

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Since time immemorial, human beings have used narrative to help us make sense of our experience of life. From the fireside to the theatre, from the television and silver screen to the more recent manifestations of the virtual world, we have used storytelling as a means of providing structure, order, and coherence to what can otherwise appear an overwhelming infinity of random, unrelated events. In ordering the perceived chaos of the world around us into a structure we can grasp, narrative provides insight and understanding not only of events themselves, but on a more fundamental level, of the very essence of what it means to live as a human being.

As the primary means by which historical writing is organized, narrative has attracted a large body of historians and philosophers who have grappled with its impact on our understanding of the past. Underlying their work is the tension between historical writing as a reflection of what took place in the past, and the essence of narrative as a creative, imaginative act. The very structure of Aristotelian narrative, with its causal link between events, its clearly defined beginning, middle and end, its promise of catharsis, its theme or moral, reflects an act of imagination on the part of its author. While an effective narrative first and foremost strives to draw us into its world of story and keep us there until the ending, the primary goal of historical writing, in theory at least, is to increase our understanding about the past. While these two goals are not inherently incompatible, they do not always work in concert.

Such is the fundamental paradox that underlies the discussion of historical narrative: As a form of discourse, can narrative engage us in its imaginative world of story – created, or at least restructured, through an act of imagination – while at the same time accurately reflecting

the truth about the past? Since Aristotle first articulated his perception of the difference between fiction and historical writing, philosophers and historians have argued about the efficacy of the narrative form as a means of articulating anything but the most general or universal truths about our experience of being human. The discussion focuses less on whether or not its underlying structure is inherently narrative than on the extent to which that structure has shaped, limited, and even at times distorted our understanding of the past.

A compelling case study of historical narrative is found in the story of Newfoundland's Beothuk people. Featuring a range of narrative sources and styles, a typically colonialist binary opposition of its key players, and a clearly delineated plot structure culminating in their extinction in 1829, the Beothuk story presents an intriguing narrative of humanity pushed to the extreme. Like any history, the story of the Beothuk owes its complexity to a myriad of factors: the legacy of the early Maritime Archaic, Paleo Eskimo, Thule, and Dorset peoples; the imperialistic agendas of Europeans; and the unique ecosystem of Newfoundland, with its distinctive challenges to human settlement and migration (Tuck, 1976; Pastore, 1989; Upton, 1977). Beginning with the Norse accounts, the written word of Europeans has prevailed in the telling of this story, with early colonial correspondence and firsthand accounts forming the context for much ethnohistorical, anthropological, and archaeological research that followed (McGhee, 1984).

Drawing on a framework of historical narrative theory, narratology, oral history and Indigenous research scholarship, this interdisciplinary dissertation explores the tremendous diversity and richness of the Beothuk narrative with a view to enhancing our understanding of that history and how it has been told. The theoretical framework of this dissertation has two goals: to explore how narrative has evolved as a primary means of human cognition, and to

determine the extent to which that means of cognition influences our perception of what is real, both in the present and the past. Acknowledging differences that occur within narrative across cultures and academic disciplines, this dissertation takes an interdisciplinary approach that focuses on what is common to the intrinsically hermeneutic nature of all narrative: the selection and sequencing of what are perceived by a narrator as significant events, and their subsequent interpretation by an audience, or reader. Through awareness of the narrative underpinnings on which it is based, the attempt is to come to a historical understanding of the Beothuk that is ultimately more inclusive and comprehensive.

The textual analysis focuses primarily on the historical and archaeological narrative. It is acknowledged that alongside these sources there also exists a literary tradition concerning the Beothuk that extends from early 19th-century poetry to contemporary dramatic and prose accounts. Dalton (1992) identifies P.P.'s "The Boeothicks" (1836) and Webber's "The Last of the Aborigines" (1851) as the earliest Newfoundland literary works on the subject of the Beothuks. More contemporary examples include Cook's play *On the Rim of the Curve* (1995), Morgan's novel *Cloud of Bone* (2007) and Crummey's *River Thieves* (2001).

Inarguably, these literary interpretations have shaped the narrative through their ongoing influence on the popular perception of the Beothuk in Newfoundland, a perception which, as Budgel (1992) notes, continues to be based on feelings of guilt for their perceived extermination. To varying degrees, this literature about the Beothuk draws on both the historical and archaeological writing, and like those forms, it can provide the reader with valuable insight into the perspective of its authors. The fundamental difference, however, lies in the fact that as a consciously fictional undertaking, this literature effectively treats the Beothuk as symbols rather than historic entities, and as such it ultimately serves to exclude the historic Beothuk as referent

(Dalton, 1992). Rather than shedding any light on their past reality as a people, this literature functions more to articulate the sympathies of its authors in their ongoing struggle with issues such as the use of the Beothuk as literary subjects and the significance, primarily to non-Native Newfoundlanders, of their tragic fate (Sugars, 2005).¹

For material that is admittedly fictional in nature, such a focus is to be expected, and both readers and writers will approach the text well aware of its primarily figurative intent. This awareness is also characteristic of Native oral traditions, which tend to emphasize the centrality of the narrator's role and his or her subjectivity in the interpretation of events. Within the historical and archaeological narratives of the Beothuk, however, the situation is quite different. For in historical writing, as in archaeological writing, both readers and writers proceed on the assumption that their primary goal is an attempt, at the very least, to accurately reconstruct and interpret the past as it really was. And unlike readers and writers of fiction, many approach the enterprise with little conscious awareness of the narrative structure employed, or, more importantly, the extent to which that structure can shape and limit their interpretation.

Narratives, both fictional and historical, rely on storytellers, or narrators, to come into being. Whether they speak in the same voice as the author or adopt a persona that is distinctly their own, narrators strive to create a world of story that is sufficiently compelling to hold our attention to the very end. As most narrators know, one of the more common means of doing so is through the creation of compelling characters – individuals who resemble or differ from our perception of ourselves in ways that we can readily recognize. As audiences, we are drawn to a main character or protagonist we can relate to, someone who shares our values or reflects some fundamental aspect of who we think we are. Often appearing in opposition to this primary

¹ An overt expression of this sentiment is found in Candow's "Obligaory Beothuck Poem, which begins with the observation, "All the tortured white artists in the world/couldn't put you back together again" (1986, 11).

character is the antagonist, a character who is largely defined through what we perceive as difference, by characteristics that we do not share, or at least wish we did not.

From the very earliest forms of narrative, storytellers have organized their stories around the struggle between readily perceived binary opposites – good and evil, light and dark, the hero and the villain. While it is true that the best narratives describe compelling, complex characters who can simultaneously intrigue and repel us, such as Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*, many narrative characters find themselves firmly fixed at opposite ends of our moral spectrum. Such characters serve as stereotypes, readily identifiable extremes of our morality and behaviour rather than realistic representations of the human condition. Narratively, they draw us into the story by serving as subjects with whom we can identify, and onto whom we can project our aspirations and desires, as well as our deepest anxieties and fears. As others, they represent extreme manifestations of the human condition that we have never quite experienced ourselves, for the simple reason, of course, that they are not real.

Any study of early Native/European interaction in North America tends to illustrate the extent to which all human beings habitually define ourselves in opposition to a perceived other, and the price we pay for doing so. Reid (1995) describes the early British in Atlantic Canada as being engaged in a creative act of imagination, constructing fictitious boundaries between themselves and the Native population as a means of protecting their own cultural identity. What Goldie (1989) identifies as the colonialist’s propensity to project fear and desire onto the Indigenous other persists today on a global scale, as it has for centuries, in “the familiar binarism of Europe and its Others, of colonizer and colonized, of the West and the Rest, of the vocal and the silent” (Slemon, 1990, 34).

Told primarily from the perspective of the colonizer, the early written history of the Beothuk tends to present an example of colonialist discourse in which this binarism of its key players, and indeed all of the tropes of European hegemony, operate in full swing. At the heart of colonialist history is the idea of the colonist shaping the world in his own image, with the narrative frame and context remaining strictly those of the colonizer. Accordingly, much of the early written history of the Beothuk exemplifies a range of key concepts outlined by scholars of colonialist discourse: subjugation of the colonized and the landscape they occupy through a number of characteristic colonial rhetorical gestures, the moral, cultural, and racial superiority implicit in British imperialism, the preponderance of the colonial gaze, and the phenomenon of discovery, as well as the existential or psychosexual anxiety underpinning them (Spurr, 1993; Boehmer, 1995; Pratt, 2008).²

A common characteristic of all colonial discourse is its tremendous power to underscore and shape the colonial enterprise. At the heart of this power is the ability of writing to construct a version of reality that readers will accept as true, whether or not it is actually based on fact. In both a historical and contemporary context, this is all too often the case with writing about others – people we perceive as different from ourselves. Limited as we are in our direct experience of the other, we tend to confuse representation with real presence. As Said reminds us, “such texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality that they appear to describe” (1978, 94). If we are to avoid entrapment within such a construct, a crucial first step is to become aware of the extent to which it exists.

² Spurr’s rhetorical gestures characteristic of colonialist discourse include surveillance, appropriation, aestheticization, classification, debasement, negation, idealization, naturalization, and eroticization. Other aspects of colonialist discourse particularly relevant to the Beothuk narrative that Boehmer discusses include historical sedimentation, the feminization of the other and the alien land mass, the appeal to the Romantic Sublime, and the inherited tropes of the Noble Savage, Utopia, and the lawless wilderness of colonial writers. For a discussion of the colonialist “monarch of all I survey” phenomenon, see M.L. Pratt (2008, 198).

Carr (1986b) and Taylor (1989) point out that narrative constitutes a primary means by which we organize our identities, both collectively and as individuals. As such, we tend to overlook its function in shaping our perception, in much the same way that we overlook the function of language in shaping our self-expression. Such is the case within much of Newfoundland's settler community, where this sense of collective identity has been shaped perhaps less by the province's history, with its focus on an accurate perception of the past, than by its heritage, which freely manipulates that past to serve the needs of its present.

As articulated by Lowenthal, heritage and history serve very different functions within society. History approaches the past as having already taken place. It is largely because of this perception that it is over and behind us that through history "the past can be ordered and domesticated, given a coherence foreign to the chaotic and shifting present" (1986, 62). Integral to our present sense of identity, history nonetheless aims to present the past as it was, despite what Lowenthal identifies as its three primary limitations: the immensity of the past itself, the distinction between past events and accounts of those events, and the inevitability of bias – especially presentist bias (1986, 214). Persuasive, interpretive, and highly subjective, historical knowledge nonetheless "casts *some* light on the past" by including elements of truth that persist despite these limitations (1986, 235).

Though drawing on history, heritage, on the other hand, serves a very different role. While it shares with history the commonality that our current sense of identity, both individual and collective, is dependant on the past, heritage prioritizes that sense of identity over the issue of historical truth and, accordingly, takes greater liberties with its interpretation of the past. One such liberty is with the question of historical bias. As Lowenthal explains,

Heritage diverges from history not in being biased but in its attitude toward bias.

Neither enterprise is value free. But while historians aim to reduce bias, heritage sanctions and strengthens it. Bias is a vice that history struggles to excise; for heritage, bias is a nurturing virtue. (1996, 122)

The function of heritage is to promote and sustain a sense of group identity, an identity which tends to be exclusive, homogeneous, and often predicated on a sense of precedence with regards to the group's origins and sense of place (1996, 146, 174, 209). Paramount to heritage is the establishment and maintenance of this sense of identity through manipulation of what is perceived to be the group's past. With heritage, the issue of historical accuracy or truth is overridden by group identity. As a result, "heritage the world over not only tolerates but thrives on and even requires historical error" (1996, 132).

This distinction between heritage and history can go a long way in explaining the diversity of narratives about the Beothuk within the province of Newfoundland. As Goldie (1989) observes, contemporary Newfoundlanders who are descended from early settlers tend to base their sense of identity at least in part on a perception of themselves as the native, original inhabitants of the island, the Beothuk having been viewed, since the death of Shanawdithit in 1829, as extinct. As noted, this perception has been consistently reinforced in poetic, prose and dramatic accounts dating back to the early 19th century, interpretations that tend to center more on the issue of settler involvement and guilt than on any factual historical representation of the now presumably absent Beothuk.³

³ The assumption of this absence may explain, in part, the willingness of creative writers to use the Beothuk as subjects of their fiction. In the absence of Beothuk descendants to challenge their narrative, these writers may perceive a freedom they would not enjoy, for example, vis-à-vis another Native population, such as the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq, who continue to maintain a distinct cultural presence on the island. For a discussion of the historical narrative of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq, see Chapter 6.

In the tradition of heritage rather than historical writing, a number of works beyond the scope of this dissertation – fictional but ostensibly historical accounts by creative writers, amateur historians, and journalists – have embellished the interpretation of Beothuk/settler interaction to include genocide at the hands of the British. Published in *MacLean's* magazine, Horwood's "The People who were Murdered for Fun" opens with the assertion that "Newfoundland's proud and peaceful Beothuk Indians are extinct today because, for more than two centuries, a favorite sport of the island's whites was hunting the natives like big game" (1959, 27). Among the atrocities with no historical referent outlined in Horwood's article is a massacre of 400 Beothuk by a group of fishermen near Hants Harbour, Trinity Bay (1959, 42). The title of Kelly's *Murder for Fun: The Rape and Slaughter of the Beothuk Indians of Newfoundland* (1974) speaks for itself. Forrest summarizes the Beothuk's relationship to settlers with the statement, "They became fair game for all" (1974, 31). Berton concurs. In his discussion of the population of Twillingate in "The Last of the Red Indians," he states, "It was their habit to butcher all the Indians they could with any weapon available" (1976, 130).

Given the distinct heritages of Native and non-Native Newfoundlanders, it is safe to assume that if such writers have impacted the narratives of these communities at all, they have done so in fundamentally different ways. In the case of Newfoundland's non-Natives, ostensibly historical works of this nature function to reinforce the settler population's perception of violent interaction between their ancestors and the Beothuk, culminating in the extinction of the latter. Given this reinforcement, the settler community's general interest in the topic, and the wide distribution of these writings, it is likely that their influence has been significant.

In the case of Native Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, the role of such writing on their heritage is difficult to determine, and more complex. Rather than reinforcing Native

peoples' perception of themselves and their community, as it does with the settler population, writing of this nature stands in opposition to their historical understanding of the Beothuk expressed in the Native oral tradition, as discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. Yet the influence of such writers, and indeed any writers, on the heritage of Native people is difficult to ascertain due to different degrees of education, literacy, and exposure to popular culture. Furthermore, the extent of such influence raises the question of whether Native people's orally expressed views can be said to constitute oral history, with its connotation of intergenerational transmission, or rather their individual, common sense interpretation of events.

Writing from the Mi'kmaq perspective, Augustine sees no difference between oral tradition and oral history, concluding, "They are one and the same in my culture" (2008a, 3). As illustrated by their testimony, during the Native oral research conducted for this dissertation, if there was any question as to whether an interpretation reflected the community's oral history or one's own personal interpretation of events drawing from written and more contemporary sources, participants were keen to make that distinction themselves. In general, the more elderly informants, and those who had not been formally educated or did not speak English, insisted that their knowledge originated from elders within their own families and communities, and they repeatedly pointed to those elders as reliable sources of that knowledge. Other participants, however, acknowledged the influence of outside forces on their interpretation, openly referencing specific textbooks in the school system or the work of authors such as Howley, Marshall, or Speck.

Determining the extent to which such influences have shaped Native oral history and heritage in the Atlantic region presents a significant research question considered beyond the scope of this dissertation. The influence of such sources, however, is acknowledged within the

context in which they came up during the interviews, perhaps most notably in the discussion of the Mi'kmaq mercenary myth, in which a number of informants comment extensively on the role of outside sources in influencing the history of the Beothuk, specifically the idea of their extinction and the Mi'kmaq's role in it.

With regards to this myth, another source that has played into the heritage of Newfoundland's Native and non-Native communities in different ways has been the historical textbooks used in the province's schools. As discussed in Chapter 6, these texts portrayed the native Beothuk as pacifistic victims of the foreign Mi'kmaq, who attacked them at the urging of the French. Although these texts were changed after scholars successfully debunked the myth starting in the 1970s, the effects of this earlier education still linger on. As Fitzgerald explains, while contemporary textbooks do serve the purpose of bringing history up to date, because each generation of schoolchildren reads only one version of the past, "that transient history is those children's history forever" (1980, 17).

Thus, while the oral tradition functioned to challenge this interpretation within the island's Native communities, it is understandable how this perception would continue to persevere in settler narratives about the Beothuk. Goldie concludes:

In Newfoundland, this death enables assertions of white presence which exceed those usually made in Canada. There is a constant concern in Newfoundland with who is a 'native Newfoundlander.' This means in its essence that the individual was not only born in the province but is a product of generations of residents. The extinction of the Beothuks leaves no "native" contradiction. Recent attempts by Micmacs in Newfoundland to assert aboriginal tenure have been strongly opposed. The argument

might be interpreted as ‘We had natives. We killed them off. Now we are natives’ (1989, 157).

Reinforcing a group’s sense of identity in this way, heritage can distort historical narrative to the point that we forget that narrative is a construct at all, and completely overlook its function in shaping our perception.

Discussions within narratology and the philosophy of history prove particularly useful in illuminating not only the workings and ultimate power of the European narrative construct, but also its origins. In the tradition of the French *récit* and German *Erzählung*, Fludernik (2009) discusses narrative as representation of a possible world in which one or several protagonists follow a plot structure reflecting goal-directed actions. With its fundamental distinction between *fabula* (the events, actors, time, and location that make up a narrative) and *sujet*, or story (a *fabula* that is presented in a certain manner), narratology opens up possibilities for understanding how narratives are told through its emphasis on the role of the narrator and the relationship of narrative to reality (Bal, 2006).⁴ A similar awareness on the part of historians and philosophers of history has given rise to insights into the fundamentally hermeneutic nature of historical reading and writing that are equally valuable in the interpretation and analysis of the Beothuk narrative. Emphasizing the interpretative nature of history, White’s work on historical narrative is central to this discussion, focusing as it does on elements of narrative form such as bias, omission, editing, and emplotment that can deepen our understanding of how history is written.⁵

As authors of two definitive and highly influential 20th-century works in print on the Beothuk, Howley (1915) and Marshall (1996) base many of their assumptions on the accounts of

⁴ For an early discussion of narratology’s fundamental distinction between *fabula* and *sujet* see Propp (1958).

⁵ White defines historical narrative as “necessarily a mixture of adequately and inadequately explained events, a congeries of established and inferred facts, at once a representation that is an interpretation and an interpretation that passes for an explanation of the whole process mirrored in the narrative” (1978, 51).

early Newfoundland settlers, colonial officials, and Beothuk women, the latter of whom were abducted under violent circumstances and lived apart from their own people until they died.

Perhaps the most notable of these is Shanawdithit who, at the time of her death, was generally believed to have been the last of her people. As historical sources, each of these accounts has value in that it presents an interpretation of the past through a distinct historical perspective.

When viewed within a more inclusive, interdisciplinary approach to Beothuk history, they raise a number of questions that are further complicated by testimony from other sources which, for reasons of translation, publication, or dissemination, have impacted the narrative of the Beothuk marginally, if at all.

Central to the discussion of historical narrative is the concept of what constitutes a historical event, with theorists debating whether an event has meaning in and of itself, or whether it derives that meaning from the historical narrative in which it has been placed. Drawing on Mi'kmaq oral history, Speck's (1922) work presents a different narrative of key events in Beothuk history, including the abduction of Demasduit in 1819, an event Marshall determines to have been "an absolutely pivotal moment in the history of the Beothuk" (I. Marshall, pers. comm., July 22, 2012).⁶ Standing in stark contrast to written accounts by the abductor and various British writers who had never been to Newfoundland, the Mi'kmaq version Speck recorded of Demasduit's capture – like those related by Shanawdithit and Demasduit herself – raises questions about the meaning of this event as it has been interpreted within the Beothuk narrative.

⁶ With regards to the conduct of Demasduit's captor, John Peyton Jr., Marshall reflects, "That was the moment when he could have shown his true feelings for the Beothuk – generosity, kindness – none of that. He had her captured and he wanted his reward. And so had he handed her back, there may have been a different outcome for the story of the Beothuk" (I. Marshall, pers. comm., July 22, 2012).

The recurrence of the concept of extinction as a central and formative theme throughout Beothuk history raises fundamental questions about interpretation and narrative structure. A common feature of both the archaeological and historical writing concerning Beothuk extinction is the lack of any qualification of the term *extinct* or discussion of its meaning. While the contemporary reader might expect some qualification of the concept, such as *cultural extinction* or *racial extinction*, within the Beothuk narrative as a whole, no such distinction exists.

With respect to the interviews conducted as part of the research for this dissertation and discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, the problematic nature of the term *extinct* is evidenced by the fact that few respondents chose to qualify the term by distinguishing between the disappearance of the Beothuk language, culture, and way of life, and the complete disappearance of genetic material that is identifiably Beothuk (J. Tuck, pers. comm., July 27, 2012; V. Grimes, pers. comm., July 26, 2012; S. Garnier, pers. comm., August 23, 2011). Those who did qualify the term have a specific research focus on Native people in Newfoundland: Tuck and Grimes as professional archaeologists, and Garnier as an amateur genealogist. Their qualification of the term *extinct* illustrates the extent to which our understanding of historical narrative can be influenced by factors shaping the perspective of those who interpret and work within that narrative – in this case, the educational background and interests of the researchers – as well as the perspective of the historical narrators themselves.

In the absence of any qualification of the term extinction, narrators who consistently describe the Beothuk as being extinct generally allow for its literal and most common interpretation. The Oxford Dictionary of English, 3rd edition, provides two primary definitions of the word *extinct*. The first definition, with regards to a species, family, or other larger group – “having no living members” – is illustrated by the example, “trilobites and dinosaurs are

extinct” (Stevenson, 2010, 2814). The second definition, which relates specifically to volcanoes, is irrelevant within the context of the Beothuk.⁷ Provided with no qualifying context, it is only logical that readers will turn to this first definition, the interpretation of which tends to vary depending on whether one is discussing Beothuk culture and way of life, or Beothuk ancestry.

That this continues to be the case is reflected in the April 6, 2013 front-page headline in the *Telegram* announcing “Beothuk No Longer Extinct,” and Marshall’s letter to the editor in response (Bartlett, 2013, A1; Marshall, 2013, A6). As is typical within the Beothuk narrative, neither Bartlett nor Marshall qualifies their use of the word *extinct*. Writes Marshall, “Do you honestly think that this justifies the claim that the ‘Beothuk (are) not extinct’? The fact is, the Beothuk culture has disappeared and so have the people” (2013, A6). This recent exchange illustrates the discussion around extinction that continues to persist throughout the Beothuk narrative. In 2013, it is relatively safe to assume that no one would argue with Marshall’s first assumption, that the Beothuk culture has disappeared and can therefore be considered extinct. Many people interviewed as part of the research for this dissertation, however, expressed the view that the Beothuk as a people should not be considered extinct, as their descendants live on in both Native and Non-native populations. With respect to the issue of extinction, the goal of this dissertation is not to resolve the question as to whether or not the presence of Beothuk DNA in populations today refutes the idea of Beothuk extinction; the goal is rather to explore the extent to which the *perception* of extinction has shaped, and continues to shape, the history of the Beothuk.

With regards to its narrative structure, this focus on extinction has fulfilled the function of providing Beothuk history with a definitive ending. Like so many sources of the early

⁷ “(Of a volcano) not having erupted in recorded history: *the islands are the remains of extinct volcanoes*” (Stevenson, 2010, 2814).

historical narrative written by Europeans, successive generations of scholars have viewed the Beothuk through the lens of extinction to the point where, as one points out, “The story of the Beothuk has become the story of their extinction” (Holly, 2000, 79). Part of the enduring appeal of that story has been the definitiveness or finality of its ending, around which so much of its interpretation has been organized. Given the admission by virtually all theorists of the difficulty of achieving objectivity in history – and the related fact that all historical narrative involves selection and editing on the part of the author – it is only reasonable to conclude that in the context of a history such as that of the Beothuk, with its widespread perception of its historical subject as being extinct, that the narrative of that people would to a large extent be shaped by what is perceived to be their ending.

It is also likely that this ending, with its tragic overtones, accounts for much of the Beothuk narrative’s enduring popularity. Since its inception, tragedy, one of White’s four primary forms of historical emplotment, has had an enduring appeal precisely because its ending, or at least its promise of catharsis, is known from the outset (1978, 67). By no means unique to the Beothuk, with respect to the history of other Native peoples this phenomenon is also central to S. Pratt’s discussion of the trope of the “dying Indian,” Polack’s discussion of the Tasmanian Aboriginal woman Truganini, Brantlinger’s “extinction discourse,” and what O’Brien refers to as “the ‘Last of the _____ genre’” (S. Pratt, 2005, 113-130; Polack, 2009, 54; Brantlinger, 2003, 189-199; O’Brien, 2006; O’Brien, 2010, 117).

As noted by Lowenthal (1986), central to the discussion of narrative within historical writing is the question of bias. Echoing Said’s observation about the fundamentally representative nature of historical narrative, Ankersmit (2010) frames the issue within the context of what he terms three levels of representation: the representation, the object, and the

represented. Using the example of a portrait of Napoleon, in addition to the *representation* (the portrait) of the *object* in reality (Napoleon), Ankersmit identifies a third aspect, the *represented*, which he defines as the particular *aspect* (for example, the profile or silhouette) of the object the artist chooses to represent. Diversity within historical narrative, Ankersmit determines, is the logical expression of this tripartite nature of representation: “Not *identifiable things* in the past (as mentioned in singular true statements) are the historian’s object of empirical investigation, but the *aspects thereof* – and these are not identifiable individual things” (2010, 42).

Seen this way, we should no more expect accounts of historical individuals or events from different sources to conform to one another than portraits or representations of the same subject by different artists. And while no one portrait can provide us, for example, with a complete image of what Napoleon looked like, by considering a number of representations focusing on different aspects of the same subject, we can hope to develop some sense of his actual appearance. Taken at face value, historical narrative accounts, like these individual representations, can be interpreted as authoritative in their own right; interpreted with an awareness of their narrative structure, however, they provide valuable insight into a far more complex history of which they represent a small part.

Most theorists agree that an awareness of bias is best employed when it figures actively in our interpretation of historical texts in all their complexity. Arriving at a meaningful interpretation of the past ultimately consists in acknowledging the plurality and diversity of these sources, many of which have been excluded or overlooked. Central to the undertaking is an understanding that any version of the narrative is not the whole story or the only story – the idea that the meaning of the past is more complex than we may have thought and that, consequently,

we need to acknowledge and accept the diversity of narratorial perspective in the telling of history (Herrnstein Smith, 1981, 232; Hodder and Hutson, 2003, 247; Said, 1984, 46-47).

Rather than yield to the anxiety arising from the multiplicity of historical sources, we can choose to embrace the diversity of perspective that characterizes both historical writing and interpretation (Orr, 1995, 106).⁸ If we accept Mink's definition of comprehension as "an individual act of seeing-things-together," the more we see of history, perhaps the more we will comprehend (1987, 55). And while it may indeed be true that "we can have no bird's-eye (still less a God's eye) view of the past," a plurality of perspective clearly offers the historian some advantages (Stanford, 1998, 17). By analyzing its underlying narrative structure, it is precisely this plurality of historical perspective within the Beothuk narrative that this interdisciplinary dissertation explores.

Acknowledging that, in actuality, most of the past has *not* been recorded, this analysis of the Beothuk narrative takes into account multicultural and post-colonial perspectives, as well as those of Indigenous and descendant communities (Partner, 1995; Berkhofer, 1995; Hodder and Hutson, 2003).⁹ Such an approach to historical interpretation is clearly not without its challenges. In pluralizing viewpoints in historical interpretation, we run the risk of re-appropriating history as counter-hegemonic "but still based at bottom on a single viewpoint" (Berkhofer, 1995, 183). Equally unsatisfying would be what Hodder and Hutson refer to as "a rabid, anything goes, relativism," in which our view of the past remains contradictory, conflicted, and incomprehensible (2003, 202).

⁸ Orr notes, "Subjectivity is scary. More than timidity, it evokes anxiety. The 'Triangular Anxieties' that Hans Kellner saw threatening the historical profession (Marxism, psychoanalysis and structuralism) shift and multiply" (1995, 106).

⁹ Kellner divides elusive historical information into several categories: that which is *unrecorded*, *recorded but destroyed*, *unfound*, *nonexistent in time and space*, and *not imaginable* (1989, 42-44).

Avoiding such pitfalls involves actively integrating our awareness of subjectivity into our practice of historical interpretation. One tactic is through an interdisciplinary approach to history that breaks down traditional boundaries with other disciplines and opens up new modes of epistemological inquiry (Phelan, 2006, 333). Acknowledging the value of interdisciplinarity, we can accept that the diversity of perspective is what makes historical discussion possible and approach historical texts with an acute awareness of all the factors that shape each writer's choices and rhetorical strategies.

Based on the assumption that our knowledge of the Beothuk has been limited by narrative, this interdisciplinary dissertation strives to analyze how narrative has shaped the writing that forms the core of our historical understanding, and ultimately to expand that understanding through the consideration of alternative, complementary sources of narrative from across a diversity of disciplines and cultural perspectives. A discussion of the theoretical framework in narratology, the philosophy of history, oral history and Indigenous research scholarship informing this study constitutes Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, an overview of early historical writing about the Beothuk, including Norse accounts from the 14th and 15th centuries and primarily British accounts from the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, explores the narrative of Europeans writing about the Native people of Newfoundland, revealing the extent to which this narrative is shaped by the perspective of its authors through a series of stereotypes that emerge about Native people in the region.

Chapter 4 examines the emergence, in the early 20th century, of competing narratives presented in two seminal texts: James P. Howley's *The Beothucks or Red Indians: The Aboriginal Inhabitants of Newfoundland* (1915), which relies primarily on the written testimony of Europeans, and Frank Speck's contemporaneous work, *Beothuk and Micmac* (1922), with its

emphasis on the Mi'kmaq perspective. In opposition to Howley's monograph, with its Eurocentric starting point, Speck's work opens up the Beothuk narrative through the inclusion of Native historical sources which, up to this point, have been overlooked. A comparison of Howley and Speck's divergent sources suggests that both have value in presenting distinct interpretations of what have been perceived as seminal events in Beothuk history.

Chapter 5 examines the schism arising from Howley and Speck's work in a series of subsequent historical and archaeological texts, illustrating how the narrative of the former has influenced the latter, and highlighting the role of interdisciplinarity in more recent research about the Beothuk. Considered together, these historical and archaeological sources expand the narrative by effectively challenging many of the prevailing assumptions about the Beothuk, including the concepts of their xenophobia and ultimate extinction.

In Chapter 6, these assumptions are further examined in light of the contemporary oral history of the Mi'kmaq people of Newfoundland. Interviewed in the summer of 2011 – exactly 100 years after Speck had conducted his research among their ancestors – the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq continue to express a very different narrative of both themselves and the Beothuk from that found in historical writing by Europeans, particularly with regard to how the history of the Beothuk intersected with their own. Rather than claiming an absolute truth, Mi'kmaq oral history reminds us of the extent to which bias informs all historical narrative, and consequently, of the value of including polyvocal sources, provided the researcher acknowledges that bias.

Chapter 7 extends the interdisciplinarity and polyvocality of Beothuk history even further by exploring a series of diverse perspectives from a variety of sources and disciplines – the oral history of contemporary Innu in Labrador and Beothuk descendants in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, French accounts from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, and recent work in craniology,

oste archaeology, and DNA analysis. Ultimately, these sources are viewed as fragments of a much more expansive Beothuk narrative, the interpretation of which invariably benefits from their inclusion.

As a rather linear narrative study of a variety of historical sources, both written and oral, it must be acknowledged from the outset that this dissertation by its very nature employs many of the narrative techniques that it seeks to explore and, often, critique: the determination of subject matter and research focus, the construction of an argument, the selection, arrangement, and editing of supporting citations here all clearly reflect a narrative bias and motivation that are distinctly my own. Rather than serving as a fixed or static end in terms of our understanding of Beothuk history, this dissertation's function is to propose a hermeneutic approach to that history that is an ongoing, dynamic undertaking, one which acknowledges the underpinnings of its narrative structure and ultimately attempts, through a more inclusive, interdisciplinary approach, to transcend them in the hope of achieving a fuller, more comprehensive understanding of the past.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

Recounted by a variety of sources over the past millennium, the story of Newfoundland's Beothuk people presents a fascinating and complex case study in historical narration. The sources of this history are numerous and diverse, ranging from victims and perpetrators with firsthand experience of the events described, to individuals across a wide range of disciplines with a myriad of personal and professional motives for writing or speaking. The interpretation of these numerous accounts, considered both individually and as a whole, benefits from recent theoretical developments in narratology, the philosophy of history, oral history and Indigenous methodology scholarship, each of which, in its own way, addresses the complex question of how the narrative form, or story, has shaped our understanding of the past. The following discussion will illustrate how theory about narrative structure, editorial bias, temporality, identity, reader-response, and narratorial reliability can enhance our understanding of the extent to which history has been structured by narrative, and, given the limitations of that structure, point to the value of exploring alternative epistemologies and historical perspectives.

An overview of the interdisciplinary discussion around the question of written narrative within literary theory, history, philosophy and archaeology is a useful starting point for the analysis of the Beothuk story, providing as it does valuable insight into the origins of historical narrative and the role of editing, objectivity, identity and bias in the writing of history. Early discussions of historical writing tend to focus on what distinguishes it from other epistemological forms. Defining historical writing as “the thing that has been,” Aristotle in his *Poetics* expresses a distinct preference for what he perceived as the more universal appeal of fiction, “not the thing

that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen”: “Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are more of the nature of universals, whereas those of history are singulars” (1984, 2322-3).

Despite this early distinction between history and fiction, history evolved as a branch of the art of rhetoric up until the end of the 18th century, when it began to emerge as a separate discipline from literature (Gossman, 1978, 3).¹⁰ With the development of modern historiography in the 18th and 19th centuries, the debate shifted to the question of whether it constituted a science or an art (Scholes, Kellog & Phelan, 2006, 212). As Carr (1986b) notes, this epistemological debate around the empirical status of historical investigation was subsequently revived at the hands of 20th-century Anglo-American philosophers (Walsh, Gardiner, Dray, Gallie, Morton White, Danto, and Mink).¹¹ Danto attempts to resolve the issue by insisting that the narrative form constitutes a valid framework for the organization of knowledge: “The difference between history and science is not that history does and science does not employ organizing schemes which go beyond what is given. Both do. The difference has to do with the *kind* of organizing schemes employed by each. *History tells stories*” (1965, 111).

A central issue within narrative theory is the question of its trans-cultural assumptions. For Dray, Hegel’s idea that there is no history before the organization of states suggests a “limitation of scope” which some historians still recognize.¹² Likewise acknowledging “that

¹⁰ As White aptly summarizes, “historiography in the West arises against the background of a distinctively literary (or rather ‘fictional’) discourse which itself took shape against the even more archaic discourse of myth” (1987, 44).

¹¹ In his discussion of the “marginality of historical theory to the historical profession,” Kellner perceives this group of scholars as forming a distinct sub-discipline focusing not on history or philosophy, but rather the philosophy of history itself: “The philosophers of history prefer to discuss the literature of the philosophers of history, so the names of Collingwood, Danto, Dray, Gallie, Mandelbaum, and Morton White appear again and again.... In short, work in the philosophy of history tends to deal with neither philosophy nor history, but rather with other works in the philosophy of history” (1989, 203).

¹² In part, the question of trans-cultural assumptions arises from Hegel’s notion of community, a concept, as Dray points out, that is founded on a Western assumption of nationhood (Dray, 1964, 70). Dray (1964, 78), Kellner (1989, 30), and White (1987, 33) all take issue with Hegel’s concept of prehistoric societies as primitive and lacking history. As White observes, “The very notion of human species implies that if any part of it exists in history, the

Hegel's notion of community is meant to be applied to the peoples and nation-states of European history," Carr cautions against assuming a universality of perspective (1986b, 151). In this he finds agreement with White, who observes that modern historians tend to rank the significance of historical events from a culturally specific perspective that is distinctly Western rather than universal (White, 1981, 10).¹³ Ankersmit makes a similar point when he describes the discipline of history as "the interior monologue of contemporary Western civilization about a past from which it originated" (2001, 259).¹⁴ In reference to Barthes, he sees the West as "writing itself" by means of historical narrative. In the case of colonial history narrated entirely by writers from outside the culture they describe, this suggestion that the narrative form may be limited in the universality of its perspective is particularly significant, setting the ground for discussions in oral history scholarship and Indigenous methodologies that advocate greater diversity of perspective that includes the voice of the colonized subject.

2.1 Historical Narrative Theory

Much of the discussion by philosophers and historians around historical narrative, particularly the Anglo-American group to which Danto belongs, has its origin in the ideas of Ranke and Collingwood, two historians whose central tenets introduced fundamental but opposing elements into the discussion of historical writing. Ranke introduced his famous dictum

whole of it does" (1987, 56). Challenging Ricoeur's idea of narrative as a "transcultural form of necessity," Carr concedes that the Western developmental narrative-historical view of the world "led Hegel, in his lectures on the philosophy of history, to treat 'China' and 'India' as *precursors* of the Western world even though both continued to exist in his own day as they do in ours" (1986b, 182).

¹³ For a discussion of White's own "fundamental and unavoidable Europocentrism," see Waldman (1981, 241).

¹⁴ The pervasive Eurocentrism of Western thought is a recurring theme in narrative theory. Ricoeur identifies its "two archaic inspirations: the Greek and the Hebraic" (1988, 264). Phelan describes "a gradual, centuries-long transition from oral to written narrative among the ancient Hebrews analogous to the one we posit for Greeks." When these two traditions merged, Phelan writes, "they swept all in Europe before them" (2006, 32). White observes, "The master narratives from among which Western man may choose are those of Greek fatalism, Christian redemptionism, bourgeois progressivism, and Marxist utopianism" (1987, 151).

of the historian's obligation to tell the past "*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*," (as it actually was) (1956, 57).¹⁵ The main impact of Ranke's thinking lies in its assumption that there exists a real history independent of human interpretation, and it is the historian's duty to determine that history and relate it in an objective manner. His work set a standard of objectivity that significantly impacted later philosophers and historians grappling with issues of bias, context and truthfulness within historical narrative.

Collingwood introduces a very different concept: the idea that the historian, in order to write effectively in the past, has to first re-enact the experience in his mind, to effectively imagine himself in the same situation as the historical subject about whom he is writing. Based on the historian's empathy or identification, Collingwood's theory centers on what he saw as an "innate idea...the idea of history itself...an idea which every man possesses as part of the furniture of his mind, and discovers himself to possess insofar as he becomes conscious of what it is to have a mind" (1948, 248). Hodder and Hutson point out that, rather than simply sitting back and empathizing or communing with the past, Collingwood's approach implies a methodology of question and answer, in which the historian poses specific questions about data from the past, questions whose answers necessitate an engagement of what they call the "historical imagination" (2003, 147).

The tension generated in the dichotomy of these two views of historical narrative – Ranke's concept of an objective description of an *actual* past, as opposed to Collingwood's idea of imaginative reenactment of the past – spurred much of the writing to follow. The question, as Mink summarizes, is a fundamental one: "... does historical understanding require imaginative replication of the past, a picture faithful to the original, as Ranke's famous maxim suggests; or is

¹⁵ As Ankersmit points out, Ranke's dictum is a repetition, in exactly the same words, of a similar edict pronounced by Lucian in the 2nd century (2001, 152).

it, as Collingwood claimed, an ongoing process of question and answer, in which answers do not aggregate but fade into that field of data which provides only the raw material for fresh acts of understanding?” (1987, 113)

Acknowledging the difficulty inherent in Ranke’s work, Danto claims that the two primary assumptions of Ranke’s dictum – the absolute objectivity of the historian, and the completeness of the historical account – are flawed. In so doing, Danto introduces the concept of editorial selection, an awareness of which is vital for anyone working with historical narrative. By virtue of the complexity of any historical situation, he argues, the historian is compelled to select certain details over others, a process which by its very nature implicates the involvement of the historian’s perspective in shaping the narrative.

The process of selection Danto finds to be inherent in the process of storytelling. Without it, he argues, “The story would get submerged in all these details. I *can* imagine him saying: ‘At this point a fly lighted on the rail of the witness box’” (1985,130). Thus, from Danto’s perspective, the only way to interpret Ranke’s concept of objectivity is to qualify it with this understanding of the role of narrative selection and emphasis: “When I say, then ‘tell me the whole story and leave nothing out’ I must be (and am) understood to mean: leave out nothing significant: whatever belongs in the story I want to be told of it. And this, surely, is what Ranke must have meant in the main” (1985, 131).

Danto elaborates on the concept of editorial bias in his further challenge of Ranke’s assumptions through two of Danto’s own fundamental concepts: the *ideal chronicle* and the *narrative sentence*. The ideal chronicle is a hypothetical record of the past that is factually accurate and complete at the time at which it is written: an idealized, full description of the past “shelved somewhere in the historian’s heaven” in keeping with Ranke’s assumption of complete

historical objectivity (1985, 149). Narrative sentences are those which “refer to at least two time-separated events though they only *describe* (are only *about*) the earliest event to which they refer” (1985, 143). Frequently found within historical writing, such sentences imply the presence of a narrator with retrospective knowledge of a historical situation. As Danto explains, the sentence ‘The Thirty Years War began in 1618,’ for example, could not have been written in 1618, without its author’s knowledge of how history played out. Relying on such a temporal perspective, narrative sentences within historical writing affirm the centrality of the historian’s viewpoint in the narrative, thereby proving that a complete and objective account of the past is impossible: “For the whole point of history is *not* to know about actions as witnesses might, but as historians do, in connection with later events and as parts of temporal wholes” (Danto, 1985, 183).

Rather than resist subjectivity, Danto suggests that we should appreciate it as the means by which we come to understand historical events: “To wish away this singular advantage would be silly, and historically disastrous, as well as unfulfillable. It would, in analogy to Plato’s image, be a wish to re-enter the cave where the future is still opaque. Men would give a great deal to be able to see their actions through the eyes of historians to come” (1985, 183). By making the links between historical events that – as indicated by the existence of narrative sentences – can only be made after the fact, the historian’s narrative possesses invaluable insight: “But since it is by means of narrative sentences that we ascribe historical significance to events, God, even if omniscient, cannot *know* what the significance of events is before they in fact *have* this significance. So in this regard again God has no advantage over the rest of us” (1985, 197).

Arising from this awareness of subjectivity is the idea of the emplotment of historical events, a concept Mink draws from White’s highly influential and controversial *Metahistory*

(1973). Described by Mink as “the book around which all reflective historians must reorganize their thoughts on history,” *Metahistory* presents White’s theory of emplotment – the idea that the historian’s choice of a plot structure provides historical writing with its narrative form (Vann, 1987, 12). Drawing primarily on the work of Barthes, Lévi-Strauss, and Frye, White argues that all historical writing is intrinsically narrative, and that its emplotment as tragedy, comedy, romance, or satire is determined not by the events themselves, but rather by the way they are perceived by the historiographer.

White’s summary of these ideas emphasizes the variability this raises in the interpretation and writing of history: “The important point is that most historical sequences can be emplotted in a number of different ways so as to allow different interpretations of those events and to endow them with different meanings” (1978, 48). Like the Anglo-American analytical philosophers, with their view of narrative in its presentation of meaning and causation as “*the* proper form of historical procedure,” White also considers the contributions to the discussion of narrative by literary theorists and philosophers – including Barthes, Foucault, Derrida, Todorov, Kristeva, Beneviste, and Genette – whom he describes as viewing narrative as “simply one discursive ‘code’ among others, and which might or might not be appropriate for the representation of reality” (Kellner, 1989, 104; White, 1987, 31).

White’s contribution to the discussion of historical narrative is difficult to overstate. Through his attention to language, rhetoric, and theoretical self-reflection, White challenged what he saw as the “willful methodological naiveté” of history, which he called “perhaps the conservative discipline par excellence” (1978, 28). White’s combination of a theory of emplotment with a theory of tropes, according to Ricoeur, was perceived by many historians as running the risk of “wiping out the boundary between fiction and history,” a risk of which White

himself was clearly aware (Ricoeur, 1988, 154; 311, n. 39). Like Carr, LaCapra concedes that White's work is perhaps most significant for its attempt to reconcile the previously disparate fields of literary theory and the philosophy of history, "to reveal how modes of emplotment inform all coherent narratives and how tropes construct the linguistic field" (LaCapra, 1983, 56).

Acutely aware of the elusiveness of historical objectivity, these theorists underscore the necessity of approaching the writing of history as a fundamentally hermeneutic undertaking. Integral to this undertaking is an understanding of the subjectivity of what we view as historical facts or events. White's discussion on this subject incorporates Lévi-Strauss' concept of the tension in historical writing between explanation and conveying information: "A historical fact is 'what really took place,' he [Lévi-Strauss] notes; but where, he asks, did anything take place?" (1978, 55). Mink expresses a similar view in his discussion of the theoretical problem for narrative raised by the concept of the *event*, which needs to be seen not as a factual basis of narratives, but rather as "an abstraction from a narrative," whose description is generated by narrative construction (Mink, 1987, 201).¹⁶ The history of our time, Mink argues – in the spirit of White's *Metahistory* – is such that "different stories about the same events" vary largely in the way in which they are emplotted (1987, 192).

Danto's discussion of the importance of the historical event's narrative context raises the question of temporality in narrative, which he perceives to be ultimately an attempt to come to terms with how human beings experience life: "Completely to describe an event is to locate it in

¹⁶ In a similar manner, Jay argues that the factual record does not exist prior to its mediation through language: "What distinguishes the events and facts that later historians reconstruct is precisely their being often already inflected with narrative meaning for those who initiate or suffer them in their own lives" (1992, 99). It is precisely because of this narrative meaning, Jay implies, that stories are told in the first place: "There is, in other words, virtually no historical content that is linguistically unmediated and utterly bereft of meaning, waiting around for the later historian to emplot it in arbitrary ways" (1992, 99). Roth expresses a similar view: "But, as we know, events may be sliced thick or thin; a glance may be identified as an isolated event or as an instance of an event. What the unit-event is depends on the telling of it" (1988, 8). Hastrup adds to the definition of event the idea of *social* significance: "Events are happenings of social significance, that is why they are registered in the first place and distinguished from the motley and continuous mass of happenings" (1990, 16).

all the right stories, and this we cannot do. We cannot because we are temporally provincial with regard to the future” (1985, 142). The temporality of human experience determines how we perceive and describe both the future and the past, with the result that both are continually subject to change. Thus, “insofar as we cannot tell what events will someday be seen as connected with the past, the past is always going to be differently described” (1985, 340). Our historical consciousness is predicated by our temporal experience as expressed in narrative: “To exist historically is to perceive the events one lives through as part of a story later to be told” (1985, 343).

As with Danto, central to Ricoeur’s thinking is the idea that the narrative’s greatest value lies in its link to our human experience of temporality. That the temporality of narrative is constituted not by the events themselves, but rather by their being narratively organized by plot, is a conclusion Ricoeur suspects “both anti-narrativist epistemologists and structuralist literary critics have overlooked” (1981, 167).¹⁷ Like Danto and Mink, Mitchell maintains that it is narrative structure that provides historical events with a coherency they would not otherwise possess. In Mitchell’s view, narrative structure arises, not from the events themselves, but rather “out of a desire to have real events display the coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure of an image of life that is and can only be imaginary” (1981, 23). Kermode expresses a comparable understanding of the role of plot: “In ‘making sense’ of the world we...feel a need to experience that concordance of beginning, middle and end which is the essence of our explanatory fiction” (2000, 33). Common to all of these theorists, then, is the idea that the subjectivity inherent in historical narrative arises largely out of human beings’ limited perception of time, which is

¹⁷ Scholes, Kellogg and Phelan echo Ricoeur’s thinking in his definition of narrative as “the symbolic presentation of a sequence of events connected by subject matter and related by time” (2006, 205). Similarly, Chatman writes, “Narrative subsists in an event chain, operating through time” (1978, 264).

expressed in the adoption of a plot structure that makes sense of these events with a unifying theme and clearly defined beginning, middle, and end.

Carr challenges this assumption that plot is imposed upon historical events to provide them with a sense of order or wholeness accessible to human cognition with the idea that narrative structure reflects our very experience of life itself. The historian's source material, he argues, is "anything but a mass of unrelated events waiting for a story to be told about them, as theorists like Ricoeur and Mink seem to suggest" (1986b, 170). Drawing on phenomenology, Carr presents a theory more in line with Hardy's view of narrative as "a primary act of mind transferred to art from life" (1986b, 19). He claims that narrative structure, rather than being imposed by the historian, is intrinsic to historical events themselves. With reference to Aristotle's theory of dramatic unity, Carr notes that human experiences, events, or actions, like narrative itself, have a distinguishable structure that includes beginnings and endings.

Whether one perceives narrative structure as arising from life, like Carr, or from the act of narration itself, like Danto and Mink, common to the discussion of all theorists are the parallels that emerge between narrative structure and human existence. An awareness of these parallels helps us understand the extent to which historical narrative is shaped, intentionally or not, by its authors. As Scholes, Phelan, and Kellogg point out, many events in history, ranging from war to the life of an individual person, provide "ready-made" Aristotelian plots that make their emplotment a foregone conclusion: "And so does the life of a single man provide a neat formula for plotting. What more perfect beginning than birth or more perfect ending than death? This is simply the old epic formula pushed well into the domain of empirical narrative" (2006, 212).

Particularly useful is Mitchell's idea that narrative coherence derives from meanings imposed on events by a narrative that are often unclear until the narrative's end. The conclusion of the narrative Mitchell thus sees as "the pole of attraction" of its entire development, superimposing "the sense of an ending" – to use Kermode's expression – on the open-endedness of mere succession" (1981, 175). Despite his phenomenological view of narrative's origins, Carr is in agreement with respect to the power or influence of its ending: "only from the perspective of the end do the beginning and the middle make sense" (1986b, 7). In keeping also with White's idea of historical emplotment, this observation that a narrative's structure is shaped by its ending has profound implications for the study of history, in which any particular narrative's ending, in broad strokes at least, tends to be known.¹⁸ As anyone who has reread the same novel or watched the same film more than once can attest, however, knowing the ending of a narrative does not necessarily make it less engaging. To the contrary, it is often precisely because we do know its ending in advance that we are willing to engage with the same narrative over and over again. In the telling, our sense of the unity of that narrative, as expressed in its known ending, is reinforced and our narrative expectations are fulfilled.

Another useful application of historical narrative theory is found in the insights it provides with regards to the role of narrative in shaping our perception and coherence of the self.¹⁹ Citing Husserl's concept of the ego "as constituting itself in the unity of the *Geschichte*,"

¹⁸ Taking objection to Gallie's framework with its reliance on *following* the story, Mink points out that the ending of most historical narratives is known in advance. The difference between *following* and *having followed* the story, Mink argues, amounts to a difference between anticipation and retrospection, a difference that "is crucial as well for cognition: at least in the case of human actions and changes, to know an event by retrospection is categorically, not incidentally, different from knowing it by prediction or anticipation" (1987, 48).

¹⁹ Citing Barthes' "I write myself," Ankersmit asserts that "we effectively 'realize ourselves' in and by writing" (2001, 257). Schafer (1981) details a similar use of narrative within the practice of psychoanalysis. MacIntyre's discussion of suicide – cited by Carr – is also relevant: "When someone complains – as do some of those who attempt or commit suicide – that his or her life is meaningless, he or she is often and perhaps characteristically complaining that the narrative of their life has become unintelligible to them, that it lacks any point" (MacIntyre, 1981, 201; Carr, 1986b, 92). From the perspective of narratology, see also Smith Foster's discussion of Habermas

Carr's phenomenological analysis sees narrative as the means by which we organize and structure not only our actions and experiences, but also our identity (1986b, 115). Conceding phenomenology's emphasis on individual experience, Carr argues that narrative structure is similarly reflected in the lives of communities, an observation with particular relevance to the analysis of historical writing, with its focus on human populations. Like the self, the group's sense of coherence is tied closely to its awareness of its origins, as well as the possibility of its disintegration (a parallel to the self's awareness of its mortality).

A related issue that recurs in recent writing by historians and archaeologists alike is the bias of our assumptions not only about community, but time itself. Carr is acutely aware of the assumptions we tend to make with regards to a Western perception of human time as linear and developmental. With reference to Lévi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind*, Carr suggests that the reality perception of many non-Western societies is cyclical or atemporal (1986b, 179). Lévi -Strauss' work is cited in a similar context in Lucas' discussion of archaeological time, which proposes for archaeology a framework that is multi-temporal, in opposition to what we in the Western sense assume to be "objective" linear time (2005, 26).²⁰ Through its imposition of a temporal perspective that differs from that of many of the cultures it attempts to describe, Dray concludes, historical narrative tends to frame history within a context that is distinctly Western: "the total experiences of civilized man follows a linear rather than a merely cyclical pattern; and it suggests to him a purposive significance for the historical process as a whole" (1964, 89).

Acutely aware that the narrative conception of human time in the West is "a relatively limited cultural phenomenon," Carr is hesitant to make any claims for the relevance of his theory

and de Silveira's work establishing "that in adolescence, previously separate abilities to narrate and to construct self-identity merge into a 'person concept' explicitly linked with historical narrative" (2010, 26).

²⁰ With his analogy of the palimpsest – a manuscript containing texts written at different times superimposed over one another at varying degrees of legibility – Lucas' framework attempts to include "the traces of multiple, overlapping activities over variable periods of time and the variable erasing of earlier traces" (2005, 37).

within other cultural contexts (1986b, 179). He concedes the existence of “arguments against the universality and ‘transcultural necessity’ of the narrative conception of time” and is open to the very real possibility that his framework is limited to the Western context:

When we say, then, that historical narrative is just an extension of historical existence, and that historical existence is the social counterpart of the individual’s way of experiencing and acting in time, *we* are asserting all this about *ourselves*, not necessarily about everyone. (1986b, 183)

The discussion of cultural relativism within narrative theory invariably leads back to the question of bias in historical writing, a question that occupies virtually all theorists dealing with the structure of narrative. As established by Danto, Mink, LaCapra, Dray and White, depending as it does on an author’s selection and organization of what are held to be significant events, narrative as a form implies bias on the part of the writer.²¹ Dray emphasizes the fact that forces which shape historians remain operative even when they are aware that they exist and take measures to counter them: “Whatever acts of purification the historian may perform, he yet remains human, a creature of time, place, circumstance, interests, predilection, and culture” (1964, 22-3).²²

Few theorists are optimistic about the historian’s ability to perceive this bias. One reason, Danto suggests, is that historians have motives behind their writing that often reflect personal or even societal feelings about the subject, or an ideological framework to which the

²¹ Kellner maintains that the very process of data selection in historical writing precludes subjectivity: “There are no unprocessed historical data; once an object or text has been identified as material for history, it is already deeply implicated in the cultural system” (1989, vii).

²² Identifying Beard as “essentially a Baconian in philosophy,” Danto traces his views to Bacon’s idea “that human beings are subject to the distorting influence of a variety of different prejudices which he labeled ‘Idols of the Human Mind’” (1964, 101).

historian is committed.²³ The question of authorial motive is central to Cover's discussion of the power of narrative in shaping collective identity. As Cover observes, this motivation is a natural corollary of narrative's propensity to moralize: "every narrative is insistent in its demand for its prescriptive point, its moral" (1983, 5). Herrstein Smith likewise believes we must assume that "every narrative version has been constructed in accord with some set of purposes or interests" (1981, 215). Her point is reiterated by Stanford (1998), who reminds us that one of the main reasons bias arises in history is the fact that it is written by winners, who will often deliberately censor or pervert the written record in their own interest.

The consequence of this bias in historical writing is subjective emphasis, omission, and even distortion, which the historian may or may not be aware of, let alone be able to control.^{24, 25} With his observation "that one does not go naked into the archives," Danto suggests that the historian's subjectivity invariably influences the process of research before it even begins (1985, 101). Hodder and Hutson echo this sentiment. Their discussion of post-processural archaeological research methods recalls Collingwood's question and answer of the historian's reenactment:

Every question is shaped by the interests and biographical experiences – the operational meanings – of the researcher, which means that every question 'prefigures' the answer to some extent. Interpretation of the past is therefore bound into a question and answer

²³ It is not always the case that this motive on the part of the historian coincides with the subject matter. As LaCapra summarizes his discussion of Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, "The historical context was at loggerheads with the desires of the narrator" (1983, 281).

²⁴ With his idea of "double subjectivity," Mink describes history as being invariably influenced not only by the ideology of the author, "but also the concepts and beliefs of the historical agents and which constitute those data themselves" (1987, 167). The situation is further complicated by the fact that, with "invented traditions," the context of the historical agents is often contrived. Cannadine cites Hobsbawm's observation that "the continuity which the invented traditions of the late 19th century seek to establish with this earlier phase [one thousand years previous] is largely illusory...their 'meaning' was specifically related to the social, political, economic, and cultural circumstances of the time" (1983, 161).

²⁵ Omission, Danto concedes, is inherent to the narrative process: "Narratives, by definition, leave things out" (1985, 141).

procedure which is rooted in the present. Analogy with the present thus underlies our interpretation of the past. (2003, 196)

Absent from much of the writing about historical narrative is discussion of authorial bias due to gender. On the whole, mention of the influence of feminist theory in writing by men about historical narrative tends to be sporadic and summative. Phelan attributes Lanser's work in feminist narratology with establishing that gender "is not just relevant to the study of narrative but something intrinsic to its form" (2006, 296). In their exploration of phenomenological (or "embodied") archaeology, Hodder and Hutson cite biological studies in sexual determination to illustrate the extent to which gender ideology can inform research methodology and interpretation (2003, 109-110). Within archaeology, the authors note that there is in general a greater interest in activities that are predominantly perceived as male, an observation that is perhaps equally relevant to history: "The past is written in terms of leadership, power, warfare, the exchange of women, man the hunter, rights of inheritance, control over resources, and so on" (2003, 228). As Ranger points out, gender bias is active not only among historians but also their sources. He notes Ifeka-Moller's observation that "colonial records on African 'tradition', on which the new invented custom was based, were exclusively derived from male informants, so that 'indigenous female belief' remained unrecorded" (Ifeka-Moller, 1975, in Ranger, 1983, 258).

Created thus within a distinct personal and social context encompassing ideology, values, motive, culture, and gender, historical narrative is influenced by an authorial bias inherent to the form itself. Part of the value of historical writing, however, lies in this very bias, which can reveal tremendous insight into the context of both historians and the past itself. With reference to the "quasi-existential relationship to the past" expressed by the 18th and 19th-century

historians discussed in White's *Metahistory*, Ankersmit regrets the "domesticated" variant of history that replaced such writing with the arrival of scientific thinking (2001, 256).²⁶ What accompanies the loss of the inherently biased (and committed) historical perspective, Ankersmit maintains, is an invaluable tool for our own self-reflection – "the mirror of the radically alien in which we can begin to recognize our own cultural identity" (2001, 261). As Scholes, Kellog and Phelan conclude, "One reason we value works not immediately of our time or place is because of the way their vision differs from ours. They help to release us from the perceptual prison of our culture" (2006, 278).

Through its exploration of the very underpinnings of narrative structure, historical narrative theory provides insight into the extent to which this structure shapes our understanding of the past. In the selection and arrangement of series of causally related events, its ordering of beginning, middle, and end, narrative relates history in a manner that characteristically parallels our own experience of life. Reflecting, if not arising from, our limited human temporal perspective – with its clearly defined beginning in birth and ending in death – narrative serves to order historical events in a way we can readily apprehend. In so doing, it gives meaning and coherence to a reality that might otherwise appear random, chaotic, or disjointed. And while this meaning may facilitate our understanding of historical events and the causal relationships between them, historical narrative theory reminds us that that meaning is related by a narrator, whose perspective is shaped by a bias arising from a vast array of sociopolitical, ideological, and cultural variables, all of which ultimately play into the narrative structure he or she creates.

²⁶ In her study of 19th-century histories of the French Revolution, Orr expresses a similar sense of loss in more contemporary and ostensibly objective history. The writing of de Staël, Michelet and Tocqueville, by contrast, Orr values for its "personal, if not intimate, sense of a persona, a narrator involved in the process of coming to terms with a traumatic history" (1995, 104).

2.3 Narratology: Reader Response Theory

With the advent of reader response theory, it became clear that theorists' concern about bias in the historical *writer* were equally significant with regards to the *reader* of history. Reader response theory views the text-reader relationship as communicative or interactive, with the reader, through interpretation, actively participating in the construction of meaning. Further influencing our understanding of the reader are developments in cognitive narratology, in particular, frame theory, with its supposition that the reader brings to the text certain experientially and culturally derived frames of reference which are activated in the process of reading (Phelan, 2007, 290). In this respect, frames are not unlike what Hodder and Hutson refer to in their discussion of structuralist archaeology as the "structures" we impose upon reality "to help simplify difference and organize it into categories we can grasp" (2003, 73).

Increasingly, scholars have become aware that analysis of discourse must take into account not only the bias of the writer and his or her sources, but also that of the reader, which is itself very much implicated in the act of interpretation. An informed hermeneutics of the past necessitates a critical awareness of the presence of bias at all levels of historical writing. Itself an object of interpretation, the historical text, like the archaeological artifact, must be evaluated in this light:

Both the interpreter and the object of interpretation contribute to understanding, always generating a new, hybridized meaning. In this sense, whether we like it or not, we think ourselves into the past. We need to be aware that we are doing this, and we need to do it critically. (Hodder and Hutson, 2003, 196)

Considered within the context of historical narrative, this process described by Hodder and Hutson shares many similarities with Iser's reader-response framework. Iser's statement

that “indeterminacy arises out of the communicatory function of literature” opens up interesting possibilities for historical narrative, the interpretation of which implies activity on the part of the reader (1978, 182). In Iser’s view, this interaction between reader and text is brought about by textual gaps or blanks. His description of the blank as designating “a vacancy in the overall system of the text, the filling in of which brings about an interaction of textual patterns” evokes the question and answer approach to historical narrative first articulated by Collingwood (Iser, 1978, 182). Within the context of historical narrative, gaps could be omissions, for example, of particular historical events or details, or inconsistencies, such as those which might occur between accounts told from different perspectives. These blanks can be either *intertextual* – existing within the individual accounts, or *intratextual* – found between the accounts. It is the perception of such omissions or inconsistencies by a reader exposed to the myriad of accounts and interpretations of events within historical narrative that lead to the process of reader response and meaning construction that Iser describes. And in the same way the discovery of such blanks or gaps in the historical record clearly plays an active role in engaging the *reader* of history, it is often precisely this discovery that motivates the historian as well.

Admittedly, Iser’s theory was developed within the context of literary fiction, with his blanks representing what he called “a specific narrative strategy” on the part of the author.²⁷ Yet the lack of a clearly articulated rationale for limiting his description to fiction, with its implications about authorial intent, points to the applicability of his framework to other forms of writing, including but not limited to history. Like many theorists’ thinking with regards to historical narrative, in Iser’s view fictional reality is presented not as an attempt to simulate reality but rather to “enable us to see that familiar reality with new eyes” (1978, 181). His triad

²⁷ Iser describes his blank as “eine spezifisch narrative Strategie”; “keine allgemein offen bleibende Frage, sondern ein konkretes Erzählelement” [a specific narrative strategy; not a general, open question, but rather a concrete narrative element] (own translation, 1970, 28).

of the real, the fictive, and the imaginary attempts to frame fiction and reality in an alliance reminiscent of Mink's ideas about narrative and human understanding.²⁸ Seen as "the chameleon of cognition," Iser maintains, fiction shares an uneasy relationship with reality, transcending as it does "the concepts it seeks to encompass" to present a truth that is unavailable through other means of cognition (Iser, 1978, 165). And while in this respect Iser's view may evoke Aristotle's claim about the role of fiction in relating truth, it is equally in keeping with Mink's view of historical narrative as "a primary cognitive instrument – an instrument rivaled, in fact, only by theory and by metaphor as irreducible ways of making the flux of experience comprehensible" (1987, 185).

Thus considered, Iser's description of fragmented narration could be applied to historical narrative, in that "fragmented narration so increases the blanks that missing links are a constant irritation to the reader's image-building faculties" (Iser, 1978, 184). With its emphasis on the interaction between text and reader rather than authorial intent, Iser's framework would seem a natural fit for the interpretation of historical writing, the intent behind which can often prove to be elusive. Iser's conclusion with regards to the literary text provides a useful rationale for the interpretive process of narrative in general: "The blanks of the literary text, however, necessitate a connecting equivalence which will enable the reader to discover what has been called the 'Archisem', which underlies the disconnected segments and, as soon as it has been 'found', links them up into a new unit of meaning" (1978,185). Within historical writing, as in literature, it is

²⁸Mink's discussion of the process of understanding encompasses memory, imagination, and conceptualization. Within his ideal of comprehension, Mink identifies three modes: the *theoretical* (associated with natural science), the *categorical* (philosophy), and the *configurational* (history). For a discussion of the intellectual function of these various modes of comprehension, see Chapter Two of Mink (1987), "History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension," which opens with the following quotation from Descartes: "...fiction makes us imagine a number of events as possible which are really impossible, and even the most faithful histories, if they do not alter or embroider things to make them more worth reading, almost always omit the meanest and least illustrious circumstances, so that the remainder is distorted" (Mink, 1987, 42).

through such disconnected segments or inconsistencies that the reading experience engages the reader and ultimately produces meaning.

2.3 Narratology: Unreliable Narration

One means of exploring textual inconsistency applicable to the analysis of historical writing is narratology's concept of unreliable narration. Unreliable narration was first defined in 1961 by Booth: "For lack of better terms, I have called a narrator *reliable* when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms), unreliable when he does not" (1983, 158). Central to Booth's theory is the idea of "a secret communion" between the implied author and reader which takes place "behind the narrator's back": "The author may wink and nudge, but he may not speak" (1983, 300).²⁹ According to Booth, this collaboration represents "one of the most rewarding of all reading experiences" (1983, 307). Relying as it does on its implication of authorial intent, Booth's framework would at first glance appear to have limited applicability in the analysis of history. Yet, as Iser points out, Booth's unreliable narrator can be seen itself as the originator of textual blanks: With authoritative orientation no longer supplied by the author, Iser maintains, an increasing number of blanks results, further stimulating the reader's experience of the text.

Subsequent work within narratology on the area of unreliable narration provides a number of useful insights for approaching bias within history. Like Booth, Riggan identifies unreliability through a series of textual clues directed to the reader, including the narration of accounts that are unacceptable "in terms of normal moral standards or of basic common sense

²⁹Reflecting narratology's fundamental distinction between author and narrator, the *implied author* is a term created by Booth (1983) to distinguish the real author of the text from the persona of that author created by the reader's *perception* of the author based on his or her experience of the text. The implied author of the text may vary considerably from the author's real-life personality.

and human decency” (1981, 36). A. Nünning’s cognitive reader-centered approach for determining unreliability also focuses on this discrepancy between the narrator’s perception and the reader’s own frames of reference, with unreliability determined by “the distance that separates the narrator’s view of the world from the reader’s or critic’s world-model and standards of normalcy” (1999b, 61). Nünning’s approach is influenced by Culler’s frame theory and concept of naturalization – a cognitive process that involves the reader’s reverting to real-world frames as a means of interpreting text (A. Nünning, 1999b, 54). The framework also draws on Wall’s discussion of the relationship between naturalization and unreliability: “Part of the way in which we arrive at suspicions that the narrator is unreliable, then, is through the process of naturalizing the text, using what we know about human psychology and history to evaluate the probable accuracy of, or motives for, a narrator’s assertions” (Wall, 1994, 30).

The application of these frameworks of narratology offers tremendous potential for the analysis of historical narrative. Such analysis is enhanced by narratology’s distinction between the *homodiegetic* narrator – who narrates from within the diegesis, or dramatic arc of the story, and the *heterodiegetic* narrator, who narrates from without. As with anthropology’s corresponding *etic* and *emic*, these categories are most useful for drawing attention to a narrator’s influence on his or her subject, and in this case, his or her narrative.³⁰ Particularly revealing are the effects on a narrative’s reliability when a narrator who is clearly homodiegetic, in retrospect attempts to adopt the enhanced objectivity (and authority) of the heterodiegetic narrator.

By assuming a clear distinction between the author and narrator of a text, narratology encourages us to see the reliability of the narrator as a function of text and how that text interacts

³⁰ For further discussion of *etic* and *emic*, terms first developed by Pike regarding the actor/observer dichotomy of describing human social behaviour, see Pike (1967), Harris (1976), and Briggs (1970, 10-28).

with the reader, rather than solely a reflection of the historical entity who wrote it. Questions or gaps that arise within and between individual accounts function to direct our attention back to those texts and, ultimately, how they interact as a whole. With its attention to the various mechanisms by which narrative texts enhance human understanding of the connection between, and ultimately the *meaning* of, events, narratology clearly has a place in the study of history. As Smith Foster concludes:

Looking back is tricky business. It is seeing through time, people, events; it's remembering subtleties and attitudes. It's getting the facts straight, even though the facts may have little to do with 'telling the truth.' So much depends on who does the looking back and why. What is the condition of the vision mechanism – one-eyed, shortsighted, farsighted, or no-sighted, blind?" As narratologists, our training helps us understand how "tricky" history can be (2010, 26).

Taken together, narratology and historical narrative theory provide a useful framework for the first component of this doctoral research: a textual analysis of the written historical narrative of the Beothuk as a whole, with a focus on its key sources.

2.4 Native Oral History

Originating as it does in Aristotle's definition of narrative, and drawing heavily on European and American scholarship, narrative theory has arisen within a philosophical context which, on the level of cultural assumptions, renders it appropriate for the analysis of a narrative written primarily by Europeans. The introduction of Native oral history into the study of the Beothuk narrative raises a number of further theoretical questions, including the issues of its

reliability, the ways in which it differs from written sources, and its place in interdisciplinary academic research.

As Johnson notes, oral history occupies “an ambivalent position” at the edges of the discipline of history, with its emphasis on documentary-based evidence (2005, 261). A contemporary expression of multi-generational knowledge possessed by distinctly localized communities, Native oral history draws on the unique perspective of people who have existed for some time in a particular geographical location (Tribal 7 Elders, 1996, 328; Brownlie, 2009, 58). Reflecting a relationship to the land that is characteristic of Native culture, it articulates knowledge that is acquired and preserved “through generations in an original or local society” (Skutnabb-Kangass, 2009, 92). As Rios and Sands note, this emphasis on geography can supercede chronology, with place acting as the organizing principle of oral narrative, rather than dates or even the order of episodes (2000, 239).

Oral history is further distinguished by the fact that it is related by a narrator in the present. Like all historical sources, the narrator of oral history, Vansina acknowledges, is “suffused by subjectivity right from the start” (1980, 157). Unlike the written tradition, however, which tends to abstract the narrator from the story, in the Native oral tradition, the narrator stands very much “at the center of these histories,” often making connections between events and histories on the spot (Howe, 2002, 162). As Cruikshank notes, it is in the very act of telling their stories that these narrators explore their meaning (2002, 7). As such, their narration represents a living history, “the representation of the past in the present,” a representation that reflects the evolving interpretation of each narrator who participates in its telling (Vansina, 1985, xii).

The fact that narrators of oral history reflect the perspective of the communities to which they belong represents both an advantage and a challenge to the non-Native researcher. The

advantage is access to a historical perspective that could be distinct from the researcher's own, one that provides insight into a potentially different way of interpreting experience, from "people who think differently and who know differently" (Smith, 2006, 551).³¹ It is on this basis that Nabokov defends the use of oral history in historical research. As a means of Native North American communities addressing their history on their own terms, Nabokov writes, oral history helps historians "to present and interpret more multistranded North American histories" (2002, 76).

If we accept Ricoeur's view of the hermeneutic undertaking as a circle, the whole of which is construed through recognition of its parts, the incorporation of oral history into the hermeneutic circle effectively "connotes a sphere of toleration" in which difference is acknowledged (Ricoeur, 1971, 548; Johnson, 2005, 268). Enlarging the circle, as Smith points out, "introduces new voices, creates new audiences, and expands the outer edge" (2000, 528). By presenting a view of Native cultures from the inside, as it were, oral history can provide historians access to other means of perceiving the past, in the process expanding their own perspective for the interpretation of history. Echoing Trigger, a related advantage, McCarty notes, is an alternative to erroneous portrayals of Native people "based on limiting theoretical lenses and outsider misunderstandings" (2005, 4).

Related, as it is, by a progression of narrators who add their own layer of interpretation with each telling, a major challenge presented by oral history within historical research is the determination of its reliability. With respect to time, the question of reliability is complicated by the fact that oral history characteristically reorders events around what, from a Native perspective, is considered significant, rather than relating them in a manner that prioritizes

³¹ With respect to Maori of New Zealand, Smith writes, "We have always known that we had a history that is different from the history taught in schools. We never know how to activate that alternative view of history; we just learnt it at home" (Battiste, Bell, & Findlay, 2002. 178).

chronology or cause and effect relationships. As Dickason notes, “The Aboriginal conception of time as a web of interacting recurring cycles spanning the present, past, and future, did not give importance to chronology” (2005, 118). A further challenge is presented by the elements of oral history of which the non-Native researcher is unaware, or cannot access, due to restrictions within many Native cultures on what traditions can be shared with individuals from outside the community (Smith, 2012, 174; Johnson, 2005, 266-267).

Another point of discussion among scholars with regards to the use of oral history in academic research is the influence of outside sources, both written and oral. As Miller notes, the influence of outside sources is unavoidable after centuries of interaction between Natives and non-Natives, and the discussion around the phenomenon is rooted in part in an outdated notion of the authenticity of Native cultures as arising from their isolation: “Scholars long ago abandoned the romantic search for ‘noble savages’ who are members of ‘pure and untouched’ societies” (2011, 136). Acknowledging outside influence on Native oral tradition, Miller counters Henige’s perception of the “contamination” of oral history with an insistence on the dialogical nature of oral history scholarship (Henige, 1982, 85; Miller, 2011, 56). Miller uses the term “feedback” to describe a phenomenon which, he insists, is the logical outcome of a cross-cultural syncretism that originated with first contact, and as such represents “a feature of life rather than a form of contamination or illegitimacy” (2011, 135). Hornborg makes a similar point with her use of the term “readback,” which she likewise acknowledges as an influence on Mi’kmaq oral history. In Hornborg’s view, the influence of outside texts within the context of their oral tradition, which the Mi’kmaq openly acknowledged, did not serve to replace, distort, or undermine the memories of their elders, which they characteristically emphasized as being reliable (2002, 9).

With regards to reliability, Rosaldo posits that the researcher's goal, in the collection of oral histories, is not so much to determine the historical truth of a matter, but rather to appreciate a people's *perception* of their history. Viewing history as a cultural construct, Rosaldo posits that "plundering other people's narratives by shifting them into degrees of facticity – true, probable, possible, false – risks misunderstanding their meanings" (1980a, 91). By subjecting oral history to scrutiny with regards to its historical truth, he argues, one runs the risk of missing its point. As a means of communication, Rosaldo posits, oral history aims to increase our perception of a people's understanding, their way of seeing and perceiving the world, rather than as a literal representation of historical truth.

Cruikshank makes a related point in her observation that people who grow up within a tradition of oral history believe that, rather than subjecting these oral histories to formal analysis, one should focus on absorbing the personal messages that are transmitted with each successive telling (2005, 60). As Paine points out, an oral narrative contains more than one message. With reference to the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en, he posits that their myths are true in the sense that they carry an "*ipso facto* truth" rather than the factual truth expected of written documents (Brown and Roberts, 1980, 8; Paine, 1996, 61). The value of oral storytellers often lies in their ability to correlate seemingly unrelated ideas and show the connections between them. Rather than attempting to winnow facts from oral sources and compare them to facts obtained from written accounts, an alternative approach is to treat oral history "not as evidence but as a window on the ways the past is culturally constituted and discussed in different contexts" (Cruikshank, 1991, 347). Doing so, Cruikshank argues, makes the researcher vulnerable, interrupting and exposing his or her norms, or frames of reference, and creating space for an alternative epistemology that can challenge conventional ways of thinking, provide greater context for

historical events, and ultimately serve to broaden and enhance our historical understanding (1998, xi-xv).

Oral history represents a cumulative interpretation, in the present, of a community's experience of the past. As such, it does not claim objectivity or truth, but rather constitutes an interpretation. In presenting a distinct historical perspective from within the Native community, oral history is limited, and biased, no less than the written history of the Native experience as narrated by those from the outside. Historians using oral history in their research do so with an awareness of this fact.

As Chamberlin notes, researchers walk a fine line between diminishing the status of oral history and exaggerating its authority with respect to written sources. Ultimately, he determines, oral texts benefit when the historian chooses "to look *at* them in and for themselves" (2000, 140). Notes Cruikshank, "More interesting than the questions of which versions more accurately account for "what really happened" is what differing versions tell us about the values they commemorate"(1998, 92). Vansina expresses a similar view when, likening oral traditions to the historian's own interpretation of the past, he concludes that both be treated as hypotheses (1985, 196). Their subjectivity, bias, and limitations with regards to reliability notwithstanding, Native oral histories give voice to a distinct historical perspective that might otherwise remain unknown to the non-Native researcher. As such, their inclusion functions to open up the historical narrative in a way that acknowledges the polyvocality of the past.

2.5 Indigenous Methodologies

Such acknowledgement of polyvocality in history forms the cornerstone of many Indigenous methodologies, which aim to reorientate historical discourse away from the voice of

the colonizer to include the perspective of the colonized subaltern. A fundamental assumption of Indigenous methodology is that much of written history, and by extension, the academy itself, have operated under colonialist assumptions that have been and continue to be harmful to Native people. Central to Indigenous methodology is the idea of agency, empowering the Native community to conduct its own research and speak with its own voice. Drawing on an ontology that is distinct from that of Europeans, Indigenous research methodologies raise some interesting questions about the very nature of reality, and the epistemological assumptions we make in our construction of what we perceive to be real, in terms of both the present and the past.

The dominance of a Eurocentric, hegemonic epistemology in historical writing, and the academy in general, is a starting point for many scholars in their articulation of the need for an Indigenous research methodology. Smith begins her seminal *Decolonizing Methodologies* by drawing attention to the link between Native peoples' experience of colonialism and contemporary research: "From the vantage point of the colonized, the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, 'research,' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary"(1999, 1). Behind this rationale is a critique of Indigenous peoples as having been treated by academic researchers in much the same way that they have been treated by the chroniclers of history, to the point that many Native communities have come to see academic research as "simply another form of colonial exploitation" (Brownlie, 2009, 34).

In both cases, the Indigenous other is seen as being objectified in a way that serves the interests of the colonizer. In the case of historical writing, the dehumanization of Native peoples has served to emphasize the perspective of the dominant society. Through reductive and simplistic representations of Native people, be they inherently idealized and romanticized or

derogatory and racist, history has justified the colonial project by denying Native peoples their humanity and subjectivity (Nicholas, 2008, 19; Brill de Ramirez, 2007, vii). To cite Fanon, “the first thing a colonizer does is, with a perverted sense, turn to the past of a colonized people and distort, disfigure, and destroy it”(1963, 210). This concept finds support in what Said describes as the “struggle over geography,” a struggle that is “not only about soldiers and cannons but about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings” (1993, 7). By continuing to relegate the Indigenous other to the role of object in research, the academy remains complicit in the colonizing role, essentially “a colonial institution that reproduces itself” (Kovach, 2009b, 175).

At the heart of Indigenous methodologies is what many scholars view as a fundamental epistemological difference between Indigenous and Western thought. Though unique in many ways, what characterizes Indigenous epistemologies as a whole is the underlying belief that knowledge or truth is neither objective nor absolute, but rather highly personal and shaped by a myriad of factors that are constantly in flux. Notes Absolon, “Indigenous research is different from Eurowestern research in that we acknowledge and include the relationship between self, Spirit, responsibility, knowledge and truth” (2011, 76). Through their emphasis on the subjectivity of knowledge, Indigenous methodologies stress individual perception and learning. Placing a premium on nonintervention and noninterference, the Dene Tha expect the individual to learn through careful observation and imitation of others (Goulet, 1998, 27-29). Likewise in Cree culture, children are given considerable autonomy and enjoy the freedom to choose for themselves and find their own way (Tribal 7 Elders, 1996, 302). Central to this epistemology is the idea of agency, that the individual must take responsibility for learning, and that, as a consequence, one’s knowledge is distinctly personal.

Given the personal nature of knowledge, it follows that, within Native culture, the acquisition of knowledge is complex and relational (Kovach, 2009b, 32; Wheeler, 2005, 198). Echoing Collingwood's ideas about the primacy of imagination in the construction of historical narrative, Wilson argues that from an Indigenous perspective, rather than being an external, objective entity, "reality is in the relationship that one has to the truth"(2008, 73). Within this paradigm, reality emerges as a process of relationships rather than something that is absolute and exists in its own right. Consequently, exploring Indigenous epistemology involves prioritizing relationships and "listening with an open heart and open mind" in a manner that is respectful of others' perception and experience (Wilson, 2008, 126).

In identifying a fundamental epistemological difference between Native and Western thought, Indigenous methodologies remind us that Native peoples' interpretation of history is distinct not only because it is coming from a different perspective; they remind us what that difference in perspective actually *means* with regards to how Native peoples perceive reality. While in a Western sense, knowledge is approached primarily through the intellect, the Native acquisition of knowledge draws on other aspects of human perception, including the senses and intuition (Cordero, 1995, 30). Merging the spiritual with the sensory, the Indigenous world view makes little distinction between physical and metaphysical realms, with the result that knowledge is not fragmented into discipline-like categories, but rather viewed as an organic, interconnected whole (Wheeler, 2005, 197). What from a Western perspective is perceived as a lack of chronology in Native oral history is in fact indicative of a completely different way of seeing reality, not as a series of related events proceeding in a linear fashion through time, but rather, as a network of forces that interact in ways we do not always understand. As Dickason

explains, “Aboriginals see the world as a web of multi-dimensional interacting relationships that inevitably affect each other, rippling across both space and time” (2005, 131).

This epistemological distinction is reflected in the difference between noun-based European languages, with their emphasis on objectification and classification, and verb-based Native languages, with their emphasis on process, rendering simple translation between the two impossible (Spielmann, 1998, 239). Accordingly, for the Native person, notes Henderson,

...to see things as permanent is to be confused about everything: an alternative to that understanding is the need to create temporary harmonies through alliances and relationships among all forms and forces – this process is a never-ending source of wonder to the indigenous mind and to other forces who contribute to the harmony. (1993,9).

Given that Native epistemologies have been ignored, suppressed, or subverted in support of the colonial enterprise, the failure to admit, within the contemporary academic context, such differences in worldview, Henderson concludes, constitutes a form of domination that must be countered with a research methodology that has at its core an understanding and respect for this alternative way of perceiving reality (1993, 19).

It is precisely because one’s ontology tends to be assumed that articulating it is not easy. For Wilson, doing so proves to be a challenge:

It feels strange to me to be writing these ideas down. It is as though I am taking such a basic and fundamental thing and trying to explain it or make some big deal of it. I feel that any Indigenous person will read this and say to themselves, “Well, duh, isn’t that stating the obvious.” It seems so obvious and simple to me, but I wonder if it is the same for non-Indigenous people? (2008, 79)

For Augustine, the challenge faced by non-Natives in understanding the Mi'kmaq is a source of amusement: "I cannot help but laugh at how they struggle to understand us and how they argue among themselves academically about who we are" (2008b, 50). Acknowledging the difficulty of apprehending another's culturally distinct frames of reference, Geertz likens the process of a non-Native trying to understand the inner lives and perceptions of Native people to "grasping a proverb, catching an allusion, seeing a joke or reading a poem" (1987, 70).

Accordingly, Indigenous methodologies are characterized by their insistence on the need for researchers to not only acknowledge an alternative paradigm for understanding the world, but also to elicit knowledge in a manner that reflects the core values of that paradigm. While many scholars insist that such research be instigated by Indigenous people themselves, others see a place in Indigenous research for "allied others," non-Native individuals who appreciate the distinctiveness of Indigenous ontology and are willing to broaden their understanding through its exploration (Kaomea, 2004, 32; Mutua and Swadener, 2004, 4). Endorsing a critical epistemology that contests notions of objectivity and neutrality, Denzin and Lincoln define allied others as "fellow travelers of sorts, antipositivists, friendly insiders who wish to deconstruct from within the Western academy and its positivist epistemologies" (2008, 6). Indeed, as Wasson and Toelkon acknowledge, one advantage of this "questing outsider who, presumably alert and respectful of the possibilities of meaning, has not internalized or rationalized the cultural norms and 'obvious' assumptions," is that he or she might be in a position to pose questions that the Native insider might never consider (2001, 178).

Whether carried out by a Native or non-Native person, at the heart of Indigenous methodologies is respect. This respect is twofold, extending to both the Indigenous worldview

itself, and, more specifically, to the individuals willing to share their personal experience of that worldview with the researcher (Absolon, 2011, 65; Wilson, 2008, 77; Kovach, 2009b, 124).

Within an Indigenous methodology, the researcher functions as a collaborator, valuing the personal expressions of participants and being open to responding in a caring, empathetic manner (Collins, 1991, 216). As Jones and Jenkins point out, such a collaborative approach is based on “learning (about difference) *from* the Other, rather than learning *about* the Other” (2008, 471).

Doing so depends on a relationship that places a premium on listening carefully, and taking seriously what people have to say about their lives (Cruikshank, Smith, and Ned, 1991, 1). Indigenous methodologies prioritize the Native informant over the agenda of the researcher, who is encouraged to participate as an equal, rather than a leader, in the process of inquiry. Instead of conducting formalized interviews, researchers are encouraged to cultivate “interpersonally conversive working relationships” that lead towards dialogue and mutual understanding (Brill de Ramirez, 2007, 169). The emphasis in this process is on a conversation rather than a monologue elicited through a carefully constructed line of questioning. Researchers’ sincere engagement in dialogue, Cruikshank, Smith, and Ned, insist, can go a long way towards “reevaluating hegemonic concepts” and destabilizing what we perceive to be “commonsense categories”(1991, 154).

To summarize, Indigenous research methodologies directly address the mistake human beings, blinded by our own cultural assumptions, habitually make of confusing our perception with what is real. Schutz explains this as living our lives according to “the general thesis of reciprocal perspective,” in which we assume that “the world taken for granted by me is also taken for granted by you” (1967, 12). Rather than acknowledging that our perception of reality results from an interpretive process influenced by our individual and collective identities, we

make the mistake of assuming that our perception is universally shared by others. As Goulet concludes, “we inevitably live our lives as if the world existed as it is independently of our role in constituting it as it is” (1998, 258).

Articulating an ontology distinct from that of Eurocentric chroniclers of Native history, proponents of Indigenous methodologies echo historical narrative theorists in reminding us that we perceive both our present and our past from within a cultural framework that is not universally shared with others. A further parallel exists here within narratology, specifically A. Nünning’s concept of naturalization, in which a reader relies on culturally specific frames of reference as a means of determining the truthfulness of a text (1999b, 54). As the preceding discussion has established, scholars of historical narrative theory are aware of the extent to which cultural, sociopolitical, and historical factors influence historians’ interpretation of the past. These scholars emphasize, however, that a major obstacle to our understanding of history can be a lack of *awareness*, on the part of both readers *and* writers of history, that such frames of reference even exist. As Brownlie concludes, “Perhaps the most difficult challenge is the effort to expand our categories of what constitutes history, what constitutes a scholar, and even what constitutes reality” (2009, 37).

2.6 Conclusions

When viewed through the lens of narrative theory and narratology, historical narrative shares more with fiction than Aristotle would have us believe. Both possess a coherent narrative structure reflective of a linear perception of human temporality as having a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end. Both are united by an underlying theme or moral reinforced by their ending, an advanced knowledge of which functions to trigger engagement with the text. Both

present a hermeneutic challenge to the reader, an undertaking that necessitates an awareness of the individual, temporal, and cultural biases of both authors and readers themselves.

In its pursuit of a moral or absolute truth, written narrative within the Western tradition tends to emphasize objectivity and underplay the role of the narrator. Historical narrative theory and narratology challenge this assumption. Taken together, their most valuable contribution to the analysis of written history lies in their elucidation of the processes through which a reader actively participates in creating meaning from a plurality of diverse, and often conflicting, narrative perspectives. In their acknowledgement of the primacy of the narrator, Native oral history and Indigenous research methodologies complement this approach in their proposal of an alternative framework for the understanding of history, one that insists on respect both for all narrators willing to share their story and the distinct epistemology their narration reflects.

Considered thus, historical understanding emerges not as a static entity, but rather a dynamic process which expands to accommodate an ever-growing diversity of historical viewpoints that will invariably present themselves with the passage of time. It is an understanding that arises not from an acceptance of what is written in historical texts, but rather from an ongoing hermeneutic engagement with those texts, a process largely triggered by our awareness of the bias inherent in all forms of narrative. Through the inclusion in this process of the oral tradition, with its unique set of challenges, the researcher acknowledges a diversity of perspective that can function to open up the narrative to new forms of historical knowledge and even further hermeneutic possibilities. Approached in this manner, history can teach us – in addition to how people lived and thought in times that preceded our own – something even more fundamental about how we use the past to construct and reconstruct our vision of ourselves and the present in which we live.

Chapter 3 -

European Writing about Native People in Newfoundland Prior to Howley and Speck

Early historical writing by Europeans about Native people in Newfoundland exemplifies many of the narrative principles outlined by historical narrative theory and narratology.

Considered within this framework, the elements of narrative structure – selection, omission, the creation of causal linkages between what are perceived to be historical events, varying degrees of reliability on the part of narrators, particularly those who are homodiegetic – work together to inform both the focus of that written history and the distinct narratorial perspective from which it is told.

Approached within this theoretical framework, this early historical writing serves to reveal the extent to which the reader's perception of a historical subject can be shaped as much by the narrator as by the subject matter described, despite any overt or implied claims to the contrary. The point is not that these sources are without historical value, but rather that they be seen for what they are: As accounts of various individuals' understanding of what has taken place, they provide us with insight into the past that we would not otherwise have.

Acknowledging their diversity, historical narrative theory and narratology encourage us to approach these texts not as accounts of absolute truth, but rather as pieces of a much larger puzzle that better approximates the true complexity of history.

Accordingly, any historical analysis of early contact between Europeans and Native North Americans must first acknowledge the tremendous number of variables posed by the limitations of written sources. With respect to incidents of earliest contact, often these records simply do not exist. As Martijn points out, this is largely the case with European transactions

involving Native people in eastern Canada into the 1560s. As an example, he cites the lack of reference to the significant “*portage trade*” carried out by sailors and ship’s officers, who were allowed free transport of their personal belongings, including a moderate number of furs which they could trade to supplement their income (Martijn, 2003, 62).³²

Pervading the written historical narrative is the issue of stereotyping that arises from the various factors shaping narratorial bias. Trigger (1986) underscores this point in his comprehensive review of Canadian historical writing, which examines the extent to which Native peoples have been stereotyped by their European chroniclers, and how that stereotyping sometimes reveals as much about the latter’s historical and ideological context as it does about the Indigenous subject.³³ As Upton (1979) points out, the narratorial perspective of these writers was further influenced by their perception of the audience for which they were writing, a perception which serves to reinforce Eurocentric interpretations of Native behaviour. In reference to the writing of Moses H. Perley, who described the Indian as “an infant requiring a guardian,” Upton concludes, “But, of course, Perley was writing for other white men, not for Indians” (1979, 106).

Across the spectrum, scholars agree that ubiquity of bias in historical writing has undeniably shaped our understanding of Native peoples in a contemporary context. Further complicating the historical analysis is the fact that a distinctly Eurocentric bias *continues* to shape the narrative to varying degrees, even in the case of historians who are aware of its influence. This phenomenon is often signaled by the articulation of fundamental assumptions about Native people in relation to Europeans that have persisted since the earliest writing about them. In his use of the term “materially dominant European,” for example, Bailey reiterates a

³² For a discussion of the portage trade in the early modern North Atlantic, see Pope (1995).

³³ For a discussion of the influence of Montaigne’s concept of “le bon sauvage” on 18th-century philosophers such as Rousseau, Voltaire, and Diderot, see Bailey (1969, 25-26, 124).

recurrent assumption about Native material and technological inferiority (1969, 186). In his summary of the “remarkable” survival of New Brunswick’s Native people in 1867, when the Government of Canada assumed control of Indian affairs, Upton suggests a view of Native people that implies their dependence on Europeans: “Completely on their own, they had been totally neglected for years...” (1979, 112). As Trigger concludes: “In spite of the progress that has been made so far, there are strong reasons to believe that entrenched European stereotypes continue to distort our understanding of native peoples and their history” (1986, 342).

Maintaining that objectivity is a myth of modernism, Given acknowledges the challenges posed to the historian interested in reconstructions of the perspectives of *all* parties involved in a historical event. The situation is exacerbated with non-literate cultures, and even more so in situations in which few individuals from within that culture have been called upon to verify existing accounts:

These problems of reconstruction are magnified incalculably when our sole source of information about past cross-cultural interactions consists in accounts written from one point of view. This latter difficulty is compounded when the societies in question were in conflict and when we are especially interested in understanding the attitudes and actions of the vanquished. (Given, 1994, 6)

Echoing Trigger, Given reiterates the dictum that history is written by the victors: “A non-literate, subjugated people may be historically recreated by the victors in ways that are consistent with the latter’s need to justify their past and present actions” (1994, 6).

While such considerations are critical to the analysis of historical narrative in general, they are perhaps particularly relevant in the case of Beothuk written history prior to the 20th century, which relates – from the distinct perspective of Europeans – the narrative of a Native

people who are understood to no longer exist. Through an overview of early European writing about Native people in Newfoundland, this chapter explores the extent to which this perspective is characterized by consistent patterns of stereotyping and a narrative form that predicts and subsequently assumes Beothuk demise.

3.1 The Norse Sagas

As is characteristic of European writing about Native peoples during the contact period, from the earliest accounts, Native people in Newfoundland are defined in opposition to the Europeans writing about them. Typically, the narrative focuses on conflict and how the two groups differ, rather than on what they might have in common. The first known European accounts of Native people in Newfoundland, the Norse (or Viking) sagas, oral traditions first written down in the 13th and 14th centuries, describe the interaction between Norse explorers and the *Skraelings* they encountered in Newfoundland and Labrador.³⁴ The two most relevant accounts in English are found in translations by Jones: *The Greenlander's Saga* in *The Norse Atlantic Saga* (1986), and *Eirik the Red*, in *Eirik the Red and Other Icelandic Sagas* (1999).

As a starting point for European writing about Native North Americans, the Norse sagas point to a number of fundamental questions within narrative theory and narratology. As retrospective literary constructs of oral traditions regarding ostensibly historical events, the sagas recall the discussion within both narrative theory and oral history scholarship about the narrator's

³⁴ Notes Sutherland, "Archaeological evidence indicates that the *skraeling* of Vinland, as well as those whom the Norse encountered and fought in Markland, must have been Indians and probably ancestors of the Newfoundland Beothuk and the Labrador Innu" (2000, 239). With regards to the identity of the people described by the Norse as "skraelings," Holly also acknowledges the possibility that "they were the ancestors of the Beothuk or nearby Labrador Indians" (2000, 80).

role in imparting understanding, as well as the factual truth, of historical events.³⁵ In their dual literary and historical functions, they evoke Aristotle's distinction between fiction and history, and defy strict categorization as either. Conceding that their construction is fictional, Jones nonetheless concludes that, in some cases at least, the value of the sagas is historical:

In brief, we no longer assume the truth of a saga. Rather we must ask ourselves the question: Is this history, though freely and perhaps not impartially presented, or is it a work of the imagination based upon oral and written sources? We get one kind of answer for the sagas of Hrafnkel and Gunnlaug, quite another for that of Eirik the Red. For there, the more hostilely the records are sifted and probed, the more securely the voyages of Eirik, Leif, and Karlsefni are seen to belong to European and American history. (1999, xiii)

Conceding that their literary form has given rise to considerable debate regarding their historical accuracy, McGhee likewise describes the sagas as constituting "historical evidence of the early Norse explorations of the North American coast" (1984, 4).

Most scholars accept that *Eirik the Red* and *The Greenlanders' Saga* are based on the early contact experiences of the Norse with Native North Americans. Assuming that such contact took place, in their re-appraisal of Palaeo-Eskimo traditions of Newfoundland and Labrador, Tuck and Fitzhugh cite Ingstad (1977) and Fitzhugh's (1980) work concerning the finding of a Late Dorset lamp in the l'Anse aux Meadows smithy to suggest the existence of "a complex series of contacts and influences between cultures of the A.D. 1000-1300 period" (1986, 166). As McGhee (1984) summarizes, archaeological and historical findings have effectively identified the Helluland, Markland and Vinland of the sagas as being the east coast of

³⁵ Notes Danto, "Knowledge entails that truth of what is known, whereas understanding entails nothing so far as concerns truth or falsity of what is understood. Understanding, however it is achieved, gives us entry into the world of another in the sense that it opens up the beliefs of others when these define that world" (1985, 340).

Baffin Island, the coast of central Labrador, and Newfoundland, respectively.³⁶ Wallace interprets Vinland as including the coastal areas of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, with L'Anse aux Meadows serving as "the gateway to Vinland and a base camp for its exploration" (1997, 39).

With regards to the latter, the relevant sections of the sagas detail two versions of the adventures of Eirik the Red, his adult children, and their significant others as they voyage from Greenland to Vinland, where they meet and interact with the Native inhabitants. *The Greenlander's Saga* begins with Eirik the Red, having committed a series of murders, outlawed and leaving Iceland for the western wilderness. Eirik settles in Greenland and has three sons, Leif, Thorvald, Thorstein, and a daughter Freydis, who marries a man named Thorvard. Leif sets out from Greenland on an expedition on which he names Helluland, or Flatstone Land, Markland or Wood Land, before encountering a third land rich in salmon and fodder for their cattle. In this land, one of their party, Tyrkir the German, disappears for a short while, only to return with the news that he has found grapes. Accordingly, the land is named Vinland, or Wineland.

On a subsequent voyage to Vinland, Leif is accompanied by his brother Thorvald, who on an expedition to the north coast murders eight Native men they find sleeping on the beach under skin boats. One of these Skraelings, as the Norse name them, manages to escape and returns the following day with a larger group who engage them in a battle in which Thorvald is killed by an arrow. Feeling compelled to return to Vinland for his brother's body, Thorstein attempts a voyage with 25 men and his wife Gudrid, "a woman of handsome appearance, clever, and very good at getting on with strangers," but rough seas prevent them from leaving Greenland, and Thorstein dies of illness (1986,154).

³⁶ McGhee's discussion of the geographical location of the sagas' North American destinations cites H. Ingstaad (1969), Jones (1982), Meldgaard (1961), and Munn (1992).

Parts VI and VII of *The Greenlander's Saga* are the most relevant with regards to Newfoundland. Part VI begins with the arrival in Greenland of Thorfinn Karlsefni, who with Leif's permission marries the widowed Gudrid and heads out to Vinland, where he and his crew disembark and enjoy the bounty of the land. It is not long before they encounter the Skraelings with their "grey furs and sables and skins of all kinds" who, frightened by the bawling of the Norse cattle, run off towards Karlsefni's guarded house (1986, 157). When they are denied entry, the Natives untie their bales and offer their wares for trade. Despite the language barrier, the Natives make it clear they are looking for weapons. Ultimately, however, they settle on trading for milk. The following spring they return in greater numbers, and one of the Natives is killed for trying to steal a weapon, with the others running away "as fast as they could, leaving their clothes and their goods behind them" (1986, 158). The Natives return a third time, and a battle ensues in which many of them are killed. Karlsefni takes particular notice of one man he assumes to be their chief who, on picking up a Norse axe and killing his own comrade with it, flings it out into the water before fleeing into the forest. The following spring, Karlsefni and his crew return to Greenland laden with vines, grapes and furs from their journey.

In part VII of *The Greenlander's Saga*, it is Freydis who convinces the Norwegian brothers Helgi and Finnbogi to join her on a profit-sharing expedition to Vinland. On their arrival, Freydis denies the two Norwegians entry to her brother Leif's house, beginning a feud that culminates in a surprise attack on the Norwegians and their crew, in which Freydis assists in the killing, with an axe, of every man and woman among them. Despite her attempts to conceal their misdeeds, when Freydis and Thorvald return to Greenland with the Norwegians' valuable ship and cargo, her brother Leif has three of their crew tortured, "till they confessed to the whole thing together, and their stories tallied" (1986, 161). The saga concludes with Freydis and

Thorvald falling into disrepute, while Gudrid and Karlsefni produce an illustrious line of offspring – including their son Snorri, born in Vinland, and his direct descendant, Hauk Erlendsson, author of the *Hauk's Book* version of *Eirik the Red's Saga* – before Karlsefni dies, leaving Gudrid to become a nun and recluse.³⁷

In *Eirik the Red*, both Eirik and his father Thorvald leave Norway for Iceland and subsequently discover Greenland. When a famine strikes Greenland, they turn for guidance to the prophetess Little Sibyl, with whom Gudrid is reluctant to cooperate on account of the heathen nature of her practice.³⁸ In keeping with Little Sybil's optimistic prophecy for her life, Gudrid marries Thorstein Eriksson, but a sickness brings about his unnatural death and that of Sigrid, who had foreseen them both. When Thorfinn Karlsefni arrives from the north of Iceland, he befriends Eirik the Red and marries Gudrid with his blessing.

The voyage to Vinland the Good is undertaken by Karlsefni along with a crew that includes Eirik's son Thorval, his daughter Freydis, and her husband Thorvard. Sailing southwards, they discover and name Helluland and Markland. When they reach a cape with sandy beaches, Karlsefni puts ashore two Scots, who return three days later with a bunch of grapes in one hand and wild wheat in the other. Proceeding to a place they call Straumsfjord, where "the nature of the land was choice," they unload their animals and supplies and begin to settle in (1999, 148).

Venturing further south, Karlsefni and his crew come across "a multitude of skin-canoes" from which poles are being waved in a "sunwise" direction (1999, 150). Interpreting this as a sign of peace, the Norse hold a white shield in their direction, at which point the Natives, described in the saga as "their visitors," rowed towards them and came ashore: "They were dark,

³⁷ As Wallace points out, the fact that Erlendsson was a direct descendant of Karlsefni and Gudrid "may have effected how their roles were presented" in his *Hauk's Book* version of *Eirik the Red's Saga* (2000, 225).

³⁸ For a narrative description of Little Sybil that is particularly detailed and vivid, see Jones (1999, 134).

ugly men who wore their hair in an unpleasant fashion. They had big eyes and were broad in the cheeks. They stayed there for a while, astonished at what they found, and afterwards rowed off south towards the headlands” (1999, 151).

After spending the winter, the following spring another fleet of skin canoes arrives with waving poles. When Karlsefni and his men raise their shields, the two groups come together and begin trading:

Most of all these people wanted to buy red cloth, in return for which they had furs to offer and grey skins. They also wanted to buy swords and spears, but this Karlsefni and Snorri would not allow. Their trading continued thus for a while, when the cloth began to run short for Karlsefni and his men; they then cut it up into such small pieces that they were no wider than a finger-breadth, but the Skraelings even so gave just as much for it as before, or indeed more. (1999, 151)

Their trading session is interrupted by the appearance of one of Karlsefni’s bulls bellowing out of the forest, frightening the Natives away in their boats.

Three weeks later, the Natives return. This time, however, they are yelling aloud and waving their poles in an “anti-sunwise” direction. Interpreting this as an indication of hostility, Karlsefni and his men take up their red shields in defense. A battle ensues in which the Natives, with their superior numbers, war slings, and what appears to be a catapult, drive the Norse to retreat. It is at this point that a pregnant Freydis emerges to disparage them: ““Why are you running from wretches like these’ she cried. ‘Such gallant lads as you, I thought you would have knocked them on the head like cattle. Why, if I had a weapon, I think I could put up a better fight than any of you!’” (1999, 152). When the Natives attack, Freydis drives them off with a dead compatriot’s sword: “The Skraelings were making for her. She pulled out her breasts from

under her clothes and slapped the naked sword on them, at which the Skraelings took fright, and ran off to their boats and rowed away” (1999,153). Puzzled by the severity of the attack, Karlsefni’s men witness one of the Natives pick up a Norse axe and try it on a tree, with positive results. When the axe breaks on contact with a stone, however, the Native man throws it down.

Defeated, the Norse decide to leave, but not before wreaking further havoc on Native people they encounter along the way:

It now seemed plain to Karlsefni and his men that though the quality of the land was admirable, there would always be fear and strife dogging them there on account of those who already inhabited it. So they made ready to leave, setting their hearts on their own country, and sailed north along the land and found five Skraelings in fur doublets asleep near the sea, who had with them wooden containers in which was beast’s marrow mixed with blood. Karlsefni and the others felt sure that these men would have been sent from that country, so they killed them. (1999, 154)

Sailing north, Karlsefni and his crew next encounter what they describe as a uniped, which hops down the river-bank and shoots an arrow into the “small guts” of the man at the rudder of their boat, Thorvald, Eirik the Red’s son. Following a dispute arising from the scarcity of women, the Norse leave Straumsfjord after their third winter, with Karlsefni’s son Snorri now at the age of three.

Passing Markland on their return voyage, Karlsefni’s crew encounters a group of five Natives, including a man, two women, and two children. The two boys they succeed in catching and bringing with them to their homeland, where they subsequently learn from them about their people.³⁹ The adults of the Native party, however, prove more elusive: “but the others escaped

³⁹ “These two boys they kept with them, taught them their language, and had them baptized. They said that their mother’s name was Vethildi and their father’s Ovaegi. They said that kings ruled over the Skraelings, and that one

and sank down into the ground” (1999, 155). The Norse arrive safely back in Greenland, and after spending the winter with Eirik the Red, Karlsefni and Gudrid return to Iceland where they live happily ever after.

Characterized by poetic, detailed description and scenes of gripping human conflict and drama, the Norse sagas make for compelling reading. While they engage us as fiction, as historical accounts the Norse sagas illustrate the limitations imposed by their narrative structure. Invoking Danto’s concept of the narrative sentence, many details of the text indicate that the narratorial perspective is influenced by the fact that the oral sagas were first written down at least two centuries after the events they purport to describe, when Iceland had undergone conversion to Christianity. Both sagas are marked by a tension between the pagan beliefs of the Norse and the teachings of an emerging Christianity in Iceland. “The people in Greenland were heathen at this time,” announces the narrator of *The Greenlanders’ Saga* (1986, 146). In a similar vein, in *Eirik the Red*, the “heathendom” of pagan prophecy causes no small amount of consternation for those more inclined to Christianity, such as Gudrid and Thjorbjorn (1999, 137). Likewise, Gudrid expresses reluctance to chant the *Vardlokur* or Spirit Locks for Little Sybil, the prophetess, on grounds that she is a Christian woman. Through such overt expression of Christian values, the sagas illustrate how perspective can shape the historical narrative in ways that do not accurately reflect the historical reality being described.

Another element of the sagas that draws attention to the subjectivity of the narratorial perspective is the considerable degree of variation that exists between the two accounts. The preceding summary of the major plot elements of each saga illustrates the extent to which the

of them was called Avaldamon and the other Avaldidida. There were no houses there, they said; the people lived in caves or holes. A country lay on the other side, they said, opposite their own land, where lived men who dressed in white clothes and carried poles, and were festooned with streamers, and whooped loudly. They concluded that this must be Hvitramannaland or Ireland the Great” (1999, 156).

narrative is shaped by subjective selection of what the narrator deems to be significant events. Given the variations between these accounts, an examination of some of the fundamental similarities between them suggests common historical ground. While the details, individuals concerned, and even the numbers of voyages differ, in both sagas it is Eirik's children who venture off to Vinland and encounter the Native people there. They discover a series of new lands which they name Helluland (Flatland), Markland (Woodland), and Vinland (Wineland), the latter of which derives its name from grapes brought back to the ship by individuals venturing into the interior.

Both sagas describe an account of early contact with Native people that is relatively friendly and involves trade, a practice instigated by the Natives with a protocol understood by the Norse. In the hostilities that ensue, more common details emerge. In both sagas, the Natives are frightened by presence of the Norse livestock, and there is one individual among them who inspects and tries out a Norse axe before throwing it away. Though the particulars vary between accounts, Eirik the Red's son Thorvald is killed by Natives, and Snorri is born in Vinland to Gudrid and Karlsefni. Both versions conclude with the Norse abandoning their plans of settling in Vinland as a consequence of the hostilities with the Native people there.

With respect to what is shared between the two accounts in terms of early contact between the two peoples, in both cases the Native people express a desire to obtain Norse weapons through trade, which the Norse refuse to accommodate. Yet when a Native individual comes across a Norse axe, although he appears at first impressed by its qualities, he ultimately discards it. In the end, with the possible exception of the scene describing an expectant Freydis vanquishing the Natives by beating a sword across her bare breasts, in terms of weaponry, the two sides appear to be reasonably well matched, with fatalities suffered by both. Significantly

for the Norse, it is the Natives' skill at archery that brings about the death of Thorvald, Eirik's son. Given the sequence of events narrated in both versions, McGhee's conclusion – that it was their fear of the Natives' fighting abilities that largely contributed to the ultimate decision of the Norse to leave – appears logical (1984, 23).

As the earliest known European accounts of Native North Americans, the sagas provide indications of a highly subjective narratorial perspective characteristic of European writing about the contact period, one that focuses pejoratively on the ways in which Native people differ from those writing about them. Named by the Norse as "Skraelings," one group of Native people are described as "dark, ugly men who wore their hair in an unpleasant fashion" (1999, 151). In her unlikely attack on their forces, Freydis describes them as "wretches" to be knocked on the head "like cattle" (1999, 152). When denied Norse weaponry, they attempt to steal it. In conflict, they display the uncanny ability to appear out of nowhere, and vanish into thin air. When they run away, as in the case of the Native man caught stealing weaponry from Karlsefni's house, they do so "leaving their clothes and their goods behind them" (1986, 158.)

It must be acknowledged that, rather than referring to the Beothuk, the Norse sagas may well be referencing the Dorset and ancestors of the Innu and Mi'kmaq. Furthermore, many of the themes expressed in the sagas, such as the physical unattractiveness of Native people and their propensity for theft, reappear in subsequent European writing about all Native people. Other themes which first appear in written form in the sagas, however, come to be more specific to the Beothuk of Newfoundland: the development of a trading relationship with Europeans that is initially beneficial to both parties, but deteriorates into violence when relations between them begin to sour; the Beothuk fascination with but ultimate rejection of European weaponry; and their ability to appear and disappear at will, in the latter case, often doing so completely naked.

3.2 Early Explorers' Accounts

Many of these themes reappear in early explorers' accounts of Native people in Newfoundland from the 15th and 16th centuries. Often vague and contradictory by nature, these accounts tend to contain at least as much information about the writers and their distinct narratorial perspectives as they do about their Native subjects. Read with an awareness of this limitation, these accounts are valuable in providing us with a glimpse of how Europeans and Native people in Newfoundland began to interact, and how that interaction informed the former's representation of the latter.

In the little documentation that does exist from the early contact period, in almost all cases, early Native-European interaction involved a series of encounters characterized by what proved to be a well founded apprehension on the part of the Native people of kidnapping and violence (Pastore 1994, 33; Kennedy 2009, 31). One example is an account concerning the abduction from Newfoundland of three Native men who are brought back to England:

In the 14th year of the king [1498] however, three men were brought from the Newfoundland-Island, who were clothed in the skins of beasts, did eat raw flesh, and spoke a language which no man could understand; their demeanour being more like that of brute beasts than men. They were kept by the king for some considerable time; and I saw two of them about two years afterwards in the palace of Westminster, habited like Englishmen, and not to be distinguished from natives of England, till I was told who they were; but as for their speech, I did not hear either of them utter a word. (in Kerr, 1824, 10)⁴⁰

⁴⁰ While Hakluyt claims that the three were brought from Newfoundland to England by Sebastian Cabot, as Gilbert and Axtell note, it is impossible to determine with any certainty the exact geographical origin of the captives, and more likely that they were transported by John Amayne of Bristol (Hakluyt, 1965, 511; Gilbert, 2011, 28-29; Axtell, 1988, 149-50).

Another early description of Native people from the region is found in Alberto Cantino's vivid account of a party of captives brought to Lisbon for display in 1501:

I have seen, touched, and examined these people, and beginning with their stature, declare that they are somewhat taller than our average, with members corresponding and well-formed. The hair of the men is long, just as we wear ours, and they wear it in curls, and have their faces marked with great signs, and these signs are like those of the [East] Indians. Their eyes are greenish and when they look at one, this gives an air of great boldness to their whole countenance. Their speech is unintelligible, but nevertheless is not harsh but rather human. Their manners and gestures are most gentle; they laugh considerably and manifest the greatest pleasure. So much for the men. The women have small breasts and most beautiful bodies and rather pleasant faces. The colour of these women may be said to be more white than otherwise, but the men are considerably darker. (1501, in Hoffman, 1961, 29)

While, as Gilbert (2011) notes, the precise number and geographical origins of this group of captives remain open to interpretation, the account nonetheless represents a distinctly European narratorial perspective on the Native other: Its description of these “brute beasts” who speak a language “not harsh but rather human” characteristically focuses on what distinguishes the physical, cultural, and linguistic traits of these people from those writing about them.⁴¹ A 1501 account by Pietro Pasqualigo, Venetian ambassador to Portugal, is similar in this regard:

These resemble gypsies in colour, features, stature and aspect ; are clothed in the skins of various animals, but chiefly of otters. In summer they turn the hair outside and in winter the opposite way. And these skins are not sewn together in any way nor tanned, but just

⁴¹ As Gilbert summarizes in his review of the correspondence around Corte Real's voyages, there is no way of determining with any accuracy the exact number of captives or where they originated, with Hoffman identifying them as Beothuk, Howley as Inuit, and Biggar as Innu-Montagnais (Gilbert, 2011, 27).

as they are taken from the animals; they wear them over their shoulders and arms. And their privy parts are fastened with cords made of very strong sinews of fish, so that they look like wild men. They are very shy and gentle, but well formed in arms and legs and shoulders beyond description. They have their faces marked like those of the Indians, some with six, some with eight, some with less marks. They speak, but are not understood by anyone, though I believe that they have been spoken to in every possible language. (1501, in Williamson, 1929, 41)

Another contemporaneous reference exists in two descriptions of seven Native people brought back from Atlantic Canada in 1509 by Thomas Aubert of Dieppe. The first account is a translation from Estienne's 1512 Latin original:

Seven savage men have been brought from that land, which is called Terre-Neuve, along with their boat, their clothing, and their arms. They are the color of soot, have very large lips, and have some tattooing.... Their hair is black and thick like a horse's mane.

During the whole of their life they never have any beard or other hairy growth on their bodies except for the head and eye-brows. They wear a girdle in which is a little pouch to cover their private parts. They form their words with their lips. (1512, in Quinn, 1979a, 157)

The second account, also by Estienne and attributed to Pietro Bembo, describes a small "wicker" boat picked up by a French ship "making its way in the Ocean not far from England":

...in which were seven men, in height mediocre, in complexion darkish, in aspect broad and open and marked with a violet coloured cicatrice. These men were dressed in the skin of fish that were variously marked, and they bore diadems of painted straw, with

seven ear-like objects woven on them. They ate raw meat, and blood they drank as we do wine. Their speech was incomprehensible. (1551, in Quinn, 1979a, 157)

Like the Norse sagas, what is revealing about these early narrative accounts is what is common among them. Again, the Indigenous other is objectified through a description that clearly focuses on what is perceived as different or alien from the narrator's perspective. Consistently, the emphasis is on the captives' physical appearance, their size, the darkness of their complexions. Their perceived primitiveness is underscored through association with the bestial in what they eat, how they clothe themselves, and even the manner in which they wear their hair. Their customs are foreign, their language incomprehensible to the European ear.

Many of these elements persist in the Florentine Giovanni da Verrazzano's account of his 1524 voyage to North America in the service of Francis I of France, in which he describes a number of encounters with Native people likely in New England.⁴² In several accounts, the Native people they meet along the coast express a keenness to trade. Repeatedly, they are described in a state of "wonderment" at the sight of the ship manned by fair skinned Europeans (1524, in Quinn, 1979a, 281, 284). One sailor who is washed ashore they regard with what is interpreted as "gestures of great admiration, looking at the whiteness of his flesh and examining him from head to foot" (1524, in Quinn, 1979a, 283). Clothed in a combination of animal skins and grasses, again the Natives are uniformly described as being darker than Europeans, with the precise hue of their complexion a central feature of each description. In one encounter, they attempt to take a beautiful young woman back with them to France, but are foiled by her resistance and have to settle for a boy. Further north, the party encounters a group of Natives "full of crudity and vices...and so barbarous that we could never make any communication with

⁴² Taking issue with Marshall's identification of these Native people Verrazzano encounters in Cape Breton as Mi'kmaq, Martijn supports the interpretation that they are Penobscot (Marshall, 1996, 17; Martijn, 1996, 119).

them” (1524, in Quinn, 1979a, 287). Dressed in animal skins, these Natives initiate trade from a rocky shoreline, where the rough breakers keep the French at a distance in a small boat. Barter goods pass back and forth via a rope, with the Natives interested only in acquiring sharp metal tools. The transaction completed, they “made all the signs of scorn and shame that any brute creature would make” which in a footnote Verrazzano elaborates as “such as showing their buttocks and laughing” (1524, in Quinn, 1979a, 287, n.19).

Hoffman’s English translation of Crignon’s 1539 *Treatise of a Great French Sea Captain from Dieppe* expresses a similar impression of the people encountered by Europeans in Newfoundland:

Between Capo di Ras and Capo de Brettoni live a cruel and austere people, with whom it is impossible to deal or to converse. They are of large stature, dressed in the skins of seals and other savage animals tied together, and are marked by certain lines made by applying fire to their faces, and are as if striped with a color between black and brown. With respect to the face and neck they are much like the inhabitants of our Barbary. Their hair is long, like that of women, and is gathered on the top of their heads like the tail of a horse. Their weapons consist of bows, which they know how to shoot very well; their arrows are tipped with black stones and fish bones. (1539, in Hoffman, 1961, 170)⁴³

During his 1534 voyage to the Strait of Belle Isle and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Jacques Cartier met a group of Native people in Blanc Sablon on the Labrador coast. Here he finds what he perceives to be one of the best harbours in the world and proceeds to name it Port Jacques Cartier. His description of the land and its people, however, is decidedly less effusive:

⁴³ Hoffman makes a strong argument for the identity of the “great French sea captain from Dieppe” as Jean Parmentier, and the author of the account as Pierre Crignon (1961, 169).

In fine I am rather inclined to believe that this is the land God gave to Cain. There are people on this coast whose bodies are well formed but they are wild and savage folk. They wear their hair tied up on the top of their heads like a handful of twisted hay, with a nail or something of the sort passed through the middle and into it they weave a few bird's feathers. They clothe themselves with the furs of animals, both men as well as the women; but the women are wrapped up more closely and snugly in their furs; and have a belt about their waists. They paint themselves with certain tan colours. They have canoes made of birch-bark in which they go about, and from which they catch many seals. (1534, in [Biggar] and Cook, 1993, 10)

Another contemporaneous French reference to Native people in Newfoundland is found in a baptismal listing of “ung suavaige des parties de la Terre neuuffve” on September 17, 1553, from the communal archives of St. Malo (in Biggar, 1930, 524-525).

In 1536, a Master Richard Hore of London led a party of “divers other Gentlemen” to Newfoundland and Cape Breton. As told in Hakluyt's 1589 *Principall Navigations*, after spending days anchored off Newfoundland, one of their party “spied a boat with Savages of those partes, rowing down the bay towards them” (1589, in Quinn, 1979a, 207).⁴⁴ The Englishman promptly summoned the others of his party:

...he called to such as were under hatches, and willed them to come up if they would see the naturall people of the Countrey, that they had so long and so much desired to see: Whereupon they came up and tooke viewe of the Savages rowing toward them and their shippe, and upon the viewe they manned out a shipboate to meete them and to take them. But they spying our shipboate making towards them, returned with maine force and fled

⁴⁴ Quinn includes the following footnote: ““They beheld the Savages at Newfound land’ [but were they at Newfoundland or Labrador?]” (1979a, 207, n.2).

into an Island that laye up on the bay or river there, and our men pursued them into the Island, and the Savages fledde and escaped: But our men founde a fire, and the side of a beare on a wooden spit left at the same by the Savages that were fledde. (1589, in Quinn, 1979a, 207)

At the Natives' site, the party also discovers a leather boot and a warm mitten.⁴⁵

Thwarted in their attempt “to meete them and to take” the Native people, the English promptly treat themselves to their belongings: “And these carried with them, they turned to their shippe, not finding the Savages” (1589, in Quinn, 1979a, 208). A further interesting but often overlooked detail of this narrative account, as Blake points out, is the subsequent act of cannibalism that takes place among the English party (1888, 902-903). Involving not the Native people they came to see, but rather the English gentry who had come in pursuit of them, this account constitutes the first documented act of cannibalism on the island of Newfoundland.⁴⁶ While Quinn's preface to the “confusing story” of Hore's voyage examines the logistics through which the party eventually returned to England “by piratically seizing a French ship,” it makes no mention of the cannibalism described in the account (Quinn, 1979a, 206). As Danto's discussion of Ranke's concept of objectivity reminds us, such omission is a common among historical narrators, whose accounts invariably include only what they perceive to be significant.

Towards the middle of the 16th century, a number of accounts of particularly questionable authenticity begin to emerge regarding Newfoundland's Native people, raising the issue of

⁴⁵ When asked if the description of “a boot, garnished on the calf as it were with raw silk,” could suggest traces of an early trade with Europeans, Marshall thinks not: “Who knows? Here we go again. It's even vaguer and less likely than Cull. This is so early and on the cuff, as if it were. Maybe they stole a boot. Maybe someone lost one.... It doesn't prove anything. Even if an individual had traded with them, I'm reluctant to talk about trade with the Beothuk as having been in place on any sort of scale” (pers. comm., Feb 8, 2004).

⁴⁶ Quinn cites the account as follows: “But such was the famine that increased among them from day to day... the fellowe killed his mate while hee stouped to take up a roote for his reliefe, and cutting out pieces of his body whome hee had murdered, broiled the same on the coles and greedily devoured them.” When discovered and confronted with the act, the guilty party retorts, “If thou wouldest needs knowe, the broiled meate that I had, was a piece of such a mans buttock” (1589, in 1979a, 208).

reliability in historical narration. In his account of the 1542-43 voyage of Jean-François de la Rocque de Roberval, Jean Alphonse, a French sea captain originally from the port of Saintonge, wrote of the Natives they encountered in Newfoundland: “The people are large & somewhat dark. They have no more God than beasts, & are evil folk. On this coast are many islands & little islets. The people are named *Tabios*. They live on fish, flesh, & fruits of trees” (1559, in Ganong, 1934, 274).⁴⁷ Recounting a 1545-1547 journey to Newfoundland, the Frenchman Jehan Mallart describes the Natives as tall people who ate raw meat:

In Teree Neufue from north to south there are men of fine bodies and arms and of high stature; fight with the black bestial men who have no faith and believe in nothing; they live on fruits, fish, meat, which they do not cook; have dogs. (c. 1545-47, in Quinn, 1981, 32-33)⁴⁸

As Martijn (1996) observes, a French writer and bookseller who lived in Paris from 1540-1552, Mallart clearly borrowed many of his details about Native North Americans from de Saintonge.

Another 16th century source who raises the question of narratorial reliability is the Frenchman André Thevet. A blurring of the lines between homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narration is characteristic of Thevet’s writing about Native peoples: Despite having written about the inability of any writer to describe foreign countries without having visited them himself, Thevet does precisely that, gleaning most of his information about Native North

⁴⁷ With regards to the native people of Cape Breton, Alphonse writes “Formerly the Portuguese sought to settle the land which lies the lowest, but the natives of the country put an end to the attempt, & killed all those who came there” (1559, in Ganong, 1934, 275). Upton describes de Saintonge as unique in using the term “*Tabios*” to describe the Natives of Newfoundland (1977, 136). Martijn suggests that the similar term “*Tabyos*,” used by Mallart in a rhymed verse, was probably borrowed from de Saintonge (1996, 119). It is on the basis of the author’s familiarity with the harbours of Newfoundland that Marshall concedes de Saintonge’s account “should be given some weight” (1996, 20).

⁴⁸ The original French cited by Quinn is as follows: “Au nort et su les gens de corps et bracz/ Ilz sond fort grandz et tirent sur le noir/ Gens bestiaux qui nont foy ny espoir/ En reins qui soit.../Ces gens icy ont des fruitz qui produisent/Tant seulement leur vie et de poissons/ De chair aussy sans en faire cuyssons/Ansy quung chien lis vivent en la sorte” (c.1545-47, in Quinn, 1981, 33). Taking issue with Quinn’s (1981) translation of Mallart’s phrase “ainsy quung chien ilz vivent en la sorte” as suggesting the Natives kept dogs, Martijn interprets it as meaning that the Natives lived like dogs, through their practice of eating raw meat (1996, 119).

Americans from interviews with explorers, pilots, fishermen and Native captives who had been brought back to France.⁴⁹ A glance at the Table of Contents of Thevet's *The new found vvorlde, or Antarctike* outlining events following what he terms his "aryual to the Indians of America" provides an overview of his interest in and impression of Native people: "Against the opinion of those that thynck the wylde men to be heary...How these barbarous and wild men put their ennimies to death they haue taken in the warres and howe they eate them...Howe these wilde men couet greatly to reuenge their harmes and injuries." The "lande of Canada, before named Baccalos" Thevet describes as "inhabited with many people of an indifferent gret stature, very malicious" (Thevet, 1568, 123). For someone who never encountered them in person, Thevet's description of the Native people of Newfoundland is particularly vivid:

This Countrey of New found land is inhabited with barbarous men, being clothed in wilde beastes skinnes, as are those of *Canada*: this people is very frowarde and untractable, as our men can well testifie that goe thither every yeare a fishing. They that dwel by the Sea, live with little kinde of other meate than fishe, which they take in the sea, whereof they take a great multitude, chiefly Sea Wolves, of which they eate the fleshe, which is very good. With the fat of this fish, they make a certain Oyle, that after it is come to his perfection, hat a redde colour, which they drink at their tables as we do wine or beere. (Thevet, 1568, 134)

Thevet's account is followed by the observation that the Native people "are brutal, except by the sea; have been but are not now cannibals" (1557, in Quinn, 1981, 34).⁵⁰

⁴⁹Thevet prefaces his *The New found vvorlde, or Antarctike...* with "An Admonition to the Reader," which begins with the following warning: "Doubt not, gentle Reader, but that the description of this present historie wil make thee to wonder, as well because of the varietie of things that herein thou mayst Reade, as also of many others whiche at the firste wil seme unto thee rather monstrous than naturall" (1568, [5]).

⁵⁰Quinn cites this passage from Thevet (1575: II, folios 1016r-18v). A subsequent description by Thevet of the Native people as curing themselves "with decoction of tree called *Quahaia* within four days" Quinn (1981) suggests as indicating "probably confusion with Micmac on f. 1010v. [if it is not simply nonsense]" (1981, 34).

Referencing inconsistencies in Thevet's accounts that are both intratextual and intertextual, many scholars have drawn attention to the unreliability of his historical narrative. Noting that Thevet claimed to have interviewed "among others, Sebastian Cabot, Cartier, and Donnacona," Gilbert states, "Among the sources that refer to the Native people of Newfoundland during this period, none are more frustrating than the words of André Thevet" (2011, 38). Hoffman summarizes his discussion of parallels between Thevet's ethnographic observations and those of Cartier and Champlain with the observation that Thevet "appears to be an amazing source" (1961,179). Schlesinger and Stabler (1986) open their discussion of Thevet's reliability as a historical source with the following quotation from his *Cosmographie universelle*: "It is impossible for any living man, never having left a place, however good a rhetorician he may be, to describe foreign countries unless he wishes impudently to lie" (1575, xvii). Quinn prefaces Thevet's account with the statement, "This is entirely hearsay material. A Spanish captain and French fishermen, unspecified, are the authorities. It must be emphasized also that Thevet often seems unable to record accurately what he had heard or even invents" (1981, 33). Thevet's section on "Culture Traits and Contacts" Quinn annotates with the phrase "Very imprecise in many cases" (1981, 33).

Other accounts that ultimately draw attention to the uncertainty of their claims concerning Native people in Newfoundland are those describing Sir Humphrey Gilbert's time in Newfoundland. Armed with a six-year patent from Elizabeth I to "discover searche finde out and viewe such remote heathen and barbarous lands countries and territories not actually possessed of any Christian prince or people," Gilbert arrived in Newfoundland in 1583 (1578, in Quinn, 1967, 188). In his narrative of the voyage, Edward Hayes, one of Gilbert's captains, opens with reference to Gilbert's intention "to discover and to plant Christian inhabitants in place

convenient, upon those large and ample countreys...not in the actual possession of any Christian prince” (1583, in Quinn, 1979b, 23). As Hayes notes, Gilbert’s crew were equipped with “hobby horses and morris dancers, and many like conceits...provided to win the savage people by all fair means possible” (1583, in Quinn, 1979b, 29). Despite much conjecture prior to their departure from England about their anticipated interaction with Native people, Hayes’ subsequent mention of Native people in Newfoundland is limited to the following observation: “In the south parts we found no inhabitants, which by all likelihood have abandoned those coasts, the same being so much frequented by Christians: But in the North are savages altogether harmless” (1583, in Quinn, 1979b, 33).

As Martijn (1996) notes, however, a subsequent segment from Hayes’ account provides some important context for his observation about Native people: “The distance between Cape Race and Cape Briton is 87 leagues. In which Navigation we spent 8 dayes, having many times the wind indifferent good: yet could we never attaine sight of any land all that time, seeing we were hindred by the current” (1583, in Quinn, 1979b, 36). Gilbert (2011) determines it is unlikely that anyone of the crew actually had direct contact with the Native people of Newfoundland: The only other surviving document from the voyage, Stephen Parmenius’ letter to Richard Hakluyt on August 6, 1583, reads, “Whether there bee any people in this Countrey I know not, neither haue I seene any to witnesse it. And to say trueth who can, when as it is not possible to passe any whither” (1583, in Hakluyt, 1965, 699; Gilbert, 2011, 40).

Research involving Thevet’s accounts and those describing the voyage of Sir Humphrey Gilbert illustrate how readers can apply narratology’s concept of unreliable narration to the interpretation of history. Discrepancies in texts signaling the unreliability of the narrator function as intertextual gaps that engage the reader (the historian) in a hermeneutic act which

ultimately brings about a new understanding. In the case of Thevet, these inconsistencies or intratextual gaps between the narrator's claim of what he has personally experienced, what he has written, and what is known about the sources of his information draw attention to the unreliability of Thevet's narrative voice, and ultimately direct the reader in search of truth towards the original sources themselves. In the case of Hayes and Parmenius, intertextual inconsistencies in narration bring Gilbert (2011) to a different conclusion than that expressed in Hayes' narrative, that despite Hayes' claim, it is unlikely that he, Parmenius, or anyone else on Gilbert's voyage had direct contact with Native people in Newfoundland. Within the context of the Beothuk narrative, such inconsistencies function to remind the reader in search of historical understanding of the necessity of actively engaging in the interpretation of that narrative rather than taking its sources at face value.

Taking up an earlier theme, 16th century European writing about the Native people of Newfoundland wraps up with an account that reiterates the Natives' propensity for revenge. During their 1594 trip from England to Newfoundland, the crew of the English vessel *Grace* find the "houses of the Savages" in St. George's Bay, along with "some part of their victuals" and a supply of caribou and cormorant (1594, in Quinn 1979b, 64). Despite discerning the "tracks of some fortie or fiftie, men, women and children" at this location, the party encounters no Natives. When they later dock at a harbour they call Pesmark in Placentia Bay, however, they describe being looted by Natives: "...in the end the Savages came, and in the night, when our men were at rest, cut both our pinnesse and our shippes boat away to our great hindrance of our voyage."⁵¹ On retrieving their vandalized property, the party promptly decides to depart for Cape Saint Marie, "for feare of a shrewder turne of the Savages" (1594, in Quinn, 1979b, 65).

⁵¹ Marshall posits that Pesmark refers to the present day harbour of Presque on the Burin Peninsula, west of Merasheen Island (1996, 24).

Pejorative, violent, and of questionable reliability, these accounts are not without historical value. Despite their hyperbole and inherent contradictions (or intertextual gaps), like the Norse sagas, they contain commonalities that, considered as a whole, provide insight into the past. Expressed from a distinctly European perspective that objectifies the Native other through negation and bestial association, these accounts lay the ground for our understanding of early interaction between the two groups, interaction that was invariably influenced by those very attitudes its narrators express.

3.3 17th-Century Accounts

Many of these themes introduced in the 16th century about Native people in Newfoundland – the strangeness of their appearance, the primitiveness of their language and culture, their propensity for violence and revenge – are taken up by Europeans writing in the 17th century. While sharing commonalities with the writing that preceded it, these 17th-century accounts express the firsthand, homodiegetic experience of their European narrators. As such, their interpretation draws not only on narratology's concept of unreliable narration, but also the application of Iser's theory about the role of intertextual and intratextual narrative gaps.

Perhaps the most famous of these historical narrators from the 17th century is the Bristol merchant John Guy, whose account of his 1612 meeting with Native people in Trinity Bay is often perceived as the first definitive description of the Beothuk.⁵² Guy's 1612 account is preceded by his *A Discourse of the Newfoundland*, a document outlining “the happie and prosperous” rendering of Newfoundland a plantation in a manner that is “Honorable, Lawfull,

⁵² Citing Hart, Marshall points out that a previous encounter with the same group of Beothuk may be indicated by a 1606 account of the Dutch ship *Witte Leeuw*, which describes having “traded with the Indians” in St. Mary's Bay (Hart, 1959,13-14; Marshall, 1996, 39). Webb, however, disagrees with this interpretation, stating that a poor transcription and translation of the original account implied that the *Witte Leeuw* was trading for furs in St. Mary's Bay, when in actuality “the original Dutch source says that the ship was trading for furs in Canada and stopped in St. Mary's Bay to take on water” (J. Webb, pers. comm., June 27, 2013).

Profitable, Easie and Necessarie” (Guy, 1612c, 4). Guy argues in his *Discourse* that his proposed plantation on the Avalon Peninsula can take place “without bloodshed or usurpation,” given that

...it cannot be proved, that any part of that country, comprehending within his Majesties grant, hath ever yet been inhabited either by Christian or Infidell, so as by this plantation we shall be so far from wronging any Prince of State, or diseising any man of his inheritance, as we shall perform work no doubt acceptable to God. (Guy, 1612c, 4)⁵³

One of the advantages of the proposed plantation, Guy argues, is the security it offers “from the invasion of the Savages, there being never anie seems in those parts, nor within two or three hundred/miles off the intended plantation” (Guy, 1612c, 9).

In his 1612 account of his voyage to Trinity Bay, Guy describes two sightings of Native encampments before encountering anyone in person.⁵⁴ The first occurs in a place Guy calls “Savage Harbour” in Trinity Bay, where they find “some savage housen” and a path leading into the woods (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 70). Guy sends a party to explore, and when they return with the report of having seen two fires on an island and on the opposite shore of a great lake, Guy takes fourteen men with him to investigate. Seeing the fires and a canoe manned by two people, they make their way in silence to a camp, “wheare they fownde noe savages, but three of their housen, wheareof two had bin latelie vsed, in one of the which the hearth was hot” (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 70). Finding a number of the Native peoples’ belongings – a bright copper kettle, fur gown, sealskins, a sail, and a fishing reel – Guy and his party move them “into one of the cabins.” Here they arrange them in what they perceive to be an orderly pile with the kettle

⁵³ As Cell notes, the focus of activity of the London and Bristol for the colonization of Newfoundland, organized in 1610, “was clearly to be the Avalon peninsula” (1982, 5).

⁵⁴ Like Barakat, who transcribed Guy (1612a), Cell notes that the account of the Trinity Bay voyage is “written in a different hand from the journal itself” (1982, 68).

hanging over it, in which they place some biscuit and a few amber beads “to beginne to winne them by fayre meanes” (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 71).

A second encampment visited the following week, on November 4, features “eight or nine savage housen in severall places” and a path through the woods leading to Placentia Bay two miles distant (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 72). At the site, Guy reports again finding a number of European articles, including fish hooks, a small copper kettle, a fishing line and lead, and what is described as a “french basket.” A new canoe is also “fownde” and left in the woods, “by reason of stormie wheather yt could not be broughte any further” (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 73).

It is on the third encounter that Guy and his party meet the Natives in person. Shortly after sighting a fire surmised to be “the doeing of savages,” Guy describes the appearance of two canoes, with “one man alone comming towardes vs with a flag in his hand of a wolfe skinne, shaking yt, & making a lowde noice, which we tooke to be for a parlie” (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 73). When the English put out a white flag in response, the Natives begin to withdraw, and it is only when they come to anchor that the Natives remain.

What follows is Guy’s detailed account of his historic interaction with Native people presumed to be Beothuk.⁵⁵ A pair of Native men disembark, one of them making a “loude speeche,” waving a wolf skin, and ultimately throwing it on the ground. When George Whittington responds in like manner with the flag of truce, the two Native men approach “daunsing leaping, & singing,” and one of them presents Whittington with “a chaine of leather full of small perwinckle shelles, a spilting knife, & a feather that stuck in his heare” (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 74). The other man gives him an “arrow without a lead,” and Whittington responds with a linen cap, a hand towel, and a knife. At this point, Guy notes, “hand in hand they all three

⁵⁵ Regarding Beothuk familiarity with trade prior to their encounter with Guy, see Gilbert (1990, 164), Upton (1977, 137), and Cell (1969, 68).

did sing, & daunce.” When a man identified as Fraunces Tipton joins them, he is also given a chain of shells, and responds with a knife and “a small peece of brasse” (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 74). Following this initial trade, Guy describes a modest celebration that includes the mutual exchange of food:

Then all fower together daunced, laughing, & makeing signes of ioy, & gladnes, sometimes strikeing the breastes of our companie, & sometymes theyre owne. When signes was made vnto them that they should be willing to suffer two of our companie to come one shoare, for two of theires more to be landed, & that bread & drinke should be brought ashoare, they made likewise signes that they had in their canoaes meate also to eate. (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 74)

At this point, Guy and a man named Teage join the party on the shore, presenting the Natives with small gifts of linen, foodstuffs, and drink.

This positive interaction is followed by a rare glimpse of Natives and Europeans in Newfoundland enjoying one another’s company through humour: “one of them blowing in the aquavitaie bottle yt made a sound, which they fell all into a laughture at” (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 74). Further trade ensues when Henry Crout and John Crouder join the party, and a man identified as a leader who “behaved him selfe civillie” gives an arrow without a tip, and is “requited with a dozen of pointes.”⁵⁶ The Natives then share with their visitors some of their “deeres fleshe dryed in the smoake, or wind,” along with a root they retrieve and wash from the riverbank, both of which, Guy notes, make a favourable impression (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 74).

Guy’s narrative differs from that of previous accounts by Europeans in several significant ways. Drawing on a narratorial perspective that witnesses rather than participates in the

⁵⁶ Cell identifies “pointes” as “Nails or spikes”; Pope describes them as “small metal finishes for laces” or “shoe lace tips” (Cell, 1982, 74, n.2; P. Pope, pers. comm., July 5, 2013).

unfolding of the events described, many of the earlier writers effectively function as heterodiegetic narrators commenting from a distance on the Indigenous other, the description of whom is characterized by pejorative generalities about their physical appearance, language, and culture. In describing a series of events in which he actually participated, however, Guy functions as a homodiegetic narrator whose account focuses on shared interaction between the two groups and includes considerable detail concerning both. His description of Native people themselves does not appear until after this trade exchange has been narrated:

In the two canoaes there are eight men, yf none are women, (for commonly in every canoe there is one woman). They are of a reasonable stature, of an ordinary middle size, they go bareheaded wearing their hair somewhat long, but rounded, they have no beards. Behind they have a great locke of hair platted with feathers, like a hawk's lure with a feather in it standing upright by the crown of the head, & a small locke platted before. A short gowne or cassocke made of stag skinnes, the furre innermost that came downe to the middle of their leg, with sleeves to the middle of their arme, & a beaver skinne about their necke, was all their apparell, save that one of them had shoes & mittens, soe that all went bare legged, & most barefoot. They are full dyde of a blacke colour, the colour of their hair was diverse, some blacke, some browne, & some yellow, their faces something flat & broad, red with okir, as all their apparell is, & the rest of their bodie. They are broad breasted, & bould, & stand very uprighte.

(1612b, in Cell, 1982, 75)

The exchange ends with the Natives returning to their vessels and encouraging the English to do likewise.

While Guy's account provides us with the most detailed description of Native people in Newfoundland to date, intratextual as well as intertextual discrepancies or gaps between his and another contemporaneous homodiegetic accounts open up his subsequent narrative to further interpretation. Following his description of their physical features and canoes, Guy includes an account of the Natives' form of silent barter. Their furs he describes as hanging from poles, a gesture that the English eventually interpret as an invitation to trade. A couple of days later, when the Natives fail to return to the site, Guy's party takes "onlie, a beaver skinne, a saple skinne, & a bird skinne, leaving for them, a hatchet, a knife & fower needles threaded" (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 76). In exchange for a small beaver skin, Guy notes, Whittington leaves a pair of scissors. Reflecting on their first trade, Guy concludes that its success is largely a result of the restraint previously exercised by his party: "Thease savages by all likelihood weare animated to come vnto vs, by reason that we tooke nothing from them at Savage bay, & some of them may be of those which dwell theare" (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 76). In an entry six days later, an intratextual gap appears calling into question Guy's assertion that he "tooke nothing." For in this subsequent entry, Guy makes reference to the canoe taken earlier on, in his description of their shallop sailing out of Trinity Bay "without the canoa, which they had towed from Truce sound vnto Old Pernecam, wheare foule weather forced them to land yt" (1612b, in Cell, 1982, 77).

Further complicating Guy's narrative is a second and contemporaneous version of his account in a letter from Henry Crout to Sir Percival Willoughby, dated April 10, 1613.⁵⁷ Crout reiterates most of the details of the first expedition in "Solvagg baye: so called because ther we had the first sight of them," including Guy's gift of bisket and beads, and his directive for the

⁵⁷ Crout's letter is cited from Cell (1982,79-89), who sources it from Nottingham University, Middleton MSS, Mi X 1/23, 59.

others not to tamper with the Natives' belongings (1613, in Cell (1982), 83).⁵⁸ Functioning as a homodiegetic narrator like Guy, Crout also draws on his personal experience in his description of the Natives, whom he notes are “people verie parsonable but only they do Reed all ther Faces with ockar and all ther skins/ and they seemed to be verie Fatt” (1613, in Cell, 1982, 86).

While agreeing with Guy in terms of generalities of the people involved and items exchanged, however, Crout's account of the meeting with the Natives provides further details about their hesitancy to trade. He describes their reaction to Guy's shallop coming to shore: “the bootye drawing neer the shore they began to be somethinge fearfull and gott againe into ther Boottes: and weare rowinge away againe a great pace until we made signes vnto them” (1613, in Cell, 1982, 85). Crout's account of the November 4 expedition also provides further clarification with regards to the “found” canoe: “we Found a very fine Canno of the sollvages contrived in most skillful manner which I thinke the governer doth mynd to send for england” (1613, in Cell, 1982, 84). In its reiteration of the Native people's hesitation to approach, as well as Guy's intent to take their valuable canoe, Crout's homodiegetic narration draws attention to the fact that there exists at least a third perspective missing from this narrative – that of the Native people themselves.

In contrast to the accounts of Crout and Guy, with their emphasis on homodiegetic interaction, the writing of Henry Cary, Lork Falkland – who took up a land grant on the Avalon Peninsula in 1617 – offers a heterodiegetic, more distanced narratorial perspective on Newfoundland's Native people. Paramount in his instructions to settlers of his colony is the directive that they stay away from the Native people. Falkland urges them to settle where Trinity and Placentia Bays meet, “to keepe the natiues out from the maine land that lieth towards the

⁵⁸ Cell footnotes Sollvagg baye as Dildo Arm (1982, 83).

north and north-west” (in Cell, 1982, 244). With regards to interaction with the Native people, Falkand is very specific in his instructions:

Lastlie & Cheiflie that none of our planters doe plant themselues amoung the natiues for that is but onlie a drowneinge of our men, But to strengthene our Ile, if we Canne may take some of the young breed of the natiues & bringe them vpp amoung our selues but the[y] most [*sic*] not be passeinge 5 or 6 yeeres olde when wee take them from there parentes wherbye they [will] not haue Remembrance of them s[oon]. (in Cell, 1982, 245)

Rather than intermingle with the Native people, which he sees as contributing to “a drowneinge of our men,” Falkand proposes a form of forced assimilation in which “the young breed of the natiues” will be raised among Europeans to the point that they forget their own people.⁵⁹

Richard Whitbourne, who advised Falkland’s colony on the southern Avalon from 1622 to 1626, makes a significant contribution to Beothuk history, one that also raises the issues narratorial intent, reliability, and the hermeneutic function of narrative gaps. A native of Devonshire, Whitbourne made many trips to Newfoundland in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, first as a sailor, and later to govern Sir William Vaughan’s colony in 1618.⁶⁰ As indicated in a Privy Council Recommendation dated July 23, 1620, Whitbourne’s *A Discourse and Discovery of the Newe-founde-landde* was published with a view to garnering attention and support for the establishment of British settlement in Newfoundland.⁶¹ Clearly acknowledging this motivation, Whitbourne’s *Discourse*, like the accounts of Guy and the Norse which preceded it, is enthusiastic about the natural abundance of Newfoundland, which he describes as “large,

⁵⁹ Falkland’s attitude provides an interesting contrast to contemporaneous French policy in Acadia, where intermarriage between the Mi’kmaq and French settlers, including members of the nobility, was officially sanctioned.

⁶⁰ As Prowse notes, Whitbourne’s early voyages to the island as a sailor included a trip in 1583, when he witnessed Gilbert’s “ceremonious taking possession of the Colony” (1895, 62). See also Marshall (1996, 245-6).

⁶¹ See “The Privy Council Recommends the Publication of Whitbourne’s Discourse” in Cell (1982, 101), cited from P.R.O., PC s/30, 578.

temperate, and fruitfull” (1622, in Cell, 1982, 109). His detailed account of the natural riches of Newfoundland includes an extensive list of fruits and vegetables harvested from its ground “no lesse fertill then the English soyle,” as well as a description of its abundance of local mammals, fish and fowl (1622, in Cell, 1982, 120-123). Acknowledging in his preface “that it is an hard matter to perswade people to aduventure into strange Countries; especially to remain and settle themselues there,” Whitbourne proceeds with his *Discourse* to try and do just that (1622, in Cell, 1982, 111). In contrast to so many of the accounts preceding his narrative, the Native people of Newfoundland he introduces as “ingenuous, and apt by discrete & moderate gouernments to be brought to obedience” (1622, in Cell, 1982, 109), a view that reflects his intent to encourage English migration to the colony and settlement. Few in number, they are a simple people who pose no threat to the proposed plantation. To the contrary, they represent a potential labour force that has been largely untapped:

The naturall Inhabitants of the Countrey, as they are but few in number; so are they something rude and sauage people; hauing neither knowledge of God, nor liuing vnder any kinde of ciuill gouernement. In their habits, customes and manners, they resemble the *Indians* of the Continent, whence, I suppose, they come; they liue altogether in the North and West part of the Countrey, which is seldom frequented by the *English*: But the *French* and *Biscaines* (who resort thither yeerely for the Whale-Fishing, and also for the Cod-fish) report them to be an ingenious and tractable people (being well vsed:) they are ready to assist them with great labour and patience, in the killing, cutting, and boyling of Whales; and making the Traineoyle, without expectation of other reward, then a little bread, or some such small hire. (1622, in Cell, 1982, 117)

Despite this general impression of their tractability, Whitbourne concedes that dealing with the Native people is not without its challenges. One of the major challenges, as indicated in the earliest Norse accounts, is the Native peoples' propensity for theft. The Bay of Flowers [Bonavista Bay], Whitbourne notes, is customarily avoided by fishermen for this very reason: "chiefly (as I coniecture) because the Sauage people of the Countrey doe there inhabite: many of them secretly euery yeere, come into *Trinity* Bay and Harbour, in the night time, purposely to steale Sailes, Lines, Hatchets, Hookes, Kniues, and such like" (1622, in Cell, 1982, 118).

Ever the optimist, Whitbourne perceives within this scenario an opportunity. Were the English to settle in nearby Trinity, he argues, they would be sure to improve their knowledge of the land, "by reason those sauage people are so neere; who being politikely and gently handled, much good might bee wrought vpon them; for I haue had apparent proofes of their ingenuous and subtile dispositions, and that they are a people full of quicke and liuely apprehensions" (1622, in Cell, 1982, 119). Their inevitable conversion to Christianity through contact with settlers Whitbourne proposes as representing "the heauenliest blessing to those poore Creatures, who are buried in their own supersititious ignorance" (1622, in Cell, 1982, 119). As is conventional in settlement proposals, conceding that "euen we our selues were once as blinde as they in the knowledge and worship of our Creator, and as rude and sauage in our liues and manners," this sentiment is repeated as the first in Whitbourne's summary of reasons for the establishment of the proposed plantation:

For it is most certaine, that by a Plantation there, and by that meanes onely, the poore mis-beleeuing Inhabitants of that Countrey may be reduced from Barbarisme, to the knowledge of God, and the light of His truth, and to a ciuil and regular kinde of life and gouernement. (1622, in Cell, 1982, 125)

Similar to segments of the Norse sagas, as a propaganda piece for settlement in a distant land, Whitbourne's *Discourse* downplays the challenges of the Newfoundland environment to potential settlers. In an attempt to address fears about the Newfoundland winter, for example, he insists that it is milder than in England, so mild, in fact, "that the Sauage people of the Countrey that liue in the North parts, endure it so well, that they lieu there naked Winter and Summer" (1622, in Cell, 1982, 154).

Like previous historical writing about Native people in Newfoundland, Whitbourne's accounts contain gaps or inconsistencies that function to draw attention to its narrative structure and consequently invite the reader's interpretation. *A Conclusion to the Former Discourse*, a brief document summarizing his *Discourse* and *A Loving Invitation to all his Maiesties Subiects*, contains some of his most detailed descriptions of the Native people, including their use of red ochre, as well as the construction of their vessels and cooking utensils. These descriptions are followed by his account of an attack "by three Mariners of a ship of Tapson [Topsham]" on a Native encampment in Trinity Bay. Having been "robbed in the night, by the Sauages, of their apparell, and diuers other prouisions," the three track a group to where they are feasting (1622, in Cell, 1982, 193). When the mariners fire their muskets at them, the Natives are described as having "all ran away naked, without any apparel, but onely some of them had their hats on their heads" (1622, in Cell, 1982, 194). Listing the items that the three mariners take away, Whitbourne concludes his account with the speculation that the event may stimulate trade between the two parties:

All their three Cannowes, their flesh, skins, yolkes of Egges, Targets, Bowes and Arrows, and much fine Okar, and diuers other things they tooke and brought away, and shared it among those that tooke it; and they brought to mee the best Cannow, Bowes and

Arrowes, and diuers of their skins, and many other artificiall things worth the noting, which may seeme much to inuite vs to endeauour to finde out some other good trades with them. (1622, in Cell, 1982, 194)

Like most writers preceding him, with the exception of Guy and Crout, Whitbourne, though claiming experience and knowledge that are obtained firsthand, effectively narrates his account from the more distanced perspective of the heterodiegetic narrator. From that increased narratorial distance, Whitbourne makes observations that do not always agree with a more recent reader's own extratextual frames of reference with respect to his or her understanding of human psychology or behavior, or what Dray calls "our common sense knowledge of the world" (1964, 16). Whitbourne's suggestion, for example, that the theft from the Natives of their canoes, weapons, furs, foodstuffs and other valuable belongings by a group of mariners seeking revenge could serve to open up trade between the two groups, if not raising fundamental questions about this narrator's understanding of human nature, draws attention to the extent to which his narrative considers only the cultural perspective of those most like himself. Consequently, the reader comes away from Whitbourne's narrative with a heightened awareness of the necessity to interpret it in a manner that takes into account the factors shaping the perspective from which it is told. This is not to minimize the contribution Whitbourne's narrative makes to our understanding of the past. Like all historical accounts, its value derives in part from our *awareness* of its underlying narrative structure, and the degree to which it needs to be interpreted not as a definitive source, but rather as one of many sources that make up the greater narrative of which it is part.

Following the early 17th century accounts, much of the subsequent writing in the 17th century consists of sporadic narratives describing the deterioration of relations between Native

people in Newfoundland and the Europeans encroaching ever further into their territory. As a group, these accounts serve to reinforce Eurocentric themes introduced earlier in the narrative, including the idea of hostility between the two groups. Referencing Guy's interaction, Sir David Kirke takes issue with the notion that there are no Native people on the island: "How noe natives upon the island of Newfoundland? Have you left your eyesight in the fogges againe, and so blinded do you know at whom you strike?" (1640, in Howley, 1915, 23). Kirke points out that conversion of these very people was one of the anticipated outcomes of the colonization attempt, an undertaking compromised by the conduct of the island's Native people towards the newcomers. Relying on fishermen as his source, Kirke's account features their perspective and, as such, reflects the same theme as most of the writing that precedes it:

And that you may be assured there are such creatures upon Newfoundland if your wisdoms consult but with our poore fisherman, that use to fish in Trinity Bay and more northerly, they wille assure by their own continuall and sad experience, that they have found too many bad neighbors of the natives almost every fishing season. (1640, in Howley, 1915, 23)

Captain Wheeler, commander of the English convoy in 1684, likewise describes the French fishing in Bonavista as being "at utter variance with the Indians, who are numerous, and so the French never reside in winter, and always have their arms by them" (1684, in Howley, 1915, 24). On the whole, narrative accounts from this period are consistent in their focus: Native people on the island are seen primarily in their role as a source of conflict with Europeans over the newly colonized territory and its resources.

3.4 18th-Century Accounts

Beginning with the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713), much of the writing of the early 18th century focuses on the French in their dealings with the Mi'kmaq in Newfoundland, which are discussed in Chapter 6.⁶² Other accounts from early in the century continue to focus on the shortcomings of Newfoundland's Native people in comparison to the English settlers with whom they appear to be increasingly drawn into conflict.

Relying on the testimony of English settlers in Bonavista Bay, Commander Percy of the Royal Navy identifies the local Natives as “a Savage people not as yet acquainted with the use of guns” (1720, in Marshall, 1996, 61). Typical of settler accounts of the period is the experience of George Skeffington. Rapidly expanding his infrastructure in Bonavista and Notre Dame Bays early in the century, Skeffington depicts a number of violent conflicts involving Native people as he and his employees struggle to monopolize the valuable salmon fishery (Marshall, 1996, 64).

An account from this period that is unique in acknowledging the limitations of its narratorial perspective comes from the English naturalist and botanist Sir Joseph Banks. Having questioned settlers during a visit to Newfoundland in 1766, Banks opens his narrative with the admission “I have as yet been able to Learn Very little...of the Indians that inhabit the interior Parts of Newfoundland and are supposed to be the original inhabitants of that Countrey” (1776, in Lysaght, 1971, 132). Banks goes on to describe what he has learned about Newfoundland's Native people from his settler sources, whom he concedes as being “in a continual State of warfare with them” (1776, in Lysaght, 1971, 132). His account includes detailed observations about particular aspects of the Natives' way of life, including their territory, diet, weaponry, and the nature of their ongoing conflict with the settlers. With regards to one encounter with a

⁶² As Marshall points out, much of the writing around this period is unclear as to the identity of the Native people as Mi'kmaq or Beothuk (1996, 40).

fisherman named Sam Frye, Banks describes the Natives' distinctive manner of scalping, which differs from a similar practice by the Canadian Indians in that it involves skinning the whole face. Unlike any of the accounts preceding it, however, Banks' narrative is unique in that it concludes, like it opens, with frank acknowledgement of its limitations:

So much for the Indians if half of what I have wrote about them is true, it is more than I expect tho I have not the Least reason to think But that the man who told it to me beleivd it & had heard it all from his own people & those of the neighbouring Planters & fishermen. (1766, in Lysaght, 1971, 133)

Much of the writing about Native people in Newfoundland that follows in the 18th century was motivated by a desire on the part of its narrators to record the Natives' struggle for survival in the face of encroaching British settlement. While continuing to perceive their subjects from a British colonial position of cultural superiority, this group of writers expresses a narratorial intent that is quite distinct from that of earlier European writing, with its emphasis on the Natives' primary role as a hostile, violent threat to British settlement. Their Eurocentric assumptions notwithstanding, these narrators are largely sympathetic towards their subjects, whom they begin to perceive as hapless victims of the colonial project in Newfoundland.

Foremost among these writers is Lieutenant John Cartwright, who was sent by Governor Hugh Palliser on an expedition up the Exploits River in search of the Red Indians, as he called the Native people, accompanied by his brother Captain George Cartwright in 1768.⁶³ In the course of their expedition, Cartwright saw much evidence of settlement, including encampments and long fence networks for herding caribou, but he encountered no Native people. The account

⁶³ With regards to his use of the term "Red Indian," John Cartwright notes, "The epithet 'Red Indian' is given to these Indians, from their universal practice of colouring their garments, their canoes, bows, arrows and every other utensil belonging to them with red ochre" (1768, in Howley, 1915, 29). George Cartwright's account contains parallels to that of his brother, including the observations that the Natives were pursued by fishermen, "much greater savages than the Indians themselves," and that they lived without dogs (1792, in Howley, 1915, 46).

of his 1768 expedition Cartwright begins with the couplet “Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutored mind/ Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind” (1768, in Howley, 1915, 29). In his opening paragraph, Cartwright articulates the motives for his journey, which include, in addition to exploring the interior of the island, locating the Native people and advancing the cause of their civilization:

...to acquire a more certain knowledge of the settlements of the Natives or Red Indians, as well as to surprise, if possible, one or more of these savages, for the purpose of effecting in time, a friendly intercourse with them, in order to promote their civilization, and render them in the end, useful subjects to His Majesty. (1768, in Howley, 1915, 29)

In addition to describing and sketching the artifacts he encounters on his expedition, paramount among Cartwright’s concerns is documenting the treatment of the Native people at the hands of English settlers, who to his thinking display “an inhumanity which sinks them far below the level of savages” (1768, in Howley, 1915, 34). To illustrate the extent of the settlers’ cruelty towards “the poor wretches,” Cartwright describes a party of fishermen’s surprise attack on a group of Natives. Unable to escape, a pregnant woman points to her extended belly:

Could all of nature have produced another pleader of such eloquence as the infant there concealed: But this appeal, Oh, shame to humanity! was alas! in vain; for an instant stab, that ripped open her womb, laid her at the feet of those cowardly ruffians, where she expired in great agonies. Their brutal fury died not with its unhappy victim; for with impious hands they mutilated the dead body, so as to become a spectacle of the greatest horror. And that no aggravation of their crime might be wanting, they made, at their return home, their boasts of this exploit. Charity might even have prevailed in their favour, against their own report, and have construed their relation into an idle pretence

only of wickedness, which, however, they were incapable of having in reality committed, had they not produced the hands of the murdered woman, which they displayed on the occasion as a trophy. (1768, in Howley, 1915, 34)

In a second, equally disturbing account, Cartwright describes the 1768 abduction of a young Native boy who comes to be known among the English as John August.⁶⁴ The story involves the shooting of August's mother by a group of fishermen, who proceed to carry her child away as she watches from the cover of the forest, where she has managed to escape:

In this dreadful situation she beheld her child ravished from her by her murderers, who carried it to their boat. How the infant's cries, as they bore it off, must have pierced her fainting heart! How the terrors of its approaching fate must have wrung a mother's breast! A cruel death or an ignominious bondage among enemies the only prospects for a beloved son she was to see no more! Sure the arrow of death was now dipped in the keenest of all poisons! (1768, in Howley, 1915, 34)

While to the contemporary reader, Cartwright's Romantic interjections into the narrative may seem excessive, they imply a sense of indignation and empathy with his narrative subject that are impossible to overlook. Indeed, these features emerge as hallmarks of Cartwright's narrative style in all of his documentation of atrocities against Native people. Another notable feature of these descriptions by Cartwright is the extent he goes to in establishing the credibility of the narrative: In the first case, to the author's horror, the perpetrators present their victims' hands as proof. In the second, one of the fishermen approaches Cartwright at Twillingate, requesting "a gratuity for the share he had borne in this transaction" (1768, in Howley 1915, 35).

⁶⁴ Following his capture in August 1768, Cartwright notes, John August "was the winter following, exposed as a curiosity to the rabble at Pool for two pence apiece" (1768, in Howley, 1915, 35).

Admitting that “to gain a sight of them is no small difficulty,” Cartwright’s inability to encounter the Native people himself does not prevent him from describing them, their culture, and even their spiritual beliefs (1768, in Howley, 1915, 36). With regards to their material culture, his account describes several aspects of “the Indian manner of living” – including their dwellings, canoes, weaponry, and food storage techniques, which are often illustrated by sketches – as well as a map of what he perceives to be their territory (1768, in Howley, 1915, 29-33, 37- 41; Marshall, 1977). He observes that they are cut off not only from Europeans, but also “effectually cut off from the society of every other Indian people” (1768, in Howley, 1915, 35). As is typical of so many European chroniclers, Cartwright describes the Native people he has never encountered largely in terms of what he perceives they lack. “To complete their wretched condition,” he notes, these “most forlorn of all human beings” live without the companionship of dogs. In light of the accounts of his descriptions of atrocities that precede it, Cartwright’s musing on this topic seems at best incongruous: “May we not look upon this as one of the heaviest evils they endure?” (1768, in Howley, 1915, 35)

Throughout Cartwright’s accounts, comparisons to the natural world abound, evoking the bestial associations characterizing much of the earliest writing about Native people in Newfoundland. “A Red Indian in the summer season, may with too much propriety be compared to a beast of chase,” he notes, concluding that such an individual “is like them endowed with a peculiar sagacity” (1768, in Howley, 1915, 36). Cartwright’s observations also include speculations about the social and cultural practices of the Natives in the winter:

It may be presumed that their first meeting in winter quarters affords every delight and social enjoyment, that so hardfaring, rude, and uncultivated a people are capable of.

Refinements in sentiment are not to be found amongst them, and they can be little acquainted with the rational pleasure of reflection. (1768, in Howley, 1915, 39)

Denied philosophical introspection, Cartwright's Natives emerge as a simple people embodying the ideals of the Noble Savage: "If they know not the arts which embellish life, and those sciences which dignify humanity, they are ignorant also of the long train of vices that corrupt the manners of civilized nations and of the enormous crimes that debase mankind" (1768, in Howley, 1915, 39).⁶⁵ With respect to spiritual matters, the Natives prove equally deficient, with their religion representing, in Cartwright's opinion, "little above such harmless trifling observances" (1768, in Howley, 1915, 39).

While it undeniably makes a significant contribution to our knowledge of certain aspects of the Beothuk material culture and way of life, John Cartwright's narrative, like most early 18th-century accounts, draws on other European sources for its information. Narrated largely in the first person, his account appears at first homodiegetic, in the sense that it presents Cartwright himself as a character within the narrative on a journey in search of understanding. Having had no direct experience of the people whose culture and way of life he subsequently describes, however, Cartwright ultimately remains outside the Beothuk narrative, his account narrated from a heterodiegetic stance limited by both its Eurocentric assumptions and its expressed intent to advocate on behalf of its subjects.

⁶⁵ For a discussion of the Noble Savage concept, see Bickham (2005) and S. Pratt (2005). Pratt concludes, "The American Indian was perceived as the quintessential noble savage from at least the time of Montaigne, whose *Essais* (1580) celebrated the stoical attitudes of the Brazilian Indians" (2005, 5). The 18th-century concept of the Noble Savage which was subsequently rejected in Britain, Bickham points out, has its roots in the writing of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (2005, 95).

3.5 Early 19th-Century Accounts

Historical accounts from the early 19th century reveal a similar attempt on the part of their narrators to advocate for Newfoundland's Native people in the face of what is perceived to be their impending disappearance. Motivated by this perception, Newfoundland Governor John Duckworth sent Lieutenant David Buchan up the Exploits River in the winter of 1811 in search of the "Native Indians of this Island" (Buchan, 1811, in Howley, 1915, 72).⁶⁶ Like Cartwright's "Remarks on the situation of the Red Indians," Buchan's account opens with first-person homodiegetic narration describing his journey in search of Newfoundland's elusive Native people. Unlike Cartwright, however, Buchan proves to be successful in making contact, so his account remains homodiegetic throughout, with the narrator drawing on his own experience with the Native people he encounters rather than that of others. Buchan's writing is particularly significant in what it reveals about the subjectivity of the homodiegetic narrator's perspective, and how that perspective is altered by the experience of interacting with the subjects in person. On the level of narrative, this change in perspective functions to create gaps in Buchan's account, inconsistencies that can alert the reader of the narrator's limitations and thereby encourage further engagement in its interpretation, rather than acceptance of the account at face value.

Early in his narrative, Buchan includes details that, viewed in retrospect, serve to undermine his expressed intent to make friendly contact with the Beothuk. He sets out on his expedition into their territory with a large, well-armed retinue, including 23 men and a boy from the crew of his schooner *Adonis*. The party also contains three local men as guides – Mathew

⁶⁶ In his August, 1810 proclamation "In the name of His Majesty, King George the Third," Duckworth offers a reward of one hundred pounds to the person who succeeds at "inducing a single Indian to communicate with us" (1810, in Howley, 1915, 71).

Hughster, Thomas Taylor, William Cull – the latter of whom was known for his enmity towards the Beothuk.⁶⁷

Buchan's language describing his initial approach to the Beothuk is overtly militaristic. On locating three wigwams in close proximity to one another, Buchan gives his men the order to examine their weapons and proceed with caution. The party draws closer, and in Buchan's words, "the wigwams were at once secured" (1811, in Howley, 1915, 77). When the entrance flaps are removed, Buchan's party discovers "groups of men, women and children lying in the utmost consternation; they remained absolutely for some minutes without motion or utterance" (1811, in Howley, 1915, 77).

Through reassuring gestures and attention to the children present, Buchan's group gains the confidence of the Natives, and a small trade ensues, with knives, handkerchiefs and other small items exchanged for animal skins. Though he is unable to speak their language, Buchan conveys through gestures his wish to return to where the group had stashed their baggage in order to retrieve further presents for the Natives. When two of the Marines, James Butler and Thomas Bouthland, volunteer to stay behind to repair their snowshoes, Buchan and the remainder of his party set off with two Native men who, he soon notes, appear to mistrust them. When one of the Native men abandons the party, the other exhibits increasing signs of apprehension: "He had however, evidently some suspicions, as he had frequently come and looked eagerly in my face, as if to read my intentions" (1811, in Howley, 1915, 78). Though

⁶⁷ As a number of historians have noted, Buchan's decision to include William Cull among his party of Marines may have played a role in its outcome, given the fact that Cull was likely known among the Natives for his capture of a woman from their community in 1803. With regards to Cull's presence on the expedition, Klittke speculates, "Wie später eine gefangene Indianerin erzählte, hätten die Beothuk beim Erblicken ihres Todfeindes Cull an Berrat geglaubt und daher die Matrojen getötet" (1894, 242). [As a captured Indian woman later explained, at the sight of their mortal enemy Cull, the Beothuk believed they had been betrayed, and because of that killed the marines"] [own translation.] Howley concurs: "My own impression is that Buchan made a great mistake in taking along with him so many of the furriers, those inveterate enemies of the poor Red man, whose very presence was along sufficient to cause their distrust" (1915, 91).

initially alarmed at the sight of more of Buchan's party when they arrive at their destination, this man appears to relax once he is fed and presented with a number of gifts, including a pair of trousers and flannel shirt, which he puts on "with sensible pleasure, carefully avoiding any indecency," and he settles down beside Buchan to sleep for the night (1811, in Howley, 1915, 78).

The party returns to the wigwams the next day, only to find them deserted. When their Native guide becomes increasingly anxious, Buchan decides to detain him. Given his liberty, the man refuses to leave. After passing a fretful night interrupted by nightmares and a close call with a gunshot, the party leaves piles of presents in the wigwams and sets off the next morning.⁶⁸ Zigzagging at the front of the party, their Native guide is the first person to discover the bodies of Butler and Bouthland on the ice, naked, decapitated and pierced with arrows. When the guide runs off still within musket range, Buchan opts not to shoot him, he explains, "as his destruction could answer no end" (1811, in Howley, 1915, 79).

While the reaction of the other members of the party was initially melancholy, Buchan notes, "these feelings soon gave way to sensations of revenge" (1811, in Howley, 1915, 80). Rather than yield to these urges and pursue the Natives, he writes, "prudence called on me to adopt another line of conduct" (1811, in Howley, 1915, 80). After a brief misunderstanding in which two of their own men are mistaken for spying Natives, the party makes it back to their starting point and reunites with the others from their group.

It is here that Buchan begins to speculate about the motives of the Natives, and his tone towards them changes. At first he feared revenge, for, he muses, "was it not be be supposed they

⁶⁸ Aroused by "a dreadful scream" from Mathew Hughster, "the Indian gave a horrid yell, and a musket was instantly discharged" (1811, in Howley, 1915, 79). The shot towards the entrance of the wigwam, it turns out, was made by Thomas Taylor, who narrowly misses killing his companion John Guieme, who had gone out while the rest were asleep.

would anticipate our conduct according to their diabolical system?" (1811, in Howley, 1915, 81) He reviews his decision not to pursue them in light of his greater mission of "their reconciliation and civilization," which he determines would have been compromised by an act of violence on his part. Yet he questions the trust and "acts of friendship" he has extended towards them, "whilst a malignant inveteracy subsists in the hearts and actuates the natives to deeds most horrid" (1811, in Howley, 1915, 81). Retracing their route, the party slowly makes its way through the snow and ice back to the schooner, which it reaches after a journey of four days.

In his "Concluding Remarks," Buchan, like Cartwright and others before him, includes a number of detailed observations about the Natives' appearance, material culture, and way of life. Unlike Cartwright's, however, Buchan's observations, like those of Guy, are informed by his experience of meeting the Native people in person. His account of their physical appearance, which describes them as being athletic and of medium build, dispels former accounts of their "gigantic stature," while their complexion and features he sees as more European than those of other Native groups he has encountered (1811, in Howley, 1915, 86). Buchan determines the entire group encountered on his expedition to number only 35 adults and 30 children. Their language he describes as "a complete jargon uttered with such rapidity, and vehemence, and differing from all other Indian tribes that I had heard, whose language, generally flows in soft melodious sounds" (1811, in Howley, 1915, 89). Although he admits to never being able to communicate with them, Buchan nonetheless maintains that as they retreat inland from settler expansion along the coast, the Natives do so with an awareness of the cause of their displacement: "thus necessitated, the cause was rooted in their minds and the injuries they wantonly received were handed down from one generation to another" (1811, in Howley, 1915, 88). Buchan's account concludes with a reflection on the appropriateness of his own actions in

not having pursued revenge: "...for their unenlightened minds would look to us for nothing but retaliation, the line adopted by me may tend to remove such an impression from their minds" (1811, in Howley, 1915, 90).

In terms of its narration, what is striking about Buchan's account is the extent to which the author's own interpretation is presented as historical fact, despite gaps in the narrative that suggest the contrary. According to his narrative, Buchan sets out on a mission to promote the "grand object" of Duckworth's order to treat the Beothuk "with kindness so as to conciliate their affections, and induce them to come among us and live in friendship with us" (Buchan, 1811, in Howley, 1915, 72; Duckworth, 1810a, in Howley, 1915, 71). Yet, Buchan enters their territory with a large group that is heavily armed, and narrates his initial encounter as a military exercise.⁶⁹ Though at several points Buchan acknowledges his inability to speak the language of the people he encounters, this shortcoming in no way impedes his ability to interpret their behavior and the motives underlying it. While Buchan's narrative, like Guy's, relates firsthand his homodiegetic experience of the Natives with whom he personally interacts, its narrative gaps – inconsistencies between his actions and his expressed intentions – highlight its limitations as a historical source.

A similar phenomenon occurs in the writing of William Epps Cormack, one of the most prominent European voices of the 19th century regarding Native people in Newfoundland, particularly in the intratextual gaps that appear between his published and unpublished accounts of the same experiences. A Newfoundlander educated in Scotland, Cormack returned to St. John's in 1821 to take over his family's shipping business (Marshall, 1996, 241). Within months

⁶⁹ With respect to the encampment Buchan encountered, Cormack notes, "He took it by surprise and made the whole party prisoners" (Cormack, 1827b, in Howley, 1915, 226).

of his arrival, Cormack determined to undertake a trek through the interior of the island in pursuit of what were now perceived to be its elusive aboriginal inhabitants.

The trip is documented in his “Narrative of a Journey Across the Island of Newfoundland in 1822.”⁷⁰ From the outset, Cormack’s language with respect to his undertaking, the landscape, and its Native inhabitants is decidedly colonial. Denied the services of a European guide, in preparation for the journey, Cormack describes having engaged “a Micmack Indian” and “tried his fidelity” on a 150-mile test journey from St. John’s to Placentia and back.⁷¹ In his handwritten, unpublished account of the same journey, Cormack elaborates: “I engaged a Micmack Indian to accompany me on my journey; the hunting habits and docility of such men, fitting him well for such an employment, and to be a guide and enduring servant in the country I was about to traverse and explore” (Cormack, 1823b, 10).

On August 29, Cormack sets off with “my Indian,” a term he uses consistently throughout the account to identify his Mi’kmaq guide. There are two exceptions to this practice in Cormack’s published account: “My Indian, Joseph Sylvester,” when he states his guide’s name, and later when Cormack decides to name a mountain “Mount Sylvester, the name of my Indian” (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 135, 144). In all other cases, Cormack consistently refers to Sylvester as “my Indian.” When Cormack is later joined by a second “Indian, who told me his name was Gabriel,” he refers to them collectively as “my Indians,” and distinguishes between them with the phrases “the Indian who last joined” and “my other Indian” (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 157-158).

⁷⁰ Cormack’s (1823a) account is published in Howley (1915, 130-168). Excerpts from Cormack’s handwritten account (1823b) in the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador – which differ from the published version – are also cited as indicated.

⁷¹ Cormack’s “European” Howley identifies as “the late Hon. Chas. Fox Bennett” (1915, 130, n.3).

On September 5, Cormack departs from the coast into the interior, “removed with my Indian from all human communication and interference.” The general direction of this voyage is stated on the first page of his account: “I now resolved to penetrate at once through the central part of the island” (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 130). Early on, Cormack introduces a theme that subsequently reoccurs throughout his narrative, that being his fear at encountering the Native people he has set out to find: “That we might be eaten up by a packs of wolves was more than probable to the farewell forebodings of the inhabitants we had last seen, if we should escape the Red Indians” (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 134). In the published account, in the first few days of his camping out “in the Indian manner,” Cormack reflects on the possibility that Native people might sight their fire “and steal upon us unawares” (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 137). In the unpublished manuscript, the author is again more forthcoming, conceding his “well founded apprehensions” to this effect (1823b, 5).

In addition to his notations concerning the local flora and fauna, Cormack’s early account contrasts his own appearance and cultural practices with those of his Mi’kmaq companion (1823b, 5).⁷² He ponders “the Indian’s” clothing, their weaponry, their remarkable endurance and physical prowess, exemplified in their ability to run down a stag singlehandedly. While his speculations about their independence and ability to endure extreme physical hardship evoke Cartwright’s earlier impression of the Noble Savage, Cormack’s account is more insistent in its distinction between himself and his Native companion. Among his many such observations, for example, his unpublished manuscript contains the note, “The flies preyed most on my Indian” (1823b, 5). Equally revealing with regards to their relationship is Cormack’s use of the passive voice in his description of how a camp is prepared “in the Indian manner”: “Care should be taken.... Arms and knapsacks are then piled.... Tinder is made.... Boughs are broken from the

⁷² For Cormack’s observations on Native dress and weaponry, see Cormack (1823a, in Howley 1915, 135-138).

surrounding spruce trees.... A few light poles are then cut and stuck in the ground” (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 138). Later in the journey, when they are faced with increasing adversity, Cormack outlines his strategy, in his words, “to keep my Indian at the toilsome task,” which involved “promises of future rewards,” and regaling him with “allusions to the fame of the Indian hunters; for enduring fatigue and hardships beyond what the white man could bear” (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 147). Despite his perception that they “in the prime of life have broken constitutions by over-exertions, casualties, and exposure to weather,” Cormack nonetheless concludes, like other writers before him, that ultimately the Mi’kmaq “might be rendered useful” to the British government (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 152, 153).

It is perhaps in his descriptions of the landscape that Cormack most clearly evokes the colonial perspective. His first view of the interior evokes M. L. Pratt’s concept of “the monarch of all I survey” (2008, 198):

A new world seemed to invite us onward, or rather we claimed the dominion and were impatient to proceed to take possession.... Obstacles of every kind were dispelled and despised. Primitiveness, omnipotence, and tranquility were stamped upon everything so forcibly, that the mind is hurled back thousands of years, and the man left denuded of that mental fabric which a knowledge of ages of human experience and of time may have reared within him. (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 139)

Throughout the account, Cormack’s characteristically colonial bravado clashes with his paradoxical feelings about encountering the Native people he has set out to meet: “There was no will but ours. Thoughts of the aborigines did not alter our determination to meet them, as well as everything living, that might present itself in a country yet untrodden, and before unseen by civilized man” (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 139). In typical colonial fashion, Cormack describes

the landscape he encounters in terms of what, at least from a European perspective, it lacks. Acknowledging the impossibility of describing the “grandeur and richness of the scenery,” he concedes, “in vain did the eye wander for the cattle, the cottage, and the flocks” (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 140). Cormack’s unpublished account reads slightly differently: “In vain were associations and recollections: in vain did the eye wander for the castle, – the cottage, – the flocks, – and the milkmaid” (1823b, 11). After traversing the interior without a single sighting of the Native people he seeks, on November 29, accompanied by his guide, Cormack emerges at Cape Ray, where they board a ship for Fortune Bay. Delighted at finally being “restored to society,” it is here Cormack wraps up his “four month’s excursion of toil, pleasure, pain, and anxiety” and takes passage to Dartmouth England, where he arrives on February 10, 1823 (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 168).

Having met none of the Native people he set out to find on his 1822 journey, in 1827 Cormack begins to plan a second journey. Before doing so, however, on October 2, 1827 he founds the Beothuk Institution in Twillingate with a mandate “to bring within the protection of civilization that neglected and persecuted tribe – the Red Indians of Newfoundland,” whom, he subsequently notes, are “called by themselves Beothuck” (1827b, in Howley, 1915, 182-183). Like Cartwright and Buchan before him, Cormack at this point is concerned that the island’s Native people are disappearing, largely due to the encroachment of British settlers. His speech on the occasion of the founding of that institution provides further insight into what he perceives as the power dynamic between the British and the Beothuk he is setting out to save:

Britons have trespassed here, to be a blight and a scourge to a portion of the human race; under their (in other respects) protecting power, a defenceless, and once independent, proud tribe of men, have been nearly extirpated from the face of the earth. Near this spot

is known to remain in all his primitive rudeness, clothed in skins, and with a bow and arrow only to gain his subsistence by, and to repel the attacks of his lawless and reckless foes: there on the opposite approximating point, is man improved and powerful – Barbarity and civilization are called upon this day to shake hands (1827b, in Howley, 1915, 183).

Cormack's speech at the founding of the Beothuk Institution is significant for a number of reasons. In addition to articulating his own perception of the situation in Newfoundland, he publically states a number of elements that subsequently become key assumptions of the Beothuk narrative. One of these assumptions is the idea of the Mi'kmaq being complicit in the destruction of the Beothuk people, as discussed in Chapter 6. Acknowledging that the two peoples were initially "on friendly terms," in his speech Cormack explains how, armed by the French, who offered them rewards for Beothuk heads, the Mi'kmaq embarked on a campaign of war against "these unsullied people of the chase," driving them from their coastal encampments into the island's interior (1827b, in Howley, 1915, 183). He also makes reference to the "surviving female" Shanawdithit who, four years into her captivity, Cormack reports as refusing to return to her people "for fear they should put her to death" (1827b, in Howley, 1915, 184). In the announcement of his goal to embark on a second journey into the interior, Cormack articulates his feelings about the alarming decline of the Beothuk population. Once again in pursuit of "these sylvan people," his goal, he states, is "to endeavour to force a friendly interview with some of them, before they are entirely annihilated" (1827b, in Howley, 1915, 184). These three themes articulated in Cormack's speech at the founding of the Beothuk Institution – Mi'kmaq hostility, Beothuk annihilation, and their xenophobia or antipathy towards outsiders,

including any of their own people who have come into contact with such outsiders – come to constitute fundamental assumptions in much of the Beothuk narrative to follow.

The resolutions that follow Cormack’s speech at the founding of the Beothuk Institution, unanimously supported by all present, provide further insight into the extent to which Cormack’s views on the Beothuk are accepted by his peers and integrated into the narrative. The first of these resolutions has to do with the institution’s mandate: “That a Society be formed to be called the ‘Boeothick Institution,’ for the purpose of opening a communication with, and promoting the civilization of the Red Indians of Newfoundland” (1827b, in Howley, 1915, 184). Following a series of motions outlining the structure and operations of the newly founded institution is a fifteenth proposal: “That Shawnadithit be placed under the paternal care of the Insitution; the expense of her support and education to be provided for out of the general funds” (1827b, in Howley, 1915, 186). It is this final resolution which gives Cormack the authority he seeks to retrieve Shawnadithit from the Twillingate household of John Peyton Jr. later in September, 1828 and move her to his own house in St. John’s, where she remains until her death in 1829.⁷³

In a subsequent series of letters to John Stark, Secretary of the newly founded Beothuk Institution, Cormack articulates his determination to succeed in his second proposed journey into Newfoundland’s interior.⁷⁴ In one, he confides, “Whether I succeed now or not in forcing a friendly intercourse with any of them, I am determined to bring about in a few years an intercourse between them and the Europeans” (1827c, in Howley, 1915, 197-198). The letter concludes with the statement, “I will by degrees have them civilized.” In another letter,

⁷³ For written correspondence regarding Shanawdithit’s move, see fourth, fifth, and sixth letters from John Stark to Cormack, September 12 and September, 16, 1828, in Howley (1915, 201-203). In his sixth letter, which Stark indicates to be handed directly to Cormack by Shanawdithit on her arrival at his house, he notes, “She asked me if you had any family” (1828, in Howley, 1915, 203).

⁷⁴ See “Letters of W.E.Cormack, Esq. addressed to John Stark, Esq., Secretary of the Beothuck Institution, relative to affairs of the Institution, & c.” in Howley (1915, 197-200).

Cormack proposes a reward of £100 to anyone who can “bring a Red Indian man to Peyton’s or other English house, as a brother” (1827c, in Howley, 1915, 198).

Cormack’s account of his second journey appears in three publications: *The Mirror*, *The Albion* of New York, and the *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal*.⁷⁵ His announcement of the expedition in the latter states, “I am here with three Indians, – a Micmack, a mountaineer, and a Bennakee (Canadian) – equipped and ready to set off into the interior, in search of some of the Beothicks, to endeavour to obtain a friendly interview with them, as a step to commence bringing about their civilization” (1827a, 205).

Acknowledging the failure of his earlier attempt, Cormack insists that “to civilize a long persecuted tribe of savages requires repeated attempts of this kind” (1827a, 206). Accompanied by three Native guides, throughout his account Cormack emphasizes what he perceives to be his status as the first European to visit the interior at this time of year. Of Red Indian Lake, he observes, “We were the first Europeans who had seen it in an unfrozen state” (1829e, in Howley, 1915, 192).⁷⁶ On finding the wreck of a birchbark canoe, Cormack muses that “the people who were in it had perished... they never having held intercourse with Europeans” (1829e, in Howley, 1915). When the party comes across a Beothuk burial site containing a European coffin, however, it is not Cormack but rather one of his Native guides who determines it as belonging to Demasduit, the Beothuk woman captured by a party of settlers led by John Peyton

⁷⁵ See Cormack (1829a, 1829c, 1829d). This latter version from *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal* is also published in Howley, from which the citations are taken (Cormack, 1829e, in Howley, 1915, 189-197). As Marshall notes, “the departure date was 31 October 1827, not 31 October 1828 as printed in the *Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal* and in Howley 1915, 190” (1996, 516, n.112). The same date of departure, October 31, 1828, also appears in *The Albion* and *The Mirror*.

⁷⁶ “Not so - ” notes Howley: “Cormack appears to have been unaware of Lieut. Cartwright’s expedition in 1768” (1915, 192, n.1).

Jr. in 1819, and reported to have died on a return voyage to her people with Peyton and Buchan in 1820.⁷⁷

Like Cartwright before him, while he comes across many of their encampments and artifacts, which he describes in considerable detail, Cormack is unsuccessful in locating any Beothuk people. At this point in the narrative, there is an acknowledgement of Cormack's mounting sense of melancholy, his frustration at his inability to achieve his goal, and the tremendous price he has paid in its pursuit. Determining, on their arrival at Red Indian lake, "that the Red Indians, the terror of the Europeans as well as the other Indian inhabitants of Newfoundland, – no longer existed, the spirits of one and all of us were very deeply affected" (1829e, in Howley, 1915, 192). Returning to the mouth of the River Exploits on November 29, Cormack concludes his 200-mile journey visibly altered by the trek. Notes Howley,

Mr. Peyton informed me, that he saw Cormack before he entered upon this journey, that he was a lithe, active, robust man. When he returned from the expedition and revisited Mr. Peyton's house, the latter did not recognize him at first, he had changed so much. He presented such a gaunt, haggard, and worn out appearance from the excessive toil and privation he had undergone, accompanied by hunger and anxiety, that he did not look much like the stalwart individual he saw depart for the interior a month previously.

(1915, 195 -196, n.1)

Nonetheless, Cormack emerges from his journey firmer in his resolve "to prosecute inquiry into the moral character of man in his primitive state" (1829e, in Howley, 1915, 196). His account he concludes with the recommendation "that the instruction of Shawnawdithit would be much accelerated by bringing her to St. John's" (1829e, in Howley, 1915, 197).

⁷⁷ For a discussion of recent research developments regarding Demasduit's capture and death, see Chapter 7.

While at Cormack's house in St. John's, Shanawdithit received limited instruction in English and was interviewed extensively by Cormack with regards to her people's culture, language, and spiritual traditions. In a letter to Dr. Inglis, Bishop of Nova Scotia, Cormack notes, "As she acquires the English language she becomes more interesting; and I have lately discovered the key to the Mythology of her tribe, which must be considered one of the most interesting subjects to enquire into" (1828a, in Howley, 1915, 208-209). Stating that the document is missing from Cormack's papers, Howley provides his own summary of the information Cormack learned from Shanawdithit, including a discussion of her maps and drawings. Narrated by Howley himself, these accounts are discussed in Chapter 4. It is notable that while Shanawdithit's maps are illustrated in pencil, Cormack's notes appear in pen, including the following overleaf inscription on one of them in Cormack's handwriting: "Nancy is a bad girl."

Suspecting that a sequestered group of Beothuk may have avoided his detection, back in St. John's Cormack writes to the French Commandant, Administrator for His Majesty, the King of France, in Newfoundland, announcing the departure of a small group of Native guides in search of the Beothuk, "to explore to the North and the vicinity of White Bay to determine their existence or extinction" (1828b, in Howley, 1915, 218). The disappointing results of their expedition appear in the October 21, 1828 edition of *The Royal Gazette*. Describing the presence of the three Natives as "a treat just now in St. John's such as is not likely again to be met with," the account states that they have returned from their journey without finding "any recent traces" of the Beothuk (1828, in Howley, 1915, 220). Cormack opens the Preface of his brief "History of the Red Indians of Newfoundland" with the affirmation that the Beothuk are extinct:

To begin in the year 1829 to write a history of the Red Indians of Newfoundland, is like beginning to write the history of an extinct people. All that they have left behind them being their name and one wonders that they left nothing else. (1829b, in Howley, 1915, 222)

Cormack's contribution to the Beothuk narrative is characterized by the overt expression of his distinct cultural perspective. Like Buchan and Cartwright before him, Cormack builds his narrative around his homodiegetic experience in search of the Beothuk, as well as his personal thoughts and reflections on the experience. Even more than his predecessors, Cormack was motivated by an urgent desire to stop what he felt was the imminent disappearance of the Beothuk as a people, an impression exacerbated by his failure to encounter any of them, save Shanawdithit, in person. Written from a distinctly colonial perspective that views Native culture as inferior to his own, Cormack's narrative of the Beothuk is generally patronizing, focusing largely on his own efforts to make their plight known to a larger audience before it is too late. Taken together, his accounts focus on the narrator himself as much as the Beothuk people he seeks, presenting the inner journey of a man obsessed with a personal goal and profoundly disappointed with his inability to achieve it.

3.6 Later 19th-Century Accounts

Following the death of Shanawdithit in 1829, there emerges a group of commentators in the 19th century writing about various aspects of what they now believe to be an extinct race. Written by a wide range of individuals – some of them anonymous – including several amateur historians and archaeologists, these accounts impact the Beothuk narrative by reinforcing themes introduced by earlier writers of European descent, including the dehumanization and

objectification of a Native people who are perceived to no longer exist. As a group, these accounts indicate the extent to which historical narrative is impacted by both the writing that precedes it and the prevalent views of the historical writer's contemporary context.

One such writer from this period is McGregor, Cormack's friend with whom he stayed after leaving Newfoundland in 1829, and whose "Sketches of Savage Life: Shaa-naan-dithit" appeared in *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* in 1836 (Marshall, 1996, 5).⁷⁸ McGregor's discourse on Newfoundland's "nation of savages" opens echoing Cormack, with the observation that the Beothuk had "no understood intercourse with Europeans" (1836, 316). In large part, the article consists of a retelling of several incidents in Beothuk history, in which many of the dates and details are incorrect. Buchan's 1811 expedition, for example, is dated 1816; the "final appearance of the Red Indians" is described as an 1823 attack by two English furriers on a husband and wife who are both killed, the latter "shot through the back and chest" (1836, 318). McGregor gives considerable attention to his "adventurous friend Cormack, the only European who ever succeeded in crossing the stubborn, rugged territory of Newfoundland," with his account reflecting many of his friend's colonial assumptions (1836, 318).

In his reiteration of Cormack's various observations with regard to material culture, way of life, and burial practices, McGregor includes the interesting detail that among the articles Cormack collected from the Beothuk gravesites and deserted encampments, he included two skulls: one of "an old warrior," and the other "the skull of a female" (1836, 321).⁷⁹ Shanawdithit's reluctance to participate in Cormack's expeditions in search of her people McGregor attributes to a very real fear of how she would be treated by them on her return,

⁷⁸ Pope describes McGregor's "Sketches of Savage Life" as "just one anonymous source" (1999, 281); Marshall suggests McGregor's source to be notes left to him by Cormack (1996, 5-6).

⁷⁹ These turn out to be the skulls of Demasduit (Mary March), captured by John Peyton in 1819 and returned to the Exploits that same year by Peyton and Buchan as a corpse, and her husband, Nonosabasut, who was murdered by Peyton's party in the attack.

“saying it was an invariable religious principle laid down by her people to sacrifice to the *munes* of the victims slain by the whites and Mik-maks any Boëothic who had been in contact with them” (1836, 322). Claiming her reasons to be “satisfactory,” McGregor paraphrases Shanawdithit as having insisted “that it was impossible for her tribe to exist much longer” (1836, 323). McGregor’s account concludes with a discussion of Shanawdithit’s generally calm temperament, which he claims only altered when she was treated with disrespect: “her fierce Indian spirit kindled – the savage eye darted fire and vengeance; and the uniform kindness of Mr. Cormack alone would subdue the tempest which raged in the bosom of Shaa-naan-dithit” (1836, 323).

The anonymous 1844 “Mary May: The Newfoundland Indian” takes this objectification and imaginative interpretation to another level. Like Cormack and McGregor before him, the author perpetuates the idea of Beothuk xenophobia. Never having “been induced to visit the white settler since British subjects have resided there,” the introduction explains, the Beothuk “have chosen to remain isolated and insulated; keeping their history, their wisdom, and their deeds to themselves” (1844, 523). As a result, they emerge a mysterious, enigmatic people, “wrapt up in a historical mantle as dark as the shades of their own impenetrable complexion” (1844, 523). Echoing themes from some of the earliest European writing about Native people in Newfoundland, the article proceeds with what the author describes as a summary of settler perceptions underlying their idea that “these poor creatures are semi-human”: their ability to vanish from sight, descend underground, transform themselves into birds and fishes, and survive for hours underwater. Assuring the reader that “this is of course unnatural and absurd,” the author proceeds to attribute the Beothuks’ “shyness, and their unsocial and vindictive disposition” to their mistreatment by the Spanish and Portuguese (1844, 524).

What follows is a retelling of what appears to be Buchan's 1811 expedition into the interior, with several significant revisions from Buchan's original account: The date of the expedition is given as 1830. Presented with a series of gifts, two of the Beothuk agree to accompany the party back to St. John's. On finding two of his party murdered and mutilated, the unnamed commander of the expedition has the two Natives accompanying them shot on the spot.

The account of Demasduit's capture, dated at 1832, contains a curious combination of narrative elements from several previously published accounts of Beothuk women, with a number of significant revisions on the author's part. The young woman is first sighted by a fisherman alone at the edge of the water, doing "the offices of the bath with singular grace and activity" (1844, 524). She makes no resistance when her captor emerges to obtain "possession of her person." Like so many descriptions of Beothuk captives, the woman here is at the same time idealized, objectified, and described in terminology evocative of the natural world: "She was apparently about eighteen years of age; an angelic creature, tall, with perfect symmetry of proportion, agreeable features, good complexion, and as agile and graceful as a fawn" (1844, 525). The subsequent description of her trip to St. John's evokes elements of the narrative of the woman captured by William Cull in 1803, as well as Shanawdithit's visit in June, 1823. Although "flattered, caressed, and made the reigning belle," the young woman remains unmoved, pining, the author conjectures, "to go back into the dark wilds among her own people." After a year in St. John's, the woman's wish is granted, and she is returned to her people "richly clad and profusely decorated" (1844, 525).

At this point, the narrative is interrupted by the author's 1836 departure from Newfoundland. Conceding that many "idle reports and tales were circulated about Mary May," which he admits were "for the most part contradictory, and strongly favour of the marvelous,"

the author leaves the reader with his own account of her fate – a version he insists “is as well authenticated as any, and quite as probable” (1844, 525). In this version, the young woman is returned to her people, who proclaim her to be a goddess, overwhelming her to the point that she contemplates returning to the settlers. Two months after her return, with her kindred “bowing before her in heathenish worship,” she is rescued from their attentions by a Mi’kmaq brave, who takes her to live with him among his own people (1844, 526).

As an event, the capture of Demasduit takes prominence in the Beothuk narrative for the variations on its tellings, providing an excellent example of how different narrators can create radically divergent accounts of the same historical event. Another account which takes albeit fewer liberties than “Mary May” is that narrated by “E.S.” in a letter to the editor of the *Liverpool Mercury* (1829, in Howley, 1915, 96-101). At one point addressing his readers as “ye effeminate feather-bed loungers,” E.S. claims homodiegetic narration, having “arrived accidentally” at the Peytons’ house in Twillingate and subsequently taken part in the expedition himself (1829, in Howley, 1915, 98, 96). Particularly evocative is E.S.’s description of the death of Demasduit’s husband Nonosabasut.⁸⁰ With its references to “writhing in agonies,” “a wild gaze,” “eyes that flashed with fire,” and “a yell that made the woods echo,” the frequently cited account features a high degree of narrative detail (1829, in Howley, 1915, 99).⁸¹ Notable for the vividness with which it describes the capture of Demasduit and her extreme grief at the murder of her husband, E.S.’s account concludes on an optimistic note of reconciliation:

The poor woman was now tied securely, we having, on consideration, deemed it for the best to take her with us, so that by kind treatment and civilization she might, in the course

⁸⁰ For a discussion of Shanawdithit’s account of the death of Nonosabasut, as well as Howley’s interpretation of the event, see Chapter 4.

⁸¹ Howley conjectures that E.S. is “probably some member of the Slade family, whose firm carried on an extensive mercantile trade all over Notre Dame Bay, their principal establishment being located at Twillingate, with branch houses in all the settled harbours” (1915, 101, n.1).

of time, be returned to her tribe, and be the means of effecting a lasting reconciliation between them and the settlers. (1829, in Howley, 1915, 101)

Sir Hercules Robinson, whose account of the event is admittedly heterodiegetic – narrating the recollection of a Reverend Mr. Leigh of Harbour Grace – shares E.S.’s spirit of optimism with regards to the fate of Demasduit following her capture. Howley acknowledges omitting much of Robinson’s account, on the claim that it constitutes “merely a reiteration of what has already been given” with regards to the relationship between the Beothuk, the Mi’kmaq, and the white settlers (1820, in Howley, 115, 127). As such, the narrative of the capture opens with Robinson’s description of Demasduit’s extraordinary reaction to John Peyton Jr. in the wake of her husband’s murder:

The anguish and horror which were visible in her intelligent countenance, appeared to give place to fear, – and she went to the murderer of her husband clung to his arm as if for protection, and strange to say a most devoted attachment appeared from that moment to have been produced toward him, which only ended with her life. – To him alone she was all gentleness, affection and obedience, and the last act of her ‘brief eventful history’ was to take a ring from her finger and beg it might be sent to him. (1820, in Howley, 1915, 127)

The story ends on a different note, however, when the corpse of Demasduit is returned to her people in a coffin filled with gifts. In his conclusion, Robinson reveals his misgivings about the Beothuk’s propensity for revenge, another theme which has characterized so much of the European writing about Native people that precedes his account: “The experiment I think was hazardous, the Indians on returning may perceive the truth, or they may fancy poison, insult, or

any barbarities practiced on their forefathers, which they carefully and immemorially record” (1820, in Howley, 1915, 129).⁸²

Yet another narrator’s account of the capture of Demasduit appears in Bourinot’s 1868 “Some Stories of a Lost Tribe,” published in *The New Dominion Monthly*. Thin on detail and questionable in its historical references, Bourinot’s account introduces William Cull of Fogo as “an enthusiast on the subject of the aborigines” (1868, 14). It also reiterates McGregor’s theme of Beothuk xenophobia, ostensibly gleaned from Shanawdithit. Writes Bourinot, “One of them who lived some years afterwards, and became exceedingly useful as a domestic, said that the reason of their refusal to go back, was that they were afraid of being harshly treated by the Indians” (1868, 17). Unlike the earlier narratives of Demasduit’s capture, which tend to focus on the drama of the event, Bourinot’s account is retrospective in tone. Reflecting on her kind treatment in St. John’s and the subsequent image of her coffin filled with presents, the author notes, “None of the allurements of civilized life, however, appear to have weaned her from her forest home” (1868, 17).

A recurrent theme in much of the 19th-century writing about the Beothuk centres around the question of their inevitable fate, with some narrators lamenting their disappearance while others conjecturing the survival of a small group of Beothuk as of yet undetected by Europeans. Characteristic of this writing is Jukes’ 1846 “Notice on the Aborigines of Newfoundland,” published by the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Based on information reportedly collected by the author in Newfoundland between 1839 and 1840, the article argues in favour of a connection between the Beothuk and “the Red Indians of North America,” concluding that “about twenty years ago the last remnant of the Boeothics, or Aborigines of

⁸² For a discussion of the more contemporary narrative around the potential causes of Demasduit’s death, see section 7.4 in Chapter 7: “Osteoarchaeology and Craniology.”

Newfoundland, were probably received by the mountaineers and incorporated into their tribes” (1846, 114). The sentiment is echoed in an anonymous 1875 article published in *Forest and Stream*: “Does a remnant of the race yet survive in some secluded valley of the unexplored interior of the island or amid the rugged hills of Labrador?” (1875, 228) Others, such as the Reverend P. Tocque, dwell on what they perceive to be the Beothuk’s tragic fate and its effect on those concerned with their welfare: “Where are the red men? They are gone; they have passed away for ever, and are now in the far-off land of the Great Spirit. The philanthropist cannot contemplate the destruction of the aborigines of Newfoundland without dropping a tear over their melancholy and sad destiny” (1869, 7).

While still reflecting a fascination with their fate, European writing about the Beothuk later in the 19th century become progressively more empirical. While incorporating many of the themes and assumptions of earlier writers such as Cormack, this subsequent writing is characterized by its attempt to view the Beothuk people through an even more objective and scientific lens. These accounts often represent brief contemplations on an element from the preceding Beothuk narrative that has appealed to the author’s curiosity or interest. Reflecting a late Victorian interest in science, they are characterized by a heterodiegetic narratorial voice that increasingly objectifies the remnants and physical remains of what are now accepted to be an extinct people.

Several such articles can be found in *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (1875, 1876). In one, Lloyd presents a series of his observations about Beothuk material culture, including sketches of their canoes, storage houses, weapons and other implements. Echoing the previously discussed account of Demasduit’s capture by E.S., Lloyd’s article also contains reference to a story told to him by John Peyton of Twillingate describing the Beothuk woman’s

fondness for her captor.⁸³ In a previous article, while acknowledging Cartwright as a source, Lloyd notes “I am much indebted to the kindness of Mr. John Peyton, of Toulinget Island, who was intimately associated, in his early days, with the Red Indians, for much valuable information concerning them” (1875, 23).

In a discussion piece following Lloyd’s 1876 article, Busk introduces the topic of Beothuk craniology, with the author providing detailed sketches and cranial dimensions for two skulls obtained from the Edinburgh Museum.⁸⁴ A contemporary anonymous article in *The Canadian Antiquarian* discusses a skull recently retrieved on Pilley’s Island in Notre Dame Bay: “It has the characteristics of the skull of a savage, but it is well shaped and pretty well developed in the intellectual region” (1876, 92). The author concludes, “The skull proves that the Beothuks were by no means of a low type” (1876, 93). Writing in 1891, MacDougall provides an overview of Beothuk history that concludes with the discussion of two grave excavations from 1886 and 1888. With respect to the findings of the former, MacDougall notes, “The body of the boy is an interesting relic” (1891, 102). Also included in MacDougall’s account are his observations that the manners of the captive Demasduit “were very pleasing,” that Shanawdithit “learned English and became a useful servant,” and that the Beothuk were exterminated by the French, who enlisted the Mi’kmaq in their campaign against them (1891, 99).

Writing in 1885, Gatschet also raises this theme of the extermination of the Beothuks by the French, echoing Cormack’s story of the French placing a bounty on Beothuk scalps. Under the subheading “Ethnological Notes,” Gatschet cites John Peyton’s description of the Beothuk from Jukes as “fierce and savage (dreaded by the whites..... They were great thieves... and the

⁸³ Lloyd writes, “After her capture, she refused to take any food from anyone except himself, and used to sleep in the tent by his side.... She soon became attached to him, and would place his snow-shoes under her pillow on retiring to rest, for fear he should leave her behind” (1876a, 228).

⁸⁴ Busk surmises these to have been “presented to the late Professor Jamieson, by Mr. McCormack, in 1826” (1876, 230).

French had a greater hatred of them than the English” (1885, 411). Gatschet notes that the Beothuk “also were supposed to be gifted with witchcraft, for when attacked, they could raise a fog, in which they made their escape” (1885, 412). Gatschet’s article concludes with a detailed Beothuk vocabulary, compiled from lists previously generated by Cormack, King, and Leigh, as well as corrections from the latter by Howley (Gatschet, 1885, 415-424). In a subsequent publication, Gatschet introduces two further vocabulary lists.⁸⁵ A review of the transcription, phonetics, morphology, and derivation of words in the vocabulary leads Gatschet to conclude “that the Red Indians of Newfoundland must have been a race distinct from the races on the mainland shores surrounding them on the North and West” and that they belonged to “a separate linguistic family” (1886, 427).⁸⁶

Compiling three Beothuk vocabularies attributed to Rev. John Clinch, Rev. John Leith, and King, Patterson published a new Beothuk vocabulary in 1892.⁸⁷ In his “Remarks on Preceding Vocabularies” in the same volume, Campbell disagrees with Gatschet’s conclusion, stating that “Dr. Latham was right in classifying the extinct aborigines of Newfoundland with the Algonquins” (1892, 26). With regards to the fate of the Beothuk, however, Campbell is unequivocal. He concludes, “I at first supposed it possible that a remnant of this people had escaped to Labrador, but a careful examination of the papers connected with Shanandithit, now in the St. John’s museum, convinced me that this was impossible” (1892, 32). Patterson’s extensive “The Beothiks or Red Indians of Newfoundland,” a compilation of anthropological and historical observations about the Beothuk beginning with the reference to them in “Fabian’s Chronicle,” opens with what has become an increasingly familiar theme in the Beothuk

⁸⁵ For a discussion of the source of these second vocabulary lists, which implicates Robinson, Leigh, and R.M. Martin, see Gatschet (1886, 411).

⁸⁶ Gatschet’s conclusion was subsequently disproven by Hewson (1978).

⁸⁷ As Patterson notes, the third vocabulary listed – that by Dr. King – “was revised by Mr. Gatschet, with the assistance of Mr. J. P. Howley of St. Johns” (1892, 19).

narrative: “Perhaps no part of this history is sadder than that which concerns the doom of the Red Indians of Newfoundland” (1891, 123).

Appearing at the end of the century in 1895, Prowse’s *A History of Newfoundland* reflects many of the attitudes and themes prevalent in writing about the Beothuk up to that time. Given the scope of Prowse’s work, it is limited in its reference to the Beothuk, a reflection of its emphasis on the experience and perspective of the colonists. His first reference appears in the context of Whitbourne’s early musings about “the ‘natural inhabitants,’ as he called the Beothics or Red Indians” (1895, 63). Prowse cites two of Whitbourne’s passages concerning the involvement of Native people in the whale fishery, in support of his impression of them as “tractable if well used” (1895, 63). With reference to Whitbourne’s previously cited account of the retribution by a group of settlers on a Beothuk encampment, Prowse concedes, “Old Whitbourne himself, much as we love and admire him, admits having shared in a most outrageous spoliation of the poor savages” (1895, 64). Reflecting on what he sees as the misunderstanding involving Guy and Whittington that leads to the estrangement of the Natives, Prowse writes, “The story of the red Indian is a sad, dismal tale of wanton cruelty, suspicion and treachery” (1895, 65).⁸⁸ Prowse summarizes his discussion of a 1762 account of the Beothuk murder of a group of settlers by noting, “Whatever may be said about the Beothics, there can be no doubt they were a most bloodthirsty, treacherous race” (Anspach, 1819; Prowse, 1895, 324, n.1). Echoing a theme that runs throughout early writing about the Native people of Newfoundland, Prowse attributes the failure of various subsequent colonial governments to make contact with the Beothuk as resulting from their deep-seated antipathy towards other people, particularly Europeans. He concludes, “Whatever our sentimental feelings may be for these

⁸⁸ The exact nature of this ostensibly historical misunderstanding is re-examined in the discussion of Gilbert in Chapter 7, section 7.1 “Newly Discovered Historical Sources.”

primitive inhabitants, all their history shows that the one ineradicable feature in their character was an insatiable hatred of the pale faces” (1895, 385).

3.7 Conclusions

Hardly optimistic, Prowse’s observations at the end of the 19th century aptly summarize the prevalent recurring attitudes in the written narrative of the Beothuk in Newfoundland from its earliest sources, a narrative that consistently represents the Native as Indigenous other. This narrative spans from the earliest European observations about the peculiarity of Native people’s physical appearance, language, and culture when they were alive, to even more objectifying, ostensibly scientific analysis of their physical remains once they were believed to have disappeared. In the majority of accounts within this narrative, the authors’ lack of any personal interaction with Native people would seem to necessitate heterodiegetic narration. Yet significantly, many of these accounts prove to be homodiegetic, with the experience of the narrator himself, rather than his narrative subject, constituting the thematic core of the work.

From the Norse accounts in the 13th and 14th centuries to Prowse’s observations at the end of the 19th century, European writing about Native people in Newfoundland typically dehumanizes the Native other. Through negation, debasement, and bestial association, European writers serve the colonial enterprise by creating and reinforcing stereotypes about people they consider to be inferior to themselves. As narrators, they reveal a bias that is so consistently Eurocentric that it functions to provide genuine historical insight – perhaps most notably into the manner in which the Beothuk were *perceived*, and how this perception may have played out in the often violent, ostensibly decisive and disastrous interaction between the two groups.

From the perspective of historical narrative theory and narratology, what is equally notable about this group of writers is the consistency with which they present their interpretations as historical truth. Writing within the Western tradition, they assume objectivity and trace a causality between events whose significance is determined primarily by the extent to which they affect either the writers themselves, in the case of homodiegetic narration, or the settler community who act as historical sources for heterodiegetic narrators. Preoccupied with their own vision, these writers are typically unequivocal in their conclusions, failing to acknowledge any limitations of their narrative approach, regardless of whether or not they had any direct personal contact with the Beothuk. Consequently, the onus is on the reader to realize that taken together their accounts, like all historical accounts, are biased and represent a distinct, albeit consistent, perspective on Beothuk history.

As discussed, one exception to the pervasive self-assuredness of this European perspective appears in the 1766 account of Sir Joseph Banks, who openly admits that his interpretation, relying as it does on the accounts of settlers, may indeed represent more conjecture than fact. A second exception appears toward the end of Prowse's discussion of the Beothuk, in which he openly acknowledges the limitations of his own account. Admittedly, Prowse's discussion opens with an account of Beothuk brutality towards the French, followed by his observation, "Like all savages they were inveterate thieves" (1895, 63). Yet, with regards to Whitbourne's description of their thieving in Trinity Bay, Prowse makes a rare concession: "On this subject it is unfortunate that we have only the white man's story, and the red man is unheard" (1895, 64).⁸⁹ Articulated for the first time within the Beothuk narrative, this observation presciently sets the stage for a fundamental early 20th-century schism in

⁸⁹ It would be two decades before Shanawdithit's testimony, as related to Cormack, was published by Howley (1915).

interpretation, one that comes to inform much of the historical and archaeological narrative to follow.

Chapter 4 - Howley vs. Speck

Early in the 20th century, the Beothuk narrative takes an interesting turn with the emergence of two very different works: James P. Howley's *The Beothucks or Red Indians: the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Newfoundland* and Frank Speck's *Beothuk and Micmac: Indian Notes and Monographs*. A comparison of these seminal texts underscores the primacy of narratorial perspective in our interpretation of history, and illustrates how that perspective is shaped. In addition, it reveals how the consideration of alternative or even conflicting perspectives can function to elucidate the complexity of key historical events.

Since its publication in 1915, Howley's *The Beothucks or Red Indians: the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Newfoundland* has become a primary source for scholars seeking the answers to a vast array of questions about the Beothuk people: anthropologists, archaeologists, and most extensively, ethnohistorians. Like the historical narrative that precedes it, Howley's work relies almost exclusively on Eurocentric sources for its information on the Beothuk, including members of the Peyton family. As illustrated by a range of sources, including those within Howley's own text, the Peytons were key players in what later came to be known as pivotal and highly controversial events.

As a whole, Howley's writing reflects prevalent attitudes discussed in earlier historical texts that serve the colonial undertaking, including the dehumanization and objectification of a Native other whom the European author assumes to be inherently inferior to himself. In the few instances when Howley does draw on a Native informant, he maintains a degree of narratorial control through editing and notation that ultimately serves to ensure the Indigenous account aligns with those of his European sources. Howley's candidness regarding his function as editor

ultimately serves to draw attention to the predominance of his own narrative voice as well as the range of narratorial perspective of the sources cited in his monograph.

Published seven years later in 1922, Speck's *Beothuk and Micmac: Indian Notes and Monographs* addresses the Beothuk primarily through Indigenous sources. As such, Speck's work raises fundamental questions about the value of polyvocality and the challenges of incorporating oral history into historical research. For a number of reasons, Speck's work is lesser known than Howley's, and his ideas have had, by comparison, minimal impact. Yet some of Speck's primary theories about the Beothuk – in particular regarding their origins and fate – raise interpretive possibilities that have been borne out in a series of interdisciplinary research developments beginning in the 1970s and continuing to the present day.

As a counter narrative to much of the writing that precedes it, Speck's work illustrates how our historical interpretation can open up through the inclusion of alternative and even oppositional sources of knowledge. An analysis of the primary sources of Howley and Speck's texts, as well the greater context of their lives and work, sheds some light on the complexity of narratorial bias, which is shaped by a number of personal factors, including the authors' upbringing, education, and life experience, as well as their cultural and historical context and who they perceive as the intended audience for their work. Furthermore, the comparison of Howley and Speck provides insight into the schism in interpretation arising from these two authors' distinct, personal, and complex narratorial perspectives on the Beothuk, and the pervasive influence of their thinking on the narrative to follow.

4.1 Howley's *The Beothucks or Red Indians*

A geologist by profession, James P. Howley worked as a geological and topographical surveyor for the government of Newfoundland from 1867 until his death in 1918 (Tompkins, 1984, 9). Howley's interest in the Beothuk was personal rather than professional. A collection of historical documents, folk traditions, journalistic accounts, and descriptions of archaeological findings believed to be Beothuk, *The Beothucks or Red Indians: The Aboriginal Inhabitants of Newfoundland* constitutes more a compendium of research resources than an ethnohistorical analysis.

Since its publication in 1915, the reaction to Howley's work has been mixed. Described as "les documents fragmentaires et épars, jetés en vrac par Howley" and an "unsatisfactory description of the looting of Newfoundland," the book has also been praised by more recent scholars for its "strong critical sense," its comprehensiveness, and its significant contribution to subsequent research efforts (Rousseau, 1962, 49; Johnson, 1937, 164; Pastore, 1993, 260). Upton commends Howley's work as "well done," with the caveat "if Howley missed a document, so did everyone else" (1978, 150). In 1996, Story described it as "still the one indispensable work on its subject" (Kirwin, Story, & O'Flaherty, 1997, xxxv). Inarguably, the book's influence has been tremendous, cited as it is, often extensively, by virtually all scholars writing about the Beothuk since its publication.

As a compendium of ethnohistorical research documents and materials, *The Beothucks or Red Indians* represents a significant publishing accomplishment. Indeed, while taking issue with a number of Howley's assumptions, Speck himself concedes that "there is a grave doubt if Mr. Howley's monograph will ever be superseded" (1917, 280). Within the context of this

dissertation, the number and diversity of narrative sources cited from Howley stands as testimony to the debt owed him by researchers even today.

The danger to researchers, however, is in assuming the text is only a compendium, and underestimating or failing to take into consideration Howley's role as narrator, particularly with respect to editing and commentary. Howley himself openly acknowledges his role as editor, stating in his preface his intent "to sift as much of the truth as possible, and finally make such corrections as are deemed to be necessary" (1915, v). His task he describes as assessing his source material, much of which is "of a very dubious character" and deciding what to include: "It was no easy task to sift all these divergent stories, eliminate what was useless or unreliable, and get at the actual facts in each case" (1915, v, vi).

Particularly problematic for Howley as narrator is his use of members of the Peyton family as sources. First among his "reliable authorities, whose authenticity is beyond question," Howley counts John Peyton Jr., a man who had significant dealings with the Beothuk in the late 18th and early 19th century, including a Grand Jury investigation for murder: "My old friend, the late John Peyton, Magistrate of Twillingate, his wife, and his son Thomas, were, without exception, the best informed persons of modern times, in fact, they were a fund in themselves from whence was obtained the most direct and trustworthy references in my possession" (1915, vi).⁹⁰

In his *Reminiscences of James P. Howley: Selected Years*, published posthumously in 1997, Howley elaborates: "the Peyton Family being the most intelligent and best educated persons I came across were the source from whence I gleaned the most reliable information"

⁹⁰ John Peyton Jr. and his father, John Peyton Sr., along with eight of their men, were implicated in the death of the Beothuk man Nonosabasut, which was brought before the Grand Jury on May 25, 1819, and dismissed on the grounds of self-defense. See Howley (1915, 102, 105) and Marshall (1996, 165-166). In a subsequent case involving James Carey and Stephen Adams introduced under the heading "The Killing of Two Beothuk," Marshall relates how Peyton is called in by John Broom, chief magistrate of St. John's, as a witness: "Peyton testified that Carey and Adams were justifiably afraid of Beothuk" (1996, 183). The jury ruled a verdict of "not guilty."

(1997, 104). John Peyton Jr., whom Howley acknowledges as “the best living authority on the subject of the Aborigines,” proves “delighted to relate his experiences with those poor unfortunate people when he found an interested listener” (1997, 103). At the same time, Howley notes, Peyton’s wife, “who had much to do with that other Indian female, Nancy or Shanawdithit, during her residence of nearly six years in her house, seemed rather reticent and disinclined to talk much on the subject” (1997, 103-104). Eighty years old when he met Howley in 1871, John Peyton Jr. was described at the time by Lloyd, a contemporary of Howley’s, as “very deaf and failing in memory” (1876, 225).

Howley’s use of members of the Peyton family as sources of Beothuk history raises a number of issues. First is the Peytons’ evident conflict of interest with the Beothuk in the context of the family’s involvement in the Bay of Exploits salmon fishery. Leaving Christchurch, England in 1770, John Peyton Sr. first sailed with Lieutenant George Cartwright to Labrador.⁹¹ He initially settled in Fogo, where he worked in the cod fishery and met his future partner, Harry Miller, who was also from Christchurch (T. Peyton, 1910, 1). Relocating to the Exploits valley, Peyton and Miller embarked on a joint venture in the salmon fishery. By 1800, Peyton was on his own and had gained rights to the entire salmon fishery on the Exploits River, which placed him in direct competition with the Beothuk, who had come to rely increasingly on salmon as a primary food source, driven as they were from the coast by encroaching settlement (Marshall, 1996, 64-67).

⁹¹ Peyton’s first experience of Native North Americans was in Labrador. As Marshall (1997) points out, there are parallels between the treatment by settlers of Native people in Labrador in the late 18th century and on the island of Newfoundland. Citing a previously unpublished March 31, 1766 letter from Newfoundland Governor Hugh Palliser to Lord Egmont, Marshall describes atrocities committed against the Native people of Labrador by “the barbarous, savage, lawless Banditte, our Winter Inhabitants of Newfoundland, [who] never spare the life of an Indian; it’s their pleasure and diversion to hunt for and kill them” (1977, 227). Notes Marshall: “The atrocities that are described in detail in Palliser’s letter sound all too familiar, bearing in mind later accounts of ‘outrages’ committed against the Beothucks” (1977, 227). In a footnote, Marshall adds, “The atrocities described in detail probably rank with the worst crimes committed anywhere” (1977, 246, n.4).

Fifteen years later, at the age of 68, Peyton handed these rights over to his son, John Peyton Jr. John Jr. had emigrated from England at the age of nineteen to join his father in 1812.⁹² Between them, John Peyton Jr. and Sr. held the exclusive rights for the Exploits salmon fishery for a total of 79 years (A.L. Peyton, 1987, 13). The business was a lucrative one. As Thomas Peyton points out, on average, the Peyton family shipped 300 tierces [about 40,000 kg] of salmon annually from their headquarters on Lower Sandy Point.⁹³ Writes Peyton, “all our fishes were eagerly sought for in the foreign markets and brought good prices” (1910, 3).

In private correspondence to Thomas Peyton seeking further information for his upcoming publication on the Beothuk, Howley refers to Thomas, John Peyton Jr.’s son, as “the only really reliable authority now living” (1907, 1). In a letter to Roland Goodyear dated March 12, 1910, Thomas concedes that “most of what I shall write about was from information obtained from my father” (1910, 1). With regards to the Beothuk and their relationship with settlers, Peyton reveals an attitude in keeping with that of 18th-century narrators preceding him. Again, the emphasis is on conflict and how it affects the interests of the settlers:

No doubt but these aborigines were a wild and mischievous race and caused the early settlers much annoyance more particularly at the fishing harbours on the outside settlements, getting on board the fishing boats during the night, cutting off and carrying away their sails and fishing gear and everything movable, nothing was safe. (1910, 6)

Yet, like his grandfather before him, Thomas Peyton feels compelled to impart what he knows about the Beothuk. His letter to Goodyear concludes as follows: “I could follow writing on the

⁹² A. L. Peyton maintains that, in keeping with the custom that the right of the river fishery would go to the person who planted the first young person, or “youngster” there in the spring for the season, John Peyton Jr. arrived in Newfoundland from England at the age of 19 as the “assignee ‘youngster’” for the main stream of the Exploits (1987, 25). In his March 12, 1910 letter to Roland Goodyear, T. Peyton writes of John Peyton Jr., “My father told me he saw the youngsters marched away from the vessels side for that purpose but it was the last time that this mode of tenureship was carried out. He, my father, with several others was intended for the Exploits River” (1910, 2).

⁹³ T. Peyton defines a tierce as “three hundred pounds neat” (1910, 3).

subject of the aboriginies. Having once started the subject I scarcely know when to stop, and fear I have trespassed on your time by writing on subjects that can be of little interest to you” (1910, 6).

Howley’s attitude towards Native people in *The Beothucks or Red Indians* is linked to his reliance on the Peytons as a source of authority. Reflecting a colonial narrative perspective similar to that of writers like John Cartwright and Cormack, he introduces the Beothuk as “living in their primitive ignorance and barbarism, under our vaunted civilization, not altogether unknown, but unheeded and uncared for, until this same civilization blotted them out of existence” (1915, xx). The Newfoundland experience he contrasts to that of Canada and Acadia, “where the equally barbarous savages were treated with so much consideration” (1915, xx). Howley’s language is particularly patronizing in his references to members of “the weaker sex”: He describes Demasduit, who was a young wife and mother at the time she was captured in 1819 by John Peyton and his father, as “this child of sorrow” (1915, 261; 1915, 103).

Howley’s attitude towards his Native subjects is further revealed in his practice of rarely referring to them by name, even in situations where he clearly knows their names. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, Joe Sylvester, the Mi’kmaq who guided Cormack – ostensibly the first white man to cross the interior of Newfoundland – is consistently referred to throughout Cormack’s narrative as “my Indian.” Sylvester also remains unnamed by Howley, who adopts Cormack’s habit of referring to him as an “Indian.” In one footnote, Howley draws attention to an agreement he has found among Cormack’s papers “which fully bears out the statement as to the unreliability of his Indian guide” (1915, 237). Dated Sunday, Sept 14, 1822, Cormack’s agreement offers Sylvester, in exchange for guiding him to St. George’s Bay and back, one barrel each of pork and flour for his mother; return passage to either England, Scotland, Portugal,

or Spain; lodging at Cormack's house while visiting St. John's; and a letter of recommendation to Cormack's friends in Prince Edward Island, with the promise "I will always be very glad to perform what Joe reasonably wants of me" (Howley, 1915, 237). With regards to the contract, Howley offers the following: "It is quite evident from the above agreement that Mister Silvester had been showing the 'White Feather' and must have contemplated abandoning Cormack to his fate in the far interior, and that in order to retain his services it was necessary to offer him all these extra inducements" (1915, 238).

Howley also includes in his text a letter addressed to Judge A.W. Des Barres from the Mi'kmaq John Lewis, in which the latter requests a number of provisions for the wife and four children of another man, Peter Johns, who is away hunting. The letter features a number of spelling and grammatical errors. Howley's rationale for including the seemingly unrelated document among Cormack's other letters is that it "is so characteristic of those people, I deem [it] worthy of insertion here" (1915, 203).

Howley's discussion of Shanawdithit provides some further insight into his attitudes towards Native people. Citing Bonnycastle (1842) and Pedley (1863), in "Capture of three Beothuk Women" Howley describes the capture of Shanawdithit, her mother and sister in New Bay in the spring of 1823 without ever referring to them by name. According to the account, once the man accompanying them had been shot by furriers, the three women "gave themselves up" in a starving condition to William Cull, who brought them to John Peyton Jr., magistrate for the district (Howley, 1915, 169). After bringing the three women to St. John's, where it became evident that the health of at least two of them was precarious, it fell to Peyton to return them to the Bay of Exploits "with a number of presents, consisting of such articles as were calculated to gratify a barbarous tribe" (1915, 169).

Following an exchange of correspondence between Peyton and Captain John Buchan, in which the latter refers to the women as “these interesting females,” it is not until Wilson’s account, in which it is stated that the furriers “took three Indian females with a view to earning a reward,” that Howley’s reader learns their identity (Howley, 1915, 169, 171). Shanawdithit is the only one of the three who is named; the others are referred to as “the sick woman” and an old woman who “was morose, and had the look and action of a savage,” and “looked with dread or hatred on every one that entered the Court House” (Howley, 1915, 172).⁹⁴ In an account originating from a Mr. Curtis of Salmonier and related to Howley by Rev. J. St. John, we learn that Shanawdithit’s mother was known among the settlers as “Old Smut” and was “thought to be the instigator of every wicked act the Indians did” (Howley, 1915, 180).⁹⁵ Acknowledging his primary sources of these events, Howley concedes, “We are indebted to Mr. W.E. Cormack and to Mr. John Peyton for the subsequent history of the three women” (1915, 174). With respect to their accounts of these three women, particularly Shanawdithit, both Cormack and Peyton function as homodiegetic narrators with a vested personal interest in the events in which they are involved. Yet nowhere in his account does Howley acknowledge their vested interest in the events of the narrative or its implications for what he presents as historical events.

Peyton’s father, John Peyton Sr., is another individual whose biased narratorial perspective Howley appears to overlook. As with his son, John Peyton Jr., Howley was credulous when obtaining information from Peyton Sr. and could have been more skeptical of him as a witness, given the nature of his interactions with the Beothuk. As many sources acknowledge, including a number cited by Howley himself, John Peyton Sr. was well known for

⁹⁴ From Wilson we learn of the three women touring the streets of St. John’s dressed “in English garb,” and Shanawdithit, her forehead and arms decorated in tinsel and coloured paper, taking great joy in frightening the people who stopped to look at them (1823, in Howley, 1915, 172).

⁹⁵ Notes A. L. Peyton, “The mother of the two Beothuk women was prematurely old. She apparently was unattractive and did not impress John’s workmen in the shipyard, who dubbed her ‘Old Smut’” (1987, 78).

his persecution and ill treatment of the Beothuk. One of the earliest references to John Peyton Sr. in Howley's book is found in a letter by Mr. John Bland, Justice of the Peace for Bonavista, addressed to the Governor's Secretary.⁹⁶ Peyton is mentioned as the likely employer of the men who murdered the parents of a Beothuk girl who was subsequently taken under the care of a Mr. and Mrs. Stone and brought to England, where she died.⁹⁷ Of Peyton Sr., Bland writes, "Peyton has rendered himself infamous for his persecution of the Indians. The stories told of this man would shock humanity to relate, and for the sake of humanity, it is to be wished are not true" (1790, in Howley, 1915, 56).

Lending credence to Bland's assessment of Peyton is the narrative of Lieutenant George Christopher Pulling, who was commissioned to record atrocities committed by English settlers against the Beothuk at the end of the 18th century. Though written in 1792, Pulling's work was unknown to Howley, a fact that could in part explain Howley's attitude with regards to the reliability of the Peytons as narrative sources. *The Pulling Manuscript* was brought to light by Hewson in 1968 and subsequently published in 1989 as Marshall's *Reports and Letters by Christopher Pulling Relating to the Beothuk Indians of Newfoundland*.⁹⁸ Through detailed interviews with English fishermen, furriers, owners, and planters in the Notre Dame Bay and

⁹⁶ In his letter, Bland refers to an earlier letter he had written to Admiral Milbank concerning "the native Indians," which, Howley notes, he was not successful in tracing. Bland's letter opens with the acknowledgement that its original source was "a Mr. Salter, who had been agent to a house in Fogo," whom Bland had met in St. John's and introduced to a Mr. Graham, "that he might hear his story from his own mouth" (1790, in Howley, 1915, 56).

⁹⁷ In his comparison of the Clinch and Pulling vocabularies, Hewson identifies this young girl as Oubee (1978a, 4).

⁹⁸ As Hewson notes, the manuscript first came to his attention through his correspondence with the keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum (1978a, 4, 170, n. 4, 5). Pulling's report actually appeared in three versions: *The Preliminary Report*, first submitted to Chief Justice Reeves, who had played a role in its commission, as "Facts relating to the Native Indians of Newfoundland, collected from the Salmon Catchers and Furriers, who reside near those parts frequented by the Indians"; *The Liverpool Manuscript*, a slightly altered copy of the report which remained unknown until 1944, when it was purchased from the private papers of the First Earl of Liverpool, President of the Council for Trade and Plantation (1786-1804) and subsequently donated to the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador; and *The Pulling Manuscript*, originally entitled "A few facts by G.C. Pulling respecting the native Indians of the Isle of Newfoundland, anno Domini 1792," which was likely submitted either directly to the 1793 Parliamentary enquiry into the State of Trade to Newfoundland or its chairman, Sir Charles Jenkinson (Hewson 1978, 3-4; Marshall 1989, 19-25).

Exploits River regions, Pulling provides detail to back up Bland's general statement about Peyton Sr's "persecution of the Indians." As Pulling observes, Peyton Sr. was away visiting his family in England at the time Pulling conducted his interviews.⁹⁹

One incident concerning Peyton Sr. is narrated to Pulling by two sources: the "very cautious" Thomas Taylor, head man for Peyton's partner Miller, and Mr. William Pitman, who Pulling describes as "well known to be a man of veracity" (1792, in Marshall, 1989, 136).¹⁰⁰ Pitman admits to having heard the story from Peyton himself. Pulling's sources both describe a 1781 expedition conducted by Peyton and Miller about which, Pulling notes, "what I cou'd gather from them that the slaughter was so great They don't like to mention what they wish to be forgot" (1792, in Marshall, 1989, 136). Both versions describe an ambush by Peyton and Miller's party that involves the murder of several people, the theft of their valuable provisions, and the capture of a "girl." One particularly vivid incident involving Peyton Sr. emerges from Pittman's account:

In one of the wigwams was a man which they had so crippled as not to be able to stand who had one of Peytons [traps] then in his hand the Bed of which he had been working into arrows on a rock. On their entrance the wounded Indian sitting on his breach fought with the remainder of y/e Trap some little time but soon being conquer'd P-n wrested the Trap from him & beat his brains out with it. (1792, in Marshall, 1989, 137, Pulling's underlining)

With regards to this incident, Pulling notes that although Pitman did not remember Peyton's story verbatim, "Yet the beating out the Mans brains with some other particulars made so deep

⁹⁹ Writes Pulling, "This Peyton was at that time a Partner with Miller who is now Major Domo up that Bay or river Peyton now resides at Christchurch in England, having made his Fortune" (1792, in Marshall, 1989, 135). Citing Peyton's reputation for his persecution of the Beothuk, however, Marshall notes that his absence from Newfoundland was only temporary (1996, 152, n. 69).

¹⁰⁰ Howley notes that Miller had lived in Upper Sandy Point, where he "carried on the salmon fishery in the Bay [of Exploits] and river" (1997, 107).

an impression on his Memory that he told me as it is natural to imagine He shall never forget them” (1792, in Marshall, 1989, 137). The account concludes with Pulling’s observation that Miller had informed him “his reason for not bringing away the Indian Girl who staid with them at y/e wigwams which was for fear she shou’d have had Children as She grew up by some of his People & the Expense of keeping them wou’d have fallen on him & Peyton” (1792, in Marshall, 1989, 137).

In addition to confirming the problematic nature of the Peytons as historical sources in Howley’s text, unlike the bulk of historical narrative preceding it, Pulling’s account is unique in that it quotes verbatim individuals from within Newfoundland’s settler society. Its sources are not those responsible for engineering the retaliatory strikes against the Beothuk, but rather those largely implicated, on behalf of their employers like Peyton and Miller, in carrying them out. The distinctive voices of these individuals provide vivid descriptive detail acknowledging both the violent and potentially sexual nature of Beothuk/settler interaction. As such, Pulling’s account introduces a valuable perspective that has been largely absent from the Beothuk narrative.

Another such perspective within Howley’s monograph comes from Shanawdithit, whose dual role as subject and narrator highlights some fundamental limitations of the Beothuk narrative up to this point. As a Native subject, Shanawdithit’s own history is narrated in a way that underscores the bias of Howley’s primary sources as well as that of the author himself. Narrated by European men, accounts of Shanawdithit feature language that emphasizes their perception of her primitiveness and inferiority relative to their own cultural and societal frames of reference.

Following the death of her mother and sister, Shanawdithit worked for five years as an unpaid domestic servant in the Peyton household in Twillingate before spending the last months of her life at Cormack's house in St. John's.¹⁰¹ As previously noted, her move to St. John's was supported by a unanimous resolution by the Beothuk Institution, of which Cormack was founder, that she "be placed under the paternal care of the Institution" (Cormack, 1827b, in Howley, 1915, 186). In a letter to Cormack, Stark reiterates the society's obligation to "do all in our power to reclaim a very savage from the verge of continued ignorance" (1828, in Howley, 1915, 186).

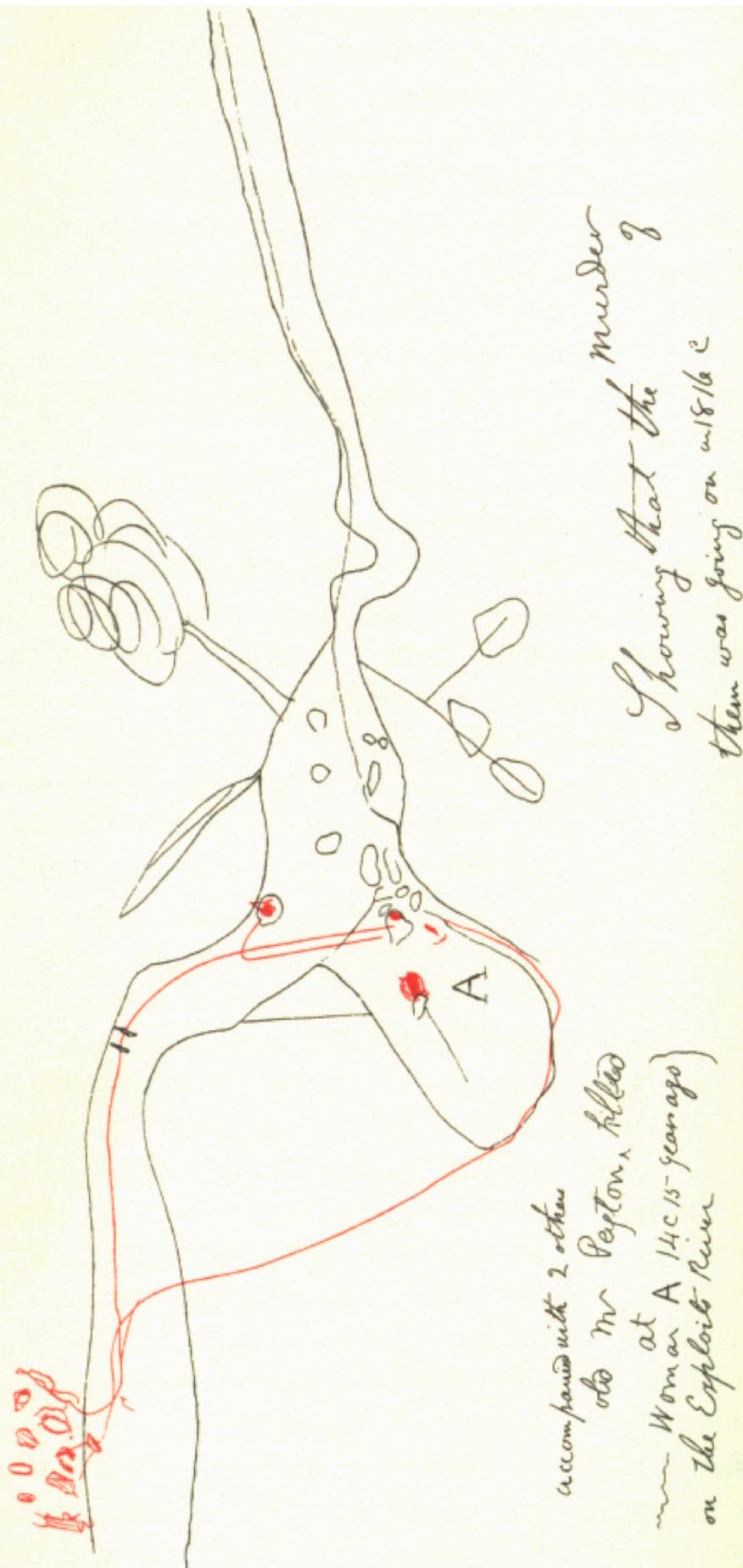
Among the drawings and artifacts created by Shanawdithit during her time with Cormack are sketches of various Beothuk implements and symbols, as well as a series of five maps outlining her own interpretation of historical events (Figs. 4.1 & 4.2, from Shanawdithit, 1829, in Howley, 1915, 238-251). Cormack's transcription of events described by Shanawdithit raises concerns about the interpretation of Native North American speech as mediated by chroniclers who tend to be motivated by their own agenda (Murray, 1991, 35, 36).¹⁰² Nevertheless, the drawings are some of the few Beothuk sources of information that remain concerning their history and way of life. With regards to the drawings, Howley concedes, "Although rude and truly Indian in character, they nevertheless display no small amount of artistic skill" (1915, 238).

¹⁰¹ Berton refers to Shanawdithit as "a kind of unpaid servant in the Peyton household" (1976, 136). Citing John Peyton Jr. as his source, Howley provides a different take on the relationship, noting, "Shanawdithit, was received and taken care of by Mr Peyton, Junior, and family" (1915, 175).

That Shanawdithit had reservations about moving to St. John's with Cormack is suggested in a letter sent to Cormack from John Stark dated Twillingate, 16th September, 1828. In the letter, which Stark assumes "will be handed to you by the Red Indian Shawnadithit herself" on her arrival in St. John's, he notes, "She asked me if you had any family" (Howley, 1915, 203).

¹⁰² To illustrate that the texts of Eliot's dying Indians have been "produced for, and shaped by, the cultural expectations of a white *readership*," Murray draws on White's discussion of the Noble Savage, a concept which White feels serves "not to dignify the native, but rather to undermine the idea of nobility itself" (Murray, 1991, 36, 191).

Drawn by Shanawdithit



accompanied with 2 others
to Mr Peyton, killed
Woman at A 14c 15-year ago
on the Exploit River

Showing that the murder
them was going on on 18/6 c

Figure 4.1 Shanawdithit's Sketch of Peyton Raid (from Howley, 1915, 245).

Reflecting her inferior status as a narrative subject, Howley challenges Shanawdithit's distinct perspective as a narrator when it does not agree with European accounts of the same events. This is particularly well illustrated in his editorializing of her narratives of violent acts against the Beothuk involving John Peyton Sr..

In what Howley has labeled Sketch V, Shanawdithit illustrates "those brutal murders so frequently recorded" arising out of a raid by a group of settlers on a Beothuk community in the vicinity of Rushy Brook, Exploits (1829, in Howley, 1915, 245). The letter A is used to denote the location of the event, on an island on the south side of the river. The first of Cormack's handwritten notations on the drawing reads, "Accompanied with 2 others old Mr. Peyton killed a woman at A 14 c 15 years ago) on the Exploits River;" the second, "Showing that the murder of them was going on circ 1816" (1829, in Howley, 1915, 244). In Howley's transcription of the first note, which is included in his text on the page opposite the reproduction of the drawing, Peyton's name is replaced by an ellipsis: "Accompanied by 2 others old Mr kills an Indian woman at A 14 or 15 years ago, on the Exploits River" (1915, 245).

A similar editorial intervention is evident in Howley's treatment of Shanawdithit's account of the capture of Demasduit. Included in excerpts Howley identifies as "From W.E. Cormack's Letter Book" is Shanawdithit's account of the 1819 event, of which she was herself a witness, being present in the encampment on the north shore of the lake (Cormack, 1827b, in Howley, 1915, 224). Shanawdithit's understanding of the motive behind the capture is quite clear: Her account describes an armed party of nine Englishmen coming up from the coast to the lake "for the purpose of carrying off some Red Indians, instigated by the reward held out by the

Governor for a Red Indian man” (Cormack, 1829b, in Howley, 228). When the English spy a group of Beothuk upon the ice, they give chase and overtake one woman, whom they seize:

Another Indian then approached; a parley and altercation took place; the whitemen insisted upon carrying the woman with them, in which they were opposed by the first Indian, who in defiance of the muskets and bayonets by which he was surrounded strove to rescue the woman: he was shot on the spot, and the other Indian, who now attempted to run off, was shot dead also. (Cormack, 1829b, in Howley, 1915, 228)

In a footnote to the incident, Howley adds, “This statement does not seem to be correct. Only one man was shot” (1915, 228, n.1).

The drawing by Shanawdithit to which Cormack refers in his account appears in Howley’s book as Sketch No. II, with two titles supplied by Cormack: on the left side of the drawing “2 Different Scenes & times,” and on the right, “The Taking of Mary March on the North side of the Lake” (1829, in Howley, 1915, 240-241). Again, the sketch is accompanied by Howley’s interpretation. In reference to the drawing on the top of the page, which illustrates the events of Demasduit’s capture, Howley accounts for the presence of three red figures by interpreting two of them as representing Nonosabasut, Demasduit’s husband – once when he is negotiating with the English for her return, and secondly after he has been shot, lying prone on the ice: “It is almost needless to say, this represents the furriers taking Mary March, her husband coming back to the rescue, and his dead body, after being shot, lying on the ice” (Howley, 1915, 241). According to Howley, Shanawdithit’s drawing contains no indication of a second murdered figure, Nonosabasut’s brother, whose murder is also described in her account.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Despite Shanawdithit’s description of the shooting of Nonosabasut’s brother, Marshall concurs with Howley on this interpretation of her sketch of the event: “A red figure close to the white men and another prone on the ice probably depict Nonosabasut, first haranguing the intruders and then lying dead”(1996, 165).

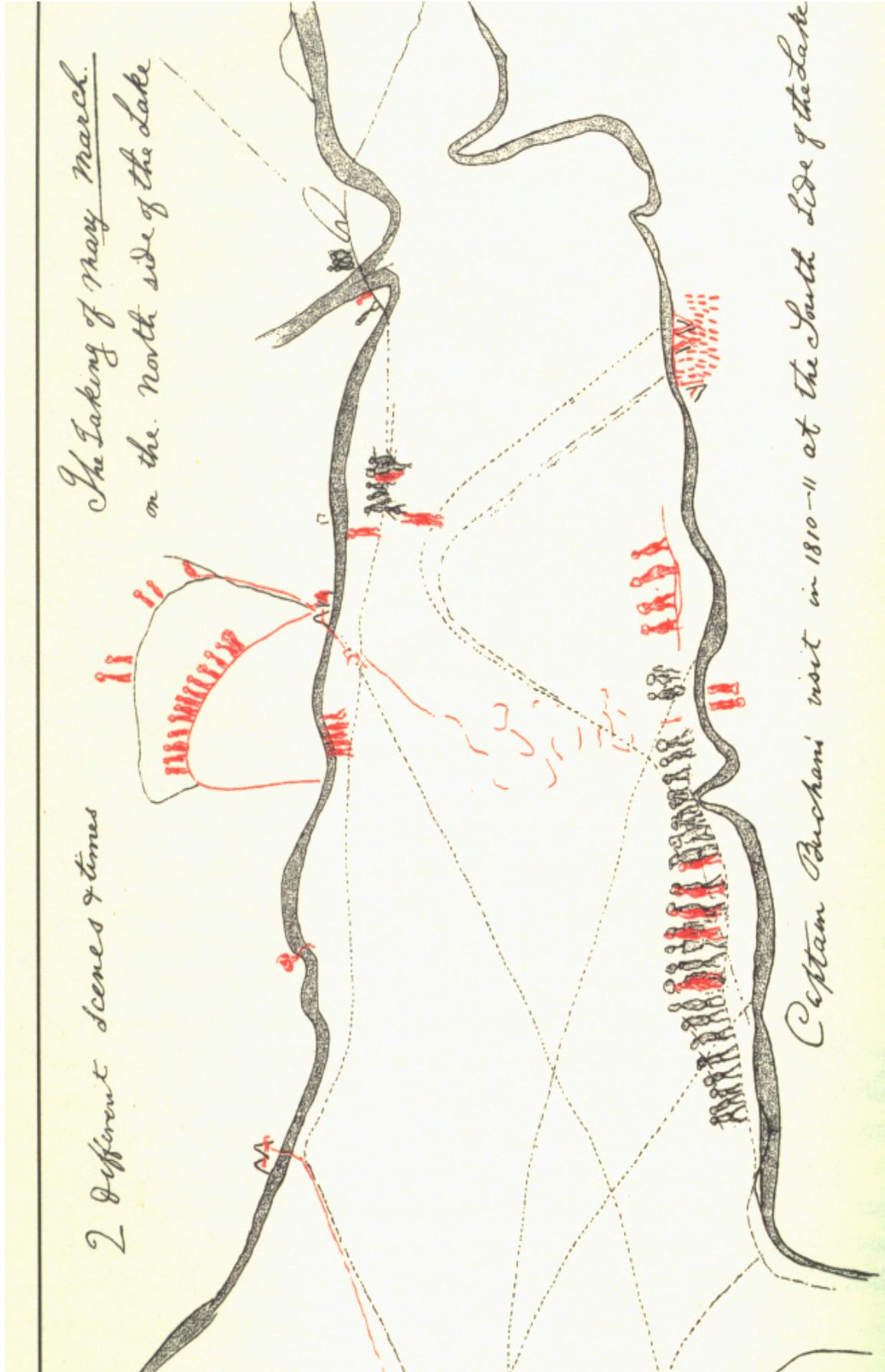


Figure 4.2 Shanawdithit's Sketch of Capture of Demasduit (from Howley, 1915, 240).

Interpreted thus by Howley, there exists no discrepancy between this account by Shanawdithit and that narrated by John Peyton Jr. himself, the topographical details of which correspond exactly with Howley's own experience of the region almost a century later:

All that is shown on this latter drawing relative to the capture of Mary March, corresponds exactly with the story as related to me by Mr. Peyton himself, and so clearly are the topographical details laid down, that I had no difficulty in recognizing the different points, on my last visit to Red Indian Lake a few years ago. (Howley, 1915, 241)

Throughout his text, Howley's editorializing serves as a reminder of the extent to which the narrator impacts – through selection, prioritization, bias, and commentary – our understanding of what constitutes key historical events, and our subsequent interpretation of those events. As Howley concedes, acknowledging the multiplicity of accounts of the capture of Demasduit, he ultimately opts for the version supplied by the instigator of the event, John Peyton Jr. himself:

Various versions of this event have appeared from time to time in our histories and other publications, but as numerous discrepancies characterize these accounts, I prefer to give the story as I had it from the lips of the late John Peyton, J.P. of Twillingate, himself the actual captor of the Beothuk woman. (1915, 91)

As the subsequent narration of the account indicates, however, Howley's exact source in this context is unclear. Though the narrative is described as coming "from the lips of the late John Peyton," Howley narrates it in the third person, with a footnote in the opening sentence that begins, "Note from Peyton's diary March 1st, 1819" (1915, 91, n.1).

In this version, “much tormented by the deprivations of the Indians,” which he bore “for a long time, without using any retaliative measures,” Peyton turns to the authorities in St. John’s after one of his boats loaded with salmon is cut loose, pillaged, and vandalized during the night (Howley, 1915, 92). On the basis of his account of the event, Peyton is empowered by the Governor, Sir Charles Hamilton, to go in search of his stolen property “and if possible try and capture one of the Indians alive” (Howley, 1915, 93). Accompanied by “half a dozen of his hardy furriers,” Peyton sets out up the Exploits in March 1819 and soon comes across a group of Beothuk encamped on the shore of Red Indian Lake, who the next morning flee when Peyton’s group attempts to surround them. “Being, as he said, a young active man at the time,” Peyton overtakes one of the fleeing Beothuk, who exposes her breasts to him to reveal she is a woman. According to Howley, “In order to reassure her and allay her fears, he cast his gun aside into a bank of soft snow and then leisurely approached her with signs of amity, he laid hold of her and endeavoured to lead her back” (1915, 93). When Peyton is separated from the rest of his party, a “powerful looking fellow came up furiously brandishing a bright new axe with which he would certainly have killed Mr Peyton had not his men just then arrived on the scene and prevented it” (Howley, 1915, 93). As Peyton and his men lead the woman back to a wigwam, there is no mention of murder or violence: “The Indians then moved off and the party, taking the woman along with them returned to the wigwams which with their contents they thoroughly overhauled” (Howley, 1915, 93-94).

In a letter from St. John’s on May 27, 1819, in light of a Grand Jury murder investigation, Peyton presents a fuller, homodiegetic narrative of this same event (1819, in Howley, 1915, 105-108). Also published in Howley’s text, this account written in Peyton’s own words contains a number of significant details absent from the previously discussed account paraphrased by

Howley. First among these is the number of men in the party and several of their names, including that of Peyton's father, John Peyton Sr., all of whom, according to the account, set out on their expedition with nonviolent intentions:

On the first of March, 1819, I left my house accompanied by my father and eight of my own men with a most anxious desire of being able to take some of the Indians and thus through them open a friendly communication with the rest, everyone was ordered by me not upon any account to commence hostilities without my positive orders. (J. Peyton, 1819, in Howley, 1915, 106)¹⁰⁴

Despite Peyton's pacifistic intentions, however, the party is induced to violence when a man trying to prevent the capture of Demasduit attacks his father:

The Indian who attacked my father grasped him by the throat. My father drew a bayonet with the hope of intimidating the Indian. It had not the desired effect, for he only made a savage grin at it. I then called for one of the men to strike him, which he did across the hands with his gun; he still held on my father till he was struck on the head, when he let my father go.... (1819, in Howley, 1915, 107)

At this point in the narrative, "the Indian" and "the man who struck him" begin to fight in front of "the third Indian" and "seven or eight more repeatedly running out from the woods on the look out" (1819, in Howley, 1915, 107). What follows is Peyton's description of the manner in which Nonosabasut was killed:

¹⁰⁴ In his account of the capture, Thomas Peyton writes, "My grandfather, John Peyton the elder was not of the party who captured Mary March as has often been reported but resided at the time at Sandy Point" (1910, 5). According to Thomas Peyton, in capturing Demadsuit, his father "walked up and gently rose her up on her feet keeping his hand on her shoulder." In this version, restrained by "a silk handkerchief her captor had loosely wrapped round her arms," Demasduit went peacefully with her captors: "The woman selected her snowshoes and quietly went with her captors being treated with every kindness." Another interesting detail is the naming of Richard Richmond as the individual who started all the violence, having approached "the Indian man" and "pricked him in the shoulder with a bayonet." Richmond is subsequently identified by Thomas Peyton as having shot Nonosabasut in the head (1910, 5).

The Indian turned again on my father and made a grasp at his throat – my father extricated himself and on his retreat the Indian still forcing on him, fired. I ordered one of the men to defend my father, when two guns were fired, but the guns were all fired so close together that I did not know till some time after that more than one had been fired. The rest of the Indians fled immediately on the fall of the unfortunate one. (1819, in Howley, 1915, 107)

There is no suggestion here that more than one man was shot. On the contrary, Peyton makes a point of the issue that the one man was shot several times, which he claims to have only discovered after the fact. In his account, Peyton also makes it clear that this tragic turn of events was contrary to his intent: “Could we have intimidated or persuaded him to leave us, or even have seen the others go off, we should have been most happy to have spared using violence” (1819, in Howley, 1915, 107). The reason he gives for the party having acted thus has to do with the fear brought about by their vulnerability, being so far from home in the heart of Indian country. As Peyton points out, with their superior weaponry, his party could have wrought considerably more damage: “Had destruction been our object we might have carried it much further” (1819, in Howley, 1915, 107).

Peyton’s account of the 1819 expedition wraps up with a reiteration of his goal to provide a safe haven for the Beothuk, pointing a finger at the Mi’kmaq as well as the settlers as the cause of their suffering: “My object was and still is to endeavour to be on good terms with the Indians for the protection of my property, and the rescuing of that tribe of our fellow-creatures from the misery and persecution they are exposed to in the interior from Micmacs, and on the exterior by the Whites” (1819, in Howley, 1915, 108). He offers to go on a follow-up expedition to the

Beothuk in the interior the following summer, provided the government covers his projected costs of £400.

Despite the tragic outcome of the expedition and its aftermath, as well as the Peyton family's extensive dealings with the Beothuk both preceding and subsequent to it, Howley adds the following footnote at the end of Peyton's narrative:

It is a pity Petyon's offer was not accepted, as he knew more about them and their ways than any other living person. With the aid of the woman it is probable he might have succeeded in opening communication with her tribe, of which he expresses himself so confident. (1915, 108, n. 1)

The woman referred to here is of course Demasduit. Citing Peyton as his source, Howley has previously described Demasduit as having been returned by John Peyton Jr. and Captain Buchan to her people the following year as a corpse, in a coffin filled with gifts and engraved with her English name and the date of her capture.¹⁰⁵ Knowing at the very least how this incident with Demasduit played out, Howley's advocacy of Peyton's proposal is puzzling.

As a compendium of various sources concerning the Beothuk, what is particularly valuable about Howley's work is the openness with which it acknowledges his prioritization of those sources and his own intervention in the narrative. While he relies heavily on members of the Peyton family, Howley openly acknowledges this choice and provides a rationale for his decisions. In so doing, he draws attention to the fact that these accounts are by no means objective, but rather told from a distinct (and many would consider problematic) perspective, one that has been shaped largely by the Peytons' controversial firsthand experience with the Beothuk.

¹⁰⁵ Howley's description of Demasduit's return also originates with John Peyton Jr.: "Her body was enshrouded in a neat deal coffin together with such trinkets as she had shown a preference for, including two wooden dolls much affected by her, a copper plate was also placed upon the coffin with her name, probable age, and date of her capture and death engraved thereon" (Howley, 1915, 95).

Howley is equally candid about his contradiction and modification of Shanadithit's account so that it falls in line with those provided by the Peytons. Consequently, whether or not readers leave Howley's monograph in agreement with his editorial choices, their articulation in the text serves to heighten our awareness that the writing is by no means objective, and that the author has made those choices in a way that reflects his own narratorial bias.

On the subject of Beothuk extinction, Howley is equally candid regarding both his own opinion and his editorialization of source material. Though by no means originating with Howley, the concept of Beothuk extinction is clearly established in his preface and maintained as a prevalent theme throughout the book.¹⁰⁶ He views Cormack's futile 1822 and 1828 attempts to journey into the interior to find Beothuks as early evidence of their extinction: "...but alas! they had ceased to exist...." (1915, vii). Furthermore, it is "our vaunted civilization," Howley writes, that has "blotted them out of existence" (1915, xx). Howley elaborates on the sentiment in his *Reminiscences*, when he describes in detail his reaction to seeing for the first time, in 1875, "the erstwhile home of the extinct Beothuk," Red Indian Lake:

Here the noble Red man dwelt for centuries amidst the peace and plenty undisturbed by the intrusion of either White or Micmac enemies. But he has disappeared forever, gone to the "Happy Hunting Grounds" of his people, in the region of the hereafter, where it is to be hoped he is at length beyond the reach of his relentless foes. Poor, untutored children of nature, peace be to your ashes..... Could it be possible they had all disappeared, leaving so little trace behind of their ever having had an existence? How I

¹⁰⁶ Early historical references to extinction include the prophecy of Henry Crout who accompanied Guy to Newfoundland in 1612 (Gilbert, 1992), as well as those of John Cartwright and William Cormack, whose narratives are included in Howley (1915). For a discussion of Crout's writing, see Gilbert (1990).

longed to meet with them and perhaps to be the means of bringing about a friendly relation with them, but alas! it was too late. (2009, 123)¹⁰⁷

Related to the disappearance of the Beothuk are Howley's equally compelling conjectures regarding their appearance, or origins. Though again not the first to speculate on this topic, Howley includes in his compendium sufficient sources regarding the origins of the Beothuk to foster interest on this question for generations of researchers to follow. In his "Theories as to the Origin of the Beothuks," Howley opens the discussion with an attempt to present an air of impartiality regarding his editorial role:

Various theories have been advanced and deductions arrived at, which, while I would not attempt to constitute myself an umpire to decide upon, I must confess leaves the question of their real origin about as much in the dark as ever. It would be presumption on my part to even express an opinion, favourable or otherwise, upon any views entertained by such eminent authorities. I shall only here give the gist of their views as they have come to me, and leave the readers to judge for themselves as to which carries most weight.

(1915, 251)

Among the views presented in Howley's text are theories of origin that include the Norse, Scandinavian, Basque, Indian or American, Tartar, Algonkin, Tinné, and Malay-Polynesian.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Since the publication of Howley's book, much of the historical writing about the Beothuk has been devoted to determining the cause of their extinction. As one of the first articles in a wave of ethnohistorical writing about the Beothuks starting in the 1970s, Upton's 1977 "The Extermination of the Beothucks of Newfoundland" – which contrasts the disappearance of the Beothuk with the survival of the Mi'kmaq in Atlantic Canada – is significant for both its assumptions and the comprehensiveness of its discussion, which set out a basic framework for understanding the Beothuk that has remained largely unchallenged. Like Howley, Upton was to be heavily referenced in much of the writing to follow, particularly that by ethnohistorians interested in addressing the questions of the Beothuk's origins and their fate. Included among these is Marshall, whose early work explores disease (1981) and the Mi'kmaq (1988) as significant contributing factors to Beothuk extinction.

¹⁰⁸ Notes Speck, "We could admire Mr. Howley's historical method more if he had seen fit to denounce instead of perpetuating this matter in his book" (1917, 275).

While historians were quick to dismiss many of these and subsequent theories such as Greenman's – which ascribes prehistoric European origins – there nonetheless persisted the general view of Beothuk origins as “a mystery” and “obscure” (Upton, 1978, 151; Robbins, 1989, 21).¹⁰⁹ As Pastore points out, “Until recently, the Beothuks, Newfoundland's aboriginal people who became extinct in 1829, were a shadowy people whose origins, culture, and demise were little understood” (1989, 52). The reasons for the persistence of this notion are not altogether clear, though they may in part be related to a recurrent perception of the Beothuk as being isolated on the island of Newfoundland and resembling Europeans in their physical appearance more than other Native groups.

Initially professing impartiality on the subject, in the end Howley once again weighs in with his own interpretation of the historical evidence before him. While insisting that “from such a diversity of opinions held by such eminent Scientists it is impossible to form any definite conclusion as to the origin of the Beothucks,” in a characteristic act of editorializing he concedes, “there can be little doubt that they must have originally come from the mainland of America, and everything seems to point to the narrow Strait of Belle Isle as the most probable course of their migration” (1915, 256). Through such overt interjection into the narrative, Howley reminds us that even when his work draws on a plurality of historical sources, the selection and interpretation of those sources remain ultimately his own.

¹⁰⁹ Many theories of Beothuk origins have been inspired by the early historic perception of the Beothuk as taller and fairer than other Indigenous North American peoples. See Rowe (1977, 137-141). For Greenman's theory of European origin, see Greenman (1960). For a discussion citing Greenman's theory, see Gardner (1966); for a refutation of Greenman's theory, see Holly (2003, 129-130).

4.2 Speck's *Beothuk and Micmac*

A number of Howley's assumptions about the Beothuk, including his ideas about their origins and ultimate fate, are countered in the work of Frank Speck. An American anthropologist with an extensive background as a researcher into Native North American cultures and languages, Speck published his *Beothuk and Micmac: Indian Notes and Monographs* in 1922. The book has its genesis in two papers Speck wrote in 1914, "Micmac Hunting Territories in Nova Scotia," and "Hunting Territories of the Micmac-Montagnais of Newfoundland," which arose from a trip he took to the eastern provinces of Canada in the summer of 1914 to conduct ethnological research (Chute, 1999, 522). The journey included a trip to Red Indian Lake and the Exploits River in search of traditional or material sources of the Beothuk. Drawing on the testimony of Native people in the region, Speck's work illustrates how interpretation of the historical narrative becomes more complex when one is willing to consider accounts from alternative sources.

In contrast to Howley, Speck turns to aboriginal sources for the information he is seeking on the Beothuk, tracing various interpretations of their experience among Indigenous people as far west as the Penobscot of Maine. Malecite references to the Beothuk, whom they called *Me'kwe'isit* ("red man") include several myths and a description of a tribe of red Indians.¹¹⁰ Speck finds a prominent place for the Beothuk in the local legends of the Mi'kmaq, who referred to them as *Me'wé'dji'djik*, or "red people," and whom he consults out of a conviction that they "might have a more extended knowledge of the supposedly extinct tribe" (1922, 18). The Micmac-Montagnais of Newfoundland's south and west coasts and interior Speck describes as

¹¹⁰Speck's Malecite discussion draws on Mechling (1914, 65).

“our most important extant sources of information about the Beothuk” (1922, 25).¹¹¹ Among the St. George’s Bay community, whose ancestors claimed an amicable relationship with the Beothuk, Speck surmises “some culture borrowing and blood intermixture to have taken place” (1922, 27).

Citing a Beothuk/Mi’kmaq legend known to be common to a number of other Native groups, Speck sees its motive as an indication “that the Micmac and the Red Indians were undoubtedly on friendly terms and that they intermingled” (1922, 29). The legend describes hostility arising between two groups as the result of a boy from one group killing a black weasel during the winter, an omen of misfortune. This version of the legend appears under the title “How the Micmac and the Red Indians Became Separated.” Of its source, Speck indicates only that it was “narrated by John Paul at Badger’s Brook” (1922, 27). With regards to the possible motive behind its telling, Speck ventures that the myth was used as “a secondary explanation of some historical event,” common as it was among aboriginal peoples, including the Mi’kmaq and other Wabanaki tribes of the mainland – the latter of whom used it to account for the hostility of the Iroquois (1922, 29).

In his analysis of Mi’kmaq material culture and nomenclature, Speck emerges as the first European writing about the Beothuk to emphasise ties between them and the Mi’kmaq as well as other Native groups. His extensive discussion of material culture among existing groups – encompassing habitations, canoe construction, dress, decoration, utensils, weapons and tools – finds a number of examples of Beothuk influence, making a strong case for what he interprets as

¹¹¹ With regards to his use of the term Micmac-Montagnais, Speck notes, “The present Indian inhabitants, whose language is Micmac, are the mixed offspring of Montagnais hunters from Labrador and Micmac from Cape Breton Island. Immigration from both these neighboring regions must have commenced at least several centuries ago, because our records from the early part of the nineteenth century show both the Micmac and the Montagnais to have been firmly established in Newfoundland at that time” (1922, 25).

cultural borrowing among the Mi'kmaq, Montagnais, Beothuk and the Eskimo.¹¹² In the ancient Mi'kmaq nomenclature of Newfoundland, Speck locates further links to the Beothuk, whom the Mi'kmaq claim to have pitied for their desperate plight in the interior of the island.¹¹³ Examples Speck discusses include the Mi'kmaq *Meywé djewa' 'gi'* "Red Indian Lake" and *Meywé za' xsit* or "red faced person," for Hodges Mountain, located northeast of Badger's Brook (1922, 46, 48).

Speck's "Folklore Notes from the Newfoundland Band" presents a number of variants of anecdotes also published in Howley, but in this case related from a Mi'kmaq perspective. A number of interesting discrepancies are found between the two versions, including the Mi'kmaq John Paul's take on the outcome of Lt. David Buchan's 1811 expedition into the interior:

By the next night they had not returned, and Buchan told the Micmac and Mountaineer to track them. They started on the track and came back to report that the Red Indians' trail led back toward Red Indian lake. So then the whole party started back and reached the camp at Red Indian point. It was deserted, but the two white men were found beheaded. Then Buchan gave chase, but his party was unable to follow them because there were footprints in confusion all over the lake. So Buchan went to several of their abandoned camps and put gunpowder in all the fireplaces so that they would blow up when the Red Indians came back to light the fires at their old camps. Afterward, of course, a lot of the Red Indians were killed by the device. (Speck, 1922, 49-50)

¹¹² For a detailed summary of Speck's findings with respect to material culture, see his "Table of Ethnological Comparisons" (1922, 44-45). As Speck explains, "The references in the Beothuk column are to Howley's monograph; the statements referring to other tribes are based mostly on my own field observations" (1922, 46).

¹¹³ For two opposing interpretations of Mi'kmaq/Beothuk relations, see Marshall (1988) and Ktaqamkuk Ilnui Saqimawoutie (1980, 4-13). See also Marshall (1996, 80).

Published in Howley, Buchan's version of the event makes no reference to his use of gunpowder in abandoned Beothuk camps. To the contrary, it is the vengefulness of the Beothuk that Buchan emphasizes in his summary of the account (1811, in Howley, 1915, 77-90).¹¹⁴

Speck locates Paul's narration of this event within the context of family oral history. He notes that Paul had originally heard the story from his grandfather and was himself 68 years old when he told it to Speck in 1914. Acknowledging the centrality of the narrator in the Native oral tradition, Speck emphasizes Paul's strong character and status within Mi'kmaq society to establish his reliability as a narrative source:

John Paul had been a headman among the Micmac-Montagnais of the island and was particularly well-informed in matters of native life. His age, experience, and willingness to work made him invaluable, and I take this occasion to recommend him to others who may undertake similar studies in this region where the younger generation of natives is not well informed nor conservative. (1922, 78, n.45)

While he clearly considered the Mi'kmaq perspective on historical events to be significant, there is no suggestion in Speck's writing that he actively sought it out. Speck includes Paul's narrative among what he describes as "historical accounts from Indian sources and some miscellaneous Beothuk lore gathered incidentally in the interior" (1922, 48- 49). Other Mi'kmaq accounts Speck cites present discrepancies with some of Howley's sources around details of the Peytons' capture of Demasduit. As previously discussed, in his written, homodiegetic account of the expedition, John Peyton Jr. emphasizes his intent as being amicable. He sets out on the expedition to "open a friendly communication" with the Beothuk and

¹¹⁴ In his concluding remarks, Buchan writes, "I trust that in this dilemma my subsequent movements will be approved of, for any further attempt at that time, to a subsequent interview would in all probability have produced direful consequences, for their unenlightened minds would look to us for nothing but retaliation, the line adopted by me may tend to remove such an impression from their minds" (1811, in Howley, 1915, 90).

reiterates his goal “to endeavor to be on good terms with the Indians” (1819, in Howley, 1915, 106, 108). In contrast, John Paul notes that Peyton and his party “went to the interior to capture some Indians” (1819, in Howley, 1915, 107). When she is caught, John Paul states that Demasduit “pointed out to the white men her full breasts to show that she had a child, and pointed up to the heavens to implore them, in God’s mercy, to allow her to return to her child” (Speck, 1922, 50). In his summary of Peyton’s telling of the event, Howley interprets this gesture as Demasduit’s “appeal to his manhood” (1915, 93). Peyton’s written narrative, on the other hand, contains no mention of the gesture. To the contrary, it downplays Demasduit’s resistance and emphasizes her compliance. Having convinced Demasduit that he “would not hurt her,” Peyton notes, “I then advanced and gave her my hand, she gave hers to me and to all my party as they came up” (1819, in Howley, 1915, 107).¹¹⁵

Speck also includes Mi’kmaq stories of amicable dealings between Mi’kmaq and the Beothuk which are absent from Howley’s work. Notes Speck, “In general the idea that the Micmac-Montagnais aided in the remorseless activities against the Beothuk arouses somewhat indignant denial among them” (1922, 47). Speck relates one account told to him by Louis John, who insists, “The Micmacs never molested the Red Indians” (1922, 54). John’s account concerns his great grandfather, who was employed by the English to guide them into the interior to capture Beothuk: “When he found a Red Indians’ camp he would tell the poor folk to run, and then he would return and tell the Englishmen that he saw some Red Indians, but that they ran off” (1922, 54). In another account, John Paul narrates the story of his grandmother and grandfather encountering a Beothuk couple with a young child on the Exploits River, and, noting that they had no food, leaving a gift of smoked meat for them in their canoe (Speck, 1915, 51-52).

¹¹⁵ See also Thomas Peyton’s description of this event (1910, 5).

Speck openly acknowledges that his Mi'kmaq sources present different accounts from those featured in Howley's text. Rather than prioritizing one perspective over the other, however, he suggests that Howley's inclusion of narrative accounts of the same events "might be considered as variants of those given here" (Howley, 1915, 265-288; Speck, 1922, 77, n. 43). Speck's emphasis arises from his ethnographic interest in a people who he believed interacted with the Beothuk and shared certain experiences and cultural traits with them. Within the greater scope of the Beothuk narrative, which up until this point has been dominated by the European voice, Speck's uniqueness lies in his recording of this alternative perspective on historical events and proposing that it be considered.

Another source of this alternative perspective in Speck's work is Santu Toney, a Native woman claiming to be a direct descendant of the Newfoundland Beothuk. In addition to providing a unique perspective on Beothuk history, Toney's account is further significant in that it illustrates the resistance such an alternative perspective can encounter – in this case from Howley himself – when it contradicts the prevalent historical narrative.

Well aware of Howley's views concerning Beothuk origins and fate, Speck acknowledges his initial meeting with Toney in July, 1910 near Gloucester, Massachusetts, as "the most surprising occurrence" (1922, 55).¹¹⁶ The ensuing correspondence between Howley and Speck presents two very different views with regards to Santu's reliability as a source. In two letters dated December 12, 1911 and May 18, 1912, Howley writes to Speck questioning his "supposed discovery of some descendants of the Beothuck" (1911, 1). With reference to his own extensive research that he is on the verge of publishing, Howley suspects many details of Santu's narrative, including her claim that she is Beothuk: "The name of your old woman 'Santu' does

¹¹⁶ In his Introduction, Speck issues a warning with regards to prevalent assumptions about the Beothuk: "We should be careful, I think, in a case of this kind, not to overestimate the peculiarity of the position of the tribe simply because it became extinct under tragic circumstances, or because so little is known of it" (1922, 12).

not sound like Beothuck to me” (1911, 1). Questioning her use of Beothuk terminology, Howley determines that Santu’s account is less reliable than that provided to Cormack by Shanawdithit: “The few names you give do not sound to me, much like Beothuk. I never heard of their being called ‘Osayanas’... The name ‘Beothuck’ was obtained from Shawnaudithit, the last survivor ? by W.C. Cormack. Had they any other name, she would have told him” (1911, 1). In a subsequent letter to Speck, Howley again references his own authority in determining Santu’s reliability as a narrative source: “I should like to interview her myself.... I believe I could determine whether her claim to being descended from the Beothucks were well founded or not” (1912, 1).

In a visit to St. John’s in 1914, the year preceding publication of his book, Howley expresses his “unbelief in Santu’s veracity,” to which Speck responds by challenging the credibility of Howley himself:

Notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Howley’s opinions, based on his extensive knowledge of Newfoundland history and physiography, deserve serious consideration, I hardly think, under the circumstances, that the conclusions of one trained in sciences other than ethnology are sufficient to warrant absolutely casting aside information which may be of value, and which on the face of it does bear some semblance of truthfulness. (1922, 56)

Suspecting that she was “making her claim for the purpose of gain,” Howley questioned Santu’s motives (Speck, 1922, 79, n.48). Speck, on the other hand, though expressing reservations about “the accuracy of her memory,” determined after interviewing her extensively that she was telling the truth to the best of her knowledge (1922, 58).¹¹⁷ Having published an account that outlined

¹¹⁷Speck’s reservations about Santu’s memory stem from his estimate of her age, which he puts at 75 at the time they met. Marshall (1988) likewise puts Santu’s date of birth at 1837, while accounts in the Philadelphia papers describe her as being close to 100. Taking into account the age of Santu’s son Joe Tony at the time Speck met Santu (24 years – based on a birthdate supplied by his great-granddaughter Ardy Landry and supported by Speck’s

his own primary assumptions about the Beothuk, Howley was unwilling to acknowledge a source that potentially contradicted that narrative, with its definitive ending of extinction. At the time of his meeting with Santu, on the other hand, Speck was still in the process of gathering research on the Beothuk. By virtue of the fact that he was still in the research stage, it could be argued that Speck's narrative was, in comparison to Howley's, still relatively open ended. Accordingly, this fact could explain, at least in part, Speck's openness to Santu's account.

According to her account, Santu's father, a man by the name of Joe Kop, was a "full-blood native" of the Beothuk tribe, also known to the Mi'kmaq as *Osa'yan'a* (Speck, 1922, 59). Taken at a young age by the Mi'kmaq, who raised him and converted him to Christianity, Kop subsequently married a Newfoundland Mi'kmaq woman, and Santu was born near Red Indian Lake. After her mother's death, Santu at the age of ten left Newfoundland with her father to live with the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia, where she later married and spent most of her life. Santu met Speck in July, 1910 when she was temporarily camped near Gloucester, Massachusetts with her son Joe, his wife, and their young child, all of whom are featured in photographs in Speck's book.

In addition to details about a number of cultural phenomena that have been cited extensively since the publication of Speck's book, the information Santu provided falls in line with much of what has been postulated by archaeologists concerning the Beothuk's Labrador connections, and particularly their interaction with other Indigenous groups.¹¹⁸ Aside from her own immediate family's Mi'kmaq connections, Santu described friendly relations between her father's people and the Labrador Eskimo and Indians: "Some of her father's people, she said,

photographs), a more accurate estimate for the year of Santu's birth is 1853, which would make her 58 at the time she met Speck.

¹¹⁸An example would be Santu's description of an annual Beothuk ceremony in which every person in the tribe was dyed red as well as the chief's practice of ordering the red to be washed off particular individuals as a form of punishment (Speck, 1922, 62-64).

when dispersed, joined them” (Speck, 1922, 64). Santu further spoke to Speck of relatives who had intermarried with the Inuit and others with the Mi’kmaq, their descendants being “scattered here and there among the Micmac of Newfoundland and elsewhere” (Speck, 1922, 66). Many of the specific details of Santu’s account, including descriptions of her father’s kayak-type boat and the diet and eating habits of his people, lend credence to concepts of Beothuk cultural exchange and intermingling addressed first by Speck and later by archaeologists like Carignan and Renouf.¹¹⁹

As recorded by Speck, Santu’s account illustrates both the value of an alternative historical perspective and the difficulty of attempting to accommodate that perspective within a historical narrative that already has a fixed conclusion. As discussed with respect to Native oral history research methodology in Chapter 2, a further challenge has to do with actually identifying and recording those alternative perspectives within a cultural context that discourages individuals from coming forward and sharing their accounts. In addition to crediting Santu’s claim about her father’s ancestry, the Mi’kmaq John Paul spoke to Speck of the secretiveness of the Newfoundland Mi’kmaq concerning the Beothuk, which he attributed to “fear of retaliation or at least molestation at the hand of the English, such a stir had been raised over them” (1922, 69). Living among the Mi’kmaq on mainland Canada and in the United States, it is possible that Santu was in a position to share her narrative unhindered by such fears. In light of Paul’s observation, however, it is not difficult to imagine how accounts of Beothuk people living among other Native groups in the region may not have made their way into the historical record.

¹¹⁹ These archaeological developments by Carignan and Renouf are discussed in Chapter 5. See Carignan (1975), (1977), Renouf (1999b), and Renouf, Bell, & Teal (2000).

4.3 The Howley Story

Drawing on diametrically opposed sources, the narratives by Howley and Speck approach the Beothuk from diverse, and at times conflicting, perspectives. This fundamental difference in their approach to the Beothuk is more readily understood when viewed within the context of both writers' lives, including their other interests, professional accomplishments, larger body of work, and perceived readership. Considered together, these elements provide a sense of the complex personal and cultural frameworks informing Howley and Speck's distinct approaches to Beothuk history.

Born July 7, 1847 and raised at Mount Cashel near St. John's, Howley was educated at St. Bonaventure's College, where he showed an early interest in natural history. The introduction to his *Reminiscences* opens with a description of his childhood:

Like most boys born and reared in the country I became imbued almost from infancy with a love of Nature. As I grew older, the "Lure of the wild" seemed to enthrall me more and more. Never did I feel so extremely happy as when wandering amongst the fields and forests, chasing butterflies, picking wild flowers and fruits, or finding birds nesting amongst the trees and scrub. (2009, 1)

A self-taught naturalist and geologist, at the age of 21 Howley joined the Colonial Secretary's office, working as assistant to Alexander Murray on the survey of Newfoundland's interior (Kirwin, 1978, 22-27; Benson, 1999, 5). Howley's fieldwork for the survey involved extensive travel in rural Newfoundland, most of it in the company of Mi'kmaq guides. As Kirwin and O'Flaherty note in their introduction to *Reminiscences of James P. Howley: Selected Years*, his accomplishments in the interior were no mean achievement: "Howley tramped over, saw with a trained eye, described with a fastidious pen, cut through, dug into, painstakingly mapped, and

proudly exhibited vast sections of the Newfoundland interior hitherto known, if at all, to only a few” (2009, li).

As Howley acknowledges, he was well suited to the work. Despite the hardships brought on by extremes of climate, a challenging, often impenetrable terrain, the torment of mosquitoes, and lack of proper food and rest, Howley cherished the opportunity to escape the pressures of society and immerse himself in the rugged beauty of Newfoundland’s interior.¹²⁰ Looking back on his career, he notes, “Notwithstanding all those drawbacks I simply gloried in the life, and would go through it all again were I able, for the pure love of the wilderness which possessed me” (2009, 4).

A prolific writer, Howley published his *Geography of Newfoundland* (1877), *Geological Map of Newfoundland* (1882) and a host of other reports and studies on the island’s natural phenomena.¹²¹ He was honoured by the Smithsonian Institution, the Royal Society of Canada, the American Association of Geologists, and the Royal Geological Society, of which he was made Fellow in 1882, and in 1911 was chosen to head the Newfoundland Court in the Festival of Empire at London’s Crystal Palace (Smallwood et al., 1967, 1094). His largest manuscript, *Reminiscences of Forty-two Years of Exploration and Survey in and about Newfoundland, 1868-1911*, documenting his travels through Newfoundland’s interior by rail, road, canoe, and on foot,

¹²⁰ For Howley’s overview of the hardships he endured in the course of the survey, see his “Introduction” (2009, 3-5).

¹²¹ For a comprehensive bibliography, see Howley (2009, 1953-1971). An earlier, less comprehensive bibliography appears in O’Dea and Alexander (1986, 963-964). For a contemporary review of Howley’s *The Geography of Newfoundland, for the Use of Schools*, see Anonymous, (1878, 58). The book is described as “a very excellent contribution to our knowledge of the systematic geographical nomenclature of Newfoundland,” which comprehensively covers the flora and fauna of the island “without a word to give the least spark of interest to any one of these.” Referring to the “dry bones” of Howley’s text, the review concludes that “the field for such a work as he has attempted is quite open” (1878, 58). Smallwood et al. note that Howley’s *Geography* “became the standard text-book on the subject and used in schools for years” (1967, 1095).

was published posthumously in 2009. Published in 1915, *The Beothuks or Red Indian: The Aboriginal Inhabitants of Newfoundland* represents Howley's best known work.¹²²

As a professional geologist, Howley produced numerous reports on the geology of Newfoundland, most of which were written under the auspices of the Geological Survey. Development proves a major theme in Howley's work, and one which propelled his activity with the survey and much of his writing. As he expressed in a letter to Gov. William MacGregor, April, 1909, "Undoubtedly most of the progress and advancement of recent years is in a large measure the outcome of the labours of the Geological Survey." In the letter, Howley echoes Cormack's view of the interior of Newfoundland as "terra incognita," stating "it would have remained so up to the present to a great extent but for the information gathered and disseminated by the Survey" (2009, xxxii).¹²³

Like Cormack, Howley took pride in his status as one of the few Europeans to have travelled Newfoundland's interior. Citing his reaction in 1875 to reaching King George IV Lake, which had been named by Cormack, as well as his musings on the latter's courage, Kirwin and O'Flaherty see Howley at times as "following in the footsteps of his hero, Cormack" (Howley, 2009, lvii).¹²⁴ On his arrival at the lake, Howley reflects:

To think since W.E. Cormack sighted and named this lake in 1822, fifty-three years previously, it had never been visited by another whiteman and that I was destined to be

¹²² Smallwood et al. refer to Howley's publication of *The Beothuks or Red Indians* as his "most outstanding literary accomplishment" (1967, 1095); Benson, "his most lasting literary contribution" (1999, 5); Cuff, Baker and Pitt, "the most important scholarly work on the aboriginal inhabitants of Newfoundland" (1990, 165).

¹²³ Setting out into the interior of Newfoundland, Cormack saw himself as the first European to do so, and wrote, "A new world seemed to invite us onward, or rather we claimed the dominion and were impatient to proceed to take possession" (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 139). Story describes Howley's *Reminiscences* as recording "the first systematic ascents and descents of the great river systems of Newfoundland" (Cook, 2000, 4).

¹²⁴ With regards to his feelings about Cormack, Kirwin and O'Flaherty note Howley's reaction on arriving at the lake: "we all doffed our caps and gave three hearty cheers" (Howley, 2009, 131). The editors also cite his meditation on Cormack's courage in "carrying through an enterprise such as this in the then utterly unknown territory" (Howley, 2009, lvii, 759-60).

the second one, not only to visit it but to survey it, and give it a definite place on the map of Newfoundland, afforded me no small satisfaction. (2009,131)

While the bulk of his writing advocates initiatives that would expand the economic potential and industrial base of Newfoundland, a tension between Howley's advocacy of development and his love for nature is revealed in the more personal reflections in his *Reminiscences*. Looking back on his first visit to Red Indian Lake, he laments finding hotels established on what appear to have previously been Beothuk encampment sites: "The march of progress is everywhere in evidence, but the primitive beauty and solitude have gone forever" (2009, 4). Conceding that "the country has made wonderful progress within the past century," Howley notes that it "possesses the elements of a great and prosperous future." With such development, however, there comes a price: "But the lure of the wild, the charm of its lonely woods and barrens will have departed never to return" (2009, 5).

While mineralogy does dominate his writing, particularly the early writing often co-authored with his employer and mentor, the Scottish-born geologist Alexander Murray, Howley was an advocate of natural history in general, and also wrote about botany, ornithology, zoology, forestry, and agriculture, the latter with regards to how it could contribute to the further development of Newfoundland.¹²⁵ As expressed in a report he wrote in 1889 about the soil quality in Newfoundland, Howley's attitude towards agricultural development and what he perceived to constitute civilization are closely intertwined.¹²⁶ His "Introduction" illustrates the

¹²⁵ As O'Flaherty notes, Howley viewed botany as a study more suited to "the gentler sex" (1997, XXXV).

¹²⁶ Howley's advocacy of the civilization of Newfoundland is a recurrent theme. He concludes an ongoing correspondence to *The Evening Telegram* with regard to the proposed planning of Bannerman park as follows in a letter dated December 27, 1888: "It is admitted that we are much behind the rest of the world in the possession of those sources of pleasure and enlightenment so necessary in any civilized community. Here then, we have an opportunity...to place ourselves on a par with at least some of our neighbours; and to remove the stigma of semi-barbarism from our common country's name" (Howley, 1888, 4).

extent to which Howley's thoughts about agriculture influenced his view of Native people and their cultures:

The cultivation of soil is one of the most noble occupations of our race. In every age, and in every country, it has justly occupied the foremost place amongst the civilized industries of mankind. No country without agriculture, at least where such is possible, can claim to be thoroughly civilized. It marks the line between civilization and barbarism. Prehistoric man was, in most cases, a wild, nomadic hunter, ekeing out a precarious existence from the product of the chase – at times wallowing in abundance, but just as frequently pinched by gaunt hunger and starvation. He required immense tracts of territory over which to extend his hunting avocations in order to supply his needs. (Howley, 1889, 1)

On the basis of their agricultural innovations, Howley describes the Swiss as being entitled “to our greatest respect.” While agricultural developments are taking place in Asia and America, he maintains, “the more barbarous hordes of both hemispheres were still in the hunter state of existence and utter savages.” Howley continues:

In fact, agriculture and civilization were so closely allied that the one was the natural outcome of the other. Today it is agriculture which marks the onward march of progress, before which the less stable pursuits of the savage have retreated step by step, and the savage himself disappeared from the face of the earth. What was once the home of the buffalo and wild red man of America, is now converted by this giant industry, into the smiling, golden-eared wheat fields, of the world's greatest granary. (1889, 1)

With regards to his view of Native people, Howley's discussion of Newfoundland in the agricultural context is particularly problematic in terms of what it articulates about his perception

of both the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq, the latter of whom he describes as having effectively replaced the former on the island:

Here in our own Terra Nova only, of all the civilized countries of the globe has agriculture been proscribed. It is true we have improved the original red man off the face of the earth long ago; but, unlike our neighbors, we have not occupied his place. Another dusky denizen of the forest – the Micmac hunter of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, driven out from his ancient home, – has come into the inheritance of the Boeothuc, and still roams over our vast interior forests and plains in pursuit of the fur-bearing animals of the country. It is a reproach to our civilization, a reproach to the British nation, that this one spot of all her dominions, boastfully termed her oldest colony, is still so far behind in the onward march of progress, and the condition of her people so analogous to that of the hunter state of existence. (1889, 1-2)

Clearly, the perspective expressed in this sort of narrative is shaped by a number of factors, including both the personal and sociopolitical context in which Howley is writing, as well as what the narrator perceives to be the expectations of his contemporary readership. A professional geologist tasked with advancing, in a specific, practical manner, the interests of the British in Newfoundland, Howley assumes a narrative perspective that reflects the ideology of the colonial enterprise. Characterized largely by assumptions of cultural and racial superiority, this perspective, however, is not always evident in Howley's more personal musings, particularly in situations when he finds himself far from the centers of colonial administration among the Mi'kmaq people of Newfoundland.

Howley's *Reminiscences* contain many reflections on his time spent enduring extreme hardships, enjoying games, and playing practical jokes with his Mi'kmaq guides, whom – in

contrast to his earlier work – he consistently refers to by name.¹²⁷ He describes them as “inveterate card players” and provides detailed descriptions of joining in on their games of drafts, throwing the tomahawk, jumping around the canoe pole, and what he refers to as “a very good game called “Sobboodedagan,” a dexterity game constructed from the ankle bones of the caribou (2009, 475).¹²⁸ Howley also expresses admiration for the Mi’kmaq’s many aptitudes and skills as navigators and hunters. John Stevens, for example, he describes as “a magnificent specimen of a man...an expert canoe-man and hunter, and the best all-round woodsman I ever met” (2009, lxi). His *Reminiscences* also contain detailed descriptions of several Mi’kmaq practices, including their manner of constructing wigwams and slings (2009, 472-473, 475).

Describing some of the Mi’kmaq as “great story tellers,” Howley provides the title of “Colquejeech melpidenauneck” as told to him by Noel Bernard, but expresses regret at having recorded so few of their stories. His account provides sporadic reference to various Mi’kmaq words, and includes, in one instance, the full transcription of a Mi’kmaq hymn. Of the Mi’kmaq language, Howley writes, “From long association with them I had learned many Micmac words, and could often follow them when describing the water ways etc. to each other. Indeed had I made an effort I should have been able to speak the language myself” (2009, 481). In Conne River today, over a century since his work there, Howley is still fondly remembered as a man who knew the Mi’kmaq language and took an interest in the Mi’kmaq way of life (J.N. Jeddore, pers. comm., August 20, 2011).

Viewed as a whole, Howley’s narrative of the Beothuk reflects a distinct tension between the distanced, heterodiegetic, colonial persona that narrates much of his professional and

¹²⁷ In one such incident, Howley is approached “with a great air of mystery” by his companion John, who presents him with what Howley is elated to interpret as “a relic of the Red Indians.” Howley subsequently shows the find to one of the other Mi’kmaq guides, a man named Peter, who “fairly howled with laughter and then explained it was a common Micmac game” (Howley, 2009, 479).

¹²⁸ For his detailed account of Mi’kmaq games, see Howley (2009, 474-478).

retrospective writing, and the more immediate, homodiegetic, personal narration of his own experiences and thoughts. The attempt by Nonosabasut, Demasduit's husband, to prevent her capture by Peyton and his family, Howley describes as "an exhibition of the very grandest heroism conceivable, worthy of imitation by the highest form of civilization" (1904, 193). Yet looking back over his considerable body of writing, the same man who travelled extensively with the Mi'kmaq through the interior, relying on them for guidance and sharing aspects of their language and culture, describes them as "a simple childlike people in many ways," and "these primitive people with their childlike simple ways" (2009, 474; Kirwin et. al., 2). For a writer whose work went on to become the definitive source of information on the Beothuk for close to a century, Howley displays markedly different attitudes towards Native people depending on the specific subject matter of his writing and who he perceives to be its intended audience.

4.4 The Speck Story

More or less a contemporary of Howley's, the American anthropologist Frank Speck presents a different view of Native North American culture. As with all historical narrators, Speck's approach to research and writing were shaped by the cultural context into which he was born, as well as the unique circumstances of his upbringing, education, and life experience. Together these circumstances provided Speck with an exposure to Indigenous cultures and underlying respect for the Native way of life that came to characterize his writing about the Beothuk.

Speck was born in Brooklyn, New York, on November 8, 1880 to a lower middle class merchant family that traced its ancestry on his father's side to early Dutch settlers in the Lower Hudson Valley (McNab 2001, 85; Pulla, 2000, 12). Like Howley, as a child Speck showed a

fascination for the natural world; his particular interests were herpetology, botany, and ornithology. With reference to Speck's friend and colleague Edward S. Sapir, Hallowell, a former student of Speck's, writes, "Sapir once told me how impressed he was by Speck's knowledge of natural history when they were still graduate students at Columbia. As compared with Frank he felt so much the city-boy and quite inferior" (1951, 67).¹²⁹

It appears that Speck's fascination with the natural world and Native American culture was greatly influenced by a seminal event that took place quite early in his life. In extremely poor health at the age of eight, on the recommendation of the family's physician, young Speck left his parents and home in Brooklyn to live in rural Connecticut (Witthoft, 1990, 1). In the summer of 1889, he took up residence for the next seven years with a "family friend," Fidelia Flying Bird Fielding, the tribal-culture keeper of the Mohegan Nation, and the last fluent speaker of the Mohegan-Pequot dialect (Eiseley, 1975, 92; Pulla, 2000, 13-14). Sixty-two years old when Speck came to live with her, Fielding was an outspoken aboriginal woman who had been actively involved in the land struggle for Mohegan territory, a 200-year battle which had resulted in the tribe losing complete title to their land 17 years previously.¹³⁰ Witthoft describes Fielding as "a second mother to him, a mother of the most loving and creative kind" (1990, 2). She undoubtedly had a significant influence on Speck's development, sharing with him many aspects of her knowledge of the natural world, as well as her own Native life and culture, including her language, in which Speck became fluent.

¹²⁹ According to Pulla, Speck met Sapir as graduate student at Columbia, where the two shared a house in Philadelphia with their wives and Sapir's parents (2000, 22). On the recommendation of Franz Boas, Sapir went on to become head of a new Canadian Anthropology Division at Ottawa's Victoria Memorial Museum. For a discussion of how Sapir contributed to Speck's research career by purchasing his Native artifacts for the museum's collection, see Pulla (2000, 27-40).

¹³⁰ For a discussion of the Mohegan land struggle in Connecticut, see Pulla (2000, 15-20).

It was his fluency in Mohegan-Pequot that distinguished Speck in an undergraduate philology class at Columbia. According to Fenton, Speck credited the class, which he took as a fill-in with linguist J. D. Prince, with sparking his interest in anthropology:

Prince was talking about the dying and dead languages of New England, and said, ‘No one any longer speaks them.’ Speck, who had made no contribution to the course to that time, raised his hand and said, ‘Yes, they do.’ And he named three or four speakers, and then added, ‘Moreover, I speak one of them.’ (Wallace, 1968, 34)

Written while he was still an undergraduate at Columbia, Speck’s earliest publications about the Mohegans, Hackensacks, and Pequots include three articles on disappearing Native languages co-authored with Prince, who subsequently sent him to Franz Boas, the father of American anthropology, for graduate study (Hallowell, 1951, 69; Prince and Speck, 1903, 1904a, 1904b). It was under Boas that Speck began his work with the Yuchi, Creek, Chickasaw, and Osage, which led to a series of publications on their languages, ethnology, culture, and folklore.¹³¹

While still a graduate student, Speck in 1907 was offered a Harrison Research Fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania, where he founded the Department of Anthropology and remained for the entirety of his academic career.¹³² In the course of his career, Speck founded the Philadelphia Anthropological Society and served as a member of the American Council of Learned Societies Committee on Native Languages, associate editor and vice president of the *American Anthropologist*, director of the Archaeological Society of Delaware and the Society for

¹³¹ Speck’s relationship with Boas continued throughout his career. In a letter to Speck dated December 17, 1911, Boas expresses interest in his findings with regards to the Beothuk: “Do you think it would be possible to get a few phrases from other people? It is too bad that nobody had the good sense 120 years ago to get this information that we now want. Why? I hope you will have a chance to hunt up the other survivors and get what you can” (Boas, 1911, 1).

¹³² Hallowell notes, “Although a meager offering of courses in anthropology had been available prior to Speck’s arrival, it was he who must be considered the real founder of a Department of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania” (1951, 69-70).

Pennsylvania Archaeology, associate editor of the *American Journal of Archaeology*, and president of the American Folklore Society. He also made significant contributions to the collections of a number of institutions, including the Museum of the American Indian, Peabody Museum, National Museum of Canada, Royal Ontario Museum, Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford), and Danish National Museum (Hallowell, 1951, 70-73; Penney, 1990, 295).

Speck's bibliography provides a sense of the extent of his dedication to the pursuit of knowledge regarding Native North Americans. Over a period of 47 years, he published over 230 articles and a dozen books on the languages, customs, religions, folklore, mythology, philosophy, art, totems, music, material culture, land use practices, and social and political structure of over 50 Native groups. Notes Rogers, "Few if any ethnologists interviewed and reported upon so many peoples" (1985, ix).

As with his 1922 *Beothuk and Micmac*, for much of his work Speck turned to Native people as his primary informants. Drawing on his fluency in a number of Native languages, he was known for his ability to win the trust of his Native informants through his faithful recording of their contributions, a process which frequently involved returning to his subjects with draft manuscripts of their contributions, for their verification that his transcription had been accurate.¹³³ As a researcher, Speck was acutely aware of the value of this process as a means of minimizing his own subjectivity with regards to his informants' accounts. He notes, "Such a process is expensive and protracted, yet it has a great advantage over taking notes and finally preparing them away from the sources. The likelihood of intrusion of the author's subjective reasoning on the material is thereby much reduced" (1935, 10).

¹³³ McNab notes that Speck's interest in "salvage ethnology" has negatively influenced the perception of his career as an anthropologist: "Yet, overall, Speck's legacy has not been highly regarded in the twentieth century. For most of his professional career, except for one brief dalliance in 1931, he eschewed anthropological theory with a passion in a century in which academic theories have become something of an obsession" (2001, 85). On the subject of theory, Hallowell notes, "On the other hand, it is not correct to infer that Speck was uninterested in theory. He simply felt that he was not particularly adept at this sort of formulation" (1951, 68).

Speck's regard for his Native informants and what they had to contribute earned him their affection and respect. William Fenton, one of his students, described him as "acclaimed by Algonquians, Souians, and Iroquians alike, from Labrador to Louisiana, as one of their own" (1971, 6). Hallowell writes, "Speck not only studied American Indians, but was deeply attached to them. They were as much a part of his personal as his professional life" (1951, 67). Notes Voegelin, "Speck was just like another Indian – you went to him because you liked him and maybe he knew more than some other Indians" (Wallace, 1968, 33-34). Speaking with Speck's student Loren Eiseley about his mentor's passing, Nichols stated, "Frank was basically an Indian. He died one. Mentally he went back to the forest" (Eiseley, 1975, 96).¹³⁴ Citing a letter sent to anthropologist Dennis Bartels from Helen Gressett, a former student of Speck's who describes him as being "very proud to be an Eskimo Indian," McNab postulates that Speck's affinity for Native people, their languages, and their culture derived from the fact that Speck himself was "an Aboriginal person, likely of Mohegan-Pequot/Innu descent" (2001, 100).¹³⁵ While this proposal might shed some light on the reasoning behind Speck's parents' decision to send him to live with Fielding at such an early age, at present there is still insufficient evidence to confirm that this is indeed the case.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ For an account of Speck from the perspective of one of his graduate students, see Chapter 9, "The Badlands and the School," in Eiseley (1975, 86-97).

¹³⁵ In his introduction to Speck, McNab refers to the fact that Speck was likely sent "among Mohegan- Pequot descendants" by his mother, "who had the Aboriginal descent in her family" (2001, 86). Later, McNab cites Gressett in reference to the photograph accompanying her 1996 letter to Bartels, where she writes: "That is indeed a picture of Frank Speck on the right. It brought back many happy memories to see his face again. He was very proud to be an Eskimo Indian and to see him in person, one would have no doubt of it" (McNab, 2001, 100).

¹³⁶ Pulla speculates, "There is a long history of trade between the Dutch and the various aboriginal groups along the eastern seaboard – the Mohawks, Senecas, Pequots, Mohegans to name but a few.... This relationship between early Dutch traders, settlers and aboriginal peoples on the eastern seaboard may offer clues to a deeper understanding of Speck's family genealogy.... Did Speck's father, grandfather, or perhaps great-grandfather marry into an aboriginal community, perhaps for business purposes?" (2000, 12) Subsequently, however, Pulla acknowledges that further research into the question is needed: "I have had many discussions with my colleagues and supervisors about Speck's mother. However, at this point in my research, I have been unable to explore Speck's birth records (if it is even possible) or talk/interview anyone from the Speck family. Some preliminary guesswork

The question of his Native ancestry notwithstanding, Speck's affiliation with the Mohegan-Pequot at an early age clearly had an influence on his interest in Native people and his manner of interacting with them as informants, which became the hallmark of much of his field work. Among his colleagues, Speck was respected for his ability to identify with his informants. Notes Fenton, "when Speck arrived, informants walked in from everywhere because they wanted to meet and sit and talk with this man who could identify with them as other human beings" (Wallace, 1968, 31). Voegelin contrasts Speck with Boas for the former's ability to put his subjects at ease.¹³⁷ Also distinctive among his peers was Speck's habit of identifying his Native informants by name, a trait evidenced in *Beothuk and Micmac*, in which the source of each oral history incident is named, and usually, their relationship traced to the person with firsthand experience of the event. Speck's photographic negatives, Witthoft observes, "form one of the few collections made in the field by an anthropologist, in which I believe at least 90% of the individuals are identified by name" (Wallace, 1968, 32).¹³⁸

Throughout his work, Speck is conscious of the divide between his Native subjects and the European-based academic tradition in which he works. He is quick to acknowledge fundamental differences between the cultural frameworks through which human beings perceive the world around them. Of the "great difference" between Montagnais-Naskapi and European views of the natural world, he writes, "The realm of non-human agencies which the European calls the unseen is to the northern aboriginal as often sensed by sight as are the familiar creatures of everyday life that surround the most pragmatic minded" (1935, 242). Indeed, much of

suggests that Speck's mother was, in some way, related to the Mohegan First Nation in Connecticut. More detailed research is needed however in order to further support or reject this supposition" (2000, 114, n. 5).

¹³⁷ Describing one Native informant's attitude towards Boas, Voegelin notes, "One of his informants would say of Boas, that she would do or say something in a particular way; then she would pause and apologize, 'But Dr. Boas, the authority, might not agree with me about my own language.' I cannot imagine any of Speck's informants having that attitude at all" (Wallace, 1968, 32-33).

¹³⁸ Witthoft notes "We have any number of anthropological prints and negatives which say "Hopi Indian on warpath," but few in which men and women are named" (Wallace, 1968, 32).

Speck's writing is motivated by a desire, if not to reconcile such diverse perspectives, to introduce non-Natives to the complexity of Indigenous cultural practices outside their own experience.

Speck's work characteristically demonstrates a respect for the value of Native culture and way of life. In "Conserving and Developing the Good in the Indian," he argues against the provision of European-style permanent housing for Native people, with its negative consequences for their health and way of life. Against supplanting Native identity "with a made-over white man's ideal," Speck advocates respecting the Native person's autonomy to realize his own social and economic goals: "More than this," Speck writes, "he should be protected from the hideous accretions of our own complex social sphere with which we are totally unable to cope either through law or religion" (1913a, 464).

Speck's 1915 "The Family Hunting Band as the Basis of Algonkian Social Organization" likewise outlines a number of Native practices commonly misunderstood from a European perspective, such as the obligation of other groups to respect family hunting territories, as well as the various social means through which these resources can be shared in times of need, often through intermarriage and interchange of customs (1915b, 294-296, 303). Refuting the idea that Native people were contributing to "the thoughtless slaughter of the game," Speck describes the Native practice of intensive hunting in particular tracts of land for a limited period of time as the game being effectively "farmed," with populations replenished through a core of breeding animals allowed to survive (1913b, 21). Speck quotes Aleck Paul (Osheshewakwasinowinini), Second Chief of Temagami Band of Ojibways, to contrast Ojibway hunting practices with those of non-Natives, who, free from the need to preserve a population within a defined hunting

territory, move about the country and “kill every animal which they find at the end of their gun without sparing anything” (1913b, 25).

Reflecting a similar sensibility, Speck’s work on Native land management practices ultimately argues for the validity of Native land ownership within the context of a North America largely settled by Europeans. Presenting the consanguineous family with its defined hunting area as the fundamental unit of Algonkian society, Speck posits that “the Indian tribes of eastern and Northern North America did have quite definite claims to their habitat,” launching a debate in anthropology that continues to the present day (1915b, 289).¹³⁹ Like Trigger (1985, 1986) and Bailey (1969), Speck’s view of North American history not only includes Native people, but also explores the complexity of their social and political organization and how it was influenced by that of the newcomers from Europe.¹⁴⁰ In his introduction to “The Eastern Algonkian Wabanaki Confederacy,” Speck acknowledges the underlying lack of a Native perspective in historical writing: “Historical literature of New England deals too meagerly with the organization of the Wabanaki tribes despite the prominent part it played in the Colonial struggles along the northern frontier” (1915a, 492).

Acutely aware of the difficulty of truly understanding “those we know only at racial arm’s length,” Speck frequently attempts in his work to bridge that gap (1935, 245). When writing about the Native experience, particularly with respect to matters of spirituality or philosophy, he often does so in a way that evokes the universal and emphasizes what people share, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background. In the conclusion to his study of the

¹³⁹ For a discussion of the controversy around Speck’s work on Native land practices, see Chute (1999), Feit (1991), and Krech (1999, 195-197). As Pulla notes in his summary of the debate, also central to the discussion is Leacock (1954) (Pulla, 2000, 130, n. 152).

¹⁴⁰ See also Speck (1915b).

ideological connections between material culture and the natural world underlying Naskapi spiritual belief, Speck writes:

The native attitude is too realistic to foster a sense of frenzied fear of death, fear of superhuman agencies or ghosts. Reconciliation to events in the cycle of change in life is apparent and striking in its sincerity. Associated with it is a low expression of personality, a minimum of self-exhibition, a balanced desire to live through the life course. And yet self or soul is the physical and spiritual center of life. Cannot egoism – the theory that bases morality upon self-interest – exist without egotism? ‘From great-grandparents to great-grandchildren we are only knots in a string,’ expresses the self-esteem of the Naskapi. (1935, 245)

4.5 Conclusions

The appearance of Howley and Speck’s work in the early 20th century signals the most pronounced narratological gap to appear in historical writing about the Beothuk up to that point. Confronted with different perspectives on the Beothuk, readers of both works are made aware of the narrator’s profound impact on the telling of history and challenged to take more than one perspective into account in their interpretation of the past.

Based primarily on accounts by Europeans, Howley’s *The Beothucks or Red Indians* features the perspective of a wide variety of narrators, including those who have vested interests with regard to their interaction with the Beothuk people, as well as narrators who succeed in making little, if any, personal contact with the Beothuk at all. Among these are narrators like Cartwright and Cormack, who are motivated by a desire to preserve what they perceive to be the last of a disappearing race. Also included are the members of the Peyton family, whose

competition with the Beothuk over the Exploits salmon fishery played a pivotal role in the motivation and outcome of key historic events.

Throughout his monograph, Howley is candid about his role as editor and interpreter of his source material. In addition to providing us with a wealth of hitherto unpublished historical accounts, Howley openly acknowledges the diversity of interpretation among his sources, particularly when they address what he perceives to be major themes or significant events. In the few incidences in which Howley does incorporate the perspective of Native informants, he tends to undermine their narratorial reliability, as in the case of the Mi'kmaq, or openly edits, corrects, and contradicts their accounts, as with the Beothuk, to bring them into agreement with the European version of the same events.

As a narrator, Howley is unequivocal about stating his own opinion and asserting it over the opinions of his sources with whom he disagrees. As a consequence, unlike much of the historical writing that preceded it, it is impossible to come away from Howley's narration without at least some appreciation of the extent to which it has been shaped, not only by Howley himself, but also by the many sources on which he draws. A comparison of Howley's other forms of writing beyond the context of the Beothuk suggests that narratorial bias, from a Eurocentric standpoint or any other, is a complex matter, one that is influenced not only by the particulars of a narrator's life, but also by the subject matter of the text and the audience for whom it is intended.

Relying primarily on Mi'kmaq informants, Speck presents a very different narrative of the Beothuk. His *Beothuk and Micmac* acknowledges extensive interaction between the Beothuk and other Native groups, including cultural borrowing and genetic intermingling, and gives voice to a Native oral history that presents another narratorial perspective.

In keeping with this accommodation of a Native perspective, what is equally notable about Speck's contribution to the Beothuk narrative is the way it anticipates key features of Indigenous methodology and oral history scholarship which, as discussed in Chapter 2, were not articulated until almost a century later. Whether his position is perceived as that of an insider or an "allied other," Speck's research methodology was motivated by a sincere desire to understand Native epistemologies (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Participatory, conversational, and collaborative, his approach was founded on respect for both the Native worldview and those individuals who were willing to share it with him. In his advocacy for Native communities and his commitment to bringing their distinct epistemologies to a primarily non-Native readership, Speck emphasized the diversity of human perspective and the necessity of integrating that diversity into our interpretation of the past.

With its emphasis on a European worldview, Howley's Beothuk narrative reinforces primary assumptions in earlier historical writing about their hostility to Europeans and other Native groups, in particular the Mi'kmaq, and their extinction with the death of Shanawdithit in 1829. In attempting to understand the Beothuk from a Native perspective, Speck's narrative, on the other hand, opens up a different and more complex interpretation, one that reframes the extinction question by acknowledging the possibility that the Beothuk may, to a limited extent, endure in the genetic makeup and cultural expression of Native groups with whom they intermingled.

It is unclear why Howley's monograph continues to occupy such a central position in the historical narrative of the Beothuk while Speck's *Beothuk and Micmac* tends to be known only to specialists. While Speck was an accomplished academic in Native North American language and culture, Howley was largely self-taught on the subject of the Beothuk. One possible reason

for the early popularity of his work is that, by virtue of his status as a prominent and well-respected Newfoundlander, Howley initially drew a greater readership, a readership that was (and continues to be) highly localized, given his subject matter. One reason for the popularity of Howley's work may be its reinforcement of themes central to the settler population's perception of its heritage, as discussed in Chapter 1. It is also possible that Howley's interpretation, with its comprehensive and eclectic mix of local history and amateur archaeology, was generally more accessible to an early 20th-century readership than Speck's more specialized, anthropological approach. Admittedly, none of these factors provides a satisfactory explanation as to why the imbalance in reception of their work has persisted. Whether or not this situation will change as the context of Beothuk scholarship evolves remains to be seen.

Chapter 5 – The Archaeological Narrative of the 20th and 21st Centuries

The growing significance of archaeology in Beothuk research of the 20th and 21st centuries illustrates how an interdisciplinary approach can both complement and challenge fundamental assumptions arising from the historical narrative. Like the consideration of alternative cultural perspectives, working across disciplines provides access to a new and broader range of findings which, when factored into the historical narrative, can serve to deepen our knowledge and enhance our understanding.

As discussed, in assuming the inevitability of extinction, European writing about the Beothuk provides a foregone conclusion to the historical narrative, one that is predestined by the Native other's inherent cultural and technological inferiority. Characteristically colonial in its intent, tone, and themes, the historical narrative up to this point, with few exceptions, presents the story of a doomed people. With its focus on extinction, it reinforces a view of the Beothuk as passive victims of a foreseeable fate and draws on speculation about its causes. By emphasizing their extinction, uniqueness, and isolation from Europeans and other Native groups, European writers created a narrative about the Beothuk whose prevailing assumptions effectively worked to reinforce one another.

Influenced by Howley's *The Beothucks or Red Indians*, as well as much of the like-minded historical narrative that preceded and followed it, the archaeological narrative of the Beothuk has also focused on the related questions of their origin and ultimate fate. While drawing heavily on the historical narrative, however, archaeologists have opened up these issues through significant research of their own, with many key figures working and writing across both disciplines. In their analysis of specific aspects of Beothuk life, archaeologists provide new

knowledge about their site selection, modes of transportation, weaponry, use of iron, and food storage techniques.

Taken together, these findings suggest an alternative interpretation of the Beothuk experience. Viewed through the lens of archaeology, the narrative begins to expand to accommodate a more comprehensive, interdisciplinary understanding of the Beothuk as a resourceful people who interacted with Europeans and other Native peoples in the region, and whose survival depended on their ability to adapt to a challenging and ever-changing environment.

5.1 Beothuk Origins

On the issue of Beothuk origins, archaeological work functions to support parallel developments taking place within the historical narrative early in the 20th century. As discussed in Chapter 4, despite acknowledging a number of diverse theories on the subject, Howley speculated that the Beothuk had originated on the mainland and crossed into Newfoundland via the Strait of Belle Isle. Subsequent archaeological research has made a compelling argument for this to be the case, though the period of this migration is not easy to determine.

One need only examine Tuck's maps in *Newfoundland and Labrador Prehistory* depicting archaeological sites of the Maritime Archaic, Beothuk, and Paleo-Eskimo to appreciate a consistent pattern over millennia of prehistoric immigration from mainland Labrador to the island of Newfoundland (Tuck, 1976, 17, 63, 79). Tuck's "The Northeastern Maritime Continuum: 8000 years of Cultural Development in the Far Northeast" concludes that, with the exception of the Beothuk, from before the Christian Era the continuity of a "northeastern maritime continuum can be rather well demonstrated" (1975, 146). Citing archaeological

findings at Red Indian Lake and Wigwam Brook on the Exploits River, Tuck states “there is now evidence at hand that indicates that the notched-point-using people of southern Labrador, Cape Freels, and elsewhere on the island of Newfoundland, can be traced forward in time to the Beothuk Indians” (1975, 69).

Archaeologists have divided the prehistory of Newfoundland’s Indian peoples into three periods: Maritime Archaic (ca. 5500-1500 BC), Intermediate Indian (ca. 1500B.C.- A.D. 100), and Recent Indian (ca. A.D. 100 – European contact) (Schwarz, 1984, 117). Archaeological data has established the Beothuk culture as having developed *in situ* from the Recent Indian complex which originated across the Strait of Belle Isle and includes three chronological complexes based on their distinctive tool kits, faunal remains, house pits, and settlement patterns: Cow Head (ca. 2000-1400BP), Beaches (ca. 1400-1000BP), and Little Passage (ca.1100BP-historic period) (Pastore, 1992, 9; Renouf, 2003, 4). Archaeologists have established that the Little Passage people were the ancestors of the Beothuk, and they generally accept that this ancestry can be traced back to the Beaches (Schwarz, 1984, 124; Penney, 1984, 187; Pastore, 1992, 11). The link further back to the Maritime Archaic tradition, however, remains tentative. Due to an archaeological gap in Maritime Archaic sites from 3200-2000BP, Tuck postulates that the Beothuk “may have descended from Maritime Archaic predecessors” (1975, 141).

Carignan’s work in Bonavista Bay further elucidates this hypothesis with regards to the origin of the Beothuk. Carignan’s findings at the Beaches site established a pattern of continual use involving Maritime Archaic, Dorset, and Beothuk people. Regarding the cultural antecedent of the Beothuk, Carignan writes, “Moreover, if cohabitation on the island between Indian and Eskimo groups was occurring then it is equally possible for these late prehistoric Indians to derive their cultural base from the preceding Indian inhabitants, the Maritime Archaic” (1975,

137-8). Drawing on the work of Carignan and Tuck, Austin summarizes his “Maritime Archaic and Recent Indian Evidence from Cape Cove Beach” by stating that, despite this gap, the possibility of “a continuous development of Indian culture in Newfoundland from Maritime Archaic to Beothuk, appears attractive” (1984, 123).

The idea of a Labrador connection for the origin of the Beothuk is also found in Pastore, whose interdisciplinary approach incorporates both history and archaeology. Citing the similarity between tools found in hearths at Red Bay in Labrador and those made by Little Passage people in Newfoundland, Pastore suggests that “the Red Bay Natives may simply be Beothuks who lived on the Labrador side of the Strait of Belle Isle” (1992, 51). At the time the first Europeans arrived in Newfoundland, Pastore maintains, it is likely that there existed a comparable Beothuk population across the Strait of Belle Isle in Quebec-Labrador. Establishing with certitude the migration from Labrador to Newfoundland was for a long time hampered by the lack of archaeological sites on the Great Northern Peninsula, which changed with Renouf’s subsequent work at Port aux Choix.¹⁴¹

Like Austin, Robbins takes issue with McGhee and Tuck’s idea of the Strait of Belle Isle as a “no man’s land,” suggesting that it was the Great Northern Peninsula itself – in its lack of significant freshwater reservoirs and deciduous trees, particularly birch, with its valuable bark for the construction of canoes and other implements – that rendered the area relatively inhospitable to Beothuk occupation (Robbins, 1989; McGhee and Tuck, 1975).¹⁴² Pointing out that “la capacité de se déplacer chez l’être humain n’était pas nécessairement restreinte par les étendues d’eau,” Robbins suggests that the maritime environment, rather than constituting an obstacle, actually served as a means of transport for Beothuk travelling from Labrador past the

¹⁴¹ For a detailed discussion of the Port au Choix site, see Renouf (2011).

¹⁴² For a discussion of Beothuk material culture and its use of birch bark, see Marshall (1996), chapters 20, 22, and 23.

Great Northern Peninsula to the more desirable habitat of Newfoundland's interior and its adjacent coastline (1989, 26).

Robbins' theory finds some support in the work of Marshall (1985), which provides strong evidence for a considerable Beothuk adaptation for marine travel.¹⁴³ The distance of more than 200 km along the Great Northern Peninsula from their most northerly communities in Newfoundland to the Strait of Belle Isle, Robbins speculates, would nonetheless effectively limit the Beothuk to irregular contact with mainland populations, thereby facilitating, over time, the evolution of a distinct culture and society. Citing Pastore's (1987) reference to a futile Montagnais mission sent by the French in Baie de Brador in 1718 specifically to trade with the Beothuk, Robbins suggests the possibility of a sporadic prehistoric trade relationship between these two groups, the subsequent dissolution of which may indeed have been a factor in the disappearance of the Beothuk from the island during the historic period.¹⁴⁴

Mitchell, who suggests that further research on the Great Northern Peninsula would reveal much about both the prehistory and history of the Beothuk people, also pursues the idea of a Labrador connection. Citing Cuff's "I Interviewed the Great Grandchild of a Beothuk," Mitchell (1999) questions the reliability of Shanawdithit's population estimate in 1823 and raises the possibility that there may have at the time existed pockets of Beothuk of whom Shanawdithit was herself unaware.¹⁴⁵ This possibility, combined with the familiarity of the Montagnais with what Governor Hamilton referred to as "the Northern parts of the island," Mitchell suggests,

¹⁴³ Marshall (1985) discusses birch bark canoe construction and its implications for Beothuk marine and freshwater travel.

¹⁴⁴ Citing Roy (1923) in his discussion of the report of this mission by François Martel de Brouage, stepson of Augustin de Courtemanche, Pastore indicates that, though unsuccessful in locating any Beothuk, the mission determined "that the Montagnais were familiar both with Newfoundland and with the Beothuk" (1987, 58).

¹⁴⁵ Cuff describes an interview with a Mrs. Richard White (nee Anne Gabriel) "who states with pride that her great-grandfather was a full-blooded Red Indian, i.e., a Beothuk." Tracing Mrs. White's ancestry as mixed Beothuk/Mi'kmaq, Cuff urges "a search for similar tales among the Micmac race" (1966, 25). Shanawdithit told Cormack that there were thirteen Beothuk left at the time of her capture in 1823. For a discussion of Shanawdithit's population figures as told to Cormack, see Marshall (1996, 208-210).

“would have put them in a position to aid and abet the weakened remnant of the Beothuk in a transition northward” (1999, 40).¹⁴⁶ While inconclusive at the time, Mitchell’s hypothesis raises an interesting possibility. Such possibilities illustrate how researchers can pursue the findings of other disciplines, including but not limited to archaeology, to open up the historical narrative to include new and diverse interpretations.

5.2 The Extinction Story

Like the early theories about the Beothuk’s mysterious origins, within the historical narrative the idea of extinction also draws on the perception of the Beothuk as a genetically and culturally distinct population that had little or no interaction with Europeans and other Native peoples. While some view this isolation as a failure on the part of the Beothuk, others, reflecting an emerging movement within archaeology to acknowledge Native agency, interpret it as a choice. For many writers, however, the very idea of isolation remains a fundamental assumption of the extinction narrative, and one that only begins to change with the emergence of new archaeological findings.

Contrasting the disappearance of the Beothuk with the survival of the Mi’kmaq in Atlantic Canada, Upton (1977) determines that this isolation was the ultimate cause of the Beothuk’s extinction. Upton divides the relationship between Beothuk and Europeans into three distinct stages: the first spanning early contact with the Basque and Portuguese until John Guy’s historic meeting in 1612; the second when the Beothuk withdrew into the interior; and the third beginning in the mid-18th century when white settlers began to use interior resources along the Exploits River. He challenges the perception that the settlers were responsible for “exterminating the Beothuk” and also asserts that endemic disease played a role (1977, 151). In

¹⁴⁶ Mitchell cites Hamilton (1819, in Howley, 1915, 108-109).

his concluding remarks, Upton asks whether, in contrast to the Mi'kmaq, who had a history of interaction with settlers, "the Beothuks died because they did not have enough contact with the whites?" (1977, 153) His conclusion is plainly stated: "Perhaps those same intruders could have saved the Beothuks from extinction" (1977, 153).

Marshall divides Beothuk/European coexistence into two stages, as opposed to Upton's three: 1500-1730 – a period of avoidance and loss of territory – and 1730-1830, "characterized as a period of further territorial confinement, increasing persecution and involuntary contacts" (1988, 71). The concept of avoidance of the white settler population is also pervasive throughout Marshall's writing on the subject of extinction. Asserting that the Beothuk neither associated nor lived with Europeans, she subsequently suggests that "their strong adherence to traditional values and behaviour, combined with an early rejection of Europeans and their culture, was salient to the Beothuks' failure to engage in trade" (1988, 57; 1996, 74).

Pastore likewise pursues the Beothuk's failure to develop an ongoing trade with Europeans as a primary cause of their extinction. Drawing on Upton (1977), Pastore defines the three categories of Europeans normally important to North American Indigenous peoples: Indian agents, missionaries, and fur traders. The lack of naval supremacy for any European nation involved in Newfoundland's migratory fishery, Pastore argues, precluded the establishment of Indian agents, whose customary role it was "to secure the assistance or the neutrality of native peoples" (1987, 48). Pastore further notes the absence of English clerics in Newfoundland until the 18th century, as well as the dearth of French references to the Beothuk during 1662-1713, when the French possessed Plaisance (Placentia) (Rowe, 1977, 189-190; Pastore, 1987, 48). Pastore explains the absence of fur traders with the rationale that the Beothuk did not trade with Europeans because they did not need to, acquiring, as they did,

valuable iron in the form of nails and various other implements scavenged from seasonally abandoned fishing premises.

This latter hypothesis is largely influenced by Pastore's archaeological work in Boyd's Cove, a late 17th- early 18th century Beothuk site in Bonavista Bay featuring "hundreds of European nails, many of them skillfully modified into projectile points" (Pastore, 1982, 30).¹⁴⁷ Surmising that seasonally abandoned fishing premises "must have seemed like treasure troves to the Beothuks," Pastore hypothesizes that the Beothuk scavenged "this supply of highly-desired raw material," thereby removing any incentive to reorganize their subsistence and settlement patterns in a manner that would facilitate trade with Europeans (1993, 268). While acknowledging the possibility of an early or limited trading relationship with the Basques and the French – a possibility suggested by the presence of Normandy stoneware and 486 European trade beads at the Boyd's Cove site – Pastore also suggests that these items may have been obtained through aboriginal intermediaries such as the Montagnais, who were trading with the French, and with whom the Beothuk were generally believed to be on good terms.

Pastore finds further evidence of a trading relationship between Europeans and the Beothuk in the faunal analysis of the site, which indicates a high frequency of remains of furbearing mammals: beaver, otter, and marten.¹⁴⁸ His analysis of the trade relationship takes into account Guy's description of a "dumb barter" system as outlined in Howley (1915, 50-51). Also considering the absence of high quality European trade goods such as axes, bells, mirrors and trade blankets characteristically associated with the fur trade, Pastore concludes that the trade would have been "very marginal," and that the Beothuk acquired the majority of their

¹⁴⁷ Pastore notes that of the 871 metal objects retrieved from the Boyd's Cove site, 605 of them were forged nails, 99 of which had been "aboriginally modified" (1983,100).

¹⁴⁸ Acknowledging that beaver is also a food animal, Pastore points out that otter and marten are much more likely to have been procured for their furs (1983, 99).

European iron “by stealing from abandoned fishing premises” (1983, 100). Given its position between the French fishery to the west in Notre Dame Bay and an English fishery in Bonavista Bay, as well as the presence of islands and shoal waters preventing access to larger vessels, the Boyd’s Cove site, Pastore maintains, would have offered the Beothuk safe access to Europeans, while minimizing the risk of reprisal.

Highly influential in the disciplines of history and archaeology, Pastore’s writing on the Beothuk illustrates the extent to which details such as diction can come to shape the historical narrative in ways the narrator does not necessarily intend. In his writing, Pastore uses the terms “stealing” and “pilfering” to describe the Beothuk’s acquisition of iron from abandoned European fishing premises. As Pope points out, Pastore came to regret his use of such terms, with their European assumptions about property ownership, and ultimately preferred the term “scavenging” to describe this activity (P. Pope, pers. comm., April 23, 2013). This change of thinking, however, is not articulated in Pastore’s writing, with the result that the narrative continues to be influenced to this day by a perception that the author himself personally revised.

Another factor inhibiting the development of a significant fur trade between the Beothuk and Europeans, and ultimately contributing to Beothuk extinction, was the unusual practice in Newfoundland of early English settlers trapping valuable furs themselves to augment their income.¹⁴⁹ As Pope (2004) observes, in addition to beaver, otter, and marten, early 17th-century European residents in Newfoundland saw a lucrative trading opportunity also in muskrat, ermine, fox, and lynx. Acknowledging the existence of a limited 16th-century trade with the Beothuk for caribou skins, Pope notes that by the 17th century, the settlers were trapping furs

¹⁴⁹ For more on this phenomenon, see Pope (2004, 306-310, 339-340).

themselves for export to England.¹⁵⁰ Pastore (1989) maintains that early European settlers were forced to trap their own furs as a result of a breakdown in relations with the Beothuk, arising from their practice of scavenging from seasonally abandoned fishing premises. Contrasting the Beothuk experience to that of the Labrador Inuit who may well have been “saved” by the French entrepreneurs with whom they traded, Pastore like Upton sees European interaction, in this case engendered through trade, as a means by which the “demise” of the Beothuk in the early 19th century might have been avoided: “This demise was ensured by the failure of the Beothuk to develop a mature trade with Europeans” (Pastore, 1987, 59).

Another hypothesis to explain the extinction of the Beothuk is put forward in a joint 1985 article by Pastore and Tuck. In an attempt to understand what appears to be a pattern of extinctions among two distinct ethnic groups, Indian and Paleo-Eskimo, the authors analyze the fauna of Newfoundland on the basis of its ability to support hunter-gatherer populations. In the historical absence of common mainland “fallback species” such as porcupines, whitefish, moose, and varying hare, it is hypothesized that these people were particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in the available population of the migratory species on which they relied most heavily for survival: the caribou and the harp seal (Pastore 1982, 7).¹⁵¹ In the case of the caribou, as illustrated by Bergerud (1971) and Rowley-Conwy (1990), the population itself is cyclical, a variable which is further complicated by erratic migration movements often incited by unseasonable weather conditions.¹⁵² For the most part seasonally available in abundance, the harp seal in certain years could face fluctuations in weather and wind conditions that would keep

¹⁵⁰ As evidence of the former, Pope cites a Bristol Port Books entry of sixty “deer skins” for the thirty-ton *Grace* of Bristol returning from Newfoundland; of the latter, he cites an October 1666 entry in the Dartmouth Customer Port Books describing the *Unity*’s cargo of 25 lynx pelts, 20 beaver, 69 otter, and 13 fox (1994, 340, n.38).

¹⁵¹ Pastore discusses this phenomenon in detail, citing Scott and Crossman (1964) and Northcott (1964) (Pastore, 1989, 67-68).

¹⁵² Fall migration of interior Newfoundland’s caribou herds, for example, can be incited in October by early snowfall. For a discussion of Newfoundland caribou herd movements and their affect on human populations see Bergerud (1971, 1983) and Burch (1972).

the herd from ever reaching Newfoundland, thus completely denying aboriginal populations a significant food source. The immigration of post-Norse Europeans, with their ability to import food from elsewhere, Tuck and Pastore conclude, ended the pattern of complete dependency on the impoverished subarctic boreal ecosystem of Newfoundland, bringing about, at the same time, “the tragedy of yet another native extinction,” that of the Beothuk people (1985, 78).

In keeping with the theme of isolation, the 18th-century withdrawal by the Beothuk away from the European-settled coast into the interior of Newfoundland is also extensively discussed as a factor leading to their extinction. Acknowledging a number of previously discussed theories such as disease, wildlife migrations, the activities of European fur-trappers and the Mi’kmaq, and the paucity of European-Beothuk relations – exacerbated by the Beothuk habit of scavenging indicated most clearly in the Boyd’s Cove and Inspector Island sites in eastern Notre Dame Bay – Pastore suggests that the ultimate cause of their extinction was that “they were forced to withdraw to the island’s impoverished interior where there could be but one outcome for them” (1989, 71). In keeping with this extinction hypothesis, Rowley-Conwy discusses a generalized overwintering strategy in the near-coastal zone, making the distinction that European settlement exacerbated, rather than incited, a prehistoric Beothuk pattern of utilizing deep-interior base camps during the winter months.¹⁵³

A review of late 20th-century historical and archaeological writing on the subject of extinction illustrates how the interpretation of scholars working across both disciplines tended to

¹⁵³ This near coastal zone is characteristically within 20 kilometers of the coast. See Smith (1987a). Referencing a map by John Cartwright first published in a previous article, Marshall (1977) presents “Evidence for Two Beothuk Subsistence Economies,” one based on the exploitation of marine resources from coastal base camps, and a second on the concentrated exploitation of migrating caribou herds in the interior. Marshall discusses a map drawn in conjunction with a 1768 excursion along the Exploits River by John Cartwright who, during this mission, recorded evidence of year-round Beothuk habitation and an extensive deer fence system in the interior used in the hunting of migratory caribou.

reinforce a fundamental assumption in the Beothuk narrative, an assumption that emphasizes their failure to interact with Europeans, their propensity to engage in scavenging rather than trade, their withdrawal into the interior, and their inability to adapt to environmental fluctuations in their harsh physical environment. With the appearance of subsequent archaeological findings proposing their agency and interaction with other peoples, however, the narrative began to evolve to accommodate a more complex interpretation of the Beothuk people's fate.

5.3 Beothuk Agency

Taking issue with what he perceives to be a prevailing academic attitude towards the Beothuk as being reactive, Holly (1998) argues that the intensification strategies for the harvesting and storage of caribou in the interior represent an all too often overlooked agency on their part. The Beothuk movement into the interior Holly views as arising from social motivation, similar to their decision not to engage in a fur trade with the Europeans, which he perceives as being motivated by their unwillingness to disrupt traditional subsistence patterns and strategies. Viewed in this context, Holly argues, “the power of social change rests, at least in part, in our hunter-gatherers’ hands” (1998, 21). Citing cultural practices described by Marshall and McGregor, Holly concludes that having chosen to relocate to the interior, the Beothuk become free to engage in a number of social and cultural activities to “strengthen group solidarity” and reinforce what he perceives as “a dichotomy between the Beothuk and their outside world adversaries” (1998, 25).¹⁵⁴

The historical narrative's focus on Beothuk passivity is further challenged by the appearance of Holly's “The Beothuk on the Eve of their Extinction,” in which the author

¹⁵⁴ Cultural practices McGregor ascribes to the Beothuk include the sacrifice of individuals returning from living with Europeans, the punishment of such perceived traitors by death, and the instruction of children, from infancy “to cherish animosity and revenge against all other people” (McGregor, 1836, 322, in Holly, 1998, 25).

elaborates on what he terms “Beothuk agency and coping strategies in the historic period” (2000, 79). Like Raynauld before him, Holly takes issue with the idea of the Beothuk as “des êtres passifs inexorablement conduits à l’extinction” (1984, 46). Citing Pastore’s *mokoshan* analogy in Boyd’s Cove, Holly postulates that a similar activity may have served to reinforce Beothuk collective identity and an ideology of avoidance and resistance.¹⁵⁵ He cites Howley, Marshall, and, most extensively, McGregor in the discussion of cultural practices “enforced by narrating, during the winter evenings, the innumerable wrongs inflicted on the Beothics by the white men and by Mikmaks” (McGregor, 322, in Holly, 2000, 86). An incident of Beothuk resistance is provided by an interview with Joe Kinsella, who relates a story told to him by his grandmother, describing a Beothuk attack her grandfather witnessed at the age of six. Arguing that “the fact of extinction should not preclude Beothuk adaptation or agency en route to extinction,” Holly concludes that “the Beothuk seem to have made choices and sought adaptations” (2000, 90, 91).

Stopp outlines several such adaptations in her discussion of food storage as an adaptive strategy among Native peoples of the northeastern subarctic. Taking issue with the prevailing notion of labour being expended in forager societies only in the expectation of immediate return, Stopp discusses a number of food preservation and storage techniques employed by the Innu, Inuit, and Beothuk including dehydration, fat preservation, fermentation, and caching. In addition to facilitating sharing under conditions of stress, caching, she points out, provides foraging people with a degree of mobility Ingold (1987) describes as “fixed point” nomadism. Acknowledging the apparent archaeological invisibility of storage-related evidence, Stopp considers archaeological evidence of caching, as well as the influence of food storage and processing requirements on the selection of settlement locations.

¹⁵⁵ The Innu practice of *mokoshan* involves a collective feast held in honour of the spirit of the caribou. For a detailed discussion of this Innu practice and its relevance to Beothuk archaeological findings at the Boyd’s Cove site, see Pastore (1992, 39-43).

Stopp's discussion of the Beothuk references both George Cartwright and Cormack's observations – in the 1790s and 1820s respectively – that caribou, seal meat, and eggs were all preserved by drying, as well as Guy's 1612 observation that their "deeres flesh, dried in the smock or winde...savoured very well" (Stopp, 2002, 313). The Beothuk devised a unique method of cold storing large bundles of venison, with the tongue and heart in the middle, in boxes made of birch or spruce bark kept in above-ground storehouses or pits lined with bark. Considered within the context of the numerous historical incidents of settlers pillaging Beothuk sites of their caribou meat and furs, Stopp's reference to William Cull's 1810 mention of finding a 40-50 foot (12-15m) Beothuk storehouse containing the meat of about 100 caribou is a reminder of the value of these food sources not only to the Beothuk, but also to the settlers who occasionally raided them.¹⁵⁶

Stopp cites Shanawdithit's drawings in Howley labeled Sketch VI and VIII as evidence of a diverse array of innovative processing techniques for various foods that involved boiling, preserving in oil or fat, and their storage in a variety of containers and structures (Fig. 5.1, from Shanawdithit, 1829, in Howley, 1915, 246). In particular, she draws attention to Cormack's labeling of one diagram "Different kinds of Animal Food," which depicts a structure containing what Cormack labels as dried salmon, meat, and lobster tails, seal fat, seal and caribou bladders filled with oil, and dried egg powder stored in birch rind. In her conclusion, Stopp urges the reader "to move away from the notion that survival hinges on procurement success" (2002, 328). Viewed in the context of her analysis, the Beothuk begin to emerge as a resourceful people who employed a number of sophisticated strategies to ensure an adequate food supply even during periods when access to game and other food supplies was interrupted or known to be scarce.

¹⁵⁶ As discussed in Chapter 4, early sources of such incidents include Howley (1915) and Pulling (1792, in Marshall, 1989).

In subsequent publications, Holly expands on the idea of adaptation and agency to urge a more carefully considered ethnohistory of subarctic peoples that does not collapse their prehistory into a “timeless vacuum” in “a place on the margins of history and human sustainability” (2002, 16-17). In an attempt to “understand the ‘logic’ or rationale by which scholars come to view the Beothuk and their history as timeless,” Holly reviews ethnohistorical, anthropological, and archaeological assumptions, many of which have their foundations in the work of Howley (Holly, 2003, 127). Citing the work of Gatschet (1885) and Hewson (1978a), Holly determines that the linguistic approach to the Beothuk, like the geographic, has been long informed by the idea of isolation. Contributing to this perception, Holly notes, are assumptions about the Beothuk as being culturally and linguistically unique, remote, archaic, and, ultimately, extinct. Their agency downplayed or completely overlooked within the historical narrative, the Beothuk are denied a living legacy with the death of Shanawdithit in 1829, at which point, Holly concludes, “extinction certainly ends history” (2003, 134).

5.4 Beothuk and Other Native Groups

At the turn of the century, archaeological developments emerge suggesting a more complex interpretation of the fate of the Beothuk. Revisiting the assumption of their xenophobia, this work draws on the concept of Beothuk agency with respect to their dealings with others, and how those dealings impacted their own survival and that of others around them. Considered within the context of emerging historical narratives about other Native peoples in the region, these archaeological developments make a strong argument for the interpretation that, rather than disappearing altogether, the Beothuk may have integrated into other cultural groups with whom they had ongoing interaction and contact.

Perhaps the most compelling argument for this alternative viewpoint comes from Renouf, whose 1999 “Prehistory of Newfoundland Hunter-Gathers: Extinctions or Adaptations?” replaces the assumption of extinction with the concept of population shifts. In response to Tuck and Pastore (1985), Renouf proposes an alternative model to the extinction framework, suggesting that Indigenous populations in insular Newfoundland offset the disastrous effects of unpredictable fluctuations in prey species through a series of survival mechanisms they adapted over time. One of these involves maintaining connections with related groups in mainland Labrador.

Like Holly and Raynauld, Renouf takes issue with the historic portrayal of the Beothuk as a passive people inexorably drawn towards extinction by forces beyond their control. By employing a number of “risk-reducing mechanisms,” Renouf argues, “it is unlikely that Newfoundland hunter-gatherers would have been as vulnerable to extinction as the current model suggests” (1999b, 405). Developed by various Indigenous groups throughout Newfoundland and Labrador prehistory, these mechanisms include specialized marine exploitation by Paleo-Eskimo groups and the more generalized marine adaptation of Indian populations. Citing Loring’s observation that “Point Revenge represents ancestral Montagnais-Naskapi,” Renouf’s archaeological summary makes a clear argument for a common Montagnais/Beothuk ancestry, an observation supported by Pastore (1992), as previously noted, and one that, despite prevailing myths to the contrary, most archaeologists now take for granted (Loring, 1999, 408).¹⁵⁷

Renouf determines Tuck and Pastore’s model to be “heavily influenced by the historical Beothuk extinction,” which she traces through Marshall, Pastore, Rowley-Conwy, and even Schwarz who, though objecting to the “environmental determinism of Tuck and Pastore” also

¹⁵⁷See Loring (1988, 1992); P. Pope, (pers. comm., March 2, 2010).

accepts their interpretation of extinction (Renouf, 1999b, 409). In contrast to Martijn (1990), who, in keeping with the Beothuk extinction model describes Innu movement from Labrador *into* Newfoundland, Renouf cites Loring's (1992) discussion proposing *regular* interaction and communication between Recent Indian groups both within Labrador and between Labrador and Newfoundland.

Renouf addresses the model presented by Tuck and Pastore on the basis of its three primary assumptions. First, she assesses as overstated the idea that Newfoundland's resources were unreliable and unpredictable, arguing that fluctuations of prey species were likely localized rather than island-wide. Secondly, the ostensible vulnerability of hunter-gatherers to environmental unpredictability Renouf counters with their practices of food storage and the maintenance of a geographically extensive network of social ties:

When uncertainty may be great (as in Newfoundland) options are kept open. Surpluses are targeted, efforts are co-ordinated, and preservation and storage technology is employed. An alternative to storage is to share it with relatives across a broad region, thus 'storing' goodwill and reciprocal obligations. In such societies social and territorial boundaries are flexible, wide-ranging kin and non-kin ties are maintained across them, and people can therefore move over a large area. When unpredictability of important resources is the norm over generations (as Tuck and Pastore argue for Newfoundland), mechanisms for sharing become an integral part of the cultural pattern. (1999b, 411)

Thirdly, like Robbins and Pastore (1986), Renouf counters the idea that insular Newfoundland hunter-gatherers lived in a bounded universe with the concept that the Strait of Belle Isle, rather than acting as a deterrent, served seafaring Indigenous people with a means of transportation and communication. Citing Martijn's discussion of the 'canaleses' mentioned in

an early 17th-century Basque source, Renouf, like Martijn and Pastore (1992), concludes that the Beothuk were also in southern Labrador (Martijn, 1990, 230). She points out that subsequent records exist of travel back and forth across the Strait via the “Chemin des Sauvages,” and that Shanawdithit described the Montagnais as “Shaunamuncs” or “good people” with whom the Beothuk regularly traded across the Strait.¹⁵⁸ Other archaeological evidence for trade links cited by Renouf include the occurrence throughout Newfoundland prehistory of Ramah chert, a translucent chert used sparingly on the island and available only from Ramah Bay in northern Labrador, and distinctive cherts from the west coast of Newfoundland occurring in sites throughout Labrador. Together these findings suggest a far-reaching trade network that includes even connections between Recent Indian and Dorset groups.

Pointing out that the extinction discussion has focused on Beothuk in the northeast of the island, Renouf asks, “what about Beothuk elsewhere?” (1999b, 416). Considered as a whole, she concludes, the evidence provides a convincing alternative to the extinction model, raising, as it does, the possibility of northern Newfoundland Beothuk immigrating back to Labrador, “calling upon existing relationships with Labrador Montagnais-Naskapi and becoming assimilated into that population” (1999b, 416).

Renouf’s interpretation is in keeping with Carignan’s finding with regards to contemporaneous occupation between culturally distinct groups. Challenging previous assumptions of hostilities between resident Indian and immigrating Dorset Eskimo populations across the Strait of Belle Isle between 500 B.C. and A.D.500, Carignan concludes, “It remains to be proven that hostilities occurred between the groups and contributed to the eventual termination of the Dorset Eskimo population” (1976, 221). In an article that traces Paleo-eskimo

¹⁵⁸ The “Chemin des Sauvages,” or “Route of the Savages” Howley noted on old French charts depicting the area of the Northern Peninsula at the narrowest point on the Strait of Belle Isle (1915, 33).

migrations from Labrador to Newfoundland, Tuck and Fitzhugh suggest interaction between Point Revenge Indian and Late Dorset groups, “another area requiring research attention,” as well as contact with the Norse (1986, 166).

One of the reasons researchers know so little about these relationships involving Native peoples in the region, Martijn suggests, is that they have failed to ask. Lamenting that so little has been done to interview the Innu about their movement over the past three centuries between Labrador and Newfoundland, Martijn suggests that a direct result of this oversight is that so much of the history has been lost. Citing Fitzhugh (1978) and Loring (1983), Martijn, like Renouf, views the late prehistoric Point Revenge complex as “directly ancestral to the present day Montagnais” (1990, 228). He points out that, beginning in 1529, Europeans describe at least four Indigenous groups in the Strait of Belle Isle, most probably the Beothuk, Montagnais, St. Lawrence Iroquians, and the Inuit. Martijn’s analysis here is reiterated by Bakker and Drapeau (1994), who, in their discussion of an epic Celtic poem’s description of the interactions of a Breton sailor with Indigenous people along the French Shore in 1787, interpret the account as referring to the Beothuk, Montagnais, and the Inuit (Conan, 1826).¹⁵⁹

Insisting there is insufficient evidence to support the interpretation that the Montagnais were regularly sent to Newfoundland by the French, Martijn (1990) cites François Martel de Brouage to illustrate that the Montagnais regularly crossed the Strait of Belle Isle for their own reasons, primarily in search of food during shortages in the winter.¹⁶⁰ Encouraging them to trade with the Beothuk, de Brouage began to provide the Labrador Montagnais with supplies, shallops and even some of his French employees to help facilitate the interaction. It was after de

¹⁵⁹ Most relevant to this discussion is “II – Campagne de Terre-Neuve (1787),” (Conan, 1826, 37- 112).

¹⁶⁰ Like Pastore (1987), Martijn refers to François Martel de Brouage, stepson of Augustin de Courtemanche, who sent the Montagnais from Labrador on a mission to Newfoundland. Martijn cites the passage in which Brouage specifies that the Montagnais “veulent aller tous les ans hiverner à Terre-neuve n’ayant pas suffisamment de quoi vivre dans ce pays-ici...” (de Brouage, 1923, 366).

Brouage's death in 1761, Martijn maintains, that some Innu individuals, families, and groups began to adopt the habit of overwintering in Newfoundland. With respect to relations between the Beothuk and the Innu, Martijn cites Shanawdithit's account of the Shaunamuncs or "Good People" and Pastore's discussion of the trade beads found at Boyd's Cove, which concludes that "a marginal trade between the Beothuk and the Montagnais lingered on into the nineteenth century" (Pastore, 1987, 58). He also cites the suggestion in Bonnycastle, Howley, and Jukes that "some of the last Beothuk survivors sought refuge with Montagnais bands on the middle and lower north shore" (Martijn, 1990, 236).

Martijn's historical interpretation of Beothuk/Innu interaction finds support in the findings of a number of archaeologists suggesting a possible cultural link between the two groups. *Shapatuan* structures are common among the historic Innu of Labrador and Quebec and in archaeological sites of their pre-contact period ancestors. A large oval dwelling with two entrances, the *shapatuan* is characterized by a long, rectangular hearth running down the structure's central axis which contains a high preponderance of caribou bone, ash, charcoal, and fire-cracked rocks. The *mokoshan* ceremony in honour of the caribou takes place within the *shapatuan*. During the *mokoshan*, the long bones of the caribou are collected and their ends ground, broken and boiled to facilitate the extraction and consumption of marrow, with remaining bone splinters disposed of in the fire (Henriksen, 1973). With reference to a *shapatuan* structure in House 4 at Boyd's Cove, Pastore (1992) cites Buchan's description of 300 stored caribou bones at a Beothuk site in 1811, as well as Speck's (1922) description of a central Labrador Montagnais *shapatuan* and Loring's (1985) discovery of a similar structure in Daniel Rattle on the coast of northern Labrador, to suggest a common cultural practice shared over centuries by the two groups. In his discussion of *shapatuan* evidence at Deer Lake, Reader

(1998) references additional similar *shapatuan* structures located in Labrador and Newfoundland to support his conclusion that Recent Indian groups in Newfoundland and prehistoric Innu groups in southern Labrador and eastern Quebec had close socio-cultural ties dating back twelve hundred years.¹⁶¹

Martijn's 2009 "Historic Inuit Presence in Northern Newfoundland, Circa 1550-1800 CE," which details the strained relations on the island between the Inuit and the French, describes an Inuit presence in Newfoundland over centuries, further opening up the narrative to include Beothuk/Inuit interaction. Citing Shanawdithit's reference to the Inuit in Jukes, Martijn concludes, "It is uncertain whether she was simply repeating traditional stories, or whether her statement indicates that there was still contact between the two groups as late as the 1800s" (2009, 86).¹⁶²

This line of thinking is pursued by Renouf, Bell, and Teal, who draw on the earlier archaeological work of Carignan and Tuck to revisit the concept of Recent Indian and Paleo-Eskimo co-habitation. Citing Pastore (1992), the authors maintain that, of the three distinct Recent Indian technological and chronological complexes – Cow Head (Tuck, 1975), Beaches (Carignan, 1975), and Little Passage (Penney, 1981, 1984) – it is well accepted, though the relationships between them are unclear, that the latter "is prehistoric Beothuk, Newfoundland's aboriginal culture of the historic period" (Renouf, Bell, & Teal, 2000, 107). Archaeologically, they point out, overlaps exist between Paleo-Eskimo and Recent Indian groups: Terminal Groswater (2100-1900 BP) with early Cow Head (2000-1500 BP), and Dorset (2000-1200 BP) with both the Cow Head and the Beaches (1500-1000 BP) complexes. Like Groswater Paleo-

¹⁶¹ Reader's discussion of the Recent Indian/prehistoric Innu connection cites Loring (1992), Martijn, (1990), Pastore (1987), and Pintal (1992).

¹⁶²Citing Jukes, Martijn writes, "Shanawdithit stated in the 1820's that her people knew and despised the Inuit 'for their filthiness,' but did not speak of any conflict" (Jukes, 1842, I, 130, in Martijn, 2009, 86).

Eskimos, Recent Indians are also known for high mobility, a factor which greatly influences a group's management of resource fluctuations and, specifically, its interaction with other groups.

Risk-reducing mechanisms for hunter-gatherer populations, Renouf, Bell, and Teal state, include residential mobility, food storage, and a network of widespread ties involving both related and unrelated groups. Citing Spielmann (1986), these latter they describe as either "buffering" – which involves the temporary exploitation of resources within another group's traditional territory – or "mutualism," regular or occasional trade between groups practicing "niche differentiation," or the exploitation of different resources. With its basis in niche differentiation, mutualism "commonly involves exchange across ethnic/linguistic boundaries" (Renouf, Bell, & Teal, 2000, 110). Buffering, on the other hand, generally takes place between related groups within the same cultural tradition.

Citing extensive archaeological work identifying similarities among both Groswater and Recent Indian tool assemblages throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, Renouf, Bell and Teal hypothesize the practice of buffering within both groups as a risk reduction strategy. Furthermore, the difference in site selection between the two groups indicates distinct economic patterns, a primary factor in the establishment of a mutualist relationship, which in this case would include, as well as the trade of meat and other animal products, a sharing of information about ice conditions and other factors influencing the availability of migratory harp seal and caribou herds.¹⁶³ The contemporaneous deposit of Recent Indian and Dorset artifacts at the Gould site in Port au Choix suggests trade or a joint activity undertaken by both groups. In their conclusion, Renouf, Bell and Teal acknowledge that their interpretation may be in conflict with

¹⁶³Recent Indian sites are often located in sheltered bays, while the Paleo-Eskimo sites tend to be found on "exposed headlands and points of land" (Renouf, Bell, & Teal, 2000, 121). The discussion of Paleo-Eskimo and Recent Indian sites cites Schwarz (1994) and Pastore (1986). The authors conclude that "Paleo-Eskimo and Recent Indian site distributions overlap at the coast but diverge in the interior zone. They also diverge in site size and in relative proportions of sites in outer coastal, inner coastal and interior zones" (Renouf, Bell, & Teal, 2000, 113).

common assumptions regarding the incompatibility of Newfoundland's prehistoric peoples: "Our view of mutually beneficial interaction may be an unconventional perspective, given commonly held assumptions about hostility between different ethnic/linguistic groups in arctic and boreal North America (see Graburn 1979), but it makes sense" (Renouf, Bell, & Teal, 2000, 116).

In a subsequent publication, Renouf expands on her thesis of hunter-gatherer interaction through a discussion of mutualism and resource partitioning among Newfoundland's Native peoples. Employing an ecological model of species interactions, Renouf frames her discussion of interaction between Late Paleoeskimo and Early Recent Indian populations in Newfoundland between 2000 and 1200 BP in terms of symbiosis, close non-predatory relationships between two species occupying the same habitat. The term Late Paleoeskimo refers to the population that occupied the Dorset sites in Newfoundland from 2000 until their disappearance from the island about 1200 BP.¹⁶⁴ Recent Indians are Amerindian people who occupied Newfoundland from 2000 BP to European contact; Early Recent Indian specifically the group which occupied sites in the Cow Head (ca 2000-1400 BP) and Beaches (ca 1400-1100 BP) complexes.

Renouf's argument is based on the assumption that while human cultures are not species, "they exhibit behaviour that is sufficiently distinct that human cultures can operate like species" (2003, 3). Citing the archaeological work of Pastore (1986), Schwarz (1994), and Holly (1997), Renouf draws a number of conclusions regarding Recent Indian and Paleoeskimo site distribution in Newfoundland: The first is that, at certain locations, the two groups coexisted contemporaneously – a finding suggested by the distribution of sites in Bonavista Bay, Burgeo, and Port Choix, and definitively demonstrated by her own work at the Gould site in the latter.

¹⁶⁴Citing Macpherson (1994) and Rosenberg (1998), Renouf (2003) suggests that the disappearance of the Dorset may be linked to localized climate warming.

Secondly, Renouf points out, there is a fundamental difference in the way in which the two groups' sites are distributed, with those of the Paleoeskimo concentrated on the outer and inner coastal areas, and those of the Recent Indians more evenly distributed across coastal and interior regions.¹⁶⁵ Drawing on Holly (2002), a third observation is that Recent Indian sites expand into the inner coastal areas left vacant when the Paleoeskimos disappeared from the island in 1200 BP.

Renouf interprets these findings within the context of the competitive exclusion principle, which predicts that “where the niches of two species is the same or similar, either one species will become extinct or else they will partition resources” (2003, 7). She points out that faunal assemblages at Phillip’s Garden in Port au Choix, with their high concentration of seal, suggest the Late Paleoeskimo practiced marine specialization, while Early Recent Indian assemblages at Beaches, Inspector Island, and Boyd’s Cove, which also include small game and caribou, imply a more generalized subsistence pattern.¹⁶⁶ Renouf posits that Early Recent Indians and late Paleoeskimos practiced a mutually beneficial form of resource partitioning that was both spatial and seasonal in nature. The subsequent relationship between the Beothuk and Europeans she divides into two stages. The first stage she views as parasitic symbiosis, whereby the Beothuk benefitted from iron obtained by their burning of abandoned English fishing premises. This phase was replaced by competition, which, in the absence of resource partitioning, Renouf asserts, led to the disappearance of the Beothuk with the death of Shanawdithit in 1829.

¹⁶⁵ Renouf footnotes the parameters of each site sample: Pastore’s is island wide and divided into Outer Coast and Inner Coast; Schwarz’s is island wide and includes the third category Interior, and Holly’s sample from Notre Dame and Bonavista bays only includes a further distinction between near interior and interior (2003, 5, n. 1,2,3).

¹⁶⁶ See Rowley-Conwy (1990) and Cridland (1998).

Renouf's challenge to McGhee and Tuck's (1975) assumption about "the generally hostile nature of relationships between aboriginal Indian and Eskimo groups in regions of northern Canada where these groups have come in contact" draws on a series of studies on Indian and Eskimo interaction that suggest a far more complex and layered series of relationships between the two groups (Renouf, 2003, 126). Citing Barth (1969), Burch insists that "the existence of these rigid boundaries did not prevent extensive interaction between ethnic groups" (1979, 142). In her study of Native interaction and identity in southern Alaska, Townsend takes issue with a categorization that she feels is far more reflective of its creators than the Native people it is meant to describe: "The locus of Eskimo-Indian dichotomy was not in the native community but in the literature of Western writers" (1979, 160). Townsend outlines the multiple opportunities between the Indian and Eskimo populations for both friendly and hostile interaction, with trade and aggression constituting the two major forms of inter-societal interaction. The polarization of the two groups underlying much of the archaeological and ethnographical work in the area, she concludes, constitutes a misleading dichotomy "which has obscured reality" (1979, 178).

In addition to challenging McGhee and Tuck's assumption that the two groups "were not on friendly terms," Renouf takes issue with the more general tendency within archaeology to create isolated categories with artificial boundaries (McGhee and Tuck, 1975, 126). Acknowledging the necessary evil that she herself employs to group populations for archaeological research and discussion, she argues that it is ultimately limiting in terms of how we view the interaction of Native people:

On the other hand these building blocks of culture history are inadequate to the task of dealing with the fluidity of the living groups they are meant to represent. Hunters and

gatherers were dynamic, group composition was fluid, social boundaries were permeable, and they lived in a world of others. Although we acknowledge this, the way we classify our data, or work within the accepted taxonomy, discourages thinking in these terms.

(2003, 2)

Renouf's discussion on this score cites Wobst (1978), who also argues against an archaeology of hunter-gatherers that is artificially bounded both temporally and spatially. Acknowledging the impossibility of seeing the whole from an individual perspective, Wobst warns against "the parochial model of hunter-gatherers" influenced largely by ethnologists practicing "salvage ethnology," with its focus on locally distinct behavior and its reconstruction of an "ethnographic present" preceding contact with Europeans (1978, 305). By reinforcing the spatial discontinuity of archaeology, Wobst argues, "the ethnographic record is replicated in the archaeological one and, in the absence of strong inference, ethnographically inspired anthropological theory receives spurious support from archaeological data" (1978, 306).

The emergence of archaeological research supporting the idea of Beothuk interaction with other groups illustrates the extent to which new data can inform alternative and interdisciplinary interpretations of the historical narrative in which it is framed. In challenging preconceived ideas about the social structure, trade, and settlement patterns of Native groups in the region, archaeologists propose an alternative to the prevalent assumptions of Beothuk xenophobia and extinction. That such interpretations find support in the contemporaneous work of ethnohistorians points to the rise in interdisciplinarity that is beginning to characterize Beothuk research by the turn of the 20th century.

5.5 Beothuk and Europeans

A similar pattern emerges in research of the late 20th and early 21st centuries challenging the historical assumption of minimal interaction between the Beothuk and Europeans. Again, archaeologists turn to a re-evaluation of historical sources to interpret new data. Incorporating expertise from diverse fields such as ethnohistory, metallurgical analysis, and paleoethnobotany, their work illustrates a growing awareness of the value of interdisciplinarity in historical interpretation of the Beothuk experience.

In keeping with this development, archaeological writing of this period is also characterized by a heightened awareness of the limitations of a purely Western epistemological approach to Native research, as well the need for fundamental changes in Native representation.¹⁶⁷ Reflecting key assumptions of historical narrative theory, narratology, and Indigenous research methodology, Trigger points out in in “Archaeology and the American Indian” that the problems addressed by social scientists and the conclusions they reach “are influenced in various ways and sometimes to a highly significant degree by the attitudes and opinions that are prevalent in the societies in which they live” (1980, 662).

This thinking is reflected in Pluciennik’s view of archaeological narrative construction, which evokes both Iser’s reader response and the discussions of bias and temporality within historical narrative theory. In Pluciennik’s first strategy, uncertainties and gaps are subsumed in a meta narrative, in which the *telos* of progress – “usually understood as the author’s society (local, national, or global)” – offers retrospective judgment on events and societies, as well as their relative placement within that progress (1999, 661). Emphasizing the importance of contingency and agency over process, Pluciennik’s second strategy involves acknowledging “the

¹⁶⁷ A similar burgeoning awareness in the representation of Indigenous peoples in historical texts is reflected in Trigger (1985), Bailey (1969), and Axtell (1992).

apparent openness, discontinuity, and indeterminacy of human affairs,” a strategy which, he warns citing Giddens (1984) and Bourdieu (1990), is nonetheless underpinned by other generalizations such as structuration or habitus (Pluciennik, 1999, 661).¹⁶⁸

In American archaeology prior to 1914, Trigger argues, the prevalence of racial myths presenting Native cultures as unchanging in response to the expansion of European colonization is gradually replaced by theories of cultural evolution more in keeping with Enlightenment philosophy and an American preoccupation with progress, with most archaeologists viewing Native societies as static and explaining their cultural change in terms of population movement rather than development. Reflecting the influence of Boas, chronological archaeology (1914-1930) begins to acknowledge that Native communities are capable of change, but attaches little importance to “understanding the dynamics of internal development” (Trigger, 1980, 670). What Trigger defines as the third phase, processual archaeology, begins in the late 1930s with the more functional analysis of archaeologists and ethnologists interacting with Native populations. Despite this significant advance, however, Trigger acknowledges the shortcomings inherent in a system that continues “to produce knowledge that is justified as serving the broader interests of Euroamerican society” (1980, 671). Reflecting a sensibility that would characterize Indigenous research methodologies to follow, he advocates the pressing need for archaeology to prove its value to Native communities in the interpretation of their history as an alternative to Eurocentric written records.

In its insistence on the necessity of alternative interpretations, Trigger’s line of thinking is reflected in more recent archaeological work questioning historical assumptions of Beothuk cultural isolation with respect to Europeans. Challenging the their “alleged refusal to befriend

¹⁶⁸ Giddens’ (1984) structuration analyzes the creation of social systems through both agency, or free will, and structure, or patterns which function to limit that free will. Bourdieu views habitus as the sum of assumed nonverbal behaviours or habits of a specific social group (1990, 66-67).

European visitors to their homeland,” MacLean’s analysis of Beothuk iron tools, along with the more recent archaeological developments on the Avalon Peninsula, foregrounds Beothuk agency and raises the possibility of a limited early historic trade with Europeans (1990, 168).

Supporting his hypothesis with reference to a range of historical accounts suggesting amicable Beothuk/settler exchange, MacLean opens up the narrative with an alternative interpretation of Beothuk interaction with Europeans.

MacLean’s analysis involves Beothuk iron artifacts from two coastal sites in Bonavista Bay (10 from the Beaches and 57 from the contemporaneous Fox Bar burial site directly across the bay); two coastal sites in Notre Dame Bay (a total of almost 2,000 artifacts from Boyd’s Cove and Inspector Island); and 32 inland sites in the Exploits River-Red Indian Lake region (yielding a total of over 1,500 iron artifacts). As MacLean points out, the Beothuk were entirely dependent on Europeans for iron, their ancestors having no knowledge of metals. One of the Beaches housepits radiocarbon dated to sometime between A.D. 1490 and 1630 produced a complete iron projectile point, two modified nail fragments, and six stone projectile points, as well as a large number of stone tools, indicating a preponderance of stone at this period.¹⁶⁹ MacLean interprets a relative overrepresentation of iron objects at the contemporaneous Fox Bar burial site directly across the harbor as reflective of the value placed on iron by the Beothuk, who may likely have included it in the gravesite to ease the transition of the dead to the afterworld.¹⁷⁰

With reference to Pastore’s work in Boyd’s Cove, MacLean describes a sample that includes over 1,700 iron artifacts dating 1650-1720, of which 1,179 were wrought iron nails and

¹⁶⁹ These approximate dates were obtained through the process of radiocarbon dating, a technique employed by archaeologists to approximate the age of artifacts through a measurement of radiocarbon, or ¹⁴C, a radioactive isotope of carbon. For more on this technique, see Bowman (1990).

¹⁷⁰ For a discussion of Native burial practices in the Northeast, see Martin (1975).

nail fragments (Pastore, 1984). His most significant finding is a number of European recycled examples among a majority of samples clearly reworked by the Beothuk. Metallurgically tested at Parks Canada's conservation laboratories in Ottawa, three modified nail fragments were established to have been worked at temperatures in excess of 1000° C, which could only have been attained in a forge (MacLean, 1989, 100-101). Further analysis by iron specialist J. D. Light determined the workmanship of three iron projectile points in the collection to be European. In addition to the presence of these fragments modified by Europeans and iron tools they had modified themselves, MacLean cites the finding of 677 glass trade beads to corroborate his suggestion that "the Beothuk at Boyd's Cove received European-modified iron as trade goods or gifts during the 1650-1720 period" (1990, 172).

MacLean determines the Inspector Island site to exhibit somewhat more evolved ironworking skills, representing, as it does, Beothuk occupation subsequent to that at Boyd's Cove. In part, this evolution was necessitated by the larger size of the European objects used as iron sources – fur traps, hammers, knives, and axes – which required considerably more "hammering, cutting, and grinding" than the wrought iron nails (1990, 173). Among the larger iron implements, MacLean describes a thin rectangular proto-tool partially carved out of a slab of iron. He argues that a decrease or complete absence of stone artifacts in interior sites occupied during the late 18th and early 19th centuries points to the Beothuk's reliance on iron at a time when they had moved inland in response to European encroachment along the coast.

In outlining the process by which the Beothuk moved from the use of stone to iron, MacLean's work, like that of Stopp, also functions to highlight Beothuk agency. Acknowledging their increasing dependence on iron as critical to the deterioration of relations with the settlers from whom they increasingly scavenged and pilfered, MacLean presents the

Beothuk use of iron as an evolution that took place throughout the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries virtually independent of outside influence. This evolution he traces in the gradual production of iron tools with prehistoric non-iron counterparts, and projectile points of varying sizes and types, including the toggling harpoon and larger projectile points modified in response to their increasing reliance on caribou in the interior (1989, 110).¹⁷¹ MacLean also traces an evolution in the type of source material employed, from the easily reworked nails predominant at the coastal sites, to the more complex European implements such as traps, scissors and hammers utilized by later Beothuk ironworkers centered more in the interior. Equally significant is the evolution in technological principle from the chipping of stone to the hammering, cutting, and grinding involved in reworking iron (Quimby, 1966, 25). Compared to similar activity of other Native groups in mainland Canada, the Beothuk iron industry, MacLean concludes, “indicated a mixture of change and traditional continuity that differs from the more sweeping cultural transitions characterizing other contemporaneous Native groups” (1989, 113).

In MacLean’s view, the Beothuk’s acquisition of European-forged projectile points and other forged objects presents the possibility of peaceful interaction between the Beothuk and Europeans or other Native groups, a proposal he acknowledges as “usually considered untenable by students of Newfoundland history” (1989, iii). To corroborate his theory of non-violent interaction between the Beothuk and early British settlers, MacLean (1994) cites a number of suggestions of trade and/or friendly interaction from the historical record – most of them from Howley: the 1582 discovery by three European men of a Beothuk camp in Trinity Bay with great stores of furs dressed for trade, Thomas Pike’s trade with a group of Beothuk on the beach in Carbonear in the late 18th century, and Tom Rousell’s friendly relationship with the Beothuk

¹⁷¹ Toggling harpoons consist of a shaft mounted with a detachable projectile head which, once lodged in the prey (usually a sea mammal), separates from the shaft and is connected to the hunter by means of a cord.

who fished from his salmon weirs in Hall's Bay (Howley, 1915, 21, 256, 267). He also points out Howley's mention of spearheads that Buchan had made by his ship's armourer in 1820 as gifts or trade items for the Beothuk.¹⁷² Acknowledging that such incidents are far outnumbered by violent accounts in the writing of people like Howley, Peyton, Patterson, Cartwright, Cell, and Pulling, MacLean nonetheless insists, in light of the fact that a number of Beothuk artifacts have been altered by European forges specifically for their use, that friendly Beothuk/European interaction cannot be ruled out, particularly early in the relationship, when the Beothuk may have felt less threatened by the newcomers' presence.

Subsequent archaeological writing has confirmed the idea of Beothuk/European interaction in the 16th and 17th centuries, though the interpretation of the nature of that relationship varies considerably. In keeping with Renouf (2001), Pope (1993) views Beothuk/European interaction as essentially competitive. The 17th-century fishery, Pope points out, was a small-scale inshore operation that could be undertaken by individuals with two or three boats constructed in Newfoundland from local lumber supplies. Whether owned and operated by inhabitants or seasonal bye-boat keepers, these boats needed to be protected over the winter months.¹⁷³ One potential source of vandalism was other fishermen, both French and English, who notoriously competed with one another annually for access to the inshore fishery, a common-property resource. Another source was the Beothuk people, who burned seasonally abandoned boats and fishing premises in order to obtain nail and other iron artifacts, which they

¹⁷² With regards to one such spearhead labeled No. 6 in Plate XXX, Howley writes, "the spear points were tied in small bundles, and fastened to the branches of trees along the river side where the Indians most frequented, such as the portages over falls. Some also were left at the deserted Mamateeks on Red Indian Lake. Whether the Beothucks ever made use of any of these is not known for certain. That figured here was picked up on the side of the Exploits River in recent years" (1915, 41). Howley does not cite a source for this information.

¹⁷³ Citing Matthews (1968), Pope describes bye-boat keepers as individuals who "took passage out and back on the so-called 'fishing' ships and left their boats in Newfoundland every winter, under the care of cooperative planters" (1993, 282-3).

would subsequently remodel for their own use.¹⁷⁴ Citing Whitbourne (1622) and Pastore's (1986) observations regarding the absence of Beothuk from the Avalon peninsula, Pope hypothesizes that the Beothuk were likely drawn to the area for the express purpose of scavenging iron. Ironically, combined with European competition for a common-property resource, this practice may ultimately have contributed to the increase in settlement by the British, with all its subsequent associated competition for other resources, thereby constituting "a particularly fateful feedback loop – which may have linked the Beothuk world with the origins of informal English settlement in Newfoundland" (1993, 288).

In his work at Ferryland, Tuck (1983) acknowledges an early 16th-century Beothuk presence at the site. In the lowermost occupation layers of site B, Tuck describes a number of artifacts suggesting the presence of Native people prior to the establishment of the colony in 1621: a single stemmed Beothuk arrowpoint, four triangular bifaces, a large preform, as well as hundreds of flakes. Given the lack of historical references to Beothuk people in the area, Tuck posits that they could have been there either to exploit the natural resources, or that they may have been drawn to the area by European seasonal fishing camps, as suggested by Pope. Concluding only that Native and early European occupations had been revealed as early as the first part of the 16th century, Tuck is reluctant to speculate on the degree of contact between the two groups and the nature of the relationship between them, if indeed there was a relationship at all.

This interpretation evolves somewhat with the subsequent archaeological work of R. Gaulton (2001), who describes Beothuk material in three separate areas of the Ferryland site. Acknowledging that the Avalon Peninsula is outside what has traditionally been interpreted as

¹⁷⁴ As Pope points out, in addition to other ironwork, a single boat could contain as many as 1200 nails, while a stage would contain thousands (1993, 73).

Beothuk territory, Gaulton explores the possibility that their presence in the region may have been overlooked. He points to the large herds of caribou on the Avalon prior to the early 1900s, along with a significant population of beaver, as food sources. Gaulton also cites several examples in Howley of trace archaeological finds in the region: a ground slate projectile point found at the confluence of the Waterford River and St. John's Harbour, as well as the mention of Native artifacts in Conception Bay and over the Avalon in general (Howley, 1915, 341, 21). Also cited in support of his hypothesis are Tuck's find of a Maritime Archaic projectile point on Soldier's Pond in Holyrood, lithic debitage at Cape St. Francis, as well as a Maritime Archaic ground slate bayonet fragment from Ferryland (Tuck, 1979, 2; Tuck, 1984, 7; Gaulton, 2001, 49). Pointing out the access it would provide to an abundance of marine and land resources, Gaulton suggests St. Mary's Bay as a region warranting further archaeological exploration of Native presence on the Avalon Peninsula.

While acknowledging the preponderance of violence in the historical narrative of early European/Beothuk relations, Gaulton, like MacLean, points out that there were also amicable encounters between the two groups early on in their relationship. He cites Guy's historic meeting in 1612, with Pastore's (1992) salient observation that the Beothuk's proposal of a silent barter as proof that they had already established a trading relationship with Europeans. The archaeological evidence of Beothuk in Ferryland, however, he acknowledges to establish their presence at the site but provide little insight into the nature of their relationship with the settlers.

One possible hint into this relationship Gaulton finds in Butt's (1995) paleoethnobotanical analysis of Beothuk hearths from Event 187 in Ferryland's Area B. Butt provides a comprehensive overview of ethnohistorical and archaeological information on the Beothuk's use of plants. In addition to ritual function, weather patterns, and faunal resources, his

discussion of Beothuk site selection takes into consideration their proximity to various tree and plant species, such as white birch, balsam fir, spruce, and pine, on which Beothuk material culture so heavily relied.¹⁷⁵ In terms of Beothuk agency, the study provides additional insight through its determination of the nutritional value of new growth, young shoots, bark, and sap of many indigenous tree species consumed by the Beothuk, and the author's insights about their selective horticulture and preservation of plant materials, as well as their exchange of information and materials with other Indigenous peoples (Butt, 1995, 52-56).

Butt's analysis of soil from a Beothuk hearth at Ferryland yielded seven non-indigenous grape seeds (*Vitis riparia*) among an assortment of local paleoethnobotanical material that included raspberry, pin cherry, blueberry and crackerberry seeds. Butt rules out the possibilities that the seeds were either misidentified or grown locally, and suggests that they were imported by Spanish or Portuguese fishermen fishing in the area. Citing paleoethnobotanical and historical evidence that gives the site a late summer to late fall occupation, Butt acknowledges the possibility of contemporaneous occupation by Beothuk and settlers and even a friendly relationship and trade between them. With reference to Pastore's hypothesis of Beothuk pilfering, Butt concludes, like Tuck, that the finding ultimately raises more questions than answers about the nature of the early relationship between these two groups (Pastore, 1992, 53, 56; Tuck, 1993, 299).

In a subsequent joint publication on Beothuk paleoethnobotany, Deal and Butt take the analysis a step further and propose that the grape seeds were acquired by the Beothuk in the form of raisins provided by Europeans fishing in the area. Citing New Brunswick as the northern limit for the *Vitis riparia* species, they rule out the possibility of local origin for the grapes.

Acknowledging that the seeds may have come from the French or Basques in poorly sieved

¹⁷⁵ Butt's overview of Beothuk uses of tree species also includes maple, alder, mountain ash, and balsam poplar.

wine, in support of their theory they also cite Guy's giving raisins to the Beothuk at Trinity Bay, as well as the fact that Guy included grapes among his list of provisions for travel to Newfoundland (1998, 13).¹⁷⁶ The authors conclude, "Whatever the source of these seeds, their presence in Beothuk hearths suggests that the Beothuk were on friendly terms with the Europeans for an extended period prior to the permanent settlement of the Avalon Peninsula" (1998, 12).

Given this paleoethnobotanical evidence, R. Gaulton determines it unlikely that the Beothuk were present in Ferryland only as scavengers, with the probable scenario that a more cordial relationship in the early 16th century was later replaced by "a pattern of scavenging and avoidance" (2001, 51). While acknowledging that their scavenging may well have been exacerbated by a growing need for iron, MacLean also cautions against what he calls "the widespread depiction of the Beothuk as thieves," pointing out cultural differences in the concept of property ownership, as well as the possibility that the extent of damage done to fishing premises may well have been distorted by the historical record (1989, 17). With regards to the former, Dwyer concurs, using Usner's phrase "informal episodes of exchange" to describe "harvesting activities" like scavenging (Usner, 1992, 191; Dwyer, 2011, 19). Dwyer argues that the perception of such conduct as being unethical or illegal is distinctly European, with Native people seeing it rather as a form of participation with the frontier community.

MacLean's argument that equal or greater property damage was done by competing European fishermen finds support in Pope's discussion of the 17th-century practice of furring in Newfoundland. His account of a furring expedition into Placentia Bay by the servants of successful planters describes the looting from French fishing premises of 400 to 500 lbs of iron spikes and nails, which along with their furs, were shared out with their backers. Pope's research

¹⁷⁶ In their "Acknowledgements," Deal and Butt attribute these observations to Gilbert and Pope, respectively.

determines that such scavenging of iron by the English from French stages, as well as the theft of French property, including boats, was common. His discussion of the 1679 expedition concludes, “Given that the limited bag of furs would have been worth about fifteen pounds, whereas the iron was worth something like ten pounds and the new shalloway was at least fifteen pounds, the plan to go “a furring” was, evidently, little more than a cover for a scavenging expedition” (2004, 310).

The idea of positive Beothuk/settler interaction in the 17th century is further supported by Tuck and B. Gaulton’s finding of archaeological evidence of Beothuk and 16th-century migratory Breton fishing crews beneath the 17th-century layers in Ferryland. In addition to 16th-century European ceramics and iron fragments, beneath the 17th-century layer they also located Beothuk arrowpoints, debitage, and a single Dorset Eskimo harpoon end blade. Though there was no evidence of a *shapatuan* structure, also present at the site were considerable amounts of bone mash reminiscent of previously discussed *mokoshan* findings elsewhere on the island and in Labrador, as well as what appeared to be deposits of Dorset lithic debitage. As Gaulton concedes, further archaeological research around these questions in Ferryland has been limited by the research focus at the site, with its emphasis on the preservation and public interpretation of an intact 17th-century building (pers. comm., May 24, 2012). This limitation notwithstanding, taken together these recent findings at Ferryland open up further possibilities that challenge the prevailing historical assumption of the Beothuk as a xenophobic people who characteristically avoided contact with other groups.

5.6 Conclusions

As a discipline, archaeology continues to make significant contributions to the Beothuk narrative into the 21st century. Reflecting a growing trend advocated by scholars within historical narrative theory and narratology, archaeologists do not work in isolation, but rather practise an interdisciplinary approach that finds its context in history and draws on other, often highly specialized disciplines, as well. Through the collection and analysis of new information and data, archaeology foregrounds interpretive possibilities that would not otherwise exist. Increasingly, it does so with an awareness of its own limitations, those specific to its own discipline as well as the more general limitation of approaching a Native issue from an epistemological perspective that is distinctly Western.

Like contemporary scholars in other disciplines, archaeologists work with an increasing awareness of the limitations on both the direction and interpretation of their research. For the discipline as a whole, these limitations include a multitude of variables ranging from cutbacks in research spending and declining university enrolment to the disturbance of sites through pilfering, gardening, insects, and root growth. Within the context of Newfoundland, the situation is further complicated by particularly acidic soil conditions, rising coastline, and the challenge the sheer land mass presents to the identification of archaeological sites.

Despite these limitations, however, archaeological research continues to uncover new knowledge that expands our understanding of the Beothuk experience. Increasingly, this knowledge finds support in more recent writing by contemporary ethnohistorians. While many archaeological findings, particularly those in highly specialized subdisciplines, may not at first appear to be significant in and of themselves, viewed as a whole they begin to present a series of

more complex interpretive possibilities which challenge some of the earlier historical narrative's most fundamental assumptions.

In contrast to the historical narrative that precedes it, archaeological research of this period tends to reinforce the concept of Beothuk agency. Through analysis that draws on a wide spectrum of supporting archaeological and historical evidence, it also proposes the likelihood of strategic, mutually advantageous interaction with Europeans and other Native groups. In so doing, this analysis supports the idea that, rather than disappearing entirely, the Beothuk were integrated into other existing populations. In light of archaeologists' increasingly interdisciplinary research around Beothuk use of iron, site selection, and various mechanisms for hedging against food shortage, the Beothuk begin to emerge as a complex, resourceful, and adaptive people who employed many diverse and innovative strategies for survival, rather than as the passive victims of their own inexorable extinction.

Chapter 6 – The Mi'kmaq Story

The story of Newfoundland's Mi'kmaq people provides a counter narrative that can enhance our understanding of the Beothuk in a number of significant ways. Like the written history of the Beothuk, the history of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq has been authored almost exclusively by Europeans. As discussed in Chapter 3, such historical narrative is characterized by the representation of Native people as the primitive, inferior Indigenous other whose very existence presents an obstacle to the colonial enterprise. In the case of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq, this narrative persisted until late into the 20th century, with writers of European descent challenging their claim to the island and even their very existence as a distinct cultural entity.

Living as an isolated minority among an expanding settler population, Newfoundland Mi'kmaq of the 19th and early 20th centuries were subject to a number of socioeconomic and political pressures that favoured their assimilation, a process which many individuals in both communities perceived as inevitable. Unlike the Beothuk, however, the Mi'kmaq ultimately succeeded in maintaining a distinct cultural presence on the island, and they continue to do so today. Through a political and cultural renaissance commencing in the 1970s, the Mi'kmaq have actively reasserted their collective identity and pressed for acknowledgement as a Native community. Central to that process has been a challenge to the Eurocentric version of their history, particularly ideas about their arrival in Newfoundland and subsequent interaction with the Beothuk, ideas which were taught in the province's schools and continue to inform many Newfoundlanders' perception of their history.

Drawing on the oral history passed down to them by elders from within their communities, the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq have attempted in recent years to counter this perception with a narrative of their own. Reflecting a growing trend towards political autonomy and the revival of Native identity across the country, the emergence of this narrative has been facilitated by recent developments favouring the inclusion of oral testimony in land claims cases within the Canadian legal system.

Like much of the interdisciplinary archaeological work and historical research from the late 20th and 21st centuries discussed in the preceding chapter, the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq oral tradition challenges some of the early historical narrative's assumptions about the Beothuk, including ideas about their xenophobia and its role in what has been perceived as their extinction. Insisting that the history of Native peoples on the island has been oversimplified by the predominance of writing from a distinctly European perspective, the Mi'kmaq story – as both a parallel narrative and source of new perspective – points to an interpretation of Beothuk history that is interdisciplinary and ultimately more complex.

6.1 Oral History Research

As noted within the context of recent scholarship in oral history and Indigenous research methodologies in Chapter 2, the inclusion of the Native oral tradition in our interpretation of history raises a number of challenges to the researcher. A chief concern among historians and legislators alike has been the question of its narratorial reliability, or its truthfulness as a source of historical knowledge. Consistently, scholars have addressed this issue by articulating what distinguishes Native oral history from history written by Europeans, and advocating that the former not replace the latter, but rather be appreciated as a culturally distinct form of cognition in

its own right, one that is best used as a complementary means of enhancing our historical understanding.

As a narrative tradition, Native oral history emphasizes the centrality of the teller. Foregrounding that teller's subjectivity and personal contribution to the narrative, Native oral history does not claim truth. To the contrary, it acknowledges the fact that each account constitutes an interpretation, and that "the storyteller can never undertake the whole story" (Tribal 7 Elders, 1996, 328; Cruikshank, 2002, 41). As such, Native oral history is distinguished from European historical writing which, as narratologists and historical narrative theorists remind us, reflects a positivist epistemology that implies objectivity and truthfulness, even if such objectivity is not actually possible.

Reflecting an epistemology that favours personal, lived experience over empirical proof, Indigenous research methodologies advocate respect for the individual's perception. At their core is an assumption about the open-endedness of historical interpretation, that "there are always multiple perspectives; no conversation is over, no discipline totally complete (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2008, 140). Eliciting those multiple perspectives not only increases our knowledge base about history; at the same time, it serves to reassert the humanity of those whose perspective has long been overlooked:

What happens when your story is missing or the story is told wrongly or is missing significant parts? If the story is missing, then our humanity is denied. If the story is told wrongly, then our understanding of ourselves is skewed. We do have opportunities and I would add duties and responsibilities to add the story where it's missing, to correct the story where it's wrong, and to complete the story where parts are left out. In doing so,

we will admit the humanity of Aboriginal peoples, four hundred years after the debates in Europe over whether or not we had souls. (Newhouse, 2008, 52)

As many scholars have noted, the process by which the researcher seeks, records, and incorporates oral history necessitates an approach and skill set that is distinct from those traditionally employed in academic disciplines that rely primarily on written, documentary sources. Paramount is the idea, also found in interdisciplinary and community-based research, that knowledge is social, constructed as it is through interactions among individuals (Lutz and Neis, 2008; Longino, 1990). For the non-Native researcher, seeking this knowledge involves forming relationships with members of Native communities (Wilson, 2008, 135; Kovach, 2009a, 51; Brill de Ramirez, 2007, 15). Emphasising the teamwork and community-relations skills involved, Brownlie notes, “oral history is difficult to do” (2009, 35).

Acknowledging the lack of a standard research methodology with regards to oral history, Augustine emphasizes, within Native communities, the importance of being open to the recommendations of community elders regarding the selection of participants and the appropriateness of the research method proposed (Augustine, 2008a, 5). Furthermore, and perhaps most significantly, oral history research involves listening to those people with what Absolon terms “epistemological humility” and respect for what they have to say (2011, 64). Such an approach involves being open to following the participants in a mutually respectful dialogue, even in cases where they appear to be digressing or telling a story which, at first hearing, has no evident relevance to what the researcher wants to know (Cruikshank, 1998). As Visser concludes, one of the greatest challenges of this approach is listening carefully to the other person while keeping our own epistemological assumptions in check:

We must be prepared to engage in the hard work of listening across boundaries and enter into the strangeness on the other side. That is the hard part. But the harder part is trying to step out of our own disciplinary or cultural world view, or put another way, to pull back the blinders just enough to see that they are there. (2004, 17)

The Native oral history research for this dissertation was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, Mi'kmaq people from Newfoundland's south and west coasts were asked about their community's oral history with regards to the Beothuk people. Interviewees were selected through advance consultation with community chiefs and elders in Conne River and Flat Bay in July, 2011: key to this process was the participation of Miawpukek Chief Mi'sel Joe and Calvin White, former chief of the Federation of Newfoundland Indians and the Flat Bay Indian Band. Ethics approval for this research was obtained through the Miawpukek Mi'kmaq First Nation, the Innu Nation in Labrador, and Memorial's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research. For two weeks in August, 2011, eighteen individual interviews and one focus group discussion involving five participants were carried out in Miawpukek (Conne River), Flat Bay, Bay St. George, and Stephenville. Interviewees included both men and women, and ranged from 18 to 89 years of age. The 25 hours of interviews were filmed on video and subsequently logged and transcribed.

The second stage of oral history interviews primarily involved Native informants in Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula. Interviewees for the latter were recruited in consultation with Port au Choix resident Joe Offrey and Professor Priscilla Renouf, who has conducted extensive archaeological research in the region. Interviewees in Sheshatshiu, Labrador, were selected in consultation with Richard Nuna and Ben Apatet of the Innu Nation, as well as Tony Jenkinson, an advisor to the Innu working in the area,

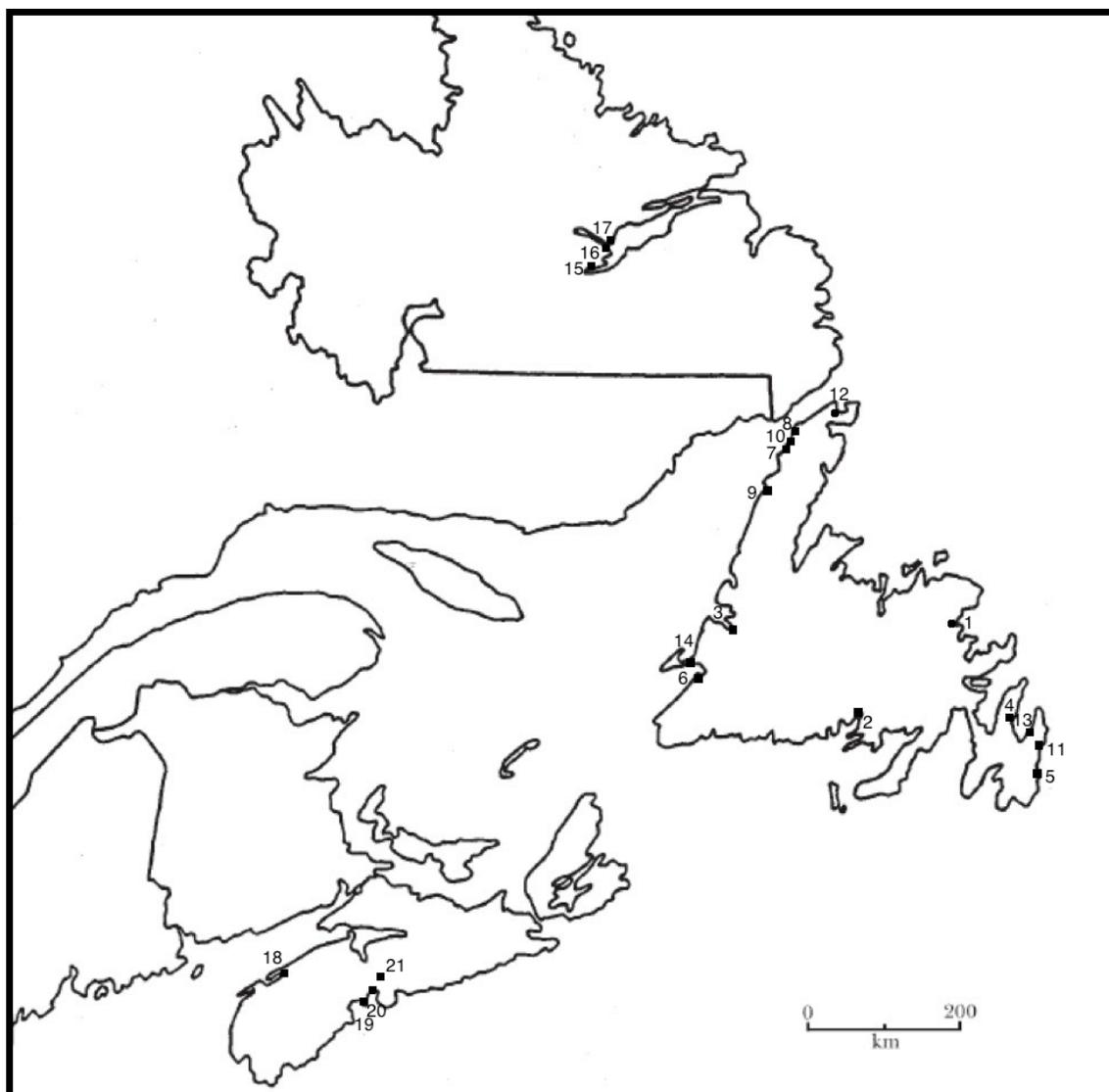


Figure 6.1 Atlantic Region Map With Interview Sites.

Newfoundland	Newfoundland	Labrador	Nova Scotia
1. Burnside	8. Pine's Cove	15. Happy Valley-Goose Bay	18. Bear River
2. Conne River	9. Port au Choix	16. Sheshatshiu	19. Bedford
3. Corner Brook	10. Savage Cove/ Sandy Cove	17. North West River	20. Halifax
4. Cupids	11. St. John's		21. Wellington
5. Ferryland	12. St. Lunaire-Griquet		
6. Flat Bay	13. St. Philip's		
7. Flower's Cove	14. Stephenville		

and Basil Penashue, who also acted as translator. Other individual Native informants were contacted directly in advance by telephone and e-mail or came forward in the course of the local research and volunteered to be interviewed. This phase also involved interviewing archaeologists and ethno-historians in the Avalon Peninsula region. Over the course of 3 weeks in July, 2012, this second phase of the research involved 31 interviewees, whose 48 hours of interviews recorded on video were subsequently logged, translated and transcribed. Transcribed material from the oral history interviews is cited in chapters 6 and 7 in the context of Native perspectives on the history of the Beothuk.

As the goal of this research was to give voice to a historical perspective on the Beothuk people that has largely been overlooked, the informants are cited in some cases extensively, particularly when their observations provide key insight into the nature of their community's own historical perception, fundamental assumptions of the existing historical and archaeological narrative, and the interaction of the two. While Native oral history, by definition, combines intergenerational transmission with the speaker's contemporary interpretation of events, also cited are the participants' comments, when they arose, with respect to the source of their knowledge, particularly in the case of its origin in the accounts of elders from previous generations.

6.2 The Mi'kmaq Mercenary Myth

Until relatively recently, the written history of Newfoundland's surviving Native people, the Mi'kmaq, has been overshadowed by the more tragic narrative of the Beothuk. As Anger notes, "Ironically, while Newfoundlanders recognize the extinct Beothuk historically, the extant Micmac do not exist as a native people" (1981, 79). From its earliest historical sources, the

binarism of survival versus extinction has shaped a narrative of the two people in which the Beothuk are consistently portrayed as victims who suffered largely at the hands of the Mi'kmaq.

Central to this narrative is what recent scholars have identified as the Mi'kmaq mercenary myth, the idea that the Mi'kmaq were brought to the island by the French in order to exterminate the Beothuk (Bartels, 1979). The myth constitutes the opening paragraph of "Micmacs (Allies)," Chapter Four of Briffet's *The Story of Newfoundland and Labrador*, which until the early 1970s, served as the grade five social science text in the province's schools:

During the struggle between the French and the English for ownership of Newfoundland, the French brought in their allies, the Micmacs, from Nova Scotia. In the Micmacs, the Beothucks found a deadly enemy. The Micmacs had guns given to them by their French allies. The Beothuks had only bows and arrows. The Micmacs had long been fighting wars with other Indian tribes that lived near them, and with the English. The Beothucks only knew how to make a night attack on fishermen and a quick escape. They knew nothing of making war. (Briffet, 1954, 24)

Interviews conducted among the Mi'kmaq of Conne River and Newfoundland's west coast in August 2011 consistently revealed the extent to which this myth influenced the island's Mi'kmaq people and their perception of themselves. Edwina Wetzel, a Mi'kmaq woman currently retired from teaching in the Conne River school, points to this element of the curriculum as one of the key reasons she abandoned the profession. "That thing in school was the strongest thing for me. It was strong enough that I stopped teaching" (pers. comm., August 19, 2011). Insisting that the myth was contained in the grade five textbook she used to teach from, she offered to show it to me. Opening an earlier version of the text, she sat down to read the following passage:

Some say that the French had offered a reward for every Beothuk destroyed.

Whatever the motive, the Micmacs did murder Beothuks. Once when Beothuk children found in a Micmac canoe the heads of some of their people, they ran in terror to their parents, who told them to be quiet. A banquet was then made for visiting Micmacs and at a given signal, they were surrounded and murdered. A war of extermination began between the two, but unfortunately, since the Beothuks only had bows and arrows, they were no match for their enemies.¹⁷⁷

Chief Mi'sel Joe of Conne River points to this teaching as the primary means by which Newfoundland Mi'kmaq children learned of the role their people played in the province's history. "When you went to school, there was a very short paragraph about Mi'kmaq people in the history book. And it referred to us being brought by the French to kill the Beothuk people. That was pretty much it about the Mi'kmaq people" (pers. comm., August 18, 2011).

Despite its pervasiveness in the Newfoundland educational system, by the late 1970s, a number of scholars discredited the Mi'kmaq mercenary myth by determining to trace its origins. Noting that the story received "a form of official sanction" when it appeared in *Handbook of Indians of Canada*, Upton (1977) notes its presence in William Cormack's speech at the founding of the Beothuk Institution in 1829 and discusses the possibility of John Peyton Jr. as a source.¹⁷⁸ Drawing on Howley (1915), Pastore (1978) also points to the possibility of the myth originating with Peyton.¹⁷⁹ The idea of Mi'kmaq/Beothuk hostility Pastore ascribes to

¹⁷⁷ See Briffet (1949, 47-48).

¹⁷⁸ Upton cites Hodge (1913, 61-2). Upton's discussion concludes that Cormack's version offered "a very comforting explanation" for the disappearance of the Beothuk, relegating the English to the minor role of finishing off what the Mi'kmaq had instigated (1977, 147). In a footnote, Upton cites mention of the myth in the 1827 papers of Bishop John Inglis, who heard the story from Peyton while visiting from Nova Scotia a year before Cormack's speech, to suggest "that the idea may have originated with Peyton" (1977, 147, n.37).

¹⁷⁹ Howley cites an almost identical account to Cormack's from Jukes (1842), which Peyton claimed had been told to him by "an old Micmac Indian", and was "also confirmed by another Micmac Jukes met in the Bay of St. George" (Jukes, 1842, in Howley, 1915, 26). With respect to the historical accuracy of the myth, Howley is

originating with John Cartwright, who was sent up the Exploits River in 1768 by Governor Hugh Palliser to establish contact with the Beothuk.¹⁸⁰ Citing Cartwright's journal description of the animosity between the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq, Bartels points out that Cartwright provides no direct evidence for this claim (1978, 10). Collectively, the efforts of these scholars have functioned to revise the historical narrative so that it no longer includes the Mi'kmaq mercenary myth. These efforts notwithstanding, however, as noted in Chapter 1, the myth continues to influence the perception of Newfoundlanders who received their schooling before those changes were reflected in revisions to the province's textbooks.

unconvinced. Determining the tale "to be open to very considerable doubt in many respects" and "hard to believe," Howley takes particular issue with the described involvement of the French, whom, he maintains, "always held that the Indians were human beings, with souls to be saved, not mere animals to be destroyed" (1915, 26). Pastore further questions Peyton's reliability as a source, pointing out that as a salmon fisherman and furrier, Peyton was in competition not only with the Beothuk, but also with the Mi'kmaq who eventually moved into their territory. Acknowledging that the claim by Peyton and one of his servants' sons might be true that Shanawdithit feared the Mi'kmaq, Pastore states, "it must be admitted that Peyton and his servants are not unimpeachable sources" (1978, 18). Peyton's 1819 mission ostensibly seeking "friendly communication" with the Beothuk Pastore describes as a "retaliatory raid" that ended in the capture of Demasduit and the death of her husband, Nonosabasut. Conceding the possibility of other unrecorded acts of violence between Peyton and the Beothuk, Pastore also notes the willingness of the furriers to bring Shanawdithit, her mother, and sister as captives to Peyton, who was serving as a magistrate, even though they had in the process killed two other Beothuk, which was prohibited by law. Pastore concludes, "It must be emphasized that all of this is conjecture, but it is certain that Peyton and other northern furriers had a good deal to gain if they could link the Micmacs to the killing of the Beothuks" (1978, 19).

¹⁸⁰ Pastore's discussion references Cartwright's mention of the Mi'kmaq in his 1768 *Remarks on the Situation of the Red Indians* cited in Howley (1915), in which, echoing a prominent theme throughout the Beothuk historical narrative, Cartwright describes them as being isolated from Europeans and Native people alike:

These Indians are not only secluded thus from any communication with Europeans, but they are so effectually cut off from the society of every other Indian people. The Canadians have generally a strong hunt that range the western coast of Newfoundland, between whom and these natives reigns so mortal an enmity (as in the subsequent letter is more fully mentioned) that they never meet but a bloody combat ensues. This is the case with all savage nations; occasioned by mutual fears, and not being able to understand each other's language. (J. Cartwright, 1768, in Howley, 1915, 35)

Cartwright subsequently cites an account by the Beothuk Tom June which describes the Mi'kmaq as inhabiting the western end of Red Indian Lake, with the result that "the two nations did not see the least signs one of the other during whole winters" (1768, in Howley, 1915, 44). Cartwright concludes, "This in the main might also be true for, being mortal enemies, and never giving quarter on either side, their reciprocal fears might, naturally enough, keep them apart" (1768, in Howley, 1915, 44).

6.3 Mi'kmaq Settlement in Newfoundland

Within the historical narrative of the Mi'kmaq written by Europeans, this idea of hostility between the two groups is rooted in the perception of the Mi'kmaq as foreigners who came to the island from Nova Scotia to displace the native Beothuk. Conceding that the Mi'kmaq were aware of the island before 1650, Pastore (1978) maintains that it is unlikely that they travelled to Newfoundland before acquiring European shallots at the end of the 16th century. In his discussion of early Mi'kmaq presence in Newfoundland, Pastore acknowledges the likelihood that a group of eight Indians described by the English Explorer Bartholomew Gosnold manning a Basque shallop in 1602 somewhere off the New England coast were Mi'kmaq.¹⁸¹ Maintaining that “it is difficult to imagine Indians regularly traversing the stormy waters of the Cabot Strait in frail, birchbark canoes,” however, Pastore postulates that such trips were sporadic and would have likely have been motivated by food shortage in Nova Scotia (1978, 10).

The idea of sporadic travel to the island finds further support in Marshall (1988), who views the Mi'kmaq as immigrants from Nova Scotia who played a decisive role in the disappearance of Newfoundland's native Beothuk. Citing McCaffrey's work on the prehistory of the Magdalen Islands, Marshall concedes that the Mi'kmaq were capable of crossing the 85 kilometres from Cape Ray to Cape North in seagoing canoes (McCaffrey, 1986). She takes issue, however, with what she perceives to be the interpretation by several authors of Denys' description of the Mi'kmaq's depletion of game in Cape Breton island around 1650 as providing

¹⁸¹ Gosnold describes the group as drawing the “Coast thereabouts” with a piece of chalk and being able to “name Placentia of the New-found-land” (Pastore, 1978, 10). As Pastore points out, Gosnold's report is significant in that it is the earliest account of Mi'kmaq knowledge of the island. He also cites de Champlain's observation that “Indians from the mainland sometimes came over to the island to trade with European fishermen,” as well as the Jesuit Father Pierre Biard's 1612 record of the Mi'kmaq having given named Newfoundland “Presentic” (Pastore, 1978, 11; Campeau, 1967, 208). Of Newfoundland, de Champlain writes, “The island is not inhabited. The savages sometimes in summer cross over from the mainland to see the vessels engaged in the cod fishery.”¹ Biggar's footnote 1 states, “The original inhabitants of Newfoundland were Beothucks; but the Montagnais and Micmacs paid visits there in summer” (Biggar, 1922-36, V, 159-160, n.1).

motivation for their migration to Newfoundland.¹⁸² Dismissing Gosnold's information as inconclusive and Biard's mention of "Presentic" as "equally invalid," Marshall argues that there exists "no indisputable evidence of prehistoric Micmac presence in Newfoundland, nor are there any reliable documents which would prove that Micmacs crossed the Cabot Strait during the first 150 years of European contact (1500-1650)" (1988, 54).

As with the Mi'kmaq mercenary myth, this view of the Mi'kmaq as more recent visitors from Newfoundland has been challenged by a number of scholars, most notably Bartels (1978), Wetzel (1995), and Martijn (2003). Advocating an understanding of Native land use as rotational, Martijn cautions against Eurocentric assumptions in the discussion around what constitutes Mi'kmaq land use and occupancy of Newfoundland.¹⁸³ Central to Martijn's argument is the idea of Eastern Canadian Mi'kmaq territory consisting of a series of maritime habitats connected, rather than divided, by water. This territory Martijn determines to include "portions of the Gaspé Peninsula and New Brunswick, all of Prince Edward Island and mainland Nova Scotia, as well as Cape Breton and parts of southern Newfoundland" (1989, 208).¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Cited in Marshall's discussion are Bartels (1978), Pastore (1978), and O'Reilly and Grodinsky (1982). The latter state, "Denys says that by 1672, the Micmacs abandoned Cape Breton Island for rich untapped sources of beaver and caribou in Newfoundland" (1982, 17). In his discussion of Denys' account, Pastore asks, "The question is, where did they go?... So, some of these Micmacs looked eastward across the Cabot Strait to Newfoundland which, in the middle of the 17th century, was lightly populated by both Beothuks and Europeans" (1978, 9). In actuality, Denys' description of the state of wildlife in Cape Breton makes no mention of Newfoundland. With reference to Cape Breton Island, Denys writes, "This island has also been esteemed for the hunting of Moose. They were formerly in great numbers, but at present there are no more. The Indians have destroyed everything,¹ and have abandoned the island, finding there no longer the wherewithal for living." Ganong's footnote 1 states, "The moose is now abundant on the island, and probably never was really exterminated" (Denys, 1908, 186-187).

¹⁸³ Echoing Mink's discussion of universal history, Martijn argues in favour of a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to history than that which arises towards the end of the 20th century in the "litigation oriented research setting" around Mi'kmaq land claims to the island: "We need to progress beyond the facile belief that there somehow exists a complete and objective record of past historical events against which every datum can be securely measured for confirmation or rejection" (2003, 45). Martijn's discussion cites a series of research projects commissioned by the Miawpukek Mi'kamaway Mawi'omi (Conne River Grand Council) and the Federation of Newfoundland Indians since a formal commitment by the federal government in 1973 to deal with outstanding land claims, as well as a number of independent academic publications and theses.

¹⁸⁴ Martijn's view corresponds with the Mi'kmaq idea of their territory, Mi'kma'ki, as stretching "west from Ktaqamkuk [Newfoundland] to Kespe'kewaq (Gaspé) including the Maritime Provinces and Maine" (Miawpukek Mi'kmaq, 1997; Henderson, 1995, 225). Outlying areas of this territory, such as Newfoundland and the Magdalen

Citing early historic references to the Mi'kmaq as a nomadic people “with no fixed abode,” Martijn views them as having ranged throughout their Atlantic Canadian territory as circumstances dictated.¹⁸⁵ Like Martijn, Bartel and Janzen also posit that, rather than being strangers from another land, the Cape Breton Mi'kmaq had a history of seasonal contact with southwestern Newfoundland that ultimately led to the permanent migration and resulting settlements in Conne River and Bay St. George (1990, 86). While these scholars suggest the possibility of a pre-contact Mi'kmaq presence in Newfoundland, there is no evidence that this actually happened, and others continue to disagree on the issue.

6.4 Newfoundland Mi'kmaq Identity

Reflecting a growing European preoccupation with the racial purity and authenticity of Native North Americans, a number of 20th-century writers begin to note the prevalence of European blood in the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq population, an observation which functions to challenge their claim to the island and their very identity as Native people.¹⁸⁶ This writing gives the impression of a population whose genetic base has been so diluted that it can no longer be considered Native, thereby reinforcing the binary opposition between the foreign Mi'kmaq and Newfoundland's native Beothuk. The Rev. Stanley St. Croix describes “the few Micmacs that

Islands, were accessed in times of food shortage as part of an “alternating foraging strategy” that temporarily extended the range of hunting, fishing, and gathering activities (Martijn, 2003, 52). This alternating foraging strategy Martijn subdivides into several types: seasonal, which involves annual displacement; concurrent, the short-term exploitation of more than one given district at a time; opportunistic, short-term profit from an unexpected bounty such as a beached whale; and rotational foraging, the abandonment of a given territory for a prolonged period of time.

¹⁸⁵ See, for example, de Champlain's 1604 description of the Mi'kmaq as wintering “wherever they perceive that chase for wild animals is best” (in Biggar, 1922-1936, III, 358-359).

¹⁸⁶ From Flaherty's filming of Nanook to the photography of Edward S. Curtis, preoccupation with racial purity and the authentic is a recurrent theme in the representation of Native North Americans by Europeans. Such representation, Phillips explains, “inscribes colonial concepts of race and purity through its insistence on the detrimental effects of “foreign influences” and “White contact” (1998, 51). She summarizes, “Essentialist discourses hate a hybrid” (1998, 145). Such a preoccupation can be sensed in Power's account of his Conne River parishioners, which concludes, “At any rate, arousing ourselves, let us endeavour to preserve the race and language, and likewise the strange yet beautiful traditions of the children of the forest” (1910, 2).

migrated to Newfoundland” from Cape Breton as “adventurers of peculiar tastes who strayed away in small groups from the parent tribe” and established themselves in Conne River, where there is “no record of them” prior to 1800 (1937, 285). With regards to the people of Conne River, St. Croix observes that the Jeddore, John, and Joe families are all intermarried with whites to the extent that “the Micmacs are more white than brown” (1937, 286). A similar perception of the Conne River community is found in MacGregor’s report, which juxtaposes the surviving Mi’kmaq of mixed descent with the more racially pure Beothuk, who have disappeared:

The unfortunate Beothuk was thus crushed out of existence by the white man and the invading Micmac. Between the white man and the Beothuk there was always hostility; and I have not heard of any family or person in Newfoundland in whose veins flows Beothuk blood. On the other hand it may be doubted whether there is a single pure-blooded Micmac on the Island to-day. As an ethnic unit the Micmac can therefore hardly be said to exist here. (1908, 6-7)

MacGregor summarizes his report with the observation that it will be at least several generations before the Mi’kmaq population, “such as it is,” will be “absorbed into the European population of Newfoundland” (1908, 7).

Until relatively recently in the 20th century, it appeared that MacGregor’s prediction was likely to come true. To a certain extent, the Mi’kmaq of Newfoundland describe themselves as having been complicit in their own disappearance as a people. As they explain today, there were a number of reasons that the Mi’kmaq of Conne River and the west coast chose for generations to conceal their ethnic identity. One of these had to do with their inherited history of the Mi’kmaq mercenary myth. As Edwina Wetzel explains, the fact that the myth was taught in the

school systems made Mi'kmaq children reluctant to acknowledge their heritage, a reluctance which persisted into adulthood:

Say you're a 10-year-old child and you read this in the history, social studies history book, that the Mi'kmaq were responsible for the extermination of the Beothuk. Never mind if the French brought them, or who brought them here. You believe that your people are responsible for murder.... Now when you go, in those days get on a coastal boat and go to travel from here to St. John's or Argentia, are you going to say that you're from Conne River? When you're going to be associated with that? [She shrugs] How are you going to? What is your self-esteem going to be like? What is your self-confidence going to be like? You know you're not going to say where you're from. Not unless you're visibly, you look very much like a Mi'kmaq – with black hair and very dark skin – you're going to say you're from some other community nearby. That's the effect. (pers. comm., August 19, 2011)

Another frequently cited reason for Mi'kmaq people concealing their identity has to do with the limited employment opportunities afforded to those whose ancestry was anything other than British. Shayne MacDonald, a Mi'kmaq lawyer who since 1994 has served in the capacity of Director of Justice and Legal Affairs for the Miawpukek First Nation, recalls how their Native identity would work against Mi'kmaq hoping to find work at the Bay d'Espoir hydro project in the 1970s, after their traditional hunting and trapping economy had collapsed:

I've heard directly from elders in the community alive today that during the hydro development around the bay in Bay d'Espoir, when they were hiring people to work on the hydro development clearing land, the people from around the bay would go to the area, and the foreman would choose who would go to work. And at the end, not

everyone would be hired. And who'd be left standing around were predominantly Mi'kmaq people. (pers. comm., August 19, 2011)

Among Mi'kmaq on the west coast of Newfoundland, people's reluctance to self-identify as Native was linked to the hiring practices of the American military base. As Scott Garnier of Stephenville summarizes, "When the American base came here in Stephenville, to get a job on the base, you dare not say you were Native. And that played a big part in people Anglicizing their French names as well. You wanted to be English white, right? So a lot of that was carried over, even to the generation today" (pers. comm., August 23, 2011).¹⁸⁷

In addition to the shame associated with the Mi'kmaq mercenary myth and the economic cost in certain parts of the province of being identified as Native, a further contributing factor to the concealment of Mi'kmaq identity and culture in Newfoundland traces its roots back to the initial conditions under which the province joined Canada. As Anger (1981) points out, no special provisions were in place for Native peoples in the Act of Union when Newfoundland joined confederation in 1949. With the perceived extinction of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq seen as foreigners from Nova Scotia, there remained no Native people on the island with whom governments had to negotiate and sign treaties. Tompkins points to a confidential 1946 memorandum by Mr. Hoey, Director of the Indian Affairs Branch, stating "that there are no Indians or Eskimos on the Island of Newfoundland" as the first indication of what was to become a persistent denial of the Mi'kmaq presence in Newfoundland (in Tompkins, 1993, 8-9).

¹⁸⁷ In part, Garnier traces this phenomenon to prejudices perpetuated by representatives of the Catholic schooling system: "A lot of priests and nuns that came to Bay St. George to educate the people sort of frowned upon that component of their ancestry – not only the native component, but the French as well. Many of the surnames in Bay St. George have been Anglicized. The Whites today were Leblanc. The Bennetts' surname was once Benoit. The O'Quinn surname was once Au Coin. Not only did they look down upon the Mi'kmaq component, but the French as well, anything that wasn't up to their standard" (pers. comm., August 23, 2011).

Consequently, at the time of Confederation, Newfoundland did not seek application of the federal Indian Act (Kennedy, 1987, 15).

Len Muise of Stephenville views this decision as having played a pivotal role in the erasure of the Mi'kmaq people from Newfoundland's collective consciousness:

They say when we joined confederation, the reason Joey [Smallwood] said there was no Indians here in Newfoundland, was because Indians couldn't vote at the time, and there was a big population of Mi'kmaq, and if you said you were Mi'kmaq, you couldn't get the guys who work in the woods, the guides and that, to vote for confederation. He said, 'No,' he told Canada, 'there's no Indians here....' That's why he said it. It wouldn't have been to his advantage. The merchants wanted to go with the US or independence.

The only way he could sell confederation was to the poor. (pers. comm., August 24, 2011)

Looking back on the political organization of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq, Marilyn John, member and chief lobbyist for the Conne River Band Council in 1984, reflects, "When we started comparing what we were eligible for and what Indians in the rest of Canada were getting, we began to realize that we were really shortchanged in 1949" (Anonymous, 1984, 11). For Calvin White, former chief of the Flat Bay Mi'kmaq Band and founding chief of the Federation of Newfoundland Indians, there exists a link between this official denial of the presence of the Mi'kmaq in Newfoundland – in the face of 1945 census results that indicated otherwise – and the historical version of their relationship with the Beothuk.

This is also part of the reason, White feels, that ignorance of the Mi'kmaq presence persists in Newfoundland. When asked about the common perception of the Beothuk as a people who kept to themselves and avoided interaction with others, White points to the distinctly European

perspective from which the history has been told:

You're reading that and you're told that, because what you're reading is the perspective of Europeans. And Europeans denied that there was ever any Mi'kmaq here other than that one paragraph in grade four when you were told they were brought here by the French to kill the Beothuk. But even after that ... to the present day, Europeans deny that there are Mi'kmaq here. I mean the government of Newfoundland, when we joined confederation in 1949, it didn't say that there was Indians here, even though it knew, that in 1945 people here had declared themselves as Indian people. So I guess, the people who wrote the texts that you read had the same view: There were no other Indians in Newfoundland, only the Beothuk Indians, therefore the Beothuk Indians never associated with anybody. But they weren't saying they never associated with Mi'kmaq. They were saying they never associated with anybody, meaning they never associated with them, the writers, the authors of that article. (pers. comm., August 22, 2011)

This awareness of the perspective from which their history has been told was keenly expressed by many of the Mi'kmaq people interviewed. It often came up in the context of the teaching of the Mi'kmaq mercenary myth in the school system. Chief Mi'sel Joe recalls returning home to check the veracity of what he'd learned in school with his grandparents: "Of course, when you get home, you ask grandparents, and they say, 'No.' Who else are you going to blame it on? We weren't writing the history. There was always someone else writing the history. So we grew up with that. And you know, actually, at one time I think I might have even believed that" (pers. comm., August 18, 2011).

Many of the informants expressed an awareness of the prevailing notion that there are still no Native people in Newfoundland, recalling a range of responses to their Native identity from

people they met while travelling outside the province. Participating in educational and literacy initiatives across the country, Edwina Wetzel recalls meeting people from various parts of Canada, some within the past five years, who were under the impression that there were no Native people in Newfoundland. Jordan Bennett, a Mi'kmaq artist from Corner Brook, describes his interaction with an Inuit woman he met while shopping for Native artifacts in the Yukon. "She said, 'What do you want these for? You're not Native. You're from Newfoundland. There's no Indians in Newfoundland. They're all dead.' I was like, 'No, well, you're looking at the walking dead right here then.' I was like, 'We're still around'" (pers. comm., August 23, 2011). Such testimony serves as a reminder of how the historical narratives of both Newfoundland's Mi'kmaq and Beothuk have shaped the common perception that there are no Native people on the island, a perception that has persisted until relatively recently on both a provincial and national level.

6.5 Newfoundland Mi'kmaq Revival

In its insistence on his Native identity, the latter part of Bennett's response signals a change in Newfoundland Mi'kmaq awareness that traces its roots to a resurgence in the culture dating back to the 1970s.¹⁸⁸ Calling itself Ktaqamkuk Ilnui Saqimawoutie, or the "Newfoundland Indian Government," in 1978 the Federation of Newfoundland Indians together

¹⁸⁸ As Kennedy points out, the organization of Newfoundland's Native population was triggered largely by a number of key events in Canadian Native affairs including the 1969 White Paper abolishing the Indian Act, the subsequent federal decision to fund Native claims research, and the establishment of the Office of Native Claims in 1974 (1987, 15). Founded in February, 1973, the Native Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (NANL) changed its name in June, 1975 to the Indian and Metis Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (IMANL), in April, 1976 to the Federation of Newfoundland and Labrador Indians, and shortly afterwards, the Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI), which came to represent Newfoundland Mi'kmaq living outside Conne River. For a discussion of 20th century political firsts for Native Canadians, including the founding of the League of Indians of Canada in 1918, acquisition of the vote in 1960, and opposition to Trudeau's *White Paper*, which proposed the abolition of Native status and the Department of Indian Affairs, see Francis (1992, 58, 201, 217). For a detailed discussion of the political evolution of Newfoundland and Labrador's early Native organizations, see Anger (1983, 97-107) and Kennedy (1987, 15-17).

with the Conne River Band issued “Freedom to Live Our Own Way in Our Own Land,” outlining the rationale behind a Mi’kmaq claim to approximately one third of the island of Newfoundland, which was submitted along with supplementary legal and historical evidence to the Office of Native Claims in March, 1982 (Kennedy, 1987, 18; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1982, 12).¹⁸⁹

The provincial government’s rejection of this claim provoked further discussion of assumptions underlying the historical and archaeological narrative of the Newfoundland Mi’kmaq. The rejection was based on an evaluation conducted by Albert Jones, a historian hired by the province to assess the claim.¹⁹⁰ Critics of Jones’ assessment have focused on his citation of inconclusive evidence to back his dismissal of the Mi’kmaq claim. In a letter to the St. John’s *Evening Telegram* dated July 14, 1982, Stuart Brown, a professor of archaeology at Memorial University, takes issue with what he describes as “Dr. Jones’ cavalier treatment of the archaeological data,” particularly Jones’ allegation of evidence for a prehistoric Beothuk occupation on the south coast “anterior to the sporadic visits of the Micmac” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1982, 111). Brown concludes that Jones would be wise to acknowledge the inconclusive nature of the archaeological evidence, as did the Federation of Newfoundland Indians in the submission of its claim.

In so doing, Brown anticipates Martijn’s dissatisfaction with the courtroom as a forum for the discussion of archaeological and ethnohistorical research: “Such an adversarial context inevitably leads to the intrusion of contractual partisan positions into the debate, making it difficult to draw a consistent clear line between advocacy and detached objective interpretation”

¹⁸⁹ Tanner views Premier Brian Peckford’s controversial intervention and rejection of this claim to a federal jurisdiction as constituting “in spirit, if not in law, an obstruction of justice” (1982, 4).

¹⁹⁰ As stated in the *Assessment and Analysis of the Micmac Land Claim in Newfoundland 1982*, the purpose of the report was “to present the Micmac land claim, as presented in Freedom, to a comprehensive historical and legal analysis to determine its validity” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1982, 12-13).

(Martijn, 2003, 45). Acknowledging the limitations of the adversarial context, these scholars effectively open the way for a more inclusive interpretative framework that welcomes a greater plurality and diversity of perspective within the historical and archaeological narratives.

When it received Indian status in 1984, the Conne River band became eligible for direct federal funding, which fostered considerable economic and cultural developments (Bartels, 1991, 48). In 1986, the band council assumed control of the community's school, and Mi'kmaq language and culture are now integrated into the curriculum. A number of successful initiatives have been launched in the aquaculture, agriculture, lumber and tourism industries, providing employment opportunities for local people.¹⁹¹ The Conne River Band hosted the Assembly of First Nations meetings in St. John's in August, 1986, and the first pow-wow in Conne River, preceded by a holistic healing conference in Native medicinal practices in July, 1994.

Despite internal divisions early on in their political organization, in more recent years the Miawpukek First Nation of Conne River has worked together with other Newfoundland Mi'kmaq on various political and cultural initiatives (Kennedy, 1987, 15-19). In 2007, the Mi'kmaq community of Flat Bay on the west coast held their first pow-wow, an annual tradition that has continued ever since. The granting of Native status for members of the Qalipu Nation is the most recent manifestation of this reassertion and public celebration of their cultural and political identity by the Mi'kmaq people of Newfoundland.

With this renewal has come a heightened sense of pride and awareness of the importance for the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq of asserting their identity. Calvin White sees the political organization of the island's Mi'kmaq, and the research involved at all stages of the process, as

¹⁹¹ As listed in Miawpukek Mi'kmaq (1987), local government services and organizations sponsored and operated by the band council include First Nations Police Force, Health Care and Social Services, Child Care and Family Services, St. Anne's School/Secondary Education, Fisheries management, and Public works. Economic development projects include Conne River Tourist Services, Miawpukek Cable Vision, and Miawpukek Crafts.

having been instrumental in changing people's willingness to celebrate and assert their Native identity (pers. comm., August 22, 2011). For Edwina Wetzel, asserting her Mi'kmaq identity at every available opportunity helps to counter the effects of history as it was taught in Newfoundland's school system. "The thing is, you have to stand up and say I'm here. I'm alive. I'm Mi'kmaq. Regardless of what you read in your textbook, I'm here. I'm living proof" (pers. comm., August 19, 2011). Intent on changing that perception, in her role as representative for her people at various provincial and national events around education and literacy, Wetzel is keenly aware of the importance of being present as a person of aboriginal descent. "Whenever I was invited to something I always went. That way there was one aboriginal person in the room. That was important. One aboriginal person in the room" (pers. comm., August 19, 2011).

In both Conne River and in the Mi'kmaq communities on Newfoundland's west coast, the young people interviewed expressed a keen desire not only to acknowledge their Native heritage, but to inform others about it as well. As illustrated in his participation in the exhibit "Problem Child" at The Rooms in St. John's September 10 – December 31, 2011, Jordan Bennet of Corner Brook has made celebrating his Mi'kmaq identity the thematic core of his work. In so doing, he challenges the common perception that there are no Native people in Newfoundland. For Bennett, denying the Native influence in his own community would be patently absurd. "You'd have to be blind if you didn't see it. People come out here, and Jesus, half the people out here are brown. It's just impossible not to know" (pers. comm., August 23, 2011).

John Jeddore Jr. of Conne River is currently studying science at Memorial University with a view to attending medical school and ultimately returning to serve his community as a doctor. To fund his studies, during the summer months he works as a guide in the Mi'kmaq interpretation center in Conne River. Passionate about the role of his people in the province's

history, Jeddore finds himself countering public misconceptions about the Mi'kmaq on a regular basis. During our meeting at the center on August 20, 2011, he interrupted our interview to greet a couple travelling from another part of the island. Stating their belief that the Mi'kmaq were not native to Newfoundland but had come from Nova Scotia, one of the first questions they asked him was if the Mi'kmaq had annihilated the Beothuk. As Jeddore subsequently explained, the prevalence of this question among contemporary visitors serves to highlight the degree to which it continues to persist as a central element in many people's understanding of both the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk narratives in Newfoundland (pers. comm., August 20, 2011).

6.6 Mi'kmaq and the (New-Found) Land

As numerous informants and scholars have noted, land has been central to the question of Mi'kmaq identity, with European rather than Native attitudes toward land informing the narratorial perspective from which Mi'kmaq history has been told. Notes Anger, "The single most important symbol of Micmac identity is the land, from which pride, legitimacy of identity, traditions and demands for rights originate" (1981, 80). The theme is woven throughout the written history of the Mi'kmaq in Newfoundland, from the accounts of Cook in the 18th century and Cormack and Jukes in the 19th, to Millais, Howley, and Speck in the 20th, and land claims that continue into the 21st.

From their earliest accounts, Europeans comment on their Mi'kmaq guides' extensive knowledge of the island's interior, of which they themselves had little or no previous knowledge, reflecting Europe's historical preoccupation with the cod fishery on the coast. Both Millais (1908) and Speck (1922) documented the division of that land into family-regulated hunting and trapping territories. As Tompkins notes, the exhibition *Newfoundland's Interior Explored*

attested to the Mi'kmaq's "highly developed geographical sense" and demonstrated "the importance of the native peoples in opening up the interior" (1986, 3).

The Newfoundland Mi'kmaq's relationship with the land to a large extent reflects their use of the landscape and their dependence on the resources of the island's interior, specifically the populations of caribou and fur-bearing mammals. In his list of Mi'kmaq place names in Newfoundland based on a collection made by Nicholas Jeddore of Conne River at the turn of the century, Hewson comments on the influence of the waterways used by the Mi'kmaq to access these interior resources.¹⁹²

In its emphasis on the intimate relationship between Mi'kmaq use and naming of the landscape, Jeddore's list reflects what Henderson describes as the "Aboriginal landscape." Taking issue with a Eurocentrism he perceives as "an intellectual paradigm about the superiority of Europeans and their ideals and institutions over other people," Henderson argues against property and ownership as useful means for determining Native rights to land (1995, 204). As an alternative, he cites Anishinaki poet and writer Gerald Vizenor: "The Land is everything to me. The land is part of my language, part of the way I perceive the world. The water, the trees, the smell of pine, the smell of autumn, the smell of wet leaves in the springs. It is all part of my imagination, part of my dreams" (in Henderson, 1995, 219). With its roots in sharing and mobility, the Native relationship to land Henderson views in terms of spatial rather than material consciousness, with the sharing of space constituting the very meaning of Native life:

"Aboriginal people do not speak of living 'there'; rather, each family or person 'belongs' to the

¹⁹² Observing that Conne River was essentially a Mi'kmaq-speaking village as recently as the 1940s, Hewson views the list of names produced by Jeddore as "typically Indian in its organization," with its focus on lakes, rivers and portages, with names listed according to the watershed in which they occur (1978b, 3). Noting that when "one travels by canoe, of course, the ultimate destination of the water on which one is afloat is of prime importance," Hewson lists six basic watersheds: Burgeo-LaPoile (BL), Hermitage-Conne (HC), Conne River Country (C), Bonavista (B), Exploits (E), and St. George's, or West Coast (SG) (1978b, 3).

space” (1995, 219).¹⁹³ As Jordan Bennet summarizes, “You’re here to take care of this land, because this land is taking care of you” (pers. comm., August 23, 2011).

Evoking the discussion within narrative theory and oral history scholarship around the significance of perspective, informants from the Mi’kmaq communities of Conne River and Newfoundland’s west coast repeatedly articulated the need to view their relationship to the land, and to history itself, from a Native rather than a European point of view. Specifically, they emphasized the tremendous value of local landscape knowledge necessitated and accumulated by a livelihood of hunting, trapping, and fishing. Len Muise notes that when Cormack walked across the island in 1822 – an almost incredible feat by European standards – he encountered Native people from as far away as Labrador, and was accompanied by Mi’kmaq guides who showed him not only how to travel across the land, but how to live in it as well, hunting, fishing, and constructing temporary shelter as circumstances dictated.¹⁹⁴ The problem in understanding Mi’kmaq history on the island, Muise feels, is largely due to the fact that we attempt to do so “from our own perspective of driving a car.” We’re looking at it from the wrong viewpoint,” he states. “It’s hard to visualize that somebody could walk all the way across the Northern peninsula, or come across from Labrador” (pers. comm., August 24, 2011). If it were viewed from a Native perspective of travelling across the land by foot, Muise insists, our understanding of the geography would change.

Another critical aspect of understanding their history related to the issue of land that Newfoundland Mi’kmaq informants repeatedly emphasized was the European perception of their interaction with the Beothuk with respect to territory. From the perspective of all informants,

¹⁹³ This sentiment is echoed by Ardy Landry: “The land doesn’t belong to the Indian: the Indian belongs to the land” (pers. comm., July 22, 2012).

¹⁹⁴ In a similar vein, Chief Mi’sel Joe and John Jeddore Jr. both recall their elders teaching them precisely where to find various indigenous trees, berries, and plants that held various nutritive and healing properties (pers. comm., August 18, 2011).

territorial boundaries between the two people were acknowledged and generally respected by both sides. While territories were distinct, there were also areas in which the two people overlapped.

One such area, Garnier explains, was King George IV Lake, where the two groups frequently encountered one another as they travelled to the west coast. In support of his theory, Garnier points out that the original name of the lake is the Mi'kmaq word "Klujjiewpe'k" or "cross pond," indicating the place where Native people crossed paths.¹⁹⁵ In his archaeological survey of the area which determined occupation by both Mi'kmaq and Beothuk, Penney notes that Cormack recognized the lake as "the southern extremity of Beothuk territory, which extended from Exploits River up Red Indian Lake, and Victoria River to the Lloyd's River" (1987b, 2).¹⁹⁶ As Penney points out, Cormack described the lake as a place where the Mi'kmaq and "the Indians friendly (Montagnais) with them commence and terminate their water excursions from and to the west coast" (1823a, in Howley, 1915, 158). Corroborated by the Mi'kmaq perspective, such observations with regards to territorial overlap support earlier archaeological findings suggesting a more complex interaction of the Beothuk with other Native peoples than the historical narrative written by Europeans would have us believe.

6.7 Mi'kmaq and Beothuk

Contrary to this historical narrative, according to the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq it was

¹⁹⁵ See also Hewson (1978b).

¹⁹⁶ In his 1829 account of his journey into the interior in search of the Beothuk, Cormack acknowledges the respect of his Native guides for what they perceived to be Beothuk territory: "One night we camped on the foundation of an old Red Indian Wigwam.... A large fire at night is the life and soul of such a party as ours, and when it blazed up at time, I could not help observing that two of my Indians evinced uneasiness and want of confidence in things around, as if they thought themselves usurpers of Red Indian territory. For time immemorial none of the Indians of the other tribes had ever encamped near this lake fearlessly, and, as we had now done, in the very centre of such a country; the lake and territory adjacent having been always considered to belong exclusively to the Red Indians, and to have been occupied by them" (1829d, in Howley, 1915, 194-195).

within such areas of territorial overlap that the Beothuk commonly interacted with their people. As discussed, within the early historical record written by Europeans, this interaction is characterized by violence, with the Mi'kmaq playing a central role in what was perceived as the disappearance of the Beothuk from the island. From the Mi'kmaq perspective, however, the relationship was more complex, with oral tradition acknowledging several instances of integration between the two peoples.

Calvin White related an example of such a relationship at a Barachois Brook site, where three Mi'kmaq families were known to have lived. Standing beside the river, White told the story of a dispute that arose between two families on opposite sides of the river, one Beothuk and the other Mi'kmaq, over the killing of a weasel, (a story that was also relayed in Conne River by John Jeddore Junior (pers. comm., August 21, 2011). As previously noted, the Mi'kmaq John Paul at Badger's Brook told a similar version of this legend to Speck, who noted that it was common among Native peoples and saw its use in Newfoundland as an indication that the Beothuk and Mi'kmaq had intermingled (1922, 29).

Elaborating on what it tells about interaction between the two peoples, White describes a similar interpretation of the story's historical value:

We know that from every account we've been able to find, anything that's ever been recorded, is that the Mi'kmaq were here in this territory from here on through to Burgeo, Bay D'Espoir territory. So for a Beothuk family to be living here, across this river, either that family had strayed away completely from their own people, and was involved and engaged with the Mi'kmaq people, or it's a myth that they only extended as far as Red Indian [Lake].... Unless that incident and that family was an isolated situation. And if that were so, that would give credibility to the fact that some of the Beothuk people

certainly moved into Mi'kmaq territory and became involved and engaged with Mi'kmaq people. (pers. comm., August 21, 2011)

When questioned about whether or not the intermingling of the two peoples was ever an issue that required explanation in the context of the story, White insisted that, in his recollection, there was never any mention of the intermingling of the two peoples as having been perceived as unusual:

No. No. There was never any unusual circumstances involving tribal involvement. The only unusual circumstance about that was the fact that one of the boys killed a white weasel. That was it. In any of the times I've heard the story talked about, there was never any, nothing made of the fact that there was people of different tribes living here together. It was never stated as being out of the ordinary. And never did I hear in any conversation I listened to as a boy, never did I hear older people saying it was very unusual, or they couldn't understand why Beothuks would be here, or what was happened. That was never part of the conversation. (pers. comm., August 21, 2011)

All of the informants expressed dissatisfaction with the way in which the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq's relationship with the Beothuk has been presented in the written historical narrative, and they viewed the perception of the two people as being hostile to each other as a reductive oversimplification. As is the case with all groups of human beings, they insist, such interaction was complex and influenced by any number of environmental and social factors. Chief Mi'sel Joe sees sporadic conflicts over hunting or trapping territory as having been misinterpreted from a European perspective that fails to understand the significance of territorial boundaries:

When the Europeans arrived here, they said there was fighting among aboriginal people. God almighty, if you look at the history books of Europeans, that's all they ever did.

Heh. Off with their head. [He laughs.] So of course there was little fights between our people and the Beothuk people. There was fights between our people and the Mohawk people and there was probably fights between our people and the Malecite people. But they weren't fights over land. They were fights over survival. You happen to be on my hunting territory, and that's how we feed our community. So you better move on to your own. (pers. comm., August 18, 2011)

Edwina Wetzel likewise disagrees with the perception of the Mi'kmaq and the Beothuk as having been constantly in conflict. Such an interpretation, she argues, is at odds with the reality of the challenges faced by people struggling for survival in Newfoundland. Like most informants interviewed, Wetzel sees Mi'kmaq/Beothuk interaction as being far more complex than the historical narrative generally acknowledges. In keeping with Renouf's theories arising from her archaeological work in Port au Choix, Wetzel includes in that interaction strategies for sharing and alliance building that were so critical to the survival of Native people in an adverse environment (pers. comm., August 19, 2011). As Graburn (1979) has outlined, one of those strategies takes the form of intermarriage, through which members of different Native communities are linked through a common bond of kinship.

Such intermarriage, the Mi'kmaq informants claim, was a common practice between members of the Beothuk and Mi'kmaq communities. Their insistence on this point stands in opposition to Marshall, whose interpretation of ongoing hostility between the two peoples only makes the allowance for intermingling as occurring by force, in the acquisition of Beothuk women by Mi'kmaq men through abduction or warfare (1988, 2006).¹⁹⁷ Acknowledging the

¹⁹⁷ When questioned if she thought the Beothuk intermarried with the Mi'kmaq, Marshall replied, "No. Not generally speaking, they didn't intermarry, let's say, as a policy. But once a person was kidnapped or taken – There's a story about the woman whose snowshoes broke or something and she was taken by the Mi'kmaq, a young

Native practice of men acquiring women through raids, Chief Mi'sel Joe does not limit intermingling to such circumstances. He points out that among Native populations, intermarriage provides a means for expanding the population's gene pool:

How do you populate and how do you grow? You don't always marry into your own clan.... Our people married outside of the clan. They married outside of the community. And if you could marry into a different clan, you did, because you maintained your strength, and you grew that way. (pers. comm. August 18, 2011)

As with Native peoples throughout North America, the situation, Joe explains, was exacerbated by dwindling populations caused in large part by the introduction of European pathogens to which Native people had little or no resistance:

You got to keep in mind, tuberculosis damn near wiped out this community at one time. And today we're faced with intermarriage with nonaboriginal people as well as that, because of that. When you get short of women, what do you do? You go looking for women, and you bring them into the community. (pers. comm., August 18, 2011)

Echoing oral history accounts in Speck (1922) of Mi'kmaq guides helping Beothuk avoid detection by search parties, Joe maintains that the Mi'kmaq assisted the Beothuk "at the worst time of their lives" when their numbers were decreasing. Such assistance, he states, included helping the Beothuk to assimilate into other Native populations, and/or escape Newfoundland to Labrador and other locations in the Maritimes. He cites the case of Santu Toney's parents as one historically known example of an amicable Beothuk/Mi'kmaq union which included a move to Mi'kmaq territory in Nova Scotia. A consequence of such intermarriage between communities, Joe points out, is a sharing of culture traits, such as the use of red ochre, which also occurred

woman. And it took quite a long time for her to get used, but she finally married a Mi'kmaq. So there would then, these people then married Mi'kmaq people, such as Santu's father" (pers. comm., July 25, 2012).

among the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq: "If you married into a Beothuk family you took on the traits and the customs of that family. And the same thing around" (pers. comm., August 18, 2011).

Again, Joe reflects the thinking of Speck (1922), who recorded accounts from Mi'kmaq describing their ancestors' amicable relationship with the Beothuk.

In general, Mi'kmaq informants objected to the European perception of ongoing hostility between their people and the Beothuk, and viewed intermingling as being inevitable in the case of two peoples living in such geographical proximity to one another. Scott Garnier took me to visit Gravels, a provincial heritage site located on the Port au Port Peninsula commemorating French settlement in the area. Providing access to the marine resources of both Bay St. George and Bay of Islands, the location near the isthmus, Garnier pointed out, is also a multicomponent archaeological site used by Dorset Eskimo and Little Passage people, prior to the arrival of Europeans.¹⁹⁸ In opening up the possibility of interaction between Native groups, the significance of the site for Garnier recalls Renouf's discussion about European misconceptions regarding the nature of prehistoric interaction between the island's Native people:

It seems that the powers that be, they never want to admit that, 'Hey, the Bay St. George was Beothuk territory as well, and the evidence of it is right here.' I think there's a bias towards equating Bay St. George and Beothuk. Why? Who knows? The Bay St. George was Mi'kmaq territory. Maybe by saying the Beothuk were here, you are saying the Mi'kmaq and the Beothuk were, you know, intermingling. Maybe they were intermingling, intermarrying. Maybe they were friends. Maybe they were trading partners. (S. Garnier, pers. comm., August 23, 2011)

¹⁹⁸Garnier pointed out that, as an archaeological site, the area has not yet been explored: "It was never excavated. There was never no major archaeological dig here. It never happened. I would think Memorial University came in and took a few samples. It makes you wonder what's underneath here. It should be explored here" (pers. comm., August 23, 2011).

Garnier's suggestion that the two peoples "maybe weren't such bad friends after all" is echoed by John Jeddore Jr. of Conne River. Jeddore recalls stories from elders within his family of amicable relations between the two groups. The Mi'kmaq name for Beothuk, Pi'tawk'ewaq, Jeddore translates as "our friends up the river" (pers. comm., August 20, 2011). Noting that "Beothuk" was never a term they used to describe themselves, M.G. Wetzel proposes that the word is an adaptation of the Mi'kmaq "Pi'tawk'ewaq," which he translates as "the up above or up river people" (1995, 18, n.50).

Like Jeddore, Jordan Bennett, Scott Garnier, and Len Muise all recall having heard from elders in their communities about instances of intermarriage between the two peoples. Most informants viewed the issue of intermarriage as an inevitable consequence of human nature. Notes Muise, "Human nature being what it is, if you get put up in a camp, that's how we spread the seed [He laughs]. And so that happened in other Native groups. So why didn't it happen with the Beothuks, is the question" (pers. comm., August 24, 2011). Scott Garnier asks the same question: "In general, we know that First Nations people married into First Nations people. Why wouldn't Beothuk people intermarry with Mi'kmaq people? It would be the only case in the world where you had two cultures side by side and it didn't happen" (pers. comm., August 23, 2011). In his discussion of Beothuk/Mi'kmaq intermarriage, Calvin White cites other contemporary scenarios in which people mingled across ethnic and religious lines even when society dictated against it:

I'm sure that we've got dozens of American children in Bay St. George and in the St. John's area. I'm sure that there's children who grew up in St. John's who was fathered by the Portuguese who come in with the white fleets. Don't tell me those things don't happen. That's the real world. That's the world we live in. So why would there not be

relationships or involvements between Mi'kmaq and Beothuk people? They were the only people that were on the interior. They were the only people that were there. (pers. comm., August 21, 2011)

A direct consequence of this view of intermingling between the two peoples is a challenge, among the Mi'kmaq informants, to the idea of Beothuk extinction. On this count, they felt that history had misrepresented and oversimplified what they considered to be a more complex reality. States Jordan Bennett of Corner Brook: "I've heard many stories of Beothuk people intermarrying with Mi'kmaq people. There's no way that those people just disappeared, like Demasduit and Shanawdithit. They weren't the last of them. It's impossible" (pers. comm., August 23, 2011). Conceding that the Beothuk language and culture have disappeared, Scott Garnier feels that use of the term *extinction* functions to overlook or downplay the Beothuk ancestry of present-day descendants: "As a culture, materially, linguistically, the Beothuk are extinct. With regards to bloodline, no, definitely not. The Beothuk are alive and well among us" (pers. comm., August 23, 2013). Chief Mi'sel Joe insists that the Beothuk people cannot be considered extinct as their descendants continue to live on in the population of Newfoundland and Labrador :

That's the biggest myth has ever been played in Newfoundland, and is still being played, that the Beothuk people are extinct. They're not. They're still around. They're here in Conne River. They're in Flat Bay. They're in Grand Falls, in all parts of Newfoundland. Anywhere where people were, even European people.... They [the Beothuk] were taken in. They were married. Men. Women. And in that case, they're still around. Even if

you went to Labrador I think you'd find there are Beothuk people in Labrador too as well. (pers. comm., August 18, 2011)¹⁹⁹

In terms of how the historical narrative of the two peoples have played out, Calvin White also sees a parallel between the disappearance of the Beothuk and that of the Mi'kmaq, who have only recently begun to reassert their identity. Furthermore, like Chief Mi'sel Joe and Louis John – who shared his Mi'kmaq family's oral history with Speck almost a century earlier – White views the Mi'kmaq as having been complicit in concealing the identity of Beothuk individuals from the white settlers who threatened them:

And certainly if we look at how Mi'kmaq people themselves kept our own identity a secret, and for so long, and only because of discrimination in a lot of cases. But if you look at how well we were able to protect that, just think of how much harder our people, and the Beothuk would have tried, to keep their identity hidden when they were actually being persecuted. (pers. comm., August 21, 2011; Speck, 1922, 54)

In both cases, White explains, the disappearance of Native people from Newfoundland has something to do with those who have assumed the role of telling history. It is only recently, White feels, “that people are questioning whether the documentation, as little as it was, was authentic. Because it wasn't written by the Beothuk people, and it wasn't written by the Mi'kmaq people” (pers. comm., August 21, 2011).

¹⁹⁹ Like many Mi'kmaq informants and some early historians, Len Muise shares the belief that a group of Beothuk people crossed over to Labrador. With regards to the idea of Beothuk extinction, Muise states, “I got my doubts. If you know people, they can slip over, just like you know, the Montagnais, the Innu and Inuit slipped over from Labrador. We have actual stories of the Beothuk going over to Labrador. That was an easy passage. They could have easily mingled with any of the groups of people living in Labrador in the 1820s” (pers. comm., August 24, 2011).

All the Mi'kmaq people interviewed expressed this awareness of the influence of bias on the narrative structure of history. Time and time again, participants articulated their dissatisfaction with a history that had been written from a European perspective that was not representative of the Native experience. Like Edwina Wetzel, Scott Garnier perceives a connection between the writing and teaching of history, both of which reflect bias: "Who writes history? Who teaches history, right? You're coming at it from a bias. Here in Bay St. George, there were no French Indian history teachers" (pers. comm., August 23, 2011). Len Muise questions Mi'kmaq history as told from an English perspective, particularly with respect to the relationship of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk people. Echoing Chief Mi'sel Joe, the problem with such history, Muise states, like any story, is the perspective from which it is told: "But is that true, though, see? Because it's an English story. You gotta be very careful about stories. It's an English story, isn't it?" (pers. comm., August 24, 2011) Pointing to the scarcity of written historical sources and the bias underlining those that did exist, the Mi'kmaq informants insisted that a significant perspective of the Beothuk narrative, that of the island's Native people, still remained to be explored.

6.8 Mi'kmaq Oral History

In the opinion of many Mi'kmaq informants interviewed, Beothuk history has been influenced by a bias favouring European written history over the Native oral tradition, the primary means by which their own version of the narrative has been relayed from generation to generation. Muise points to history's emphasis on the written word, its reliance on primary and secondary documentation, as having put the Native historical perspective, with its oral tradition, at a distinct disadvantage. Chief Joe agrees, reiterating his grandfather's reaction to what Joe

had learned in school about the Mi'kmaq exterminating the Beothuk:

I think my grandfather was right: Who else are you going to blame it on? Our history is oral history. And even when you go to court, the courts don't want to deal with oral history. They want written history. And we never wrote our history; it was all passed down generation after generation. Storytelling was a part of how we lived. Storytelling was part of our entertainment. But in those stories was the story of past, present, and future. (pers. comm., August 18, 2011)

The importance of oral history, both as a means of preserving historical knowledge and as a valuable form of social interaction and entertainment, was another theme repeatedly emphasized by the Mi'kmaq interviewed. Reflects Marlene Farrell of Flat Bay, "Of course, in the past they didn't have the TVs and the newspapers, so that was their entertainment – people get together, sit down, and pass the stories on" (pers. comm., August 23, 2011). Many stressed the importance of such stories in passing historical knowledge on to the next generation. Among the younger people interviewed, both John Jeddore Jr. and Jordan Bennett recall the central role storytelling by elders played in understanding their people's past. Notes Bennett, "These stories were legit. They weren't telling you bullshit they wanted you to believe. They wanted the stories to be passed on with the culture in the future too. For generations to pick it up and know it" (pers. comm., August 22, 2011).

Regarding the reliability of Native oral history, M.G. Wetzel makes a similar point: The Newfoundland Mi'kmaq oral history in Speck (1922), he points out, was clearly not collected by with the purpose of litigation in mind (1995, 86). Shayne MacDonald agrees: "It wasn't informed by any rights-based research or advocacy. It was just what you heard as a kid growing up" (pers. comm., August 19, 2011). McLeod emphasizes that the validity of oral history derives

from the respect traditionally accorded to the elders in Native culture, who validate these histories as they pass from generation to generation as a means of ensuring the transmission of valuable community knowledge (1992, 3).

One of the primary reasons Mi'kmaq history has been so often misinterpreted or overlooked, the participants felt, was that it was considered from a European perspective to be less reliable than written history. Echoing Trigger (1986), this bias Chief Mi'sel Joe finds characteristic of what he calls the "nonaboriginal mentality" that has prevailed in the interpretation of Native history. In his dealings with Newfoundland Mi'kmaq land claims, Shayne MacDonald sees the perceived weakness of oral history, from a European perspective, as arising from its lack of detail or specificity, which tends to diminish with each telling. Like many other informants, MacDonald grew up hearing an oral history of Mi'kmaq families intermarrying with the Beothuk:

So the oral history about the Beothuk and Mi'kmaq in the [nineteen] seventies that prevailed in the community – we had elders that were in their eighties and nineties – and when they were kids, they heard it from people at that age who basically were alive at that timeframe. But as each generation goes by, the details in some respects go to the wayside, and the core of the oral history stays. So there's a tendency, when you look at oral history in that respect, to easily discount it. Because it doesn't have the degree of specificity. So that someone trying to determine which one is truthful or has more veracity, will tend to gravitate towards the written. Because the written at times got the dates, the times, the who, when, the where and what. It's unfortunate that that takes place, but that in my mind would be why the oral history may not be given as much credence as it should be. (pers. comm., August 19, 2011)

Through his ongoing legal work with the Miawpukek First Nation, MacDonald has been encouraged by changes in case law in the 1990s establishing a place for oral history in Native land claims. Central to the issue is the case that became known as *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, in which hereditary chiefs of the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en brought a petition for the settlement of land claims to the British Columbia Supreme Court based on long-standing oral tradition. As scholars noted in a special 1992 edition of *BC Studies*, Chief Justice Allen McEachern's decision, which rejected the chiefs' petition and dismissed oral history, was problematic on a number of grounds: the skepticism with which it treated evidence presented by Native people and anthropologists, as opposed to the archival evidence provided by historians; McEachern's faith in the documentary record as the only reliable source of insight into the past, and his ignorance of the extent to which both oral and written history are embedded in social processes (Wilson-Kenni, 1992, 7-10; Fischer, 1992, 43-46; Cruikshank, 1992, 33-39). The latter, Fisher interprets as arising from the fact that – overlooking the insights of more contemporary historians such as Trigger and Ray – McEachern's decision expressed a view of Native history “still firmly entrenched in the nineteenth century as interpreted by the historians of the 1930s” (Trigger, 1991, 1195-1215; Ray, 1991, 301-315; Fisher, 1992, 53). Six years later, in 1997, McEachern's decision was overturned by the Marshall decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, in a ruling that determined oral history could be relied upon in a court of law along with written records and the testimony of expert witnesses (Mildon, 2008, 79-81; Cruikshank, 2002, 22; Lischke and McNab, 2008, 7).

MacDonald points out, however, that such gains have been diminished by two tactics regularly pursued by the Crown to “take the sting out of oral evidence”: the frequent lack of corroboration of oral history by written history, and oral history's limited temporal span – the

period within which it can reasonably be expected to provide valid historical evidence (pers. comm., August 19, 2011). In the case of the latter, he explains, the generally accepted temporal span of a century excludes much Mi'kmaq oral history in Atlantic Canada, where Europeans first encountered Native North Americans several centuries previously. As an example, MacDonald refers to the 2003 Queen vs. Ken Drew case, which the Miawpukek band lost, he feels, largely because so little weight was accorded the Mi'kmaq oral history presented.²⁰⁰

A further reason given for the lack of credibility accorded Newfoundland Mi'kmaq oral history was the perception, among Mi'kmaq informants, of an attempt on the part of government to mitigate against the threat of future land claims. Many informants believed that acknowledging a prehistoric Mi'kmaq presence in Newfoundland, the existence of living Beothuk descendants, or both, would open up for government an untenable situation with regards to land rights on the island. Len Muise insists that this is precisely why a particular version of Native history has prevailed:

Because it's not to the advantage of politicians and governments to believe the version that there's still Beothuks, because they'd have to recognize them as a First Nation group. It would be political suicide. Like when the Mi'kmaq put in a land claim. It would be political suicide for the government to accept that.... So they said, 'No, we simply can't believe that, even if we know that it might be true. We can't dare say it because the political consequences would be very severe.' (pers. comm., August 24, 2011)

Chief Mi'sel Joe senses a similar motive behind the prevailing history of Native people, both Mi'kmaq and Beothuk, that has persisted for so long in Newfoundland:

You know, if all of a sudden, there was proof positive that there were Beothuk people still around – and government have always said the only aboriginal people in

²⁰⁰ See Canada. Province of Newfoundland (2003).

Newfoundland that would have an aboriginal right and title to this island would be the Beothuk people... all hell would break loose. So you have to keep telling this story that they're all gone. (pers. comm., August 18, 2011)

Working in concert with a European narrative that questions their very identity as a Native people in Newfoundland, the dismissal of their community's oral history, many informants concluded, was another means to ensure that certain key assumptions of that narrative, particularly concerning the Mi'kmaq's place in the province's history and their interaction with the Beothuk people, remained unchallenged.

6.9 Looking Ahead

Despite the prevalence of such assumptions, the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq interviewed spoke with optimism about various means of challenging the historical narrative with regards to the representation of their community. One means of countering this narrative, many informants felt, was to undertake DNA testing to determine the extent to which, if any, Beothuk blood exists among the Mi'kmaq population in Newfoundland. Virtually all informants interviewed expressed enthusiasm for DNA testing, which they viewed as a means of legitimizing not only their oral history, but also, in many cases, their claim to Native ancestry itself. Given the possibility that DNA testing could open up land claims, Scott Garnier predicts that government "would never want to say that there's Beothuk DNA still housed in the Mi'kmaq population" (pers. comm., August 23, 2011). Shayne MacDonald feels that reluctance arises from an unwillingness on the part of mainstream Newfoundland society to open up a wound created by their ancestors' involvement in the tragic fate of the Beothuk.²⁰¹ Calvin White, however, sees

²⁰¹ States MacDonald, "You know, as time goes by, the wound heals – I mean the guilt and conscience of the broader society – and going down the road to inquire as to well, are there individuals that are still alive belonging to

the situation differently. While agreeing that neither level of government – provincial nor federal – would be anxious to see genetic testing undertaken, from a European perspective, anyway, White feels that such testing may ultimately offer a much needed sense of resolution, or even absolution, a welcome alternative ending to what has generally been understood as a tragic tale:

I think it would be important, probably more from a European perspective than it would be from an aboriginal perspective. I think it would be important because it would give them a chance to be able to bury the hatchet, you know – [He smiles.] I didn't mean – no pun intended. To be able to say that I'm pleased, and I'm delighted, and overjoyed that somebody did survive. (pers. comm., August 22, 2011)

While at turns ironic, passionate, and discouraged by how their history has been understood, the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq informants interviewed expressed a strong sense of optimism that that perception would inevitably change. Some believed that DNA testing would provide the empirical proof or evidence which was felt, from a European perspective, to be so lacking in Mi'kmaq oral history. Others, echoing Trigger (1980), felt the answer lay in a more inclusive archaeology that was open to research questions and interpretation incorporating a Native perspective. For many, the answer lay in education, the importance of fostering an enhanced knowledge of Mi'kmaq language, culture and history that would maintain the distinctiveness of the Native perspective and guarantee its place in the interpretation of history. For all, the inclusion of this Native perspective was vital to the development of a more comprehensive narrative of the Beothuk people.

Acknowledging strides that had already been made, informants felt that transformation was necessary at all levels of education, from the schooling of young children to the support and

the Beothuk tribe, wherever, I think that would just aggravate that sad story and the guilt of conscience of broader Newfoundland society. So, in my opinion, that would be why the Newfoundland society have never delved into whether that aspect of the Beothuk and Beothuk/Mi'kmaq relations" (pers. comm., August 19, 2011).

development of Native academics interested in interpreting their history from a much needed Native perspective. “It would have been great to have an aboriginal perspective,” reflects Jordan Bennett. “Like if we had this type of forum back in those days, Jeez, man oh man, what you wouldn’t be able to tell” (pers. comm., August 23, 2011). Reflecting the key tenets of Indigenous research methodologies, Chief Mi’sel Joe emphasizes mutual respect and the importance of sharing the knowledge that comes from diverse historical perspectives:

The only thing I think that’s important, really important for all of us, is that we learn how to be respectful of each other, and communicate with each other. And by talking to each other, in a respectful way, whether you’re a scholar or whoever you are, you have good information that I need, and I probably have information that you need. We can all agree to put all that stuff together.... I think if we can all learn, we’ll be so much better off, all the way around (pers. comm., August 18, 2011).

6.10 Conclusions

The story of Newfoundland’s Mi’kmaq people offers both a valuable parallel and a counter narrative to the history of the Beothuk. Characterized by the heterodiegetic narration of Europeans, the written history of Newfoundland’s Mi’kmaq, like that of the Beothuk, features a narratorial bias that serves to foreground European interests and undermine Native agency. Within the early historical narrative, Mi’kmaq presence on the island is explained as having been facilitated by the French, who relied on the Mi’kmaq’s territorial ambition, belligerence, and superior weaponry to bring about the extermination of the Beothuk. Though subsequently disproven, the persistence of this myth can be attributed to its place within the social studies curriculum of the province’s elementary schools until the 1970s. In challenging Mi’kmaq

territorial claims to the island and their identity as a distinct and Indigenous population, this parallel historical narrative of the Mi'kmaq illustrates how the early written history of Europeans was constructed to serve their own colonial ambitions in Newfoundland, even to the point of negating the very existence of its Native people.

Acutely aware of the European bias underscoring their written history, contemporary Newfoundland Mi'kmaq offer a counter narrative with a bias of its own, a narrative that reasserts their identity and insists on the value of their oral tradition as an alternative perspective on their own experience as a people. One feature of this narrative is a territorial claim to parts of the island that continues to generate scholarly debate among ethnohistorians and archaeologists even today. Related to that claim is a view of the Beothuk as a group which, though persecuted by Europeans, enjoyed a complex relationship with the Mi'kmaq and other Native peoples, one that involved positive interaction as well as periodic conflicts over breaches of mutually acknowledged territorial boundaries. Challenging the idea of extinction as a European construct, the Mi'kmaq oral tradition, like much of the more recent historical and archaeological work of the previous chapter, suggests the alternative interpretation of Beothuk intermingling with other Native peoples in the region.

Emerging from Mi'kmaq narrative is a desire on the part of its subjects not so much to rewrite history, but to make it more inclusive by bringing to our interpretation of the past a Native perspective they feel has long been overlooked, and one that finds support in more recent developments in history and archaeology. Viewed together with an awareness of the bias inherent in each, the European and Mi'kmaq narratives concerning the Beothuk illustrate the extent to which our understanding can ultimately be enriched by an ongoing, interdisciplinary, hermeneutic engagement with history that acknowledges its polyvocality and diversity of

perspective.

Chapter 7 – Newer Fragments of the Beothuk Story

Many of the themes addressed by contemporary Mi'kmaq in their discussion of the Beothuk – in particular both people's interactions with other groups, and the Eurocentric bias and oversimplification of their written history – find support in more recent developments in the Beothuk narrative. Drawing on Native oral history, contemporary Indigenous people's perceptions of Beothuk history, and a wider range of European sources and academic disciplines, these developments serve to open up the Beothuk narrative even further, raising possibilities for interpretation that did not previously exist.

In his discussion of the history of subaltern groups as inherently fragmented and episodic, Gramsci insists on the incalculable value of every potential historical source (1971, 54-55). Providing an alternative perspective on the past and its meaning, these historical fragments include sources from France which describe a series of events not included within the historical narrative written in English. Another perspective comes from oral testimony by Innu from Labrador and people with Beothuk ancestry in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula. Their understanding of the Beothuk reflects many of the key points emphasized by contemporary Mi'kmaq people living in Newfoundland, including a view that the idea of Beothuk extinction constitutes a reductive oversimplification of a more complex reality. Shaped by her experience as a Native woman whose Beothuk ancestry is confirmed both through DNA testing and her family's oral history, the perspective of Ardy Landry evokes narratology's concept of reader-response, further opening up the narrative through its illustration of how historical interpretation can be informed as much by the bias and cultural framework of the reader as that of the narrator.

Our understanding of the Beothuk narrative is further enriched by the inclusion of contemporary developments in osteoarchaeology, craniology, and DNA analysis. On one level, these developments are significant in providing new information on details of key historic events – including highly specialized empirical analysis of scientific data – that have not previously been considered. On another level, through their *interpretation* of that data within the framework of assumptions of the early historical narrative, these interdisciplinary findings illustrate the extent to which that narrative can continue to shape our understanding, even in cases when the findings point to an alternative interpretation.

Encompassing a wide range of disciplines and cultural perspectives, individually these developments can appear to have a limited meaning. When they are considered relative to one another and within the context of a more contemporary, inclusive interpretive framework, however, a bigger picture begins to emerge. Viewed collectively, such interdisciplinary and multilogical findings can provide us with new insight into the past, as well as heighten our awareness of how the established conventions of historical narrative have shaped and continue to influence our understanding.

7.1 French Sources

An analysis of accounts describing early Beothuk/French interaction illustrates how the consideration of sources with an alternative historical perspective might prove useful to expanding our understanding of Beothuk history.²⁰² A number of our historical assumptions about the Beothuk are challenged by Jean Conan's account of his experience with a Native

²⁰² At the time of writing, there is no indication of awareness of Conan's work among English-speaking writers beyond Marshall (1996, 136) and Bakker and Drapeau (1994). Likewise, English-speaking writers have yet to address Rompkey's *Terre-Neuve: Anthologie des Voyageurs Français 1814-1914*, which, published in French, contains Ney (1828) and Carpon (1847).

community near Ship Cove in 1787, including the notion of a culturally entrenched Beothuk xenophobia with respect to Europeans (Conan, 1826, 37-112).

Conan's *Les Aventures extraordinaires du citoyen Conan* is an epic autobiographical poem written in Breton in 1826 by a man who, at the age of 61 recounts, among various life experiences, his encounters with the Native people of Newfoundland (Sohier-Ozouf, 2001, 11; Bakker and Drapeau, 1994, 30-31). Clearly, Conan's poem merits further study as epic and autobiography. Another useful framework for analysis is romance, specifically what Frye describes as its episodic "vertical perspective" and powerful tendency towards polarization (2006, 35). Furthermore, of particular significance for a narrative written originally in Breton and translated into French – a narrative describing a Native language that is never understood by the narrator – is the issue of translation. In his description of translation as poetic transposition or *Umdichtung*, Derrida emphasizes this point in a manner particularly relevant to Conan's *Aventures*: "One should never pass over in silence the question of the tongue in which the question of the tongue is raised and into which a discourse on translation is translated" (2007, 192).

In Chapter II, "*Campagne de Terre-Neuve (1787)*," Conan describes three encounters with Newfoundland's Native peoples. On the basis of their geographical location, weaponry, interaction with Europeans, and cultural traits, Bakker and Drapeau argue that the first two groups Conan encounters were Beothuk, and the third were Montagnais (1994, 40-43). They postulate that the first group were Beothuk on the basis of their location within known Beothuk territory of Notre Dame Bay and the fact that they attacked the sailors with stones rather than the more sophisticated weaponry of the Mi'kmaq and Montagnais. The second group at Shoe Cove, also within Beothuk territory, Bakker and Drapeau argue to be Beothuk on the basis of their

location, the lack of any western implements in the camp, and their use of fish and animal species cited in Tuck and Pastore (1985, 75-76).

Conan's account of his time in Newfoundland describes a series of interactions with Native people that raise the possibility of a more complex relationship between Europeans and Beothuk than appears, as discussed, in the early historical narrative. Also significant is the degree to which Conan's narratorial perspective evolves over the course of his account. Beginning from a colonial stance that typically both fears and desires the Native other, Conan's narrative builds towards a more introspective, complex, and conflicted view of Native people vis-à-vis his own cultural framework.

Spurned in his offer of marriage to "une certaine jeune fille que j'aimais par-dessus tout et qui m'aimait aussi," at the age of 22 Conan registers for service in the French cod fishery and on April 10, 1787 embarks for *Terre Neuve* aboard a brig named *Le Sauvage* (Conan, 1826, 37). Through a series of ill omens and misadventures climaxing in the shipwreck of *Le Sauvage*, Conan and three of his companions, all in a weakened state from the ordeal, find themselves in a small Beothuk community in Shoe Cove. From the outset, Conan and his compatriots exhibit a fear of the Indigenous other that is characteristic of colonial discourse. The first encounter occurs when Conan and his shipmates strike land near Cape St. John of Notre Dame Bay, hypothesizing that "jamais personne, peut-être, n'avait aborde cet endroit avant nous!" (1826, 61) In a tale reminiscent of other settler accounts of the Beothuk, Conan and his shipmates encounter a group of "Sauvages qui se mirent à nous jeter des pierres, à trépigner, dans l'espoir de nous attraper pour nous mettre en pièces" (2001, 62). Terrified at the recurrent thought of being "dévorerés par les Sauvages," the French flee the area and are subsequently taken in by an English ship (1826, 69).

Still recovering from the ill effects of the shipwreck of *Le Sauvage*, Conan and three of his comrades are left at Shoe Cove in the presence of a small Beothuk community of sixteen men and two women, “une vieille femme difforme et une jeune fille qui pouvait avoir dans les quinze ou seize ans” (1826, 70). Arriving at the mamateek, Conan is immediately convinced by his three companions that he would be the first to be eaten, due to his youth and superior physique.²⁰³ When the Beothuk share with them “les meilleurs morceaux” of their bear meat, salmon, and white fish, Conan and his shipmates reciprocate by offering their small portion of ship’s biscuit (1826, 71).

As they prepare for bed, the Beothuk men encourage the young woman to lie down beside Conan. Conan’s resistance to her attempts at seduction evoke the ire and fear of his compatriots, who abuse him for risking all of their lives by refusing to cooperate. Responding that he would rather die than submit to the young woman’s advances, Conan expresses a typically Eurocentric view of the indigene: “Ces gens-là sont des Sauvages, des corps sans âme; moi, par la grace divine, je ne suis pas comme eux!” (1826, 72) Conan awakes the next morning to find the young woman “terriblement vexée” in a heated altercation with the Beothuk men, who appear to be teasing her for her lack of success at seducing him (1826, 72).

Reflecting on what he witnessed in the mamateek the previous night, Conan’s view of the Native other evokes the bestial in a manner that is typical of colonial discourse.²⁰⁴ Having during the night witnessed “ce que jamais je n’aurais supposé et que le papier ne permet pas de raconter,” Conan concludes that, in this country, the savages conduct themselves exactly as animals do in France (1826, 72). Left after breakfast with the two women, Conan once again

²⁰³ The Beothuk word for house, “mamateek” describes any of a number of dwellings the Beothuk constructed for seasonal habitation, including as Marshall notes, “conical, six-sided, square and rectangular, oval, eight-sided and five-sided structures”(1996, 350).

²⁰⁴ To quote Fanon, “When the settler seeks to describe the native fully in exact terms he constantly refers to the bestiary” (1968, 42). For a discussion of bestial associations in early European writing about Native people in Newfoundland, see Chapter 3.

finds himself the object of the young woman's advances. Again he resists as she caresses his lips and hands, and in the process Conan continues to aggravate his companions, who remain convinced that they are going to be eaten.

It is in the subsequent episode that a fundamental change occurs in the relationship between Conan and the young woman, as well as in the narratorial perspective from which it is told. Taking him by the hand, she leads Conan away from the others to a tree from which hang a number of valuable bear and seal pelts. She indicates that Conan is to take the most beautiful. When he chooses one, she adds a second of superior quality and, smiling, folds them up and gives them to him to take away. What follows is a unique incident in the narrative history of European/Beothuk interaction on the island of Newfoundland. Conan and the young woman retire under the shade of a tree, where they both speak in a language the other does not understand:

Puis nous nous assîmes à l'ombre d'un arbre; elle me tenait despropos que je ne pouvais comprendre, et moi, je lui parlais tantôt en français tantôt en breton, peu importait, finalement, ce que je lui disais. Quand nous fûmes restés là au moins deux heures, nous revîmes à la cabane pour nous reposer. (1826, 73)

The incident brings about a change in Conan that distinguishes him from his compatriots, who continue to despair at having been abandoned among the savages. When Conan announces that he is happy to spend the rest of his days where he is, his companions are shocked at his having abandoned "la loi de Dieu" and insist that he leave with them at the first opportunity (1826, 74).

After a sleepless night, Conan awakes to find himself the object of affection of the woman he has come to call "ma bien-aimée": "nuit et jour elle me calînait" (1826, 74). When they go for a walk, she begins to cry at the sight of a European ship on the horizon. She runs to

the mamateek to warn the older woman and to find Conan's two pelts. Through gestures, Conan expresses his regret at having to leave and tries to convince the young woman to go with him. She indicates her desire to stay, and offers to be faithful to him should he remain with her. At the beckoning of his comrades, Conan leaves for La Scie.

In a subsequent episode, through an indiscrete overindulgence in *eau de vie*, Conan finds himself alone in the woods of Newfoundland at night. Once again, he evokes the bestiary in his fear of being “dévoreré par les bêtes féroces ou par les Sauvages” (1826, 78). Walking alone at night, he has a vision of “deux bêtes, un mâle et une femelle... accouplées” which regard him impassively as he goes by. He hears what he perceives to be the voices of the savages but, “grâce à Dieu,” he sees no one (1826, 79).

In the “Troisième rencontre avec les Sauvages,” Conan and his companions encounter a Native group including “cing ou six Sauvages, qui étaient habillées proprement comme des demoiselles,” a group of women regularly brought to Saint-Julien for the diversion of French officers (1826, 88).²⁰⁵ It is during this encounter that Conan celebrates the sexual liberty of the Native, contrasting it to the extreme jealousy of the French, “avec quoi nous nous tourmentons l'esprit” (1826, 88). Conan's final word on the savages is one of admiration: “j'avais bien regret d'être français, car les Sauvages sont gens plus sages et plus honnêtes que les Français, qui sont toujours en révolte” (1826, 88).

In many respects, on first reading the story of Conan's relationship with his “bien aimée” in “Campagne de Terre-Neuve (1787)” epitomizes conventions of colonial narrative. As the author, Conan controls the narrative in a manner that Torgovnick identifies as typical of what she

²⁰⁵ Citing Martijn (1990), Bakker and Drapeau identify this group as Montagnais (1994, 42).

terms “primitivist discourse” (1990, 3).²⁰⁶ Alternating between the fear of violence and desire, the narrative typically swings from positive to negative portrayals of the Native.²⁰⁷ Citing Said’s concept of “standard commodities,” Goldie identifies sex and violence as two such commodities generated within the limited economy of Indigenous representation by white writers, who frequently oscillate between fear of the “treacherous redskin” and desire for “the Indian maiden, who tempts the being chained by civilization towards the liberation represented by free and open sexuality, not the realm of untamed evil but of unrestrained joy” (1989, 15).

Within this framework, Conan’s “bien aimée” – much like Demasduit, and so many other Beothuk women described by European men – emerges as the voiceless other, or “ventriloquist’s dummy” spoken by a colonialist narrator (Torgovnick, 1990, 9). Articulated exclusively by Conan, she becomes a *re-presense* of her real self, Spivak’s “domesticated Other” functioning primarily to consolidate the imperialist narrator’s self (1985, 253). Equally applicable in this context is Hulme’s discussion of the interracial colonial romance, which, in the tradition of classical expansionist literature, presents the traveler and Native nurturer in a relationship that is doomed from the outset (1986, 141).²⁰⁸

An analysis of Conan’s account reveals the extent to which European perceptions of the Native are shaped by historical, sociopolitical, cultural, and personal factors impacting the narrative voice that survived the experience to tell the tale. Significantly, however, the distinctly French implications of humanism within Conan’s account distinguish the colonial experience of

²⁰⁶ Torgovnick’s concept of primitivist discourse is characterized by presenting a “cherished series of dichotomies: by turns gentle, in tune with nature, paradisaical, ideal – or violent, in need of control; what we should emulate or, alternately, what we should fear: noble savages or cannibals” (1990, 3).

²⁰⁷ This tendency Said traces to the West’s earliest expressions of esteem for the Oriental other, which were without exception accompanied by “counter response” (1978, 150).

²⁰⁸ The “ideal of cultural harmony” presented in Hulme’s theory of interracial love plots ultimately proves, like the story of Pocahontas, to be a myth (1986, 141). As summarized by Pratt, the relationships presented in such myths can never be sustained: “Whether love turns out to be requited or not, whether the colonized lover is female or male, outcomes seem to be roughly the same: the lovers are separated, the European is reabsorbed by Europe, and the non-European dies an early death” (2008, 95).

the French from British imperialism, with its assumptions of racial and cultural superiority. Influenced by “the noblest sentiments of the French Revolution, the humanistic ideals of the Third Republic, and the historical grandeur of French civilization itself,” the French colonial undertaking, unlike that of the British, involved a policy that strove towards assimilation (Spurr, 1993, 120).²⁰⁹ In her preface to *Les aventures extraordinaires*, Sohier-Ozouf iterates Conan’s fundamental humanistic belief in the equality of all people. The author’s “adhésion republicaine” she explains as arising from both his service during the French Revolution and his extraordinary educational opportunity – as the son of a weaver in 18th century Brittany – provided to him by the monks of the Beauport Abbey in Kerity-Paimpol (2001, 16).²¹⁰ Considering Conan’s background, the historical/political context, and the fact that his *Aventures extraordinaires* was written in 1826, a reading of the text that considers the egalitarian assumptions of French humanism is certainly not out of place. If we accept Bakker and Drapeau’s interpretation of the identity of the Native groups described in Conan’s *Aventures extraordinaires*, the ultimate value of Conan’s work lies in its challenge to fundamental Eurocentric assumptions about Beothuk xenophobia and attitudes towards miscegenation.²¹¹

Challenges to another common assumption about the Beothuk – that of their disappearance with the death of Shanawdithit – are found in French sources suggesting a Beothuk presence in Newfoundland of which Shanawdithit herself was unaware, or which she chose not to communicate to Cormack. Four accounts by French voyageurs involved in the cod fishery along the French Shore in the 19th and early 20th centuries make reference to Native

²⁰⁹ This distinction is clearly reflected in the very different experience of the Mi’kmaq in Atlantic Canada – whose leaders Membertou and Messamoet in the 17th century forged a number of meaningful allegiances with the French – and the Beothuk in Newfoundland, whose history of contact with the British is shaped largely by misunderstanding and violence (Henderson, 1997, 26).

²¹⁰ Said expands this concept to encompass an emerging 18th-century European sympathetic sensibility to the Oriental, an identification “accessible only to an observer who sacrificed his prejudices to *Einführung*” (1978, 118).

²¹¹ As noted in Chapter 6, these assumptions have been reiterated by Marshall (pers. comm., July 25, 2012) and Holly (1998, 25).

people in Newfoundland (Rompkey, 2004). Two of these accounts refer specifically to the Beothuk.

In his “À la recherche des Béothuks” (1828), Nèy describes a meeting with two Indians sent by Cormack to explore “les côtes françaises” for evidence of the Beothuk.²¹² Citing Marshall, Rompkey identifies these individuals as the Montagnais James John and the Mi’kmaq Morris Lewis (Rompkey, 2004, 69, n. 1; Marshall, 1996, 195-200). Despite these men’s failure to find Beothuk on the island, Nèy insists that the Beothuk still exist and provides a story concerning “une petite fille de Saint-jean, étant hors de la ville à cueillir un fruit nommé plates-bières...” who is attacked by “un Indien” (1828, in Rompkey, 2004, 69). While the geography and date are uncertain, details about the incident, such as the reference to bakeapples and the description of an arrow tip made from a refashioned fishhook, suggest that the story may indeed describe an encounter with a Beothuk.²¹³

A second account is Carpon’s “Les Mœurs des colons et des autochtones,” in which the author claims to have met two “sauvages” who had been “expédiés par le gouvernement anglais pour explorer l’intérieur de l’île, où devaient séjourner encore des familles de sauvages rouges [Béothuks]...” (1847, in Rompkey, 2004, 100). In his account, Carpon claims to quote “textuellement” the narration of one of the two men, in which he admits to their having just recently killed a Beothuk man himself while hunting caribou.²¹⁴ While hardly conclusive, the

²¹² The “French shore” during this period is defined by Rompkey as “la partie du littoral nord-ouest de l’île sur laquelle les Français avaient joui d’un droit qu’ils considéraient comme ‘exclusif’” (2004, 7).

²¹³ In reference to these two Indians sent by Cormack, Nèy writes, “Jusqu’alors leurs recherches avaient été infructueuses, et ils supposaient qu’il n’existait plus d’Indiens rouges dans l’île. *Cependant ils étaient dans l’erreur*, [my emphasis] car à notre retour à Saint-Pierre on nous raconta qu’une petite fille de Saint-Jean, étant hors de la ville à cueillir un fruit nommé plates-bières [plaquebière²], fut tout à coup effrayée en voyant un Indien arrêté devant elle à quelque distance...” (1828, in Rompkey, 2004, 69). While the date of the incident is unspecified, the context suggests that it is contemporaneous (ie circa 1828). The location, described as “Saint-Jean” could refer to either the city of St. John’s or Île Saint Jean (R. Rompkey, pers. comm., Nov 29, 2004).

²¹⁴ In his preface to Carpon’s piece, Rompkey warns that “ses observations sont souvent exagérées” (2004, 97). The detail of the account (which Carpon claims to quote verbatim), however, its parallels to the descriptions of the two men in Nèy’s account, and the frankness with which it is related, suggest that it contains an element of truth.

occurrence of two separate French accounts describing a Beothuk presence in Newfoundland at the time Shanawdithit was believed to be the last of her people bears further examination as another alternative historical perspective on the Beothuk.

7.2 Native Oral History

The idea of a Beothuk presence continuing in Newfoundland after the death of Shanawdithit is supported by oral history from Nova Scotia and the island's Great Northern Peninsula, where a number of people came forward in July, 2012 with stories of Beothuk ancestry in their families. Though diverse in their perspective and the individual circumstances they describe, these accounts by contemporary aboriginal people stress their identity and unique cultural practices as Native people on the island. As a group, they challenge the written historical narrative with its assumption of extinction, instead viewing the Beothuk as one of several Native groups in the region that interacted among themselves as well as with Europeans.

Like the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq, many of the other Native people interviewed in Newfoundland, Labrador, and Nova Scotia expressed an awareness of times when their own culture had been perceived by the majority settler population as nonexistent, a perception that the Native groups themselves were partially responsible for perpetuating. Sue Thynne of Wellington, NS draws a link between Newfoundlanders' general ignorance regarding Native people on the island and the government's position at the time of Confederation: "See, when Joey Smallwood joined Canada he said there was no Indians in Newfoundland. Newfoundland was full of it: Castor River, Port au Choix. All them places" (pers. comm., July 24, 2012).²¹⁵

²¹⁵ With regards to Smallwood's position on the presence of Native people on the island of Newfoundland at the time of Confederation, Tanner notes "the official view that the Mi'kmaq were no longer a distinct aboriginal population" (1998, 244). Tanner references Hiller and Harrington's (1995) citation of Smallwood's November 20, 1947 list of Canadian federal departments: "Indian Affairs Division – we have no such thing in Newfoundland...."

Within Thynne's family on Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula, there was no doubt about their Native ancestry. Looking back on her childhood in Bartlett's Harbour, Thynne recounts one family story of her great grandmother almost being "shot for a bear" by her great grandfather, when he encountered her in the woods dressed in Native regalia. At 89, Thynne fondly recalls her father calling his daughters "my Indian papooses," and the pride with which her mother dressed her children in the Native tradition, their moccasins and mittens "all trimmed up" with long, colourful bindings (pers. comm., July 24, 2012).

Oral history and other cultural practices in the region point to the Native ancestry of many of its people. Employed in the local heritage centre for artisanal crafts, Lisa Brown of Flower's Cove illustrates a method of tanning seal hide for the manufacture of moccasins that is unique to the Great Northern Peninsula. The process involves soaking the hides first in a bog pond to remove the hair, after which they are submerged in a solution containing fir sap, which renders the hide waterproof and produces its characteristic honey brown colour. Travelling around the area in July, 2012, I saw hides stretched on frames propped against fences and outbuildings and met several people who continue this tradition of tanning. Bert Parrill of Pine's Cove was in the process of preparing hides for his wife to make into a pair of moccasins for their daughter, who was away at university and had requested the boots specifically, which her mother asserted she wore with pride as an expression of her unique local culture (pers. comm., July 12, 2012).

In the course of our discussion, Brown points out that the practice, like many of the people in the area, is Native in origin. Her own family tree she traces back to the marriage of her great-great-great grandfather, a settler named Diamond, to a Beothuk woman with the first name

The Government of Newfoundland has no such division or department for the welfare of the Indians or the Eskimos, of whom there are many hundreds in Labrador" (in Tanner, 1998, 245).

Elizabeth. Brown insists that her family has always known that the woman was Beothuk, although it could not be confirmed in any of the documentation she attempted to trace. On the man's side, she explains, she was able to trace his ancestry back to George Gaulton, the first settler in Savage Cove. On Elizabeth's side, though, there were no records whatsoever.

This, Brown explains, is due in part to the general lack of documentation for Native people born in Newfoundland. "I traced my father's father's side, but I couldn't trace her grandmother's side, because it stopped at her. There was no paperwork for her. That's where it stopped – with her" (pers. comm., July 12, 2012). With the exception of Mi'kmaq documented by the Catholic clergy from St. Pierre and Miquelon, the births, marriages, and deaths of Native people in Newfoundland were rarely recorded. Further complicating the matter, Brown states, was the practice of Anglicizing the woman's Native name in marital records, or representing her with an "X". Joe Offrey of Port Au Choix, whose family traces back to a Native woman named Nova Lee Deerchild, suggests that the practice also had at its root an attempt by some people to deny or conceal their Native ancestry:

People don't want to be Indian. They don't want to know who they are, and they don't care who they are, and so they don't want to see their wife was Indian, so they put a question mark there. And five minutes of your time going into the census, you don't have to go back very far, and you'll see the evidence of that. (pers. comm., July 14, 2012)

To many interviewed, it was common knowledge that the people of the Great Northern Peninsula had Beothuk ancestry. States Offrey, "The Great Northern Peninsula is Beothuk" (pers. comm., July 14, 2012). Nathaniel Gaulton, whose family has a Beothuk link, agrees, emphasizing that his knowledge originated from the oral history of elders within his community:

It was stories I heard from the older generation growing up. It was Beothuks lived here on this coast. And lived here in Savage Cove. That's what they always said. Beothuks lived around here before the white men came here, before the white people came here. And my grandmother's grandmother was married to a Beothuk. (pers. comm., July 12, 2012)

For many Native informants, the presence of people on the Great Northern Peninsula claiming Beothuk ancestry is explained by the region's proximity to Labrador, an area to which they believe the Beothuk to have temporarily migrated and spent time with the Innu people when under the greatest pressure from the settler population during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The general understanding seems to be that when the pressure abated, these Beothuk migrants, or their descendants, returned to the land they had always called home. Joe Offrey summarizes the sequence of events by which he and others believe the Beothuk returned to the Great Northern Peninsula:

They were used to coming over to Labrador. They had close ties to a group here. They married into them and things. So they were used to coming down and coming across the Strait. When the food supply up in Central dried up and they chased 'em and shot 'em up and things, I believe – and not only me – that they moved down on the rugged land with the caribou and things, and the food, with the food source, down on the rugged part of the Northern peninsula, inside on the closest place across from the Labrador. But times were tough. They weren't allowed on the coast to gather food. They were hungry. And they had a choice. And they made the right choice, in that they come across the strait to be with their friends. But it's like all other people. Everybody want to go home. And maybe their dads, the ones that came across, died off, but their kids grew up with a good

understanding of where they come from and what it was all about. And I think they came back to the Newfoundland side. It makes sense, you know. And I'm not the only one talks about it. I hear it all the time. (pers. comm., July 14, 2012)

Innu elders interviewed in Sheshatshiu agreed with this idea of some Beothuk likely having spent time in Labrador before returning to the island. From a Native perspective, they insisted, it only made sense in terms of their ongoing interaction with other peoples in the region. For Sebastian Penunsi, the idea of the Beothuk being isolated on the island contradicts the reality of Native trading patterns and modes of transportation:

I cannot say they were isolated, because where would they do their trading posts? Where would they travel? The only closest distance would be the Bell Island areas straits, the routes in that area there. There had to have been a way to travel from there. And it's the same thing with us, we Innu. We travelled by boat. We travelled in the wintertime. We travel long distance, to be here or to be out there, to the other people on the other side, in Quebec. (pers. comm., July 18, 2012)

Pien Penashue expresses a similar view when asked if he believed Newfoundland Beothuk were isolated by water. The assumption that they were bound by land, he insists, makes no more sense for the Beothuk than it would for the Innu of Labrador:

I don't believe that, no. Because in those days people used to travel, used to travel long, long ways. Long distance too. For the Innu, for them people to be existed in Newfoundland, they had to be existence there, but also they had to be travelling. It's like we do here in Labrador. We travel long distance, really long. (pers. comm., July 18, 2012)

This understanding of the Beothuk, Penashue points out, is supported by his family's oral history with regard to interaction between Native people in Labrador and on the island of Newfoundland: "My late great-great grandmother, before I was born, there are stories that we have heard from that, yes, people did cross from Newfoundland and Labrador in those days" (pers. comm., July 18, 2012).

Joseph Mark, an Innu hunter in Sheshatshiu originally from St. Augustine, also supported the idea of interaction between the Beothuk and the Labrador Innu. Drawing on his own personal experience, Mark insisted that the distance between Blanc Sablon, near Labrador on Quebec's Lower North shore, and St. Barbe on the Great Northern Peninsula could easily be crossed in summer by boat and in the winter by running across the ice, the latter of which he estimated he could himself complete in a couple of hours. Like many Innu interviewed, Mark confirmed that people had regularly crossed the Strait of Belle Isle in the past as they continue to do today. Based on his community's experience of forced resettlement in the early 1960s from St. Augustine to La Romaine, in which the entire band returned to their ancestral territory contrary to the federal government's directive, Mark also understood the drive behind the Beothuk returning to their home in Newfoundland when conditions permitted.²¹⁶ Like many of the Innu elders, Mark encouraged me to speak to more Native people on the Great Northern Peninsula to hear their version of events and develop a fuller understanding of what had taken place. Pointing to a map of the Strait of Bell Isle, Mark concludes, "I believe what these people

²¹⁶ See Commission de toponymie Québec (2012). With regards to the forced resettlement, the commission notes, "Au début des années 1960, dans l'espoir de leur offrir les services essentiels, le gouvernement fédéral décide d'incorporer le groupe à la bande de la réserve de La Romaine. Cette tentative échoua. Durant la nuit, en pleine tempête, le groupe retourna sur son territoire ancestral, espace où une présence amérindienne avait été signalée par l'explorateur Louis Jolliet, en 1694" (2012, 1). In the context of his people's return to St. Augustine by foot during a winter storm, Mark could appreciate how the Beothuk might have done something similar, because they couldn't "feel comfortable" or "settle well" in a region that was not their own: "We walked from La Romaine to St. Augustine. We walked back. Everybody walked home. So that's how they done it to us. So I don't know, that's probably happen same thing to these people. They probably miss the area where they were at all the time and feel at home" (pers. comm., July 19, 2012).

are saying, that there were these Native people from Newfoundland – that they, it’s a possibility too, and I believe in what they are saying – that they must have went back” (pers. comm., July 19, 2012).

Referencing Pintal’s (1998) archaeological work in the region, elder Sebastian Penunsi insists that the theory makes sense, given the Beothuk’s ancestral and ongoing trade relationships with the Innu of Labrador.²¹⁷ Such relationships were common talk among the elders of Pien Penashue, who recalls having heard about the Native people in Newfoundland “from our fathers and our great grandparents” (pers. comm., July 18, 2012). Reflecting on the oral history he has heard concerning these people, and the proximity of the Great Northern Peninsula, Penashue concludes, “So there has to be some kind of connection here in Labrador Innu. Of course there has to be some kind of a relation there, that people are related to Newfoundland people. We have people here who we said that these people are different but they weren’t different, they were Innu also” (pers. comm., July 18, 2012).

All the Innu elders interviewed expressed this idea of referring to the Beothuk not as a separate people but rather as Innu living in Newfoundland. None could remember having heard the word “Beothuk” used among members of their community. In our discussions, Elizabeth Penashue repeatedly referred to Newfoundland’s Beothuk as “my people” (pers. comm., July 20, 2012). The practice among the Innu informants of referring to the Beothuk as Newfoundland Innu was indicative of a remarkable degree of empathy for the Beothuk expressed by all who were interviewed. While discussing the history of the Beothuk with Native people throughout the region consistently raised difficult questions of racism, identity, and colonial greed, with the

²¹⁷ With regards to trade involving groups from various regions of Labrador and Newfoundland, Pintal notes, “Bien que distincts, ces groupes participaient à un même vaste réseau d’échanges, d’où les difficultés à bien distinguer le matériel archéologique de ces deux régions” (1998, 255). Of Beothuk activity in the region, he concludes, “il est fort probable que les ancêtres des Béothuks ont fréquenté la région de Blanc-Sablon au cours des quelques 600 dernières années. Ailleurs en Basse-Côte-Nord, leur présence, bien que possible, demeure plus équivoque” (1998, 256).

Innu elders, time and time again the subject brought about reflection on the desperate plight of their own people, the Innu of Sheshatshiu, whose legacy of social problems they attributed to their contact with whites.²¹⁸

On a personal level, all of the informants interviewed had experienced racism growing up Native in Newfoundland, whether or not their family had openly acknowledged their ancestry. Despite both her parents' pride in their Native children, Susan Thynne recalls being puzzled by the derogatory term which was used to describe Native people on the Great Northern Peninsula: "I said to Mom one time, I said, 'Mom, why do they call us the Black Indians? We're beautiful'" (pers. comm., July 24, 2012). Thynne recalls her own son being called a "wagon burner." In addition to "Black Indian," other informants recalled the slurs "Indian squaw," "kimo," "Jackatar," and "squaw fucker."

Like the Mi'kmaq interviewed, many people in Newfoundland whose families claimed Beothuk ancestry stated that not all members of the family would openly acknowledge their Native blood. Joe Offrey reflected on the irony of his father teasing his mother about being Indian, only to discover later in life that he too had Native ancestry. While Offrey saw most people in his extended family as proud of being Native, he admits that there are exceptions: "I got one Aunt, if you mention being Indian, she's gone. She definitely don't want to hear tell of Indian. If you call her a Indian you ain't seein' her no more" (pers. comm., July 14, 2012).

²¹⁸ In the course of our conversations, the Innu elders repeatedly emphasized the unprecedented rate of change that had influenced their people's settlement and hunting patterns. Many informants felt that this unprecedented rate of change reflected a concerted effort to make the Innu people more like the white majority. Noting the preponderance of English in the community and the settlement of his people in modern housing, Sebastian Penunsi points out, "This is the governments themselves have wanting the Innu to be like a non-Native or non-Innu person. This is the government. That is what they always wanted to do to us, to change us, in their own way" (pers. comm., July 18, 2012). Joseph Mark points out that efforts to reorganize Innu society have failed largely because of the assumption that the Innu will change: That's a change to change us, to change the Innu to be like their own government. But the changes doesn't fit the Innu of the way they lived before. They gave money to the bands, making the Innu feel like in a white society, or in their own, like their own, and to govern. But we still have our problems with that. (pers. comm., July 19, 2012)

As with the Mi'kmaq, other Native people in Newfoundland were known to conceal their Native identity in order to avoid discrimination in the hiring process. In Newfoundland, Thynne explains, fear of non-Native society acted as a further deterrent to people openly acknowledging their Beothuk ancestry, in some cases even to themselves: "I think what's happening, that the reason why the Newfoundland Indians didn't want to believe they were Indians, because they couldn't get work. They were scared of the white man" (pers. comm., July 24, 2012).

Acknowledging the dearth of colonial records in Newfoundland regarding Native people, many informants emphasized that they had little concrete proof of their family's claim to Beothuk ancestry. Though insistent on their identity as descendants of the Beothuk, they pointed out that they had little if any evidence to back up their claims. Part of this reluctance, Sue Thynne explains, stems from the general lack of education among people of her generation growing up on the Great Northern Peninsula: "We didn't know nothing about our background. They should've taken us and said, 'Look, you're a Native,' and this was it. But see we people never had no education. Because we were down there in the woods" (pers. comm., July 24, 2012). Nathaniel Gaulton follows up his description of his Beothuk great-great grandmother with the disclaimer, "Now I'm just going by what the older people was sayin.' I don't have a clue" (pers. comm., July 12, 2012). Similarly, although he is able to trace his ancestry back to specific, named Beothuk individuals on both sides of his family, Joe Offrey admits that the family has no documentation to prove the connection: "We haven't got documents. We know it. But knowing something and having documented proof is another thing. We know she's Native." (pers. comm., July 14, 2012).

While this lack of documentation functioned to foster reluctance on the part of many of the informants to speak publicly about their ancestry, others were less concerned about their

inability to prove their family history with written documentation. Viewing her connection to the Beothuk as highly personal and vital to the identity not only of herself but also her children, Lisa Brown is one of these people who, though acknowledging the lack of documented proof, is nonetheless forthright in defending her family's oral history. When asked how she learned of the identity of her Beothuk ancestor, Brown insists that it was passed down to her from her elders: "My dad told me. His dad told him. His dad told him. Like it's come down through the generations, right?" (pers. comm., July 12, 2012).

Unlike so many informants who emphasized their lack of documentation, for Brown, her family's oral history tradition is sufficient to assert her claim. Furthermore, she expresses her intention to continue that tradition within her own family: "I know who I am. I know where I come from. So what you think doesn't really bother me, right? But some people may think it's important. But I don't. I know. And my kids will know. And their kids will know" (pers. comm., July 12, 2012). Given her own family's oral history and that of other families in the region, Brown rejects the idea that the Beothuk are extinct: "I have the Beothuk blood, whether your opinion is they're extinct or not. I know different.... The government can't bring me a paper and say 'There's no Beothuk anywhere in this world.' Because they're standing right in front of one. That's me. [She smiles.]" (pers. comm., July 12, 2012).

Having voluntarily undergone DNA testing in 2008, Ardy Landry was unique among the informants in her ability to produce tangible evidence of Beothuk ancestry. Landry states that she never felt any need to prove her Beothuk connection. Through her family's oral history, she was aware that her great-great grandmother was Santu Toney, the woman interviewed by Frank Speck in Maine in 1911, who was the daughter of a Beothuk man from Newfoundland and a

Mi'kmaq woman from Nova Scotia.²¹⁹ Her desire to undertake the testing, Landry explains, arose from a conversation she had with Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq chiefs around the question of blood quantum with regards to her own children. It was only when the DNA results were returned to her eight weeks later, Landry recalls, that she discovered she was a match to Demasduit: "I punched my numbers right into the computer, and the first thing came up, it said, 'ancient DNA.' It's a site that has all the ancient DNA on it, from different tribes, and mine was a match to Demasduit" (pers. comm., July 22, 2012).

The match Landry is describing specifically involves HVR1, or the First Hypervariable Region, of her mitochondrial or mtDNA sample as compared to that of a mtDNA sample extracted from the tooth of Demasduit by a team of geneticists from McMaster University, Memorial University, and the University of Copenhagen in 2007 (Kuch et al., 2007).²²⁰ Though representing only a small percentage of an individual's DNA, mitochondrial DNA can provide more informative analysis than nuclear DNA due to its high copy number and high mutation rate, which ensures differentiation between populations (Brown & Brown, 1992). Furthermore, the fact that mtDNA is inherited maternally allows for the tracing of maternal lineages, which are characteristically obscured in cultures in which children inherit the surname of their father (Reed, 2001, 32).²²¹

Genetic relationships between living people and their potential ancestors are determined by comparing the number of mutations – expressed as single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) differences from the standard Cambridge Reference Sequence – that are common in samples of living and ancient mtDNA. In their analysis, Kuch et. al determined Demasduit's mtDNA to

²¹⁹ For a discussion of Speck's dealings with Santu Toney, see Chapter 4.

²²⁰ As Kuch et al. explain, with its enamel protecting the mtDNA in the dentin, a tooth represents a significantly less contaminated source of ancient human DNA than bone, which is more porous (2007, 601).

²²¹ As Reed concedes, paternal mtDNA is inherited to a significantly decreased extent: Gyllensten, Wharton, and Wilson (1985) accredit the percentage of paternal mtDNA to between one one thousandth to one one-hundredth of an individual's mtDNA.

contain four SNPs in the HVR1: 16223, 16298, 16325, and 16327 (2007, 601). Landry's mtDNA certificate, issued October 8, 2008, indicates identical SNPs in the HVR1: 16223, 16298, 16325, and 16327.²²²

The significance of Landry's match to Demasduit is that it confirms the two are related through the maternal line. Memorial University professor David Pike of the Newfoundland and Labrador mtDNA Project describes the match as an identical genetic signature on part of the genome that confirms such a relationship, without specifying the location of the common ancestor in the family tree. When asked exactly what the result of Landry's test meant in terms of that relationship, Pike summarized as follows:

It means that they share a common maternal ancestry. So it could be that Ardy has an ancestor who could be a sister of Demasduit. Or maybe descending from a cousin of Demasduit, the two of them having mothers who were sisters, or maybe the grandmothers were sisters, or the great grandmothers were sisters. But somehow there is a direct, unbroken, all female, common ancestor, along the female line. (pers. comm., July 25, 2012)

In addition to Landry, one other individual from a sample population of 155 people tested in the Newfoundland and Labrador mtDNA project proved an exact match to Demasduit in the HVR1 region. While this individual and Ardy were the only two from the sample population determined to belong to Haplogroup C, to which Demasduit also belongs, it is not known how many of the sample population have Native ancestry.²²³ As Pike points out, the match between Ardy and Demasduit is restricted to the HVR1 region of their mtDNA. In the absence of a

²²² Landry's mtDNA profile is detailed on her Certificate for Sample #127289, issued by Matthew E. Kaplan of FamilyTree DNA, October 8, 2008.

²²³ Reed defines a haplogroup as a sample of individuals grouped by mtDNA due to its variability of mutations within the mtDNA displacement loop or D loop. Based on these D loop mtDNA mutations, the "five founding mtDNA haplogroups" accounting for approximately 98% of all Native American mtDNA are A,B,C,D, and X (2001, 37-38).

complete mtDNA sequence from Demasduit and any individuals to whom she is compared, Pike concedes, it is impossible to determine with any precision how close or distant the relationship actually is (pers. comm., April 24, 2013).²²⁴ Given the fact that the inheritance of mtDNA is restricted to the maternal line, Pike adds, in the absence of a much larger population sample, it is also ineffective for determining common heritage among different Native groups.²²⁵

Given these limitations, there is no way of determining the proximity of Landry's relationship to Demasduit without much more comprehensive testing of the whole mtDNA sequence for them both. As such, Landry's mtDNA test result forms more of a starting point than a conclusion. What is perhaps most significant about her experience is the extent to which the result has confirmed her family's oral tradition regarding the Beothuk component of her ancestry, which was already known to them through her grandfather Joe Toney's mother, Santu Toney. As mtDNA is inherited only through the maternal line, what Landry's result established, albeit at a level currently impossible to determine, is that she has Beothuk ancestry on both sides of her family.

Like many Newfoundland Mi'kmaq informants interviewed, Landry was aware of Newfoundland's history of denial regarding the existence of its Native people. "Instead of outright admitting Beothuk Indians are still in existence, they'll do everything to disprove it. And that's another form of racism" (pers. comm., July 22, 2012). Landry's conclusion echoes many of the Native informants interviewed throughout Newfoundland, Labrador, and Nova

²²⁴ Notes Pike, "So it is possible that Demasduit's HVR1 and Coding Region mutations might harbour mutations that distinguish her matriline from that of Ardy and some other people. Alternatively, it might instead be the case that Demasduit is a perfect mtDNA match with one or both of the two members of haplogroup C that are in the Nfld & Labrador Project. But without fully testing all of their mtDNA we simply cannot tell. If they happened to be a perfect match on the whole of their mtDNA genome, that would favour a relationship that is more close than distant, in the sense that mutational differences suggest that sufficient time has elapsed to enable mutations to occur and accumulate" (pers. comm., April 24, 2013).

²²⁵ "Regarding issues of admixture, mtDNA is a poor tool to make judgements about them, at least on an individual basis. In contrast, a thorough survey of the mtDNA of a large group of people could prove useful" (D. Pike, pers. comm., April 24, 2013).

Scotia, whose observations parallel scholarship around the psychological underpinnings of the phenomenon of othering so prevalent in colonial writing.²²⁶ Both historically and in her own personal, contemporary context, Landry insists, exclusion arising from racism facilitates self-interest and greed, with the reinforcement of perceived difference enabling the non-Native to readily appropriate Native resources: “It’s about inclusion. There’s never been any inclusion in anything for our people unless it’s a gain for the non-Native. Then they’ll include us, if they can gain something from it. That’s the thing. It’s all about greed” (pers. comm., July 22, 2012).

Both Landry and her mother, Ivy Toney-Landry, were among the most animated informants on the question of racism towards Native people. When asked towards the end of our conversation if she had any questions for me, Ivy Toney-Landry replied, “Yes, I want to know why white people hate Indians. They hate them. Detest them. My god, no name for it” (pers. comm., July 22, 2012).²²⁷ Like her mother, Ardy Landry relates a long family history of racism that extends from her great-grandparents’ time to her experience with her own children in the public schools of Nova Scotia. Evoking Collingwood’s insistence on the primacy of imagination in the writing of history, at several points in the course of our conversation, Landry reiterated that the prejudice she and her family routinely experience was not something a non-Native person could hope to understand. Time and time again she insisted that I was incapable of appreciating the extent of their suffering because I had not experienced it myself. “See you’ve

²²⁶ For a discussion of the underpinnings of the phenomenon of othering in colonial writing, see Gilman (1985). Fear and anxiety characteristically underlie one’s constructed concept of the other. While we all rely on stereotypes that are both individually and culturally generated to preserve our illusion of control over the self and the world, the colonial context is often defined by what Gilman defines as “pathological stereotyping” – a distinct phenomenon characterized by a sense of fixity or intransigence in one’s perception of others: “The pathological personality’s mental representation of the world supports the need for the line of difference, whereas for the nonpathological individual the stereotype is a momentary coping mechanism, one that can be used and then discarded once anxiety is overcome” (1985, 19).

²²⁷ After considering Toney-Landry’s question, I began my response by stating, “Ivy, you asked, ‘Why do white people hate Indians?’ I don’t believe all white people hate Indians. But many do.” “Many,” Toney-Landry added, with a nod of her head. “Too many” (pers. comm., July 22, 2012).

never experienced it so you wouldn't know, but it's an awful thing" (pers. comm., July 22, 2012).

Informed by oral traditions passed down from elders within their communities and individual families, as well as by their own personal and familial experience, the perceptions of contemporary Native people in the Atlantic region bring a new perspective to our interpretation of Beothuk history. Though diverse in their origins, these perceptions share the commonality of challenging the European narrative's view of the Beothuk as a culturally and geographically isolated population doomed by virtue of their refusal to interact with others. This view they counter with a different narrative, one told from their distinct perspective as Native people. From this alternative perspective, they insist, the Beothuk experience must be seen as having been shaped by factors common to all the region's Native people, who continued to interact and survive in the face of a colonial expansion that threatened their very existence.

7.3 Osteoarchaeology and Craniology

When considered within the context of a Native perspective, research findings within the fields of osteoarcheology, craniology, and DNA analysis open up possibilities for analysis that extend beyond, and sometimes openly challenge, assumptions of the written historical narrative. In so doing, these developments illustrate the degree to which our understanding is shaped by the historical narrative, and how difficult it can be to open up a pre-existing narrative, with its definitive ending, to accommodate alternative interpretations.

On close analysis, recent publications concerning the Beothuk in the areas of osteoarchaeology and craniology appear to have their conclusions shaped as much by the historical narrative preceding them as the scientific research they describe. A case in point is a

detailed analysis of the skulls of Demasduit and her husband Nonosabasut published in the *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* (Black, Marshall, & Kitchener, 2009). Citing Magnusson and Palsson (1976) and Marshall (1996), the single paragraph “History of the Beothuk” at the beginning of the article references “records of alleged hostile interchanges with the Vikings” and a series of “hostilities and violent encounters” with the settler population that followed (2009, 659-60). In typical colonial fashion, the Beothuk are defined largely through negation in terms of what they lack. We learn that they were unique in the extent to which they “avoided contact with Europeans,” with whom they refused to interact: “They rejected European firearms, foodstuffs and clothing, and did not develop trade, as they pertinaciously adhered to their traditional way of life more rigorously than most other indigenous groups” (2009, 659). This introduction notwithstanding, the authors concede that “not all interactions between the Beothuk and Europeans were likely to have been antagonistic, and it is alleged that some resulted in offspring” (2009, 660).

Following this brief summary of historical narrative are detailed cranial analyses of the skulls of Demasduit and Nonosabasut, illustrated with extensive photographic documentation. The skulls are described as having been “collected” by Cormack and presented to his mentor Professor Robert Jameson at the University Museum in Edinburgh, where they remain to this day (2009, 661). While the authors cite the museum’s March 15, 1828 entry concerning Cormack’s donation, they fail to note that Cormack himself makes no mention in any of his many reports and publications of his having taken the skulls (Harries, 2010, 408).²²⁸

In their discussion of Nonosabasut’s craniology, the authors identify evidence of a serious trauma inflicted to the mandible. Due to the advanced stage of healing and repair, they

²²⁸ Of Cormack’s omission, Harries notes, “The odd thing is that, although he wrote a detailed account of his expedition, Cormack never reported the fact that he took the skulls.... Nevertheless, it is maybe a little queer that Cormack himself never described himself taking the skulls” (2010, 408).

determine the injury to have been sustained “some considerable time before death” (2009, 668). Details of a potentially fatal injury inflicted to Demasduit’s skull, however, prove to be more open to interpretation. The injury is described as “a perimortem fracture to the left side of the head, with the impact site occurring in the upper region of the left parietal bone” (2009, 671). Viewed in closeup, to the non-expert the injury could easily be confused with one of many standard cranial sutures present in all skulls (2009, 674, Fig. 18).

Some appreciation of the extent of the injury, as well as the force that inflicted it, however, comes with a comparison of the right (2009, 671, Fig. 14) and left (2009, 670, Fig.13) lateral views, the latter of which features the prominence of the injury in the skull’s profile (Fig. 7.1). Pointing out the fracture’s sharp edges and absence of any evidence of healing, the authors determine that it was caused by “a high-impact blunt force” that must have occurred either at the time of death or immediately following it (2009, 673). They note that as the injury is definitely not *post mortem*, it must have occurred “either relatively shortly before death” or,

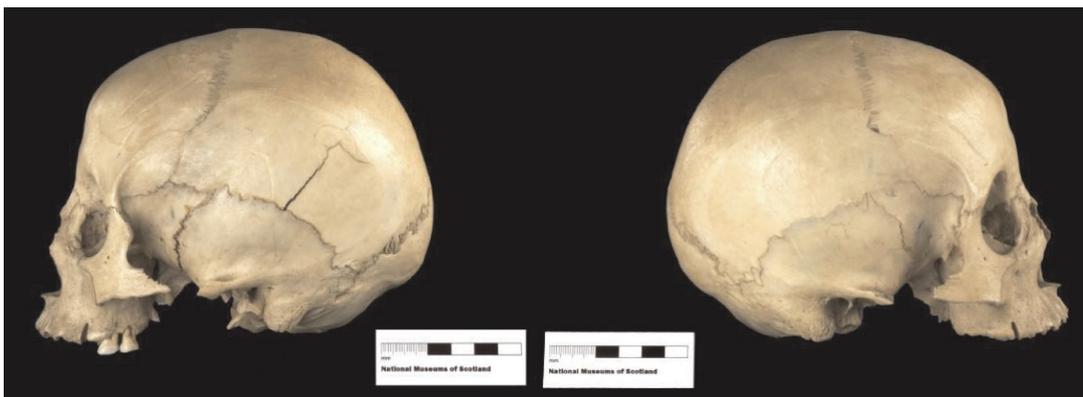


Fig. 7.1 Demasduit’s Skull Left (Showing Fissure) and Right Views (from Black et. al., 2009, 670 671).

alternatively, “in the relatively immediate period after death” (2009, 673).²²⁹

Faced with choosing between an impact that occurred at the time of death or following it, the authors adopt the latter. Their rationale for doing so is taken not from the findings of the

²²⁹ The authors cite Saukko and Knight (2004) in support of their conclusion that the injury “is most certainly not a *post mortem* artifact” (Black, Marshall, & Kitchener, 2009, 673).

craniological analysis itself, but rather from the context of the historical narrative within which the skulls, and the individuals to whom they belong, have been placed. In their discussion, the authors acknowledge the possibility of the trauma as representing evidence of homicide. Such a possibility, they conclude, however, is not in keeping with the historical record: “It is possible that the cranial trauma could be taken as evidence of homicide, resulting from a blow to the left side of her head, but given that she was allegedly highly regarded by her captors and their intention was to return her to her kin alive, this seems highly unlikely” (2009, 675).

The authors acknowledge that the historical narrative around Demasduit’s final days with Captain Buchan and John Peyton Jr. attributes her death to tuberculosis. While conceding that they “could find no evidence to confirm her reported cause of death,” they nonetheless present two alternative scenarios that are more in keeping with that interpretation (2009, 657).²³⁰ The first hypothesizes an injury to Demasduit’s head that may have gone unnoticed but still caused her death:

It is possible that in her weakened state she met with an accident whilst on board ship that caused a head injury, perhaps from a fall, which was sufficient to fracture her skull and could have resulted in her death within a few days, with little evidence of more than headache, lethargy, fever or general decline. Given that she was already in a weakened state, additional symptoms resulting from an injury may have gone unnoticed. (2009, 675)

How an injury of the magnitude of this cranial fracture could have gone unnoticed by either Demasduit or the people accompanying her is not explained. Equally problematic are the authors’ subsequent conjectures that there “may have been no obvious external manifestation of

²³⁰ With regards to the likelihood of the blow being the cause of death, Marshall notes, “Dr. Black said it was, could have caused her death or been part of the cause of her death, because of course she was very ill and would have died of TB anyway, but it could have hastened it, or it would have been shortly afterwards” (pers. comm., July 25, 2012).

this injury,” leading her companions to attribute her “ensuing confusion and decline to her prevailing medical condition” (2009, 675-76). This hypothesis would appear to contradict the authors’ previous assertion that fractures of this nature are survivable, “provided bleeding has been contained and infection prevented” (2009, 673): If Demasduit had indeed been accidentally injured with such a fatal blow, it is unlikely that there would be so little evidence of the injury that neither she nor anyone else would notice it.

The second alternative scenario presented in the authors’ conclusions hypothesizes that the injury was inflicted immediately following Demasduit’s death by careless handling of her corpse: “It is, however, equally possible that the fracture arose soon after death while her remains were moved carelessly either onboard ship or, perhaps more likely, during the arduous journey upriver and over the ice to Red Indian Lake” (2009, 676). Again the authors turn to the historical narrative to support their interpretation, citing “contemporary reports” describing a difficult inland journey over challenging terrain that resulted in the breaking of several sledges (2009, 676).

The author of these contemporary reports is Captain David Buchan, who, along with John Peyton Jr., was charged with the responsibility of returning Demasduit to her people (Buchan, 1820, in Howley, 1915, 121-126). When interviewed in person, Marshall confirmed that Buchan’s account had played into the article’s interpretation (pers. comm., July 25, 2012). The craniological analysis of Demasduit’s skull concludes with the acknowledgement that while the timing of the injury must have been “either shortly before her death or in a relatively short period following her death,” the cause of the injury cannot be reliably confirmed (2009, 676).

As a Native woman with a known family connection to the Beothuk and a keen interest in their history, Ardy Landry offers her own interpretation of the events surrounding Demasduit's death. Drawing on her personal experience, Landry's interpretation of the historical narrative illustrates narratology's concept of reader response discussed in Chapter 2, in which the reader interprets the narrative by filling in gaps, or textual inconsistencies, according to her or her own personal and cultural frames of reference. In so doing, Landry's response illustrates the extent to which the biased perspective of the reader, as well as that of the narrator, can interact with the text to inform his or her understanding of historical narrative.

As she herself acknowledges, central to Landry's perspective is a bias against white men in positions of authority, arising from discrimination she and other members of her family have experienced in their dealings with lawyers, judges, and police officers working within the legal system. As a result of this experience, she is skeptical about the version of Demasduit's story penned by Buchan: Landry points out that, like John Peyton Jr. – the man who captured Demasduit – Buchan was also a figure of authority, and that the two men were well acquainted with one another when they took their final journey with her.

Landry insists that contrary to what is stated in Buchan's official reports, it takes "no stretch of the imagination" to determine from Black, Marshall, and Kitchener's discussion that Demasduit died of a blow to the head (pers. comm., July 22, 2012). With regards to the historical context cited in the article, Landry takes issue with Marshall's understanding of the relationship between Demasduit and John Peyton Jr. Marshall acknowledges that this relationship has been "highly romanticized," due in part to Buchan's reporting "she ceased to respire with his name upon her lips" (1820, in Howley, 1915, 121). Yet, in Marshall's view,

Demasduit felt beholden to John Peyton Jr. for having spared her life, and she retained a fondness for him until the time of her death:

Now I personally believe that Demasduit felt beholden to Peyton because he had saved her life. He could have killed her, and in the normal run of things, that could have happened. So I think the relationship from her side – probably something that he didn't fully understand, and what I think historians haven't fully understood – was that she was, I call it, beholden to him. (I. Marshall, pers. comm., July 25, 2012)

In support of this theory Marshall cites Lloyd, who recorded that “Demasduit became fond of Peyton, Jr., and placed his snowshoes under her pillow; presumably he had heard this from Peyton” (Lloyd, 1876a, 228; Marshall, 1996, 540, n.22).

In rebuttal, Landry points out that Demasduit's treatment at the hands of Peyton included the murder of her husband and brother-in-law, her separation from her child, and her enforced captivity away from her people. That Demasduit was in a vulnerable position, Landry states, is evidenced in her inability to convince Peyton and Buchan to allow her to be reunited with her child.²³¹ Given her vulnerability while under Peyton's control, Landry insists, Demasduit's relationship with Peyton was likely to have been very different than that described by Marshall: “She didn't hang onto his coat tails, no. Love him right to death.... No, I think they had their fun with her. They weren't gonna take her home until she passed on. They had no intentions of taking her back anywhere. They were keepin' her” (pers. comm., July 22, 2012). The fact that Peyton was a married man, Landry argues, is likely to have played into his

²³¹ With regards to Demaduit's separation from her child, Buchan concedes, “She often would express to Mr. Peyton and myself that we should not find the Indians and said, ‘gun no good’ but would never hear of us going in without her, at the same time giving us to understand that she only wanted her child and that she would return with us” (1820, in Howley, 1915, 121).

decision to spend so much time with Demasduit away from home. “He kept her away so he could do his thing with her. Why wasn’t he home with his wife?” (pers. comm., July 22, 2012).

Absent from the written history of the Beothuk, she concedes, is any mention of sexual relations. “It was something that they just didn’t talk about. The British, of course. John Peyton Jr.” (pers. comm., July 22, 2012). And yet sexual relations, Landry argues, played a key role in how historical events unfolded, providing a very different motive for settlers’ attempts to make contact than those outlined in most historical accounts: “The truth is they didn’t capture these Beothuk Indians to befriend them. They just outright slaughtered them. It was the women that they used, and they had kids by them. And they had kids by others. That’s why all the DNA is out there floatin’ around” (pers. comm., July 22, 2012).²³² Landry’s comment takes on added significance in light of the observation by many historians, including Cadigan (2009), Handcock (1978) and Head (1976), that the early settler population in Newfoundland suffered from a gender imbalance.²³³

A Beothuk descendant who describes having experienced discrimination on the basis of her identity as a Native woman, Landry offers a unique and valuable perspective that draws attention to gender elements of the Beothuk story which, taken together, suggest a common colonial theme of sexual violence and exploitation. Objectifying descriptions of Native women, including those of Demasduit, Shanawdithit, and Conan’s bien-aimée –whom Conan describes as caressing him day and night – focus on the physical appearance and sexual attractiveness of these women to the European male chronicler (Conan, 1826, 74). While the male sources in Pulling’s narrative only hint at sexual encounter, Beothuk captives (including, but not limited to

²³² Landry is alluding here to the many attempts on behalf of Newfoundland’s colonial administration in the late 18th and early 19th centuries to make contact with the Beothuk before they disappeared.

²³³ With regard to the early 17th-century settler population in Newfoundland, Cadigan notes: “There were few female settlers, meaning that most single males had little opportunity to establish their own households or accumulate much property on their own” (2009, 46).

Shanawdithit, Demasduit, and the unnamed woman captured by William Cull in 1803) are women who find themselves isolated from their communities and kept alone in the presence of European men, often for extended periods of time (Pulling, 1792, in Marshall, 1989, 137; Howley, 1915, 91). In contrast to these women, perceived as “morose,” unattractive, and prematurely old, Shanawdithit’s mother holds no interest to the men in John Peyton’s employ, who dismiss her as “Old Smut” (Howley, 1915, 172; Peyton, 1987, 78-80).

As previously noted, the eroticization and feminization of the Native other, with the psychosexual anxiety underpinning such representation, are common characteristics of colonial discourse (Spurr, 1993; Boehmer, 1995). The predominance of these elements throughout the Beothuk narrative, along with interpretations such as that of Ardy Landry, suggest that further research and extended feminist and/or gender analysis beyond the scope of this dissertation is indeed warranted. From the perspective of historical narrative analysis, the value of Landry’s discussion lies in its illustration of reader response theory, in which readers’ personal experience and cultural framework influence their reading of a text in a way that can suggest further alternative possibilities for interpretation.

7.4 DNA Analysis

Like recent developments in osteoarchaeology and craniology, contemporary writing on the subject of DNA analysis provides another example of the extent to which researchers’ scientific findings can be interpreted within the context of the historical narrative in a way that reflects more about that narrative than it does the findings themselves. A case in point is “A Preliminary Analysis of the DNA and Diet of the Extinct Beothuk: A Systematic Approach to Ancient Human DNA,” a 2007 co-publication of ten authors from McMaster University, the

University of Copenhagen, Memorial University, and the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig, Germany (Kuch et al., 2007). As with the craniological analysis by Black, Marshall, and Kitchener, the article features a brief historical context which, citing Marshall (1996), emphasizes the Beothuk avoidance of Europeans and defines the former largely through negation: “They also did not develop trade relations, and rejected European firearms, foodstuff, and clothing” (2007, 594).

The analysis concerns two ancient mtDNA samples extracted from the teeth of Demasduit and Nonosabasut. Determining that both samples fall within haplogroups X and C, the authors determine that both individuals belong to Northeastern Native populations and do not, as Reed (2001) suggests, reflect an admixture of European-Native American descent. The presence of both haplogroups among the current Mi’kmaq population, they note, “suggests either gene flow between them and the Beothuk or a shared ancestral founder population or both” (2007, 602).

As with the previously discussed publication, again the authors interpret their findings within the framework of the historical narrative. Citing Marshall (1996), they note, “It has also been documented that in the early 1800s, when the Beothuk group began to disintegrate, some Beothuk joined the Mi’kmaq, either voluntarily or through kidnapping” (2007, 602). Without further testing of the current Newfoundland Mi’kmaq population, they conclude, “it is not possible to make a precise statement about common ancestry, possible gene flow, or both” (2007, 602). In the context of the Beothuk narrative, of particular note with this interpretation is the mention of kidnapping as a means by which Beothuk blood is hypothesized to have arrived in the Mi’kmaq population.

A more recent DNA study conducted by a group of geneticists at the University of Iceland detected the presence of a haplogroup C1 in mtDNA lineages of contemporary Icelanders, which they determine to have been present in the Icelandic mtDNA pool for at least 300 years, and likely centuries earlier (Ebenesersdottir et al., 2011). The finding, they suggest, raises "the intriguing possibility that the Icelandic C1 lineage could be traced to Viking voyages to the Americas that commenced in the 10th century" (2011, 144).

While Haplogroup C is indicative of North American ancestry, the rarity of the specific C1 mtDNA variation discussed in the study is determined not to belong to any known subgroup of C1 from either North America (C1b, C1c, C1d) or Asia (C1a), but rather constitutes a new subgroup, which they designate C1e. This apparent uniqueness of C1e leads the authors to propose additional research into a possible match through further testing of both the contemporary North American Native population as well as ancient mtDNA samples. Without this further research, the authors concede, the geographical origin of C1e will remain a "mystery." Their conclusion is as follows: "Until then, we propose that the most likely hypothesis is that the Icelandic voyages in the Eastern coastline of the Americas resulted in the migration of at least one Native American woman carrying the C1e lineage to Iceland around the year 1000" (2011, 98).

Through the comparison of ancient and contemporary DNA samples, geneticists are able to determine, with increasing degrees of accuracy, the relationship between people in an existing population and those who lived in the past. Like all disciplines, genetics has its own limitations, including the exorbitant cost of procedures and facilities, as well as the logistics involved in gaining access to a sufficient sample size willing to participate in DNA extraction and analysis. Within the context of the Beothuk, geneticists are further limited by their

dependence on history for the contextualization of their results. While genetics produces valuable new empirical data that could shed light on the relationship between contemporary and ancient populations, like recent developments in osteoarchaeology and craniology, analysis of that data continues to be shaped by assumptions within the existing historical narrative.

7.5 Conclusions

Encompassing a diversity of perspectives and academic disciplines, recent research concerning the Beothuk illustrates how our understanding of historical narrative can be enhanced by an approach that is truly polyvocal and interdisciplinary. Accounts from French sources relate a number of events absent from the English narrative, including sightings of the Beothuk after 1829, when they were generally considered to be extinct. Among these sources, Jean Conan's epic autobiographical poem stands out as an example of how an individual homodiegetic narrator's experience can challenge common historical assumptions, but also how that narrator's perspective can be influenced and change, in a positive way, through interaction with the subject.

In a similar way, accounts from the oral history of Native people in the Atlantic region raise further interpretive possibilities. Passed down from elders within the immediate family and larger community, these accounts counter the early European narrative by emphasizing Beothuk agency and interaction with other peoples. As a group, they challenge the idea of the Beothuk as isolated victims of British colonial expansion in Newfoundland, and refute the extinction theory with an alternative interpretation that emphasizes the Beothuk's ability to leave the island as historical circumstances dictated and integrate among other Native groups in Labrador and mainland Atlantic Canada.

Unique among these accounts is the more contemporary, personal opinion expressed by Ardy Landry, a woman of Beothuk descent whose reading of the circumstances surrounding Demasduit's death raises further interpretive possibilities of a key historic event. In so doing, accounts like Landry's remind us how the ongoing, dynamic process of historical interpretation is informed by the personal and cultural bias of the reader as well as the narrator of history.

Our understanding of the Beothuk is further enhanced by recent findings in osteoarchaeology, craniology, genetics, and DNA analysis. Individually, these findings present analysis of specific, highly specialized empirical data relating to key historic events. Furthermore, in their reliance on written history, they illustrate how the historical narrative continues to influence our interpretation, even in cases where the data can be seen to contradict or oppose its primary assumptions. Considered collectively, and within the context of recent developments in history and archaeology, these findings demonstrate how an interdisciplinary approach to the Beothuk can work in concert with alternative cultural perspectives to give us an understanding of history that is more multidimensional and complex.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

Narrative, like language and culture itself, is a powerful force, one that influences us in ways of which we are often unaware, and which we do not always understand. Within a familiar linguistic and cultural context, it is easy to overlook the forces that shape our perception of reality. Of the narrative assumptions underpinning so much of how we structure our view of the world, we tend to be even less aware. At its worst, this unawareness can lead us to the critical error of assuming that reality and our perception of it are one and the same thing. The analysis of history as narrative reminds us that this is not the case.

As articulated by Aristotle, a narrative is generally expected to display a unity of form characterized by a clearly discernible beginning, middle, and end. Though they may disagree about the extent to which the narrative form mirrors or arises independently from life lived, philosophers and historians ultimately agree that in contrast to a hypothetical version of history that is objective and complete, what we have in historical narrative is a plurality of interpretations shaped by human beings with distinct perceptions and experiences that are both individual as well as cultural.

While sharing the colonial legacy of Native people worldwide, Newfoundland's Beothuk have been distinguished from other Native groups in the region by a narrative history that predicted their disappearance in the early 19th century and has, for the most part, served to reinforce it ever since.²³⁴ Written by Europeans, the early history of the Beothuk described them as having systematically avoided contact, not only with Europeans, but also, uniquely, with other

²³⁴ See Polack (2009, 2011) for the Beothuk in a global context. Polack draws a parallel between the Tasmanian Aboriginal woman Truganini and Shanawdithit, “who died in 1829 in St. John’s, became and, to a much larger extent, remains emblematic of the supposed disappearance of indigenous people from Newfoundland” (2009, 54). Polack describes the tension between Natives and settlers in Tasmania and Newfoundland as occurring “in two places synonymous with some of the worst excesses of the British imperial project” (2011, 333).

Native peoples as well. At the heart of this narrative have been a series of related assumptions about their mysterious origins, their isolation on the island of Newfoundland, their rejection of all outside influences, and their ultimate extinction with the death of Shanawdithit in 1829.

The concept of extinction, the idea of a people being denied a living legacy, has been a central and formative theme in the story of the Beothuk. Its reductive connotation in reference to a human population notwithstanding, this idea of extinction provides the Beothuk narrative with a resolution sufficiently ominous as to demand an explanation from anyone seriously contemplating the broader scope of human history. Undeniably, part of the enduring appeal of that narrative has been the definitiveness or finality of its tragic ending, around which so much of its interpretation has been organized.

Analyzed within a framework of narratology and the philosophy of history, many of the assumptions in early historical writing about the Beothuk begin to come apart. Reflecting a fundamental tension between Ranke's insistence on the telling of history as it actually happened versus Collingwood's emphasis on the role of the historian's imagination, discussions in the philosophy of history affirm the extent to which the history of the Beothuk has been shaped by narrative, with the limitations of its predetermined, linear, cause and effect structure, the pervasiveness of editing, selection, translation, and revision in its sources.

Central to discussions within the philosophy of history, the extent to which these processes are informed by bias is further explored within the domain of narratology. Articulating the underpinnings of story as a hermeneutic engagement between the writer and reader, narratology provides a platform for the analysis of bias in both arising from a myriad of personal, cultural, socio-political, and historical variables.

Viewed within the framework of narratology, the narrative of the Beothuk, like any historical narrative, is characterized by intratextual and intertextual gaps which the reader fills in to create meaning. Particularly relevant are the gaps evoked by unreliability on the part of narrators. Be they the homodiegetic narrators of primary sources acting within the dramatic arc of the story, or heterodiegetic narrators reinterpreting events from a greater temporal remove, their unreliability can be intentional within the narrative – arising from any number of motivating factors on the part of the author – or incidental to it. In either case, unreliable narration creates a perceptual gap, or discrepancy, between a narrator's account of events and the reader's frames of reference, which do not necessarily agree with that account. Faced with this inconsistency, the reader of history is drawn into the interpretive act and actively participates in the construction of meaning. With respect to the Beothuk narrative, this phenomenon is illustrated by individual readers who draw on their own personal and cultural frames in their interpretation of key historic events, as well as by the narrators of history whose inconsistencies function, for the most part unintentionally, to draw readers into that act of interpretation.

For a reader thus engaged in the interpretation of history as a hermeneutic undertaking, early European writing about Native people in Newfoundland comes to reveal as much about the narrators themselves as their subjects. Accounts foregrounding the primitiveness and bestiality of Native people, the peculiarity of their physical appearance, language, and cultural traits, their indolence and itinerancy, and their propensity for theft and violent conflict, reveal a conspicuous pattern of European thematic concerns often projected onto the Indigenous other, regardless of variations in the historical, geographic, or individual circumstances of the subjects being described.

Many of these themes appear in Howley's seminal *The Beothucks or Red Indians: the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Newfoundland*. Informed by a characteristically British colonial sensibility, Howley's work is heavily reliant on testimony from members of the Peyton family, whose primarily homodiegetic narration is shaped by their history of competition and violent conflict with the Beothuk. As such, Howley's highly influential text illustrates the extent to which historical narrative, even when based on sources of questionable reliability, can direct subsequent research and interpretation. Howley's work is further significant in the extent to which he openly edits, comments upon, and even contradicts certain sources, which functions to draw attention to his role as narrator in shaping the historical text.

An antidote to Howley's work appears in Speck's *Beothuc and Micmac: Indian Notes and Monographs*, which turns to Native oral history for much of its source material.

Documenting a number of cultural links between the Beothuk and the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq, Speck's work challenges many of the prevailing assumptions about the Beothuk, including theories about their cultural xenophobia and isolation on the island of Newfoundland. Reflecting a personal perspective that privileges Native oral history and culture, Speck's cumulative body of writing, when compared to that of Howley, ultimately illustrates the complexity of narratorial bias and its basis in a myriad of cultural and personal circumstances.

The schism in Beothuk interpretation arising from Howley and Speck plays out in much of the archaeological narrative to follow in the 20th and 21st centuries. With early work in the field drawing heavily on the historical narrative for its focus and interpretation, subsequent research begins to explore fundamental assumptions about the Beothuk in a new way. A significant feature of this archaeological research is its interdisciplinarity, as it is reinforced by concepts appearing in more contemporary historical writing, with many scholars working across

both disciplines. Focusing on their survival rather than their extinction, research in food storage, iron technology, paleoethnobotany, and their interaction with Europeans and other Native groups emphasizes the agency of the Beothuk and their remarkable ability to adapt and survive for centuries in the challenging physical environment that is Newfoundland.

This question of survival is key to the story of Newfoundland's Mi'kmaq, whose oral history likewise challenges many of our historical assumptions about the Mi'kmaq people, their origins, and their role in what they perceive as the ostensible disappearance of the Beothuk. As a parallel narrative, the history of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq illustrates how the writing of Europeans can objectify Native people and shape our perception of them to the point of questioning their very existence. As a counter narrative, the Mi'kmaq story offers a different interpretation of Beothuk history. Taking issue with the Mi'kmaq mercenary myth which prevailed in the province for so long, the Mi'kmaq of Newfoundland's south and west coasts tell a different story of their relationship to the island and its people. Harkening back to the work of Speck, the Mi'kmaq story emphasizes their longstanding affiliation with Newfoundland and their relationship with the Beothuk, a relationship they interpret as far more complex and enduring than the historical narrative would lead us to believe. Central to the Mi'kmaq story is their vital attachment to the land, their emerging sense of identity and pride in their place as Native people in the province, and a rejection of the concept of Beothuk extinction. Drawing on their success in political organization, community mobilization, and cultural and socio-economic development, the Mi'kmaq of Newfoundland advocate partnership and collaboration towards a new understanding of history that includes their own perspective along with that of others.

In this spirit of comprehensiveness, inclusion, and polyvocality, a number of more recent research developments have been considered here as fragments within the Beothuk narrative.

While their individual significance may appear limited, taken together, French accounts from the early 17th century to the 20th century provide new insight into some of the historical narrative's fundamental assumptions concerning the Beothuk, particularly regarding their disappearance after 1829, and their interaction with other peoples, both Native and European. Oral history from Labrador Innu further challenges the idea of Beothuk isolation, insisting on a long history of interaction between Native peoples in the region. The idea of Beothuk reintegration in Newfoundland from Labrador finds support in oral testimony of Native people in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula who include Beothuk individuals among their ancestors. Shaped by their own bias arising from a number of factors including their personal and collective experience in a society increasingly defined by European values, oral accounts by Native people in the region provide the Beothuk narrative with a valuable alternative perspective, both as narrators and readers of history.

As McHalsie points out, in the pursuit of our own research agenda, scholars can run the risk of missing important connections offered by oral tradition, connections that can provide context for our understanding (McHalsie, 2007, 108-109). McHalsie's point was borne out time and time again in my own experience of oral history research with Native people in the Atlantic region. The specific objective of my research, as stated explicitly in the list of questions submitted for ethics review at both the band and university levels, was to determine the participants' understanding of Beothuk history. As is standard in Indigenous research methodology, within the ethics review process, I had also pledged to conduct my research in a manner that would openly acknowledge the risks involved and minimize any harm to the Native participants.

While I began the interviews with specific questions around the particular issue of Beothuk history, invariably the informants' responses would range through a series of topics which, at first glance, would not appear to be directly related to the question: their personal experiences, both positive and negative, of growing up Native in Newfoundland and Labrador; their attachment to and use of the land as a means of survival; the loss of the traditional way of life within their lifetime, and the tremendous cost of that loss to their communities; historical and contemporary incidents of racism experienced by themselves and members of their immediate and extended families. As Cruikshank (1998) and Rios and Sands (2000) point out, such an experience is common in oral history research, and I came to realize that researchers can learn much if we are respectful and willing to listen to an account which, at first glance, might appear to represent a digression.

In listening to their responses, I became aware that perhaps what was more valuable than the answer to any particular question I had come to ask was the participants' expression of their perspective on Beothuk history. Notwithstanding variations in interpretation between specific individuals and communities, over time I came to appreciate the extent to which, as Wicken notes, "aboriginal people formed an understanding of events that differed from the understanding of others because of the particular circumstances in which colonization affected them" (2012, 3). Echoing Martijn (1990), in response to my question as to why his people's perspective was so little known outside the Mi'kmaq community, Len Muisse remarked that in the century that had passed since Speck visited Newfoundland, no one had thought to ask (pers. comm., August 24, 2011).

Through my oral history research, it became apparent that, for Native people in Newfoundland and Labrador, a discussion of the Beothuk invariably evoked personal, familial,

and historical memories that, for some participants in particular, were painful to recall, and only emerged over time, once we had established a degree of mutual understanding and trust. In the course of that experience, I came to realize that what was most significant about the oral history research was not necessarily the factuality of the participants' claims, but rather the expression of their distinct epistemology and historical perspective – the *context* of their historical understanding – and that my role was not to challenge the legitimacy of that contribution, but rather, acknowledging its bias, to record it, that it might be considered in future research concerning the history of the Beothuk.

In so doing, within this dissertation I have attempted, as Johnson (2005) urges, not to subsume Native oral history into the existing historical narrative framework, but rather to approach it in a manner that acknowledges its ontological distinctiveness. The hope is that in complementing rather than replacing the non-Native perspective, the consideration of Native oral tradition will ultimately help to improve our historical understanding. As Calvin White summarizes, “There’ll be collusion, I think is the word, with regard to history. It will be your perspective and my perspective, but everything written from both our perspectives. And that’s when it’s going to change” (pers. comm., August 22, 2011).

The consideration of such diversity of perspective within the greater historical narrative can enhance our understanding of the Beothuk experience, particularly with regards to the focus and interpretation of more recent research developments. Seen within an inclusive and comprehensive historical framework, the persistent influence of the historical narrative’s key assumptions on research in such areas as osteoarchaeology, craniology, and DNA analysis becomes increasingly clear. While contributing new empirical data to our analysis of history, a

commonality of this diverse research is its reliance on the existing historical narrative for the interpretation of what are often challenging and even contradictory findings.

By elucidating the limitations of the historical narrative in all its forms, my hope is to encourage a more comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach to the Beothuk that allows for such findings to be interpreted in alternative, and perhaps more meaningful, ways. To do otherwise is to run the risk of overlooking a crucial perspective, detail, interpretation, or fragment of history that could prove vital to our understanding. As Schneider, Alcock, and Ings (2008) note, with regards to the necessity of integrating interdisciplinary knowledge from a diversity of sources, for Newfoundland there exists a powerful parallel in the story of the collapse of the Northern cod stocks: When a delegation of inshore fishermen went to Ottawa in 1984 to warn of the impending collapse, fisheries scientists and the federal officials they visited made the decisive error of ignoring what they had to say (86).

Weatherford (1998) concludes his comprehensive study of Native American contributions to the world with a reflection on his meeting with an elderly Yacqui woman shortly before her death. Looking back on her life, Weatherford laments the enormous cost of what the world has lost primarily in technological and scientific terms: the knowledge of potential sources of nutrition, cures for disease, methods for more successfully navigating and interacting with the environment. He also acknowledges the loss to humanity of a distinct epistemology, of the ability to perceive the world through the woman's unique cultural lens and express that perception in a language that is no longer spoken.

In the course of my interviews with Native people throughout Atlantic Canada, the question arose, time and time again, of what we had all lost in the narrative of the Beothuk. For many, what we had lost was the knowledge of a way of life of a people whose culture, though

unique, had numerous connections and parallels with their own. For others, we had lost a respect for the enormous complexity of that way of life, for the perseverance of a people who, they insisted, contrary to popular opinion, had never entirely disappeared from the face of the earth.

As Pastore (1998a) points out, our interpretation of the history of others can run the very real risk of causing pain to those people who are its subject. As contemporary First Nations political developments on both the provincial and national stage attest, Native people in Canada live a complex and often challenging reality, one that continues to be influenced by historical and contemporary forces, most of them beyond their control.

For over a millennium, the story of Newfoundland's Beothuk people has evolved in response to its narrators' search for meaning in what they have generally perceived to be a series of violent and ultimately tragic events. Shaped by my own research bias, the findings presented here are intended to open up that narrative in a way that acknowledges the perspective of all who are interested, invested, and in some cases, implicated in the history of the Beothuk. Through an interdisciplinary approach to Beothuk history, the goal of this dissertation is to draw attention to the limitations imposed by various aspects of its narrative structure, and to explore possibilities for a fuller, more comprehensive understanding that might, in the end, more accurately reflect the complexity of history as it may actually have unfolded, and as it continues to unfold today.

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APPENDIX I

Appendix I
Oral History Interview Questions

The Beothuk Story:

European and First Nations Narratives of the Beothuk People of Newfoundland

Part One: Personal Information

1. Could you please state your full name and address?

2. Where did you grow up?

3. To your knowledge, where does your family originate?

Part Two: General history - Beothuk

I'd like to ask you a few questions now about your view of Beothuk history as you feel it is generally understood by most people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

4. Through what sources were you first introduced to the generally accepted history of the Beothuk people (for example school textbooks, newspaper and magazine articles, documentary film, television)?
5. What are the main things you remember about that history?
6. Is there anything in particular that stands out for you about this version of Beothuk history?
7. Are there any aspects of this history that you agree with?
8. Are there any aspects of this history that you don't agree with?
9. What's your general impression of what you think most people in Newfoundland and Labrador understand about Beothuk history?

Part Three: Oral History

I'd like to now ask you a few questions about your knowledge of oral history concerning the Beothuk people of Newfoundland.

10. Can you describe in broad terms what you know of any oral history regarding the Beothuk people?
11. What is your source of this oral history (for example, family or community members)?
12. Does this oral history tell us anything about the origins of the Beothuk?
13. Does this oral history deal tell us anything about the ultimate fate of the Beothuk – what became of them as a people?
14. Does this history tell us anything about the relationship between the Mi'kmaq or Innu and the Beothuk people?
15. Does this oral history tell us anything else that you feel is important to share?
16. Is this oral history important to you personally? If so, why?
17. Do you feel this oral history is important to your community? If so,why?

Part Four: Comparison

At this point, I'd like to ask you a few questions about how you feel these two versions of Beothuk history compare with one another.

18. In what ways do you think the commonly accepted version of Beothuk history in Newfoundland and Labrador agrees with your oral history?
19. In what ways do you think the commonly accepted version of Beothuk history differs from your oral history?
20. Do you feel that either version of history has more validity than the other? If so, please explain why.
21. If you do perceive a difference between these two versions of history, is there anything you'd like to add with regards to that difference, or why you think it exists?

Conclusion

22. Is there anything else you'd like to add to what we've discussed?

Many thanks for participating in this research project. Your participation is much appreciated.

APPENDIX II

Information Sheet for Participants

The Beothuk Story: European and First Nations Narratives of the Beothuk People of Newfoundland

Project Description

The aim of this research project is to explore the Native perspective on Beothuk history through oral history interviews with people from Newfoundland's Mi'kmaq and Innu communities. I am interested in exploring why Native people in Newfoundland feel this history is important, and how they feel it ties into both their individual and collective sense of identity. Interviews will be videotaped with a view to the ultimate production of a documentary film presenting the Native perspective on Beothuk history; if preferable, participants may opt out of the videotaping and elect to have their interview recorded by audio for research purposes only. Research findings will be compiled and submitted to Miawpukek First Nation and the Innu Nation in text and digital form, and a DVD copy of the documentary film will be provided on completion. Oral history interviews will be collected in three stages: August 2011, January 2012, and May 2012.

Researcher

Christopher Aylward, PhD Candidate, Interdisciplinary Studies, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NL A1C 5S7

Tel. (709) 237-1169

email: caylward@ryerson.ca

Confidentiality and Privacy Issues

Should it be requested, every effort will be taken to protect the privacy of participants in this research project and to maintain confidentiality of information collected. Participants should be aware that this might be limited due to the nature of the research and size of the community. Completed interview tapes and transcripts and other research notes will be identified only by code, with names and contact details kept separately. All of these will be secured in a locked cabinet or in password protected computer files.

Use of Data

Data from this research may be used in publications by Christopher Aylward, in accordance with the confidentiality and privacy guidelines outlined above. Participants can decide whether the tapes, transcripts and other research materials should be deposited in the local archives, be retained by Christopher Aylward or - if the interviewee prefers - erased after transcription and destroyed upon research completion.

Agreement to Participate and Right to Withdraw

Participation in this research is purely voluntary. Participants may withdraw from participation in the project at any point during the research.

Further Information

Participants concerned about their involvement in the research may contact the following:
 Dr. Peter Pope: Archaeology Unit, Department of Anthropology, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NL A1C 5S7 Tel. (709) 864-8311 Email: ppope@mun.ca

Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's NL A1C 5S7 Tel.: (709)864-2861 Email: icehr@mun.ca

APPENDIX III

Consent Form

Title: The Beothuk Story: European and First Nations Narratives of the Beothuk People of Newfoundland

Researcher: Christopher Aylward, PhD candidate, Interdisciplinary Studies
 Memorial University of Newfoundland
 Tel.(709) 237-1169 email: caylward@ryerson.ca
 Research Supervisor: Dr. Peter Pope, Dept. of Archaeology
 Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NL A1C 5S7
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You are invited to take part in a research project entitled “The Beothuk Story: European and First Nations Narratives of the Beothuk People of Newfoundland.”

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you a basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any other information given to you by the researcher.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in the research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction:

To date, the history of Newfoundland's Beothuk people has been recorded primarily by European sources in the form of written accounts. While the importance of Native oral history to our understanding of the Beothuk was emphasized by Frank Speck, an American anthropologist who interviewed Mi'kmaq people on the topic in 1914, little has been done since that time to record the perspectives of Native people on Beothuk history.

Purpose of study:

The aim of this research project is to explore the Native perspective on Beothuk history through oral history interviews with people from Newfoundland and Labrador's Mi'kmaq and Innu communities.

What you will do in this study:

In this study, you will be interviewed about your oral history tradition concerning the Beothuk people of Newfoundland. You will also be asked questions around why Native people in Newfoundland feel this history is important, and how they feel it ties into both their individual and collective sense of identity.

Length of time:

You will be asked to participate in a single interview, which should take anywhere between 45 and 90 minutes to complete, depending on how much you want to say in response to the questions.

Possible benefits:

The main benefit of this research project is to provide participants with the opportunity to share their historical perspective on Beothuk history, one which many people feel has been largely overlooked. The main benefit to the Mi'kmaq and Innu communities is the collection and recording of Mi'kmaq and Innu perspectives on Beothuk history that may further our understanding about the relationship between these Native peoples.

Possible risks:

Given the subject matter, the risks inherent to this research project are minimal. One possible risk could be that participants could find their views to be in conflict with prevailing historical thinking about the Beothuk. I will discuss with participants in advance of the interview the possibility of this risk, and provide them with an opportunity, both within the interview and after the fact, to address this difference in historical interpretation.

Confidentiality:

In the event that participants wish for their contribution to be confidential, they will have the opportunity to have their interview audiotaped, and for their information to be used in the written analysis only.

Anonymity:

Participants who wish to remain anonymous will have their audiotaped interviews coded for identification, and their contribution will appear anonymously in the written analysis.

Recording of Data:

Unless the participant requests otherwise, interviews will be video taped, with a view to using some of the footage in a documentary film about Native perspectives on Beothuk history. Videotaped interviews will be logged and transcribed for use in the written analysis.

Reporting of Results:

The oral histories collected in this project will be cited in the researcher's written interdisciplinary doctoral dissertation using direct quotations and the participant's name, if the participant agrees. If the participant requests anonymity, pseudonyms will be created, and the participant's personal identifying information will not be used. At the conclusion of the dissertation process, and with the participants' approval, sections of the videotaped interviews may be used in a documentary film about Native perspectives on Beothuk history.

Storage of Data:

Completed interview tapes and transcripts and other research notes will be identified only by code, with names and contact details kept separately. Upon project completion, one copy of the tapes, transcripts and other research materials will be provided to the local archives, and another will be retained by Christopher Aylward unless directed otherwise. If interviewees prefer, they can opt for their interview material to be erased after transcription and destroyed.

Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact:

Researcher: Christopher Aylward, PhD candidate, Interdisciplinary Studies
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Tel.(709) 237-1169 email: caylward@ryerson.ca, **or**

Research Supervisor: Dr. Peter Pope, Dept. of Archaeology
Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NL A1C 5S7
Tel. (709) 864-8311 email: ppope@mun.ca

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about this research (such as the way you have been treated or your right as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 864-2861.

Consent:

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research
- You have been able to ask questions about this study
- You are satisfied with the answers to all of your questions
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights, and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form for your records.

Your signature:

I have read and understood the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project, understanding that I may withdraw my consent at any time. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

Signature of participant

Date

Researcher's signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

Signature of researcher

Date

Telephone Number: _____

e-mail: _____

APPENDIX IV

List of Interviews

Note: All interviews conducted in person, unless otherwise indicated.

Newfoundland:

Dorman Alexander, Flat Bay, NL, August 22, 2011

William Bartlett, St. Lunaire-Griquet, NL, July 13, 2012

Jordan Bennett, Corner Brook, NL, August 23, 2011

Lisa Brown, Flower's Cove, NL, July 12, 2012

Robert Burcher, St. Lunaire-Griquet, NL, July 14, 2012

Gary Bussey, St. Lunaire-Griquet, NL, July 14, 2012

Jerry Evans, St. John's, NL, July 25, 2012

Marlene Farrell, Flat Bay, NL, August 23, 2011

Scott Garnier, Stephenville, NL, August 23, 2011

Barry Gaulton, Ferryland, NL, May 24, 2012 & July 27, 2012

Nathaniel Gaulton, Savage Cove, NL, July 12, 2012

William Gilbert, Cupids, NL, July 27, 2012

Vaughan Grimes, St. John's, NL, July 25, 2012

John Jeddore Jr., Conne River, NL, August 20, 2011

John N. Jeddore, Conne River, NL, August 18, 2011

Mi'sel Joe, Conne River, NL, August 18, 2011

Noel Joe, Conne River, NL, August 19, 2011

Phyllis Long, Flat Bay, NL, August 23, 2011

Laurie MacLean, Burnside, NL, July 26, 2011

Ingeborg Marshall, St. Philip's, NL, February 8, 2005 (by telephone)

Ingeborg Marshall, St. Philip's, NL, July 25, 2012

Shayne MacDonald, Conne River, NL, August 19, 2011

Len Muisse, Stephenville, NL, August 24, 2011

Joe Offrey, Port au Choix, NL, July 14, 2012

Bert Parrill, Pine's Cove, NL, July 12, 2012

Dale Parrill, Pine's Cove, NL, July 12, 2012

Gerald Penney, St. John's, NL, July 25, 2012

David Pike, St. John's, NL, May 19, 2011 & July 25, 2012

Paul Pike, Stephenville, NL May 18, 2011 (by telephone)

Jill Quilty, Flat Bay, NL, August 22, 2011

Carolyn Sheppard, Flat Bay, NL, August 23, 2011

Jacqueline Snook, Flat Bay, NL, August 23, 2011

James Tuck, Ferryland, NL, July 27, 2012

Edwina Wetzel, Conne River, NL, August 19, 2011

Gerry Wetzel, Conne River, NL, August 19, 2011

Calvin White, Flat Bay, NL, August 21 & 22, 2011

Rosalind White, Sandy Cove, NL, July 12, 2012

Stanley T. White, Sandy Cove, NL, July 12, 2012

Labrador

Anthony Jenkinson, Sheshatshiu, NL, July 16, 2012

Joseph Mark, Northwest River, NL, July 19, 2012

Shirley Moorhouse, Happy Valley – Goose Bay, NL, July 21, 2011

Scott Neilsen, Northwest River, NL, July 20, 2012

Elizabeth Penashue, Sheshatshiu, NL, July 20, 2012

Francis Penashue, Sheshatshiu, NL, July 20, 2012

Lizette Penashue, Sheshatshiu, NL, July 18, 2012

Pien Penahsue, Sheshatshiu, NL, July 18, 2012

Sebastian Penunsi, Sheshatshiu, NL, July 18, 2012

Nova Scotia

Marlene Companion, Bedford, NS, July 24, 2012

Ardy Landry, Bear River, NS, July 22, 2012

Ivy Toney-Landry, Bear River, NS, July 22, 2012

Susan Thynne, Wellington, NS, July 24, 2012

Carl Trask, Bear River, NS, July 22, 2012

Ruth Holmes Whitehead, Halifax, NS, July 23, 2012

UK

John Harries, Edinburgh, UK, March 9, 2011 (by telephone)