(RE)HISTORICIZATION OF THE PAST AT THE ROYAL NEWFOUNDLAND REGIMENT GALLERY OF THE ROOMS

By Nadia Sarwar

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Folklore

Memorial University of Newfoundland

December 2019

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

Abstract

This thesis investigates the representation of history about Newfoundlanders' contribution to the First World War in The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery at The Rooms. Taking an ethnographic approach and focusing on the representation of war history in a provincial museum setting, I discuss the museum as an institution of power that functions through constructing, presenting and circulating certain ideological messages among visitors, volunteers and staff members. Elaborating on The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery of The Rooms as a representational space, I demonstrate how the stories and displays of the exhibit have been placed in provincially legitimized representations to derive a particular understanding of the past. Finding a relation between myth and memory, this research further examines The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery as a site of fabricating public memory, a place of providing history education as well as a space of constructing national and place identity. Finally, considering the functioning of the produced ideological messages and identifying visitors', volunteers' and staff members' perspectives, this thesis asserts the importance of addressing alternative narratives in addition to producing grand narratives while representing history in a museum setting.

Key Words: The Rooms, First World War, Museum Representation, Public Memory, History Education, Identity, and Ideology.

Acknowledgements

My heartiest thanks to the staff members of The Rooms for cordially receiving me as a researcher. Without their constant support and co-operation, the completion of this project was nearly impossible. Thanks to all the staff who managed to sit for long interviews and shared their valuable opinions and knowledge to make this research happen. Thanks to all the front desk staff of The Rooms who received me very warmly and jovially each time. A special thanks to Maureen Power and Angela Noseworthy who helped me graciously throughout various stages of my thesis and let me work independently with the exhibit without any interruption. I would like to show my gratitude to the volunteers of The Rooms for supporting my research through giving interviews and sharing their ideas about Newfoundland history and culture. I owe much thanks to Michael Pretty and Jane Severe for their valuable time and also for enlightening me about Newfoundland's legacies to the First World War and exhibit planning. A heartiest thanks to Dale Jarvis who responded very generously whenever I was in need of help. Thanks to all the visitors and tourists to The Rooms who showed generosity in sitting for interviews, sharing their ideas and taking visits to the exhibit in my company.

I can't thank enough all the faculty, staff members and students of the Department of Folklore, at Memorial University for all of their support during this research project. A special thanks to Dr. Kelley Totten and Dr. Daniel Peretti for showing interest in my research and helping me out with their suggestions. My heartiest thanks to Pauline Cox and Nicole Penny for all of their support with the equipment that I used for interviewing and taking pictures. My sincere thanks to all of my classmates who have been co-operating with me since I commenced my degree program. Thanks to Natalie Dignam and Katie Crane for sharing their knowledge about Newfoundland culture and First World War history. A special thanks to my friend, Vanessa Johnson, for sharing the readings and ideas related to my research topic.

Dr. Holly Everett has always been a best advisor to me, and I am really lucky to have her as my supervisor. She shows the generosity of giving me time and sharing her books. I am really grateful for all her patience, kindness and encouragement throughout the whole project. Because of her invaluable assistance of guiding me and keeping me on track, I owe a lot to her.

As last but not the least, I appreciate all the support, motivation and inspiration that I always get from my parents. I can't thank my husband enough for his constant contribution to this project by sharing his ideas, helping me out with the tiresome jobs like transcribing, typing excerpts from books, aiding me to find books and references from library and also taking care of our son. My five-year-old son has always been the ultimate source of happiness for me. Whenever I felt frustrated, I used to look at his face which helped me to get back to work with full enthusiasm. Commencing an MA degree is always challenging, and I thank God for making me able to take this endeavor.

Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Placing History in Context	20
2.1 Why/ How did Newfoundland Get Involved in the First World War?	20
2.2 Creating the Great War Myth Surrounding Beaumont Hamel	27
2.3 Commemorating the First World War in Newfoundland	39
2.4 Has the Necessity of Securing Official History and Public Commemoration of the First World War Ended?	43
Chapter 3. From Representation of History to the Production of Meaning	47
3.1 Describing the Exhibit	49
3.2 Understanding Museum's Representation of History	76
3.3 Creating the Exhibit	88
3.4 A Critical Note	95
Chapter 4: The Interplay of Myth, Memory, Knowledge and Identity	112
4.1 Constructing a Site of Public Commemoration	113
4.2 A Place of Attaining History Education	121
4.3 Forming a Basis for (Re)Constructing National and Place Identity	134
Conclusion	149
Bibliography	153
Appendix	160

List of Figures

Figure 1: The “Courtyard and Amphitheatre”
Figure 2: The Main Entrance of The Rooms with a Caribou Statue
Figure 3: Entrance to the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery
Figure 4: The “Faces of Valour”
Figure 5: The Story of Eliza Strong
Figure 6: Text Panel Declaring Newfoundland’s Connection to Britain
Figure 7: Advertisement for Recruitment
Figure 8: “Britain Declares War”: The Global Map and British Empire
Figure 9: Various Dresses Worn During the War
Figure 10: Text Panel Depicting NPA’s Recruitment Effort
Figure 11: The Knitted Socks
Figure 12: Soldiers’ Journey to Overseas by S.S. Florizel
Figure 13: Text Panel Describing Soldiers’ Experience in Overseas
Figure 14: “Beaumont-Hamel: France July 1st, 1916”
Figure 15: The “July Drive”
Figure 16: The Preparation for the “Big Advance”
Figure 17: Text Panel Depicting the Battle of Beaumont Hamel
Figure 18: The Horrible Nature of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel
Figure 19: The Terrible Fatalities of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel
Figure 20: The Terrible Fatalities of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel
Figure 21: “Trail of Caribou”
Figure 22: The Other Battles
Figure 23: The Room of “Death Pennies”
Figure 24: “Can We Ever Know the Cost of War?”
Figure 25: “Flower of Remembrance”
Figure 26: Flowers of Remembrance on the Wall
Figure 27: The Interactive Feature: “Do you Measure Up?”
Figure 28: The Interactive Feature: Holloway Studio
Figure 29: Graphics on the Wall: The Battle of Beaumont Hamel

Figure 30: Graphics on the Wall: Soldier in the Battle
Figure 31: The Video Aid
Figure 32: Rotated Photos
Figure 33: The Audio Recorder
Figure 34: The Medals of War
Figure 35: The Showcased Artifacts of War
Figure 36: The Quote on the Wall
Figure 37: The Quote on the Wall
Figure 38: The Quote on the Wall
Figure 39: The Artist Acting as a Soldier's Mother
Figure 40: The Memory Hub
Figure 41: The Replica: Socks
Figure 42: The Replica: "The Danger Tree"
Figure 43: The Personal Belongings of the Soldiers
Figure 44: Wartime Dresses of Soldiers and Nurses
Figure 45: Consequences of "Beaumont Hamel"
Figure 46: "Forget Me Not: Visitor's Thoughts
Figure 47: "Forget Me Not: Visitor's Thoughts
Figure 48: "Forget Me Not": Visitor's Thoughts
Figure 49: "Honouring Their Sacrifice"

Chapter 1

Introduction

Belonging to Bangladesh, a country whose existence is demarcated with the devastating experiences of war, I have always been interested to dig into people's perception of war histories and their ways of defining themselves out of the ashes of warfare. After reaching St. John's, Newfoundland in fall of 2017 with a view to accomplishing a graduate degree in Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland, I could not help but be intrigued by the significance of the First World War in the eyes of the community, especially when I began to explore the province and its people which, was quite new to me. My interest in learning about Newfoundland's legacies from the First World War increased when I learned that the Memorial University of Newfoundland was founded as a tribute to the fallen soldiers of the Great War and, has still been serving as "a living memorial to those who served in the First and Second World Wars" (www.heritage.nf.ca/First World War Commemoration at Home) on behalf of the all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. If the estimation of the Newfoundland heritage website is correct, "[I]n the century since the First World War, dozens of other (other than Memorial University of Newfoundland) war memorials have been established across Newfoundland and Labrador" (www.heritage.nf.ca/First World War Commemoration at Home). Visitors to the province can easily recognize the First World War as a significant moment for all the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

While wandering in the street of St. John's (the capital of the province), one would easily learn about Newfoundlanders' contribution to the First World War observing the most notable National War Memorial situated in the downtown St. John's. This monument stands as a vivid example of commemorating Newfoundlanders' contributions to the First World War. The Fighting Newfoundlander is another significant war memorial established in Bowring Park, St. John's immediately after the war, adding a caribou and the symbol of the Newfoundland Regiment later on. Moreover, many other smaller monuments and memorials of the First World War have been erected from time to time in St. John's and various other places in the province which represent Newfoundlanders' and Labradorians' grateful remembrance of the people who served during the First World War from Newfoundland and Labrador. The most recent establishment of a permanent exhibit at The Rooms dedicated to the history of the First World War is a vivid example of the necessity of commemorating the First World War in contemporary Newfoundland. This thesis concentrates on The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery of The Rooms that has been created to honor all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who served overseas and on the home front during the First World War (1914-1918). It attempts to explore how The Rooms, as a provincial museum, not only creates space for public commemoration of the First World War, but also foregrounds a nationalist mythology out of the distressing history of the First World War. Taking an ethnographic approach to the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery of The Rooms, this thesis attempts to examine how the history of the First World War has been represented in a museum setting with a view to shaping public discourses of collective memory, place and national identity and providing history education through circulating a master

narrative of the war and social achievement. The objective of this research is to explore the construction and circulation of an explicit historical reality about the war and the cultural past of Newfoundland in The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery along with analyzing the ideological assumptions communicated by the visitors, volunteers and staff members of the exhibit. In this regard, I intend to analyze the anecdotal messages put forward by The Rooms about the history of the First World War, why they are put forward, and in turn, how these messages influence visitors' understanding of place, identity, and nationality in "learning the collective [and] ... historical truths [that] are socially produced" (Handler and Gable 1997, 4).

Since it opened in 2005, The Rooms has been home to the Provincial Art Gallery, the Provincial Archives as well as the Provincial Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador. According to The Rooms' website, "[T]he Rooms is Newfoundland and Labrador's largest public cultural space. It represents and showcases our province to itself and to the world" (www.therooms.ca/ This Place We Call The Rooms). Within the social and cultural landscape of Newfoundland, The Rooms — as a provincial museum, provincial art gallery and provincial archive — is readily associated with the past, present, and future of the province, promising a broad collection of artifacts, art, and historical records. For Newfoundlanders, it is a place for cherishing a hundred years of tangible and intangible history, as well as passing on knowledge and emotional memories from generation to generation. For outsiders, it is one of the top destinations to visit in the province and also a great source of learning about the community. It is a "must visit" place for all Newfoundlanders and

Labradorians interested in the culture and heritage of their forefathers and also for the visitors and tourists of the province wanting to be enriched with the local culture. So, by showcasing local culture, The Rooms stands as a vivid representation of provincial culture and heritage that proudly represents its people and their traditions to local residents and also to outsiders. Every year, the museum receives thousands of visitors which indicates how remarkably The Rooms is serving its community and visitors, as a valid source of knowledge about the historical and cultural legacies of the province.

When taking a visit to the place for the first time, one would surely be fascinated with the beautiful architecture of The Rooms, which is created to mimic the fishing rooms of years ago. This is the highest raised building in St. John's, and it is quite visible from any corner of the city's downtown area. The pitched roof top of The Rooms is designed to symbolize fishing rooms, where the fishermen of the province used to go and mend their nets and also prepare new nets for fishing. Traditionally, the fishing rooms were also a place where fishermen would tell stories. Likewise, The Rooms also stands as a storehouse of preserving traditional culture and lifeways through presenting artifacts, photographs, archival documents and so on that would let the visitors know about the histories of Newfoundland and Labrador. It was previously identified as the Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador (AGNL) situated at the St. John's Arts and Culture Centre. The Rooms Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador took control of it in 2004 to turn it into a provincially owned organization. Currently, it is located at 9 Bonaventure Avenue

and provides 10,000 square feet of gallery space for permanent collections and travelling exhibits.

Apart from housing a rich archive holding various provincial documents and a permanent art gallery incorporating numerous historical and folk arts and crafts, The Rooms as a provincial museum also manages to hold several temporary exhibitions focusing on Newfoundland's culture and traditions every year.

The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery (Beaumont Hamel and the Trail of the Caribou: Newfoundlanders and Labradorians at War and at Home 1914-1949) of The Rooms was created in 2016 as a permanent exhibit on the part of The Rooms' provincial museum division. From the staff members, volunteers and visitors' interviews I conducted, it was quite apparent to me how this exhibit is serving the visitors of The Rooms since it opened. As mentioned by the staff members, this exhibit has become the heart of The Rooms as it started getting more visitors after the opening of the exhibit. The exhibit was inaugurated on the occasion of the centennial commemoration of the First World War with a view to remembering the sacrifices of Newfoundlanders during the historic moment of the First World War, along with an exploration of the war services and impacts, both overseas and on the home front. Surely, Newfoundlanders' contribution in the First World War was a great historic moment for the province that made "a proud announcement to the world that the island was initially a country" (Macfarlane 1991, 139) and was able to raise and sustain its own regiment. Since then, Newfoundlanders had started to develop "a new sense of national identity" (Cadigan 2009, 188). As the war ended

and even after Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, the necessity of continuing with the same sense of nationalism was inevitable within the provincial political and cultural scene (Harding 2004, 2006) to give shape to the provincial cultural identity emanating from the "whole history of colonialism, subjugation and exploitation" (Cadigan 2009, 267). This thesis attempts to understand how the history of Newfoundlanders' contribution to the First World War has been represented at The Rooms in a favorable light, and how the relation of power and knowledge is motivating those representations. As museums are often prone to serve the material needs of the state (Greenberg 1997), this thesis will focus on various ideological messages created and circulated by The Rooms surrounding The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery through a systematic 'meaning making process' (Silverman 2004, 235). I will also examine the influence of those messages in visitors' and staff members' understanding of past and present.

The thesis is significant as it considers critical museum studies while exploring the representation of war histories in a museum setting. It seeks to analyze how The Rooms attempts to represent the history of the First World War in a 'provincially sanctioned narrative' (Jack 2010, 5) and how the staff members, volunteers and visitors to the exhibit make sense of that produced narrative. Simultaneously, it also addresses the museum as an influential institution that determines what to tell/ not to tell/ how to tell, what to consume/ not consume, what to remember/ what to forget. Uncovering the "politics of representing histories in the museum" (Handler and Gable 1997, 71), this thesis will identify, how museums

promote master narratives providing little space for alternative narratives (Stanley 2006; Creighton 2007). As Creighton writes, "where master narratives are too heavily promoted, there is a danger that those who do not see themselves reflected in the story will feel a sense of exclusion from, rather than inclusion in, the grasp as a whole" (Creighton 2007, 167). Examining museum texts as well as the visitors', volunteers' and the staff's standpoints, I will analyze how the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery of The Rooms mobilizes the history of the First World War through representing "a hazy image of a manipulated and trivialized past" (Katriel 1997, 87).

This thesis will also provide a new understanding of the artifacts displayed in The Rooms to the participants and the wider community with an exploration of how history museums create stories to "make the object speak, converting objects into stories" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 55). Other than the artifacts, this thesis will also take into consideration exhibit displays, educational programming events, and the extensive use of various technologies, simulations, and performances as, "most research on museums has proceeded by ignoring much of what happens in them" (Handler and Gable 1997, 9). In addition, few studies have actually considered visitors' understandings of museum texts as well as museum staff's positions within these representational practices. This research can also be important in comprehending how war histories have been represented in museums and how those representations shape visitors' understandings of war history. In addition, apart

from museum studies, this research project will contribute to the growing body of scholarly work on folklore and cultural studies.

Methodology:

This thesis is much inspired by folklorist Meghann E. Jack's analysis of the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry's representation and meaning (2010) and also, Heather Anne Creighton's identification of alternative narratives of Newfoundland culture, identity and history going beyond the provincially sanctioned master narratives (2007). Following Handler, Jack attempts to approach the museum 'as a social space' (2010, 38). I also found it very beneficial to have a better understanding of The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery because, to accommodate a detailed analysis of the whole museum was beyond the scope of a master's thesis. I will approach the museum as a 'surrogate theatre' (Kirshenblatt- Gimblett 1998, 34) rather than viewing it as 'a natural and transparent shattering space' (Lidchi 1997, 90), as the role of museums is limited to performing certain 'culturally conditioned goals and functions' (Lidchi 1997, 39). The objective of this thesis is not to seek historical accuracy, rather it is to identify how the museum attempts to create stories and how the visitors, as customers, consume those stories and position their present life within it; mostly, having an understanding of a certain historical reality but sometimes, creating their own stories, too.

In this regard, I focus exclusively on The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery of The Rooms. I did not intend to cover any other area of The Rooms. All the interviewees, whether staff members, volunteers, or visitors, were chosen based on their

association with the First World War exhibit. The methodological model for this paper was to concentrate on three aspects of the museum: the museum space and/or the cultural products (design, artifacts, objects, audio and visual depictions, texts, narratives, educational programming and so on); "cultural producers" (administrative staff and volunteers); and the "cultural consumers" (local visitors as well as tourists) (Handler and Gable 1997; Jack 2010). With a detailed ethnographic investigation, this thesis attempts to understand the museum's representation of war histories, the role of the staff members in creating The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery as a representational space and how the idea of collective memory, history education, place and national identity are manifested through museum texts and initiatives. It also considers how visitors, volunteers and staff members communicate and react to those ideological assumptions. My ethnographic investigation involved participant observation (observing visitors, staff, and museum space and attending educational programs and guided tours); taking extensive photographs of the museum spaces as well as interacting with volunteers, staff members, and visitors; and performing semi-structured interviews with staff members, volunteers, and visitors from inside the province as well as outside of the province.

Based on the fieldwork conducted at The Rooms in Summer 2018 and Winter 2019, the following questions will be discussed: 1. How are the stories, objects and artifacts of The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery at The Rooms selected/crafted in a provincially sanctioned representation? 2. What implications/meanings are being produced and/or not produced by those crafted stories, objects and artifacts? 3. How is The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery of The Rooms influential in constructing public memory, providing history education and (re)making national and place identity?

4. What roles do museum staff play in creating museums as a representational space? 5. What is the public understanding of those ideological discourses?

After obtaining ethics approval in mid-July 2018, most of the fieldwork for this project was completed between the last week of July and the end of August 2018. My fieldwork for this thesis started with participant observation and attending educational programs and guided tours in late July 2018. From the beginning of August 2018, I started conducting interviews with adult visitors and tourists to the museum. In total, six interviews including the visitors and tourists were collected in August 2018. Moreover, four more semi-structured interviews with the volunteers (who worked in The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery) were also collected in August 2018. In addition, I held four in-depth interviews with staff members of The Rooms who worked on the exhibit in August 2018. As I had a plan to conduct twenty interviews in total for the successful completion of the project, the rest of the interviews were conducted in Winter 2019. My fieldwork at The Rooms ended with an interview with the curator of the exhibit on April 11, 2019.

Interviews with the tourists to the province were conducted in the summer of 2018 as summer is the busiest tourist season of the province. Most of the interviews with visitors residing in the province were conducted in January of 2019. Twenty interviews were conducted in total. Only adult visitors (from age 30 up) were approached. Moreover, the gathered data represents a variety of individuals in terms of their gender and associations.

The use of qualitative methodology was much justified with the context of the research as, this study does not intend to obtain a statistically based and close-ended outcome. On the contrary, incorporating a limited number of individual participants and prioritizing their perspectives, this research tries to bring forth various and never-ending experiences and viewpoints. It acknowledges how everyone, whether staff members, volunteers, or visitors, can have perspectives that might differ from each other, but all be worth considering. As this research includes a limited number of respondents and can not ensure a boundless number of interpretations providing scope for in-depth qualitative research including a large number of participants, the 'subjective nature of the results' (Hooper-Greenhill 2006, 374) can not be denied. Following Hooper-Greenhill, Jack identifies the limitations of such qualitative research that is "focused on a limited number of participants being posed very specific, though open-ended questions" which according to her, "can easily be characterized as 'anecdotal' and 'subjective' in comparison to the more rigid, statistic-oriented approaches of quantitative questionnaires or even the in-depth probing of more sophisticated qualitative studies, which include large numbers of visitors, offering a more unbiased breadth and scope of visitor understanding" (Jack 2010, 140). This research is still important as it not only includes varieties of perceptions gathered through interviewing but also, attempts to understand those perceptions within a broad social and cultural context (Jack, 2010).

The studying of visitors and staff members has been a challenging issue for this research. To ensure variety in data, I have included those staff members of The Rooms who have been working with the exhibit from the beginning, being involved in its

creation, preservation and continuation. Along with including curatorial notes, this thesis includes the perceptions of those staff members who have been involved in the interpretative planning, education and guided tour programming of the exhibit. There was no chance of choosing the staff members randomly as, all the available five members who are currently involved with the exhibit have been interviewed and included in this research. The staff members were contacted through email with the help of the curator of the history and museum division of The Rooms. The staff members were interviewed individually in one of the conference rooms of The Rooms, situated in the staff office area which is quite separated from the main part of the museum. Though the semi-structured interview pattern was beneficial in allowing the staff members to speak about their diverse experiences with the exhibit, it was challenging to bring out various perspectives about the exhibit from the staff members. Because they are employees of The Rooms with various professional obligations, it was possible that they were not comfortable expressing their personal thoughts about the exhibit in an interview. Moreover, the staff members' personal (most of them were Newfoundlanders) and professional connections with the exhibit might have hampered their ability to see the exhibit from a visitor's perspective.

Other than the staff members, this project also included five of the volunteers who have experience working with the exhibit. During the summer, visitors will encounter many volunteers in different sections of The Rooms whose duty it is to let visitors know about Newfoundland history and culture. During my fieldwork, I met many volunteers stationed just in front of the exhibit. The interviews with the volunteers were

conducted in the volunteers' room situated beside the entrance to the staff area of The Rooms. Other than the staff members and the volunteers of the exhibit, I have done ten more interviews with the visitors to the exhibit. The visitors were approached randomly. While conducting visitor interviews, I made sure to include visitors residing in the province as well as those from away. All the interviews with the visitors were conducted on site; in front of the exhibit where there is a small cafeteria and a seating area for visitors. It was challenging to conduct interviews with the visitors to the exhibit. Jack explains very explicitly the challenges of conducting visitor interviews in a museum setting:

> Tired from standing on their feet all afternoon, hot or cold, hungry, frustrated by their misbehaving children and complaining in-laws or simply in a rush to get to their next destination, many visitors feel harassed by a researcher looking to 'have a few moments of your time to ask some questions about your museum experience.' The fact that the researcher is suspiciously sitting on a bench behind a small shrub in the museum foyer, tape recorder in hand and eyeballing the visitor as the next potential informant, is rather off-putting. The researcher's challenge of presenting herself as polite, convincing, yet non-intrusive is no easy feat, and those visitors who do not flatly refuse an interview, often give hurried, disinterested or hesitant responses. Only if the researcher is lucky, will she get a real 'talker' who is willing to elaborate beyond superficial replies (2010, 139).

The challenge of persuading visitors to sit for an interview was always there. Jack was right in asserting how difficult it is to find a participant willing to share his/her experiences. To approach the tourists was quite difficult as most of them were on tight schedules, visiting many other places in St. John's. I wonder how many tourists actually took time to visit the exhibit with a view to understanding its meaning while they were busy moving from one place to another to visit as much of the place as they could within

a limited time period. I was lucky enough to have the kindness of some of the tourists who consented to share their opinion. Whether it was a spontaneous participation or resulted from a hesitation to refuse is another question. Approaching visitors from within the province was a little bit easier than reaching out to tourists from elsewhere. The visitors who were originally from Newfoundland were positively inclined to express their thoughts, which may be influenced by their familiarity with the context of the exhibit. Visitors who are from elsewhere but have been living in Newfoundland for a considerable length of time were also included.

To make the survey easier, I used to station myself immediately before the entrance of the exhibit. Some of the visitors were approached after they took the visit to the exhibit. Others were approached before entering the exhibit and asked if they would like to sit for an interview after visiting the exhibit. As a part of my participant-observation, I also spent time in the exhibit to analyze displays and also to observe how visitors reacted to the expressive elements of the exhibit. I also visited the exhibit with some of my interviewees to understand how they were perceiving museum representations. The purpose of the study had to be clarified to the participants, along with supplying them research details and consent forms before conducting interviews.

All the interviews were followed by recording with an audio tape recorder and taking notes. The interviews ranged from 10 minutes to 50 minutes. The interview questions were mainly focused on those topics which would provide information about visitors' understanding of museum space, their knowledge of First World War history, their opinion about the exhibit's representation of war history, the general message that

they got from the exhibit and so on. Most of the questions were open-ended, which provided the visitors enough opportunity to explore wider contexts. All the materials collected through interviews were compiled, transcribed and analyzed by the end of April 2019 before the start of the writing process. Interview texts are presented without any alterations. Other than the curator of the exhibit, all the interviewees are kept anonymous in the thesis to ensure their privacy. The name of the curator is used with her permission. The information provided by the curator is connected to her name to identify the curatorial decisions and thoughts, which was essential for this research.

The interview texts are closely analyzed with a view to understanding the derived meaning and relevant themes. This thesis also made use of certain critical and cultural theories along with taking an ethnographic approach. The initial themes are linked with the larger context to understand museums' representation of war history and how those representations influence public understandings of war history. Various expressive elements displayed in The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery (i.e., the use of language and discourse, dialogue written on the walls, presentation of photographs and videos in large screens, use of maps, extensive use of technologies, displayed objects and artifacts displayed) have been analyzed critically with a view to examining how the displays in a museum setting have been shifted from an object-oriented demonstration to a story-oriented representation (Moore 1997; Bouquet 2012). While doing so, I consider the formalist, materialist and analytical historical process of museums to grasp the transition from old museology to new museology (Davis 2007, Smith 1989; Walsh 1992). With a thorough analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted with the staff

members, this thesis reads the museum as a representational space along with analyzing the effort of the staff members to construct the museum as an institution of power that 'package[s] and sell[s] [...] an idealized and pleasant past ...[with] exact replication [...] to an anonymous public of consumers' (Handler and Gable 1997, 175-176). Building on the work of Benedict Anderson, this research will also examine how the idea of nationalism has been crucial within the social and political scene of Newfoundland and how, as a provincial museum, The Rooms makes use of the history of the First World War to promote a "positive social identity" to visitors and also, "to derive a positive self-image from that identification" (Uzzell 1996, 227). This thesis also links McCannell's idea of "touristic space" (MacCannell 1973, 591) to a museum setting with a view to elaborating how various ideological and cultural messages are constructed and circulated by The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery to represent the history of the First World War from a certain perspective. Finding a connection between memory and myth, this research emphasizes museums' ways of constructing historical realities and simultaneously analyzes how The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery upholds the idea of public commemoration and remembrance surrounding the history of The First World War. Following Althusser and focusing on the role of The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery within and outside of the province, this thesis also reads the museum as an Ideological State Apparatus (Althusser 1971, 138) that functions through constructing ideological messages. Echoing Fairclough and following the 'social constructivism' theory, this thesis analyzes the influence of the 'meaning-making process' (Silverman 2004, 235) on the visitors, volunteers and staff members.

Dividing the Paper:

This study is divided into four main chapters and a brief conclusion. It starts with an 'introduction' that identifies the major themes to be covered in this research project. It briefly highlights the importance of the First World War in Newfoundland along with establishing the position of The Rooms as a provincial museum within the place and outside of the place. It provides a precise introduction to The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery with a view to shedding light on the representation of the history of the First World War in the exhibit. After that, it states the objective and significance of the research providing the key issues (museum and representation of war history, museum and meaning making, museum and ideological assumptions, consumption of war histories in a museum setting) that framed the research questions. The introduction also describes the methodologies that have been followed for the successful completion of the project. While explaining the methodology, it considers the ethnography of museums along with providing a precise elaboration of the theoretical framework. Finally, it specifies an outline of the chapters.

The second chapter of this thesis is titled "Placing History in the Context". It attempts to place the history of the First World War (from 1914 onwards) in the context of Newfoundland. This chapter basically embraces the historical detail of the First World War, elaborating Newfoundlanders' historical legacies from the First World War more broadly. This chapter also explores, why and how Newfoundlanders got involved in the First World War. Why was constructing a Great War myth in Newfoundland essential immediately after the war? How did Newfoundlanders commemorate the First World

War? And is the necessity of commemorating the First World War still extant in Newfoundland? As previously stated, the goal of this research is not to establish historical authenticity. The reason behind dedicating a whole chapter to the historical details is to let the reader of this thesis know about the importance of the history of the First World War in Newfoundland. This chapter is beneficial for two reasons: to provide enough information about Newfoundlanders' contributions to the First World War and to situate The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery within its context in the later chapters.

The third chapter is titled, "From Representation of History to the Production of Meaning." It provides a detailed description of the exhibit, taking into consideration what it portrays, what the site looks like and how the history of First World War has been represented in the exhibit. Based on my observations, this chapter will attempt to understand various representational strategies followed by The Rooms while depicting the history of the First World War. Considering the interviews conducted with the staff members of The Rooms, it will also explore the creation process of the exhibit. Finally, it will investigate the theoretical shifting of museum studies, the importance of materialism and the construction of grand narratives in a museum's representation. Placing all of these in the context of The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery, this chapter will explore how a particular exhibit is formed to legitimize a carefully constructed image of the First World War.

The fourth chapter, titled "The Interplay of Myth, Memory, Knowledge and Identity," will analyze The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery as a site of

constructing public memory, providing history education and promoting national and place identity. Taking under consideration the interviews conducted with the visitors, staff members and volunteers, this chapter will explore how visitors are making sense of the past. Are the visitors passive consumers, or are they able to create their own meaning(s)? Is there any conflict in the encoded and decoded meaning of the exhibit? What is the role of the staff members in creating the museum as a representational space? What is the position of the staff member and volunteers within a distinct and multifaceted space like the museum? Focusing on all of these, this chapter will concentrate on how the 'meaning making process' (Silverman 2004, 235) works and how the museum influences the public understanding of history and culture.

This thesis will end with a brief conclusion, focusing on the main themes and findings as well as discussing how this research relates to larger themes or ideas. The conclusion also elaborates on the scope for further research.

Chapter 2

Placing History in Context

As this thesis attempts to examine the representation of the history of the First World War in The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery along with analyzing the cultural and ideological messages communicated by and between contemporary visitors, volunteers and staff members of the exhibit, this chapter will explore Newfoundlanders' historical legacies to the First World War. Focusing on Newfoundlanders' involvement in the Great War of history, the chapter will examine how the construction of an official history about Newfoundland's contribution in the First World War, as well as public commemoration services held after the war have been significant in Newfoundland. This chapter offers insight into how the history of the First World War has been shaped or reshaped from time to time in Newfoundland, along with getting a sense of the importance of the history of the First World War in Newfoundland.

2.1 Why/ How did Newfoundland Get Involved in the First World War?

Being a colony of the British Empire during the First World War, Newfoundlanders viewed the war effort as a chance to prove their loyalty to Britain. As a response to Britain's call to join the war, the people of Newfoundland, including the Government, took the opportunity to raise and sustain its own regiment with a desire to flourish as an independent nation in the eyes of the world (Bassler 1988).

As Lemelin writes, "[C]onsisting of the island of Newfoundland and the coastal territory of Labrador bordering Canada on the North American mainland, Newfoundland

(established in 1583), was one of the British empire's oldest colonies. With a population of 224,921 citizens, and nearly three-quarters of the workforce employed in the fishing and sealing industries, Newfoundland at the onset of the twentieth century was a small, largely rural colony" (Lemelin 2015, 184-185). According to O'Brien, as the First World War broke out, "[W]ith a population of slightly less than 250,000 people, 32,000 of them in the city of St. John's, Newfoundland hardly counted as a major player on the world stage, and appeared quite unlikely to have any significant impact on the war in Europe. Most of the colony's workforce was involved in the fishery, with smaller numbers employed in the mining and forestry sectors, as there was little in the way of manufacturing or other industry. Its government, led by Prime Minister Sir Edward Morris, was considered to be perilously weak, presiding over a polity sharply divided along regional, sectarian, and class lines" (O'Brien 2007, 401). Bassler also records that, "Newfoundland was one of five self-governing dominions. In 1914 it was governed by an unstable party, a weak premier and an appointed authoritarian governor […] Prime Minister Morris, absorbed in local affairs and unprepared to take charge of the war effort, handed over administration of Newfoundland's war effort to a group of private citizens known as the Newfoundland Patriotic Association (NPA) under the chairmanship of Governor Sir Walter Davidson" (Bassler 1988, 44).

According to the Newfoundland Heritage website, before becoming involved in the First World War, the Newfoundland government had hardly any experience in maintaining a military force. But, as the war began, the government was confident enough to raise and sustain 500 men especially in St. John's. The government of

Newfoundland immediately assured Britain they would provide 500 soldiers for war service. Soon an enthusiastic official proclamation on 21 August 1914 went on to call for the young volunteers to take part in the "greatest War in the history of the World" (O'Brien 2007, 407). Almost everyone, including the press and church, made an effort to urge the young men of the province to take part in the war, as the war effort was projected to end before Christmas of 1914 (Bassler 1988; Martin 2009).

The depiction of war from the British perspective was prevalent in the articles and editorials published during the war and became an unvarying feature of St. John's newspapers (Harding 2004, 2006; Bassler 1988; O'Brien 2007). As O'Brien explains, "[M]ost dwelt at length on the evils of Prussian militarism, while a few speculated on the dire consequences of a possible German takeover of Newfoundland. The war effort was also promoted as a way to enhance Newfoundland's position within the British Empire, on the grounds that the colony's contribution would earn the country 'a distinguished place in whatever scheme is developed for closer Imperial Federation when the war is over"' (O'Brien 2007, 403).

While critically analyzing Canadian war memorials to the Great War, Young also pointed out how newspapers contributed to the voluntary recruitment process, encouraging more and more people to join the war effort. As Young noted, most of the newspapers in both Canada and England were filled with the smiling faces of the soldiers proving the war effort to be an adventurous trip which surely overlooked the harshness of war. Moreover, poor socio-economic conditions and unemployment motivated the young men to be a part of that adventure:

> Many of these youngsters in both Britain and Canada were no doubt leaping at the opportunity for adventure and a free trip to Europe. If they were among the unemployed (there were tens of thousands of them in Canada at the time), here was the promise of a regular wage - all in return for service in a war that would shortly be over (within a year was the usual speculation) and from which they would return as heroes (Young 1989-1990, 6).

In Newfoundland, "[S]ome joined out of a desire for employment, some for adventure, and some from a sense of duty" (O'Brien 2007, 407). In the face of the commercial depression, to raise a battalion of 500 was challenging for the Patriotic Association:

> [B]y the time the first 500 men had been enlisted, Davidson and the Patriotic Association had already decided to expand the unit to a strength of over 1,000 in order to produce a full infantry battalion. Little or no thought was given to how such a unit could be sustained if the war lasted longer than the widely predicted matter of months. Nor was the question of making provisions for the replacement of casualties considered in the early stages of the war. Instead, all involved seem to have been caught up in the spirit of the moment, without regard to an uncertain future and apparently without thinking about who might have to take responsibility for such matters at a later date (O'Brien 2007, 410-411).

As Huybers noted, while Newfoundlanders joined the British campaign in September 1915, the soldiers were not only inexperienced, but also uncomfortable with the harsh realities of modern warfare (2015). O'Brien also argues that, to join in an armed conflict as a potential participant, Newfoundland was far more unprepared. Although serious military preparations resulted in forming an 'effective fighting force,' "the hasty and haphazard nature of the process of mobilization led to deficiencies in administration which would result in some difficult and divisive problems as the world conflict escalated […]. Certain measures taken, and in cases not taken, in the period of mobilization would

come back to haunt Newfoundland in the later stages of the war…" (O' Brien 2007, 402). Moreover, the recruitment process of Newfoundland Regiment was also considered to be faulty because of which the battalion faced serious causalities during war. According to the Newfoundland Heritage Website, during voluntary recruitment the "[N]ewspapers and other forms of mass media played a major role in stirring up patriotic fervor, but they were not very prevalent in rural areas. News was particularly slow to arrive at Labrador's remote communities, where residents sometimes did not know the dominion had gone to war until months after the fact" (www.heritage.nf.ca/Patriotism).

The recruiting strategy of the NPA was thought to be contradictory as it did not take under consideration the many out port residents who could have been enlisted. The country also faced problems with training and outfitting the battalion. For the new recruits, most of the basic military supplies were inadequate:

> Rifles were in short supply, and so were machine guns, revolvers, binoculars, and almost every other piece of equipment needed to send a 500-man infantry unit to war. A lack of khaki material was a problem, and another was a shortage of qualified instructors for the training camp (www.heritage.nf.ca/Training the Newfoundland Regiment).

Soon it was realized that "[T]he war would also have a destructive effect on Newfoundland's fragile economy[…]While many people in Newfoundland believed in 1914 that a wholehearted war effort would lead to the achievement of nationhood, in the end such an effort led to the opposite." (O'Brien 2007, 420).

The voluntary recruitment during the First World War was mainly inspired by the idea of "THE RIGHT COURSE, THE BEST COURSE, the only course" (Martin 2009, 55) which was used by the Patriotic Association of Newfoundland in a 1917

proclamation to encourage more men to participate in the war effort. At the beginning (in 1914), the young men of the province were urged to join in the 'right course' through enlistment in the Newfoundland Regiment to ensure a devoted service for the king and country. As Martin states, "Morris announced that Newfoundland should be prepared to give its last man and dollar in defense of the Empire and recommended the continuation of recruitment for as long as necessary" (2009, 65).

With the devastating causalities of July 1 at Beaumont Hamel[1], optimism faded into gross pessimism. Even the dream of maintaining an effective fighting force through voluntary recruitment began to shatter and, "[B]y April 1918 the voluntary recruitment system had failed to maintain the Regiment at strength" (Martin 2009, 82). After "the colony witnessed mounting casualties and a deteriorating economic situation, the "best course" was for men to leave their positions within the intricate sphere of community and family production to enlist. By 1918, an enlistment rate which did not match casualties resulted in the colony's beloved and distinguished regiment being removed from the frontlines" (Martin 2009, 56). Martin argues further that, " […] the system failed to produce a sufficient number of volunteers to maintain the Newfoundland Regiment at full strength because those responsible for recruitment, chiefly Governor Walter E. Davidson

[1] The Newfoundland Regiment fought the Battle of Beaumont Hamel on 1 July 1916 as a part of the Somme offensive. The Newfoundland Regiment's 'tragic advance' on 1 July 1st at Beaumont Hamel resulted in wiping out the whole regiment in the face of a well-organized German troop (See also, Harding 2006, Gough 2004 and 2007, and Major 2001).

and the Patriotic Association, did not understand the socioeconomic reality of Newfoundland […]" (2009, 56).[2]

In spite of having many insufficiencies, Newfoundlanders' wholehearted contribution to the Great War was beyond doubt:

> Approximately 12,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, out of an estimated population of 242,000, enlisted during the war. Nearly as many again volunteered but were rejected. Thousands more were involved behind the scenes, raising the fighting forces, outfitting them, training them, providing comforts, looking out for their families, caring for returned soldiers and sailors, commemorating them, and raising funds. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were involved in virtually every aspect of the war effort, for the war was fought on many fronts (www.heritage.nf.ca/Homefront).

Due to the wholehearted service of the regiment, the king granted that the regiment be called the Royal Newfoundland Regiment (Cadigan, 2009). But Newfoundlanders had to pay a heavy price in return for the distinctions and honours bestowed upon the regiment. According to O'Brien's estimation, the regiment suffered 3,564 casualties, including 1,232 fatalities in the four years of the Great War (2007).

Newfoundlanders found it really hard to bear the heavy price that resulted from joining the War. Instead of flourishing as an independent nation, the whole country

[2] Between 1914 to 1918, there was huge pressure to recruit volunteers from all areas of the country to run the war effort of the Newfoundland Regiment. According to Martin, "Failure to understand the importance of the individual in community and family production in areas outside of St. John's led to an overestimation of the colony's available manpower […] But years of believing that there was a large body of idle out port men who remained home because they were uneducated or unpatriotic, meant that little could now be done to increase voluntary recruitment […] a fundamental lack of understanding of the socio-economic life outside the capital city lead to serious problems throughout the war. These problems, identified too late, remained uncorrected during the period of voluntary recruitment and coloured the way in which conscription was carried out under the Military Service Act in 1918" (2009, 56).

crumbled due to bad economic conditions and the loss of a whole generation of young men who could have instead built the nation. So, maintaining ideas of patriotism and nationalism was essential to soothe the whole nation and overshadow the harsh realities of war time and the faulty political decisions which resulted in the construction of the Great War myth after the war.

2.2 Creating the Great War Myth Surrounding Beaumont Hamel

Although the Newfoundland Regiment was involved in various military engagements including Gallipoli and Beaumont Hamel, the battle of 1 July at Beaumont Hamel occupied a special place in the official history of Newfoundland. According to Cadigan, even after July 1st, "[T]he Newfoundland Regiment continued to pay the price of battle on the fields of France, distinguishing itself at Gueudecourt, Sailly-Saillisel, Monchy-Le-Preux, the Scrape, Ypres, Poelcappelle, and Cambrai" (2009, 190), but none of those got as much attention as the tragedy of Beaumont Hamel in the official history of Newfoundland. In his MA thesis, "Glorious Tragedy: Newfoundland's Cultural Memory of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel, 1916-1925", Harding states, "[F]or most Newfoundlanders that wartime effort is symbolized by the slaughter of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment (RNR) at Beaumont Hamel, France on 1 July 1916…(2004, 1).

The regiment's first assignment was Gallipoli, where they arrived in September 2015. As Kevin Major argues, "Gallipoli proved a rough baptism. Thirty men were lost to Turkish gunfire, another ten to disease carried by the hordes of flies" (2001, 328). In spite of suffering 142 causalities in total, the losses at Gallipoli were not "felt as widely

throughout the dominion as the losses of Beaumont-Hamel, which affected every household in the colony and subsequently dominated the memory of the entire war" (Huybers 2015, 56). Harding points out three predominant themes in the war literature of Newfoundland that are important to understanding the importance of Beaumont Hamel in the context of Newfoundland:

> First, the Newfoundland Regiment had fought against overwhelming odds which offered little chance for success. Second, the Newfoundlanders who sacrificed themselves so gallantly were identified as being the finest men the nation could offer. Third, the battle was proclaimed as a victorious engagement that yielded several triumphant repercussions for Newfoundland (Harding 2004, 126-127).

Newfoundlanders' unselfish contribution during the war to serve mother country was beyond doubt. So, the 'bloody loss' of Beaumont Hamel was depicted "as Newfoundland's greatest wartime expression of devotion to King and Empire. Through their sacrifice and determination at Beaumont Hamel, the Newfoundland Regiment earned a more respected position for their country within the British Empire" (Harding 2004, 107). Harding showed how the 'Great War myth' (2004) began to flourish especially in the years immediately after the war. According to him, "Beaumont Hamel was indeed the wartime microcosm of everything worth remembering about that conflict" (Harding 2004, 127). As Beaumont Hamel has always been depicted as a crucial event of the First World War, at least for the Newfoundlanders, the incident has been closely scrutinized by many historians and other writers. What follows is a sampling of such accounts.

As Paul Gough explains:

> The battle for Beaumont Hamel on 1 July 1916 may need little introduction. It was at this point on the 11-mile battlefront that the great mine of Hawthorn Crater was exploded at 7.20 am and here too the dreadful moment when the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment—some 801 officers and men led by Colonel Hadow—were erroneously ordered to attack over open ground into a killing zone that was swept by well positioned German machine guns, some more than a mile away (2007, 694).

According to Lynde:

> On the morning of 1 July 1916, the Newfoundland Regiment made its tragic advance on Beaumont-Hamel, as part of the Somme offensive. The Newfoundland Regiment was stationed in trenches near the village, which lay behind German lines. Its goal was to seize control of the German trenches. The Regiment began the third wave of the attack, following the first two waves that were devastating failures. With no friendly fire to cover their advance, German cross-fire cut across the lines, killing and wounding many men immediately. On 2 July 1916, only 68 of 801 men answered roll call. The events of that day are forever seared into the cultural memory of the province, an entire generation lost (2018, 43).

Harding describes it this way:

> The highly anticipated moment came on 1 July 1916. At 7:28 a.m. several mines were blown along the Somme front, and at 7:30 a.m. the infantry advance began. Substantial gains were made by several divisions in the south, but most units were met by a crippling hail of German artillery and machine-gun fire. During the first hour, almost half of the 66,000 Allied troops in the attack were killed or wounded, usually before getting past their own barbed wire […] The Newfoundland Regiment, a part of the 88th Brigade, received revised orders from General de Lisle at 8:45 a.m.,requiring an immediate advance on the German front lines, and hastily prepared for an assault for which it had not trained, not a single Newfoundlander fired a shot, let alone inflicted a casualty. Within a half- hour the battalion's advance had been shattered […] (2006, 6).

Gogos writes:

> The order to attack for the Newfoundlanders came 1 hour 15 minutes after the assault had begun, on an exposed slope with hundreds of men dead and dying choking the trench system […] It was decided that they would have no choice but to advance from their positions in the St. John's Road and Clonmel Avenue support trenches if they were to attack in timely fashion. Though the situation was far from clear it was evident that the first two waves earlier that morning had failed to reach their objectives. Going over the top just behind a crest and all alone the approximately 800 men of the Newfoundland Regiment began the slow walk towards the German front lines in single file, but first they would have to reach the British lines[…] Many fell before reaching the British front line, a select few fell short of the German front line near the Y-Ravine, while many more were literally cut to pieces in crossfire from German machine guns and concentrated artillery rounds that churned up no man's land in a symphony of smoke, dust, cascading turf and bits and pieces of human flesh and bone […] The Newfoundland Regiment's month long preparation lasted only minutes in the field (2015, 2).

According to Kevin Major:

> Daylight on 1 July 1916, of the day of the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel (as the regiment's part in the Somme Offensive came to be called), was far from reason for celebration. Fear had come rushing in to fill the trenches. German machine-gun fire lashed the air as the eight hundred Newfoundlanders stood ready, in agonizing anticipation of what their orders would be. The Welsh regiments who had gone over the top ahead of them were devastated. The machine guns had had their pick of targets. Just past 9 a.m. the British generals surveying the scene from behind the lines, in a display of unfathomable stupidity, sent word that yet another regiment would be sent into the brunt of the German fire. Many of the Newfoundland Regiment died, unable to get past their own barbed wire; many were felled in no-man's land like so much colonial excess. One or two at most reached the enemy trenches […] Left to answer the roll call the next day were 68 men. The battle buried 272 of their comrades and wounded the rest. It is the single greatest tragedy in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador. For a country of a quarter million, still reeling from the great seal hunt disasters of two springs before, it was a monstrous cruelty to bear (2001, 328-329).

A.M. J. Hyatt states:

> At Beaumont Hamel the regiment suffered "virtual annihilation"-every officer participating in the attack was either killed or wounded, and in approximately thirty minutes the unit sustained over 700 casualties. Twice after this the Newfoundlanders were exposed to almost equally bloody battles" (1966, 71).

As Cadigan noted:

> Allied Command assigned the regiment a leading role by asking it to capture an area in the vicinity of Beaumont Hamel, behind the German front line. On 1 July 1916, about 810 officers and men of the Newfoundland Regiment went over pact of artillery bombardments on German defense, and the Allies had failed to destroy a strategic machine-gun emplacement. When the order came, the Newfoundlanders climbed out of their trenches with rifles in hand and advanced toward the German machine guns. Within minutes the regiment was nearly annihilated. Only two officers and 95 of the men from the regiment answered roll call the nest morning. Fifteen officers and 95 other men lay dead on the field, while 16 officers and 479 men were wounded. One officer and 114 soldiers were missing somewhere among the mud, bold, craters, spent shells, and barbed wire. The attack was a military disaster (2009, 187).

Contemporary scholars describe very sharply the futility of Newfoundland Regiment's advancement on 1 July 1st 1916 arguing how the Regiment was wiped out within few minutes after the war began in the face of well-organized German troop where Newfoundland soldiers could hardly leave any sign of 'heroism' (Harding 2004, 2006; Major 2001; Macfarlane 1991). According to Macfarlane, "THE NEWFOUNDLAND REGIMENTS HOPELESS AND FRUTILE advance on July 1, 1916, was the country's proudest moment" (1991, 140). Frank Gogos also argues "While this may have been the message from the government of the day and citizens looking to find solace in the

tragedy, Beaumont- Hamel was really a bloody catastrophe for country of Newfoundland" (2015, 1).

Harding points out how the July 1st, 2016 incident at Beaumont Hamel has been considered to be a 'tragic episode' and 'national tragedy' in the history of Newfoundland especially after Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949 confederation. But, as he argues, contemporary views of the Beaumont Hamel do not pay heed "to the way the battle was perceived in pre-confederation Newfoundland" (2005, 31). Though contemporary literature is inclined to view Beaumont Hamel as "the event which fatally crippled Newfoundland's nationhood" (Harding 2006, 24), it was perceived differently in the years following the war. To secure the war of Beaumont Hamel in the collective memory of the Newfoundlanders, the triumphant image of the incident was far more essential in the social and cultural scene of Newfoundland (Harding 2004, 2005 and 2006). Soon the romantic ideal of heroism and devotion emerged, encouraging Beaumont Hamel to be remembered as the heroic moment in the mind-set of the Newfoundlanders which necessarily overshadow the terrible loss that the Newfoundland regiment suffered on July 1, 1916 in the Somme front.

Harding argues, in spite of focusing on the number of battles that Newfoundland Regiment fought successfully in the final years of the First World War, "the bloody failure of Beaumont Hamel' emerged as the "triumphant symbolic microcosm for Newfoundland's war effort" (Harding 2006, 26). He argues:

> [B]ecause at no other time during the conflict did the dominion field a larger battalion; at no other time was it involved in a more anticipated offensive; at no other time did it suffer more casualties; and according to

> Newfoundland's mythmakers, at no other time did the dominion's soldiers perform more nobly in the service of their dominion, their empire, or their God. Beaumont Hamel was quickly identified as Newfoundland's wartime benchmark […] Though a military failure, Beaumont Hamel was the standard against which all subsequent Newfoundland military endeavours would be measured. Once the full scope of the defeat was realized, the mythmaking process functioned to turn Beaumont Hamel into a successful standard as selective memory construction would allow (Harding 2006, 26).

In the article "Beaumont Hamel and the Danger Tree", Frank Gogos also points out how the attack of Beaumont Hamel on 1 July 1916 "was deliberately mythologized and the Regiment's exploits were sold as a glorious sacrifice…" (2015, 1). According to him, the Newfoundland Regiment "made the ultimate sacrifice for the British Empire and that the loss of so many men from such a small country in 30 minutes was tragic but ultimately triumphant" (2015, 1).

Harding points out how school textbooks constantly addressed the First World War through the lens of Beaumont Hamel, which turned out to be the vital moment in Newfoundland history. He argues,

> Textbooks sought to ensure that Newfoundland's mythic memory of the Great War would survive into the consciousness of subsequent generations of Newfoundlanders. Second, the historical literature also utilized common literary devices, phrases, and a progressive three-step narrative structure that transformed Beaumont Hamel into the symbolic icon of the Newfoundland's cultural war memory. These accounts were highly selective, as writers made certain to avoid realities of the battle which could have threatened its mythic image. Descriptions of battlefield conditions and combat did not discuss the actual sufferings of wounded or dying soldiers, opting instead to emphasize the severe fighting as a danger which forced the soldiers to utilize their admirable and heroic traits. Writers also refrained from criticizing British strategies or the tactics used by the Newfoundland Regiment at Beaumont Hamel. Writing about the

> Great War and Beaumont Hamel was not about finding fault or laying blame; it was about persuading Newfoundlanders that the conflict had been a constructive national endeavor and that Beaumont Hamel was Newfoundland's defining wartime moment. (2004, 128).

Even the letters and messages produced by government and high-ranking officials regarding Beaumont Hamel contributed to the construction of the Beaumont Hamel myth. In "NEWFOUNDLAND'S HEROIC PART IN THE WAR" By F. A. McKenzie we read:

> General Hunter-Weston, addressing the survivors said, "Newfoundlanders, I salute you individually. You have done better than the best." In a letter to Sir Edward Morris, written shortly afterwards, the general repeated in even more emphatic terms his praise […] Sir Douglas Haig was equally emphatic. In a message to the Government of Newfoundland he wrote: "Newfoundland may well be proud of her sons. The heroism and the devotion to duty they displayed on July 1st has never been surpassed […] The soldiers of Newfoundland have won the highest praise which sons of Britain can ever earn," said the governor. "The glory of it can never fade. July 1st, when our heroes fought and fell, will stand for ever as the proudest day in the history of the loyal colony." Grief for those who had fallen meant no looking back (1916, 316-318).

As Cadigan argues, "Newfoundlanders had developed a new sense of national identity as their country seemed to have been baptized in blood at Beaumont Hamel. The myth of Beaumont Hamel quickly emerged, 'emphasizing bravery, determination, imperial loyalty, Christian devotion, and immortal achievement' on the part of the Newfoundland Regiment" (2009, 188).Though the myth of heroism was very much prominent in the pre-confederation war literature, historical details reveal that the soldiers who fought at Beaumont Hamel knew little about what was going to be happen. Huybers, in his article, "Nationalism and Newfoundland's Memory of the First World War"

includes what Walter Tobin (one of the few survivors of Beaumont Hamel) said regarding soldiers' knowledge about the incident:

> We had no idea, in fact, the ordinary soldier did not know what was going on. Non-coms knew a little but not very much. Lieutenants knew a little more, and the captains knew a little more, the colonels a little more. The generals, they knew a lot. But passed down to the ordinary soldier he was just one of the little sheep at the end of the flock (2015, 61).

Hyubers argues, from Tobin's assertion it was apparent that, the soldiers of the Newfoundland regiment had hardly any idea about the devastating outcome of the war:

> They were not equipped with any information and the reality of the Western Front was horrifying. The "Beaumont Hamel-centric myth" promoted the immense sacrifice of the Newfoundland Regiment. Walter Tobin's testimony offers a counter- narrative because it suggests that their sacrifice was not a conscious effort - that they were thrown into the line of fire (2015, 62).

No doubt, the young men of Newfoundland thought of the war effort as an adventurous journey to a new land. As Major relates, "Major-General Beauvoir de Lisli, British commander of the 29th Division, addressed the Regiment on June twenty-sixth. From atop his steed, he glorified in the 'honour and credit' he said the men would bring to themselves and their Island home. He assured them that in numbers and artillery, in battlefield strategies and sheer determination, the Germans were hopelessly outclassed […] There was talk of spending Christmas back home" (2001, 328). But the reality was totally opposite:

> The soldiers had come expecting to find a life of excitement. They found it, on the contrary, duller than the most dreary spells of lonely life in the back woods of their own island. Either side kept constant watch on the other.

> Snipers waited eagerly for the least sign of life that they could fire on. Shells rained down wherever troops were suspected to be. Aeroplanes came humming overhead dropping bombs or observing. The heat, the hard work, the flies, the thirst and the intermittent shelling combined to tax the nerves and temper of the men to the full (Lackenbauer 1999, 181)[3].

So, as Harding writes, a 'bloody battle' had been "translated into heroic defense of Newfoundland's freedom, leading many to believe that Beaumont Hamel was sacred soil which the country rightfully owned and needed to reclaim" (2005, 32). Newfoundland's role in the First World War was deliberately encouraged by the state "to fund a commemorative tribute instead of recalling the conflict in a critical or negative manner prevented it from being exposed to charges of hypocrisy and deceit" (Harding 2005, 37). Various national acclamations of the Beaumont Hamel attack intensified the necessity of building a national heritage out of the ashes of a deadly battle. So, 'a deadly battlefield' (Harding 2010) was transformed into a sacred space for Newfoundlanders which gradually takes shape as the inspiring moment for the whole nation. Harding also notes the roles of the press, the state, and others in portraying the Newfoundland Regiment's effort in the First World War as positively as they could immediately after the war. It was far more important to maintain an "optimistic view of the war effort" (Harding 2004, 54) in the public eye instead of "grieving those who were lost in the fighting" (Harding 2004, 54):

> It was probably in the best interest of Newfoundland's mythmakers to recall the attack in admirable and triumphant fashion. The state, press, and heads of Newfoundland's various religious denominations had all proactively encouraged

[3] Quote taken from The Times. *History of the War.* XIV, 188.

> Newfoundland's participation in World War I, so for them to recall the conflict in a critical or negative manner would have been to expose themselves to justifiable charges of hypocrisy and deceit. Thus, it is not surprising that newspaper editors spoke of Beaumont Hamel in heroic terms; that clergymen gave sermons which re- called the advance as a glorious Christian sacrifice… (Harding 2006, 26).

Following Harding, Huybers also noted how the "Beaumont Hamel-centric myth" was crucial to interpret the entire war effort of the Newfoundland Regiment and thus, promote Beaumont Hamel as a 'noble event' to inspire the whole nation and rationalize the substantial losses (2015). For example, Huybers explains:

> Instead of defining the battle as an unfair military sacrifice of nearly 800 men, the myth transformed the event into a noble quest taken on by Christian knights in search for the Holy Grail - victory in a fight against good and evil. Realistically, the Beaumont-Hamel-centric myth was a simplified version of events that was initially presented to the public without depth in an attempt to keep Newfoundlanders' support in the war effort. It was necessary to make Beaumont-Hamel into an inspiring event to win the war as well as to "mitigate the shock" back in Newfoundland (2015, 58).

Similarly, Kevin Major points out that,

> The story was cloaked in patriotic rhetoric. The incredible courage of the men drew attention away from the unanswered questions about the event itself. Why were there so few routes cut through their own barbed wire? Why was the artillery barrage so badly bungled? Why was the carnage allowed to continue when they had no defense whatever against the enemy machine guns? And - most painful of all for a country that throughout its history had given so much to Britain - were they sent into such a hopeless situation merely to satisfy the egos of the brass who knew there would be less to answer for than if they had been the sons of London merchants or the fishermen of Cornwall? [...] It would take decades before these questions were allowed to emerge. No regiment, of the hundreds up and down the Somme that day, suffered more. It left a wretched pall over the country […] In striding toward Dominion

> status, in answering Britain's call with such a financially unbridled show of patriotism, Newfoundland had done its own people a disservice (2001, 329, 333).

The Newfoundland Regiment's involvement in the Battle of Beaumont Hamel appeared in such a fashionable manner to the public through the constant effort of the press and both British and Newfoundland high officials. Soon Beaumont Hamel became an important part of Newfoundland history that seemed to define Newfoundland as a distinct nation. Harding writes,

> In describing the battalion's effort as a heroic failure, the commanding officers reassured their senior officers that the soldiers had conducted themselves admirably in the face of impossible conditions, thus cloaking the actual futility and senselessness of their plans. By attempting to save their own reputations, British 4th Army commanders allowed their charges to assume mythic reputations of their own (Harding 2004, 50).

The tragic incident of Beaumont Hamel immediately turned into a proud moment in history for the Newfoundlanders. So, with the death of the Regiment, there was a birth of a new legacy. Newfoundlanders were in need of finding "new ways of describing and gaining an understanding of the war to overcome the terrible financial and personal losses of war" (Harding 2004, 68).

The post-war Newfoundland reality was based on "[T]he lack of emphasis on what actually happened to the Newfoundland Regiment on 1 July 1916 prevented Beaumont Hamel from being recognized as a bloody military failure sooner than it did […] Essentially, remembering Beaumont Hamel in the decade after it occurred was not about accurately recalling events and their impact — it was about rationalizing a terrible event and finding concrete positives where none can ever be found" (Harding 2006, 27).

Though the interpretation of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel has changed over time, this tragic incident is still recalled by Newfoundlanders as very significant. The contemporary historical study of the war reveals that a constructive interpretation of Beaumont Hamel was far more effective than lamenting over the losses in the political and cultural scene of Newfoundland following the end of the war.

2.3 Commemorating the First World War in Newfoundland

After the First World War, the government of Newfoundland embarked on a journey of constructing war memorials in Newfoundland and overseas to secure the official memory of the war (Lackenbauer, 1999). The construction of war memorials throughout the province since the end of the war has been observed to commemorate the sacrifice made by the men and women of the province. According to Gogos, the young soldiers of Newfoundland "laid down their lives in a distant land for a distant cause" (2015, 4) yet the memory needs to be preserved in the collective memory of the people. Harding observes the "physical expressions of Newfoundland's identity and the burgeoning sense of nationalism" (2004, 173) behind all the commemorative services of the Great War in Newfoundland before Confederation. Rather than assimilating as a British colony, Newfoundlanders desired to flourish as a distinctive nation through participating in the First World War. Immediately after the war, nationalistic mythology surrounding Beaumont Hamel brought those national collective potentials through which Newfoundlanders could at least pretend to be a valid part of the British dominion and also could forge a tale of national birth. So, the First

World War became synonymous with the liberation war movements for the Newfoundlanders (Harding 2004; 2006).

The consequences of war were far more violent and tragic than one could imagine:

> […] between 1914 and 1918, a country with a population of less than two hundred thousand, and with an accumulated public debt of thirty million dollars, raised and sustained its own regiment. This was an act of faith in Newfoundland's future and a proud announcement to the world that the island was finally a country. But the cost was higher than anyone had dreamed […] It carried this - the price for its great moment of nationalism - into the teeth of the Depression, and never recovered. Newfoundland's role in the Great war led inexorably to bankruptcy, to an unelected government, to the colony's abandonment by England, and, finally, to confederation with Canada (Macfarlane 1991, 139-140)

In the face of the violent nature of the war, the government urgently needed to constructively commemorate the war dead in order to distract public attention from the harsh consequences of war. They needed to find solutions for all the faulty decisions taken during the war and also, to console a large number of people whose losses were irreparable. Young writes,

> The dead are presented as warriors or knights who have fallen on the field of honour or lie sleeping after sacrificing themselves in defence of some great and good cause, usually combining Justice, Peace and Freedom, in the service of God, King, Country, Loved Ones, Home and Empire…Furthermore, the sacrifice of the fallen warriors brought victory, the implication in part being that victory was granted by God because of the justice of the cause. Those who have fallen are martyrs or even types of Christ and are not to be thought of as dead since they have ascended to Heaven. Before, during and after war, this mythology of heroic sacrifice had to be sustained and had to continue to be sustained. There was no place for discrepancy or irony of forgetfulness, for as Kipling's two

> widely used phrases- "lest we forget" and "Their name liveth for evermore"- remind us, war memorials were deigned to guarantee that the dead heroes would never be forgotten (1989, 13).

So, constructing war memorials and observing memorial days were the ritualized forms of mourning that "offers comfort to individuals at home who have suffered a loss, to soldiers who have lost comrades, to communities that have lost a significant part of themselves, and ultimately to the collective national identity that has lost so many young men and not a few women" (Young 1989, 20).

In this regard Harding writes:

> [C]ommemoration enabled societies simultaneously to mourn and honour their veterans and dead while also serving to reaffirm collective perceptions of that conflict. The conflict introduced new levels of death and destruction to the world, while also spawning romantic, triumphant, and selective recollections of the conflict that came to be known as the Great War myth. Such recollections sought to justify the war, provide an understanding for why it had occurred, and identify lasting legacies which nations could honour (2004, 22).

Paul Gough also observes that commemorating the First World War in the context of Newfoundland was the means of controlling public memory which, as he argues, not only influences people's "evaluation, judgement and speaking" (2004, 236), but also provides a base for a group's identity. His research on the Beaumont Hamel Newfoundland Memorial uncovers how the discourses around commemoration are inextricably linked to the idea of remembering and forgetting. In the context of Newfoundland, to remember and also not to forget about Newfoundlanders' contribution in the First World War has always been essential to

preserve the Great War history as a kind of national heritage. According to Gough, the Great War heritage sites play an important role in constructing cultural memory through educating people about the history of the First World War, which is most often inspirational and patriotic (Gough 2004).

While investigating commemorative rituals performed by Canadians to remember Canada's war effort during the First World War, Young points out "the existence of a national mythology that sees the Great War as a kind of Canadian rite de passage" (1989, 20). He explains, "[T]he noble sacrifice of Canada's war dead (both the self-sacrifice of those who died and the sacrifice of those who lost loved ones) in the supposed just cause of the mother country and her allies is complemented by the sense that Canadians are a distinct and special people, capable of heroic virtues, and that, as a nation, Canada possesses at its best the highest of human ideals" (1989, 20). Such interpretation of the war effort is also true in the case of Newfoundland. For the Newfoundlanders, to be able to take part in the First World War was a 'rite de passage' that provided them an opportunity to flourish as a nation and consequently, the history of the First World War became an internal part of their national history. Without emphasizing the heroic contribution of the soldiers who died in the First World War, the official history of Newfoundland is not complete. No doubt, the loss that Newfoundlanders suffered because of the First World War is real, but the official commemorative rituals of the First World War in Newfoundland have often tended to overshadow many war time harsh realities (Young 1989, Harding 2004& 2006, Gough 2007, O'Brien 2007).

2.4 Has the Necessity of Securing Official History and Public Commemoration of the First World War Ended?

The exploration of the larger social and cultural context based on some imaginative common experiences often gives fuel to shape a goal for a nation. As Conrad argues, "[W]hile new information technologies have the capacity to collapse time and space in the twenty-first century, they have yet to annihilate the past and place (history and province), and our emotional attachments to them. We must not let the past, or selective perceptions of it, get in our way" (2002, 167). Even after becoming a part of Canada in 1949, maintaining a distinctive regional identity focusing on regional experiences has always been important in the context of Newfoundland, and has often been obtained through a productive construction of the past to ensure a creative future.

According to Conrad, "[I]f, as some scholars claim, identity can exist entirely in the realm of imagined world, then we have the capacity to draw upon our common regional experience, as tenuous as they are, to inform our actions in the present and our dreams for the future. History and cultural production will play an important role in our dreaming [...] (2002, 168).

Though Newfoundlanders' memory of the First World War has changed from an inspiring event to a tragic incident over the past 100 years, the necessity of securing an official history and public commemoration of the Great War has not yet ended due to the sense of nationalism that still prevails in Newfoundland. Newfoundlanders' remembrance of the war effort is visible in various

commemorative rituals and programs. Observing Memorial Day is one of them. Harding depicts this as “a sombre occasion” where Newfoundlanders lament over the tragedy of Beaumont Hamel. Harding viewed Newfoundlander’s commemorative rituals of the First World War as the beginning of a “new heritage” (2004).

Huybers also noted that, even after Newfoundland joined Canada, the memorialization of the First World War has been distinct from Canadian official remembrance of the First World War as Newfoundland’s war time experiences were much related to British dominion (2015). As Lynde stated, “Canada Day in Newfoundland and Labrador is a dual day—a day of mourning and a day of celebration. This duality is maintained by the many markers embedded in Newfoundland’s psyche” (2018, 47). In Newfoundland, Memorial Day evolved to preserve the memory of the first world war. Though the Newfoundland perspective on the war has changed since Confederation, acknowledging Beaumont Hamel as a tragic event rather than a glorious victory, Newfoundlanders’ war memories still exist through the tragic incident of Beaumont Hamel, understanding it to be one of the most significant parts of First World War history. As Newfoundlanders’ collective memory of the First World War is manifested through the Battle of Beaumont Hamel, the memory of other conflict remained mostly unacknowledged in the dominant discourses of war within the province. So, Newfoundlanders’ entire orientation toward the First World War revolves around the memory of Beaumont Hamel and it is not at all surprising because, this is the provincially sanctioned way of remembering the First World War:

> The year 2014 marks the beginning of four years of concentrated commemoration of the First World War. Newfoundland has also

> chosen to commemorate the war and plans to do so separately from the rest of Canada. Their strong separate identity and this sense of nationalism are still visible when examining their plans for commemorating the First World War. *Honour100* is the campaign created by the provincial government of Newfoundland to organize events such as pilgrimages, re-enactments, and remembrance ceremonies to bring the memory of the war back to life. They are also committed to providing a heightened educational experience by organizing trips for students to travel to the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial during the 100th anniversary in 2016 and reinforcing the curriculum in secondary schools across the province to focus on Newfoundland's contributions during the war (Huybers 2015, 62).

Immortality was a common theme in Canadian Great War commemorative services before Confederation. To inspire future generations to commemorate the war effort was a great concern after the war. Thus, the memory of the war turned into an aspect of national heritage that had been passed from generation to generation. The same theme of immortality prevails in current Newfoundland commemoration services of the First World War which ensures the public duty of keeping the memory of the war dead alive. Securing the memory of the First World War becomes a rallying crying for the province even after Confederation so that the sense of nationalism that the people of Newfoundland once dreamt of can be kept alive. Transferring of that nationalistic feeling to future generations has also been taken into consideration.

The establishment of a permanent exhibit at The Rooms dedicated to the First World War is a vivid example of commemorating the war effort and transferring of the memory of the Great War in contemporary Newfoundland. This exhibit, along with other memorial sites, has become one of the significant

commemorations of the Great War. Scholars like Harding, Gogos, Young, Gough, Major and many others have studied various First World War memorials and memorial sites that reflect Newfoundlanders' contribution to the war. However, other than some exhibit reviews, I have found little detailed academic research that concentrates on the representation of the history of Great War at The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery of The Rooms and examines the visitors' and staff members' point of view regarding the exhibit.

What's Next?

The third chapter of this thesis will provide a detailed description of the exhibit along with critically analyzing some of the exhibit displays. Focusing on museum staff interviews, I will explore in the next chapter: 1) how were the stories, objects and artifacts of The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery at The Rooms selected and crafted in a provincially sanctioned representation? 2) what are the meanings being produced and/or not produced by those crafted stories, objects and artifacts? 3. how does the museum contribute to creating a master narrative of war? 4. has history been treated as a commodity only to be 'consumed, digested and excreted'? (Wallace, 1987, 39).

Chapter 3

From Representation of History to the Production of Meaning

> At 8:45 a.m. on 1 July 2016, church bells across the province rang in unison to mark the moment of the 100th anniversary. Following this, Princess Anne, Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, opened the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery, the largest World War I exhibit in Canada, at The Rooms. The permanent exhibit, dedicated to the stories and tragedies of Beaumont-Hamel, was made possible through a 3.2 million-dollar donation from Newfoundland philanthropist Elinor Gill Radcliffe. Having laid wreaths at the National War Memorial earlier that day, Princess Anne spoke to the crowds about the exhibit: "The new gallery does not describe military campaigns, it speaks instead of individual men and women, of courage and gallantry, of their loss and their despair. And it underlines the statement, 'They were ordinary people who did extraordinary things.' And to use the word by which they were known to their fellow Newfoundlanders: they were ours[4] (Lynde 2018, 44).

In the essay "Canada Day/Memorial Day", Lynde describes the opening of The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery at The Rooms in the above-mentioned light. From Princess Anne's assertion, it is apparent how the First World War exhibit at The Rooms stands as a living memorial for Newfoundlanders' contribution in the Great War. In this chapter, I will attempt a detailed description of the respective exhibit considering what it portrays, what the site looks like and how the history of Newfoundlanders' contribution in the First World War has been represented. Based on my fieldnotes and observation, it will shed light on some of the artifacts, images, photographs, audio-visual representations, museum texts, exhibit presentation and design. To have an understanding

[4] As further reference to this quote, in her footnote, Lynde writes, "This ceremony was mirrored at Beaumont-Hamel, 9 km north of the town of Albert, France, where Prince Charles vowed, 'We will not forget them.' Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan issued a statement: 'We remember the incredible bravery of the Canadians and Newfoundlanders who fought in these battles, which began in northern France on July 1, 1916' (Lynde 2018, 47)

of the process of creating the exhibit, I include data gathered during the interviews I conducted with staff members of The Rooms. In this chapter, I will explore how 'a certain historical reality' (Jack 2010, 11) about the First World War and the cultural past of Newfoundland is being put forward by the exhibit, why it has been put forward and for whom it has been put forward.

To understand museums' representation of history has been a great concern of scholars from time to time as, museums not only gather various displays together but also attempt to create "grand narratives"[5] (Stanley 2006, 35) in most cases. Handler and Gable identify an authoritarian representation of history in history museums. According to them, "the authoritarian objectivism of history museums had to be challenged" (Handler and Gable 1997, 5) with a critical exploration of the cultural representation that museums provide. In their book *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg*, the authors emphasize the necessity of critically analyzing museums' ways of collecting, classifying and displaying materials to note which ideologies and whose interests a particular museum is trying to serve. Scott T. Swank also discusses the manipulation of ideologies in history museums that sought to generate particular knowledge through an authoritative interpretation of history (Swank 1990). From my participant observation and field work at The Rooms in Summer 2018 and Winter 2019, I have noticed that The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery of The Rooms motivates a

[5] In the essay, "Whose Public? Whose Memory? Racisms, Grand Narratives and Canadian History" Timothy Stanley analyzes how the idea of "grand narratives" normalizes certain narratives and thus, excludes alternative narratives.

selective and scrupulous interpretation of history while depicting Newfoundlanders' contribution to the First World War. Focusing on the physical description, representational strategies and the creation process of The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery, this chapter will analyze how the particular exhibit is modelled to be "encoded with particular cultural meaning for visitors to identify with" (Jack 2010, 172).

3.1 Describing the Exhibit

Regarding The Rooms' demonstration of the First World War history, Emma Lang writes, "The Rooms' presentation of the story of Newfoundland and Labrador's role in the First World War begins before one enters the building in St. John's from the parking lot, one passes the new outdoor amphitheater dedicated to those that served in the war and on the home front. Above the entrance to the museum, visitors see a statue of a caribou, the symbol of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, framed by the shape of a house" (2017, 189). The exhibit is officially titled, "The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery: Honoring All Newfoundlanders and Labradorians Who Served Overseas and on the Home Front During the First World War (1914- 1918)". It is situated in the 2nd floor of The Rooms. After coming to the 2nd floor through walking up the staircase, visitors encounter a brief introduction to The Rooms' centennial campaign for First World War commemoration represented through a metallic statue of a caribou and an inscription that reads, "Where Once They Stood We Stand," reflecting the significance of the history of the First World War for the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Visitors will also find the names of the donors who contributed to the exhibit. Upon looking up, one can see

thousands of metallic forget-me-not flowers on the ceiling leading towards the entrance of the exhibit (see Fig. 3).

Figure 1: The Courtyard and Amphitheatre

Figure 2: The Main Entrance of The Rooms with a Caribou Statue

Figure 3: Entrance to the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery

The exhibit is arranged chronologically. It starts with the beginning of the First World War and ends with the starting of the Second World War. The exhibit is divided into thematic zones concentrating on the stories of people, places, and themes related to the war. Just opposite to the entrance, visitors will encounter the visages of the men who served during the war as a part of the Newfoundland Regiment. Visitors' journey through the exhibit starts with a welcoming Sable Chief (the mascot of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment), and his story. This portion of the exhibit also comes with an overall thematic introduction of the exhibit stated through a text panel that says:

> *The "Great War," 1914 to 1918, was immense in breadth, in effort and in lives lost, damaged and changed. It was the great adventure and the great sorrow. A war to end all wars. Yet it did not.*
> *What we now call the First World War was a defining event for Newfoundland and Labrador. It affected lives at home and took many people overseas. Some who went never returned.*
> *The war required a show of strength and endurance in the face of danger and hardship. It asked our people to give all they had, and then give more. Our connections to this conflict are all around us still: in monuments and street names, in family stories and treasured keepsakes. In this exhibition catalogue, we share the stories and words of Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans who experienced the First World War and all that our sacrifice brought us.* (quote taken from the exhibit text panel)

After entering the main gallery, the visitors will find themselves in a different environment than the outside. The exhibit starts with the prominent sound of videos and voices of people sharing war time experiences and stories. The first section of the exhibit is entitled as the "Faces of Valour" showing big photographs of the soldiers of

Newfoundland regiment and nurses in ten large vertical panels. A great number of quotes reflecting peoples' experiences and memories of the war are written on the wall so that visitors can get to know about the war time realities of Newfoundland at a glance. The beginning of the exhibit basically "sets the tone of the rest of the exhibit, focusing the visitor's attention on the stories and lives of individuals who experienced the war and the long-lasting impact it has had" (Lang 2017, 190) on Newfoundland. The gloomy and unpleasant nature of the war is represented through the choice of colour of the exhibit. As Emma Lang writes, "[…] Everything is grey – the walls, floor and ten large vertical panels showing the faces of those impacted by the war. The only colour comes from a khaki uniform in the distance" (2017, 190).

Figure 4: The "Faces of Valour"

The next thematic section is titled as “Home Front” starting from the year 1914. This section presents the stories representing the war efforts that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians took to take part in the war. This section also includes what happened at home during the war. It basically explores the responses of the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to the First World War. The “Home Front” section starts with an introductory panel that states, “*Everyone wondered about the enemy and how to defend our shores*.” This section elaborates on Newfoundlanders’ preparation for the war and how different organizations of Newfoundland and Labrador supported the war effort. The touching story of Eliza Strong who “joined the Women’s Patriotic Association following her son Charlie’s enlistment in the then Newfoundland Regiment” is presented in this section” (Candow 2016, 368). Eliza’s son Charlie was killed in 1918 and “She died exactly two years later, to the day” (Candow 2016, 368). In this section, visitors find letters, news headlines and photographs depicting declaration of war on the part of Newfoundland and also, the obligations of the Newfoundlanders to join the war due to the strong political connection to Britain.

Figure 5: The Story of Eliza Strong

Figure 6: Text Panel Declaring Newfoundland's Connection to Britain

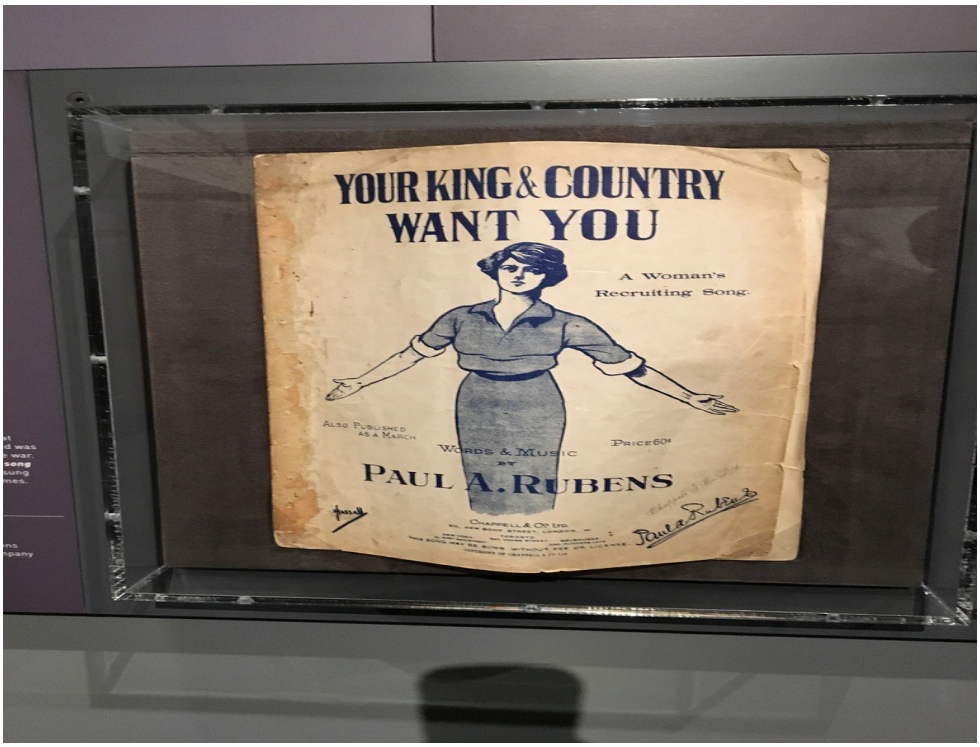

Figure 7: Advertisement for Recruitment

In this section, visitors learn that Newfoundland was a British colony during war, along with gaining an understanding of the British Empire through a global map describing its extent. Focusing on the question, "How did we get there?", this section mainly indicates how enthusiastically Newfoundlanders greeted the war news and finally joined the war. This zone incorporates some sub-sections, one of which is called 'Mobilization,' where visitors get to know the stories of the people who signed up for the First World War. Their faces and uniforms are highlighted in this section. Through the interpretive text panels, visitors will get to know about all the organizations that joined to help the war effort.

Figure 8: "Britain Declares War": The Global Map and British Empire

Figure 9: Various Dresses Worn During the War

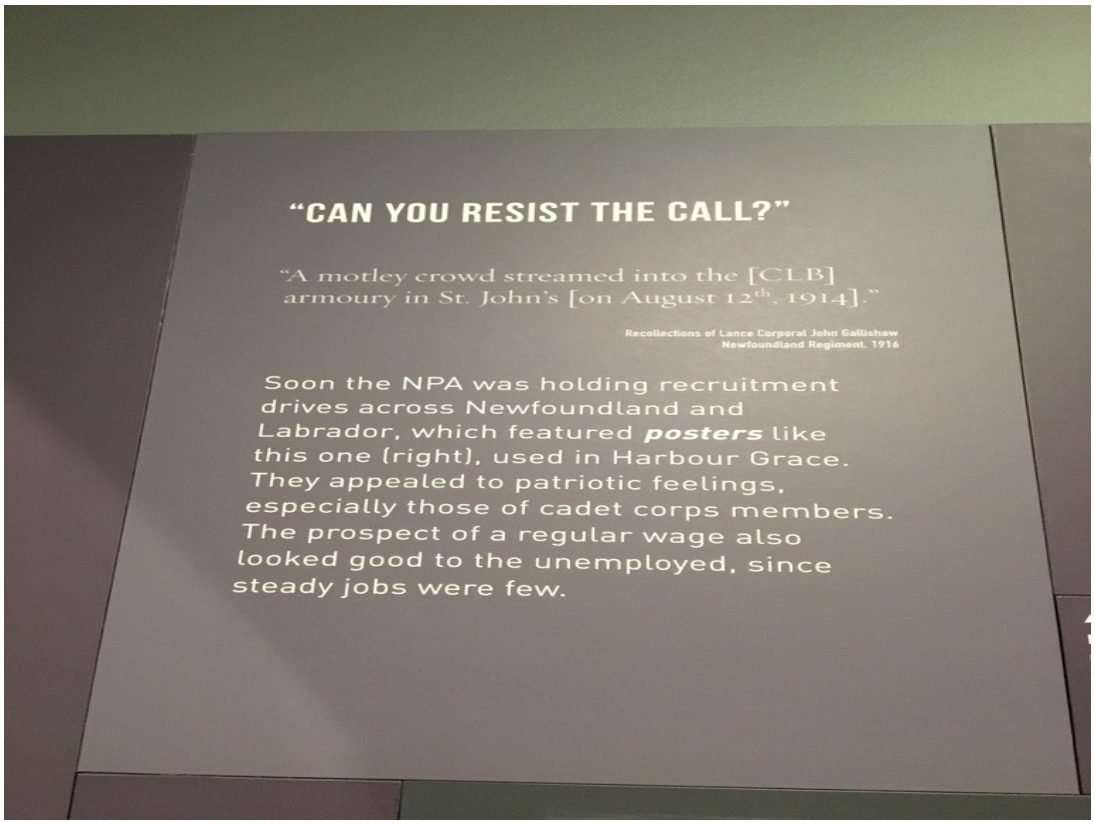

Figure 10: Text panel Depicting NPA's Recruitment Effort

Another subsection of this thematic zone is entitled "Community/Social Section" informing visitors about various war time activities of the Home Front through displaying brief excerpts from letters, sermons, diaries, and memoirs. A range of personal items like artifacts, documents, or replicas are visualized in this section. Along with depicting the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve's role in home defense, this section pays great attention "to the efforts of women who knitted articles of clothing for men overseas…" (Candow 2016, 368).

Figure 11: The Knitted Socks

In the “Protection” section, visitors learn the protective measures that Newfoundlanders had to take to tackle the threats created by the war. The “Politics and Economy” section represents newspaper articles highlighting the economic downfall of the Home front after Newfoundlanders joined the war. This section also includes short biographies of the political leaders to explore their role during the war. This section ends with video clips that shows Newfoundland regiment’s journey to the overseas on the SS Florizel 1. The happy faces of the soldiers ready to experience a new journey are highlighted in this section.

Figure 12: Soldiers' Journey to Overseas by S.S. Florizel

The next thematic zone, "Overseas," represents what happened in 1914 and 1915 concentrating on the soldiers, sailors, nurses and airman who went over overseas. This zone starts with an interpretive text panel that states:

> *At last! The Atlantic was crossed, and Regimental boots touched English soil. But much work had to be done before volunteers from Newfoundland and Labrador joined the fighting.*
>
> *New roles had to be learned and practiced. In addition to training for land, sea or air service, some men were taught a trade: cook, signaller, sniper, stretcher-bearer. Women volunteers learned to care for the wounded.*
>
> *Pride grew as people transformed and leaders emerged. Everyone felt they were part of something shared, something big. They all looked ahead to the*

> *real action- wondering what it would be like and how they would measure up.* (quote taken from the exhibit text panel)

This section portrays the Newfoundland Regiment's journey overseas and their training. The transition from an adventurous journey to the harsh reality of war is reflected in this section through the portrayal of the stories of an enlisted man, a VAD nurse, a naval reservist and an air force pilot. Their stories are represented through images and diaries. Personal experience narratives related to the naval engagement are depicted in this section to highlight the experiences of the naval reservists during the war. This section includes postcards, letters and telegrams of the family members and soldiers that were sent and received during the war and thus, records the personal experiences of people with the war.

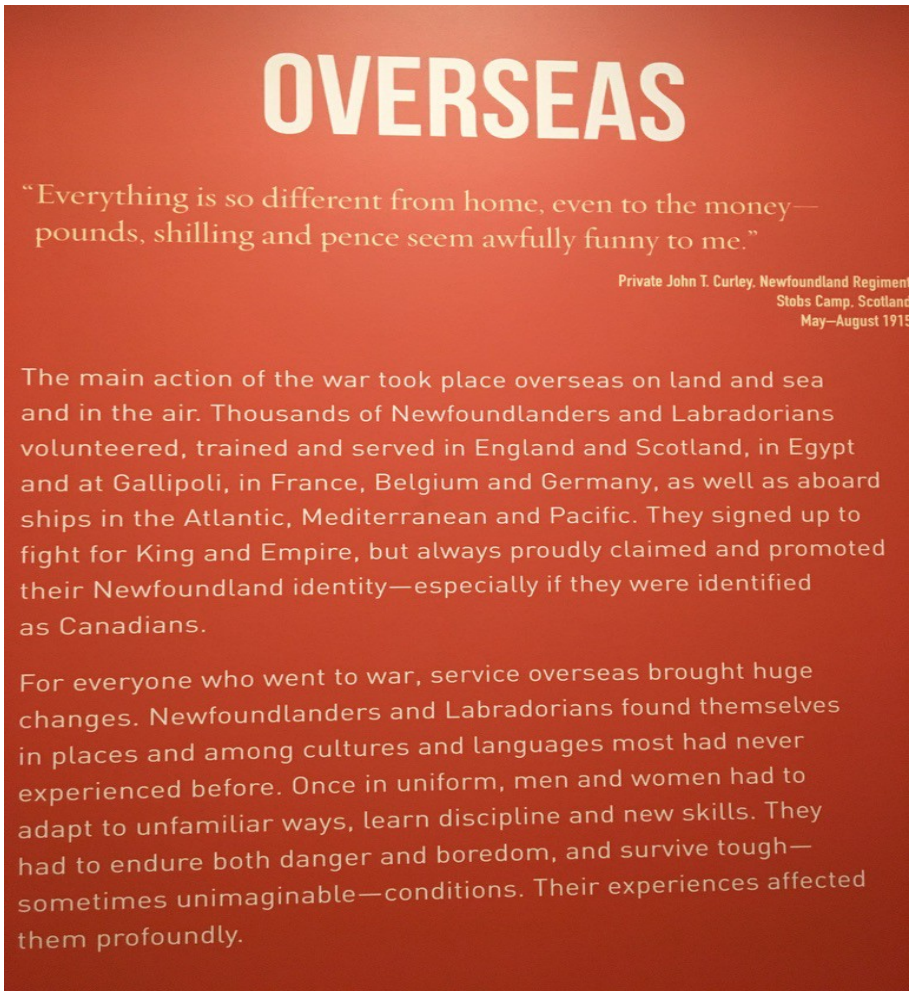

Figure 13: Text Panel Describing Soldiers' Experience in Overseas

Then the exhibit continues to move chronologically, focusing on the regiment's first battle at Gallipoli. The Battle of Gallipoli is described in this section through a map, soldiers' credentials (badges, passports, pins, and so on), artifacts and digital images. The Battle of Gallipoli, which is relatively small, is followed by the zone that illustrates the Battle of Beaumont Hamel.

With the next section, the tone of the exhibit moves from one of excitement to one of sorrow. Candow states that, "the section named after Beaumont-Hamel forms the exhibit's core" (2016, 368). Visitors will go through 'a trench like pathway' (Lang 2017,

190) to reach the main part of this section. The sounds of machine guns and bombs become more prominent after stepping into this section. Due to the disturbing and tragic nature of the section, a warning is posted at the entrance describing the nature of the content. Artifacts and photographs related to the memory of the Battle of Beaumont are embedded in the wall visualizing the horrible nature of the battle. This section starts with a text panel titled "The July Drive" that depicts how Newfoundland Regiment got prepared for the attack of July 1, 1916. In another text panel, a map depicting the "*objectives and Advance of the 29th Division, British Expeditionary Force*" is shown. It highlights the statement of Major and Adjutant Arthur Raley regarding the Newfoundland Regiment's preparation for the battle.

Figure 14: "Beaumont-Hamel: France July 1, 1916"

Figure 15: The "July Drive"

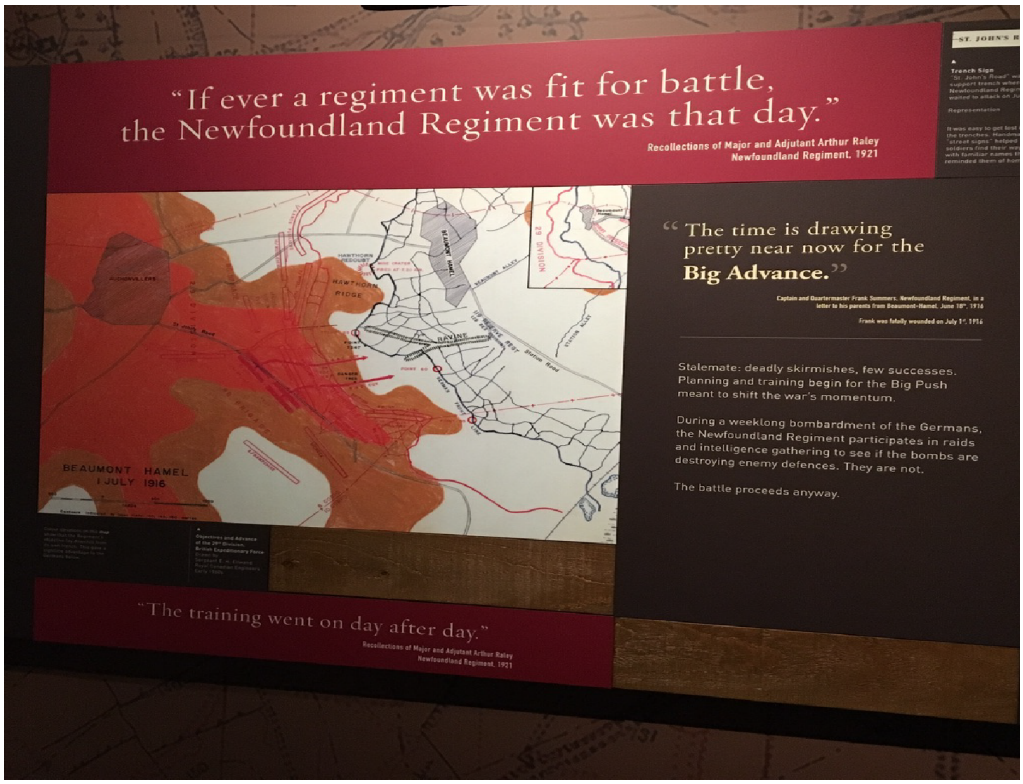

Figure 16: The Preparation for the "Big Advance"

This section starts with a depiction of how the troops waited in a support trench called “St. John’s Road” near the front lines at Beaumont Hamel. It portrays the emotional thoughts of the soldiers before going to the battle. Then, through several text panels, photographs, videography, the exhibit describes what happened in the Battle of Beaumont Hamel.

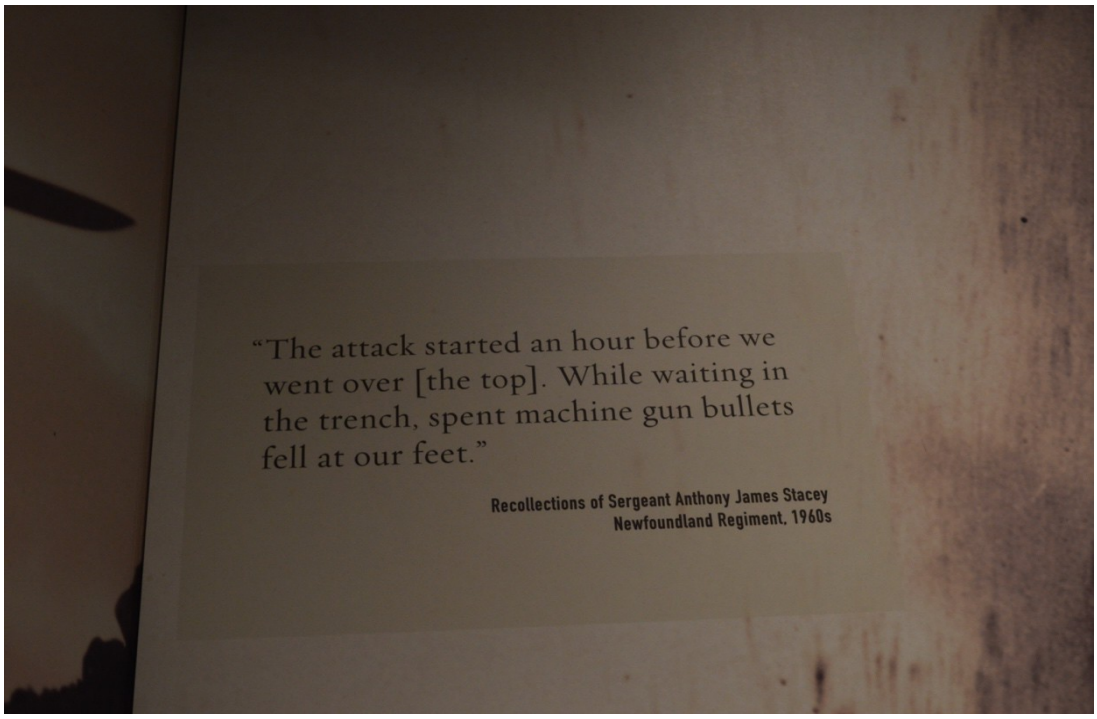

Figure 17: Text panel Depicting the Battle of Beaumont Hamel

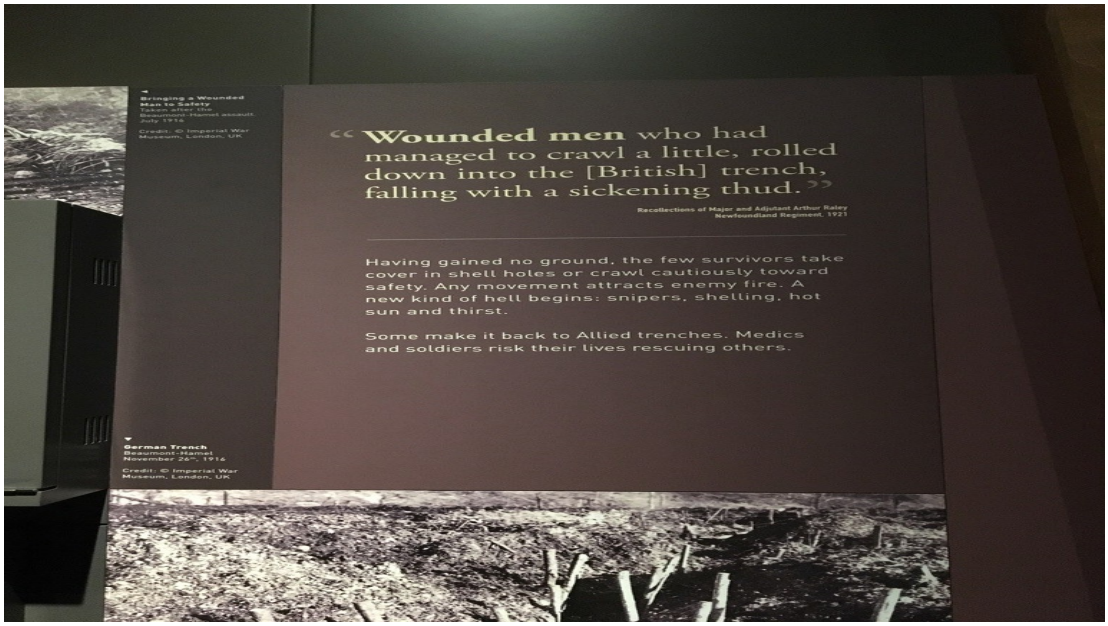

Figure 18: The Horrible Nature of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel

Then the exhibit turns to the terrible fatalities incurred at the battle.

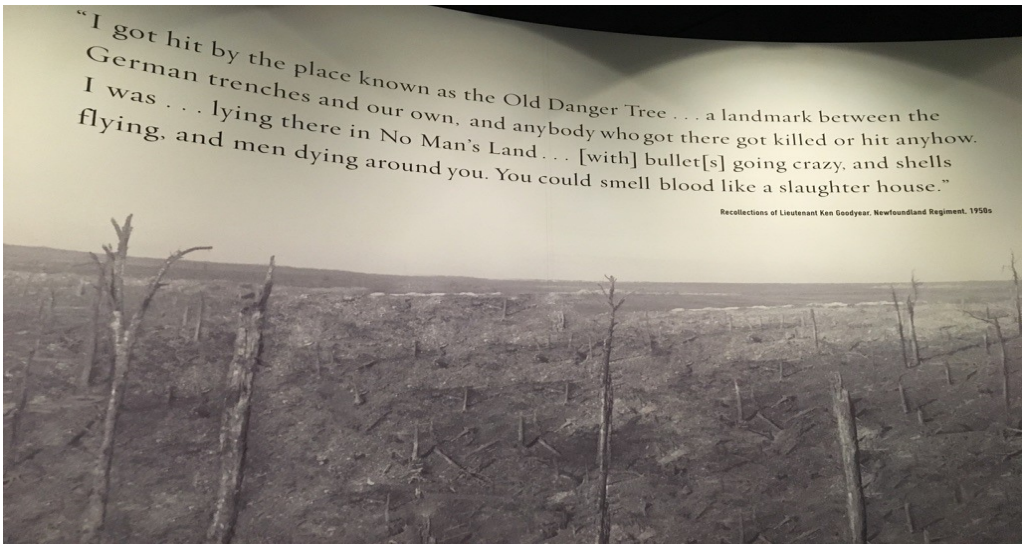

Figure 19: The Terrible fatalities of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel

Figure 20: The Terrible Fatalities of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel

The subsection of this thematic zone titled “Aftershocks” starts with a panel which states:

> *At first, the British authorities boasted of a great victory-an attempt to keep up morale. Then, with the casualty lists, came the unthinkable truth: July 1st had been the bloodiest day in the history of the British Army. The 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was all but gone.*
>
> *The losses and devastation affected communities across the dominion. People were stunned with shock and stilled by mourning, even as they worked to rebuild the Regiment.*
>
> *July 1st, 1916 quickly became a symbol of our courageous service, unwavering commitment and huge sacrifice. But at what cost? To this day, many people in Newfoundland and Labrador feel that the vents at Beaumont-Hamel are part of our collective consciousness, deeply connected to our sense of who we are.* (quote taken from the exhibit text panel)

From this text panel it is evident that, the whole section is designed to explore the terrific causalities that a whole generation of Newfoundlanders suffered.

Then, the exhibit moves to a pensive space known as the Danger Tree Room. In this section, visitors will encounter a replica of the ‘Danger Tree’ and a graphic of the original ‘danger tree’ on the wall. The Danger Tree has become an icon of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel as many stories associated with this tree survived after the war. As Gogos writes,

> For many who survived that fateful morning on July 1st, the Danger Tree, the lone reference point on a battle scarred ground, garnered a place of reverence. Located roughly half way between German and British front lines, it was a one of the areas where the wire had been cut

> prior to the battle for the Newfoundlanders to pass through. It was the forming up place during the two trench raids in the days leading up to the battle and was the area from which the Newfoundlanders moved forward in search of wounded comrades on the night of the second raid. More than eighty of our men were cut to pieces near this tree on July 1st. The Danger Tree stands as a natural monument to the fallen of the Newfoundland Regiment on July 1st, 1916, and is considered just as important a memorial to our fallen as the Caribou and the Park itself […] the tree was a symbol of determination for the soldiers who fought over that ground near the village of Beaumont-Hamel (Gogos 2015, 3).

Emma Lang also describes "[t]he danger tree" to be "an iconic point on the Beaumont-Hamel battlefield beyond which, the story goes, no member of the Newfoundland Regiment survived" (Lang 2017, 190).

The next thematic zone, "The War Continues" describes the terrible dimensions of war. One of the text panels from this zone relates:

> *By August 1916, what had started as an adventure had become something far more demanding and deadly. Battles ended-but new ones began. Men were wounded and killed, replacements arrived, more men were wounded and killed.*
>
> *Through 1917 and 1918, The Great war ground on relentlessly, always calling for more: more people, more training, more support, more sacrifice.*
>
> *Meeting all the demands tested everyone's commitment, endurance and courage. While pride in achievements grew, so did the understanding and questioning of war's real cost.*
>
> *Yet people continued to send support and sign on to help the cause. For many, war was now a way of life.*
> (quote taken from the exhibit text panel)

This section emphasizes the coping mechanisms and community supports necessary during the war, visualizing how the soldiers dealt with injury and sickness as well as how nurses and volunteers helped them to recover. Here, museum visitors encounter with artifacts, photos, documents, and personal quotes that provide the details of these stories.

This section depicts the rest of the war very briefly with "The Trail of Caribou," and the battles and places to which Newfoundland regiment contributed throughout the war. "The Trail of the Caribou" is demarcated on a large map along with many other combat experiences of the Newfoundlanders. This section depicts how "The Trail of the Caribou" became a source of identity and pride for the Newfoundlanders both at home and overseas. After that, the exhibit concentrates on the story of awarding the designation of "Royal" to the Newfoundland Regiment. To visualize the wartime achievement, a case full of military medals of the soldiers and sailors is displayed. The stories of individual success are depicted in this section through illustrating the historical details of Tommy Ricketts; a Newfoundlander who received the Victoria Cross.

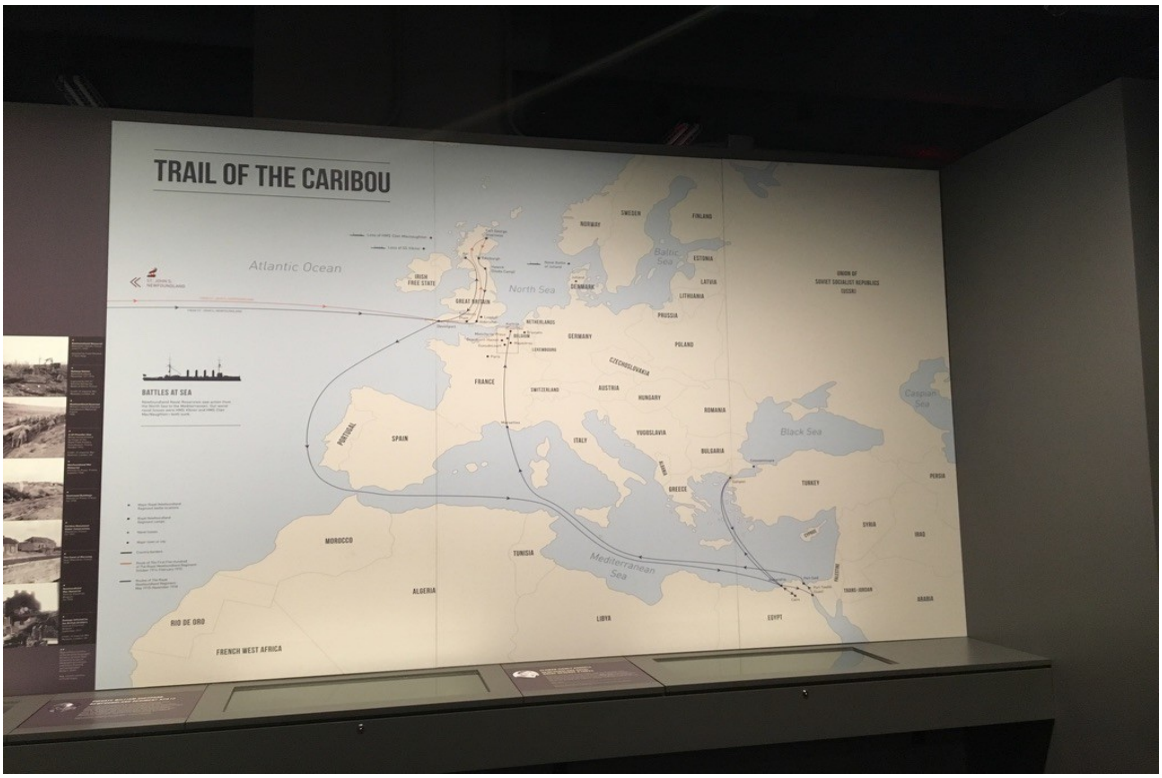

Figure 21: "Trail of Caribou"

Figure 22: The Other Battles

This next thematic zone, titled “Consequences at Home,” represents the effects of the First World War experienced in the years after the war and the decades later. It talks about the aftermath of war including when the soldiers came back home and how they dealt with it, how families coped both with the war and later with the loss of the key person of the family. It explores how many families lost key wage earners and how some lost all their male family members. It also concentrates on the women who served during the war and how their lives changed when they returned back home. This section basically elaborates on the stories of people who were affected by the war. For example, what happened to the families who lost their family members in the war and also the soldiers who did survive, and came home wounded both mentally and physically? Visitors get a sense of the real effects of war through the tragic stories of individual families who lost their loved ones. Moreover, the stories of returning soldiers and the hardships they had to face to reintegrate into society are highlighted in this section. The harsh reality of the wounded soldiers is depicted through large and small graphics. This section also includes an introspective area, a memorial wall of “death pennies”, as a memento of the soldiers who died during the war.

Figure 23: The Room of "Death Pennies"

The next thematic zone, titled "Contemplative," starts with a text panel that states:

> *How do you measure the cost of a war? What words could ever capture what had just happened?*
>
> *These were questions on everyone's mind once peace was declared. It was easy to know who was missing. But what had the effort cost us?*
>
> *The numbers of lost and wounded were staggering. And every addition to the statistics- each a mere number- represented someone's heartbreaking loss.*
> *Official recognition of service and loss were sent out. Memorial scrolls, medallions and a letter from the king for each life taken. Some families proudly displayed these tokens, the acknowledgement of sacrifice. Others put them away and spoke no more of absent family members. How could paper and metal stand in for a loved one now gone?* (quote taken from exhibit text panel)

This section asks, “Can We Ever Know The Cost Of War?” and consequently, the visitors observe the long-term impacts (e.g., the downfall of fisheries; war debt; the Great Depression, the loss of independent government; and Confederation) of the First World War on Newfoundland and Labrador through time. The reactions of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to the Second World War are also presented in this section through texts and graphics.

Figure 24: “Can We Ever Know the Cost of War?”

The final zone titled “Lest We Forget” explores how people remember the First World War in the modern era. The necessity of commemorating the sacrifices of the people who served during the war is illustrated in this section. This section includes a video of contemporary people commemorating the war time sacrifices. The war memorials are presented through large graphics to show visitors the existing

commemorative services surrounding the First World War in Newfoundland. Then comes the memory wall which encourages visitors to leave their thoughts about the exhibit and memories of the war. The visitors are given a chance to write their thoughts about the war on a piece of paper that has the shape of a forget-me-not shape flower. The visitors stick the paper to the wall as a token of their impression of war history that they get from the exhibit. This wall is created to represent a community-built memorial inside the exhibition. Pictures of Memorial University, the war memorials, and street names are also placed at the end of the exhibit to represent how the First World War is perceived in contemporary Newfoundland.

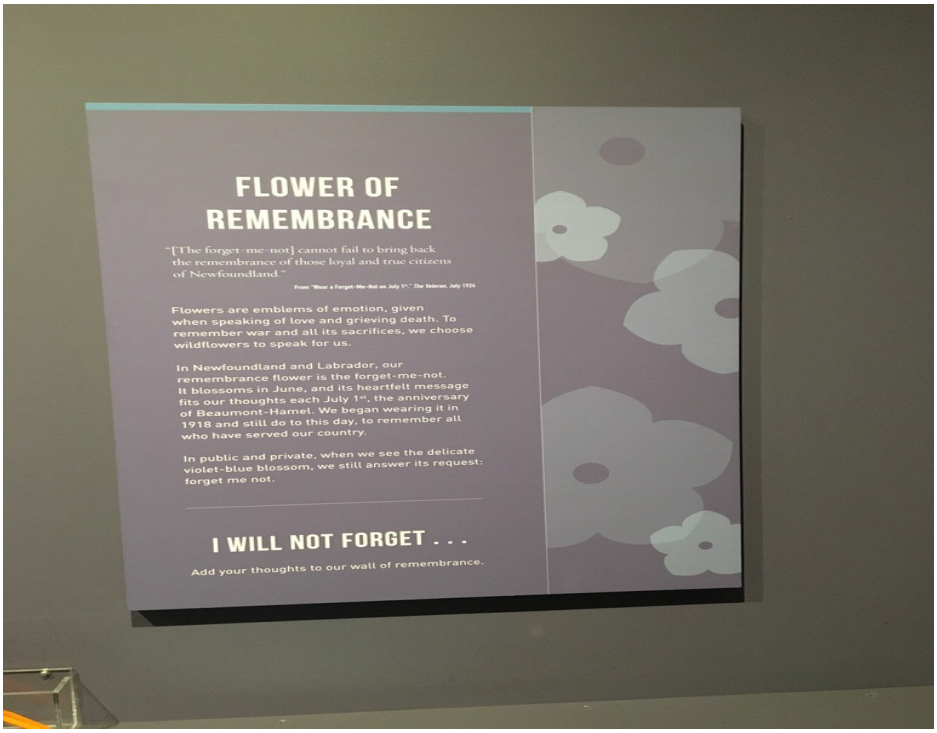

Figure 25: "Flower of Remembrance"

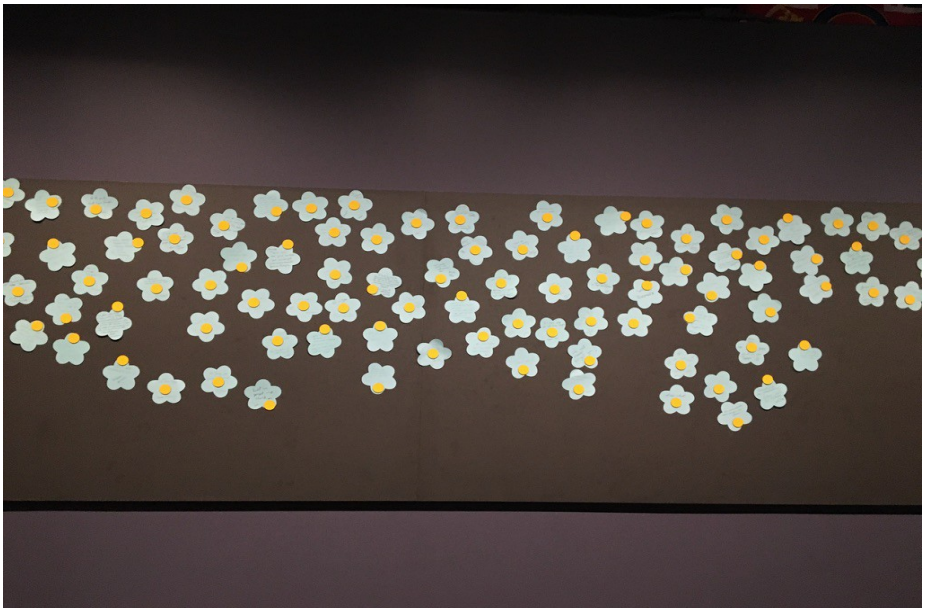

Figure 26: Flowers of Remembrance on the Wall

3.2 Understanding Museum's Representation of History

As discussed above, this exhibit is basically divided into eight chronological thematic zones: 'Faces of Valour', 'Home Front', 'Overseas', 'Beaumont-Hamel', 'The War Continues', 'Consequences at Home', 'Contemplative', and 'Lest We Forget. Each section has "a full range of interpretive media, including didactic panels, costumed mannequins, recorded sound, still and moving images, filmed re-enactors, and original and reproduction artifacts" (Candow 2016, 368). Visitors are invited to have a 'sensory engagement (Visually, Aurally, Tangibly)' (Jack 2010, 128) through seeing various war time artifacts, photographs and objects, touching some selected items, experiencing the sound of machine guns and voices of people, and listening to war time songs, all of which contributed to create a wartime environment. Emma Lang describes the journey through the exhibit as a "visceral experience" through which the "visitors enter the muted world

of the gallery; footsteps are softened by carpet and voices become softer" (2017, 189-190).

Museum exhibits like RNRG (The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery) are not only a place where history is consumed, but also a place of recreation for visitors. The visitors are placed in a setting differentiated from everyday life. The exhibit ensures the direct involvement of visitors with history through various interactive features. Visitors are provided with a chance to interact with certain objects and to be an active participant in the history of the First World War. Visitors get the "experience-centered forms of consuming culture" through engaging in a sensorial journey which is "based on doing, rather than seeing" (Jack 2010, 133). They get a chance to play a role in the presented history by measuring their height and weight, as well as testing eyesight and chest width in order to imagine themselves as a potential candidate for the regiment. In the home front section, there is a Holloway studio section where the visitors get to try on some soldiers' and nurses' uniforms and have their photograph taken with the uniforms. According to Moore, "while some museums have begun to appreciate the appeal of historical re-enactments as popular public events, and involving the visitor in more direct experience of the 'real person' through dressing up and taking on a character, this remains largely unexplored, though it has begun to be used highly successfully with children" (1997, 146). This is how visitors can assume themselves to be the 'real person' who interprets 'real things' in a 'real place' (Moore 1997, 146).

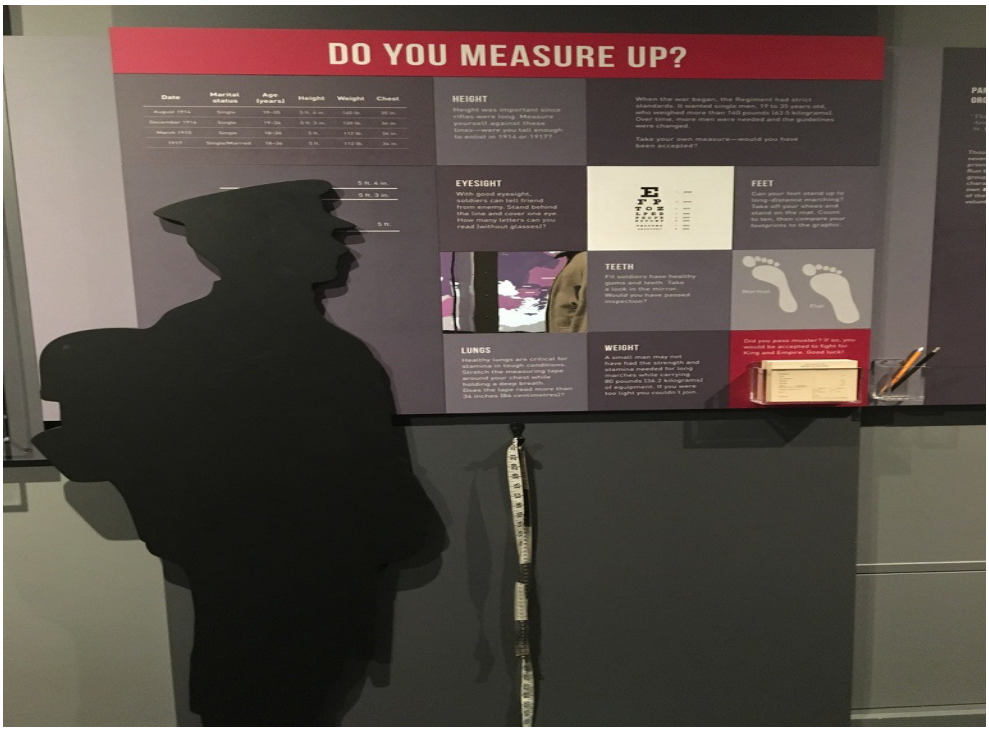

Figure 27: The Interactive: "Do you Measure Up

Figure 28: The Interactive: Holloway Studio

The construction of a physical setting that evokes the memory of the First World War is done very tactfully through the careful choice of place, paint colour, and design which "encourage the visitor to feel like they are 'on location'" (Jack 2010, 130). The "experience-centered methods" (Jack 2010, 135) of interpreting the past have been prioritized throughout the whole exhibit to encourage visitors to learn the history through direct encounters with the presented displays. Various media are used to tell the stories such as, displaying photographs, graphics of original documents, artefacts, videos and audio, maps, and the quotes on the wall.

Figure 29: Graphics on the Wall: The Battle of Beaumont Hamel

Figure 30: Graphics on the Wall: Soldier in the Battle

In various sections, stories are presented through 'demonstration'[6] using multimedia, film footage, and computer technology. For example, the overseas section depicts the experiences of the soldiers through presenting large graphics of different military trainings of the Newfoundland Regiment that were held in the British military camps of England and Scotland. The original footage is displayed through video and audio components. Rotating photographs are shown on the screen to accommodate more photos and stories.

[6] In her M.A thesis, Meghann E. Jack "(Re)Visiting the Industrial Past: Representation and Meaning at Nova Scotia's Museum of Industry" explains how Museum of Industry illustrates Nova Scotia's industrial past through demonstration; with the presentation of workable machines, multimedia, videography, dialogue of the actors, and so on (See, Jack 2010, 126).

Figure 31: The Visual Aid

Figure 32: Rotated Photos

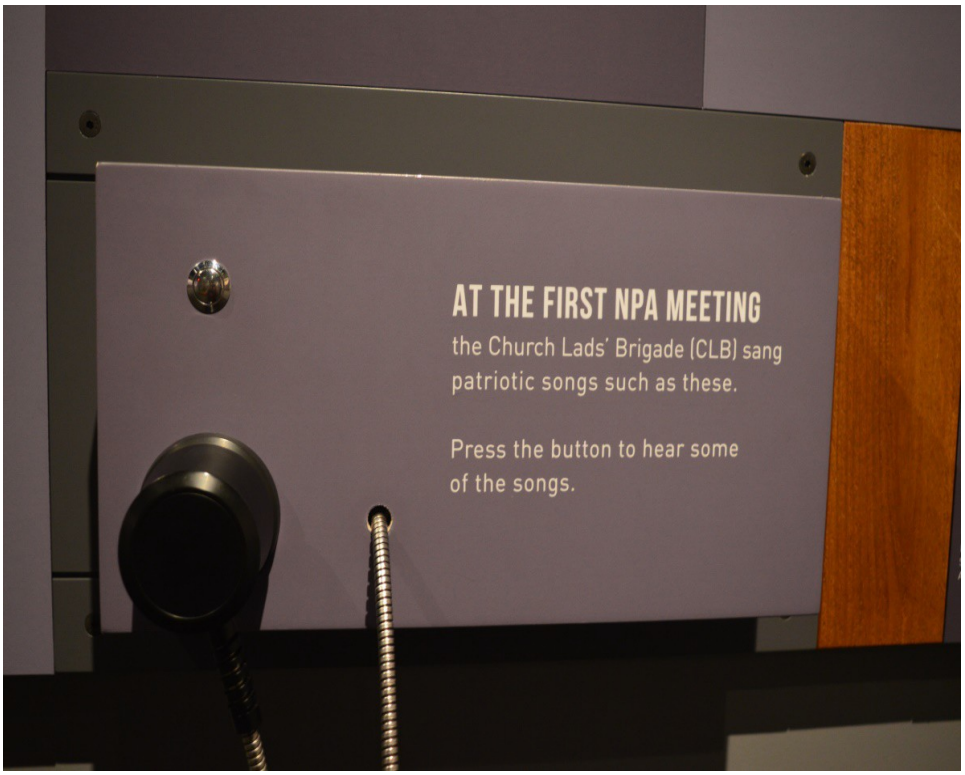

Figure 33: The Audio Recorder

A large number of war-related objects ranging from weapons, medals and helmets to postcards which people sent home as the remembrances of the war are represented. After the Beaumont Hamel section, visitors meet a large display case with various artifacts related to army life during war.

Figure 34: The Medals of War

Figure 35: The Showcased Artefacts of War

Moreover, visitors find various documents depicting the stories of combat and war-time lifestyles of the soldiers in various sections. Large font quotes reflecting the emotional experiences of the people during the war are also prominent in each section.

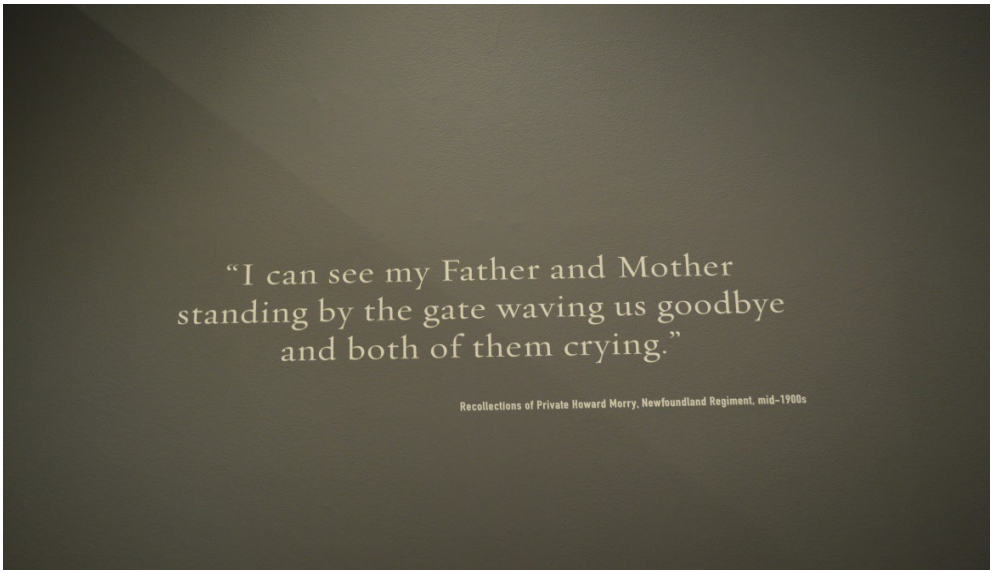

Figure 36: The Quote on the Wall

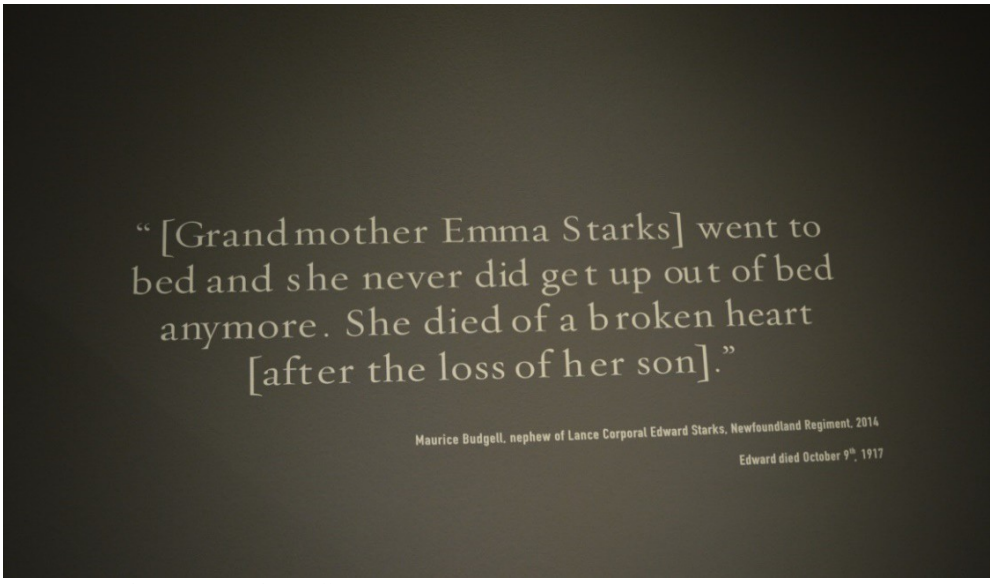

Figure 37: The Quote on the Wall

Figure 38: The Quote on the Wall

To represent more stories, a memory hub is presented in a corner of the exhibit so that visitors may read stories in the database even though they are not on display. Most of the things were covered on the wall or via video screens. Stories of the soldiers, nurses and family members are represented through videography for which actors and actresses were hired and scripts were written based on the life histories of the people.

Figure 39: The Artist Acting as a Soldier's Mother


Figure 40: The Memory Hub

Replicas of the Danger Tree, socks and other artifacts are presented as remembrance of various war-time events. The danger tree emphasizes the horrifying nature of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel and socks are representative of the contribution of the women to the war.

Figure 41: The Replica: Socks

Figure 42: The Replica: "The Danger Tree"

The stories of Newfoundlanders' contributions to the First World War are presented in RNRG following various representational strategies in order to allow visitors to travel back to the time of the First World War and imagine themselves as active participants in the events of that time.

3.3 Creating the Exhibit

From the interviews I conducted with museum staff, it is obvious that the exhibit was created to commemorate the role of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians during the First World War along with exploring the impact of the war on the social, economic and political identity of the province. The stories are told through personal accounts of the people who were involved in the war and also affected by the war. The war-time services of the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, both overseas and on home front, are highlighted in the exhibit. Sections like 'Home Front' and 'Overseas' let visitors explore the history through self-direction while the Beaumont–Hamel section proceeds quite compactly, hardly leaving any option other than visiting the whole area (Lang 2017). The exhibit is designed to offer visitors a feeling of traveling back to the war time realities and then moving forward again as they consider the impact.

My interviews with the staff members reveal that, in case of representing the things and contents, The Rooms considered what most of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador demanded. According to the staff members, while representing the history of the First World War, they prioritized individual stories that were important to the people of this province. It is an exhibit in which Newfoundlanders tell their own story of

the war. The emphasis on stories came about because people wanted their relatives to be represented in the exhibit. As one interviewee explained,

> Well, The Rooms decided to make this because we did a call to the public to St. John's and Newfoundland and Labrador and asked what people wanted to see and what I thought was important to Newfoundland and Labrador history (Staff member interview conducted in August, 2018).

Another staff member said,

> To share the story. To share the story of all those people that played a part whether they were at the home front or they were at the battlefield […] They put a call out to everybody, to people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and there was an overwhelming response for the story about war and particularly the story about the first world war and Beaumont Hamel and that story (Staff member interview conducted in August, 2018).

The curator, Maureen Power relates:

> For the world war exhibit, we really wanted to make sure that we tell the story from the perspectives of the people and the people know who is here and the people from Newfoundland and Labrador who took part in the war effort during that time period […] We really wanted to tell it from the people (Interview conducted on April 11, 2019).

Before creating the exhibit, The Rooms put a call out to the public to come up with their stories and things related to the First World War. In this respect they also arranged "a road show" where the staff members traveled through Newfoundland and Labrador and called on people to tell their stories and show their artifacts:

> We did not ask them [for] donation right away. It was just to see what was out there and we wanted to see the stories more than anything. From that a lot of

> people wanted to include their stories into the exhibit. We get a lot of artifact donation that way and a lot of loans that way. We also had a temporary exhibit here in the same space before the gallery was built. We had a collection of great war exhibit where people could bring their objects and stories. That's how we collected the stories and artifacts (Staff member interview conducted in August, 2018).

Most of the displays for the exhibit were chosen based on the predetermined context explored through academic research:

> We choose based on the importance of the context […] When I came to actually choosing what to go out that came after we decided on our themes and our zones. We first decided our messages for the exhibit. We decided okay, these are the top things we want to teach people about the First World War. This is how we want to lead out. So, before we choose our artefacts, we knew that we want a section on home front, we knew we want a section of war air force. We know we want a commemoration section that you know […] So, we match the stories and the artefacts to the zones and the themes (Staff member interview conducted in August, 2018).

In this regard, another staff member explained:

> We choose materials based on whatever the story was […] that's how we chose based on the whatever the need was to follow the story line or the timeline that's how we did […] So we wanted to feature the Holloway studios. So, what we did, the archive provided a graphic which was a big collage of men from 1915 that was actually done by Holloway studios. We also provided some newspaper articles and the museum provided a camera that was used at the Holloway studios to help cited the story. So, whatever the need was, we find a way to fill up. They might say we want to tell the story of this nurse. Do you have anything to tell about this nurse? So, myself and my colleagues would go to check out collections, if there is anything. So that's how we did it. So, if we had a name, then, we

> would go and search (Staff member interview conducted in August, 2018).

In response to my question about why the exhibit made use of many media while presenting the history of the First World War, Maureen Power explained that they were involved because some visitors want the factual information of the history, and others prefer to read history as stories. The rationale behind the graphically dense exhibition was to represent history in an interesting way so that visitors could get the information easily:

> This is all for the visitors, not for us. We are academics you know; we have been doing research regarding this for years but, we need to know if somebody comes from a different background whether or not [they're] going to understand and engage with this. And when we look at it we look at the tactile learners, means someone using their hands to learn, the audio learners, some who learn though hearing, the visual learners, someone that learns through visualizations and grasp and kinetic learners, people that learns through physically moving through spaces. We tried to touch on all those different forms of learning so that something in the exhibition everybody could understand […] We tried to involve every single type of learner that is in the current research so that everybody can get something out of it […] (Interview conducted with Maureen Power on April 11, 2019).

Another staff member said,

> I think, the exhibit is done well with the photographic materials and the letters. I think, the visual aids are the immediate information and I think, really in this modern age, people want to know in a second. So, I think the way the exhibit has been put together with photographic material with the large size of letters and with artefacts, it is easy for to people to absorb things very quickly. They will understand it quickly and retain it. And I think that is done well in that way […] the way the information was displayed, it helps the

> visitor very well […] (Staff member interview conducted in August, 2018).

While representing Newfoundlanders' contribution to the First World War, The Rooms makes a balance between personal and formal history. The stories collected from ordinary people had to be supported by official records:

> We backed everything up through research because Newfoundland Regiment, we were very, very lucky because Newfoundland Regiment had an excellent paper keeper. So, our attestation papers are incredibly full of records. It tells everything, any type of injury they had and any type of sickness they had. Any letters they wrote home and all copied and put it into their files and these were all at the national archive in Ottawa and we had the copy there at The Rooms (Interview conducted with Maureen Power on April 11, 2019).

While recalling the challenges of creating the exhibit, the curator, Maureen Power described how they had to work hard to fill the gaps and meet the deadlines:

> I gotta kind of so you are going back and forth trying to figure out what already was in your collection and what coming in and what story you need to tell […] So that was a challenge kind of doing a survey of the collection because we wanted to tell the history of the people. So, you need to know who belong to and who own that in that collection, and it takes a lot of work. We tried to collect the donor's name but the donor might have collected the artifacts in the 60s. Then, we would go through the telephone book to find out the donor […] So that's the challenges that we faced most often. And also, we were working to a date […]" (Interview conducted with Maureen Power on April 11, 2019).

Moreover, there were limitations with the space as this is a physical exhibit. To represent the history of the First World War within a limited space has also been a great challenge:

> We knew we wanted those themes and so each of those things were then allocated a footprint based on how much we wanted to. We knew Beaumont Hamel needs a big space […] you know you are constrained by the size of gallery. It can't be infinite because we knew that this, the 9000 square feet that we have to work with. So, you know how much you want to allocate for Homefront. How much we need to allocate for Beaumont Hamel and how do we want Beaumont Hamel to be treated. We wanted to have the tree, the danger tree, in the middle of the exhibition as it takes that much space. So, we had to figure that out. Then comes down to cases, the case size and the stories. We wanted to tell this many story. We only have this many case that are this size. So, you know you gotta kind of give and take based on your restrained space (Interview conducted with Maureen Power on April 11, 2019).

The design of the exhibit is flexible enough to rotate stories and artifacts. Though it is a permanent exhibit, the design is done in a way that things could be rotated. As the staff members of the exhibit informed me, the displays of the exhibit would be changed from time to time, but the themes will remain unchanged:

> The original loan period to my knowledge is for three to five years. So, when we took loans of artifacts from the people, my memory is that it's either of three years period or five years long period. So, once those loans are up, the concept is that, we will be able to put in a new artifact that tells the same story. So it fits in the particular zone or theme that it's in but it highlights someone new and whole new family gets to know and gets come in and see their artefacts on display and of course it's just, tells more stories and the more stories we tell and the more people learn (Staff member interview conducted in August, 2018).

Another staff member relates,

> It's a permanent exhibit. In terms of the artifacts that are actually displayed there from time to time because of conservation reasons. They have to switch things out but, the story would be the same […] (Staff member interview conducted in August, 2018).

In the exhibit, history is represented through the lens of a provincially sanctioned narrative highlighting the contribution of the Newfoundlanders and Labradorians during the Great War. The systematic effort of The Rooms to (re)construct the history of the First World War is obvious in the creating process of the exhibit. No doubt, The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery has been purposefully modeled to represent the history of the First World War from a particular point of view. It informs visitors about the sacrifices of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians during the First World War. The sentimentalized and nostalgic representation of war history is often desirable in a museum setting (Jack 2010). In the exhibit, the history of Newfoundlanders' contribution to the First World War is chosen very purposefully to provide a "sophisticated understanding of nationhood and more perceptive understanding of the national past" (Schlereth1989, 304-305). This is how museums attempt to have control over past, through presenting displays systematically: "It is itself a created past, implying by its authority a command over time and space" (Walsh 1992, 32). Moreover, museums are often prone to create "an artificial and isolated place, removed from the everyday experience of process through time and space […] a fantasy island, taking 'time out' from history" (Walsh 1992, 100). According to Jordanova, our understanding of the past is dependent on various evidences that we relate together to produce meaning. She argues,

the selection process of restoring the past is never 'accidental even if the selection processes are largely unconscious" (Jordanova 1989, 26). The presentation of certain things and omission of others have always been motivated by the desired meaning that is intended:

> […] that some of the stories we were telling of course a lot of the stories had two sides why things happened a certain way or you know certain things led to another and someone else does not believe that. Our advisory committee really worked hard a lot and these volunteers too, to sort through all the different theories and all the different stories and help us to cite what the best version or safest version of the story would be to present in that usually would be an unbiased story. You can tell the both sides if you can and people can make up their own mind about what happened. You tried to be factually correct. So, that was their role in kind of check and balance for the curator and for the exhibit team (Staff member interview conducted in August, 2018).

3.4 A Critical Note

Whereas the old museology "is too much about museum methods and too little about the purposes of museums" (Davis 2008, 399), the New Museology concentrates on "the presentation of museum objects […] to enable museums to communicate more effectively with their visitors" (Davis 2008, 399). Contemporary museums are moving away from "the 'object-centered' representations to the 'story-centered' illustrations" (Moore 1997, 24). Bouquet notes the evolution of the museum "from being an object-oriented museum to being a story-oriented museum" (2012, 131). Davis also talks about the "classic approach of museums" as the "object-centered rather than concept-centered… where cultures are exclusively defined by the form and decoration of their

material culture" (2007, 57). Following Stuart Hall, Meghann Jack identifies the necessity of formulating story out of the 'raw historical events' to make it 'a communicative event" (Jack 2010, 129). The demonstration of the meaningful themes and creation of certain narrative discourses through a systematic representation of museum texts and displays are apparent in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery which, profoundly invites visitors to grasp certain meanings. According to Moore, museums are political institutions that "enable their users to understand the world in a political sense […]" (1997, 22). The story that is presented in RNRG is very clear and explicit: the idea of commemorating the sacrifices and war services and remembering the achievements of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians during the First World War is privileged throughout the whole exhibit. Though the exhibit is divided into various sections, each section contributes to that main story.

Some present-day museums are organized following nineteenth century "ideals of rigid taxonomies and classification, whereby it was believed that artefacts could be laid out in a consistent, unitary and linear way" (Smith 1989, 19). To some extent, RNRG seems to be influenced by the modern idea of museums that attempted "a form of didactic linear narrative, a representation of progress through the ordered display of artefacts […]" (Walsh 1992, 20). This exhibit provides a chronological structure representing the stories of those Newfoundlanders who were directly or indirectly related to the Great War. As my interviews with the staff members reveal, though there were debates among the members of the advisory committee about the chronological representation of history, they could not overcome it:

> We could not really do that because it was a very specific four years. Right? So, we kind of trying to keep with the museum trends kind of what's historic research is going and also make sure we tell things in a chronological manner. So that's what it makes sense because battles came after battles you know […] (Staff member interview conducted in August, 2018).

It is true that RNRG does not encourage the factual learning of history and puts less emphasize on the concrete aspects of history. Rather it situates the objects within a particular context. At the same time, it does not provide new ways of thinking about history, but rather records history through a narrative representing the events that seemed to happen linearly with the progression of time whereas, "history is not a linear progression of events and episodes, one leading inexorably to the next, but rather history is made up of a multitude of everyday decisions about how life should be lived" (Ettema 1987, 75).

While linking the events chronologically, RNRG paid attention to interpretative contexts by placing the displays within a definite context. I have found RNRG to follow both formalist and analytical approaches of representing history as it includes "not just what happened, but how and why it happened" (Ettema 1987, 63). All the displays are gathered together to communicate history in a purposeful way (Ettema 1987, 82). Still, the exhibit could not overcome the formalist bias of representing history through materialism and linear progression.

While critically analyzing any museum exhibit, it is important to notice "whose culture is being preserved and whose is not, from whose point of view the story is being told and whose point of view is being suppressed or distorted, whose culture is being

respected and whose culture is being demeaned" (Brown 2004, 143). RNRG did a great job in prioritizing individual stories while remaking the history of the First World War, but we should remember that "[S]tories are not just entertainment, 'stories are power.' They reflect and transmit cultural values" (Ames 2004, 84). From the interviews with the staff members, it is apparent that they had to come up with the particular themes out of the thousands of stories to provide the 'best' version of Newfoundlanders' contribution to the First World War.

While talking about 'touristic space' in modern industrial society, and echoing Goffman, Dean MacCannell identifies "a structural division of social establishments into what he terms as "front region" and "back regions" (MacCannell 1973). According to him, "[T]he front is the meeting place of hosts and guests or customers and service persons, and the back is the place where members of the home team retire between performances to relax and to prepare" (MacCannell 1973, 590). He recognizes how the back region "allows concealment of props and activities that might discredit the performance out front" (MacCannell 1973, 591). MacCannell's idea of 'front' and 'back' space could easily be connected with a(ny) museum setting. Whatever is displayed in this exhibit or any other museum exhibit is the designed 'front region' that is created through a systematic selection process. My interviews with the staff members of The Rooms disclose how the staff members faced challenges of filling up the gaps to make up a concrete story out of the displays they had. To give an indication of the creative process of the exhibit, The Rooms declares the dilemmas of making choices at the very beginning of the exhibit through a single text panel:

HOW DO WE CHOOSE
WHICH STORIES TO
TELL?
Our call to share personal stories for this exhibition was met with an overwhelming public response. There are so many stories to tell- too many to fit in this gallery. Faced with making choices, we selected images and artifacts that could suggest the broad range of experiences within each themed area.

The displays were also designated to easily accept new artifacts, new faces, new stories. The exhibition will evolve.

Do you have stories, photographs or memorabilia to share? Please let us know.
(quote taken from the exhibit text panel)

But is this single panel enough to disclose the things that happened in the "back region" while creating the exhibit? This is a matter of opinion. Moreover, this exhibit does not acknowledge how the representation of history is contextually specific and it could be varied with the change of the context. As Karp argues, "[E]very museum exhibition, whatever its overt subject, inevitably draws on the cultural assumptions and re-sources of the people who make it. Decisions are made to emphasize one element and to downplay others, to assert some truths and to ignore others […] Exhibitions made today may seem obviously appropriate to some viewers precisely because those viewers share the same attitudes as the exhibition makers" […] (1991, 17). In RNRG, the past is recreated in a romantic light that seems very straightforward and complimentary. Things are represented in such a way that visitors are prompted to learn the 'authentic' history from the exhibit. Instead of having a clear understanding of the fabricated nature of

museums, visitors would have a feeling of attaining "the historical authenticity and reality of what they see" (Jordanova 1989, 25).

A museum is an institution that promotes material culture representing history through artifacts and, as a provincial institution, RNRG is not an exception. Presenting artifacts is important in a museum setting as it helps provide a convincing image of the past. Visitors also feel excited after getting a 'first-hand encounter with history" (Gosselin 2011, 137). Tilley says, "Material forms may act as key metaphors of embodied identities, tools with which to think through and create connections around which people actively create identities […] (Tilley 2006, 817). Artifacts are subjected to various interpretations based on the contexts in which they are used. Apparently, museums these days are doing great jobs in providing a systematic display of the artifacts as well as adding details with the artifacts instead of simply representing a bunch of objects without having any interpretation but, such representations are not as simple as it seems to be. As Peter Smith argues, "the idea that artefacts have a complex presence which is subject to multiple interpretation has important implications for the way museums think about and present themselves" (1989, 19). History museums in particular are intricately related to the material culture because, "the collection, preservation, and display of artifacts has been a traditional task of history museums" (Schlereth 1989, 294). Schlereth argues that "[A]rtifacts serve on one level as the devices that men and women have always used to mediate their relationships with one another and with the physical world" (1989, 295). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett identifies "the role of objects as the correlatives of memory" (1989, 329). She shows how "[O]bjects lifted from a prior

context become significant in relation to other objects in the collection and the process of collection […] ” (1989, 332).Though RNRG is not an object-based exhibition, it displays numerous artifacts related to the war experiences of the Newfoundlanders. This exhibit places the artifacts in a very systematic manner to communicate the effective meaning. For example, uniforms, war equipment and personal belongings of the soldiers are placed from the beginning of the exhibit to provide a picture of soldiers' experiences with the war.

Figure 43: Personal Belongings of the Soldiers


Figure 44: War-time Dresses of Soldiers and Nurses

Medals are presented almost at the end of the exhibit to highlight the Newfoundland Regiment's achievements in the war. The prosthetic arm, leg and wheelchair of the soldiers are displayed in the Beaumont Hamel section to elaborate the terrible loss in the battle.

Figure 45: Consequences of Beaumont Hamel

This is how artifacts collected from different people and locations are placed altogether in an organized way to provide a credible representation of the past. The Rooms not only attempts to construct the history of the First World War by displaying a large number of objects, but also relates a particular interpretation of loss and achievement with those objects. It is really hard to have a grasp of the history of the First World War without having a proper historical knowledge about the larger context of the war. The exhibit invites visitors to consume the provincially sanctioned narrative of

Newfoundlanders' contribution to the First World War through a systematic representation of the events and thus, appears to be as "a site of power relation" (Witcomb 2007, 133). In response to the selective representation of history in a museum setting, Handler and Gable assert,

> It erases the choices the museum makes-choices to tell one story and not another, to pursue one sort of evidence and not another, to relate the Duke of Gloucester Street to one historical context and not another-and it erases the political and cultural values that, explicitly or implicitly, underpin those choices. Mimetic realism thus deadens the historical sensibility of the public. It teaches people not to question historians' stories, not to imagine other alternative histories, but to accept an embodied tableau as the really real (1997, 224).

Through representing various similar types of displays and stories, RNRG is actually providing the same message throughout the whole exhibit. Though the staff members acknowledge how they worked hard to represent the stories of people from all parts of the province, this exhibit is primarily created to highlight the contribution of the Newfoundland Regiment. It does not include the stories of all the residents of Newfoundland who have direct personal experience with the war. The exhibit includes those Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who had ancestors and who served in the First World War from Newfoundland's side. There are many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians whose ancestors served in the war as members of other regiments, but those stories are not included in the exhibit. No doubt, it does include many people from the province but involving thousands of people cannot ensure multiple perspectives unless different people are saying different things. All the displays in the exhibit represent the same stories of sacrifices, achievements and commemoration. It fails to represent the bigger historical context which could reveal the stories of those who possess a different

perspective about the war. The exhibit tries to legitimize a selective history of the First World War as the history of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and recreates a grand narrative of the war that necessarily excludes those who do not fit into that narrative.

Emma Lang criticizes the exhibit for "its discussion, or lack thereof, regarding the causes of the war, opposition to the war and the conscription of soldiers" (Lang 2017, 191). According to her, the controversial aspect of the war is overlooked very tactfully and intentionally. The causes of war are covered slightly and ignored for the most part under the veil of Newfoundland's loyalty towards Britain as a British colony. She mentions Newfoundlander's wholehearted contribution to the war is highlighted whereas opposition to the war is not covered. She further argues, though the exhibit mentions some of the major politicians of war time Newfoundland, that it mostly omits critical aspects of war time politics and all the wrong decisions taken during the war (see chapter 2). Most importantly, the exhibit hardly asks about the necessity of Newfoundland's involvement in war except mentioning the high cost that Newfoundlanders paid due to their participation in the war.

Moreover, visitors experience the past in the way it is presented rather than as a neutral observer of it. I agree with Lang that the exhibit very tactfully ignores the political context of the war. The letters and messages which were produced immediately after the war are highlighted in the exhibit without leaving any critical note about how those messages inspired the construction of Great War myth immediately after the war. Though the exhibit does not idealize the war; it does provide a romanticized version of the history

of the First World War where nobody would ask about the futility of the war (Harding 2004; 2006).

The ambivalent representation of the history of the First World War is also apparent in the exhibit where the war is portrayed as a tragic incident, but at the same time an inevitable part in constructing the history of Newfoundland and Labrador. Though the exhibit laments the losses that resulted from the war, it also boasts about all the achievements acquired through participating in the war. Candow finds the representation of the war history in this exhibit a little bit controversial as it "glorifies sacrifice yet bemoans the supposed 'cost' in the economic and political realms" (Candow 2016, 371). He argues that, in the context of Newfoundland, the idea of 'sacrifice and loss' is logical in a sense that many families have lost their nearest and dearest ones and the whole nation has lost a generation of young men. But the way history is represented in this exhibit "makes for a very static, one-dimensional visitor experience" (Candow 2016, 371). The exhibit surely posits the question of "how life would have been different had the young men who were killed during the war become the leaders of Newfoundland," but it does not touch on "how contentious and hotly debated both the purpose of the war and the place of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in fighting that war were at the time" (Lang 2017, 192). As curator Maureen Power explained,

> Well, Beaumont Hamel is what is in people's mind of Newfoundland and Labrador in the First World War because of the massive losses we had that day […]. The question always arises, do it discredit the people who lost their lives in any other battle? We were trying to make a balance, but Beaumont Hamel was something that sticks in people's mind as the

> defining event of first world war[…] (Interview conducted with Maureen Power on 11 April, 2019).

Regarding representing Beaumont Hamel in the exhibit, another staff member said,

> […] that is only one battle of many that the Newfoundland Regiment participated in, but we felt it was an important one because it was so ingrained into our culture's memory, what people really knew about and remembered and really felt strongly. So, we dedicate a large portion of exhibit just to the battle of the Beaumont Hamel (Interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

In Newfoundland, the history of the First World War is still conflated with the history of the Beaumont Hamel. This version of history that flourished immediately after the First World War depicts Newfoundlanders' contribution to the war as a "noble sacrifice," whereas the most recent version would like to view it as "a tragic exercise in futility" where the British high command is being accused "for sending men to almost certain slaughter"(Candow 2016, 370). This transition of history is also covered in the exhibit via a single text panel, without any in-depth analysis of how politicians constructed the tragedy of Battle of Beaumont as a glorious achievement for political purposes following the war (see 2nd chapter):

> *At first, the British authorities boasted of a great victory- an attempt to keep up morale. Then, with the causality lists, came the unthinkable truth: July 1st had been the bloodiest day in the history of the British Army. The 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was all but gone.*
>
> *The losses and devastation affected communities across the dominion. People were stunned with shock and stilled by mourning, even as they worked to rebuild the Regiment.*

> *July 1st quickly became a symbol of our courageous services, unwavering commitment and huge sacrifice. But at what cost?*
>
> *To this day, many people in Newfoundland and Labrador feel that the events at Beaumont Hamel are part of our collective consciousness, deeply connected to our sense of who we are.* (quote taken from exhibit text panel)

In response to The Rooms' representation of the battle of Baumont Hamel Candow argues,

> More recently, historians have begun to appreciate that heavy casualties were unavoidable in an industrial war of attrition, and that victory could not have been achieved by any other method. Viewed in this light, the Battle of the Somme was both a moral victory and a turning point in the conflict. This perspective is nowhere to be found in the exhibit…The Rooms Provincial Museum has adopted the fatal national wound concept in assessing Beaumont-Hamel's impact" and "its selective amnesia more rightly belongs to historical fiction" where "more fruitful lines of thought have been ignored (Candow 2017, 370/371).

In his article "Making History: Cultural Memory in Twentieth Century Newfoundland," Jerry Bannister claims Newfoundlanders to be a nation that is mostly trapped by the gloomy history of the past. He writes, "history had inflicted a debilitating psychic wound from which it was not certain that Newfoundlander could recover" (2002, 182). It is true that, the exhibit is created to illustrate the history of the First World War as *"a defining event for Newfoundland and Labrador*," (from the exhibit text panel) and advises that, the exhibit will "share the stories and words of Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans who experienced the First World War and all that our sacrifice brought us" (Candow 2016, 367). In this regard the curator of the exhibit also relates:

> I think the people are learning from the exhibit is the sacrifice […] real life and real people die and they got heart. So, you really want to, I hope people come away from the exhibition is the idea that the war affected people's life here in Newfoundland and Labrador. People's families were torn apart. People's family came together […] It's the people that get affected by the war and I think that comes across the exhibition (Interview conducted with Maureen Power on 11 April, 2019).

Similarly, another staff member asserted,

> This is what Newfoundlanders wanted. Right? And Labradorians. This is the story they wanted to be told. And I think it was told in a very heart warming and a very, in a very emotional way and I think that it was a privilege to be part of it for sure (Interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

The careful representation of history and the selective ways of representing history are indicative of the conscious construction of particular meaning(s). One of the staff members described how they hired a production company and prepared the script relating to historical details to engage the visitors more intimately:

> […] we have videos where we hire actors and they represent someone from the past. We tried to get a range of different people. We wanted a mother, we wanted a nurse and we wanted a prisoner of war who was in the battle, a sailor, a child, to see how the war affected people and lots of life and so those stories, there were so much information to tell with those stories that you could not condense that into a fifty-word text panel and have been as emotionally engaging as the videos are (Interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

Another staff member says,

> To have a full understanding of the tragedy of the Beaumont Hamel, visitors are placed in the shoes of a member of the Newfoundland Regiment during the battle. (Interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

Though the curator of the exhibit thinks it to be "the grass roots exhibition development", this exhibit actually creates a one-sided emotional representation of the war that would arouse emotional feeling in the mind of the visitors about Newfoundlanders' contribution in the First World War instead of being critical over it.

It is important to note that, the staff members are very much aware of the critical side of the history of First World War and museum development. Their rich background and knowledge about First World War history and museum development were very much reflective in their interviews. As a provincial institution, perhaps this exhibit could never highlight the controversial aspects of the war that would tarnish the image of the province to its people and to the outside world. Since The Rooms is a government organization, the history of the First World War could not be approached in a different way other than providing the grand narrative that is provincially sanctioned. The curator Maureen Power explains,

> We are the provincial museum of Newfoundland and Labrador and it's a Newfoundland and Labrador exhibition that's what we are. We also tried not to overlap with other museums. So, if you want to see the history of first world war, go to the Canadian war museum. We are not here to overlap with other institutions…And ultimately, we the provincial museum of Newfoundland and Labrador and our ultimate stake holders are the people…So, this is an exhibition about Newfoundland and Labrador […] (Interview

conducted with Maureen Power on 11 April, 2019)

What's next?

This thesis not only comprehends how histories have been represented in museums, being encoded with definite meaning, but also examines how those representations and constructed meanings shape people's understandings of both past and present. Museum exhibitions are often created very decisively to attain certain goals. As Skramstad argues, "The goals are always to make a connection with an audience, to establish a relationship of trust, and to cause some specific outcome, whether it be knowledge, fun, insight, or the purchase of a product of service" (2004, 127).

After analyzing the visitors', staff members' and volunteers' interviews, in the next chapter, I will examine the way visitors, volunteers and staff members "receive and interpret the messages the museum conveys […] (and) decode the site and make meanings for themselves" (Jack 2010, 11). While doing so, in chapter 4, this thesis will analyze how The Rooms attempts to uphold the ideals of public memory, history education, and national identity with a view to influencing public understanding of war histories.

Chapter 4

The Interplay of Myth, Memory, Knowledge and Identity

In a museum setting, it is often required to construct the historical past in a systematic way that would provide significant meaning. Focusing on The Rooms' attempt to create a certain historical reality about Newfoundlanders' contribution to the First World War in The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery, this chapter will examine why the construction of the definite meaning out of the history of the First World War has been essential in the exhibit. It is to note that a museum is "an important cultural and political capital" (Koiva 2007, 61) and it has often sought to fulfil the needs of contemporary society. Likewise, as a provincial museum, The Rooms also intends to play certain roles within the province and outside of the province through the manipulation of ideological assumptions. This chapter will explore how The Rooms attempts to create a site of public commemoration of the First World War through constructing The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery, how the particular exhibit performs as a source of historical knowledge and how the idea of Newfoundland nationalism is being promulgated in the exhibit. Simultaneously, this chapter will also analyze how visitors to the exhibit make sense of the past and experience the site in a meaningful way. Finally, I will discuss the position of the staff members and volunteers within a representational space like The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery. Overall, concentrating on the interviews conducted with visitors, volunteers and staff members of The Rooms, this chapter will explore how meanings are circulated and validated in a museum setting and

if those intended meanings influence the public understanding of history and culture (Jack 2010).

4.1 Constructing a Site of Public Commemoration

In a modern museum setting, the idea of war history most often revolves around the idea of commemoration and remembrance (Lackenbauer 1999). Katriel views museums "as privileged houses of memory…(that) have a story to tell and the meanings that the story promotes is socio culturally constituted and situationally performed" (Katriel 1997, 160). According to Koiva, a museum is "a place for displaying historical and contemporary values, an institution for preserving and displaying personal and collective memory […]" (Koiva 2007, 49). My research confirms that The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery has been created as a platform for public commemoration and remembrance of Newfoundlanders' role in the First World War – for the Newfoundlanders as well as for visitors from elsewhere. In response to my question, what is the single message that The Rooms wants to communicate with its visitors, the curator of the exhibit, Maureen Power said,

> […] That Newfoundland and Labrador took part and had a great impact in the First World War and we should never forget (Interview conducted with Maureen Power on April 11, 2019).

Another staff member answered this way:

> I think the message of remembrance and don't forget what happened. You know and that is it's not the thing that yes, it happened 100 years ago, but it's not that, not much far removed from us […] (interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

One of the volunteers relates,

> Their mandate for the war museum? [Interviewer: yes!] It would be to never forget. I mean it was such a significant part of Newfoundland's history and as people that had served in the war and family members you know those people have gone, just that the story does not be forgotten […] (Interview with volunteer conducted in August, 2018).

As I have argued in chapter 2, performing structured commemorative rituals (i.e., observing memorial days and creating memorials sites) surrounding the Great War has been common practice in Newfoundland since the end of the war. Likewise, this exhibit also validates the necessity of commemorating the history of the Great War as a 'defining event' (see chapter 3) in Newfoundland. The Rooms' conscious attempt to structure the exhibit as a systematic commemorative site of the First World War is noteworthy in my interviews with the volunteers and staffs who have been working with the exhibit:

> I think the topics were chosen in way that followed a certain timeline that people would understand and if you went through the exhibit, you kind of built upon the experience and understanding of how the war started, progressed and how it affected Newfoundland in the long term and how we can commemorate and how we can all have permanent commemoratives out of those stories […] (interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

When I was attending Memorial Day ceremonies on July 1st, 2018 at The Rooms, I observed how The Rooms had invited the donors to the gallery to stand next to the artefacts that they donated and talk to the visitors about the memory of the family members who fought in the war. This is how The Rooms is constantly trying to uphold

the exhibit as an active commemorative site where people will come and commemorate Newfoundlanders' contribution in the First World War and simultaneously absorb an agreeable image of the past. In this regard, one of the staff members stated,

> It's a really special experience. That's something I think they remember. All they remember the time they spend with that person who told them about their great grandfather in the war. Right? We do get high and high numbers over a thousand people came in both of last two July 1st […] we are putting up new things to keep the interest up (interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

The idea of commemoration and remembrance addressed in the exhibit requires critical examination in order to have an understanding of 'how memory is reassigned and controlled' (Gough 2004, 251) with a view to upholding the 'officially sanctioned form of remembering' (McDowell 2008, 41) of the First World War history. As Misztal argues,

> One way to start studying the social promotion of memory is to analyze social contexts in which memories are embedded groups that socialize us to what should be remembered and what should be forgotten […] (Misztal 2007, 384).

Gosselin identifies an indispensable relation between memory and myth and argues that memory is used as an agent to represent a mythologized past (2011). Regarding remembering war history, Lackenbauer argues:

> When exploring war and remembrance, it is worthwhile to make a general separation between "private" and "official" constructions of collective memory. Private memory consists of personal, individual reflections, unpublished or published, such as diaries, literary perspectives, poetry, and unofficial histories. Official memory is that directly created or fostered by the state through press releases, official histories, government-funded memorials, and the like. In some ways this line may be

> arbitrary, as private memory may be shaped by official remembrance and official memory may be a product of individual initiatives or based on unofficial resources (Lackenbauer 1999, 186).

Lackenbauer shows how both public and private memory play a vital role to create "collective memory and national 'myths"'(Lackenbauer 1999, 87). According to him, public and private memory collude in the construction of collective memory. The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery reflects both public and private memory of the First World War nurtured by the Newfoundlanders. Newfoundlanders and the exhibit combine official records and personal items. From the staff member interviews, it was apparent, while creating the exhibit, The Rooms prioritized personal memories over official memories. It is true that visitors often feel more connected to a museum exhibit if it provides a reflection of individual memories (Jack 2010 & Kavanagh 1990). As one staff member explained:

> I will be honest with you. People, the general public, whether they be the visitors from all the parts of the world or local folks or Canadian, or American whatever, they really like the exhibit. They find it moving especially the local folks because it's near and dear to their hearts. They love it as much as it's a war exhibit though, but they appreciate the exhibit. People cry when they see it especially the persons who donated material or come in maybe for the first time and see the photographs of their grandfather or grandmother who they never see before but see they are featured in this beautiful building (interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

One of the visitors from outside of the province says,

> So, when they start talking about that they have a personal connection, you don't forget what this exhibit is […] everything in the exhibit is pretty

> unique and I found the exhibit really overwhelming and really touching […] (Interview with tourist conducted in August, 2019).

As Jack identifies, the recollection of memories has always been important in "visitors' museum-going experience" (2010, 156). In this regard she further says,

> Visitors were quick to relate the exhibitions to their own personal and collective family memories, situating themselves within the storylines [….] The formal history that spoke out to visitors from across the galleries and in close exhibit encounters fused with visitors' own personal memories, creating experiences where both curatorial influence and personal feeling co-interpreted the museum narrative (2010, 155-156).

Scholars have identified that the personal memories have often dominated over official memory as people can connect themselves more with the personal memory than the official one. As Jack argues, "ln this way, they (visitors) look to validate and affirm their family, and in tum their place in history" (Jack 2010, 161). Lackenbauer is quite right in arguing for the overlapping nature of public and private memory (1999). MacDowell also shows how public memory "is not only negotiated by official or national groups but also by the media, academics, heritage institutions and local community organizations" (2008, 40).

In Newfoundland, the private memory of people regarding the First World War has always been motivated by the official history of the province (Lackenbauer 1999; Gough 2004; O'Brien 2007; Macfarlane 1991). As Lackenbauer argues, "The primary focus of Newfoundland's collective memory of the Great War will forever be on its regiment's legendary valour at Beaumont Hamel. It was here at the Somme in 1916 that Newfoundlanders joined together in a united imperial thrust "over the top" and died

together in a tragic slaughter of almost incomprehensible proportions" (1999, 195). One of the volunteers also acknowledges how, in Newfoundland, the Battle of Beaumont Hamel has been remembered as a crucial episode in the history of the First World War:

> Hundred years later, people still remember and try and understand and be upset and be angry about it as well because Newfoundland would not be what it is now had that battle not happened. It changed entire way of everything because so many people were lost (Interview with Volunteer conducted in August, 2018).

Constructing Beaumont Hamel in the collective conscience of Newfoundlanders has often been beneficial as, remembering the traumatic events in a systematic way that arouses emotional feeling in the mind of the present and future generations who did not live through that era. Public memory has the power to validate and naturalize the sense of belonging. If public memory is not cultivated, the "sense of self, identity, culture and heritage is lost" (McDowell 2008, 42). Through commemorating and remembering the selective past, individuals feel connected with the community in which they live:

> I think, a lot them have their own war histories and war stories. They come and they can sympathize and recognize almost themselves and their families in this exhibit […] locals who have a massive interest in the First World War if they have family members who was involved, or they know someone who was involved. They do spend lot of time in the gallery (Interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

While pondering over the idea of 'public memory' Seixas argues, though history and memory have a close connection with past, public memory is much different from history as '[H]istory' invokes notions of objectivity and science" whereas 'Memory'

invokes notions of subjectivity and feeling" (2006, 11). He identifies 'public memory' as something "'uncritical' and full of feeling" (2006, 12). As another staff member recalled,

> Oh! I met so many people who got so much emotional and especially people that have a personal connection like a family member that had served or family member that had passed away and most of the people now may be hearing of these stories from their older family members themselves (Interview with volunteer conducted in August, 2018).

Another volunteer says,

> A lot of people found it really sad and emotional especially if they have a personal connection to someone who served during the First World War and Second World War or even people today who are in the military or their families are involved in the military […] But often time, we can't let people forget about the war (Interview with volunteer conducted in August, 2018).

Halbwachs elaborated the idea of collective memory as a socially constructed perception which is formed through finding collective meaning in past events and remembering those events in a regulated arrangement (1992). Still, the importance of public memory can not be denied as it "brings the past into present consciousness and allows it to be mobilized for decisions about the future" (Seixas 2006, 12). Like the other war memorials of Newfoundland (i:e, the national war memorial of Newfoundland, the fighting Newfoundlander and so on) , the sense of patriotism and love for the province is reflected throughout the whole exhibit. It is true that the exhibit is not "created as celebrations of heroism, though those who have died are depicted as heroes" (Young 1989, 20). The reason behind such representation is to involve "all segments of the population, but particularly the old who 'remember' and the young who come to learn"

(Young 1989, 5). To relive the memory of the past in the present is significant for creating a constructive future. The idea of commemoration and remembrance depicted in the exhibit takes the shape of "collective symbols of speaking for communities as a whole" (Lackenbauer 1999, 194). In this regard, one of the visitors from outside of Newfoundland said,

> I think the overall message that they want to say is that Newfoundland had made a massive contribution beyond its size through activities in world war and nobody should forget it. Many Canadians would not be aware of it. Many Canadians across the Canada don't look at the Gallipoli as a Canadian battle. The Royal Newfoundland Regiment went to the Gallipoli and fought there. So, for Newfoundlanders is a part of their history and other Canadians should know about that and they will because of things like this […] it's a news to many Canadian and it's good to bring forward" (Interview with tourist conducted in August, 2018).

So, The Rooms' attempt to honour the people from Newfoundland who were directly or indirectly related to the First World War is not purposeless. This is how The Rooms endeavors to construct the selected history of Newfoundlanders' contribution in the First Word War as a significant part in the day to day life of the contemporary Newfoundlanders. In this regard, one of the visitors from Newfoundland relates,

> I think the goal of the exhibit is to commemorate all those lives that was lost and to make future generations aware of what had happened and the depth of it and the effect that it had on Newfoundland and its people…[Interview with visitor conducted in January, 2019).

The construction of a platform for public commemoration has often been a medium to form the collective memory of a group of people that will heighten their sense of homogeneity. Most of the commemorative services indicate the remembrance of a selective image of past. The exhibit promotes an idea that Newfoundlanders' contribution to the First World War should be remembered in a systematic way so that the residents of Newfoundland can gain a feeling of common identity. This identity is going to inspire the present and future generations and represent an affirmative image of Newfoundland to the outside world. This type of interpretation of the past has a tendency to leave a feeling in the mind of the people that, this is what the past exactly was, this is how we should consume the past and history is never meant to be altered. While representing war history, to identify the museum as a site of *memory* is much safer on the part of the respective museum. It not only helps to avoid the critical issues about the war but also leaves a positive impression in the mind of the people.

4.2 A Place of Attaining History Education

No doubt, museums have always been treated as a valid place of learning history (Gosselin 2011; Walsh 1992). During my interviews, most of my interviewees revealed that they expect to learn the history from a museum. As one visitor said,

> History mostly. About the past like people have done the ways they are today. So that you can get know how the people are here and the community here…Somewhere where you can go and learn about the country and just get a better understanding of the place you have come to […] (Interview with tourist conducted in August, 2018).

Another visitor from Newfoundland identified history as key to their museum experience:

> History all the way. History from hundreds or may be even thousands of years if it's available. And I know it's a snapshot but some kinds of essence what laid the place for it is today […] (Interview with visitor conducted in January, 2019).

Similarly, a volunteer from Newfoundland includes,

> […] museum is a place like that you are going back as far as you can through history and also, I think it's an educator in many cases, it's a better educational tool we have its hands-on experiences in many aspects. It's an opportunity for a person to sort of deal with their own space into what's going on in the community for years and years and years… (Interview with Volunteer conducted in August, 2018).

Gosselin points out that, the public makes sense of museums 'as sites of history education' (Gosselin 2011, 5). He asserts that "museums in Western societies are considered the most trusted sources of historical information" (Gosselin 2011, 125). Swank analyzes history museums as the 'agents of social memory' where 'memory is not just memory; it is a selective principle" (1990, 94). As the "part of cultural landscape," a museum is not only "an important source of civic pride," but also an "important institution concerned with public education" (Skramstad 2004, 123). Jordanova also identifies the "assumed function of museums" (1989, 22) which is, to help the visitors with knowledge acquisition" (1989, 22). Local and national museums play vital roles in constructing public memories through history education. Museums have developed "as a facilitator for communities" which provide "educational service" to their community as an authentic source of history (Walsh 1992, 160). As one volunteer explained,

> In my view, a museum is a place that tells the culture of the country and the history back through the centuries. It also gives me an insight as to what went on back say, hundred years ago to the present day and how things have evolved and the industrial revolution, how it has impacted the culture whatever the country the museum is in, whatever province the museum is in (Interview with volunteer conducted in August, 2018).

Museums have been considered as important sources of learning authentic history, but "[A]uthenticity' is, of course, a fugitive term" (Gough 2004, 251). The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery provides 'a partial interpretation of history' (Gough 2004, 251) completely focusing on Newfoundlanders' valor in the First World War.

As Gosseling writes, "museums are not neutral spaces, that they are informed by the cultural, historical and political agendas of their stakeholders" (Gosselin 2011, 15). As a provincial museum, The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery upholds a one-sided representation of the history of the First World War (see chapter 3). As previously discussed, the way The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery represents the history of the Great War, it mostly echoes the modernist epistemology where the exhibit appears to be motionless and linear, upholding a singular viewpoint.

The "social constructivism" view claims that reality is constructed through various texts or discourses. According to this view, "the social world is textually constructed" which leaves 'ideological effects' (Fairclough 2003, 9) on people. Ideology reflects the "positions, attitudes, beliefs, perspectives, etc. of social groups" and "Ideological representations can be identified in texts" (Fairclough 2003, 9). So, texts are

not just the combination of certain words, rather they are a way of constructing meaning and have ideological influence in the society (Fairclough 2003).

Museums' attempt to circulate ideological messages through representing history should be analyzed in a critical light as they reveal "more about the present than the past, more about the interpreter than the interpreted" (Gosselin 2011, 25). From my experiences of conducting fieldwork in summer 2018 and winter 2019 at The Rooms, I analyzed the museum as an 'Ideological State Apparatus' (Althusser 1971, 138)[7] which functions through circulating prominent ideologies. My interviews with the staff members reveal how the exhibit plays an important role in circulating prominent ideologies about the history of the First World War:

> We are constantly offering programs in that exhibit. We are bringing guest speakers. We do workshops in that exhibit. We did a military workshop some time ago and in terms of genealogy, we offer the genealogy military workshop and we are bringing speakers to talk about the different phases and different parts of the war […] All of those things play a role to continue how we grow and bring people into the gallery (Interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

During summertime, visitors are met by a welcoming volunteer immediately outside of the exhibit sitting with a table full of First World War artifacts. The volunteers are placed to have direct communication with the visitor, to make them interested to visit

[7] According to Althusser, western society run through two apparatuses: Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). According to him, RSA (police, court, military and so on) runs by repression whereas ISA (school, church and so on) works by circulating ideologies.

the exhibit and to let them know about Newfoundlanders' contribution in the First World War. One of the volunteers related,

> My responsibility that I have been told just to be there. Many people don't want to see the exhibit. They just want to walk through the place and just do it as their own quite personal experience. No problem with that but some people wanna to be interacted with people. Other people wanted a little bit of education. I try myself to educate a bit about the artefacts here […] I try to push everyone to the First World War exhibit [laugh]. I just encourage them to go and see that […] (Interview with volunteer conducted in August, 2018)

As a provincial museum, The Rooms helps people learn about the history of the First World War by offering various educational school programs. My interviews with staff members reveal how the school programs surrounding the exhibit are keeping pace with the curriculum of the provincial Department of Education:

> It's part of our strategic plan to create programs for school age children and also for the public as well. So, I guess, it's a part of our mandate and it's part of our strategic plan to continue those programs and to continue working with the department of education, to continue building partnerships with the Eastern English school district boards and you know building partnerships with other organizations that are doing school programs and so (Interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

Another staff member says,

> Well school programs are very closely matched with the objectives as they are set out by the provincial department of education and so we look at those curriculum objectives and we look at our collections and our exhibits and we try to build programs around that. (Interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

The staff members share how most of the students do not find the exhibit very interesting at the beginning but, at the end of the program, they really get emotionally attached to the exhibit. In this regard, one of the staff members tells,

> Students are, I think when they first see the research they have to do, I think it's a little intimidating […] But once they get into the program and we bring in the education volunteers to help them with the reading and all that stuff. Once they get into it and they understand that this soldier was just a year or two older than I am. It makes it more relevant to them and when they go back to the gallery and they participate in the interactive components of that it becomes real for them…They soon change their mind when they know that these are young men of their age who left or go to a land that they have never been to before and then, they follow that story (Interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

The Rooms also offers guided tours of the exhibit four times a week during the summer which is considered to be the highest tourist season. The tours are conducted by the trained staff members. The curator of the exhibit also offers guided tours by special request. Katriel identifies guided tours "as communicative events" (Katriel 1997, 24). From the staff members' interviews, it was apparent that the guided tours are organized around the personal stories of the soldiers and nurses. One of the visitors from outside of Newfoundland relates how the guided tours are constructed with a special focus such that most of the visitors will overlook the other factors:

> To read actually in the exhibit, you actually need two hours because in the guided tour, they are like reading you the letters and stuffs, so you are not necessarily seeing everything on the wall. I would say that the guided tour I got the overview of the story they were trying to tell but I did not actually

> get to like looking at the artefacts on the walls. But when I was by myself, I got to see how they set up everything (Interview with visitor conducted in January, 2019).

Another visitor said,

> I took the guided tour a year ago. Their focus was they read letters between Newfoundlanders who were the part of the troop that fought in Beaumont Hamel and like his sweetheart who was living in Newfoundland and I think some of the letters were to his mom. And so, it's really trying to tell the personal story of him or counting words like his experience going to war. At the beginning he was very excited to leave and see the world, sort of becoming like missing, homesick and wanted to come home and then they would add on to it well, at this point, he was stationed here so he was experiencing this or that. So, I think telling the story of a person to focus it instead of giving you, like, much historical facts […] (Interview with tourist conducted in August, 2018).

Bennett points out how visitors accept activities and exhibits within a museum at face value. He asserts, "[F]ew visitors have the time or inclination to look beyond what museums show them to ponder the significance of how they show what they show" (Bennett, 1988, 83). Describing their motivation for visiting The Rooms, one visitor said,

> Because I am interested in history, local culture. I just wanted to find out all aspects of life in Newfoundland and it seems best place to come…Somewhere where you can go and learn about the country and just get a better understanding of the place you have come to […] is one way of learning about the city …" Interview with Tourist conducted in August, 2018).

The Rooms' intention to help people learn history in various ways reveals that, The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery has been created not only to re-live the memory of the First World War but also to maintain that memory through transferring the

knowledge from generation to generation. In this regard, one of the visitors from Newfoundland tells how every nation wants to preserve their history to ensure the continuity of their history:

> Certainly, they want to remember it, all the aspects […] I think every nation wants to preserve their history and for the younger generation so that they don't forget. All history should be preserved so that we don't forget what happens […] (Interview with Visitor conducted in January, 2019).

The staff members acknowledge how they consciously educate the younger generation to understand the significance of the First World War in Newfoundland:

> It's done a great job in educating people about the war and the effects of war and I think it helped to make the younger generation more appreciative and more respectful of it and helping them to recognize and that sort of thing […] (Staff member interview conducted in August, 2018).

Another staff member says,

> We want students to work with the knowledge of the First World War. We want students to understand that there were number of significant events that happened in Newfoundland and Labrador and we want them to understand that these are a part of us and we want them to remember that history is constantly, it's not something about the past but it's part of our history and it's part of our culture and had such an impact […] we want students to understand that The Rooms is a place where we collect and we preserve the history for future generations and we hope down the road they would be part of this and that their memories and their stories will be kept and preserved in a place like The Rooms (Staff member interview conducted in August, 2018).

No doubt, with the transference of knowledge, exhibits like RNRG inspire people "to participate in the construction of a culturally constituted self" (Katriel 1997,

54). While talking about Israeli Settlement museum, Katriel argues that the way things are represented in a museum actually "invites visitors to refigure themselves" (Katriel 1997, 54). In most cases, both the interaction of the public with the museum space and the communicated meaning are influenced and shaped by the dominant discourses engraved in the respective museum space. Most people easily place themselves within the produced grand narrative and thus, make sense of the past through those narrative discourses (Jack 2010). A tourist I interviewed described the process this way:

> But what we gotta do is present the information that the kids won't pick up naturally and do it in such a way that they don't feel that he is being educated. Seeing something interesting and co-incidentally learning […] (Interview with tourist conducted in August, 2018).

It is true that, as many Newfoundlanders are personally connected to the exhibit and also possess prior knowledge about the history of the First World War, they find the exhibit more absorbing than the visitors from elsewhere. A visitor from Newfoundland said,

> I think it's one of the finest exhibitions that I have ever seen. I like the intimacy of the stories. I like how the stories are presented […]. So, it's very touching and its personal. When you put it together and you read and you listen, it becomes almost overwhelming, but you know it's actually true that you have to step back and take a deep breath and understand and grasp it and be amazed at what actually did go on during that First World War in the battle of Beaumont Hamel (Interview with visitor conducted in January, 2019).

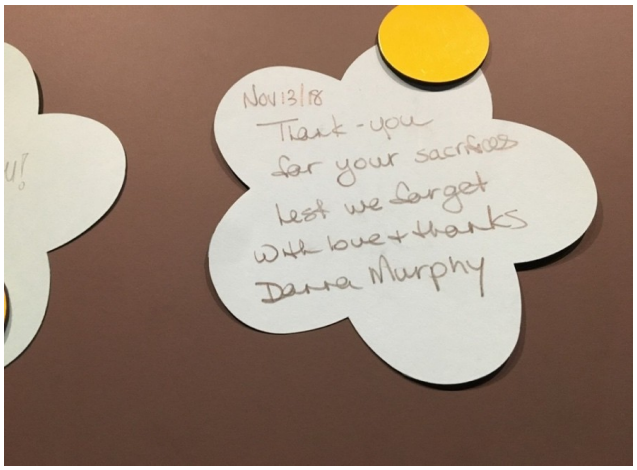

Figure 46: "Forget Me Not: Visitor's Thoughts

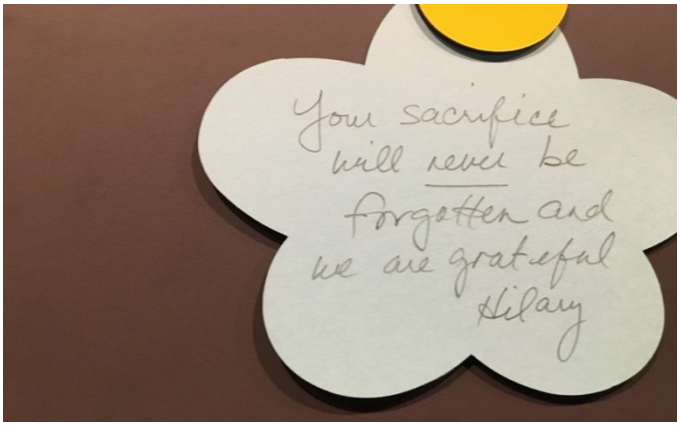

Figure 47: "Forget Me Not: Visitor's Thoughts

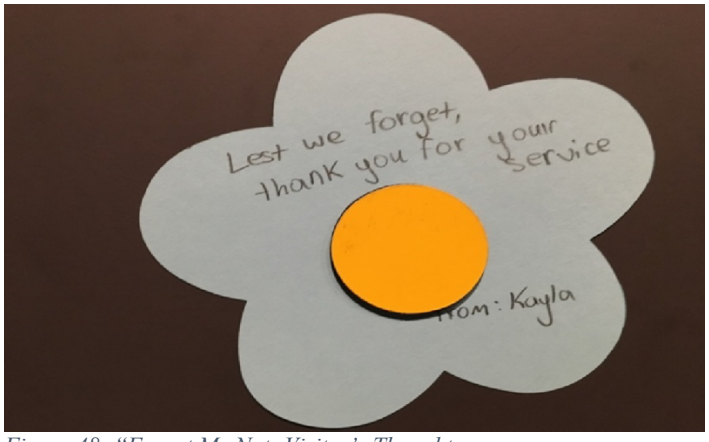

Figure 48: "Forget Me Not: Visitor's Thoughts

The curator Maureen Power acknowledges that the history of the First World War has been significant in her life, having been born and raised in Newfoundland. She explained,

> It was very hard for me to separate myself from it especially since after it opened, I went on developing the catalogue for the website. Even yesterday I got a call from one of my family members who had some First World War things [laugh] […] The first world war is definitely a part of my narrative as a child, my father was a historian and my mother were really interested in history. […] I already had the background of knowing about the First World War. Anyways and it was a part of curriculum going on here and of course working here and being interested in history myself […] (Interview conducted with Maureen Power on April 11, 2019).

Some of the visitors from outside of the province also find the exhibit very 'moving' and 'comprehensive':

> It's very well done. On all sides the soldiers going there and the parents are at homes and waited for the one that left behind. I think it's well done […] They have the pictures of the graves as well and the comments on the wall that was well done, too. It's really moving…I have been a soldier all my life. I am saddened, but I am not disturbed because I understand that's the way it goes [Interview with tourist conducted in August, 2018).

Another visitor commented,

> I think this particular exhibit is very meaningful to the Newfoundlanders. It did not surprise me […] It's a personal testimony so they are always bringing it to life and bring the reality of it and the personal testimonies were very good […] I can't think of anything I would criticize. You know it might make clear that some of the content might be distressing to some people. So, you continue through the exhibition

> aware of that. I think it's very comprehensive […] (Interview with visitor conducted in January, 2019).

One of the tourists started crying while explaining how moving and intimate the exhibit seemed to him. He began,

> It's probably boring for those who does not get the message. […] I don't think it was glorified […] but being proud is not necessarily being a hero but yes, all the soldiers [started crying and continued to cry]. The exhibit is really very moving (Interview with tourist conducted in August, 2018).

My study reveals, the identity position that the visitors take after visiting the exhibit basically "depends on the individual, their past experiences, their frameworks of knowledge, who they are with at the time of the visit, and their relationships to those being represented" (McLean 2008, 290). As the newly emerging relativist perspective indicates, "the value of any museum object can never be fixed, once and for all, because different people, with varying personal histories, cultural backgrounds and social locations, will find different meanings in it. Another way to say this is that the evaluation of museum objects is an ongoing sociopolitical process, one in which a range of individuals, groups and institutions negotiate so that their interests in objects are defended and exhibited" (Handler and Gable 1993, 34). It is not always valid to assume the visitors are only passive consumers of the represented history in museums. Jack identifies visitors as active participants in constructing the meaning of an exhibit (2010). My interviews with the visitors reveal variations in their attitudes towards the displays. One visitor from outside Newfoundland says,

> […] the history is written by the winners, but every presentation of war has been represented from the

> viewpoint of that particular group and it represents what that group actually thought about it. Really I can't find out what happened together something from all sides to have a more accurate picture because everybody makes themselves good if they can [laugh] and people would rather talk about the good things that happened or they would prefer to represent themselves good and they aren't gonna talk about the bad things that they did (Interview with tourist conducted in August, 2018).

Another visitor from outside of Newfoundland related how they found the exhibit confusing when they visited it for the first time, as they had no prior knowledge of Newfoundland's contribution in the First World War:

> I think it has changed a lot over time like I did the tour when I first got here and I did not know very much about Newfoundland and I did not know anything about Beaumont Hamel and for me as a person who is from somewhere else and then came to Newfoundland to do the tour, I found it, like I was just really confused […] But if someone who was not from here, I really did not understand why this battle was so important and why it is the focus of the whole exhibit…I just did not get it and I was just why it's such a big deal and then as I learnt more and then I go in when I went in with my in-laws in the last summer and I could show them cause I knew a lot more and I knew why it's such a big deal. So, it's such, like a different experience. When I took the tour, I was like why is this battle and why did they have it in the whole exhibit? (Interview with visitor conducted in January, 2019).

Not all Newfoundlanders are overwhelmed by the depicted history of the First World War at The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery. One of the visitors from Newfoundland identifies how this exhibit very tactfully upholds a certain version of history:

> It's a very political exhibit in the sense that as I said earlier that I think it's more about crafting an image […] I think it's less about the transfer of knowledge. As I said it's a brand. It's a simplified version of here, so we are, and you know it makes it, if you are not part of that picture then it's almost like you are not a Newfoundlander […] yeah! I have relatives who have fought and died in World War I. But they were British. So, they would not be included in this exhibit [laugh]. It's about Newfoundland [laugh] (Interview with visitor conducted in January, 2019).

Museums may act as a source of particular historical knowledge by representing the past as static and also, directing people "to learn the grand narrative" (Stanley 2006, 47). However, there is always room to re-imagine history. Such reimagination helps in "replacing the monolith of grand narrative with a web of multiple overlapping history" (Stanley, 47). As one local visitor commented,

> I think that most people don't know lot about the history. I think that there is an assumption that Beaumont Hamel was unique in the sense that this was the only battle where that many people died […] The whole war was like that. It was not just Newfoundlanders. I wonder what is the value of isolating our own experience from the others? What is the value of thinking that we are so unique that only we suffered whereas everybody suffered in the First World War, even the Germans suffered [...]? (Interview with visitor conducted in January, 2019).

4.3 Forming a Basis for (Re)Constructing National and Place Identity

The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery represents the history of the First World War in a certain way that it seems to be worth remembering instead of being critical of it (see 3rd chapter). To arouse patriotic and nationalistic feeling, it is necessary to represent the past in a definite way that will act as a common basis for all whereas, to

be critical over the past could do the opposite. The purposeful active representation of history recognizing a common historical ground helps to identify one's place in the past as well as in the present (McKay, 2017) and leads towards building up a 'constructive' future. As one staff member relates,

> I had visitors following the tours share their stories with me and family members and I have had people break down with tears after the tour because of the impact they felt […] it makes you proud you know proud of the history and it makes you, yeah! It's a very emotional piece and I think it's the one that we are all very proud of… (Interview with Staff member conducted in August, 2018).

Newfoundland nationalism has been a significant part of the provincial cultural and political scene even after Confederation. In my interview with one of the tourists, he revealed that he was amazed to see various new and old Newfoundland flags along with Canadian flags in the streets of Newfoundland. This surely indicates Newfoundlanders' unique identity as something other than Canadian:

> One thing I am surprised that when I was driving around the Newfoundland, you see a lot of Canadian flags in company with the Newfoundland flag. It gives you the impression that people are reconciled the fact that they are in Canada and they are already constituted. You will also see many old Newfoundland flags too […]" (Interview with tourist conducted in August, 2018).

One of the visitors from Newfoundland relates that ever since Newfoundland became a part of Canada, residents have had a fear of losing Newfoundland identity:

> One of the arguments against Confederation was if we became Canadians, we would give up our identity. We

> would no longer be distinct people […] (Interview with visitors conducted in January, 2019).

Another visitor relates,

> If you visit, for example, a French or British or German museum, they are much less concerned about the nation defining aspects because I mean they don't need to define their existence by war because its already there […] (Interview with tourist conducted in August, 2018).

In response to Newfoundland nationalism, Bannister says, "[N]ationalism in Newfoundland, as elsewhere, has been dependent on creating the cultural means through which diverse peoples can unite behind a single political goal" (Bannister 2002, 186). According to Huybers, "Newfoundland and Labrador is the home of a variety of people who, on a day-to-day basis within the context of their communities, are defined far more by their class, gender, and ethnicity than by the mythical nationalist identities invented by political elites" (Huybers 2015, 296).

In respect to the idea of nationalism, Benedict Anderson says: "it is an imagined political community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign […] nationalism masquerades under false pretenses that he assimilates 'invention' to 'fabrication' and 'falsify', rather than to 'imagining' and 'creation' […] Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (Anderson 2006, 6). Anderson attempts to understand the idea of nationalism not only with the political ideologies but also "with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which-as well as against which-it came into being" (Anderson 2006,12). So, influencing by the idea of nationalism, a large group of people get united to

construct certain homogenous traits that would arouse homogenous feeling. one of these is the recognition of a 'significant' past that usually provides a sense of community. Likewise, the construction of national experiences is necessary to intensify the idea of nationalism (Goff 1992):

> I am also proud to be a Canadian […] We are fortunate to live in a country of Canada […] We can be anywhere in Canada, you could be living there for 20 years and someone would say, Oh! You are a Newfoundlander. Well, how do you know? Because there'r something there in the way we speak, they all say, I know where you are from […] if you ask why did you come to choose to Newfoundland and you know what people say, the people, the most people I talk to they would say the people and the next is the scenery and the culture […] (Interview with visitor conducted in January, 2019).

Echoing Anderson, McLean argues:

> [M]useums can play a significant role in forging national identities […] it is the task of museums to recover and recharge the 'past', becoming a space in which, the nation could present itself as an 'imagined community'. The museum assumes a symbolic meaning of the nation which it represents, to the extent that it has been argued that the tendency to create national museums coincides with surges of nationalism and a sense of national identity. The forging of identities, though, is not only confined to national museums. Regional and local identities are also given significance through cultural objects and it has been acknowledged that any form of identity can be manifest in museums (2008, 285).

Museum Studies is currently examining "the role of the state in representation Museum" showing concern towards the "state-based ideologies, such as nationalism" (Greenberg 1997, 15). Greenberg talks about the usefulness of analyzing "the relationship between museum representation and nationalism" (Greenberg 1997, 15). Bouquet examines how nineteenth century museums "contributed to nation-building" and promoted a materialized representation of nation upholding certain ideologies through an

ordered representation of objects and stories to attain a desired future (Bouquet 2012, 34). Katriel investigates museums as "culturally sanctioned sites" which upheld "a privileged, once-hegemonic version of a particular past that is now under siege" (Katriel 1997, 159). Walsh also investigates how "modern heritage representations especially, have been concerned with the promotion of an idea of nation" (Walsh 1992, 178). Tilley examines how the idea of social identity has become a great concern in the interpretation of landscape, place and heritage in the past two decades (2006). Duncan declares museums as the "powerful identity-defining machines" (1991,101). Davis points out how museums "remind us of who we are and what our place is in the world" and also, "operate at a variety of levels: they are significant to us as individuals, as a member of community, even as a statement of nationhood" (2007, 53). Following Duncan, Bouquet analyzes museums as the "sites of ritual" where visitors performed the 'ritual of citizenship' (Bouquet 2012, 26):

The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery posits an obligation to all the Newfoundlanders and also to the outsiders to commemorate Newfoundlander's contribution of the Great War. The idea of remembering and honoring the people who contributed to the First World War from Newfoundland is prominent in the exhibit. As scholars identify, the construction of public memory in a national/provincial museum setting is investable as, memory is linked to the construction of nation. Creighton argues that "Memory objects referencing life events can help stabilize identity" and losing of certain memory could be resulted into losing of one's identity (Creighton 2007, 41). A 'sense of belonging to a community' is established through interacting 'with a shared set

of symbols' (Creighton 2007, 114). Memory is a convenient vehicle to recreate historical realities and also to fill up the gap of the past (Grant, 2017). Stanley views the construction of the public memory as a way of making Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities" (2006, 33). According to him, public memories help "giving voice to a particular interpretation of the past best characterized as 'nationalist grand narrative" (Stanley 2006, 34). Harding shows how memory could be used as a "nation building device" (Harding 2004, 33) through connecting past with the present. Commemoration and remembrance are the ways of reliving the past in the present. The attempt to find root and regenerate the whole nation and let others know about that 'constructive' nation called Newfoundlanders out of the memory of the First World War is obvious in this exhibit:

> I think, for Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans, I think, they have a sense of pride that you know our family members were part of this and we gave all. I think, it's the sense of pride that connects them with the gallery but also for the tourists, it's just that it's a story and wow! Did not realize that it has such an impact on you know a small province you know. And One hundred year later, we still have that connection and I think that is something that our visitors walk away with this, we still have that connection. July 1st is the Memorial Day for us first and I think they get it (Interview with staff member conducted in August, 2018).

In the book *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War,* Jonathan Vance argues that "commemorative services always recalled Newfoundland's war effort as a nationally formative event in which Newfoundland had earned an honourable international reputation" (1995, 123). A social group is identified by the sense

of collective identity that the people of the respective group share. It is the "interpretation of the events and experiences which have formed the group over time" (McDowell 2008, 41). The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery seems to act as a site of confirming a distinguished Newfoundland identity depicting Newfoundlanders' legacies to the First World War as the "symbolic moments" (McDowell 2008, 41).

As discussed earlier, the correlation between myth and memory could never be denied as historical realities can be constructed in various ways. Whereas myths can help construct memories, memories can also help build dominant myths. The exhibit not only upholds a nation's past but also constructs some cultural heroes who are represented as the inevitable part for that nation. In his influential book *Imagined Community,* Benedict Anderson discusses Indonesian nationalism. He depicts how the idea of 'our hero' exemplifies "a young man who belongs to the collective body of readers of Indonesian, and thus, implicitly, an embryonic Indonesian 'imagined community' (Anderson 2006, 32). Thus, for Newfoundlanders and outsiders, the significant representation of the soldiers definitely refers to a group of men who belong to a particular nation called Newfoundlanders. Finding definite meanings out of the history of the First World War is beneficial as, it could serve as the cultural and historical basis for all Newfoundlanders to continue with a homogenous identity and also, to represent Newfoundlanders as a distinctive nation with a strong sense of community to the outsiders.

Figure 49: "Honouring Their Sacrifice"

Moreover, the Battle of Beaumont Hamel is given the highest importance in reshaping a nation's history out of a terrific historic moment. In an answer to the question why Beaumont Hamel is so prominent in the cultural memory of Newfoundlanders, Candow argues,

> As exemplified by this exhibit, Beaumont- Hamel still dominates our cultural memory not only because it honours the dead and provides a national foundation myth, but also because it simplifies complex historical processes and absolves us of blame for the loss of democracy and independence. It is a potent brew from which, apparently, we will drink for many years yet (2006, 371).

This exhibit also reminds visitors of Newfoundland's ability to flourish as an independent nation which was believed to be shattered with the devastating impact of the First World War on the province. In this respect Candow further says,

> Many people lay the blame for our failure to prosper in peacetime at the feet of the Great War." Actually, except for a post-war downturn that was part of a short-lived global recession, the economy performed adequately until sideswiped by the Great Depression — another global phenomenon, and one that had nothing to do with the war — then flourished during the Second World War. When Newfoundland entered the Canadian Confederation in 1949, it brought a surplus with it. War-related debt undoubtedly contributed to Newfoundland's struggles during the Depression, but it is simplistic to suggest, as the text does, that the war led to the loss — there's that word again — of democracy in the 1930s; and unblushingly linking it to Confederation, which it also does, is sentimental nonsense. Thus, in assessing Beaumont-Hamel and the war, the exhibit text advances what historian Robert J. Harding has called the concept of a "fatal national wound" that triggered a "tragic avalanche. "By enshrining this ahistorical perspective in a permanent exhibit, The Rooms Provincial Museum has all but guaranteed its continuance for another generation (2016, 369 & 370).

This exhibit also intends to represent Newfoundland as an 'idealized landscape'[8] to present-day Newfoundlanders as well as outsiders through representing Newfoundland's historical legacy to the Great War in a positive light (Jack 2010, 97). Jack recognizes museums as the 'powerful articular or cultural communicators of notions of place-identity" (2010, 15) She shows how "[M]useum narratives can reproduce, elevate, and dispel particular place myths" (2010, 15). In the exhibit, Newfoundland is depicted having a significant past which is tragic but seems foreseeable for constructing the sense of place and nurturing a homogenous identity. The omission of political details during the war and the uncritical approach to the history of the First World War are the indicative of a selective representation of the history.

[8] In her MA thesis titled Jack investigates how The Museum of Industry emphasizes on "the story of Nova Scotia's industrialization, emphasizing triumphs and optimism, in an effort to replace negative stereotypes of the province as an idealized landscape…" (Jack 2010, 97).

The idea of constructing 'postmemory' is often beneficial (MacDowell 2008) as "[…] memories are passed down through generations to be represented by people who have no personal attachment to the memory. Subsequently, they seek to re-use, re-enact and re- present those memories in order to feel closer to their ancestors" (MacDowell 2008, 41). In the context of Newfoundland, it is beneficial for two reasons. Firstly, it creates a positive place identity that is essential as the "people who live in Newfoundland are supposed to love Newfoundland, and live their life according to this particular model, in order to claim a 'Newfoundland identity" (Creighton 2007, 142) and secondly, it represents Newfoundland as a province with significant history and past memories and make it a tourist destination.

The creation of sense of place and sense of identity is crucial for museums. David L. Uzzell argues "[M]useums and interpretive exhibitions have a crucial role to play in communicating to their visitors a sense of the identity of the place they are visiting (1996, 220). He adds "Military and regimental museums both provide a public record of the history and achievements of the regiment or command, and act as a socializing agent to inculcate the traditions, value systems and conventions of behavior into new recruits." (1996, 221). While promoting national identity and place identity, RNRG helps Newfoundlanders "to foster a sense of pride and identification" (Bouquet 2012, 36).

While talking about national museums, Mary Bouquet states, "[T]his new form of social space and collective property personalized the nation by making its people visible to one another in the presence of a collection and in a building identified with

common ancestors" (Bouquet 2012, 36). She argues that "the notion of the museum as a theatre of the nation aptly captures the staging of the collection in often monumental buildings, suggesting the casting of objects (through their installation), made to perform for an audience" (Bouquet 2012, 45). RNRG echoes the need of 'having a (homogenous) culture', 'having a (homogenous) history' and 'having a collective-memory' (Bouquet 2012, 51) through staging some appropriate collections and relating those to a suitable story:

> I think for me personally it portrays who we are very well but we have also got to tell our own story. Okay? Like the exhibit is telling our story and history but we have to tell our story also for people coming in from different provinces of Canada and from countries around the world that are coming here. They can understand who we are as a people…" (Interview with volunteer conducted in August, 2018).

No doubt, museums play an important role in determining as well as constructing national identities promoting a sense of nationalism through a strategic representation of things. Such representations of past benefit the museum to be an important place at least for those whose histories it represents. Timothy argues, ""Grand narrative is not particularly good history, as it often fails to represent events within the contexts that actually produced them" (Stanley 2006, 35). One of the visitors from Newfoundland relates how The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery attempts to provide a focused story excluding others:

> Because in Labrador, people did not join the Newfoundland regiment. A lot of them joined, they traveled through Quebec to be recruited. Many of them went to over the England and join the British forces. So, it was because Labrador

> was quite separate like physically from Newfoundland. So, they joined the war effort in different ways. So, their stories even though they were Labradoreans, they were not included. So, I think it's just a when you simplify the past, the past is really messy. I understand that you have to simplify it when you are doing an exhibit because otherwise it would not make any sense. But I think when you oversimplified, you lose you know like complexity is important (Interview with visitor conducted in January, 2019).

The "[S]ites of memory such as monuments, plaques, museums and symbolic architectural spaces […] (reflect) hegemonic values that cultivate notions of national identity and frame ideas and histories of the nation" (McDowell 2008, 44/45). MacDowell depicts these "as sites of civic construction, they instruct citizens what to value concerning their national heritage and public responsibilities" (2008, 44/45). He views heritage as "an aggregation of myths, values and inheritances determined and defined by the needs of societies in the present" (2008, 37). According to him, it is the dominant group who often determines the presentation of the heritage of a particular community:

> I feel like anything related to Newfoundland from a provincial standpoint is representing the idealistic Newfoundland […] Newfoundland is pretty big space and it's a province that is Newfoundland and Labrador and traditionally we have had completely separate experiences within the province like that's just how it is. They have created this ideal Newfoundland tradition and Newfoundland culture and Newfoundland homogenous idea and that's what we present to people […] you experience Newfoundland that way but it's not the experience that everybody has […] (Interview with visitor conducted in January, 2019).

Museums often privilege those interpretations that suit best to the dominant classes. It is the "[N]otions of power (that) are central to the construction of heritage, and consequently identity…heritage is not given; it is made. Those who wield the greatest power, therefore, can influence, dictate or define what is remembered and consequently what is forgotten" (MacDowell 2008, 43):

> […] So almost like confusing as a person come to this land new. The nationalism was so much tied to the UK and now it's a Canadian province and I don't know if lot of people are not from Newfoundland or are not from Canada like if you come over cruise ship and you are from the US, I don't know how many Americans actually pick up the complete change […] it's a pretty big deal but it's very settled in the exhibit (Interview with visitor conducted in January, 2019).

Greenberg shows how "museums struggle for hegemony in its attempt of institutionalizing the ideologies of the overriding group and making them 'common sense' for others" (Greenberg 1997, 16). The 'narratives of national identity' (MacDowell 2008,45) are created not only focus on the dominant group's ideology but also "suppress the identity of minority of less powerful groups" (MacDowell 2008, 45). Echoing Ian Mckay, Bannister also points out how national identities are created excluding those who do not necessarily fit into the constructed grand narratives. (Bannister 2002, 181). The contribution of those of aboriginal ancestry from Newfoundland and Labrador who fought and died during the war remained mostly unrecognized in the official history of Newfoundland:

> Because the country's military records did not identify all aboriginal recruits, it is unknown exactly how many enlisted. It is also unknown how many died overseas due to enemy attack or illness. Little is known of the other Inuit and Southern Inuit

> volunteers from Newfoundland and Labrador who fought in the First World War (Higgins 2007, www.heritage.nf.ca/Aboriginal in the First World War).

Creighton argues that there is no chance to view the idea of homogeneity as something 'normal' (2007). She emphasizes that the idea of homogeneity contributes to the construction of a grand narrative excluding the alternative narratives. Creighton identifies the importance of recognizing the alternatives of the dominant 'Newfoundland culture'. 'Newfoundland identity' as "a significant source of 'Newfoundland culture' and 'Newfoundland identity' exists within the dominant historical and geographical narratives of the province" (Creighton 2007, 7). In this regard she further states:

> This scholarly recognition notwithstanding, the perception of a homogenous 'Newfoundland identity' is a prominent one. And more importantly, this perception of homogeneity should perhaps not be considered normal […] Alternatives to the 'Newfoundland culture' and the 'Newfoundland identity' are important to explore…" (Creighton 2007, 9)

As argued in the third chapter, the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery exhibit does not include a variety of perspectives regarding Newfoundlanders' role in the First World War but reflects a homogenous Newfoundland where everyone feels alike or should feel alike. However, as Creighton argues, "[I]n the context of Newfoundland, it should be recognized that the local culture is not homogenous; rather there is great diversity, though it is not often described. There are alternatives to the master narratives. It should be acknowledged that the construction of a homogenous group of people making a home in the province is a deliberate device, used to create an entity that will draw visitors, and that will be a force on the national stage" (2007, 166).

As this thesis investigates, while representing history, the museum could construct/produce certain meanings out of thousand displays but, visitors are not often confined to those definite messages rather more prompted to attain different meanings (Jack 2010; Merriman 1989). This thesis identifies the significance of addressing those alternative narratives while representing history in any museum setting. Such representations might not help having a sense of homogenous feeling or homogenous identity but are essential to understand the bigger context in which that particular history is placed.

Conclusion

The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery was created to commemorate the services of Newfoundlanders during the First World War, along with depicting the huge impact it has had on the province since the end of the war. This thesis has attempted to examine how The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery of The Rooms constructed the history of Newfoundlanders' contribution to the First World War with a view to providing history education and shaping public discourses of collective memory and identity through circulating a master narrative of the war. It has also considered how the produced meanings work for the public, which is surely important in understanding the functioning of those ideological messages contemporarily. Considering all of this, I have discussed whether or not The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery provides space for alternative narratives in addition to the produced grand narratives of war and achievement.

Focusing on the devastating outcome of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel, I have analyzed how the construction of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel as a significant moment of the First World War was essential in Newfoundland immediately after the war. I also looked at how the battle of Beaumont Hamel is perceived in contemporary historical scholarship, focusing on the transition of history from comprehending Beaumont Hamel as an 'heroic moment,' to a devastating phenomenon with lasting repercussions. It also identified the necessity of commemorating and remembering the war effort in a systematic manner in Newfoundland since the end of the First World War.

Identifying The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery as one of the major memorial sites of the First World War, I have provided a detailed description of the exhibit to demonstrate how history has been showcased in a museum setting following various representational strategies. Focusing on museums' constructions of historical realities, this thesis also envisages the shifting of museum representations highlighting the story-oriented representation of history in The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery. I also discovered how the represented stories are crafted, conforming to the selected personal and official history) to provide the *safest* version of the history of the First World War. Echoing MacCannell, I assert that The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery is designed as a 'front region' that does not reveal how history is refined through a systematic selection process for the purpose of an exhibition. Focusing on the exhibit's representation of a very sophisticated and gracious history of Newfoundlanders' contribution to the First World War, I have shown how the particular exhibit overlooks the relativity of historical authenticity and promotes a legitimized version of history.

This thesis has critically analyzed The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery as an active commemorative site of the First World War in present-day Newfoundland. Addressing the importance of constructing public memory, it explored The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery as a valid platform for providing an image of a homogenous Newfoundland out of the history of the First World War. As a provincial museum, The Rooms needs to serve its community in a way such that history can be passed from generation to generation and all Newfoundlanders feel connected with it. Inspired by Louis Althusser and considering the representation of war history in The

Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery, this thesis has read museum(s) as the 'ideological State Apparatus' that works through communicating ideological and cultural messages like other formal institutions (e.g., schools, colleges and churches). The construction of The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery was an essential move on the part of the provincial government to dig into the sense of nationalism that was aroused with the forming of an independent regiment during the First World War. The Rooms ensures the representation of a positive place identity to its people and also to outsiders, presenting Newfoundland as a place with significant historical legacies through the construction of an exhibit like The Royal Newfoundland Regiment Gallery. Finally, I have discussed the importance of addressing alternative narratives while representing history in a museum in consideration of the viewpoints of the visitors, volunteers and staff members of the exhibit.

Overall, this thesis raised general issues about the representation, production and consumption of war history in a museum setting that encourages understanding the past in a systematic way, which is surely influential in shaping public discourses of collective memory and identity. By considering various people's interactions with museum displays, I have shown how individuals may take different positions while consuming history in a heritage site, deriving multiple meanings from the same exhibit.

While (re)historicizing the past in museums, to fill the gaps and to re-imagine various looms of consuming history has become a crying need in contemporary period. While arguing to create space for alternative narratives in museums' representation of war history, this thesis has emphasized exploring the past as "an open process of

evolution, a process that does not obey any simple logic, a logic that cannot be reduced to the struggle between good and evil" (Letourneau 2006, 84).

This research has touched on the challenges of studying visitors, staff members and volunteers of a provincial museum like The Rooms while analyzing museum's representation of history. Further research could be done to address those challenges in detail, to tackle the problem of studying museums' representation of history as well as the interaction of the public with those representations. Moreover, how The Rooms as a complex whole (provincial archive, art gallery and museum) represents Newfoundland history, culture and identity and how people (whether they are "insiders" or "outsiders" to the province) position themselves within those representations remain to be explored.

Bibliography

Althusser, Louis. 1971. "Ideology and ideological state apparatuses". In *Lenin and philosophy and other essays*, edited by Louis Althusser, 121-173. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Ames, M. Michael. 2004. "Museums in the Age of Deconstruction". In *Reinventing the Museum:Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, edited by Gail Anderson, 80-98. Lanham: Altamira Press.

Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections On the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: New York: Verso.

Bannister, Jerry. 2002. "Making History: Cultural Memory in Twentieth Century Newfoundland." *Newfoundland Studies,* 18 (2):175-194.

Bassler, Gerhard. 1988. "The enemy alien experience in Newfoundland, 1914-1918" *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 20(3): 42-62.

Bennett, Tony. 1988. "Museums and 'the People." In *The Museum Time-Machine: Putting Cultures on Display*, edited by Robert Lumley, 63-85. London: Routledge.

Bouquet, Mary. 2012. *Museums: A Visual Anthropology*. London. New York: BERG.

Brown K. Claudine. 2004. "The Museum's Role in a Multicultural Society." In *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, edited by Gail Anderson, 143-149. Lanham: Altamira Press.

Cadigan, Sean T. 2009. *Newfoundland and Labrador: a history*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Candow, James E. 2016. Exhibit Review. *Newfoundland and Labrador studies*, 31(2): 367-372. https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/NFLDS/article/view/25792/29925

Cheyne, G.Y. 1988. *The Last Great Battle of the Somme: Beaumont Hamel, 1916.* Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd.

Conrad, Margaret. 2002. "Mistaken Identities? Newfoundland and Labrador in the Atlantic Region." *Newfoundland Studies* 18: 159-174.

Creighton, Heather Anne. 2007. “Storying home in St. John's, Newfoundland.” Master’s Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Davis, Peter. 2007. “Place Exploration”: museums, identity, community.” In *Museums and Their Communities*, edited by Watson Sheila, 53-75. London: Routledge.

--- 2008. “ New Museologies and the Ecomuseum.” In *Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, edited by Brian Graham and Peter Howard, 397-414. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Duncan, Carol. 1991. “Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship” In *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display,* edited by Ivan Krap and Steven D. Lavine, 88-103. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Ettema, J. Michael. 1987. “History Museums and the Culture of Materialism.” In *Past Meets Present: Essays About Historic Interpretation and Public Audiences*, edited by Jo Blatti, 62-85. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Facey-Crowther, David R. 2003. ‘“Don’t Let the Old Flag Fall’: War, Remembrance and the Forging of National Identity: Newfoundland 1916-1934.” Unpublished Conference Paper presented at the Calgary British World Conference.

Fairclough, Norman. 2003. *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research.* London: Routledge.

“First World War Commemoration at Home.” *Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage.* Accessed April 25, 2019. *https://www.heritage.nf.ca/first-world-war/articles/commemorations-at-home.php*

Goff, Jacques Le. 1992. *History and Memory.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Gogos, Frank. 2015. “Beaumont-Hamel and the Danger Tree.” Accessed March 30, 2019. http://newfoundlandbronze.ca/wpgogos/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/History-of-the-Danger-Tree3.pdf

Gosselin, Viviane. 2011. “Open to Interpretation: Mobilizing Historical Thinking in The Museum.” PhD Thesis, The University of British Columbia.

Gough, Paul. 2007. “‘Contested Memories: Contested Site’: Newfoundland and its Unique Heritage on the Western Front”. *The Round Table* 96 (393): 693 – 705.

Grant, Peter. 2017. *National Myth and the First World War in modern popular music*. London, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

Greenberg, Jason S. 1997. "Representing the state: class, race and nationhood in an Israeli museum." *Visual Anthropology Review* 13: 14-27.

Halbwachs, Maurice. 1992. *On Collective Memory* Translated by Lewis A. Cosser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Handler, Richard, and Eric Gable. 1997. *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Handler, Richard. 1993. "An Anthropological Definition of the Museum and its Purpose." *Museum Anthropology* 17 (1): 33-36.

Harding, Robert James Allen. 2004. "Newfoundland's Cultural Memory of the Battle of Beaumont Hamel, 1916-1949" Master's Thesis, Dalhousie University.

--- 2005. "Newfoundland's National Victory: The Triumphant Symbolism of Beaumont Hamel Memorial Park." *The Newfoundland Historical Society* 98 (1) :30-37.

--- 2006. "Glorious Tragedy: Newfoundland's Cultural Memory of the Attack at Beaumont Hamel, 1916-1925." Newfoundland and Labrador Studies 21(1) :3-40.

Higgins, Jenny. 2007. "Aboriginal in the First World War." *Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage.* https://www.heritage.nf.ca/first-world-war/articles/aboriginals-first-world-war.php

Hoeper-Greenhill, Eilean. 2006. "Studying Visitors." *In A Companion to Museum Studies,* edited by Sharon Macdonald, 362-376. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

"Home Front". *Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage.* Accessed April 25, 2019. https://www.heritage.nf.ca/first-world-war/articles/home-front.php

Huybers, Olivia. 2015. "Nationalism and Newfoundland's Memory of the First World War". The Killick 1 : 57-8.

Hyatt, A. M. J., 1966. "The Fighting Newfoundlander: A History of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment by Colonel G. W. L. Nicholson" *The Canadian Historical Review* 47 (1): 70-71.

Jack, Meghann E. 2010. “(Re)visiting the industrial past: representation and meaning at Nova Scotia's museum of industry.” Master’s Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Jordanova, Ludmilla. 1989. “Objects of Knowledge: A Historical Perspective on Museums” In *New museology,* edited by Peter Vergo, 22-40. London: Reaktion Books Ltd.

Karp, Ivan, and Steven D. Lavine, eds. 1991. *The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Katriel, Tamar. 1997. *Performing the Past: A Study of Israeli Settlement Museums*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Kavanagh, Gaynor. 1990. *History Curatorship.* London: Leicester University Press.

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

--- 1998. *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Koiva, Mare. 2007. "The Contemporary Museum as a Site for Displaying Values." *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics* (Estonia National Museum) 1 (1): 49-62.

Lackenbauer, P. Whitney. 1999. “War, Memory, and the Newfoundland Regiment at Gallipoli,” *Newfoundland Studies,* 15 (2):176-214.

Lang, E. 2017. Review of Beaumont-Hamel and the Trail of the Caribou: Newfoundlanders and Labradorians at War and at Home 1914–1949. *Ethnologies* 39(2): 189–192. https://doi.org/10.7202/1051670ar

Lemelin, Raynald Harvey. 2015. “Newfoundland” *History Australia*, 12 (3):183-19. doi: 10.1080/14490854.2015.11668592

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

Lidchi, Henrietta. 1997. “The Poetics and Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures.” In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, edited by Stuart Hall, 151- 222. London: Sage Publications.

Lynde, Denyse. 2018. “Canada Day/Memorial Day” *Canadian Theatre Review*, 174 :43-47.

MacCannell, Dean. 1973. “Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings.’” *American Journal of Sociology* 79: 589-603.

Macfarlane, David. 1991. *The Danger Treee: Memory, War, and the Search for a Family's Past.* Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross.

Major, Kevin. *As Near To Heaven By Sea: A History of Newfoundland and Labrador.* Toronto: Penguin Books, 2001.

Martin, Chris. 2009. "The Right Course, The Best Course, The Only Course: Voluntary Recruitment in the Newfoundland Regiment, 1914-1918." *Newfondland and Labrador Studies* 24 (1). https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/nflds/article/view/12686/13590

McDowell, Sara. 2008. “Heritage, Memory and Identity”. In *Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, edited by Brian Graham and Peter Howard, 37-53 Aldershot: Ashgate.

McKay, C. 2017. “Active remembrance: The value and importance of making remembrance relevant and personal.” *Teaching History* 166: 20–27.

McKenzie, F.A. 1916. “Newfoundland’s Heroic Part in the War,” *Great War* 126:309-318.

McLean, Fiona. 2008. “Museums and Representation of Identity” In *Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, edited by Brian Graham and Peter Howard, 284-296 Aldershot: Ashgate.

Merriman, Nick. “Museum Visiting as a Cultural Phenomena” 1989. In *New museology,* edited by Peter Vergo, 6-21. London: Reaktion Books Ltd. (149-171).

Misztal, Barbara. 2007. “Memory Experience: The Forms and Functions of Memory”. In *Museums and Their Communities*, edited by Watson Sheila, 379-396. London: Routledge.

Moore, Kevin.1997. *Museums and Popular Culture.* London: Cassell. Newfoundland. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press.

O'Brien, Mike. 2007. “Out of a Clear Sky: The Mobilization of the Newfoundland Regiment, 1914-1915.” *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 22 (2): 401-427.

Overton, James. 1988. “A Newfoundland Culture?” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 23: 5-22.

“Patriotism”. *Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage.* Accessed April 25, 2019. https://www.heritage.nf.ca/first-world-war/articles/patriotism.php

Paul Gough. 2004. “Sites in the imagination: the Beaumont Hamel Newfoundland Memorial on the Somme”. *Cultural Geographies* 11: 235–258.

Schlereth, Thomas J. 1989. “History Museums and Material Culture.” In *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment* edited by Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig, 294-320. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Seixas, Peter. 2006. “What is Historical Consciousness?” In *To The Past: History, Education, Public Memory and Citizenship in Canada*, edited by Ruth W. Sandwell, 11-22. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Silverman, Lois H. 2004. “Making Meaning Together: Lessons from the Field of American History.” In *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, edited by Gail Anderson. Lanham: Altamira Press.

Skramstad, Harold. 2004. “An Agenda for Museums in the Twenty-first Century.” In *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, edited by Gail Anderson, 118-132. Lanham: Altamira Press.

Smith, Charles Saumarez. 1989. “Museums, Artefacts, and Meanings.” In *New museology,* edited by Peter Vergo, 6-21. London: Reaktion Books Ltd.

Stanley, Timothy J. 2006. “Whose Public? Whose Memory? Racisms, Grand Narratives and Canadian History.” In *To The Past: History, Education, Public Memory and Citizenship in Canada*, edited by Ruth W. Sandwell, 32-49. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Swank, Scott T. 1990. “The History Museum”. In *The Museum: A Reference Guide* edited by Shapiro and Kemp, 85-114. New York, London: Greenwood Press.

Tilley, Christopher. 2006. “Introduction: Identity, Place, Landscape and Heritage.” *Journal of Material Culture* 11: 7-32.

Uzzell, David. 1996. “Creating Place Identity Through Heritage Interpretation.” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 1: 219-228.

Vance, Jonathan. 1995. *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War.* Vancouver: UBC Press.

Wallace, Michael. 1987. “The Politics of Public History.” In *Past Meets Present: Essays About Historic Interpretation and Public Audiences*, edited by Jo Blatti, 37-53. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Walsh, Kevin. 1992. *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World*. London: Routledge.

Witcomb, Andrea. 2007. “‘A Place for All of Us’? Museums and Communities.” In *Museums and Their Communities*, edited by Watson Sheila, 133-156. London: Routledge.

Young, Alan R. 2017. “We Throw the Torch’: Canadian Memorials of the Great War and the Mythology of Heroic Sacrifice” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 24(4) (winter 1989-90): 5-28. DOI: 10.3138/jcs.24.4.5

Appendix

List of Interviews

This listing includes all interviews except for those who wished to remain anonymous.

Barfoot, Jay. Interview with the staff. August 27, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Carl, Bill. Interview with the tourist. August 02, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Charting, Jack. Interview with the volunteer. August 10, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Crane, Katie. Interview with the visitor. January 23, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Dignam, Natalie. Interview with the volunteer. August 23, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Hoyles, Pauline. Interview with the volunteer. January 11, 2019. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Johnson, Mary. Interview with the visitor. January 10, 2019. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Noseworthy, Angela. Interview with the staff. August 17, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Paulock, Don. Interview with the volunteer. August 22, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Power, Maureen. Interview with the curator. April 11, 2019. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Pretty, Michael. Interview with the visitor. August 28, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Regan, Cathleen. Interview with the tourist. August 09, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Ronayne, Sandra. Interview with the staff. August 27, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Severs, Jane. Interview with the visitor. January 2, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thompson, Ann. Interview with the tourist. August 03, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Tucker, Craig. Interview with the staff. August 17, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Whitfield, Jennifer. Interview with the volunteer. August 13, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Williams, John. Interview with the tourist. August 07, 2018. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.