. In Chapter Six I will explore the way that narratives about other

---

[17]For an exploration of the use of "skill" in occupational identity and the historical development of radical and labour movements as well as informing the entire discourse surrounding labour, rights and dignity see: Michael Sonenscher, "Mythical Work: Workshop Production and the *Compagnonnages* of Eighteenth-century France," *The Historical Meanings of Work*, Ed. Patrick Joyce (Cambridge: Cambridge UP) 1987, 31-63.
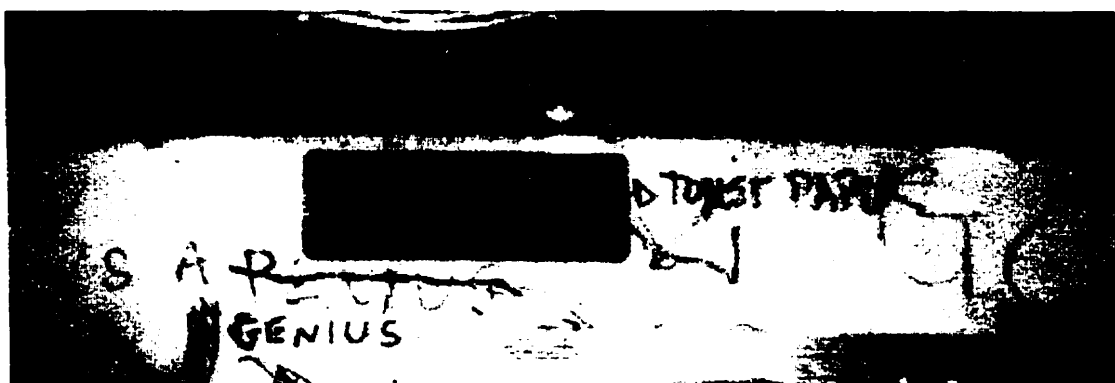
Figure 9. Graffiti, in black marker, on school bus, 1998.

groups are used to fashion an identity; a group's history is intimately entwined with its identity (Lloyd and Mullen; Pilcher). It is enough to note here that these narratives are a way in which planters locate themselves both in time and in relation to other groups—in both cases the narratives serve an instrumental function in creating an occupational identity. Let me return to the brief history of the forestry industry.

In 1963 the government of Ontario adopted a new system, the Forest Management Agreement (FMA), that typified a shift occurring throughout Canada. Ontario took the responsibility of reforestation out of the hands of industry and instead restructured the fee logging companies paid to the government to cut on Crown land (these had come to be known as "stumpage fees"). This money was then funnelled back into the cost of reforestation which would be carried out by the government and the logging companies. By all accounts this system produced no better results than its predecessor. One of the problems with this system was that the money from stumpage fees was accounted into general revenues and was just as likely to be used for policing or road construction in the south as reforesting the barren landscape around Armstrong, Hurst or several other northern Ontario towns. The government led work teams also suffered from the same inefficiencies that the forestry industry had encountered. One important difference was that the Ontario government's level of brutality and power extended far beyond those of the timber barons. While the forest industry replicated its industrial work model directly into their reforestation work, the Ontario government recreated its own system on the cut-block. As a state controlled industry it used state

controlled people as its work force: prisoners and Native workers (Kuhlberg).

Through the joint management of prison authorities and the Ministry of Lands and

Forests (now the Ministry of Natural Resources) the use of prisoners as unpaid (chain-

gang) labour was common in the reforestation industry. Native Canadians were also

employed; however, they were paid a fraction of what unionized workers were

making. The early reforestation efforts under the control of the Ministry of Lands and

Forests were sometimes called "Indian-and-widow-work" in reference to the

composition of its work force. The women in these early camps were not actually

widows. The name is the result of the prejudice against not only native Canadians but

also women in non-traditional work. These young, energetic women were among the

first wave of in the early 1970s who expanded the borders of "women's work."

The Birth of Contemporary Treeplanting

The shift away from the models of the past began in 1970 in British Columbia.

Dirk Brinkman and two friends won a contract in what was then a new model for

reforestation: open bidding on jobs. The ministry was doubtful that three men could

accomplish what had taken fifteen in other contracts. The first day Dirk planted 1500

trees; the next day the head of reforestation flew into the site to see for himself what

had occurred. Dirk's success was accomplished by applying a new model to the job of

reforestation: the use of piecework as a wage system; the camp model for housing and

work; and the invention and adaptation of tools. In this section I will address these

issues in detail along with a broad early history of the company.

The early days of treeplanting are captured in Nicholas Kadal's 1977 documentary film *Do It With Joy*. Its subjects are the thirty friends and family that made up the nucleus of the early Brinkman crew on a contract in central British Columbia. Many contemporary treeplanters are embarrassed by the film's unabashedly saccharine and naive account of early treeplanting, while others jokingly refer to it as "the Brinkman propaganda film." Whatever one's critique of it, as a piece of documentary film making, it is an important historical record of the early days of the industry. Its naive character exposes some of the underlying values, beliefs and ideologies of early workers and the company, which continue to have an impact on treeplanting twenty-eight years later.

The Camp

One of the factors that enabled Brinkman to win contracts and to provide a good wage for its workers was that it adopted what was then a new model in woods working, living close to your work. Most people will recognize that this is merely a return to the days of labour intensive timber cutting, when logging camps were created near the site of work and then abandoned when the area was logged out. As Ian Radford has commented: "It was far cheaper to build camps within walking distance of the timber than to build access roads suitable for vehicle traffic" (249). Brinkman returned to this early model by creating a camp right on the block. *Do It With Joy*

captures the rather primitive aspect of these early camps. Many familiar structures are depicted in the film. For example, personal tents have changed little; however, the cook and dining tent were one structure with little room for food preperation or eating and spartan cooking equipment.[18] To fashion the dining tent available wood was used to form spars, creating a crude "A" frame which was then covered in a thin clear tarp. Conspicuously absent from the documentary are latrines, drying tents, water treatment facilities, showers, or any electricity generator—things which planting crews take for granted today. Surprisingly to the contemporary viewer, the narrator of the film comments on how much more stuff this crew is taking into the bush this year, concluding, good naturedly, that they are getting "soft." Although the conditions in these early camps were difficult in comparison to contemporary ones, the camps of the 1970s had a large economic advantage. Quite simply there was only a single set-up and take-down cost to the operation. The close proximity to the work site meant almost no capital expenditures on movement or servicing of a separate work site, and workers got a longer labouring day. The result of the work camp is that Brinkman's model provided for a low-cost, highly mobile crew which learned to adapt quickly to eco-typical situations.

---

[18]There are still some instances in which the cook area and the dining tent are not separate, however, the size of the shelter in 1977 and the equipment which was available to the cook is primitive compared to contemporary camps.

Early Influences and History

Both the Kadal's film and Brinkman's own brief printed history identify this period as the formation of the character of the company (specifically) and treeplanting (in general):

> Many of the myths that form the fabric of the company's culture stem from this time of pioneering in an infant industry: the shift from life-taking slashing contracts to life-affirming tree-planting[19]; living with and becoming part of isolated native communities[20]; overcoming tremendous physical challenges through sheer determination, teamwork and ingenuity. (Brinkman and Associates, "Company Information" Appendix XII, 1996)

Treeplanting, arriving as it did at this time, is not a cultural or industrial accident; it is part of the broader "back to the land" movement which occurred across North America, itself a part of the "counter culture" movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Separating the overlapping and idiosyncratic expressions of "counter culture" is a book length project. I will briefly outline some of the influences which affect treeplanting. The phrase counter culture, first elaborated in Theodore Roszak's *The Making of a Counter Culture*, is an attempt to categorize many disparate elements which were part of the cultural upheaval of first America and then other urban, industrialized nations in the late 1960s. The "back to the land" movement is within this tradition in that it attempts to create a total alternative to the "large-scale, highly

---

[19]This is in reference to earlier work that Dirk Brinkman had done with slashing and other extraction work.

[20]Refers to the crews working around isolated northern or interior British Columbia native communities and engaging in a dialogue with these communities at a time when contact between the two groups was very limited.

interdependent economic units and elaborate, bureaucratized political arrangements" of capitalism (Labedz and Reilly 147). The phrase "back to the land" is a sub-set of the communalism movement within the counter culture movement and implies an anti-urban ideology and a romantic construction of the rural landscape. The contemporary inheritors of this project have adopted the term "intentional community" to more accurately reflect the diverse settlements which dot the North American landscape. In all cases the communitarianism of the 1960's and its spirit in contemporary treeplanting is what Victor Turner has called "ideological communitas: a variety of utopian models of societies based on an existential communitas (*The Ritual* 132). At the birth of treeplanting the "back to the land" movement in British Columbia was popular amongst certain groups, owing in part to the fact that some areas of the province could still be homesteaded.

Do It With Joy explicitly identifies many of the workers and some of the impetus for treeplanting as a movement "back to the land." Unlike their rural farming counterparts across North America, treeplanters went back to the land for a limited time. Even in the early days of the industry the work force was mainly young urbanites who would work for a quarter of the year in order to not have to work for the rest of it. More specifically, planters would work for a short period in order to purchase (and budget) time outside of wage earning activities. With this time they would engage in projects which had/have a limited economic value i.e. art, music, dance, travel. The temporal difference, however, did not affect the underlying utopian

project which forms the heart of the "back to the land" movement. One of the planters in the film states: "I think that if you know someone who is having a lot of problems or troubles, they should go treeplanting. It's a great gift." Even at its inception treeplanting is both an occupation and a project. The task that one is doing is identified both materially and in conjunction with broader ideological goals. In the case of early treeplanting, as documented in the film, these goals are tied to early environmentalism, communal living, adventure, and the material realization of a utopian community.

The early days of any occupation are often characterized as the best that the industry has seen (Santino, *Characteristics*; Lloyd and Mullen). Planters are no different in this respect. Tim Beckett, writing about the early days of planting, states:

> Treeplanting began in its modern form in the 1970s. . . . These are often referred to as the "green-side-up" days because all that was needed was to have the green part of the tree (that is, not the root) sticking out of the ground. . . . Contracts ran for the duration : there were no days off and it was not uncommon to work a month straight . . . . Everything was covered in filth. . . . But to some, these were treeplanting's boom years. . . . The money was the best that it's ever been. Even an average planter made the equivalent of $400 a day. (10)

In many ways treeplanting is an industry without a printed history. Being a seasonal occupation where the average length of a planting career is about four years there is little continuity of an oral history told by older workers in bars or workers halls (Santino, *Contemporary*; *Characteristics*). There has been very little interest in either the popular press or in the form of books or collected tales. This is not to say that

these activities do not occur; in fact, there is currently a small explosion of newspaper

feature articles and popular magazine stories about planting. The impetus for this

interest was the success of a photo essay and accompanying treeplanting tales featured

in *Canadian Geographic* (1997). Following this articles appeared in *The Citizen*

Weekly, *The Globe and Mail*, and *Toronto Life*. All of these articles share the

common feature of first person experiential reportage with the necessary background

information for readers unfamiliar with the industry. Their own histories of the

occupation, like the one quoted above, rely more on a consensus of the historical

trends in the industry, than on any careful collection of oral histories or an

investigation using the textual records available from companies, industry and

government. As in the historical legends (von Sydow) of fantastic inventions, folklore

and history are interwoven with ideologies surrounding historicity and identity to form

a dense discursive network of meaning. In attempting to understand similar issues in

anthropology Terence Turner has proposed that:

> [H]istory and Myth are both primarily to be understood as modes of
> consciousness of the social present, expressed in terms of the relation of
> that present to its past (and future). As such, they form part of the
> sociocultural structures through which the present is produced, which
> always means in large part *reproduced*, as an instance of a pattern of
> the past. (279, italics in original)

It is at this point that a working distinction between oral history and oral

tradition would be helpful. Oral history has often focused on the life history of one

informant to illuminate aspects of an individual, group, or time period that is not

included in the broader historical record. Oral tradition, in the context of oral history, is the collecting of a particular kind of history, one which the person did not witness but which is secured as a historical event significant to a group (Lummis 97).[21] The distinction is primarily the use of an theoretical construct to distinguish between two interconnected temporal narratives. The history of treeplanting is a melange of these two folk-histories. Complicating the picture is that the short career of planters (average of four years) ensures that the narrative history of the occupation quickly shifts from oral history to oral tradition. Lacking the multigenerational context by which stories and tales *may* be corrected and preserved, massive variations in narratives can occur in a short period time (Olrik; Allen, B.). In 1997 I collected a tale, told by a planter about an event in 1996 of which I was a part. The planter told of a party in which the entire camp had a portion of its wages garnished; this money was then used to purchase "magic mushrooms" for the festivities. Although mushrooms were present, how they arrived and who ingested them were very different from the events related in the planter's narrative; however, the purpose of the tale and its rhetorical use of the past was consistent with the individual and group's value of a particular treeplanting tradition—permissive drug use. The story, despite its lack of

---

[21]This issue is an active debate in folkloristics; I am not proposing a theoretical framework on the topic of folklore and history (folkloristics and historicity) but rather I am using a working-definition centred around the artificial delineation between two types of folk history: oral history and traditional history. For a more nuanced understanding of the debate see: Richard M. Dorson, "The Debate Over the Trustworthiness of Oral Traditional History," *Volksuberliferung: Festchrift Furkurt Rankezur Vollendung Des Go Lebensjahres* (Gottingen: Schwartz, 1968) 19-35. For an exploration of the interlocking of history, tradition and culture see: Henry Glassie, "Tradition," *Journal of American Folklore* 180.430 (1995): 3-27.

veracity, was completely consistent with the tradition of planting. Another example of the use of history and folklore can be found in the "golden age" tales, common to treeplanting and all occupations.

As a general consensus the history of the early days of treeplanting closely resembles the oral history of other occupations where, in the case of Lake Erie fishermen, "there were more fish and there was less pollution; men were better, they worked longer and harder but liked the work" (Lloyd and Mullen 166). Jack Santino has identified what Lloyd and Mullen call the "golden age" as an important element in every occupational group's identity of itself; "a time before the present when things were different or somehow better" (204). Lloyd and Mullen found that, although the stories may be exaggerated, for Lake Erie fisherman the era before regulation and the environmental collapse of the Great Lakes fish stocks was a better time to be a fisherman. There is some evidence that treeplanting has become more difficult over the last twenty years. Logging companies will cut the area that is easiest to exploit first. Elizabeth May has studied Canada's forest system and found that: "It is the geological features of out-wash plains and eskers that support the most productive forests. Since 1940, virtually all of Ontario's forests on outwash plains and 70 percent of those on eskers have been logged at least once" (135). The outwash plains and eskers contain what planters sometimes call "beaches," areas of good soil and fairly flat ground which make planting easy and profitable. May has pointed out that this area is almost completely cut. Logging companies are forced to move into more

difficult and marginal pieces of ground. Since the boom years in the late 1980s government and industry have stopped reforesting the backlog of unplanted ground. Planters must now chase the cutters into the marginal land of the Canadian Shield.

Tools of the Trade

The history of any occupation is not only contained in oral or written sources. it can also be traced through the material culture of the workers. The study of material culture provides the researcher with a way of reading the relationship between objects to uncover human social relationships which may not be readily apparent either because the people are historically removed from us. or because in a contemporary situation people do not express these relationships in language (Deetz: Glassie, *Folk*). Such is the case in treeplanting. Because of its simplicity, treeplanting requires a small collection of specialized tools. In other areas it borrows the tools of the industries to which it is closely aligned (logging, exploration, recreational camping). Despite the fact that treeplanters—especially in the east—do not identify themselves with loggers or other woods workers, their equipment from cork boots to hard hats, makes that connection for them. Another way in which the material culture of treeplanting speaks of the priorities of the occupation can be found in their clothing. A survey of treeplanter's clothing would produce a plethora of recycled materials adapted for the environment and the job at hand. This suggests that minimal capital expenditure and lack of specialization in equipment are traditional aspects of the occupation.

Two tools unique to treeplanting are the bags and the shovel. Prior to the invention of the tree-bags planters would carry trees in newspaper bags (1930s). From the 1950s to the early 1970s trees were transported in steel buckets or in a canvas bag with a rope handle woven into the rim. Beckett reports "that some planters carried loose trees in their teeth – no one knew about the pesticides. . ." (11). The inventor of the tree-bags was Dirk Brinkman.

During the first contract mentioned above Dirk recalled immediately being struck by the way that planters would put down their bucket, plant the tree, pick up the bucket and continue to the next spot. "No way," he told me, "I went back to the camp and got some haywire and pliers. I took the handles out–got shit from the trainer for doing that. I sewed the bucket to my belt with the haywire. I sewed one on each side but Ted Davis put two on one side so he wouldn't have to switch over."[22] The next year they put Ensilite (a type of foam now commonly found in camping mats) around the belts for padding; in 1972 they added shoulder straps to transfer weight from the hips. By 1975 they were contracting companies to produce the pieces of the bags (bags, belts, shoulder straps) and then they assembled the pieces themselves. Ed Walters, a fellow planter, took the initiative and began producing the bags as a full unit in 1976. Brinkman joined this venture and "Forest World" became a major manufacturer and distributer of treeplanting equipment. In 1989 Brinkman sold its shares and after a name change to "Bush Pro" the company continues to be

[22]Telephone interview July 25.

one of the major players in treeplanting equipment. The modern form is three bags on a padded belt, much like the waist straps on back packs, and shoulder straps with a sternum strap. They are constructed out of heavy gage nylon and adjust to most planter's bodies. The bag's advantage is that it allows a planter maximum range of movement and carrying capacity. The modern bags, shovel and traditional work dress of planters is depicted in Figure 10.

The second tool vital to treeplanting is not an invention but a specialization on the basic form of the shovel—a specialization which effectively created a new category of shovel. A common misunderstanding that nonplanters make is that one plants a tree by digging a hole. What a planter is actually doing is creating a wedge shaped slit in the earth only large enough to accept the root mass of the tree. For this sort of task the typical shovel/spade is perfectly useless since it is designed (size of the blade, length of the shaft, weight, balance point etc.) to move a volume of earth. Early treeplanters used a "hodad," a hoe-like implement most commonly found in agricultural work; it has a handle similar to an axe and is wielded in a similar fashion. Dirk sums up planter's attitudes to shovels: "Shovel was a wimp's tool" and "That's not a real tool." As with the bags Dirk and other planters began to immediately modify the hodad to better suit their needs. The main problem was with the cutting edge; it tended to burr. Dirk began working with blacksmiths and experimenting with heating the leading edge in a technique called "hard edging." The change in design of a rounded "hard edged" blade resulted in 1974 with a tool that Dirk called "perfect."

Figure 10. Nadya (left), Unknown woman (background) and Lys (right) moving to a new piece of land. Traditional work clothes and equipment are depicted.

Despite this perfection the overall structure of the tool (design, size, weight and techniques needed to properly use the tool) was not adaptable enough to respond to the conditions of the bush. The search was now on for a way to design a shovel that would respond to the needs of treeplanters. Taking what they had learned from the modification of the hodad, Dirk and others in the Brinkman organization sent away for shovels from around the world. Dirk describes how they tested their strength: "Well it wasn't very scientific; essentially we beat them against each other until one broke. The winner went on. We wanted a tough shovel. And we had shovels from around the world: Germany, Japan, Britain." In 1983 Dirk went to England to work with S&J Steel on designing a shovel. After a tour of the plant he was shocked at the working conditions and the class structure of the mill, so he went to Bulldog Steel because of their management style. Using the Cat Track Spade—which some planters had been modifying for a couple of years—as their basic model, Dirk and the design people at Bulldog built the dies for the "spear" and "spade" shovels. The steel was the best that could be produced at that time and Dirk had found, through experimentation, that a parabolic leading edge was the most effective at penetrating soil. After less than six months of production he discovered that he had failed to protect his intellectual copyright; Bulldog was using the dies to produce "knock-off" shovels and selling them to other distributors. The shovels are now widely produced and distributed with little variation between models. The two main models are the "spear" which is a slightly longer blade and a long (five feet) straight shaft, and the "D" which has a smaller

blade and a short (four foot) shaft with a "D" shaped hand grip. In the tradition of the

occupation planters continue to modify their equipment. The most popular adaptation

is to shorten and sharpen the blade, thus reducing weight and making it easier to cut

through the soil. Examples of both shovel types and some modifications appear in

Figure 11. In Chapter Six I will address some of the ways these modifications are not

only practical but also become markers of individual identity within an occupational

identity.

The actual task of quickly planting a tree in variable soil types in different

terrain is the unique aspect of treeplanting. In these areas treeplanters have developed

highly specialized tools. In all other aspects of its operations it has been comfortable

with adopting and adapting the material life of the other occupations with which it is

closely associated through similar goals, tasks and environmental conditions.

Piecework

It may initially seem at odds with the utopian project of treeplanting that

Brinkman would adopt piecework, a system which Marx had described as "the form of

wage most appropriate to the capitalist mode of production" as its wage system

(*Capital* 689). Piecework pays the worker a fixed price for each item or action which

they execute; in treeplanting the worker is paid on a per tree basis. In the early

history of planting small groups of friends and relations worked on a contract. These

planters knew how much money they would make once they won the bid; the only
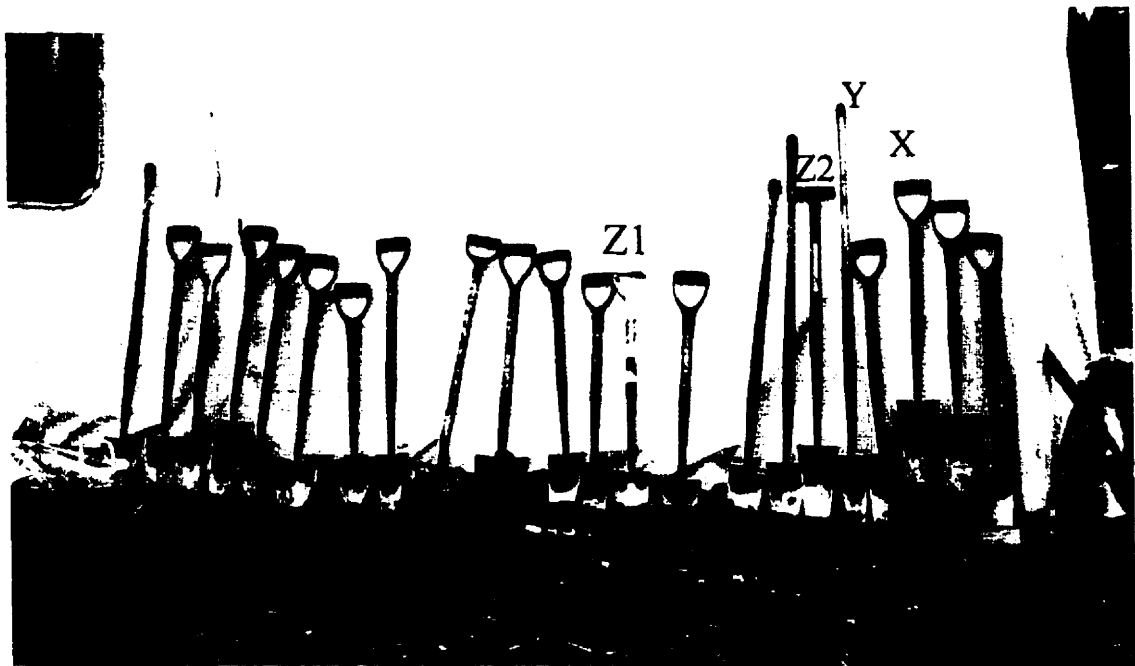
Figure 11. Various shovels. "X" is an unmodified D-handle. "Y" is an unmodified shaft. "Z1" is a modified D-handle and "Z2" is a modified shaft.

variable was how much time it would take them. Splitting the money equally between planters would have been common; however, once a larger number of people began to work on a contract the bonds of reciprocity secured through either family or friendship eroded and made a new wage system necessary. Piecework can be seen as an extension of the contract structure. The particular form that piecework has taken is the result of a more complex genealogy than this brief introduction suggests. Below I will outline a short history of piecework and how the system works in the planting context.

The price which planters are paid is set in the bidding stage of the contract. A contractor will survey an area of land which a logging company is to reforest. Factoring in their costs for servicing this land they arrive at a price per tree which they will charge the company. In 1997 Brinkman charged Abitibi Consolidated fifteen cents per tree for the contract on the McConnell and Kershaw blocks. John Lawrence's costs equalled seven cents per tree which left eight cents per tree for the planters. This model suggests that there has been some dynamism to the amount that would be paid to the planter per tree. This is not the case. Throughout Canada the price paid to planters, in the best case scenario, has remained stagnant since 1983. In many areas of the country and for planters working for other companies the price per tree has fallen one, to one and a half cents per tree over the last fifteen years, a decrease of 12.5 to 19 percent. The factors affecting this decline will be addressed in more detail later. Like the cost of labour in hourly wage work there exists a market-

driven mean wage for similar skills and similar occupations. Treeplanting and

piecework are no different in this regard. Companies bid against each other in a

highly competitive market in which the low bid is often the winner. In this regard the

variable that can most easily be controlled by the company to give it an advantage

over its competitors is the price they will pay their workers. Since there exists no

bargaining unit for treeplanters in the form of a union or guild,[23] their power to lobby

for their own interests is severely limited. Speaking of the kinds of companies that

have chased the low-ball bid as a way of advancing their own market share Johnny G.

observed:

> When I first started working it was for a company named Bark; they are
> now called Arbour. They really do hold the crown as one of the more
> exploitative, less appreciative outfits. They get work – mostly because
> they underbid everybody. And I don't really think, and I don't know
> this for sure and maybe this is a bad thing to say and pejorative, but I
> don't really think that they make their money on their trees. I think
> that they make their money on their planters: they charge extravagant
> camp costs, they skimp on support stuff like big equipment . . . .
> (June 10)

As Johnny G. alludes there are other ways that a company can "make money on their

planters," however, almost all of the skimping that he speaks about affects a planter's

ability to work in the uninterrupted manner which provides the maximum amount of

profit per day. In the end it is the planter who is seen as the mass variable in an

---

[23]In the case where treeplanters work under a union contract they never reach the level of full members before their season is over. Becoming a "full member" of a union is usually determined by a set number of hours being worked. Until one completes these hours they are only provisional union members and the union's ability to represent them before management is limited. No unions to date have opened up spaces on their bargaining committees to treeplanters.

industry whose other costs (diesel, tents, machine repairs, management salaries) are more fixed.

The contract on which I worked and did research in 1997 and 1998 was insulated from these devalued prices by the collective agreement between Abitibi Consolidated and the Industrial Wood Workers Alliance (IWA) Local 2693. Under the terms of the contract treeplanters must be paid no less than eight cents per tree and they cannot be charged more than $1.85 per day in camp costs. Camp costs are a fee charged to the planter per day by the company for feeding and housing the workers. Officially this system is called a "daily planting adjustment." In other parts of Ontario planters in some areas were working for as low as six and a half cents per tree and paying twenty to twenty five dollars a day in camp costs.

In Ontario the other variables which affect the price per tree are the type of tree stock and the type of land being planted. There are two basic types of tree stock: bare root and container stock. Bare root are trees grown in soil for up to five years which are harvested with their natural root system remaining. These trees are considered large, ten to twenty inches high, with long, dense root systems. Container stock are trees grown in a soil compound and harvested retaining the organic matter around the small root mass. These tree are much younger and, therefore, smaller than bare root, five to ten inches tall, with only three inches of root retained in a soil and vermiculite compound called a "plug." Bare root is considered more difficult to plant and is therefore priced at a higher rate than container stock; in 1997 we planted bare

root for ten to twelve cents per tree. The second factor that determines the price is the

type of land: site prepared and unscarified land. Scarified land is the practice of

treating the land in preparation for reforestation either chemically or by changing the

contours of the ground to more readily accept and nurture the kind of trees that are

being planted. Unscarified ground is considered to be more difficult to plant and is,

like bare root, priced at a rate which reflects the increased level of difficulty in

planting under these conditions. Beyond the aspects particular to treeplanting,

piecework has a long and often bitterly contested history—one to which young workers

in the silviculture industry are new recruits.

Piecework as we know it is the product of the industrial revolution.

"Following the enforcement of factory acts, surplus value could no longer be increased

through the extension of the working day, but instead had to be augmented through the

intensification of labour" (Burawoy 266). This is the classic history of piecework as it

germinated in the industrial revolution in England. As a wage model it initially gives

the impression of providing a better relationship between worker and capital, but as

Marx pointed out, the initial rise in workers' wages with the adoption of piecework

was always followed by a readjustment in the piecework price.

> As soon as it [the wage] has reached a certain rate, the rise which it had
> brought about by the increased intensity of labour becomes itself a
> reason for the masters to reduce wages, since they regard them as higher
> than is good for the worker. (*Capital* 172)

At the close of the 19th and the birth of the 20th century this readjustment was not

based on a gross calculation, but was increasingly managed under a "scientific"

regime. Frederick Winslow Taylor and those that followed him, most notably, Elton

Mayo are credited with the creation of the "scientific" and "rational" work place based

on a synthesis of the early imperatives of sociology to replicate the model of science

onto the study of, and management of, the social human (Taylor; Kranzberg and Gies).

What many commentators overlook is that Taylor was attempting to salvage the

system of piecework from the increasing attacks over safety and the way that it

dehumanized workers (Wrench and Lee 513). Taylor's early reputation was partly

the result of his success at providing management with the tools to control piecework

for his own advantage, and to limit the most obscene accidents.

As Marxists have long pointed out, the work that a person does, their material

life, creates an individual which closely resembles the needs and priorities of work at

the expense of all other competing interests (home, family, fellow workers etc.).

Piecework clearly demonstrates this. While hourly wages create a sense of solidarity

amongst workers and generate the inevitable conflict over wages, piecework creates a

highly individualistic worker:

> But the wider scope that piece-wages give to individuality tends to
> develop both that individuality, and with it the worker's sense of
> liberty, independence, and self control, and also the competition of
> workers with each other. The piece wage therefore, has while raising
> the wages of the individual above the average, to lower the average
> itself. (Marx, *Capital* 267)

In studying contemporary piecework taken on by women in the home, Sheila

Allen and Carol Wolkowitz found that, like the false autonomy of the piecework

labourer in the industrial revolution, the homeworker, although apparently free to

engage in an economic activity that provides her with the flexibility and freedom to

make a wage, has little real freedom or control.

> Homeworkers are thought to set their own hours of work, and combine
> homeworking with all their other obligations within the home and
> outside it. . . . In practice, however, their obligations to the supplier are
> those of an employee, and they are, if anything, more constrained than
> those who go to work. The supplier establishes the hours of work
> through the time set for the delivery and collection of work and
> payment by the piece, and their earnings are limited not only by their
> willingness to work but by the availability of work and the allocation of
> work with different piece rates. . . . Hours, pace and quality of work
> are so effectively controlled by the supplier that direct physical
> supervision is not required. (46)

It is because of the fracturing of worker's solidarity, the myriad mechanisms of

control over the piece-wage process and the increase in accident rates[24] that

contemporary labour organizations oppose piecework. The argument of Hugh

McKensie, research director of the *United Steel Workers*, typifies contemporary

critiques of piecework:

> A good piecework system is an oxymoron. The idea of operating an
> operation with an incentive system is based on a fallacy. . . . Piecework
> systems tend to be a substitute for adequate management. If the
> managers of the plant think that their first line supervisors aren't
> getting enough output from the people that work there then they will
> tend to bring in some kind of incentive system on the theory that the

---

[24]Although the literature is highly partisan on this subject a well balanced study of both the literature and a contemporary case study is John Wrench and Gloria Lee, "Piecework and Industrial Accidents: Two Contemporary Case Studies," *Sociology* 16.4 (1982): 512-525.

best system of discipline for the workers is the workers themselves. I
just don't see this translating into a good work environment. (*This
Morning*, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Aug 17, 1997)

The decline in piecework over the last fifty years in areas of manufacturing has

been the direct result of efforts by unions to secure a system of hourly wages for their

members. These powerful unions have been confined to large scale manufacturing

such as forestry, steel, mining and the automotive industry. These industries until

recently were almost exclusively male. The result has been that men have seen their

participation in piecework almost disappear in two generations while women and male

workers in less powerful positions have toiled in the shadows of a wage system that

many people assume has disappeared. Women make up the bulk of the workers in

North America who still labour under a piecework system. Industries such as garment

making, shoe and boot sewing and other textile manufacturing, along with craft work,

make up the bulk of women's experience with piecework. Male workers typically

find themselves working by the piece in the agricultural sector, fruit and vegetable

picking being the most common. Of this group the vast majority labouring in such

areas as Niagara in Ontario, the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia and the

Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia are migrant labourers from the southern United

States, the Caribbean and Central America—in short, a marginal group with very little

power[25]. It could be argued that young people form another sector in this class of

---

[25]A similar situation rages in the much more massive farm industry in America, where labourers in southern
Florida have seen their wages erode over the last twenty years to the point where they can no longer afford to
work (*Industrial Worker* 1998: 1 and 6).

worker.

This assertion would, however, misrepresent some of the alignment of interests which piecework creates between the employer and the employee. Wrench and Lee call this a "coincidence of interests" where the company and the worker both want to keep production high (512). This is clearly the case in treeplanting. The company's cost of running a camp is fairly fixed; therefore it is in their best interest to plant as many trees as quickly as possible. The worker also wants to make as much money in as little amount of time possible; therefore both workers and the company have similar goals. This coincidence of interests is one of the main reasons independent contractors were successful where lumber companies and government had failed.

A second result of a piecework system is that it lessens the amount of necessary supervision and, therefore, planters with only one week experience can be left to work on their own with only a few visits from a manager per day. In the early days of the industry the supervision was even less than this because crew bosses would be paid a low day rate and would also plant trees by the piece. The time "planter-crew bosses" had to spend helping, advising and supervising planters was limited. The elimination or minimization of a managerial caste in any occupation dramatically reduces overhead. As Hugh McKensie pessimistically noted, one of the advantages of piecework is that it leads to less management. Finally, the result of piecework is that it has created the highly individualistic, creative planter who successfully responds to the challenges of the natural environment. Planters, both

before and after independent contractors, would often work in crews, planting side by side, in what was known as "line planting."

This form of planting was abandoned because of the increased need to monitor individual planter's quality and because of the difficulty in coordinating a large amount of people to work together. Today the line plant occurs only a few times in a season when planters have run out of land or an entire crew must finish a block that day; everyone ends up completing their individual pieces and is sent into a communal piece of land as a kind of make-work project to get rid of trees. Figure 12 is a contemporary example of this activity. This form of planting is disparaged with the term "cattle plant" or more forcefully, "cluster fuck." Although the cattle plant was still depicted in *Do It With Joy*, piecework has today helped create a highly individualistic workforce which has very little contact or need to coordinate with their fellow planters.

It is important to realize that the work camp and the piecework system are a dual reorganization that is not dissimilar from several other projects, of which the Farm Security Administration in California during the depression years of 1935-41 is one antecedent. In both cases an economic reform was interlocked with a material reorganization of people's living and working space with the goal of creating a different kind of worker and hopefully a different kind of work. Greg Hise in *From Roadside Camps to Garden Homes*, sites the comments of M.L. Wilson, the first Director of Subsistence Homestead Programs: "Somehow, or in some way, the

Figure 12. Five planters engaged in a "cattle plant" on the final day of the contract. The planter standing on the stump and saluting is Cliff.

attitudes and lives of the families who occupy these communities must be integrated

so as to provide a new and different view of life and a new and different set of

values" (qtd. in Hise 255). The reorganization of people's lives based on the

changing of their environment is a concept that forms the basis of Doreen Massey's

work in "radical geography" (*Space* 1-15).[26] In Chapter Four I will take up Wilson

and Massey's challenge to see how, in Massey's words, "social change and spacial

change are integral to each other" (*Space* 23).

As I will demonstrate in Chapter Two and Three, piecework is one of the

foundations of the occupation. Its constant occurrence and absent presence[27] in almost

all narratives is evidence of its structuring many aspects of treeplanting. Chapter Five

will look at the nature of the camp and the way that it forms a material expression of

the social relations, the culture, of treeplanting which shares many of the

characteristics which I have alluded to here.

The early days of planting have their roots in British Columbia. The entry of

Brinkman and Associates into Ontario transferred the basic structure which had been

refined over the company's thirteen years of operation. Over time the particular

challenges and landscapes of Ontario have created a treeplanting culture which,

although sharing many characteristics with British Columbia, has developed a separate

---

[26]"Radical geography" is her own term for a new geography which reevaluates its primary conception of space and time, as well as its orientation to other disciplines.

[27]The phrase "absent presence" is borrowed from Derrida's observation of the relationship between the signifier and signified.

identity from its west coast roots.

Treeplanting in Ontario

Brinkman and Associates continued to grow. From 1977 to 1980 the company had expanded from one crew to ten simultaneously working throughout British Columbia. In 1983, Brinkman expanded into Ontario in the first waves of open bidding on contracts. John Lawrence was hired in 1985 as the operations manager for Ontario. He still oversees all of the camps, and nursery stock green houses, and supervises Brinkman's largest camp in that province. By 1986 Ontario and Alberta accounted for half of Brinkman's annual income. The difference between B.C. and Ontario planting is based on the length of the season and the price paid per tree. Martha's comment, "The only thing you get from planting in Ontario is your bags and shovel" (June 17), is a common refrain when B.C. planters comment on the work in Ontario. Another refrain is that Ontario is "sucker work," implying that one is a fool for working in the east. Compared to B.C., Ontario appears to be a difficult place to earn money. Since the diversification of Brinkman and other large reforestation companies into areas of surveying, forest stand management, and cross province treeplanting, a planter can work ten out of twelve months a year. In Ontario environmental factors such as soil water content and an early frost in the north means that a planter can expect to work for only six to eight weeks a year, while experienced planters with more skills sometimes work twelve weeks. Also the prices paid per tree

are higher, on average, in British Columbia. Planting in Ontario is, therefore, a short season operation worth much less money than in B.C.—we are, in essence, the poor cousins of the west coast planter.

From interviews with planters who have worked in other provinces each area of the country has its own character. Different treeplanting operations acquire their characteristics based on: the kind of the people in the camp, the land that people worked on and the labour history of the province itself. In Quebec, planting is part of a mature male's seasonal work cycle, which may include working on farms, doing construction, forestry or whatever else comes along. The camps are very similar to logging operations with the men (with women becoming a growing presence in the occupation) living in trailers or bunk houses and a competitive union wage is offered. British Columbia is a huge industry, more diverse in its workforce and also in the age range of the people that plant. It is not uncommon for a sizable segment of any camp's workforce to be made up of "career planters," that is, people who make almost all of their yearly income from treeplanting. One aspect of Ontario planting that makes it unique is the historical forces that have shaped its recruitment policy.

Recruitment and Ontario Planting

The expansion into Ontario occurred just before a boom in the silviculture industry across Canada. This boom was caused when several levels of government "discovered" that logging companies had only been replanting twenty percent of the

ground they had cut. Of this amount huge tracts of reforested land had failed to reach

maturity. Both the federal and provincial governments poured millions of dollars into

reforestation. While this was happening, the amount of area logged had dramatically

increased. Because of this the numbers of trees planted per year swelled to 160

million. At the same time staffing for Brinkman was becoming a problem. Johnny G.

(JG) explains the early difficulties of the Ontario industry:

> JG: When I first started treeplanting was made up of a very nomadic,
> transient population of people, very very outsider—very outsider. People
> who spent there winters in Goa [India] or on the road or just not here.
> They came here to work and then hit the rest of the world for the rest
> of the year. And they were a fairly rough bunch. A lot of them at that
> time had come east from British Columbia because the market had
> slumped there, prices were down. And conversely prices were quite
> good given the kind of work that was being done here. So they came
> out and that lasted for only two years until the market here began to
> level out a little bit. It became less profitable for them to be here and
> they found it—British Columbia planters in general tend to be a pretty
> cranky lot, and it doesn't take much to set them off and it became pretty
> obvious here that we needed to look for a new source of labour. And
> that's when recruitment started at the universities. And I'd say that
> about 1987 we were recruiting solely from the universities.
> J: So that was a conscious decision by Brinkman?
> JG: Oh that was a very conscious decision by John Lawrence. He
> started doing the university tours and immediately the atmosphere
> changed. We started getting people that were really excited to be here,
> really interested in being here. They could deal with the hardship far
> more than the people who claimed to have all the experience.
> J: Just because of the kind of people?
> JG: Just because of the kind of people we were getting: people that
> were really happy to be out here and doing this kind of the job instead
> of being at the Baskin Robins or McDonalds or whatever, [people] who
> felt there was a certain degree of challenge to it. And it got them out
> of the city. There are lots of reasons. (June 10)

Being a seasonal occupation, treeplanting creates an interesting case study in

work force recruitment because it occurs regularly, there is intent in the industry to hire a particular type of person, and planters have a choice each year about whether or not to work.

There is a second method of recruitment within this group. Brinkman has a system of hiring where those people who are recommended by a current employee get preferential treatment when it comes to hiring. This is generally called nepotism, a word with predictable negative connotations. In the case of treeplanting it has a practical value above-and-beyond providing privileges for the in-group. Since resource work in the north under a piecework system is outside the experiences of most people, let alone a twenty year old student, nepotism acts as both a filter and a support system. In some companies the drop-out rate can reach fifty percent, destroying morale and jeopardizing the entire contract. Brinkman has a very low drop-out rate (in 1997 and 1998 one person left early), in part, because those planters who recommended their friend for a job act as a support system for them. The new planter also generally recognizes the reciprocal relationship of which they are now a part. They know that if they leave, it will reflect badly on the person who recommended them.

In Chapter Two I will extensively discuss the role of work narratives in the occupational setting; here I will briefly explore the use of work narratives as a tool for recruitment . Before a planter even arrives they will most likely have heard a great many stories about planting, in part, because of the two factors that I have mentioned

above: the generational subculture/habitus of university and the nepotism system of

hiring. In the former case the tales of work are likely those extraordinary and highly

entertaining stories that workers tell outsiders (McCarl, *Occupational* 13). In the

latter case, however, tales of work have a functional purpose; they are told as a test, to

see if the person who wants to become a treeplanter is serious. Neil (N), interjecting

into an interview that I was conducting with Kwanza (K), generated the following

observations about what both men do when approached by people looking for a job.

> N: Was that what you were asking, about people asking you to get them
> a job? Cause I honestly must have at least twenty people every year
> ask me. At various levels: ask me once and never mention it again
> from that to somewhat serious inquiry. And I probably only really got .
> . . one or two people a year a job. . . .
> K: People say: "Are you doing that thing you do every year? Are you
> doing it again this year? Can you get me a job?" And I say, "Yeah"
> "Can I come with you?" And I say, "Sure man but you have to stick it
> out." "Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!" A month later –
> N: When it's down to the crunch. You're like, "Listen, this is what its
> really about. Get some serious talking.
> J: Do you ever do the horror stories?
> N: I just lay it out on the line. I don't do the horror stories because for
> me at this point they're not that valuable.
> K: I just tell it like it is, you know. This is what it is like, breakfast at
> this time. [imitating a different person] "You have to get up at that
> time! Five o'clock in the morning, six o'clock in the morning, its cold
> at that time." They don't want to hear it.
> N: By lunch time they quit. [laughter]. (Kwanza June 13)

Work narratives in this case act as a gate keeper; both Neil and Kwanza are obviously

astute observers and users of narrative to both test and encourage would-be

treeplanters. As many planters and staff comment, "the job is not for everyone."

Work narratives, used as recruitment tests, are the scales upon which the teller weighs

whether or not the person in front of them would make a good planter.

Recruitment and Habitus

The above forms of recruitment have created several integrated and reinforcing

effects. First, it has created a certain uniformity to a treeplanting camp where many

new recruits are from the same age, ethnicity, geographic location and socio-economic

group. A group which exists within larger society but has its own shared values,

attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of a particular class is what Pierre Bourdieu has

called a "habitus" (Bourdieu and Passeron). By using the metaphor of the market

economy to analyze how cultural products (art, language, music, to name a few) are

assigned a value and become "cultural capital," Bourdieu has outlined ways in which

elite habitus, through the concentration of cultural capital, secure their position. Under

this system cultural capital can be exchanged for economic capital, thus materially

securing the elite's position. Although he is most interested in elite habitus as a site of

domination, the concept of habitus can be applied to several different groups. In the

case of treeplanters, the focus on recruitment in the university has been the tapping of

a certain habitus for its labour force. As I have outlined in the Introduction, the class

position of the average university student places them within the middle and upper

class (petty bourgeois and bourgeoisie).[28] The general uniformity of planters towards

the ideology of the wilderness, their view of manual labour (Chapter Four) and their

willingness to see the goals of management and worker as similar (Chapter Two and

Three) are all examples of a shared system of values, which have their locus in their

habitus.

Habitus is complicated in and by the study of youth. Since youth tend to

inherit, rather then construct, their class position, writers have tended to ignore the

complexity within class positions. This is especially true of the rise of young (20-25)

economically dependent individuals and their relationships with their parents, class

position and social position. This is the case of treeplanter's position within their

habitus. The area in which this habitus does not overlap with that of their parents is

in age. Bourdieu's concept of the habitus is open to criticism based on its

deterministic structure, but also because it has rarely opened itself up to empirical

study of the way in which people within a habitus uses the cultural capital which has

been secured for them. Any habitus will necessarily be split generationally, as one

section of the group is actively using the exchange of cultural capital to secure (and

redefine) its position. Within any habitus, youth have little power to manipulate the

structures of cultural capital; rather, theirs is a process of negotiation. Therefore,

---

[28]The class position of university students has changed over the last twenty years as working class students have gained access to capital. However, the Canadian Federation of Students has pointed out that representation of class in university continues to be minimal and under threat as rising costs and growing debt create a new impediment to working class students (Canadian Federation of Students 1998).

instead of calling treeplanters a labour force drawn from a specific habitus it would be more accurate to call it a habitus-subset. The fact that the workers are young places them in a position with considerably less power and privilege than their parents but comparatively more than other generational habitus-subsets.

A key to understanding planter's social position within their habitus is to examine the dynamics of age. Because they fall within the category of youth they resembles a generational subculture (cf. Hebdige). I have used the two terms interchangeably throughout this paper in part because habitus and subculture studies inform each other in important ways. Subcultural groups form within families, work places and large institutions. Over time they form shared values, language and beliefs which help form the epistemology of the group. The difference from Bourdieu's research is that the study of subcultures has presumed that they do not have the power to affect large social re/organization such as the amassing and securing of cultural capital (Hebdige 16-17). Taken together the organizing paradigm of habitus and subculture exposes both the class and power position of the labour pool of planters, as well as the generational group, with its own particular beliefs and values which may not replicate the broader habitus which they occupy. For example, the elevated status of treeplanting (it has high cultural value) within this habitus is based on the generational subculture aspect and not on the broader habitus value (see Chapter Four and Six), which is decidedly hostile to unskilled manual labour. The elevation of manual labour does not cause a serious challenge to Bourdieu's scheme since planters

instrumental use of cultural capital is consistent with the manner in which all habitus

secure their own positions.

Post-Boom Years

By 1992 the market had slumped in Ontario, tree prices were stagnant,

competition was fierce and although thousands of hectares of land remained unplanted

the number of trees being reforested was dropping fast. From its peak of 160 million

in 1989 the number fell to 85-90 million trees in 1997. This occurred, in part, because

of the fiscal hangover caused by the massive reforestation in the late 1980s, a situation

which was halted by a new policy by government. Under the old FMA system

companies payed a stumpage fee, the government accounting this money into general

revenues and then reimbursing the logging company's reforestation costs. Under the

new Crown Forest Sustainability Act the government allotted a set amount of cut area,

with the logging company's cut allowance for the following year dependent on their

reforestation success. The change also created a Forestry Trust instead of accounting

the funds into general revenue. This new policy stabilized the reforestation industry,

since all of the players could now project what area would need to be planted (John

Lawrence Aug. 5/98).

At the same time that the number of trees being planted was declining, a major

merger in the industry changed the playing field. First two companies and then a third

merged to form Outland. This large company pursued a strategy of cornering the market through aggressive bidding, hoping that economics of scale would allow them to retain their profit margin. The result of this price war was to break the price per tree stagnation, which had been in place since 1983, by driving the prices down. The new forestry act also created downward pressures on wages, because the fee that logging companies pay the government is assessed every three years. If Abitibi can demonstrate that its cost for reforestation is markedly lower than its fees, these fees will be lowered. The result is that the company stands to make a windfall profit for the three years between assessments. During this market reorganization Brinkman lost market share in Ontario and retrenched itself to working with higher priced, high quality contracts, mainly for Abitibi Consolidated (John Lawrence Aug. 5/98).

Like the lumber industry where many of the antecedents of treeplanting can be located, treeplanting has existed as an occupation long enough to mimic the boom/bust cycle of frontier resources extraction (Radford 248). The erosion in real wages which the treeplanter has endured in Ontario sees the worker in the industry at a cross road. A mix of people still populate the camps: some are students who recognize the futility of trying to support their education but still insist on trying; others are labourers for whom planting is a necessary part of an overall yearly strategy of seasonal, part-time and contract jobs that make up a yearly income. There is also a third group, dismissively categorized by a B.C. treeplanter who worked in Ontario once: "For many, treeplanting was little more than a paid adventure" (Beckett 11). In 1997 all

these elements came together in a camp north of Thunder Bay, first on McConnell and

then on the Kershaw block.

JL's Camp

In contrast to the small scale operation depicted in *Do it with Joy* the

contemporary Ontario camp is a marvel. In 1997 I conducted my fieldwork at

Brinkman's largest Ontario operation, JL's camp. It was first located one and a half

hours north of Thunder Bay at "Mile 82" of the Armstrong highway on what is called

the McConnell block[29]. After turning off the highway you travel down a logging road.

across a ford created by a beaver dam, and continue on for half an hour longer to

arrive at a large flat area of gravel and a small amount of high ground surrounded by a

swamp. The dining tent and cook bus the center of camp life are depicted in Figure

13. After this area was planted we packed up the camp and drove to "highway" 811.

The term should be used lightly since the "highway" is a gravel access road for

logging operations on the Kershaw block. After two and a half hours on the road we

set up camp on a large push[30]: total distance from Thunder Bay, three and a half hours

---

[29]Cut areas are named after the major lake in the region. McConnell and Kershaw are the official names of the area the we were working in. Many campers called the areas "mile 82" and the "cariboo cut," respectively. The former because of the cut off from the Armstrong highway and the later because the massive clear cut was officially a purposeful design to encourage the return of woodland cariboo to the region.

[30]A "push" is an area created on the side of the logging road to allow trailers to turn around or maintenance work to be done.
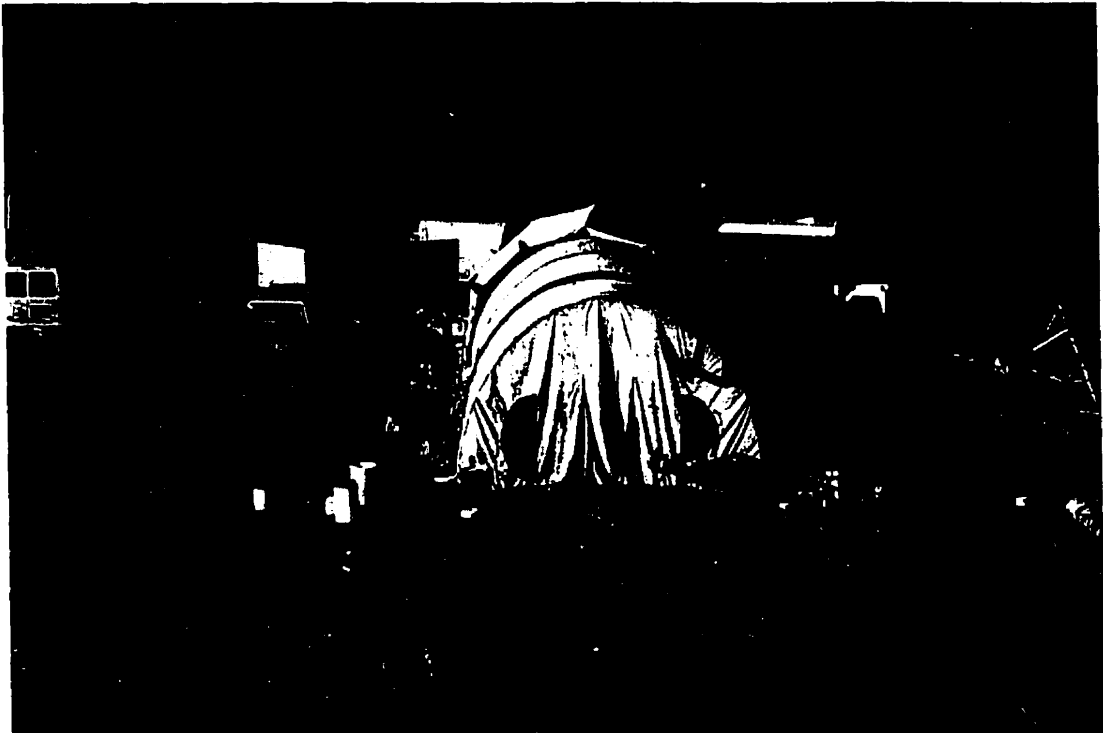
Figure 13. View of the dining tent and cook bus from atop a moraine at the McConnel ("Mile 82") camp.

by car. At its height these camps supported 69 planters and staff and five extra family members. From the above description one can see the basic needs of a planting camp: it must have all of the necessary facilities to support a large number of people living in a small space and it must be highly mobile. Balancing these two priorities is not a simple task.

This camp's compliment of basic equipment is: one cook bus (full kitchen facilities; bus is operational), two interlocking dining tents (total size. 20 feet wide by 60 feet long), one octagonal drying tent, one shower tent, two double occupancy latrines, two pick-up trucks, one flat bed truck, three extended cube-vans, one half sized school bus, one ATV, one "Bombardier Machine," one small insulated trailer with air conditioning unit, one large trailer, one generator, one water pump, one water filtration system, two "Paloma" water heaters, two independent sink units, fifteen tables, thirty benches, two shelving units, one industrial coffee maker, one "Coleman" stove, one wood stove, one stereo system, two arm chairs, place settings for all, six walkie-talkies with battery chargers, two fifty-gallon water barrels and enough rope, tarps, plumbing, tubing, wiring, junction boxes, diesel, gasoline, oil and duct tape to service the camp. The cost of maintaining this camp is between five and ten thousand dollars a day. When erected, the camp provides all of the basic needs of the planting population, but it also becomes more than that: it becomes "home." Chapter Five will discuss the spatial organization of the camp in terms of social relations and as an ideological nodal point, where ideas of home, work and carnival are re/created. It is

enough to mention here that although the camp may look like a random collection of necessary equipment, there is a harmony of design which balances the basic needs of a camp with broader aesthetic concerns.

A planter's personal gear will include: a tent, the tools of the job (shovel, boots and bags), clothing, toiletries, and personal effects. What one brings planting is determined by space; space is determined by the mode of transportation to the planting camp. Those who travel in their own personal vehicles tend to have more equipment and incidentals, while those who fly or arrive by bus are limited in the amount of baggage they can bring.

JL's camp moves at least once per season. Once the camp is relocated there is usually a day off and then work starts again. On the McConnell block we worked four days and then had one day off. The standardization of days off, although still not uniform throughout the entire industry, is one of the differences with treeplanting historically. As Beckett has pointed out, it was not uncommon for planters to work until the contract or the block was finished, then to receive a day or two off only to return to the same situation. Contemporary planting is still not finished until the last tree is in the ground. On contracts in rough areas or areas that were poorly planned the situation of working with no hope of escape still exists—what AC calls "plant for freedom" contracts. Unlike other companies Brinkman does not have a penalty for planters who leave early so there is no threat associated with quitting; it is more likely that planters who are being treated well will want to stay to make as much money as

possible.

On work days, the routine is essentially the same for planters and staff. You wake up at between 5:30 and 6:30 a.m. and make your lunch from the items that the cooks have placed on a long table at the front of the tent. After that, you eat breakfast, get your gear together and prepare to board whatever vehicle is taking you and your crew to the block. You leave camp at 6:50 - 7 a.m. and work on the block until 5. Depending on travelling time a planter arrives in camp at 6-7 in the evening. They may shower, swim (if there is a lake), or "hang out" until dinner is served. After dinner, planters usually go to bed around 8. The generator is shut down when the two people doing dishes and the cook are finished. The whole camp is usually quiet by 10. The cooks and tree-runner are on a different schedule which will be discussed in Chapter Three.

The time when this routine is broken is "night off." This is the evening of the last day of work; there is always a party until late in the evening with dancing, a fire (when not under a forest fire watch), games and performances. Day off is an opportunity to go into town and do laundry, purchase supplies, grab a meal or see a movie. For those who do not have their own vehicles Brinkman supplies a free ride to and from town. The evening of the day off usually finds planters in bed early in preparation for the next day. When we moved camp this routine was broken because the large distance needed to travel into town made a single day off impractical. Therefore, we switched to five days working and two days off.

Each camp has a history. Most Brinkman planters will work for one camp, more if they stay in the occupation longer than four years. As I have outlined planting is a combination of oral and traditional history. Because planters move out of camps fairly quickly there is little overview of the history of a camp. However, planters and staff will recall events that have special importance to them. Some of these include friendships, extraordinary events or small changes that later proved to be important. JL provides one of these small historical episodes which has gone on to affect the camp:

> One of my favourite years was '92 or '93. That was the year that we
> believed that all we needed was bread, water and bass. . . We brought
> in DJs to give us more bass. We had a lot of fun. . . everyone had been
> working with each other for a long time. . . people were planting a lot
> of trees. . . . It's always easier when people are making good money. . .
> . (June 27)

One of the distinct aspects of JL's camp is dancing. Like everyone else I had assumed that people always danced to Aretha Franklin, The Jackson Five, The Beastie Boys and James Brown. It was, however, a group effort to start dancing. The workers and JL purchased a stereo system that surprisingly continues to fuel the festivities and a tradition was born.

A thousand small events like this go into constructing a camp's social history. These narratives are not full performance events but are told in response to questions or are embedded within larger narratives. This makes the collection of a history of one camp difficult. From my own experience over the last three years I can provide a

brief sketch. In 1996 JL's camp was first located in Timmins, after that contract was finished three-quarters of the camp relocated to Mile 82 (the McConnel Block) and was joined later by another camp to form "the super camp." Just two weeks after arriving the camp was evacuated as a major forest fire threatened the area. After working all night the camp was moved further south out of harms way. Many of the planters were "old crusties" (see Chapter Six) who had worked with each other for many years, making the camp a relaxed and playful environment. In 1997 the camp returned to the McConnel block. There was a large influx of new planters and many old faces had left. People referred to this as a "transition period" in which people got to know each other and a new friendship group was formed. That year relatives of Robyn, JL's partner, were staying in camp. Her father, John after days of poor health had a spell where he lost consciousness and his vitals began to fail. A helicopter from Thunder Bay arrived and "med-evaced" him out of camp. The Camp Joe, Catherine had advanced medical training and attended to him, but lacking medical equipment there was little that could be done. John made a full recovery and was thankful of the support and sympathy shown by the planters. While John was still in the hospital, the school bus, full of planters, was returning from a day off in town when it hit a moose. Everyone escaped without injuries; the moose died on the side of the road. Johnny G. was praised for his great driving abilities and everyone was reminded of the fact that a planter has never died on the job, but once every three years someone dies from a traffic accident in the bush. Shortly after the accident the camp moved into the

Cariboo Cut (Kershaw Block) to finish off the end of the season. 1998 saw a consolidation of the new planting group and an assertiveness as to their place as experienced planters. Few extraordinary events marked this year. The planting was difficult. We moved once and finished off the year in good spirits.

As I have mentioned, Ontario treeplanting is a short season operation and after planting 3.1 million trees in 48 days it was time to leave. The contract was concluded with a large feast specially prepared by the cooks, a rearrangement of the dining tables to form a great-table eating environment, decorations, a mix of the comical evening dress and more serious fancy attire and a festive final party which traditionally is as bacchic a celebration as most people will ever experience. The next day sees planters making breakfast at eight and beginning, one last time, to take down the camp. By 2 p.m. people are beginning their goodbyes and slowly, a site which was their home begins to empty as personal vehicles and later, Brinkman vehicles full of gear make their way back to what they call the "real world."

Chapter 2

Planters' Work Narratives: The Role of Technique(s) in the Occupation of Treeplanting

The understanding of work and work culture requires more then a description of a company and its wage system. In several important studies, Robert McCarl[31] has developed the concept of technique(s) as a "theoretical construct" which can "provide a background against which specific work cultures can be investigated" (McCarl, *Occupational* 17). He explains that "technique reflects the 'working knowledge' (what you need to do the work) of any work group, and as it is passed from one worker to another through imitation and instruction, it begins to reveal a pattern of interactions that is unique to that particular group. . ." (6). More importantly, technique(s) represents the "central shaping principle of an occupation" (15). This chapter will outline the "canon of work techniques" which is necessary for each treeplanter to do his or her job. In order to follow emic divisions of the work tasks the technique(s) of treeplanting will be divided into three sections: macro-level, the "mental game" and micro-level. The mediating effects of narrative and its performative contexts will be

---

[31]Robert S. McCarl,"The Communication of Work Technique," *Culture and Tradition* 3 (1990): 108-17.
—. Smokejumper Initiation: Ritualized Communication in a Modern Occupation," *Journal of American Folklore* 89 (1976): 49-66.
—. "Occupational Folklife: A Theoretical Hypothesis," *Working Americans: Contemporary Approaches to Occupational Folklife*, Ed. Robert H. Byington (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Publication) 1978. 3-18.
—. *The District of Columbia Firefighters Project: A Case Study in Occupational Folklife* (Smithsonian Folklife Series No. 4. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office) 1985.

explored in order to understand how these factors affect our ability to understand

technique(s).

Greeners

Practical training, orientation and emotional support is provided to greeners by

a crew boss. The crew boss in charge of orienting and training new planters currently

is Eric. He is a quiet, direct person who appears intimidating at first but is well-liked

and highly respected by his fellow planters as someone "who can really pound[32]."

Prior to the first day of work Eric led an orientation session where greeners were

instructed on the kinds of clothes to wear, food to bring out onto the block for lunch,

advice on peculiar aspects of the camp, such as communal showers and the lunch

table, and finally how to plant trees:

> So what are we going to do for the people that have never planted?
> You'll all come with me and we'll go to a relatively confined area
> where you can see the site prep which in this case is bräcke[33], which is
> a little *scalp* made by a machine which in this case was dragged behind

---

[32]Pound or Pounder: A planter who is exceptionally good. It is different than a high-baller in that it denotes a certain pace and speed. Even a greener can "pound", meaning that they may have a good hour or day in which they move fast and plant a lot of trees, but they are not a high baller. The origin of the term is most likely onomatopoeic, or a semantic representation of the action of planting quickly.

[33]Bräcke (pronounced: bra kee): The term is Swedish in origin. It denoted a machine and the soil modification that is created. The soil modification looks like a golf divot, 1.5 feet wide and 2.5 feet long. The soil "scalp" which is moved to create the divot looks as if it were on a hinge and lays in a mound on the forward face of the bräcke. The bräcke's depth is dependant on the type of soil and the speed the machine was travelling over the block but on average it is 6 to 12 inches deep. The Bräckes are spaced 5 to 7 feet apart. The technique of planting Bräckes is placing a tree high on the corner of the scalp side so that nutrients from the scalp will gravity-feed down to the tree.

> a skidder. It has two wheels with two teeth each. And these two
> wheels spin in the opposite direction that its rolling, it actually digs into
> the soil like this [makes a scooping hand motion: palm up finger
> slightly curled up] turns it over on a hinge. So what we're going to be
> doing is planting the trees in the high corner of one of those bräckes.
> Its hard to explain; you'll see it when you get out there. (May 13)

In relation to organizing one's land Eric ended his discussion with: "everything else

to say we can do it on the block because now it's really out of context." This type of

instruction is formal instruction and emphasizes the abstract nature of planting. It is

abstract because none of the greeners have ever seen a bräcke machine, let alone a

bräcke. The concept of dirt having a hinge is both obscure and funny. As an eight-

year veteran of treeplanting Eric understands that treeplanting is a job which is made

up of a constellation of techniques, many of which need to be seen and practiced;

therefore no amount of talking will explain them. This is why his talk is peppered

with variations of the phrase: "It's hard to explain. You'll see it when you get there."

For research purposes I worked on the greener crew, but treeplanting is a

solitary occupation and so it was difficult to observe the greener's first few days of

learning the skills necessary to be a good planter. In talking both formally, in

interviews, around the table during supper or on the bus, I would make a point of

asking greeners about these early days. Kailen a twenty-one year old university

student whose previous employed summers, had been spent as a camp counsellors,

said:

> The first feeling, I guess, out there was when Eric left me on my piece
> of land and said, "plant" and walked away. I just remember looking

around, I had a big swampy piece, and not seeing a single god damn bräcke. And I'm thinking to myself, "where the fuck am I supposed to put the tree." And as soon as I thought that I was standing around and I thought: "oh my god you're supposed to be planting like fifty of these in a minute." And I started panicking, "I can't just stand here. Oh god, oh god!" And like looking around for anyone to help me. Finally Eric came along and he made the hole for me for the first little—whatever. But you know I mean the first two weeks weren't that bad. I just focused on not getting uptight. I know things will get better. I have to keep a good head space. If I have a good head space quality and everything else will come. I think I did a good job on getting a good head space. (June 12)

Kailen's learning experience is shared by most planters: the feeling of being lost, desperation and then coming up with a strategy to deal with these feelings — "focused on not getting uptight." Kailen's narrative anticipates many of the reoccurring techniques that planters have to learn and master and I will address them in the order that they appear in her narrative.

Macro-Level

Many planters comment that planting a tree is not difficult, finding the right place to plant a tree is. The category macro-level is meant to include the larger aspects of forest cover, land organization, cutting-in and bagging-up which are aspects of a planter's "piece." A "piece" is the area of land which a planter creates by working off of another planter's "flag line": using flagging tape (brightly coloured plastic ribbon) to mark their section they cut a piece of land in which they work until they are finished. Land is variable and a host of techniques exist to deal with different

aspects. Most of our work this summer was bräcked; a form of site preparation where an independent contractor working for Abitibi Consolidated mechanically treats the soil to make it more receptive to seedlings. The planter is expected to plant a tree in each bräcke. In many ways this simplifies the work, a simplification which many experienced planters call "boring." The effect of changing land is nicely summed up by Nick, a second year planter: "Every time we change land I feel like a fucking greener. I don't think I'm ever going to understand this job" (June 14). The frustration is especially acute because learning a new technique under a piece-work system can cost a planter hundreds of dollars. The main advantage which the experienced planter has over the novice is that a planter with three or more seasons under their belt has seen a wide variety of land types and has already adopted strategies to be successful in unproductive or difficult land. As Chris, a six year veteran of planting told me:

> When you recognize a hundred different land type—there's not that much—but once you know them all you know the feeling of them. And usually on one land you'll have two [or] three types, maybe one, maybe two or three: swampy area, an easy area. So I'll know; I'll know pretty quickly. But it takes a certain time. (May 30)

"Head Space" and the "Mental Game"

"Head space" is also called the "mental game" and is a difficult area to define. The term itself comes from the common treeplanting expression, "planting is a mental game." When planters are discussing the mental game its primary characteristic is that

it represents a category of technique(s) that encapsulates the reorientation that one must effect in order to be productive in a piece-work system. It implies but is not limited to motivation, dealing with pain, discipline, concentration, use of time and attitude. It can be difficult orienting oneself to the piece-work system. Earning eight cents per tree is a daunting task when it takes you five minutes to plant one tree or when you finish working a gruelling day and you find you have only made thirty dollars. At the end of my first day when I was too tired to stand, raspberry bushes having turned my legs to pulp and I had planted three hundred and fifty trees ($28.00) I was told by my crew boss: "You will never work as hard as you've worked today, congratulations."

Another aspect of the mental game was described to me by Eric when he cautioned against the popular and seemingly desirable practice when a planter, no longer concentrating on the task at hand "zones out." "Don't do that," he said. "Lots of people want to do that but you always, you're always looking and thinking, preparing. I never think about anything but planting when I'm planting" (Journal, May 28). There is quite a bit of disagreement about this point. Bicycle-Helmet-Andrew found that the "zen like" state when one is moving fluidly through the land and you are no longer thinking to be the most desirable state to plant in; one that he constantly sought out and measured his days against. Other planters agree and look forward to the ability to think and dream while they are planting. It is a characteristic of hard core planters that they do not share this opinion. They tend to emphasis the need to

be constantly aware of your environment and the passage of time. Either way, the individual nature of planting limits any real conflict in relation to questions of different technique(s). Later the reorientation of time under a piecework regime will be discussed as part of the mental game but for now the focus will be another point raised in Kailen's narrative—quality.

The concern for quality is part of this system, part of the "head space." Brinkman, unlike many companies, does not fine its planters for poorly planted trees, it merely makes them replant, a replant for which they are not paid. Independent contractors ("checkers") working for the logging company inspect each planter's block by throwing what is known as a plot. A plot is approximately 1/100th of a hectare. It is measured with a rope four meters long which is tied to a shovel. The company must achieve a ninety-three percent rating to receive full payment on the contract. The factor which adds a level of complexity to this issue is that, like technique(s) quality is "standard" rather than a "law" (McCarl, *District* 28). This is the case despite the fact that there are a number of guildlines which outline the quality of a good tree. A few variables that affect quality include: mineral soil, depth of tree, straightness of tree, ground cover around tree and health of tree before being placed in the ground. In some cases the difference between a good quality tree and a poor quality tree is measured in half-inches. In calling quality a standard rather than a law I am making the distinction between the ideal tree as described in the silviculture literature and the enforcement of these rules—the difference between the ideal and the lived reality.

Every planter knows that quality is a standard because it is variable from shift to shift and from area to area. At the beginning of the season planter's trees are judged very harshly and there is a constant need to be careful about how you are planting. After two or three shifts, this standard is relaxed and if there is no significant down slide in quality, a more comfortable level for planters, crew bosses and checker is achieved. Likewise, if production is low, staff will let it be known that quality can be relaxed a little bit in order to put more trees in the ground. This act is similar to what Mikolos Haraszti, in his study of piecework in a Hungarian tractor factory called "looting," the collusion between workers and managers to break rules in order to make money (qtd. in Burawoy 271-274). It is also the sense that is contained in Johnny G.'s comment about planters and quality: "They aren't doing a bad job to get away with something. They're doing a bad job to try to make an honest day's living. And, having been in this business for as long as I have, I've seen that become more and more difficult to do that as a planter" (June 10). That is not to say that treeplanting and an Hungarian tractor factory are analogous but within certain confines a parallel can be drawn. Out of all of the factors open to the planter and staff the ambiguous nature of quality is the best avenue for increasing production and wages under a piecework system. It is the technique of understanding the variable nature of quality which determines both planter and staff's success at exploiting the standard of quality to their advantage.

Not all planters have the ability to loot. In 1998 tension in the camp over the

issue of quality threatened to expose many of the subtle hierarchies that exist within

the egalitarian structure of the camp. Like the tractor factory, looting is a technique

which must be learned (Buraway 273). Greeners and planters from outside the

company felt that the quality standards that they had to endure were greater than those

of experienced Brinkman employees. Part of this tension was the result of staff and

the checker insisting that quality is a measurable law. As I have demonstrated,

planters know that this is not the case and the hypocrisy implied in the stance added to

the tension. What can be additionally troubling to the greener is the ambiguous

position of looting in relation to the canon of treeplanting technique(s). This is

because looting is an unspoken alignment of interests, an alignment which planters

may anticipate but rarely control.

Micro-Level

The one aspect of planting which is not discussed in Kailen's narrative is the

actual planting of a tree. This category of technique(s) is the micro-level of planting.

It is often excluded from narratives since it is a series of basic skills at which most

planters gain an acceptable level of proficiency relatively quickly, with refinements

being made over time. Figures 14 and 15 show two different planters in the process

of planting a tree. In telling me about learning to plant, Annabel's (A) narrative goes

into a bit more detail than most:

A:Eric gave me a speed lesson. He came out . . . he said, "just walk

Figure 14. Reid putting a tree in the ground.

Figure 15. Nancy and her dog Finnegan working on her piece. She has just put a tree in the ground and is kicking the hole closed.

beside me and watch how I plant." He kept saying, "throw me another one. Throw me another one." "You sure you're planting all those? You sure you're not putting two in a hole?" [laughter] He is so fast. And he is talking, "Watch my eyes; see my head. O.k. I'm looking for the next bräcke, the tree's in; I'm stomping on it. My hand's in my bag getting my tree already. I'm walking as I'm grabbing my tree; I'm looking, I've found it; the tree is in. . . ."

J: And it clicked that day?

A: No. But it helped get me momentum. (June 11)

A successful planter integrates many techniques—on the micro-level, macro-level and the mental game—and creates a personal planting style that is a combination of accepted work habits, personal needs and desires and is based on the basic model provided by the early instruction by their crew boss. In-so-far as planters in Ontario rarely work together there are very few solitary activities in a day which could affect a fellow worker. The conservative aspect of visiable work habits and norms, which aim to create a predictable series of behaviours in a variety of situations, is not a work priority for treeplanting. This is in contrast to earlier studies of coal miners (Green, Kidding) and railway workers (Long, Ohio) which found that predictable work norms were very important to the group because of hazardous working conditions or because of one group's position in a larger complex work environment. By contrast the expression of group work norms in treeplanting is highly flexible and judgement of a fellow planter is reserved as long as their style makes them money.

Exceptions to the Rule: "Highballing"

There are two exceptions to the above analysis, both of which deal with the

issue of "highballing". One exception was raised by Rob, a six year veteran planter and a first year tree-runner. The exception that he raised was in a discussion about highballing, the ability to plant a large number of trees. Highballing, in Ontario means planting 2700 - 3100 trees (240-280 dollars) per day, every day. To accomplish this Rob insisted a planter needed to adopt a style of planting that was the most efficient possible. This style would integrate everything from the micro-level through to the mental game and the planter's use of time. The hypothesis is that there exists a maximum efficiency, a sort of "mastery of form" (Jones, *Exploring*), which at this stage would prove to be uniform amongst all planters that achieved this level. His argument was that at a lower level of productivity, a planter could have an idiosyncratic style, less efficient but equal to the task of planting 1500 to 2000 trees. To move onto the next level one would have to adopt the most efficient planting techniques. It is the movement of the shovel, the time it takes to get a tree out of one's bag, the speed and efficiency with which one negotiates the movement of closing a hole with your foot so that your forward momentum to the next planting site is not hindered, and a host of other minute details within the constellation of micro-level technique(s) which affect a planter's speed. At this level of planting it is the accumulation of seconds--remembering that a planter at this level is putting a tree in the ground in less than ten seconds--that makes the difference. Under a piecework system over an eight and a half hour day, a one tree per minute increase equals 510 trees or $40.80. Increased efficiency, that is, the acquisition of new skills and the

abandoning of old habits is part of the constant refinement that every treeplanter engages in. Whether this results in a decrease in the range of techniques is only hypothetical at this point; however, all highballers share similar techniques. A fact which would suggest that as one reaches the upper levels of efficiency there is a very limited number of techniques available to the planter. The belief that a style of maximum efficiency exists does motivate some planters to experiment with new techniques. However, most planters are acutely aware of the minor difference between their methodology and their fellow workers and it is the differences rather than the similarities that are highlighted. In the case of one exceptionally proficient planter the mastery and experimentation with technique(s) is an aspect of the interesting environment in the camp that resulted from his prolific planting.

Highballers and the Canon of Work Technique(s)

Matt is, by everyone's standards, a "highballer." As I stated above a highballer is not just someone who has periodic success. Even on the bad days of the 1997 planting season Matt made a large amount of money. It is one of the dynamics of being a highballer that an individual's technique(s), their actions both on the block and in the camp, is open to scrutiny and comment. On a small scale they become camp celebrities, superstars of the treeplanting world. Every occupation has its legendary figures and anyone who approximates their ability is tagged with nicknames which are both an act of joking to undercut the status that they acquire and an acknowledgement

of their abilities. For example, a fisherman who is successful will often be teased by calling them whatever television fishing personality is currently popular, in the late 1980s it was Bob Izume. Likewise, while splitting wood and doing small scale logging, I've heard one of my fellow workers called Paul Bunyan, after the heroic American giant woodsman of "fakelore" (Dorson, *Handbook*). Status because of one's abilities is often sought in the work setting since it opens up opportunities for advancement or is at least a recognition of skill which is usually pleasing to people. McCarl in his study of D.C. firefighters links status to the canon of work technique:

> Performance in a work setting is not a law, it is a standard. . . . So important is this standard that status in the occupational community can be said to depend not only on a person's ability to consistently perform the requisite techniques needed to accomplish the job, but also on his ability to understand the canon upon which he is being judged and learn how to manipulate it. (28)

However, at Brinkman, where hierarchy is subtle and advancement unlikely, an individual who is singled out as a highballer aquires status without the typical benefits that status brings, in fact, the effect is often negative. The result of being labled a highballer is that the planter no longer participates in the spatial organization which isolates the block (work) from the camp (nonwork). As I will address in Chapter Five the spatial/ideological division has the effect of undercutting the planter's ability to create status based on his/her performance as a worker. A planter has the choice whether or not to open themselves up to critiques and evaluation of their technique(s) by choosing to participate in tale-telling sessions about their day. Besides this a

planter is only open for evaluation on a regular basis from their crew boss. This is not to say there is a rigid divide; a planter's own self evaluation is often based on a combination of their work and their social life. Be that as it may, the effect of a shift in this regime is that a highballer is the only one in camp who is constantly exposed to comments and critiques about their technique(s) and, therefore, their status and position within the group is constantly in flux.

This can be an isolating experience and is probably one of the reasons why the term highballer is difficult to define. For example, a female planter who I knew well, is a very good planter; she emphatically denied that she was a highballer when I asked her. To first year planters a highballer is anyone who plants four boxes each day. To an experienced planter this level is raised to five boxes. Among those who regularly plant five boxes this level is again raised. It is apparently an honour that most people—except those who are not in the running—are loath to possess. A partial explanation for this, as I have indicated is the loss of privacy in regards to one's technique(s) and the amount of money that one makes.

Matt is, however, quite unique among highballers since he has a peculiar style, a style which stands outside of the accepted canon of work technique(s). Even in a highly individualistic occupation the consequences of being idiosyncratic disrupt group solidarity by challenging codes of work behaviour. Matt called his style "the drop method." Normally the planter, holding a tree by the collar (the space between the roots and the first laterals, on black spruce this can be from one to three centimetres)

between the first and second finger, bends over and slides the tree into the left hand corner of the slit that they have made with their shovel. Making sure that the tree is the proper depth (mineral soil covering the root plug but not the bottom laterals), the planter then closes the hole with a sharp kick of the heel. The sensation after a long day was described by a male planter as the equivalent of "spending eight hours at your proctologist." Matt's technique was, instead of bending over, to bend slightly at the waist, carefully flicking the tree towards the hole with enough precision that it lands in the correct spot and at the correct depth. In a later chapter I will detail the various injuries that a planter suffers from, and as might be expected lower back pain is one of them. Matt's method had the advantage of limiting the amount of strain that is exerted on a back which bends over 1500 to 3000 times a day.

Matt's success as a planter and his unorthodox style caused a small sensation at the camp. This was especially the case among less experienced planters. Identified as a highballer with a questionable style brought the entire canon of work technique(s) into question. Some planters, myself included, began experimenting with the "drop method." The result to my productivity was less than impressive. The crewbosses, seeing many young planters experimenting with this style, actively encouraged them to stop. A crew boss, on the topic of highballers, went so far as to use Matt as an example of why highballers are not necessarily good in the larger picture. The problem is that Matt's system produced poor quality trees. It is almost impossible to throw a tree into the proper spot and at the proper depth. That is not to say that he,

himself did not plant quality trees. The debate about that is a delicate subject and one that I will not comment on further because to question a planter's quality is to question their ability to do a good job. It is enough to say that those who used Matt's technique without his experience planted poor quality trees.

The manner in which Matt handled the attention and lack of privacy was ingenious. His tactic was to hyperbolically acknowledge the status that he had acquired by offering workshops on his drop method (see Figure 16). Appearing one day was this announcement:

SEMINAR
TITLE: THE DROP METHOD,
OR HOW TO PLANT TREES, LOTS
OF 'EM WITHOUT EVER, EVER
BENDING OVER
REGISTRATION FEE: $40 (OR
                  ONE BOX)
CONTACT: MATT FARFAN
MANAGER, LITTLE BUDDY CORPORATION

Matt's fictitious company was created long ago, possibly as a way of dealing with just such circumstances. The result of his use of humour was to diffuse the tension which was developing both on a group and personal level. By making himself the object of self criticism he undercut the fissures which had developed because of his success and secured his place within the group, a place which was always slightly different then other members, but a position which nevertheless afforded him a similar level of privacy, respect and individuality. The implicit criticism of his own method also

Figure 16. Advertisement for Matt's seminar taped to the side of a stereo speaker. Moose skulls found on the block are common decorations at planting camp.

helped to secure the position of the canon of work technique(s) as the sign system of community work norms and codes.

Sources of Learning

After two shifts of training, greeners are integrated into crews with experienced planters and their training continues to come from their crew boss. The piecework system discourages planters from helping each other since aid can be measured in dollars and cents—any time away from planting means you are losing money. Assistance is exceptional and represents a high level of generosity on the part of one planter to another. The general tendency is that crew bosses are the main source of instruction for new planters; as such they have a huge influence on determining the overall uniformity of technique(s) which exists in treeplanting, the style which a planter adopts, as well as their particular perception of treeplanting culture and their place (participation) in it. When a fellow planter does take time out for a greener, it makes a strong impression. Most planters, when they tell about their greener year, will recall their crew boss who trained them and the planter who took time and money off to help them. Annabel's (A) story is typical.

> J: What was it like, getting a handle on the work?
> A: Well at first it was no problem. For the first shift and then I
> thought: "oh my god people are planting like three, four boxes, oh my
> god." . . . People explain to you this is what happens. You're not even

gonna have to look for your trees, lines[34], any more. You'll look once
and a while but you just know your land.

J: What people were those? crew bosses or other planters?

A: Nancy was one. Nancy was kind of my mentor at the beginning.
That's when my biggest baddest day was, right at the beginning. It was
me and you and Nancy and. . . it was when you got all the raspberry
things in your hair [J: oh yeah]. . . . I was in the back of my land and I
was watching them [Nancy and Andrea] just plough towards the back
and I'm like plugging along filling in the back. And Nancy and I were
beside each other on my flag line and I said—I was almost in tears—I
said, "do you find this land hard to plant?" She said, "No this is great,
this is fabulous. . . ." And I couldn't find a place to put a tree, it was
all like nothing . . . . I'm in the back of my land and its duff[35], duff,
duff, naturals[36]. And I look at Nancy and Andrea and they're pounding,
pounding and putting the trees in. And I met up with Nancy on my
flag line and I said [imitating crying]: "Nancy I can't fucking plant this
land." And I just lost it. And I took my helmet and I threw it and I
threw my shovel. And she came running over and she gave me a big
hug and she said, "Its just land. Its just trees. Don't worry about it."
And I remember that every time I get upset: its just land; its just trees.
And Nancy was the one who said: "you'll learn your land; you won't
have to look for your lines after a while." And she's the one who
always stressed organization on your land. Always stay organized.
Always have a certain route where you're going. Because that helps in
speed. So mainly Nancy, Eric—Eric taught me so much. (June 11)

In this case, Nancy, unlike Eric, did not physically show her how to plant her land.

She did, however, comfort Annabel and later in the season, when Annabel planted her

first three-and-a-half box day, it would be Nancy who would lead the congratulations

as we all talked on a long walk out of the block.

---

[34]"Lines" are the already planted line of trees which forms the border between the planted and
unplanted areas of the piece.

[35]"Duff" is partially decomposed organic matter which is unacceptable planting material in Ontario.

[36]"Naturals" are naturally regenerating trees which are valuable to the forestry companies, jack pine,
black spruce and red pine being the most common. Naturals are treated like one of the planter's own trees and
one must plant six feet away from them.

The Use of Work Narratives

Despite the tale of planters helping each other, treeplanting can be a lonely and isolating experience. AC, a first year crewboss with five years of planting experience, describes the relative isolation of planting:

> Its weird because you don't spend that much time with people. . . it takes me two years to get to know people well here. . . . You're in the field alone all day, you don't really chat to them at breakfast, if you do you're crazy. You're in the field, you get in the van; you might say "hi" to them in the van. If you're lucky you might share a cache[37] with someone you like. You're in the field alone all day; you come home and eat dinner and most of these people are in bed half and hour after dinner so when are they making the best friends I'm never quite sure. It is kind of like communal living but you don't really do that much with people. (June 28)

AC's question of when and how people become best friends will be returned to later but her point about the isolation of the work and the lack of free time during the planter's shift is the working context created by piecework. It is not uncommon to only see another person twice in nine hours. Once your training is over, first and even second year planters often get Kailen's "where the fuck am I supposed to put the tree?" feeling. Because of the isolation information about the learning and refinement of work technique(s) is uniquely confined to narrative. McCarl has suggested that meaningful occupational narratives deal with the middle ground of experiences: "the

---

[37] The Cache is the area on the side of the road where trees are kept. Usually extra water, and your other supplies are also kept there. Depending on the size of the block anywhere from two to five planters will share a cache.

details and occurrences of middle point expressions as they function between the two poles [mundane and exceptional] become a distinguishing characteristic of the group" (*Occupational* 13). An important characteristic of treeplanters is they spend a great deal of time talking about their work and the techniques that they employed throughout the day. These narratives are a way of comparing their work performance to a group standard, what McCarl calls a "canon of work technique." Within a narrative performance, in the bus on the way to camp, around the supper table or having a smoke after dinner, planters are engaged in creating a simulacrum of a group work experience in which they offer up to their fellows a chance to comment on the choices that they made that day. They present for censure or praise the activities that they think fulfil both personal and performative imperatives.

The Narrative Context

I have just addressed three interrelated aspects of treeplanter work narratives: these should be separated and discussed more fully. The first aspect is the time and place that narrative performances take place (breaks from work); the second is the social contexts of these narrative; the third is the relationship between context and personal priorities (agency) that helps to shape and craft a work narrative.

The Narrative Context: Interstices and Technique(s)

Interstitial perioids during the day, or breaks, have long been recognized as key

sites where expressive behaviour in the work place occur (McCarl, *Occupational*, *District*; Green, *Industrial*; Narváez, *I've Gotten*). Since treeplanting is a piecework system, with no minimum production per day required, theoretically a planter can structure their own time while on the job, taking as many breaks or working as long as they like. In reality, one's use of time, like the manipulation of a shovel, is subject to considerations of technique and compared against a canon of work technique(s). The expressive acts of gesture and sign language, which only partially remove one from the job at hand (a sort of mini-break), are limited in planting since planters are usually geographically distant from each other. I collected a few examples, and these took place only on days when the land was bad and therefore people, abandoning all hope of making money, decided to work and play. In one example a planter leaving the cache walked a short distance into his piece, stopped at the point where he was still clearly visible and began using his shovel like a blind man uses a white cane. The planters who were gathered around the cache, sharing the same feeling of hopelessness, burst out laughing.

The cache is the area where boxes of trees are kept. Here planters "bag-up, "put trees in their bags, and store their daypacks and lunch (see Figure 17). On the block, the cache represents a potential break site in the work day. Catherine, a second year planter, often compares the cache to a water cooler in an office, it is a place where workers can gather to talk and relax. It is recognized, however, that efficient

Figure 17. Reid and Nancy bagging up at the cache.

planting demands that you not waste time at the cache. Bicycle-Helmet Andrew,[38] a

second year planter described the dangers of the cache and the demands of the

piecework system:

> My big problem is getting out of the cache. Or just noticing I'm being
> lazy and getting your butt going. If you're just lazy and you don't feel
> like going hard. Just because you're like, for this moment I feel like
> being lazy you are paying to be lazy. If you're sitting down you are
> paying money to sit on your ass. If I sit down for half an hour that's a
> third of a box. That's like thirteen bucks. I am paying thirteen bucks to
> sit on my ass and I don't want to do that so I have to get up and go.
> (June 19)

The cache, therefore, has the potential to be a locus of conversation and

narrative exchange but most planters recognize this as inefficient. That is not to say

that brief exchanges are not shared there; usually they are what McCarl would call the

non-symbolic activity from which the meaningful or symbolic must be separated

(*Occupational* 10). Unlike one's activities while planting in their piece the planters'

activities at the cache are visible, opening oneself up to comments about technique.

Although it is not recommended that you "hang around" the cache, several respected

planters have a technique of taking long breaks (twenty to thirty minutes) once or

twice per day and then working without any breaks for longer periods of time. This

kind of practice, because they are seen as successful, does not generate much

comment.

There are four more significant sites where conversation bursts forth. The first

---

[38] Planters used this term to differentiate him from Dog-Boy Andrew, one of the other planters.

is on the bus or van ride home. Here, away from the bugs and in a climate-controlled environment, everyone relaxes and an air of playfulness and good humour is evident. While this does not happen everyday on the bus ride home, I, as researcher, was guaranteed to collect stories about techniques, bears, lost loves, fantastic inventions, and other things too numerous to mention. The second is back at the camp in the communal showers. Here people showering and those waiting create a cacophony of conversation, laughter and splashing water. Supper is more subdued as exhaustion has usually caught up with planters. Here the talk is more broad ranging; school is a favourite conversation as are the personal experience narratives and the personal histories that new friends typically share. Finally, there is the smoking area. Even in the bush planters no longer smoke inside the dining tent. Because of pregnant workers and young children, planters now smoke by the front flap (it could be called a door). This is a regular crowd, made up mostly of men, who find each other regularly after breakfast, before and after dinner and swap stories and tales (see Figure 18).

Beyond Interstices: Space/Time, Technique(s) and Narrative

McCarl has observed that technique(s) is the central shaping principle of an occupation. He has relied on narratives as the most effective way to access this information since observing actual work processes (and the grouping of gesture and sign language on the shop floor) is extremely difficult (*Occupational* 12). The orientation of people within the work space, noticing the collectively agreed upon gaps

Figure 18. Talking and smoking outside the dining tent. Viewed from left to right: Matt, JL, Domm, JP, Ben and Neil.

and breaks in the day, can be helpful in accessing the worker's emic understanding of the priorities of their work environment. From my own experience working in a National Grocers food distributing warehouse I observed that there was a distinct culture (folklife) of workers on each shift.[39] The difference between each shift is the result of many factors but one of the dominant was that the breaks in the actual work time, company time rather than a recognized fifteen minute break, were different from shift to shift. This created a different approach to work (its tempo, rhythm, speed and amount of energy needed to perform a task) and therefore, a slightly different work culture was developed on each shift (Nickerson, *Is There* 135). The organization of space and time is as much a technique as the activities which take place within these two dimensions. The recognition and documentation of this is helpful in understanding some of the things that workers may not express in narratives — or aspects that may be impermeable to the outsider when hearing narratives. Melissa (M), a second year planter, narrates at length, illuminating several of these points.

> J: How are you finding this year?
> M: Excellent. It was hard to adjust in the beginning. Last year I found it really hard to adjust. I found maybe fitting in was kind of hard. I felt like a sixteen year old kid again. I was all insecure. It was really hard, but this year having last year behind me has been so different. Also the planting is totally different. I'm making money now and I'm here to plant and that's the only reason and everything else is definitely a bonus. But I feel that, now that I'm comfortable as a planter and the work that I'm doing everything else just kind of falls into place. It makes sense because, I worked hard–I feel legitimate at the job now.
> J: Did you not feel legitimate last year?

---

[39]The warehouse was located in Peterborough Ontario and was a 24 hour operation with three shifts.

M: No. Last year I hung around a lot at the cache and stand in my land, plant maybe a tree every thirty seconds. And I was always asking, I just didn't get it, why I was here and what the point was. And why we were planting these trees and always asking these questions. Maybe this year I've answered them or maybe I've just stopped asking them. But I'm here to make money, that's what it's all about at the moment.

J: So figuring out why you are here helped click with the job of planting?

M: Yes. Exactly. And also knowing how to plant and I was pretty slow last year. I was probably doing a lot of extra moves that I didn't need . And now I just know what I'm doing and I'm at the cache and I just put my trees in my bags, maybe eat a fruit and then go back right away. I remember last year it was three o'clock and I was in my land and I was walking by the road and there was Mark and I said: "What time is it?" And he said, "Its three o'clock." And I was like, "Fuck, three o'clock. I've still got two hours." And it was a real drag. And he said, "Oh you're still there?" I was wondering what does that mean "you're still there." I was still there at three o'clock, where it meant three o'clock was a drag as opposed to three o'clock meant two hours left; now I can put two hours worth of trees in. And its a very different frame of mind. And now when I find out it's noon I'll think, "that's good I can put in however-many-boxes or however-many-trees." It always helps me to think this day is going to end like every other day is going to end[40]. I might as well do my best until then and put in as many trees as I possibly can. (May 28)

The interesting thing about this conversation is the way that esoteric descriptions of technique(s) gain a social and almost emotional presence in the narrative. Melissa links her failure socially last year to her poor performance as a planter and to the fact that, because of this, she never felt like a planter. Part of her alienation from the work

---

[40]It is interesting to note the tempo, word choices and philosophy of Melissa's refrain, "this day is going to end, just like every other day," is very similar to Annabel's "its just trees. its just land." Both can be repeated, mantra like, while their cadence and message have a calming influence on a frustrated worker. Many planters have small, reassuring sayings that help to get them through long and unproductive days. However, I have noticed that more women then men appear to employ them or at least to have one to which they constantly return.

was her failure to master the practical skills of the job: speed at the cache and moving quickly through the land. Melissa also recognized that treeplanters must orient themselves to time and the passage of time in relation to the day. This is a technique which is directly shaped by the piecework system and expressed through the appropriate use of breaks; it is also a way in which a planter knows if s/he is working inside or outside of the canon of work technique(s)—essentially whether they are a treeplanter.

As I have suggested the category of the "mental game" encapsulates all of the non-physical techniques of treeplanting. The fact that it is non-physical is a problem for both the researcher and the greener. Someone can show you how to dig and close a hole and how to hold a tree, as Eric did for Annabel. The inexperienced planter can also watch other planters and imitate their tempo and planting style. One cannot, however, be shown how to think, orient oneself to time, work through pain or overcome disappointment, loneliness and fear which are all aspects (to varying degrees) of a treeplanter's summer. Since the mental game cannot be demonstrated, it is narrated; that is, its features, characteristics, uses and functions are described or demonstrated through various types of narratives. These narratives are often what Archie Green has called "scant packages," apparently contextless, short comments and aphorisms which are often impermeable to those outside the occupation and therefore rarely get noticed by researchers (*Calf's* 11). In the case of Melissa, Mark's off-hand comment on her orientation presented her with the realization that she was missing an

important aspect of the treeplanting technique: the proper orientation of the planter to time under a piecework system. Melissa's realization that she was not looking at her time on the block properly may have taken an afternoon; however, finding one's own strategies and tactics for the "mental game" can take much longer. Generally, like Melissa, a planter does not feel competent in their abilities the first season.

Narrative Contexts and Narrative Content

Melissa's story was collected as part of a formal interview. At the end of a long day both of us sat in her room in an Atco trailer, smoking and drinking beer. She was patient with my questions and expansive in her answers, often illuminating her points with stories and anecdotes. I am concerned with separating the place in which tales of work take place from the context because the former denotes a relationship between time and space, whereas the latter attempts to understand activities from a social perspective. As such it is important to realize that the material collected from formal interviews, while valuable and fairly representative must be considered according to its context. My role as a participant observer meant that I was considered a planter first and a researcher second. The result was that interviews often had the character of swapping tales. Conversation at treeplanting camp is a form of entertainment, a kind of play. Understanding narrative contexts can highlight the relationship between personal priorities, narratives about work and their function in treeplanting camp.

I collected many tales from a group of people who swapped stories about their day while sharing a cigarette before dinner. In contrast to the interview, in which informants are responding to questions or prompted by a researcher's comments, personal experience narratives (PEN) exist as a conversational genre. They are embedded in the flow of speech and often follow each other as "second stories" (Allen, *Personal* 237). All of the participants in the session which follows were experienced planters. Except for Jon Budgell (JB) and me the others are planters who were hired from different companies to finish up the contract (Cliff = C; Unknown Male = U).

> JB: I had the worst piece of land this side of the contract.
> C: Is there an echo around here or something like that I keep hearing that.
> U: I'm glad its not just us. I was right next to you [talking to John Budgell]
> JB: Were you next to me? At the end there?
> J: Was this like a baptism by fire for you guys or what?
> C: No. I mean we had tough land but today was just a bad day.
> JB: How did you find it up there [to unknown male]? See if you're right beside me there. It's weird. Its up high but there's a swamp up there. Like there is a swamp up on the hill. Figure that one out.
> C: That is pretty weird. Were you on the side of a hill. Was it, like terraced?
> U: I like the swamp on top of a rock where there's a depression and the waters in there.
> J: Like the hanging gardens of Babylon.
> U: Exactly. Just there to kill your shoulder when you're sphagnum planting. One inch of sphagnum and [onomatopoeia]: hmppppp.
> C: Yeah, no winning today.
> JB: Yeah quite interesting: swamp on the top, swamp at the bottom. The middle was nice though. Grass about this tall from the ground. Grass and bushes and shit.

C: I did too. I had alder like you wouldn't believe, pressed right into the
bräcke, every bräcke. The holes are good, the bräcke was fine. It was
just getting from one to the other. It was like yeeaaaaaaa!
JB: I was just upset because it wasn't supposed to be my land.
Somebody did the flagging in, flagging in ninety degree turn thing. I
flagged back and all of a sudden I had this huge back area of crap,
"what happened?" I couldn't even find her flag line. [inaudible side
conversation] Yeah, and these were yellow flags. There'd be this huge
tree up here and they'd flag it on the ground, down there.
C: Why don't you [referring to the subject of the conversation] put it up
where we can see it.
U: That sounds like my flagging style. Just drop them. (June 23)

Like Melissa's tales, this conversation is peppered with references to proper work

techniques and critiques of improper practices. These quick references to aspects of

the job suggest a broader work technique(s). Rocks under spagnum, crashing through

underbrush, understanding difficult terrain, each reference is an *oevre* into an

accompanying set of skills. What is not included in this quote is that once Jon

Budgell's comment about flagging tape was "taken-up" by the Unknown Male the

people engaged in the session explored this theme in more depth.

The quick references to aspects of the work with which the audience is familiar

and the truncated linear narrative flow are a common trait in this more natural work

narrative. As I have pointed out the tales contained here reflect the middle point on

McCarl's scale since the planters talk about the unique nature of their own particular

piece of land. The "second story" quality of PEN's as well as the shared experience of

a bad day leads to a tale telling session in which the negative and strange aspects of

land are highlighted. These tales continue to be part of the middle point of narrative

since they are not mundane events; and are events with which a majority of planters would have some experience. The swamp on the top of a hill, jumping around alders and, interestingly, the Unknown male who, not having a story for this day chooses a prior experience which fits the mood and tone of the storytelling context of "shitty" experiences, what Robert A. Georges has called the "cultural rules" of timeliness and appropriateness in story telling (120).

Exceptions to Every Rule: *Verboten* Technique(s)

In the above story, John is upset about the flagging of the person working beside him. I have argued that the particular configuration of the canon of work technique(s) is extremely flexible in treeplanting since a worker's activities rarely impact on his/her fellow workers. In the story above we see an example where this is not the case. "Flagging" is the use of flagging tape to mark off your work area. Usually the planter finds him/herself on the road with the crew boss. Following the instruction of the crew boss to cut a large or small piece the planter sights a spot at the back of the land (the back being natural forest or another logging road and the spot being a distinctive tree or rock). The individual then works planting trees and placing pieces of flagging tape until s/he gets to the back. The area between their colour tape and the person beside them is their piece. It is tempting, while cutting your piece to expand the size of your land in areas of good ground (sand or accessible mineral soil) and contract in the areas that are poor (rock or swamp). What happened to John is

that the person working beside him readjusted their boundaries by not cutting straight back, thus leaving John with a large section of swamp. Continued activity of this kind will get a planter a bad reputation in the camp since they are essentially "stealing" good land.

The example above is an example of a small category of *verboten* practices which has as its organizing principle activities which adversely affect other planters. Along with improper cutting-in there is "creaming out." "Cream" is jargon for good land; to cream someone out is to go onto their land and plant an area of good ground. This activity is usually done by mistake because flagging tape is hard to see or the planter, working with her/his head down, is excited by good land and does not notice that they have crossed over into another person's land. If this activity is done on purpose or if a pattern of "accidents" suggests that a planter is in the habit of creaming out his or her fellow planters, then it is not uncommon that they will be isolated from the group in the camp or in extreme cases be subject to verbal and physical abuse. The final and less serious transgression of the canon of work technique(s) is to work late on your piece. A crew travels to and from the block together and if you work late you force your fellow workers to wait while you continue to make money — or more seriously you force them to stand around in a snow, rain, or bug storm for no good reason.

In the above three examples a serious breakdown in planters either participating in these behaviours or not following proper work technique(s) in the case of flagging,

threatens the piecework structure and by extension the underlying structure of the occupation. Crew bosses often comment that good land is a question of luck. A planter who finishes their piece and is sent to a new section takes a piece of land next to the last person. The land that this planter is walking into, although only two hundred meters from their previous piece, may not share any of its characteristics. Luck, in this case, functions as a form of group control, it suggests a lack of hierarchy, control or favouritism. Without this aspect of land selection the piecework system is highly exploitive. Outland, a large reforestation company, assigns pieces based on a workers' past performance. Highballers are given the best land because they will make the company more money. Greeners and less talented planters are given poorer quality ground. By extension, the work culture at Outland is highly competitive and aggressive. It must be understood that there is a long standing rivalry between Brinkman and Outland. But there is no denying that despite the exaggerations and oppositional identity structures (Lloyd and Mullen 125), which employees of each company employ against the other, there is a fundamental difference in the work cultures. Outland encourages competition among its employees over how many trees they plant or how much money they make, while Brinkman actively discourages such behaviour. As Johnny G, one of the crew bosses, commented: "If there's anything I can do to discourage macho treeplanting, I will."

Work Narrative/Play Narratives

Two things are created in any storytelling session, the story and the occasion of its telling. Gillian Bennett has pointed out in *Playful Chaos: Anatomy of a Storytelling Session* that often the event is more important then the content of a tale. It is the creative activity of a group telling that is sought by the participants (209-11); to a certain extent this is what is happening in the above tale. After the above debriefing of their day the complaints about flagging styles evolved into four people designing a fantastic device for "spray on flagging tape," with each narrator adding to the idea of the previous performer in a classic tall tale session of one-up-manship.

Since these are occupational narratives, aspects of play are interwoven with practical concerns. Roger D. Abrahams has pointed out that early folklore studies of occupational groups were only interested in aspects of play (songs and stories) (20). As in the above examples, researchers often find that labourers intermix play and work in their narratives.[41] The event itself often may be fun while the content of the tale may be a careful exploration of one's work day, as in the case above. McCarl has suggested that "the best narrator is one who can strike a balance between the objective (reportorial) and the subjective (totally personal) points of view to relate a personal experience in a manner that conforms to the expectations of the group" (*Occupational* 8). In his study of smoke jumpers his choice of well rehearsed, dramatic tales for the

---

[41]See: Philip Nusbaum, "A Conversational Approach to Occupational Folklore: Conversation, Work, Play, and the Workplace," *Folklore Forum* 11.1 (1978): 18-28.

article may obscure the more common storytelling mode which is a collective activity with stories being built onto stories in the chaotic fashion pointed out by Bennett. Although McCarl's analysis of narrative performance is limited to the more traditional structure of audience and performer,[42] he does point out that the work narrative must fulfil both a personal and group function.

The interrelation between personal priorities and narrative context deserves a paper in itself. I would, however, like to point out where questions of technique(s) overlap in this area. In the above narrative, the overall group and narrative concern is to display, through narrative, the shared opinion that today was "shitty." To this end each planter shares an aspect of their day (or a past experience) in which the land was such that no technique(s) could conquer it. In order to make it clear to the audience that this is, in fact, the case, Jon Budgell adds that his land was poor through no fault of his own. If there is any fault (on a bad day) it lies with the person who did not flag their piece properly. As has been noted flagging is an activity in which it is necessary to have a strong degree of predictability associated with it since it affects other planters. To do a poor job flagging is to make the person's job beside you more difficult. Here a specific aspect of technique is commented on in some detail. The participants in this tale telling session are also reinforcing John Budgell's initial pronouncement that today was a bad day, thereby creating a group consensus. In

---

[42]In *District of Columbia Firefighter Project*, McCarl uses more conversational (PEN) narratives while retaining the same rubric.

doing so they are actively limiting the ability to have their performance judged

personally. Essentially the challenges of the day were greater than the planter's

abilities and their utilization of proper work technique(s).

Just as there is a large variety in land there is a large variety in planting days

and the narratives that go along with them. On any standard day, some planters do

well and others do not. On normal days narratives are more varied with discussions

about particular problems that were faced and the techniques that one applied to

conquer them. Bicycle-Helmet Andrew's comments are a case in point:

> In Kak I get discouraged and it sort of slips and my bräcke to bräcke
> speed is what dies first. I'll walk slow to the next one, the trees go in
> pretty quick, but the in between speed is very slow. If I hit a row with a
> few nice ones [bräckes] I just poke through the good ground and then I
> notice its good and I'm like fuck! Go! Go! Go! (June 19)

Here it is the failure of the planter to quickly adjust to changing land types—one of the

main macro-level techniques of planting. Andrew is quite creative in his analysis of

work technique(s), going so far as to assign the above problem the name, "Kaky

Bräcke Syndrome." The contrast between the two narratives displays that aspects of

technique(s) are subject to considerations of performance and the context of the day.

The ability of other planters to judge their fellow workers based on someone's

performance on the block is limited by Brinkman's policy to make all planting

numbers confidential and discussions about a planter's success or failure is carried out

on the block. This means that a planter's display of work technique(s) is generally

confined to narrative, thus making an understanding of narrative vital to appreciating

the way that technique(s) is both a body of knowledge to used and understood and a

rhetorical device used to create a simulacrum of the work day for heuristic, relaxation

or identity construction purposes. Chapter Six will further explore the manner in

which work and work narratives are used in identity construction, while here I have

outlined the manner by which narrative and technique(s) are used in the two former

cases.

The true tyranny of work[43] is not that it is there each morning when you wake

up. The tyranny is that it is there as you dream and as you eat. In some occupations

the workers actually eat the dust from the mine or the construction site. In England,

the foreman traditionally provided painters with a quart of milk in the hope that it

would flush out the toxic fumes that they were exposed to all day long. Treeplanters,

early in the season, often come to breakfast complaining that they did not get any

sleep because they were planting trees in their dreams. Planters are also warned not to

touch their food when they eat on the block because the trees and ground that they

handle are contaminated with herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers. The mediating

factor in the tyranny of work is that, although it is always with us, it is tempered and

interwoven with play. Through hard work and practice, a planter gains a set of

techniques which forms the basis of their connection with other planters. Since these

workers labour together in an enclavic setting, their work is the central shaping

---

[43]I have borrowed the phrase "tyranny of work" from James W. Rinehart's major work, *The Tyranny of work: Alienation and the Labour Practice.* I have chosen a more metaphoric application of the title then his own rather narrow study.

principle for all other activities. The stories that planters tell about their day is the story of work within a context of relaxing and having fun. That this fun is sometimes serious business cannot be denied but it is a form of fun nonetheless.

The central goal of a treeplanter is to make money. However, almost all planters agree that this work is unique in that it is a community of people who live, work and play together. Their non-work activities assist in integrating their total environment to create a unified group.

Planters and Technique(s): Conclusion

It is the advantage of a study of technique(s) that it represents a "background against which specific work cultures can be investigated" (McCarl, *Occupational* 17). What we find with treeplanters is that the piecework system and individual work areas create an isolated and individualistic group of highly motivated workers. The isolation is countered by the use of narrative in group settings to create a simulacrum of the unique challenges of the day so that other planters can participate and comment on each others' activities. This function of narrative helps to foster group integration and forms a specific work culture. When a planter steps up to the dinner table and over an empty platter cries, "you creamed me out," we can see how a specific technique becomes part of a broader cultural narrative. It is more difficult to observe the way that the general canon of work technique(s) affects the entire culture of treeplanting. Clearly the narratives of Melissa and John Budgell link the mastery of technique(s)

with emotional and personal priorities. It is on this level that technique(s) underpins the other structures of planting. The technique(s) and culture that we have been addressing is that of the planters and, by the sheer number of planters in a camp, it is the main culture of treeplanting. Chapter Three will analyse the technique(s) of a group that planters work alongside—the staff.

Chapter 3

Staff's Work Narratives: The Role of Technique(s)

This chapter is a continuation of Chapter Two. Here I will look at the various staff positions and the technique(s) unique to the job. Special attention will be paid to the relationship between staff and planters and the unique aspects of the staff's jobs that set them apart from the planters. Simplistically one could argue that all managers, by virtue of their position and power, are separated from labourers. This argument obscures the role of the staff as a bridge between planters, Brinkman and Associates and Abitibi Consolidated. Coupled with their role as representatives of several competing interests is the anti-hierarchy and anti-authoritarian tradition of treeplanting (see Chapters One and Five). The successful negotiation of their multiple positions and their culturally specific use of authority is key to understanding how staff are considered treeplanters although they rarely put a tree in the ground.

Staff: Their Position in Camp

It is important to recognize that the staff, although participating in all aspects of treeplanting constitute a separate group. Although each job requires different skills and demands different time and spatial organization there are several common attributes that all staff share: separation from the larger group, constancy of work and being bearers of tradition. This introduction to the staff will outline the commonalities

of the group, while the individual sections will concentrate on technique(s) and activities that are unique to it.

During the 1997 planting season the staff was made up of one tree-runner, five crew bosses (one bringing himself and a crew of six planters with him three weeks into the contract), two cooks, one camp joe and the supervisor. The gulf which exists in the urban work site between management and labourer is not necessarily reflected in treeplanting. This is partially due to Brinkman's policy that all staff members from the tree-runner to the secretary in the head office must have first been a treeplanter. As the company continues to integrate itself into more traditional management practices and the silviculture industry there are signs that this policy is changing. The hiring of professional accountants and advisors from outside this system is one such indicator; however, at the time of this writing it had not yet affected treeplanting culture at the camp level (Company Information Sheet, 1997).

McCarl has noted that increased rank is not the "leaving of one level of technique to pass onto another . . . an officer . . . accumulates a constellation of physical, social and intellectual techniques that must be maintained as an ever-expanding background from which specific techniques are drawn" (*District* 162). Staff members were once treeplanters and part of the technique(s) that each of them shares is the need to integrate their particular activities with what they know from their own experiences of planting. A common critique of a crew boss who no longer approximates this kind of manager is expressed by AC, herself a crew boss: "I'm sorry,

I think some people have forgotten about planting: certain crew bosses" (June 28). To

forget about one part of the constellation of technique(s) is to be a less effective crew

boss. It is the display of treeplanting skills along with the communal living situation,

that helps to limit the gap between the two groups.

A gap does exist, however. Almost all aspects of a staff member's day is

different from planters. The primary role which all staff share is that of "support

people." Johnny G. describes this role:

> We are support staff for these people and the entire idea of all of us
> being there is for us to make it as easy as profitable and as enjoyable
> for these people to do their jobs as they can. Because if they're happy
> they're making money. And if they're making money obviously then so
> are we. (June 10)

The Head Cook, Michelle succinctly points out the consequences of this kind of role:

> People are really needy and demanding; they are also appreciative. This
> crew especially are really appreciative. But planting is a really hard job.
> It makes people really self absorbed because it's intense and really
> shitty. You're working really hard, all day long and so it's hard to keep
> in mind that every body else is working really hard too. So people— I'm
> sure the crew bosses say the same thing and the tree-runners and
> everyone but it's weird being on the support staff end of things.
> Because that's exactly what it is, its support. You're background. My
> role, my job is to enable people to do their jobs. (June 15)

Unlike the constant hum of narratives about planting and the constant expression of

planter's priorities, the staff is pushed into the "background." This ignorance about the

role of the staff, or the logistics of running a large camp, has one of its most glaring

expressions in the belief that the cooks had the day off after breakfast was served and

did not start working again until four or five o'clock. After we examine the job of the

cook the reader will appreciate how unrealistic this statement was.

Staff do not share the planter's spatial division of the environment between block/work and camp/nonwork. It is expected that problems or issues within the camp will be addressed by a staff person. These problems are often technical, a lack of hot water or a malfunctioning generator being two examples, but sometimes the issues are laughingly minor, a clogged drainage pipe is one problem that staff are often asked to fix. Michelle (M) also has a comment on this point:

> J: So you get tons of questions?
> M: Tons and tons and tons.
> J: I heard somebody ask you if you could fix the showers the other day.
> M: All the time, all the time. Usually they ask while we're serving dinner. And on the days off they often have a lot of questions and I usually just say: "I don't care. It's my day off too." (June 15)

It is understandable that a greener will not know how or what to fix and it is expected that they will seek help. From the perspective of staff it is the exhaustion of being available to any question on a constant basis which eventually causes some irritation.

One of the many paradoxes of treeplanting is that, while the work that they do may not be appreciated by planters the experience and knowledge of the staff puts them in a leadership role in the treeplanting community. This leadership role often translates into the role of what Von Sydow has identified as "tradition bearers" (1948). By being the main people who orient planters to the camp, staff inevitably recreates aspects of previous years that they appreciated. They are often the ones who motivate planters to participate in the night-off parties, to dance, to work on costumes and to

help decorate the dining-tent—all aspects of this camp's traditional night off.

Generally, however, JL's policy that his camp be a community of equals has been successful. The occupational divisions I have outlined above usually do not affect personal relations there. This egalitarian atmosphere may be observed in the rapport and easy interaction between all members of the camp. Once the work day is over it is the individual, rather than his/her official status, who determines the flow of social relations. As a variegated group of tradition bearers within that sphere, however, staff members exhibit specific concerns and techniques.

Camp Joe

Unlike other staff positions which are stable from year to year camp joe is a fluid position and a camp may or may not have one. Sometimes a valued planter is injured and this position is created for them as an act of reciprocity by JL. At other times the position is created ahead of time because the camp will be large. The camp joe can expect to do a variety of jobs: wash the morning dishes; clean up around camp; maintain the shitters; take care of the garbage; maintain the generators and water pumps; run equipment to and from the block and go to town for food, mail, alcohol, equipment, spare parts, etc. In 1997 the camp joe was also the first aid person. The tasks that accompany the position involve safety inspections and helping employees with workers compensation problems. Along with these duties, the camp joe in 1997 was also a child care worker for the head cook's seven month old child.

Like all staff positions, the hours are long and the pay is salaried at 100 dollars per day. During follow-up research in 1998, there was still a child care worker who now looked after two children but no longer performed (understandably) the full range of camp joe activities.

In years or camps where a camp joe does not exist there is often a person who could be etically described as the "dog's body." This is usually a planter who is being groomed by the supervisor of the camp for a staff position. They are given many of the more complex jobs of a camp joe and are paid a similar wage as him or her when they are taken off the block to perform these functions. Unlike the greener there are initiation rituals which accompany this position. The dog's body, therefore, is often teased by their friends and open to good natured attacks because of their obvious elevation of status.[44] Both the dog's body and the camp joe are being evaluated on their ability to solve basic problems and to acquire an understanding of the wider issues involved in treeplanting. It is through the acquisition of basic skills and success at these tasks that a camp joe can expect to be promoted once a position opens up.

Tree-Runner

The tree-runner's job is generally recognized as the hardest one in camp. The pay is 150 to 200 dollars per day and fifty dollars on the half day that you work

---

[44]See: Jack Santino, "Characteristics of Occupational Narrative," *Working Americans: Contemporary Approaches to Occupational Folklife*, Ed. Robert H. Byington (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Publication, 1978) 57-70.

setting up the block while everyone else enjoys the day off. The hours are consistently longer then many other members of the camp and the responsibility to the smooth operation of the entire day is huge.[45] Although laden with responsibility, the Tree-running job is quite simple. Runners are responsible for: helping organize where caches will be located; determining where these caches will be moved to once an area is done; and moving trees from the refrigerated storage trailer ("reefer") to the caches. 1997 was Rob James' first year as a tree-runner and I interviewed him as we were both heading to town. It was only two shifts into the contract and he was already feeling tired. "I get up in the morning tired and I have a bunch of things to do to get done and get out of there: gas; chainsaw; making sure I have enough oil for the machine down the line. If I get to the back [of the block] and forget to have oil with me... I'll need assistance" (May 19). Rob told me that the job itself is not difficult but it requires a great deal of hard work since each box of trees can weigh between forty-five to sixty-five pounds depending on the water content in the tree plug and he will lift hundreds of these a day. The job also requires organizational skills. Rob explains:

> If I really hustle, really chucking trees into the back of the truck, it
> takes forty-five minutes. And then with those roads it takes a half an
> hour to get to the back of the block; it's a two hour deal. That's a
> significant chunk of the day to get trees to just one crew. . . . It's just
> like manual labour. It's just like grunt work, just moving boxes.

---

[45]The hours required for each staff position is dependent on the contract. In complex areas like Hornepayne crew bosses work long days because they have to survey the block at the end of each shift. The camp's distance from an urban center will affect the number of hours that they spend getting supplies into town.

Planting is totally physically demanding, similar in that work aspect of it, but the art of getting fast and getting good and moving efficiently and that; there is no art to doing tree-running. You just have to know when to do your grunt work so that you aren't wasting time. I mean, lifting a box is lifting a box; it's just the same. (May 19)

Rob went on to explain that there is some satisfaction in the "flow" of a day when you are prepared and everything is going well. As he points out, however, this feeling is not equal to the "art" of treeplanting. The idea of "art" and "flow" are not normally words that are used in conjunction with manual labour.[46] The experience of flow was developed into a general sociological principle by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi as an holistic experience where one is completely absorbed in actions without the need for conscious thought. The creation of flow is often the result of narrowing one's focus to a small set of actions or goals; within this sphere there is a dissolution of self and action (Csikszentmihalyi 11-38). Planters will often talk about the rhythm of planting, "zoning out," "being in the groove," "hitting their stride." Planters also talk about moving effortlessly through their land, a lack of resistance, and a zen-like state. All of these experiences cause a high that carries them through the day. It is a high that many of them seek and only rarely find. Csikszentmihalyi has noted that some people will leave comfortable lives in a quest for the experience of flow. Planters often struggle with answering the question of why they return year after year. One of the reasons for returning is the experience of flow. When the planter experiences flow

---

[46]For a study of the art of work in a skilled profession see: Robert McCarl, "The Production Welder: Product, Process and the Industrial Craftsman," *New York Folklore Quarterly* 30 (1974): 243-253.

they have raised manual labour to an art and in return they are rewarded with the kind

of communion that few people get a chance to experience.

Besides being separated from the art of planting another factor that is difficult

for the tree-runner is the isolation—long hours of work and very little communication

with people on the block.

> J: You said yesterday that it's like you're not at treeplanting camp.
> R: Yeah, it feels different. Because I'm by myself most of the time.
> Most of the time I'm driving around to get somewhere. The actual
> loading the caches is just minutes at the end of a long drive; that's the
> time that I would see someone. . . . Usually I don't see anyone. . . . It
> could get [lonely]. That's what Malcolm said. That's why Malcolm
> wanted to be a crew boss . . . he just wanted to talk to people. . . .
> Like the funny things that happen, like something happened to this
> person today, the stories that are generated. At dinner people talk about
> it; its funny. None of that applies. . . . (May 19)

The long hours of isolation on the job also isolates the tree-runner from the broader

camp community. Because their work is solitary and rarely impacts on others, they

are not included in the narrative flow which surrounds treeplanting. I have earlier

argued this narrative world is necessary for both the work and social success of

individual planters and the separation from this environment is difficult on tree-

runners.[47] As if to counter this narrative isolation and the generally gloomy picture of

his days, Rob told me this story:

> R: I ran over the door. [J: what door?] The door of the machine; it fell
> off when I was driving. It just tipped forward off the hinge. I was
> trying to grab it and I was holding onto it while I was driving but I
> didn't have a good hold on it—just with my finger tips. So if I didn't

---

[47]During follow-up research in 1998 the tree-runner expressed the same feeling of isolation.

move with it it would slip out. So I was trying to go with it so I could
get a better grab but I never did. It fell in front of the machine and I
ran over it. [I] stopped on it actually. I tried to pull it out and I
couldn't get it out so I had to keep going.
J: What kind of condition is it in now?
R: Actually its not bad the earth was really soft, just covered in a bunch
of mud. [5 sec. Pause] I had to tell JL. I was laughing my head off but
I shouldn't have been. I was by myself. It was last thing; I was
heading out, feeling pretty good. It was the last thing. All I had to do
was get across the creek and the door fell off. I just laughed my head
off. I just laughed and laughed and when I told JL: I just couldn't stop
laughing. JL was just looking at me, stunned, big eyes. And then it
made me laugh harder. I thought I was gonna throw up. (May 19)

The tale aims at and succeeds in conveying the idea that Rob's days are not

completely boring, the excitement of both destroying a door and then the challenges of

telling your boss creates a multilayered tale that combines the visual tapestry of the

environmental context and a running critique of technique(s) that I have come to

expect in the longer tales that planters tell each other. This tale is slightly different

than some that we have looked at in that it has the characteristics of being a

cautionary tale (Santino, *Characteristics* 60). After the lines: "I was heading out,

feeling pretty good. It was the last thing, all I had to do was get across the creek" the

listener knows that the lesson here is not to let your concentration relax until you have

totally finished the work.

With the rather unflattering portrait of tree-running the question must be asked,

why would someone want to do it? Rob said that he was bored of planting and

wanted something different. Tree-running is also a kind of entry level position for

those planters who the supervisor and the director of Ontario operations (in this case

both positions are filled by JL) feel should be promoted to staff positions. In 1998 Rob James was no longer a tree-runner but a crew boss. Some tree-runners have gone on to similar positions while others have either liked tree-running and stayed or not been promoted past this position. It should be noted that this position is the only one at Brinkman that is sexually segregated. There are no women tree-runners. Whether true or not it is assumed by both planters and staff that the physical demands of the job would exclude women who generally have less upper body strength then men.

Unlike the crew boss, tree-runners have little interaction with planters. If they are doing their job properly, most planters, as Rob pointed out, will not even notice them. The responsibility of the job lies not in the skill involved in the work but rather in the consequences of failure. The piecework system, as we have seen in Chapter One, has part of its internal structure based on the illusion that the worker is autonomous and solely responsible for production. Clearly this is false. It appears, however, to be a necessary lie since eight percent of the camp is made up of people who assist in creating the illusion of the autonomous planter. It would appear that exposing the fragile balance that separates wage satisfaction from exploitation is not in anyone's best interest. The exposure of the planter to the exploitive nature of piecework becomes especially apparent when a tree-runner fails, for whatever reason, to get trees to a planter's cache. Johnny 5 worked for another planting company and his comments expose the different work culture that can result from a small difference like tree-running:

> It was interesting because the camp that I came from thrived on a whole different energy. Like, at Brinkman everything is set up for you. You have the cache in front of your chunk. If you don't have a cache in front of your chunk then the foreman and the tree-runners are really quick to jump on it. I guess the best way to put it. The camp that I worked for, I did a spring contract and like I planted August last summer and then spring this year. [The camp] really thrives on bitching and whining. And it's all a yelling thing: like, everyone was always cussing; everyone was always yelling; everyone was always whining. That's what binds everyone together is their hatred of this and that . . . . It's always fun to yell. It's one thing that I kind of feel uncomfortable with at Brinkman: everything runs so smoothly for the planter so there isn't anything that you can bitch about except for your own personal accomplishments. (June 20)

In other narratives he told me about having to walk a mile to get more trees, and waiting for help from crew bosses. At Johnny 5's camp the poor logistical organization of the camp led to dissatisfaction among the workforce—planters were paying the price of the company's poor organization. For planters to not be exploited under a piecework system their labour output must reflect their efforts rather than structural inefficiencies within the work process. If a planter cannot put a tree in the ground because they do not have trees than the company is effectively stealing their wages.

In 1997 there were only two instances where I could not work because of a lack of trees.[48] In both cases this situation lasted only about a half-an-hour. For an experienced planter Brinkman's efficient tree-running allows the planter to see tree delivery, not as a constant aggravation, but as a challenge. AC considers waiting for

---

[48]During follow-up research in 1998 there was only one instance of waiting for trees.

trees as "guilt free down-time" (June 20). As a planter, Rob used to make beating the tree deliverer a contest "beat the tree-runner and your reward is a break" (May 19). Although it is not acknowledged, the goal of the tree-runner is the maintenance of the piecework system. His effectiveness at this job is one of the factors that makes the difference between a profitable, friendly, non-aggressive workforce or one that more closely resembles Johnny 5's company. Paradoxically, the consequence for a good tree-runner is invisibility and loneliness.

Head Cook and Cook's Assistant

If one were to pick up almost any book on lumbering there is always a specific mention of the cook and their special status in the camp. Like the historical lumber camp, the treeplanting cook is a unique individual, made more unique by the product that s/he produces. Food is the single most important item at treeplanting camp. This is not only because the work demands a large caloric intake, three thousand calories per day, but also because of the very nature of food. "Eating affects us biologically and physiologically as well as socially and ideologically. Consequently, we are likely to bring a great fund of emotion to the behaviour of eating" (Oring 34). It is the fund of emotion that makes the cook's position in the camp different than other staff. In Chapters Four and Five I will address some of the overlapping ideologies that are expressed in spatial relations as a way of understanding the "fund of emotions" that position the cook as cook/mother. Here I will concentrate on the work which makes

the cooks' position unique from the staff position in general. Three aspects of the cook's job set him/her apart from the other staff: the different technique(s) associated with the job; the job being radically different from all other work performed at treeplanting camp; and the final dinner as a performance of skill.

Let me return briefly to the role of food in camp. Meg Luxton, in her study of women in Flin Flon, noted that working-class families have always known the importance of food as vital to the reproduction of the worker:

> In one single wage household the husband was on bonus, which meant his pay depended on how hard he worked. . . his wife commented: If he doesn't eat good, then he can't work hard and if he doesn't work hard, his pay is dropped. . . . (144)

Similarly, food is incredibly important for the productivity of the treeplanter. In their orientation, greeners are instructed to pack a big lunch, "more than you think you'll need" (May 13). Treeplanters also share the opinion of another of Luxton's informants: "When we don't eat so good everyone get's bitchy. I think my cooking keeps this family together" (144). This sentiment was echoed by JL during a difficult shift when he told the head cook to "make up some special stuff to keep the planters happy" (Journal, June 9).[49]

I have been arguing that emically there appears to be a large range of options open to the planter, however, compared to other occupations the range of skills is rather limited. In the case of the cook the range of skills necessary to be effective at

---

[49]Information was received second hand.

her job are extensive. Michelle is responsible for budgeting, shopping, cooking, coordinating and training her assistant, and the maintenance of all aspects related to the kitchen. Her activities affect the entire camp. For this work Michelle is paid two hundred dollars a day; the cook's assistant makes 150 dollars per day. The cook or her assistant is also paid fifty dollars for shopping on the day off. Figure 19 shows Cynthia, the assistant cook, at work in the cook bus. Michelle (M) touches on some of her duties in her description of her day:

> **M**: I get up a four-fifteen, come down and start the generator and start the coffee maker so that it has time to perk. Then Cynthia [assistant cook] comes in at five and starts making up the lunch table and the breakfast table and helps me with whatever I haven't got done by then.
> **J**:And what are you trying to get done by then?
> **M**: The baking or frying things. And we make up lunch table things the day before. So then we serve breakfast and wait for you guys to leave, which is usually ten-to-seven and then we clean up breakfast, often times we will have a nap, or we'll just keep going. We come back, start making dinner, prepping for the next day and do it all over again.
> **J**: When do you get out of here?
> **M**: We've been getting out of here around eight o'clock. . . . I used to do the shops on the day off. But in Thunder Bay it's pretty bad because there is so much to do and so many shops. So last year I was getting up at eight in the morning, driving to town and literally shopping all day and driving back again and prepping for three hours. . . .
> **J**: Why did you switch from planting to cooking?
> **M**: Planting sucks [laughter]. . . . Cooking has a bit more variety to it and I can make more money. (June 15)

Many studies have documented the use of food preparation as a display of skill, creativity and a communicative device (Theopheno; Visser; Brown and Mussell). Many of these have focussed on the home but a sizable number have studied the use

Figure 19. Cynthia preparing dinner.

of food as a commodity in the restaurant business and the culture of the mainly female work force (Ann Lewis Johnson; Reiter). In the kitchen of a treeplanting operation the preparation of food is also subject to McCarl's idea of technique(s). The job of the cook deserves a study in itself, however, it is enough here to demonstrate that food preparation at Brinkman is dependent on the goals and expectations of both the cook and the planters. Returning again to McCarl's distinction between technique(s) being a standard rather than a law, the preparation of food is subject to the standards of the treeplanting kitchen itself, rather than the law of a cook book. Items like soups and breads are made quickly and without the separation of ingredients and the linear step-by-step processes that are the standard rule of cooking in the home. The goal is to produce good food within the time available, food which meets the expectations of both planters and the cooks themselves. This orientation to food would appear to limit the amount of creativity associated with cooking. While many planters do not realize that all aspects of the meals are prepared from "scratch"—without the use of prepared foods—and do not appreciate the time and effort involved, others often thank the cooks at the end of the meal or when a dish has especially impressed them.

What they are thanking the cooks for is a surprising variety of food that is prepared in a retrofitted bus under difficult conditions that include, electrical failure and fuel shortages. Regardless of the challenges, meals and the routines that surround them are vital to the camp. When a planter enters the dining tent in the morning there is a table on the right covered with three categories of food from which they can

construct a lunch. The first category is items for sandwiches. This includes a wide range of breads, spreads, meat, cheese and vegetables. The second category are simple dishes like glass noodles in Tai peanut sauce; this category often includes left-overs from the previous night's dinner. The final category is "treats"; these often take the form of a bar. In 1998 names for desserts included: smack, chocolate turtle bars, chocolate tiger balls. The emphasis is on high sugar to help a weary planter (or supervisor) over the exhaustion that even coffee cannot overcome. Supplementing these categories are a selection of fruit, vegetables and the famous outdoors compilation GORP. The history of GORP is unclear but its acronym is generally agreed to stand for: Good Old Peanuts and Raisins. GORP at planting camp is a much more elaborate snack, involving a mixture of sweet and savory products chosen (almost at random) from the bulk bins of a Thunder Bay supermarket.

Planters prepare their lunched before eating breakfast because one quickly develops favourite lunch items and the supply of singular items are limited. Breakfast is composed of hot and cold cereal, eggs, a warm cake or loaf, potatoes, bacon, fruit and warm beverages (coffee, various teas, hot chocolate). The major variation at breakfast involves eggs and the cake or loaf; on rare occasions the cooks will experiment with the corpus of breakfast foods. For example, in 1998 a giant platter of grilled cheese sandwiches dominated the breakfast table.

Dinner is a combination of the functional and elaborate. When planters arrive from the block there is always a pot of soup and crackers on the table. When the

weather turns warmer chilled soups like gazpacho and iced coffee will be substituted for the hearty lentil or potato variety that were popular earlier in the season. When the meal is ready and all the planters have returned to camp planters are called to dinner by sounding a car horn. The meal is composed of a main course, two side dishes, salad and dessert. Meals that are constructed around a single main course, like pizza or pasta, will usually have four or five varieties of the dish. What is difficult to appreciate is the complexity of spicing and the high quality of the food that planters are served. For example, a vegetable side dish is not an overcooked pile of soggy cauliflower, it is spiced with lemon and coriander seeds. Vegetarian burgers and the buns that they sit on are made from "scratch" and chicken (and tofu for the vegetarians) would be sauteed in "jerk" sauce (a Jamaican melange of several spices producing a hot, smoky flavour). Since a large number of vegetarians plant for Brinkman (generally half the camp) the cooks prepare meat and vegetarian versions of all entrees. When "vegans" (vegetarians who do not consume animal byproducts) are in camp the cooks prepare a third menu item to satisfy their dietary needs. The quality and variety of the food is even more amazing considering the quantity that is needed. For example lasagna dinner is composed of eight lasagna, five gallon pot of vegetables, fifteen loves of bread and eight pies.

The final meal of the camp is the occasion when the group norms of food preparation are discarded. Although there is an expectation by the planters that this meal will be special it is actually the cooks themselves, who choose to discard the

standard expectations of food preparation. Using Ann Oakley's distinction between

food preparation in the home as "work" versus the media marketing of cooking as

"creative" we can understand the final meal as a reevaluation of the cooking process

where the creative is foregrounded (58). In order to draw attention to the creative

aspect of the meal, the food is placed within a performative context. Diners are seated

and are served (see Figure 20), the food is presented with garnish and arranged on the

dishes with an eye for symmetry and colour combinations. In 1997 the food was

especially impressive as the cooks and two volunteers stayed up for twenty-six hours

in order to hand roll sushi and veggie-rolls and prepare the rest of the meal (see Figure

21). The improbability of a meal so delicate and colourful being presented in the

middle of a clear cut added to the audience appreciation of the cooking skill that was

on display. The effect of the final meal is that in foregrounding the creativity of food

the cooks themselves emerge from the "background" as support staff to receive the

appreciation they deserve. The event carries a similar cadence as a circus

performance. The audience and performer both know that within the routine there will

be an action that is obviously more difficult and more impressive than all which have

come before it. This knowledge does not limit the appreciation of the feats that take

place, rather the arrival of the *coup de grâce* places the performance and the performer

within its proper context. It exposes the level of difficulty that came before it by

displaying to the audience that everything which came before it was fairly simple, only

increases their wonder and amazement. In a similar manner, the final meal allows the

Figure 20. Planters beginning to gather for the final dinner. The tables have been rearranged to form two long rows

Figure 21. Sushi was part of the festive food at the final dinner as well as a display of the cooks' skill

cooks to display hitherto unknown parts of their repertoire and be publicly appreciated by the planters. It is an opportunity which unfortunately other staff members rarely get.

Crew Bosses: History

As we have hinted throughout this chapter, the position of crew boss is one of most important and complex in the camp. Their position is complex because they form a bridge between the planter's limited work goals and the larger demands of the silviculture industry and the particular contract. In order to understand this bridge it is important to appreciate the job of crew bosses both synchronicly and diachronicly. In this section I will look at the history of crew bossing, the jobs that they perform on the block, the negotiation of authority and the use of the radio as a medium of a playful form of group communication.

The early days of treeplanting in British Columbia (1971 to 1983) were marked by group planting. Under this system a crew boss was not needed because several people coordinated their efforts to finish one piece of land. Essentially, managing a piece was a collective project. As quality standards increased, the need to measure planters' work on an individual basis became more important. When individual piece cutting[50] commenced so did the need for supervision and the measuring of quality. Its

---

[50]"[I]ndividual piece cutting" is the process by which a planter flags off an area of land which is their sole responsibility to plant.

at this point that the crew boss came into being. In the early days, the cost of supporting a managerial staff was not easily incorporated into the planting structure and so the crew bosses were "planter-crew bosses." These people were paid a small salary for their supervisory work while planting trees at the same piece rate as other planters. This system was eventually abandoned because of the increase in inexperienced planters who needed more supervision and the size of crews in Ontario There were also concerns that this form of incentive system cases could lead to a crew boss who put their own needs above other planters. Despite these factors some of them want to see a return to the planter-crew bossing. Two reasons given by Eric is that it would add a bit of variety to his day and it would give him the ability to make more money (Journal, May 21). Crew bosses, like all staff are now paid a salaried wage; they make 150 to 200 dollars a day.

Crew Bosses: The Job

[T]hey colour maps, they do numbers, they walk around all day. (June 28)

The quote above is from AC, a first year crew boss, who was being humorously self-deprecating about what she and the four other crew bosses do all day.

Like planting, the activities of the crew boss appear to be simple, however, all of this

walking does have a purpose. Crew bosses generally take their role as support staff

very seriously. Their goal is to do anything that will help planters to make as much

money as they can. Eric gives a concise description of his job:

> I'm the crew boss for all these people around me planting which
> basically means that I am here to help them plant, plant as much as they
> can; make sure they have trees and land and take care of the larger-
> picture decisions on the job. And, I suppose, foremost to make sure
> that they do a good job. Also I have to deal with checkers who are
> supposedly neutral contractors. . . those guys are easy to deal with,
> that's not a problem. (May 22)

Several aspects of the job are alluded to in Eric's description. We have already

covered the role of the crew boss in teaching greeners and less experienced planters

important work technique(s). However, helping people to "plant as much as they can"

also depends on Eric taking "care of the larger-picture decisions." If a crew runs out

of land, for example, and there is no contingency made for them to move into a new

area then it is the planters who suffer lost wages because of a salaried staffer's

mistake. Figure 22 is a page from a crew bosses note book which records the

topographical location of each planter, the number of trees planted and who will return

to this area the next day to finish their land. It is a graphic example of the way in

which crew bosses organize the block. The importance of running an efficient camp is

obvious and crew bosses are an important part of this equation. In order to plan out

the day ahead of them there is a nightly group meeting between the crew bosses, the

tree-runner and the supervisor (see Figure 23). Although the meeting is a collaborative
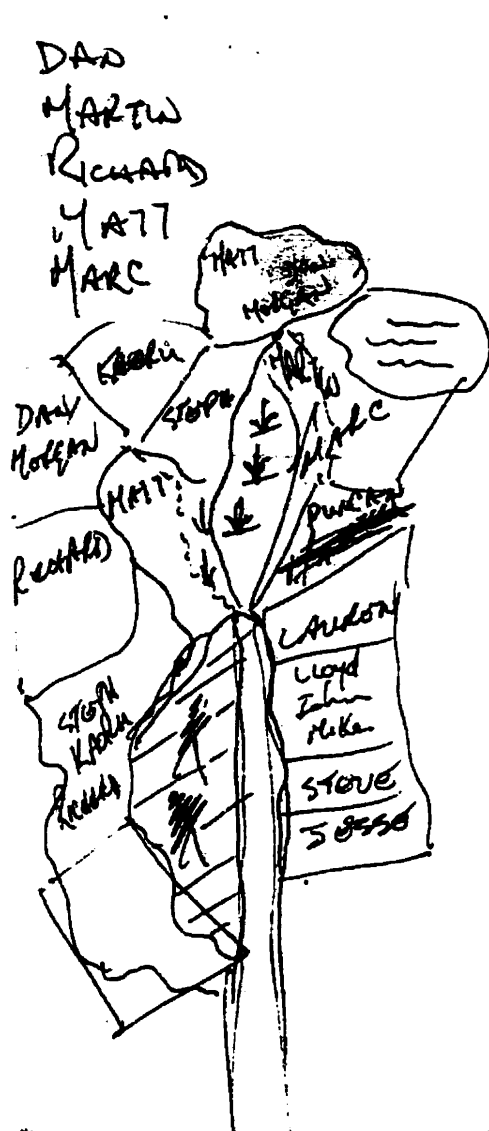
Figure 22. A page of a crew boss' notebook. The hand drawn map shows the location of planters' pieces in this area of the block. Planters' names and numbers record the amount of trees planted. "Areas Remaining" is a list of planters who will return to finish their pieces.

Figure 23. Crew bosses and supervisor consult a map as part of the logistics of organizing the next day. Depicted from left to right are: Ac, JL, Eric and Andrew.

effort, field observations and interviews reveal that the most experienced people sitting at the table dominate the decision making, with the supervisor having the most input. It has also been noted by female crew bosses and me that their male counterparts control the conversation and make it difficult for the less experienced female crew bosses to participate. In contrast to the relatively solitary treeplanter, staff must coordinate their efforts in order to be successful. On the block, crew bosses use "radios" (a two way, multi-channel walkie-talkie) to coordinate their efforts. As AC said, they walk a lot. The day is spent checking on the progress of planters, moving finished people to new pieces of land, doing quality checks, teaching or offering advice to planters, sometimes replanting small areas for a planter, coordinating cache set-ups, and constantly balancing the small activity of putting a tree in the ground with the larger logistical concerns both for today and for next week.

Quality and the Negotiation of Authority

Besides working with each other, crew bosses also need to work with the checkers. The checker in 1997 had been working on this contract for several years and a cordial relationship between everyone had been established. This does not mean that there were not tensions between the checkers and the crew bosses. In an episode several years ago the crew bosses were insulting and making fun of one of the checkers on their walkie-talkies. This was apparently standard practice and would have not caused any concern except that later, while talking with the checker in

question, one of the crew bosses got a call on his radio, a call that also came through on the radio of the checker. Lloyd and Mullen have pointed out that powerful individuals outside of the group are often the subject of deprecating narratives which help to shape the identity of the occupational group (159). The Checker is a powerful individual in the treeplanting world since quality, like technique(s), appears to be a standard rather than a law (McCarl, *District* 28). It is the difficult role of the crew boss to balance the demands of the checker with the demands of the planter. This balancing act is most apparent in the decision to make someone replant.

The replant is one of the few times that a crew boss' actual position of authority is clearly demonstrated. As I have mentioned earlier expressions of hierarchy and the use of authority as a tool to modifying either work or social behaviour is avoided in all but the most extreme circumstances. The reasons for this was partially addressed in Chapter One when dealing with counter-cultural experiments in human social organization. In discussing the levelling and anti-hierarchical affect of liminal space in Chapter Four and Five I will also address this issue. It is enough to note here that, unlike the managerial class[51] in industry and service jobs with a complex stratified structure, crew bosses secure their position as people with authority based on the display of technique(s) accumulated from their days of treeplanting and other planting experiences. In many ways they earn their respect through the display

---

[51]I have borrowed the term from: John Ralston Saul, *The Unconscious Civilization* (Concord, ON: House of Anansi P, 1995) 113-153.

of planter's own technique(s). When they exercise authority based on hierarchical status there exist mechanisms and a constellation of technique(s) for negotiating that authority. We could call these, "containment tactics" for the potential dangerous contagion of authority. The following incident highlights some of the containment tactics of crew bosses.

On June fourth the crew that I was on was sitting in the van waiting to go home after a long and frustrating day of planting bare root. After some chatter Dave said: "[a crew boss] came up to me said: 'You've got to replant your fucking land.'" So out of place was this statement that all of the other conversations in the van stopped and ten people turned their attention to Dave. One of the planters had an impassioned suggestion: "I'd just throw down my bags and walk off saying, 'You fucking replant!'" A woman in the group said that she would demand an apology first and then walk off the land. Caught up in the sense of injustice, the planters' suggestions for the crew boss in question grew more creative until Annabel asked a qualifying question about the incident. In his reply Dave attempted to return some balance to the incident: "It wasn't like that. He hasn't got great people skills. You know I don't care, I'll replant if he asked with some humour." (Journal, June 4).

The request for humour is not unusual. In fact the entire crew agreed that it is the way that you are asked to replant, rather than the replant itself that makes the difference. But why should a manager have to worry about asking nicely? The emphasis on courtesy points to the group expectation that position will not dictate

relationships; that relationships will be primary, rather than secondary, in character. In speaking with Johnny G. I related the above incident and the need of planters to be asked in a polite manner. He replied:

> That's how I work, exclusively. It doesn't work with everyone. There are some people that you need to be very serious with but I would bend over backwards to give someone the benefit of the doubt when it comes to a situation like that. I'll even say to someone: "you know I should make you replant this." We're fortunate on this contract that if we have some bad plots they'll give us the chance to go back in and replant it. [J: That doesn't happen everywhere?] No that doesn't. So some people I say, "you know I should get you to replant but I'm not. But you know that if a plot falls here you'll be back to replant, so keep that in mind." People work hard out there. They work their asses off, especially in ground that is difficult. And I really don't feel like coming down hard on people. (June 10)

Contained in Dave's experience and Johnny G's comments about his use of authority is a partial expression of the regime of authority at treeplanting camp. This regime is full of paradoxes and contradictions but it does appear to have an internal cohesion which is recreated by all levels of workers.

Firstly there is the use of humour. Functionalist anthropologists have long pointed to humour as the chief example of the "safety valve" theory of social relations. The argument is that social categories exist in equilibrium; their internal dynamic acting to support each other. Tension within this system must be expressed in a way that does not threaten the overall structure and yet serves the cathartic function of expressing and then dissipating these tensions (Abrahams and Bauman 206). Humour is often chosen because it is seen as a discursive field whose structure and expression

are insular, in that both the content and the structure of the joke reveal and obscure its referential nature. The expression "its only a joke" is just such a device which brackets off the joke and protects both the teller and the listener from its consequences. By using humour the crew boss is distancing him/herself from their speaking position and also blunting the ability of the content of their message to raise tension in the listener.

One could also view humour in a less functionalist mode and look at the rhetorical nature of the discourse itself. Bakhtin, in his study of carnival identifies two forms of laughter. The first is satirical laughter: "the satirist whose laughter is negative places himself above the object of his mockery, he is opposed to it" (12). The second is the form of laughter that accompanies carnival, festive laughter: "the people's ambivalent laughter . . . expresses the point of view of the whole world; he who is laughing also belongs to it" (12). The distinction between the two forms is that the former denotes a strategic use of the discourse within a hierarchical structure. One uses laughter to undercut the position of another and simultaneously advance one's own status. Humour and laughter, in this case, are devices in the battlefield of hierarchy, what game theorists, in speaking about a contest where one side advances only at the expense of their opponent, call a "zero sum game." On the other hand, festival laughter is a communitarian, or in Turner's more precise language, an expression of "communitas" (*Ritual* 131-2). Here laughter is between social equals and its intent is the maintenance and expression of this relationship. As Johnny G

stated and Eric implied, the goal of the crew boss is to come up with alternatives to the appearance of authority based on hierarchy. Humour is used to minimize the hierarchical positions by the sharing of a discursive field.

Crew bosses are aided in their task of negotiating authority because their own position vis-a-vis quality is fluid. As Johnny G. makes clear, the crew boss approximates the quality standards of the checkers, essentially enforcing the rules of a third party. In this way crew bosses are merely messengers of bad news and they will use the position of "don't shoot the messenger," as another tactic in the negotiation of authority. Johnny G's comment, "you know that if a plot falls here you'll be back to replant. . . ." is an example of crew bosses using their ambiguous position to place the locus of authority away from themselves—and in this case to use that position to help a treeplanter.

Crew Bosses and Planters

As I have mentioned in the introduction to the staff section, planters make up the bulk of the camp and are the dominant culture. It is easy to forget that staff must find their place in this environment. One of the results of being the dominant group is that the planters' needs, desires and position become naturalized and the roles and desires of the small group of people who exist in a different "time-space routine" (Seamon) are treated as less significant. The arrogance of the majority can cause some conflict between staff and planters. One example of this took place while walking

with Eric from one end of my crew's block to another. A planter stopped him to ask

if trees were going to be delivered soon. He asked if she was out. She replied: "No,

but soon." We left her after Eric (E) explained that trees would be arriving soon.

This is the conversation between the two of us when we were out of her range of

hearing.

> E: I hate that.
> J:That people think that they can plant so fast?
> E: No. I hate the implied message that we [staff/crew bosses] are
> morons. . .

At this point Eric, who is the model of the tolerant crew boss, catches himself in the

act of talking badly about a planter in front of me and finishes the exchange with the

hyperbolic statement: "They should trust us implicitly, like lords!" (Journal, May 26).

Although crew bosses are treeplanters in that they engage in the larger work culture of

planting, this small space created by their particular work makes them a little

community within a larger community. One of the unique aspects of this group is a

medium of communication—the radio.

Radio Games

As I have attempted to make clear earlier, planting is an isolating experience as

is the case with tree-running. The main advantage of crew bossing is that it is a very

social job. You are expected to talk to and help people and you often work as a team

with your fellow crew bosses. Because of the vast distances on the block and the

need to coordinate the efforts of sixty to eighty people, staff have radios. Several

studies have been done on mediums of official communication and the real uses to

which workers have put these technologies.[52] The only difference in the case of

treeplanting is that the unofficial discourse on the radio is not carried out by

subterfuge. The official and unofficial coexist and intermingle to form a constant hum

of communication that contains everything from the very important, news of a medical

emergency being one unfortunate example, to the fantastic. Like Marsha L.

MacDowell's comment of worker's art being a representation "of the immediate

experience of life—of events, places, characters known only through direct first-hand

experiences," radio communication at its middle point is a commentary on the work in

which a small group of people are engaged (186). The instance of talking about

checkers cited earlier is an example of this. At the extraordinary end of the spectrum

the medium has been totally coopted for nonwork purposes. During follow-up

research in 1998 a tree-runner used his radio to broadcast the song "Burning Ring of

Fire" by Johnny Cash at irregular intervals throughout the day, thus creating an aural

ambush for the crew bosses. Periodically, contests which mimic television game

shows will be held on the radio. In one case "the first person to correctly identify

'onomatopoeia' wins one night at the Shoreline Hotel, transportation in van provided"

---

[52]See: Paul Smith, "Contemporary Legend and the Photocopy Revolution." *Perspectives on Contemporary Legend 2.* Ed. Gillian Bennett, Paul Smith, and J.D.A. Widdowson (Sheffield: CECTAL, 1987) 177-202. Alan Dundes, "Office Folklore," *Handbook of American Folklore.* Ed. Richard Dorson. Bloomington: (Indiana UP, 1983) 116. Martin Sprouse, ed, *Sabotage in the American Workplace: Anecdotes of Dissatisfaction, Mischief and Revenge* (San Francisco: Pressure Drop P, 1992)

(Journal June 13).

In treeplanting, the radio as a material culture object, is now identified with crew bosses. Like the distinctive pink flagging tape that they use, the radio is, in Charles Sanders Pierce's tripartite division of the sign, an index. That is, "the signifier is a reliable indicator of the presence of the signified" (Richter 1989: 848). Greeners often comment on the fear of hearing the squawk of the radio because they know the crew boss is around and that means that the quality of their trees will soon be up for examination. Anxiety is not always the case when one hears the radio, however. While working next to a forest line in an area where bears had been spotted I was relieved when the crashing sounds coming from the bush were interrupted by radio chatter, signifying the imminent appearance of a crew boss rather than a bear.

In conclusion we can see that crew bosses are a distinct group of workers within the larger treeplanting community. Yet a lack of hierarchical organization ensures that they participate equally in all areas of the block and the camp. Part of this lack of separation is the result of their display of the techniques of treeplanting on a daily basis and within the skills that are particular to their own tasks. The most specialized of crew bosses skills is the negotiation of authority in relation to replanting. As representatives for the needs and desires of planters and as enforcers of a quality system, which is itself a standard rather than a law, crew bosses use a variety of techniques (humour and authority repositioning) to both protect their own position and to maintain the occupational eco-typical hierarchy of the work force at camp. One

aspect of their higher status centers on the possession of a radio and their unofficial uses of it. Unlike the treeplanter, the crew boss because of his/her position as a leader, is almost always working. This puts an enormous strain on some of them, while others find it personally rewarding to rise to this sort of challenge. In either case, the differences between a successful or a disappointing camp depends on crew bosses' ability to bridge the divergent occupational specialties and interests of the camp.

Supervisor

The role of the camp supervisor is both simple and complex: s/he does everything. Johnny G., himself a supervisor, describes his role as a "crew boss with a cheque book" (June 10). JL's role is more difficult since he is also the Ontario coordinator for Brinkman and Associates. Planters and staff who have worked on JL's camp for several seasons find that his authority to make important decisions translates into a smooth running operation with little down-time. In a thousand small ways a supervisor is reflected in his or her camp. Like crew bosses they must negotiate and balance the needs of planters, staff, the company and the foresters. They are also responsible for the financial success of their camp. Because of isolation supervisors are expected to have a huge range of skills and techniques, from the mechanical to accounting, human relations to plumbing. It is not uncommon for JL to get up with the cooks to fix a problem, deliver trees during the day, coordinate the activities of

several crews and repair a vehicle until late in the evening. Like the display of planting skills by crew bosses, the display of a wide range of planting and crew boss skills limits the distance between the supervisor and the camp.

Even before the camp begins the supervisor has a great deal of control in shaping its form. All supervisors assemble their camp from returning planters, experienced planters moving to new camps and by interviewing and hiring new planters. JL's camp has the character it does, in part, because he once told me that "I'd hire a planter, even if I didn't think they would be the best planter, if I thought they'd be good in the camp. You need that mix of people" (June 27). The intent to shape a camp that reflects the kind of needs and priorities that JL values is obvious in this quote. I do not want to suggest that the key to understanding this camp lies in JL's decisions. The dynamic of seventy people is far too complex. What I propose is merely a way of understanding the dynamic of how a camp becomes closely associated with its supervisor. JL's ability to affect the shape of the camp must be recognized, however. He is as confined to the synchronic and diachronic forces of treeplanting as any greener. Like a crew boss it is his ability to balance the competing forces around him within the camp's culturally accepted manner that makes a successful supervisor.

Staff: Conclusion

McCarl's theoretical model of technique attempts to provide a theory and methodology to understand the principles by which an occupation is shaped. By shear numbers (92 percent of the work force) it is the work experiences of planters that create the culture of treeplanting. Planters, however, are in turn affected by the staff around them and the job that they must perform. The primary shaping principle of the occupation is the way that planters reorient themselves in time and space under the regime of piecework; mastery of all other techniques is secondary. The relative autonomy of the workers creates a highly flexible canon of work technique; however, highballers' and new techniques expose the conservative nature of the group's work norms.

Because of the relative isolation work narratives are used to create a simulacum of a shared work experience within which planters can critique aspects of techniques. Complicating this paradigm is that work narratives are also used for entertainment, identity formation and basic communication. In studying planting narratives it is important to recognize the polyphonic nature of any given narrative.

Existing along side planters is the staff. The members of this group have a greater range of skills and techniques that accompanies their jobs but essentially they exist as support people. Their main job is to secure the autonomy of the planter so that piecework can operate as a fair wage system. Within the confines of this directive, staff have a complex and dynamic work culture.

Chapter 4

Towards an Understanding of Space

This chapter is, foremost, a necessary theoretical exercise in preparation for the more empirical study of treeplanting spaces and the way in which they occur within the broader context of liminal space/time in Chapter Five. Treeplanting exists as a liminal state, a world betwixt and between (Turner, *Image* 249-250; cf. Van Gennep 10-13). The liminality of treeplanting is neither straightforward nor obvious. It presents several challenges to some of the basic tenets that have characterized studies in liminality since the work of Victor Turner. In this chapter I will investigate the need to consider not only technique but also the spatial organization of treeplanting as an indication of social relations in the camp. The rest of this chapter will be concerned with the contemporary structure of liminality and the theoretical problems that accompany the concept of liminality in relation to treeplanting. I will outline the way in which planting conforms to the classic liminal model as a stage in a rite of passage. Following this the nature of liminality will be problematized in order to address the aspects of planting which are obscured by the adoption of the classic idea of liminality. Finally, I will suggest an alternative orientation, the study of liminality as praxis. Focusing on praxis is an attempt to integrate liminality with contemporary studies of space/time by cultural geographers.

Beyond Technique: Understanding Space

Chapter Two and Three outlined the ways that the canon of work technique, as expressed in both deeds and words, is the central shaping principle of treeplanting. This position is supported by the fact that the bulk of conversations and stories told at any time of the day will be about work. A situation that ". . . can be tedious sometimes always talking about planting, but we're sharing a common experience: valid bitches" (Lys June 19). Tedious or not, most people do not forget that the reason they are here is to work. JL sums up this feeling:

> It is basically work. There is this other funky subculture side of it because of the type of people and the situations we're in but it's basically resource related bush work. And it could be done by gangs of men in bunk houses or it can be done in this style. This style just seems to fit. (June 27)

Although JL's comments attempt to reinforce the primary nature of work, his recognition of the "style" of planting suggests that there are other aspects of planting which are also important. A goal of this chapter is to study how the spatial organization of treeplanting as liminal creates the context for "the situation we're in."

As JL points out, while the work could remain the same, changing the "style," the gender ratio and housing of the workforce, would radically change treeplanting culture. The need to temper the primacy of the study of technique as the central shaping principle of this occupation is contained in a quote from Johnny G., a comment with which many planters agree:

> The work is just work and it'll never be anything else but it's the people
> that make it worthwhile and I think that we have such a strong rate of
> return [of planters]—it's very stable here—says a lot about how people
> feel about the way that we do things. And in return they keep coming
> back with who they are and who they know and really loosen up the
> restraints with how they can behave with one another, and it is a very
> remote environment. . . . (June 10)

Johnny G.'s comment's touches on our central concern with the way that space affects

social structures and culture; it also anticipates Thomas W. Dunk's argument against

the foregrounding of the means of production as a deterministic model for

understanding the superstructure edifices of working class culture. Instead Dunk posits

a balance between structure and agency, a balance that is important in understanding

not only class but also the work culture of treeplanting:

> [W]ithout eliminating the intentional, conscious human subject, it is
> possible to infer real constraints upon his or her freedom of action in
> the cultural sphere while maintaining an autonomy between the
> "objective" material situation and the cultural ways in which the
> experience of this situation is handled. (35)

The spatial turn in social sciences has been noted by several authors (Duncan;

Gregory and Urry; Massey, *Space*; Soja). It is important to my study here since the

organization of space has a huge effect on our understanding of work itself. Bruce

Nickerson's ground breaking essay, "Is There a Folk in the Factory?" revealed that the

factory is both a material place and a spatial metaphor within which we have come to

synthesize more complex spatial changes such as the Industrial Revolution, the rise of

stable and then mobile capital, the spatial organization demanded by the increasingly

complex division of labour and the rise of class as a formation of a kind of space

called place. Despite the intense metaphor of space which the factory evokes,

folklorists have tended to retain the folk group as their model. The consequence of this

is that particular spaces remain uninvestigated since they are merely the base context,

the shell, in which the folk group resides. With McCarl's evaluation that the shaping

principle of an occupational group consists of the tasks that are performed, folklorists

began to explore the interconnections between the actual activity of work itself and the

folklore and folklife that resulted (*Occupational*). On the whole, however,

occupational folklore has tended to ignore the actual work environment and the way in

which it is connected to the community as a direct site of investigation.

Two studies suggest some directions in which folklorists should travel in

addressing space/time. Robert McCarl's study, *The District of Columbia Firefighters'*

Project clearly portrays the way in which the spaces of the firehouse are an important

context for the folklife of this group. For example, fireman who did a lot of cooking

were perceived to have acquired more feminine virtues. This labelling is directly

relevant to the way in which spatial regimes structure social relations (61). However,

since this is not his main focus, this fertile area is left unexplored. A study which

takes on the complex task of understanding a group of workers in relation to the urban

environment is William W. Pilcher's *The Portland Longshoreman*. In this study the

participation of the longshoreman in the city-scape is a major structuring principle.

For example, the location of housing is tied to issues surrounding family and work.

Pilcher's study is hampered by the complexity of studying a group in the urban setting. Still, McCarl and Pilcher's attention to space are two examples of research in the direction that I am suggesting[53]. The treeplanting work camp provides the researcher with an opportunity to combine these two studies: to see how technique and space shape an occupation; and to address issues surrounding the way in which individuals and groups negotiate the spatial regimes of work and non-work. Most importantly it provides insights into the way that a group of people construct both work and non-work space/time, which may be applicable to more complex communities of workers.

Johnny G.'s earlier comment about "environment" implies that it is the particular space of treeplanting which accounts for much of its character. Chapter Five will address the way in which planters live within liminal space. Here I will explore the creation of liminality as the primary spatial context of treeplanting.

Leaving the Real World

My first task is to demonstrate the manner in which treeplanting replicates the classic model of liminality. The liminal was first developed by Arnold Van Gennep to denote the second stage in the tripartite division of rites of passage (10-13). The second stage is the limen—the boundary—between the separation and reintegration of the initiate. The liminars (those who are in the liminal period) are betwixt and

---

[53]Another writer who perceives space and place in relation to work is also: Stanley Brandes, *Metaphors of Masculinity: Sex and Status in Andalusian Folklore* (Philadelphia: UP of Pennsylvania 1980)

between states (Turner, *Image* 249). Victor Turner freed liminality from its position as a part of rites of passage and applied the concept to "all processes of spatiotemporal social or individual change" (*Image* 2). With this development the study of groups as diverse as "small nations," "good Samaritans" or "monastic orders" were open to investigation (Turner, *Image* 250). Treeplanters cause a small problem for the researcher since they occupy an ambiguous position in relation to liminality. Of central importance is whether they are participating in a rite of passage and are therefore truly liminal, or whether they are merely participants in a quasi-liminal exercise and therefore only metaphorically liminal, that is, liminoid (Turner, *Image* 153). I will argue that both appear to be the case; to save confusion I will arbitrarily call the area under investigation liminal until I return to this debate.

Treeplanters are engaged in a liminal existence on several levels. First, their geographic isolation and the travel that this entails create the material conditions of liminal space. Second, the space they travel to is already culturally defined as liminal. Let me address the latter point first. In its earliest form, Arnold Van Gennep linked liminality to the natural boundaries of forests, swamps and mountain passes (15-25). Spaces such as these marked a "territorial passage" and were both integral to rites of passage, while some had rites of their own (18-9). These areas positioned the individual between worlds and opened up a new space, the "limen," or threshold. The individual is sent to the wilderness, or to an initiation hut positioned in the forest; consequently, the landscape and the individual now occupy the same space/time

configuration. People—whether real or fantastic—who occupy this position are now

liminal entities since they themselves fall between the structure of social relations (cf.

Jackson; McNeil; Narváez, *Newfoundland*).

This cultural creation of the wild as liminal is perpetuated in the Canadian

context. There is a long Anglo-Canadian tradition, inherited as part of a broader

European project, to create North America as this type of wilderness. Matthew

Johnson has outlined the way that Europe created both the "garden" of the "noble

savage" and the terrifying "wilderness" of the "savage" as extensions of their own

political and philosophic arguments (93-95). For example the famous arguments of

Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau finds each man attempting to

use nature within a broad political argument grounded in European concerns and

colonial expansion. Within the forces of colonialization the word "bush" is tied to the

period of colonial expansion as it denotes areas in the colonies that are not under

cultivation. By extension the colonies themselves began to be known as "bush"

(OED). These two particular landscapes have their antecedents in the geographic

orientation of the Greco-Roman world in which North was a geographic locality, a

savage country (Hamelin 3-4).

Both French and English Canadians have continued the tradition of viewing

space as the central shaping principle of our nation.[54] Whether in literary criticism

---

[54]For an example of this tradition in the United States of America see: Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Frontier and Section* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall) 1961. A critique of the Turner thesis and its place in folklore can be found in: Beverly J. Stoeltje,"Making the

(Frye, *Anatomy*, *Bush*; Atwood, *Survival*, *Strange*) music (Gould) history (Innis) or the more recent challenges to the tradition of this spatial configuration by cultural theorists (Wilson; Cavell), Canadians have been preoccupied with the way in which our landscape has configured both the shape of the country and the culture of the people that inhabit it. An example of this tradition is Atwood's exploration of Northrop Frye's famous Canadian question, "Where is here?" She suggests that the question of "here" rather than the more common "Who am I?" is the result of a particular environment; since Canada is an underdefined space the question of locality, "Where am I?" is of more importance then the question "Who am I?" which finds its place in well-defined societies (*Survival*: 18-19). What Atwood's metaphoric use of the geographic fails to realize is that her project is part of the long tradition briefly sketched above. This project has resulted in the creation of particular Canadian landscapes—the wilderness, the bush and the North.

Each of these landscapes have their own characteristics which deserve a full exploration that unfortunately cannot be provided here. The implication of the north as vacant (Gould), the wilderness as crowded (Atwood, *Strange*) and the bush as a site of intermittent human control and then a surrendering to nature (Jackson; Wilson) are just a hint of the nuances of the terms. The importance of this here is the attributes which these terms share: each term denotes a space outside of normal social relations

---

Frontier Myth: Folklore Process in a Modern Nation," *Western Folklore* 46 (1987): 235-253.

and control; and each area is a transformational space. That is not to say that these categories are uncontested. Alexander Wilson has clearly demonstrated the shift in Canadian perception of the wilderness which accompanied the post-war affluence and the rise of the outdoor recreation industry (22-5). What I am suggesting is that, while recreation may be one of the implications in the ideology of wilderness, the landscape construction that treeplanters are more likely to share is Cliff's view of planting:

> It does kind of, it does kind of, how do you say this now? It [planting] does kind of clear the shit off your soul. It burns you down to the quick! And you see things a little more clearly. People are a little more open and honest. It depends which camp you're in, of course, but it really shows you for who you are: to yourself and other people. Like when you're out there and the bugs are everywhere and its hot and it's cold and it's rainy and its dry. There's nothing like harsh conditions and at the end of the day hopefully you've worked your ass off, you've had a good meal. It simplifies your life big time and you get back to town and you feel very much empowered. Tell you the truth even if I had lots of money something tells me that I would still plant. (June 27)

Clearing the "shit off one's soul" is analogous to Goffman's idea of the "levelling and stripping" which occurs in the liminal period (qtd. in Turner, *Ritual* 128). As such planters recognize that one of the reasons that they enter the bush is to experience this quasi-spiritual levelling and stripping. A group of planters (Domm = D; Nick = N; Unknown Male = U) went so far as to equate treeplanting with Canada:

> D: Its really weird because its such a Canadian thing.
> N: Did you read that article?[55]
> D: I haven't read it yet

---

[55] Gillian Austin, ed., "Screefer Madness," *Canadian Geographic* 117.3 (1997): 60-71, was published during the planting season and created quite a bit of conversation around the camp.

N: They were talking about it being a distinctly Canadian coming-of-age kind of thing.
D: There's a little bit of it going on in the States, like Washington and areas like that, like in the western part.
N: You know we could go down there as experts.
U: Show those American boys what's going on.
J: How much of it is a southern thing?
D: Oh yeah. Definitely.
N: Tons, tons, 3/4 of the people in Alberta are southern and eastern Ontario. (June 14)

Treeplanting is liminal not only in its participation in the metacultural ideology of Canadian wilderness; treeplanting as liminal also has its roots in time and space. The treeplanting camp is literally separated from the normal space/time from which planters come. The travel is two-fold. In the first case, planters, as Domm and Nick point out, are generally from southern and eastern Ontario. With the average trip from the south to Thunder Bay taking twelve to eighteen hours by car the journey itself constitutes a separation. After this journey from the south to the north planters embark on a second territorial passage, which moves them from the urban to the wilderness. Johnny G. describes one of these movements in 1997:

> Yesterday is a good example of driving into an area that is just a cut-over and driving through an immense, immense piece of cut ground. Immense enough that people got out of the vans at the end of the drive and were quite thunder struck by the sheer enormity of the cut. (June 22)

The planters mark the different spaces by referring to where they are as "treeplanting" and everything else out there as "the real world." The journey itself is a movement into liminal space and away from the quotidian world.

The journey back to the "real world" is recognized by planters, some of whom

refer to this stage as the "adjustment period." There are a number of narratives that

deal with the culture shock of returning to the city. Many of them deal with the

treeplanter continuing to act as a planter, not recognizing that they have reentered a

different space/time. These activities, of course, have very different meanings in the

city. Rob James tells a story which is a variation on this theme:

> I heard about this guy this one time he got off the train in Toronto
> straight from treeplanting. He's got all his gear on his back and stuff
> and he heads into Toronto—a stop over or something. He's walking
> around and needs to take a shit so he heads into an alley and just shits
> in this alley; gets up and walks away. (May 19)

Movement into different time is more difficult to recognize, however, time at

planting is altered and like space it can be considered liminal. At this camp a planting

shift is usually four days working and one day off ("four and one"). Coupled with this

new work schedule is the phenomenon common to many people who camp or work

outdoors—the loss of time.[56] In this case, time is usually calendar dates and the days

of the week. Without resorting to extensive examples most people will appreciate that

Monday and Friday have completely different meanings for those people who work a

full-time job. Likewise, the weekend is a modern invention of the industrial age

(Rybczyniski 43) which is both a measure of objective time and a testament to how

---

[56]For a discussion of time and berry pickers see: Peter Narváez, "Newfoundland Berry Pickers 'In the Fairies': Maintaining Spatial, Temporal and Moral Boundaries Through Legendary," *The Good People: New Fairylore Essays*, Ed. Peter Narváez (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991) 302-36.

time reflects and is an instrument of our socio-economic organization—a temporal sign system working in conjunction with the office and the factory to create a spatial/temporal sign system (and material device) for the operation of late capitalism. Time is radically different in treeplanting since the camp is separated from the larger cultural time codes. The effect is that the micro-structure of time—hours and minutes—remain, since they are important to work but the broader categories of days and their conjunctive meanings are unimportant and quickly fade. The disorientation that this causes can range from humorous to mildly upsetting. Melissa deals with this disorientation by recreating the urban work week within the "four and one" structure:

> I wanted to talk about the four on one off—the four days on one day off
> shit. I love it. We were supposed to say what we'd prefer when we
> were applying for the job. I kind of had to devise—because when I'm
> planting and someone says, "oh its Sunday", I think, you know, "what
> does that mean: Sunday or Wednesday?" It doesn't mean anything. So
> for me day one is Monday. The hump day[57] is day two. . . day two is
> definitely Wednesday, that's the hump day. Day three is Thursday.
> Day four is Friday. Night off[58] is Saturday. And day off is Sunday. Its
> the day for me to recoup and to get together. And that's kind of how I
> put together my week. (May 28)

The movements of separation and reintegration through various territorial and temporal passages are not, in themselves, enough to call treeplanting a truly liminal

---

[57]"Hump day" is popular slang which refers to Wednesday. It relies on the week as a modern temporal structure of work (Monday through Friday and leisure (Saturday and Sunday). Wednesday is the middle of the work week and is the "hump" that a worker must travel over to move one step closer to the weekend. The visual image of a hump implies the it is the hardest day of the work week.

[58] "Night off" is the evening of the last work day for the shift. It will be discussed more fully in Chapter Five.

state, since it is fundamentally a metaphoric association, a way of talking about space.

There are, however, some ways in which planting more closely resembles a rite of

passage as Van Gennep would understand the term.

Treeplanting as Rite of Passage

> JG.: This business has become a rite of passage for a huge number of
> people. It really isn't quite understood by anyone who hasn't done it
> and I'm not sure how understood it can be . . . .
> J: How does the rite of passage thing work?
> JG: Well I think a lot of people do a lot of growing up here. Look at
> people like S. D., for a lot of people they've never been, not only away
> from home but away from the things that make their lives comfortable.
> A lot of people find significant relationships in this business. I know I
> have. It's become in a lot of ways a very personality-defining thing to
> do. (June 10)

Both Nick and Johnny G. see planting as a rite of passage. But how are we to

understand rites of passage in complex societies, especially in the case of treeplanting

where planters are not all initiates and the elevation of status is unclear. One of the

ways that treeplanting can be considered a rite of passage is to recognize that members

of the group consider themselves to be participants in some kind of "rite." In its

vernacular and popular manifestations rites of passage involve some level of

separation, a time of hardship followed by a reintegration into the community as a

slightly different person.

Bringing the discussion more in line with what classic anthropologists and

social scientists would regard as a rite of passage, treeplanting participates in an

important capitalist ideology perpetuated by the middle class, the mythical first job. In this model, a youth's first job should be manual labour, or below their class position. They will then return to university[59] and relocate themselves into more class appropriate work. This view of treeplanters is expressed by a female desk clerk of the hotel in Thunder Bay where many planters stay.

> Well, they're mostly good, hardworking kids, who are trying to make some money for the summer. Most of them are in school and most of them are from down east. So sometimes it's their job, first experience with the north. Which is really different from where they come from. But no, they seem to be a great group of kids. . . . I think maybe then some of these kids have come from pretty affluent homes and now kind of, good to appreciate what you have to work so hard for, eh? I think its probably the first experience for some of them. (June 22)

This model of economic participation is also contained in the first person account of Gillian Austin in the *Canadian Geographic* profile on treeplanters entitled "Screefer Madness:"

> The first year, my Dad [sic] was so proud of me. He wanted to hear all about it. . . . He was proud because I was doing such a tough job, working with my body and being outside. Now it's ten years later and he's not so proud anymore. "What are you going to do with the rest of your life?" he asks. (67)

Elements of this economic model are reflected in social reproduction theory called "the rational choice model" (Borman and Reisman 6). It is the belief that young workers "will see clear and obvious steps along a career path beginning with a particular entry level position and proceeding to a logically connected 'advanced' position down the

---

[59]University is a class and age specific transition space/time between child and adult periods of life (Dunk 9-10).

line" (6). Borman and Reisman have noted that this model is most evident in middle class assumptions about careers and the structure of work.

Within this model one can see how treeplanting now has a context within which the individual can become transformed. The rite of passage involves: the separation of the nonworking youth from their habitus; the liminal period, or the time that they actually have a job; and reintegration into the community with the elevated status of workers. More specifically, they are workers who have replicated their class model of work structures. Gillian Austin's quote poignantly demonstrates the way that the elevation of status quickly dissipates when she no longer replicates her class position and continues to work in the field of manual labour.

There is a second way in which treeplanting conforms to the classic model of a rite of passage. This model is also concerned with cultural reproduction, but it is a shift from the "rational choice model" to an understanding of workers based on generational sub-cultures. I have outlined in both the Introduction and Chapter One that treeplanting has become closely linked to students of university and the generational subculture that occupies this space. Within this habitus treeplanting is afforded a higher status then almost any other occupation. An individual who becomes a treeplanter for more than one year shares in this elevation of status. Nick explains this:

> My friends are totally fascinated. "You go up there? You deal with the bugs? You do that hard work?" And it's just like you've got a write off for the rest of the year. If I don't want to work for the rest of the year I

don't have to. Some friends of mine were bugging a friend of ours
about getting a job, "you're not doing anything with yourself." [He
replied]: "Hey look at Nick, he hasn't got a job." [They replied]: "Yeah,
well he plants for the summer. . . . He's done his time." (June 14)

Ignoring the distortions which occupational and personal identity formation can cause

in tales of this sort, treeplanting is generally viewed as a very difficult and rewarding

job by a university student's peers. People who return from planting camp achieve

something similar to the status that Nick apparently acquires among his friendship

group.[60]

Treeplanters participate in a number of activities that create liminality: spatial

and temporal separation from the "real world;" inclusion in and perpetuation of the

construction of the wilderness as a liminal space; and participation because of their

class and age positions in interlocking ideologies which define one's first job as a rite

of passage.

Problematizing the Liminal

Despite these arguments for considering treeplanting as liminal instead of

liminoid, several problems arise out of the lived reality of planters. The lived

experience of treeplanting is that it is an occupation which is fully integrated into the

---

[60]The elevation of status within this habitus may also be affected by the use of travel—the travel from
the south to the north—as a form of cultural capital. For a overview of the complex use of travel as cultural
capital, social boundary construction and inter-habitus conflict see Luke Desforges, "Checking out the Planet:
Global Representations/Local Identities and Youth Travel," *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*. Eds.
Tracy Skelton and Gill Valentine (London: Routledge: 1998) 175-192. See also I. Munt, "The 'Other' Post
Modern Tourism: Culture, Travel and the New Middle Class," *Theory, Culture and Society* 11 (1994): 101-23.

northern resource extraction industry, and it is made up of people who are tied to various families and social groups in the south. Treeplanting never achieves the position of betwixt and between since its economic—and, in many respects, social—success lies in the retention of ties to the various localities of materials, ideology and power. The work camp relies on its ties to the urban centers for its supplies; it looks to the resource extraction industry for its very existence and the habitus of large urban centers for its workforce. Furthermore the capital which is generated by this group, both wages and surplus value for the company, has its locus in areas other than the camp. All of these factors ensure that despite participating in a rite of passage these workers remain "plural, fragmentary . . . experimental, idiosyncratic, quirky, subversive, utopian . . . (Turner, *Image* 353). As such they remain only metaphorically liminal. One thing should be made clear: the problematic nature of liminality is not the fact that it has no phenomenological basis in reality. Clearly, it is an important and material part of people's lives. The issue is that since liminality itself has been separated from its place in rites of passage, the very nature of liminality has been affected.

Turner himself admitted that when not talking about rites of passage, liminality is being used metaphorically (*Image* 253-4). The problem with the use of space/time metaphors is discussed by Edward W. Soja:

> Spaciality is reduced to a mental construct alone, a way of thinking, an ideational process in which the 'image' of reality takes epistemological precedence over the tangible substance and appearance of the real

world. Social space folds into mental space, into diaphanous concepts of spaciality which all too often take us away from materialized social realities. (124-5)

A second critique of the post-Turner concept of liminality is that while it posits liminality as the space between social orders, it presents these social orders as static. It is the condition which Henri Lefebvre critiqued by the term " absolute space," in that it is transparent, stable and fixed. It is the individual who moves into and out of these spaces. Liminality is not an isolated space/time phenomenon; both Turner and Van Gennep understand liminality as a part of their socio-spatial model. This model is based on Van Gennep's early work on "semi-civilized" people. He writes:

> We have seen that an individual is placed in various sections of society, synchronically and in succession; in order to pass from one category to another and join individuals in other sections, he must submit. . . to ceremonies. . . . (189).

Van Gennep applied his concept of liminality to primitive societies and reserved its use for the events that replicated the spatial nature of the etymologic root of "limin"—"threshold." Turner applied the concept to complex societies—with only minimal adaptation. This use of a mechanical, atemporal model of society within urban settings has had unfortunate results as the concept of liminality has been picked up by successive generations of anthropologists (Turner, *Ritual*; Myerhoff), sociologists (Nippert-Eng), literary theorists (Morgan) and folklorists (Abrahams and Bauman; Babcock).

Thus liminality has become increasingly separated from its theoretical roots, yet remains unattached to research developments into the relationship between space and time by British cultural geographers such as Doreen Massey. She is one of many who have begun to understand space as an element constructed out of social relations: "The view then is of space-time as a configuration of social relations within which the specifically spatial may be conceived of as an inherently dynamic simultaneity" (3). What Massey suggests is that space is not a mirror of social relations, nor does it dictate them, but rather is constituted by them. This construction of the spatial then reinforces the very social relations that created it. Within this completed cycle the intertwining of space and social relations has remained overly simplified in the concept of liminality. Liminality's meaning has been limited to a simplistic spatial metaphor for acts of transformation, conflict, festival, and a host of other phenomenon. Turner's comment on societal relations is an example of this tendency: "Society seems to be a process rather than a thing—a dialectical process with successive phases of structure and communitas" (*Ritual* 203). Turner's understanding of society and space as a dialectic where humans move between structure and anti-structure—while revolutionary for its time—is too simplistic in light of contemporary studies of space in complex society. Edward Soja has critiqued this kind of model as "reductionist structuralism which presents the human agent as a cultural dope, merely a bearer of structures" (121). Not only is the liminar a cultural dope, in their singular nature they are an ideal subject. For instance, Turner's study of a person on pilgrimage is only a

pilgrim; he cannot simultaneously be a father, a retired soldier, an alcoholic, or someone who likes sorbet (*Image*). This simplicity meshes well with the dialectical model of society in which a liminar only moves between structure "A" and anti-structure "B."

Turner's model does not provide a thorough understanding of the interdependency of social and spatial relations in contemporary, complex societies. For this more complex understanding, we turn to Chantel Mouffe, who said:

> [W]e are . . . always multiple and contradictory subjects, inhabitants of a diversity of communities (as many; really as the social relations in which we participate and the subject-positions they define), constructed by a variety of discourses and precariously and temporarily sutured at the intersection of those positions. (qtd. in Massey, *Space* 7-8)

Contained within an investigation of rites of passage, Turner's static concept of liminality is empirically and theoretically useful. However, as explored above, when post-Turner liminality is applied to investigations of "hippies," "dharma bums," "small nations" and a general social theory of complex cultures, its value is severely compromised (*Image* 249-255). To be useful, it must be reorganized to encompass the insights of Massey, Mouffe, and Soja. The above critique does not suggest that liminality does not exist. Clearly there is a long tradition of liminal creation and maintenance in various parts of Canadian society, however, what post-Turner liminality does not address is the *creation* and *maintenance* aspect of liminal space/time. One of the ways of integrating it into contemporary socio-space/time

studies and providing an historic materialism interlocutor into the study of liminal space/time is to investigate it as an issue of praxis.[61]

Towards an Understanding of Liminality as Praxis

In order to move towards an understanding of praxis, liminality must be seen as an issue of space/time. By space/time I mean an understanding of the two concepts similar to that proposed by John Urry: "Space and time only exist when there are entities in some sense *in* space and time. Hence they do not exist without at least two existent objects, which occupy a relationship within time-space" (24-5 Italics in Original). There exists, therefore, an interdependence between entities and the space/time that they occupy, since space/time is also a device by which the entities come to understand their position in relation to each other. In each case neither the entities within space/time, nor space/time itself are deterministic producers of effect. This scheme is complicated by the realistic position that there exist structures in space/time that actively reorganize space/time configurations with the intent of reorganizing social relations. Capital and the division of labour power are two such examples (Urry 36). As Massey has stated:

> [W]ithin this dynamic simultaneity which is space, phenomena may be placed in relationship to one another in such a way that new social effects are provoked. The spacial organization of society, in other

---

[61]I have chosen to represent historical materialism as a form of interlocutor which brings about the philosophy of praxis as a instrumental simplification of Gramsci's more complex reading of the interrelation between the two fields of inquiry (cf. Gramsci, *Selections* 442).

words, is integral to the production of the social and not merely its
results. (4)

Massey's comments provide a way of examining socio-spatial relations which Turner's

explorations appear to have overlooked. It is the relationship of phenomena in space

that can provoke liminal space/time. Turner's writings on liminality are located within

a "primitive" or "semi-civilized" community—that is, within a particular type of

space/time relationship—and do not explore further concepts of the term when applied

to more complex societies and their spatial organization.

Gramsci's idea of hegemony offers another way of understanding liminality in

the context of contemporary complex societies. His model of hegemony is a process

whereby the dominant class sacrifices some of its power in order to secure key

compromises from the subordinate group, thus creating an economic, ideological and

cultural equilibrium that secures the domination of one class over another (*Hegemony*

197; cf. Bullock 379). This situation, which Gramsci has called a "dynamic

equilibrium" creates space/times of freedom which result from the very nature of

hegemony itself (*Hegemony* 197). Gramsci, in sharp contrast to Turner's simplistic and

static socio-spatial/temporal scheme, suggests a fluidity and dynamism to social

structures. I recognize that there is a gap between a Marxist theorist's search for the

mechanisms of freedom, dominance, consent and revolution, and Turner's

anthropological idea of structure and anti-structure; however, Gramsci's ideas of

freedom and Turner's ideas of liminality both occupy interstitial space/time. In

Gramsci's case freedom is necessary as some people and social organizations must exist between the strands that make up the net-like relations of power that is hegemony (cf. Foucault, *Power* 142). Turner, on the other hand, posits a space which exists "betwixt and between" static social structures. The question I am postulating is: which model more accurately reflects the space/time structures of contemporary society in general and treeplanting specifically?[62]

I have suggested that Gramsci and Turner share some similarities in their respective configurations of freedom and liminality; however, there is a difference between the two models which is important in my reevaluation of liminality. Turner's model is constructed in such a way that social structures are not implicated—not even present—in liminal space/time. A model of liminality using hegemony suggests that liminality is constructed out of and within social structures in much the same way as Levi-Strauss' idea of bricolage.[63] Through bricolage space/times are freed of their context, and they become the raw materials by which individuals and social groups construct liminal space/time.

---

[62]The link between Gramsci's idea of freedom and Turner's liminality has a second, parenthetical, relationship. Turner has called liminality "potentiality," a time of pure possibility (*Image* 3). Gramsci links the birth of freedom to this kind of state: "Whether a man can or cannot do a thing has its importance in evaluating what is done in reality. *Possibility* means 'freedom.' The measure of freedom enters into the concept of man" (*Selections* 360, emphasis added). Certainly the full sociological expression of this theme is Emile Durkheim's concept of "escape" as a will to freedom (238-9; cf. Nietzsche, *AntiChrist, Genaelogy*).

[63]For the development of the idea and dynamic of bricolage see: Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: U of Chicago P 1967)

Gramsci's dynamic equilibrium is echoed in Massey's "ever shifting geometry of power and signification" (3) and is adopted and expanded in Michele Foucault's idea of shifting and negotiated spatial entities (*Power* 142). Foucault in turn expands on the ideas of sites of freedom in Gramsci's social theory. Although neither Foucault, Massey nor Gramsci specifically address liminality, they each provide the context in which it is located. Massey's concept of dynamic social structures says that they mediate power and signification; Foucault and Gramsci's realization of hegemony as an always/already incomplete entity contains temporary interstitial space/time. Linked together, these ideas identify the mechanisms of interstitial spaces in contemporary complex society that allow the location of the liminal.

How does this concept of liminality apply to treeplanting? Treeplanting provides an example of just such a liminal construction as I have been exploring. The creation of treeplanting liminal space is partially the result of the movement of labour power and capital. The labour power occupies a specific space/time because of the orientation of capital within several interlocking structures: Brinkman and Associates, the Logging Companies and the Ontario government's organization of Crown Land. By concentrating on the relation between capital and the division of labour, as it is expressed spatially, we can see that planters are a movement of capital across space, a form of investment by the planter in their own labour power. The voluntary relocation of young urbanites betrays a particular class position since they have access to the

capital to move large distances—essentially the ability to purchase their participation in a space/time structure which will return a profit on their investment.

If liminality is created in part through movement, as with the pilgrims studied by Turner (*Image*), or the Peyote rituals of the Huichols Indians studied by Barbara Myerhoff, then can we call this capital, liminal? In some ways, yes, since it is the effect of the movement of capital from the south into the north which accompanies the movement of people, thereby allowing both capital and people to overlap and create liminal space. The real material nature of the bush is not its location as outside the social relations of capital and the division of labour. It is, rather, that treeplanting is the creation of liminality within and because of the flow of capital and the movement of labour. Of course, when these structures come into contact with the Canadian tradition—a tradition with its own material history—of seeing the wilderness as a transformational zone, there is an interlocking, a simultaneity of spaces whose interaction creates liminal space/time. However, it is the activities at treeplanting camp which define the nature of liminality itself. The way in which liminality is constructed out of this spatial reorganization of capital is in the multiple and overlapping space/time regimes that are expressed by treeplanters within these broader structures.

The use of Gramsci's idea of hegemony to understand the fluidity of social structures can be coupled with the earlier bricolage example to promote an

understanding of liminality in praxis. Simon J. Bronner demarcates the realm of

praxis in relation to social relations and cultural products:

> In praxis is the idea that individuals form customary modes of
> behaviour and thought in reaction to their perceptions of life around
> them and in response to the social and economic organizations in which
> they operate. In praxis the view of the social structures and the role of
> history become more important than in performance. (93)

Praxis has a long history. It was first proposed by Aristotle as distinct from *theoria*.

Our modern understanding of the term is the result of Marx's struggle to integrate

historical materialism into the German philosophical tradition embodied by Immanuel

Kant, Gorge Hegel and Ludwig Feuerbach (Marx, *Economic* 108; *German* 121-3).

Here I am concerned with the way that praxis "is concerned with knowledge expressed

through activities in social life" (Bronner 91). Treeplanting as liminality makes the

concept of praxis necessary to understand the way in which the material history of

treeplanting and the wilderness are animated by the activities of planters themselves.

A second example of liminality in praxis appears in Sue Birdwell Beckham's

The American Front Porch: Women's Liminal Space. Here the front porch is still

considered liminal because it is betwixt and between the interior house and the exterior

street. It is also a space which is created based on an alignment of broad and

interconnected social and spatial regimes. The rise of the Industrial Revolution and

the changes in gendered space it entailed, along with the role of architecture as both

reflecting and refracting social organization, are played out on the front porch. The

liminal position of the front porch is dependent upon its ability to coexist alongside

these broader spatial regimes. This is buttressed by its position as betwixt and between (82-84).

My basic argument has been that cultural categories such as liminality only acquire material spatial and temporal existence in the real world when considered as praxis. In the following chapter, I will focus on the way in which liminality is expressed in the spatial organization and social relations at treeplanting camp.

Chapter 5

Liminal Culture: The Creation, Manipulation and Use of Space at Treeplanting

This chapter is concerned with the way in which treeplanters live and work within a liminal environment. As I have argued in Chapter Four it is the praxis of liminality which should concern us. The rejection of the ideal cultural category developed in post-Turner discourse around liminality leads me to redefine the concept as the material study of liminality as praxis in contemporary complex socio-spatial context(s). I do not propose that we have rejected the concept of liminality or that Turner's work is not a major factor in this chapter. My use of the term "contemporary liminality" is a recognition of a need to problematize what liminality means, and more importantly, how it is used in complex societies.

One of the methods for understanding the social organization and culture of planting is to investigate the organization of space. The theoretical perspective of this chapter is that the spatial has the power to organize social relations; a fact which is fundamental to Doreen Massey's cultural geography:

> [W]ithin this dynamic simultaneity which is space, phenomenon may be placed in relationship to one another in such a way that new social effects are provoked. The spatial organization of society, in other words, is integral to the production of the social and not merely its result. (3)

I make no distinction between space and place or space and buildings. All of these divisions are simply the organization of space and each exposes the priorities of the

people who create them (cf. Pocius). As such this investigation explores the larger

spatial divisions of planting camp—the camp/block split. Following this I investigate

the way in which the block is created as a work space. The majority of this chapter is

concerned with the camp. Several paradoxical positions and interpretations of the

camp are presented in order to highlight the way in which heterotopia is the

predominant creation of contemporary liminal space. I will be using Richard Cavell's

definition of heterotopia as a working model; he calls it a "set of relations [in which

we live] that delineate sites which are not irreducible to one another and absolutely not

superimposed in one another" (88). My central concern is to demonstrate the way in

which treeplanting is created out of overlapping and coexisting spaces. This creation

has an internal logic which aims to maintain the liminal position of the camp as

heterotopic and to provide the maximum amount of agency for the individual within

this space. It is an exploration of the construction and use of certain spaces in order

to expose the relations between people, power, and experimentation with social

organization(s).

The Block and the Camp

The primary spatial organizations of treeplanting are the two worlds of the

block and the camp. This division exists despite the apparent contradiction of the

camp being located on the cut-block. An area of planting that I worked on in 1997

brought us close enough that we were putting trees beside the tents at the outskirts of

camp. The incongruity of separating the camp from the block points out the way that spaces are constructed rather than naturally appearing out of environmental imperative(s). The division of block/camp replicates the urban industrial division of work/home. Alexander Wilson, among others, has commented on the fact that urban and industrial development has "fragmented geographies into those devoted to work and leisure, production and recreation" (195). This division has not been value neutral. It has reinforced and deepened class and gender divisions by creating sociological models that obscure the role of the home as a site of production (Oakley), limit women's participation in the greater knowledge economy (Spain), and through this ideology normalizes class relations by obscuring the reality of the twenty-four hour worker (Luxton). This fragmented geography has become one of the primary binary opposition structures of late-industrial capitalism (Jameson) within which work/production/male is set against home/consumption/female. And while I recognize that this model has been challenged by feminist critiques and the experience of wage-working women, the structural force of this material organization of social relations continues.

This model and its concomitant values are partially adopted in treeplanter's division of block/work from camp/home with the higher value being placed on the area of production. For example the Head Cook, Michelle, is placed within the position of their parents (especially their mother) since she occupies the same space as both home and cook.

I think also being a cook. [3 sec. pause] This may be unfair but you're
in a position where you reminding a lot of people of their mothers and
their fathers. Its that kind of nurturing. I mean people really do come
and sniffle to us that they have a cold and what should they do about it,
you know. And I don't mind actually. I kind of like that role but it is
kind of funny. I'm sure there are many other environments in which the
cook is not thought to be a such a nurturing, maternal figure. It's also a
very gendered—most cooks are women, at Brinkman anyway It just so
happens. (June 15)

While Michelle's status in the camp would appear to be elevated by this arrangement,

in reply to my question of what around camp bothers her, she replied:

Oh, when planters come in after their day and tell me how hot it was.
Like I wasn't over a stove in the same clear cut all day long; like I was
just somewhere else. (June 15)

Conversely, the attitudes of the workers in the field would appear to reinforce the

basic argument that I have been outlining. Nick, a second year planter made the

statement:

I love this. You can come back to the camp and you've earned your
rest. You don't have to do anything you don't want to because you
worked a fucking long day out there. (June 2)

Part of the consequences of creating a spatial organization which mimics the

urban model is the reproduction of the class and sexist ideology outlined above. It is,

however, only a partial expression of the complex spaces that are created at planting

camp. Nick is not the expression of male privilege that one might expect. Brinkman's

workforce is made up of an almost equal representation of male and female planters

(see Introduction). Both men and women express Nick's opinion; he just had the

misfortune of being caught on tape. Likewise the status of the cook, while being diminished by being identified within the camp/consumption/female space, paradoxically aquired increaded status because she controls one of the primary structures in camp. It is this kind of overlapping and seemingly contradictory socio-spacial arrangements that constantly occur in the camp. As I argue throughout this thesis, the division of the camp and the block is also important to maintain the quasi-egalitarian project of camp life. The confidentiality of workers' "numbers" (the amount of trees planted) coupled with the general code of conduct by which a planter's numbers are considered private, helps to limit the creation of status based on work performance. By limiting the ability of work to permeate the camp a separate space outside of the priorities of money and the piecework system can be created.

Under the regime of work the home is merely an adjunct, a resting place, whose only value is in the recreation, but not biological reproduction, of the worker By bracketing off the world of work the treeplanting camp has the opportunity to become a heterotopic space. In this space a host of desires and needs interact to create the dynamic simultaneity of social relations and spatial organization which Doreen Massey has identified as being at the heart of people acting in space (157-73). Before I begin my investigation of the camp I will take a closer look at the way in which the block is constructed as a work site.

The Block

In Chapters Two and Three I discussed the techniques of organizing one's land under the heading "macro-level techniques." Here I will broaden this discussion by displaying the interrelation between the gaze and jargon (as a form of discourse) which is used to construct a work site (Foucault, *Birth* xii). The use of the loquacious gaze is a material reorganization of the landscape which is necessary in order for the land to "make sense" to the planter. It is a project which Gerald Pocius has recognized in Calvert as the transformation of "unworkable space into specific place" (61). The gaze and jargon are used in treeplanting to create a semiotic field which overlays the actual landscape and reorders it into a work site. In the work site some things have a functional meaning and are exposed within the textual field, while others have no functional meaning and, therefore, literally do not exist.

The second half of this section will concentrate on the way in which the block, as the regime of work, does not replicate the urban industrial model. The urban industrial model is the division of work from play/leisure that occurred during the Industrial Revolution when the two spheres became separate space/time regimes; the crossing of these boundaries is an act accompanied by regulation, ritual and social codes of conduct (Wilson 195). Prior to the Industrial Revolution work was a period of labour within which play, leisure, and bodily activity overlapped and were interwoven (Rybczynski 43). With treeplanting, piecework and liminality recreate this system of labour through individual agency within the canon of work technique.

The Creation of the Work Site

It is a common trend to use the metaphor of reading[64] to understand the way

people interpret and interact with a range of objects in our physical environment

(Young, *Bodylore*, *Whose*). A study of the Pinelands in New Jersey by Mary Hufford

provides the basis for Kent C. Ryden's exploration of the metaphor of reading the

land:

> If environmental literacy enables one to read one's surroundings as if
> they were a text, that text must be made up of intelligible words,
> sentences, and paragraphs. The folk sense of place provides these units
> of meaning . . . " what appears to be monotonous woodlands, to
> outsiders are teeming with categorical forms in the eyes of the
> woodsman. . . 'islands', 'sloughs' and 'bottom' are landscape motifs,
> grammatical units in the language of those who read the environment."
> Each folk region encodes a language all its own. . . private and difficult
> to learn. . . . (72-3)

A problem created by the metaphor of "reading" when it is applied to the physical

world is that it promotes an overly passive role on the part of the woodsperson. The

relationship between nature and the woodsperson is equal and itself passive, and the

land is posited not only as the text but also as the author of the text. What is needed

is a rejection of the underlying passivity implied in the model of "reading" in favour

of a model that exposes the collusion between seeing, language and power. Michel

---

[64]The history of "reading" and the reader as a category in literary criticism and semiotics is long and complex. By "reading" I mean the place of the reader in relation to the text. Twentieth century literary theory, especially Romanticism, High Modernism and New Criticism concentrated on the author or the text and purposefully obscured the reader. Reader Response theory restored the reader, however s/he was often an ideal subject with little relationship to actual readers (cf. Richter 1158-71). It is this theoretic tendency which still affects folklorists when they use the reading metaphor.

Foucault has provided just such a model in his exploration of "the gaze" in his

archaeology of the birth of the clinic (ix-xix).

The gaze of the treeplanter like the gaze of the 19th century clinical physicians

in Foucault's study, is "a new alliance. . . forged between words and things, enabling

one *to see* and *to say* (*Birth* xii, Italics in Original). The position which Ryden and

Hufford propose is analogous to that of the eighteenth century philosophers, Descartes

and Malebranche for whom "to see was to perceive" (*Birth* xiii). For Foucault, the

birth of the gaze, however, represented a different form of seeing:

> At the end of the eighteenth century . . . the density of things close in
> upon themselves, have powers of truth that they owe not to light, but to
> the slowness of the gaze that passes over them, around them, and
> gradually into them, bringing them nothing more than its own light.
> The residence of truth in the dark centre of things is linked,
> paradoxically, to this sovereign power of the empirical gaze that turns
> their darkness into light. (xiii-xiv)

Under the tutelage of a crew boss a planter learns to gaze upon their land and

reorganize it according to the priorities of their work. In talking about seeing and

space I am not using a metaphor. The gaze is a technique with material and spatial

consequence. It is the actual reorganization of space, the material creation of a work

site. The gaze acts as a filter through which important features of the landscape

become visible while others are made insignificant. In 1997 a planter spent an hour

working on his land unaware that he shared his space with a bear. Other planters have

claimed to not see any sign of the first bloom of the wild orchids that are plentiful in

our work area. On the next day of work they returned to camp amazed at their

abundance once they started looking for them.[65]

The gaze classifies and orders knowledge and creates an epistemology which

the planters call "the block." The creation of this epistemology relies on the interaction

between seeing and saying, between the gaze and a discourse. Foucault traces the rise

of the gaze and the birth of rationalistic discourse in the clinic. In treeplanting the

discourse which is allied with the reordering gaze is twinned with jargon. Jargon is

the antithesis of objective, transparent and passive language. Its purpose, as a

discourse, is the creation of a shared subjectivity. It is fundamentally a reflexive

discourse which exposes itself, its purpose and its efficacy as part of its overall project

of using the signifier to comment on the signified. This is why jargon is appropriate

to the work context: jargon actively creates the possibility of work by opening up the

signified to a sign system of economic exploitation. In so doing, jargon is a language

that acts like work itself, a "separate and specialized system of things" (Williamson

36). Jargon reinscribes each thing to a place based on its value to the work process.

For example the word "tree" denotes not any tree but the one that you will be

planting. All other trees are either: naturals, residuals, slash, dead heads, a tree-line,

etc. Tellingly there is no word for a small poplar tree on your land. Having no

importance as either help, hindrance or an economic factor it is neither seen nor talked

---

[65]The use of the gaze in urban work settings would, theoretically, be less pronounced because the built environment is a unified field whose purpose is work.

about. The gaze and jargon begin to overlap the physical landscape creating a

working environment which can be exploited and communicated. The quote below is

a hypothetical example built on my knowledge as a planter of the jargon of landscape

in treeplanting:

> I want you to head down this *finger* (long narrow piece of land), off to
> your right there will be a *pocket* (an irregular expanse of plantable
> ground formed by the natural tree line) . *Bag-up heavy* (put lots of
> trees in your bags) so you don't *cut yourself off* (plant all the land in the
> front while ground in the *pocket* remains unplanted); *pound* (plant
> quickly) the *kak* (difficult ground) at the back and get back out to the
> front quickly so you can get to the *cream* (easily planted ground) and
> move on.

Under the spatial reorganization of the loquacious gaze the "clear-cut" or "cut-block"

(the work site of the logging industry) becomes the "block," the work site of

treeplanters. The gaze, jargon and the constellation of work techniques each interact

respectively on the visual, discursive and material level to create a text of the land that

serves the purpose of resource exploitation.

Play and Work

It is one of the many paradoxes of treeplanting that the tripartite force which

organizes the block into a zone of work still retains interstices within a loose

space/time structure which allow for forms of carnivalesque play to occur. As I

outlined in Chapter Two piecework creates a certain amount of freedom in that the

individual is responsible for her/his own productivity. As such many codes of conduct

that would be unacceptable under an hourly wage structure are common in

treeplanting. The first example of carnivalesque activities is a direct result of

piecework.

At breakfast on June ninth the camp was treated to the following announcement

about our planting assignment:

> This area has been described as having more than its fair share of rock
> [laughter]. This area has been described as, perhaps, not appropriate for
> site-prep equipment[66] [laughter]. This area has been referred to,
> euphemistically, as a "shit box" [loud laughter]. (JL, June 6)

The land was so bad that planters were put into teams of four to keep their moral up,

so bad that planters who averaged $150 to $200 a day made eighty dollars. Forty

dollars of that total was the result of Brinkman paying for time spent in travel.

Planters on this day knew that they would not make any money and so they played.

One of the most memorable creations was two giant "spider webs" or "cat's-cradles"

made out of flagging tape (see Figure 24). It took four people approximately one hour

to make them. When speaking with Annabel about the creation she said, "It was fun

on a shitty day." Flagging tape is a favourite medium for creative play on slow days.

Super-Dave spent the better part of an afternoon climbing a dead birch tree in order to

tie a large piece of vibrant blue flagging tape to it. "Sometimes," reported Super-

Dave, "its just crazy shit like this. . ." (June 14). Other planters have organized swims

in a nearby lake, torn down bear hunting blinds, made baskets from grapevine, carved

---

[66]"Site-prep. equipment" are the machines that are used to prepare the soil. In 1997 this was a bräcke machine.

Figure 24. Cat's cradle made out of flagging tape and strung between two slash piles

figures from wood, made daisy chains–almost any activity that one could think of

performing with the limited materials on hand. Many of these projects are creative

and end up being shared with other planters. Some activities, like Malcom's cross-

dressing depicted in Figure 25, are simply comic displays that relieve the boredom and

frustration of the job for himself and others. The skills displayed are a social as well

as a deeply personal way of spending time on the block.

A second series of carnivalesque activities involves expressive activities on

productive days, when the canon of work technique would normally direct planters to

work hard and make as much money as possible. Activities on these days are those

that do not interfere with a planter's ability to make money. The most common and

memorable of these is planting semi-clothed. Johnny G. describes one incident that he

was witness to:

> Naked planting was something that we had a lot of fun doing for a
> while. Back when the ground was really clean and there wasn't a lot of
> slash and you could move around quickly. I remember specifically in
> Cochran one day walking out on the cut block with the company
> representative working with us and his boss, somebody who was fairly
> up there in the corporate hierarchy, and we're just touring the plant with
> these two guys and suddenly these two women come blasting up the
> corridor[67]–just bags and boots. It was a real shocker for these guys.
> We just turned around [laughter]. No apologies for sure. It's really all
> about doing your job. You've got your hard hat on and your steel toed
> boots you've met the requirements. (June 10)

[67]A corridor is a form of site preparation where the slash and other ground cover is pushed into rows oriented from the front of the piece to the back thus creating a corridor of clear ground to plant in.

Figure 25. Carnivalesque activity on the block as Malcolm
dons a red velvet dress. Photographer: Andrew Forester, 1996.

Johnny G.'s comment about "touring the plant" raises an important point of qualification in the scheme that I have been creating. A researcher can see the shift from wilderness to work site created by the loquacious gaze at work in the activities and narratives of greeners and less experienced planters since they are engaged in the learning process. Experienced planters are more likely to have entered a routine in relation to treeplanting where the block and the activities that take place there are more naturalized. Johnny G.'s off-hand comment about "touring the plant" is one example of word play in which a plant is used for the treeplanting context. It is structurally, however, an accurate portrayal of the environment. As Nancy, another experienced planter pointed out to me: "We're in the middle of a clear cut. Its pretty bloody ugly. There's just no way around it. I don't call this the bush. This is a logging industry. We're in the middle of a big industry" (June 20).

Another kind of carnivalesque behaviour on the block for women has been to work topless. Lys describes her own experience working topless on the block in 1997

> It's really nice to develop a comfort with it [nudity]. Planting topless.
> [John: Oh did you do that this year?] Yeah. I didn't do it last year. I
> wanted to do it this year because Nancy had done it. . . . Nancy came
> onto my land and I was like, "let's do it, lets do it." And Nancy was
> like, "yes I was thinking that too but Robin's taken her pants off and I
> think that's rather odd. . . . And I was like, "fuck that!" . . . . But I
> took off my shirt anyway. Apparently that was the day that Ryan [the
> checker] told Malcolm he should tell us to put our shirts back on. So
> Malcolm came onto our land and was like, "Ok, make sure you have
> sun-screen on" [laughter]. (June 19)

There are myriad personal reasons why women and men experiment with social

nudity; two factors accompany nudity at treeplanting camp: deep play and carnival. In

many ways the concept of deep play (Geertz 1974) is similar to carnival in the way

that it extends play into other areas of life, the negotiation of risk, and the implicit

challenge to social codes and mores. In the case of carnival we can see the

foregrounding of the body as a heteroglossic expression which displays multiple

categories of meaning: worker, gender, politics and play, to name a few. The ability

of women and men to experiment with public nudity at treeplanting is part of the

dynamic of what Turner has identified as the "potentiality" of liminal space; the idea

that liminality is not what is "going to be" but "what may be" (1979: 3). For the

person who takes their clothes off nudity is an experiment, an instrumental exercise.

It is a search for the answer to Turner's "what may be." In this play with meaning and

identity it is a form of festival and an important part of the culture of contemporary

liminality.

The Camp

The almost primal feelings that planters have regarding the camp are difficult

to express. Much of the emotion is a response to the clear cut in which they live (see

Figure 26). For those who have never experienced one, a clear cut is the absolute

destruction of a coherent, natural order. I have struggled to design an illustration that

would evoke some of the emotions that a clear-cut can create in a planter. It is not so

Figure 26. View of the "Cariboo cut" camp and clear cut.

much that people can not understand destruction, rather it is the process of understanding the evidence of a natural order which is embedded within the scene of destruction which lies at the heart of understanding a clear-cut. Although the comparison is slightly misplaced I suggest that the reader look at a picture of Hiroshima or Dresden after the bombing of these cities. Note the fact that it is both the scale of the destruction, and your ability to know amidst the rubble what has been lost, which create the sense of sorrow, awe and a sickening vertigo. It is curious that when the destruction of these cities is displayed one rarely sees a photo spread showing "before and after" pictures. It is as if they are unnecessary. A lone wall, the shell of a building, one piece of lumber allow the viewer to reconstruct the miles of roads, houses, shops, gardens, and people that make up a city. It is the action of recreating these places from the broken landscape of the photo that emotionally engages the viewer. Moving through a clear-cut is somehow like this. Johnny G. describes his experience of travelling through one of the largest clear-cuts in Ontario during the 1997 planting season:

> Yesterday is a good example of driving into an area that is just a cut-over and driving through an immense, immense piece of cut ground. Immense enough that people got out of the vans at the end of the drive and were quite thunder struck by the sheer enormity of the cut. And suddenly you're in the middle of nowhere, four hours from the city and well, "here we are, it's home, let's make it something." And by the time the tents go up and the cook bus goes up and everything's in place it feels ok again. (June 10)

Yi-Fu Tuan has pointed out that "the built environment clarifies social roles

and relations. People know better how they ought to behave when the arena is

humanly designed rather than nature's raw stage" (102). He has also pointed out the

way in which the creation of buildings is, in part, the creation of place out of space—it

is the creation of a home place (56). The investigation of home place has often

focused on it as a resting place. Below I will investigate the way in which the camp

is a form of resting place. However, I agree with Massey that the concentration of the

home place as a static location is a romantic notion created by male authors who do

not recognize the labour that occurs in this resting place (122). This argument is at

the heart of why I have chosen to call the camp a site of non-work rather than leisure

time or play. It is more precise to see the camp as a heterotopic site. Richard Cavell

defines heterotopia as a "set of relations [in which we live] that delineate sites which

are not irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposed in one another"

(88). Like Bakhtin's theory of dialogism in Dostoevsky's novels (*Problems*),

heterotopia is the ability of separate and distinct units of socio-space/time to coexist.

The situation appears paradoxical through conflict based models,[68] however, Cavell's

reading of the Canadian embassy in Washington, DC, suggests that it is possible to

create multiple and overlapping space/time regimes.

---

[68]The most common conflict based model is Marx's historical model of thesis, antithesis, synthesis. Marxists would suggest that issues of dominance and control preclude heterotopic space. Clearly post-Gramsci investigations of hegemony suggest that simple conflict based models are no longer useful in understanding contemporary issues of power.

The temporary nature of the camp, its fragility, its multifunctionality, the multiple uses that it is put to, and the multifaceted individuals which make up its population ensure that the camp remains a contested and heterotopic entity. Heterotopia is a distinctly contemporary liminal orientation to space/time since it is the rejection of scale and static monolithic social structures. As such it is the very mechanism by which Turner's chief attribute of liminal space, "potentiality," can be realized. In many ways the heterotopic nature of the camp mirrors the relative freedom from work norms created on the block under the space/time organization called piecework.

It is the construction of the buildings that make up the camp that creates Johnny G's sense of "ok." However, that sense also derives from the kind of buildings that are assembled, coupled with the fact that they represent the roles and relations of treeplanting. In Chapter Six I will outline the way that identity is expressed in the built environment, but it is important to note here that not all of the shelters which treeplanters sometimes use create the sense of "ok." Atco trailers (modified tractor trailers for bunk houses pictured in Figure 27) and lodges (planting contracts in which planters stay in tourist lodges) are not considered to represent treeplanting. Both forms of housing are disparaged in planters' narratives and are considered to be an importation of foreign work ideals that does not reflect the occupational identity of treeplanters. The built environment is, therefore, an expression of the culture of

Figure 27. Atco Trailers at "Mile 82" camp.

planting. It is not culture itself but a cultural product, one whose construction, use and existence tell us a great deal about the nature of treeplanting and planters themselves.

The Work Camp and the Exploded House

JL's camp is made up of five primary buildings: cook bus, dining tent, showers, drying tent and shitters. Support structures are those which are either necessary adjuncts to the main buildings or whose primary purpose is not the sheltering of people. These include: vehicles ("white Tilden vans"[69], trucks); the "reefer" (the trailer that trees are stored in); and the "walk-in" (an insulated refrigerated small storage trailer for semi-perishable food items). The third level of built structures are the personal items that a planter brings with them. These are generally confined to one or two tents, a vehicle and sometimes a camping trailer. All of buildings are mass produced "tent" structures, a form whose strength comes from an assembled skeleton frame which is then covered in a weather proof skin, usually a specially shaped polyester tarp. Two main designs are utilized. The dining tent and showers are Quonset hut, while most of the personal tents are based on the free-standing geodesic dome model that replaced the "A" frame design in the early 1980s. Two designs fall outside this area: the drying tent is an octagonal, flat walled tent with a peaked roof

---

[69] These vans are rented from the franchise car rental company "Tilden" and like the Atco trailers and the Paloma hot water tanks, they take their name from the company that produced them. Other examples of this include "Windsurfer," "Walkman" and the famous "Kleenex."

whose skeleton and skin is not integral to the walls; the shitters are a highly specialized shape closely resembling the traditional "outhouse" form.

Like the modern home, the camp is supplied with purified water, electricity, propane for cooking, and hot water for showers. Providing these services are a host of machines: one generator, one water pump, one water purification unit, two "Palomas" (high efficiency water heaters), and canisters of propane. The machines themselves are supported by supplies of diesel, gasoline and oil, while the lines between these units and the structures that they support are linked by tubing, wires and junction boxes.

The growth of consumer products, the expansion of road systems into the remote wilderness, and the general improvement of materials for bush working has meant a shift in the modern bush camp away from its woods working predecessor. Notably absent from the treeplanting camp is a workshop for making tools and repairing aspects of the camp. Parts for trucks, tarps for temporary repairs or even a new tent can be purchased and brought to camp within twenty-four hours. This has meant that while the camp appears to be similar to the historic bush camp, its construction out of disposable, ready-made materials, gives it an invisible connection to the urban environment several hundred kilometres away.

Unlike the woods working camps during the lumber boom years, or the early years of treeplanting in British Columbia, JL's camp is assembled rather than constructed. It is essentially imported onto the site that it will occupy. Small items

such as bench legs, a water barrel table or a wind break may be fashioned from local materials. These displays of resourcefulness and craftsmanship are rare, however, and the number of people skilled enough to create such items is small.

A metaphor for the camp configuration might be an "exploded house." By this I suggest that the camp can be seen not as a random collection of buildings but rather as possessing a unity of purpose and design. The camp is constructed out of units, much like Henry Glassie's observation of the way the Virginian house builder imagined the houses he built (*Folk* 119). The camp is, however, a house exploded. The exterior walls of the house which present its elements to the outside world as an ordered whole have disappeared. Its rooms with their purposes, order and ideology are scattered across a large piece of ground and its "guts"—the wiring, plumbing and other mechanical elements that allow the modern house to function—are freed from their hiding place within the walls and exposed for everyone to see.

Treeplanting camp, understood as the tearing apart of the modern house into its constituent units, is more than an exploration of the analogous functionality of units (shitter for toilet; cook bus for kitchen) it is the dismemberment of the ideological discourse of the modern home itself. The rest of this chapter will explore the various meanings which the camp and the buildings hold due to their configuration and their use. Here I will address the way in which this exploded house contains an internal consistency, a consistency which carries with it ideological implications for the way in

which the house has come to be seen as a structuring principle which both reflects and creates social relations.

Henry Glassie and James Deetz have traced the changes which the colonial and post-colonial house have undergone in Virginia and the eastern seaboard, respectively. For both men the house is a material testament to the material and social changes that affected the eastern Unites States over two hundred years ago. Glassie is interested in the way that an ideal house is transposed into the material realm and the way that these two worlds represent deep structures that control the generation of meaning on both the individual and cultural levels (*Folk*). Deetz presents a less complex understanding of the building, but he too is interested in the way that material changes are more than a causal relationship based on a crude model of material determinism. For him, the building is a way of reading the interrelation of the personal, cultural and material. As two pioneers of material culture studies Deetz and Glassie opened the debate on the manner in which things carry meanings, how these meanings change and the mechanisms by which they occur. One of their chief insights is that certain changes in house types are a response to new meaning generating binary oppositions. The binary opposition that I will explore here is the rise of the individual and the increase in the idea of privacy reflected in house types. Glassie has found evidence for this in the creation of "transition zones," areas in which a visitor is within the house and not yet in a room (168; 182). Matthew Johnson traces the same trend in the increase of specialized rooms which make a distinction

between production, consumption, and rooms designated for individual use (the

exercising of privacy) (169; 177-8). Johnson also explores the interrelationship

between the house, individual and society:

> [T]he house served as the stage not just for the redefinition of
> relationships between people but also for the reformation of the people
> themselves. . . . If the household was a little State it was also a little
> body as well, writ large. (157)

The explosion of the house on the cut block of treeplanting retains the basic

modern specialization of units: cook bus/kitchen, dining tent/dining room,

shitters/toilet, showers/bathroom. However, the dissection of the house destroys the

internal logic of the modern home with its ideological project of both reflecting and

creating the individual within the nuclear family, what Leslie Bella has called

"familism ideology" (12; 17). Glassie also talks about the way that the house is a

testament to order and control in part because the maintenance of boundaries is the

construction of order itself[70]. In contrast, planting camp is not able to maintain the

order of the modern home and the ideology that it represents since the exploded units

exist only in rough relation to each other; its bonds of control—being stretched—are

ineffective. For example, the oppositional pair interior/exterior is impossible to

maintain since planters must move within "nature's raw stage" each time they exit a

structure (Tuan 102). Likewise, the "transition zones" by which the modern house

---

[70]See also: Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books, 1970).

constructs one aspect of privacy is completely lacking; one is either in or out of a tent. The use of the porch, entry ways, or sitting rooms by which the modern house mediates the movement of people from the outside to the inside and public to private space do not exist at planting camp. Shelters are defined as public and multipurpose where one is either inside or outside. Within the tents the organization of space is specialized only insofar as it has its antecedents with structures that one could recognize in the home. The correlation is, however, ineffective since all activities in the tents at camp, from showering, to eating, to defecating take place in a public space.

The change in the housing of the workers, the "style" of treeplanting, as JL has called it, is fundamental in understanding the social relations that exist. The exploded house that is the camp is the explosion of the house as an ideological discursive field; it is the deconstruction of the individual by removing the material order which supports the spatial/cultural complex that allow him/her to exist in the first place.[71] Accompanying its destruction is the creation of a new order--the treeplanter in contemporary liminal space. It is the spatial regime of treeplanting which helps to construct this individual.

---

[71] For a fuller exploration of the spacial construction of the autonomous individual see: Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vantage Books, 1970). John Urry and Derek Gregory, "Introduction." *Social Relations and Spacial Structures*, Ed. Derek Gregory and John Urry (New York: St. Martin's P, 1985) 1-8.

In using the term regime I risk creating the impression of a homogeneous space/social tyranny. As I have argued, treeplanting space is a heterotopic spatial organization. The destruction of the house, piecework as a wage system, and the potentiality of liminal space create a regime of independent sites. These sites are necessarily limited and exist only insofar as their existence does not threaten the integrity of other sites—or the industrial unit in general. For example, the creation of a male space whose boundaries are maintained by the denigration and objectification of women would not coexist with communal showers. This structure based on the internal logic of heterotopia I call a regime. Within this regime there exists a broad scope of individual agency to choose the sites that one wants to participate in. There are fewer sites which coexist on the block than in camp owing to wage work being the dominant field. In relation to the camp I will look at the way a large group of planters adopt the communal shower to create a "society of the baths" while a minority of the camp choose to reject this site by only using the showers in a utilitarian manner (Foucault, *Foucault* 251-2). It is the dynamic of agency within structure, its scope and configuration, that accounts for the diversity in treeplanting camp. It is the purpose of the rest of this chapter to explore the various spatial sites within the regime of the camp.

The Edifices of Work

I have proposed earlier that the camp can be viewed as an adjunct to the field of work if one chooses to consider work as the primary attribute of treeplanting. Although the emic understanding of treeplanting is that the sphere of work and the camp are equal and necessary halves that make up the whole "treeplanting experience," it is useful to see the camp within its semantic genealogy—work camp. According to this interpretation the camp is there to reproduce the worker's labour power from day to day. Implied within this system, the camp is an expression of management rather than worker's priorities. I will address the former point first.

The reproduction of labour has been an issue for Marxists from the beginning. However, the implications were not fully grasped until the work of Louis Althusser attempted to design a schema for the reproduction of the worker based on the activities of ideological state apparatuses (127-85). Although not directly addressing the material life of the worker, Althusser's work demonstrated the construction of the individual, with the implication that this activity is necessary and directed. It would be the work of feminist Marxist sociologists to expose the relationship between the home, the material production of the worker and the ideologies of class, capital and gender (Luxton; Oakley). Although treeplanting camp is not the complete reproduction of the worker since children are not born and nurtured to become

treeplanters themselves[72]—or more specifically to replicate the same subject positions vis-a-vis gender and class as their parents—the camp is still the site where the worker carries out the necessary material functions to be able to rise again the next morning and sell their labour power anew. As I outlined earlier this creates the view of the camp as a home and a site of consumption and leisure. As John Urry has outlined: "[The] production of wage-labour is necessarily spatially located and constrained and attachment to 'place' is of particular significance" (33). When the "place" of the worker overlaps with their work site, the organization of capital and wage-labour become more complex and interdependent.

Viewed in this way the structures of the camp inscribe the priorities of work at every turn. The communal aspect of all the buildings with their wide open spaces is a fiscally efficient structure since partitioning adds to the complexity and cost of the building. Likewise, the organization of the camp is based on environmental and utilitarian criteria rather than on some sort of counter-hegemonic principle. The use of prefabricated tents, for example, is simple efficiency since they are relatively light weight, easily transported and a camp construction based on units is a necessity for the same camp to be adaptable to a variety of terrain types.

---

[72]In 1997, four children were part of the camp; in 1998 this number rose to five. Three of these children have spent every summer of their lives in a bush camp and in 1998 the oldest (nine years old) worked one day as a treeplanter. Although the sample is small, children are participants in the camp and at Brinkman the employing of parents is encouraged with a program of splitting the cost of child-care between the company and the workers. See Figure 28 for a depiction of a parent and child at planting camp.

Figure 28. Hannah and her father, Rob the tree-runner.

The individual planter under this regime is a worker twenty-four hours a day

and any activities that are not related to work or the reproduction of work are

secondary, outside of the space-time work structure and therefore, elements of leisure.

In this model the songs, stories and dancing of planters are analogous to folklore

collected from loggers earlier in the century in which the individual was nothing but a

worker until they started singing; then they were nothing but a singer.[73] The early

model these folklorists followed was that the logging camp provided the harsh and

isolated conditions necessary to forge a community which would create leisure time

activities replicating the lore of supposed folk societies.

The study of leisure time activities in this manner leads one to an organic

model of social relations. Treeplanting's bacchic parties, which are inspired by hard

work, drugs and alcohol are relegated to a functionalist "safety valve" analysis in

which the festivities are allowed to occur in order to release the frustrations that are a

product of long hours of work (Abrahams and Bauman 206). In this model, work

retains its place as primary, an unquestioned and unexplored category, while leisure is

a therapeutic exercise. Planters talk about the need for a "blow-out," a "hard-core

party" and a "drunk." Communalism and festival are only tactics within an overall

[73]A cross representation of this orientation of collecting can be found in the following texts. In each case it is the leisure time activities of the workers that are collected while the work itself is ignored. William Main Doerflinger, *Shantymen and Shantyboys: Songs of the Sailor and Lumberman* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951). Edith Fowke, *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods* (Austin: Published for American Folklore Society by The U of Texas P, 1970). Frank Rickaby, *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1926).

strategy by Brinkman to accomplish what Michael Burawoy has called the "obscuring and securing of surplus value" (1985: 271).

Although my analysis is cursory, there is some validity to this view. An investigation of the nonwork aspects of treeplanting threatens to obscure the real power relations that are present in this occupation. One example of this is that like the camp/block dichotomy, the supervisor has a duel personality. JL is the competent. matter-of-fact, manager who works hard to create a good environment for his planters and to put their needs on par with the business end of planting. JL has also been given a nickname for those times when he puts the business needs ahead of the planters, when he foregrounds the work side of planting, and when he is exercising his authority in a naked manner. At these times he is called "Icepick." Of course, he is only called Icepick to his face by those people with equal status. Johnny G., a fellow supervisor, crew boss and independent contractor, called him Icepick in front of other people. JL is extremely uncomfortable with the nickname and the implications that go along with it, ruthless, aggressive, uncompromising, capitalist, since he presents himself as a fellow worker rather then as a boss. And while I do not want to be unfair to anyone, the analysis of the camp as a work site does expose collusion between the workers and the company whereby the nonwork aspects of the camp contribute to the economic side of treeplanting[74]. The concept of collusion is helpful since it avoids the

---

[74]See Patrick Joyce, "The Historical Meanings of Work: An Introduction." *The Historical Meanings of Work*, Ed. Patrick Joyce (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987) 1-30. Among other aspects, he outlines the contemporary study of workers and owners in terms of collusion between the two groups rather than the Marxist

fallacy of intentionality which leads to improbable pronouncements on the power of coercion by management and owners. One planter, for example, felt that treeplanting companies specifically hire young students because, not knowing their rights, they are easy to exploit. Planters are happy to see the camp, in part, as their reward for a hard day's work, while management is equally happy to find that the potentially radical creation of communal social relations is a benefit to company profits. Work is not the primary characteristic of the camp. It is one site in the heteroglossic spatial organization of the camp. The exploration of this site exposes the way in which the camp structure recreates the worker by providing the materials necessary to sell their labour again the next day. It also highlights the way in which the camp allows for the creation of leisure activities that do not threaten the basic construction of the individual as worker. In contrast to the argument that the camp is an edifice of work is the point that was made earlier that the broader division between the block and the camp is meant to partially insulate the camp from becoming the more homogeneous work-camp. It is recognized, however, that to ignore aspects of the camp as work would be to normalize power relations between the company and the planters, relations which are not always to the planters benefit. Sometimes the camp is only an extension of the block and Icepick is the supervisor.

---

idea of class war as an essential quality of class relations. Although obvious political issues are raised by such an inquiry, it is necessary to recognize both aspects of the relationship in order to create a nuanced understanding of the complex interactions between the two groups.

Constructing Communitas

Turner has defined "communitas" as an affective experience, one which is existential but contains some defining characteristics.

> Essentially, communitas is a relationship between concrete, historical, idiosyncratic individuals. These individuals are not segmented into roles and status but confront one another rather in the manner of Martin Buber's "I and Thou." Along with this direct, immediate, and total confrontation of human identities, there tends to go a model of society as a homogeneous, unstructured communitas, whose boundaries are ideally coterminous with those of the human species. (Turner, *Ritual* 131-2)

As important as its basic characteristics is the distinction that communitas is an experience that only occurs under specific situations:

> Communitas emerges where social structure is not. . . Communitas breaks through in the interstices of structure, in liminality; at the edges of structure, in marginality . . . [it] is accompanied by experiences of unprecedented potency. (*Ritual* 126 and 128)

The problem with Turner's idea of communitas is not the expression of the event itself but rather the implication that the conditions which liminality provides necessitates the emergence of communitas. The experience of treeplanting is that communitas is a constructed reality, a kind of project, whose positive nature is fragile and not guaranteed within the open-ended nature of liminal (and contemporary liminal) space-time.

The construction of contemporary liminality and communitas is one of the things which is built in the group effort to construct the camp itself. As Chris (C). a francophone planter from Montreal with six years of planting experience, observes:

C: I think, and this is very personal, but I think that I'm part of this culture but I create it too. I think so. . . .
J: So you think that we, all the planters, build this place, just by being here?
C: Well, I was talking about me. If you're talking about the under-culture [the treeplanting culture], the values, musicians, community—we are living in a community. Something [community] which is very rare in our time too. (May 20)

During the course of a broad and far-ranging discussion Chris explored his personal relationship with and within the larger treeplanting culture. He also talked about the different factions in any treeplanting camp, but he kept returning to the idea expressed in the quote above that it is the labours of individuals that creates the community and that this work is expressed by the building of the camp. Like Johnny G. he saw the camp and the treeplanting community as a construction out of nothing.

Three specific activities, centring on the camp, help to create community and its more egalitarian form, communitas: the mobility of the camp which creates the use of the metaphor "tribe" as an emic approximation of treeplanting life; the actual construction of the camp by the workers; and the maintenance of the camp by a group of people who "help out."

The "Tribe"

The camp as a self-contained, mobile and temporary entity, which moves over space in order to access and exploit resources and moves again in the pursuit of other areas of exploitation, creates a common metaphor of treeplanters—that they are a tribe.

In leaving treeplanting to attend a folklore conference in which I was to present some

of my research, a planter half jokingly reminded me of my responsibility in

representing treeplanters to outsiders: "Take the wisdom of our tribe to yours," he said.

The idea of a young urbanite using the referent "tribe" as part of his understanding of

social structure is not naivety, since the activities of the treeplanter overlap with the

cultural construction of tribal life, the archetypal construction being the Plains Indians

of North America. I am not arguing that planters constitute a tribe but that they

constitute the culturally accepted (exoteric) idea of a tribe. This idea is expressed not

only in treeplanting but in other aesthetics, notably body modification such as "modern

primitives" or "tribalism" (Vale; cf. Wojcik).[75] "Tribalism," like orientalism in the 19th

century is a construction and consumption of "the other," a process of appropriation

rather then investigation (Said). The process of consumption is less noticeable in

treeplanting since it is a definition of equivalency rather than a clear aesthetic and

ideological position. The equivalency is that tribes are mobile, primitive, resourceful,

egalitarian, and based on primary relationships—attributes which planters believe that

they share. The experience of a caravan of sixty people moving across a barren

landscape in search of an area of extractable resources which will support them until

they move onto the next area is the experiential heart of this equivalency. The

---

[75]In the Canadian context "tribalism" was widely popularized in 1992 by a ten episode television series called "Millennium: Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World." A major sponsor of the series was The Body Shop franchise. They cross-merchandised a new line of bodycare products with the "tribal" theme of the series. This act further disseminated the term.

movement over space and the construction of home become the material evidence for the assertion that planters form a tribe. The relationship to the creation of communitas lies in the way the tribal metaphor is used to not only understand the social relations of treeplanting but also as a template for the construction of appropriate social relations. Barbara Myerhoff, in her study of ritual voyages to the peyote huts of the Huichols Indians, describes travel as a process of transformation which eliminates "a sense of time, thus allowing the Huichols to perceive themselves as a single people, despite the profound difference in their past and present lifestyles" (226). I would be overstepping my argument to claim that the process of travel is a sacred journey for the treeplanter, but as Johnny G.'s earlier quote suggests, the experience of moving through a clear-cut can create the feeling of entering a separate and different world, one which will call on different skills and social relations. One response to this challenge is the metaphor of the tribe as an idealized, cultural construction of communitas.

Camp Construction

The second way in which communitas is constructed is through the actual building of the camp. The first camp that planters will come to has already been set-up earlier by staff and some experienced planters. JL's camp moves at least once per season because the area around it will be planted. It is in this move that the camp changes and becomes an expression, not only of treeplanting as a whole, but also of

the labour of individuals working together. This is not to say that those who set-up

the initial camp do not take pride in their work. But like my earlier argument

concerning the culture of the camp being the expression of the largest group, the initial

camp is constructed by a small group of people whose labours and accomplishments

stay within their group. Rarely does an expression of creativity, such as the

construction of a stone base for the wood stove in 1997, elicit praise. In 1997 the

expression of appreciation began a search for the maker who then received recognition

for his/her efforts. However, since much of the camp is prefabricated and the

"competency" involved in its construction involves the limited "grammar" of knowing

how to assemble the structures, individual performances of skill in an already

assembled camp is not readily apparent (Glassie, *Folk* 19-22). The moving of the

camp allows people to understand the construction of the camp, to participate in the

competence necessary to tear-down and set up the camp. The move also creates a

group work environment where the display of skill and the creation of a home place

also creates communitas.

In order to accomplish the tasks of "take-down" (taking down the camp) and

"set-up" (setting up the camp) everyone is divided into work crews. Work on set-up

and tear-down is unpaid labour, a situation which some planters strongly dislike, while

the majority see it as an onerous, though necessary aspect of treeplanting.[76] The crews

---

[76]Antecedents for unpaid labour can be found in the unpaid Sunday maintenance work in late 19th century factories in England (Schollier 249).

are led by a supervisor who is familiar with this area. Each crew is responsible for

one unit of the camp: dining tent, cook bus, shower tent, shitters and water-and-power.

Figures 29 and 30 show planters and staff at work dismantling the dining tent. There

is also a crew which is in charge of loading the disassembled camp into the various

vehicles. Staff and the supervisor assign each planter to a work group which is

responsible for taking down and setting up one unit. The method by which the crews

are selected demonstrates some underlying forces in the camp.

The level of skill necessary to take down or set up most of the tents is

minimal; therefore there is little division of labour between skilled (experienced

planters or people who have previous training) and unskilled (greeners or less "handy"

people) planters. This makes the assignment of people to work crews fairly easy

except in two areas, the kitchen and water-and-power. Since the kitchen is vital to the

running of the camp the Head Cook has the power to hand pick those people who

have "helped out" in the kitchen and have displayed a level of competency in those

tasks. Water-and-power, because of the complexity of machinery and the need to

understand wiring and plumbing, demands a higher level of skill. This crew is made

up of more staff and experienced planters who have done the work before. The

kitchen and water-and-power also display the traditional gender division in skill

acquisition: the ratio of women to men on the kitchen crew (approximately nine to

two) is inversely proportional to those on the water-and-power crew.

Figure 29. Planters and Staff taking down the dining tent in the process of moving camp from "mile 82" to the "cariboo-cut.".

Figure 30. Planters and staff taking down the dining tent.

The encouragement of women to "help out" with water-and-power maintenance after the camp has been set up has resulted in a rise in the number of women gaining nontraditional skills. However, the perceived need to have a higher percentage of experienced people on this crew has resulted in the above ratio being fairly constant from year to year. It should be noted that my above hypothesis will only be proven correct if there is a steady increase in the number of women working on set-up and take-down of water-and-power in the coming years, the increase being equal to the percentage of women who "help out." If this is not the case, then the reasons for the gender gap lie in the systematic alienation of women from technical and complex skill acquisition based on deeply held sexist ideology.

The construction of the camp itself is generally seen as a positive, although exhausting, experience. The sense of pride, the display of skill and the connections which are formed between people who work together are contained in JP's narrative of building the shitters, a picture of which appears as Figure 31 (Jewel = JW; Unknown Woman = U; Johnny 5 = J5):

> JP: Speaking of shit, those shitters out there, they are the mothers of all shitters.
> JW: They look like the gateway to hell.
> JP: They are the best shitters ever. Talk to any of us on the shit crew, we are fucking proud of those shitters, proud.
> JW: I don't know, they're getting pretty close to the top.
> JP: No lots of room still. I looked down there today.
> J: Only one more shift. How much more can we do?
> JW: I don't know, we have fast metabolisms.

Figure 31. The "gateway to hell" (Jewel). Shitters at the Kershaw Camp.

JP: The thing is we hit bedrock after two feet and you know what we said: "We are gonna build shitters that are gonna last 'til the end of this contract." And we did.

JW: You guys were all fucking worried. "These things aren't very deep don't take too many shits."

JP: Oh yeah, I was telling people, "Man, shit lightly. Save it for the block, dump in your tent, anywhere but the shitters. . . ." We were proud of those shitters. We said that we have built [U: That was fucking hard work] Yes! You're a shit crew member.

U: There was rocks like this big [indicates a rock half the size of a person.].

JP: It took us a day. We started at nine in the morning and we finished the shitters at three. We had to notch the logs. Those logs are notched and nail [sic].

J: Holy fuck–[U: yeah]

JP: People think those are just shitters man. Those are two outhouses on top of a log cabin.

J5: What's up with those shitters anyway. I've never seen shitters like that before: back to back action.

JP: That's kind of cool eh? Yeah, I like that too [JW: Well it's not very private.] Oh no, it's great. You get to chat with somebody when you take a shit.. .

J: It's nice to talk to somebody?

JW: It is.

JP: Yeah I like it. . . . They're gonna laugh. Those shitters have stood through wind storms, tents are blowing, all the tarps are cleared off, this fucking wall of this tent knocked off all the fucking rocks. When I was on one of my sick days the whole fucking thing [dining tent] just went [onomatopoeia]: wooomp! The shitters have fucking standed [sic] tall man! I need a drink, god damn it! (June 20)

Previously I had argued that the job of constructing the camp is fairly simple, requiring little skill since the units are prefabricated. This is an instance in which the shitter crew had to be creative in order to adapt to the environment of the new campsite. In other instances the display of skill is more subtle and is a question of

working hard with a group and getting the job done quickly and efficiently. In either case, planters take pride in their accomplishments and the act of working together binds people together. This creates what Dorothy Noyes, in talking about network theory, has called "multiplex relationships" (449-478). The attributes which Turner attributes to communitas are, in part, the creation of multiplex, dense relationships between individuals.

Yi-Fu Tuan has called place "a special kind of object. It is a concretion of value, though not a valued thing that can be handled or carried about easily; it is an object in which one can dwell" (12). The concretion of value is, in part, the knowledge that planters have built their home, that it stands or falls upon their labour and that they see themselves in its construction. Although the materials are the property of Brinkman the camp is the creation of treeplanters; it is a dwelling, it is a place. I will conclude this section with the narrative of Annabel, a first year planter who, like Johnny G. before her, found in the creation of a built environment, the sense of "ok."

> I was in touch with Neil quite a bit [before I arrived].... And he was telling me what camp was like: it's this huge tent and there's a bus that's made into a kitchen so at one end and then in the middle there's a wood stove and all these couches and arm chairs and big stereo all hooked up and at the other end are all the tables for eating on. And I'm thinking "wow" with this total picture, big tent, clean, fancy. When we first arrived at the camp I couldn't believe my eyes: "Look at this dump." I said, "its all gravel and dirt." I said, "where's the grass." That's what I was thinking: grass and trees. There's no fucking trees anywhere [laughter]...! And then there were two lounge chairs and a stove and it

was right by the door.... But after I got my tent set up it's. . . ok. (June 10)

Camp Maintenance

A camp is not only created; it also needs to be maintained. In Chapter Three I discussed the way that maintenance often falls to the crew boss and contributes to their job being almost constant. From year to year there is another group of people who maintain the camp; these are the people who "help out." I bracket off the phrase "help out" because it is a category of planters recognized by other planters: one is or is not a person who "helps out" or "helps around camp." The small jobs that are necessary to maintain a camp are not assigned to any one individual because the work roles of treeplanters are fluid when they are in the camp. Some of these jobs include: maintaining the generator, water pump, hot water tanks, cleaning up the camp, cutting firewood, repairing equipment, set up for parties. Generally there is a small group of people (5-10) who, for personal and social reasons, volunteer and/or make themselves available for the above chores.

It is a long standing sociological concept that humans in association have centrifugal and centripetal forces acting upon them. Elements of the camp clearly display centrifugal force. The slow and steady degeneration of order, cleanliness, integrity of buildings—all excusable because of the exhaustion that begins to become incapacitating as the season wears on—begins to eat away at the integrity of the camp itself. It is the efforts of those who "help out" that allow the camp to continue to

function. I have been arguing, in part, that the camp is a sign system whereby heterotopic space is encoded. Specific expressions of social organizations are experimented with, and these spatial organizations in turn have the ability to constitute these very social relations from year to year, what one could call the tradition of space/time structures. Those who help out are therefore doing two jobs simultaneously: they are maintaining the material elements of the camp and they are also maintaining the sign system which it represents.

There are two reasons for helping out—personal and social. I will address the latter first. Without those who helped out the camp cannot function with fluid, nonhierarchical relations in the camp setting. Those who help out tend to recognize that a community does not just happen; it is created through concrete activities like making decorations for a party, keeping the camp clean or helping out the cooks, not for pay but because they look busy. Helping out is partially the creation of the camp as a noneconomic zone since labour is donated and reciprocity is the system of exchange. Annabel touches on some of these themes when she talked about her own participation in the camp:

> I hate to see the way it is. So I pick this up or that up and I help the cooks do this or that—I just can't not do that, walk over something ten times. We all have to live here and it might as well be a nice place—a nice shitty place in a clear cut. (June 11).

A second example occurred during follow-up research in 1998 when five planters who were off work because of injuries made a complete mess of the dining tent after it had

been cleaned by the assistant cook. The head cook got this group to clean the tent by using an analogy: what they had just done to the assistant cook was equivalent to having someone digging up their trees after they planted them. It is to the credit of those who help out that they recognize the interrelation between different types of work.

Helping out by picking up dishes is not very creative. However, there are aspects of doing things around camp that allow a person to perform a task publicly and creatively. Contained in this kind of helping out is the idea of giving a gift to the camp. This is expressed in decorating for a party or in the dialogue which followed the building of a fire pit (Sam = S; Nadya = N; Kim = K; Cynthia = C; Jewel = JW; Unknown Woman = U).

S: You just missed—John—a feat of togetherness.
N: Yeah, they made a fire.[77]
J: You made a fire?
S: It's not just a fire it's a gathering place.
J: Who participated in this gathering place?
K: You're looking at us. . . : Kim, Sam, Jewel, Dave and Cynthia.
C: I don't only cook you know.[78]
K: A damn good fire pit!
JW: The first fire pit of the season.
U: I made this stone stuff here, heavy things. (May 22)

Like the building of the camp, working together creates a material testament to group activity. The labour results in a sense of communitas and the fire pit will now

[77]It is not clear from the narrative, the group has created a rather elaborate fire pit, with a large interlocking rock border and a seating area made out of logs

[78]Cynthia was the assistant cook in 1997. She has since gone on to be a head cook at a different camp.

function as a site where people share stories, jokes and music, activities which will also create and reinforce the communitas of the planters. Figure 32 depicts just such activities occurring at the site which these people created.

Space, Status and the Creation of Privacy: The Negotiation of Micro-spaces

Many researchers have studied the manner in which people create private spaces within a public setting (Hall 1969; Birdwhistle 1970; Scheflen and Scheflen 1973). Here I will address some of the issues that are important to treeplanting. The overall project of the camp would appear to be the construction of a community which devalues the private individual in favour of the social individual. People, however, still have a need to negotiate privacy in the camp. There are three main ways in which this occurs: the use of certain structures which are encoded as private because of their construction; the negotiation of privacy within a group setting by an individual using certain cultural codes which signify privacy; or by occupying a position of higher status.

The use of structures to create privacy is confined to one's tent or a vehicle. The tent is obviously a private space based on the cultural codes which surround *private* property, one of which is that this property is under the complete control of the individual. It is analogous to the bedroom and has many of the same characteristics of a dependent child or young adult's bedroom in the family home: it is highly idiosyncratic, tied to personal identity, and is often a room which holds a high level of

Figure 32. An interstitial moment as planters relax around the fire pit before dinner.

value for the individual because of the scarcity of spatial control which exists in the broader environment. The structure of a tent also helps to mark it as a private space: one must walk to it, one cannot see inside of it, and one must ask for entry from a person whom they cannot see.

The "Tilden" vans in the camp act in a similar way as the tent but more effort must be put into the marking[79] of the space as private since it does not fall under the rubric of private property. The reader will perhaps be confused as to how a vehicle owned by Brinkman is not private. It is not private since Brinkman does not insist on its claim to the vans. It is a work vehicle; outside the block it is merely a solid structure. Like the tent this structure has doors that denote privacy; one must ask for entry. More importantly the windows of the van let people see the occupants. Viewing the occupants allows them to display behaviours which generally indicate the marking of the space as private. For example, two people talking, leaning towards each other, occasionally touching, or displaying a keen interest in the conversation marks the space as predominantly private. This is in contrast to more then two people talking, which, although it may be private, displays to the viewer less private*ness* than one or two people in a van. Likewise three or more people, listening to music and

---

[79]The idea of something being "marked" is borrowed from linguistics. Deborah Tannen defines the term as referring "to the way language alters the base meaning of a word by adding a linguistic particle that has no meaning on its own" (4). Tannen has applied it to gender markers and fashion. In this case I am using it to refer to the way in which an area, with the use of a "particular" behaviour, can be marked as private.

talking loudly are still in control of the space, but the element of privacy contained in the activities on display are considerably less than the other two examples.

The act of doing fieldwork led me to understand some of these codes since my informants and I would often have to search out and create a private space to conduct interviews. What I found was that the dining tent was the least likely space for people to respect the codes of privacy since the space was mainly constructed as public. In contrast a personal tent was the most likely place to carry on an uninterrupted interview. Where privacy was a question of displaying the space as marked through the use of kinesics and proximic devices one was most successful when this could be easily displayed at a considerable distance. For example, a van parked close to the dining tent was more likely to be infused with the value of public space no matter what the occupants did to work against this. On the other hand sitting on a small rise, outside, in full view of the camp, but far enough away that an individual would have to purposefully invade the marked territory of privacy would be one of the most secure places to conduct an interview.

The creation of privacy is based on the manipulation of cultural codes; one must create the nonverbal expression of the need for privacy. The creation of privacy requires a host of tactics to manipulate signification. I will touch on a couple of them, but first I want to make an important distinction between privacy and solitude. The tent is a site of solitude since it cuts one off from other people and limits the individual's ability to invite someone to break into private space. The tent is a solitary

place, ultimate privacy. The negotiation of privacy in a public space is a more fluid

idea. It has to do with the creation of boundaries, personal identity and most

importantly for us here, the act of being alone in a public place. Figure 33 shows two

people engaged in a semi-private moment amidst the hurried activity of planters

preparing to go to work. Madeleine Pastinelli addressed the act of creating privacy

among young, working-class roommates in Quebec City. Her findings are similar to

mine in relation to treeeplanters.[80] The use of props is the most effective way of

creating private space—reading a book or using a personal tape player with head

phones, for example. The display of one of the major senses—vision or hearing—which

normally extends the individual out and into the world, when turned inward is a

powerful cultural code for privacy creation. Less effective is the use of either touch or

taste for the creation of privacy. Knitting, needle work and eating can be considered

markers but they are ambiguous. The most effective display is to turn as many senses

inward as possible, such as writing a letter while listening to a "walk-man" (trademark

of Sony corporation).

The tactics which planters use to either expand this space and display its

membrane as solid or to invite social interaction by lessening this space and displaying

the membrane as permeable is an important dance that occurs constantly in

treeplanting as people move through space/time and create their own spaces to respond

---

[80]Pastinelli, Madeleine, *De L'Altérité aux Familiarités: Espaces Privés et Espaces Collectifs en Colocation dans un Quartier Populaire de Québec* Unpublished Conference presentation (Folklore Studies Association of Canada, May 26-8, 1998)

Figure 33. Bruce and Hannah share a private moment amidst the bustle of morning activities.

to personal needs inside of larger spatial structures. The manipulation of personal space is especially important for planters who are uncomfortable with communal living. For them the creation of personal space is necessary to live and work at treeplanting camp.

There is a small group of people and spaces where privacy is not created but acquired because of status positions. Daphne Spain has explicitly stated that the control of space is the display of status (218). The fact that control in most areas of treeplanting is situational and temporary is an indication of the lack of hierarchy, however, some areas which unite space and status do exist. According to greeners, the area around the wood stove is reserved for experienced planters. Since the wood stove is in the corner of the dining tent seating is limited; the seats face towards the stove so that the backs of the group is presented to the rest of the tent, creating the impression of a closed unit. Of all the treeplanting structures the area around the wood stove is the only specialization of space. At about the same time that greeners become integrated into other crews they also begin to sit around the wood stove. Thus the degree to which status is afforded by this space is temporary. A second example of the union of space and status are the company pick-up trucks. Planters generally do not use these as a shelter and only staff or planters with a long history in this camp appear comfortable in using these vehicles for social purposes.

Finally, there is the cook bus, the only primary building which is controlled by an individual. Because of the control of a particular space the cook and the cook's

assistant have an elevated status when compared with other members of the camp. This situation exists despite the earlier discussion about the subordinate position of women, home and leisure. The forces which create this position are not only spatial but also the way in which the camp is structured around the conglomeration of cook bus and kitchen and the almost hyperbolic importance placed on food (see Chapter Four). Like the houses in Calvert, Newfoundland, studied by Gerald Pocius, the cook bus/dining tent is the social and reproductive center of treeplanting life (173, 221 and 229-30). Control over the kitchen is secured through its separation from the site of consumption (the dining tent), its definition as a work site and its identification with the cooks themselves—the cook bus is Michelle's cook bus.

It is a mixed group of people who have access to the kitchen. Planters with several years of experience who have a relationship with the cook are often found in the kitchen. People who help out the cooks by either cleaning up the kitchen after parties or days off and those who work on the kitchen crew often have access to this space. Even greeners can participate in the kitchen if the cooks decide that they like them. The kitchen is, therefore, a space controlled by the cooks but shared by a broad collection of people who are similar to a friendship group. People who have access to the kitchen necessarily share in the elevation of status and also in some material advantages such as being able to keep some beer in the fridge or the comfort of "hanging out" in a warm, comfortable environment on cold evenings.

The Shower Tent: Society of the Baths and the Construction of the Grotesque Body

The shower, depicted in Figures 34 and 35, is a Quonset hut structure, a large half cylinder looking object, with an aluminum alloy skeleton covered by a tarp. It is approximately ten feet wide at its base, fifteen feet long and seven feet high at its apex. A sheet of plywood holding two shower heads is secured on both walls at the far end of the tent. The people showering stand on pallets, while four or five people waiting can be accommodated on two benches set up against the walls close to the door. In 1997 there was some disagreement in the group of people setting up the camp over whether they should use some tarps to partition off small areas under the four shower heads. The plan was abandoned for two reasons. First, it was more work. Second, and more importantly, many people thought that the communal shower was an important part of treeplanting. One of the proponents of leaving the shower communal was AC, a first year crew boss and a seven season planting veteran:

> I like communal showers. I love communal showers. Because they're the most social part of camp. You get in there, there's always the coolest people take the showers. All the people I like take showers. You chat, hang out, it's really relaxed. It's the end of the day, everybody is in a good mood. Everyone tells funny stories. Like Scott and I have our entire friendship based on the shower. . . . We talk hardly at all outside the shower but in the shower we like, "da da da da." (June 28)

Figure 34. Hand washing station and shower tent, partially disassembled.
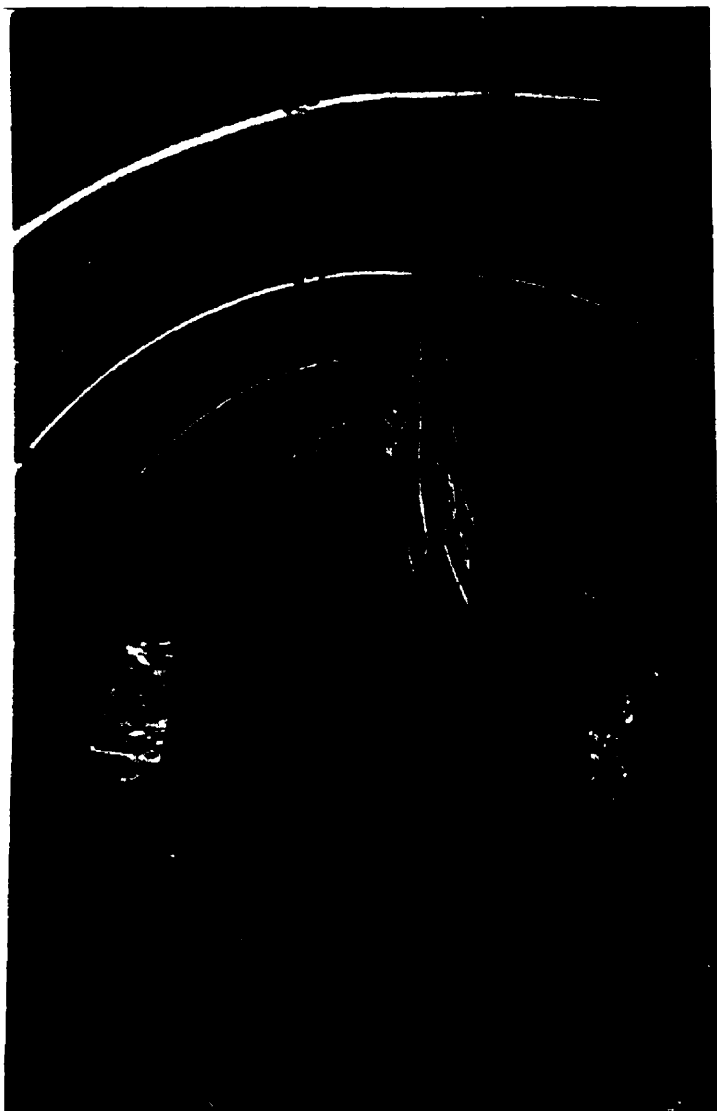
Figure 35. Interior of partially disassembled shower tent.

The social role of bathing would appear to be confined to historical study or to the

rare examples found in sauna cultures like Finland or surprisingly, Thunder Bay.[81]

Poggio, writing in 1414 describes his visit to one of the last great baths of Europe in

Baden:

> Two of the baths are public, accessible from either side of the central
> square; these are the common folk. . . the dregs of the populace, who
> come here in large numbers. . . In these pools a sort of stockade has
> been constructed even though these people are at peace. . . . It is truly
> laughable to see decrepit old women bathing alongside young beauties,
> entering the water stark naked while men look on. . . . [I]n my heart of
> hearts I admire the innocence of these people, who do not fix their eyes
> on such details and who think and speak no evil. (Aries and Duby 602-
> 3)

Further into his account Poggio equates the practice of public bathing, whether outside

as in the above example or in a bath house, with a classic Utopian project: "Even the

most delicate things become easy thanks to their customs. They could easily have

accommodated themselves to Plato's *Politics*, sharing everything in common, for

without his theories they instinctively number among his supporters" (606).

Foucault, in his work on Roman baths for his study of sexuality, calls the baths

a "quasi-public place of pleasure" which created a "society of the baths" (Foucault,

Foucault 251-2). The bath is a spatial regime which was driven out of Europe in the

seventeen and eighteenth century. Its disappearance has generally been linked to the

---

[81] Thunder Bay has had several waves of Finnish immigration which shaped the town's history and perception of itself. There are two main commercial saunas in town, that I know about, and probably several smaller ones in worker's halls and the like.

rise of the individual and the ideological and spatial reorganization that this entailed

(Aries and Duby 1987). The continuation of the bath in some instances and its

reappearance in the occupation of treeplanting can be read in many different ways.

The fact that it is a created rather than an inherited structure suggests that a conscious

decision to reproduce the communal bathing "society" that AC and Foucault talk about

is evident. As I have argued in the section "The Exploded House" the spatial

arrangement of built structures can be used to recreate the individual subject and to

experiment with new forms of social relations. The shower, more than any other

aspect of the camp, is a conscious ideological project, what Bakhtin called "the

rehabilitation of the flesh" (*Rabelais* 18). This was made clear in a shower

conversation during follow-up research in 1998.

> I think it's really good for women, especially young women, to be up
> here and to be together like this and to see other women and other
> bodies. We're not all perfect, some of us have had children and we
> aren't all one hundred pounds. And it makes a difference to women.
> (Journal, June 12, 1998)[82]

The showers are certainly a site which is transformational in the lives of

treeplanters and my own research has demonstrated that they do have a positive impact

on most people. In my collecting, first shower stories were second only to tales of

work. I had the good luck to collect two different tales of the same event, one from

---

[82]An informant related this quote to me. The sentiments were expressed by a third party as part of a
conversation which was taking place in the shower. My informant wrote down the quote and gave it
too me shortly after the incident because she thought that I would be interested. She took great care to
accurately relate what was said.

the participant and the other from someone who heard the tale. I include them both because not only is it a great study in the dynamics of oral narrative, but more importantly because each person adds their commentary on the event which exposes some of the dynamics that the showers have in people's lives. I will present Nancy's narrative first, partially because it is more general but also because it represents a way that an event is taken into narrative form and becomes a comment on the life that people live on a daily basis. Her tale is told to illuminate a point that she was making as part of a long conversation about gender, sexuality and nudity in treeplanting.

> I heard—I guess I won't mention any names. It was right at the beginning. I wasn't in the shower. He sort of walk in and he was like, "Right then. Ok [onomatopoeia: "hoooo" like exhaling after a fright]. I think I have to go to the bathroom." And he went out and came back in and he was like, "I just had to collect my thoughts. Ok. Right. Here I am then. I'm in the shower, ok." [laughter]. [J: So he talked his way through it?] Totally, but quite admitting the fact. And talking later he's like, "I just had to leave and collect my thoughts." Which is a riot. Totally unsuspecting. I think that's pretty cute [laughter]. (June 20)

Let's now turn to the story from the person in question, Nick:

> Last year we had sort of individual showers, a guy's washroom and a girl's washroom because it was a lodge. This year we got these communal showers. So the first day I walk into the communal showers and there's two people there, Jewel and Jen, both naked as jay birds. And I walk in. And I knock on the door and they're like, "come in." And I walk in and they're both nude as anything and it just "Oh!" I drop all my clothing and I say, "I'm going to the washroom; I'll be right back." And they both start laughing. I go to the washroom. Sitting down, you gotta regroup, eh? "Ok am I cool with this? I'm cool with this. Are they cool with this? Yeah, they're definitely cool with this, they invited me in. Fair enough." Walk all the way back to the showers, step in the shower. There's a naked lady beside me; I have to

keep darting my eyes around. There's something like this in the
Canadian Geographic article[83] but this guy he seemed really up-tight
and really, like it was such a trying experience. I just saw it as
something new. Anything new that hits you in the face like that it's
like, "Wow!" But after that it's fun; it's different. . . . Basically I just
keep a trick in mind instead of staring at them I stare at their eyes. So
every time I talk to someone in the shower, which is often, I just look
at them in the eyes, make sure I don't break contact with their eyes.
Which is kind of unusual and kind of confrontational at times. . . . For
me when I got outta there I felt like I'd just conquered a phobia. I don't
feel too bad about my body and the way that it works and the way that
I look. I get nervous about it but I get in, I get out, but I don't feel too
bad about it. It's kind of nice. (June 14)

It is clear that both genders appear to benefit from the experience of communal

showering. As one male planter in 1998 put it: "It gets to be no big deal—weird eh?

It's like showering with your sister" (Journal, June 12 1998).

The shower is important to the camp not only as a project but as a deepening

of the contemporary liminal experience. One of the roles of ritual and rites of passage

is Goffman's "levelling and stripping" (qtd. in Turner, *Ritual* 128). In the above

narratives the shower acts as a social leveller. A small room full of naked and semi-

clothed people talking, laughing and telling tales is perhaps as close to the unmeditated

interaction of Buber's "I and Thou" that Turner ascribes to communitas (Turner,

Drama 250). One of the critiques of liminality which was not addressed in Chapter

Four is that stages of liminality can exist, such as the difference between the

---

[83] Gillian Austin, "Screefer Madness," *Canadian Geographic* 117 (1997): 60-71 was published during the
planting season and created quite a bit of conversation around the camp.

experience of liminality in a theatre[84] and the liminal experience of a circumcision rite

of passage. The shower works as a gateway for planters to realize that they are in a

space and place which operates by different social codes—this could more accurately

be expressed as, a place which operates by a system of overlapping codes where some

are recognizable to outsiders while others are particular to this space/time.

The shower, besides acting as the gateway to help enculturate the individual

into treeplanting, is also part of the creation of an important dimension of

liminality—carnival. Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* identified some of the

important aspects of carnival, chief among them is laughter and the grotesque body.

> [Within carnival] the body is deeply positive. It is presented not in a
> private, egotistical form, severed from the other spheres of life, but as
> something universal, representing all the people. . . . We repeat: the
> body and bodily life have here a cosmic and at the same time an all
> people's character; this is not the body and its physiology in the modern
> sense of these words; because it is not individualized. The material
> bodily principle is contained not in the biological individual, not in the
> bourgeois ego. . . . This is why all that is bodily becomes grandiose,
> exaggerated, immeasurable (19).

There are important comparisons that can be drawn between the society of the

baths and grotesque realism. Grotesque realism, the regime of the body within

carnival, is "the rehabilitation of the flesh" and as such is a project continued by

treeplanters (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 18). Lys' narrative about her first shower makes this

point.

---

[84]See: Mikel Koven, *An Ethnography of Seeing: A Proposed Methodology for the Ethnographic Study of Popular Cinema* (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, PhD Thesis, in progress)

When I first arrived last year I didn't quite understand the—because no one explained to me—the showers were going to be co-ed. I kind of picked it up and then I just wasn't sure what the protocol was. Eventually I got dirty, too dirty, pretty quickly, about third day actually. And I kind of peeked in the shower. I was all shy, and Bob was there. So I took a shower with Bob and had a nice chat with him. And at the end of the shower I was like "what's your name?" [J: "seeing as how you're nude"] Yes, seeing as how I appear to be your friend and you're naked. He said, "Ah that's the joke in camp: meeting someone for the first time naked in the shower." But I love it because I love being naked, especially swimming naked. Because I don't own a swimsuit anymore; I've just gotten really used to that. But I guess it's really nice to feel that out because I'm still not completely comfortable with my nudity. It's really nice to develop a comfort with it. (June 19)

The rehabilitation is an obvious ideological project whether it is carried out in the courts of Ontario for the right of a woman to go topless[85] or whether it constitutes an important aspect of the occupational folklife of treeplanting (see Figure 36). This rehabilitation is not, however, the same-but-different arrangement of the consumption of the body in advertising, fashion (advertising with a semiotic twist), pornography/erotica, or all of the other showcases for the human body under the auspices of late capitalism. Within carnival space the rehabilitated body is not singular (as we have seen) but placed within a particular context: "The cosmic, social, and bodily elements are given here as an indivisible whole. And this whole is gay and gracious" (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 19). The shower is a device within an overall project to

[85]In 1995 Susan Jessop's appeal of her fine for appearing topless in a Toronto park resulted in the law being struck down (R v Jessop). The decision has withstood several appeals making it legal for women in Ontario to appear topless in public places.

Figure 36. Partial nudity during a night off party.

deepen liminality and create carnival space, carnival space being partly the

foregrounding of the body in order to recontextualize it.

It is the nature and consequences of the recontextualization of the body which I

had the pleasure to debate with a couple of treeplanters, Johnny G. (JG) and Michelle

(M), over drinks on a day off.

> M: The difference is between nudity and here its desexualized and it's
> not just nudity it's touching and hugging.
> J: What's the difference between the two? How does this work with,
> like, slash romances[86] when you cross the line from sex to desex.
> M: I think this is just a space that is really controlled by women. I'm
> lucky that I hang around a lot of men who are 'feminists' and really
> respect women. Don't get that necessarily in the city.
> J: What do you think about all this Johnny? Same question.
> JG: I think that it might be more that men and women, they work
> together all day long and they have respect for each other–it's that
> respect.
> M: Yeah. I guess that's a lot of it. But it's just good for some men to
> see women like real women with no ideal body types. They have
> breasts and pubic hair and they're real. They're just breasts. (June 15)[87]

This conversation touches on many themes that I have previously addressed. Michelle

is, in part, arguing for a pragmatic interpretation of power and consent consistent with

Hannah Arendt's persuasive study *On Revolution*. On the other hand Johnny G.

represents the Marxist development of commodity fetishism in which both the product

and social relations are created in the labouring process (Burawoy). There are

---

[86] A "slash romance" is a play on words where slash is waste wood left on the block that impedes the planter's progress and is slightly dangerous and romance is obviously something people would want. This is used to denote a treeplanting relationship, with the connotation being that it is mainly sexual, sincere and will be over when the last tree is in the ground.

[87] This segment of a longer interview was recorded in note form shortly after the conversation took place.

problems with arguing the case for a desexualized body since both men and women use their bodies in a multitude of ways, one of which is to communicate sexual messages. At the same time several studies problematize the position that mutual respect is automatically created between women and men when they work together. As an example, the work by Robert McCarl on the integration of women and African-American men in a Washington D.C. firehouse found that these two groups, although not isolated in the work, are isolated from social events in the firehall with obvious consequences to their acquisition of new skills and professional status (112). Likewise, Elaine Pitt Enarson in her study of sexual integration in the U.S. forest services found that women bore the bulk of responsibility in developing strategies and tactics to integrate into a hostile environment. In striking contrast to treeplanting, she found that the larger society view of women was replicated in the workplace:

> Yet women's bodies are made sexual and their presence at work made distracting. The more clearly a woman is female, the more her presence seemingly distracts and the more tenuous her claim to legitimacy as a worker. (94)

I favour the metaphor of the grotesque body because it avoids the false dilemma that anything which represents a healthy heteroglossic representation of the body must be the alternative to the consumption/sexualized/capitalistic body—the desexualized body (the presupposition being that we could have a desexualized self). Recalling Bakhtin's quote above ("The cosmic, social, and bodily elements are given here as an indivisible whole. And this whole is gay and gracious.") carnival also allows us to see the body

as heterotopic.[88] The body is a thing that works, plays, has sex as well as a thing in relation to ourselves and to other people. In comments on an early draft of this thesis which I presented to planters for critique I received the following note: "I think of my body as a machine. The kind of work—the repetitive—makes us into planting machines." The idea of carnival does not argue against either the working body or the desexualized body since it is in carnival (as opposed to advertising) that these aspects can emerge and coexist. In this way both Michelle and Johnny G. expose important aspects of the body and treeplanting life.

The Dining Tent as Medieval Hall: Community and Carnival

The dining tent forms the hub around which all activities in the camp circulate. Viewed from a vantage point the rest of the camp spreads out in a more or less equal distribution from this point. Socially the dining tent is the center of treeplanting life. It is here that people eat, share stories, receive mail and warm themselves at a fire. It is also here that the space is transformed through music, decorations, and rearranging tables and benches to become a space of carnival. It is the nexus of all the paradoxical spatial and social relations that make up the treeplanting experience.

---

[88]For a more complete exploration of the body as spacial arrangement see: Nancy Duncan, ed, *BodySpace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

In its simplicity of design but its complexity of meaning the dining tent is

similar to Matthew Johnson's description of the medieval hall:

> The open hall was a room that appeared undivided in terms of physical
> barriers but which was divided conceptually into front and back, upper
> and lower, high and low status ends. . . . As such it "mapped out" a
> system of social divisions between the late medieval household within
> the same body of space. . . . It asserted the values of household as
> community, a little commonwealth as the setting for a family
> community in a world where servants were considered part of the
> family. (81)

The treeplanter's conception of community is obviously far different from the

medieval notion of a community based on rigid hierarchy; however the open hall, as

an expression and enacting of community, is similar to the dining tent. As an open

space, defined through its use, the dining tent is an ever shifting geometry of

spatial/social construction. Dinner time is a moment of pause, the act of eating helps

to define the space and the sharing of food becomes a shared context, stories flow,

some people eat quietly, others read. As the site of food sharing, meal time in the

dining tent—like family meals in general—is a time in which the social relations of

treeplanting itself are created (Goode 243). Stories of work, personal experience

narrative, legends and tall tales along with the norms expressed in the way in which

people serve themselves and clean up after the meal is an important site of community creation.[89]

At most other times the space is less defined and its meaning less clear. This is because, like the medieval home, the dining tent is a multipurpose room where production, consumption, work and play intermingle. For example, at any one time people may be playing chess, a crew boss will be documenting the day's work by colouring in maps (see Figure 37), and other planters will be repairing equipment or writing letters. As I have already outlined the shelter itself can be something in which people take pride, one which can also seem very fragile when torrents of rain create fast flowing streams under the tables or high winds shake the walls.

Like dinner there is another event that takes place in the building that redefines the space and focuses it; this is the night off party and the treeplanter's carnival. It has been argued that contemporary society has created the divisions between ritual which are conservative expressions of the community and festivals which are often events that radically question the norms and values of the community (Stoeltje, Festival 262). The division has gone on to denote ritual as sacred and festival as profane. The division mirrors the oppositional pairings that have been the focus of much of this chapter, notably work/leisure and work/play. This issue is at the heart of why I have

[89]See also Robert McCarl's study of the importance of food and food preparation in perpetuating the culture of the fire hall in: The District of Columbia Firefighters Project: A Case Study in Occupational Folklife, Smithsonian Folklife Series No. 4 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985) 57-61.

Figure 37. Eric at work in the dinning tent recording reforested areas by colouring maps.

chosen to designate the camp as a site of non-work rather than leisure or play.

Treeplanting allows the mediation of oppositional pairs at the same time that it

paradoxically recreates them. The carnival of night off is an example of this in that it

is a fundamental part of the treeplanting experience, not separate from the work but

integrates it into the celebrations through costume and decoration. Although night off

is analogous to the urban weekend, it would be inaccurate to relegate it to the category

of leisure or play. Like older religious observances, festival is "integrated into the

larger ritual cycle" that is treeplanting (Stoeltje, *Festival* 262). As we have seen in the

section "The Block," carnivalesque expressions can appear almost anywhere, however,

they tend to be localized in the dining tent.

Traits of festival are well documented (Stoeltje, *Festival*; Bakhtin, *Rabelais*;

Turner, *Dramas*; Babcock). I will address only those that contribute to my analysis of

liminality in praxis, namely reversal and transformation. The first step in creating

festival is that both the space and the time must be transformed. Some night off

parties are considered to be more carnivalesque then others. For example, the first

night off of the first shift is generally quiet, resembling a relaxing evening with

friends; as the season goes on, the night off becomes increasingly more elaborate and

more closely resembling festival. Two occasions which could be considered the high

holidays of treeplanting are the summer Solstice and the last night party. The

celebration of the Solstice closely resembles the integration of ritual and festival that

was mentioned above, with contemporary spirituality, sacrificial food, prayers and a

general sense of worship integrated into a bacchic celebration. In all instances the party is accompanied by a transformational process.

The shower on night off is one of the tools of transformation. The way in which the shower creates carnival space is not only by reconfiguring the body but also by being one of the material activities by which treeplanters prepare for the dominant expression of carnival, the night off. The first act in the preparations for night off is to shower—even planters who do not fully participate in the society of the baths do so on the night off. On regular days a handful of people shower in a relaxed manner. On night off the shower is full of people joking, laughing, telling stories, drinking and washing away the work shift. Food, and alcohol is brought into the tent and it is here that the night off begins. One enters the shower as a worker and exits, clean and dressed in what are called "night" or "day off clothes." This is colourful clothing, in the rave fashion of polyester fabric and prints from both the 1950s and 1970s. The person is literally transformed by the shower into a potential participant in carnival.

The adoption of costume by donning the day off clothes is also a form of transformation, but I will discuss this in more detail below. The most important site of transformation is the dining tent. Several devices are used to recreate the space: the rearranging of the tables and chairs to create a dance floor; decorations ranging from simple to incredibly complex; stringing christmas lights; using candles for lighting; and arranging a formal bar. The labour involved in the creation of festivals is often overlooked. It should be noted that it is often the people who "help out" who create

this space and work the next day to return the tent to its original form. The more important celebrations find a larger group of people pressed into service since the decorations are more complex and the various parts of the festival are more elaborate. Figure 38 depicts this labour and transforming of the dining tent into a festive site. Curiously enough, there has been an effort in decorating the hall to create a more complex arrangement of space than is normally present. The creation of specialized zones of activity constitutes an act of reversal when contrasted with the open hall. The bar, when it exists, is often integrated into a quiet area created out of bench seats from the "Tilden" vans. This area tends to be divided from the dance floor by a series of tables around which people gather to talk, play cards or chess. The dance floor is next to the door and the Hip-Hop, Motown and Rave music is directed in that area. The outside is also important in this arrangement as the area of the fire is integrated into the festivities as a quiet place where separate activities like playing music, talking or just enjoying the fire occur. One could call this a resting place.

The transformation of the individual is accomplished, in part, by the adoption of a special set of clothing. Day off clothes are the ones that are commonly worn. For the high holidays more elaborate costumes are created which display the reversal, repetition and juxtaposition common to festivals. The Solstice celebration of 1997 was accompanied by cross-dressing men and women, face painting to create masks and elaborate costumes by one participant made out of tree limbs. Cross dressing is a well established mode of experimenting with meaning and planters carry this act to fantastic

Figure 38. Nick and Nadya hanging pine bough as decorations for final night party.

extremes (see Figure 39) . An activity which is not reversal *per se* but involves the same discourse of critique is the donning of elaborate thrift-store dresses by female planters (see Figure 40). This hyperbolic femininity is both a quasi-reversal from their normal asexual dress and an example of the implicit message of critique that accompanies festival. Some other costumes, which are not necessarily reversals or critiques, attest to the ingenuity of planters to construct costumes out of readily available materials. Figure 41 highlights an example of planters' use of bricolage to create a costume out of fruit. Issues surrounding gender, sexuality, power and desire are played with at the treeplanting festival. The locus for these activities is the open hall of the dining tent. It is in the night off party that the camp comes together here to celebrate itself and search for meaning.

Conclusion

The study of liminality in praxis if full of contradictions and paradoxes, united under the regime of heterotopic space. Like the tribal metaphor planters are a society which is based on resource extraction. It organizes its work according to its own internal logic—a logic which allows for expressions of carnival within the sphere of work. It attempts to insulate its living environment from the dangerous contagion of the priorities of work. As such it is similar to the exercise of containing the use of authority by crew bosses in Chapter Three. Within the camp there are structures which deepen the liminal space and open up the individual to life as a member of a

Figure 39. Dan cross-dressing for the final night party, 1998.

Figure 40. Women in thrift store dresses and Mike in a dress posing for pictures on top of "the machine."

community whose relations are multiplex. This is also a society which celebrates itself in elaborate festivals. These festivals often integrate the ritualistic and constitute a site of the play with meaning and signification. Along with these seemingly unique aspects of treeplanting I have attempted to show that as a form of bricolage treeplanting space is open to reproducing social and cultural codes from outside treeplanting space/time. One of the chief concerns raised by this point is to remember that treeplanting is an economic activity and one should not highlight the cultural aspects of the camp at the expense of exposing real power inequality. Although I have attempted to argue that the lack of control over space, the sharing of difficult work and the communitas formed within contemporary liminal space/time has created a camp with general equality between its members, the creation of this space exposed some groups to more risks than other. Women especially expose themselves to more risks in communal showering than men. And although my research demonstrates that the showers are a safe space the safety of the showers is not guaranteed from year to year. Until the camp comes together and trust is established between individuals women face a potentially uncomfortable adjustment period[90]. The issues of the showers raises another point regarding post-Turner liminality. As a site of "potentiality" contemporary liminality guarantees no set form of social organization within it. It is not a proscriptive space. Most researchers tend to focus on the

---

[90]I would hope that my work has also demonstrated that men also feel "uncomfortable" until trust is established. However, the feeling of being uncomfortable is different for women and men.

Figure 41. Neil and Sam with "banana phones" and "banana glasses" at a night off party.

attributes that Turner has ascribed to the space. In a survey of one hundred and forty

MLA abstracts concerning liminality only one paper explored the malevolent nature of

this space/time.[91] Michel Foucault observed that "freedom is not completely

indifferent to spatial distribution, but it can only function where there is a certain

convergence" (247). Most planters feel that treeplanting is a site of freedom. But it is

a freedom which relies on the convergence of spaces and the creation of a certain

culture within that space. From year to year this condition is not guaranteed. That it

occurs annually is a result of the convergence of spatial forces repeating themselves in

a similar configuration to create liminality in the first place. In turn the built

environment encodes the particular praxis of liminality in this camp; acting to deepen

the liminal space and to recreate certain social relations from year to year. Finally,

treeplanters themselves actively recreate the space through their use of and negotiation

of these space/time sites. It is the joining of the two halves of treeplanting, the block

and the camp, which creates the "treeplanting experience." It is an experience which

changes people: "The letters that I wrote to my friend about this stuff, conditions, you

know. But they aren't conditions to me anymore. It's part of our life. It's funny how

much I've changed" (Annabel June 11). Chapter Six will address some of these

changes as they are expressed in the complex interrelation between personal and

occupational identity.

---

[91]Audrey Shalinsky and Anthony Glaocock, "Killing Infants and the Aged in Nonindustrialized Societies: Removing the Liminal." *Social Science Journal* 25.3 (1988): 277-287.

Chapter 6

Personal and Occupational Identity in Treeplanting

At several points in this thesis the issue of identity has been alluded to. The stories, activities, even the simplest work tasks of treeplanters can be informed by an exploration of the complex constellation of meaning and value that we call identity. Indeed, Alan Dundes has asserted that folklore primarily concerns identity (1989). This chapter will revisit important portions of this thesis in order to introduce identity into the investigation of treeplanting life. I will also provide new data which will round out some of the more idiosyncratic examples.

Throughout this thesis I have argued that time and space are major shaping forces for this occupational folk group. Issues surrounding identity are no exception. The occupational identity of treeplanting is temporary, lasting no more than eight weeks in a year. The short season coupled with the isolation of the work camp means that planters are unlike other occupational groups since their identity is minimally shaped by contact with outsiders (cf. Lloyd and Mullen; Pilcher). As a result of environmental factors planters find that the adoption of an occupational identity is a very fast enculturation process. The character of JL's camp is such that planters have more ability for their private identities and subject positions to influence the overall occupational identity of treeplanting than is suggested in other studies of occupational identity (Lloyd and Mullen; McCarl, *District*; Pilcher). These studies have emphasized the way that workers reflect occupational identity rather than the way in which

individuals participate in its creation.[92] The issue of individual agency and

occupational identity is obviously of more concern in a study of a temporary

community, however, it would likely be a force in all work places. The temporary

nature of the work coupled with the planter's ability to express their personal identities

is consistent with the general attitude of instrumentality by which young labourers use

work (Borman and Reisman 7). Finally, the interweaving of occupational and private

identity begins to create a sense of the camp as a home place.

Identity

In *Lake Erie Fisherman* Timothy Lloyd and Patrick Mullen directly address the

issue of identity in the lives of fisherman. Their main finding was that "fishermen's

narratives project not a single identity but multiple and social identities" (161). In this

aspect, as well as others, treeplanters and Lake Erie fisherman share many similar

traits. Treeplanters occupy multiple subject positions and, depending on personal and

social forces, they express many of these in narratives. The project of creating identity

through narrative is recognized and well studied by folklorists (Bauman; Dundes,

Defining; Oring; Glassie, *On*). It is the weaving of these multiple positions within

narrative by which planters craft a "performance" of personal identity (Lloyd and

---

[92]Lloyd and Mullen place great emphasis on personal identity and occupational forces, however, personal priorities are treated as a filter through which aspects of the occupational identity are adopted and adapted (161-173). What I am interested in is how personal priorities affect the occupational identity itself.

Mullen 164). Treeplanters are predominantly concerned with expressing three levels

of identity: occupational, wage work or student life, and creative non-work activities.

Although not every planter expresses this tripartite division these three main areas are

common. The main concern for planters, however, is the expression and negotiation

of an occupational identity. I will return to Melissa's narrative from Chapter Two in

order to demonstrate the way in which personal and occupational aspects of the story

are interwoven. This interweaving of priorities eventually necessitates a choice for

Melissa (M) between her personal identity or the occupational identity of treeplanting.

J: How are you finding this year?
M: Excellent. It was hard to adjust in the beginning. Last year I found it
really hard to adjust. I found maybe fitting in was kind of hard. I felt
like a sixteen year old kid again. I was all insecure. It was really hard,
but this year having last year behind me has been so different. Also the
planting is totally different. I'm making money now and I'm here to
plant and that's the only reason and everything else is definitely a
bonus. But I feel that, now that I'm comfortable as a planter and the
work that I'm doing everything else just kind of falls into place. It
makes sense because, I worked hard—I feel legitimate at the job now.
J: Did you not feel legitimate last year?
M: No. Last year I hung around a lot at the cache and stand in my land,
plant maybe a tree every thirty seconds. And I was always asking. I just
didn't get it, why I was here and what the point was. And why we were
planting these trees and always asking these questions. Maybe this year
I've answered them or maybe I've just stopped asking them. But I'm
here to make money, that's what it's all about at the moment.
J: So figuring out why you are here helped click with the job of
planting?
M: Yes. Exactly. And also knowing how to plant and I was pretty slow
last year. I was probably doing a lot of extra moves that I didn't need .
And now I just know what I'm doing and I'm at the cache and I just put
my trees in my bags, maybe eat a fruit and then go back right away.

Treeplanting is a separate place from the "real world." Sometimes planters have to make a choice as to which person they are going to be. Melissa's choice to adapt herself to the canon of work technique had the added effect of helping her to see herself as a treeplanter, essentially enculturating her into treeplanting. In the work place enculteration is the direct result of the work that a person performs. This effect of work on people is one of the basic maxims of Marx's theory of the reproduction of the worker:

> [T]he mode of production must not be considered simply as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part." (Marx and Engels, *Historical* 18)

It is the act of planting trees which creates a treeplanter. Once you have become a planter a certain occupational affinity--a communitas--with all planters is created.

Domm makes this point:

> You get a lot of different people. You'll get a lot of athletes, whatever, they're into planting because they want to run; they get right into it. . . . Then you get people who are like [imitating stereotypical hippie voice]: "Yeah, right on I just want to go planting, you know." And all that kind of shit. But regardless of what kind of people come planting there's something within everyone here that has not quit and is never gonna quit planting that ties people here to everyone--because it's not for everyone. That's what I find. . . . Regardless of who you are, if you stay a whole season of planting there's something that ties you to everyone else. You run into someone in a bar or what ever and you hear "screef."[93] And you're like "screef?" You planted! (June 14)

---

[93] Screef is the action of clearing away organic material from a site where a tree will be planted. This is usually done with one's boot, "boot screef" or by hand "hand screef." As a work term in the treeplanting register it appears to be no more important than any other term. It does, however, occupy

It is the sharing of a common identity which is close to the heart of communitas and the culture of liminality which I discussed in Chapter Five. However, in this case it is the sharing of work which forms a bond with all other treeplanters past and present, from different regions and in some cases from different countries. This dynamic is similar to Erik Erikson's definition of identity

> The term identity expresses. . . a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others. (102)

But what exactly is the occupational identity of treeplanters? What is this essential character? I have suggested that part of the answer to this question can be found in the canon of work technique; it is the work of planting which creates treeplanters. What may be obscured in the more mechanistic aspects of cataloguing work techniques is that the work itself is impregnated with value at every stage. It achieves its value because the work shapes identity, it makes people who they are. The actual occupational identity of treeplanting is not a list of attributes. It is the result of complex interactions between different groups, individuals and narrative. As such, many factors need to be addressed before some of the characteristics of treeplanting can be stated with any confidence. One of these is the relationship between planting and other occupations for young workers.

---

a small sub-set of terms which denote work tasks that are unique to planting. Because of this "screef" has become, what Pierce calls an "index" in that the word and the occupation are so closely aligned that one is an indication of the presence of the other (Richter 848). The index nature of the word has led to it being used in titles of items which have treeplanting as their subject i.e. "Screef," a treeplanting 'zine (c. 1987-1995); "Screefer Madness," the title of Gillian Anderson's collection of photographs and first-person writings of treeplanting in *Canadian Geographic*.

It is a common misconception that young people do not value work. Research into youth and work has actually found that the opposite is true; work is very important to youth (Willis; Valli; Borman and Reisman). The difference between older, established workers and their young counterparts is the role that work plays within youth culture and the way that the culture(s) of work are integrated into the generational subcultures which fall under the category "youth" (Borman and Reisman 7). One of the charges labelled against treeplanting as an occupation is that it is not a "real" job. Gillian Anderson's experiences with her father quoted in Chapter Four display this belief. Treeplanting is often not taken seriously because it is neither full-time nor wage work—both of which make the occupation very appealing to young workers. Kathryn Borman and Jane Reisman found that one of the main differences with young workers is that youth can use the market place "as a locus to test talents, spend time, or use instrumentally to achieve specific non-career related ends" (7). Many of the narratives which I have documented contain within them variations on the phrase "It's just work" or "I like the money." At the same time there is a strong current in the narratives which bears out Borman and Reisman's findings. Annabel provides one example:

> I hate the city. I grew up in the country. I hate the noise . . . and I need isolation and I hated what my life had become. . . . Another reason I came treeplanting is because I knew it was really physical work and I like physical work. . . . Here it's great; if you work hard you make more money. In the city no matter what you do on the job you always make the same. There's no point in pushing yourself. (June 11)

Treeplanting is very much an experiment for some planters, a way of testing themselves against what many people consider to be the hardest job in Canada. The instrumentality of treeplanting changes with experienced planters, they treat it more like a regular job. However, both young and older planters use treeplanting as an instrumental occupation to some degree. Planting is similar to what Linda Valli has found in many youth working situations when the researcher adopts a cultural orientation to work and labour:

> Cultural orientation. . . implies involvement by individuals and groups in the ongoing creation of their own identities in a way that is neither mechanistic nor wholly volunteeristic but is rooted in their social and economic past and in their perceived futures. (qtd. in Borman and Reisman 8)

Treeplanting is a temporary identity which is used by planters instrumentally in their own identity formation. Treeplanting's location as a space/time betwixt and between an individual's perception of themselves as both past and future means that treeplanting is a kind of liminal identity, one which is difficult to transport into the real world. Lacking the ability to incorporate their liminal treeplanting identity into the "real world" planters emically refer to those aspects of planting which do translate to their quotidian existence: "self esteem" or "empowerment." Nick (N) and Annabel (A) raise these points in a conversation:

> A: He just said, "keep planting it makes sense, it gets better."
> N: When I got back from planting last [year] I felt really empowered. I mean not much bugged me that would have bugged me before. My independence too, I'd start walking somewhere and not worry how I was going to get home, just knowing that I would figure it out.

A: That's really cool and I look forward to getting back to civilization for that. Not worrying about stuff, like, "this isn't a big deal why am I sweating this."
N: There's no way I'm gonna die so who cares.
A: Yeah, nothing is as hard as treeplanting.
N: Yeah, you will notice that you can't handle people whining around you. (June 1)

Nick is a second year planter while Annabel is a greener so there is a certain amount of mentoring occurring in this narrative; however the experience of returning to the city with a new attitude and an increase in self-esteem is common to many planters. The nucleus of the occupational identity of treeplanting is integrated into the personal identity of young workers and displayed in narratives like the one above and in actions back in the city.

Issues of Identity: Gender, Sexuality and Age

At this point I want to return to an issue which can not be lost since it lies at the heart of the occupational identity of treeplanters. Because planting is a temporary, liminal occupation in which the worker is highly independent and the exercise of power based on status is indirect and limited there is more room for the expression of personal identity within the rubric of occupational identity. Like the construction of the camp or the journey to the work site, the occupational identity of treeplanting is created each year; the appearance of genesis creates the illusion of mutual and equal participation in the construction of the occupational culture. This thesis has outlined several instances in which staff or experienced planters have more influence on the

shape of treeplanting culture. However, each season the illusion of mutual participation leads to the actual participation by greeners and less experienced planters in shaping such important cultural events as night-off parties, meals, games and sports, to name a few. In this context I would suggest that one cannot understand identity without addressing the personal priorities that an individual has in either adopting or rejecting aspects of occupational identity. At planting camp, the enculturation of the worker is not a passive process whereby the individual must accept and accommodate themselves to a monolithic culture. Certainly in Melissa's case there are some things which one has to accept—the adoption of temporal techniques in response to piecework being one example—and integrate into their person in order to be a planter. There are other aspects of people's identity which may be integrated into the culture of the camp and may actually become part of the occupational identity. An example of this is the arrival of two cross-country runners in 1997. Contrary to the work culture (and sanity) of minimum physical effort after work, these two people ran home each night from the block. Despite neither of them returning, the 1998 season saw three planters running after their work day. Finally, research into identity and occupation needs to be gilded by a knowledge of what aspects of personal identity are important to their informants. It is this information which creates the scale by which the value of certain aspects of work are measured.

Gender

As Lloyd and Mullen have observed, one way of understanding the issue of personal and social/occupational identity is to recognize that individuals occupy multiple subject positions and that each place that they occupy informs and shapes their identity (164; cf. Massey, *Space*; Haraway). All of these positions are in flux and contested. One of the chief sites of identity construction is the gender of the worker. Men and women work for different reasons; the value of work and the identity of themselves as workers is affected by their gender. A factor that permeates much of what I will discuss below is that treeplanting women are engaged in a nontraditional occupation, while male planters are within a traditional work setting.[34] I will return to this point below, but first I will address one of the main differences between the two groups. In interviews women tended to link body image to physical work, while men were generally silent on the subject. Lys provides some examples of this trend:

> Its funny, his [a fellow planter's] physique is so masculine and so
> brawny-man and that kind of thing. I remember saying to him once, "I
> want your muscles. I want to have them." And he was like "why?"
> (He was kind of like upset at that) because I want to play like you

[34]By nontraditional I am following Nancy Zukewick Ghalam's statistical analysis of occupations and gender. 71% of women's employment was confined to five occupational groups: teaching, nursing, clerical, sales and service (204). See also the analysis of the way in which the frontier work camp was constructed as male within a limited ideology of masculinity by Deryck W. Holdsworth, "'I'm a Lumberjack and I'm OK'": The Built Environment and Varied Masculinities in the Industrial Age." *Gender, Class and Shelter*. Eds. Elizabeth Collins Cromley and Carter L. Hudgins (Knoxville, TN: U of Tennesee P, 1995) 11-24.

[laughter]. . . . I was thinking today because I knew we were going to talk and what kind of experience might be specific about being a woman. I was thinking. . . about how esteem and body esteem are tied up with planting and I don't think it's as strong with me although I really like the image of myself as a strong person, as a hearty person and as a person able to withstand this stuff. And that's what appealed to the job with me. And it's funny being up here because it doesn't really fit. It doesn't completely work for me and maybe that's because I know there's a lot tougher chicks here or I don't know what. I don't know but I think I don't have any weight problems[95] and I don't think I have any real muscles so. (June 19)

During an interview with an informant who had become a confidant to many planters I was told about some of the issues and heartaches that planters were "dealing with" in camp; attempted suicide, eating disorders, and low self esteem were all mentioned. No names were exchanged but all of these issues involved women. I am not suggesting that this is a qualitative study of gender and work or even that men do not have similar issues. What I want to point out is that women see treeplanting differently than men. The dynamics that give the work value and which make people then want to adopt it as part of their own identity is intimately tied up with issues around gender. For many women treeplanting is a way of testing themselves, and their bodies, against a difficult task. When they succeed and take on the occupational identity of treeplanters an aspect of themselves changes as well. In turn the

---

[95]The context does not make this comment clear, "weight problems" does not refer to clinical obesity. It refers to self esteem issues and body image in which women see themselves as weighing more than their actual weight. It also suggests issues surrounding bulimia nervosa, excessive dieting and anorexia nervosa—all conditions which some women in camp had spent time battling.

occupational identity of treeplanting begins to become affected by this testing and experimentation and it becomes a site in which women can become empowered.

Men, on the other hand, tend to highlight the continuity of their experiences outside of planting with planting itself. Treeplanting is an extension of the traditional male work fields of resource extraction and physical labour. As such masculinity and treeplanting are unmarked categories and often do not appear in the issues surrounding male planting narratives and identity construction (Shuman). This is in opposition to women for whom planting is a nontraditional work site which has come to be defined as an area of challenge. Rather than a challenge, male treeplanters tend to view it as a site for the display of traditional male skill—an area of competency and skill—an area that could be called a gendered canon of work techniques."[6] The situation which I just described is only a generalization, a trend, which appears—like body image for women—when the bulk of the data is organized and assembled. Many men also have issues surrounding their bodies, as Nick's narrative in the shower highlighted. Young male planters also occupy an ambiguous position in regard to traditional male skills in outdoor occupations—most notably, many do not have them.

Most men and women who plant live in large cities in the south, although many of them grew up in small towns or in the country. The loss of outdoor living and physical labour is shared by both women and men. There is the perception that

---

[6]For an exploration of masculinity and occupational identity see: William W. Pilcher, *The Portland Longshoreman: A Dispersed Urban Community* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972) 23-30.

the skills of the city and urban jobs are one-dimensional and that treeplanting is a return to what many participants feel they have lost. Annabel's reasons for planting highlights some of these points:

> A lot of my friends told me that I was doing this to run away from my problems. And I said, "No that's not it at all. I need a break from you. I need a break from the monotonous life that I was leading in Halifax." It was monotonous. . . . I hate the city. I grew up in the country. I hate the noise . . . and I need isolation and I hated what my life had become. . . . Another reason I came treeplanting is because I knew it was really physical work and I like physical work. . . . (June 11)

Issues surrounding gender highlight the different aspects of treeplanting which are valued by men and women. Despite this, women and men still structurally use treeplanting for similar ends and goals. This situation has created the interesting dynamic that although it appears that treeplanting means similar things to everyone, issues around gender suggest that men and women's experiences and participation with occupational identity are quite different. At its most general, women test themselves against the tough conditions of planting in order to reconstruct their personal identities, some of which have been damaged by issues surrounding body image. Men view treeplanting as part of a tradition of male work environments and attempt to display competency in this tradition. Both male and female planters treat this exercise instrumentally and the joint male and female perception of planting as a return to an experience which they had as children means that some elements of common ground between the two genders vis-a-vis treeplanting exists.

Sexuality

Deryck W. Holdsworth has outlined the manner in which frontier spaces are male spaces in which sexuality is expressed "by a dominant masculinity that represents fighting, drunkenness and whoring as 'natural' lifestyle behaviours associated with these places" (16). Holdsworth unearths examples of multiple masculinities in spaces such as the YMCAs at certain ports for sailors, and the close physical contact between men in logging camps (15 and 20). The activities of festival briefly outlined in Chapter Five suggest that planting camp is a site of varied masculinities and femininities despite the occupational identity which strongly mimics traditional masculine work messages. Figure 42 is an example of the play and critique of masculinity within carnival. Within discussions over gender and work there is still a tendency to consider heterosexuality as normative and, therefore, issues surrounding the complex constellation(s) of gender, sexuality and the graduations of masculinity and femininity are not explored.

Many aspects of planting camp play with issues of gender and sexuality. Cross dressing at parties is common, as are mock high school proms where gender roles are swapped and hyperbolically accentuated to create an air of play and critique. The grotesque is often a part of these display; with men sporting massive faux breasts and women with a pair of work socks tucked down their pants. Within this bacchic play of sexuality there are also members of the camp who are openly homosexual, bisexual and a category which planters (among others) call "bi-curious." A distinction should

Figure 42. Andrew and Bruce strike a pose and play with masculinity.

be made between festival activity and actual expressions of various sexualities. A straight male may very well feel comfortable in the context of play dressing up as a woman without adopting a personal identity as an individual who is willing to experiment with his sexual orientation. Likewise, a member of the camp who wears the same clothes every day and does not take part in festival behaviour is equally likely to be gay, lesbian, straight or bi-sexual. I mention festival because the fact that sexuality and gender are categories in planting camp which are being actively experimented and played with on a daily basis is part of the context for understanding the role of sexuality, identity and treeplanting. Nancy's (N) narrative outlines some of the aspects of sexuality and the camp:

> J: Did you want to talk about homosexuality and camp culture?
> N: I thought you might ask me something about that and I really don't
> have a lot to say about it. I wasn't out my first year. It seems like such
> a non-issue. People that plant seem so ok with it. Considering that this
> is such a het[erosexual]. atmosphere there seems to be a large number
> of at least bi[sexual] curious people anyway. I think it's just a non-
> issue. I tried to make a big deal out of it last year; I tried to be really
> out about it. I didn't want any questions about it. This is who I am;
> get to know it right away. And I realized quickly that no one cares. . . .
> I still miss my women friends. . . people around here don't get my
> jokes. (June 18)

The aspect of respect and freedom which people experience at camp has not always been the case. Johnny G. makes this point during a conversation on this topic:

> Definitely more [gay planters] over that last 4 - 5 years. I see a much
> greater representation of people who are homosexual. It's certainly not
> been a regular thing compared to real life. I've got a very good friend
> who did this for four or five years and at that point he was the only gay

> person I'd ever known at treeplanting camp—and probably there were more, who knows. Just like everyday life. And I know it was very frustrating for him. Not the fact that he wasn't in contact with other people but just the fact that he was alone. (June 10)

The reality of being "out" at treeplanting camp is not the same as being part of gay culture. The isolation which Johnny G.'s friend experienced is that he could not be "out." The isolation which Nancy feels is that the community which understands her jokes and experiences, essentially the place where much of her personal identity is located, is not at treeplanting camp. For all its tolerance, treeplanting is predominantly a heterosexual culture.

It should also not be presumed that the culture of planting camp is full of people who are comfortable with the fluidity of identity that is sometimes expressed. A small minority of people were decidedly uncomfortable; they did not, however, make any attempt to change people's behaviour.

The issue of how this fluidity is created can be found by returning to issues surrounding liminality. Turner has identified bi-sexuality as a liminal position since it is ambiguous and fluid. The phenomenon of LUGs, Lesbians Until Graduation,[7] is common in the lesbian community in towns with large universities and it suggests that the liminoid position of university creates some of the same conditions of ambiguity, freedom from social codes and potentiality as treeplanting camp. Lys' own

---

[7]LUGs can be used as a mild derogatory title; I am not using the term with these connotations (cf. Nolen).

lighthearted narrative concerning her experience with relationships in treeplanting

highlights this phenomenon:

> And so I arrived and my first thought was "o.k. I'm going to stay
> faithful [to my partner]." My second thought was, "O.k. if I have a
> relationship it will be with a woman, that's allowed; I want to explore
> that. And so I can't deny myself that." Then it was, "I'll have a one
> night stand, it won't mean anything [laughter] at all." (June 19)

Treeplanting camp is a heterosexual culture whose liminal position allows for the play

with sexuality and the inclusion of "out" homosexuals to exist in a place where it is

"no big deal." The fact that people can be out in planting camp is generally

considered by treeplanters to be a testament to the freedom afforded the individual in

the occupation; it is a source of pride and has begun to be seen as part of the

occupational identity of this particular camp. Like issues surrounding gender and

questions concerning freedom in general, it is not the majority of planters who accept

any risk in the creation of this tolerant space. It is the bravery of men and women

who either explicitly identify themselves as gay or lesbian and those who experiment

within the space of planting camp who have secured this temporary space for

themselves.

Age

Treeplanting, because of its change in hiring practices in favour of recruiting

from a specific habitus, has become identified as a youth occupation. The

demographics of the camp suggest that treeplanting contains two age groups. The first

and largest group is drawn from the habitus of young university students. The second group are those planters who have spent several years planting and now are out of university or are people who began planting when they were older (25 to 27). Both of these groups tend to adopt different attitudes in relation to treeplanting, and highlight different personal and occupational identities. Young planters tend to view planting as a paid adventure whose monetary rewards are less important than participating in the culture of treeplanting. For them planting provides money so that they can pay for part of their university fees and living expenses. Others in this group use planting as a way to work hard for a short period of time and then spend the rest of the summer at a job that does not pay very well but which they like. This group is known as the "camp kids" because most of them will leave treeplanting to go and work at various wilderness camps. Making money at treeplanting is important to them; however their socio-economic position affords them a certain level of security through parental support and student loans—a security which is not shared by the second group.

The second group for whom planting is seasonal work within a year long strategy of part-time, contract or seasonal jobs are generally older (25-38). This group tends to focus on the monetary and work side of planting. A section of this group is known as the "old crusties," a title which denotes their potential to complain about certain things, to be less "fun" and to treat planting more as a job. It is a title that is both emic and etically applied. Johnny G. and several other planters take great pride in being an old crustie, while many younger planters use the term as part of verbal

jesting. In either case the existence of the categorization exposes the existence of at lease two distinct groups that make up the planting camp. In 1998 the two groups spent most of the season in a good-natured form of warfare called joking (Basso 1979). The tension between the two groups does highlight the fact that an occupational identity for treeplanting is a difficult thing to pinpoint. Figure 43 is a photo of a piece of graffiti depicting a caricature of a "crusty" which appeared on the bus. Its author is, himself an experienced planter, however, he was not identified with the old crusties. His drawing means that the joking between the two groups was endemic enough that it actually formed part of the character of the camp. The ability of a camp's culture to change annually depending on who has come back to plant, the land, and the size of the crew means that some years one generational group—such as "the old crusties"—may hold sway and the occupational identity of treeplanting will mainly concentrate on work or the cultural activities that they find important. The next year as a new group of planters is hired this will change again and work itself may take a back seat to the creation of friendship groups based on sharing personal experience narratives, recreational activities and the like. With all other factors taken into consideration (work process, canon of work technique, the structuring principles of spatial organization, the tradition(s) of the occupation and the culture of liminality) the culture of planting is dramatically affected by the largest friendship group within the camp. This group is often made up of planters who entered the occupation at a similar time and have moved through the seasons as a group. This group tends to be a
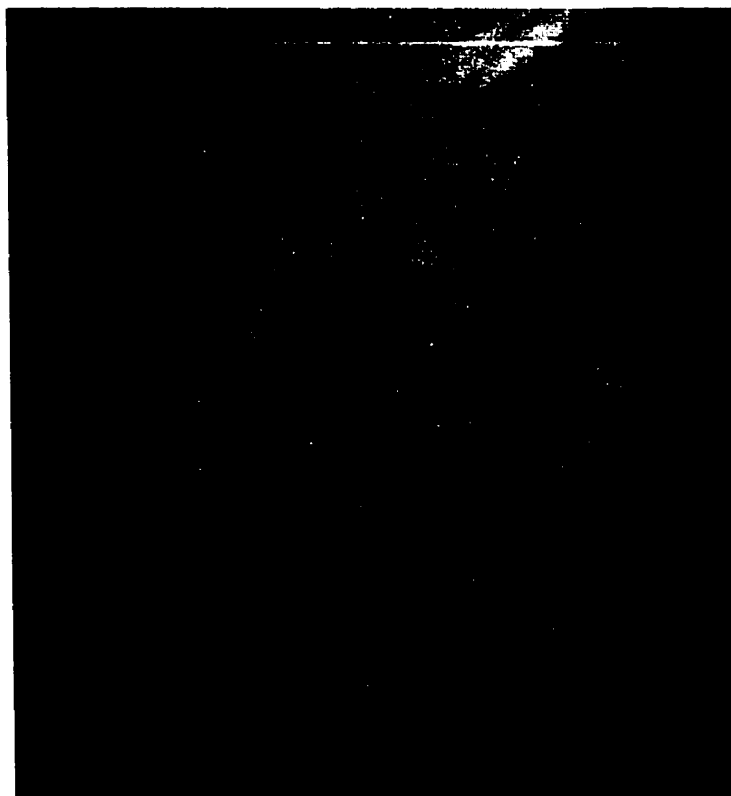
Figure 43. Graffiti in black marker on the bus depicting an "old crustie," 1998. Artist: Crawford Noble

similar age and draws on experiences from outside the occupation particular to itself to inform the culture of planting.

The kind of music played at the festivals is a good indication of the changing shape of age groups within treeplanting. Motown has been a staple in JL's camp since the dancing started (see Chapter One). Over the last two years this music choice has been slowly giving way as a new set of planters enters the occupation. Their choice of music is almost exclusively Rave. I am not suggesting a direct correlation between music and social groups, but the dynamic of playing music for public consumption coupled with the fact that music is tied to personal identity (age, race, class and gender) does allow the researcher to spot trends in the movement and flow of generational friendship groups and the way in which these affect the occupational identity of treeplanting.

The role of age as a factor which influences personal and occupational identity is not, in itself, an indicator of a particular subject position. No two individuals of the same age will be alike since race, gender, sexuality and class could easily eclipse age as a factor. However, it is one aspect of camp life which helps to explain the interaction between personal and occupational identity.

The Construction of Identity

Up to this point I have been concerned with demonstrating two aspects of occupational identity. The first is the way that the enculturation of an individual into

an occupational identity is based on the shared principles of the canon of work technique. Second, I have suggested how the multiple subject positions of the individual affect the way in which the worker will value certain aspects of work and participate in an occupational identity which would be more in line with their personal priorities. This process has the added affect of changing the occupational identity itself. In this section I want to return to the issue of the way in which occupational identity is constructed. Here one needs to move beyond the simplistic explanation that an identity is the result of merely doing work. Lloyd and Mullen, building on the work of William Jansen and Richard Bauman have pointed out that identity is formed by two similar forces: oppositional and differential (161-173). Identity formation is partially the result of one group's interaction with another. It is through the recognition and display of difference that much of a groups identity is constructed (Jansen; Bauman; cf. Noyes). Treeplanters define themselves by their opposition to several groups, notably hunters and fisherman. Differential identity is Bauman's term for the performance of oppositional identity and, as such, it forms the basis of most of the narrative performance in this section (35, 38). Emic and etic points of view, as well as esoteric and exoteric perceptions are important issues in identity construction. The question of who says what about whom will be of special importance in this section, notably in relation to inter-group perceptions.

Because treeplanting is an isolated occupation there is little interaction with other groups which help to craft an occupation into a shared sense of itself. There are,

however, some instances in which this occurs, and these are shared in narrative form. Loggers, firefighters, hunters, townspeople, fisherman and other planting companies are all groups who help shape the occupational identity of planters.

One of Nadya's favourite and best performed stories is about the "big beefy" treeplanters at Outland. She had several stories and in each case the Outland planters fill the classic role of the wise men of Gotham, the legendary city of fools (Leach 461).

> This one time—the big beefies—we were in town and the Outland boys were staying in the same hotel as us, the Shoreline. We went to a bar and they were there too and we didn't say anything but you know looking and making fun of them. So the next day we come out and the Beefies wrote "We Suck" on their own white vans. I don't know—I think they thought they were our vans or something. But they're driving away and yelling about how much Brinkman sucks and here they are with this "we suck.". . . (June 23)

The solidarity between treeplanters that Domm talked about earlier is nonexistent when one is actually planting. Outland is Brinkman's main competitor in the Ontario marketplace; it is also a planting company whose culture is different, by degrees, than Brinkman camps. In narratives Outland is treated as the antithesis of Brinkman. They are given the attributes of stupid, male and bumbling. Other stories highlight the aggressiveness of the camp and the competition based wage system. In each case these tales reinforce the occupational identity that the way "we" work is the best and more importantly unique. The differences between companies, with Outland possessing negative attributes, highlight the aspects of JL's camp that are important to

planters (a certain level of equality between the sexes, lack of macho-planting, lack of competition) while giving these attributes a positive value.

Hunters and fishers are groups with which planters occasionally come into contact; the scorn that is heaped on their heads is unqualified. Common elements in stories about these two groups include: hunters who shot planter's dogs; hunters who laid bear-bait close to tents, or on people's land, and fishers who have stolen planter's tents and equipment, or got drunk and kept planters up all night with their partying and yelling of sexually explicite threats to female planters–as was the case during the 1998 season. The dynamic between planters and these two groups is hard to understand until one realizes that each group believes that it is the sole possessor of a particular sector of space/time. When fisherman who have been coming to a lake three hours away from the last gas station for the last ten years suddenly find sixty young southern ("eastern") "hippies" camped in their place, the reaction can be emotional to say the least. For their part treeplanters, who have been occupying a space/time that is betwixt and between, suddenly find their space/time shattered by the arrival of fishers and hunters; they greet their neighbours with a mixture of contempt and polite disdain. Planters stop skinny dipping, their ease with their surroundings suddenly changes and one can feel the air of trust and safety evaporate. A common refrain from people who spend a lot of time in the bush is "I don't fear anything when I'm out there, except other people." The conflict is that both of these groups are

escaping the normal space/time of the city and neither of them feel that they can coexist.

Hunters and fishers are considered by treeplanters as belligerent, threatening, stupid, misogynistic and drunks. While other groups that planters come in contact with are treated with various levels of seriousness, hunters and fishers are treated antagonistically and given almost no quarter. In 1997, four fisherman attended one of the parties; the results were mixed. Most planters agreed with the opinion of the dogs who would have nothing to do with them. Some people tried to talk to them and their reaction was that they were generally nice guys who were really drunk and really freaked out about what was going on around them. After huddling together and drinking for about an hour they left. In conversations with fisherman in 1998 I found that they generally had a lot of sympathy for treeplanters and recognized that they had a very difficult job. When some planters who fish got to talking with this group an area of common ground was reached; however, this did not extend beyond one or two people.

Another group that helps to define the identity of treeplanters is loggers. Cliff's (C) comment's about loggers is a concise etic narrative which highlights planters' feelings towards their sister occupation:

> C: Cutters and the industry hate treeplanters. I'm not sure why. Maybe because it's too much like real work. Maybe they see us as a bunch of eco-freaks that hate their guts or something like that. I don't know.
> J: Hard thing to call.

C: Exactly. They probably don't even know. [To them] it's just a bunch of groupie, groovy idiots, it's Woodstock[98] without the music. It's a treeplanting camp: Woodstock where you've got to work. They don't understand it.

Cliff's comments outline a common trait in identity formation. Here we can see what planters believe other people think of them: the exoteric view of planting. First, treeplanting is real work and loggers couldn't handle it. Second, planters believe that outsiders see them as hippies. The counter-culture communitarianism and several other themes in treeplanting camp certainly have their antecedents in the hippie period. However, planters both emically value this counterculture position and distance themselves from these associations when faced with etic representations of their culture. The verbal and cultural gymnastics involved in balancing on this razor's edge is generally reflected as a joke within the ingroup—more accurately, the joke or phrase is ironic, and full of code shifting, adaptation, hyperbole, and critique. For example, one planter was rolling a joint (marijuana cigarette) during a party that up until that point had been smoke free; another person walking by ironically commented "way to keep the tradition alive." In another example a tent site where a group of planters had a Volkswagen van with tents set up around it was called, by those not living there, the "folk festival." These distinctions may seem minor to those outside the occupation but comments like these point to shifts in an occupation's identity.

---

[98]A reference to the famous concert in Woodstock New York in 1969 that has come to be a symbol for the counter-culture movement of the late 1960s

The view of planters concerning loggers is that loggers have gone soft with all of the machinery that they use and it is planters who carry on the noble tradition of woods working. Many planters are environmentalists (see Chapter One); however, planters react strongly to having the label placed on them by other people with the implication that they are knee-jerk southern environmentalists who do not understand the north. Planters struggle with their environmentalism at planting camp with most coming to an uncomfortable compromise between their occupation and the ideal reorganization of the Canadian resource extraction industry.

Lys's narrative addresses another oppositional identity formation but this time in relation to firefighters.

> It [firefighting camp] was just up the highway a bit. So we went to
> visit that and that was really exciting. Because there was lots of
> tension, lots of buzzing air and that kind of like, that's the centre of all
> the stuff [said heroically]. Big tents were made out of logs and stuff.
> [J: Oh wow]. All in straight rows too [Laughter]. We went into the
> kitchen or the cafeteria, which was like a tray cafeteria. [J: Oh my god].
> And looked at their food anyhow and it was so far inferior. . . . (June
> 19)

For planters both food and housing are important parts of their identity. Food at Brinkman is full of variety and vegetarian meals are provided. Janet Theopheno's study of the way in which foods prepared at two weddings communicate different messages about ethnicity, class, community status, personal and family relationships is one example of the work that researchers have done on the way in which food is used. At planting camp, the kind of food that is served is both a recognition of the counter-

culture tradition and a way of distinguishing planting from the "meat and potatoes"

resource sector. The variety and urban cuisine of planting is a powerful

communicative device of an oppositional identity from the food traditionally eaten in

woods working camps. Housing is likewise a traditional occupational identity marker.

In Chapter Five I mentioned the way that Atcos and lodges are considered foreign

housing models. These housing models do not fit the occupational identity of

treeplanting because the camp is based on a model that integrates the traditional work

camp with the contemporary outdoor recreation consumer industry. Likewise the camp

expresses its status as liminal space time that is populated by young workers (see

Chapter Four and Five). To be a treeplanter is to sleep in a tent. The idea that the

trailers are more comfortable and therefore would naturally replace the tent as the

preferred sleeping structure misses the fact that comfort is culturally defined.

Treeplanting is a hard and difficult job. Living in the bush is a hard and difficult job.

Anything which changes these conditions threatens the "hardcore" occupational

identity of treeplanters. One should also recognize that the antagonism between

planters and loggers means that planters are not likely to adapt housing structures that

mimic a contemporary logging camp. Unlike loggers, treeplanters maintain that they

are not about to go soft and get a beer gut.

Because of the use by both planters as individuals and the occupation as a

whole, shelter tends to be multivocal in its expression of identity. Other areas of

material culture can show a clearer expression of individual identity within the broader

context of the occupation. The alteration of tools, specifically the shovel, is an important marker of personal expression. In Chapter Two I outlined the structuring principle of the canon of work technique. The manipulation of the shovel is a material discourse of a planter expressing: their understanding of the canon of work technique; the occupational identity of treeplanting; and their own personal identity. A planting "style" is the combination of these three areas, the shovel can be a testament of that style. More than this the shovel is an extension of the planter. Chris once commented that to be a good planter I had to think of the shovel as "an extension of my arm—it must become a part of you." In order to accomplish this a planter may chop down the blade, change its angle, sharpen it, add or remove kickers; or change the shaft. More decoratively, they may paint or carve designs into the shaft. The kind of shovel that one uses may also become a personal identifier. There are constant discussions about whether the spear or "D" handle is the best. Most of these end in broad comments that closely reflect the exploration work technique in Chapter Two and Three. Most planters suspend judgement of a planter's equipment as long as he or she is successful. The most common comment on another planter's shovel, if the modifications are extensive, is "how do you plant with that?" Individuals modify their shovel to reflect their interpretation of the canon of work technique; as such, the shovel becomes an object that speaks about a person's work style and their personal identity (see Figure 11).

Greeners form a noticeable group partially because of their equipment, it is new, clean and unmodified. Figure 44 is an example of the how new equipment is conspicuous. On the walk-in the first day Super-Dave threw his empty bags into a mud puddle and kicked them down the road. "I don't want people to think that I'm a greener," was his reason. Despite the fact that the culture of the camp acted to integrate greeners quickly into the group, some new planters still felt that any testament to their position was undesirable. The progress of greeners into the occupation can be read in their equipment: bags get dirty, shovels get modified and many other equipment changes are made. Not only equipment but also the planter's unofficial "uniform" can express occupational and personal identity. I previously mentioned that planters have traditionally modified and adapted the detritus of urban society to serve their work purposes. In this way planters have been keen practitioners of bricolage. The traditional clothing of planters has been: steel-toed work boots, work socks, long underwear, shorts, t-shirt, long sleeve cotton shirt, and bandanna (baseball hat or t-shirt worn over head). Most of the clothes were bought at thrift stores. I use the verb tense "has been" because there is evidence that this is changing. The recycled and thrift store aesthetic is being replaced by clothing purchased from the recreational outdoor/camping stores. The most notable inclusion into the planters uniform is the MEC (Mountain Equipment Co-op) "Rad Pant." These are light weight, "rip-stop" nylon which dry within ten minutes, are durable and light weight. Their advantage over cotton pants, or long underwear is obvious to those who wear them.

Figure 44. Planting equipment. Most clean, new bags in the picture belong to greeners.

The adoption of a new technology is never simply the result of its improvement over what has come before it. If it was merely a adoption of one type of pant this may be the reason. However, there is a general increase in the use of various specialized clothing, from ultra thin polypropanene gloves, and cycling gloves, to polyester bandannas and "Polartech" pants. The explosion of the outdoor recreation industry is being expressed at planting camp. The consequence is that planters are now spending considerable sums of money (Rad Pants, $50; glove $10; bandanna $10) in specialized equipment. The fact that new planters have the funds to purchase rather than create their clothing points to a changing class position in planting and a changing aesthetic which will affect the occupational identity of planting in the coming years. It is already apparent from a survey of JL's camp that there is a gulf between new planters and "old crusties" based on the amount of specialized clothing that is brought out onto the work site. Treeplanting's material culture, since it is tied to the work process, tends to highlight the esoteric perceptions and values of the group without reference to oppositional identity formation. As such it exposes inter-group configuration, change, variation and conflict. It is the dailiness of the planter's material world which exposes these subtle facets of the ingroup. One activity which regularly brings planters into contact with another group is the day off in town. At this time the lives of planters in all their material and narrative content interact with the townspeople.

In two narratives about going into town there is the common exoteric play in narrative by which planters express what they believe others think of them. Going

into town for planters is the return to the "real world" for a short period of time. In a

large town like Thunder Bay, with a long tradition of migrant labour and treeplanting,

the relations between planters and townspeople is quite good. In smaller northern

Ontario towns, most notably Hurst, incidents through the years have created open

hostility between locals and planters. Planters have been banned from hotels and bars,

fights have raged between large groups of town people and planters and open

antagonism has been the order of the day at different times and in different places

throughout the north. Against this backdrop Cliff tells the first story:

> The local people—they don't—well I was talking to Eric[39] and he was at
> the Hoito and he was paying his bill and he overheard this waitress
> saying, "Those treeplanters, why do they have to be so dirty."
> [Laughter]. It was one of those things that we would joke about all the
> time. We'd come up to [each other], "Oh man why do I have to be so
> dirty." And that was after they bathed eh? (June 27)

The second story was told to Andrew and me by Kwanza in the showers one day:

> Do you [referring to Andrew] remember that guy, what was his name?
> He would always dress up on the days off to go into town: shiny shoes
> and nice clothes. And I would look at him and "Wow," I said, "Why
> do you dress up like that and he said, "I don't want everyone in town to
> think that all us treeplanters are stinky dirty people." (Journal May 26)

Treeplanting is filthy work, a fact which planters become acutely aware of when they

arrive in town. Words like filthy, itinerant, drunks and easterners have all been

applied to treeplanters and most of them, like the unknown man in Kwanzas narrative,

want to counter this negative impression. Like Lake Erie fisherman who were

---

[39] A different Eric than the crew boss who was introduced in Chapter Two.

concerned with their image as drunken brawlers, planters work hard to impress upon people that they deserve respect from those around them (Lloyd and Mullen 125-30). In a town like Thunder Bay which is not directly threatening to treeplanters, the effect on identity formation is less a matter of outright conflict and more a matter of differential identity construction (Lloyd and Mullen 155; Bauman). Planters are not urbanites although they interact with them once every four or five days. This interaction allows planters to recognize their unique identity by contrasting their position with townspeople. This in turn helps shape the occupational identity of planters.

Identity and Home Place

Since treeplanting is a seasonal occupation which is quite short in duration, planters returning to the city often find themselves alone with this sudden change in identity. Stripped of the culture that gives their personal identity as treeplanters meaning, the off season planter has to wait until the next season to relocate a part of themselves within the treeplanting occupational identity. Because of the seasonal nature of treeplanting both as a material activity and a part of a person's character, emotions and identity have a locus, a place, a geographic location.

Planters who have become enculturated into treeplanting and are comfortable in their position in camp begin to think of it as a second home. It is, however, a particular kind of home; within which parts of the personal identity of an individual

reside. One might find it odd that an individual could long for a home place which is a work place. What is more accurate is that an individual planter begins to structure their year around treeplanting in such a way that their identity as a treeplanter lays dormant until it is reactivated by being within the locus of treeplanting space/time. It is a kind of coming home. Those who do not plant may wonder at the appeal of a place that is dirty, filled with gruelling physical labour which damages a planter's body, and causes people to break down crying and swearing to the heavens. Some of the narratives that I have placed in this section give us a hint at the power and appeal that the occupation of treeplanting can have. Nancy (N) provides one example:

> J: Did you know you'd be coming back? Did that change your year?
> N: Yeah. I did. I knew right away when I left last year. I knew I'd be back. Did I tell you this? I got a pay check while I was here. My last two weeks of work. I got the pay check. I opened it. It was ten dollars less than what I made that day. Two weeks at about thirty hours a week, $6.85 an hour. . . . I think about the health care job that I had too. I looked after this guy who was an alcoholic, abusive and I had to use my own car and I got paid ten dollars an hour. Not a bad wage but that's only eighty dollars a day. An eighty dollar day out here is really bad. And that [health care] was a horrible job; I had to pay my rent, pay for gas. . . . And I can leave here after six weeks with seven thousand dollars in my pocket. (June 18)

It is not surprising that for young working men and women the pull to return to treeplanting can be very strong. Not only is the job potentially rewarding but it also offers the kind of challenges and opportunities for adventure which are not present in

the low paying service industry jobs to which most young workers are condemned[100].

Michelle (M) describes her own reasons for returning to plant every year:

> M: The pragmatic thing is that with my skills and education what else
> could I do to make $200 a day. The obvious answer is prostitution. . . .
> For the most part I feel that these are my kind of people; I'm
> comfortable in the bush; I'm comfortable being dirty and working
> intensely for a short period of time. I like being out doors and I think
> it's a great place for Hannah to grow up[101]. It's a good balance from the
> city. It's a nice break from the cerebral part of my life: I just sleep,
> poo, eat. You just let go—you have to because you can't control from
> up here. . . .
> J: You said it's your kind of people how does that work?
> M: The people that I know in the city tend to be either professional
> people or students . . . so typically—and this is a whole bunch of
> stereotyping and generalizations but—typically, my city life tends to be
> more surrounded by conservative people, more materialistic, just urban
> heads. . . . And here it's more people who are tough. I like the
> hardcore aspect of it, I really like the hardcore environment: we work
> hard, we party hard. People here are also really political, aware, I hate
> to use the term but, "alternative." Where else am I gonna meet a reggae
> musician, a bio-chemist and a person with an MBA who is figuring out
> where to put the world's largest roller coaster. (June 15)

The orientation with which planters approach their job can be represented on a graduated scale: on one end planting is a break from normal life; on the other end planting is a sanctuary from normal life. Where the personal identity of a planter falls on this scale affects the way that they interact with the occupational identity of treeplanting and the value that it has in their life.

[100]See: Daniel Bochove, "Generation Faces Grim Job Outlook," *Globe and Mail.* Monday, September 6, 1993: B1-3.
[101]Hannah is Michelle and Rob's one year old daughter.

In 1997 I sat down with a friend in the cook bus on a rainy cold day off. I'd known him since I started planting and he was having a hard season. We chatted a little bit, I asked him for a bear story and he told me one; the formalities over I asked him what was wrong. He was having relationship problems with one of the other planters. In itself this fact would not mean much beyond one man's personal life. It was, however, the effect of this crisis on his view of treeplanting, his identity and the deep sadness that these changes caused him that expose some of the dynamics of personal and occupational identity in treeplanting. This planter saw camp as "his place" and a "home" where he could "be himself." He looked forward to it all year long. That he was now uncomfortable in a place that had always been a refuge was too much for him. He quit at the end of that season[102].

In order to appreciate the planter's sense of "home" one must realize the values, beliefs and ideologies that surround the concept. In the context of African-American families, the struggles over racism and sexism, bell hooks [sic] has explored the idea of home place. Although the two contexts are dissimilar some of hook's observations have a relevance to treeplanting. The first is that there is no essentialist character to home. It is not only a gendered place which reproduces social relations. Home can be a site of resistance, a radical political dimension that nurtures the dignity of the members of the community outside of the dominant discourses (42-3). Treeplanting is a home place which some planters return to as an act of resistance. The "alternative"

---

[102]Aspects of this conversation were recorded in my journal June 15.

people that Michele mentions, the "political" people, the various modes of sexuality, the underemployed, the frightened, can all be found at treeplanting trying their best to make a home which does not replicate the dominant discourses of the "real world." For some planters the occupation is a kind of home "where we can recover ourselves" (43).

I talked with another planter in 1997 who came to the realization that he would quit planting half way through the contract. JP carried the same sadness, usually mixed with bravado, as others who face quitting. "I'm not coming back," he told me. "This is my swan song. It's really tough though because to quit this job you have to reorganize your entire life" (Journal, June 16). Both of us were having a bad day on the block and we smoked a couple of cigarettes at the cache and talked about his decision. He used the word "expectation" several times in our talk. "It's just you have all these expectations about planting, how much money you'll make and the people and all that shit and it's all year. And then I'm sick[103] and I don't make any money. Shit I sound like I've been here forever but it's only been four years" (Journal June 16). Returning to treeplanting to realize a part of oneself means that a worker has to structure their year around six to eight weeks in the bush. For some people, like students, this is not difficult. For underemployed workers it is a necessary part of their work cycle. For others it is a way to make money and engage in non-wage work

---

[103]JP had suffered from a viral infection for much of the planting season. Illness in short season work in Ontario can destroy a planter's expected earnings

in the arts. Quitting treeplanting not only means leaving a job, it means reorganizing

one's life. For some the need to quit planting is based on what it is doing to the rest

of their lives. Anne-Marie Murray makes this point in an article to the *Globe and*

Mail:

> What had become more difficult. . . was managing the transient aspect
> that the planting schedule had imparted to my life. Tree-planting had
> fostered a non-committal attitude that affected most of my relationships
> and encouraged me to procrastinate when faced with important
> decisions. The freedom that I had tasted through tree-planting's sweat
> and toil came at a price that I was no longer willing to pay. (1989:
> A18)

I know that several planters have disagreed with Murray's assessment of treeplanting

but she does recognize that at some point balancing planting and the real world takes

its toll. Nancy, in talking about age and "real life" makes the following observations:

> I'm looking around and I see all these young people and I'm wondering
> why am I still here doing these piddly jobs - I should just get on. . . .
> Yeah it's a good way to make a chunk of cash, but it's not advancing
> my career or helping my art or whatever. (June 18)

Time to Quit?

Coming to the realization that it is time to quit is also a part of the

occupational identity of treeplanters. I have thus far been outlining interwoven

relationships between personal and occupational identity and the way that they interact

in a seasonal work setting. Sooner or later everyone stops planting. The work is too

difficult, the pay is too poor when judged on a yearly basis and, as we have seen, the

strain of balancing two worlds becomes a choice between one or the other. For the

male planter above, the time to leave came when he was no longer able to mesh his personal identity with the occupation.

JP planted for eight days in the "fall plant" and then left the occupation. Other planters do not leave because their time has come. For this group injuries take them out of the game. The sports analogy is used because it reflects the look on people's faces when they realize that their bodies can no longer do the work. Murray describes her own experience in much the same way: "At 29 I was beginning to feel like an aging sports hero, past my prime but too proud to admit it was time to retire" (A18). Planters wear their injuries as badges of their occupational identity. As accurately as narratives of technique or photographs, callouses, bruises, cuts—injuries in flesh and blood—reflect the nature of the work. At breakfast and supper a long list of injuries are narrated and displayed. Wrists and other joints begin to ache and then go numb from the repetitive action of planting.[104] Tendinitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, bursitis and several other conditions are endemic to planting. Planters duct tape or wear dish washing gloves on their tree hand to avoid scraping the flesh off their fingers from putting their hand in soil all day long—sometimes it occurs anyway (see Figure 45). Blisters and callouses are the result of miles of walking. Constantly kicking the soil leads to a condition known as "numb toe." With the build up of callouses and nerve

---

[104]It should be noted that in collecting narratives of injuries and my own experience of being a planter for three years, the issue of injury is the only major area where management and planters disagree. Brinkman, JL and several crew bosses expresses the opinion that injuries are the result of poor physical conditioning and poor planting technique. They also held the belief that the job could be done without incurring any physical harm. Planters held that the work, by its very nature, damaged the body.
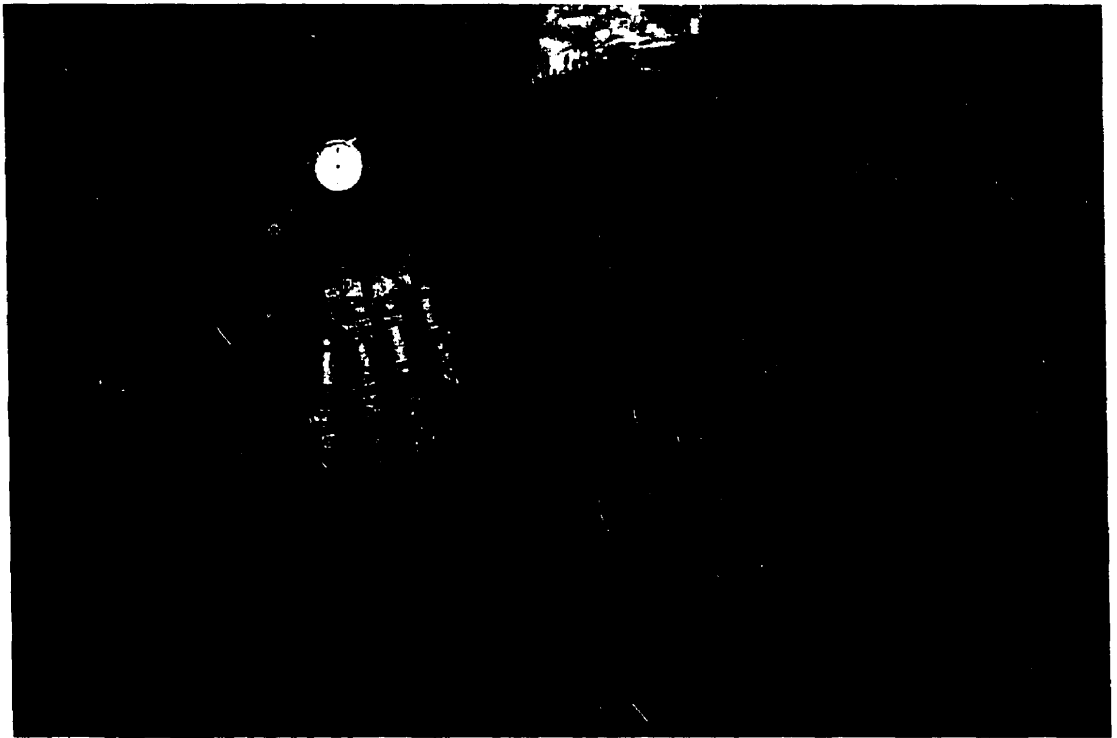
Figure 45. Two types of hand protection: duct tape (left), dish washing glove (right).

damage a planter loses feeling in one or several of their toes. Another temporary injury is called "butt chafe" and results from sweat and dirt mixing together, agitated by the act of walking to create a painful rash from the tail bone to the perineum. Injuries have several conflicting meanings in treeplanting. As I have said, planters often talk about them as a badge of planting. The occupation is tough, injuries are the proof, and a planter that works through them is being "totally hardcore." On the negative side, injuries can end a planting season or even a career. Each year a few people do not return or leave early because some part of their body can no longer handle the strain. Those who leave because of injuries are similar to those who lose their connection with the camp, both carry a certain amount of sadness with them because they are not ready to leave.

Why does leaving define treeplanting? Because it exposes the powerful bond that is formed between one's personal identity and the occupation. It is a kind of addiction which is often described in narratives as "in your blood" (Lloyd and Mullen 134-6). In wrestling with the addiction of planting Cliff stated:

> It [planting] gets get under your skin! It gets into you! It gets into your middle. It really does. Some people say—it's not something you really like but it's just there. It's hard to explain without actually doing it. Because so many people, it's so cool to hate your job these days and a lot of planters hate their jobs too and I don't blame them. Like [I] said before too, I'm not coming back or whatever, but I never really meant it. (June 22)

The metaphor of Lloyd and Mullen's "in your blood" and Cliff's "under your skin" is a leap of emotional intensity which attempts to understand the indissolvable intimacy

between a person and their identity. Throughout this thesis narratives of work have contrasted treeplanting with the other jobs that planters do in the "real world." These real world jobs are disparaged and rarely discussed in terms of positive identity formation. These are the dead-end, part-time, minimum wage "McJobs" that have become the economic context for young workers. These jobs form the oppositional pair by which treeplanting, as wage work, is partially defined. Johnny G.'s comments in Chapter One is typical: ". . . people that were really happy to be out here and doing this kind of the job instead of being at the Baskin Robins or McDonalds or whatever" (June 10). In order to motivate planters to stay to the end of a contract JL will deliver an oratory that, because of lack of variation in the content and performance each season, experienced planters have labeled "the Seven-Eleven speech." In this oratory JL compares treeplanting with other summer jobs that planters would find if they were to return to the city; McDonald's, Baskin Robins and Seven-Eleven are used as iconic representations of minimum-wage, alienating work places. JL's audience is very sympathetic to his message. Part of the gulf between young labourer's experience with wage work in the real world and treeplanting is the latter becomes a desirable part of one's personal identity while the former remains nothing more than a job. Planting becomes addictive, in part, because the experience of a job that "gets into your middle" is such a rare and valuable one for young workers who are surrounded on all sides by McJobs where they feel both alienated and violated.

Taken as a whole, the narratives in this chapter present a picture of the occupational identity of treeplanters. First and foremost planting is a hardcore job. The pride of planters is that they are able to do work that few others would be able to manage. The phrase, "it's not for everyone" also means that only "we" can do this job. Comments and narratives about housing, food, clothing, injuries, and contact with other groups all display the hardcore nature of planting. In other ways planters consider themselves the inheritors of the romantic period of resource extraction, when life was hard and workers were larger than life. Figure 46 is a representation of a "crazy" treeplanter that mimics the self-portraits of Vincent Van Gaugh (1863-1890). Esoterically it suggests the romantic value of participating in something hardcore and crazy. The extreme nature of planting is also part of the parties. Planters see no inconsistency with disdainfully labelling fishers or hunters as excessive drinkers while treeplanting parties are an exercise in binge drinking and drug use. The festivals and parties are an important aspect of the occupational identity; festivals are hardcore and the pageantry of festival changes the context and meaning of drug and alcohol use in an attempt to distance it from the kinds of drinking engaged in by other groups.

Planting is also a place in which the individual can express a certain amount of freedom. As such, the occupational identity reflects and refracts the multiple subject positions and personal identities of those who make up the camp. This creates a kind of kaleidoscope in which personal and occupational identity forms and reforms itself over time into different patterns. The parameters of the patterns are limited by the
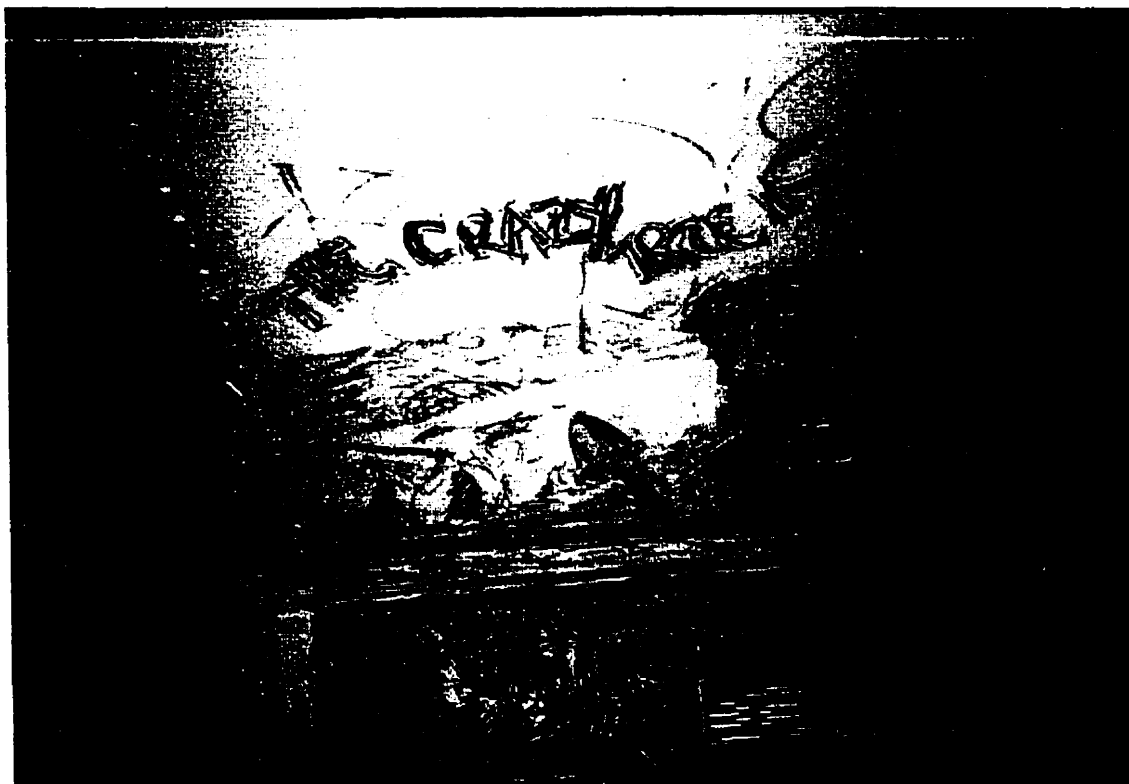
Figure 46. Graffiti in wax crayon on wall and ceiling of bus, 1998. Artist unknown.

design of the kaleidoscope; in much the same way, the structures of work and the camp limit the range of possible permutations of occupational and personal identity. The expression of personal freedom and identity becomes entwined in the sense of planting as a home place, a site of resistance which nurtures these "alternative" identities. Finally, the broader context of limited work opportunities for young people means that treeplanting is an occupation which planters use to test their skills and strength, to increase their self esteem and to shape part of their personal identities.

Along with these general attributes of treeplanting I have also outlined the mechanisms by which this temporary identity is constructed. The work and camp act to enculturate a greener into the culture of planting. Once the greener becomes a planter, his/her personal identity and occupational identity react and interact with each other in a way that eventually forms a temporary identity. When the planting season ends this identity is retained in a dormant state until they can reenter the culture that gives it a context and a meaning, or occasionally revived in discussion with other planters or talking to non-planters. The powerful forces of flow in the work, liminality in the overall culture, the hardcore nature of the job and the ability to rise to these challenges means that for those that succeed in the occupation their self esteem and view of themselves is elevated. Beyond these general observations I can only agree with Cliff that "It's hard to explain without actually doing it."

Conclusion

This thesis has been concerned with the interlocking forces that make up the occupation of treeplanting. As such it represents a partial ethnography of this unique and fascinating occupational group. In Chapter One I addressed the historical and structural forces that have helped shape contemporary treeplanting. Issues surrounding oral history and group identity are implicated in any exploration of an occupational folk group. This is especially important for treeplanters since their history is transmitted orally, in the context of a small, isolated, mono-generational group. Below I will suggest directions for future research on treeplanters. The collecting of treeplanting oral histories and using this project to reevaluate the relationship, both theoretical and methodological, between folkloristics and historiography should be a central project.

Chapter Two investigated the way work narratives can be used to explore the canon of work technique, and the way these techniques can be considered a shaping principle of the occupation. Under McCarl's theoretical construct the characteristics and nature of narrative itself is not problematized (*Occupational*; *District*). Although this may not have been important in his own research, treeplanters make this sort of inquiry necessary. What my research exposed was that piecework and the physical environment contributed to planters working in relative isolation from each other. In this context work narratives are used to construct a simulacrum of a shared work

experience. Since the exchange of technique(s) is predominantly confined to narrative one must accept that several factors will affect narrative content: cultural rules of when and how a tale is to be told; use of narratives for entertainment; and the construction of personal and occupational identity, are a few of these factors. Once these culturally specific forces are recognized, one can see the way that technique(s) help shape treeplanting.

Chapter Three used a similar approach to investigate the work and folklife of staff. What I found was the position of the staff is the result of their bi-cultural (sometimes tri-cultural) position in the camp. They secure their position as treeplanters by displaying competency in the traditional canon of work technique (McCarl, *District* 162). Other aspects of their job call on different skills, including the management and negotiation of their bi-cultural status. Crewbosses are a good example of this since they represent their own interests along with that of planters, the company and Abitibi Consolidated. Within this matrix of competing interests the culture of this camp is deeply suspicious of overt uses of authority. It is the ability of crewbosses to use tactics of authority containment and still get planters to work within proscribed boundaries that makes an effective crew boss (specifically) and staff (generally). Staff usually have much more complex jobs than planters and therefore the range of techniques is greater.

The exploration of treeplanting as liminal space/time is the focus of Chapter Four. Here three main points were made. First, I argued that within the paradigm of

classic anthropology, treeplanting is both a boundary/territorial crossing, by which planters enter the liminal space/time of the wilderness as it has been historically and materialistically constructed in central Canada, and a rite of passage within several different sociocultural contexts. Second, the above arguments are suspect because planting and planters do not completely enter a space/time which is separate from the dominant social structures around them. In fact, the success of treeplanting relies on the constant interaction between the camp and other space/time regimes. The paradox of an activity which appears to be liminal and yet challenges some of the basic assumption of post-Turner liminal studies, led me to argue against the basic socio-spatial configuration of liminality in complex societies. My third point, therefore, is that liminality can only remain a useful tool in understanding cultural processes if it is integrated into contemporary research on the socio-spatial and socio-temporal shape of everyday life. When this is done, one finds that post-Turner liminality proposes a simplistic space/time model of society which undermines the very viability of liminality as a cultural category. In order to reevaluate liminality I have proposed that it be viewed as a diachronic material process. This view highlights the praxis of liminality and foregrounds the construction of liminal space/time out of the "ever shifting geometry of power and signification," as Doreen Massey terms the overlapping, interlocking and conflicting space/time regimes which make up complex society (3). This viewpoint has the advantage of seeing liminality as a starting point of an investigation rather than as the labelling tool which it has become.

As a starting principle the praxis of liminality, or the culture of liminality, is the focus of Chapter Five. This investigation explores the way in which overlapping space/time structures are integrated and expressed within treeplanting. These spaces coexist because of the heterotopic nature of liminal space/time which is created in treeplanting. The investigation of the block as the construction of a work site and the construction of the camp as an investigation of social relations are ways of highlighting the various spatial regimes of treeplanting. The foregrounding of the spatial in this section is a way of understanding that all social relations take place in time and space. In the same way that cultural products like songs, legends, proverbs and material culture are the traditional focus of folkloristic investigation, this chapter argues that because space and time are both a product and structuring principle of social relations they lay within the scope of folkloristic investigation.

In the final chapter I revisited some aspects of the thesis in order to address issues surrounding identity. Identity is implicated in all aspects of treeplanting and this chapter briefly examined several examples. The factors affecting identity formation are consistent with many other studies (cf. Lloyd and Mullen), although the interaction between personal and occupational identity is more complex in seasonal work. The researcher must account for the subject's position(s) outside of the work setting as well as their various subject positions within the occupation. What I found was that the liminal space/time of treeplanting has created a site of identity experimentation and construction. Experimentation extends to the work forces' general

instrumental use of the occupation. The result is that instrumentality creates an occupational identity which highlights and reflects the priorities which occur within identity experimentation. Identity remains an enormous field of study and my hypotheses on the nature of the temporary identity of young seasonal workers at this stage can only be provisional.

Future Areas of Research

It is customary to temper one's conclusions by suggesting that they are only provisional. In the case of treeplanting this assertion is not academic posturing. To my knowledge there exists two books, five popular periodical articles, seven video documentaries and two web pages on this subject. The dearth of data has meant that this thesis has been confined to a study of one camp. Minor extrapolations and generalizations, where they have been made, are the result of data given to me by informants who have worked in other parts of Canada. At this point let me repeat my cautionary statement in the Introduction: this thesis is an ethnographic study of one camp for one season in Northern Ontario. I have used the word "treeplanting" throughout this paper as a form of shorthand.

My limited study leaves several important questions unanswered and demands comparative investigation of the areas that I have written about. I have placed a great deal of importance on the wage system. Future investigation needs to answer the extent to which piecework constructs a set of sociocultural relations. A second

question which needs to be revisited is the way in which ethnicity, gender, race and class affect the material construction of liminality. The answers to both of these questions would help explain two of the occupation's major structural components.

Our understanding of treeplanting would further benefit from comparative study in several areas. A survey of the major companies in the occupation with representation from the four main provinces where treeplanting occurs would help to answer questions such as "What are the cultural similarities and differences between companies and geographic locations?" With an increase of this kind of data researchers could begin to search for the interrelationship between personal identity and occupational identity, and the variation(s) in key concepts like tradition, technique(s), narrative and festival just to name a few. Comparative analysis would also be able to question the extent to which treeplanting is an occupation. This question is important if researchers are to understand the cross-country similarities and differences in the way that labourers use treeplanting. Questions concerning wage work, instrumental employment, youth and employment, youth and rites of passage, and the changing nature of seasonal work all rely on broad comparative analysis.

Beyond reevaluating my own key concerns and the need for a larger body of data with which to conduct comparative research, there is a need for a material history of the occupation. Key points have been hinted at in this thesis but more research is necessary in the areas of nascent-treeplanting, treeplanting prison work gangs, early Ministry of Lands and Forests projects, and the histories of smaller planting

companies. A history of this kind would rely not only on textual evidence from government and various companies, but would also contain oral histories from workers, staff and owners. The industry is still young enough to provide a rich pool of informants from diverse backgrounds, making a study of this kind fruitful.

The Role of Research in the Lives of Treeplanters

The writing and collecting of both historical and contemporary treeplanting life is an important project at this time. Recent challenges to the position of contract treeplanting in British Columbia means that research into planting culture could become an important part of the debate regarding the industry's future. The situation in British Columbia is that the provincial government is in the process of changing the rules concerning reforestation on crown land. At the time of writing Bill 12 had passed into law and was being implemented throughout the province. It gives displaced unionized forest workers first right to reforestation contracts under the control of Forest Renewal British Columbia (FRBC) (Murray 37). There are several reasons why the New Democratic Party in British Columbia finds it expedient to transfer jobs from young underemployed workers to unionized underemployed workers, but an historical prejudice against treeplanters is certainly one facet that allows a government and industry to make these kinds of changes. Planters have often been labelled as itinerant, transient, unskilled, or "out of province workers who do not contribute to. . . community stability" (Murray 37). Easily recognizable in these

attacks is the long standing fear of the transient worker (cf. Lucas 28-33; Hise 247).

The irony of the situation is that both forestry companies and trade unions who have

organized woods workers have historically battled these same negative stereotypes of

their labourers. In this context the early work of folklorists such as Lomax and

Rickaby can be read politically. This is in part because they seriously studied and

wrote about a marginalized occupational culture that was practically invisible to a

middle and upper class ideology which viewed workers as married, property owners

and members of stable communities. The difference between wage work, a job, a

career and an occupation is the work's status within a community. To call treeplanting

an occupation is a challenge to the prevailing opinion that it is a poorly organized,

often corrupt business that employs young transient deviants (cf. Murray 37).[105] My

own research clearly displays that it is a vibrant occupation that has an important

social history and contemporary culture, forming a vital part of a labourer's annual

work/school cycle. The implication of the transfer of jobs from the traditional

silviculture workforce to a new group is that one group of labourers is more important

than another. It is hoped that research projects in this area—whether academic, artistic

or popular—will openly engage the government, industry and their unions who are

threatening the traditional silviculture workforce, in dialogue.

---

[105]Little data has been collected in this area. My summary of the exoteric opinions of planting is gleaned from my own research and planter's narratives. The hostility between planters and the forestry industry is more common in British Columbia than Ontario, however, so common are the tales of officials in the forestry industry disparaging treeplanters I am confident that future research will support these conclusions.

Outside of the dramatic changes in British Columbia subtle forces are affecting treeplanting. Throughout this thesis I have discussed the continual erosion of real wages in planting and the way this has affected the composition of the workforce. The most noticeable change is that more planters are engaging in the occupation as a form of paid adventure—doing it for the experience rather than the money. In the past money and the experience were always interlocking reasons for going north; however, the stagnation of the price per tree has meant that those who use planting as wage work within an annual work/school cycle do not feel that planting provides the kind of wages that allows this system to function. Coupled with changes in the occupation, erosion of the economic conditions of the young workers who make up treeplanting's labour pool has created a broad economic crisis for young workers. There have been few extensive studies done on young workers who have suffered through the sustained economic recession in the early 1990s and the high unemployment recovery which has occupied the latter half of the decade (Bouchove B1). During this time extensive changes to government support programs like Unemployment Insurance (benefits cut and name changed to Employment Insurance), Welfare and Student Aid (both provincial and federal) have adversely affected young workers (*Globe and Mail* B1 and B4). What all of these changes have in common is that they limit young people's access to capital. The erosion of treeplanting as a source of large wages is yet another factor in the continuing degradation of the living standards of young worker/students in this county.

The downward pressures on the price per tree are not likely to change in the near future. The continued consolidation of planting companies, the steady decline in the gross number of trees being planted and the continued practice of "low-ball" bidding (the lowest bid wins the contract) on government contracts means that the price per tree on non-union work sites can only fall. Traditionally the pressures on wages have been offset by either formal or temporary trade organizations in which workers can bargain for better pay. Seasonal workers have historically been a difficult group to organize as the experience of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) found in the Pacific Northwest forest in the early decades of this century (Lind 5-20). Currently, where unions are not hostile to treeplanters, they are ignorant of their needs and quietly indifferent. This is a dangerous position for planters because Abitibi Consolidated openly announced its intention to pressure the IWA Local 2693 to cut treeplanters out of the collective agreement during contract negotiations in 1998 (Journal May 25, 1998). Planting contracts outside collective agreements have seen prices per tree fall by 12.5 to 19 percent over the last ten years (see Chapter One). Despite historical antagonism and current misunderstandings the future of securing a fair wage for planters exists in working with local unions. The fear of many planters is summed up by Cliff when he told me:

> I'm starting to see planting—not so much with Brinkman because they've
> got this Abitibi thing going—but I'm starting to see planting turning into
> a minimum wage job or not much better than that. And it's not fair. I
> know it's the nasty-nineties and all that stuff and people have to cinch
> up their belts but this job is far too difficult for that. . . . [19]85 was

my first year and we were getting 8.5 cents then and now we're getting eight cents. (June 27)

The gulf between unions and planters is demonstrated in a common occurrence. When union representatives talk to planters they often point out that one of the benefits of belonging to the union is that Brinkman is forced to have Atcos on site. The representatives never realize that planters hate the Atcos. For their part planters do not become involved in the union or in other activities that would bring the two groups together. The consequences of this situation is that the only representative of the planter's interests are the planting companies. In the case of Brinkman and Associates a long tradition of good company-planter relations has earned it a reputation as a good company throughout Canada. The future security of this arrangement in the context of changes to the silviculture industry is doubtful.

Research, Practice and the Work Context

In order to address some of these issues I am making my research available to those groups who may be able to act on some of its findings. The IWA will receive a summary of the aspects of my research that may improve understanding between unions and planters. Brinkman and Associates will receive a complete copy of this work. There are two reasons for this. As the first treeplanting company and the second largest reforestation company in Canada they have come to be seen as an exemplar of the industry. Because of this they have amassed a large amount of textual

history concerning the company and treeplanting in general. It is hoped that this thesis will add to this store of knowledge. The second reason is that some parts of my research may help to shape some management decisions that affect planters. For example, the contentious issue of quality discussed in Chapter Two may not be recognized as an issue by management. I recognize that by providing my research to management I run the risk of following Michael Owen Jones's suggestion that occupational folklore/folklife should be used to help the company better manage their workforce (*Why Folklore*). My position on the debate that Jones's organizational paradigm has caused in occupational folklore is that Jones's thesis is shortsighted and overly optimistic. Jones's model effectively normalizes power relations in the work place and treats workers as a commodity which is either shaped by management or exploited in terms of cultural capital by folklorists (cf. McCarl, *Response*; Green, *At the Hall* 168). In providing Brinkman and Associates with a copy of my research[106] I am addressing the reality that planters have no organization which represents their interests. Lacking this organization the options open to me are to attempt, by circuitous routes, to positively affect the lives of my informants. For the above reasons as well as an act of respect and an acknowledgment of JL's open and honest help to me while researching and writing, a copy of this paper will be sent to him.

---

[106]It may not be clear to the reader, but Brinkman is aware of the use of drugs and alcohol in its camps and remains a permissive environment for responsible drug experimentation (alcohol consumption is, of course, just another form of drug use). Because of the company's traditional stance I do not believe there is any danger to workers in exposing their drug use to management.

Finally, a copy will be made available to JL's camp in 1999. It is hoped that comments and discussion will both inform my own research and provide an arena in which planters could expand the debates surrounding their occupation.

Conclusion

In 1987 Archie Green asked an important question: "Who treasures tales of work?" In this graceful and gently reflexive essay in remembrance of Archer Taylor, Green explores the way labourers use work narratives and the personal resonance that these tales have in his own life and research. Green writes: "A tale might function to precipitate a job action, to symbolize a job need, to mark a job's worth" (165). More reflexively he observes that "I did savour those. . . reminiscences which fed into my waterfront growth" (158). As both an academic and a worker Green has constantly attempted to connect, through the common experiences of work, the academy with pile butts, lumbermen, wobblies, hard-rock miners, salmon fishermen and a host of others (167). Who treasures tales of work? This is an important question for those who study occupational folklore because the answer reveals what position the researcher occupies. I love treeplanting tales. Like my informants and Archie Green it is through tales that I "grew" as a planter. It is through tales of cream, kak and black muck that I began to understand land types and how to plant. Stories about legendary high-ballers or villainous planters outlined the profane and sacred history of the

occupation. The "hornet story"[107] taught me about problematic labour relations and uneven power at planting; bear stories, fatal car accidents and tales of injuries made me respect the isolated and sometimes malevolent environment in which I worked. As a planter I am surrounded by narratives. Some are like Green's "scant packages" while others are long and far-ranging tales (*Calf's* 11). In either case, work narratives help labourers make sense of their world. It is a world that I have been privileged to share and one I have hopefully rendered accurately, fairly and with the same generosity accorded my informants as they have constantly shown to me.

---

[107]The "hornet story" is well known among a generational group of planters and recounts an incident where a partial work stoppage resulted in an unfairly fired planter being reinstated in his job.

Bibliography

Abrahams, Roger D. "Towards a Sociological Theory of Folklore: Performing Services." *Working Americans: Contemporary Approaches to Occupational Folklife*. Ed. Robert H. Byington. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Publication, 1978.

Abrahams, Roger D. and Richard Bauman. "Ranges of Festival Behaviour " *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*. Ithica, NY: Cornell UP, 1978. 193-208.

Allen, Barbara."Personal Experience Narratives: Use and Meaning in Interaction." *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: A Reader*. Ed. Elliott Oring. Logan UT: Utah State UP, 1989. 236-244,

Allen, Sheila and Carol Wolkowitz. "The Control of Women's Labour: The Case of Homeworking." *Feminist Review* 22 (1986): 25-51.

Allmaps. "Canada: Major highway System of Canada and the Northern United State." Markham, ON: Allmaps Canada Ltd., 1990.

Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. New York: Monthly Review P, 1971.

Arendt, Hannah. *On Revolution*. New York: Viking P, 1963.

Aries, Elizabeth. *Men and Women in Interaction: Reconsidering the Difference*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996.

Aries, Philippe and George Duby. *A History of Private Life*. Cambridge MA: Belknap P of Harvard U, 1987.

Armstrong, Pat and Hugh Armstrong. *Theorizing Women's Work*. Toronto: Garamond Press, 1990.

Atwood, Margaret. *Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

-----. *Survival: A Thematic Guild to Canadian Literature*. Toronto: House of Anasi Press, 1972.

Austin, Gillian, ed. "Screefer Madness." *Canadian Geographic* 117.3 (1997): 60-71.

Babcock, Barbara A., ed. *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*. Ithica: Cornell UP, 1978.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Cambridge: MIT P, 1984 [1965].

---. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Minneapolis: U of Minneapolis P, 1984.

Barden, Thomas E. "Tobacco Growing in Southwest Wisconsin: Ethnicity in a Traditional Labor Practice." *Midwestern Journal of Language and Folklore* 12 (1986): 24-37.

Basso, Keith. *Portraits of the Whiteman: Linguistic Play and Cultural Symbols among the Western Apache*. Cambridge: London UP, 1979.

Bauman, Richard. "Differential Identity and the Social Base of Folklore." *Journal of American Folklore* 84 (1971): 31-41.

Beckham, Sue Birdwell. "The American Front Porch: Women's Liminal Space." *Making the American Home: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Material Culture 1840-1940*. Eds. Marilyn Ferris Motz and Pat Browne. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State U Popular P, 1988. 69-89.

Bella, Leslie. *The Christmas Imperative: Leisure, Family and Women's Work*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1992.

Birdwhistle, Ray. *Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1970.

Borman, Kathryn M. and Jane Reisman. *Becoming a Worker*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1986. 3-28.

Bochove, Danielle. "Generation Faces Grim Job Outlook." *Globe and Mail*. Monday, September 6, 1993: B1 and B4.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991.

--- and J. Preston. *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. 1977.

Bowlby, Sophie, et. al. "Becoming a Paid Worker: Images and Identity." *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*. Eds. Tracy Skelton and Gill Valentine. London: Routledge: 1998. 229-48.

Brandes, Stanley. *Metaphors of Masculinity: Sex and Status in Andalusian Folklore*. Philadelphia: UP of Pennsylvania, 1980.

Bronner, Simon J. "Art, Performance, and Praxis: The Rhetoric of Continued Folklore Studies." *Western Folklore* 47 (1988): 75-102.

Brown, Linda Keller and Kay Mussell eds. *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity*. Knoxville: The U of Tennessee P, 1984.

Brunvand, Jan Harold. *The Study of American Folklore: An Introduction*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1968.

Bullock, Alan. "Hegemony." *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*. Eds. Alan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass. London: Fontana P, 1988: 379.

Burawoy, Michael. "The Politics of Production and the Production of Politics." *Political Power and Social Theory, Volume 1*. JAI, 1980. 261-299.

Byington, Robert H. ed. *Working Americans: Contemporary Approaches to Occupational Folklife*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Publication, 1978.

Canadian Federation of Students. Available: http://www.cfs-fcee.ca

Cavell, Richard A. "Theorizing Canadian Space: Postcolonial Articulations." *Canada: Theoretical Discourse/Discours Théorique*. Eds. Terry Goldie et. al. Montreal: Association for Canadian Studies, 1994. 75-104.

Child, Francis J. *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. 5 Vol. 1882-1898; rpt. New York: Dover, 1965.

"CICB [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce], StatsCan [sic] Clash Over Youth." *Globe and Mail*, March 24, 1998: B15.

Cole, Sally and Lynne Phillips ed. *Ethnographic Feminism: Essays in Anthropology*. Ottawa: Carleton UP, 1995.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: The Experience of Play in Work and Games*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975.

Cyr, Hélène. *Handmade Forests: The Treeplanting Experience*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 1998.

Deetz, James. *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life*. London: Anchor Books and Doubleday, 1977.

Derrida, Jacques. "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. Ed. David Lodge. London and New York: Longman, 1988. 108-123.

Desforges, Luke. "Checking out the Planet: Global Representations/Local Identities and Youth Travel." *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*. Eds. Tracy Skelton and Gill Valentine. London: Routledge: 1998. 175-192.

Dewhurst, Kurt C. "The Arts of Working: Manipulating the Urban Work Environment." *Western Folklore* 33 (1984): 192-202.

Do it With Joy. Dir. Nicholas Kadal. Videocassette. Stonehouse Films 1977.

Doerflinger, William Main. *Shantymen and Shantyboys: Songs of the Sailor and Lumberman*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951.

Dorson, Richard, ed. *Handbook of American Folklore*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1983.

---. *Land of the Mill Rats*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1981.

Doucette, Laural. "Voices Not Our Own." *Canadian Folklore Canadien* 15.2 (1993): 119-138.

Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books, 1970.

Duncan, Nancy, ed. *Bodyspace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

Dundes, Alan. "Defining Identity Through Folklore." *Identity: Personal and Sociocultural–A Symposium.* Ed. Anita Jacobson-Widding. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities P Inc., 1983: 235-261.

---. *Folklore Matters.* Knoxville, TN: U of Tennessee P, 1989.

---. "Office Folklore." *Handbook of American Folklore.* Ed. Richard Dorson. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1983. 116.

---. "Who are the Folk?" *Interpreting Folklore.* Ed. Alan Dundes. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1981. 1-19.

Dunk, Thomas W. *It's a Working Man's Town: Male Working Class Culture.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill–Queen's UP, 1991.

Durkheim, Emile. *The Division of Labor in Society* Trans. W. D. Halls. New York: Free P, 1984.

Eagleton, Terry. *Ideology: An Introduction.* New York: Verso, 1991.

Enarson, Elaine Pitt. *Woods Working Women: Sexual Integration in the U.S. Forest Service.* [?]: The U of Alabama P, 1984.

Erikson, Eric. *Identity and the Life Cycle.* New York: International UP, 1959.

Ervin-Tripp, Susan M. "An Analysis of the Interaction of Language, Topic and Listener." *American Anthropologist* 66 (1964): 70-85

Fast Food Women. Dir. Anne Lewis Johnson. Videocassette. Whitburge, KY: Appalshop Inc., 1991.

Fine, Gary Alan. "Community and Boundary: Personal Experience Stories of Mushroom Collectors." *Journal of Folklore Research* 24 (1987): 223-240.

---. "Dying for a Laugh: Negotiating Risk and Creating Personas in the Humour of Mushroom Collectors." *Western Folklore* 47 (1988): 177-194.

---. "Social Change and Folklore: The Interpreting of Social Structures and Culture." *Papers III: The 8th Congress for the International Society for Folk Narrative*

Research. Ed. Reitmund Kvideland and Torunn Selberg. Bergen, Norway: International Society for Folk Narrative Research. 285-298.

Foster, George M. "What is Folk Culture?" *American Anthropologist* 55 (1953): 159-73.

Foucault, Michael. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1994. [Original Pub. 1963 English Translation 1973].

---. *The Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Parthenon Books, 1984.

---. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vantage Books, 1970.

---. *Power/Knowledge*. Ed. Glen Gordon. New York: Parthenon Books, 1980.

Fowke, Edith. *Lumbering Songs from the Northern Woods*. Austin: Published for American Folklore Society by The U of Texas P, 1970.

Fox, Mary Frank and Sharlene Hesse-Biber. *Women at Work*. Tuscaloosa, AL: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1984.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957.

---. *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination*. Toronto: House of Anasi Press, 1971.

Geertz, Clifford. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." *Myth, Symbol, Culture*. Ed. Clifford Geertz. New York: Norton, 1974. 1-38.

Georges, Robert A. "Timeliness and Appropriateness in Personal Experience Narrating." *Western Folklore* 46 (1987): 115-120.

Ghalam, Nancy Zukewich. "Women in the Workplace." *Gender in the 1990's: Images, Realities, Issues*. Ed. E.D. Nelson and B.W. Robinson. Toronto: Nelson Canada, 1995.

Glassie, Henry. *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historical Artifacts*. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1972.

---. "On Identity." *Journal of American Folklore* 107 (1994): 238-241.

---. "Tradition." *Journal of American Folklore* 180.430 (1995): 3-27.

Goode, Judith. "Food." *Folklore, Cultural Performance, and Popular Entertainments.* Ed. Richard Bauman. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992.

Goodwin, Joseph P. *More Man Than You'll Ever Be: Gay Folklore and Acculturation in Middle America.* Bloomington, IA: Indiana UP, 1989.

Gould, Glenn. "Prologue From 'The Idea of North.'" *The Glen Gould Reader* Ed. Tim Page. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1984. 389-394.

Gramsci, Antonio. "Hegemony." *Culture, Ideology and Social Process: A Reader.* Eds Tony Bennet et. al. London: Open UP, 1981. 193-7.

---. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* Ed. and Trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971.

Green, Archie. E. "At the Hall, In the Stope: Who Treasures Tales of Work?" *Western Folklore* 46 (1987): 153-170.

---. *Calf's Head and Union Tales.* Chicago: UP of Illinois, 1996.

---. "Industrial Lore: A Bibliographic-Semantic Query." *Working Americans: Contemporary Approaches to Occupational Folklife.* Ed. Robert H. Byington. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Publication, 1978.

---. "Only Kidding: Joking Among Coal Miners." *Language, Culture and Tradition.* Ed. A.E. Green & J.D.A. Widdowson. Leeds and Sheffield: Institute of Dialect and Folklife Studies, U of Leeds; CECTAL, U of Sheffield, 1981. 47-76.

Gregory, Derek and John Urry. "Introduction." *Social Relations and Spacial Structures.* Eds. Derek Gregory and John Urry. New York: St. Martin's P, 1985. 1-8.

Grimm, Jacob. *The German Legends of the Brothers Grimm.* Ed. and Trans. Donald Ward. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1981.

Handler, Richard. *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec.* Madison: The U of Wisconsin P, 1988.

Hall, Edward T. *The Hidden Dimension.* Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1969.

Haraway, Donna. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspectives." *Feminist Studies* 14.3 (1988): 575-599.

Hebdige, Dick. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style.* London: Routledge, 1987 [1979].

Himelin, Louis Edmund. *The Canadian North and Its Conceptual Referents.* Ottawa: Department of the Secretary of State of Canada, 1988.

Hirsh, Eric and Michael O'Hanlon, ed. *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space.* Oxford: Clarendon P, 1995.

Hise, Greg. "From Roadside Camps to Garden Homes: Housing and Community Planning for California's Migrant Work Force, 1935-1941." *Gender, Class and Shelter.* Eds. Elizabeth Collins Cromley and Carter L. Hudgins. Knoxville, TN: U of Tennesee P, 1995. 243-258.

Hobbes, Thomas. "Leviathan." *Classics of Western Philosophy: Second Edition.* Ed. Steven M. Cahn. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company. 1977 [1690]. 345-404.

Holdsworth, Deryck W. "'I'm a Lumberjack and I'm OK'": The Built Environment and Varied Masculinities in the Industrial Age." *Gender, Class and Shelter.* Eds. Elizabeth Collins Cromley and Carter L. Hudgins. Knoxville, TN: U of Tennesee P, 1995. 11-24.

hooks, bell. "Homeplace: A Site of Resistance." *Yearning: Race Gender and Cultural Politics.* Toronto: Between the Lines, 1990. 41-49.

Hoovers Inc. Available: http://www.hoovers.com

Hufford, Mary. *One Space, Many Places: Folklife and Land Use in New Jersey's Pinelands National Reserve.* Washington: American Folklife Center, 1986.

Innis, Harold A. *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History.* Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1962.

Jackson, Michael. *Alegories of the Wilderness: Ethics and Ambiguity in Kuranko Narratives*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992.

Jameson, Fredrick. "Marxism and Postmodernism." *New Left Review* 176 (1989): 31-45.

Johnson, Matthew. *An Archaeology of Capitalism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

Jones, Michael Owen. *Exploring Folk Art Study: Twenty Years of Thought on Craft, Work and Aesthetics*. Ann Arbour, MI: UMI Research P, 1987.

---. and D.M. Moore, et al. eds. *Inside Organizations: Understanding the Human Dimension*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1988.

---. "Why Folklore and Organization(s)?" *Western Folklore* 50 (1991): 29-40.

---, ed. "Special Issue: Emotions in Work: A Folklore Approach." *American Behavioral Scientist* 33 (1990).

Joyce, Patrick. "The Historical Meanings of Work: An Introduction." *The Historical Meanings of Work*. Ed. Patrick Joyce. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987 1-30.

Koven, Mikel. *An Ethnography of Seeing: A Proposed Methodology for the Ethnographic Study of Popular Cinema*. St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland. PhD Thesis, in progress.

Kranzberg, Melvin and Joseph Gies. *By the Sweat of Thy Brow*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons and Capricorn Books, 1975.

Kuhlberg, Mark. *Unfit to Wear the Crown*. Toronto: York U. PhD Thesis, in progress.

Larson, D. W. "In Brown's Woods: A 19th-century Forest Restoration Project Yields Lessons for the Next Century." *Canadian Silviculture Magazine* 4.3 (1996): 20-24.

Leach, Maria, ed. "Gotham." *Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend, Vol I*. New York: Funk and Wagnell, 1949. 461

Lefbevre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1967.

Lind, Carol J. *Big Timber, Big Men*. Seattle: Hancock House Publishers Ltd., 1978.

Lloyd, Timothy C. and Patrick B. Mullen. *Lake Erie Fisherman: Work, Tradition, and Identity*. Chicago: UP of Illinois, 1990.

Locke, John. "Two Treatises on Government." *Classics of Western Philosophy: Second Edition*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company. 1977 [1690]. 477-576.

Lockwood, Yvonne R. "The Joy of Labour." *Western Folklore* 33 (1984): 202-221.

Lomax, John Avery. *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*. New York: The McMillian Company, 1957 [1938].

Long, Terry L. "Occupational and Individual Identity Among Ohio Railroad Workers of the Steam Era." *Western Folklore* 51 (1992): 219-235.

Lucas, Rex A. *Minetown Milltown Railtown [sic]: Life in Canadian Communities of Single Industry*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1971.

Lummis, Trevor. "Oral History." *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and popular Entertainments*. Ed. Richard Bauman. New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994. 92-97.

Luxton, Meg. *More Than a Labour of Love: Three Generations of Women's Work in the Home*. Toronto: Women's Press, 1980.

March, Richard. "Lust and Disgust on the Job: Broadening Occupational Folklore." *Folklore Forum* 11 (1978): 60-65.

Marcus, Laural R. & Marianne T. Marcus. "Occupational Folklore." *The Emergence of Folklore in Everyday Life: A Fieldguide and Sourcebook*. Ed. G.H. Shoemaker. Bloomington: Trickster P, 1978. 121-32.

Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. Capital, Vol I. Harmondswoth, UK: Penguin Books, 1976.

---. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977 [Originally Published, 1844].

---. *The German Ideology. On Historical Materialism: A Collection.* Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972.

---. *The German Ideology. Part One With Sections From Parts Two and Three and Supplementary Texts.* Ed. C. J. Arthur. New York: International Publishers, 1989.

Massey, Doreen. *Space, Place and Gender.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994.

---. "Spatial Construction of Youth Cultures." *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures.* Eds. Tracy Skelton and Gill Valentine. London: Routledge, 1998. 121-129.

May, Elizabeth. *At the Cutting Edge: The Crisis in Canada's Forests.* Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1998.

Maynard, Lara. *The Make Workers Behind the Label.* Folklore Studies Association of Canada: Unpublished conference paper. May 26-8, 1998.

McCarl, Robert S. "The Communication of Work Technique." *Culture and Tradition* 3 (1990): 108-17.

---. *The District of Columbia Firefighters Project: A Case Study in Occupational Folklife.* Smithsonian Folklife Series No. 4. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1985.

---. "Jump Stories: An Examination of an Occupational Narrative." *Folklore Forum* 11 (1978): 1-17.

---. "Occupational Folklife: A Theoretical Hypothesis." *Working Americans: Contemporary Approaches to Occupational Folklife.* Ed. Robert H. Byington. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Publication, 1978. 3-18.

---. "Occupational Folklore." *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction.* Ed. Elliot Oring. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 1986. 71-89.

---. "The Production Welder: Product, Process and the Industrial Craftsman." *New York Folklore Quarterly* 30 (1974): 243-253.

---. "Response to Michael Owen Jone's Article, 'Why Folklore and Organizations?'" *Western Folklore* 51 (1992): 187-189.

---. Smokejumper Initiation: Ritualized Communication in a Modern Occupation."
   Journal of American Folklore 89 (1976): 49-66.

McDowell, Marsha L. "Visual Descriptions of the Work Experience: Insider vs.
   Outsider Views of Art and Work." *Western Folklore* 33 (1984): 178-192.

Millenium: Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World. Writer. Adrian Malone. Bini
   Production Ltd. and Telefilm Canada, 1992.

Mills, Antonia. *Eagle Down is Our Law: Witsuwit'en Law, Feasts, and Land Claims.*
   Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 1994.

Mitchell, Roger. "Occupational Folklore: The Outdoor Industries." *Handbook of
   American Folklore.* Ed. Richard Dorson. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1983. 128-
   35.

More, Thomas. *Utopia.* Trans. Paul Turner. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books,
   1965.

Mudslide. Dir. Nicholas Oldland. Videocassette. Pulling Teeth Productions, 1997.

Mullen, Patrick B. "Memory, Identity, and Occupation: Personal Experience Narrative
   of Commercial Fisherman." *Papers II: The 8th Congress for the International
   Society for Folk Narrative Research.* Ed. Reitmund Kvideland and Torunn
   Selberg. Bergen, Norway: International Society for Folk Narrative Research.
   89- 96.

Munt, I. "The 'Other' Post Modern Tourism: Culture, Travel and the New Middle
   Class." *Theory, Culture and Society* 11 (1994): 101-23.

Murray, Anne-Marie. "A Treeplanter Hangs Up Her Hip Bags." *Globe and Mail* July
   27, 1998: A18

Murray, Joyce. "WSCA Proposes Changes to Bill that Threatens Silviculture Workers."
   Canadian Silviculture Magazine 5.1 (1997): 37-9.

Myerhoff, Barbara G. *Peyote Hut: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians.* Ithica
   and London: Cornell UP, 1974.

Narváez, Peter. "I've Gotten Soppy: Send-Off Parties as Rites of Passage in the Occupational Folklife of CBC Reporters." *American Behavioral Scientist* 33 (1990): 339-52.

---. "Newfoundland Berry Pickers 'In the Fairies': Maintaining Spacial, Temporal and Moral Boundaries Through Legendary." *The Good People: New Fairylore Essays*. Ed. Peter Narváez. New York: Garland Publishing, 1991. 302-36.

Nelles, H.V. *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines and Hydro-electric Power in Ontario, 1849-1941*. Toronto: McMillian Company of Canada Ltd., 1974.

Nickerson, Bruce. "Is There a Folk in the Factory?" *Journal of American Folklore* 87 (1974): 133-9.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Anti-Christ*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin Books, 1990 [1895].

---. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Vintage Books, 1989 [1887].

Nippert-Eng, Christina. "Liminality in Everyday Life: Commuting and the Transition Between Home and Work." *American Sociological Association: Association Paper*, 1988.

Nolen, Stephanie. "Girls Just Wanna [sic] Have Fun." *Globe and Mail*. February 13 (1999): D1 and D3

Noyes, Dorthey. "Common Ground." *Journal of American Folklore* 180.430 (1995): 449-478.

Nusbaum, Philip. "A Conversational Approach to Occupational Folklore: Conversation, Work, Play, and the Workplace." *Folklore Forum* 11 (1978): 18-28.

Oakley, Ann. *The Sociology of Housework*. Bath: Martin Robinson, 1974.

Olrik, Axel. "Epic Laws of Folk Narrative." *The Study of Folklore*. Ed. Alan Dundes. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965. 129-141.

Oring, Elliot. "The Arts, Artifacts, and Artifacts of Identity." *Journal of American Folklore* 107 (1994): 211-232.

Pastinelli, Madeleine. *De L'Altérité aux Familiarités: Espaces Privés et Espaces Collectifs en Colocation dans un Quartier Populaire de Québec.* Folklore Studies Association of Canada: Unpublished Conference Presentation. May 26-8, 1998.

Pilcher, William W. *The Portland Longshoreman: A Dispersed Urban Community.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.

Plant Dem Trees [sic]. Dir. Morton Oblubeck. Videocassette. Independent , 1983.

Plato. *Plato's Republic.* Ed. and Trans. Grube, G. M. A. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1974.

Pocius, Gerald. *A Place to Belong: Community, Order and Everyday Space in Calvert, Newfoundland.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1991.

Radforth, Ian. "Logging Pulpwood in Northern Ontario." *On The Job: Confronting the Labour Process in Canada.* Eds. Craig Heron and Robert Storey. Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1986. 245-280.

Proust, Mircel. *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu* [Remembrance of Things Past]. Trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff. London: Chatto and Windus Ltd., 1922. [Original Publication, Serial. 1913-1927].

Redfield, Robert. *The Little Community, and Peasant Society and Culture.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1960.

---. "The Folk Society." *American Journal of Sociology* 52 (1947): 293-308.

"Recovery Fails to Lure Young Workers." *Globe and Mail,* April 10, 1995: B1 and B4

Reiter, Esther. *Making Fast Food.* Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1996

Richter, David H, ed. *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends.* New York: St. Martin's P, 1989.

Rickaby, Frank. *Ballads and Songs of the Shanty-Boy.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1926.

Roszak, Theodore. *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition.* Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1969.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Social Contract and Discourses*. Ed. and Trans. G. D. H. Cole. London: J. M. Dent and Sons. 1973 [1762].

Rybczynski, Witold. "Waiting for the Weekend." *The Atlantic Monthly* 268.2 (1991): 35-52.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Salinsky, Andrey and Anthony Glaocock. "Killing Infants and the Aged in Nonindustrialized Societies: Removing the Liminal." *Social Science Journal* 25.3 (1988): 277-287.

Santino, Jack. "Characteristics of Occupational Narrative." *Working Americans: Contemporary Approaches to Occupational Folklife*. Ed. Robert H. Byington. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Publication, 1978[b]. 57-70.

---. "Contemporary Occupational Heroes." *Folklore Forum* 11 (1978[a]): 55-59.

Saul, John Ralston. *The Unconscious Civilization*. Concord, ON: House of Anansi P. 1995.

Scheflen, Albert E. and Alice Scheflen. *Body Language and Social Order: Communication as Behavioral Control*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973.

Schollier, Peter. "Worker's Time for Cooking and Eating in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Western Europe." *Food and Foodways* 6.3-4 (1996): 243-260.

Seamon, David. "Body-Subject, Time-Space Routines, and Place-Ballets." *The Human Experience of Space and Place*. Eds. Anne Buttimer and David Seamon. New York: St. Martins P, 1980. 148-165.

Shuman, Amy. "Dismantling Local Culture." *Western Folklore* 52 (1993): 12-35.

Smith, Paul. "Contemporary Legend and the Photocopy Revolution." *Perspectives on Contemporary Legend 2*. Ed. Gillian Bennett, Paul Smith, and J.D.A. Widdowson. Sheffield: CECTAL, 1987. 177-202.

Soja, Edward. *Post Modern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London: Verso, 1989.

Sonenscher, Michael. "Mythical Work: Workshop Production and the *Compagnonnages* of Eighteenth-century France." *The Historical Meanings of Work*. Ed. Patrick Joyce. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987. 31-63.

Spain, Daphne. *Gendered Spaces*. London: UP of Carolina, 1992.

Spouse, Martin, ed. *Sabotage in the American Workplace: Anecdotes of Dissatisfaction, Mischief and Revenge*. San Francisco: Pressure Drop Press. 1992.

Spradley, James P. and Brenda J. Mann. *The Cocktail Waitress: Women's Work in a Man's World*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1975.

Stevens. Phillips Jr., ed. " Special Issue: Folklore in Industry." *New York Folklore* 14.1-2 (1988).

Stoeltje, Beverly J. "Festival." *Folklore, Cultural Performance and Popular Entertainments*. Ed. Richard Bauman. New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992. 261-272.

---."Making the Frontier Myth: Folklore Process in a Modern Nation." *Western Folklore* 46 (1987): 235-253.

Soja, Edward. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London: Verso, 1989.

Spain, Daphne. *Gendered Spaces*. London: UP of North Carolina, 1992.

Swanson, C. and P. Nusbaum, eds. "Occupational Folklore and the Folklore of Working: Special Issue." *Folklore Forum* 11 (1978): 1-65.

Tannen, Deborah. "Wears Jump Suit. Sensible Shoes. Uses Husband's Last Name." *Gender in the 1990's: Images, Realities, and Issues*. Ed. E. D. Nelson and B. W. Robinson. Toronto: Nelson Canada, 1995.

Taylor, Frederick Winslow. *The Principles of Scientific Management*. New York and London: Harper Brothers, 1911.

Terkel, Studs. *Working*. New York: Pantheon, 1974.

Theopheno, Janet. "I Gave Him A Cake: An Interpretation of Two American Weddings." *Creative Ethnicity*. Eds. Stephen Stern and John Cicala. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 1991: 44-54.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1977.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." *Frontier and Section*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. 1961

Turner, Terence. "History, Myth and Social Consciousness among the Kayapó of Central Brazil." *Rethinking History and Myth: Indigenous South American Perspectives on the Past*. Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1988. 195-213.

Turner, Victor. *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithica, NY: Cornell UP, 1974.

---. *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*. New York: Columbia UP, 1978.

---. "Liminal to Liminoid in Play, Flow and Ritual." *Rice University Studies* 60 (1974): 53-92.

---. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. New York: Aldine De Gruyter. 1969.

Urry, John. "Social Relations: Space and Time." *Social Relations and Spacial Structures*. Ed. Derek Gregory and John Urry. New York: St. Martin's P. 1985. 20-48.

Vale, V. and Andrea Juno, ed. *Industrial Culture Handbook*. RE/Search 6-7. San Francisco: RE/Search, 1983.

---, ed. *Modern Primitives: An Investigation of Contemporary Adornment and Ritual*. RE/Search #12. San Francisco: RE/Search Publications, 1989.

Valli, Linda. *Becoming Clerical Workers*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1986.

Van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1960. Originally Published, 1909.

Visser, Margaret. *Much Depends on Dinner: The Extraordinary History and Mythology, Allure and Obsessions, Perils and Taboos, of an Ordinary Meal.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986.

von Sydow, C. W. *Selected Papers on Folklore Published on the Occasion of his [von Sydow] 70th Birthday.* Ed. Lauritis Bødker. Copenhagen:Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1948.

Williamson, David H. "Some Effects of Social and Economic Changes on Gyppo Loggers." *Anthropological Quarterly* 50.1 (1977): 31-38.

Willis, Paul. *Learning to Labour: How Working-Class Kids Get Working-Class Jobs* London: Saxon House, 1977.

Wilson, Alexander. *The Culture of Nature: North American Landscape from Disney to the Exxon Valdez.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1992.

Wojcik, Daniel. *Punk and Neo-Tribal Body Art.* Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1995.

Wrench, John and Gloria Lee. "Piecework and Industrial Accidents: Two Contemporary Case Studies." *Sociology* 16.4 (1982): 512-525.

Young, Katherine, ed. *Bodylore.* Knoxville, TN: U of Tennessee P, 1993.

---. "Whose Body? An Introduction to Bodylore." *Journal of American Folklore* 107 (1994): 3-8.

Appendix I

Glossary of Terms

Atco: A forty foot trailer converted into sleeping quarters. Provided to planters on union contracts. "Atco" is the company that makes the trailers. Generally planters do not use the trailers when the weather warms up.

Block or Cut-Block: The deforested area, usually a *clear cut*, but sometimes selective logging practices. This is the work site of the planters. There exists a binary opposition between the camp and the block.

Cache: The area on the side of the road where trees are kept. Usually extra water, and your other supplies are also kept there. Depending on the size of the block anywhere from two to five planters can be sharing a cache.

Clear cut: A logging practice in which all timber including waste wood is logged. This practice creates large expanses of land with very little natural or residual cover.

Crew Boss: A staff person paid on salary whose responsibility it is to coordinate planters, ensure quality and help both planters and staff throughout the day. Brinkman's policy is that all crew bosses must be former planters.

Flagging Tape: Brightly coloured plastic ribbon used to mark off a planter's *piece*. Crew bosses have their own colour (pink) flagging tape which they use to mark bad trees, problem areas, or anything physical direction which could help a planter.

Greener: A first year planter. Probably a derivative of "Greenhorn".

Highballer: A planter who consistently makes over two hundred dollars per day (2500 trees). This is a complex term and is often applied to people who would not include themselves in that category. A highballer is usually someone who is not only successful at planting but is also seen as an admirable person in the camp.

Kak: Poor quality land. Antecedents for the word can be found in children and adolescent's names for excrement.

Landing: An area of road where vehicles can turn around, or stop to be repaired. Treeplanters can sometimes plant these areas depending on the specifications of the contract.

Pound or Pounder: 1. A verb denoting fast planting; 2. a noun denoting a fast planter. It is different that a *highballer* in that it denotes a certain pace and speed. Even a greener can "pound", meaning that they may have a good hour or day in which they move fast and plant a lot of trees, but they are not a highballer. The origin of the term is most likely onomatopoeic, or a semantic representation of the action of planting quickly.

Push: An area of road where vehicles can turn around, or stop to be repaired. Treeplanters cannot plant these areas. Camps are often constructed on a series of pushes along the roadside.

Scalp: The soil which is moved when the bräcke is created. It looks very much like a divot on a golf course.

Screef: The action of clearing away organic material from a site where a tree will be planted. This is usually done with one's boot, "boot screef" or by hand "hand screef." As a work term in the treeplanting register it appears to be no more important than any other term. It does, however, occupy a small sub-set of terms which denote work tasks that are unique to planting.

Skidder: A large tractor like vehicle used for various work on the block. The dirt roads that crisscross the clear cut are often referred to as "skidder roads".

Site prep. or Scarification: Preparing the land for planting either through a burn, chemical spray or creating specific configurations of planting sites by mechanical means.

Sphagnum: A common moss that grows in wet ground or swamp. On some contracts one can plant black spruce into sphagnum.