

Vernacular Perceptions of Masculinity and Fatherhood among Newfoundland

Offshore Workers and Their Families

By

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## **Abstract**

My thesis is an ethnographic study of how offshore workers of Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as their families, express and reflect upon traditional Newfoundland constructs of fatherhood and masculinity through narrative and ritual. With a schedule that often involves a constant shift between home and away, offshore workers in the province take part in high-risk professions in order to provide for their families back home. These professions, and their associated lifestyles, involve the incorporation of routine strategies that allows family culture to maintain itself. At the same time, these professions largely carry on a tradition of hegemonically masculine practices, albeit in a newer context.

Drawing on a blend of literary and ethnographic research based on the Avalon Peninsula, I utilize examples of current Newfoundland culture to describe how nostalgic memoirs of outport Newfoundland create models of hegemonically masculine fatherhood in the province. I go on to explain how those models manifest themselves in the experiences of current offshore workers, and how they affect their spouses and children. Furthermore, through examining how young adults with offshore-working parents describe their experiences of their fathers, it is possible to see how the effects of local hegemonic masculinities are manifested through narratives about fathers who worked away from home.

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## Chapter 1: Masculinities, Fatherhood and Migratory Labour

In the fall of 2010, my wife, Jennifer, discovered that she was pregnant with our daughter Marieve, who would eventually be born a healthy little girl in June 2011. The thrill and excitement of becoming a father carried throughout my time as a doctoral student at Memorial University, constantly remaining on my mind as I completed my coursework, prepared for comprehensive exams, and considered possibilities for what would become my doctoral thesis. Like many students before me—and alongside me—I struggled with finding a topic for the thesis, shifting ideas constantly and feeling unable to locate a center from which to begin. Through reading ethnographic material, and listening to my scholarly mentors and peers, I realized that, in order to choose a topic that was both feasible and motivating, I needed to find something that was inspired by either my own experience or by incredibly moving experiences of others. To say that topics often occur in the least likely of places may seem cliché, but it is not without truth.

My own point of departure occurred in a classroom at the Health Sciences Centre in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. In preparation for Marieve's birth, Jennifer and I attended prenatal education courses designed to inform mothers, as well as their support networks, about the routine of birthing and the details surrounding it. Although I was one of many men accompanying their spouses or partners, I noticed that many women did not have their partners with them. I later found out from friends that many husbands were unable to be

present because of their occupations. While some men commuted to work in Alberta, others worked in either the fisheries or on one of the oil platforms off the coast of Newfoundland. Seeing that situation, combined with the encouragement by my committee member, Dr. Philip Hiscock, to do a sort of “mini-fieldwork” project while in the hospital for the birth, I became interested in the dynamics of fatherhood when fathers work away from home.

More specifically, I desired to know how working fathers, as well as their wives and children, made sense of the process of offshore and migratory labour. Flying back to St. John’s after a visit home to Indiana, I encountered many migratory workers on their way home from a stint in the Athabasca oil sands. I wondered how they spoke about being away from home, and I became curious about the lives of those they left behind in Newfoundland. This was not a new phenomenon, as the province has a long history of residents needing to leave home for periods for employment. Throughout the province’s history, it was common for men to leave home for extended periods of time, and the majority of men worked in the fishing industry that dominated Newfoundland’s economy. Beginning with the early 17<sup>th</sup>-century participation by Portuguese seafarers (Abreu-Ferreira 2003:132-133), and continuing into the late part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the 1992 cod moratorium, cod fishing, and the occupations surrounding it, was a mainstay for many Newfoundlanders. As Kieran Walsh states, fishing was a lifeline that was “integral to the survival of many people in rural Newfoundland and Labrador” (Walsh 2004:12-14).

For much of Newfoundland's history, family-centered labour was an essential part of the cod fishery, spanning from the small-boat, early village fisheries (Sider 2003:3) up through the major overhaul of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Wright 2001). During the last two centuries, it became common for family members to leave home in search of short-term work opportunities. According to Cory Thorne, migration was the "dominant aspect of Newfoundland regionalism...Ever since there has been a place called Newfoundland, there has been a displaced Newfoundland regionalism" (Thorne 2012:40). At first, many men, along with their families, would mobilize to fish in another area of the province (Cadigan 2009:85). During the Second World War and Cold War, many men found work in construction on military installations (High 2009:68-74). Since the 1960s, many Newfoundlanders have traveled to Western and Central Canada, most notably Alberta and southern Ontario. According to Cory Thorne, residents of southern Ontario popularly acknowledge the trend:

Newfoundlanders in southern Ontario are well known for their continuous quests to return home to Newfoundland. Many leave after 6-8 months and return each year (seasonal migration) several times before making more permanent settlement. Many arrive in Ontario and quit their jobs to return home unemployed after just a few months. Those to [sic] establish longer residency continuously discuss their plans to move "home" even after living in Ontario for 30 years or more. They likewise maintain real estate in Newfoundland with the plan to return as soon as economically feasible (Thorne 2004:177).

Thorne states that, while Newfoundlanders could live in Ontario for extended amounts of time, they "seldom abandon completely their Newfoundland identity" (Ibid, 177). Cyclical migration is one of many strategies to maintain cultural ties to



Newfoundland communities. Many eventually returned home when economically possible, and many Newfoundlanders living away continue to do so.

Although there are migratory workers of both sexes, in the past, a worker who “leaves home, returns months later, re-establishes the relationships that have been altered by this absence, and then ships out once again” (Forsyth and Gauthier 1991:178–179), was usually male. Working away from home was, and continues to be, male-dominated. Sociologist Nicole Power notes this work pattern as having roots in regional traditions (Power 2008:575–577), while historian Miriam Wright contends that it drew on the ideology of seafaring men as hardy, risk-taking souls with a strong sense of independence that enabled them to make a living for their family (Wright 1995:132). For many Newfoundland men, work was historically synonymous with manhood.

Most research on masculinities of offshore Newfoundland comes from geography, sociology, and industrial psychology, with occasional research emerging from both anthropology and history. It is my hope that, as a folkloristic analysis of offshore-working men and their families, this thesis provides several new thinking points for the study of the effects of offshore life. Though I realize that this is not the first qualitative study of the topic—and will not be the last—the examination of narrative performance, and how personal narrative evokes issues such as gender identity and nostalgia (among others), frames the majority of my scholarly analysis. Narrative analysis also provides more room for a critical analysis of the accounts of offshore workers and families. Through focusing on

both the spoken *and* the silent, a more effective critical analysis is possible, as omission of certain topics is often as strong as inclusion.

Whereas other research projects in Newfoundland centered on one specific community (e.g., Melvin Firestone's look at Savage Cove and Gerald Pocius's look at Calvert), this ethnography focuses on the family of an occupational folk group. Many studies of the effects of offshore life were large-scale research projects, with respondent numbers reaching into the hundreds. This thesis is the opposite, largely focusing on a small-scale, more detailed examination of a handful of families. Unlike most of these previous studies, which excluded personal information of their research informants, this project examines informants as people with complex life histories and thoughts, as well as many social and cultural contexts that shape their answers.

Finally, as a folklorist, I focus on performance, and how it guides the analysis of cultural practices. Deborah Kapchan, in her article titled "Performance," states that "Performances are aesthetic practices—patterns of behavior, ways of speaking, manners of bodily comportment—whose repetitions situate actors in time and space, structuring individual and group identities" (Kapchan 1995:479). Personal stories, daily routines, and ritual travel to and from work are all venues for performance, and in my thesis, I build on Kapchan's notion of performance as it relates to fatherhood, work and gender. Specifically, my central question is not, "How does offshore labour affect the understanding of masculinity," but rather: "How does offshore labour affect the understanding of fatherhood?"

I initially hoped to answer my question through the study of family acts of gathering, playing, and celebrating. Keeping in mind Catherine Bell's proposal that ritual is a series of practices that works to create collective worldview (Bell 1992:19-20), I hoped to learn how ritual traditions shaped family and occupational identity. I wished to look at ritual traditions, repeated family rites, and the processes of leaving and returning home as a set of repeated traditions. My informants, however, took me on a different route, demonstrating that offshore workers do not always perform fatherhood through outwardly noticeable acts. Instead, they emphasized a strong sense of routine that helps to maintain economic and social stability within a family.

In this thesis, I argue that men in offshore and migratory labour positions, along with their wives and children, play an active role in promoting traditional forms of masculinity through performances of daily living, whether at work or at home. Although the economy of Newfoundland has shifted largely from the fishery to a more diversified economy largely based on oil and gas production, I will argue that the hegemonic masculinities of the traditional fishery carry on in a new occupational and social contexts. These masculinities appear in the ways that offshore-working fathers discuss their experiences, as well as in the ways that other family members make sense of the lifestyle.

In order to understand the framework connecting masculinities and fatherhood, it is first necessary to understand concepts of masculinities in scholarly context. The following three sections focus on how scholars in the field of Folklore, in the context of Newfoundland, and in studies of fatherhood, shaped

the scholarly understanding of what it means to be a father. These arguments will serve as a framework for discussing and explaining the methodologies of my thesis research.

### *Folkloristic Perspectives on Masculinities*

It is impossible to understand fatherhood without examining masculinity, not only within the context of the discipline of folklore, but also in relation to Newfoundland culture and to fatherhood on the whole. In looking at the ways in which folklorists understand masculinity, it is easier to understand everyday cultural practices as performances of masculinity. By focusing on small, everyday actions over overtly public masculine practices, and placing them into the context of Newfoundland culture, it is easier to understand how the daily actions of fatherhood project vernacular constructions of masculinity. This also makes it easier to understand how Newfoundland conceptions of masculinity and fatherhood situate themselves in relation to more global forms of masculinity.

It is extremely difficult to pinpoint an exact time when folklorists began to examine masculinity, as the point of origin is subject to debate. While scholars like Simon Bronner criticize the supposed dearth of studies surrounding men's folklore (Bronner 2005: xvi), other scholars, including Pauline Greenhill, point out that "Men's culture has been taken simply as culture, unmarked, but it has been extensively and very documented" (Greenhill 2006:198). Greenhill criticizes the study of men's folklore by scholars like Simon Bronner, highlighting that the field of Folklore was a locus of male privilege that resulted in a limited critical

understanding of masculinities (Greenhill 2006:198). Historically, psychoanalytic folklore scholarship—which was among the first approaches to explicitly discuss the concept of masculinity and manhood—expressed male dominance.

Psychoanalytic studies of men's folklore drew much of their inspiration from Alan Dundes, the eminent figure in the Freudian approach to folklore.

In his scholarship, Dundes emphasized Freud's interest in folklore as the main motivation for a psychoanalytic approach. While Dundes analyzed many topics from a Freudian perspective, from folktales to the Qu'ran, his analysis of play attracted attention. Dundes's work on cockfighting expands on the ideas of anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who examined the cockfight's multiple functions among the men of Bali:

But the intimacy of men with cocks is more than metaphorical. Balinese men, or anyway a large majority of Balinese men, spend an enormous amount of time with their favorites, grooming them, feeding them, discussing them, trying them out against one another, or just gazing at them with a mixture of rapt admiration and dreamy self-absorption. (Geertz 2005:61)

Through cockfighting, Balinese men, according to Geertz, receive “a kind of sentimental education. What he learns there is what his culture's ethos and his private sensibility (or anyway certain aspects of them) look like when spelled out externally” (Geertz 2005:83). Geertz assures the reader that cockfighting had multiple meanings for its participants, and though he and Dundes both focused on the study of the masculine, Dundes's work lacked the holistic approach of Geertz.

Dundes's work certainly attracted attention, but it did not come without criticism from colleagues in the discipline. While not condemning psychoanalysis, José Limón and M.J. Young question the validity of Dundes's research:

We characterize this area as underdeveloped not because we reject psychoanalysis as a legitimate mode of inquiry; rather, we feel that Dundes's particular practice of it does not represent the best kind of scholarship that could be done. For us and others his work remains too textually and etymologically oriented and consistently lacks the fieldwork, ethnographic analysis, and intense engagement of Freud that would lend legitimacy to, and serious consideration of, his provocative speculations. (Limón and Young 1986:448-449)

Dundes's dependence on Freud, as well as lack of ethnographic research, led to psychoanalytic folklore gaining a reputation as a take-it-or-leave it approach.

Gary Alan Fine, in looking at the role of psychoanalysis in folklore, suggests: "...it is certainly true that most folklorists do not attempt to disprove psychoanalytic interpretations as much as they ignore them or reject them *ex cathedra*" (Fine 1992:46). According to Fine, there is little to gain from disputing those involved in psychoanalytic studies:

If you accept the analyst's interpretation, it indicates that he or she is correct; if you reject it, you are denying your repressed feelings and, obviously, she or he is correct for having provoked that reaction. The audience member who disputes an interpretation cannot win. (Fine 1992:49-55)

In spite of Dundes's perceived scholarly shortcomings, his work would have a long-lasting impact in the field, and he was a highly influential figure in the discipline of Folklore.

Beyond Dundes, several scholars adopted the psychoanalytic approach in the study of masculinity. Limón and Young praise Stanley Brandes, a colleague of Dundes at UC-Berkeley, for having “a better example of ethnographically grounded and closely analytical work” (Limón and Young 1986:449). In his examination on the folklore of men in an Andalusian community, Brandes points out that much of the folklore “ultimately owes its existence to severe cleavages in the social system,” and “refers to psychological concerns that transcend all political and economic circumstances” (Brandes 1980:212-213). The men of Brandes’s study emerge as nonconformists, if only for a short part of the time. Brandes does not focus on men as “opponents” but rather looked at men as comprising a community. According to Brandes, men experience some folklore as “a never-ending source of sustenance, strength and creativity” (Brandes 1980:213-214).

One of the other major figures in the study of men’s folklore, Simon Bronner, drew influence from the writing of psychologists, and his work—which incorporated psychoanalytic theory alongside ethnographic research—was, and continues to be, a step forward from that of Dundes. Bronner shares Brandes’s interest in the study of nonconformist masculine practices, exploring topics such as pigeon shoots and deer hunting (Bronner 2004, 2005). In addition to employing a psychological approach, Bronner’s hunting studies draw upon the concept of deep play developed by Dundes and Geertz. Bronner, suggesting that a deer hunt is an act of deep play, claims that the hunt is “a narrative of the coming of age associated with hunting marking another transformation in society

for the dominant male: from a mother-raised boy to a male bonded man" (Bronner 2004:37).

Jay Mechling is among the first folklorists to examine masculinity in a way that, while incorporating psychoanalysis, favors the work of Jung over Freud. Focusing on the folklore of Scouting, for example, Mechling's research points out how boys take on both male and female roles in their acts of play. He later demonstrates that the need for fraternity and community makes androgyny necessary for male bonding (Mechling 1983:229). Unlike earlier scholars, Mechling utilizes feminist theories to examine masculine performances, and in doing so, criticizes the lack of well-rounded scholarship surrounding male folk culture:

The scholarship on men's folklore generally adopts this folk view that men are rather easier to understand than are women. Put differently, most folklorists writing about the folk cultures of men have not felt the need to resort to theory in order to understand the meaning of men's folklore. (Mechling 2005:211)

Mechling's work helps to bridge early psychoanalytic studies of masculinities and later feminist analyses of masculinities.

Psychoanalytic studies of masculinity, while still an active part of Folklore scholarship, are a group of studies that neither age well nor receive much praise from current scholars. An example of a more current study is Simon Bronner's 2005 collection *Manly Traditions: The Folk Roots of American Masculinity*. In her review of the book, feminist folklore scholar Pauline Greenhill takes Bronner to task for his failure to acknowledge feminist scholarship, criticizing his essentialist views of men and women:



Essentialist in the worst possible way—apparently presuming that men are violent and women sensitive (pp. 9-10), for example—his “Menfolk” chapter goes through the same old sexist notions—that men are afraid of women’s reproductive power, the women are really in charge and keep men in line by a combination of whining and nagging, and so on. (Greenhill 2006:197-198)

Greenhill also highlights the amount of privilege that comes with psychoanalytical scholarship, noting that Gary Alan Fine’s essay in *Manly Traditions* “similarly exemplifies white male privilege and ignorance about it” (Greenhill 2006:197-198). Even Jay Mechling—who received significantly better accolades for his research than Alan Dundes—is not exempt from criticism. Archivist and folklorist Nathan Bender’s review of Mechling’s 2001 book *On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth* points out the essentialist qualities of Mechling’s writing, criticizing his writing as a vehicle for his own self-interest:

...the work comes across as half novel and half introspective lectures of a Freudian folklore theorist attempting to explain adolescent behaviors and BSA politics. [...] As such, the case for this work as an ethnographic study of a scout camp is based on essentialism, where actual variations of time and place do not really matter so long as the author’s perceived core ideal of an “event” is represented. (Bender 2004: 108-109)

The irony of Mechling’s approach to his book is his failure to follow his own advice in the study of masculinities: the need for further theoretical explanations. Psychoanalytic folklore not only exemplifies Greenhill’s accusation of male privilege, it also has little connection to other Folklore theories, and is overly reliant on the nearly century-old findings of two scholars.

Shifting towards an understanding of multiple masculinities involves examining culture from a culturally contextual perspective, rather than a deeply rooted psychological approach. The concept recognizes that masculinities change as they intersect with other factors, such as age, region, and class. Joseph Goodwin's research in the 1980s, while looking at masculinities within the gay community, neither provides a critique of psychoanalysis (Goodwin 1989), nor incorporates feminist theory into its arguments. Michael Taft includes critical commentary when looking at the theatrical behaviors of men who cross-dress in mock weddings, noting that Freud was too essentialist and narrow-minded in his approach to understanding transvestism:

Some might take the Freudian tack that “the human being oscillates all through his [*sic*] life between heterosexual and homosexual feelings” (Freud 1911:46). In other words, cross dressing allows men to express their female side. But Freud was concerned with “pathological” transvestism, rather than theatrical cross-dressing, and while this yin-yang theory of human sexuality has its allure, it doesn’t get us very far in understanding the more specific motivations of the farmer dressed as a bride. There is more to this behaviour than meets the Freudian eye. (Taft 1997:136)

For Taft’s informants, a cross-dressing man was one who was comfortable in his masculinity and possessed “positive social attributes” (Taft 1997:133). To cross-dress was to simultaneously play on notions of masculinity and femininity while keeping community ideals surrounding masculinity in place. Although men were able to portray women, they also had the privilege of going back to being men after the performances concluded. Multiple masculinities might exist, but certain forms of it gained privilege over others, thus creating a hegemonic form of masculinity within the community.

Taft, however, clarifies that hegemonic ideals came with a price, as well as another side of the story. While making note of prairie men subscribing to a traditional male image, Taft also stated that these opportunities, as well as much of rural life, were facilitated by the work of the women in a community. Though they are part of the hegemonic ideal, many men also felt a lack of control over their own economic prosperity (Taft 1997:137). Taft believes that hegemonic social structures took advantage of men who subscribed to hegemonic masculine ideals:

The male farmer or rancher wishes to see himself as the master of his own destiny: someone whose independence is based on land ownership and freedom from the urban workplace. In reality, he is the servant of government bureaucrats, the commodity exchanges, urban consumerism, and international subsidy wars. (Taft 1997:137)

Although men perceive themselves as being in control, according to Taft, the things they idolize ultimately control them.

The projections and reinforcements of hegemonic masculinity are also a major part of the research of folklorist Michael Robidoux. As Robidoux points out in his 2012 article “Male Hegemony or Male Mythology?” bourgeois institutions develop mythological and idealistic concepts of masculinity in Canada. In addition, Robidoux claims that men do not fear that these concepts could have a negative impact on their lives:

As we consider the unfolding of this masculine construct in a more modern Canadian sport context, an important acknowledgement must be made. [...] The basis of masculine mythology in Canada is a bourgeois ideal that promotes qualities of physicality and ruggedness that have little bearing on bourgeois patriarchal relations. [...] But as we see actual manifestations of the myth, we see these rewards quickly dissipate as

they cater to and perpetuate the imbalance of power in male gender relations. (Robidoux 2012:119-120)

Robidoux's research on junior hockey players shows how men simultaneously benefit from hegemonic masculinity and suffer from its disadvantages.

In a more recent study, Ann Ferrell's research on tobacco farmers in Kentucky discusses the masculinity crisis that can occur when a lifeline for engaging in hegemonic masculinity is under threat. Focusing on the shift from tobacco to vegetable farming, Ferrell's study reveals the need for men to adapt to growing traditionally feminine crops as a way to continue farming:

Tobacco farmers are performing a traditionalized masculinity as they choose to continue to raise a crop that has been gendered male, tobacco, versus moving to crops that symbolize the feminine household sphere. "Diversifying" requires a new performed identity in addition to new knowledge, skills, equipment, and so on. This new performed identity must replace the traditionalized performance of masculinity of fathers and grandfathers, the models of the Golden Age of the tobacco-man masculinity previously described (Ferrell 2013:240).

Lamenting the loss of a traditional lifestyle, tobacco men engage in a form of nostalgia that, according to Ferrell, "is in part about the loss of economic value, but such value is entangled with a sense of loss for a time when both tobacco and the tobacco man were respected" (Ferrell 2013:247). Even when the opportunity to practice hegemonic masculinity is unavailable through traditional means, it nevertheless continues through nostalgic thoughts and emotions.

The diminishment of hockey players, and the struggle of shifting away from masculinities shaped by tobacco farming, is partially related to both groups' dependence on the creation of homosociality, a term largely associated with scholar Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and meant to signify a desire for same-sex

bonding without sexual associations (Sedgwick 1995). Robidoux explores Sedgwick's theories, noting how the occupational folklife of hockey players relies on a strategy of homosociality that, while meant to build team unity, also reinforces the hegemonic masculinity that makes them more useful to their employers:

Aside from the skills that are mandatory in playing the game of hockey, upcoming players learn traditional behaviours and roles in order to satisfy labour demands. The team atmosphere in which the players are immersed creates a perpetual environment of group interaction, scrutiny, and verification; players either thrive or struggle under the group's gaze, yet they are forced to perform their roles within the rigid boundaries predefined by existing team/group structures. Divergence from these unstated codes of behavior is interpreted as subversive: it undermines the desired levels of group unity and cohesion. (Robidoux 2001:4)

Similarly, Ferrell notes that former tobacco farmers lamented the loss of opportunity to engage in homosocial interaction:

Instead of cutting tobacco a row over from a buddy or days spent in the male-controlled environment of the tobacco warehouse, many of these farmers spend their days driving alone in their pickups and tractors, overseeing the work of other men (Ferrell 2013:212).

Both occupations depended on hegemonic masculinity enforced by homosociality, and whether through injury (see Robidoux 2001) or economic climate change (see Ferrell 2013), the shift led to major personal crises for those involved.

Though their work long preceded Sedgwick's concept of homosociality, scholars of Newfoundland folklore documented homosociality in outport life, with Herbert Halpert attributing the spread of oral tradition and customary folklife to "direct contact of men engaged in common pursuits" (Halpert 1969:38). As

Sedgwick notes that these group practices are unstated, and therefore unconscious, this was a part of the way in which men gathered in the outports of Newfoundland. Homosociality required an unstated sense of obligation and reciprocity, as Louis J. Chiaramonte found in his research on social interaction, dyadic folk groups and mumming:

In the process of forming his network a man will become obligated to others and will, in turn, obligate them through exchanges of labour, borrowing, work done, and work received for payment, and through reciprocal drinking. Later, it will be shown how dyadic relationships affect mummering and drinking during the twelve days of Christmas (Chiaramonte 1969:79).

While there was no official law about reciprocity, it was nonetheless prevalent, and brought men together in a community.

In some cases, hegemonic masculinity was partially based on strategic denial. Patrick Mullen's research on rockabilly music and homosociality, which draws on his own experience as a young adult in the rockabilly scene, explores how this version of homosociality by men depended on their dominance of women at the same time they desired them:

Our male bonding sent out a message that we didn't need women, but of course we did. Viewing women as unnecessary and even antithetical to the masculine urge to get drunk was a means of expressing dominance of them, but the concept of homosocial desire also suggests a need for women that fulfills the man-to-woman connection in the erotic triangle. This would also be true in honky-tonk and rockabilly lyrics that leave women out—implying the ironic nature of homosocial desire, the denial of needing women as an underlying expression of the need for women. (Mullen 2014:200)

Thus, creating homosociality within a hegemonic form of masculinity requires denying its creation.

To better understand hegemonic masculinities, it is necessary to discuss forms of counterhegemonic masculinity, and some of the research in the area actually precedes that of psychoanalytic folklore work. The work of Américo Paredes, a professor at the University of Texas, criticized the dominance of white male scholars in the study of Mexican culture. His 1958 ethnography, *With His Pistol in His Hand*, examined the ways in which the *corrido* song tradition of the Mexican-American borderlands challenged the perception of Tejano men as inferior and undesirable. Paredes notes that the image of the dominant Anglo-Texan male, largely inspired by that of the law enforcement group, the Texas Rangers, is pictured as “a fearless, almost super-human breed of man, capable of incredible feats” (Paredes 1958:23-24). Yet, in the *corridos*, Paredes finds that men “should be quiet and hardworking, excellent *vaqueros* and good farmers. They should be respectful to their elders, peaceful in manner, and ready to defend their right” (Paredes 1958:118).

Paredes’s book not only challenged the dominant idea of Tejano masculinity within Texas, but, according to José Limón, had incredible influence as a political piece, even serving as a *corrido* in itself:

I have argued that, as an ethnography, *With His Pistol in His Hand* is influenced formally by the Mexican ballad (Limón 1992), and that as a new “*corrido*” in the form of postmodern ethnography it also does political work as a text of positional warfare in two directions. First it directly attacks the degrading, or comedic, visions of *mexicanos* that were then promoted in intellectual discourses by two intellectuals organic to the dominant class of Texas. [...] Second, in offering Cortez as a refutation of such racist characterizations, in standing up as an assistant professor to his powerful senior Anglo colleagues at Texas in the late fifties and early sixties, not to mention the Texas Rangers, Mr. Paredes and his book become like a *corrido* and its hero for a new generation of Chicano social activists of the

sixties, who recognized the legendary fighting qualities of the two men, Cortez and Paredes (Limón 1994:81-82).

Through challenging dominant conceptions of masculinities in Texas, Paredes established himself as one of the first folklorists to examine counterhegemonic masculinities, not only countering the ideas of Anglo-Texans, but even previous notions of *machismo* from Mexican scholars, such as that of Vicente T. Mendoza:

In this essay, one of the last left us by the late Mexican folklorist, we are told that “there are two kinds of *machismo*: one that we could call authentic, characterized by true courage, presence of mind, generosity, stoicism, heroism, bravery,” and so forth and “the other, nothing but a front, false at bottom, hiding cowardice and fear covered up by exclamations, shouts, presumptuous boasts, bravado, double talk, bombast...Supermanliness that conceals an inferiority complex” (Mendoza 1962:75-76). What Mendoza calls “authentic” *machismo* is no such thing. It is simply courage, and it is celebrated in the folksongs of all countries. Admiration for the brave man who dies for the fatherland, for an ideal, or simply because he does not want to live without honor or without fame is found among all peoples (Paredes 1971:19).

Based on his countering of the assumptions of both Anglo-Texans and elite Mexican scholars, Paredes contributes to masculinities scholarship by being one of the first folklorists to study postcolonial masculinities. His work on *corridos* deconstructs conceptions of masculinities that were perpetuated by a dominant, and colonialist, white population that had a major influence on both sides of the border.

Paredes’s work also displayed the presence of multiple masculinities within one society, and the Mexican-American border has continued to be a space for such research. José Limón, carrying on Paredes’s criticism of Anglo-Texan views of Tejanos, discussed how carnivalesque play was a way for many Mexican-Americans to fight against a discourse that “casts these classes in the



idiom of human rubbish, animality, aggressiveness, and abnormality” (Limón 1994:124-125). Through scenes of mock fighting and playful language, Limón argues that Tejano men are able to create a system of solidarity that counters their experience of being victims of globalization in a postmodern political landscape:

But even as it sets limits to a dominant Anglo and Mexican class perhaps the most encompassing significance of the carnivalesque as a total set of expressive practices is its critical relationship to the urbanized metroplex of cities and shopping malls linked by busy highways that now constitutes the reality of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. This emergent urbanizing postmodern political economy is based increasingly on low-wage service industries, high tech farming, and on the same rapidly shifting patterns of consumption as everywhere else. Low-wage employment and protracted employment, as cheaper Mexican labor across the border is manipulated, lead to the long-term marginalization of men such as these on Chema’s *rancho*, and in turn, to the further marginalization of their spouses and to marital strain and divorce (Limón 1994:139).

Whereas the men of Robidoux’s study were simultaneous victims of, and participants in, the play-based hegemonic masculinity of hockey (and unable to function outside of it), the men of Limón’s research, despite being socioeconomic victims of hegemonic masculinity, fight against it through another form of play. It decentralizes the power of hegemonic masculinity through the establishment of multiple masculinities in the region.

More contemporary works utilize scholarship such as queer theory, which criticizes hegemonic masculinity as a concept. C.J. Pascoe, in her 2007 book *Dude, You’re a Fag*, notes that the concept of hegemonic masculinity “is so rife with contradictions...According to this model both a rich, slim soft-spoken businessman and a poor, muscular, violent gang member might be described as

hegemonically masculine” (Pascoe 2007:8). Pascoe criticizes the concept as something that many men ascribe to, but few succeed. It is an ideal, rather than a practice in itself, and a strong enough ideal to cause a crisis of masculinity.

Part of the contribution of queer theory was the idea that masculinity is not exclusive to the male body. Jack Halberstam, in his book *Female Masculinity*, challenges this notion by discussing the indifference towards female masculinity, as well as the denial that masculinity exists beyond the male body. Halberstam argues that female masculinity is “far from being an imitation of maleness...female masculinities are framed as the rejected scraps of dominant masculinity in order that male masculinity may appear to be the real thing” (Halberstam 1998:1-2). Pascoe, in her study of masculinities within a California high school, utilizes Halberstam’s concept of female masculinity in order to describe masculinity as “a configuration of practices and discourses that different youths (boys and girls) may embody in different ways and to different degrees” (Pascoe 2007:5). Masculinity is practiced by people of all sexes and genders, is a spectrum upon which people land, and is a fluid concept that allows people to embrace various forms of masculinity at different points.

Several scholars have taken studies of traditional folklore genres such as folktale and fairy tale and used them as points of discussion of queer theory, female masculinity, and the fluidity of masculinities. Pauline Greenhill’s research on cross-dressing in ballads reveals how women in the songs cross-dress to “freely commandeer symbols of masculinity and of male power and privilege” (Greenhill 1995:160), thus appropriating masculine dress and materials while

remaining exclusively in heterosexuality. Greenhill found that songs such as “The Handsome Cabin Boy” featured women who not only cross-dressed as men, but also earned further attraction from men upon finding out about this cross-dressing. Female masculinity was not an object of repulsion, but adulation, and singing songs that included female masculinity resulted in a moment of “adventure and escape” (Greenhill 1995:171) for women, while possibly giving male singers, who often sang in the all-male lumbercamps, a chance to embrace both homosexual behavior and a female sexuality that was “near if not actually available” (Greenhill 1995:172).

Similarly, performance scholar Joy Brooke Fairfield’s study of the tale “Princess Mouseskin,” focuses on a tale about a princess who trades her skin for mouse skin in order to transgress her gender and sex. Fairfield, in discussing the choices of the princess, states, “Given the options of submitting to the patriarchal system of her homeland or setting out for new worlds wearing new skin, she chooses the latter” (Fairfield 2012:237). Fairfield argues that the tale’s plot is an overcoming of gender dysphoria. Through transgressive acts such as switching skins, the Princess engages in a form of female masculinity while remaining female. Fairfield points out that the mouse skin “does not transform her but acts as costume, one that enables her to “do” the male gender” (Fairfield 2012:238). Although the concept of female masculinity is a fairly new one, it has been a part of folk culture for far longer, and queer theory enables folklorists to revise their analysis of tales such as Princess Mouseskin in order to better understand how fluid masculinity transcends bodies, cultures, and time.

This transcendence even applies to the understanding and portrayal of folklorists themselves. Kendra Magnus-Johnston's study of the Grimm brothers' portrayal in popular movies (e.g., Terry Gilliam's *The Brothers Grimm*) finds that the brothers, because of their failure to meet the expectations of hegemonic masculinity, are "derogated through their limited agency in their gender and sexual performance. Usually against their will, they variously cross-dress, undergo coercion by patriarchal and/or matriarchal authorities, are afflicted with human-animal transformation, and experience crippling self-doubt and/or personal illness" (Magnus-Johnston 2013:67). Focusing on their "failings as heteronormative masculine heroes" (Magnus-Johnston 2013:75), the author points out that the compartmentalization of the brothers' work "into their respective sexualities...produces a queer(ed) vision of the brothers in popular American cinema" (Magnus-Johnston 2013:68-69).

Jason Whitesel's work on the cultural politics of overweight gay men (described as "bigmen" in Whitesel's text) in the United States combines queer theory with the study of carnivalesque masculinities. Focusing on a group of overweight gay men called the "Girth & Mirthers," Whitesel's research finds that, in order to assert one's masculinity within the bigman community, group members "engage in, or even prefer, ritual events that subordinate their status" (Whitesel and Shuman 2013:490), such as performing in the Chub-and-Chaser-Contest that requires contestants to comically present themselves in hypermasculine roles. According to Whitesel, play allows bigmen to "trouble the codes of the gay hierarchy...By troubling accepted behaviors, values, and norms,

big men at the Cabana play with who they are, creating disorder as they shamelessly perform their fat bodies” (Whitesel 2014:88-89). Taking the Bakhtinesque analysis of previous scholars, such as Limón, and merging it with queer theory, Whitesel’s studies show how men deconstruct the hegemonic through ironically embracing it.

Not all deconstruction of hegemonic masculinity happens through irony, however. According to scholar Cheryl MacDonald, this deconstruction, and challenging, of hegemonic masculinity also occurs within hegemonic circles such as sports teams. This is particularly the case following the increasing exposure of metrosexuality- a form of masculinity that involves “a preoccupation with fashion as a new aspect of jock culture” (MacDonald 2014:101). Citing the work of David Coad, who states that “metrosexuality does not discriminate against homosexuality or insist on heteronormativity” (Coad 2008:17), MacDonald claims that metrosexuality is “an internal challenge to hegemonic masculinity” (MacDonald 2014:101). Communications scholar C. Wesley Buerkle, however, states that the metrosexual still desires to dominate. According to Buerkle, “the metrosexual engages in a public performance that invites a gaze upon his body and uses his kinder, gentler masculinity for the purpose of heterosexual conquest” (Buerkle 2009:79). The image and approach may be different, but according to Buerkle, the approach of metrosexuality is still the same as that which precedes it:

the metrosexual transformation remains a decidedly heterosexual performance. Because metrosexuality blurs the distinction between masculine and feminine activities, inviting the perception of sexual malleability, we can expect heteromasculine hegemony, as a self-

preserving structure, to re-assert traditional masculinity against any challenges to its dominance (Buerkle 2009:79).

The complexity of metrosexuality must be positioned in relation to the rise of “lumbersexuality,” which presents men as having a rugged, yet painstakingly maintained appearance. A 2014 article in *The Guardian* by Holly Baxter works to compare and contrast metrosexuality and lumbersexuality:

I like the poseur who sits beside me at a nauseatingly hip cafe with his cold brew, Barbour jacket and anchor tattoos – I can’t deny it. He isn’t telling me he’s anything but a freelance web designer who can grow an impressively bushy moustache. He isn’t sitting at home, crying over his laptop and wondering why he can’t just get out there and be a “real man”. Instead, he’s playing with the concept of what masculinity looks like and does. He is at the same time both aggressively attached to the traditionally masculine look and completely removed from the lifestyle that it advertises. Men are given a harder time than women when they play with gender through style, since fashion still isn’t seen as their rightful domain. The metrosexual threw caution to the wind and started carrying his moisturiser round in his manbag; the lumbersexual now serves us up a hypermasculine aesthetic with an unashamedly ironic grin (Baxter 2014).

Unlike metrosexuality, which scholars see as hegemonic masculinity with a feminine appearance, lumbersexuality appropriates the look of hegemonic masculinity (i.e., the rugged woodsman) without embracing the lifestyle involved in maintaining it. Like metrosexuality, there is a focus on appearance and fashion, and for those who are involved in lumbersexuality, there is an awareness of the connections to the metrosexuals of the early 2000s. In his 2014 article in *Time* magazine, “Confessions of a Lumbersexual,” journalist Denver Nicks discusses how he embraces the connection:

The lumbersexual has been the subject of much Internet musing in the last several weeks. The term is a new one on me but it is not a new phenomenon. In 2010 Urban Dictionary<sup>1</sup> defined the lumbersexual as, “A metro-sexual who has the need to hold on to some outdoor based

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<sup>1</sup> Urban Dictionary ([www.urbandictionary.com](http://www.urbandictionary.com)) is an online slang dictionary, edited and maintained by its

ruggedness, thus opting to keep a finely trimmed beard.” I was never a metrosexual and I’m actually most amused by Urban Dictionary’s earliest entry for lumbersexual, from February 2004: “A male who humps anyone who gives him wood.” But I do think defining the lumbersexual as a metrosexual grasping at masculinity gets at something... If my beard is a trend-inspired attempt to reclaim a semblance of masculinity in a world gone mad then so be it. Beats scrotum jokes (Nicks 2014).

Between the relative newness of lumbersexuality and the lack of extensive research on the topic, it is difficult to see the trend’s full social impact, but the connections between it and metrosexuality imply that, whether through appearance or performance, the quest for hegemonic masculinity is still alive and well in many places.

One of the benefits of post-structuralist research around masculinities is that it allows scholars to examine the flaws of hegemony and privilege, as well as to explore how it simultaneously empowers and controls the men who work to assert hegemony. The scholarship on men’s culture in folklore shifted from a psychological approach to a critical analysis of dominant forms of masculinities. Contemporary research demonstrates that, while men desire to attain hegemonic ideals, the quest for them also reveals their vulnerability. Scholarship also shows that difficulties in adapting to change (social, economic, etc.) also serve as a catalyst, allowing hegemonic masculine practices to evolve in a way that continues to assert hegemony. Play and ritual studies, such as that of Limón and Whitesel, served as a space for examining masculine assertions, yet the focus on play and ritual also resulted in a gap in scholarship: within folklore, for example, there is very little research on masculinities and personal narrative.

There is room for more critical analysis of personal narrative, and how people perform masculinities through discussion and projecting personal experience.

### *Masculinities in Newfoundland and Labrador*

The folkloristic approach to masculinities is certainly relevant to the study and presentation of masculinity within Newfoundland and Labrador. Provincial history, interpreted by some “as the story of settlement against all obstacles and survival against all odds” (Byrne 1997:233), portrays its past citizens as fishermen who were self-determined to work against the struggles that came their way. Part of the tradition came through fishing, some of which took place on the surrounding seas (Cadigan 2009:85) or in seasonal summer fisheries on the Labrador (Smith 1995:79). Beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it became more common for Newfoundlanders to leave home for skilled trade positions in the “Boston States” (Reeves 1990:35-38) or industrial work in Ontario and Nova Scotia (Thorne 2007:52-53 and MacKinnon 2008:52-54), and migration played a factor in the transmission of the Newfoundland stereotype to other parts of North America. Combined with the island’s Canadian and American military presence during the Second World War (Byrne 1997:239), the image of the rugged Newfoundlander seafarer gradually pervaded popular culture, and the image continues to the present day. Miriam Wright points out that stereotyping and romanticizing is not exclusive to Newfoundland, but is a part of many fishing-based societies:

Making one’s living from the sea is an occupation around which whole mythologies have grown. Popularized through songs, stories, and



pictures, the "man of the sea" is a romanticized vision of the people who actually make their living fishing. It is a particularly masculine stereotype, depicting a world fraught with danger, hardship, and inhabited by strong, risk-taking men who were socially isolated and resistant to change. (Wright 1998:143)

Despite the fact that not all Newfoundlanders worked on the sea, most Newfoundland men of the past were fishers, and thus the attributes associated with seafaring men, and the masculine behaviors associated with seafaring work, became associated with the province.

As Elke Dettmer notes in her research of Newfoundland folklorism, the rugged seafarer image has been challenged by many Newfoundlanders as detrimental to Newfoundland identity. Dettmer also notes that, within the Newfoundland initiation ritual called the Screech-In, the act of being "screeched in," includes initiation as an honorary Newfoundlander by a man dressed like a stereotypical Newfoundland fisherman. Inclusion in this custom requires some suspension of disbelief: "...most Newfoundland audiences find it amusing, while the visitors may be rather perplexed. In any case, visitors would not mistake the entertainment for reality" (Dettmer 1993: 202). While Dettmer suggests that these stereotypical portrayals have had positive benefits for the local population, Pat Byrne accuses Newfoundlanders of giving into negative projections, stating that locals, "having accepted this fictive image of themselves...found it convenient and expedient to bathe it in the rosy glow of 'tradition'" (Byrne 1997:238). According to Byrne, it was easier for Newfoundlanders to give into the hegemonic image of the rugged seafarer, rather than cultivate a more pluralistic understanding of Newfoundland masculinity.

A monolithic understanding of Newfoundland masculinities is present even in academia, tracing back to some of the earliest anthropological research on outport communities, which focused on fishermen and manhood. Anthropologist Melvin Firestone, whose work focuses on familial fishing crews in the Great Northern Peninsula community of Savage Cove, demonstrates how the agnatic, communal, and egalitarian nature of the outport communities heavily influenced the development of masculine behavior:

The typical local economic group in Savage Cove is a familial fishing crew composed of a father and his sons or a group of brothers, sometimes including other agnatically related males (Firestone, 1967). The local methods of fishing make this an efficient cooperative grouping. In such units all members have equal shares, and group maintenance is the vested interest of all—not only economically but emotionally. As will be seen, accommodation to such groups leads to reticence and self-containment in men. The parental influence which is strongest in orienting men towards cooperative but self-effacing behavior is that after a warm and solicitous boyhood boys tend to be ignored by their fathers but gain recognition and esteem upon becoming sufficiently old and able to do a man's work. They are then quick to accommodate to the male self-contained posture. (Firestone 1978:92)

Agnatic group organization meant that constructions of masculinity were passed from father to son, and so on, for multiple generations, and that masculinity was synonymous with the ability to work. Firestone's findings reveal that the connection of maritime work and manhood had little opposition in an outport community. As boys in Savage Cove had few other types of males around them besides fishermen and their school teacher, they almost always identified with their fathers, and looked to them for guidance in their growth and development (Firestone 1978:98).

A lack of alternative careers for men also had major impacts on the gendering of occupations. Along with loggers and miners, fishermen commonly believed that any occupation outside of their own was feminine. Labour scholar Lisa Sullivan's examination of how workers interpreted labour as "meaningful" suggests a connection between masculinity and the notion of "real" work, and in a highly romanticized way. Sullivan points out that, in Newfoundland song, the connection between masculinity and specific occupations "is reaffirmed by representations that brand as effeminate outsiders to a community of resource-extractors" (Sullivan 1994:200-202). Entering into extraction-based occupations was an important male rite of passage because of the hardship and danger that were a constant force in daily life.

A pursuit of extraction-based work extended into the seal fishery, as Willeen Keough's study of the Newfoundland seal hunt shows:

Since the middle decades of the nineteenth century, then, the dominant cultural understanding of the seal fishery has been of an exclusively masculine space — where men and boys tested themselves in a harsh, frozen landscape; where cruel sealing masters drove their crews to exhaustion while greedy merchants urged on their fleets with the toast "Bloody decks and a bumper crop"; where countless ships were crushed in the ice and thousands of men lost their lives. Still, men, young and old, fought for a berth, because "going to the ice" was a rite of manhood, and sealers were hailed as "men of the Viking breed" for their skill and their ability to endure hardship and danger at the "front." (Keough 2010:133-135)

It is easy to see the parallel between the experiences of men in Keough's study and the men of Michael Robidoux's research on hockey players in a St. John's based junior hockey team. Sealers and hockey players, working in a predominately masculine space, subject themselves to the demands of their

employers, not only for the sake of a paycheck, but also for the sake of proving their masculinity, not only to the world, but also to the homosocial environment of which they are a part.

Keough's research reveals how the sealing environment not only put pressure on Newfoundland men to prove themselves as workers, but also to prove their love of the sea. To do otherwise was not considered masculine. According to Dona Davis, "Being landbound is feminine, staying in the house is being feminine, not fishing is being effeminate if not exactly feminine. [...] Being landbound is feminizing and demeaning for men" (Davis 1993:473). For decades in Newfoundland's history, labour had a gender divide. Men worked on the water, women worked on the land and the division shaped constructs of masculinities and femininities, and resulted in gendered understandings of land and sea. Gerald Pocius's study of space in the Southern Shore community of Calvert reveals that men, when it came to land, often knew the quickest route to find necessary resources, but knowledge was generally individualized (Pocius 1991:93-94). In contrast, the knowledge of the sea was collective:

Although males know only certain areas of the wooded regions, all share knowledge of water space. Each male who fishes knows the number of trap berths in Calvert harbor, the names of each, where they are located, and their characteristics. Since who receives what berth changes from year to year, men must be familiar with all these spaces and know how to locate them. (Pocius 1991:92)

According to Pocius, knowledge develops over a man's lifetime and reflects a patrilocal marriage pattern in the province whereby men remain in their home communities. Women, who have a more tightly focused spatial knowledge consisting of their home and its surroundings, often move to another community

with marriage. Pocius argues that they are not as familiar with the area (Pocius 1991:99). To Pocius, knowing the sea, and knowing the land, were ways for men to assert their gendered knowledge of the community.

Andrea O'Brien refutes Pocius's claims in her 1999 article on the traditional practice of rural boil-ups (outdoor gatherings in which people get together for a cup of tea and food), noting that women in the Southern Shore community of Cape Broyle engaged in activities like trout fishing and berry-picking, thus gaining an extensive knowledge of the area beyond the home. According to O'Brien,

Pocius should not assume that female cognitive maps are confined to dwellings, yards and other family units in the community. While their knowledge of the hinterlands may not be as extensive or utilitarian as men's, it exists nonetheless, in varying degrees, according to the amount of acculturation a woman has had with the landscape. (O'Brien 1999)

Women in Cape Broyle played an important role in local economic production and family subsistence, yet scholars such as Pocius focused more on the income-based labour of men in the community. Both sexes had extensive spatial knowledge, and O'Brien found that girls gained social capital through their awareness of the area- itself a form of cultural capital.

Despite O'Brien's findings, current scholarship in Newfoundland still focuses on the connection between rurality and masculinity. Sociologist Nicole Power's research on rurality in the province suggests that rural Newfoundland is primarily a space where "all-male, inter-generational outdoor experiences prove to be integral to the cultivation of particular ways of being male within rurality" (Norman, Power and Dupre 2011:170). Mobility within a particular landscape is

partially associated with gender. Whereas many teenage women in Newfoundland describe their time in rural areas as “boring,” young men “were encouraged to explore and play in the ‘freedom’ and independence the woods offered” (Norman, Power and Dupre 2011:170-171). The sense of independence, exploration and homosocial activity, long a part of the fishery culture, could continue regardless of whether or not the fishery was active in a particular community.

The rise of a technologically modernized fishing fleet that focused on large trawler vessels, rather than the efforts of individual harvesters, challenged the historic sense of exploration and independence. Following Newfoundland’s entering into Canada in 1949, the rise of fisheries training programmes, designed to introduce fishermen to new technologies, brought forth many new opportunities for young men in the province. Not only did the programmes allow young men to receive further education in new ways of fishing, but also resulted in a large number of younger men joining trawler crews. Miriam Wright’s work on the trawler generation shows how the pursuit of jobs aboard trawlers changed family, and community, dynamics following Confederation:

The College of Fisheries represented a new era, not only a new industrial fishery, but also a new way of acquiring knowledge and skills apart from the traditions of their fathers. It represented a break from the past and a panacea for the problems of the Newfoundland fishery. Knowledge would no longer be passed from father to son, but from technological expert to student within an institutional setting provided by the state. An unbounded faith in the ability of “technological man” to solve the problems of the world was behind this approach to industrializing the fishery. In the process, the young men would be moulded into technologically trained, family breadwinners. (Wright 1998:151)

The formal educational institutions, rather than unofficial, agnatically based family

groups, were considered to be the new way to show young men in Newfoundland how to be a fisherman, and thus, be a man in the traditional sense. Technology changed ideas of masculinity, yet it simultaneously maintained a division of gender roles within the province.

Much of the work of sociologist Nicole Power focuses on the informal notions of knowledge, as well as risk perception, which are both inevitably tied to concepts of masculinity (Power 2008:567). Exploring the notion of traditional fishing as being “in the blood,” as well as learned through kinesthetic example, Power demonstrates the importance of the notion of “common sense” among men in the fishery (Power 2005:105) and its role in the modern fishery. This notion of “common sense” had later effects on the perception of fishing for things other than cod. Power points out that the rise of snow crab fishing would inevitably create alternative forms of masculine practice:

This perceived feminisation of snow crab harvesting may also reflect the perceived reduction of physicality required to do the work associated with introduction of hydraulics, and the increased presence of women on board vessels. If fisheries as sites of work are interpreted as feminine, this has implications for the ways in which men perform masculinity. The changing regulatory and industrial context seems to encourage harvesters to invest in masculinity that values professional status, business ethics and sophisticated vessels and technologies. (Power 2008:579)

Rather than proving one’s manhood by fishing cod, the option of exercising one’s masculinity through technological innovation and professionalism became part of the picture. Informal knowledge, which shaped the traditional family fishery, had to find a balance with a quest for formal technical knowledge: a quest that would ensure the continuation of proving one’s manhood through resource extraction. In the end, the image of the rugged fisherman has carried on into the current era,

but conceptions of masculinity are part of a profession that is increasingly sophisticated, open to new ideas, and no longer exclusively dependent on family ties or community cooperation. The dominance of the fishing-based masculinities continues into current scholarship, and as a result, there is little scholarship on how these masculinities carry on into other industries, including oil and gas.

### *Masculinities and Fatherhood*

In folklore scholarship, there are, overall, few studies of fatherhood. One of the first pieces was Mary Elza Roberts's article "Folklore in My Father's Life," published in 1953 in *Midwest Folklore*. It largely consists of collected material, rather than theoretical writing, but it did point out the potentially valuable role of the father in the transmission of folklore:

While my father had too little time to spend with his own children, we did learn to appreciate and to love his wealth of stories and rhymes as we played about the fire in the evenings, or helped him in the field. Later, when the grandchildren received more of his time and attention, we heard even more of his lore. (Roberts 1953:149)

Pieces such as Mody Boatright's 1958 article "The Family Saga as a Form of Folklore" highlighted the importance of family stories, and combined the study of oral tradition with that of family folklore (Boatright 1958). Steve Zeitlin, one of the more prominent examiners of family folklore, claims that it is necessary for a folklorist to have a twofold approach to studying family. By focusing on the common threads within family storytelling, and understanding how those stories portray and transmit family values and experiences, Zeitlin sees family folklore as



a smaller, more intimate atmosphere for transmitting larger culture values (Zeitlin 1980:32-33).

For its importance, family folklore lacks the prolific scholarship of other folk genres. Stanley Brandes's research on family misfortune stories expresses frustration at the lack of dedication to a genre that, albeit unstructured in its transmission, is responsible for furthering family bonds (Brandes 1975: 14-17). Folklorists described the experiences of researching family, particularly one's own family, as a difficult process that could incite discomfort for those involved. Sharon Sherman's account of videotaping a family Passover Seder reveals that the difficulties of negotiating one's identity as a folklorist, and one's identity as a family member, often results in the undermining of family relationships (Sherman 1986:54). Kirin Narayan highlights the importance of family as an influence in folklore research, saying that "to ignore the range of stories that we ourselves carry, as family members, is to miss a precious resource in a situation where we already have privileged insight and rapport. Further, we might gain understanding into the reasons we are drawn to particular topics rather than others" (Narayan 2007:7). By understanding family folklore, we are best able to understand our scholarly interests.

Much of the folklore work done on fatherhood, like that of early masculinities studies, is psychoanalytic in nature. As previously mentioned, Simon Bronner's research largely looks at the social and psychological aspects of folk tradition, and his work involving fatherhood follows in that tradition. Bronner's examination of father-son folklore transmission, specifically within

hunting culture and deer camp rituals is significant in its discussion of patrilineal transmission of hunting skills as a psychoanalytic process:

As respected “patriarch,” “king,” and “monarch” of the woods, in contrast to the supposedly gentle, submissive doe, the buck takes on a paternal role. It follows, then, that hunting is a coming of age experience not just because a father commonly teaches it to his son; it also involves a symbolic killing and replacement of the father. In killing the buck, the hunter acquires his strength, but not without unease. (Bronner 2004:27)

According to Bronner, people not only consider killing a buck as a son's coming-of-age ritual, but also a trial involving the completion of difficult tasks and trust in patrilineal tradition.

In looking at another type of hunting—pigeon shoots—Bronner points out that those involved in pigeon shooting are not only asserting masculinity via carrying on traditional hunting practices, but are also defending society against animal rights organizations, who are believed “to erode a life of tradition and force compliance to some imagined cosmopolitan authority” (Bronner 2005:442). Bronner sees these organizations as a threat to patrilineal tradition, while demonstrating that hunting is a locus for the transmission of values and worldview.

Worldview and ideology in relation to fatherhood is explored in scholarship beyond folklore. Critical theorist James V. Catano, in looking at the idea of the self-made man, emphasizes that masculine identity is “rule-governed practice...a practice performed and maintained—culturally and individually—through and in terms of preset rhetorical arguments” (Catano 2001:2). Although an independent man may be one who is comfortable with his masculinity, others’ conceptions of manhood shape him, as well as his ideas of fatherhood. As men learn about

fathering from their own elders, and/or the culture around them, Catano's understanding of masculine identity as something inherently developed by a man's cultural setting is extremely important to understanding to construction of both masculinity and fatherhood.

Ralph LaRossa's article "Fatherhood and Social Change" proposes that fatherhood has two major elements: (1) the culture of fatherhood, which focuses on "the shared norms, values, and beliefs surrounding men's parenting," and (2) the conduct of fatherhood, focusing on what behavior actually takes place (LaRossa 1991:448). Bearing in mind the ideals of fatherhood versus the common practice actually incorporated into daily life, LaRossa's viewpoint connects to folklorists' work on masculinity by differentiating between perception and action. What one does as a father, and what one thinks one does, can be vastly different.

Sociologist Michael Kimmel, in his edited collection titled *Men's Lives*, adopts a "social constructionist" perspective on the actions and perceptions of fatherhood. Kimmel proposes that men are not only biologically male, but also become male through practice. Kimmel, along with his co-editor Michael Messner, argues that this practice-based perspective must exist to demonstrate the existence of multiple masculinities within society, as well as provide a framework for what he refers to as a "life course perspective." Kimmel and Messner use the life course perspective "to chart the construction of these various masculinities in men's lives, and to examine pivotal developmental moments or institutional locations during a man's life in which the meanings of

masculinity are articulated” (Kimmel and Messner 1991: xx-xxi). Through practices that shape one form of masculinity, other forms of masculinity (including those that may take place in the future) are also constructed, and the life course perspective is helpful for focusing on specific experiences that play a role in the shaping of masculinities.

The life course perspective also points to the fact that major changes within society can affect an average man’s life. Significant societal and/or economic changes, experienced over the last generation, have resulted in major shifts in the role of the father. Initially, fatherhood was rooted in the teaching of values as a way of managing patriarchal structures. Luigi Zoja’s work on the construction of father’s roles in Revolution-era America revealed that a father had the joint obligation of working all day and educating a child:

Patriarchal structures and the Protestant temperament, in various degrees of severity, went hand in hand with one another in the America of the founding fathers. The father’s principal task in relation to his children lay in the *teaching of values*, a substantially religious function. It was held, with religious fervor, that the father alone, in spite of his obligations in the workplace, and not the mother, was able to educate a child. (Zoja 2001:272)

Zoja goes on to argue that respect for fathers who taught values was deep and suggests that the father “was answerable only to God, and only God could withdraw respect from him” (Zoja 2001:274).

This structure, however, was vulnerable to greater change, particularly during the time of the Industrial Revolution. The shift of the father’s role from providing values to providing economic security made huge changes in the role of the father within a family. Jessie Bernard, whose definition of a provider is “a

man whose wife did not have to enter the labor force” (Bernard 1991:150), noted that, while the father was an important provider, the definition of what made a “good father” shifted from intangible values to tangible materials:

Lack of expressivity did not imply neglect of the family. The good provider was a “family man.” He set a good table, provided a decent home, paid the mortgage, bought the shoes, and kept his children warmly clothed. (Bernard 1991:152)

A shift from focusing on work to focusing on specific jobs also brings misconceptions regarding fathers’ identity. According to Esther Dermott, changing economics changed men’s roles “from the good father as moral guardian, disciplinarian, and educator to the single role of financial provider to a contemporary ideal of nurturing involvement...” (Dermott 2008:16). As economic structures shift, and fathers’ roles change, family structure, as well as family dynamics, change with them.

Government influence can play a role in changing masculinities as well. According to South African scholar Robert Morrell, Nelson Mandela’s rise to power as President of South Africa resulted in a push for more gender equality, as a way to break away from the patriarchal attitudes of both pro-apartheid Afrikaners and traditionally masculine Bantusian leaders (Morrell et al. 2012:12). As a large percentage of South African men worked in migratory labour positions that ensured they were never at home for their children, Mandela’s position was a radical proposal for a newly integrated society. New forms of masculinities, however, do not always meet with enthusiastic participation. According to scholars Abigail Gregory and Susan Milner, the rise of the egalitarian “new

fatherhood” trend led to a push for better parental leave for fathers in the UK and France, but due to various issues, such as weak statutory rights, wage guarantees, and persistent attitudes of conservative gender roles, many men have been unable to, and unwilling to, take advantage of these new benefits (Gregory and Milner 2011: 594). Multiple masculinities may exist within a society, but there are structural concerns that sometimes prevent fathers from shifting from one kind to another.

Other scholarship reveals how fathers struggle to live up to the images of masculinities presented to them. Theo Hollander’s study of crisis and masculinities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo discusses how theorists of hegemonic masculinities fail to recognize the effects of poverty and deprivation on masculinities:

Increasingly, men were unable to live up to the expectations that they themselves, their families, and the society had of them. The men interviewed said that this incapacity to live up to basic male expectations led to a significant increase in disrespect toward men in the society and especially the family, which undermined men’s most fundamental privilege, receiving respect and having full authority. This situation impacts negatively on the men, in the sense that as soon as we lose our roles as breadwinners and household pillars, we lose our authority and this feels like being completely useless (Hollander 2014:426-427).

Hollander found that this deprivation led to a rise in victimized, violence-based hypermasculinity, which he said “could be seen as a form of protest masculinity, rather than compliance with hegemonic masculinity” (Hollander 2014:429).

Eventually, these men would shift towards an effaced masculinity in which men became less violent, less envious of other men, and content with lower standards of themselves (Hollander 2014:434). Hypermasculinity, in this case, is seen as a

step towards more subdued forms of masculinities.

Matthew Gutmann, in his book *The Meanings of Macho*, found that, for men in Mexico, forms of hypermasculinity, such as *machismo*, were not static categories of masculinity that could easily describe a person. Gutmann states “consensus will rarely be found as to whether a particular man deserves a label such as neither-macho-nor-*mandilón*<sup>2</sup>. He will probably think of himself as a man in a variety of ways, none of which necessarily coincides with the views of his family and friends” (Gutmann 2006:238). In addition to finding that men viewed themselves, and were viewed, in a variety of ways, Gutmann also discovered that such forms of masculinity were transformed by a variety of spaces, and not just in a solitary environment (e.g., work):

...the ‘breadwinner’ role of men, which is so often tied to masculine identities in modern capitalist economies, is not inherently a work-related gender construction...we must grasp that men’s gender identities are developed and transformed in the home and not just in sites considered to be typical male reserves (Gutmann 2006:147).

Thus, forms of hypermasculinity like *machismo* are not just the product of one’s self-perception or place, but are as fluid as masculinity itself.

Concepts such as *machismo* are far from exclusive to the culture in which they manifest themselves. Paul Horton and Helle Rydstrom, two scholars based out of Sweden, found that *machismo* was prevalent among Vietnamese men, who frequently expressed their hypermasculinity through buying sex and drinking in order to “display their manliness and, by so doing, stimulate either fictive or real kin relations” (Horton and Rydstrom 2011:550-553). This *machismo*, and its

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<sup>2</sup> “Mandilón,” according to Gutmann, “carries a meaning that is stronger than the English ‘henpecked’ but not nearly as vulgar as ‘pussy-whipped’ (Gutmann 2006:232). It is considered the opposite of macho.

associated practices, connected to home life, where men were seen as the “pillar of the household,” and it was a woman’s role to keep that in place:

...16-year old Phong from Thinh Tri said that men may not be perfect and they do often hurt the honor of women, but they are nevertheless the important persons in a family. They are “superior” (*quan tu*) to women and therefore they should behave with more “strength” (*manh me*) and in a more “determined” way (*quyet doan*) way. Here, Phong is not only referring to widespread assumptions about men being the ‘pillar of the house’ but also to young men’s concern with their future role as the breadwinner of the family (Horton and Rydstrom 2011:556).

From Horton and Rydstrom’s study, it is not only possible to see that regional concepts, such as *machismo*, can be applied to other parts of the world, but also that cultural productions, and the sustainability of such forms of masculinity, do not take place solely within a homosocial setting. Just as men project hypermasculinity through their cultural practices, many Vietnamese women also believe that they have a responsibility to support these practices, even if it requires much sacrifice on their part. Men in Vietnam, however, will assert their hypermasculinity in various ways, regardless of their spouses’ sacrifices. If their spouses do not provide them what they need in their pursuit of *machismo*, they will seek sexual favours and attention from other women. Such forms of masculinity have the potential to have an extremely negative effect on men, their spouses, and their families.

### *How Does This Literature Come Together?*

From examining the literature of masculinities within the field of folklore and other disciplines, it is clear that social contexts and practices are important in



transmitting cultural values and ideals concerning masculinities. With the shift in theoretical understandings of masculinities, as well as understandings of gender overall, folklorists revealed that masculine practices not only transcend sex and gender, but that many hegemonic practices give little benefit to men. They often mask a changing economic and social landscape that, while promoting an image of hegemonic masculinity, does so at the expense of an individual's cultural, social and personal well-being. As scholars such as Limón and Whitesel demonstrate, such masking can be countered through carnivalesque play.

In Newfoundland, while the traditional agnatic fishery continued in many places, the rise of the post-Confederation technological fishery created an environment that promoted an image of a well-trained male breadwinner working aboard a large trawler boat. Although shifts in technology and economic policy were taking place in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and resulted in many new opportunities for Newfoundland men, technological and economic changes occurred alongside the appropriation and transmission of the stereotypical rugged male fisherman. The elite and popular transmission of the ideal Newfoundland man—one who often leaves home to work in fishing, logging and/or mining—had a major effect on many Newfoundland fishermen in the wake of the 1992 cod moratorium.

More generally, interdisciplinary scholarship on fatherhood connects with folkloristic approaches to masculinity by examining how fathers' roles changed in response to major social shifts. While the role of the father typically centered on work, the biggest change concerns what the father provides. Much of the scholarship in family folklore has yet to fully examine how structural change

affects fathers and family, and there is room for research on how these shifts are interpreted and embodied within everyday family practices, as well as how they are individually understood and interpreted.

As noted earlier, folklore scholarship demonstrates the complexity of hegemonic masculinity, pointing out the cultural practices that ensure its survival while making light of the vulnerabilities that lie behind hegemonic masculine traditions. In Newfoundland scholarship surrounding masculinities, the image of the hardy, resource-extracting male figure developed into a figure that is brave, hard-working and self-sacrificing of his own comfort. Studies of fatherhood elsewhere show that the popular image of fathers' roles greatly changed from a purveyor of morals to a provider. The folklore scholarship of Brandes and Bronner, among others, highlights the fact that traditions often pass between father and son. In my research, I synthesize all of the above, looking at how fathers, through their work and family, assert traditionally hegemonic male roles in an era when people see these roles as decaying.

With the shift from a fishing-based economy towards one based on oil and gas extraction, it is necessary to explore how the changes affected traditional ideas surrounding fatherhood, family, and masculinities in Newfoundland. My quest is to provide a stronger understanding of how offshore life impacts fatherhood and family life through a study of narrative and family routine. As most of the research on offshore labour and family life in Newfoundland exists largely within the disciplines of geography and sociology. I believe that Zeitlin's approach to studying family –a small-scale, localized focus that tells much about larger

cultural concerns -- is necessary to understand the true impact of offshore lifestyles. In this thesis, I do this by focusing on personal experience, examining gendered narrative performance, and framing the offshore work cycle as both a ritualistic and routine process.

### **Chapter Outline**

Within Chapter Two, in order to study the ways in which fathers' offshore work is understood, both by themselves and their family members, it is necessary to examine how older generations understand their fathers' presence in their lives, and how their work is a performance of both fatherhood and masculinities. Through looking at the life stories of older generations, I will identify the ways in which hegemonic masculinity is projected in stories about fathers. These traits emerge in the narratives of modern-day offshore workers and their families, and through discussing the experiences of offshore workers and their wives, as well as young adults who grew up with fathers working away from home. I will argue that Newfoundland fathers are carrying on many of the aspects of traditional outport masculinity.

Chapter Three is an ethnographic examination of narratives shared by fathers who work offshore. In this chapter, I explore how aspects of nostalgia and return shaped the men's entry into offshore labour, their perceptions of risk and danger, and the overall assessment of the lifestyle. Through examining these three topics, the chapter compares the reflections of elderly outport residents with that of modern-day workers who leave home for employment, and connects the

projections of past fathers with modern-day self-projections of work and fatherhood.

Chapter Four is a combined study of ritual and narrative, and focuses on the lives of offshore wives, who remain at home during their husbands' time away. In examining their narratives, I will demonstrate how they frame the offshore experience as an occupational ritual that requires a sense of routine during a time of flux and uncertainty, breaking down how narrative and ritual emerge within each stage of the labour cycle: the departure, the time away, and the return home.

The experiences of youth are the focus of Chapter Five. Here I focus on how young adults, who grew up in either offshore or fishing-based households, experience and narrate their fathers' absences from home. Utilizing the same framework of Chapter Four (the departure, the time away, and the return time home), Chapter Five looks at how young adults discuss the challenges and struggles faced by having fathers away from home. In addition, I will examine how their experiences of growing up shape their own lives as young adults, and how they utilize many of the same narrative strategies used by the authors in Chapter Two to discuss their fathers' role in their lives.

Chapter Six is a concluding synthesis on the previous chapters, bringing their arguments together. It provides space for discussion of how the offshore lifestyle is best understood through focusing on the narrated experiences of older generations, fathers, mothers and children. I discuss remaining scholarly gaps, as well as future research directions for those interested in the study of the

offshore lifestyle. First, however, I present a study of personal memoirs of outport life. Chapter Two examines traditional notions of what makes a good father in Newfoundland, how those ideas are projected through public narrative, and how these narratives transmit nostalgia and views of fathers in Newfoundland culture.

## Chapter 2: “It is My Hope That I Will Be Remembered...”: Reflections of Fathers and Fatherhood in Published Narratives of Outport Life

I don’t attempt to define life or explain the meaning of life but I was given a life of seventy plus years for a reason. In those years I hope that I provided adequately for my wife and family. It is my hope that I will be remembered as a husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather who provided guidance and a positive influence on their lives.

–Ross Roberts (Jim’s Cove, Newfoundland and Labrador), *Yesteryears in Outport Newfoundland* (Roberts 2010:88)

As I begin to reveal to public view a little of my past way of life, and a few of the many things that have happened to me along the way, I ask myself the questions, “Do I have anything to tell that might be of interest?” and “Will there be a word of encouragement to some teenager?”

--Allan Richards (Little Brehat/Great Brehat, Newfoundland and Labrador), *My Life and I: Life’s Many Challenges* (Richards 1997:i)

These men, along with many other individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador, have either told or written out their personal experiences in order to share them with others in their community and beyond. These published life stories provide a valuable source when exploring representations of Newfoundland men in popular and folk culture, and considering how men represent themselves. Examinations of personal responses surrounding life events (and of reflections of a father’s place in a community overall) reveal clues as to how fathers perform specific values, and how they work to instill them in their children.

According to a study led by Barbara Fiese, storytelling provides “a window into important themes of group membership such as intimacy, authority and responsibility. Families also tell stories, providing interpretive meaning to family

experiences” (Fiese et al. 1995:763). In the epigraphs, the anecdotes of Roberts and Richards serve as narratives of self-interpretation that also demonstrate how the men wish to be interpreted by other people. In going back to Zeitlin’s discussion of how small-scale family folklore reveals larger social and cultural concerns, I argue that these small-scale narratives have much to say about how men- particularly fathers- are idealized. They display what narrators wish to discuss about their fathers and through highlighting certain characteristics of their fathers, they also interpret what they believe a father should be.

In the last chapter, I discussed how the concept of hegemonic masculinity serves as an ideal that highly influences local conceptions of masculinity at the expense of those who participate in it. Taft, Ferrell and Robidoux all discussed how hegemonic masculinity led to major crises for those in their respective studies. In this chapter, I argue that outport memoirs, being mostly published in the years following the 1992 cod moratorium, not only seek to tell a life story, but also nostalgically reflect upon hegemonic ideas of both fatherhood and masculinity within outport Newfoundland. The narratives in these memoirs present the idea that fathers in Newfoundland are highly moral and hard-working risk takers who sacrifice their own comfort for the betterment of those around them.

First, I examine several memoirs, set the theoretical context and explain the significance of these published life stories to both Newfoundland culture and the field of folklore. Next, I explore how these memoirs answer the following questions about fathers in outport Newfoundland:

- (1) How are fathers portrayed as purveyors of morality and/or values?
- (2) How are fathers narrated as supporters of fellow community members?
- (3) How are fathers represented through their work?
- (4) How are fathers displayed as heroic in the face of risk or danger?

Finally, I conclude with a discussion of why these stories are relevant to current understandings of fatherhood in the province, and how they project images of hegemonic masculinity within the province.

### *Explaining the Memoirs*

As mentioned above, this chapter draws on a group of published memoirs of growing up in Newfoundland. Numerous memoirs and biographies of elder Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are available to the public via bookshops, libraries, souvenir shops, big-box discount stores, and, in some places, gas bars. (Usually, these books sit in the same part of the shop as jars of bakeapple jam, musical spoons, and locally made pudding bags.) Often, these texts come from audio recordings, transcribed by close family members and friends, and then published as one continuous narrative. Some are published by local or regional publishers while others are printed through companies that specialize in self-publishing. All of the stories in this chapter are told in the first person, and consist of authors telling their own life stories. Their recollections of their fathers as part of these life stories.



Here I draw upon data from fourteen published life stories which are part of either university or public library collections. Of these, all but one emerged in, or after, the year 1992, and the majority of them came after the year 2000. In regards to gender, nine of the authors are male, while five are female. Geographically speaking, Notre Dame Bay was the best represented, with seven authors being based there. The rest of the narrators came from various parts of the province, and while none of the writers (or tellers) were from St. John's, many of them did later reside in, or around, the city.

When reading the life stories, my focus was primarily on how authors described their fathers, whether through discussing their fathers' work, their interactions with their fathers, or their fathers' personalities. In some cases, the books included stories about mothers and grandparents, as well as the authors' experiences of being fathers themselves. I also examined the biographical statements of the authors to better understand the later events of their life in relation to their early experiences. I must mention that my sample is *not* the fullest list of these life stories -- there are far more published than the fourteen I utilized for this research -- but this group of stories stood out as among the strongest and most relevant to the topic of fatherhood.

### *A Theoretical Context*

According to Sandra Dolby-Stahl, personal narratives are responsible for bringing private experience into a more public sphere, and "facilitate the creation of intimacy" (Dolby-Stahl 1985:47). Nolan Porterfield points out that the multiple

purposes of biography range from self-edification to moral instructorship.

According to Porterfield, biography also serves the purpose “of altering or redirecting our previous understanding of a body of knowledge” (Porterfield 2000:179). Jeff Todd Titon, in his 1980 *Journal of American Folklore* article “The Life Story,” gives one of the most solid definitions of the life story:

A life story is, simply, a person's story of his or her life, or of what he or she thinks is a significant part of that life. It is therefore a personal narrative, a story of personal experience, and, as it emerges from conversation, its ontological status is the spoken word, even if the story is transcribed and edited for the printed page. (Titon 1980:276)

If we synthesize both Porterfield and Titon’s points surrounding the life story, a person’s decision to publicize parts of their private life is important to extending a general understanding of a cultural body of knowledge. Biographies play a role in improving public knowledge, and life stories are personal displays of significant parts of life. Thus, a personal biography has the ability to change public knowledge through providing a solid account of a person’s experience. A biography also provides a contextualized account of others in the author’s life, and in this case, it provides their perspective on their fathers.

Martin Lovelace, in his doctoral research on life history, points out that the alteration and selection of public truth is an inevitable part of creating a life story. According to Lovelace, the autobiographer “selects, from the vastness of random experience, the people, events, patterns of life, he will treat as ‘significant’...the process of selection is a matter of inclusion and exclusion, self-revelation and self-censorship” (Lovelace 1983:481, 486). These stories are a blip on the radar

in regards to the vastness of one's life experience, but the author or teller nonetheless interprets them as the most important blips.

It is significant to point out, however, that the tellers themselves are not the only ones involved in this process of selection. Scholarly interpretation of work is also subject to the same processes, and James Clifford's 1986 piece "On Ethnographic Allegory" emphasizes this subjective process in discussing written reports of fieldwork:

I treat ethnography itself as a performance emplotted by powerful stories. Embodied in written reports, these stories simultaneously describe real cultural events and make additional moral, ideological, and even cosmological statements. (Clifford 1986:98)

Clifford helps us to realize that *all* of us are performing when telling and writing. Thus, rather than attempting to make a definitive statement about how people talk about their fathers in Newfoundland, in this chapter I recognize these interpretations belong to individuals. They are fourteen authors' views of the role of their fathers in their lives. That said, folklore reflects group knowledge and attitudes, and by extension, these biographies utilize the words and experiences of its subjects in a way that contributes to a greater understanding of life within a certain time, group, or region.

Given that the majority of these life histories have come from authors who are well past the age of retirement, they offer opportunities to examine the role of personal reflection on one's past from those who are the eldest members of their family, community, and generation. Karen Baldwin points out that the quality of life stories evolve with age, noting that the "content, color, and textured meaning of our homegrown telling repertoires change a bit with each season of the family,

each generation of its tellers” (Baldwin 1983:71). Tellers have experienced childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle age, and now, a life of retirement that might involve much time for reflection on topics such as going to school, meeting one’s spouse, and work.

Life stories set in Newfoundland outports fit into a larger narrative of a rapidly-changing province where many communities continue to experience serious population declines (in some cases, as high as a fifty-four percent decline from 2006 to 2011<sup>3</sup>). At the same time, the oil and gas industry is bringing many economic opportunities to provincial life, and rural communities are not exempt from these changes. Given that the fishery’s collapse also brought many changes to the region, these stories serve as cultural points of reference. They describe the experiences of those who not only fished, but also grew up with fathers who did so. The stories’ accessibility, and their narrative qualities, help to project those experiences into public discourse and establish further discussion about the role of fathers in Newfoundland society.

One of the most prominent topics discussed within these narratives is the experience of growing up in small Newfoundland communities. From early school days to times of youthful leisure and enjoyment, the experiences are not easily patterned into one type of narrative, but, quite often, have commonalities in the ways that the tellers reflect upon their childhood and family life. Specifically, the ways in which they discuss the role of their father in their formative years is

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<sup>3</sup>Ramea, a community on the South Coast of Newfoundland, went from a 2006 population of 618 to a 2011 population of 280. Source: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/mobile/2011/cp-pr/table-eng.cfm?SGC=1003026>

worthy of exploration, as it not only relates to the role of the father within Newfoundland society and folk culture, but also has much to offer to a discussion of personal and occupational narrative.

### *How Fathers are Described and Interpreted*

Mike Donaldson, in his 1993 article “What Is Hegemonic Masculinity?,” discusses how hegemonic masculinity, with its perpetuation of models and ideals, which stand in sharp contrast to what fatherhood involves. Donaldson proposes that ideals of masculinity

...may reside in fantasy figures or models remote from the lives of the unheroic majority, but while they are very public, they do not exist only as publicity. The public face of hegemonic masculinity, the argument goes, is not necessarily even what powerful men are, but what it is that sustains their power (Donaldson 1993:646).

Elaborating further, Donaldson connects fatherhood and hegemonic masculinity by stating that men, in general,

... have an exceptionally impoverished idea about what fatherhood involves, and indeed, active parenting doesn't even enter into the idea of manhood at all. Notions of fathering that are acceptable to men concern the exercise of impartial discipline, from an emotional distance and removed from favoritism and partiality. In hegemonic masculinity, fathers do not have the capacity or the skill or the need to care for children, especially for babies and infants, while the relationship between female parents and young children is seen as crucial (Donaldson 1993:650).

I would argue that Donaldson's claims about fatherhood and hegemonic masculinity are essentialist, as they lack cultural context and fail to acknowledge localized concerns of what makes a good father.

Donaldson's findings also stand in sharp contrast to how children understand their fathers. In their 2006 study of how children in South Africa view their fathers, scholars Linda Richter and Wendy Smith note that children often

...idealise fathers in a number of ways. They idealise the men who are their fathers by describing them as perfect, omniscient and superhuman, and they create images of ideal fathers they would like to have, to be, or be with, one day. (Richter and Smith 2006:162)

This group of South African life histories suggests that Richter and Smith's notion of youthful idealization can continue past a point of life where a narrator's father is deceased, and the narrator themselves is in a very late stage of life. Although hegemonically masculine ideals are described as unattainable by many scholars (e.g., Pascoe, Robidoux), there is something to be said about the fact that even in old age, people may still describe their fathers as "perfect, omniscient and superhuman" (Richter and Smith 2006:162).

Gwendolyn Poole Molnar grew up in Pilley's Island, Notre Dame Bay and in her later years, resided in a small community near Niagara Falls, New York. She was born in 1915 and passed away in 2009. A retired nurse and co-owner of a restaurant with her husband, her stories are put together in a book titled *Tapestry of Yesteryear: Growing Up on Pilley's Island*. Published when she was ninety-three years old, the narratives, according to their publisher, reflect Molnar's lifelong interest in writing missives and poems for family members (Flanker Press 2015). Molnar describes her father in the following narrative:

My father was born in 1883 in Sop's Arm, the first son of Edward Poole of Hant's Harbour and Lucy Way of Herring Neck. He never had any formal education. As a child, education took second place to working with his father. When he was about six, his father would take him to help with the

nets. If he was caught dozing on his oars, Grandpa would flick salt water in his face. Hearing that story, my heart ached for the little boy that he was. Somehow, I couldn't make the connection between that and the kindly, gentle grandfather that I knew and loved. But times were harsh in the days of my father's boyhood and children were treated accordingly. (Molnar 2009:4)

Gender studies scholars Berit Brandth and Marit Haugen, in looking at men who worked in forestry-related occupations, researched how rural masculinities are constructed through "what bodies do as an instrument of work...the presentation of the body at work supports the storyline and contributes to men's identification as real forest workers" (Brandth and Haugen 2005:16). Molnar introduces her father through his work, and through the effects of his inability to successfully do his occupational duty, even as a child. Highlighting that he had no formal education, and was forced to work from a very young age, Molnar introduces her father as a worker, reinforcing what Brandth and Haugen refer to as " 'the toiler' who is doing masculinity through hard work and stamina" (Brandth and Haugen 2005:17). Focusing on his work, and his lack of formal education, Molnar projects her father as an example of what rural men were forced to be in outport Newfoundland.

Most of these published descriptions of fathers, as well as parents in general, are positive in nature, with negative characterizations only emerging in connection to step parents. Even when parents were strict, authors never presented their parents' moral teachings as a negative influence. Marie Maher, a native of Torbay and former nurse who published her stories in conjunction with the community's 2005 Come Home Year celebration (a homecoming festival for

current and former residents of a community), provided a description that was far from negative:

My parents were very careful and understanding. They believed that our age of crazy ideas would pass if they could keep us under control for a few years. My father always talked to us in proverbs. [...] My father didn't have a lot of world's goods, but the Lord gave him a keen mind, a healthy body, and a sincere interest in his family's welfare. Money was scarce, but we had many things that money can't buy. Our parents instilled in us a desire to be the best. They encouraged us to use our talents through perseverance, honesty and a work ethic which would be our mainstay. (Maher 2005:2)

Projections of positive life experiences often connect to the ability to express gratitude in daily life, which Maher does when discussing the encouragement and moral support given to her by her parents. This reflects the findings of Philip Watkins, Dean Grimm and Russell Kotts, who noted a strong connection between gratitude and the ability to recall positive events (Watkins, Grimm and Kotts 2004:61-64).

Maher's book of recollections, originally intended to be utilized as part of the Torbay Come Home Year celebration, is both a personal narrative and an item of nostalgia consumption, and Maher's positive stories feed into the festival. If Maher incorporated negative accounts of her upbringing into the book, it would be unsuitable for a Come Home Year gathering.

In these three life stories, authors focus on positive events while dismissing the negative as a product of a vanished era (e.g., Molnar). In doing so, they make room for personal recollection and create a more nostalgic account of their fathers. Through constructing this positive attitude towards their fathers, they demonstrate Richter and Smith's theory of idealization, all while



upholding major traits of both rural and hegemonic masculinity. Because there is no recollection of what happened when they challenged their parents, or went against their wishes, there is nothing to counter the ideal, or to question whether or not the fathers achieved the hegemonic ideal of fatherhood.

### *Discussing Fathers' Morality and Values*

Historic scholarship surrounding the role of parents as moral guides focuses largely on how women- particularly those in the 19<sup>th</sup> century- were seen as the epitome of moral beings. Ruth Bloch's study of the rise of the "moral mother" described women of the Victorian era as "supremely virtuous, pious, tender, and understanding...it was above all that women were attributed social influence as the chief transmitters of religious and moral values" (Bloch 1978:100). Going further, Bloch states that "Good mothers were described as caring, pious, and wise; they prayed for their children, instructed and catechized them, reproved their sins; and they served as examples of virtue and faith" (Bloch 1978:106). Yet their influence, according to Bloch was "denigrated" as many scholars insisted "that fathers subsequently undertook the more serious and ultimately most beneficial education of their children" (Bloch 1978:106). While women did much of the moral guiding, fathers were credited for the work, often unnecessarily.

According to Robert Morrell, hegemonic masculinity has been associated with a lack of morality, having "produced/reproduced a moralistic binary, which

links hegemony with bad men. This has stigmatized certain types of (African) male behavior and attitude as hegemonic” (Morrell 2006:25). Hegemony, in this case, has been attributed as a destructive or detrimental force, and this is not exclusive to South Africa. Donaldson described children as having “more abstract and impersonal relations with their fathers” (Donaldson 1993:650), attributing nurturing and care as the opposite of masculine. Unlike the South African fathers in Morrell’s study, fathers in these outport life stories are highlighted for their moral bearing. The tellers do not just idealize fathers, but also claim to learn ideals from them.

Worldview, and its respective transmission, are responsible for transferring cultural capital from father to child. According to Pierre Bourdieu, there are three forms of cultural capital: (1) *objectified*, which consists of tangible goods that realize (or oppose) certain social theories; (2) *institutionalized*, which provides hierarchical credulity to certain forms of cultural capital; and (3) *embodied*, which connects to a person through physical embodiment, and requires time and energy for successful acquisition (Bourdieu 1986). Of the three, the transmission of morality and values falls into the last category; embodied through practice over time, they cannot just be given to someone else. Morality and values appear through example, and are the topic of idealization among the authors examined in this chapter.

In his discussion of the role of religion in the idealization of fathers, psychologist James Furrow points out that belief and narrative are connected to one another:

Religious beliefs are often communicated in narrative form. Religious knowledge in the form of stories composes the individual's interaction with faith and the world (Greeley, 1981). These stories hold the mysteries of religious experience and provide a means for conveying that experience. The accounts are more than anecdotal summations, but each is located in a shared historical, psychological, and existential context. (Furrow 1998)

Though several authors discuss the role of religion in their lives, I have chosen to focus on how the authors highlight the importance of Christian religious practice and morality to their fathers' worldview. For example, Marie Maher said that her father's keen mind was given to him by the Lord, while Gerald Pelley discussed his father's desire to maintain strong Christian values. Furrow's research also points out that devotedly religious expressions are outside of one's own reach, suggesting, "For the religious individual, these choices are made within the context of a larger understanding, located outside oneself" (Furrow 1998). Maher and Pelley, rather than highlighting their beliefs, choose to focus on their fathers' dedication to maintaining religious values.

Religious expressions, as part of a larger worldview or series of cultural ideals, depend upon a balance between individual and group narrative. According to Alan Dundes, worldview is not only the way in which a person views themselves in relation to the world, but also the way in which people, utilizing the categorization strategies of their own folk group, perceive the world (Dundes 1995:230). Maher's account fits well with Dundes's definition of worldview, as she makes note that her father did not build his own keenness. Instead, a greater cosmological structure did so. Similarly, Pelley's discussion of his father's desire to be right with God, shaped in the environment and community in which he lived, is another good example.

One of the major ways authors depict their father's religious or moral worldview is through describing the consequences of behaving against their father's ideals and beliefs. Leslie Harris, a native of the now-resettled Gallows Cove community in Placentia Bay, as well as the former president of Memorial University of Newfoundland, discussed the tendencies of his father, master of a schooner, to rely on biblical and religious quotations as a tool in reinforcing discipline. Harris's father utilized biblical and religious quotations as proverbial phrases. By drawing upon historic wisdom, he indicated the way he expected his children to behave. The two example quotations that follow discuss how Harris's father made use of Christian hymnal lyrics (in this case, the hymns of Catholic cardinal John Henry Newman and Protestant composer Philip Bliss, respectively) to admonish his children:

(1)

My father, who delighted in storing up, for use on appropriate occasions, apt scriptural quotations or aphorisms derived from other sources, particularly liked Newman's hymn, I believe, because of the lines "I loved to choose and see my path" and most especially, "Pride ruled my will." Whenever the latter was pronounced, the child to whom it was directed was reminded that he or she had failed in the exercise of a proper humility, had flirted with a violation of a fifth commandment, or had been reluctant to offer a proper apology for some act of misbehaviour. To be the object of such a reprimand was not a small matter, for to be out of favour with our father was a worse punishment than a physical beating would have been. (Harris 2002:168)

(2)

My father was, as one might expect, particularly struck by the songs that contained nautical imagery. Thus, he often admonished his children to "let your lower lights be burning"; although I do not believe that he intended the message to encourage spirituality. Rather, I think, it was an injunction to be practically useful in the world and mindful of the needs of neighbours in distress. (Harris 2002:170)

In looking at these two instances, we can see that Harris's father not only utilized proverbialized lyrics as a way to teach his children. As Donald Brenneis noted in his research, such speech is also a form of indirection- one that covertly transmits worldview (Brenneis 1986:339). Through quoting songs, particularly those that dealt with belief and morality, Harris's father indirectly admonished his children for their wrongdoings, but also worked to creatively instill a specific set of ideals into their lives. As Harris mentioned, these teaching moments were not explicitly designed to be religious in nature, but were nonetheless filled with opportunities for transmitting cultural worldview- albeit in small doses.

Another narrator is Renew's native Paddy 'Iron' McCarthy. McCarthy was a fisherman whose stories were published in 2003 (the year of his 100th birthday). In his book, he discusses his father's insistence on reciting the rosary before going out to fish:

I remember going out fishing with my father one morning during summer holidays. I was about nine or ten years old I suppose. We were going over there by Watty Keating's on the way to our stage when he asked me if I had said my prayers before leaving the house. I thought about telling him a lie and saying yes but I was afraid to do that so I out with the truth and said no I hadn't said them. Well, without going one step further he made me kneel down on the ground and say my prayers. I said a few quick ones that morning I can tell you, because I was half sleepy anyway. It learned me a lesson, although probably not a good one. But from then on [sic] whenever he asked me if I said my prayers, whether I had or not I told him yes. (McCarthy 2003:31)

McCarthy's account, like that of Harris, is a vernacular interpretation of religious practice- one based on local context, and, like vernacular culture on the whole, "a way of communicating, thinking, behaving within, and conforming to, a particular cultural circumstance" (Primiano 1995:42). Leonard Primiano's interpretation of

vernacular religion states that it includes the ways in which people “encounter, understand, interpret and practice” religion (Primiano 1995: 44). McCarthy’s account of religious experience with his father fits within Primiano’s interpretation. Just as Harris’s father used Protestant hymns as his personal tool for reinforcing religious belief, McCarthy’s father’s belief—that one should pray before fishing—is a display of vernacular religious practice.

Though adherence is part of this vernacular interpretation of belief, subversive attitudes toward religious practice, and the effects of it, are also a part of how authors experience religion. McCarthy later goes on to discuss how his desire to get away from reciting the rosary resulted in even more trouble for him:

There was no such thing as going to bed without saying your prayers, or leaving the house in the morning without saying them. Reciting the rosary went ahead every evening after supper as regular as clockwork. If you got the bright idea of trying to slip out of the house before the rosary started, you would be stopped in your tracks pretty quick. More than likely you’d be grabbed by the scruff of the neck and be made kneel down. The five mysteries never went quick enough to my likin’. I wanted to get out and meet up with my buddies Florie Hepditch and Tom McCarthy (Nommie), because we had something lined up to do every evening like hide and go seek, a game of ball, or go skating. As soon as the rosary was over in our house I’d take off runnin’ for Hepditch’s, and I’d get there just in time for them to be starting their rosary. So I’d get pointed down on my knees again for another five decades. Oh, that was it! (McCarthy 2003:31-32)

Although McCarthy admits to wishing that rosary time went more quickly in his household, he also makes notes of the fact that the devotion to saying the rosary was both a part of family *and* community life. It was impossible to ignore the presence of such a ritual in the community, and McCarthy’s retelling of the experience points out the effects of trying to circumvent a deeply important personal (and community) religious practice. It was only as an adult that

McCarthy approached this experience with humorous recollect. McCarthy's stories are a hybrid of anecdotes and religious narratives. They point out localized and personal understandings of religious structure, while humorously reflecting upon the effects of trying to avoid religious practice.

McCarthy is not the only teller to discuss rosary recitation. Lucy Fitzpatrick McFarlane, a regular contributor to *Downhome* magazine from the Placentia Bay community of Lord's Cove, brought up rosary recitation as part of her 2010 book *Tickle and Bight*. McFarlane frequently utilizes humour to discuss growing up in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Lord's Cove, and her account of family rosary recitation follows in a similar vein:

I can't help but smile when I think about prayer time in our house. We were all on our knees on the floor of the kitchen, with rosary beads in hand, as we recited the holy rosary after supper. My father's eyes were always closed as he led us through prayer, while our cat dashed around, flicking all the beads as he went. Mom didn't realize we deliberately planted the cat there for our entertainment, but my father did. Sometimes my sisters and I would giggle out loud, and suddenly, without changing her tone of voice, Mom would throw a warning into her prayer: "Hail Mary, full of grace...(Kate, stop laughing)...the Lord is with thee...(you, too, Helena. Stop it!)...blessed art thou amongst women..."

If that didn't work, she'd continue praying as she reached back to sock us upside the head. (McFarlane 2010:106)

In McFarlane's example, her father is the parent who, through his focus and example, appears to be most firmly devoted to rosary recitation. McFarlane does not present him as someone responsible for disciplining his child, however. Instead, McFarlane's mother is portrayed as being simultaneously responsible for leading family prayers and discipline. Combined with McFarlane's description that "Mom didn't realize we deliberately planted the cat there for our

entertainment, but our father did” (McFarlane 2010:106), her father is displayed as someone who is aware of his children’s antics, yet carries on as if he were not responsible for correcting them. There is ambiguity as to whether or not McFarlane’s father was contributing to the prank, or simply ignoring it out of self-maintenance.

Although McFarlane talks of her mother being responsible for keeping her and her siblings in line during rosary time, she does describe her father’s more active role in regards to religious practice. Recollecting Sunday morning wakings, she tells the following story:

My father was an easy man to get along with and, more importantly, he was kind and pleasant, yet he knew when to be firm if we crossed the line. His most admirable quality was his patience and, trust me, when all of us kicked up a di-do about something or argued amongst ourselves, he was the one who sorted things out without taking sides with any one of us. He never cared how many of our friends we brought home and on most weekends, every bed was filled from top to bottom. On Sunday morning, he had his own method of getting everybody out of bed in a hurry. He’d stand at the foot of the stairs and call out each of our names and if he had to do it a second time, he expected to hear our feet hitting the floor. “Everybody up for church now before I sends yer mother up there with the broom!” he’d say.

Then he’d pause a minute. “...And if there’s anybody else up there that’s not one of my crowd, you’d better get down here, too, because you’re going to church with us!”

Oh, yes, family always came first with my father and no matter what, he supported each of us in everything he did. He tried to give us advice and guide us the best way he knew how and even if we chose to do things our own way, he let us make our own mistakes. That takes a very strong, wise person to step back from a situation when it involves someone you love. (McFarlane 2010:118-119)

Elliott Oring writes that humor does not always subvert dominant ideas, but often has a role in reinforcing them (Oring 2008:189), and Newfoundland humor finds a



center in antiauthoritarian ideals. In looking at the frequent targets of Newfoundland humor, Michael Taft argues that authority figures (e.g., clergy and policemen) are the most common targets, yet there is still a certain level of respect for them (Taft 1987:92). This duality of subversiveness and respect applies to parents as well. Given the space to recollect past stories with a sense of humor about their occurrence, McFarlane's account of her father, though designed to be light-hearted and humorous, also respects her father's desire to instill love and support into his family. In this case, humour and values are inseparable.

The same intersection of morality and humour played a part in the narratives of Bay Roberts native Jack Hambling. Born in the late 1920s and still living in Bay Roberts, Hambling self-describes as "a dedicated outdoors man" and is known throughout the community as an athlete, writer, and motorcycle enthusiast (Janes 2011). His 1992 book *The Second Time Around: Growing Up in Bay Roberts*, stands out as unique. Whereas many of the narratives in my research are about life in small outport communities—some of which are no longer present due to resettlement and outmigration—Hambling's narrative is about growing up in a community that is now one of the largest communities on the Avalon Peninsula. Hambling's father worked at the Bay Roberts cable station, so the book is one of a couple of cases in these published narratives where the teller's father did not work primarily in the fishery.

Hambling describes his father as a man of relatively few words. Using humorous anecdote, Hambling discussed how his father was interested in making sure his son was, in a sense, well-informed and educated:

Whenever they had friends in for a visit, it was always Mother who kept the conversation going; if Father said more than a dozen words all evening it was considered tantamount to an oration. It wasn't that he was antisocial; he just didn't see the point of carrying on aimless chatter. The only time I ever wished that he would say less was the day before I was slated to leave home in search of a livelihood. We had been trouting at the Meadows all afternoon and on the way home, Father figured this was as good a time as any for a father-to-son talk about the birds and the bees. He pulled the car over to the side of the road and, between nerve-soothing drags on a Lucky Strike, inquired, rather tentatively, what—if anything—I knew about the facts of life. (Hambling 1992:5-6)

As Hambling prepared to leave home, his father's sudden burst of loquacity surprised him. While Hambling wished that his father might have remained silent on that trouting day, his recollection also conveys his father's desire to make sure that he fulfilled his obligations as a parent. He spoke when he felt it was necessary and beneficial. Hambling presents him as someone who fulfilled his obligations as a father, even if it meant breaking with his usual character.

In my earlier research on the use of humour and anecdote in Guy Delisle's graphic novel *Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea*, I argued that the production of anecdotal material was reliant on a lack of desire for open, serious social criticism. There is also a need for reassurance that the tellers will not suffer any direct consequences from their actions (Hartmann 2012:11). I believe that these conditions apply to Hambling's recollections of his father. As his father is no longer living, Hambling was able to reminisce about his father's inquiries without risk of a reaction. At the same time, he does not discuss his thoughts about his

father's personality, or whether or not he wished for his father to speak more often. Instead, he simply focuses on his father's duty to his family. That deceased fathers are nonthreatening, or cannot be hurt by their children's accounts, means that the way they are portrayed, and the sometime humorous nature of their transmission of morals and life lessons, can be more openly discussed.

Ray Cashman contends that stories can be utilized in a way that questions worldview (Cashman 2008:1), and Amy Shuman argues that stories often serve as a "critique of the master narrative" (Shuman 2005:18-19). While these narratives of outport life serve as a way for the tellers to safely reflect upon the ways in which their families instilled particular ideals and ideologies, stories also have the power to question, debate, and criticize the past in otherwise impossible ways.

We do not see these narratives overtly question, debate, or criticize. For example, we do not see Lucy Fitzpatrick McFarlane questioning why her father did not get up from his prayers to assist her mother in maintaining order during prayers. Likewise, there are no accounts of how Paddy 'Iron' McCarthy felt about having to re-recite the rosary. Instead, we see examples of fathers' desire to fulfill their religious duties, even if it meant others had to sacrifice their own time and energy (e.g., McFarlane's mother having to deal with the children).

The personal reflections about fathers transform into public narratives of how the authors' fathers, though not necessarily involved in the day-to-day aspects of their children's upbringing, nonetheless made an impact on their children. Pelley, McFarlane and McCarthy construct their fathers as having a

deep sense of religious duty, not only in their personal lives, but also in the lives of others within the community. For example, this sense of duty emerges when McFarlane's father ensured that all children in the house went to church.

Likewise, Pelley and Hambling's fathers were depicted as men of decency. While Pelley's father was devoted to maintaining a strong moral base (as well as a sharp hunting eye), Hambling described his father as being restrained, only electing to speak when he found it absolutely necessary. Finally, a strong sense of duty to family is evident in these stories. Examples include Marie Maher describing her father as having "a sincere interest in his family's welfare" and pushing her and her siblings to be honest, hard-working and persevering (Maher 2005:2) and Harris's father providing anecdotal "injunctions" to push his children to be useful members of society, as well as aware of the needs of the world around them. Fathers enforced morals and religious practice, provided discipline as necessary, and served as *de facto* sex educators.

Although scholarship has noted that mothers played an important role in the transmission of morals and religious beliefs, these narratives focus more on the father's role in transmitting these ideals, rather than the mother's contribution to religious activity (e.g., MacFarlane's mother keeping the children in line during prayers). These ideals fit within what scholars have attested as hegemonic masculinity and fatherhood, with the father displaying a certain level of "rationalization and restraint" (Robidoux 2001:22). and an abstention from overly affectionate emotion (Donaldson 1993:654). Tellers focus more on their fathers engaging in acceptable forms of emotional behavior, thus idealizing their

engagement in hegemonically masculine behavior. Countering Morrell's findings that hegemonic behavior was considered to be amoral, the tellers instead support the notion that such behavior is, in fact, ideal and worth sharing with others.

### *Narrating Sacrifice, Support, and Community*

According to Jessie Bernard's historical study of the "good provider" role in North American society, a man "achieved a good deal of satisfaction from his ability to support his family. Within the family it gave him the power of the purse and the right to decide about expenditures, standards of living, and what constituted good providing" (Bernard 1981:4). Simultaneously, Bernard describes the "good provider" as "a kind of emotional parasite" who claimed a right to "emotional ministrations" for his successful provision of "goods and material things" (Bernard 1981:10). Men proved their role at home, and in the community, through providing for others. Much like the firemen of Thurnell-Read and Parker's studies, their ascription to such hegemonic practices served as a protection against public scorn (Thurnell-Read and Parker 2008:128).

Though the last section largely focused on the home lives of the authors and their fathers, work is also a major part of the story for the authors. While Lucy Fitzpatrick McFarlane's account primarily took a humorous approach to her father's bestowing of moral guidance, it also discusses her father's role in providing for both his family and community. Linda Richter and Wendy Smith point out how children "value very highly the traditional roles of fathers as

providers, protectors, and guides into the social and moral worlds of their communities” (Richter and Smith 2006:165). For the Newfoundland authors, a father’s responsibilities to providing are equally important as his moral guidance. This includes not only working to financially provide for a family, but fostering a protective and nurturing environment in which children can grow.

In McFarlane's accounts of her father, she discusses how she, and her eight siblings admired the fact that their father was determined to be positive, involved in the lives of his children, and simply present, if nothing else:

We admired our father for many things, not just because he found a way to spread his attention and affection between the nine of us, but because he made each of us feel like we were the most important people on earth. He had the ability to look on the positive side of life and he always found time to do things with us, no matter how busy or tired he was. My father loved Sunday afternoons when we were kids because he would take us trout fishing or berry-picking. Oh, my, I can still smell the aroma of the tea brewing in the kettle on the open fire and waiting for him to cut up thick slices of Mom’s homemade bread. It didn’t matter to us if we did anything at all, because we were quite content to hang around him or listen to the stories he told about the olden days. (McFarlane 2010:118)

More than focusing on providing material goods, McFarlane focuses on her father giving of his time, with his presence providing fuel for the development of positive recollections about time together. According to Donaldson, hegemonic masculinity means that “relationships don’t require energy, but provide it” (Donaldson 1993:652), thus displaying a belief that the simple act of being together with their children in the same place is a sacrifice that hegemonically masculine men make. Those bonding moments are of greater importance than their quality.

In more contemporary scholarship on fatherhood, “generative fatherhood” theories emerge. Based on the notion that fathers had an “ethical obligation...to meet the needs of the next generation” (Dollahite and Hawkins 1998:109), generative fathering theories criticize the long-standing belief that fathering was “a social role embedded in a changing sociohistorical context” (Dollahite and Hawkins 1998:109), and instead saw it as a continuously building process based on repetitive action. Communications scholar Mark T. Morman, along with behavioral scholar Kory Floyd, wrote about the role of sacrifice in generative fathering:

Set against the obligatory or even socially mandated norms or expectations for today's father, the generative fathering framework emphasizes the specific type of activities fathers perform in response to the needs of their children, fathering that involves a genuine and even sacrificial sense of commitment, caring, and attention for a child's developmental processes, particularly for any biological sons who, in turn, will someday grow into fathers in their own right and thus ensure the survival of the family's bloodline and genetic material. (Morman and Floyd 2006)

As sacrifice is a part of generative fathering, generative fathering counters Donaldson's view of hegemonically masculine fatherhood through focusing on intensive nurturing time. As sacrifice involves giving one's time to care for children, providing attention and committing to their needs, McFarlane's father works against the hegemonic ideal through spending intensive time with his children, while still subscribing to many hegemonic practices.

In these life stories, the authors often discuss how fathers' sacrifices were not only for family, but often for community members in a worse economic condition. Cecil Parsons, who grew up in the Notre Dame Bay community of

Leading Tickle during the 1930s and 1940s, and later became a schoolteacher and guidance counselor to students in the Conception Bay community of Foxtrap. In his memoir (titled *Effie's Angels: A Memoir*), he discusses how his father provided for others:

Things are getting rough for some of the families because food is getting low. I hear mom say to dad "Garge, we better share some of the flour and potatoes we have." And again the neighbours help each other until the fishing season opens. In the meantime dad and Uncle Herb J. shoot some seals in the water and they share them with the neighbours. (Parsons 2002:24)

Parsons does not discuss if his family would have enough to eat themselves after donating food to others. Instead, the focus is on a perceived obligation to help fellow neighbours.

Similarly, Robert's Arm native Stella Gladys Ryan, who wrote about her experiences in a 1992 book titled *Outport Girl*, discussed her father helping those in the community with life-threatening illnesses:

I can remember one lady in our village who was dying with TB. The family never had anything to eat. So, Mother packed a box and Dad carried it to them. I don't know where the food came from. But, Mother and Dad always had enough to share. When Dad visited the lady, she was too weak to eat. Dad came home and killed a lamb and carried some of it to her family to make soup for them and for her. (Ryan 1992:21)

The importance of sacrificing one's own things for the sake of others is evident in the words of both Parsons and Ryan, and a goal upheld in egalitarian outport communities. Melvin Firestone's research in the Great Northern Peninsula community of Savage Cove points out that, in spite of individual differences, "...the dominant ethic is that of equality. No man's doors are closed to another and each is received much as the other..." (Firestone 1967:41). Firestone's



observations prove true within Parsons and Ryan's narratives, which demonstrate the importance of men working hard to provide for others within a community.

The authors show how the ability to provide for others was a communal responsibility, as well as an opportunity to prove one's own worth. Their views support Firestone's research on Savage Cove:

The industrious, hard worker who makes something of himself, especially if he betters himself from a very humble beginning, is considered more of a man than others, and those who are irresponsible and lazy are considered somewhat childish. (Firestone 1967:41)

As Firestone explains, being a man in outport Newfoundland involves a constant sense of bettering oneself, but more importantly, it entails understanding one's responsibilities as a member of a larger community. Lucy Fitzpatrick McFarlane's story echoes the beliefs of men in Firestone's research, particularly when she tells of how all of the men of Lord's Cove worked together during stormy winter days:

There were things that had to be done on those stormy days. The menfolk dug out doorways and paths for the elderly and those who lived alone. The boys willingly gathered up wood for the fire, brought in buckets of water from the well and made sure the animals were fed and safe inside the stables. As long as they didn't have to go to school, they'd do anything. (McFarlane 2010:34)

According to McFarlane, work was cooperative, not only for men in the community, but also for boys, who had an opportunity to skip school in order to fulfill community needs. There is a threefold performance of masculinity here: 1) via working hard, and willingly doing so; 2) by working as a community, for a

community; and 3) through young boys forsaking formal education for the opportunity to work with the men of the community.

Michael Robidoux finds that within a hockey team, masculine power is “expressed through the everyday language of the group” (Robidoux 2001:127). This everyday reinforcement contributes to what Robidoux describes as a “shared identity...that has been validated through annual rituals and everyday behavior. It is this model that is privileged within the community as ultimately the only legitimate masculinity” (Robidoux 2001:125). Within outport Newfoundland, ideals of manhood and fatherhood also come into play. Sacrifice of self for the good of a community is also a quest for equality, respect and power in a community. The boys of Lord’s Cove are like the hockey team of Robidoux’s research: sharing a collective desire to skip school and work, they are working towards the hegemonic ideal of outport manhood.

### *Narrating Fatherhood and Work*

So, apart from what bodies do as an instrument of work, bodily display becomes an aspect of doing gender. The presentation of the body at work supports the storyline and contributes to men’s identification as real forest workers. Rural cultures have often been built around physically defined masculinities and tended towards the heroisation of the work-hardened bodies of men. Parts of the gender display are the tools used by the men at work. Artefacts in general carry meaning beyond the instrumental and utilitarian functions. As machinery in rural industries represents many qualities connected with men and masculinity, it is an important display of masculine identity (Brandth, 1995). Being capable operators of machinery establishes men’s connection to other men and confirms their distance from women. As tools and technologies of work change, so might men and masculinity (16).

Brandth and Haugen's discussion of rural masculinity deals largely with the ways in which power and gender manifest themselves through forms of work such as forestry. According to their discussion,

...bodily display becomes an aspect of doing gender. The presentation of the body at work supports the storyline and contributes to men's identification as real forest workers. Rural cultures have often been built around physically defined masculinities and tended towards the heroisation of the work-hardened bodies of men (Brandth and Haugen 2005:16)

The tellers of these life stories spend a large amount of time discussing work, both of their father and themselves, and these narratives are part of the display of ideal manhood and fatherhood in outport Newfoundland. They frequently talk about the details of working hard, thus serving as occupational narrative, while also playing a role as hero narratives that elevate hard-working fathers to a higher level of status as both fathers and men.

Because the fishery was largely family-based, the intersection of family and occupational life is impossible to ignore within outport life, and in the case of many of the narrators, work was part of life from the early stages of childhood. Lloyd Raymond Brown, a professor in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University, published his childhood memoirs in 2010. Titled *A Lingering Look Behind- Growing Up in Joe Batt's Arm on Fogo Island, NL*, Brown spoke of his childhood, during the 1930s and 1940s, as constantly full of work, even to the point where he claims having to grow up a worker:

I grew up, as did most boys my age, as a worker. We played, of course, but only after our work was done, and there was always lots of it to be done. Work was primary. If I wanted to go trouting, I had first to make sure

that all chores were done before I left. If I went swimming, usually back of Wester Shore in a salt water pool, I had to keep an eye on the sky. At the first sign of dark clouds I was expected to head home in case we had to take up the fish which was spread on the flake and rocks to dry. If I wished to play football (soccer) after school, I had to make sure that the pig was fed, the water brought in, and the wood put in the wood box first. For me as a young child life seemed to be a constant conflict between work and play, and I was constantly reminded that I had to maintain the balance between the two. (Brown 2010:139)

Brown, even when engaged in play as a child, always had to keep work in mind, even at a very young age. Just as it was for the men of the community, work was also the first priority for children. As Brown later goes on to point out, efficiency in one's work was emphasized and the ability to perform chores efficiently was a marker of maturity:

Bringing water in buckets was a boring chore. It took perhaps five trips or more to the well, depending on the size of the buckets, to fill the water barrel, sometimes referred to as the gully. We usually had 1 ½ gallon buckets for the children, 2-1/2 gallon ones for the women, and 3-1/2 or four gallon ones for the men, or teenage boys who wanted to prove they were men. We used hoops to keep the buckets of water from knocking against our legs as we carried them. The well where we got most of our water was approximately a kilometer from our house. Women and children would take a spell about halfway home. Men, however, even though they carried bigger buckets and therefore heavier loads, would not take a break. It would have been a mark against their manliness to do so. They thus set the standard for adolescent boys. To be able to use the same size buckets as the men did, and to carry your turn of water from the well to the house without pausing for a rest was a sign that you were becoming a man, participating in a small, informal initiation into manhood. (Brown 2010: 146-147)

Brown's narrative of gathering water emphasizes the quest to prove manhood, not only among boys, but also among men in the community. By discussing boys' desires to carry the biggest buckets, to work without breaks, and to follow the lead of the men of the community, Brown demonstrates how, in copying the

actions of older males, the boys of the community were slowly becoming the type of men that outport life required. They evolved into hard-working and consistent men, who always sought challenges for improvement.

Drawing on Jack Santino's argument that every job has its own challenges and social milieu (Santino 1978:205), we can see in Brown's narrative the challenges faced by a young working boy who is part of a social hierarchy. If a boy can carry a bigger bucket, he attains a higher amount of respect in social (in this case, familial) situations. Such respect could be a gain of cultural capital. As Bourdieu notes, cultural form of capital requires an investment of time and energy on the part of the individual, who gains respect and assimilation for having such a stake in the capital (Bourdieu 1986). Gerald Pocius also points out that work, such as Brown's, is a "public performance that is constantly on view to other audience members of the community" (Pocius 1991:108-109). For those like Brown, balancing personal desire, community obligation, and the performance of gender roles required constant negotiation.

Narrators often described working with their fathers. This could involve removing them from school to work and confiscating their pay. In a way, the egalitarian nature of the outport community meant that children of a certain age were seen as equally capable of working as their elders, yet they were not entitled to the personal benefits from paid work. Paddy 'Iron' McCarthy discusses working in the seal hunt as a young boy:

I made a fine bit of money...even though I didn't see any of it. My father or mother always went down and collected my pay. It wasn't unusual because the other young fellows' parents did the same thing. In them days we were expected to help out our family by earning a few dollars any time

we could. We knew when we went to work that we couldn't keep what we earned, but times were tough and we had to put up with it. (McCarthy 2003:7)

According to McCarthy, as well as other narrators, there was simply no questioning the system. McCarthy not only had to help his father, but also work outside of the home to support the rest of his family. Just like the adults of the community, he sacrificed individual desire for the good of others.

Melvin Firestone's research on socialization in outport Newfoundland suggests that boys were often directed towards traditional professions such as fishing and sealing. According to Firestone, "A boy growing up in a Newfoundland fishing settlement develops an orientation that pertains to his future position of fisherman as a result of parental and community influences" (Firestone 1978:91). For McCarthy and Roberts, their early involvement in the fishery mirrors Firestone's findings about being oriented towards it at an early age. Being involved in the fishery at such a young age is part of the process of becoming part of the hegemonically male membership in a community.

It is important to point out, however, that authors not only narrate their fathers' experiences of working away from home as part of the fishery, but also discuss their occupational pluralism. Occupational pluralism was not for one's own pleasure, but rather to alleviate the fact that fishing alone could not provide all of the things necessary for survival. Thus, many narratives often describe the work having to be done at home, either before the father's departure for the fishery or during the off-season. These narratives of preparation are often more

descriptive in nature, as we see with Cecil Parsons's description of his father's household responsibilities:

Dad also prepares for the long winter months by storing the heavy 'grub' like flour, molasses, sugar, etc. in the tilt which now has become our storage area. Potatoes and the few carrots and turnips from mom's vegetable patch are kept in the root cellar. As well dad procures and keeps for the family use some 'good' salt fish and the odd pickled salmon with some salt herring. (Parsons 2002:22)

Parsons notes that his father fulfilled his fishing responsibilities for both profit and subsistence, but also had an important role in food preservation and procurement. His labour played a supplemental role to his mother's gardening, which is a long-standing tradition in Newfoundland outport gardening.

Pocius's study of gardening and food preservation in Calvert points out that men in the community were responsible for the more labour-intensive parts of gardening, such as breaking the land into soil, digging potato rows, and gathering capelin and kelp for fertilizer (Pocius 1991:110-115). Preparing food for the winter was thus a collaborative process that allowed men to engage in the heavy labour that was consistent with shared views of masculine expectations.

Cooperation was necessary for a family's survival during the winter. Paddy 'Iron' McCarthy's description of his father's preparation work makes note of the reality that a family had to make use of what they had, as little else would be made available to them during the winter:

In the Fall of the year when my father got settled up for the fishing voyage he would buy our winter's grub, and it was sure to include a barrel of pork. We used to get good pork back then. It was called heavy mess pork and it had some of the ribs left on. He also got six to eight barrels of flour, one or two tubs of butter of either twenty-two or thirty-two pounds each, two

chests or bales of tea, and a barrel of molasses which was twenty-eight to twenty-nine gallons. Very little sugar was used. If we happened to run short of any stuff during the winter, chances are we had to wait until the spring of the year when the coaster came around again with more supplies. (McCarthy 2003:6-7)

While Cecil Parsons talked about his father's responsibility to get food for his family and ensure its proper storage, McCarthy only focused on the purchased foods they could not grow. Thus, we see that providing for one's family not only required the physical procurement of fish, and the heavy labour of agriculture, but also the act of purchasing for the family what one could not fish or grow.

While the male narrators often described the things that their fathers grew or bought to prepare for the winter, they said little about how they themselves participated in the winter preparation. Female narrators, however, spoke more candidly about gendered duties within family work, especially in regards to the work that their fathers required them to do within the fishery. Stella Gladys Ryan, whose father would fish on the Labrador, describes how she was responsible for many of the onshore tasks required for processing salt cod, and discussed what she had to do once her father came home with fish:

When Dad got home with the salt bulk fish from fishing on the Labrador, there was the fish to wash and dry. The old salt had to be washed off the fish. We'd do that with old mitts on our hands. The fish would be washed in a puncheon tub out on the stage head or on the flake. We also had to make sure that we had lots of boughs to spread on the flake lungers. The fish would be spread out on the boughs to dry. It had to be watched every minute so that the rain didn't come and make it wet. (Ryan 1992:29)

As it was customary for women and children to lay fish onto the flakes, Ryan's description of her duties focus more on the work that she was required to do, rather than the emotional experiences of balancing fishing work with play.



Reflections on the necessity of performing one's gender were largely absent in the authors' accounts.

An absence of reflections does not mean, however, that gender is absent from their discussion. In some cases, women narrators acknowledged that men's work was more physically demanding. Hilda Chaulk Murray's description of women's lives in outport Newfoundland during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century makes note of the gendered differences in their work, particularly with regards to the difficulty of certain tasks:

In many families, the men did the difficult job of "trenching" potatoes. This was done after the fish fertilizer had been placed on the potato beds by the women. The men dug up the space between the beds and placed the loosened earth on the fish. The trenching covered up the fish fertilizer, thus cutting down on the bad smell and also reducing the number of weeds. (Murray 1979:18)

In Murray's description, there is little discussion of how men embrace the opportunity to prove their masculinity through pursuing physically difficult work. However, there is certainly an acknowledgement that, in order to survive each year, the challenge of taking on physically demanding work not only benefitted men in the community, but, as the previous text describes, provided much benefit to the women of the community, who relied on men's contributions to carry on their own work. Murray's description of men's work, focusing on their role in doing the "difficult jobs," makes note of the complementary roles that were done by men and women, but its characterization of men's tasks as the more difficult ones slightly obscures the reality that, for all involved in a family fishery, work, as well as life, was often difficult.

Although men engaged in occupational pluralism, most of them still struggled to make ends meet. Lamaline native Luke Foote, who was born in 1925 and died in 1999, discussed the struggle in his memoirs, *Life's Difficult Moments: The Calm After the Storm*, published in 1996 while Foote was living in Mount Pearl. In one story, he talks about how his father, in spite of having both animals and food during winter, still struggled to make ends meet. Ultimately, he had to accept government assistance:

My father owned two cows, one ox for hauling wood in the winter, and a vegetable garden. With mainly welfare to depend on and without the other family members to help, I guess we would have starved to death. Sometimes my father would get a chance to make windows and other things for people in between the fishing season. You could never make enough money fishing in the summertime to feed a family in the fall and winter. After the fishing season was over, the only thing left for most people in Newfoundland at the time was welfare, which used to be called "the dole." All you would get was an average of six cents a day for each person. (Foote 1996:2)

Foote's father, who was a widower (his wife passed away in 1928), had the sole responsibility of fishing and caring for his children until he remarried some years later. He was unique among this group of memoirs in the fact that he not only had to take on the work of a typical outport fisherman, but also assume all the responsibilities of the household itself.

According to Robidoux, hockey players being vulnerable made for a debilitating situation, and men who failed to live up to team standards also failed to live up to a fully masculine identity (Robidoux 2011:189). Foote's narrative of his father, while discussing how his father engaged in a traditionally hegemonic and masculine job as a fisherman, also countered many narratives by openly discussing his father's struggles and vulnerabilities. Between being obligated to

complete both men's and women's work (e.g., vegetable gardening), and being on the dole, Foote's father is described as hard-working, yet still unable to live up to the hegemonically masculine standards of the community.

Occupational narrative can also play a role in criticizing hegemony and power. Santino's study of occupational narratives notes that occupational narratives often project "the sociological problems of responsibility, status and authority," noting that hostility towards authority within such narratives is quite extensive (Santino 1978:212). In several narratives, the authors of Newfoundland outport life openly discuss their dislike of certain types of work, thus going against the masculine ideals of the community. Lloyd Raymond Brown discussed gathering firewood with his father:

In late spring in order to secure enough firewood for the summer (we would rarely pull enough from the centre of the island) many fishermen would make trips in the bay in their schooner, trap skiff, or bully. My father and I prepared the skiff for the trip by placing a bogie, usually homemade from an old iron pot, a mattress of shavings, and some bed clothes in the fore cuddy and waited for a suitable day to leave. Though some of my memories of these trips are pleasant, I didn't look forward to them. I hated the hard work—lugging eight foot length of wood, knotty and sticky with myrrh, from the woods to the landwash, putting them in the punt at high tide, and unloading them aboard the skiff. I also hated the flies and frequent bad weather, sometimes hot, at other times drizzly, foggy, and rainy. I found these trips to be extremely lonely, especially at night when all you could see were the dark, tall trees that ringed the beach and the black waters of the cove; and all you could hear were the sougling of the wind in the trees, the trickling brook, and the lapping of the waves against the side of the boat. It all produced the feeling of emptiness one experiences after a poignant parting. (Brown 2010:142-143)

Brown's recollections have a twofold function. First, they serve as a traditional occupational narrative that deconstructs and counters the power that older workers (in this case, Brown's father) had over younger, less experienced

workers. Secondly, Brown's narrative provides no romanticism. He describes the work in great detail, but rather than relishing in the opportunity to work hard and prove himself as a young man, he deconstructs the romanticism of the fishery by speaking of its loneliness and emptiness.

The ambivalence within occupational narratives also emerges in stories of how many of the narrators were either forced, or strongly advised, to end their formal education. Even in more contemporary times, many Newfoundland fishermen had limited levels of education; a 1994 study found that within the fishery, 68 percent of the workforce had not graduated from high school, and 40 percent had never gone to school beyond the eighth grade (Gardner Pinfold 1994:58-59). Hegemonic ideals of what made men good fishermen had a large part in this lack of education; in his study of masculinity in Newfoundland folktales, Martin Lovelace makes note of an overall disdain for formal education within rural Newfoundland communities, pointing out that it "was considered to make a man unfit, or disinclined, for 'real' work" (Lovelace 2001:157).

Some youth saw it as an obligation to follow their father to the fishery, as Allan Richards discusses in his recollection of his own experience:

At the age of thirteen or fourteen, I was called upon to make a great decision, which disturbed me very much. School was about to start. One day, my father said to me, "You can go to school or you can stay home." It was left up to me to decide. I didn't say a word. It hit hard. I needed time to think it through. I felt that my father wanted me to stay home and help him in the woods. (Richards 1997:7)

Stories of working with one's father also reveal how the authors, via their work, prove their own worth to their fathers. Although Richards was ambivalent about

whether or not he should have ended his education, and Brown was frank about disliking wood collecting, both emphasized that they sought respectability through their hard work, thus focusing on the positive.

### *Narrating a Father's Triumph over Risk and Danger*

In his narrative, Ross Roberts discusses occupational risk in relation to having to temporarily leave school to help his family:

Other responsibilities and issues took precedence over my own education. Another time when family responsibilities removed me temporarily from school occurred when my brother was involved in a serious accident. One day as my cousin and I were walking from school we could see a commotion as we neared our homes. Dad hysterically paced back and forth praying loudly while mom was frantic inside while attempting to comfort the other children. As we ran closer we learned that my oldest brother, Reginald had an accident at the family sawmill behind grandfather's store while helping dad with the lumber. (Roberts 2010:15)

Roberts' recollection of his brother's accident points out the risk, uncertainty and instability that could be a part of rural life.

In his study of highclimbers, Robert Walls notes that occupational folklorists have long "focused on the performances of stories, songs, rituals, and even acts of labor themselves that workers utilize for their strategic, rhetorical, and affective potential to accomplish both pragmatic objectives and symbolic goals" (Walls 2006:171). Walls's point about acts of labour being used to achieve symbolic goals can bring us to a discussion about how risk and danger, undertaken by working fathers, is discussed among the narrators. Although these stories of danger are part of multiple contexts (e.g., community, occupation), the most notable of these is the family folk group. Steven Zeitlin, along with Amy

Kotkin and Holly Cutting Baker, have examined the hero within family folk groups as “virtuous protagonists” who manage to “triumph over malicious opponents with wit and wisdom or a decisive physical stroke” (Zeitlin, Kotkin and Baker 1982:20). Such protagonists, through obtaining a sense of distinction for their heroism (and the respect of their families and community members), gain symbolic capital within their family and community, and they do so through their work: an act of gaining economic capital (Bourdieu 2013:297).

In the case of the stories discussed in this chapter, the malicious opponent is not a specific person, nor is it even human: it is the physical environment of Newfoundland and Labrador, working against the narrators’ fathers and providing major challenges to their work on the sea. Luke Foote recalled his father, having recently recuperated from illness, managing to survive being lost at sea:

After a long time recuperating, my father finally got better. The fishing season rolled around again. On one occasion, he and my oldest brother, Bill, went out fishing in a boat my father had built himself. That evening, a great windstorm came up. Their boat engine broke down, and they were unable to make land. They were out all night. The storm got worse when darkness came on, which led everybody to believe that they would never be seen again.

However, the next morning they were seen in the vicinity of Green Island, about one mile from land. That was about the worst place they could be, for the sea in that area was very boisterous, with high waves because of the shoal water. Drifting all night, this was where they found themselves after daylight. They knew that if they drifted too close to the island or the main land of Lamaline, which we used to call “back of the beach,” near Penny’s Hill, their boat would be smashed with the rocks and heavy sea, and both of them would drown. They had to think fast. (Foote 1996:3-4)

In Foote’s narrative, he states that, at first, his father and brother were presumed dead because of the intensifying storm and the day turning into night. Shifting

towards their survival, he goes on to focus on their fast thinking and knowledge of the sea as being factors in their overcoming danger. Mary Ellen Greenwood's analysis of hero hunters suggests that

...the search of a hero is outdoors-related, his ability is always tested, and his opponents might range from another hunter to an animal to bad weather. In any situation, the hero is always the consummate outdoorsman who knows and keeps the rules while displaying great skill under trying circumstances. (Greenwood 2004:82)

Greenwood's description of a hero hunter, in this case, also applies to Foote's father and brother. Tested by the elements, yet showing skill and bravery, they exemplify this hero type.

Naomi Kinden is a senior care worker from the community of Shagg Rocks who now lives in Lewisporte, Notre Dame Bay. She also recollected her father's heroism in the face of danger:

My dad was never a failure; he always got a full boat of fish. Sometimes my mom and I would stay up late at night with an oil lamp in the window waiting my dad's return from the windy high seas. There were times we waited and cried, because we thought he had been swallowed up by the giant waves. I remember one winter; my dad went sealing, again for food for us all. He hadn't returned by dark, mid-night he was still gone. The wind had changed, the ice has moved off from the shore. My dad and two uncles had drifted away on the ice pans. We had stayed awake all just praying to God to bring them back safe. Early next morning, after dawn, we thought we had seen something black move on the ice pans in the far distance. It had been my dad and his two brothers but it took hours before they came ashore, due to the high winds pushing the ice pans off shore. My dad was very brave and courageous, and times like this were always a part of his life style. (Kinden 2002:13)

Kinden's narrative follows the same structure as Foote's. First, she states that her father is out working. Then, Foote expresses the realization of his fathers' absence, as well as the fear surrounding said absence. Next, a more detailed

description of the specific dangers, as well as the actions taken to counter them, are part of the narrative. Whereas Foote simply concludes his narrative by saying “They had to think fast,” Kinden describes her father’s valor and triumph over his obstacles.

The final example of danger narratives comes from Leslie Harris, who went into great detail about his father’s work as a master mariner, as well as his efforts to rescue men from a terrible gale storm. Harris also recollects how maritime danger affected his entire family, as seen in the following narrative surrounding the near peril of a ship called the *Morning Star*:

Without radio or any other means of communication with shore, my father knew nothing of the havoc that had been wrought among the fleet, nor did he know that the *Morning Star* and her crew had been given up for lost with all hands. By all except my mother, perhaps; for she continued to maintain, and fully persuaded her three sons of the truth of her belief, that my father’s seamanship would ensure his happy return. I distinctly recall the blinds being drawn in many of the houses round [sic] excepting ours, for every man on the room apart from grandfather was involved.

Meanwhile when wind and sea had sufficiently abated, father made sail and returned to land. Having some iced bait still remaining he determined upon a set at Cape St. Mary’s to see if the rough water had stirred up the fish. It was soon apparent that it had; and two days of hectic activity filled her to the hatches. Rather more than a week after the great storm arose, the *Morning Star* was seen approaching behind Pevie’s Point, obviously with a full load of fish. Her crew were in wonderment as to what tragedy might have led to so many drawn blinds around the harbour. (Harris 2002:139)

Harris states that people recognized his father as a man whose occupational skill provided him with a sense of strength and courage in the face of potential disaster. In Harris’s life story, the inclusion of fear and anxiety surrounding the men’s disappearance is communally shared. In the case of Harris’ father’s



actions, the efforts to avoid death, as well as the state of amazement surround the return of the *Morning Star*, are both a part of the narrative.

Whereas many stories of disaster or near-disaster in the context of work are often utilized in the form of a cautionary tale, the stories above do not serve the function of reinforcing certain social or occupational mores (Santino 1978: 202). Rather, the tales of triumph over danger discussed here are stories of a father's triumph, and for both male and female tellers, they serve a laudatory purpose, recalling a father's great skill and ability to overcome obstacles. As noted earlier, Richter and Smith proposed that children often idealize their fathers, sometimes in a superhuman way (Richter and Smith 2006:162), and these tales of fathers follow that trend in a structured and significant manner. By lauding their fathers' bravery within his labour, the authors inscribe symbolic capital upon their fathers in a public manner.

### *Conclusion: Bringing These Stories Together*

Drawing on Jeff Todd Titon's concept of life story as consisting of what things people think are significant parts of their lives (Titon 1980:276), it is possible to explore how these stories, as well as their common motifs, are meaningful to understanding fatherhood in Newfoundland. While narratives in the chapter present what people in outport Newfoundland thought others should know, whether in the form of individual life experiences or accounts of others in their lives, they reflect Titon's thesis that life story narratives have an ontological basis in speech. Many of these narratives, in spite of being typed, printed and

published, are oral recollections. The written stories share many traits with the oral accounts.

Authors portray their fathers in these stories as deeply rooted in faith and morality, committed providers to both their families and communities, highly valuing work as something that creates strength and/or manhood, and overcoming danger as part of an occupation. Rarely in these narratives do we see descriptions of bad fathering, abusive situations, or cruel behavior. When struggles are described, they are briefly described, and moved past in the story (e.g., Marie Maher saying that her parents did not have much money). In addition, there are silences about the emotions of certain situations (Paddy 'Iron' McCarthy's lack of discussion about rosary recitation and Lucy Fitzpatrick McFarlane's lack of questioning her father's actions). According to Elaine Lawless's study of domestic violence narratives, silence plays as important a role as speech. Lawless states that silence hints at "a muted message of oppression and hints at further attempts to speak an opinion, to lash out, or defy," and that it sometimes exists as "part of a power play" (Lawless 2001:79).

It is dangerous, however, to insinuate that these life stories are necessarily hiding oppression. These accounts, and the silences within them, are part of a rhetorical strategy that works to create a positive view of outports and the fathers who populated them. It is possible to interpret these motives as a reflection of outport society, focusing away from malintent, as Firestone's study of Savage Cove noted:

All men are not, however, considered as being of equal worth. The industrious, hard worker who makes something of himself, especially if he

better himself from a very humble beginning, is considered more of a man than others, and those who are irresponsible and lazy are considered somewhat childish.

Despite these considerations, the dominant ethic is that of equality. No man's doors are closed to another and each is received much as the other, with friendliness and camaraderie. One gets the feeling that the men act as if they were shipmates together on the same cruise, and though there are certainly differences in the ways in which people regard each other, it is best to let these bide under a feeling of general good will and acceptance. (Firestone 1967:41)

Because these are family stories being told, and there are many cases in which the narrators' families are still alive and well, the notion of sensitivity in what is publicly discussed plays a role.

In her study of her mother's recipe collection and the stories it tells, Diane Tye notes her own struggle with interpretation of her mother's experiences:

At the beginning of this work I wondered if it was possible for me to write about my mother outside of my relationship with her. I wondered, when I read her recipes, if they would tell me about her life, or if I would be able to recognize only those stories that reflected her relationship with me. (Tye 2010:38)

Bearing in mind the close relationship of author and subject, and considering that the fathers in these stories had no autobiographies of their own to share with others, the question arises: are the narrators of this chapter telling the lives of their fathers, or their interpretation of their fathers' lives? The expressions of a father-child relationship are only a small portion of these texts, and stand in relation to the recollection of personal experiences (e.g., becoming adults, raising a family, or enjoying retired life). Therefore, it is possible to look at these texts as expressions of how fathers, and the things that they did, shaped the remainder of

the narrators' lives. They are narratives that frequently heroicize the hegemonic ideals of outport manhood and fatherhood.

The timeframe in which these narratives entered into the public domain adds further complexity. Published primarily after the 1992 cod moratorium (and during a time of great flux for many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians), these narratives play a role in the production of nostalgic sentiments about outport life in Newfoundland. Ray Cashman describes critical nostalgia as “a cultural practice that enables people to generate meaning in the present through selective visions of the past” (Cashman 2006:138). Nostalgia creates capacity for selective memories to become public understanding of memories, and in Atlantic Canada, a plethora of consumer products evoke nostalgic memory for supposedly simpler times. As mentioned earlier, Diane Tye uses molasses as an example to point out the economic power of nostalgia, as well as the fact that nostalgic items “have taken on symbolic meanings...manufacturers capitalize on nostalgic consumers...” (Tye 2010:64). As noted already, some of these memoirs sit on the store shelf next to other products as musical spoons, pudding bags, and copies of magazines such as *Downhome*, a publication known for its stories of rural life in Newfoundland. It is possible to suggest that these memoirs, being published and available for public consumption, have the same ability to evoke nostalgia from other Newfoundlanders as a pease pudding bag.

These life stories of men and women, through describing fathers as moral, hard-working, and heroic men who were self-sacrificing for the good of the community, are printed as a tangible version of an otherwise intangible form of

nostalgia. With little criticism of the actions of the authors' fathers, the positive tone of many accounts contributes to the nostalgia of the former outport life, as well as to the idealization of the hegemonically masculine fisherman within the province. Writers generally decline to fully discuss the struggles of rural life. Some authors are more frank than others, but their overall sentiments are optimistic and they express a great sense of gratitude. They are part of an attempt to represent outport Newfoundland men in a positive light, yet they also show how narrators, some of whom strongly disliked their working and social conditions, have chosen to publicly represent their fathers in a hegemonically masculine sense.

These texts transmit a creation of intimacy via personal narrative. The narrator is inviting readers to have a look into their personal life, and doing so in a way that they see as most effective. Stories of their fathers are part of such intimacy, and their actions continue to portray Newfoundland fathers in a way that describes their hard work without necessarily encouraging others to follow in the same life path. Having established these common depictions of earlier generations of fathers, as well as the nostalgia surrounding them, the next chapter explores how present-day accounts from working fathers project aspects of hegemony and power through their stories.

### Chapter 3: “You Deal with What She Brings”: Fathers' Perceptions of Offshore Labour and Its Effects on Family Life

Ann Ferrell, in her study of tobacco farmers in Kentucky, looks at gender as “traditionalized performance” that often connects masculinity with resource production (Ferrell 2014:42-43). Through being local experts in the traditional occupational processes of tobacco farming, men worked towards a form of hegemonic masculinity that earned them respect within a community. I would argue that Ferrell’s tobacco men are similar to the fathers discussed in Chapter Two. In a quest for economic capital to support one’s family, they engage in traditionalized performances that also provide them with power and respect among their families and communities. Being highly moral, working hard, and sacrificing one’s own comfort are methods of establishing oneself within a hegemonic position.

With this historical ideal firmly established within Newfoundland popular culture, I wish to discuss how these historically hegemonic ideals emerge within modern-day narratives of men who work in offshore oil and gas production. In looking at contemporary experience narratives, it is possible to not only see how the traditional notions of fatherhood and masculinity emerge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but also how other forms of traditionalized performance come into play. Men’s desire to support their family through hard work and sacrifice is deeply intertwined with the cycle of migration found in Newfoundland society, as well as with a desire to assert a stronger sense of control over one’s own livelihood.

This chapter will examine the narratives of fathers who work offshore in order to better understand how aspects of work and family not only intersect, but

also how they stand in relation to both Newfoundland culture and fatherhood overall. The first part of the chapter examines the experiences of offshore workers, first through reflections they shared with me of their own experiences growing up, and then of the experiences that led many of them to return to Newfoundland and work in offshore industries. The second part of the chapter examines the ways in which offshore workers interpret their work experience, followed by a discussion of how the notions of risk and danger surrounding it are incorporated into their narratives. I will conclude by discussing how family and work connect through narrative, and in turn, how these narratives perpetuate traditional perceptions of masculinity and fatherhood within the province.

### *Backgrounds and Motivations for Offshore Labour*

In the last chapter, I noted Melvin Firestone's research on outport communities in the 1960s, which suggested that "...there is no one occupation that has become associated with any type of character or position in contrast with any other. A man does what he does to get a living, given the exigencies of life" (Firestone 1967:42). Occupational flexibility and masculinity were tightly connected in Savage Cove, as well as many other outports. This would change, however, as processes of economic modernization resulted in more intensification of the fishery's role in the economy. According to Reginald Byron, this modernization narrowed the earlier pluralistic nature of working life in the outports, and instead focused on fishing methods and production (Byron 2003:7).

Men in the modern fishery thus maintained their power and influence not from having multiple jobs, but engaging in one occupation with greater skill. Nicole Power, in looking at how fishermen demonstrate masculinity, states that these “culturally valued abilities and skills required to perform many of these services are distinctly masculine” (Power 2005:74). Performing these skills and demonstrating these abilities served as the way in which fishermen continued asserting their masculinity, and economic changes led to crises of masculinity for many men in the fishery. It also led to outmigration; according to a Harris Centre study by Scott Lynch, the combination of the fishery collapse and the two recessions during the 1980s and 1990s led to negative net migration in all but four years between 1972 and 2006 (Lynch 2007:11-14).

In comparing the tobacco men of Ferrell’s study, the tobacco buyouts of the 1990s and 2000s caused many men to view their traditionalized performances differently. According to Ferrell, “This change symbolizes an intricately linked set of altered work responsibilities, relationships with the crop, and meanings of the tobacco man masculinity, noted through comparisons of the present with the past” (Ferrell 2014:48). I would argue that, for many men in Newfoundland, the crisis led to outmigration becoming a traditionalized practice of hegemonic masculinity. Through working and living away from home, men continued to engage in hegemonic masculinity through hard work and economic support for family. Most notably, they were engaged in self-sacrifice through relinquishing (albeit reluctantly) their home area. Although very few of the men I interviewed had fathers who worked in the fishery, many of them experienced



employment crises that required them to either work, or move, away from home.

Tom reflects on his father, who moved himself and his family to Alberta in the 1980s, as being in that position due to economic downturns in the Placentia Bay area:

Tom:

I was in Fort McMurray and Edmonton; I moved away as a child. [...] I was eight when we moved...my dad took a job with Syncrude in Fort McMurray. Dad worked for CN for a short time, and then he worked locally at the phosphorus plant. He made that decision; being away was not something he enjoyed. He had an opportunity to work locally, so he did. [...] This was after the boats; he didn't like it at all. [...] He had no choice; he was laid off here, there was no work. He wasn't willing to go away and come back, go away and come back. He wanted to be around his family all of the time. (Tom 2012)

Tom's narrative of his father's experience demonstrates how his father, through outmigrating with the family to Alberta, continued to assert traditionalized performances of hegemonic masculinity. He moved the family for a job in Alberta, sacrificing his desire for home to ensure that he and his family would be stable on both economic and social bases.

Gerry Murphy's account of his father did not involve moving the family out of Newfoundland, but instead focused on how his father responded to economic downturns:

My father works in the safety industry; he's worked in that basically all of his life. He was in Long Harbour—he worked in the phosphorus plant there—and then when that shut down, even before that, he was working in government, in safety. Then he had a stint there where he owned the local pub in Bay Bulls, and then that burnt down. (Murphy 2012)

Both Tom and Gerry discuss how their fathers asserted masculinity through not only switching jobs, but careers on the whole. Rather than engaging in

occupational pluralism, each of the two fathers remained in a single occupation but had to exercise flexibility for the sake of supporting their family. This was discussed among other interviewees as well; for example, Mike Chidley recalled how his father had to engage in occupational flexibility in response to being injured:

I'm from here, born and raised, in the lighthouse as I said, midwifed on the lighthouse out here. My father spent his time in the fishery, but came back from the Second World War with a broken neck, worked on the lighthouse from some time, and ended up back in hospital—tore the plate they put in his neck—and due to the rigorous work of keeping lighthouses at the time, storing drums of oil and all, he couldn't go back there. He did a little fishing, but mostly did electrical work, carpenter work, made his way through just working at other things. (Chidley 2012c)

For Mike's father, occupational flexibility was a response to being unable to partake in the traditional fishery, therefore also being unable to engage in traditionalized performance of masculinity. Eventually, when Mike's father was unable to work in the local lighthouse, he re-asserted traditionalized masculinity through engaging in a form of occupational pluralism that did not require fishing.

Flexibility and pluralism was not only a long-term strategy for many men in Newfoundland, but also throughout Atlantic Canada. Larry McCann's 1999 study of the Nova Scotia shipbuilding town of Weymouth, which engaged in the pluralistic work cycle of farming, lumbering and shipbuilding, describes it as

...a long-term strategy, deliberately chosen either to exploit the environmental possibilities of staple production...or to cope with the shortcomings of industrial capitalism...As a means of earning a permanent livelihood, these strategies are practised to both create and sustain family well-being. (McCann 1999:487)

Occupational pluralism served as a barrier against demasculinization. It allowed men to engage in resource production, work hard, and provide for their families, while simultaneously working against the failures of industrialization.

Men who engaged in occupational pluralism also needed a wide variety of knowledge in order to survive. According to Ferrell, preparing cut tobacco required a combination of “technical as well as artistic skills in which farmers took pride” (Ferrell 2014: 49). The combination of the two was a part of asserting traditionalized masculinity, and this could also be seen among Newfoundland workers. According to Valerie Summers’ 1992 study, rural working Newfoundlanders typically “have experience and knowledge in many different areas but do not specialize or have formal education in any single field” (Summers 1992:15). Although Summers noted that a lack of specialization relegated many workers to unskilled, lower-paying positions (Summers 1992:15), versatility nonetheless remained important for maintaining economic and familial stability.

Versatility also affected how occupational traditions were passed onto others. Whereas the traditional fishery model was focused largely on a young man taking a role on his father’s boat, changes in the lifeways of many Newfoundlanders following the 1992 cod moratorium opened up room for a new tradition—one in which jobs were passed *up* generations instead of solely down to the younger ones. Bearing in mind Henry Glassie’s point that traditions are processes of cultural constructions (Glassie 1995:398), occupational flexibility was a response to the intense socioeconomic flux following the moratorium.

Deprived of traditional methods of work that helped men assert influence and power within fishing communities, many men had to become open to new ideas and jobs as a way to maintain their status of provider and hard-worker. Gerry's narrative of his father discusses how he changed paths due to the loss of his job (and later his bar):

...He went and got more education, got his safety degree, and I was working in Alberta at the time, and I was [living] in Alberta...I was the established one with the house, and so Dad came up with me, and I kind of roped him into a job. And now he's in West Africa, making quite a bit, and living the dream. (Murphy 2012)

Although Gerry's father initially remained at home to pursue higher education, it was Gerry himself who helped his father continue his role as a worker and provider. Through utilizing family networks for occupational survival (i.e., his son's work), this carries on familial occupational traditions; unlike the past, where fathers provided children and other family members with work, the roles are reversed.

Deborah Shutika's work with Mexican migrant families revealed that migrating families had a far higher standard of living and were "significantly more likely to own their homes than those who have never migrated" (Shutika 2011:66). However, for Mexican families, migration required people to relinquish "significant control of their lives", and Shutika found that the process is "a leap of faith" (Shutika 2011:179). Among Mexican families, migration did not guarantee stability, but simply promised the possibility of it. This "leap of faith" came with major emotional consequences caused by the disruption of social bonds at home.

Shutika found many migrants felt “a deep regret that their families were separated and that they were forced to leave their home” (Shutika 2011:241). Tom’s story of leaving home echoes that of Shutika’s interviewees; whereas Mexican migrants discuss the deep loss of social bonds, as well as the loss of home, Tom’s father lamented being away from home, but felt no choice but to go.

Unlike Mexican migration, Newfoundlanders who migrated away from home did not typically involve a cross-border move, yet the sense of distance nonetheless connects the two cultures. Being away from home often results in the production and transmission of nostalgia, which Cory Thorne has pointed out as often being stereotypical and based on “the mythology of a utopian past” (Thorne 2007:57). A fledgling past can also contribute to the creation of such images. In his research on Newfoundlanders in Ontario, Thorne writes that “the history of Newfoundland as the youngest, poorest, and least-developed province within Canada, gives rise to the conflicts and stereotypes that have shaped the expatriate Newfoundland populations” (Thorne 2004:84). Expatriates gathered as an ethnic group, and established a stronger sense of social connection away from home (Thorne 2004:152-153).

This concept of nostalgia brings with it a sense of social connection that propagates its transmission—also a major part of migration. In their work on Mexican migration, Douglas Massey, Rafael Alarcon and Jorge Durand found that return migration was heavily rooted in the fact that migrants who went away for economic opportunity nevertheless maintained “a strong sentimental attachment to their native culture” (Massey, Alarcon and Durand 1987:1375).

Communities socially propagate, and promote, the emotional aspects of return migration. Harry Hiller, in looking at chain migration, describes it as “intensely social behavior that involves social ties in the sending community as well as the destination” (Hiller 2009:276), while simultaneously highlighting that return migrants “are people for whom a social group at home has continued to serve as their primary reference group” (Hiller 2009:374). Social ties create migration, yet migration can also create a quest for stronger social ties back home.

Though he desired to be back in Newfoundland, Tom emphasized that he did not want to return without a sense of economic stability:

I never considered myself an Albertan—I’d always considered myself a Newfoundlander, and I’d always wanted to come back here to live, and that was always the goal. I wanted to come back and make a good living; I’d had opportunities over the years to come back and just get by, but I wasn’t happy with that, and when the opportunity came up, I came down for a year, just to try it out and see if I enjoyed it, but I ended up taking a full-time job after. (Tom 2012)

Whereas outmigration could be seen as both an economic strategy and a way for Newfoundland men to work towards the hegemonic ideal of the hard-working provider and father, Tom’s account of migration displays the emotional toll that hegemonic pursuits have on other family members. Although his father could work and provide for the family, Tom felt out of place in Alberta, and wished to return home. His account reflects his quest for stability with the desire to be in his home province, but Tom was not about to return if he would only be able to “get by.” He had no desire to struggle in the same ways as his father.

Although being able to economically provide for oneself and one’s family is part of traditionalized masculinity in the province, research found that for many

Newfoundland men, economic stability was not necessarily essential to their return. In his 1985 study of return migration in Newfoundland, sociologist Barnett Richling found that familial and social stability played a much greater role in return migration than economic indicators:

...while economic-occupational *pull* factors were more influential in return migration than *push* factors, economic factors were relatively unimportant for return migration. Familial-personal and patriotic-social *pull* factors were more significant, indicating that the return to Newfoundland is linked to strong attachments to the Island itself, and is not affected by difficulties encountered abroad nor, apparently, by economic improvements at home. (Richling 1985:243)

In looking at people returning to the Bay of Islands area of Newfoundland, Richling pointed out that social and cultural values influenced people's return to rural communities. According to his study, people in these communities

...associate it with a more satisfying and desirable way of life than found elsewhere, and with preservation of the historical roots of Newfoundland identity. Often-cited illustrations of this include references to the quality of local environment – both land and sea – abundance of game, fish and other resources, suitability of conditions for rearing children (e.g., virtually no crime, nearness of watchful kin, open spaces for play), manageable (i.e. slow) pace of life, and the security of being with others who share common experiences and values. (Richling 1985:246)

It is important to point out that Richling wrote his account, which notes an attachment to the Island as being a greater factor for return than economics, before the moratorium. Richling's scholarship denies today's reality that, for many men, working and providing for one's family are a more important form of traditionalized masculine performance than the traditionalized performances of outport life.

Leslie Bella's studies of Newfoundlanders living away from home found that, even though Newfoundlanders found opportunities to engage in traditional practices in a new setting, such practices were not enough to create a truly satisfying sense of home:

Many of the men interviewed talked about outdoor recreation as a significant link with home. They remembered a childhood of hiking, rabbiting, boating and trouting in rural Newfoundland, and wished they could return to the way things were. Some had found comparable activities in Ontario, but it really wasn't "the same" because the landscape was different. Some women experienced this draw to Newfoundland as an outdoor environment, but were more likely to deplore the weather back home. Women missed family and community back home, but generally not the outdoor recreation (Bella 1999:12-13).

Bella goes on to say that Newfoundlanders' "success in cultural maintenance is confirmed in the continued interest Newfoundlanders have in returning home, particularly upon retirement" (Bella 1999:14-15). The promise of home carries the culture forward, even while away from home.

However, for many Newfoundlanders, waiting until retirement was not possible as many wished to raise their families on the island. As Mike Chidley discussed in his account of moving back home, it was paramount for him to bring his daughter Michelle up at home:

After spending time in Ontario – my first time leaving home after high school, Ontario, Kitchener for three years – I came home, and my dad died in '72. The next move was to British Columbia for seven or eight years, and then moved home after Michelle was born. My wife was teaching out there, so we decided that [we're] loading up and trucking it, we're moving east to bring our little girl up in Newfoundland. And basically, [I] got into the offshore game in the eighties on the Grand Banks, supply boats, and went and did my marine ticket. (Chidley 2012c)



In Mike's case, moving home preceded entering the offshore life, but he and Tom connect in the fact that they both entered the occupations in order to support their families while raising children in Newfoundland.

Mike's concern reflects the larger concerns of many ethnic communities, where cultural loss is a major part of migration narratives, and also a major producer of nostalgic ideas and sentiments. Cory Thorne, in his study of Newfoundlanders living in Fort MacMurray, Alberta, states that migration "creates fear and, as such, influences geopolitical relationships," and that it often led to a loss of romantic regionalism, which was "problematic to those dedicated to a conservative past, sometimes reflected in the promotion of traditional cultural imageries..."(Thorne 2012:51). A quest for tradition not only takes place among those who originally settled a place, but also for those who have left one place in order to seek opportunities in another.

A fear of being distant from Newfoundland is certainly present in many accounts of Newfoundlanders living away from home. Outmigration resulted from a loss of opportunities for employment, economic stability and family support- all of which serve as traditional performances of masculinity among fathers in the province. As men continued their quests to be providers and hard workers, they struggled with being away from home (e.g., Tom's father hating to leave home), and their children often struggled alongside them, feeling distant at school (e.g., Tom's feeling out of place in Alberta). These men and their families did not see raising children away from home as ideal, and they preferred to be at home over the possibility of making better money while living away. Men involved in

outmigration, as well as return migration, had the simultaneously responsibility of not only providing economic stability for their families, but also providing social and cultural capital to prevent their children from feeling like outsiders.

There is a great deal of sacrifice undertaken for the sake of raising children in Newfoundland. For Gerry Murphy and his wife, moving home to Newfoundland involved Gerry leaving a high-paying job in Red Deer, Alberta, thus also sacrificing his house and a large amount of social time with friends:

I guess when I started, we moved home from Alberta; I guess it was a step. I worked in Alberta for ten years, we partied hard. I had a great life, a single life, I was twenty-two years old making a hundred thousand dollars a year. I bought a house eventually, but when I was up to making that kind of money, I was paying rent, living with four or five of the boys. Money was just [there]; you were living like a rock star. And then me and Allie got serious- we knew each other years and years ago, we met home at Christmas and then we both went away and kept in contact. She was in Calgary, I was in Red Deer—it was about an hour and a half away —and I just said this is not going to work with us being up here. (Murphy 2012)

Gerry sacrificed the comfort of his job, home and lifestyle for the ability to raise a family and move home to Newfoundland. Through his personal sacrifice and focus on providing for his family, Gerry fulfills his role as a Newfoundland man and father, and his quest to return home furthers that performance. Cultural and geographic identity was more important to him than economic gain elsewhere; Allison's personal sacrifice and decision to move home also supported Gerry's fulfillment of his masculine roles.

Relinquishing a lifestyle away from home to return home is not exclusive to fathers in Newfoundland, but is instead part of a larger tradition of return migration. Richling, in looking at return migration, found that

Rather than indicating an individual's failure to 'make it' in the city, return actually signifies personal success in balancing rural priorities with short-term exploitation of urban resources (Richling 1985:247).

International case studies of return migration present a large variety of reasons for migrants returning to home areas. For example, a 2001 study of return migration in rural China found that many return migrants are back in the home provinces due to a lack of success in finding employment in urban areas (Zhao 2001). Similarly, migration and policy scholar Jean-Pierre Cassarino's theoretical examination of return migration found that the process

...seems to be viewed as the outcome of a failed migration experience which did not yield the expected benefits. In other words, in a neoclassical stance, return migration exclusively involves labour migrants who miscalculated the costs of migration and who did not reap the benefits of higher earnings. Return occurs as a consequence of their failed experiences abroad or because their human capital was not rewarded as expected. (Cassarino 2004: 255)

Zhao and Cassarino's findings focus on the negative aspects of return migration, yet Newfoundland return migration is often the inverse, praising those who return with practically nothing over those who in spite of having everything, never come home. Home is not only a place to return to, but an identity that people ascribe to during the process of return migration; Jane Dunsiger, in her study of immigrant narratives in St. John's, points out that home is culturally symbolic, and is adapted "to suit the needs of changing situations" (Dunsiger 1982:31). Because many Newfoundlanders have left the province temporarily for work, the return migration process is part of the affirmation of home, rather than a fallback to which people return after failing elsewhere.

According to Douglas Massey, quests for economic opportunity and strong attachments to home strongly influence Mexican migration:

...networks are maintained by an ongoing process of return migration, in which recurrent migrants regularly go home for varying periods each year and settled migrants reemigrate to their communities of origin. [...] Although Mexican migrants may be drawn north for economic reasons, they retain a strong sentimental attachment to their native culture...(Massey 1987: 1375).

Many Newfoundlanders establish long-term settlement outside of the province, while maintaining strong social ties to home. This is not exclusive to migration within a country, but is also a part of cross-border labour migration. Douglas Massey found that Mexican migrants had social networks that were

...maintained and reinforced by a constant circulation of people, goods, information, and capital between sending and receiving areas. Most of this circulation involves the temporary migration of people who work seasonally in the United States. However, the networks are also reinforced by another kind of return migration involving people who once adopted a settled migrant strategy (Massey 1987:1394).

Massey did note that property ownership had a great effect on returning home, which implies economic success as a major factor in the decision to return. In going back to Newfoundland, one does not return because they have failed to become economically stable in another part of Canada, but because they have “made it” in a way that allows them to come home. Coming home to Newfoundland is popularly believed to be the ideal outcome, even finding its way into folk humour. For example, Newfoundland politician John Crosbie once told the joke, “How do you spot the Newfoundlanders in heaven? They’re the ones who want to go home” (Mercer 2007).

The popular notion of “making it” is complex in the fact that, in the narratives of people such as Gerry, there is an account of someone who has done quite well economically, and has made a happy life for him or herself. While men like Gerry interpret themselves as having “made it,” the local sense of “making it” trumps the greater societal construction of success. Having made it in the city, or on the mainland, is only a solitary step in attaining success, rather than a means in itself. Before making it at home, one must make it away from home.

Harry Hiller, in his 2009 book *Second Promised Land*, pointed out that there exists a “myth of return” surrounding Newfoundlanders who return home from Alberta. Hiller points out that, in the creation of this return myth, three assumptions must exist:

- (1) Leaving the province is temporary;
- (2) Leaving the province is not voluntary;
- (3) Life on the island of Newfoundland is ideal and most superior (Hiller 2009: 336).

Lauri Honko’s concept of myths as models on which human activities, as well as heroic endeavors, are based (Honko 1984:51), suggests that the myth of return makes a model out of the person who, in spite of *having* to leave, comes back home to settle in Newfoundland. Making it does not simply make one more successful. Rather, it makes a Newfoundlander into a figure of respect among family and community, giving the individual a higher level of symbolic capital from which to draw upon (Bourdieu 2013:297). Those workers who do commute,

rather than relocate for longer periods, are part of a culture of respect. Having engaged in the short-term exploitation of resources, commuters return to Newfoundland in the same fashion as Newfoundlanders who return home after a long-term absence. In both cases, Hiller's assumptions apply: leaving is temporary and involuntary, and it does not abandon the Newfoundland way of life.

It is important to note that returning home, and the symbolic capital that comes with it, must include continuing opportunities for economic stability. Hiller's examination of migration demonstrates more reticence on the part of outport Newfoundlanders to return to the province with only the promise of "getting by":

The implication is that if marginality were a primary reason for leaving, then feeling integrated into the community through employment or social connectivity was a primary reason to return. On the other hand, among all migrants, one of the primary drawbacks to returning was a reluctance to take a lower-paying job than the one they held in Alberta (Hiller 2009: 365).

While men such as Gerry were willing to take a pay cut to return home, others such as Tom expressed disinterest in moving home for a job with marginal pay. For fathers, working hard and providing for family are important (as they were in the historic outport), but traditionalized performance of masculinity also included the ability to earn a fair wage.

Ray Cashman's examination of critical nostalgia in Northern Ireland is relevant here. Cashman largely focuses on how material culture plays a role in producing nostalgic emotions, states that it can be seen as "a cultural practice that may serve as a response to a wide variety of personal and collective needs" (Cashman 2006:140). In the case of my informants, critical nostalgia provides a

desire to return home, and impacts *how* people make the decision to do so.

Although economic stability is important, the possibility of raising a child in Newfoundland—surrounded by fellow Newfoundlanders—is a balancing factor largely based on a sense of connection to home.

Cashman goes on to point out that nostalgia often relates to rapid change, noting that

Such a fast pace offers people very little sense of being in control. Such a fast pace makes it difficult to make informed decisions about which changes should be embraced and which changes should be resisted. Unable to slow the pace of change but unwilling to passively float with the tides of change, people nonetheless claim their right to at least evaluate change in retrospect...(Cashman 2006:146)

Nostalgia, therefore, is a response to a perceived lack of control, whether cultural, economic, or social. Cashman points out that a lack of control pushes people to utilize their past as a site for gaining agency. By being able to have a sense of control over one's social networks, cultural identity, and economic stability, men who return home to work in offshore industries are reaffirming traditional masculinities.

However, it is important to note that, while some of my informants expressed a strong desire to return home, and to see home in a new way, this was not a universal trend, as there were several informants who never left home in the first place. For these individuals, the offshore industries allowed them a chance to gain more control of their working lives. Robert, who worked offshore during the early 1980s and the late 2000s, discussed his motivations to re-enter the field as part of a career transition:

I was a night cook and baker for a year and a half and about a half year as a chef. [...] I had worked offshore previously in the early eighties, and my previous employment ended, and there was an opportunity there, so I decided to take it. It was a career that fit with where I was in my career; I had been a chef in a hotel for eight years, and I was quite tired of the hours and the problems of running a fair-sized kitchen. And the opportunity to work offshore presented itself; it was a simpler situation, to a certain extent. Offshore, it's a smaller crew in the kitchen; it's a different thing. If you work in a hotel kitchen, you're dealing with banquets, you're dealing with restaurants, and meetings, and it's a lot of dealing with employee problems, people not showing up. If you're offshore, people show up if they're there. (Robert 2012)

In Robert's case, being a cook and baker fit well with his career goals, his level of experience, and his desire to leave the stress of managing a hotel kitchen. The offshore industry provided him with a more suitable work environment than the hospitality industry. Although the number of hours worked aboard a platform are demanding, Robert's previous career actually provided him less control over his time and energy. Offshore work was a way for him to regain a sense of agency and stability that was lost in his previous job.

The lack of interest in a conventional nine-to-five schedule was a common discussion among other informants. Gerry, before taking his current position, actually stopped working in the oil industry to try to work a typical schedule, but found it frustrating:

I ran a land crane, lived in Torbay—said, "I'll stop this oil field stuff, I'll do construction, I'm a crane operator"—doing rough trusses and stuff. But then you were still working six days a week, you were up at six to be up there at seven, and you were home at six, seven o'clock. So then you get one day a week, or a couple of hours before they go to sleep, when they're awake, but then you've got to get up with the kid, and then you feel guilty. You're not really getting the husband side, you're not getting any time with your wife because you want to spend time with the kids and you're not getting stuff done around the house. I don't know anyone who does that; the offshore life is addictive, I guess. (Murphy 2012)



The sense of agency provided by work in the offshore industry that Robert mentions in his narrative also applies to Gerry's experience. Having land-based jobs with authority resulted in great personal struggle, as well as an inability to prioritize family time. Thus, workers see being offshore and away from family, in spite of being away from home for a longer period, as a chance to maintain autonomy over one's non-working time.

Overall, the workers I interviewed expressed a desire for more control. It surfaced as the motivation to enter the oil and gas industry. As many informants witnessed parents, as well as themselves, in situations where economic-related outmigration was necessary to survive, the offshore industries provided both a way to ensure economic stability upon returning to Newfoundland. Masculine empowerment, in the case of my informants, often involves a return to one's home area, a desire to begin a family, and a wish to have greater control over one's time. The fact that empowerment occurs via a profession in which one sacrifices control for half of the year is an ironic one. Through that sacrifice, my informants actually provide themselves the ability to remain in Newfoundland, along with economic stability, the ability to balance their life priorities, and increased time with their families. It allows them to not only be more ideal men, but also more ideal fathers.

### *Discussing the Work Experience*

It is easy to suggest that the discussion of work experience would fit best under the category of occupational narrative, but there are complexities to that

classification. Santino pointed out in his work on occupational narrative that many work narratives are told in the presence of other workers, often outside of the place of employment and at times of break or inactivity (Santino 1978:200-201). Outside of an occupational group, however, the story can become quite personal and reflexive, as Robert McCarl's study of firefighters in Washington, D.C. found:

The one-on-one interview with me provided the synchronic opportunity for the narrator to engage freely in this introspection, because I was responsive and keenly interested in the account, knowledgeable about the culture but not an insider. It is possible, therefore, that in this culture when stories are told in natural contexts, the commonality of terms, expectations, and proper emotional perspective reduces verbal expression to its most minimal level. Had he been relating this event to a group of fire fighters, it would probably have been condensed and this internal material greatly abbreviated or left out (McCarl 1985:204)

The narratives in this chapter, taking place in either a one-on-one or family setting, echo McCarl's findings.

In the fieldwork process, I asked about the personal experience of working offshore in order to provide context for its impact on family. When asked about his experience as a night cook baker on an oilrig off the coast of Newfoundland, Robert focused initially on the simultaneous benefits and struggles of the work:

As a night cook baker, I found that certain aspects of it were really good, but certain aspects, no. As a night cook baker, the transition from sleeping during the day and working at night to coming home, I found that the first week, I'd be screwed up with the jet lag, so to speak, of trying to readjust. I found that three weeks' off wasn't quite really three weeks off. [...] When I switched to day cook on another rig, the three weeks off was...I got a little better value from it [laughs]. (Robert 2012)

Robert, in his narrative, chose not to elaborate specifically about the tasks of his job, or the experiences of working in the kitchen, but instead oriented the conversation toward the difficulties of the adjustment process. Thus, his work

experience involved repeatedly adjusting to a new schedule, a new environment, and even a new sense of bodily experience via the effects of jet lag and sleeping pattern changes. While eager to discuss the benefits of his offshore work, he also highlighted the problem of adjustment: the benefit of three weeks off, because of the adjustment process, was hardly sufficient.

When asked about the job's impact on family life, Robert provided the following observation: "I don't think there's anyone out there who doesn't miss his family. [It's] a very rare bird who'd rather be there than with their family" (Robert 2012). Gerry, when asked the same question as Robert, focused on the reality of being away from family, but also noted that negative feelings about being away were common. He emphasized that men, in order to make it through, had to accept the reality and focus on the positive aspects of the position:

I guess it was the same as everybody; I shouldn't say it was the same as everyone, because everyone deals with stuff differently. You miss home, you want to be home, but you know the reason that you are where you are and doing what you're doing is because [of] the greater good. It sucks; anyone who says they enjoy being on a drilling rig is totally either lying or mentally insane. It's harsh, it's a bad place to be, but if you've got to do it, then you get a month off and you get all of the benefits of it. You just have to look at the positive side of it, I guess. (Murphy 2012)

Traditional performances of sacrifice involved giving up one's own personal comfort for the sake of more time off, more intimate time with one's family, and decent wages. In order to endure the working conditions and separation from home, focusing on the positive was a way for men such as Gerry to maintain their composure amidst less than ideal conditions.

While Gerry did not hesitate to point out that the work necessary to maintain a family base in Newfoundland was not always easy, he also said that

the benefits made it worth the effort. Aware of how a commuting schedule can create tension within a family, Gerry also discussed how he tried to refrain from complaining about work while talking to his family. A discussion with both Gerry and his wife Allison demonstrates the way in which they maintain boundaries:

Gerry:

For me, I see guys offshore, even in Newfoundland, let alone the other side of the world, that just have a really hard time being there, not being home. Their mind isn't in it, and you can see it. But they do it because their mind is too much. The only way I'm able to do it is that Allison's so strong, and knowing that's she's home, being a single mom, and that the kids are [okay]...

Allison:

We're not the type to nag at each other. I try not to do it to him and he tries not to do it with me, either. Yes, I had a bad day, but I know that what he's doing is stressful...

Gerry:

But you've got to have that venting toward one another—

Allison:

But I'm not going to call bawling and say "I can't do this, come home."

Gerry:

But guys do get that, all the time, for sure. (Murphy 2012)

In their account of offshore life, Gerry recognizes that there are many men who have trouble being away from home, and who are unable to cope with the troubles of being distant. He also attributes that a large part of his strength as an offshore-working husband and father comes from the support of Allison, who stays at home with the children. Allison's role in helping Gerry maintain his masculine performances involves consciously making an effort to not bring up things at home during his time away. Gerry, in turn, recognizes that his pursuit of work and economic stability is not easy on Allison, and part of his strategy

involves maintaining a sense of empathy for her situation. Mutual understanding of the effects on both husband and wife can help significantly.

These men have sacrificed their bodies, social lives, and time for the sake of their occupation, and their exit from hockey often led to flux and ambiguity. Unlike the men of Robidoux's study, who frequently struggled at home, some of the men in my study found that periods at home were also sites of flux and ambiguity due to the switching between work and home life. Mike Chidley discusses how, even though he was quite lucky to avoid working offshore with young children, he nonetheless struggled to transition between the two worlds:

Obviously, when you're young, in the game, it's the excitement of the work. But I was sort of lucky in a way; I was in my forties when I got into this dynamic positioning. And my kids, then, were into their teens, their later teens, and I suppose I was lucky in a way that my newfound wealth paid for their education; there was more money to put into their education and stuff like that. I was lucky in that way, but the offshore game is...People don't realize that when you go away to do a job, and you come home, you have to fit in again with your family, friends, and activities. You're always turning your hat around to do something else, and I've seen over the years—I've dealt with it myself—leaving to do something else, you have to psych yourself to do some job. You get integrated into that type of work, and you know, you've got your family at home, you've got to get integrated into your family again, and friends, and activities. It does have a toll—it's not a nice way to live, really—and young people getting into the game, they don't realize how life goes by so quickly. And what a lot of people don't realize is that, I'm home again for six weeks, but then I'm working twelve hours a day, seven days a week, Christmas, holidays. There's no break. When you compile the hours, we work a lot more hours in our half year away than a civil servant would work, if you want to compile overtime and weekends and Sundays. (Chidley 2012c)

Although Mike did not express trouble with performing basic life skills, or developing relationships outside of his occupation, there are certainly parallels between his story and those found within Robidoux's text. Both leave home to

pursue lucrative economic opportunities for their families, yet also struggle with transitioning between work and home, and admit that the lifestyle is difficult, not only on their families, but also themselves.

Demonstrating how occupational narrative often reflects uncertainty, Contessa Small points out how paper mill workers “employ techniques through narrative processes which help them physically and emotionally to deal with this potential danger” (Small 1999:20). The dangers that Mike narrates in his account of his work experience are not about being physically injured. Rather, they speak of a profession considered time-consuming, isolating, and hardly enjoyable. Mike criticized younger workers for being too romantic towards the offshore industries, as he thought young peoples’ romanticism failed to address the drawbacks of the lifestyle. Mike criticized younger offshore workers for focusing too much on money, and being too drawn towards the promise of disposable income. Some older workers, while highlighting the positive, speak more freely about the effects of the work on the self and the body. Tom’s experience is one that is simultaneously positive and negative, and when asked about the struggles of the work, he focused on what he could provide, while expressing honesty about the effects of the job on himself, his wife Terri, and his children:

Tom:

The younger guys are hungrier for the money; they don’t have kids. [...] The biggest change for me was my daughter coming around—it was bittersweet for me, because I’m here, living with my family in Newfoundland, making a good living—what my father couldn’t do. But I’m not at home all of the time, and that’s the sacrifice I make. I don’t know that Terri recognizes it, but it’s harder to grasp when I’m gone, that you’re working, and it’s not fun, and you’re not relaxing, or getting away from anything. It’s not easy.

Nightshifts are hard; we work twenty-one days on, twenty-one days off, so we alternate shifts. Sometimes you're working twenty-one days; sometimes you're working twenty-one nights--

NH:

--Twenty-one straight nights?

Tom:

Twenty-one nights, twelve hour shifts. That's hard on the body, and hard on the mind, especially coming home. It takes me up to three to five days to get back on a normal, functioning level...it takes years off your life, for sure. (Tom 2012)

Like Mike, Tom is far from romantic about his working experience, but whereas Mike focused mostly on what he was able to do as an offshore worker (i.e., provide for his family and pay for his children's education), Tom's narrative discusses sacrifice for the sake of providing a better life than his own father. Witnessing his father's sacrifice of living at home for the sake of his family's well-being, Tom is eager to be a provider while being at home. That being said, he pays a physical, mental and social price for the sake of being a good provider and being able to live in Newfoundland.

Oleg and Joy Rybakov talked of how the offshore industry also allowed their son the chance to have supplemental medical care, and also provided financial support for Oleg's mother, who still lives in Russia:

Joy:

One big example is that, with extra money that you wouldn't have working on land, we have access to extras that we wouldn't have. For example, our son sees a homeopath for medical conditions, and that's not covered under MCP [the provincial medical care plan], [just] only a small portion under our health plan. So without that extra work, our son would not have access to that extra care that he's getting now, and needs. So I'm grateful that we have the means to provide it. That's a benefit.

Oleg:

I can help my mother; when she's away, I send money every month. And another benefit, as I've said before, I'd like to work here nine-to-five, five days a week, but it's not as beneficial. To have six months a year to be at home, to have six months to do whatever you want, any project. (Rybakov 2012)

In the case of Oleg, his work not only provided him with more time at home with family, but also allowed him to better ensure the well being of his son. Though he would prefer to have a more conventional work schedule, he found the money, time, and ability to provide for his family to be far more important, thus sacrificing his personal comfort for the betterment of his family.

Mike, Tom and Oleg's narratives bring forth of the awareness of the physical impact of the job. None of them hail the work as easy, and the schedule is criticized for being physically, mentally and socially difficult. But the benefits outweigh the drawbacks in a way that keeps them working in the field, and the work is a way to provide things that would have otherwise been inaccessible, such as higher education and supplemental health care.

As many outport men were risk-taking workers who sacrificed their bodies and selves for the betterment of their families and communities, Mike, Tom and Oleg fit into that traditional model. At the same time, their openness about the effects of such work, and their reflexive discussion of the experience, set them apart from other men. They are pursuing a hegemonic ideal, but not blindly; their accounts are simultaneously reflexive and resignatory in nature.

The ambivalent nature of their narratives is only furthered when discussing whether or not the men wished their children to follow their footsteps into offshore



life. I would argue that these accounts, while serving as occupational narratives, also play a role as cautionary tales for others who are considering the profession. As Santino notes, a cautionary tale is persistent and used to teach others (e.g., particularly newer employees) a specific lesson to avoid a similar fate as the person in the tale (Santino 1978:202). McCarl's firefighter subjects used narrative as a way of "illustrating tricks, techniques, and precautions in narrative form..." that "also makes value judgments about those who correctly or incorrectly perform those techniques" (McCarl 1985:98). Unlike many cautionary tales, which usually refer to the experiences of other people, some of my informants used their own experience as the basis for creating new cautionary tales. Though they talk about the benefits, they also speak of the bodily effects, the mental stresses, and the impact on their own social worlds. Regardless, the men sacrifice their own physical and mental comfort to provide for their families.

This sacrifice is not a sacrifice that they wish upon others, as they frequently emphasized that they worked to provide their children with an education. My informants, having inserted their own physical experience into their narrative, are making themselves part of a cautionary tale from which others may learn. They work in this field, and sacrifice many things, to prevent their children from doing so.

### *Narrating Risk, Danger and Safety*

In addition to the effects of offshore labour and the desire for their children to not follow the same path, my informants also spoke about the notions of risk

and danger in their work, as well as ideas of safety. In the last chapter, I discussed how the tellers described their fathers as strong, brave men who could successfully triumph over dangerous situations, such as bad weather or rough seas. They sacrificed their time, energy and bodies for hard work in risky conditions, and thus earned the respect of their children, families and communities for doing so.

McCarl, in looking at firefighters' understanding of danger and accidents, noted that accident narratives were an "informal research arm of the fire fighting culture...the current generation of fire fighters has only to look and listen to their predecessors for warnings about the dangers they face and ways to protect themselves from those dangers" (McCarl 1985:200). Risk was something to be expected in dangerous professions, and something to be prepared against through the use of safety techniques. In her study of risk perception among Newfoundland fish harvesters, Sandra Lee Brennan found that harvesters expected occupational injuries to occur. Brennan suggests that expecting injury "indicates the unpredictable nature of a job on a moving platform, and is an argument against the notion that human error, or incompetence, or lack of due diligence, is the primary cause of most injuries onboard" (Brennan 2009:84). Having an understanding of the unpredictability of marine work ensures that men are more willing to sacrifice, and endure the risk, in order to engage in their work.

Most of my informants have not directly experienced disaster, but past events, as well as the potential risk of a disaster, are constantly on their minds, and emerge as part of their accounts. According to Regina Bendix, the act of

narrating disaster, and the chaotic acts that accompany it, have the ability to create a sense of structure and order:

Personal narratives are, so I contend, the primary means at an individual's disposal to regain order out of chaos. While fire trucks, bulldozers, construction crews and money allow for the removal of rubble and rebuilding of physical structures, personal narratives accomplish the same work in our heads and hearts (Bendix 1990:333).

As personal narratives guide understandings of disaster and tragedy (Fialkova 2001), they also, as Russell Frank found in his study of third-person accounts of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, “retain their power to make sense of experience and to bind readers into a symbolic community” (Frank 2003:159).

The men I interviewed utilized their own personal experiences with disaster as a framework for their understandings of occupational risk and danger, while connecting themselves to major disasters. Before going offshore, Mike Chidley worked on a rescue boat, and his account of former disasters demonstrates his personal approach to risk and safety:

The first helicopter that went down was in the eighties, in Placentia Bay, and I spent a night on a fast rescue boat looking for any bodies, survivors. They happened to be out there on a job, and she left the platform, and went six feet down. Before the Cougar, that was in the eighties, first helicopter went down. [...] And before that, the *Ocean Ranger* was one of the biggest tragedies of marine life. [...] When you're dealing with Mother Nature, and machinery, you're sort of at their mercy; not much we can do. The night the *Ocean Ranger* went down, [was] I suppose a snowball of occurrences and faults; we had sixty-foot seas that night. Unbelievable, yeah, but that was what was there; friends of mine were on supply boats, trying to pick up the lifeboats in the sixty-foot seas. [...] I suppose that you park it somewhere in the back of your mind and try not to think about it, and deal with Mother Nature has to throw at you; that's with going to sea, dealing with it and there's not much else you can do about it. You go to sea, you deal with what she sends. (Chidley 2012c)

According to performance scholars Phyllis Scott Carlin and Linda M. Park-Fuller,

disaster narratives serve as a site of social commentary where tellers “become community witnesses who reflect on their actions, the actions of others and of their audiences” (Carlin and Park-Fuller 2011:24-25). Mike’s account of working on a rescue boat is a perfect example of this. He discusses his work on a rescue boat, discusses the experiences of friends who aided with the *Ocean Ranger* disaster, and utilizes the opportunity to express his personal worldview in regards to risk and danger.

Mike tells his story in a way that suggests that suppressing one's sense of risk is essential to working offshore. Having had friends who aided in rescue efforts for the 1982 *Ocean Ranger* disaster that killed all eighty-four men aboard the platform, Mike utilizes their experience to affirm his beliefs of how a marine worker should face natural dangers. The supposed security of a fixed oil platform does not leave room to be lax about the dangerous nature of oil and gas work.

Unlike Mike’s account of the Placentia Bay crash in the 1980s, most of my informants’ stories of risk and danger were in relation to the Cougar Flight 91 crash on 12 March 2009. En route to the *SeaRose* (a floating production, storage, and offloading vessel, or FPSO vessel) and the *Hibernia Platform*, a Sikorsky helicopter carrying eighteen people lost oil pressure due to gearbox failure. Failing in its attempt to turn back towards St. John’s, the helicopter ditched in the North Atlantic, resulting in seventeen deaths (Transportation Safety Board of Canada 2010). This disaster incited a great deal of public discussion, particularly with regards to the safety of the Sikorsky helicopters used in

transporting workers offshore. When speaking about risk and danger, Tom mentions the disaster as part of explaining his coping mechanisms:

I don't look at it as a job being risky. Where we are makes it riskier, and the fact that you're removed from everything on the platforms, and the drilling rigs, and even on the supply boats, the safety is pretty good. The problem is when something happens it's usually pretty bad, and you're self-contained out there, and there's only you that can deal with the problem. There are smaller systems in place, but I don't look at the job being risky. When the chopper crashed, I was out there during that, and I came up the week before...[with] the chopper, everybody knew that that was going to happen, and for the most of us, we thought it was just a matter of time, so when it did happen, there was shock involved, but you also had that feeling of "I'm glad it's not me." There's a lot of that, so then you feel guilty about thinking about being glad it wasn't you, which is tough, because you knew some of the guys that were on it. And some guys knew a lot of them—I knew a few—so you know what it's like when you're getting on the chopper, whether it be offshore or onshore; it's in the back of your head, and it always was. But everybody thought of it in different degrees. Since then, you deal with it in different ways; some guys take anxiety medications, some guys take Ativan<sup>4</sup> just to fly. It's a concern, but it's just part of the job. (Tom 2012)

Like Mike, Tom acknowledges that the risks of the job, particularly the transport to and from the platforms, must be set aside for the sake of doing one's job.

Having been wary of a possible helicopter crash, Tom, as well as many of his fellow employees, were able to better deal with the situation through acknowledging the reality of its likelihood. Workers separate incidents of danger from the work itself in order to facilitate an easier offshore work experience. At the same time, dangerous incidents are hardly absent from their minds.

Gerry said that, while there is definitely a presence of danger, particularly in certain tasks aboard a rig, it is part of the industry as a whole:

It depends on your job. If you're in the line of fire like a roustabout, if you're doing physical work out there, there's a lot of stuff that can bite you.

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<sup>4</sup> Lorazepam, sold under the brand name Ativan, is an anti-anxiety medication.

Pretty much every month, every hitch offshore, you're getting alerts from other rigs: someone gets hurt, someone gets killed, someone gets their legs broken, someone gets maimed for life, a couple of people get killed, the helicopter goes down. This is because we're in the offshore industry, we're getting this IDC (international drilling contractors)—it's a worldwide thing—and if there's any big incidents, they have to send them out to all of the rigs. So you're working in the industry, and say they're all over the world, there's maybe 10,000 rigs, land and offshore. And once a month, you're hearing about someone getting seriously roughed up or killed. There is obviously a lot of danger out there, but your own safety is your own, looking after yourself. But that's with any job- you could get hit by a bus crossing a road in St. John's- that's just the way it is. [...] You're your own person, you just take it and you watch your back. (Murphy 2012)

Although he claims that his work is not particularly risky, Gerry points out that because of the nature of safety and accident communication among international drilling contractors, there is a constant flow of alerts of the dangers of working on oil and gas platforms. He also points out, however, the frequency of alerts is not necessarily a reflection of the riskiness of the profession overall, but an accepted fact. The reality that an accident is just as likely to happen on land while crossing a street serves as a counter that not only mediates the potential tension caused by hearing about accidents, but also demonstrates awareness that risk and danger are possible in any situation.

Of my informants, Gerry's experience with the crash was the most direct, as he was aboard one of the last successful flights of the Cougar helicopter that ditched in Flight 91:

Gerry:

And that's the thing...there's always a lot of risk, there's a lot of elements to working away and working in these countries that you just can't even fathom, you can't even explain. [...] There was one other guy that got off besides me; the boys that are always flying in and out are the same, [and] the cook and the galley are the same as a driller on the floor. They're out there doing their job, helping us get off of the rig. And we were a couple of

days over then; we reached into the cockpit, gave the boys the thumbs up...and I used to always wait because, as a crane operator, or deck foreman, you are the H.L.O.—the helicopter landing officer—so every time the pilot comes, you are there, giving the men their vest, giving them their food, helping people on and off. So you're in contact with the helicopter pilots a lot, and reached up there and gave the boys the thumbs up, and I don't know if it was the pilot, or the copilot, that went down in that crash the next morning. I got the call—I only got in because I was a supervisor—my roustabouts were stuck offshore. But when they called me, they said, "Hey, did you hear that there was a helicopter went down?" and that was at seven in the morning. And then me and Allie got up, and that whole hitch home, we were watching the news. (Murphy 2012)

Gerry's narrative, which says that elements of risk are often unexplainable, orients the conversation in terms of his connection with those who died in the Flight 91 crash. He negotiated his emotions through talking about the last time that he saw the members of the crew. While not necessarily saying that it could have been him, the story connects him to those who lost their lives in the crash, and implies that it was, in fact, an account of a narrow escape.

In spite of his close call, and in spite of having had a father who was taken hostage during his offshore work experience in Nigeria, Gerry nonetheless stressed the importance of self-responsibility during risky situations, as well as the importance of continuing one's work in spite of disastrous events. Using Robert McCarl's definition of technique —“the pattern of manipulations, actions and rhythms which are the result of the interaction between an individual and his or her work environment” (McCarl 1978:149) — it is possible to highlight that emotional perseverance in times of danger is part of the occupational technique required to work in offshore labor. Moving forward, in spite of the emotional weight of disaster, is an action that is not only individual in nature, but also

believed to be necessary for group cohesion. Self-preservation and the willingness to keep working is a group tradition in itself, while individual emotions subside for the betterment of the family and the occupational group.

It is important to note, however, that everyone involved in the industry could continue to sacrifice personal emotions. The incident had enough of an effect on Robert that it made an impact on the rest of his time working offshore:

I think when it comes to transportation, yes. As far as the sense of danger of being on the rig, there's a false—I don't know, maybe that's the wrong thing to say—there's a sense of security when you're on the rig. The rig is big, and stable—which the *Ocean Ranger* proved that attitude wrong (laughs)—yet you feel safe when you are on the rig. Same thing when you're on the supply boat; some guys hate the supply boats. When the weather's bad, and the choppers can't fly, you go back and forth on a supply boat, and some guys are really bad sailors, so they hated it. But it's never really bothered me; I've always felt pretty good about it, even when it was rough; it didn't bother me. But the chopper...never used to bother me before, but after the crash, it's kind of iffy. (Robert 2012)

Robert points out that, in spite of the supposed stability of the rig, disasters reduce people's sense of security. The Flight 91 crash shook workers' faith in the helicopters that transport them to the offshore platforms. Overall, it appears that workers see transportation to the oilrig as riskier than being on the oilrig itself, and was enough of a fear for Robert that he eventually quit the industry to take a land-based construction position. Nonetheless, his experience stands out as important in the fact that, for some, the transportation to and from work is more dangerous than the work itself.

As mentioned earlier in this section, marine workers, such as fish harvesters, recognized risk and injury as inevitable. In fathers' narratives, however, we see men who were either witness to disaster, or nearly part of it



themselves. For the most part, they do not see their work as dangerous, instead choosing to promote an ideal of personal responsibility for safety. Self-responsibility, safety awareness and emotional perseverance in the face of risk are ways that men continue to promote the ideal of Newfoundland men as triumphant over danger. Rather than being solely based on vernacular community knowledge, however, their triumph over risk and danger is hybridized, combining traditionalized knowledge with modern-day training, work protocols, and safety equipment.

### *Narrating the Intersection of Work and Family Life*

Robidoux's discussion of homosociality among hockey players displays an environment in which men, living and working together for intensive periods of time, are encouraged to adopt a homogeneous lifestyle in which people who "stand out" (e.g., a Russian player on a Canadian team) are pressured to "become a 'regular guy,' just like everyone else" (Robidoux 2001:146). The pressures of assimilation among these men resulted in many difficult experiences, as uniqueness was quashed for the sake of team unity.

In regards to family, I would argue that there is a similar process in the offshore lifestyle. Overwhelmingly dominated by men, the occupational environment of places such as oil platforms encourage men with families to engage in social practices that encourage this homogenization. One of the ways that this emerges is through the discussion of families, which are a major part of conversations among offshore workers, but with limitations. The men I

interviewed discussed how the offshore life was not a site for people to discuss their feelings in all their complexity (which, according to Tom led to a tendency to only discuss family in a positive manner):

You have families, so you're all kind of in the same boat. You don't talk about that kind of stuff too much, unless something comes up or something bad happens; you might talk to a guy you work with, but generally people don't talk about their problems out there. The only time you ever hear anything is when someone's getting divorced. [...] It's not that you don't talk about your families and what not, but you try not to talk about the negative side of things. If you do talk about stuff, it's mainly about the positive, especially when it comes to families. Guys have their own thing going on, too, so you don't want to be burdening them with your baggage. I mean, it's no different; a fella offshore has the same issues with married life as onshore. You generally try to keep the questions to yourself. (Tom 2012)

This strategy is not only to maintain as stress-free of an environment as possible, but also to strengthen the idea of what Tom describes as being “in the same boat,” and having the same family issues. Men, therefore, are allowed to be “family men,” but they are not allowed to openly be men with family struggles.

This is simply a perpetuation of traditionally male occupational practices, and much of it is reinforced at the organizational level as well. In looking at gender in the offshore world, behavior scholars Robin Ely and Debra Meyerson speak of the offshore industries, as well as other risk-heavy positions, as places heavily rooted in masculine practices:

Organizations doing dangerous work provide especially powerful illustrations of these processes, since dangerous work entails physical risk, which is a sine qua non of masculinity. Few settings evoke more vividly the dominant cultural image of the ideal man: autonomous, brave, and strong. In coal mines, fire departments, police departments, the military, manufacturing plants, construction sites, and elsewhere men go to great effort to demonstrate this: attributes in order to prove their worth as workers and as men. Work norms encourage such displays, and organizational practices reward them. (Ely and Meyerson 2010:4)

Ely and Meyerson also found that masculine ideals were reinforced through a hybrid of work training and occupational socialization:

In sum, men in dangerous, male-dominated work settings typically gained respect and avoided ridicule by demonstrating and defending their masculine image, defined as appearing physically, technically, and emotionally invulnerable, and training and socialization reinforced the way in which they consider each other's experiences. (Ely and Meyerson 2010:8)

Vulnerability complicates the dynamics, not only between employees, but also between fellow fathers and men aboard. To be vulnerable is to violate the norm of the working environment, and to add more stress to an already stressful work environment. Ascribing to hegemonic, homosocial ideals is not only beneficial to men in a vernacular, community-based sense, but also earns them respect at a more corporate level. Among the men of my study, this is no different; though they discuss vulnerability privately, in their homes, there is no place for it at work.

Vulnerability is nonetheless present in the occupational setting, particularly in fly-in-fly-out positions, where scholars have observed many negative effects. A higher divorce rate is associated with the constant parting and arriving (Collinson 1998), and the narratives of my informants discuss this reality. Robert, who briefly went offshore in the early 1980s, expressed amazement about how the occupation had an impact on family life, particularly for younger fathers:

There were a lot of guys, who were a lot younger than me, with families. I'm kind of an anomaly—I'm in my fifties with a young family—but there's a lot of guys in their twenties with families. And on one hand, they've said "Well, there's no other job and this trade's going to give me this much to provide for my family, so that's why I'm doing this," but it's still hard on them. And the offshore...I remember in the early eighties—I was young and single—I was amazed to how many divorced people, or people on

their second and third marriages, worked offshore...a lot the guys who had been doing offshore life for a long time. It was kind of strange, especially back then, the divorce rate wasn't what it is now. (Robert 2012)

Robert points out that, regardless of age, being away from family is a difficult task for those involved, and that the divorce rate among families from his first offshore experience is hardly as unusual as it once was. For many communities, the offshore life is one of the only ways to make a living without having to leave the province. The pursuit of economic stability for family simultaneously makes family life more vulnerable. At the same time, it also makes many men very vulnerable to the negative effects of homosocialization. deprived of the ability to discuss their issues and concerns without social stigma, they have few venues in which they can discuss their struggles, thus placing them in a liminal state of not being able to speak of struggle on either land or sea.

### *Conclusion*

In working with my interviewees, I first learned how they entered the offshore working life. Many of the men followed in the footsteps of their fellow Newfoundlanders and returned home to work, even if that meant working away from home for half of the year. Some of them returned to their home communities, while others chose to take advantage of the opportunity to live in a city. In either situation, there is a great deal of connection with one's home community. All of them speak quite highly of the economic rewards of the industry, pointing out that the advantages of being home half of the time outweigh the economic opportunity elsewhere. There is a major focus on the

benefits of the work (e.g., economic stability, more time with family, being able to live in Newfoundland), even if it comes with the occasional stress or danger.

Workers accept this stress as part of the trade.

In Chapter Two, I discussed how, and in what context, outport residents in Newfoundland narrated their experiences with their fathers via memoir, as well as how these experiences were narrated and publicly shared. I also noted that these stories often displayed fathers as being highly faithful and moral, as being hard workers who engaged in personal sacrifice for community good, and as being hero-like in their response to occupational risk. Through focusing on these things, as well as the positive aspects of their fathers, the authors created a nostalgic vision of fatherhood for use as a public commodity.

As the accounts in this chapter show, many of the traits of outport fathers, such as hard work, facing occupational risk, and engaging in sacrifice, emerge in the present day. Unlike the stories of the previous chapter, the perspective comes from the fathers themselves, who narrate the need to sacrifice many things for people around them. Some sacrificed a comfortable lifestyle in another province to return home to Newfoundland, while others spoke of the deep emotional, mental and physical sacrifices that come with working offshore. Time with family and friends, and even the ability to be openly afraid and vulnerable about troubles (e.g., occupational or familial struggles) are part of that sacrifice. These sacrifices are not only a part of the personal narratives of these workers, but are also shared with other family members, who acknowledge their struggles and sacrifices and accommodate them accordingly.

Unlike the stories of the last chapter, which served a primarily nostalgic purpose, the accounts of men such as Gerry Murphy and Mike Chidley are often far from nostalgic. While being away from home is a part of how they entered offshore occupations, a more critical understanding of returning home is present. A return home was not as easy as boarding a plane, but required some deal of stability that was not always present in late 20<sup>th</sup> century Newfoundland. Though the men face risk, and are hard-working and self-sacrificing, they do not wax poetic about their jobs. They carry on with them, sacrificing many things, in order that their children will be able to pursue the career of their choosing.

Working as an offshore laborer requires a great deal of sacrifice for other family members, who accommodate and adjust to changing shifts, the risk of helicopter crashes, and the need for physical and mental rest upon fathers' returns home. The next two chapters will examine the experiences of mothers and children, discussing how they adapt to both the offshore lifestyle and to offshore workers' pursuit of traditionalized masculinities.

#### Chapter 4: “It’s All Around Difficult, But It’s Doable”: Wives of Offshore Workers Respond to Offshore Labour Patterns

Many of my informants expressed a great deal of concern for their family’s well-being, not only for their children, but also for their wives, who remain onshore during their time away. It is important to note, however, that, while men have to sacrifice their comfort, their physical and mental health, and their time, they are not the only members of the family to prioritize the betterment of the family over their own wants and needs. Wives of offshore workers also make many sacrifices in the best interest of their family.

The departure of a husband involves a process of separation, not only between the wife and her husband, but also between the children and their father. In shifting from having both partners at home to one parent away at work, a mother must engage in certain practices in order to not only ensure the transition goes as smoothly as possible, but also to maintain a sense of continuity during the time that the husband is away from home. When the husband arrives home, there is also a separate but equally important transition that is part of the cycle of offshore labour.

Each phase involves specific practices and attitudes that shape the offshore experience for mothers and children. In the past, most scholars have separated ritual activities from repetitive actions. Victor Turner thought of rituals as “occasions not given over to technological routine” (Turner 1967:19). Turner’s exclusion of routine, however, failed to address the possibility that rituals, in themselves, could be performed in the same fashion as “technological routine,” and carried the assumption that rituals were sequestered from daily life (Turner

1977:183). Catherine Bell's discussion of ritual theory points out that ritual practices are not necessarily rooted in outwardly expressed practices, but are instead a product of tangible or intangible oppositions:

Although [ritual] theories have formulated the interrelationships of religion, society, and culture in a variety of ways, in each case ritual is seen as a definite component of the various processes that are deemed to constitute religion, or society, or culture. Moreover, despite the variety of avowed methodological perspectives and ramifications, there is a surprising degree of consistency in the descriptions of ritual: ritual is a type of critical conjuncture wherein some pair of opposing social or cultural forces comes together. (Bell 1992:16)

Although scholars usually separate routine and ritual—including Bell herself—the processes of routinization connect to those of ritualization, and folklorists have noted this connection within occupational folklife. McCarl's study of firefighters found that occupational custom "extends from the mundane to the unusual, from habitual activities (such as checking one's boots, hat and coat) to the complex rites-of-passage associated with an initiation, promotion, or retirement" (McCarl 1985:172). In the case of the spouses of offshore workers, the role of routine fits within their personal customs and practices, and also serves as a way to gain multiple forms of capital, especially cultural and social capital.

This chapter examines how wives of offshore workers discuss the cycle of offshore life, not only in terms of ritual and routine, but also in terms of how they publicly narrate their experiences of these rituals and routines. Utilizing detailed ethnographic data from my interviews with six wives of offshore workers, as well as scholarship on both seasonal labour in family life in Newfoundland and the



role of women in traditional Newfoundland outports, this chapter looks at the three aspects of the work cycle in relation to offshore wives' experiences. First, the spouses' experience of their husbands' departures will provide context for understanding its effects on family life, as well as how a customary routine is established among family members remaining at home. Secondly, I will explore how work and routine play a role in negotiating a husband's absence. Finally, I examine the arrival home as a process that not only requires transition between social worlds, but whose traditions and routines are often rooted in festive practices.

### *The Historical Role of Wives in the Labour and Family Life of Fishing Communities*

In his study on the historical role of women in an outport community Martin Lovelace found that women had not only a great deal of responsibility at home, but also a great deal of knowledge that kept the family fishery afloat:

Given that Newfoundland outport men did rely heavily on their wives to run the household, tend the livestock and garden, help "make" the salt fish, and keep the books for the family fishery, this relationship of dependency by the man on the woman's superior knowledge is an accurate picture of domestic life. (Lovelace 2001:160)

Lovelace makes the point that, although men were the principal breadwinners in their families, they were unable to earn a living without two forms of labour from their spouse: (1) physical acts of labour onshore; and (2) the labour of maintaining and keeping the necessary knowledge for personal, and familial

survival. Thus, the labour of the fishery was a reciprocal, complementary process that required both men and women's knowledge to maintain itself.

Hilda Chaulk Murray's ethnographic work with women who grew up in an early-to-mid-20<sup>th</sup> century outport also illustrates that women were largely responsible for maintaining day-to-day operations, even when the husband was onshore:

Usually, when the husband "settled up" in the fall, that is, settled his debts to the merchant and received any cash coming to him after the purchase of winter supplies, he gave the money to his wife. Likewise, any money earned "away" was given to the wife to look after when the man returned home. The woman handled the cash and managed the day to day running of the household. (Murray 1979:24)

Work, for both men and women, was a seasonal process, and for the latter, it involved a great deal of responsibility—as well as authority—over day-to-day economics and financial preparation. As many of the narrators in Chapter Two pointed out, mothers were simultaneously responsible for managing both children and the overall household.

This degree of responsibility, however, did not necessarily come with a large amount of personal freedom. Several scholars have pointed out that men within mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century rural Newfoundland communities had a large amount of social control, with the amount varying largely by household.

According to James Faris's 1967 study of Cat Harbour, "only men can normally inherit property, or smoke or drink, and the increasingly frequent breach of this by women is the source of much gossip (and not a negligible amount of conflict and resentment)" (Faris 1967:74). Gerald Pocius's 1976 study of singers in Calvert finds that, for some families, male influence extended to decision-making:

“Decisions have always been made by the head of the family, the father, and he is served without question by his wife” (Pocius 1976:120). Two decades later, Gerald Thomas did note that the AT313 tale type — *The Girl as Helper in the Hero’s Flight*, a common Franco-Newfoundlander motif — demonstrated how women were often in charge of “initiating and directing the development of relationships with men” (Thomas 1999).

In general, men also had more mobility than women, both within and outside of the community. Melvin Firestone observes in his study of Savage Cove that “Just as the men come and go from the community while the women stay, so men’s movements are much more free about the community than women’s as women’s duties require their more constant attendance upon the home” (Firestone 1967:74). In the case of outport communities such as Savage Cove, mobility was rooted in male privilege and dominance. Even though both men and women were involved in seasonal work within the province, the occupational pluralism of outport men took them to far more physical places, such as to the sea or to the woods. Thus, some scholars believe that, for men in a fishing community, the male places that are, in the words of Yi-Fu Tuan, endowed with value (Tuan 1977:6) are further apart than those places endowed with value by female community members. Later research, such as that of Andrea O’Brien, demonstrated that women in the outport valued many of the same places that men valued (O’Brien 1999), and that such scholarship was wrong to suggest that the woods and sea were only endowed with male values.

Before the 1950s, however, male privilege did not reduce the value of the

primarily female spaces within a community. While researchers saw women as having less official power within a community, they were nonetheless engaged in a high level of occupational pluralism. Willeen Keough's research on spouses in pre-modernization fishing communities shows that the work done by wives for fellow community members, such as other fishing families, allowed them to be on equal economic footing with men:

Far from being economically dependent, women in fishing families were actively engaged in a variety of economic activities: not just household production, but paid work as domestic and fishing servants, as washerwomen and seamstresses for single fishermen and middle-class clients, in the hospitality trade, and in community healing. (Keough 2012:540)

In addition, many women in Newfoundland found ways to make supplemental income through the craft industries of organizations such as the Newfoundland Outport Nurses and Industrial Association (Stalker 2000) and the International Grenfell Association's hooked rug enterprise (Flynn 2004). A high level of pluralism also reflected that women had many ways to make great social and economic contributions within a community, albeit in a manner that still supported patriarchal ideals:

Although men maintained a veneer of patriarchal authority in public, they usually consulted with their wives before airing opinions on community matters or settling up with the merchant in the fall of the year. As a local saying notes, "She made the cannonballs, and he fired them." (Keough 2012:541)

Cooperation created a stronger sense of egalitarianism within the outport, even if things were not always equal for men and women. Through a series of networks and community cooperation, women utilized their social and cultural capital to create further economic capital for their families.

The outport notion of equality would lose ground to “progress,” and this is especially the case during the post-Confederation, mid-20<sup>th</sup> century period within Newfoundland. The changes to the ways fishermen caught their fish—such as the introduction of the modernized, industrial fishery and the push for young men to become more professional, highly trained fishermen (Wright 1995)—had other effects. The focus on technical capital, rather than human capital, was responsible for bolstering the idea of fishing as a mostly male realm within Newfoundland society. Furthermore, the focus on developing industrial knowledge, rather than a fishery based on localized knowledge (Murray, Neis and Johnsen 2006:552), further cemented ideas disseminated through popular culture.

The technological shift away from the traditional fishery involved changing from a family-based production model that incorporated women’s labor and management towards a model that relegated many women to work in the local fish processing plants. While some fish plant workers were seasonal, their positions were in line with the seasonal occupational pluralism of women in the past. Sometimes, the option of full-time, year-round employment in the plants was not sought after. According to Cynthia Lamson’s 1986 study of Atlantic Canadian fish processors, full-time workers expressed dissatisfaction over a lack of time for other things in life:

Full-time employees working night shifts were most dissatisfied with their present jobs for family and household reasons, including: not having enough time to be with husbands and children; not being able to keep up their homes to a perceived standard of tidiness; being continuously tired

and moody; no time to spend with friends or to partake in outside activities...(Lamson 1986:150).

Whereas earlier occupational pluralism allowed for the building of community, the maintenance of domestic surroundings, and a more complementary relationship with spouses through the traditional fishery, the technological fishery relegated a large amount of processing-based labour to the female sphere. Although wages were higher in the fish plant, job dissatisfaction was also high due to a lack of advancement and women receiving lower wages than many men who worked there.

Modernization opened up new ideas and thoughts to communities. While the high-tech fishery led to major economic changes, it also simultaneously led to community members seeking other forms of employment outside of the fishery in order to survive. This strategy was not only the case in Newfoundland, but also in other fishing-based societies in the North Atlantic, such as Norway. John C. Kennedy, in researching the crisis in the Norwegian fisheries, emphasizes that the changes surrounding occupational choice in 1970s-era Norway were not products of outside influence, but rather a result of emerging reflexivity among local elders:

Here, it seems apparent that in the modernizing sociocultural context of the 1970s, the advice of elders convinced youth that 'modern' jobs, rather than those in the fishery, were indeed preferable. Moreover, at the time, people began to consider their lives, both in relation to familiar local realities and to the faraway (yet encroaching) world beyond Arnøya. This new reflexivity placed the once automatic entry into the fishery (usually on the day of a boy's confirmation into the Lutheran church) under a new and increasingly critical lens. Late-modernity meant reflexivity and choice, which gradually fueled changes in local expectations of life and work. (Kennedy 2006:127)

Modernization broke down the requirement that one had to enter the fishery at a young age. As the high-tech fishery pushed for higher levels of technical education, the leaving of school at a young age was a strategy that would be detrimental to future economic survival.

As the cod moratorium inflicted a deep economic wound into Newfoundland, many men experienced sudden unemployment and economic struggle. Just as the processes of modernization had pulled many outport women out of traditional occupational practices in the previous decades, modernization would do so for many outport men. Whereas a more complementary gender divide anchored the traditional fishery in Newfoundland, the modernized fishery was more strongly connected to a male breadwinner ideal. Some scholars suggested that the moratorium created, if anything, a higher level of tension between men and women in the province.

Dona Davis, in her 1993 examination of the community of Grey Rock Harbour, describes it as a place in which the moratorium “dramatically undermined the traditional complementarity of gendered labor and resulted in the constellation of a gender ideology rooted in mutual antagonism” (Davis 1993:459). This degree of antagonism, partially caused by the fact that many men were unemployed and living on social benefits, not only led to the rapid decline of the male breadwinner ideology, but also led to resentment towards men in the community. Davis finds that many women in the community thought that men were making things worse by being at home:

Women no longer depend on men as the main providers for the family. Younger women have come to view men as a liability rather than as an asset to family finances. By combining work and unemployment benefits from the fish plant, women tell me they can live better without men, especially if men are draining family resources into unproductive fishing or into alcohol consumption. A woman cannot receive welfare if a man (husband) is living with her. (Davis 1993: 467)

Some of this antagonism was based on spatial separations between men and women in a community. As the land was a site of empowerment for many women, and the sea did the same thing for many men, the sudden placing of many unemployed men onto traditionally female space led to further resentment. Davis notes that this was due to a challenge of what it meant to be male, or female, within the outport:

Men may be viewed as invading the public and domestic spaces of women...Men on land become like women. In the late 1970s, a man who would not fish and spent much time in his home was referred to as a biological or psychological anomaly, "more like a woman than a man." Being landbound is feminizing and demeaning for men. (Davis 1993: 473)

Davis proposes that the divide between the feminine land and the masculine sea suffered a serious challenge to its binary opposition. When the moratorium took away the rights of men to pursue a masculine lifestyle through work on the sea, it left many men feminized, and put many women in the position of the stable worker and breadwinner, even if they were working in seasonal positions such as fish processing.

Nicole Power's more recent work on masculinity and the Newfoundland fishery suggests that, while Davis's work is not necessarily wrong, men were not feminized so much as presented with the challenge of adaptation. Suggesting that men "have adapted masculinity rather than abandoning it" (Power 2005:21),



Power notes that coping strategies were a major part of adapting to change for both men and women, but many women did so in a way that still maintained traditional ideas of gender roles:

In a context where there are few opportunities for women to construct culturally “appropriate” feminine identities and to enjoy real material independence, Newfoundland women have actively responded by reconfirming responsibilities for an psychological investment in domestic and caring work. (Power 2005:32)

While coping strategies helped reaffirm identity for some, the processes of economic struggle, and the outmigration that was a part of many rural communities in both Newfoundland and Atlantic Canada, caused concern for both men and women. Mike Corbett’s research on contemporary gender and outmigration in Nova Scotia reveals that women were not as mobile as men due to men being able to find other work after losing one job (Corbett 2007:440). At the same time, the dominance of patriarchal imagery in rural communities conceals the fact that “The typical Atlantic Canadian migrant may be more realistically characterized as a well-educated young women as opposed to an uneducated, independent, young manual labourer” (Corbett 2007:440). Patriarchal imagery, in this case, obscured the reality that outmigration is a phenomenon that affects much more than fishing-based families. It has affected many types of communities.

### *Popular and Scholarly Understandings of Wives of Offshore Workers*

Typing the words “offshore wives” into an Internet search engine will yield several forums for interaction and discussion related to husband lifestyle and occupation. Posts are often cathartic and humorous, with one user suggesting that a reality television program, in the style of the popular *Real Housewives* television franchise, should feature offshore wives. Kari, a member of the parenting website Circle of Moms, posts:

I think since we have all the Real Housewives who are all rich and snody, they should consider a show called The Real Housewives of The Oilfield and see how our lives are. People constantly tell me how lucky I am to have a man in the oilfield and how they wish their boyfriends or husbands would get into, well let me be the first to say and I am sure many of you agree, being a housewife or just a wife or girlfriend to the oilfield isn't easy by no [sic] means!! :) How many of you agree?? (Kari 2009: 423296)

The responses to this post include serious descriptions of the experience. Forum member Mehgan[sic] describes her experience and provides commentary about the constant role shifting and the necessity to develop personal strength in order to “survive” the lifestyle:

I agree with you! Being an oilfield wife you are a single mom and a married one. You are the man and the woman of the house. You are here for everyone but little time for yourself. It is a rough job for any woman and takes a strong one to be one. If you are not a tough strong woman then you will not survive. Dont [sic] get me wrong, I have been happily married 9 years all oilfield, 5 kids, and everytime [sic] he goes to work, him coming back home just rekindles our love again honeymoon all over again!!! (Mehgan 2009:423296)

Mehgan’s post suggests that women married to offshore labourers must maintain a sense of strength, a high level of personal sacrifice, and a willingness to take on multiple gender and social roles, in order to thrive. In other words, flexibility is essential.

A 2007 article from the British newspaper *The Herald* initially discusses the notion of “intermittent husband syndrome” experienced by many offshore wives in the 1980s. The author notes changes in the past twenty years, highlighting more positive aspects of family life, such as the increased time spent with family during weeks off. The author also notes that offshore-based trades are becoming multi-generational with many workers’ children entering the industry (Smith 2007). In Atlantic Canada, this positive emphasis is largely absent from articles in popular and media culture. For example, one that focuses on the lives of wives of oilrig workers have stressed the negative aspects of the lifestyle and male absence in Atlantic Canadian communities:

The biggest concern might be what doesn’t happen when the men are away. Little-league teams, community groups and fire departments have all been hit by the loss of male volunteers, while the women left behind are so overloaded with the demands of running a home solo that many can no longer spare the time to take their place. While women have stepped up as much as possible, it’s hard to make up for the number of men who have left. (Beaton 2008)

This article focused largely on the fact that the industry, while providing an economic lifeline for communities, also caused its social lifelines to deteriorate through the long-term absence of its men. These long-term absences are portrayed in the media as being equally detrimental to the wellbeing of the men who work in the industry. A 2011 story from CBC Newfoundland and Labrador tells the story of an anonymous rig worker, who says, “ ‘I get tense and I get agitated thinking about things I need to do before I go,’ he said. ‘If I don’t come home from this flight, is everything in order?’” (The Canadian Press 2011). These popular culture articles speak about the economic gain, while focusing heavily on

the losses, both personally and socially. They state the positive and negative in the same space and project the complexities of life for both families and the communities in which offshore families settle.

These depictions raise questions about how offshore workers' wives negotiate the constant cycle of their husbands leaving for work and returning home. Scholarly research on Newfoundland and Labrador has investigated such questions. For example, a 2011 interdisciplinary, collaborative study between Julia Temple Newhook, Barbara Neis, and five other scholars on the health of workers, family and community, revealed that commuting for work potentially has profound effects on family members:

Whatever the origins of employment-related mobility, it has the potential to positively or negatively affect the physical, mental, emotional, and social health of workers and their family members, including spouses, children, and those in the extended family. Employment-related mobility can enhance community well being by generating increased resources and opportunities, but it can also generate significant vulnerabilities within home and host communities. (Newhook, Neis, et al. 2011:123)

Newhook et al.'s study, reveals negative effects that traveling labour has on family members. One paragraph emphasizes that "mental health claims were about 16% higher than among spouses of non-travellers, and stress-related psychological disorder rates were triple that of non-traveller spouses" (Newhook, Neis, et al. 2011:137), while another focuses on how commuting can "exacerbate existing acute and chronic shore-side problems" (Newhook, Neis, et al. 2011:138). The study also notes that, while many couples have strained relationships because of this type of work, others "may adjust well to the extended absences of their mobile partners" (Newhook, Neis, et al. 2011:143).

This finding echoes Keith Storey's 1986 study of familial adaptation to the offshore lifestyle, which notes that, while difficult for many wives, the offshore lifestyle brought "a greater sense of independence as a result of their partners working offshore" (Storey 1986:89).

Storey's conclusions, while largely based on large resonate with my ethnographic research. This is especially true for women who have become parents and are responsible for maintaining family life while the husband is working away from home. Storey writes that women with children were more likely to cope better with the separation from their husband. While only a few women "stressed that they took great solace from their children during their husbands' periods offshore," many women without children included in Storey's study "felt that children would have helped them to cope better" (Storey 1986:82). That does not mean, however, that it was necessarily easier for women with children during the offshore periods. Storey's findings reveal that a third of the mothers described their children as being harder to handle during their fathers' absences, and that 73% of children did not contribute more to household life during those times (Storey 1986:80-81). Meg Luxton's research on housewives in Flin Flon, Saskatchewan points out that child care differed from other domestic work, with a production time lasting twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. According to Luxton's study, "Even when children are asleep or playing away from home, the mother is always responsible for them. Such a commitment of attention and awareness can never be contracted or made more flexible" (Luxton 1980: 82).

Based on both popular and scholarly understandings, it is difficult to declare whether or not the offshore labour cycle yields positive or negative results. Context, individual experience, and personal background play an important role in how wives of offshore workers present their experiences to others. Rather, I wish to discuss the ways in which wives of offshore workers discuss the labour cycle, and how the stages of departure, separation and return raise important issues about the effects of offshore labour on wives. The next three sections of this chapter will focus on individual stages of the labor cycle, and how they are framed and discussed by wives of offshore workers.

### *The Departure*

Separation processes remove offshore workers from the social worlds of home. For some, the process of separation involves taking a shuttle bus to a nearby port. For others, it may be a helicopter ride across the North Atlantic, or even a flight to sub-Saharan Africa. Regardless, offshore workers, in the process of separation from family, find themselves in an anomalous place, neither in the comforts of home nor in the occupational social world to which they will travel.

For the wives with whom I spoke, the separation process is a repetitive, cyclical one that is rooted in both family experience and cultural norms surrounding many forms of labour in Newfoundland. Whereas employment in the offshore oil industry typically involves equal amounts of time off and time at work, the history of transhumance (Smith 1987, 1995) and occupational pluralism, as

well as the rise of the modernized fishery, did not do this. Instead, in the past, fathers were gone for several months at a time (often to receive a meager number of days, or weeks, at home). For wives, their current experience connects with the experiences of growing up in a way that does not necessarily evoke nostalgia, nor indicate a desire to return to a past way of life. When I asked Oleg Rybakov's wife, Joy, an architectural designer and mother of one son, about her experiences of growing up with a father who worked as an engineer on a fishing vessel, she noted that she felt somewhat spoiled in comparison to what she witnessed growing up in the Bonavista Bay community of Valleyfield:

...My father is an engineer, retired now...and I grew up in a lifestyle back when the men were going for like three or four months at a time, and getting home for three or four days at a time, or, if lucky, a week. Now, of course, we're a little spoiled, because we get a month on and a month off. So that's the generation I grew up in. (Rybakov 2012)

Joy frames her father's work as shaping her understanding of the current offshore schedule. Even though Oleg is gone every other month, she sees it as an improvement over the earlier precedents for working away in Newfoundland, and there is now a greater level of control over one's work-home schedule.

For Tom's wife Terri, a mother of two who works full-time as a social worker and grew up in a small community in Placentia Bay, there was neither a sense of nostalgia nor a criticism of the past lifestyle. She simply described the experience of having a father who worked away as being what it was:

He had a lot of schooling through EI programs, and then he would go away to Ontario in the fall, come back around Christmastime, and just do

labour jobs. [...] It was always sad to see him leave, but then we just kind of kicked into normal life after a while; my mom worked shiftwork- she was a nurse's assistant. It was sad to see him leave, but we were happy when he came back. It was just kind of the way things were. (Terri 2012)

Bearing in mind the experiences of women such as Joy and Terri, the question arises: how do offshore wives play a role in guiding children through the process of separation from their fathers? The process is likely not easy for either a spouse or their children, and Storey's study states that many women "found problems in handling both their own tension and their children's anxieties at partings" (Storey 1986:82). The view that leave-taking is equally hard on spouses and children left at home was repeated by wives, and they spoke of ways they prepared for the start of the upcoming separation.

Having had fathers who worked away from home, Joy and Terri understood the process of the labour cycle, but having children makes things more complicated in terms of the departure process. A 2005 study of offshore workers in the United Kingdom by Parkes, Carnell and Farmer points out that parents were often concerned about negative reactions, rejecting behaviours towards the departing spouse, and the fact that many husbands missed "some of the pleasure of seeing young children develop" (Parkes, Carnell and Farmer 2005:425-426). They go on to note that spouses "recognized the importance of providing a stable environment for the children, whether or not their father was at home" (Parkes, Carnell and Farmer 2005:426).

While some mothers worked to "maintain their awareness of...regular absences" (Parkes, Carnell and Farmer 2005:426), that was not always a



successful strategy for my informants. When Robert was working offshore, his wife, Jeanne, a government worker, stated that conscious awareness of their father's upcoming departure made the separation process worse for their two children:

I'm not sure how much it helped. With my son, it was more "Oh, Daddy's getting ready to leave," but with Lily, she was more stressed about it. We were both reacting about it the same, but my son was generally fine when Robert was leaving every other month. But after the second or third week of Robert being gone, you could see his attitude was different; he missed somebody. But when Robert was leaving, my son would tell Lily, "Don't cry, he's going to come back." But then he was the one, when Robert was gone, that you could see was really affected. (Jeanne 2012)

Jeanne also noted that the separation process was much easier when her children were not present at the time when Robert left for the airport. She recounted a time when it was extremely difficult for their daughter, Lily, to see her father leave:

The other time that was kind of heartbreaking was that we were driving Robert to crying, and crying, because Daddy was leaving for three weeks. And so those moments like that made it difficult, because when he was leaving during the week, and she didn't see him leaving, it was not as bad as bringing him there on the weekend and seeing the kids (mimics them crying). [...] It was more common for him to leave when we were not there, so he would just take a cab. (Jeanne 2012)

The trip to the heliport, for Jeanne and her family, was a sign that things in the family would shift, even if only for a few weeks. This supports Victor Turner's notion of the symbol as "the smallest unit of ritual which still retains the specific properties of ritual behavior" (Deflem 1991:6). Here, the heliport and the trip towards it serve as symbols of the shift from one stage of the offshore ritual (i.e., being at home) towards the processes of separation and absence.

For Robert's children, marking his departure served a negative purpose, or created unwanted emotions for those involved. A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, who saw ritual as a site for social interaction, emphasized that ritual customs could keep certain ideas and emotions alive within a society:

...ceremonial customs are the means by which the society acts upon its individual members and keeps alive in their minds a certain system of sentiments. Without the ceremonial the way in which they consider each other's experiences: sentiments would not exist, and without them the social organization in its actual form could not exist. (Radcliffe-Brown 1964:324)

Ritual evokes sentiment. In some cases (e.g., Robert's departure), an action intended as positive resulted in negative emotions, which brings up an important issue about guiding children through the departure process: very young children may not understand the separation process. Storey's study reports, "older children could more easily articulate unhappiness about their father's departure, which both parents, but especially the fathers...tended to find upsetting" (Storey 1986:82).

Another factor for young children can be the challenge of understanding units of time, such as weeks, days and hours. Joy and Oleg's son, Nathan, did not understand time, so Joy utilized a bedtime ritual as a way to help Nathan understand when Oleg would return:

When [Oleg] usually goes back to work, we usually drop him at the airport—there's a group taxi going to the vessel—and so Nathan goes with me, and we drop him off, say "Say bye to Dad, you'll see him in thirty sleeps" [...] ...that's what he understands, he doesn't understand time too much, and it's hard to say days, because how long is a day. At least a child knows that they go to sleep, and they wake up, and then they know it

on a calendar: cross it out, one sleep down, one off, another one, cross that off. That's what we've learned that works for us. (Rybakov 2012)

For Joy, the ritual act of crossing off days on the calendar was used as a way to help her son negotiate the ritual act of separation from his father, and helped Nathan to better understand when Oleg would return.

The marking of ritual—and, in the case of the calendar, the ritual act of marking—is something that is contingent upon a child being old enough to understand the notion of time or ritual. For those families with infant children, these practices do not assist parents in helping their children understand. Marsha, a mother of two with experience as an offshore safety officer, notes that the things that were done to mark her husband's departure were not necessarily to help her then nine-month old son deal with the departure, but more of a process to help her deal with her separation from her husband:

I'm sure we will [develop rituals] once he gets older, but we haven't. We don't even pick my husband up from the airport because he arrives at horrible times and flies out at horrible times. We don't bring him to the airport, and we don't pick him up. I'd say "Daddy's going to be home," but he doesn't understand anything. I think it's for me, just numbering the days until I can get some sleep again and get some help. It upsets me; for my son, my husband gets up with him, and they play for two solid hours in the morning...this is all he knows, and all of a sudden, he's playing with Mommy. We both found that really upsetting because he's too young to know what's going on. (Marsha 2012)

For Marsha's husband, playing with their son is not only a way for Marsha herself to get some alone time, but also for her husband and son to bond. Like Joy and Oleg's son, Marsha's son was not old enough to understand the passing of time. Marsha said this helped during transition times. In her case, the thoughts of her

son being separated from his father had more effect on her and her husband than it did on the child.

Marsha, who was my only informant to be both an offshore wife and an offshore worker, had a stronger sense of kinesthetic empathy towards her husband's work. Yet, at the same time, she attributes her work as intensifying the stress surrounding the impending separation process:

We find it really stressful in the last week before he goes offshore; the two of us are really contrary...especially my husband, he's worse than I am. It's not a good lifestyle when you're out there being away for five weeks offshore. [...] My job was in safety, and I'm one of those people who always thinks about the worst case scenario. I'm always terrified that something's going to happen. He goes to work—he's in a helicopter, he flies to work—he was working in Mexico, and they were staying in a compound with armed guards. We work all over the world, so he could be working in Nigeria. [...] My husband's actually in the one of the most high-risk jobs out there as well—he's a mechanic onboard—and those days, knock on wood, there's a lot of severe injuries, and a lot of bad backs and things. People get their hands crushed quite a bit. (Marsha 2012)

Marsha's work in safety has made her aware of the negative aspects of the offshore industry, such as pain, injury, and crisis that many wives have not personally witnessed. This heightened awareness of the potential dangers of her husband's job added to her anxieties. All the wives I interviewed, however, reported experiencing the process of separation as being emotionally difficult for them and their children.

### *The Time Away*

In his 2010 study of how military wives maintain communication and relations with deployed spouses, communications scholar Andy Merolla

demonstrates that deployment adaptation is dependent upon three things: (1) relational maintenance; (2) coping strategies; and (3) social support (Merolla 2010:6-7). Merolla found that multiple strategies, including attending to personal needs, topic avoidance during spousal conversations, preoccupation, and drawing support from a variety of sources, mitigates the stress of being apart from one's spouse (Merolla 2010:13-17), and also makes the great deal of personal sacrifice easier to bear. This is especially true for those wives with limited communication time with their spouses, as Merolla later points out:

When communication routines are difficult to establish, partners may keep journals to recreate some of the missing routineness of interaction. When confronted with long periods of non-contact with their spouse, partners can attend to their own education, health, or spirituality. When network members offer support that is unhelpful, partners can seek out the types of individuals (and support forms) that better align with their needs (Merolla 2010:21).

Alternative routines are established which allows wives to make better sense of the separation and also organize their time accordingly.

Sacrifice, a disruption of routine, and a large amount of responsibility certainly characterizes the lives of wives of offshore workers in Newfoundland. While their husbands are working away, they maintain the household, care for children, and fulfill their own occupational duties and obligations. Their narratives reflect the demands of this type of work, as well as the struggle of being apart from their husbands. Although their husbands are primarily working in one specific job, wives are continuously engaged in occupational pluralism, regardless of whether or not their husbands are away or at home. While at home, their husbands are also responsible for working around the house and

caring for children, but their engagement in occupational pluralism is intermittent.

Offshore wives stressed the need for routine in order to mitigate possible stress resulting from the separation process. Whereas ritual is connected to symbolic, intangible practice, routine is more visible and observable.

Psychologists Barbara Fiese, Kimberly Foley, and Mary Spagnola describe routine practices, such as mealtimes, as “involving instrumental communication, task accomplishment, and repetition of roles over time” (Fiese, Foley and Spagnola 2006: 68-70). Routine, like ritual, is repetitive, and plays a role in maintaining family practices, as well as group cohesion. Among the firefighters of McCarl’s study, customary practices are considered to “confront the many repetitive social situations that comprise a large segment of their daily lives” (McCarl 1985:172). I would argue, however, that repetitive routines, such as those of wives of offshore workers, are also used to confront the repetitive nature of the offshore labour cycle.

The women I spoke with often mentioned the need to maintain a sense of routine at home while their husbands were involved in their own routine practices at work. Mary Chidley, a full-time schoolteacher whose two children were adolescents when her husband Mike began working offshore, saw it as “business as usual” for her family:

I suppose that when he first started in the late 1990s- at that point, Michelle was in late high school and Murray was beginning high school, and I was a teacher, so I worked all of the time. And the kids being older didn’t really affect us too seriously; it was a little different at first having Mike go away six weeks at a time, which is the norm. It may have been four weeks, I’m not sure, but I guess everyone, between either school and work, you carry on as usual. (Chidley 2012a)

Routine, and its repetitive nature, was already in place for Mary and her children. As she taught school, and her children attended it, the notion of routine was structurally set, regardless of whether or not Mike was home from work.

For Joy and her son Nathan, routine became a way of communicating a sense of normalcy and control: “To pass the time, I find it’s best just to get back into routine as soon as possible, because that comforts him knowing that everything is going as per the plan” (Rybakov 2012). In these cases, routine worked in conjunction with ritual. Routine practice negotiated the symbolic and literal separation process, and the experiences stemming from it. Jack Goody points out that ritual, while historically seen as separate and distinct, is not the real basis of social life, which lies in “routinisation” (Goody 1977). Catherine Bell, in discussing Goody’s proposal, notes that ritual, rather than being a standout moment, is “an aspect of all activity” (Bell 1992: 72), and that routine and ritual are equal “strategies in certain cultural situations” (Bell 1992:92). The daily routine for Joy and Nathan Rybakov is a strategy that helps prevent confusion for their son. As Nathan gets older, his routine attendance at school will change the home routine, and the family culture surrounding the Rybakov’s experience will change to some degree.

Support from others also comprised a form of routine for my informants. Family support was extremely helpful for women dealing with their husband’s absence. In Joy’s recollection of her childhood, many women who worked outside of the home traditionally relied on other family members for assistance:

If you didn't work in the fish plant, you worked away, pretty much. I know that all of my relatives, like my aunts...who were left home raising their kids—my cousins—their husbands were gone away. For my mother, it was totally the norm to have a husband who worked away- almost everyone was in the same boat, and they were a support for each other. Women didn't actually work, too many times, when the husband worked away, unless they had another person, a grandparent or whatnot, living at home to help with childcare. But it was very much the norm; I remember growing up thinking that this was totally fine, everyone did it, so what's the problem? (Rybakov 2012)

Forsyth and Gauthier proposed five familial structures among offshore oil workers. The first, titled the "replacement father/husband," involves the father being replaced by another male relative, who takes care of things in the household in the husband's absence (Forsyth and Gauthier 1987:184). For the offshore families I interviewed, sometimes the reverse took place: rather than having a male relative come in, such as a grandparent or uncle, the family would travel to another relative as a way to providing another male figure for children. Joy spoke of how frequent trips to visit her father in Valleyfield often followed Oleg's departure and served to provide structure for Nathan, who at the time was not yet school age:

Before Oleg's mother came to stay with us, during the thirty days that Oleg was out to sea, I used to try to bring him out to my dad's place for a little visit to show "Okay, you don't have your dad now, but you have your best friend Poppy for a few days." [...] I used to find that that helped to cushion the blow of losing his best friend; he can get another one. [...] When school starts, it will be a bit more difficult to just run to Poppy's house whenever we want, so it's going to be limited to just the big vacations, [such as] Christmastime and the like. So if Oleg has to work for Christmas, I have been going to my father's house for Christmas. It's a little distraction for Nathan, a change of scene, because he won't miss Dad being in Poppy's house because Dad's doesn't live in Poppy's house. So it's a different scene, and it's like he's gone on vacation and feels that Dad hasn't left him anymore; he feels like he's on vacation visiting Poppy. It helps. (Rybakov 2012)



Serving as a strategic form of distraction, the ritual of traveling to Valleyfield simultaneously helped Nathan deal with his father's absence and have another male figure with whom he could play and spend time, if only for a few days out of the thirty.

For offshore wives, work itself is also a form of structure to mediate the process of being away from husbands, but its role varies largely by individual situation. The challenge of having very young children makes working outside the home complicated for wives. Gerry Murphy's wife, Allison, attributed the constant shifting between Gerry being at home and at work, as well as the logistics of a child care schedule, as being factors in her waiting to return to paid employment:

Allison:

I've been at home with the kids since Sarah Jane was born. I've been back to work for short-term jobs—I worked in a clothing store—but pretty much I've been at home with them until Sarah Jane goes back to kindergarten. And it's expensive for me to go if I'm not making above minimum wage to get childcare for two kids.

Gerry:

And she's a single mom for six months of the year while I'm gone, so it's not like you can have the "Okay, Dad's getting home at 3 o'clock, I only need a babysitter for a couple of hours." When I'm gone, I'm gone, so to have Allie to work, and having other people look after your kids—which is never pleasant.

Allison:

When we were looking at having kids, we said that if I could stay home, if we could afford to do that, that is what I'd like to do. When Sarah Jane goes back to school, and she's in school full-time, I will definitely going back to work, because it will be— you can manage it. Sarah Jane goes to preschool two times a week.

Gerry:

Exactly. It's expensive (Murphy 2012).

Allison's experience is not far from that of many spouses of offshore workers. Parkes, Carnell and Farmer point out that while many spouses elected to take jobs that allowed them to either work part-time, or devise their own hours via self-employment, this type of work was scarcer to find in rural areas (Parkes, Carnell and Farmer 2005: 427). A shortage of child care options in Newfoundland also increases the difficulty for wives to enter, or return to, the workforce. In the case of Allison, the offshore work schedule, combined with the difficulty of finding child care, contributes to her decision not to work outside of the home until her son attends school.

For wives who do work outside of home, the experience of having one's husband away is largely dependent on if their work is part-time or full-time. For part-timers, there are advantages, such as having a small bit of time for one's self or being able to run errands alone, as it serves as a way for women to maintain a certain amount of flexibility in how they go about their day. For wives who work full-time, the offshore lifestyle sometimes brings significantly high levels of demand and stress. For example, Jeanne, in her narrative, compared the stress she experienced working three days a week versus five days a week:

It wasn't extremely hard—it wasn't easy all of the time—but the fact that I was only working three days a week made a whole difference versus other people working five days a week. So being full-time was a whole different story. Out of the two years he was away, for eighteen months, I was only working three days a week, and the kids were in day care or in school five days a week. [...] I had a few days for me, to run errands, groceries, things like that: things that you realize that, when you're alone with the kids all of the time, shopping on the weekend with the kids can be quite a hassle (laughs). And that made things a bit easier, I think, because the last six months, when he was offshore, I worked for five days a week, and it was totally different. My work changed, I started working four days a

week, and after that, five days a week, and when he was gone, it was only after a few weeks that I said, “We’ve got to change something here...either I’m changing my job, or we are hiring someone full-time to help me in the house, or you’re changing your job.” I know a lot of people who do it, but that’s what I found was quite hard. (Jeanne 2012)

For Jeanne, being able to switch more easily between working and taking care of domestic duties was an advantage of working part-time. It allowed for a better balance between the paid work that Jeanne did and the unpaid work of maintaining a household that she was also in charge of while Robert was away.

For Terri, the necessity to get things accomplished at home, combined with the demands of full-time employment, affected her perception of the offshore life to the point that she compared it to being a single parent:

I look at the single parenting part and I sympathize with single parents. At the same time, I’m not a single parent; financially, obviously you don’t have these restraints that the average single mom has. But still, it’s the loss of time together, when they miss certain events in their child’s life. And sometimes it can be lonely, especially if you don’t have any family; we’re lucky that we have family. [...] It’s a difficult lifestyle, but it has its advantages. But I think it has more disadvantages than advantages. (Terri 2012)

The sentence “...I sympathize with single parents. At the same time, I’m not a single parent...” speaks to the ambiguity that can arise from being the wife of an offshore worker. Terri, though married to Tom, is physically separated from him for half of the year, yet is physically near their children all year, thus being shifted between two worlds within the same family. Terri identifies with the experiences of single-parent families, yet she also outwardly emphasizes that she is not one. She considers herself privileged to not have the perceived sense of restraint that single parents might experience.

At the same time, the work that Terri does outside of the home allows her to avoid the isolation and separation that she associates with having a spouse who works away from home. In discussing the importance of paid work to her own life, Terri emphasizes that she does want to be a stay-at-home mother, and that by not doing so, she is able to build a level of community, as well as personal identity, that she would not have by staying at home:

I don't think I'm cut out personally to be a stay-at-home mom; I know that about myself. But if I know that if I wasn't working, there would be that whole level of isolation, apart from not having a partner at home. When you work, you meet people, you have friends, you have different experiences that you wouldn't have if you were just here with two little kids all day. (Terri 2012)

Terri's emphasis on needing to work, and discussion of the personal benefits of doing so, asserts her personal identity as an offshore wife.

Many wives do not have a physical community of offshore wives with which to connect. Part of the development of community around a ritual also involves deciding who is and who is not a part of a folk group. Wives of offshore workers can create their own support communities but they should not assume that all the women seek out these affiliations. Joy, when asked about whether or not she had friends whose husbands were away, commented that she found it futile to put herself in this type of social situation:

The friends that I have chosen to have right now don't have husbands who work away. It's common, it's very common, but I'm not a social butterfly either. And I find it's not necessary to gather a group of people who are in the same situation around myself because it's just more of the same, and the reason to have a friend is to share their interest. A lady could have her husband working at sea, but I have nothing in common with her, and

therefore we won't be friends. So I don't think it matters to have other friends in the same situation. (Rybakov 2012)

Joy did not gravitate towards other offshore spouses, instead stating that she felt like an outsider in their community.

Mary Chidley also noted that she did not share a sense of community with other offshore wives in her community, largely because of the fact that her husband was going offshore when no one else in the community entered the field. Partially because of this situation, Mary emphasized the importance of individual adjustment to the time apart from her husband, as well as the need to maintain a sense of routine and busyness in order to fill the time:

I suppose I grew up that way; my father died when I was only ten, so I was used to just having my mother, just the one parent. And I suppose you learn to adjust to the situation; it's also personally how well you adjust. And when I was teaching, teaching took up so much of your time, [and] nighttime. You were so busy teaching that the weekend would be the same thing. You probably did more work than you probably would have if the husband was home, and you would take on more volunteer stuff. But with a husband home, you're more involved in that kind of way... (Chidley 2012a).

Mary's account of being raised in a single-parent family illustrates that for some women, the absence of men at home is familiar. Other wives also had fathers who worked away from home or were absent from their lives due to death. In these cases, it was past experience and that helped women cope with their husbands' separation and not a community of other women.

Part of the challenge during the husband's time away is that, for both parents, there is work involved. Whether working offshore or at home with children, each parent is responsible for maintaining his or her own structure of

work during this time. This change of structure, and the flexibility that results from it, is not exclusive to Newfoundland, but common in many offshore-working societies. Forsyth and Gauthier attribute families' willingness to adapt as a positive factor, saying that they "must be capable of changing their basic structure and organization if they are to remain viable social systems" (Forsyth and Gauthier 1991:186). The adaptations, while unique to each family and based on individual experience of the period of absence from home, are aided by a sense of constant routine, involvement in labor, and familiarity with the way of life surrounding offshore labour.

### *The Reunion: Re-Integration, Festivity, and Future Cycles*

I remember that I used to refer to getting off of the boat after five or six weeks—I used to do six week rotations—it felt like prisoners when they get out of jail and the freedom is a weird sensation, and I used to be the only female. Several times, I was the only female personnel at sea. As a female, that seemed strange to me, because I'm used to a male atmosphere. (Marsha 2012)

For offshore workers, the challenge of integration back into home life involves returning to familiar settings, and the level of difficulty for those involved varies from individual to individual. For example, unpredictability can be a factor. Jeanne said that it became very difficult to know exactly when Robert would come home, and the lack of experience with the offshore life initially affected her children's' reaction to Robert's arrival:

Quite often, he would come during the afternoon—sometimes we didn't know when he was coming—or during the day, so we were usually not able to pick him up. [...] Ninety percent of the time, he came in a cab. [...] ...After a couple of times of not coming back on the day he was supposed to, I wasn't making a big deal of when he was coming back. So it was like, "Maybe today, maybe..." but before it was "He's coming today." The first

time that he didn't come back on the day he was supposed to, that was a bit harder, so I took a habit of "It's supposed to be today, but we'll see, maybe tomorrow..." So I was not building up anticipation, but when he was back, they were just brats and not listening to me, totally excited for him. (Jeanne 2012)

Rather than having his family meet him at the heliport, or arrive there and risk disappointing the children in case he was either late or unable to depart, Robert started coming home in a cab, meaning that the reunion was more private. When things did not go according to plan, Jeanne's role in the process was to guide the children and help them to maintain their level of anticipation for their father's arrival, which prepared them for future arrivals by making them aware of the unpredictable nature of travel home.

Adjustment is a major factor in the life of the offshore family, especially as workers shift from being at work to being away from their job for a period of time. Their presence at home requires those family members who are at home to also make accommodations. For some, the homecoming phase of the cycle is not marked by ceremony or particular actions. In fact, none of the women interviewed indicated that they did anything to mark the return as special. Rather, this phase in the offshore ritual is marked by the adjustment itself. Joy spoke of the process, making note of the fact that there is not one set thing that she and her family do together, but also explaining that the adjustment process involves all family members:

There's nothing really that we do, per se...the first week is an adjustment for everybody. We all have to adjust to new schedules, [Oleg] has a new schedule now, and a totally different life than on the vessel. We have to adjust to an extra person in the house and someone else's thoughts, feelings, etc., right? There's that...we just fall into routine, and adjust for

the first week, and after that, we just coast...I don't know what we do, we just sort of...life, that's what we do. (Rybakov 2012)

Just as Joy was responsible for bringing Nathan back into routine during the times Oleg was away, she notes that she also had to help with creating a sense of routine for the family during the times Oleg was home.

Part of Joy's need for routine and structure is due to her own upbringing. Growing up, she found that it actually felt stranger when her father was at home:

For us—for me, I guess I'll speak for myself—it felt like when Dad came home, we had a guest in the house, because he was always gone. When someone comes to your house, a relative comes, everything sort of changes, and when they leave, you breathe a sigh of relief, and things get back to normal...because it was normal when he was away. (Rybakov 2012)

Joy does not breathe a sigh of relief when Oleg is away, but her experiences growing up affect her understanding of his return. For her, Oleg's being home every other month is easier than her upbringing, and she is adamant that his schedule retains that regularity:

Oleg and I had the conversation when he decided to go out to sea; I agreed fifty percent time, no less. That's my requirement; I don't see a family making it on less than that. For example, if he had to go out for two months, then come home one month, it probably wouldn't last the test of time. So that's where our comfort zone is; one month on, one month off, no less. (Rybakov 2012)

According to Joy, she and Oleg lead a preferable lifestyle to that of her childhood. Growing up, she was told she had to face the reality of being married to someone working away from home. Her mother said “even if I didn't want the lifestyle, I had to take it, because women didn't work...you did that, and you



didn't have a choice" (Rybakov 2012). Joy considers having input on her husband's employment as an improvement over her mother's situation.

Past scholarship on families of offshore workers focused on the negative aspects of the lifestyle. Forsyth and Gauthier suggest that the post-return experience of fishermen was something that, while being important to the fisher, greatly annoyed his family:

The fisherman returns home with new tales of adventures at sea, but his family quickly tires of hearing his stories and cannot appreciate his work as well as can another fisherman. Therefore, he turns to the company of other fishermen even while he is onshore and subsequently turns away from his family and from sharing this part of his life with them. (Forsyth and Gauthier 1991:180)

Subsequently, Forsyth and Gauthier go on to note that offshore-working husbands, already having to re-adapt to life onshore, were seen as mere visitors longing to re-assume their roles in the household:

The husband, alternatively, tends to believe he should resume his traditional role as the head of the household and may resent her competence in this area. In addition, he must learn to adapt to the separate worlds of rig and home, especially in relation to the interactions required with his spouse and children. Not only must he cope with the pressures of his job, but he must also cope with the expectations of his family when he returns home exhausted and grouchy. He may find family squabbles that require resolution or possibly plumbing in need of a plumber, a role he is often expected to fulfill. Often he is merely considered a guest in the home who returns periodically for visits, which can prove to be problematic after a few days. (Grambling and Forsyth 1987: 181-182)

While it is important not to minimize the challenges families face, the assumption that these families are living in a world of tension, stress, and potential instability,

and that occupational and familial instability continues while the worker is at home, is problematic. The fact that the wives interviewed stress the positive aspects of their lifestyle helps to balance their scholarly misconception. Joy referred to Oleg as their son's "best friend" when he was at home, and that Nathan always wanted to spend time with his father during that time. The two maintained close bonds, and it was not a situation where Oleg seemed to be a visitor to Nathan. Time at home is a chance for father and son to bond, rather than for mother and son to have a visitor for a month's time.

The families are also very open about the fact that, due to the nature of changing lifestyles, activities, and routines, there is an initially rough period of adjustment. While expecting a father to quickly re-integrate into family life may be unrealistic, it can also be as much of a burden to shelter a father from the challenges of reintegration. In these cases, the father is treated like a visitor. Keith Storey's studies of offshore adjustment stress that women often had to learn to respect the needs of spouses, but his research also points out that many men expressed a disinterest in knowing what problems arose during their time away (Storey 1986:74-75).

My research does not fully support Storey's finding and the couples interviewed generally demonstrated a greater level of reflexivity than that found in Storey's research. For example, Gerry noted that his lifestyle was neither easy on his family, nor on himself. Even though disagreements could rise, he looked the maintenance of a routine within the family as a helpful tool in the process of readjustment:

Gerry:

The first three or four days, because I'm on the other side of the world, and I'm on the night shift, so the jet lag just—your body's turning inside out, basically—I'm coming off of nights. And Allie's got a total routine, which you have to do with two kids, being there and doing it by yourself. And when I first get home, I'm tired, so it's usually the first few nights where you get into an argument, or even the first night.

Allison:

Well, it's a routine; you do breakfast the same time every day. We do soccer, gymnastics, ballet, and I'll do supper. When Gerry's home, I'm more laid-back...(Murphy 2012).

Gerry is aware of the fact that his schedule creates adjustment issues for his family, and that it can be difficult for everyone.

For wives such as Allison and Marsha, the relaxed nature of their husband's time at home often creates a more celebratory environment, one in which the worlds of offshore labour and onshore home life are negotiated and put into a more positive light. Allison and Gerry Murphy make a point to do things together as a family during Gerry's time off, and it was noted that their daughter, four-year-old Sarah Jane, was always in close proximity to her father:

Allison:

Pretty much whatever Gerry does, Sarah Jane does...

Gerry:

We used to go out behind here, before they started doing all the developments; we used to call them "nature walks." We're pretty busy, eh? She's got soccer, which she's got to get up for...

Allison:

We'll always go boating with his parents...that was our big thing this weekend, we saw dolphins and whales, and capelin...

Gerry:

We took her out to a little outpost—we were going to go to Indian Harbour, [a] great place on Merasheen Island for sea trout—there's a little outpost out there called Port Royal where the b'ys used to boat and stuff from

Long Harbour. Sarah Jane was up, she was bopping around the island; it's just awesome.

Allison:

We're not really big on going to movies; we're more outdoorsy...

Gerry:

Even around the house, we're out doing stuff, and she's always doing stuff. We should be keeping a journal, saying this is what I do with her...(Murphy 2012).

In addition to local adventures, the family also spent time at a farm in Manitoba operated by Allison's sister, and Gerry and Allison went to Ireland, as a couple, on more than one occasion. Though Gerry's job requires much travel, his experience is one in which labour mobility is responsible for increasing leisure mobility. As Gerry goes to work, Allison works to maintain a routine at home with the children, and that routine carries on through the festive period of Gerry's time at home.

Routine is as important as ritual in times at home. Jack Santino, in his introduction to Lisa Gabbert's book *Winter Carnival in a Western Town*, makes note that "Ritual and festival can be perceived as polar opposites. Ritual is instrumental in the eyes of its participants. It causes change; it makes something happen. Festival is most often seen as ludic, a form of play. It is celebrated as an end in itself." (Gabbert 2011:xi). I would add that routine is as instrumental to its participants, and that festival, which Santino sees as a break from routine, can co-exist with routine, rather than stand in direct opposition to it. Festival is a break from routine as much as it is for ritual, and sometimes takes shape in the form of structured leisure events. That said, the leisure activities that the Murphys engage in as a family while Gerry is home, do not so much constitute an actual

ritual or festival as create a feeling of festiveness. This festive feeling serves a mitigating role that eases the reality that Gerry works in a high-risk part of the world, in a high-risk industry, and Allison is responsible for maintaining a home life for the rest of her family. Thus, festive play is a way to commemorate the time spent at home, to take advantage of the month-long period at home, and to allow the Murphy children to spend time with their father.

The Murphys' time together as a family is enhanced by the fact that, at the time of our conversation, neither of their children were attending school. This increased their mobility as a family during the months Gerry was at home. In the future, the amount of travel they are able to do might change, as it did when the Rybakovs' son entered school. This does not completely prevent families from taking vacations together, however. Tom and Terri's daughter, Emma, was already in school, so they spent their time in Fox Harbour on the weekends. In Robert and Jeanne's case, they would often spend some part of the Christmas holiday in Quebec with Jeanne's family.

Travel can be a major part of the re-integration process. Erik Cohen, in his research on the phenomenology of tourism, notes that travel activities "are 'functional in relieving the tension built up in the individual and hence reinforce, in the long run, his allegiance to the 'centre.' The individual may need relief from tension, created by the values, but he is not fundamentally alienated from them" (Cohen 1979: 181). Travel, in the cases of my informants, aids in the process of family re-integration through re-centering the father into his family after being away. Neither home nor work, the destination is a site of tension relief, and a

diversion from the typical routines of the offshore cycle.

By traveling away from home, some of the challenges of the offshore lifestyle are temporarily relieved, but they are not permanently alleviated. Travel is situated within the overarching ritual of the offshore life. Travel is necessary in the departure process, and begins the process of being away from home, but it is also responsible for beginning the shift towards the return home (a more festive part of the offshore ritual). For the offshore spouse, it still involves the maintenance of routine (albeit relaxed), but it also serves as more of a ludic period that allows a wife to relinquish some of her responsibilities to her husband, enjoy quality time as a family, and recharge one's self for the next offshore cycle. It is an end in itself, but it also leads to the beginning of another cycle.

### *Conclusion*

The stages of rites of passage provide a framework for the offshore work cycle, and it is the offshore wife at home who is largely responsible for providing a sense of routine through the three stages. In the departure phase (the separation), wives provide children with a sense of routine as a way to not only distract from the reality of the separation, but also aid children in becoming more familiar with the process. The continuation of structure and routine alleviates the struggles of the away phase, not only for children, but also for wives. During the return phase, routine is still set in a place as a way to accommodate the schedules of wives' work and children's school attendance, but through small inversions in the daily routine, as well as travel and time between husbands and

children. The routine changes ways that simultaneously root the husbands' time at home in festiveness and routine stability.

Family routine, however, is also deeply private, and subject to change within each family. Spouses tended to talk more about the notion of routine, and its importance in their lives, rather than the actual actions that made up routine. Diane Goldstein's 2012 article on the stigmatized vernacular and untellability, which focuses on how articulation is sometimes unnecessary or untellable, notes the following reasons for untellability:

Stories become untellable because the content defies articulation, the rules of appropriateness outweigh the import of content, the narrator is constrained by issues of entitlement and storytelling rights, or the space the narratives would normally inhabit is understood by the narrator as somehow unsafe." (Goldstein 2012:121)

The narratives of my informants fit largely into the first two categories. The use of the term "routine" is a way for informants to publicly narrate their experience to someone outside of their community and social world. However, it is also a way to maintain space about private emotions surrounding the offshore life. Susan Ritchie's writing on ventriloquism within the field of folklore reminds scholars that informants need to "maintain control and ownership of their performances" (Ritchie 1993:367), and to push collaborators for further articulation on something that is publicly narrated as personal, intimate, and private would be to turn control of the offshore experience over to the ethnographer.

As previously mentioned, the technological fishery in Newfoundland was responsible for relegating land-bound, year-long work into a more female sphere, with many women having limited options of either working in fish processing

plants or staying at home with children. For my informants, there are now many more options in terms of employment than during the emergence of the technological fishery. Being in close proximity to the capital city of St. John's means that it is possible to engage in a variety of occupations, and the wives I spoke with had careers that reflected this sense of mobility. From careers in education, social work, and the Canadian government, the options are far improved, and for those women who were not working at the time of our conversation, there was at least some previous work experience, or a desire to return to that work. The option of participating in occupational life outside of the home, or the fish plant, was there for all of them.

Given that past scholarship focused on the disempowerment of women through the rise of the technological fishery, the question arises: with the rise of oil and gas occupations in Newfoundland and Labrador, does the commuting lifestyle contribute to a sense of empowerment in women who have husbands in the industry? The argument is a tricky one, and three factors affect the results: (1) the number of children a family has; (2) the age of the children; and (3) whether or not the children attend school. Of all of the families with whom I collaborated, none of them had more than two children, and for those families with both children in school, it is much easier to have a full-time occupation, personal time for oneself, and a higher level of independence as a woman. For those families who had one of their two children in school, having a job outside of the home was easier (although maintaining a home was described as more difficult), while the families who had young children were the ones most likely to



have a stay-at-home mother.

Regardless of their respective situations, all of the wives I spoke with were actively helping to manage the offshore ritual, balancing their personal experiences and routines during the three stages while guiding their children through the repeated comings and leavings of their fathers. While some families were accustomed to the offshore life, having family members in the fishery, or having grown up in households with largely absent fathers, previous experience was not necessary for guiding children through the process. Everyone I interviewed stressed the importance of creating a consistent sense of ritual and routine for children. In some cases school attendance provided routine, while in others, connections to other family members helped the situation.

Overall, however, the consensus of offshore wives in this study was positive. They felt that their husbands were able to spend far more time with their children than if they had a full-time job onshore. As I mentioned in the last chapter, Gerry Murphy elected to leave his full-time position as a crane operator onshore in order to work in Angola and have more time with Allison and the children. He found the month-long window of time to be more favorable. Joy also noted that their son had more time with Oleg as a result of his profession, saying that it was superior to a conventional “day job”: “I don’t think most families who work nine-to-five jobs, both parents working, spend as much time with their children as Oleg does, because he has that window of time that most people don’t get. Most people get two hours in the evening, Saturday and Sunday” (Rybakov 2012). The long period of time spent offshore meant that the other half

can be spent with family. Some families consider this as preferable to the limited leisure time couples working an average of the forty or fifty hours a week in a nine-to-five position with weekends off, would have together. They see the schedule as more beneficial in terms of having quality time together, especially when the children are young. The question of what happens when children attend school will eventually arise.

There is, however, a major awareness of the fact that, for many families, this lifestyle is not sustainable, and often eventually leads to strife. The families with whom I collaborated were very aware of the possibility of familial tension. They often bore witness to it by referring to other community members and co-workers who had undergone separations or divorces. Marsha, who herself witnessed co-workers go through multiple divorces and marriages, noted that her offshore experience gave her a certain degree of empathy for spouses who are back at home:

A lot of the men I've worked with, they've been married and divorced at least once. For twelve years, I've worked offshore, and all of a sudden, I'm the wife I'm home, and it does totally put a different perspective on it, and he was a such a colicky baby that it was a lot of work. We do want another kid, but I don't know how I could possibly do it without my husband home. I never thought about how, back in the day, how hard the wives had it at home with two and three kids...(Marsha 2012).

As Marsha was on maternity leave from her job at the time of our conversations, the question of whether or not she would return to work was constantly on her mind. Although her work experience helped her to understand what many husbands go through while working away, it also brought up issues of whether or

not a family could sustain two parents working in offshore industries. Joy was simply told, as a young woman, that she had to resign herself to being married to someone who worked away. She was, however, told this during an era when women were not working outside of the home or the fish plant. At the time of this writing, Joy had recently begun working as a self-employed home designer, incorporating her vocational training as an architectural technologist into a career. She is working to balance her own career interests with being an offshore wife, as well as a mother, and in a way that allows her to remain close to home while maintaining a passion for home design.

In the beginning of this chapter, I spoke of the examples of narratives from offshore wives' forums on the Internet, and how the women posting focused on notions of surviving, switching lifestyles, and taking on multiple gender roles. These actions, put together, comprise the identity of the offshore worker's wife for many women, who simultaneously negotiate roles as wives, mothers, and employees. Donna Haraway's concept of "subject positions" promotes the notion that roles, as those of offshore wives, are situated in a given time, place and situation (Haraway 1991: 196), and the subjectivity of these positions best allows us to see how the multiple factors of offshore life must not only be balanced, but also how they must be brought together. As the ritual stages of offshore life build upon one another, cycle after cycle, the experiences that comprise each cycle create a stronger awareness of the social positions of many Newfoundland women. The next chapter will focus on the social positions of young adults whose fathers are offshore workers and explore personal perceptions of their fathers.

## Chapter 5: “I’ve Never Really Talked about It Before”: Young Adults’ Narratives of Fathers Working Away from Home

A 2005 study on spousal perceptions of offshore work noted that children of British offshore workers had a specific level of understanding about their fathers’ work that expressed a simultaneous sense of admiration and resignation:

Spouses also commented on children’s perceptions of offshore work; again, both positive and negative attitudes were reported. The children expressed pride, respect, and curiosity about their fathers’ work, but spouses also observed their children’s matter-of-fact attitude “It’s what Dad does, and that’s it . . . they’ve always taken it as it comes” (Parkes, Carnell and Farmer 2005:426).

Respect and pride are part of the picture, but Parkes, Carnell and Farmer also interpret children’s actions as that of resignation, or tolerance, of the life. Unable to potentially change it, the fact that they have “taken it as it comes” is a type of survival strategy for children dealing with their fathers’ periodic absences. Just as the authors of outport life stories focused on the positive aspects of their fathers, rather than provide the public with a critical reflection of the good and the bad, children such as those featured in the study do likewise. They highlight the good things while resigning themselves to the reality of the lifestyle. Children must give up as much as their mothers—they lose time with their fathers, as well as many other things—but their sacrifice is much less voluntary.

This level of resignation and “acceptance,” in other societies has had mixed results for families involved in migratory labour. In certain regions, such as Southern Africa, migratory labour emerged as a modern-day phenomenon and produced economies that relied on labour-based remittances for survival. Several

scholars have noted that this form of labour took its toll on father-child relationships. Francis Wilson's study of migratory mine and farm labour among men in South Africa sustained poverty rather than improved life for those families involved in it (Wilson 2006:30). Furthermore, South African fatherhood scholar Robert Morrell pointed out that this migratory labour combined with a common worldview surrounding fatherhood in sub-Saharan Africa. Morrell notes that, "In an African context, fathers are often presented as absent not least because of the migrant labour system which physically took men away. But the stern patriarch, present but dominant and uncaring, is also part of the story" (Morrell 2006:19). As this labour system within a southern African context, does not typically include regular return trips home, the role of the father is different from labour migration in Eastern Canada. While he is absent from home to make money for a family, he is nonetheless unable to emerge from poverty. Children who grow up in this lifestyle might perhaps view fathers differently than they would in a situation where their fathers make frequent trips home.

In previous chapters, I have examined the effects of offshore employment on workers and their wives. This chapter examines how young adults narrate and frame their experience of having a father working away from home. By looking at how the grown children of offshore and migratory labourers view the work their parents did, as well as the occupation's effects on their families' lives, it is possible to better understand how family and community bonds are maintained. It is also possible to see how experience narratives of these young adults have strong connections to the life stories of outport residents, to offshore-working

fathers, and to wives of offshore workers.

The first section of this chapter will focus on the struggles of young adults to discuss their experiences in their communities, as well as the ways in which young adults describe and elaborate upon their fathers' occupations. The middle section of this chapter examines how young adults narrate their experiences of their fathers' labour cycles. Through examining the process as an occupational ritual, I will break the cycle down into a discussion of how young adults experience, and narrate, their fathers' departures, time away from home, and return. Finally, I will elaborate on how young adults' stories play a role in their current personal and professional lives, and how a sense of ritual and secular pilgrimage influences their own labour mobility.

### *Narrating Community and Atypicality among Offshore Fathers*

I interviewed five young adults whose fathers worked away from home, either in fishing or in migratory labour. While they grew up in offshore and/or migratory labour families, and sometimes had friends in similar situations, they did not discuss their experiences openly. Post-secondary students Sheldon O'Brien (whose father was a deckhand) and Kendra Devine (whose father is a skipper) reported that their fathers being away for work was not a major topic of conversation for them during their school days. When asked if people talked about it, they responded by saying:

Kendra:

Not really. Sometimes. Our friend's mom works on the rigs, and she sometimes says "I miss her," and they're sad, but they're also used to it.

Sheldon:

Everyone is in sort of the same situation, so no one gets sad about it, or lonely about it, because everyone feels the same. [...] Everyone's in the same boat, so it's not something that's talked about. It's kind of weird to look at in this perspective, because I never really talked about it. (Devine and O'Brien 2012)

In their narratives, Kendra and Sheldon position their own experiences within a larger cultural context, taking note of the fact that, while it might be difficult for young people to be away from their parents, so many people are in a similar situation that it creates a sense of unstated, but mutual, understanding. Silence is not only an individual statement, but a group one as well. People sacrifice their individual emotions for the sake of the group.

In contrast, Mike Chidley's daughter Michelle, who works and lives in Calgary but grew up in Renew, did not experience that sense of being "in the same boat" as others around her because her father was the only father, among her group of friends, to go away for work:

Growing up, I didn't, and I think it's a very different reality now. It's obviously a very different reality now, but when I grew up, I don't remember any of my friends' dads being away. If they fished- I don't even know if crab, or fish, or shrimp...it was just coming in when I was in school, transitioning from the cod moratorium was hard. And most of my friends' parents were at home, because they were all fisherman, and then the cod moratorium...and that was hard on families. And I don't know if I have an accurate perception of what that was like, right? There's different ways of looking at it. (Chidley 2012b)

Mike's work took him away from the community at a time when most of its members were unemployed and beginning the process of recovery from the moratorium. His efforts to provide for his family could be seen as a way to break free of the moratorium-induced stress that affected communities such as

Renews.

Michelle credits her father's decision to break away to not only personal pride, but also economic necessity:

Dad was going away to make money, and other people were staying at home and getting checks from the government. Right or wrong, that's what the reality was of people around here. Some people took that money, and the opportunities, and did something with it, and went back to school, and other people are still contented to live on those checks. But my dad was never of that mind- he wasn't a fisherman, either, so it's not like he could have taken advantage of it, but he never would have, I don't think. He was always a worker, and took great pride in making a living for himself, and working hard for it. (Chidley 2012b)

Michelle expresses Mike's sacrifice and dedication to providing for his family --in her words, "working hard for it" (Chidley 2012b) -- as fulfillment of his role as provider and breadwinner. Research on the traditional provider role frequently mentions its decay. A 1998 study by Heather Juby and Celine Le Bourdais suggests that while fathers are more engaged in caring for children than simply providing for them, they are largely limited by work commitments (Juby and Le Bourdais 1998: 163). Work commitments, according to Juby and Le Bourdais, lead men to sacrifice caring time, but their disconnect between providing and caring falsely assumes that the two are incompatible. When discussing her father's work, Michelle does not differentiate between caring and providing. She does, however, highlight that his time at home was limited by the need to work, and the need to make a good living to provide for his family.

Fathers who provide for their families through the fishing industry work in a risky occupation and they are described by their children as hard working.

Courage and a good work ethic are also traits of outport fathers described in



written memoirs discussed in Chapter Two, yet the young people I interviewed are quick to separate their fathers from the stereotypical image of the outport fisherman. University student and server Sabrina Pinksen provides a multifaceted description of her father's work:

Well, he's really involved with the FFAW—the Fish, Food and Allied Workers here in St. John's—so he's always going around to meetings and stuff like that; he also teaches first aid courses, and he does carpentry work sometimes for people at home. He's built a couple of houses for people in Ontario who don't have houses at home. So he's managed to keep himself busy during the winter. [...] Most people have a stereotype of someone from the bay: oh, he's a fisherman, he fits that exact persona. But that was never my dad; he wanted to be a teacher, but his mother wouldn't let him. [...] He wanted to be a pilot, but he couldn't pass his test because he had bad hearing...he didn't want to be a fisherman. He even did a mechanic course, and he hated it, so it was a “what are you going to do?” sort of thing. His older brother was a fisherman; he owned a boat, and had an enterprise for years and years and years until it wasn't really working out anymore, so he branched off and bought him out, and had his own company and his own boat just like that. He doesn't really fit that stereotype...(Pinksen 2012).

Sabrina describes her father as someone who is working in a traditional Newfoundland profession, as well as part of a tradition of having multiple occupations. She is quick to emphasize, however, that he is not part of the “rugged fisherman” stereotype. He simply works in fishing, among many other things.

In other cases, informants described their fathers as being extremely hard workers. Kendra Devine described her father by the intensity of his fishing season:

My dad's an extreme fisherman; he just goes all summer. From March, he starts at the boat, and goes fishing the first of April, and we see him two to three times over the summer, except for a couple of hours. If the boat's unloading, or the plant's full and he has to wait a couple of days, that's the only time we'd see him, or if the weather's bad. (Devine and O'Brien 2012)

The way these young adults talk about their fathers can be understood as narrative strategies that work to challenge attitudes about outport fishermen. Kendra stresses that her father's work goes beyond that of many fishermen in the community. Michelle distinguishes her father from the unemployed fishermen. Sabrina's emphasizes her father's desire to go beyond the fishery for work, separating him from the common stereotype of an uneducated fisherman. Each is speaking from a different community about a different working environment, but their point is largely the same: they see their fathers as atypical, men with an exceptionally high devotion to both their work and their families.

#### *Narrating the Ritual Practices of Departure and Return*

Usually around the last of March, or the first of April, you just hear everyone talking about that it's time for the plants to open, everyone's going out fishing again, and so he would leave; he's gone already this year, first of April. Before they go out, they usually spend a couple of weeks just doing pots; they leave at seven in the morning, come back around 7:00 in the evening. That's just in Ferryland, though—they don't go offshore doing pots or anything—and when they're done with that, they just leave in April, and they go for three or four days, come back, sleep a couple of hours, then come back again, so you don't see them at all.

--Sheldon O'Brien

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the ritual cycle of offshore labour involves the departure process, the period of familial separation, and the return home. Each stage in the cycle is variable in regards to the amount of time spent, and different professions call for a unique set of ways to mark the ritual cycle of work. The preparation for fishing season is like the start of an offshore stint in the

fact that it is a periodic rite that is seasonal and cyclical (Lienard and Boyer 2006:17). As the fishing season is much longer than a typical offshore platform shift, the preparation for it is not only longer in duration, but, as Sheldon points out, is more pronounced in its public marking.

As the fishing season is part of a labour cycle, the beginning of it is a custom that is not only marked through occupational tasks, but also through observation and acknowledgement of the cycle. The fact that Sheldon and Kendra witnessed first-hand the changes in their own families' lives, as well of those of the greater community, is evidence of ritual's role of transformation within a society. While Jack Santino states that rituals "involve a conscious attempt to change or transform participants or spectators" (Santino 2011:61-62), I would argue that offshore labour rituals circumstantially transform participants through their effects on family members.

As I discussed in the last chapter, there is a great sense of familial adaptation for families involved in offshore life, with at-home family structures shifting for all involved. In some cases, this adaptation involved a geographic shift. For Kendra, whose parents were divorced, her father's work meant that she would relocate from her own home and live in another community with her grandmother:

I lived with my nan in the summer because my mom lives in Alberta, and works there, so I had to transfer around a lot while he was out fishing. She left when I was in Grade Five to go out to Alberta, [and] it was so hard, because my parents were divorced; they were trying to figure out custody, and we were just being tossed around because he's gone six months of the year, and Mom was gone the other six, so that's why we ended up living with my grandmother. I don't think [my brother] really understood what was going on. I did, and I was just upset the whole time, but you get

over it eventually; she just comes and goes, and it doesn't really bother us.

The first of March, he used to start go to the boats until seven or eight in the evening, so we used to start going with my nan. And I knew that the first of April, Easter break, we were gone to my nan's, and we wouldn't be back until September. Nan and Dad's houses were only a couple of communities apart, so I didn't really mind it. I was just so used to it, I was never really taught to think about it, to think about how much I was being shuffled around, I guess. (Devine and O'Brien 2012)

For Kendra, her parents' divorce created a different set of social environments than with other informants, and required a different strategy. Having two parents who worked away, grandparents—who, as with the Rybakovs, were a distraction from Oleg's departure—were the main source of structure and support for Kendra and her brother. Having no choice but to go to other family members, Kendra expressed resignation to the lifestyle as a teenager.

Grandparents often serve as supports for young people. According to sociologists Frances Goldscheider and Leora Lawton, "Such living arrangements clearly help to strengthen people's commitments and provide opportunities for social learning that supports intergenerational coresidence" (Goldscheider and Lawton 1998:630). Debbie Martin and Lois Jackson's study of young women's social relationships in Newfoundland notes that informants "viewed spending time with extended family as an essential part, and perhaps even the core, of their lives" (Martin and Jackson 2008). In the case of Kendra and her brother, their grandmother not only provided a sense of structure through taking them in during their father's time away, but also provided them an opportunity to engage with other family members throughout the year. Thus, extended family members not only offer stability during a time of ambiguity for the children of offshore

labourers, but also give young people the chance to engage with other family members throughout the year.

Martin and Jackson's study also noted that many women in rural Newfoundland communities looked beyond their biological family for support, noting that informants

...spoke of the 'whole' community as being like one's family – providing a constant form of support by acknowledging the women and the important contributions they make to the community. The community as "family" is composed of individuals who trust and respect one another, and who, according to the women, create a climate of safety. (Martin and Jackson 2008)

Community members create a space in which resignation to the commuting lifestyle, and silence about its effects, became safety measures. Sabrina explained that only after moving to St. John's, and away from outport life, did she see that her and her friends' experiences fell outside the "typical" North American family structure:

Now, when I look back at it, it's kind of different; at the time, it was all I knew. But at the time, my mom was a nurse, and she was working shiftwork. But at the time, my sister, who was seven years older than me, didn't want much to do with me, and I went with my grandmother, or my best friend's mom, she would babysit me. I was always kind of floating around from house to house...but I don't know, it was normal for me. But for a lot of people, it wouldn't be, I guess (laughs).

All of my friends were, too. Most of my friends growing up, their father was a fisherman, and in some cases, even their mothers were fishing. They'd be staying with their grandparents, and I'd be staying with my grandparents. It was normal. (Pinksen 2012)

For Sabrina, that sense of knowing that others were going through the same thing as she was, created a sense of safety and familiarity that helped her through the process. She moved between family members due to her mother's

work shifts, and although her periods of time with her grandparents were not as long as that of Kendra's, the sense of shifting between relatives, and social worlds, was just as present in her narrative. The process of moving between family members not only requires flexibility, but a different way of thinking about the nuclear family. Margaret Ann Clael's research on the role of grandparents in Newfoundland society indicates that "Taking on the direct role of the parent may not always be the case, yet a grandparent may be involved in the life of the child by giving support in an extended nuclear family" (Clael 2013: 269). Clael's research raises the point that, in Newfoundland, may be necessary to redefine what actually comprises the nuclear family.

Children being switched between relatives and friends not only results from parents' seasonal participation in the fishery, but is also a reflection of declining youth involvement in the fishery. Whereas in earlier generations, boys began fishing with their fathers at a young age, fishery policy in the middle to late 20<sup>th</sup> century began to push workers towards an economy in which "the family breadwinner would presumably earn enough money so that his wife and children would no longer have to contribute to the production of saltfish for market" (Wright 1998:158). With opportunities in the fisheries decreasing, young people looked elsewhere for their future job prospects. Given that oil and gas production often requires some form of post-secondary education, whether through college or trade school programmes, and that working out West often required one to be of adult age, the role of children onshore focused more heavily on school and home responsibilities.

Overall, previous scholarship on offshore labour primarily focused on its negative effects on families, with a steady stream of research focusing on the social disruptions to marriage and family. Krahn, Gartrell and Larson suggest it is hard to point out the impact of a family on offshore labor, noting, “The relationship between family well-being and life in a resource development community is not clear. Some argue that the family can serve as a buffer in disruptive social settings” (Krahn, Gartrell and Larson 1981:309-31). The latter phrase, “disruptive social settings,” brings up a major theme within scholarship: the negative effects of offshore life. Research has shown, however, that those families with greater experience with the offshore life speak more positively about it, as a 2005 study of British offshore workers notes:

The partners of the participants in the present sample had ‘survived’ in offshore employment. Personnel who find it difficult to adapt to offshore work tend to move to onshore jobs, but the present spouses all had partners currently working offshore, many of whom had been doing so for a considerable period of time (two-thirds of the spouses reported that their partners had worked offshore for 10 or more years during their marriage). Moreover, the longer the time the partner had worked offshore, the less likely was the spouse to express a preference for him to move to onshore employment. This finding is consistent with a ‘survival’ explanation; men working offshore are more likely to continue doing so if their spouses have adjusted to the lifestyle. Indeed, longer term concerns about problems that might arise when the offshore partner retired and was continuously at home were not uncommon among older spouses. (Parkes, Carnell and Farmer 2005:432)

In the case of Michelle, she talked about her parents having a very strong sense of independence from each other. This allowed them to sustain the lifestyle for longer. Yet, she also acknowledged that it is very different for each family:

I think each story is probably very different, right? It’s a combination of the family dynamic and the personalities involved, and like I said, my mom

was very independent, and my parents love each other dearly, but she doesn't need him to exist. She's just very independent, and she could make her own way in this world- she doesn't rely on him to be there. Everyone wants a companion in life, and I'm sure she misses him when she's away, I think some people would find it terribly lonely, if you need that support. (Chidley 2012b)

In writing how military wives occupy their time during deployments, Tony Morella notes that "self-reliance is an essential component...worry or stress can become less dominant when partners can keep busy" (Merolla 2010:13-17). Although Michelle did not specifically discuss where her mother found her support, Mary herself noted that her work, as well as her community involvement, allowed her to keep busy during the times that Mike was away. Years of experience creates a stronger sense of understanding, and attachment, to the ritual of offshore labour. Preoccupation only intensifies such an attachment.

Similarly, Sabrina noted that her mother was able to continue her own life without worry, saying that "Mom doesn't worry about anything. She's not one of those moms who does the worrying kind of thing, she was never concerned about it. I remember that my grandmother used to worry more than my mom did" (Pinksen 2012). At the same time, silence about fear and concerns works as a performance of boundary maintenance, one which portrays the individual as someone who assures others that things will be okay while the husband is away. Dorothy Noyes, in a discussion of cultural performances within folk groups, notes that such practices serve as a boundary mechanism: one that shows who a person is and who they are not, as well as who they are trying to become (Noyes 1994). Thus, refraining from worrying, or maintaining one's independence, is a



way to not only demonstrate one's own position on the situation, but also show others how to maintain composure and stability in light of it.

In some cases, the offshore lifestyle is responsible for creating boundaries between family members, and may actually facilitate separation for those family members who are struggling with a relationship. Andrew, whose father worked in Fort McMurray as an ironworker for several years, pointed out that his father's migrations often made things less tense for his parents, who ended their marriage after his father no longer worked in Alberta. Andrew noted that the commuting actually kept his parents' marriage going for longer than it would have had his father worked at home:

My parents are now since separated, so I think now, for years, that the separation between the two...it would be a break for both of them. I've never really seen any hardships with my mom, just for the fact that they probably weren't happy for a while, because they have since separated. [...] They separated when he got home, when he was home for good. (Wade 2012).

In the case of several informants, the absence of one or both parents for work often meant that parental responsibilities shifted to eldest children. Just as Kendra noted her grandmother's assumption of parental roles during her parents' work stints, Andrew described his brother's experience of having to serve as the man of the house:

My other brother, who is five years older than me, I think he was in the same boat as I was. He was the man of the house when Dad was gone, so he took a lot of responsibilities. When I would do something, and Mom would get mad, Mark would usually be the one to say something to me. Like I said, my dad was an old-school kind of guy on us in ways, so I'm sure it was a break for him, but I saw Mark step up into the role of the male of house when my dad was absent. (Wade 2012)

Although his brother assumed a fatherly role, the major difference between Andrew and Kendra's situations was that Andrew's brother was still subject to his father's control and influence. Neither entirely a father, nor a child, his brother was placed into a dual role within his family. This example is part of a larger historic pattern of older siblings caring for younger children. As many women worked on fish flakes in the historic fishery, their older children often maintained the role of caregiver for younger siblings (Wright 2001:13).

For Kendra, who was responsible for her younger brother, her parent's absence came with added responsibility, mixed with a sense of independence, at a very young age:

I feel that my life, and my parents, is just bizarre. My mom lives in Alberta—she doesn't come home—and so I feel like I was a bit wilder because I had no supervision, and no one was home to look after me, and tell me the rules. Very independent, and because my mom wasn't around, I was looking after my little brother, Brent. I was cooking and cleaning at fourteen or fifteen because I had to be the woman of the house, because no one was around. [...] I hated it, hated it, hated it; I had too much to do, and I was too young to handle it. I just hated it so much, so that's why I used to love going to Nan's in the summer, because all of my responsibilities were...she could just take it, and there's an adult there to do something. (Devine and O'Brien 2012)

Looking back at her experiences, Kendra does not see them as positive, frequently criticizing the pressure placed upon her by her parents. She reports being very overwhelmed about having to care for herself and her brother. Thus, Kendra describes her experiences of spending time with her grandparents as a relief. Though having to serve as a parental figure for her brother, Kendra needed a parental figure herself, and spoke very highly of her grandmother, who served as a support for her and brother during difficult times:

We lived with my nan, so we weren't at my house, and so we didn't have to do anything, just go every couple of weeks to check on it and make sure it didn't burn down. [...] My nan is the best person in the entire world; she was just there. It's not like we ever really dwelled on the fact that our parents were gone, but for my brother, it really affects him a lot that my parents were gone. If he was sad, my nan would go in and just talk to him, calm him down, say "They'll be back." That was all she could do. (Devine and O'Brien 2012)

Kendra's experience of having to work to help care for another child, while still being one herself, possibly exasperated her feelings on the liminality of being a teenager. Adolescence, widely considered by scholars as being a liminal phase, is full of what semiotician Ben Rampton refers to as "ritual practices which youngsters develop to bring order and definition to their indeterminate position as neither children nor adults" (Rampton 1997:5). Being a teenager while her father worked on the sea, and while her mother worked in Alberta, Kendra found order to what she considered an otherwise overwhelming period of time in the routine practice of going to her grandmother's.

While Andrew's brother was responsible for him while his father was away, and thus took on the role of a father figure, there are other cases where children were also responsible for the physical work their fathers usually did. Sheldon, who was an only child, spoke of his father's absence as a time where he had to work more intensely to help maintain a household:

Sheldon:

I pretty much had to do all the bitch work when my dad's gone, because there's no one else around the house. I'm an only child, so I have to do everything, like mowing the lawn, painting the eaves of the house, and the fence...It's kind of annoying; that's what I hated about it. I had to do everything, because I had no brothers and sisters.

NH:

Does your mom work too?

Sheldon:

Yeah, she cleans houses as well. She has a disability, so she can't really do anything that's hard, like labour, so I pretty much had to do all of the property work when no one's home. [...] I've been working every summer since I was thirteen anyway, so I'm pretty much working and having to do all of that stuff at home, too. [...] I worked at the plants in Fermeuse and Calvert from grades seven to nine, and then I just did student projects and tours until I graduated. (Devine and O'Brien 2012)

Part of Sheldon's responsibilities during his father's absence was to engage in the work his father would have otherwise done around the house. Thus, his narrative centered on work. In the case of Sheldon, his account of work responsibilities at home not only describes having to work at a very young age, but also vents about the reality of having to take on a larger workload than desired due to his status as an only child.

The need to adopt multiple roles is continuous with having to take on a greater independence, particularly when one or more role models are absent from home. In more than one case, my informants discussed the impact of not having a constant male role model in the house, either for themselves or for their siblings. While Andrew linked his father's presence with learning valuable skills, his father's absence created an environment in which he had to learn more independently:

Dad was always the disciplinary parent of the two, so I kind of got away with a lot of stuff, but it was tough at times, because whenever I needed a male role model to teach me. For instance, there was a time where there was trouble with the car, our car, and we had to bring it over to the mechanic. Usually, my dad would just fix it, and the majority of times, Dad would fix things, and I'd watch and learn as he goes. So there was an instance where something happened to the car and it wasn't very serious—it might have been the oil change, actually—and I remember not being able to do it, so we had to bring it over and pay for it to get it done.

And there's also an instance where he wasn't there for sporting events, which were a big deal to me, but I was in sports, and there were a lot of big games where he wasn't there because he had to work. I played a lot of basketball growing up, and I played a lot of softball, but any sport that was offered at school, I would take part in. But those were the big ones, and I played them very seriously. (Wade 2012)

Touching on things such as repairs and sports, Andrew's story is one of loss of time with his father, as well as one that demonstrates how migratory labour can result in a lack of male role models.

Michelle shared her belief that her brother lacked a male role model to learn from, whereas she was able to develop a strong mother-daughter bond.

When asked whether it was hard on her brother, she said:

I think so, being the boy. I did those stereotypical gender-specific things with my mom; we went shopping, did girly things together, we got our hair cut together, stuff like that. But my brother didn't have my dad around to teach him how to play hockey, or do things like that. In the early days, before Dad went away, my brother had him around, but he was gone quite a bit. Even when he had a construction contracting company here, building houses and stuff, a lot of the jobs weren't local, but it wasn't to the same extent; it was less predictable. But he was still in St. Lawrence, or a different town in Newfoundland, for a couple of weeks at a time. (Chidley 2012b)

Michelle's brother experienced many of the same things as Andrew, whose father was away working in Alberta for two-thirds of the year. Unlike Michelle's brother, however, Andrew noted that, when his father was home, their time together frequently involved doing work around the house. This meant that, for Andrew, he not only needed to adjust to having his father at home, but also adapt to a different style of parenting:

It would be tough, because then I would have to watch what I was doing. He disciplined us, and I remember that sometimes I would be mad that he was home because I wouldn't get what I wanted—he wouldn't give in like

my mom would—and I remember that usually, when he came home, I'd be glad to see him for a few days, and he'd usually bring home something small for us. But then after a couple of days, I was ready for him to go back, because he was getting us to do stuff, and he was there watching over us; if we messed up, he was watching over us. But now, looking at it now, it doesn't bother me. At least he was making sure that we weren't getting lazy, by asking us to do work. It wasn't too bad, bringing in the wood, or putting out the laundry. (Wade 2012)

In the case of Andrew's father, work was something that was always engaged in, even when one was off work for a long period of time, and this was something that he expected of Andrew as well:

Whenever he'd see me sitting there and doing nothing, he'd have me doing something, because he's one of those guys that, even when he's not working, he doesn't stop; he never sits down. The only time he sits down is when it's dark and he can't go outside and do something. He'll sit down and have tea and watch TV, but that's it. He never stops; he doesn't stop moving. We have a joke that he has a major case of ADHD and he can't sit still. He's just very hyperfocused and he always needs to be doing something. (Wade 2012)

In the second chapter, I noted that many elderly Newfoundlanders in their memoirs recalled being engaged in work from a very young age. Lloyd Raymond Brown's statement that he "grew up...as a worker" is one of the clearest examples of how work was part of childhood. Similarly, Andrew, with his father's schedule, alternated between the more traditional way of life and a more modern-day lifestyle in which responsibility, for young people is greatly reduced. The young people I interviewed reported that their fathers were absent, and not there for their children during particular times of struggle (e.g., Andrew needing to fix his car). Yet they also described their fathers as hard working and caring, just as fathers of the outpost were described by the earlier authors in Chapter Two.

The work that Andrew's father did, regardless of whether it was in Alberta or Newfoundland, was a way for him to not only maintain his identity as a worker, but also to instill a work ethic into his children. It is important to note, however, that, while Andrew was often asked to do more work when his father was away, other informants remember that their fathers' off time as a period when there was more opportunity to be together as a family, rather than as a time of work.

Both Sheldon and Kendra noted that their fathers' presence at home always involved times of family togetherness. Kendra made note that there was more time to spend with her father, yet did not elaborate very much about what they did together, calling it "nothing special." In spite of claiming that these activities were "nothing special," Kendra also noted that events, such as preparing for school, were times of fatherly affection and closeness between parents and children:

Kendra:

We live with Dad in the winter, so we're together, just always hanging out, nothing special, because he's home the entire time. We do get to see him. [...] When he's done fishing, he usually brings me and my brother school shopping, so when he brings us down, we know that fishing's coming to a close, and he'll be home soon. It's a big deal, every year; that's what he does. It's showering us with affection, because we haven't seen him, and we haven't spent any time with him. (Devine and O'Brien 2012)

Therefore, family shopping trips, in Kendra's case, are part of a payoff for the mutual sacrifice involved in a father working away from home, simultaneously reinforcing the image of the father as a breadwinner who, like his family, makes great sacrifices for the betterment of the household.

In his research on ritual food consumption in Mexico, Stanley Brandes notes that ritual patterns are different from those that are a part of daily life, and that there is a certain ritualized quality within consumption (Brandes 1990:163). Margaret Visser, in examining the cultural significance of the family dinner, says that humans

turn the consumption of food, a biological necessity, into a carefully cultured phenomenon. We use eating as a medium for social relationships: satisfaction of the most individual of needs becomes a means of creating community (Visser 2015:1).

While Brandes notes that ritual stands out from daily life, Visser demonstrates that ritual is also a major part of it, and is often based on necessity. Sheldon and Kendra both noted that, during the off-season there were more times for family dinners and shopping. In the case of Kendra, consumption is part of her family's ritualized behavior, and such consumption takes place out of necessity.

Consumption, as well as the increase in family activities and the amount of attention and time given to children, suggest that a father's return home from work is a festive time of inversion. The fact that a father is home with his children, after being away from home for so long, is enough of an inversion in itself to be festive. Being in each other's presence, in these cases, has an inherently celebratory quality about it.

The focus on togetherness is something that family scholars have pointed out as being important between a father and his children, but the ways in which people describe father-child time brings up important issues in this research. Esther Dermott describes two ways of fatherly involvement: (1) "being there" and (2) "intensive time." With the former, Dermott means "secondary activity without



active engagement” or “devoting a period of time exclusively to participation in activity that is child related” (Dermott 2008:49), but still considers it be passive due to a lack of direct engagement. For the latter, Dermott refers to a more active process: “focusing on playing together, talking, reading and teaching, and therefore involving communication on some level, on a one-to-one basis” (Dermott 2008:49).

Both Sheldon and Kendra’s fathers were busy for several months of the year, and were home the rest of the year. Breaks from fishing were short in duration and at times that were not always conducive to spending time together as a family, but were intended as recuperative periods for fathers preparing to go back out to fish. Thus, the time at home was a time for “being there,” being together as a family and, as Kendra described, not doing anything particular beyond that. For Kendra, however, the act of school shopping was an event in her family that marked the end of the work period and started the ritual period of being at home as a family. Given that Kendra and her brother were students, the practice of school shopping can also serve as part of the greater ritual of school starting for the academic year. As her father’s occupational life began to unwind for the year, Kendra’s would begin.

For Sheldon, there was nothing specific to mark the period at home with his father, but a then-weekly ritual of having Sunday dinner together served as a marker of home time. Thomas Adler, in a study of men who cooked for their families, noted that the “festal pattern of male cooking generates and maintains a celebratory attitude which shows up in the adoption of specialties, the preemption

of weekend meals and guest-dinners, or greater inclinations to experiment” (Adler 1981:51). Sheldon’s father cooking jiggs’ dinner on a Sunday when home from fishing fits well into this pattern. It was a ritual that was reinforced by his fathers’ presence at home. It was, however, a seasonal practice, as he points out: “You don’t do the same kind of things in the winter or fall; I find that my family has jiggs’ dinner every Sunday, but that doesn’t go from April to September because there’s nobody around” (Devine and O’Brien 2012). Part of the festivity that comes with Sunday dinners is the fact that, like festivals themselves, these times do not last all year.

As scholarship has pointed out, historically in Newfoundland gender roles at home were often complementary (Porter 1985:107, Pocius 1991:97 and Murray 1979:18-25). There were multiple instances in which my informants spoke of their fathers taking on household tasks that are usually associated more with women. Just as Kendra and her father bonded together, Sabrina noted that she and her father spent a great deal of time together when he was onshore, and that his time at home allowed their mother (who hated to cook) to have a break from these domestic responsibilities:

He’s always been pretty busy, but we definitely spent a lot of time together. He was never one to be at the house all day. He’d come home, and cook; he’s the cook in the house. My dad loves cooking, and he’d be gone, and my mom would cook eggs. We’d eat breakfast three times a day. [...] He’d always cook Sunday dinner, especially if he was home; when he’s gone, not so much. Someone else would cook, and we’d go over there, but if he’s home, he’d cook all of the time. It was a thing for my dad that, when he was home, he would wake up in the morning at seven and cook me breakfast before I went to school. That was his thing, kind of. (Pinksen 2012)

Though involved in a traditionally masculine occupation within Newfoundland, Sabrina's father nonetheless took on roles while at home that were traditionally associated with women. Rather than out of necessity, however, it was out of enjoyment, and a departure from the demands of his own career.

Some offshore workers appear to transgress, invert, or simply ignore typical gender roles for the sake of oneself and one's family. Sabrina's father is not the only father to break with gender stereotypes, and Robert and Tom were the main cooks while at home, and Allison proudly spoke about her father knowing how to knit. While these inversions of gender stereotypes are nothing new to the masculine world—occasional cooking is a traditionally male practice—the fact that frequent cooking is common for men such as Sabrina's father is a departure from the status quo, and stands in contrast to Sheldon's father's tradition of cooking Sunday dinner (Devine and O'Brien 2012).

From a historical perspective, scholars have noted that the connection between masculinity and domesticity changed dramatically during the Victorian era, when ideas of manhood shifted away from a domestically manly image towards a project of what historian Stephanie Olsen refers to as “imperial masculinity.” These ideas of masculinity, which emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, focused on “imperial, secular, bodily ‘muscularity’ “ (Olsen 2007:175), rather than a home-based, Christian-based form of manhood. Olsen notes that, although there was a significant shift away from the domesticity, it was still possible for individuals to embrace it, even if they were in the minority. Newfoundland

masculinities, according to Willeen Keough, were constructed “by deploying all the classical elements of conflict: man against man; man against nature; man against himself” (Keough 2010:134-135), rather than promoting a world where men worked “to maintain and defend the private, domestic world of marriage and family” (Keough 2010:134-135). Sabrina’s father cooking is a modern example of how the offshore occupations are a balance of what is domestic and what is imperial.

In some cases, such balance was necessary in a household where both parents worked. This was the case with Sabrina’s family, as her mother worked as a nurse and often worked at nights. At the same time, however, it is possible to see acts, such as cooking, as part of maintaining one’s own personal life, away from work, which comes with its own series of attitudes, processes and demands. David Collinson has noted that an increasing focus on home as a haven allows people to escape the demands of capitalism and seek “sanctuary” (Collinson 1998:305). People wish to escape from the influences of industrialism. Family life can therefore be a form of escape from the risks, dangers and struggles of offshore life, and this escape is manifested through acts such as cooking and school shopping, which then become festive inversions of daily life.

Like inversions and festive events, calendar customs can hold great importance. Of these, Christmas seems to hold the deepest meaning, and some fathers never missed it. An article on the ritual communication of Christmastime by Elizabeth Rytting points out that

the true holiday is thus set off by an active family ritual, as opposed to the perception of images...Practices that are repeated annually, in particular,

with varying degrees of ritualization, will acquire emotional significance and become themselves the things remembered.” (Nytting 2005:12)

Sabrina’s father made the effort to be home for Christmas while her mother, who had a land-based position as a nurse, was more likely to miss Christmas than her father was:

Oh, yeah, he was always home for Christmas, and that was just really the only holiday we kind of celebrated; it’s big in our house. We didn’t really celebrate Easter and stuff like that...me and my sister, our birthdays are in April, so he wasn’t there for that, but with the Christmas, it was a bigger problem with my mom because she had to work every second Christmas, that sort of thing. But he was always around for that...I don’t remember him being gone for those sort of things. It was more my friends’ parents who worked in Alberta, that kind of thing, and saying “My dad’s not going to be home for Christmas.” But mine always is. (Pinksen 2012)

Andrew noted that his father would strategically arrange his work schedule in a way that allowed him to be home for Christmas:

I think the way that he broke it up was that he would come home in the summer sometimes, and then he’d come home for a month at Christmas, and then another month, he’d break it up and come home for maybe two weeks at different times of the year, I think—if I can remember correctly. (Wade 2012)

This does not mean, however, that these professions are completely in line with, and responsive to, family rituals and traditions. In many cases, demands of offshore occupations result in men having to be away from their families on important holidays, and this is something that results in absence from birthdays, births, deaths, and many community holidays. This degree of absence is something that is not far from the mind of the young people I spoke with, and there is an awareness of the father’s and the child’s sacrifices. Both fathers and children regret missing many things. For example, Sheldon stated that his

father's fishing schedule meant that he was unable to come to Ottawa with Sheldon to help him move to university.

Sheldon pointed out to me, in an earlier conversation, that his father left school at the age of thirteen in order to work aboard a trawler boat. As noted above, leaving school was a common practice for young men during the pre-moratorium era of Newfoundland when education was not essential to maintaining a family fishery. Now that formal education is more highly valued, the role of high school graduations has achieved a new significance. Given that high school graduation is, according to psychologist Frank Fasick, "the symbol of entrance into young adulthood for the vast majority of young people" (Fasick 1988:467), it was important to many fathers in the community to do what they could to be present for their children's rite of passage. Sheldon and Kendra both described how fathers would attempt to make the necessary sacrifices at work to be present at their children's graduation:

Sheldon:

Oh, that's one thing I forgot to talk about- graduation is a big deal up the shore, and parents not going to it because of fishing- that's a big thing. When's it going on, it's the first week of May, and everyone is a big tangle—

Kendra:

--they're really into fishing at that point. My dad got in at 2 o'clock the day of my grad. He came in from fishing, the day of my grad, and he was exhausted. He was so tired...

Sheldon:

My dad got someone to cover for him.

Kendra:

My dad couldn't. He's a skipper.

Sheldon:  
(laughs) Oh, yeah, because he's a skipper.

Kendra:  
He does try to be there, because he does have the say of when the boat comes and goes, but that was a close call; he didn't know if he was going to make it...but he did. (Devine and O'Brien 2012)

As Kendra noted, it was not always possible for some fathers to be present, and Sabrina recounted that her father, in spite of being one of the speakers at her graduation, was initially noncommittal about whether or not he would be able to attend:

I remember that that was a big deal because my dad would say "I don't know if I'm going to make it, Sabrina, I don't know if I'm going to be there," and my dad—he's in public speaking, he was doing one of the speeches at my ceremony—kept going, "I don't know, Sabrina..." Eventually, he said "Okay, I'm going to be there, no matter what." His second-in-command would take over if he had something important to do. (Pinksen 2012)

Although the majority of my informants' fathers did not complete postsecondary education, they placed a heavy emphasis on their children attaining some form of it, whether through university studies or through attending a trade college. After discussing her father attending her graduation, Sabrina pointed out that her father did not want her and her sister entering his profession. When asked if she had ever thought of it herself, she said:

Not at all. We were expected to go to university and do something. If we had wanted, or expressed an interest in going out and taking it over, [then] it's good to have a son, because he could then take over his enterprise when [my dad] wants to retire- but my sister isn't into that. We were expected to get an education; he didn't want that for us. (Pinksen 2012)

Just as the fathers in Chapter Three said that they worked hard offshore to

prevent their children from having to do so themselves (and therefore preventing the obligations placed upon many of the male authors of Chapter Two), the young adults of this chapter acknowledge their parents' sacrifice, and express gratitude for their benevolence and caring.

### *Occupational Continuity, Emerging Adulthood and Secular Pilgrimage*

Within a community, the pressure to carry on in occupations such as fishing varies greatly, but research has shown that the decision to follow a different career path than one's parent gained increasing acceptance in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. A 2006 study by T. Bjarnason and T. Thorlindsson that examined migration expectations within Icelandic fishing and farming communities noted a decline in importance of geographic proximity, stating that

...the pursuit of education, employment or other interests beyond the home community no longer requires severing all ties with family and friends, or abandoning all hope of later return. In a very real sense, young people must make the decision to stay as consciously as they must make the decision to leave. (Bjarnason and Thorlindsson 2006: 297-298)

Craig Palmer and Peter Sinclair, in looking at community and family expectations among young residents of Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula, state that migration is not simply due to a lack of employment options or a lack of connection to traditional lifeways:

Young women may be as likely as young men to migrate, and about as likely to inherit land and a house if they stay, thus ending the previous pattern of male-only inheritance of land and houses. Family histories of participation in particular aspects of the cod fishery will also have little to do with which individuals migrate. Nor will the extent of participation in traditional activities help predict who will leave. Attempts to lessen this migration, or to at least reduce its consequences for the area, will be further complicated by the large number of young people who not only



expect to have to leave the area, but even desire to do so. (Palmer and Sinclair 2000: 44)

The majority of my informants expressed an openness to potentially entering their fathers' occupations, and did not express hostility towards it, even if they chose a different path for themselves. Sheldon discussed how fishing was valued in Ferryland, and he believed it would survive the changes. He also noted that young people were encouraged to engage in specific aspects of the fishery:

Fishing is always going to be up the Shore—it's always going to be passed on—but it's like every generation has been told about it in sort of a different way. Now, there's not that many people interested in fishing, because it's hard work and a shitty schedule, but they say that, if you're going to do it, get your skipper's ticket, [and] not just [be] a deckhand, because a deckhand is pretty much slavery. If you're a student, the plant is highly recommended by everyone; my parents would rather than I work and stay home in Ferryland, because it's more than the minimum wage. [...] I guess it's all about passing it on to the next generation, but they don't want you to do it as a career; if you're there, there's no reason why you shouldn't be there, and it's high praise when you do go there. (Devine and O'Brien 2012)

As Sheldon indicates, working in a fish plant, particularly as a youth or a young adult, is an occupational activity that can receive high praise within a community. That said, locals understand it as a stepping-stone towards something else, as fish plants are vulnerable to both occupational hazards and economic instabilities. John C. Kennedy notes that the transition from familial fisheries towards fish plants created a sense of distance among family members (Kennedy 2008: 310), while Dona Davis's study of Grey Rock Harbour brings up the troubles (and subsequent closures) of fish plants which are managed from afar and lack proper community connections (Davis 2000:346). As I conducted this fieldwork, no fewer than five fish plants closed throughout the province,

putting at least six hundred people out of work (MacLeod 2012). While the fish plant is an opportunity to make a decent living, it is nonetheless a shaky scenario for many rural Newfoundlanders. This reality leads to parents pushing their children to move towards other occupations, and to often view seasonal work in a fish plant as a means to another end, such as funding higher education.

For those of my informants who had parents working away from the province, there was never a push to follow the same vocation as their parents, but there was certainly an emphasis on having a “good job,” as well as a career that would guarantee one a constant living. For Andrew, entering a trade was something that his father, a boilermaker, supported, yet did not necessarily expect Andrew to pursue:

He never pushed us to get a trade, but it's a good, hard earning; you earn your money when you work. He says you've got to use your hands, and get dirty, and you earn the money you make. He says it's really good money, and you never run out of work because there's always going to be something. You might go, for a time, where there is no work, but there always will be work eventually. So he did say that, if we wanted to go into a trade, that he would support it, because it's good money and hard work; you earn your pay. But he never pushed us to do it. He's happy that I'm in the education programme. (Wade 2012)

Much like the fathers of Chapter Two, Andrew's father emphasized hard work and encouraged his children to do likewise, even if it was not in his profession.

Michelle, noted that her career path was greatly connected to the benefits of what her father's occupation provided:

I've kind of fell into what I'm doing; it wasn't a goal necessarily. It worked out really well for me, but the paths that I took that led me to where I am didn't really have anything to do with Dad, other than him providing me with a good education, and support to be able to make those moves. (Chidley 2012b)

The emphasis on finding “good work” or receiving a quality education, in the cases of my informants, trumped pressure to enter any of the offshore occupations. Mike Chidley, in fact, discouraged young people from doing so, saying that education was more important than other benefits:

It's not for everyone, definitely not for everyone; I wouldn't encourage any young person to get into it. I'm big on education; education gives you choices in life, and I'd rather see a kid get educated. If you want to go offshore then, be an engineer or whatever, then do it, but without an education, many guys like myself, with no post-secondary education—I needed to go to marine college to get my ticket, I suppose—it doesn't give you a big pile of choices in life. (Chidley 2012c)

Just as Mike wanted Michelle and her brother to earn an education, it is important to note that all of my young informants felt that encouragement from their parents. While offshore work had potential rewards, their fathers believed that education had more, and would be more meaningful than exposing oneself to a difficult and risky profession, even if that profession had high regard. In looking at my earlier examinations of men who worked offshore, there was very little connection between the work that the men did and the occupational lifestyles of their parents. Many of the men had fathers displaced from one occupation, only to enter another. In some cases, due to economic instability or other related factors, they were involved in several occupations. (Gerry Murphy, having aided his father to move to Alberta, and eventually find employment in Nigeria, is an exception.)

Some of my informants, however, did not find their educational ventures to be enjoyable. Not long after our interview, Sheldon decided to do a trade course

in occupational health and safety, claiming that university was not something he particularly enjoyed. Having previously gone to university in Ottawa for a year, Sheldon told me that he did so to leave home and see more of the world, rather than going for the education. As I write this thesis, he is preparing to go out to Western Canada for work, and is doing so in order to maintain a base in Newfoundland. Having lived away from home once before, he has no plans to reside anywhere else.

Sabrina, who is still at Memorial at the time of this writing, has a sister living in Calgary, and spent some time with her during high school. Her Alberta experience would eventually lead her to take a year off from her university studies and go out west in search of employment. She stated that she felt obligated to do so, yet had a deep desire to stay in St. John's, and eventually returned after a period. Andrew, who graduated from Memorial in the summer of 2013, decided to stay in the area and work in the local school district, but he is among the only of my younger informants who decided to seek work locally upon completing their studies.

If connectedness to home is a marker of success, it is possible to say that the process of going away, whether for work, studies, or self-realization, has been, for many of my informants, a secular pilgrimage that wavers in terms of prominence within Newfoundland. With Newfoundland having a stronger economy than in the 1990s, being able to work at home, or work away but remain a Newfoundland resident, is preferable for many youth such as Sheldon, who personally felt like an outsider while living in Ontario. Sheldon

simultaneously chose to work away and remain in a community of Newfoundlanders, and his desire is not something that is out of the ordinary for people who choose to live in one place and work in another. Debra Lattanza Shutika, in her examination of labour migration between Mexico and the United States, notes that migration fits well within life's rites of passages, describing it "as part of a larger life cycle of events that begins with the first passage to the United States and ends with the death of the migrant" (Shutika 2011:171). According to Shutika, movement and migration start early, and end quite late in life, fitting into the larger picture of one's life.

Going on to describe it as a journey, and something that "signifies figurative movement within a place, such a 'journey as personal growth,' and allows for the possibility of a deep engagement in place," Shutika is quick to note that a labour migration journey does not disparage one's home or one's present location. Her research points out that, for many Mexican migrant workers, transnational mobility did little to sever relationships between current location and home:

Working and living in the United States was the beginning of a new phase in the settlers' lives that altered their relationships with their natal community but did not terminate them. Consequently, migration was a journey between heterogeneous places that were also shaped by the journey between the two. (Shutika 2011:171)

The worldview of Shutika's informants is also evident among the young adults I interviewed, especially those who had spent time living away from home.

Michelle spoke very proudly of her heritage and how it plays a role in how she views her current home in Alberta:

...I guess I come at it from a different perspective. I see being from a have-not province, and living in Alberta where there's a lot of opportunity, and a lot of money, and a lot of good things, the money flows through the economy, right? There's a ton of restaurants, and theater, and stuff happening, and it's only because there's people spending money everywhere, and it trickles through the economy. But the people there don't necessarily appreciate that, and don't know what it's like to not have that. They take it for granted, and there are Albertans that don't appreciate the money that they get from their resource revenue, [or] the benefit they get from resource revenue; oil and gas accounts for half of the provincial budget, either through royalties, land leases, or tax. It's a big deal, but coming from Newfoundland, I look at it differently, and get frustrated with people sometimes...(Chidley 2012b).

Having friends whose fathers were out of work during the moratorium, and struggling to find employment in Atlantic Canada following university, Michelle realizes that she did not experience the same struggle as many fishing families when she was growing up, but neither does she take prosperity for granted. She does not share what she perceives as a typical Albertan worldview.

Shutika's description of the "journey" applies to offshore and migratory labour in Newfoundland, one that is rooted in occupation and economics, and beneficial to the self. Informants such as Sheldon and Kendra, who admitted that the discussion of the entire experience was at times unsettling and unusual to verbalize, reflect how offshore labour (whether in the fishery, aboard an oil tanker, or out in the Athabasca oil sands) is the continuance of a long-standing history of migration in Newfoundland.

While it is not a mandatory rite of passage, scholars have found that migration has advantages. According to Douglas Massey, the inherently social nature of migration, combined with the extensive community connections established through return migration, builds further social capital for a group

already rich with it (Massey et al. 1987:170-171). In her doctoral research, Debra Shutika argued that, for Mexican migrants in the Kennett Square neighborhood of Philadelphia, migration allowed for the development of friendships, employment networking, and community engagement, all of which guided further migration (Shutika 2001:112). At the same time, migration also came with drawbacks, and my informants were more ready to acknowledge the drawbacks at a time where many of them are either returning from, or about to engage in migration. Only Michelle Chidley spoke positively about living away from home.

Like their parents, young adults' emphasis of the importance of carrying on with one's typical routine as a strategy to manage their parents' work cycles. Children are equally responsible for "getting on with life" as their parents. In many cases, they must take on additional responsibilities, such as caring for siblings and taking on their father's household duties. For these children—now young adults who are either beginning educations or careers—their fathers' work required them to constantly switch roles, whether in terms of occupational life, gender roles, or familial roles. Being in the liminal state between childhood and adulthood, many of them narrated the stresses of taking on those duties while attending school (and in some cases, working outside of the home), and the struggle to properly represent their experiences of a lifestyle that few people discuss within a community.

My informants expressed empathy for their parents who were forced to live away from home in order to offer their families economic stability. They recognized their sacrifices. For example, Sheldon and Kendra both described not

recognizing their fathers growing up, and noted that it must have been hard for their parents to experience that distance:

Sheldon:

My mom always tries to get me to be around when my dad comes home. She makes sure that I'm there, and that I'm awake when he comes home, but lately, I'm never home anyway, so I get the guilt trip. My mom said when I was younger that I wouldn't remember my dad if he was gone for a while; I wouldn't remember who he was throughout the summer—

Kendra:

--I was like that too—I remember it, and I remember that my dad was so heartbroken. That's a really strong memory for me, that I didn't know who he was...

NH:

So was this when you were really young?

Kendra:

Yeah, I was about four or five, and Mom and Dad were still married. I remember that he came in the house, and I didn't know who he was, and I started freaking out—

Sheldon:

--yeah, I used to cry because I didn't know who he was—

Kendra:

That has to be hard on the parents—their own children not to know them—it's tough. (Devine and O'Brien 2012)

Although these instances happened when Sheldon and Kendra were very young, they later became markers of the personal costs of their fathers' employment. Michelle spoke about beginning university in Nova Scotia, and how a particular moment helped her better understand her father's feelings of loss at being away from his family:

That's the one thing I would say, that I would have preferred to have my dad, but he wanted us to have a good life. And he provided it. And we're a close family now; I don't think it hurt us. But it's those memories. He wrote



me a letter when I was going away to university, and left it with my mom, because he was gone. I was leaving to go away to university and in the letter was stuff he had never said to me before, about how he feels like he missed my whole childhood. That is hard. It's those memories that you can't recreate. (Chidley 2012b)

The narratives in this chapter demonstrate that adult children understand the sacrifices that commuting for work demands. Parent-child time decreases, relationships are affected, and perceptions of parents are shaped. The resignation of both youth and their parents to the necessity of offshore and migratory work for the economic good of the family, however, prevents many of these realities from becoming part of a widely shared public narrative.

### *Conclusion*

Michelle's comments regarding her father's sacrifices echo that of the outport narrators from Chapter Two. Unlike many of these narratives, however, stories such as Michelle's and Kendra's highlight the losses that can come from offshore and migratory labour, as well as their parents' regret at not being able to be more physically present. There is a very delicate balance between pointing out the negative effects of having fathers working away, and recognizing that the sacrifices were responsible for creating opportunities for children to succeed without having to work offshore, or go elsewhere for employment. Parents worked in these positions so that their children would not have to do so.

These young adults, now living away from their home communities, have developed a more distanced perspective about their experiences of growing up with fathers who work offshore. Andrew thought it was important for people to

know "that the lack of a male in the household, and in the family- it does have an effect on myself, and I didn't realize it, but it does have an effect" (Wade 2012).

Andrew wants to do things differently than his father did, yet he did not completely write off his childhood. He simply acknowledged that the lifestyle has both positive and negative aspects, and that, although he did not realize it as a child, he grew to better understand the repercussions as he grew into adulthood. Andrew's story, and his understanding of it, have changed with time.

The young people's narratives centred on topics such as risk, sacrifice, and the need to maintain routine. They share many traits with published recollections of outport fathers (e.g., focusing on being hard-working and responsible), with fathers' occupational and family narratives (being aware of the effects of the lifestyle on other family members), and with mothers' experiences of the offshore labour cycle (being present on land to negotiate the experience through routine, and having to sacrifice one's own emotions for the sake of others). The final section of this thesis will conclude by summarizing the findings of this research, discussing connections between chapters, and establishing groundwork for potential future research in the field.

## Chapter 6: Concluding Thoughts

In this thesis, I have examined personal narratives in order to explore how offshore fathers discuss their work experiences, and how their families understand and cope with the occupation's demands. Fathers' work in the offshore oil fields involves a great deal of sacrifice. My informants stressed a need for routine and the belief that going about one's daily life is the best strategy for negotiating the constant changes that come with the rotating work schedule. All family members sacrifice their personal needs for the sake of the family. This may be through a parent either leaving their children behind to work offshore, through being left to take care of children alone, or through a child becoming responsible for younger siblings. All of these acts are routine practices that are part of "getting on" with life. Festive periods of being together as a family during time off serve as a reward for dealing with routine practices. Furthermore, being able to live in Newfoundland, and raise one's family there in relative economic stability, is a reward in itself.

I started this thesis with a scholarly analysis of masculinities research, focusing on the scope of research within the discipline of folklore, within Newfoundland studies, and within scholarship on fatherhood. Within the field of folklore, psychoanalytic theory had a significant impact on masculinities scholarship with its emphasis on both feminization and deep play (Dundes 2003, Bronner 2004). As more folklorists entered the realm of masculinity studies, and incorporated the approaches of feminist and queer theory into scholarship (Taft

1997, Robidoux 2012, Greenhill and Fehr 2014) the theoretical approach became broader and better rounded.

In Newfoundland, ideas about masculinity come from local, community-based knowledge, some of which connect with larger notions of masculinities in Canada. Scholars have noted that the promotion of male physicality (Keough 2010), the engagement with natural settings (Pocius 1991), and an emphasis on participation in both resource extraction and personal mobility (Davis 1993, Sullivan 1994), popularly shape perceptions of Canadian masculinities. Newfoundlanders and Canadians continue to take advantage of opportunities such as mining, drilling, fishing for snow crab, or felling trees for the paper industry in order to ensure financial stability. My informants are involved in resource extraction, albeit in a new context. Rather than fishing for cod, or working in a local mine, they are crane operators in Angola, dynamic positioning operators aboard tankers, or even chefs aboard an oil platform. Regardless of their role in the extraction, they are nonetheless part of a larger occupational tradition that continues to shape Newfoundland, as well as Canadian, conceptions of masculinity.

Chapter Two discussed how elderly Newfoundlanders, through the medium of locally published life stories, not only narrate their experiences of growing up in outport communities, but also share their memories of their fathers. In telling their life stories, authors elaborated on the role of parents in their early lives. Within these accounts, tellers discuss their fathers' presence in their lives, and show how fathers in rural Newfoundland maintained the simultaneous roles

of worker, transmitter of morals and values, and benevolent provider both to family and community. These life stories typically chose to focus on the positive aspects of their father's role in the author's life, as well as his heroic experiences of encountering danger and risk while at sea. They portray their fathers as being strong, morally-driven, and hard-working providers. The author's accounts served as a publicly oriented performance of both family and outport life that could not only be enjoyed by family and community members, but also help promote nostalgia for an earlier age.

A longing to return home, and a desire to remain rooted in Newfoundland life, was a major theme in Chapter Three, which examined the personal experiences of Newfoundland fathers who have been involved in the offshore industries. For nearly all of my male informants, the collapse of the fishery, as well as the Newfoundland economy, resulted in them having to leave the province in order to seek out work. The offshore industries were, for many of them, an opportunity to return home to raise families, remain close to the outport communities where many of them grew up, and create a stronger sense of economic stability. Just as the narrators of Chapter Two focused on their fathers as conveying moral values and emphasizing the importance of hard work as a way to assert their role as outport men, the informants of Chapter Three expressed a desire to provide for families, promote the value of education and a good living, and emphasize the importance of the place in which they were born. Offshore labour was, therefore, an opportunity, to assert some of the traditional values of past outport life, such as hard work and heroism in the face of danger

and risk. Unlike the collapsed present-day fishery, however, offshore work guaranteed greater economic stability and a more reliable work schedule.

The structure of the offshore lifestyle is not only something that affects workers (who are, as Mike Chidley states, always turning their hat around), but also their family members, and the last two chapters focus on the impact of such forms of labour on families, in particular wives and children. The wives of offshore workers are not only responsible for maintaining a household during their husbands' absence, but also for guiding children through the cycles of offshore labour. In looking at the labour cycle as a ritual cycle, it is not only possible to point out the common experiences of mothers back on the island, but also demonstrate how their role in maintaining a sense of home, and a sense of routine, is essential for children.

The fifth and final chapter examines how young adults, having grown up in families where their fathers went away for work, frame their experiences of both loss and joy within the offshore labour cycle. Their fathers' work schedules often resulted in youth having to temporarily become part of other households and communities during their fathers' absences. This created a sense of liminality for them at certain points of the year as well as a space for shared identification between themselves and the other children in the community. By ritualizing offshore forms of labour, and creating a form of routine that is ingrained into daily life but not frequently talked about, many young Newfoundlanders are incorporated into the offshore labour cycle.

In regards to offshore labour in Atlantic Canada, there is a need for more research on these forms of labour as a ritual process that, like many rites of passages, involves processes of separation, liminality and reintegration. As I have proposed, in the ritual processes surrounding offshore labor, mothers who are at home with their children identify with the experiences of single parents. Part of understanding the ritual aspects of the offshore lifestyle also involves accepting that some aspects of the ritual are private, and deserving of proper respect from ethnographers. Jack Santino, in his examination of ritual displays in Northern Ireland, points out that while “all rituals are display events...not all rituals are necessarily public” (Santino 2001:29). For some families, ritual is not always publicly shared and routine is just as important, if not more important, than ritual, and future examinations of ritual call for more examination, and appreciation of, the power of routine.

The ritual processes also bring up the need for future research on youth migration. As this scholarship has largely been focused on young adults who are going away for the purpose of traveling, rather than for studies or work, further research could provide a perspective on how younger generations (especially those who come from recently returned families) engage in traveling away from home in order to return home to settle in Newfoundland. How do the current generation’s motivations to move away stand in comparison to that of their parents’ generation?

The frequent inversions of gender and family roles during an offshore father’s time at home point to new directions on research concerning

masculinities in Newfoundland. Many studies of what it means to be male in Newfoundland have focused heavily on traditional notions of gender in outport communities, but very few have focused on how people understand gender in the urban and suburban areas of the province. As nearly two-fifths of the province's population now lives in the St. John's metropolitan area, its influence on provincial culture is undeniable, and a case study of how the urban influences play a role in masculinities would be beneficial to studies on offshore life and fatherhood.

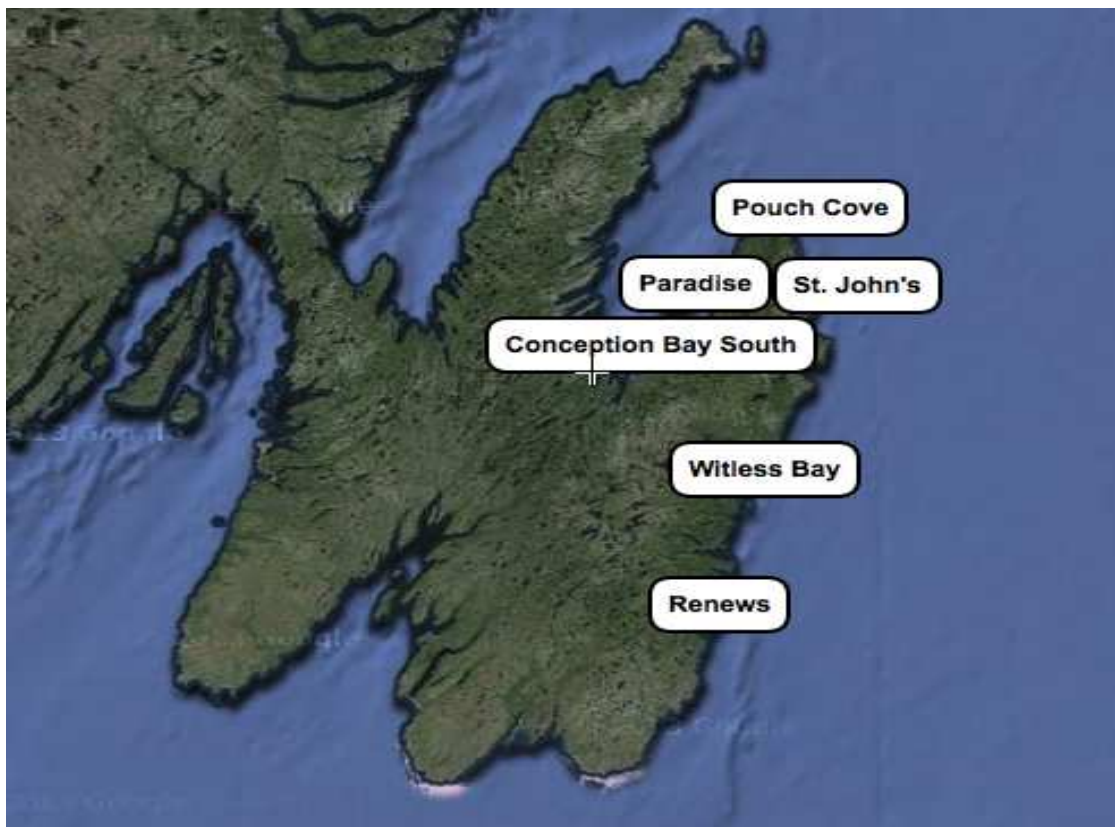
Several scholarly accounts have focused very heavily on the negative effects of offshore life, suggesting that families are torn apart, divorces are more prominent, and that the occupations are physically, emotionally, and socially stressful on those who either work in them or are connected to those who do. In Newfoundland, my research suggests that at least some families see offshore labour as providing positive benefits. Even though the lifestyle involves a great deal of personal and familial sacrifice, and there are certainly regrets among fathers for not being more present in their children's lives, working offshore is publicly narrated as a positive opportunity. Fathers are able to simultaneously provide for their families, acquire more time at home with their spouses and children, and engage in professions that simultaneously carry on traditions such as a belief in hard work, personal sacrifice for family benefit, and working away from home to provide for the family. Rather than being directly linked to the sea as a way of asserting masculinity, however, the sea, in this case, is more metaphorical. The sea, much like masculinity overall, is multivocal. The offshore



lifestyle at the centre of this thesis represents a rich location for folklore study of constructions of masculinity in the context of particular occupational and family traditions.

## Appendix 1: The Fieldwork Process

Fieldwork for this thesis took place between April and August 2012, largely focusing on residents of communities on the Avalon Peninsula, where a large portion of the offshore-related activity in Newfoundland takes place. St. John's is the major hub for the offshore industry in the province, and the Isthmus of Avalon region, with both the Bull Arm fabrication plant and the Come by Chance Refinery, also plays a major role in the economic activity of the peninsula (Storey 2011).



*Figure 1: Sites of Fieldwork, Avalon Peninsula, Newfoundland. Map by author.*

Fieldwork took place in multiple communities, but the majority of my nineteen informants lived, as shown in Figure 1, in the eastern part of the Avalon

Peninsula: St. John's, Pouch Cove, Paradise, Conception Bay South, Witless Bay, and Renews-Cappahayden. In addition, four of my informants are currently based in St. John's, but maintain connections to family homes in the communities of Wild Cove, Conception Harbour, Calvert, and Ferryland, respectively. These informants (two men, two women) were post-secondary students at either Memorial University or Academy Canada, and interviews with them took place on campus at Memorial as a way to provide a familiar location for conversation. Another informant, while currently based in Calgary, Alberta, spent most of her childhood years in Renews-Cappahayden.

The majority of my fieldwork took place within suburban areas of St. John's. While driving to conduct interviews, I received directions to look for subdivision signs, and, interestingly enough, some of my informants were among the first residents of a new neighborhood. Some of the houses were so new that they had yet to complete landscape work, and some of them were among the few houses on their block, reflecting a changing landscape and a recent prosperity among communities. Even among informants living furthest away from St. John's, people still stated that their community no longer felt rural, as the city was still so close and accessible.

I initially intended to interview a total of four to six families with children, utilizing repeat trips to visit them in order to better understand their family life when the father is home. During the fieldwork process, however, I realized that the families were able to say what they needed to say within one session, and that repeated visits were not necessary. I was also sensitive to the fact that

families might prefer to spend time together while the father is home, rather than devote a large amount of time to a young folklorist knocking on the door with a digital recorder. As well, I came to appreciate that the transition from work to home is also one that is not necessarily easy for working fathers to make, much less talk about to a stranger.

While I continued to have contact with some of my informants after the interview, and many of them assisted me in providing informants and advice for fieldwork leads, follow-up was extremely difficult with the majority of my informants. Though I attempted follow-up contacts, less than a third responded, while the rest simply did not reply to my messages. As a result, I draw from my interviews in much detail, while focusing on the quality of the narrative, rather than the number of narrators. I believe that this approach to examining narratives allows for a more intimate examination of each family. While I wish I had more interest from families, I believe that I made the most out of my collected data.

When determining the youngest appropriate age for an interview, I initially decided that the children should be, at the absolute youngest, in kindergarten, as it seemed to be an age when the children would be able to express their thoughts and be comfortable with strangers asking them about their fathers going away for work. During the fieldwork process, the children remained close to their parents, who were able to provide them with ways to think about their fathers going away for work. I did not sense that parental absence would affect the information my young informants gave me during the interview process. The presence of either parent provided a sense of safety and comfort for all involved.

Overall, however, my interviews with young children did not turn out to be as successful as I had hoped, as many children of current offshore workers are simply too young to be interviewed, and many of the families that I did interview were fairly new to fatherhood. Simply put, it was a product of circumstance. Instead, I was able to interview people between the ages of 18 and 30, who grew up as children of either fishermen or migratory workers. For them, the memories of being young were still fresh in their minds, as they were among the first generation of children to grow up with fathers working in places such as Alberta. Their perspectives on their fathers was also valuable for understanding the effects of labour migration on families.

Recruiting informants took place via a variety of methods. My initial informants came through personal connections, such as attending the same religious services or working in the same place, my sessional instructorship through Memorial, and through previous research projects throughout my student years. Those initial connections were part of the “snowball effect,” in which I was able to find more informants through talking to initial informants and connections, and which allowed me to conduct intensive amounts of fieldwork in a short amount of time.

A more public manner of recruitment took place via two channels. First, Facebook groups for Newfoundland and Labrador parents, as well as Southern Shore oilfield workers, were groups that allowed for public posts and gave my project some exposure throughout the province. In addition, I created a recruitment flyer explaining my research, copying and distributing it throughout

the Southern Shore region. With the help of my wife, I spent one day driving between St. John's and Cappahayden, posting flyers in grocery stores, gas bars, restaurants, convenience stores, and the occasional post office. I also utilized the help of friends and coworkers from other communities around the Avalon, who agreed to post flyers in their respective hometowns.

Overall, posting flyers was not a highly successful endeavor, but it did attract the attention of a few families throughout the Southern Shore, who contacted me after seeing my posts in community post offices. The following list of people includes a biographical description of each family that took part in the study. I have retained the actual names of some informants, while changing others as per their request.

- 1) Oleg and Joy Rybakov are a middle-aged couple residing in Pouch Cove, Newfoundland and Labrador. Oleg, originally from Murmansk, Russia (located in northwestern Russia, and the largest city north of the Arctic Circle), has worked for several years as a marine engineer, and currently works on a trawler boat based out of Argentia. His schedule is four weeks offshore and four weeks at home. Joy, who is originally from Valleyfield (now part of New-Wes-Valley), Newfoundland, works as an architectural designer, and together, she and Oleg have one son, Nathan, who was four at the time of the interview. Oleg comes from an area where offshore labour is the dominant trade, and he estimates that 70 percent of the labour force in Murmansk is involved to some extent. Joy grew up in a

community where the majority of the work force, including her father, went away for work for an extended period.

- 2) Sheldon O'Brien is in his early twenties and was a post-secondary student from Ferryland, Newfoundland and Labrador. Sheldon's father was born in Ferryland and works as a seasonal deckhand, while his mother is disabled and makes supplemental income cleaning houses. Sheldon initially went to Carleton University in Ottawa to study journalism, but later transferred to Memorial University to study communication studies, and finally to Academy Canada to study occupational health with the intention of working out west.
- 3) Kendra Devine was born in Calvert, Newfoundland and Labrador, is in her mid-twenties, and was a student at Academy Canada in St. John's, as well as a fish plant worker in Bauline East. The older of two children, Kendra's father worked offshore as a boat captain, while her mother moved to Alberta upon divorcing her father while Kendra was still in secondary school. Kendra and Sheldon were interviewed together, as they were close friends.
- 4) Robert, Jeanne, and Lily (who elected to use pseudonyms) are a family residing in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. Robert is in his forties, and was originally from a community in Conception Bay. Robert first worked offshore in the early 1980s, and then was employed for several years in the hospitality industry in both Alberta and Newfoundland.

Looking for a change of working environment, he left the industry to return to offshore work as a nighttime baker on an oil platform. Electing to leave the field after only a couple of years, Robert has worked in construction for the last five years. Jeanne, who is Francophone and from Quebec, works full-time for the federal government, and their daughter, Lily, was in the third grade. (They have another son, who at the time of the fieldwork was only five, and was too young to interview.) Neither Robert nor Jeanne comes from families in which offshore or migratory labour was common, although Jeanne had one family member who was a part of the Canadian armed forces.

- 5) Tom, Terri and Emma (who elected to use pseudonyms) are a family residing in Conception Bay South, Newfoundland and Labrador. Tom and Terri, a middle-aged couple, came from the same community in Placentia Bay. They had a daughter, Emma, who was in the first grade, as well as a toddler-aged son who was too young to interview at the time. Tom, who has worked as a drilling controller/operator for over ten years, spends three weeks offshore and three weeks at home. Terri works full-time as a social worker in St. John's. Tom's father moved the entire family to Fort MacMurray following the loss of his job in the 1970s, while Terri's father worked short stints in Ontario on a regular basis. While Terri never had to leave the province as a child, Tom spent eleven years in Alberta, and immediately returned home to Newfoundland upon finishing high school.



- 6) Marsha is in her mid-thirties, and was on maternity leave from a foreign energy company, where she worked as a safety officer aboard a seismic testing vessel. Originally from a town on the Burin Peninsula, Marsha lives in Paradise, Newfoundland and Labrador, with her husband, who worked offshore as a mechanic for another seismic testing vessel. Marsha had a background as an offshore worker, as she studied petroleum engineering technology at College of the North Atlantic before working abroad for several years. Her first son was born nine months before my fieldwork sessions, and she gave birth to a second son after my fieldwork was completed.
- 7) Gerry and Allison Murphy, both in their early thirties, have been married since 2010, and have two children (both of whom, at ages four and one, were too young to interview), in Witless Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador. Gerry was born and raised in Mobile, and has been working as an offshore crane operator for the past seven years. Allison used to work in retail, but now stays at home with the children. She is from Calvert, where she grew up in a fishing family. Gerry and Alison both lived and worked in Alberta for several years, but returned to Newfoundland to raise their family. Gerry's father entered the industry through Gerry himself, and currently works in Nigeria.
- 8) Sabrina Pinksen is in her twenties and originally from Wild Cove, a small community on the Baie Verte Peninsula. At the time of the interview, Sabrina lived in St. John's, where she was a student at Memorial

University and worked in the hospitality industry. Her father is a fisherman in Wild Cove who catches crab, capelin and mackerel and often spends weeks at a time away from home. He is still active in the fishery, while Sabrina's mother works as a nurse.

- 9) Andrew Wade is a student in his early twenties who, at the time, was majoring in education at Memorial University. Andrew grew up in Conception Harbour, Newfoundland and Labrador, where he was the youngest of three sons. His mother worked for the provincial court system as a reporter, while his father worked at the construction site of the Long Harbour Nickel Processing Plant, which was to open at the end of 2013. Before that, Andrew's father was an ironworker and boilermaker in Alberta for several years, and often had to work an eight-month stretch at a time before returning to Newfoundland for four months at home.
- 10) Mike Chidley, 62, is a native of Renews, Newfoundland and Labrador, and a Town Councillor for Renews-Cappahayden. A dynamic positioning operator who leaves home three times a year for work, Mike was among the first residents of Renews to begin working offshore, beginning in the 1990s. Before that, he worked in western Canada on construction crews and pursued other endeavors as well. His wife, Mary, taught special education classes for many years in schools along the Southern Shore, and his daughter, Michelle, who is married and living in Calgary (but grew up in Renews), works in communications and government relations for the oil and gas industry.

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