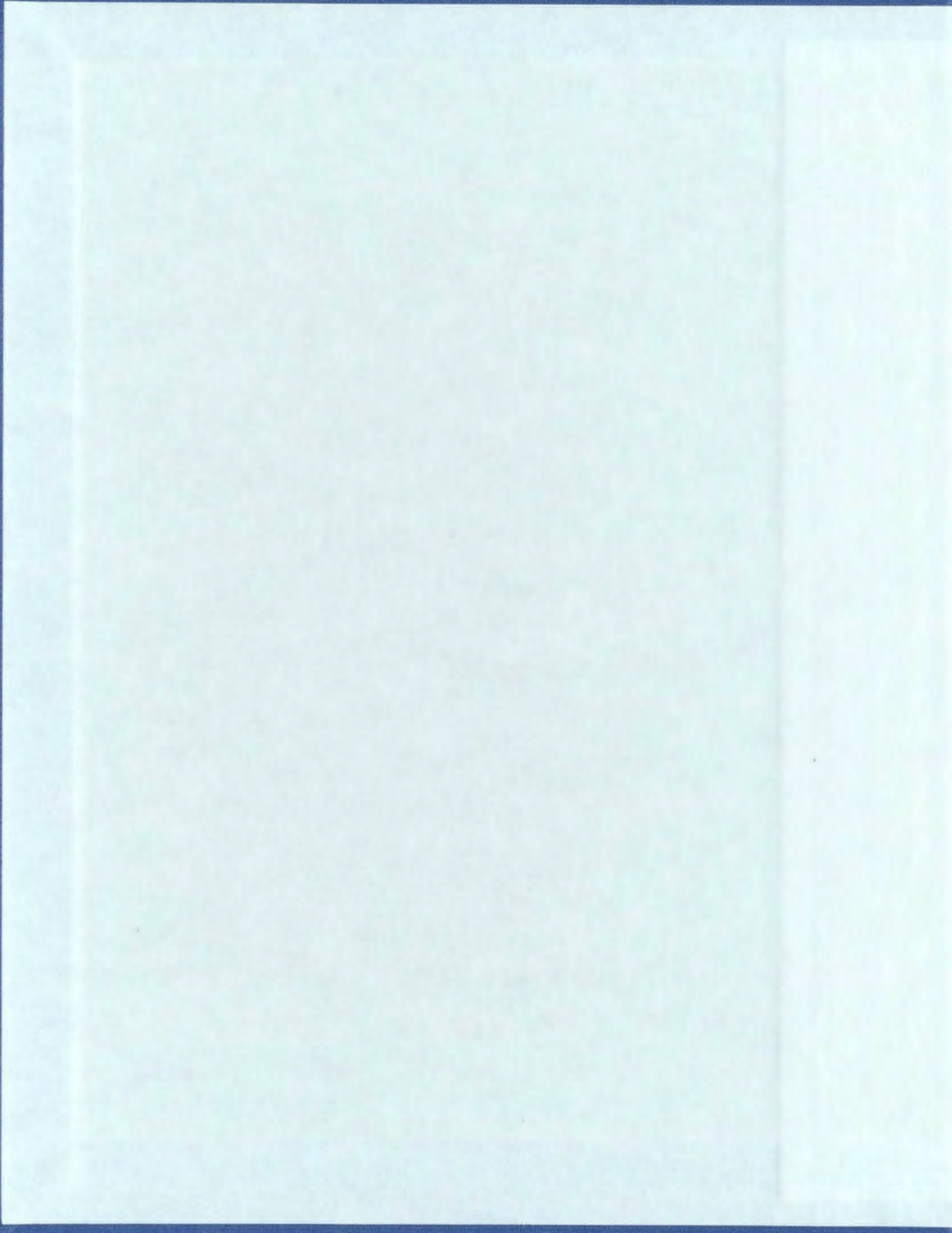


OCCUPATIONAL MEMORIES:
SELECTED NARRATIVES OF SEVEN RETIRED
NEWFOUNDLAND MEN

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Occupational Memories:
Selected Narratives of Seven Retired Newfoundland Men

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

Master of Arts

Folklore Department

Memorial University of Newfoundland

December, 2009

St. John's

Newfoundland

Abstract

This thesis is about the vernacular use of occupational narratives by selected older Newfoundland men to define masculinity and culture within their specific trades and perhaps by extension within the general population of older men who live on the island portion of Newfoundland. It begins with an introduction to selected academic and popular ideas about masculinity, how it is created, developed, maintained, and defined specifically by older male Newfoundlanders who have decided to continue to live in Newfoundland. To create a context for the research I have included a survey of Newfoundland occupational and cultural masculinity as seen in selected books. The men that I interviewed are introduced with some family background and work history followed by a discussion of my informants' performance of masculinity during the interviews, applying a performance-centred theoretical analysis and placing the findings on an "Identity Ordeal Cycle." Culturally-specific occupational-language was important to my research so a discussion is included of the term "good man" as used in Newfoundland by older Newfoundland men, specifically my informants within their occupationally past, as it pertains to masculinity and dependability within the older sea-based male-dominated trades of Newfoundland.

Acknowledgments

I seem to have misplaced myself.
Have you seen it? It's funny,
how you never miss things until
You really need them and today,
There was this moment when I
Really could have done with
The better part of me.

And there it wasn't.

It isn't big. And it isn't
All that small. It's hard to describe.
It was hand-knit by my mother.
You can see where the weave
Is fraying in the elbows
and knees. It is well worn.

Parts of me are polished from so much love.

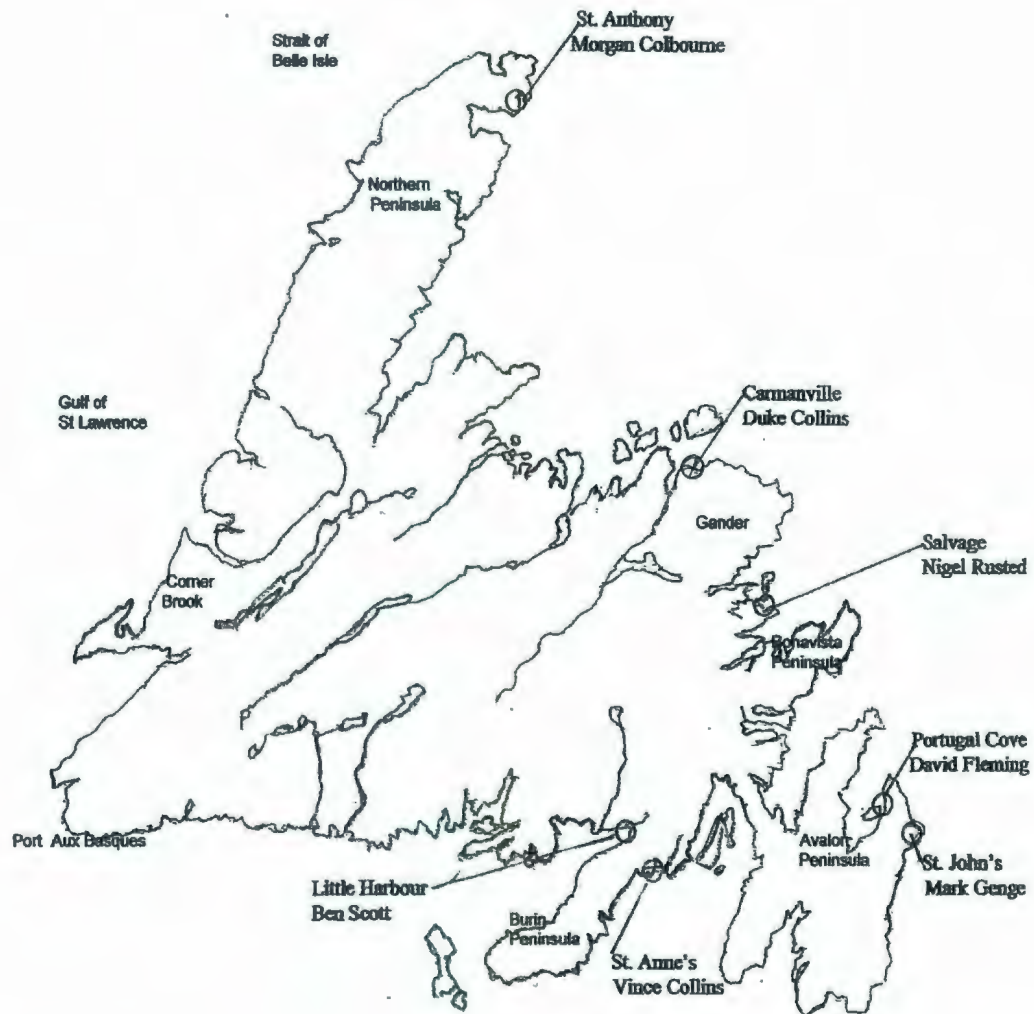
Patrick Carroll

If not for the support and guidance of Philip Hiscock and the continued bolstering, badgering and belief in me that I received from Jeanne Power, Sharon Cochrane, Cindy Turpin, Pat Carroll and my three children, Nate, Emily and Jessica, this thesis would have remained, when shredded, an excellent way to start a fire. This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father Vern Lundrigan, for showing me the calm strength of a quiet man, and to Skipper Ben Scott and David Fleming, who passed away during my research, for teaching me grace in difficult times. A special thanks to my informants Morgan Colbourne, Duke Collins, Vince Collins, and Nigel Rusted for sharing their memories and life stories when I asked the right questions and for chiding me when I asked the wrong ones.

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Newfoundland
(Map drawn by G. Lundrigan)



Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis is an investigation of the work-related memories of selected older male Newfoundlanders as it pertains to their culturally based male identity. It focuses on the occupational language used by selected informants to define themselves and their lives lived. It is based on the work-life stories of older Newfoundland men. It examines the working lives of these men as influenced by their home life in Newfoundland, their occupational lives away from Newfoundland, and the resultant concepts of identity that developed.

The research focuses on masculinity as an expression of ethnic identity by discussing the lives of the informants within vernacular Newfoundland culture. It describes how folklore about men in Newfoundland has been used to support a standard of male behaviour, how these particular men have interpreted that standard and how they have performed masculinity as an expression of their cultural identity. The thesis also explores how Newfoundland male identity is understood by the men in the study, how it is used within their social structures, such as occupations and outport communities, and how it is expressed by these men. The thesis also investigates, to the extent possible, how some Newfoundland men express male ethnic identity when they work and live in places other than Newfoundland.

In 2003 I had a conversation with John Widdowson who was in Newfoundland researching material stored in MUNFLA, Memorial University Folklore and Language Archive. He asked me what I was researching, and as a result of my answer he suggested that I read some of his earlier work on community and identity in Newfoundland. In his 1975 article "Folklore and Regional Identity" published in *Folklore Studies in the Twentieth Century* he stated:

We need to recognize the cultural role which traditions play in fostering a sense of identity, whether for the individual, within the family group, the community, the village, town, city or region, as well as in different social classes and age groups, and indeed nationally. (Widdowson 1975, 451)

Widdowson's logical, sequential connections from culture through tradition, identity, individual, family, community, village, city, region and finally to nationality helped me to understand the importance of the narratives of the men that I had talked to and how narrative defined my informants' self-concept. Widdowson was discussing the persistence of English regional identity in Newfoundland, the long-lasting nature of English cultural influences in Newfoundland, and his conclusions were informed by his extensive Newfoundland experiences. His statement and his conclusion are true for all the nationalities that settled in Newfoundland. The dialects and idioms that persist in the language of

Newfoundlanders today are largely derived from the languages and cultures of the Europeans who first came to fish in the waters around Newfoundland. The English, and Irish, the French, and others eventually settled in Newfoundland and because of the decades of isolation in outport communities those language roots are still a part of the cultural heritage of Newfoundland.

In 1991, Lorber and Farrell re-stated Widdowson's findings when they wrote, "identity, culture and gender are inextricably linked" (1991, 19). I was born in Newfoundland in 1948, before Confederation. I retired from teaching in Ontario and returned to and live in Newfoundland and attend Memorial University to fulfill a lifelong goal, a degree from my home-province university. Although I was raised in Ontario I consider myself a Newfoundlander. Ontario is not the culturally barren wasteland that many Newfoundlanders, many who have not lived on the mainland, think that it is. It is a culturally diverse province where many cultures have created communities that act as "cultural safe-houses" where they can continue to practice their language, religion and cultural cuisine unhindered.

I was raised in a enclave of Newfoundland families near the Thames River in London, Ontario. Lynd said that personal identity is not just "who one is" but it is a reflexive symbiotic relationship between an internal self concept and an external realization based on where one is and where one is from (Lynd 1961, 14-

15). Elliott Oring makes the connection between personal identity and a collective knowledge of cultural identity in "Arts, Artifacts and Artifices of Identity."

"Personal identity is shaped from experiences that are unique to the individual as well as from those common to a collection of individuals" (Oring 1994, 107).

Since the day I returned to live in Newfoundland in 2001, I have been questioned about my reasons for moving to (or back to) Newfoundland. I have always responded with the reply "I'm a Newfoundlander." As far back as I can remember I have thought of myself as a Newfoundlander. I was raised in Ontario in a small cultural-enclave community where I was one of many children in the neighbourhood who grew up with the feeling that we shared the same family. Most of the men and women, of middle age or more, in my neighbourhood served as stand-in aunts or uncles to every girl and boy. Although my neighbourhood was populated by many different cultural groups, they all shared the same convictions about raising children. They practiced a hands-on parenting style and they wanted to pass on their own specific culture to their children. My family had many family and friends who were also from Newfoundland. Although I was raised in Ontario I grew up hearing the same accents and the same stories as many other Newfoundland children who were raised in outport communities in Newfoundland.

My father and my mother both continued to think of themselves as Newfoundlanders even though they lived away from Newfoundland for more than half a century. My father died in 1989 and he is buried in London, Ontario where he chose the graveyard and the plot. Before he died he told me that the sound of water flowing relaxed him and reminded him of Newfoundland. The plot he chose is close enough to the Thames River that the sound of the river flowing by is a calming constant reminder for visitors of where he was from. He asked me to choose the headstone for his grave. He wanted it to look like the cliffs of Newfoundland. I chose a slate-gray stone porous enough that the colour deepens when it rains. The face of the stone is smooth but the edges are purposely left jagged. The outline of Newfoundland is etched deep into the face of the rock proudly portraying his heritage. His headstone stands amongst other headstones that are also marked to define the men buried there, headstones of other men who also want to be remembered by their connection to their culture. On the headstone to the left there is a thistle (Scotland), on the one to the right there is a menorah (Judaism). On the headstone in front there is a corn flower (Germany) and on the one behind a shamrock (Ireland). Each headstone denotes the culture of the occupant. The identifying markings are emphatic proof that not even death will destroy their cultural connection to their place of birth. In his article "Geography

and Folk Life,” Ronald Buchanan said, “According to Lesley White, culture is an outcome of the ability of human beings to communicate among themselves using symbols” (Buchanan 1963, 7). The cultural nature of the symbols that serve as the frontispiece to the headstones, surrounding and including my father’s, is proof that symbols can also be used to communicate between cultures as well as within cultures. Such carefully chosen cultural symbols forever carved into each man’s headstone is also proof that culture can last beyond the death of individuals.

Giovanna Del Negro and Harris Berger in *Identity and Everyday Life* stated, “The politics of everydayness in expressive culture is complex and highly reflexive,” and “the expressive culture of disenfranchised groups is characterized by ‘everyday’ performance spaces and an aesthetic based on relevance to a tradition or community” (Del Negro and Berger 2004, 17). The research materials and methods that I chose to use for this thesis are intentionally “everyday.” This thesis is reflexive and predicated on my own “everyday” memories. All sources have been chosen by me, all information has been collected by me and all informants have been selected by me. All that I have collected has been affected by my own remembrances of the older Newfoundland men from my past and influenced by the many stories I heard from them – stories that they felt best represented their lives and their masculinity – stories that they told and re-told

many times at family gatherings and other Newfoundland-related social functions.

Folklorists use the terms “emic” and “etic” to describe the interior and exterior descriptors used from within and from without respectively to define societal cultural actions and meanings. The words “emic” and “etic” were never used in the home I grew up in, but I was well acquainted with their concepts and their execution. The term “boundary maintenance mechanism” was also never used in the home or the neighbourhood where I grew up. I only learned these academic descriptors by attending university. As a result of my multi-cultural experiences growing up in Ontario, the actions and processes that both “emic” and “etic” and “boundary maintenance mechanism” describe have become part of my social self-awareness and social self-description and it follows that they will continue to be part my written (as well as oral) social self-descriptions in this thesis.

Ronald Rompkey recognized the lasting nature of emic social and cultural boundaries in Newfoundlander when he said, “Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province with both pre-Confederation and post-Confederation consciousness” (Rompkey 2006, x). When Rompkey refers to a consciousness he is referring to the longevity of memory within an orally literate society. Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949. For many older Newfoundlanders Newfoundland is a political, economic, and cultural reality separate from Canada and at the same time

Newfoundland is a provincial partner in the confederation of Canada. Both versions of Newfoundland exist in the everyday memory of many Newfoundlanders. I am one such Newfoundland who can think of himself as a Newfoundlander and as a Canadian from Newfoundland simultaneously. And I am also one such Newfoundland who has learned most of what he knows and believes that he knows about Newfoundland first-hand from such oral sources as stories, songs, pictures and other personal experiences.

Most of what I knew about Newfoundland before returning in 2001 I heard from my parents, aunts and uncles and other Newfoundland relatives and friends. For me Newfoundland consisted of stories told in thick accents by visiting relatives, an endless extended family who just showed up at the door with salt fish under one arm and Purity treats under the other. It was oral and aural, it was all story and song, spoken and heard. There are some noted Newfoundland writers who also see Newfoundland as an oral society. In *People of the Landwash*, George Story discussed Newfoundland as an orally literate society. In his 1957 essay "Dialects and the Standard Language" the introduction to the collection, Story details the many dialects that make up the oral use of language in Newfoundland (Story 1997, 19 - 23). Cultural memory is long in such societies. And, as common in most cultures, the past is often present in the narratives and literature of

Newfoundland. Rompkey explains the resilience of Newfoundland culture after confederation with Canada by saying that Newfoundlanders are members of “an imagined community reflected by its own people” (Rompkey 1997, x). The “*Downhomer*” magazine (now *Downhome*) is a testament to the visceral connections that Newfoundlanders have with their “island home.” The magazine contains pictures, stories, songs and poetry representative of Rompkey’s “imagined community” of the people of Newfoundland. The continued connection to Newfoundland by those who have moved away is declared by the magazine’s circulation department. Alicia Hanlon, *Downhome*’s circulation director claims that it has subscriptions on all continents except Antarctica and in thirty six countries (Personal conversation, Alicia Hanlon 13 08 09).

Oral narratives, such as those published in the *Downhome*, as well as the many other books, songs and television and radio programs, comprise a contemporary body of work of the Newfoundland people’s contemporary working history, a people’s progress. This oral history, what can be called “a worker’s history,” has often been documented by CBC radio and television by programs such as *Land and Sea*, and others, and thanks to the efforts of Memorial University much of it has been archived in Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA).

Rompkey's "imagined community" (and parallel "imagined past") can be seen throughout the popular culture in Newfoundland. Current musical groups such as Great Big Sea (*Great Big Sea*, 1993) and Buddy Wassisname and the Other Fellers (*Makin' for the Harbour*, 1993) and others have followed the path of earlier performers such Omar Blondahl, aka Sagebrush Sam (*The Saga of Newfoundland in Song*, 1960), Harry Hibbs (*Harry Hibbs At the Caribou Club*, 1969) and Dick Nolan (*Newfoundland: That's What You Mean to Me*, 1993) as they retold the oral histories of Newfoundlanders by recording traditional ballads and songs of Newfoundland.

Artistic expressions of history are a part of the daily working memory of many older Newfoundlanders and as a result they form a major part of the cultural perceptions that many older men have of themselves as Newfoundlanders. The contentious history of Newfoundland is a common theme in many identity-based, social-commentary, fiction-as-fact books recently written by Newfoundlanders about Newfoundland such as: *Gaff Topsails* by Patrick Kavanagh, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* by Wayne Johnston and others. Newfoundland history is also a subject of interest in other more scholarly writings such as: *As Near to Heaven by Sea* by Kevin Major, *A History of Newfoundland* by D. W. Prowse, *A Place to Belong* by Gerald Pocius, *The Oldest City* by Paul O'Neill, *Newfoundland* by

Harold Horwood, and *People of the Landwash* by George Story, and others.

The cultural and political status of Newfoundland and therefore Newfoundlanders is also well represented in the poetry and stories of the province including Des Walsh, Al Pittman, Percy Janes and Uncle Mose (Ted Russell) and others. There is a wealth of social commentary and vernacular dialogue in the live performances and the recorded works of musicians such as Ron Hynes (*Cryer's Paradise* 1993), Shanneyganock (*Live at O'Reilly's Vol.1* 2000) and others, and in the humour of Newfoundland comics such as Peter Soucy (Snook) and others. The cultural, political dialogue is also a common theme when humour and music are combined in the performances and recorded works of artists such as Buddy Wassisname and the Other Fellers as well as many others performers. These oral practitioners all professionally and publicly voice their membership in Rompkey's "imagined community." They join the chorus of writers, poets, storytellers and academics who believe that Newfoundlanders are a distinct people with a "rich cultural heritage" (Rompkey 2006, x).

The island of Newfoundland has limited resources and has habitually depended on the sea for its livelihood. As a result, the men of Newfoundland have had to work "away." For Newfoundlanders, "away" can mean on the water, down to the Labrador, in the Boston States or on the mainland. Newfoundland men have

historically left home to fish on the Grand Banks for food and livelihood, to cut wood on the Labrador for fuel or to build their ships or to work in the merchant marine that has for centuries moved products, from bananas to salt, for much needed revenue. Newfoundland men built Quonset huts on the DEW Line in the Canadian Arctic (personal conversation Rudolf Mercer 2003). Jim Rasenberger wrote about the Newfoundland men who built skyscrapers in New York his book *High Steel: The Daring Men Who Built The World's Greatest Skyline* and Mary Walsh characterized those same Newfoundland men in her play *High Steel*. Stories of men who worked and lived “away” are part of my family history (personal conversations: Dave Collins 2001, Don Collins 2003 and Captain Duke Collins, 2003) or in the navy during the wars (personal conversation Verdun Lundrigan 1980, and George-Will Collins, 1967). My interviews also contain accounts of Newfoundland men who sailed to “all ports” in the merchant marine (Duke Collins), the fishery (Ben Scott), the armed forces (Morgan Colbourne), the ministry (Bishop Genge), and the health services (Dr. Rusted).

This repeated and necessary absence from home has generated language to describe where the men are in terms that succinctly communicate where they are and why they are there. Terms such as “working away”, “on the Labrador”, and “working on the water” still punctuate the everyday speech of Newfoundland.

When young men were forced to leave their homes and families to find work they sometimes did not return. When men had to leave their families for long periods of time to work they often returned to Newfoundland only to collect their families and take them away with them.

Economic out-migration is a part of the history of Newfoundland and it is still a part of the ongoing dialogue of Newfoundland today. Writers such as J. D. House, Leslie Bella and Martina Seifert (and others) state that there are more people who identify themselves as Newfoundlanders living off the island than there are Newfoundlanders currently living in Newfoundland and Labrador today (Bella 2002, 1; House *et al* 1989, 1). Out-migration continues to deplete the island's population. "In the thirty years between 1959 and 1986 net out-migration from Newfoundland was 120,000, or nearly a quarter of the provinces population (House 1989, 6). Statistics Canada and the provincial government project a continued decline in the population of Newfoundland as a result of out-migration exacerbated by an ever dwindling birth rate. "A first in Canadian demographics was recorded earlier this year [2006] in Newfoundland and Labrador: the number of deaths exceeded the number of births" (CBC News, October 17, 2006). Out-migration will continue to be an ongoing element in the lives of the people of Newfoundland. Although out-migration is not a main theme of this thesis, it has

been, and continues to be, one of the main social engines responsible for the social and cultural composition of Newfoundlanders.

Out-migration is a part of my family history. It started when my grandfathers moved into St. John's from their outport homes in the first half of the twentieth century. It endured when my parents moved away from Newfoundland in 1951 taking their sons, including me, with them. And it persists as I live in Newfoundland while my children and grandchildren live in Ontario. It has a considerable impact on my personal history as it has on the personal histories of many other Newfoundlanders. Out-migration is a part of the everyday life of many Newfoundlanders. It will surely continue to have an impact on my life whether I remain in Newfoundland or return again to live in Ontario.

The reflexive nature of my interpretation of my research and of the analysis of my interviews is informed by my experiences as a Newfoundlander who was born in downtown St. John's, who has "lived away" in Ontario in Newfoundland off-island settlements, and who has "come back from away." The combination of these varied life experiences furnished me with a serviceable understanding of the "imagined community" of Newfoundlanders. My life experiences as a Newfoundlander awakened my interest in Newfoundland which in turn whetted my interest in the older men of Newfoundland and their occupational life stories.

Alan Dundes said, "the texture is the language" (Dundes 1964, 254).

Language is not only the vehicle of communication, it is in and of itself a communication of culture. Language is the texture of a culture in the same way that touch enhances vision and smell accentuates the presentation of food long before it is ever tasted. Culturally imbued phrases and idioms are among the textural elements of conversation that accompany national languages. Idioms, accents and kernel narrative expressions used in everyday conversation carry accentuated meaning and they are emic reflections of membership in a culturally distinct group.

My thesis research is based on the performance of language by seven older Newfoundland men during my introductory discussions with them and further during the series of interviews I carried out later. I had first recruited the help of my relatives and friends in Newfoundland to help me contact older men who might be interested in telling their work-related life stories. I chose the seven men I interviewed from the more than twenty men that I initially spoke to.

I started by asking my older relatives if they would agree to be part of my research. Most declined to be interviewed, but many of them knew somebody who would be interested in talking to me. I also began random conversations with older men that I met while I was out for walks. There are many older men in and about

St. John's who delight in "pass the time" conversations. Most of these chance meetings were unproductive because the men were not interested in organized conversation and discussion. They were simply interested in passing the day away with idle talk of the weather or local politics.

In consultation with my supervisor, Philip Hiscock, I widened the search in an attempt to get as diverse a sampling of older Newfoundland men as possible. I selected seven men ranging in age from Morgan Colbourne who was sixty at the time of the interviews to Dr. Nigel Rusted who was ninety-eight at the time of the interviews. I decided to interview each man at least three times. I recruited men from different occupations. My research is predicated on the idea that older Newfoundland men share a common cultural background, and as a result of that common cultural community, they also share a like-minded approach to their reflections about their past work-life, even though they had very different occupational experiences. My informants were all retired. Their occupations (and ages) at the time of the interviews are as follows: Canadian Armed Forces Special Services (Morgan Colbourne - sixty), merchant marine ice pilot (Captain Duke Collins - seventy-three), musician (Vince Collins - sixty-eight), incarcerated self-professed criminal (David Fleming - sixty-four), Anglican Bishop (Mark Genge - seventy-eight), Medical Doctor (Nigel Rusted - ninety-eight, and highliner fishing

captain (Ben Scott - eighty-nine).

I conducted a series of at least three taped interviews with each informant. I took pictures of each informant during the first and subsequent interviews and I also took pictures of any noteworthy artifacts that they spoke about. I likewise took pictures of any common everyday activities that the informants were involved in. After all the interviews were concluded I organized the recordings and made backup CDs of all interviews with a working copy of all interviews on my computer. I surveyed the recorded interviews and transcribed selected sections of each informant's interviews. I listened to the interviews multiple times taking note of any similarities and differences in family background, religion, birth place, hobbies, and occupational successes. The real work began as I started to analyse the recorded interviews in an attempt to apply a systematic approach to unpacking the stories of my informants work-lives.

My grandfathers were both born in outport communities of Newfoundland during the last years of the 19th century. My father's family was from Upper Island Cove and my mother's from Spaniard's Bay, both in Conception Bay. Like many outport men, they moved to St. John's when hand-lining and cod-trap fishing gave way to draggers and trawlers. St. John's had been the economic and social centre of Newfoundland for some time before my grandparents moved in the early 1920s.

Confederation with Canada in 1949 made it politically and economically easier for Newfoundlanders to move to mainland Canada. Confederation changed the world for many Newfoundlanders, just as it did for my family.

When my parents moved to mainland Canada, it was to London, Ontario. In January of 1951, when I was three years old we took the train across the island. I was told it was nicknamed "The Newfie Bullet" by the Americans because it didn't travel anywhere near the speed of a bullet. London was chosen because my mother's brother, Dave Collins, an electrician, was living there at the time. He was one of the many technically trained Newfoundlanders who had already been enticed into working and living on the mainland. Nonetheless, unlike his sisters, Dave Collins and his family returned to live in Newfoundland in 1958. He was one of many relatives in my family who returned to Newfoundland to "be buried in ground that remembers you," an expression I heard from many of my mother's family.

My mother's younger brother, Cliff Collins moved to London a few years later. Cliff Collins died in 2007. In his will he stated that his body was to be cremated and his ashes returned to Newfoundland. I attended when his ashes were added to the water of Third Pond in Spaniard's Bay. Dave Collins still lives in St.

John's.

When my parents first moved to London they moved into a small apartment in the basement of Dave Collins's house. After a few years they moved into a house a few blocks away. All my relatives lived within a short walk of each other. I grew up surrounded by Newfoundland uncles from Spaniard's Bay and Upper Island Cove and Newfoundland aunts from Garnish, Pouch Cove and Twillingate. Newfoundlanders, like many other immigrant cultures in a new country, lived together in sub-communities and many Newfoundlanders lived in the same area of London where we lived.

In the late 1950s my family moved into an area known as "Blackfriar's Village." It is in one of the older areas of London near where the river branches into two. It is known locally as "The Forks." The city was first settled where the river divided and it is where the city government and courts are still housed. Today's urban planners would never allow residential housing to be built there because it's a natural flood-plain for the river. The area was overlooked as the city expanded in the 1960s. When those who could afford new homes moved out of the downtown neighbourhoods to new sub-divisions on the outskirts of the city, the district was re-populated by a diverse cultural mixture. The village was populated

by a hodgepodge of economic, cultural and social backgrounds. Our neighbours were mostly first-generation and second-generation Canadians, working men and stay-at-home-mothers.

I was raised in a village within a city, a working example of John Porter's "Vertical Mosaic" in action (Porter 1965). It was a striation of many cultures co-existing within a residential space confined by both geographic and socio-economic factors, each culture separate and distinct and each culture aware of and respectful of the other. For many years I have been interested in the mechanisms that ethnic communities use to maintain their social boundaries, possibly as a result of my early multi-cultural exposure. A "boundary maintenance mechanism" is any process collectively used by a society to protect and fortify its values. It can be used to define the ways in which single societies maintain their cultural differences within a multicultural society. "Social friction layer," or buffer-zones, are constructed between most societies when those societies co-exist in close proximity. It is within that thin friction layer where distinct cultural differences are most easily seen and studied. I grew up within just such a friction layer of cultural intensity where my concept of who I was and where I came from was constantly fortified by Newfoundland accents, music and stories, and reinforced by parcels

regularly sent from Newfoundland containing the foods and smells of home.

I spent my early childhood in that culturally diverse community near downtown London and I knew as a result that I would not ever be comfortable in the white-bread world of any suburban secondary school. Instead, I attended H. B. Beal Technical and Commercial High School in the downtown core of the city. I spent my high school years there, happy amongst the sons and daughters of first-generation Portuguese, Italian, Polish and Irish immigrants. Although the accents in their homes were different from those in mine, there was a common understanding amongst us. We all had fathers and grandfathers who stood out physically and linguistically from the familiar social fabric of mainland Canada. There was much that we understood about each other even more that we didn't have to talk about. Their fathers also had calloused hands and they also smelled of hard work. They smoked pipes, drank beer, played bowls, threw darts, and when they laughed they all sounded the same.

One of the more notable aspects of living within such a cultural friction layer is that it created an enhanced sense of who one was, of who one's people were. The constant and often abrasive nature of the many culture contacts kept my feelings of otherness close to the surface. My parents and the parents of my

friends were always seen as immigrants. They were always outsiders in Canadian society as seen in London.

Not so for their sons and daughters. We – those children – often “passed” as insiders inside mainstream Ontario society if we wanted to and as long as we were careful. The real danger was assimilation: instinctively we knew that we didn’t want to lose our cultural differences. We didn’t want to blend in and become lost within the “shades of gray” of the Canadian culture. It would surely cause the loss of the visceral connection that bound us to our own cultures, which gave us a place to belong.

I knew the fathers and grandfathers of my Polish, Irish, Portuguese and Italian friends were significantly different from my other Canadian friends’ fathers and grandfathers. These men wore their culture on the outside – and they were proud of who they were. Thick accents flavoured by red wine and strong beer identified these men as “others,” not Canadian mainstream. These men were distinctive, and as a group they presented, to me, a teenager, as a unified, albeit different, version of what a man is supposed to be.

This realization aroused my interest in the men of my culture. I wanted to know if Newfoundland men were also distinctive and as a group unified in some

way. I wanted to know if Newfoundland men wore their culture on the outside or if they tucked their cultural masculinity inside, out of social view. I wanted to know why many of my European friend's fathers still had strong accents, especially in their homes. I wanted to know why some of my Newfoundland friend's fathers lost their accents when they were at their jobs or associating with "Canadians."

Cultural friction layers hold distinct cultures in place within Canada's striated "Vertical Mosaic" (Porter 1965). They also help to strengthen the distinct characteristics of the individual culture without causing undue damage to the homogeneous bond of the national culture. The accents, foods and stories of Newfoundland, common in my parents' home, accentuated the difference between my family and the families of my Canadian friends. It fortified the structure of my Newfoundland culture. These experiences combined to strengthen my interest in the working men from my culture.

In Ontario I was a displaced Newfoundlander and, after returning to Newfoundland in 2001, I remain a displaced Newfoundlander from Ontario. Although I continued to think of myself as a Newfoundlander wherever I lived, my cultural identity differed depending on the host society. My identity was a reflection of the ethnicity and culture by the host society where I was living at the

time. I felt like a cultural chameleon, but without any choice of my cultural “colour.” It was sometimes a source of humour, but more often it was the cause of discomfort.

In his essay “Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Folklore” Elliot Oring used humour to point out the social impact of situational identity when he re-told a joke about an old Romanian Jew who decided to return to Romania after living in Israel for over thirty years because he felt if he died in Israel he would die a Romanian, but if he died in Romania he would die a Jew (Oring 1986, 30). After returning to live in Newfoundland, my ambiguous cultural pedigree continues to hold me in the space designated for CBFAs Newfoundlanders who have “Come Back From Away.” I remain buttressed between Livyers and CFAs non-Newfoundlanders who have “Come From Away.” I stand firmly fixed as a CBFA in Newfoundland.

In the summer of 2001 I moved back from Ontario to St. John’s, Newfoundland to attend Memorial University. I had received a professional development leave of absence from my position as Head of the Arts at St. Marys District Collegiate and Vocational Institute (D.C.V.I.) in St. Marys, Ontario. It was the realization of one of my life-long educational goals, to have a degree from Memorial University. I moved to St. John’s late in July to give me time to find a

house to live in and to get my bearings. I leased a house in Georgetown. It was central to the city and close to where I was born. I spent many days walking the city to familiarize myself with the pathways and roads of the city where I was born, the same pathways where my father and grandfathers had walked.

On one warm summer day I needed to get out for a walk after trying to read books about oral history such as *The Voice of the Past* by Paul Thompson (Thompson 1978) and studies on masculinity and interpersonal and workplace cultures, relationships and negotiations such as *Male Myths and Icons: Masculinity in Popular Culture* by Horricks (Horricks 1995). I had been entertaining the idea that there may be a generic masculinity in Newfoundland, a Newfoundland hero. But my research to date informed me that there was no such single concept that could be easily found. Each time I researched a possible source for a common concept of a hero I was led, as Stephen Leacock said in *Gertrude the Governess*, “madly off in all directions” (Leacock c2005). I talked to John Murphy a retired host of CBC radio’s *Fisheries Broadcast*, about the many men that he had interviewed in the hopes that he would be able to steer me in the right direction. He responded, tongue in cheek, “You have to be serious to have heroes, and there’s no one serious around here” (Personal conversation John Murphy 2005) He

announced his observation in a mock well-rounded radio voice to give it added importance but his smile told me that it wasn't gospel. His shift into radio-speech reminded me of his years of experience in radio and the many Newfoundlanders that he had interviewed and the stories that he must know about the people of Newfoundland. It only convinced me all the more that there was a wealth of interesting material to be found out about the culture and character of older Newfoundland men if I could just meet them.

As I was walking along the harbour-front an older man, possibly in his eighties gave me a St. John's nod-and-wink. My father, as well as most of my uncles had been St. John's men so I knew what the nod-and-wink meant. It's often used by some older men in Newfoundland simply as a physical recognition from one man to another. It can also be more than a plain non-verbal hello. It's rarely used carelessly. When it's used to connote acceptance, the man who initiates the nod is acknowledging the other, by age and work-life status. It's usually a recognition of equal status. In other cases it can be used to invite men who are not usually a part of the socio-occupational group into a dialogue. It may be a comment on a choice in companions, if the man receiving the nod is walking with a man of dubious character or an attractive woman. It can be used as a serious

comment on the weather, or as a humorous comment on the activity of the day. It has many uses and meanings, each adapted to the social setting and the participants involved. It's part of the everyday street language of St. John's men.

The older man who nodded to me was sitting on a bench watching the movement of the ships in the harbour. I noticed him as I walked towards him because he was so intent on all that was happening on the water. He looked as though he knew the harbour well. He turned as soon as he became aware of my approach and he nodded at me. I instinctively stopped and introduced myself. He invited me to sit down. I sat beside him and we talked about weather, wind and water – common topics in Newfoundland. He asked me the usual questions about where I was from: "Where do you belong?" and where my parents were from. When he found out that my grandfather and my father had both worked at Harvey's Cold Storage, and that I had been born just up over the road on Barter's Hill, he opened up and told me about his work-life in St. John's. He had been a harbour pilot for most of his life. He started as a boy when the finger piers still divided the water from the wharf. He had helped moor everything from schooners to destroyers, and he worked the harbour until electronics and technology replaced him.

I was just out for a walk. I had nothing more on my mind, so I had neither a tape recorder nor a camera with me, and he was gone before I realized that his life-story was one of the reasons for my return to Newfoundland. He was the “everyman” of my thesis. The story of St. John’s harbour was the story of his life, the story of his life was representative of the story of Newfoundland. This was the first of many formative experiences that I had during the first year of my return to Newfoundland. I don’t know who he was and I couldn’t find him again even though I returned to the same spot many times during subsequent walks.

This happenstance meeting with one of the many interesting older men of Newfoundland rekindled my interest in male Newfoundland workplace cultural expression. Although I didn’t have the opportunity to interview my “lost informant” he is nevertheless one of the characters in this thesis because he showed me the “who” and “what” that was to be the backbone of my research.

Chapter Two: Common Themes of Newfoundland Culture in Popular Culture and Literature

Cultures that are close to the natural world, those that work in harmony with the land or the sea, commonly develop a symbiotic relationship with the uncontrollable environmental and atmospheric forces of the earth, a way to live with and rationalize the randomness of geological and atmospheric events. Belief structures such as religions, offer explanations for man's reliance on the natural world. Religions provide a "supreme being" and "Garden of Eden" creation-story to explain man's dependence on, and susceptibility to, the winds and waters of the world. Some religions, including those of many North American first nations, also attributed a spiritual consciousness to much of the natural world. Philosophers, such as Plato and Hegel, have presented many theories to try to explain man and the world where he lives. Hegel described the world as "a unity of the given and the constructed" (Laing 1969, 21). It just remains to decide which is "given" and which is "constructed."

Many beliefs date back countless centuries, so far back in man's history that it is no longer clear whether they are a "given" or whether they are another of man's social "constructions." Even in our modern enlightened world, beliefs are still constructed to explain random events. Today's cultures are disconnected from

the natural world by technologies, yet they still work out their own compromises with their cars or computers. It is common for many people to anthropomorphise the elements that they struggle with daily. The debate over the “given” and the “constructed” can be found in Newfoundland's oral and written literature.

The belief that there is a consciousness to the natural world can be found in many books written about Newfoundland including those books written by visitors. Farley Mowat in his book *The Boat Who Wouldn't Float* described why he poured a glass of scotch over the gunnel of his boat (Mowat 1969). W. Hodding Carter explained why he threw tobacco in the sea in his book, *A Viking Voyage: in which an unlikely crew attempts an epic journey to the new world* (Carter c2000). They are both modern men yet they chose to recognize the sea as a sentient creature, one that they had to communicate with. After spending a protracted period of time at sea, they chose to alter their modern technologically-filtered view of the natural world because their close proximity to the raw forces of nature forced them to form a relationship with the wind and water. So, like many who work on the sea without modern-world conveniences, they had to listen to the winds and the waves. Their new-found admiration for the ocean and its subsequent offerings to the sea are more in line with the behaviour of Odysseus on his ten-year journey home to Ithaka than it is to the behaviour of two 20th century writers.

The water sang to me, you know. Of course that sounds just crazy, but it's absolutely true. (Lundrigan 2003, 6)

Nicole Lundrigan opened her first novel, *Unraveling Arva*, about the difficult life of a Newfoundland "girl" with the above words. Nicole didn't write these words to be spoken aloud by Arva, the main character of her book. The conversation between the water and Arva exists as unarticulated feelings in the mind of Arva, more subconscious thoughts than conscious awareness. The omnipresent power of the sea resonates with many people from Newfoundland. In myth and legend the waters surrounding many island cultures have been imbued with magical powers. Water creatures such Scylla and Charybdis from Greek myths such as *The Odyssey*, the oral poem attributed to the poet Homer, are a part of literary tradition. Centuries later, Shakespeare used the magic of water in many of his plays, such as *The Tempest*, where Prospero, a sorcerer speaks to the water and the water obeys his commands.

Through Arva, the main character in her book, Nicole publically voiced her feelings about Newfoundland and she vicariously articulated the unspoken feelings of many other Newfoundlanders as well. In fiction, whether novel, play or song, a character can openly state as truth what another author must prove by reference and bibliography.

The book opens with a short soliloquy of private thoughts by Arva. Arva tells us that she feels the force of the water that surrounds her outport home in Upper Island Cove, Newfoundland. Water is a constant in Arva's daily life. The sounds of water are so strong that Arva perceives them as voices: "It told me how to move and I listened" (Lundrigan, 7). Only the reader can hear Arva's voice as she speaks secretly to all who choose to listen by reading the book. The reader can hear Arva in the same way that Arva can hear the voice of the sea, because they choose to listen.

Nicole Lundrigan created Arva as a fictional unsanctioned spokesperson for the feelings of many Newfoundlanders. Nicole was born in Upper Gullies, Newfoundland. She moved "away" to attend university in Ontario. She is one, of many Newfoundlanders, who still lives in Ontario after attending post-secondary education (Lundrigan 2003, back cover). Arva is a convention, a character created by the author to graft a connection between the author and the audience. Through Arva, Nicole can voice feelings about cultural and social displacement, fear about becoming culturally lost when she moves away from her outport home. Arva, and all such characters in the novels, songs, poems and stories about Newfoundland, whether in text or visual art forms, acts as a guide charged with the task of maintaining the readers, the listeners, or the viewers visceral and cultural

connection with Newfoundland.

The more public and often self-sanctioned voices of Newfoundland are the singers/songwriters who habitually voice the inner feelings that most of us are not brave enough to say out loud. As Arva suggests in her private thoughts there is often a sensory association between Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders. Leslie Bella, in her book *Newfoundlanders: Home and Away* points out that such emotional connections are consistent over time and persistent over distance (Bella 2002, 43). And as often as not, music is repeatedly the public vehicle used to contain over time and carry over distance such visceral connections that can best be defined as culturally significant awareness. The stories, songs and music of Newfoundland have been one of the main expression vehicles for Newfoundlander's emic view of themselves and their continued connection to their culture.

On *The Serious Stuff*, a CD by Buddy Wassisname and the other Fellers, the sights, sounds and smells of the ocean are apparent in the titles of songs such as, "Where the Mountain Meets the Bay," "Down by the Ocean" and "Salt Water Joys." These selections, as well as others on the disc, are filled with sensory triggers that evoke deep memories for Newfoundlanders. Music, like many other art forms, is a reciprocal medium. The listener initiates the dialogue with the art

form (whether it be music, poetry, literature or visual art) by making a conscious decision to participate, to look, to listen. The art form, intentionally constructed by the author, completes the dialogue by supplying the sought-after cascade of sensory triggers resulting in a memory episode that has a satisfactory cathartic consequence. The success of the many CDs still available by the trio is proof that there is a market for this artistic connection to Newfoundland.

Although Buddy Wasisname is primarily known to be a comic trio it is their "Serious Stuff" album that points out the reason for their success. Within well-crafted comedy there is great truth; as Stanislowski (Stanislowski 1963, 148) and others have said, comedy is simply the other side of tragedy. Comedy has successfully been used by many dramatists, such as Aristophanes (*The Clouds*, *Frogs* and others), Shakespeare (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, and others), Becket (*Waiting for Godot*, and others) and others, as a way to discuss man's feelings about their attempts to triumph over personal adversities. The continued success of groups such as Buddy Wasisname and the Other Fellers, and others, relies on the symbiotic emotional connection between tragedy and comedy and their success shows that there is much to say and many who are willing to listen.

The place names of Newfoundland are another proof of the impact water has

on life in Newfoundland. Names such as Upper Island Cove, Burnt Cove, Conception Harbour, Robert's Arm, Tickle Cove and Winter House Brook show the strong connection between Newfoundlanders and water. Water is also the topic of many songs about Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders, such as: A Great Big Sea Hove in Long Beach, I's the Bye That Builds the Boat, Jack was Every Inch a Sailor, and Wave Over Wave. Water, fluid or frozen, has been forefront in many of the books that I researched.

Within the many biographical and historical and fiction writings about growing up in Newfoundland, there are stories that highlight the connections that repeatedly resonate from generation to generation. Bertha Thorne touched on this when she attempted to define the importance of story-telling in Newfoundland. Thorne said telling stories about Newfoundland is "like skimming a stone over the surface of the water. You are merely dancing on the surface of the story" (Thorne 2003, px). Within her one poetic reference Thorne is able to juxtapose the two main materials that conventionally are said to compose Newfoundland, rock and water. Inherent in the seemingly simple statement is a reference to the life struggle that many Newfoundland men have faced. The men that I interviewed who worked on the North Atlantic recognized water as a major force in their work-life stories. They weren't as bold as to call the sea their mistress, but the sea played a major in

their occupational educations. Duke Collins and Ben Scott lived through life-threatening ship wrecks while working at sea, Bishop Genge and Nigel Rusted were storm-stayed during their years traveling to the outports, and Morgan Colbourne and David Fleming learned to walk the winter sea ice to hunt for sea birds and seals. Their personal-life work-histories were written as they learned to survive on the water. Lessons learned while working “on the job” are hard-learned. They have real and lasting consequences and they are not forgotten. Thorne’s simile is also apt because it reflects the chaotic and ever-improvised struggle that I have faced as I recorded the stories of my informants before their recollections faded into neglected nostalgia or before they were no longer here to help me form the outline of my thesis research.

The imagery used by Thorne is also appropriate because it is a common theme when Newfoundlanders write about Newfoundland. Water is an ever-present friend/enemy in the mind’s eye of many Newfoundlanders. No matter how far you travel away from the shore that divides the land from the ocean, you are never far from a pond or a river. Water is an ever-present theme in much of the literature that I surveyed, whether it be *The Log of Bob Bartlett*, “I have been shipwrecked twelve times.” (Bartlett 2006, 1), or *Human Beans* by Ron Pomphrey, “And don’t – do not – go down to the landwash, teasing Mother Ocean by throwin’

stones at it because the ocean is a livin' t'ing. And when you least expect it, she'll turn on ya and take you out and drown ya, especially if you keeps teasing her" (Pumphrey 2007, 170). Water will surely remain one of the main characters within many of the books and songs about Newfoundland.

Newfoundland biographies and memoirs are commonly filled with stories about how hard it all was just trying to get by working on or near the water. As Captain Abram Kean said in *Old and Young Ahead*, "I have found, without exception, that great men distinguish themselves, not so much by what they achieve, as by their ability to grapple with difficulties and overcome them" (Kean 2000, 57). Kean's book is about sealing and the men who "went to the ice" (a term used in Newfoundland for harvesting seals) and the book's title is a common call when seals are sighted. In Newfoundland, going to the ice was often a proving ground for young men. Bob Bartlett called sealing "a whiff of dank blubber and sharp bite of north wind sweeping out of Baffin Bay" (Bartlett 2000, 74). He stated that sealing wasn't about making any amount of money, "You'd think this would bring in a lot of money to the crew. ... But sometimes these fellows go out and suffer from March until June and come out with a net profit of \$15!" (Bartlett 2000, 76). He described sealing as "days of iron men and wooden ships" (Bartlett 2000, 78). He said, "sealing was a fine game; and still is. And there were fine men

in it and fine ships” (Bartlett 2000, 85). Kean and Bartlett talk about sealing as a hardening experience, a place where men can prove that they can take all that the North Atlantic can throw at them. It was surely an adventure, but it was also an opportunity to prove one’s worth to older men. It was one of few opportunities afforded to these young men, in their situation and in their time, to show their skills and willingness to work hard and to proof themselves worthy to older experienced men who might offer them employment opportunities in the future.

There are stories of such men in every outport and inland pond-side settlement. Stories about men who worked hard in a hard place, about men who were made by the very nature of the island, men who loved the hardiness and the rawness of Newfoundland. The title of Darrell Duke’s book *When We Worked Hard*, about the men of Tickle Cove, is an endorsement of hard work. Duke speaks with respect about the men of Tickle Cove and it is clear that he has great affection for the place and the people of Tickle Cove when he says, “Tickle Cove was never short of case-hardened handymen and heavy-duty sailors” (Duke 2007, 34). In his book Duke describes men in terms of the work that they do, especially fishing. Duke refers to men as “good fishermen” and one as “a good hand to split fish” (Duke 2007, 36). Duke’s use of these terms parallel my informants’ use of “good man” (discussed in chapter Six). Darrell Duke is a Newfoundland-born writer who,

like Gordon Pinsent and Nicole Lundrigan (and others) in their writing, has made comment about the mythical Newfoundland character, the outport handyman, when he said, "Jimmy Taylor, the man who could do it all" (Duke 2007, 42).

Alistair MacLeod in his historic fiction of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, *No Great Mischief*, speaks of similar men (MacLeod 1999). The men he wrote about were emigrants from Scotland who adopted Cape Breton as their new home in North America. There are many similarities between the men of Newfoundland and the men of Cape Breton. Now connected to mainland Nova Scotia by a causeway, Cape Breton is an island with unique histories and dialects that parallel the social and cultural development of Newfoundland. Although *No Great Mischief* is a fiction, many truths can be openly discussed through fiction. Through the character of one of the grandfather storytellers in his book, MacLeod expresses the same sentiments about the ancestors of the people of Cape Breton as do many of the writers of Newfoundland historical fictions. "He might not be the kind of man you'd invite to sing and dance and do imitations at your party, but he's a good man nonetheless" (MacLeod 1999, 92). Alexander MacDonald is the storyteller in *No Great Mischief*. He has a twin, a sister. Macleod gave each of the twins special abilities. To Alexander he gave intelligence and kindness and to his sister he gave emotions and truth. MacDonald's twin sister often says what he cannot.

Sometimes I am at Pearson airport between flights, and if I have time, I walk down to the departure gates for the East Coast flights. The gates always seem to be the furthest away and I cannot do it unless I have a lot of time. I have no real reason for going except that I want to be in the presence of those people. To listen to their accents and to share in their excitement. ... I am always moved by those middle-aged Newfoundlanders from Fort McMurray who tell their children that Newfoundland is a place to be proud of, while trying to justify their accents and the manner in which they speak. (MacLeod 1999, 194)

Maxwell Kennedy said in his book about Western Bay, "Forgive me, dear reader, for going off target. But, I love this place and cannot bear it to be slighted" (Kennedy 1995, 80). At first examination, Kennedy's comment seems to be just a simple proclamation of a man's deep feelings for the place of his birth. However, it masks deeper feelings of many unspoken insecurities about the status of Newfoundland within the confederation and its position amongst the other provinces of Canada.

Maxwell Kennedy's comments about his love for Newfoundland is often reflected in the actions and lives of the characters in many of the fiction-as-histories written about Newfoundland. To test their manhood the men in these books and many other books about Newfoundland men pit themselves against the thing that they know best – the island, the sea and the environment. Although

Newfoundland has changed as it has become more a producer of oil than of fish, many beliefs have remained the same. Beliefs about the negative impact of Newfoundland's entrance into the world of the offshore oil industry show up as themes in books such as *Hard Target* where some of Newfoundland's early settlement beliefs and political lore are reported as fact. Beahan has his main character, Bannister, read what appears to be an historically accurate article that details the belief of many Newfoundlanders that they became reluctant Canadian citizens by "an act of parliament, [because] Newfoundland had become the tenth province of Canada" (Beahan 1990, 27). In the face of such forced early settlement beliefs and opinions about lack of locus of control over political matters, Newfoundlanders seek the surety of the indestructibility of their God-given island home. In the opening pages of *Gaff Topsails*, Kavanagh expresses the feelings that many Newfoundlanders have about Newfoundland.

Time Passes.

God's rough pile of scrapes and leavings, cast away at the edge of nothing, abandoned beyond all horizons, suffers the gentle erosion of wind and tide. The mass of debris sorts and settles itself until it comes to adopt the softly rounded contours of a single territory – an island. (Kavanagh 1998, 22)

Newfoundland men like Gordon Pinsent (*By The Way*, 1992), Walter C. Carter (*Never a Dull Moment*, 1998), Ron Pumphrey (*Human Beans*, 2006) and

others have written accounts of their lives. Their books are not quite biographies and not quite fictions. Instead they are stream-of-consciousness collections of stories about their learning to become men within their respective societies. Each man in his own way devised a measure-stick by which he evaluated his past-life, his-work life, his play-life and his legacy. In all of the above books the authors discuss their individual tragic flaws and how they learned to overcome them or more commonly learned to live with them. Writing about the difficulties of learning how to become a man is not confined to Newfoundland men. There are other “island-born men” from other islands who have written similar books about their early lives growing up on islands. Sidney Poitier wrote *The Measure of a Man*, a book about his life growing up on his Cat Island, Bahamas home. Portier's early life experiences exploring the edges of his water-borne home and the attitudes he subsequently adopted about his island and the older men from his past and their cultural self-view parallel the ideas of Pinsent, Carter and Pumphrey. These men, and other writers like them learned to love their islands because of the isolation and cultural intensity that the water created.

As I discussed earlier in this chapter, for many people who have written about Newfoundland, there is a visceral link between Newfoundland the geographic reality and Newfoundland the “imagined community.” This is as true

for academic writers as it is for those who have written fictions. Gerald Pocius mirrors the sentiments of many of those who have written historical fictions about Newfoundland when in his final comments about Calvert, he discusses “space and place.” In *A Place to Belong*, a book about an outport community on the Southern Shore, the south east coast of the Avalon Peninsula, he said,

For finally, what explains Calvert’s – and much of Newfoundland’s – life is the sharing of space. Not just families sharing the space in their house, or relatives the space of their neighbourhood, but an entire community sharing the space that surround it, the resources of the land and water, are shared through a system that ensures knowledge of place and equity of product. (Pocius 1991, 298)

Such beliefs about sharing the natural world are true for older Newfoundland men who have written their autobiographies. They also feel a down-in-the gut connection to Newfoundland. Bob Bartlett clearly stated his feelings about Newfoundland and his work-life on the seas. In the closing chapter to his autobiography, *The Log of Bob Bartlett* he said, “If I had it all to do over again I should be a sailor just the same. There is nothing so satisfying as the sea. . . . The sheer joy of being alive and working hard is your reward” (Bartlett 2006, 307). Bartlett’s comment that, “The sheer joy of being alive and working hard is” the real “reward” of living is an attitude that my father and my uncles

often expressed and also an attitude common to many of the older men from Newfoundland that I have spoken to and interviewed during my research for this thesis.

I found a visceral link to Newfoundland in the life stories of the older men that I spoke to. For people from “away” their stories might sound more like fiction than fact. Stories about shipwrecks and hurricanes (Scott, Collins), night parachute jumps (Colbourne) and roller skating across Newfoundland (Genge) sound like the stuff of legend, nonetheless, my informants’ personal work-life stories are the connective tissue between the physical reality of the island, the part of Newfoundland that is composed of rocks and ponds, and the imagined part of Newfoundland, comprised of images and memories. Both parts are called Newfoundland, but to the geographer and the Newfoundlander the word has had different meanings. To the former, it’s an ancient rock island in the Atlantic. To the latter, it’s home. The reality is that Newfoundland is neither one in itself; it is the combination of the two.

At a kitchen party in St. John's, in 2002, hosted by an old family friend, Pat Martin, I met the Newfoundland geologist, Hank Williams. He is one of the men responsible for doing research on an ancient rock formation on the west coast of Newfoundland between Trout River and Woody Point in Gros Morne National

Park. Hank told me that his findings showed that the barren ultramafic rock, peridotite, that makes up the formation is part of the ocean mantle floor. He told me that his nickname is "the rock man" (Williams personal conversation 2002). He is both international geographer and "down home" Newfoundlander. At the kitchen party he was all Newfoundlander. He played banjo and mandolin and guitar and he switched from one to the next with comfortable ease as he sang and told jokes. He told stories along with all the other men at the table. He was as quick with a jibe or a joke as anyone attending. Harry Hibb's brother was among the men at the "time" but he sat quietly playing Harry's favourite accordion.

When I discovered who Hank was, I was interested in his life story. He was a natural performer and he delighted in the attention. We met a week or so later to talk about my research. I started my discussions with him in the same way as I did with all of the older men that I interviewed. As soon as the friendly introductory portion of the interview was over and he realized that I had started to interview him he was no longer the joke-telling musician, but instead he was the professional geologist. His posture changed, he sat up straight and his voice took on an air a professional man used to speaking in public and a man who was comfortable defending his opinions.

Nonetheless, throughout the interview he switched back and forth between

his jovial Newfoundland guise and his professional geologist role depending of the content and style of my questions. He only became both when I asked why he stayed in Newfoundland instead of accepting any of the many occupational advancement opportunities that he had been offered during his career. His professional geologist character and his outport Newfoundlander character merged and he then spoke about the inanimate rock that had been his life's work as though it was a living responsive consciousness, one that not only reflected his emotions, but one that defined who he was as a Newfoundlander.

In the introduction to his book *A Viking Voyage*, W. Hodding Carter opens with a warning to the reader in the form of an explanation for why he wrote the book. It reminded me of the life stories that I had collected from my informants. Before I undertook to meet and get to know the informants that I chose to interview I didn't realize that I would become so connected with their lives; I didn't realize that their lives, their life and work histories, would become such an important part of my life memories. Carter's quote reminded me of how much the lives and in some cases deaths of my informants impacted on my own life. So, for anyone who is entertaining research into life histories and life stories, Carter's words are an apt warning.

If ... you enjoy tales of quixotic idiocy, passion,

determination, frightening beauty, loss, enlightenment, failure and redemption, then read on. This is your story, and I lived to tell it. (W. H. Carter 2000, 3)

Hodding Carter's story about his voyage from Greenland to Newfoundland is the story of the men who have lived their work lives on the sea. His book interested me because in many ways it is representative of the life stories of any of my informants. Carter's book retells of the stories about Viking exploration and the first European discovery and first European occupation of Newfoundland by reenacting the events using a sail powered wooden replica of a Viking merchant ship. Whether the island was called Vinland by the Vikings or Newfoundland by the English, it became a place of mystery at the edge of the then known world. Historically, it was difficult to find and just as difficult to get to. For many people in Europe it became representative of the wilderness that was the New World. Newfoundland remains an isolated place today, even though it has been a part of the known world for centuries and a major port involved in merchant shipping and a strategic military asset during both world wars as well as the nuclear escalation between the US and the USSR known as the "Cold War." St. John's is self-named "The City of Legends" and Fogo Island is identified as one of the four corners of the world by those who profess to believe that the world is flat. Isolation and mystery are two of the many interesting geographic and social elements that have

contributed to the occupational and cultural lives of my informants.

I gained a deeper understanding of Newfoundland through the stories of my informants. I also discovered, as a result of my research of older Newfoundland men that, while collecting their stories, I also gained an increased understanding of myself and of my life as a Newfoundlander who has, like my informants, lived most of his life “away” from Newfoundland.

The random and obviously ramshackle background research discussed in the previous chapter grounded me and my ideas and supplied the needed background for the interviews with my informants. In the same way that an artist mats and sizes a canvas before foregrounding the themes to be highlighted, the haphazard research that I discussed in chapter two contributed to my, and I hope my reader's, cultural perspective and academic point of view.

Chapter Three: My Informants

The men in my study have diverse economic, educational and family backgrounds, and as a result have had equally disparate life-paths. In the final years of their lives they enjoyed, or suffered, different retirement outcomes. Some of my informants grew up in isolated communities. They grew up in communities on the coast of Newfoundland in a time when those communities were joined by water, but separated by the landmass of the island. Who they became is a direct result of who they were as children, what experiences they had as adolescents growing up in the coastal communities, and what options their parents and other family members modeled. Much of their growing-up can be attributed to who their parents were and who their grandparents were. There is no way to know them as children, nor is there a way to know children like them because of the changes that have taken place in the social and family life of the children in Newfoundland today.

My discussions of the older men that I interviewed do not intentionally exclude the equally important narratives of the older women who partnered them throughout their lives. However, the research is not a survey of older people of Newfoundland; it is a discussion of the work-lives and experiences of selected older men and how they chose to perform their cultural individuality within their selected occupations.

As I stated earlier, I narrowed my research to the concepts of manhood as explained by older Newfoundland men. To do otherwise would have broadened the research to a point where it would have been unmanageable. Any detailed discussion of all occupational experiences would have been an unrealistic task. Any discussions of the narratives of Newfoundland women, or the women in Newfoundland who worked together in the same occupational setting with their men was therefore outside my research parameters and best left to others. There is however one exception. My informants attributed much of what they became later in life to their family life, especially their experiences growing up under their parents' guidance. The social and familial conditions at the time my informants were being raised in Newfoundland created a work-based learning environment wherein they learned as much from their mothers as they did from their fathers about relationships in the home and in the work place. Their "knowledge schema" (Tannen 1993, 60) about family-life, about male and female relationships and about work-life was taught to them by their parents as the family worked as a unit to harvest their survival needs from their gardens, the woods and the sea. As Tannen said schemas are "structures of expectations" (Tannen 1993, 21) and they refer to "participants' expectations about people, objects, events and settings in the world" (Tannen 1993, 60). Rebekah J. Johnson in *A Multi-Layered Framework of*

Framing grouped schemas into four categories, “situational, functional, tonal and character” (Johnson 2008, 1). The home is the first and foremost “situational” frame for most children. Schemas are first learned at home and they last the lifetime of the learner.

My informants learned their nationalistic feelings about Newfoundland from their parents and other extended family and community members. The schemas that my informants learned from their parents (and others) often informed their occupational and social decisions in the future. The schemas became part of my informant's world-view and as such they became part of their decisions to stay in or to return to Newfoundland. Georgina Cooper, in her poem “The Deserted Island,” for which she won the O’Leary Poetry award in 1944, paints a childhood memory-word-picture of a delicately balanced equality between the work-lives of the men and women in pre-confederation Newfoundland.

“The Deserted Island” (verses one and four)

Here in the years that were
Men walked with fishing gear —
Men brown’d and bearded.
Sturdily grown, and fearless
As the great rocks which stand
The battling of tumultuous seas.
Calloused their hands, and cupped
From rowing long against contrary winds.

...

The busy wives – how sweet
They made those homes –
The gleaming lustre on the dresser hanging –
Soft to the tread the brightly coloured rugs
Spread o’er the well-scrubbed floors.
And restful beds of softest feathers
Plucked from the breasts of seabirds caught for food.
(Cooper 1979, 2)

Harry Cuff, in the biographical notes that preface the 1979 book about her life and poems said Cooper “was recalling an earlier resettlement project, one pursued by individual men who were seeking what they perceived as a better way of life and fewer hardships for their families.” From the tenor of her words it is clear that she saw the men of her time in a similar way as Gordon Pinsent did when he held up the older men from his youth as an example of the heroes who helped form his opinions of men (Pinsent 1992, 41-46). It is equally clear from the writings of other Newfoundlanders, such as Guy, Lynch, Johnston, Kavanagh, Major, Pinsent, and others, that the women in their lives (the mothers, aunts, sisters and wives) and as a result the women in their writing, played as important a role as did the men in determining who they became. Cuff also states that as a child, in Trinity Bay, Cooper was daily rowed from Random Head to Deer Harbour to attend school. As her words are read it is absolutely clear to the reader that she had many opportunities to watch older men’s “Calloused ... hands, and cupped

from rowing long against contrary winds” (Cooper 1979, 2). Cooper shows us the dusty corners of her opinions about the men and women from her formative years when she speaks the words of an adult through the eyes of a child.

R. D Laing hypothesized that it is in the family where an individual learns “what is taken to be not-me, or not-self” and also where an individual learns “that with which I identify myself (e.g., my family) onto what I take to be ‘me, or ‘self’, or that with which I identify myself” (Laing 1960, 46). In concluding his last lecture of the Massey Lectures series titled *The Politics of the Family* he said,

Our family of origin has done its best. It has given us its range of distinctions, options, identities, definitions, rules, repertoires of operation, instructions, attitudes, loci, scenarios, roles, parts to play... (Laing 1969, 47)

This concept of self-awareness of identity and culture is important to my discussion of the cultural self of the older Newfoundland men that I interviewed. It is important because it is the beginning point where these older Newfoundland men started their self-realization journey into the working-based world of Newfoundland masculinity. It is the point in their lives when Newfoundland normative socio-cultural behaviour became the prime source for the model that they would use to emulate their own versions of men. It is the biological metamorphosis that Robert Ezra Park defined as a process wherein an individual

achieves character and later becomes a person. As Park put it, "We come into the world as individuals, achieve character, and become persons" (Park 1950, 250). Park's statement maps out the path taken by my informants from their early life as children through to the later life as respected older Newfoundland men – culturally sentient members within their own specific occupational societies while still aware of their own individual identity.

The families of my informants are important because families are the origin of cultural self-concept. A boy first compares himself to his father and a girl to her mother. In many family situations children can further compare themselves to their grandparents as well. In many outport families, specifically those of most of my informants, grandparents lived near by. And in many cases grandparents were also models of occupational and social behaviour. Within my informants' families of origin there existed a list of the possible future selves they might become. The family is not just the biological beginning of the physical self. It is the cultural, economic, occupational, religious, and social wellhead of possibilities for future occupational and social experiences.

The men that I talked to told me that they grew up fast. I took that to mean that they all had short childhoods compared to today's children who became teenagers before they became young adults. Ben Scott talked about hand-lining at

age seven, and Morgan Colbourne spoke of going out to take his first seal before he was ten years old. Children growing up in the outports of Newfoundland became working participants in the economic life of the family at an early age. My informants told me that in the outports when they were growing up it was normal for boys to be out working alongside their fathers as soon as they were big enough, usually by the age of ten. Gerald Thomas points out the seemingly rapid onset of adulthood in traditional Newfoundland communities in his discussion of the Franco-Newfoundland fairy tale.

It is well to remember that boys began fishing with their fathers at around the age of nine, and girls were usually immersed in household chores as early as six or seven ... This is to say that by the time boys and girls reached puberty, they were already doing a man's or woman's work, even though they might not be emotionally mature
(Thomas 1997, 166)

In the 21st century most of the children in North America don't often enter the work force – become social adults – until they have become physical adults. Philippe Ariès believed that the concept of childhood is a modern idea. He determined that there was no concept of childhood in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The early lives of many of my informants were more in line with the children from earlier centuries. In Ariès's book *Centuries of Childhood*, his source data was only "taken from pictorial and printed material," and as a result his work

has been criticized by for “lack of explanation” and a “pervasive chronological vagueness” throughout the text (Wilson 1980, 136). Even though Ariès work has been heavily criticized, for example by Wilson, it still a good starting place for the academic realization that childhood is a concept that has changed with time as well as culture. As Wilson says, in viewing the past we all struggle with “present-mindedness” and “present-centeredness ... the condition of viewing the past exclusively from the point of view of the present” (Wilson 1980, 147). Ariès wrestled with the same rear-view dilemma that all those who examine the past struggle with, that it is not possible to view the past through the eyes of the past, instead we must view it through the eyes of our current historical knowledge. Therefore, structurally any view of the past must be myopic. Wilson (and others) have questioned Ariès statement that “there was no awareness of childhood.” But in reality they have done little other than rephrase his findings by stating “the past did not have our awareness of childhood” (Wilson 1980, 47).

It's clear that Wilson's concerns about extrapolating artistic pictorial representation of the past into a holistic theory of all activities of that era has been shared by many folklorists who have warned future interviewers about interpreting small amounts of material that they or others have collected about any group of people as universal. Folklorists have written numerous books detailing the many

difficulties that arise during and after an interview. They warn that all material collected and then subsequently analysed has been altered because it has passed through the current historical perceptions of the interviewer. Van Maanen's simple truth is that "The crucial problem of what we so cavalierly call 'writing it up' is to balance, harmonize, mediate, or otherwise negotiate a tale of two cultures (the fieldworkers' and the other's)" (Van Maanen 1988, 138). Van Maanen goes on to say that fieldwork is "unruly, conflict ridden, and always problematic" (Van Maanen 1988, 139). and that it is more important to "understand how, why, for whom, where, and with what consequences, ethnographies are written" (Van Maanen 1988, 139).

With these warnings in mind, I have to wonder if what I thought I heard my informants say is what they thought they were telling me. It makes it all the more difficult because, like listening to any narrative collected from the past, I cannot go back and ask the informant if I "got it right" as some of my informants are now deceased. I often thought as I listened to the recordings I made of Ben Scott, who died during my research, that I was indeed hearing the past because I was actually listening to a dead man talking. When Ben Scott told me he was in a dory hand-lining at seven years old he was not telling me that his childhood had been stolen from him so he could be forced into the working-world of adults, even though

that's what I first thought I had heard (Scott disc # 1: 24:20). He was not bemoaning the early loss of his childhood. He was simple telling me the truth, his truth, that in his world his childhood was over and it was time for him to pay his way. It is likely that I had superimposed my own "unruly, conflict ridden, problematic" (Van Maanen 1988, 138) cultural bias on the top of a simple fact.

This research into male occupational, cultural identity was partly born out of my interest in the "nature vs. nurture" argument. It's a old argument. But it's an argument that has had impact on me and therefore my research approach. Because I was born in Newfoundland and raised in Ontario, and because I had many friends when I was growing up in Ontario who, like me, were also born of immigrant parents but raised outside their culture of origin, the argument has always been part of my thinking.

As a result, the "nature vs. nurture" model became a structure for my discussions about my informants. Within the first few minutes of the first interview with all of my informants I asked them about their parents and their brothers and sisters. It seemed a natural place to begin, but I realized, while I listening to the interviews, that my questions moved from questions about their place of birth and family of origin, questions closer to the origins of their nature, to questions about their education and occupations, questions about nurture. Ultimately the questions

became questions about their life and occupational choices and the reasons for those choices. My questions and my informants' respective answers became a bricolage of each informant's cultural and familial pressures to conform. Their answers read like a script of my own attempts to mediate the needs of my parents with my own needs as I attempted to become an independent and self-directed man raised in Ontario. The occupational and life choices they made, either to conform to or to rebel against those forces, formed the story of their lives. The stories of their struggles paralleled my own attempts to reconcile my cultural origins with my mainland experiences.

My informants were all born in Newfoundland. Some were born into outport families while others were born into St. John's families. They were born into families of different religions and social and economic standing. Their life experiences form a cross-section of the lives of men born in Newfoundland in the first half of the 20th century. Each man chose his education and occupation based on the opportunities available to him, on his perceived needs and on his specific interests. Each man made his choice knowing that he lived with family and social expectations that he would either appease or disappoint. For Bishop Genge and Nigel Rusted, their lives were cause for celebration. For Morgan Colbourne and David Fleming their life choices left their families disappointed and disheartened.

Morgan Colbourne



Morgan Colbourne on the right holding his hand-made cast net while giving away caplin.

Middle Cove Beach in 2002. (Photo by G. L.)

Morgan Colbourne was born into a fishing family in St. Anthony on the Great Northern Peninsula. He chose to leave his outport origins to become a welder and that offered him opportunities in the military. He traveled to many places around the world returning to Newfoundland to marry and settle down, but he rarely returned to St. Anthony. In July, 2002 I had just started looking for men to interview when I met Morgan Colbourne on Middle Cove Beach. I found

Middle Cove during the first summer of my return to Newfoundland. It became a place of solace and comfort for me. The rock beach is contained by two towering headlands and it has a wild natural quality that draws many people to enjoy warm summer evenings just sitting and watching the water. Morgan was casting for caplin with a large cast net and giving most of the fish away to anyone with a bucket. He seemed to be an interesting prospect. I waited until he was finished casting before I approached him. It was a beautiful evening and people were setting up their fire pits, getting ready for an evening on the beach. Even though it was a busy beach with adults and children all about, Morgan was aware of me and my interest in him well before I approached him.

I was lucky to have met Morgan first and early in my research. It was an easy meeting and after a short discussion he agreed to meet me again in a few days for an interview. Morgan chose the time and place for my first interview with him. We met late on a sunny afternoon overlooking Middle Cove beach where I had first met. Morgan is an informal man. He would rather be outside sitting on a rock than anywhere inside on a nice day. We sat in my truck watching whales breach and feed in the cove. The first interview set a standard for all of the following interviews. Morgan was the first of my informants and he “presented” as an outdoors kind of a man. His choice of a natural-world setting seemed to fit his

character. The next two interviews with him were also outside. We sat in his garden at his home in St. John's surrounded by Morgan's sculptures in the trees at the back of the garden. At the start of the first of the garden interviews Morgan told me the two sculptures were called the "mother-in-laws" because they scared the crows away (Personal conversation Colbourne 2002).



Morgan Colbourne's handmade sculptures called "The Mother-in-laws" in the wood at the back of his garden in St. John's. (Photo by G. L.)

The first part of our interview was more conversation than it was formal interview. Because we are about the same age and share similar interests, we talked our way through the first twenty minutes discussing things like what he thought of

folklore, how folklore was connected to heritage and how heritage and ethnicity were connected to folklore. He told me that he believed that the folklore of Newfoundland was a natural expression of the people's lives lived in the isolation of the outport way of life common for so long in Newfoundland. He said it was expressed in the music and storytelling that he grew up hearing on the Great Northern Peninsula (Colbourne disc #1: 00:30).

At the beginning of this interview and also subsequent first interviews with all informants I collected a family history including parents' names and origins if known, place of birth of informant, number of siblings in their family of origin, employment history and relocation history. From the beginning, Morgan seemed tailor-made for my interests. It was early in my research but I already had a good idea what I was looking for in an informant. He fit all of my research criteria at the time: he was born in Newfoundland, he had lived "away" to work and returned to Newfoundland to live, he was an older Newfoundlander with a traditionally-based work-history, and he had a wealth of occupational and personal life-stories that he was willing to tell.

In many ways Morgan became the prototype for my other informants. Morgan knew Newfoundland well. He left his home in St. Anthony when he was just seventeen. When I asked him when he first left home, he furnished a

description of his early work history.

I left at seventeen. My next visit was probably seven years later. Well I left St. Anthony, and I came to St. John's, there were no [paved] roads at that time so, [only] dirt roads, you hitchhiked by Department of Highways trucks and by coastal boats. And I wrote a test and passed it to be a welder in an old school on Parade Street. And I, that's what I did I became a welder, and went to work a couple of years for a construction company in St. John's. I decided I was going to join the military and I did that. I joined the Canadian Guards. I was, they were looking for people for Parliament Hill and I qualified for that, being a guard. Ah, then they found out that I was a welder and they immediately transferred me to Vancouver, for underwater welding and underwater transactions. Which I did and I, ah, accomplished.

(Colbourne disc #1: 04:55)

Morgan was open about most of his life and work history. However he was evasive about much of his work in the military. I noticed it first when he used the phrase "underwater transactions" and again later when he said,

In the military you were chosen to do specific things. I didn't know it at the time but I was chosen for special forces, and ah, with this trade they teach you, what's called the law of elimination, to enter and do a job and get out.

(Colbourne disc #1: 08:00)

I asked: "Things you can't talk about?" He replied: "That's right." I inquired: "Enough said?" He ended our Special Services discussion by asserting: "Right" (Colbourne disc #1: 08:15). Later in the interview he hinted at the nature of

Special Services work while discussing world travel he said: "I was in and out. I can't say I was in China, because you were only given a grid reference" (Colbourne disc#1: 17:05).

Duke Collins



Duke Collins at his home in St. John's in 2005. (Photo by G. L.)

Captain Duke Collins chose to stay in Carmanville, in the Hamilton Sound, Notre Dame Bay, and follow his father and his grandfather by becoming a sailor and then a captain in the merchant marine. His varied and early experiences at sea

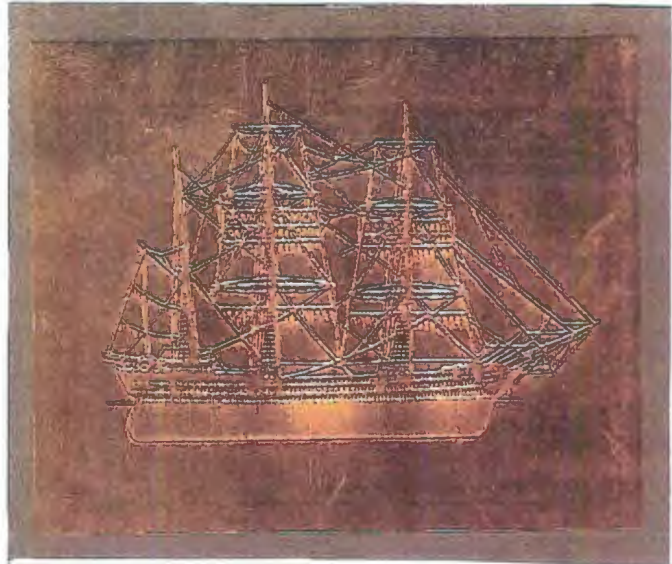
opened up many opportunities which eventually launched his career as an ice pilot. He stayed in harness with his family's shipping business for many years. He returned to Carmanville regularly until his parents passed away. I started my first interview with him by asking "How are you?" He replied: "Fine thank you, and enjoying my life as a Newfoundlander" (Collins, Duke disc #1: 00:50).

Captain Duke Collins is my one of my godfathers and a distant relative. He attempted to explain the family connection during our first interview.

Well, ah, to the best of my knowledge my family ... they originated from the Spaniard's Bay area where your family is from. And my branch of the Collins family they made they their way north, back in those days, and they settled in Indian Islands [Notre Dame Bay]. Then from Indian Islands, which is in the Hamilton Sound, they went onto Carmanville, where I was born. (Duke Collins disc #1: 05:20)

The interviews with Duke Collins provided me with an example of some traditional life experiences of a Newfoundland merchant sailor. If Morgan Colbourne was my prototype informant then Duke Collins was my pattern. The interviews with Duke gave me a baseline for all other interviews. The stories of his life at sea furnished me with a occupational template that I could use as I attempted to untangling the life stories of subsequent informants. His life experiences epitomize a widely held, perhaps stereotypical, view of Newfoundland male behaviour. Duke has always enjoyed his role as a sailor. As he said: "Ships

were my love” (Duke Collins disc #1: 17:10). His walls of his house are hung with many pictures of his past life at sea.



An example of the many images of ships that Duke Collins uses to decorate the walls of his home.

(Photograph by G. L.)

Captain Collins is proud of his past work-life and accomplishments, and commonly spoke of his work-life with pride. He sat ramrod straight as he explained how his boyhood summer vacations affected his first full time job at sea: “So by the time I went aboard the vessel in San Francisco at the age of seventeen I was considered to have enough experience as a seaman to be classed as an able-bodied seaman and receive the pay accordingly” (Duke Collins disc#1: 11:35). Later in the same interview he offered information about his work-related life after

he retired.

I think I've got a very good background in mathematics; as a matter of fact last year the Marine Institute called me. By the way, since I retired I've worked as a consultant and an instructor with the Marine Institute and last winter I was teaching ship stability. They were short on instructors. They knew about my certificates, but they also knew about my mathematical background. So I went in to teach ship stability to second-mate foreign-going students.

(Duke Collins disc #1: 33:50)

Duke Collins is a careful man. At the beginning of our second interview he started the interview by correcting a misunderstanding he thought he had left me with at the end of the last interview. We were talking about the dangers associated with sailing ships and at the end of the first interview he told me a story about one of the times that his father had been "drove off." We had been discussing shipwrecks and he wanted to make sure that I understood the difference.

Drove off. I realized afterwards you didn't catch on to what that was. Although it's being shipwrecked, it's not shipwrecked in the term of what we think of as shipwrecked. When we speak of shipwrecked we think of the vessel running aground. And then losing the ship that way. In this particular case it was the wind, and I don't know, I tried to think of another term to use for it other than 'drove off,' the Newfoundland seaman's term.

(Duke Collins disc #2: 00:00)

Duke Collins went on to retell me the full story about the time his

grandfather and father and the crew of their ship were “drove off” (blown out to sea by an offshore wind). His grandfather was the captain and his father was the Mate. The wind was coming from the North West so their ship was blown away from Newfoundland out toward the Grand Banks. The seas were running well above forty or fifty feet. As Duke described it, it was just by luck that the wind blew them into the path of a Norwegian cargo ship heading for Spain. The schooner was swamped and the sails were gone so the cargo ship took the crew on board. The seas were running too high to come along side so the seven-man crew of the schooner had to row from the sinking wooden schooner over to the steel-hulled cargo ship. The only way to get from the dory to the Norwegian ship was by “Jacob’s ladder,” a rope ladder lowered over the rail of the ship. The men had to row the dory alongside the cargo ship and wait under the ladder until the sea rose up enough for each man to reach the ladder and with the help of the others in the dory climb grab the rope ladder and climb to safety. Finally there were just two left in the dory, Duke’s father and his grandfather. Duke told me,

The story goes that kind of an argument, kind of a row, started in the dory. ‘You go first. No you go first.’ Anyhow, my father won the argument and persuaded the old fella. ‘You grab the ladder.’ So he grabbed the ladder and then my father saw a chance, here’s my grandfather holding onto the ladder with both hands, he was a strong fella. My father saw the one opportunity and he grabbed my grandfather around the legs and the crew of

the cargo ship pulled them both up to the deck. ... about twenty feet or so.
(Duke Collins, disc #2: 04:20)

Vince Collins



Vince Collins playing his favourite accordion at my home in St. John's in 2004. Photo by G. L.)

I wasn't actively looking for informants when I met Vince Collins. Vince's son, Glen, lived across the street from me on William Street in St. John's. I met Glen at a neighbourhood get-together. Vince was visiting his son Glen and so he came along to the neighbourhood "time." A "time" in Newfoundland is "A party or celebration, esp. a communal gathering with dancing, entertainment etc" (Story, D.

N. E. 1982, 568). Vince is the author of a CD of traditional Newfoundland accordion music called *Lifting Out the Stove*. Glen played guitar accompaniment to his father's accordion for most of the tunes on the CD. The CD also includes short interviews of Vince describing the tunes played and where he learned them. Vince was very easy to talk to, and I had heard his interviews on the CD, so I decided to ask him if he would talk to me on tape. He accepted without any hesitation. I interviewed him a few days later in my kitchen over a cup of tea.

The interview started with talk about music, because Vince brought two of his accordions to the interview. He knew I was interested in his accordions, and his music, because at our first meeting we discussed his CD and the music of other accordion players such as Mark Hiscock of Shanneyganock and Wilf Doyle, a well known Newfoundland accordion player whom I had interviewed two years earlier as part of the course work for a paper in public sector folklore. Wilf Doyle has recorded many albums of traditional Newfoundland music, such as: *Jigs and Reels*, *Newfoundland Talent Showcase*, *The Sailor's Alphabet*, and others. Vince told me that originally he didn't want to record the CD. When I asked him why, he said,

Glen got me into all this. I didn't want to do this, the cd, see. I thought it was a bit too old-fashioned, and it was outdated and that. But I'm glad I did because

(pause) Well we started before the wife got sick see.
(pause) I lost her in 2000, (pause) the first of April.
So we had to put that on hold. So that was in '99,
when we started. We had to wait for *Great Big Sea*
to come back to use their studio see.

(Vince Collins disc #1: 01:30)

Vince was upset as he talked about his wife. It was clear that it was hard for him when she died. I decided to change topics to allow him time to collect himself so I asked if his parents might be related to my mother. My mother was a Collins from Spaniard's Bay. He composed himself and we continued. He told me he had looked into his background and that his family was from England. We spoke about his work-life in St. John's and he told me that he had been a commissionaire at the Arts and Culture Centre. I told him that my grandfather had been a commissionaire and that he had also worked at the Arts and Culture Centre. He told me that he had worked with my grandfather for years and that he knew him well.

George Will Collins? I knew him all to pieces. Mr. Collins.
Amazing, Eh! I used to sit down and talk to him about the war.
He died up in Toronto, yea? I used to love to sit down and talk
to the old fellas about the war and that, after all they went through.

(Vince Collins disc #1 04:30)

We were both surprised that there was a connection between the two of us. Vince went on to tell me that his family had purchased all the wood needed to build their

house in Placentia from Mark Gosse, my great uncle, who owned a lumber yard in Spaniard's Bay (Vince Collins disc #1: 07:00).

Vince was a pleasure to interview. His memory of working in Placentia and of his earlier days growing up in St. Anne's, Placentia Bay, where he was born in 1935, was sharp and clear. He often talked his way from one topic to another without any injection from me. It was almost as though he already knew what I wanted and he naturally worked his way from fishing to fixing nets and knitting, and from locally grown vegetables and locally caught fish and game to how they were prepared and cooked. Vince left school at fourteen as was common when he was young. He left school to dory-fish in the inshore fishery with his father and brothers. He fished as long as there was fish to catch. Vince Collins chose the only real option that he felt that he had, to become a fisherman like his father and his brothers. His family fished the in-shore fishery of Placentia Bay. He left fishing when the fish stocks began to decline in the mid 1900s. Vince left fishing to take work in Placentia. He worked for the Americans on the base in Argentina. When work dried up there he moved into St. John's where he worked as a commissionaire at the Arts and Culture Centre.

David Fleming



David Fleming during one of the last interviews I had with him in one of the several interview rooms in the penitentiary in St. John's in 2003. Photp by G. L.)

The interviews with David Fleming were the most difficult interviews of all the interviews that I undertook. David Fleming was in prison during all of our interviews. He was one of the first people in Newfoundland charged as a

dangerous offender. All of the interviews with him were conducted under the close supervision of the guards at the penitentiary in St. John's. Fleming was, "convicted in 1991 of seven of 12 sex-related offences he had been charged with" (Telegram 2003, C1). During the time of his interviews he was diligently defending himself against those charges. In November of 2003 the Crown withdrew the dangerous offender application and released Flemming stating, "He's no longer a threat or a risk" (Telegram 2003, C1).

David Fleming was very different from the other men I interviewed. The interviews I had with him were always emotionally charged. Each interview felt like a sparring match, and I was always the loser. Although Fleming spent most of his life in prison he was surprisingly open about his early life experiences. He told me that he chose not to follow his father into farming and construction. He ran into difficulties with the Roman Catholic nuns and priests while he was still in elementary school and he left school before he graduated from Grade Seven. Fleming told me that he had few options without an education, so he chose to become a criminal. It was a life-patterning choice that he was unable to change and a choice that left him few options (Fleming personal conversation 2003).

I met David Fleming through his lawyer Bob Buckingham. Bob Buckingham had contacted my thesis supervisor, Philip Hiscock, regarding

Fleming's desire to tell his side of the story. Philip Hiscock and I had been discussing my interviews with Ben Scott and during our meeting I told Philip that I had just realized that one of the themes of my research was the notion of a Newfoundland "good man." Philip suggested that it would be useful to have the views of someone like David Fleming as part of my research.

I had first noticed the importance of the term during an interview with Skipper Ben Scott. He and I were talking about his many experiences as a fishing captain on the Grand Banks. I asked him who took over when he left the bridge. He told me that the mate was on the bridge when he wasn't and when I asked Skipper Scott how it was so easy for him to leave the bridge and after a cup of tea go to sleep, he explained by telling me that the mate was a "good man." It interested me that Scott used the term "good man" to define the occupational character of his first mate, not his social character. The occupational use of this term this term by my Newfoundland informants will be discussed in the Scott interviews and again in the chapter entitled "Other Themes: Gardens and Goodmen."

Fleming's adamant claims of his innocence of the charges laid intruded into many of the interviews. It was the focus of his life. I asked him: "So, you don't want people to see your life only in terms of this last charge?" His reply was

immediate and resolute.

Like I told Bob, I will fight in the courts until my dying day, to clear this matter up. Cause I mean, I look at it this way. When someone charges somebody with a crime, especially a sexual assault, that individual has given a statement to the police and that individual should be clear in their own mind, of what happened because it happened to them. But when you walk into a court of law, and every time you tell your story it's different, then there's something the matter with your story. And the court shouldn't be casting their light up on me. Well Fleming is a criminal, so Fleming's guilty.

(Fleming disc # 10: 12:30)

Access to David Fleming was difficult because he was incarcerated and his charges were still active. Although he was in prison and had been for many years he was still under investigation. As a result, I was not able to interview him in private as a folklore student doing research for a thesis, because anything Fleming and I discussed would become the property of the Crown and the crown would surely use it in the case against him. To be able to interview him in private I signed on as a research assistant for his lawyer Bob Buckingham. In this way I was able to conduct private interviews. Without this "research-assistant" status any information that I gathered during my interviews could be used against Fleming by the crown because the interviews that I conducted with Fleming in the penitentiary during his incarceration would surely be attended by a guard.

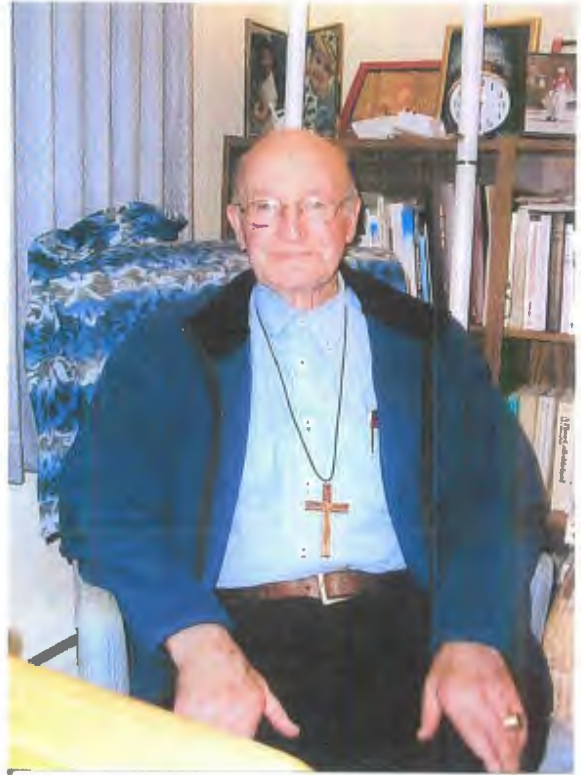
The guards on duty on the day of an interview would assign an interview room for me to use. Many times permission was given grudgingly, and the rooms assigned were often small and close to noisy hallways and guard stations. Permission to interview Fleming on any given day was only granted at the indulgence of the officials on duty. Nevertheless, I was able to interview David Fleming five times.

The interviews were animated and interesting and Fleming was receptive to discussing any topic and responsive in his answers to my questions. I asked him questions about his parents just as I had asked other informants. I asked him about his wife and his children, and I asked him about his work-life experiences. His replies were more similar than they were different from any other informants' answers. When I asked him about his memories of his life as a young boy, he declared, "I grew up in the same Newfoundland that everybody else grew up in" (Fleming disc #1: 06:00).

David Fleming laid no blame for his past life. He simply stated that he made the choices that led him into a life of crime. During our first interview Fleming told me about his life on the streets of St. John's. He said, "I used to come into town then [from Portugal Cove], I used to come into St. John's, start beating the streets of St. John's. I met a couple of guys, and we became friends and the well. ...

The path right to crime was taken” (Fleming disc #1: 11:30).

Mark Genge



Bishop Mark in his study in St. John's in 2002. (Photo by G. L.)

Mark Genge left his work in the family general store in the west of St. John's that he owned with his brothers to become an Anglican minister and finally an Anglican Bishop. His work in the church took him to many parts of the Island. He traveled off the island to continue his education. He chose to return to live and work in Newfoundland even though there were many opportunities away. In the

first interview I had with him, he asked me to call him "Bishop Mark" (Genge disc #1 00:20) His name choice implies that although he is a Bishop he still wants the informal connection that use of his first name creates.

Mark Genge was born in St. John's in 1927, but as in many St. John's families, he has connections to outport Newfoundland. His work as an Anglican minister took him to most parts of the Island and Labrador. He has also lived off the island for years at a time, usually to follow his or his wife's educational goals. When I asked him what he thought about Newfoundland being called "The Rock." he replied, "No, I think of Newfoundland as a beautiful island set out in the Atlantic ocean, blessed by winds that come from all directions, and the sun that shines on us, as it is shining today" (Genge disc #1: 01:00). His reply clearly shows his love for Newfoundland. We went on to discuss island cultures and how living on an island may create a mind-set not common in the cultures of other provinces in Canada he said,

I think there's an island sort of concept that people have, or a feeling, because you are sort of separated from other provinces by water. And it's not a big island if you look at the other parts of Canada. And the fact that we live in a house where you can look out on the water, and you can get to the ocean from anywhere in Newfoundland in a short period of time and I think that there's a feeling that grows with people who live on an island, sort of a self sufficiency.
(Genge disc #1: 01:30)

Bishop Mark was seventy-five at the time of the interviews. When we spoke about his work-life and his travel off the island to continue his education, he offered the following: "Travel outside is not new to me but I feel I was born here and this is where, (pause) I'll die here" (Genge disc #1: 04:00). We went on to discuss his family and their travels off the island. Bishop Mark has five daughters who married people from away. He believes that most Newfoundlanders like to think that they will return to the island but as he said,

Well now, they'll certainly come back but now with the job market and that, the economy, I'm sure that they envisage that they will come back, and I have five daughters who married people from away and they are all living away, but I doubt if they feel they that will ever come back and work here.

(Genge disc #1: 05:10)

Bishop Mark grew up on Hamilton Avenue. He called himself a "West-ender" (Genge disc #1: 07:00). He told me that even though he was born in St. John's before there was ever an overpass, he was a "townie" because he was born this side of the overpass. And he stated: "Everybody knows what's meant by it" (Genge disc#1: 07:20).

Nigel Rusted



Doctor Rusted in 2005 at his home (Photograph by G. Lundrigan)

The Rusted family is part of the history of outport Newfoundland. Nigel Rusted's father, Canon Ernest Edward Rusted, emigrated from England to Newfoundland in 1903 as part of the mission work of the Church of England (later to become the Anglican Church of Canada). Canon Rusted started his mission in Newfoundland in Salvage where he lived from 1903 through to 1909. He worked

in Upper Island Cove from 1909 through to 1924, and finally in Carbonear from 1924 through to 1951 when he retired.

Nigel Rusted did not go into the ministry like his father. He chose to become a doctor as did his brother Ian. Early in his career (1931) he traveled the coast of Labrador as medical officer on the *Kyle*. Later (1935) he spent a year on the hospital ship, the *Lady Anderson*, which serviced the Southern Coast of Newfoundland. His early adventures as one of the cottage hospital medical staff opened up many occupational opportunities. He has become well known in St. John's for his longevity. In July of 2007 he became a centenarian. In an interview he gave to Barb Sweet and printed in St. John's *The Telegram* on November the 11, 2007 he stated: "I never expected to reach it, to tell you the truth. You're damn lucky to get there." He is famous for his medical expertise and as equally well known for his colourful convictions about life, medicine and politics.

Although Nigel didn't follow his father into a religious ministry, it was clear from our discussions that Nigel felt his occupation, his medical calling, was just as important to the people of Newfoundland. He told me early in the first interview that he saw himself as an educational vehicle. He saw medicine as another form of a ministry to the people of Newfoundland, one that was as important to their

mental and spiritual health as any religion was. During his years as a doctor he traveled to many outport communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. In many ways his work supplied the same sort of solace as that of Bishop Genge and that of his own his father, who was a minister. My interviews with Dr. Rusted were more reminiscence than question and answer sessions. Dr. Rusted was an experienced interviewee and he knew exactly what he wanted to say. I interviewed him three times; he often had his own topics prepared in advance, a personal script of sorts and he followed it religiously. My questions were often irrelevant.

Ben Scott



Skipper Scott in his home in St. John's in 2003 (Photograph by G. L.)

Captain Ben Scott was born in Little Harbour, Fortune Bay on the south coast of Newfoundland in 1914. He followed his father and brothers and became a fishing captain on the south coast of Newfoundland during the late 1920s and early 1930s. He fished the inshore fishery when he was a young boy. When he was old enough he went to Labrador to fish and to cut wood. As soon as an opportunity

opened up he began to fish the Grand Banks. He eventually moved to St. John's where he captained many vessels. He fished the Grand Banks until his retirement. Of all my informants, Skipper Ben Scott is the closest to the stereotypical "outport Newfoundlander."

Ben started fishing when he was just big enough to stand in a dory. He told me that he fished anywhere, where ever the fish were. He cut wood in Newfoundland and on the Labrador coast. He started his work-life fishing and he retired as a fisherman. He called himself a "fish killer." The Dictionary of Newfoundland English defines a fish killer as "A fisherman, esp. a 'skipper' known for catching great quantities of fish" (Story, D. N. E. 1982, 179). He wasn't proud of it. He simply stated it as a fact of his life. He told me during our second interview, "You never had no choice" (Scott disc #2: 21:20).

Ben Scott made his own furniture and grew his own potatoes and strawberries. He carried his outport life style with him when he moved into St. John's. He worked his garden diligently after his retirement. He told me that the day he left the sea was the last day he thought about the sea, or even looked out to sea. His life on the sea from being a dory fisherman on a three-masted schooner to being the captain of a steel-hulled diesel-powered dragger was not as much chosen by him as it was imposed on him. He shouldered it just as he did any other task.

Mel Riehl and Paul Verkley



Mel Riehl and Paul Verkley after a rainy day at work in Ireland in 2005 (Photo by G. L.)

I decided early on in the research that I needed a control group of sorts, a group of men other than my core group of older Newfoundland men, that I could interview to give me a basis for comparison. I decided to interview men from my own occupational past that I knew well, knew in the same way that the men that I had interviewed knew the men that they worked with. I wanted to clarify some of my own assumptions about working in occupations dominated by men.

I had started work early in my life. By the age of fourteen I was working

twenty hours a week while still attending school. By the time I graduated secondary school I had experience in three occupations: the fast-food industry, the soft-drink industry and the music industry. After high school graduation I became an industrial cutter in a garment factory in London, Ontario. Baldwin Garments made industrial garments for many companies across Canada including blue jeans for Great West Garment (GWG) jeans. After a year I became a tailor making trucker uniforms for Allied Van Lines (and others) in the same factory. After two years working in an industry populated mostly by women seamstresses from many of the same cultures as my childhood and high school friends, I changed occupations and became a carpenter building houses. As a carpenter I was exposed to a culture of men who performed their masculinity daily by their physical ability and expertise. I met and worked with Mel Riehl and Paul Verkley while working as a carpenter in the late 1960s.

I chose to interview Mel Riehl and Paul Verkley because they were two old friends that I was confident would give me honest and informative interviews. Mel Riehl contacted me when he heard I had retired from teaching to attend Memorial University. He asked me to travel to Ireland to act as a consultant along with him and Paul Verkley to Michael Rice, an architect who designs timber-frame R-2000 structures, based on the holistic principle of "The Golden Standard." The Golden

Standard is a structural aesthetic design principle used by many architects and designers. "The Golden Standard" is also known as "The Golden Mean". However the term "The Golden Mean" also has other meanings, so within the architectural community that practices its principals, the term "The Golden Standard" is preferred. The Parthenon and Notre Dame are two well known structures constructed using The Golden Standard. The painting of The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci is also constructed using "Golden Standard" principles. Constructing houses using The Golden Standard requires an open mind as well as a wealth of structural knowledge.

The interview with Mel Riehl and Paul Verkley was serendipitous. We were in Ireland, driving back from Carlow to Portlaoise, and as usual we stopped in to a pub for a pint of Guinness. This time it was the Swan Pub in a small community called Swan. In the past I had missed many interview opportunities, but I had learned to carry my pocket-sized digital recorder with me everywhere. Mel and Paul both knew that I wanted to talk to them on tape, but they always found a way to avoid my attempts. I had tried before without success. So, after a long, cold, wet, Irish day outside and pint of cold Guinness in a warm pub I knew they wouldn't expect me to try to interview them in a pub. With another full pint on the table in front of each of them they couldn't and wouldn't get up and leave. I set the

recorder on the table. After a the second pint they were both relaxed enough to let me interview them. I turned on the recorder.

This interview was not structured in the same way as any of my other interviews. Mel, Paul and I have been friends for forty years. After meeting and working with Paul and Mel in the late 1960s I again worked with both men in 1971. Over the next forty years we have continued as friends and occupational associates. We remained friends as we followed different occupations. Our paths frequently crossed. Mel Riehl stayed in construction. Paul Verkley left construction in the late 1970s and went back to farming with his family for more than two decades. I left construction in the early 1980s and became a teacher. When Mel contacted me after I retired from teaching in Ontario in 2004 and when I saw the interesting work that he was involved with in Ireland, I returned to a past occupation that I enjoyed, the life of a design/built consultant.

The interview began as any conversation between old friends and work-life associates might. They both knew the nature of my research, so when I asked them “What makes you a man?” They were ready. Mel answered by telling me an anecdote from his work-life. He said: “Siobhan (one of Mel’s Irish clients) said that I was one of the only ‘man’s man’ that she knew because I did what men do, sort of thing eh. We don’t plan. We don’t schedule. We don’t worry [laughter]”

(Riehl, Verkley disc #1 00:56). I countered by asking, “If that’s true then how can I see who you are as men?” Paul responded: “That’s easy! Have you been to Mary’s? Have you seen the stairs? Have you seen the roof? That’s me, at least me when I’m in Ireland” (Riehl, Verkley #1: 04:20). At the time of the interview Mary Dillon was a client who was having her house designed by the architect Michael Rice, well known for his holistic designs. Michael’s houses, Community Centres and retirement facilities are well known Celtic landmarks in many communities throughout Ireland. His designs can be viewed at <www.holistichouseplans.com>.



Paul Verkley's stairs under construction at Mary Dillon's house in Roscrea, Ireland (Photo by G. L.)

As the interview continued I noticed that both Paul and Mel commonly talked about themselves as men by referencing their relationships with women. It seemed that they were highlighting their male characteristics by pointing out what they considered feminine. Mel commented, "Most renovations are run by women. Most decisions, even though the guy makes the final decision, he wouldn't make that decision without talking it over with his wife, or whatever, eh (laughter)" (Riehl, Verkley #1: 02:00). Gerald Thomas documented similar sentiments among French Newfoundland Men in "Early Life Crisis and Resolution of Conflict" a discussion of the meanings embedded in the fairy tales of French Newfoundland (Thomas 1997). Mel and Paul were using their work relationships with women to establish that they were heterosexual men. Mel and Paul are seasoned tradesmen. They have worked in a wide variety of work-life situations. They built the studios in London, England where the television series *Big Brother* is taped. During that project they told me that they worked with two gay designers (Riehl, Verkley disc#1: 2:30) who were responsible for designing the interiors of the studios where the show was taped. When I asked them if they were any different as men when they were working with gay men Mel replied: "No, they were just a couple of guys." Paul interjected: "No, they were designers" (Riehl, Verkley disc#1: 02:30). Paul went on to say: "No, it's not like I had to keep my ass against the wall. You

don't make a distinction. I think if you're working, it's [you are known by] the product you're putting out" (Riehl, Verkley disc #1: 03:40). Mel and Paul spoke about their experience working with two gay designers with a good deal of respect because, as they saw it, the designers were passionate about their work and the quality of the finished product. They had an affinity with the designers, even though they were not the kind of men that they were used to working with, because it was the quality of the completed work that was the most important thing to both the gay designers and the heterosexual carpenters.

Many times during the interview Mel and Paul talked about work as an expression of who they are as men. Mel is a natural teacher. I asked Mel what sort of "boss" he was. I asked him if he preferred to lead the men that worked for him or if he preferred to push them to get what he wanted. He answered: "I really enjoy seeing somebody like Herki for example or Sulev, just fit right in there and Raido come right in and boom. ... But it's really nice to see somebody just take into it" (Verkley, Riehl disc #1: 10:20). Herki, Sulev and Raido are young Estonian men who work for Mel in Ireland. He has enough trust in the men that he works with to let each man use his own abilities to his best advantage. His years of experience working with many men in many trades taught him to let each man find his own way.

Mel doesn't like taking credit for his teaching. He prefers to talk about work in terms of the work done and the enjoyment that the work offers. When I asked him to explain, Paul interjected : "When we were doing the siding in Cork. I mean that's how you work together. It's not going to happen every day, but." Mel joined in saying: "You and I, it was it was so fun, so much fun. It just worked so perfect." Paul replied: "Yea, you could never put on more siding with two guys anywhere" (Riehl, Verkley disc #1: 20:20). The interview was like a verbal free-for-all. When I asked a question I never knew who would answer. When I asked the question "What's a man?" Paul replied,

What's a man, what's a good man. A good man is, you've got to be flexible. I think, a good man, some days when I work with, I work with Herki, he's always good to work with, well that's a no-brainer. When I worked with Raido on those stairs, he's keen, he's a goer. And with Sulev. You can work a rhythm with those guys. They got that peripheral [vision], they kind of blend in, they're flexible, you got to be flexible when you work with those guys. Now I've got to be flexible when I work with those guys. As little flexibility as I have [laughter].

(Riehl, Verkley disc #1: 20:30)

I interjected: "Paul, that's part of it, you just said something there. That's reflexive thinking for you to admit that." Paul replied: "Yea, but I don't like it [laughter]." Paul is known for his irascible character. As Mel put it: "And even if I try to guide Paul. That's not going to work. Paul is going to do what Paul is going

to do.” Paul responded: “Good luck [laughter]” (Riehl, Verkley disc #1: 26:30).

Paul Verkley’s comment, “What’s a man, what’s a good man?” reminded me of the many playwrights and other fact and fiction authors that I have read, studied and taught during my years adhering to my educationally goals. Many of these authors have struggled with the same question. I say question because none have been able to formulate a definitive answer. It also reminded me that the question is time-,culture- and situation-specific and that the workaday accepted expression of masculinity is a performance of family, social and occupational inculcated norms.

Chapter Four: Performance and Reflection

When the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the official accredited values of the society, more so, in fact, than does his behaviour as a whole. (Goffman 1959: 35)

As Goffman says “All reconstructive discourse ... is craft” (Goffman 1959, 293). My informants for this thesis were gifted craftsmen, performing in the interviews like seasoned professionals. It was as though they had been interviewed all their lives instead of being at sea (Duke Collins, Vince Collins, Ben Scott), in the military (Morgan Colbourne), in prison (David Fleming), or attending to people (Mark Genge, Nigel Rusted). They performed well enacting Goffman’s “accredited values of the society” (Goffman 1959, 35) for themselves and their occupational place within the diverse cultures of Newfoundland. They all excelled in their occupational choices and they all lived full and interesting lives as well. Although they had not met, and they knew little about one another, save what they might have learned through day-to-day information publications (newspaper articles about David Fleming and Bishop Genge or books written by Nigel Rusted and Duke Collins), they shared many common experiences. Of course, they are all older Newfoundland men, and therefore have had a similar life,

but the many common beliefs shared by my informants requires comment. They were indeed all born in Newfoundland and worked and lived on the island for most of their lives, but their birth places, as well as their occupational and social lives, were so diverse that social or occupational proximity cannot be seen as the source of their similarities (Appendix A: Map, page 5).

The similarities began with the first interview. The first similarity is my surprised observation that all of the older men that I interviewed accepted my request to interview them and they took on their roles as informants without hesitation. Each man was an experienced tradesmen in his own right and as a result of their extensive work-lives they have also been leaders in their respective occupations, but it still surprised me how effortlessly they all adopted their role as informant. Some of my informants had been interviewed before (Vince Collins, David Fleming, Mark Genge, Paul Verkley), others had not (Morgan Colbourne, Duke Collins, Ben Scott, Mel Riehl), but I saw little difference in their comfort level or ability during the interviews. They all performed their roles equally well and we quickly reached what Goffman calls “a working consensus” with agreed-upon “projected definitions” (Goffman 1959: 10, 14).

Most informants chose to hold the interviews in their own home in a room of their choosing. There were exceptions. Vince Collins visited me in my home as

it was convenient for him. His son lived across the street from me and Vince combined his interviews with visits to his son. David Fleming was unable to choose the place where his interviews were held as he was still incarcerated during the time I was interviewing him. However, he maintained control by deciding the day and the time of the interviews. These were all men who were used to making their own decisions and equally used to accepting the consequences for their actions. In many ways, all informants lived a semi-public occupational life. They all received some form of public acknowledgment for a noteworthy achievement that each man accomplished in his respective occupation. For some their occupational life was printed for publications, for others it was printed in public record. Nigel Rusted had recognition within the medical and academic communities because of, among other things, his years on the South Coast hospital ship, the *Lady Anderson*. For Dr. Rusted it was a scholastic fame, and David Fleming felt he was forever infamous in the press because of "the shootout on Kenmount Road."

As Fleming put it, "On a rainy night, I'll never forget it, it was on the 13th of May in 1966" (Fleming disc #5:20:00). Fleming and two of his fellow criminal friends decided to steal the safe from the Skyline Motel on Kenmount Road in St. John's. They were parked waiting for the owner to leave for the night when they

were discovered by a patrolling police car. Fleming was carrying a gun and when the officer turned his back while he was questioning Fleming pulled out his gun just to scare him off and “he gets up and jumps me and the gun went off” (Fleming disc #5:22:00). The RCMP were called in and a “manhunt” followed to apprehend Fleming. The incident created Fleming’s criminal persona. As Fleming said in an interview in the *Telegram* upon his release from prison, “I take full responsibility for my criminal record.” (*Telegram* 29 July 2003: A3). Even though each of my informants followed different paths, from priest to criminal, skipper to musician, they all accepted their part in the creation of the public person that he had become.

The matter of hard work recurred frequently. Skipper Ben Scott said “The work was some hard. They were hard times” (Scott disc #1:28:30). The reality of his statement is not reduced by its being a commonplace assertion. The same sentiments can also be found in some of the old songs about Newfoundland, such as “Hard Hard Times” (verses 1-7: Line 4 in the version collected from Ned Rice of Cape Broyle by Kenneth Peacock), and also in newer reminiscent songs like “Wave over Wave” by Jim Payne: “The work is hard and the hours are long” (Verse 2: line 1).

My informants perpetuated this commonly held social belief many times during our talks. They communicated their emotional connection to the “hard

times” of their past work-lives using words, as Ben Scott did when he said: “The work was some hard” (Scott disc #1:28:30). but they also used visual cues to denote the seriousness of their comments. Ben Scott would often look at the palms of his hands and add the affirmative “Yes b’y” under his breath or using ingressive speech while he rubbed his still-callused palms. He would pause, slump slightly into his chair, then straighten his back and shake his head slightly from side to side. His face would stiffen. His eyes would fix on some image at a distance that only he could see. He would stare straight ahead as though he were examining a recurring image, an image he had seen hundreds of times before. It was over in a second, but the impact was unmistakable. The work was some hard.

My calling attention to the repeated phrase is not to say that the work, nor the times, were not hard. And, rarely did any of my informants contradict this widely-held belief. My informants clearly believed that it was. The interviews were informal, like a Sunday afternoon chat, but my informants took the interview process seriously. They were engaged and animated during my questioning and their answering. Talk of childhood or family rarely elicited any change in demeanor. However, any discussion of their past work-lives was usually prefaced with an introductory statement combined with a vocal change and a change in their posture (Fleming disc #7:32:00, Genge disc #2:03:00, Scott disc #1:28:30).

Their vocal and posture changes told me that they took seriously the interview process and that they thought that they had something of value to offer about their past work-lives. Each time the topic of the difficulty of their work-lives came up there was a perceivable aural and visual shift in their voice and body posture. During any work-talk I noticed my informants initiated a posture change. They commonly adopted a more masculine posture. I learned to look for such physical signals when I was a crisis intervention worker for Family and Children services, in London Ontario in 1974 and in Vancouver, British Columbia in, 1975.

I recalled that skill as a teacher, Department Head and Vice-Principal during the years from 1985 through to 2001. It is a valuable tool to be able to rely on during an interview with an emotional student or parent in the close quarters of an office. I have used it successfully many times to de-escalate potentially violent situations. It has become second nature for me to evaluate the physicality of people when I am facilitating conversations. I noticed that my informants sat up straighter and the tone and timber of their voices often deepened. Goffman describes these posture and vocal shifts as “footing” and “frame” alignment.

A change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of utterance. A change in out footing is another way of talking about a change in our frame for events. ... participants over the course of their speaking

constantly change their footing, these changes being a persistent feature of natural talk. (Goffman 1981, 128)

The audience, in this case the interviewer, also performs in that they support the performance of the actor, in this case the informant, because failure to do so would disrupt the process of frame building. As Goffman says: “a tacit agreement is maintained between performers and audience to act as if a given degree of ... accord existed between them” (Goffman 1959, 239). Mark Genge commonly lowered his head as though in prayer, and softly cleared his throat before he would start to answer any questions about his past work-life. Before David Fleming would answer any questions about his past experiences as a “criminal” (e.g. Fleming disc #1:12:30) he usually sat forward just enough to enter the edge of my own personal space. He would raise his voice a little and his speech was slightly syncopated, a staccato effect. He frequently used this footing change when he spoke about emotional experiences during his years in prison (e.g. Fleming disc #3:00:00 - 05:00).

Each informant had his own identifiable “footing” routine. My informants adopted roles that they were used to playing in plays that they knew well. As though they were playing a scene from an Italian Commedia del Arte play they chose to play classic characters: some became Pantalone, wearing their age as a

mask, others stayed true to their work-lives and played Doctor or Captain, still others chose to become Zanni or Punchinello.

I chose to stay safely within the parameter of my predetermined role as the interviewer. In that role I stayed safely on the other side of the “front” as Goffman describes it, “... that part of the individual’s performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance” (Goffman 1959, 22).

My informants did not perform the characters of the work-life that they were describing, but, instead they performed the role of an interpreter or a guide. They discussed their past lives as though they were detailing the activities of someone else, someone that they knew well. It was as if they had chosen to play the part of an objective observer of their own life. They were aware that they were talking about themselves yet for the purposes of the interview, and the stories contained therein, they created a buffer zone in the guise of the storyteller of their own life that kept a safe emotional distance from the reality of the events that they were remembering. Goffman stated, “in the case of a replay of a past event, the self we select for ourself can only ‘altercast’ the other figures *in the story*, leaving the hearers of the replay undetermined in that regard” (Goffman 1959, 151).

Elizabeth Fine said: “Performance is basic to humanity” (Fine 1992, 23). I

was aware that I was performing a role during the interviews. I decided early what my role was to be. My many experiences as a teacher taught me that the best way to let some else speak was just to be quiet and listen. As a teacher I commonly chose the role of the interested listener. I found it allowed my students to speak aloud their questions and concerns in a real-time exercise that permitted them to hear what they were saying, and thereby learn from themselves what they already knew and therefore what they still wanted to know. I adopted the same role during the interviews. It was not role as much as it was a reality. I was the interested listener. As Ben Scott so clearly put it, "It's not what I want to say as it's what you want" Scott disc # 1:24:30). After listening to my interviews many times I realized that Ben Scott was setting out the ground rules for all the interviews that followed.

Most of the time my informants and I were able to maintain our respective performances roles without interruption. But, when their remembering of the stories that they were telling came too close to the reality of the events that they were describing they sometimes broke composure. Their "fronts" fell away and the man and his memories became one. When this happened it often resulted in an emotional experience for my informants. Mark Genge cried at the memory of the loss of his brother. Duke Collin's body shook as retreated from the past and he returned to the present when he attempted to tell the painful memory of the

drowning of his brother. David Fleming became angry when he allowed himself to feel the injustice of the years that he had been incarcerated. And, Morgan Colbourne became evasive when he discussed events that involved national security issues.

The construct of the interpreter character adopted by my informants functioned as an emotional go-between or an emotive pass-through. It allowed an informality that otherwise could not have existed had I tried to interview these men while they were still actively involved in the respective occupational work-lives. The bishop probably could not have cried in the pulpit over the loss of his father decades earlier. The seasoned ice-pilot could not be seen to withdraw from his occupational responsibilities because of the painful remembrance of a drowned brother so many years ago. These roles, as adopted, are structural safety nets for both "narrator" and "story listener." As Goffman states,

The statuses 'narrator' and 'story listener,' which would seem to be of small significance in terms of the overall social structure, turn out, then, to be of considerable importance in conversation, for they provide a footing to which a very wide range of speakers and hearers can briefly shift." (Goffman 1981, 151)

On stage during a theatrical performance Stanislavski (1963) tells us that there are three people standing where the audience sees only one. The person, the actor (also called the mechanic), and the character. They stand in the same space,

merged yet insulated from one another by the craft of the actor. They must not come together for, if they do neither the one nor the other can successfully exist in that context. The skills of the actor (the mechanics of acting) work to protect the individual from the reality of the character's existence. The construct of the interpreter gives safety to the informant in the same manner. The interpreter insulates the informant from the reality of his former, younger occupational self.

Goffman said, "An honest, sincere, serious performance is less firmly connected with the solid world than one might first assume" (Goffman, 1959:71). Although most of the interviews with my informants seemed unstaged, upon examination it can be seen that both the informant and myself, the interviewer, were scripting their questions and responses in order to afford each in their turn the best possible outcome. When I spoke to each informant I asked them where they would like to be interviewed. I thought it was my intention to hold interviews in a place conducive to open dialogue. However, after examination I realized that I was negotiating with my informants and purposefully deferring to their wishes to set up the conditions of trust that I needed to be able to carry out the interviews. My informants, without exception, made choices that best suited their needs. None of my informants surrendered the opportunity to control the time and place of the interviews. No informant allowed me to make a choice for them. David Fleming

was unable to choose the place, but he chose the time and date, and in some cases cancelled the interview on short notice. On two occasions I arrived at the penitentiary for a scheduled interview to be informed by the guard at the gate, "Mr. Fleming says 'It's not a good day.'"

Most interviews took place in the informant's home, a place of their choosing and a place of comfort and one perceived to be under their control. I was also interested in pictures, furniture and other made or purchased items that they had in their homes so in most cases it was a logical choice. It served both of our needs well. It also allowed a comfort-space where my informants could use artifacts as memory precipitators.

Oring discusses the importance of artifacts as an expression of cultural identity in "Arts, Artifacts, and Artifices of Identity." In his discussion of what he calls the "three interrelated concepts" he states: "Personal identity is shaped from experiences that are unique to the individual as well as those common to a collection of individuals" (Oring 1994, 212). Oring delineates his concepts of identity as "individual identity, personal identity and collective identity (Oring 1994, 212). My informants, where ever possible, displayed artifacts of their identities: individual, personal, and collective. The picture of Ben Scott standing on the deck of the *Ocean Spray* over the mantel in his living room, the wooden

cross on the wall behind Mark Genge, the pictures of many of the ships that Duke Collins had captained, the workshop in Morgan Colbourne's backyard, and even the tattoos openly displayed on David Fleming's forearms identified where we were and who they were, as well as who they had been. Interestingly, Morgan Colbourne also chose Middle Cove Beach for two of our interviews, where we could watch the water and the whales. Vince Collins chose my home for his interviews. Vince was the only informant who professed to be a musician. He had spent much of his recreational life performing in other people's homes. As a result, he seemed more relaxed in my home than he did in his own. Although I visited him in his home for the preliminary discussions about whether he wanted to be interviewed, he chose my home to talk to me. Although the interview spaces chosen by my informants at first appeared static, in fact they were fluid spaces. After the initial introductions were over and the interview was underway and after the informant and I became comfortable with each other there began a play of status shifting, what Goffman calls "footing changes." "A change in our footing is another way of talking about a change in our frame for events" (Goffman, 1981, 128). Each interview was like a verbal dance; at times I led, at other times my informant led. Even with the incursions of unscheduled interruptions, such as phone calls, whales breaching or the interjections of a wife calling out corrections

from the safety of her kitchen (Scott disc #1 - 3) the interviews took on all the aspects of a two-hander, two-man play complete with prologue and denouement.

The men in my research study in Newfoundland were alike in some ways to the men in Spain that Stanley Brandes called the "Men of Monteros" who, "show themselves to be concerned with two problems of identity: their place in the social hierarchy and their relationship to women" (Brandes 6, 1980). The men that I interviewed in Newfoundland didn't begin their day with the old Orthodox prayer "Thank God I wasn't born a gentile, thank God I wasn't born a slave, thank God I wasn't born a woman" but the men that I interviewed were all more than content to be men, and especially men in Newfoundland.

They relished their hard-won social standing and they enjoyed their sexual status in their current and/or remembered relationships with their wives. In their own individual way they all saw themselves as alpha men in their respective occupations, and in many ways they had been. They were all reflexive thinkers because of their age. At the time of their interviews all my informants were retired and they aged from Morgan Colbourne at sixty-two through to Nigel Rusted at ninety-seven.

They rarely saw themselves as I saw them, as elderly retired men resting after long and arduous work-lives. Instead, they saw themselves through their

memories and not their eyes which surely must have seen the aged reflection in the mirror each morning. Like many of us well on the other side of sixty, they were able to see themselves as young virile men in their prime and as respected older Newfoundlanders at the same time. It's possible to hold two opposing images in your mind at the same time and believe that both are true. I learned that time folded easily for the men I interviewed and they spoke of themselves and their past lives and themselves in their present lives at the same time. In their present lives they often spoke about their past experiences as though they were spectators at the events and not participants in those events. My informants were capable of a duality of vision not accessible to the young. Because they had already spent a good deal of time reflecting on their past experiences, they were able to distance themselves from their own past experiences and therefore they could view, or more correctly review, those past events without subjective influences.

In reviewing the play of their own lives, they took the role of the "spectator" that Augusto Boal speaks of in *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (Boal 1992, 2). It's the same male trait discussed by Jose Ortega y Gasset that Brandes chose to use to start his discussion of masculinity.

Only the person who can imitate himself to himself
is capable of being spectator to his own person and
the only individual who is capable of this is he who

has become accustomed to look at himself, contemplate himself, and give pleasure to himself through his own form of being. (Brandes 1980, 3)

At first my informants were hesitant to discuss themselves as though they were talking about someone else but, as the interviews progressed, they relaxed. They still maintained ownership of their former selves but they eventually began to rewind their lives and talk about the choices that these young versions of themselves had made and they were also able to offer other options that they may have had. They often took pleasure in poking fun at the foolish mistakes that they made when they were young men. Ultimately, they were able to see the younger versions of themselves that they were remembering as though through another's eyes. Brandes said much the same thing when quoting Ortega y Gasset, "Tell me to what you pay attention and I will tell you who you are" (Brandes 1980, 3). In many ways my informants were able to see the reality of who they were by reliving their memories and by doing so they could see who they had been by the things in their lives that they had paid attention to. Morgan Colbourne paid attention to his family first and foremost and he became a good father and husband. Duke Collins concentrated on the seasons of the sea and he became a noted ice pilot. David Fleming focused on a life of crime and he became an infamous criminal. Mark Genge dedicated his life to the spiritual lives of other people and he became a

Bishop in the Anglican church. Nigel Rusted observed and administered to the health needs of Newfoundlands and he became a famous surgeon. Ben Scott followed the schools of fish on the Grand Banks and he became a highliner.

Morgan Colbourne was modest when he told me about the time he walked out on to the ice near his home in St. Anthony to take his first seal (Colbourne disc # 1: 50:45). However, he sat up a little straighter in his chair as he told me the story about building his first skiff with his grandfather (Colbourne disc #2: 06:00). And he spoke with pride as he told me that he had never had a mortgage on his house and that he had never borrowed any money (Colbourne disc # 1: 24:40). But he beamed when he told me that his children had attended and graduated Memorial University, all without loans (Colbourne disc # 1: 23:00).

Correct information was important to Duke Collins. He began our second interview by correcting a misunderstanding that he thought he had left me with at the end of our first interview. He carefully retold the story about how ships were often “drove off” by offshore winds as they tried to sail to a safe harbour on the east coast of Newfoundland. He thought that I had not clearly understood the correct meaning of the term as it pertained to sailing and the sea. He gave a detailed description of the reasons for and risk in being “drove off.” It was important to him that I have the right information. To Duke Collins, the ice pilot,

being careful and correct in all your duties was the difference between success and failure, living and dying. A "good man" in Duke's occupational world was a man who got it right the first time. But, if he didn't, he wasn't afraid to correct any misunderstandings. It was as equally important to him that I did not attribute my learning any wrong information from him (Collins disc #2 00:00).

David Fleming commonly viewed his past actions as though they were events in another man's life. He told me about a time when this foolish young criminal, a past version of himself, stood in front of a well known judge in St. John's to answer charges of break and enter at a private Rod and Gun Club just outside the city. Fleming said all was going well until the judge insulted that younger version of himself. The magistrate called Fleming stupid for being in front of him yet again. Fleming told me that no cocky, young, street-wise St. John's tough would take that. Fleming went on to tell me that his younger self responded telling the judge that he himself wasn't so smart and that he shouldn't be hearing the case because he was a member of the gun club that Fleming had robbed. Fleming told me that he knew this because he had also stolen the membership list. The young Fleming went on to tell the judge that he knew that the judge was also known to frequent the events at the Mount Cashel Orphanage where the liquor stolen from the gun club had been sold. In young Fleming's words, "You bought

back your own booze. Who's the smart one now" (Fleming disc # 4: 40:00)?

Mark Genge got the giggles trying to tell me the story about the first truck that his family bought. They needed it to make deliveries for their general store on Campbell Avenue. He would start the story and then start laughing, and start it again. He had great fun laughing at himself as a young man who had to drive the truck all the way home in first gear. They bought it and he drove it home but he didn't know how to shift out of first gear. He knew that he was supposed to shift into second gear but he didn't know how or when.

He stared off into space as he relived the event. He was clearly seeing it in his mind as though it was being projected onto the wall of his study. He asked me to visualize a young man driving all the way home in first gear with his mother and father sitting up proudly in the back seat like royalty. The motor of the old truck was racing and gravel was spraying off the back wheels as he drove up the unpaved hills of St. John's. People stared and covering their ears as the old truck roared by. There were few vehicles in St. John's in his youth so a truck slowly passing by with its engine roaring and blowing blue smoke was an event that would gather a crowd (Genge disc #1: 18:30).

Nigel Rusted usually talked about medicine, his education in medicine, or his practice of medicine. He commonly told anecdotal episodes in the life of a

young doctor. A young doctor who learned as much from his patients and other medical practitioners as he did from the many educational institutions that he attended. In the same interview he could talk about himself as a young man at Bishop Feild College who liked sports, himself as a young doctor on the *Kyle* cruising on the Labrador and himself as an older man approaching a century of living. He would compare the three versions of himself as though they were characters in the same play. He was clearly able to “contemplate himself, and give pleasure to himself through his own form of being” (Brandes 3, 1980).

He told me in our first interview that you should “live full-out until you die” (Rusted disc #1: 24:30). He laughed at himself as an inexperienced young man. He laughed especially hard at the younger version of himself as he talked about the time he fell through the ice on a pond in Upper Island Cove while trying to impress a young girl that he liked. It was clear that he didn’t see himself an old Newfoundland man, but instead he saw himself in all the past versions of himself that he had been, all at the same time. He surely didn’t see himself as old, just older. He said that you are not old until they print your age in your obituary. On hearing his comment, I had the feeling that he wanted to write his obituary, or that he in fact already had.

Ben Scott enjoyed showing me the furniture that he made. He told me that

he would make a dresser or a cabinet each time he had a long shore leave (Scott disc # 3: 23:00). Most of the furniture in his house was hand-made by him. Ben Scott also built models of many of the ships that he had captained. Ben spoke about his life in terms of his time at sea and his time at home. He spoke about two people, Skipper Scott at sea and Ben Scott at home. He was proud of the achievements of both versions of his earlier self, but for him they were clearly two different and separate people. Ben had many stories that he wanted to tell but his memory was letting him down and many times during the interviews he became frustrated with his inability to summon up significant events and dates. He would usually call out to his wife to supply the missing information.

She was always close by busying herself with little household tasks, so she knew what was being discussed at all times. She could recall the needed facts effortlessly, which added to his discomfort. The answers were always called out by his wife from the kitchen or the living room in reply to Ben's request (Scott disc #2: 19:30). Ben died before he could tell me all the stories of his life. Life is a remembered social string of reactions. Ben's death taught me that when a man dies his voice dies with him. His story is silent unless there is someone to continue the dialogue and recall his life's lessons lacing them into an organic narrative.

Chapter Five: Structural Analysis

We have taught ourselves that it is useless to ask questions, when we have no methodology to answer them. But, between the impossible and the trivial, there may be a way that is both feasible and significant.

(R. D. Laing 1968, Introduction)

As I listened to my taped interviews I realized that I needed a structured method to help me organize the many questions and answers that comprised the bulk of the texts. I had asked my informants a battery of questions during the interviews. I had asked similar questions of each informant and at first glance their answers told me that they had lived dissimilar lives. Their lives seemed too different for me to find any points of comparison. But after listening to the interviews repeatedly I detected similarities that eventually provided the tools that I needed to create a map of their lives.

The first and most obvious similarity is that they were all born in Newfoundland. The second is that they were all born early in the twentieth century. The third is that they were all born before Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949. The result of the combination of these three circumstances is that all the older men that I interviewed were born and grew up in Newfoundland when outport life was still the accepted standard by which they were to be judged. They

grew up in a time in Newfoundland when most people and most things were in some way connected to fishing and to the sea. They were all subject to similar social, financial and occupational pressures, and they all had to make their social and occupational decisions based on the realities of their time and place.

Once I understood this simple reality the apparent differences between my informants and the lives that they had lived seemed to be the result of a simple social veneer. It didn't matter whether they were doctor or bishop, captain or ice pilot, fisherman or criminal, they all had to live in the same society in the same time. It was I who had brought the obvious differences to the forefront because of the way that I approached the social standing of each informant. I tried to heed the warning words of Martin Lovelace that "The special nature of the text obtained through the life history interview demands a mode of analysis which is sensitive to rhetoric in general and which will enable the life history to be seen as the informant's argument in his own behalf" (Lovelace 1977, 215). But as usual, I proceeded headlong in my own way to learn by my own mistakes.

My approach to each set of interviews and the questions that I used were basically the same for each informant. But I unwittingly approached each informant differently based on my own social-status reaction to their occupations. As a result I had unknowingly created a pattern that each man had to adapt to in

order to answer my questions. My questions and the concentrated nature of the interview situation encouraged each informant to interpret his life story through his occupation experiences. If in analysis I only focused on the questions and answers pertaining to occupation, then there appeared to be few similarities amongst them. However, when I grouped my questions into categories it became clear that there was another pattern to their answers.

My approach to each set of interviews was to start by asking questions about where and when they were born, followed by questions about their mother and father and early family life and then questions about occupational choices and ending with questions about the present. The questions I used compelled each man to revisit his life from its beginning up to and including the present. The structure that I habitually placed on the interviews pressed each man to return to his memories and reorganize all the memories of his life in a linear way from his birth through his early life, his coming of age, his first experience of love and loss, his leaving his parents' home, his first near-death experience when he realized that he was mortal, and so on through all the major points of his life to the point where each informant eventually talked about his own death.

When I was finally able to process all that they had told me I realized that, although I had asked my questions assuming that they were all sequentially linked

and along a straight time-line from my informant's birth to the present day, they had been answered in a way that changed my straight-line thinking to suit a more holistic way of understanding. For many people, including my informants, birth and death are simply the alpha and omega of their self-awareness. The time-tested cognition of the men that I interviewed allowed them access to any point on that band of self-awareness. Their memories formed a wide curve of thinking that connected the end to the beginning. For them, memory recall is a random-access activity; it is neither linear nor sequential.

My early technical training and my current academic experience taught me to begin at the beginning and work logically and methodically through the material until the end goal was achieved. Teaching secondary school for twenty-five years taught me that the teacher often learns as much from the students as the students learn from the teacher. My informants had accrued decades of experiences that they could recall at will. Their ability to recall was not predicated on time but instead it was based on the need to access one of the many experience-related events from their past occupational lives. They turned my straight-line format into a circle that led their thinking, and therefore my research, back to the beginning. Once I realized this I looked for a structural approach that suited their answers not my questions, their lives not my research.

I looked at the structural analysis methods of scholars such as Lord Raglan, Levi-Strauss and Vladimir Propp but I found that their work was better suited to the analysis of myth and magic than the narratives of lives lived. Their work is well designed for the analysis of the heroes of folktales such as Jack in Jack Tales and the heroes of classical tales such those of Romulus and Remus, Odysseus and Hercules. Although the analysis methodology of Levi-Strauss and Propp was not useful for my interpretation of the lives of my informants, it was nonetheless a good place to start because heroes have been and continue to be a significant part of the world's written as well as oral literature. Myth and magic and classical hero types are common in everything from bed-time stories, cartoons, comic books to university English courses. And it is against hero models that everyday men's lives are often compared.

My early education studying the classical heroes of Greece and Rome and my further education in twentieth century literature and drama reminded me of Joseph Campbell's "Hero Quest Cycle." Campbell described his "Hero Quest Cycle" as an adventure where, a man leaves his everyday life and, "Ventures forth from the word of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from his adventure with a power to bestow boons on his fellow man." (Campbell

1949, 30) Campbell developed his “Hero Quest Cycle” in his book *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (Campbell 1949, 30, 245, 266). Campbell developed his circular graphic representation of the life of the hero by abstracting the life-tales of many of the world’s traditional heroes. His intention was that the lives of all heroes and the lives of all men who strived to rise above their birth-station could be analyzed using his “monomyth” ideas. His concept of a life experience as a cycle that returned to the starting point was a good fit for my research as well as my informants’ holistic memory retrieval methods. My informants’ lives had been a series of searches: searches for knowledge, searches for status, searches for excitement, searches for fame, searches for a life partner, and searches for self awareness.

Campbell's graphic is purposefully elementary because it is designed to incorporate any and all of life’s struggles. It has another interesting characteristic, it implies movement. Its circularity suggests the movement of time as it impacts on the natural life cycle. Campbell’s “Hero Quest Cycle” is commonly used to interpret the everyday struggles of characters in literature such as that of “Huck” in *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain and Ishmael in *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville. It is equally well suited to analyze the life stories of my informants. I saw it as a useful tool that I could to analyze the lives of the men that I interviewed using an

adaptation of Campbell's "Hero Quest Cycle," one that I call an "Identity Ordeal Cycle."

I adapted Campbell's circle graphic into an octagon to more clearly represent the decision points in the lives of my informants. The circle implies effortless movement. My informants' lives were certainly not effortless. Campbell was also speaking of heroes only, and he incorporated fate as a major factor. Fate was not a major factor in the lives of the men that I interviewed. I changed Campbell's "Supreme Ordeal" into "Identity Ordeal" because personal and cultural loss as a result of separation from Newfoundland was a significant element in the lives of my informants. For Campbell's heroes the greatest character challenge was the "Supreme Ordeal" commonly a battle against some external force: man against the supernatural, man against man, man against nature. For my informants the greatest challenge was an "Identity Ordeal" precipitated by separation from "Home." (Newfoundland and family) Even though we now live in a digital world, I reversed the rotation from counterclockwise to clockwise because my graphic also represents the natural flow of time as it impacts on the lives of my informants. Time still moves from left to right for me and therefore it also moves clockwise.

Although Campbell's graphic and also mine are basically circles, they are fixed on an X/Y axis. The graphic shows that the "Call to Adventure" and the

“Identity Ordeal” are at opposite ends of the vertical “X” axis and the “Crossing Over” and “Return Crossing” form the ends of the horizontal “Y” axis. I call my graphic the “Identity Ordeal Cycle” because the “Call to Adventure” leads directly to the “Identity Ordeal” as long as the participant decides to continue to move forward instead of turning back. All of my informants chose to continue. In doing so, they fashioned the men that they were to become as they discovered and passed the many test that their individual paths offered them.

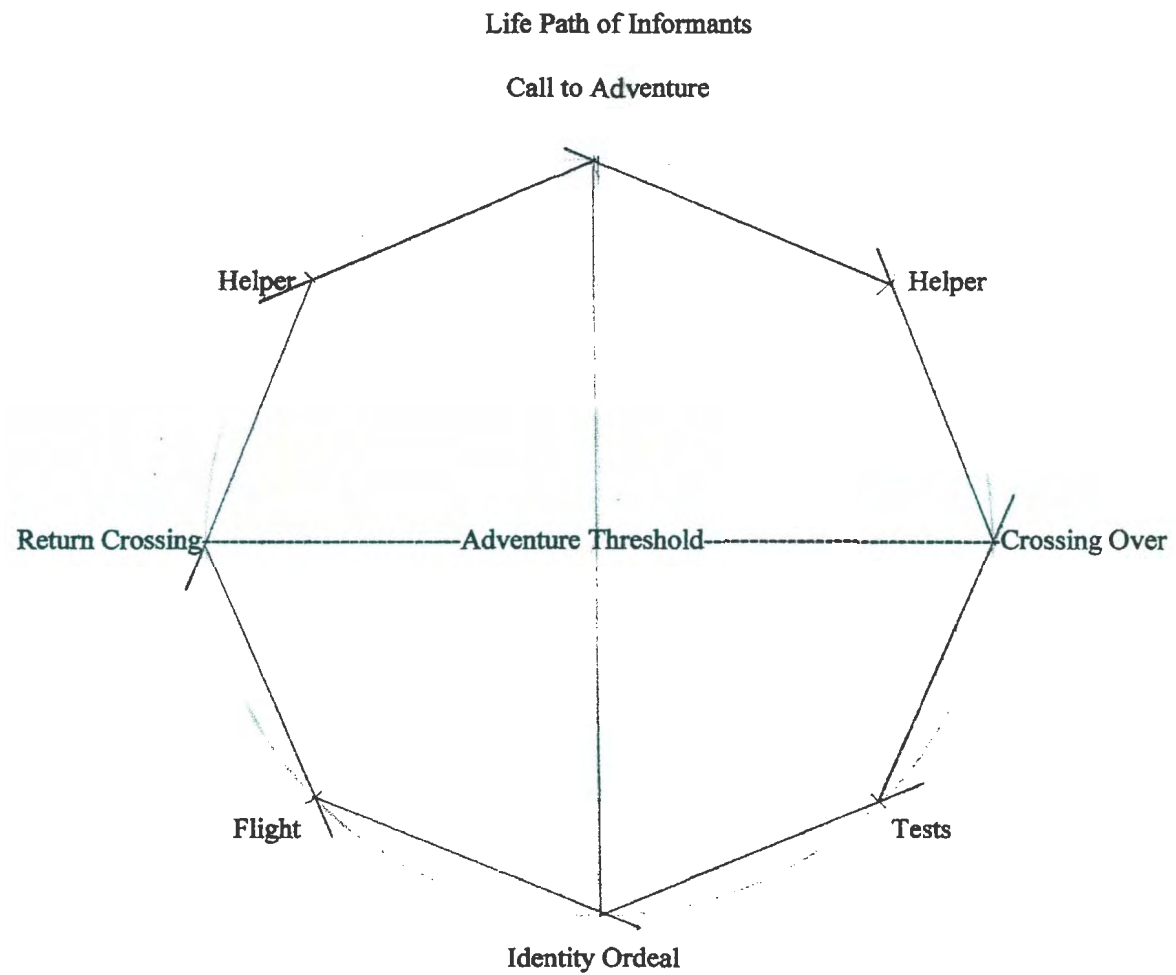


Figure drawn by G. L. - an adaptation of Joseph Campbell's "Hero Cycle" found in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*. / denotes the informant's decision.

Informant	Call	Helper	Crossing	Tests	Ordeal	Flight	Helper	Return
Morgan Colbourne	A	T	Op	Q/m	D/I	E/Ch	Wf	R
Duke Collins	Wk/Sv	F	S	Q/a	D/Sw	E/Ch	Wf	R
Vince Collins	Wk/Sv	B	Op	Q/a	D/Is	S/Ch	Wf	R
David Fleming	A/N	T	Op	Q/p	D/Ic	E/Ch	Wf/Cd	R/N
Mark Genge	Sv	Sn/M	Os	Q/r	Sn	R	Wf	R/Sv
Nigel Rusted	Sv	F	Os	Q/m	Is	R	Wf	R/Sv
Ben Scott	Wk/Sv	F	Op	Q/a	D/Sw	R	Wf	R

Legend: Call: Work - Wk, Service - Sv, Necessity - N, Adventure - A

Helper: Father - F, Mother - M, Teacher - T, Supernatural - Sn Friend - f, Brother - B

Crossing: Outport - Op, Mainland - M, States - St, Overseas - Os

Tests: Qualifications - Q (military, at sea, prison, medical, religious)

Ordeal: Death threat - D, Incarceration - Ic, Isolation - Is, Shipwreck - Sw, Supernatural - Sn

Flight: Escape - E, Change in occupation - Ch, Retirement - R

Helper: Wife - Wf, Supernatural - Sn, Other - Ot, Children - Cd,

Return: Work - Wk, Service - Sv, Necessity - N, Death, Retirement - R

Using my adaptation of Campbell's graphic as a framework, I found I could easily hang the major events in my informants' lives on the eight corners of the octagon. The octagon worked well as it allowed me to view the path of each of my informants' lives and understand the totality of that life in the same way that a photograph can be perceived as a whole thing while at the same time individual parts of that photograph can be studied as discrete parts. I found I had a holistic way of analyzing the interviews and yet I could still isolate and concentrate on any of the eight major parts of the graphic. Using the "Identity Ordeal" graphic I found that there were many points of comparison in the lives of the subjects that I interviewed.

Campbell's fundamental premise is that there are three essential stages of the maturation process in the lives of all heroes: "separation, initiation, and return" (Campbell 1949, 30, 245, 266). Campbell's monomyth hero-quest cycle closely parallels the ideas developed by Arnold van Gennep in his book *The Rites of Passage*. Gennep posited three phases found in all rites of passage: "separation, transition and incorporation" (Van Gennep 1960,11). The same three stages are common in the lives of my informants. Each man followed his own path towards his desired adventure, for most it was an occupational goal. Each man searched out an occupation based on his own perceived needs. Even though each man was

following his own head each man also followed the path of the “Identity Ordeal Cycle.” The “Call to Adventure” was different for each man. For Morgan Colbourne it was as much his need to leave a life designed for him by his father as it was his need to find a life of adventure. For Bishop Genge it was a religious catharsis, it was a call from his god to follow the path of Jesus and to serve his fellow man. For Nigel Rusted it was his desire to serve the medical needs of his fellow Newfoundlanders.

The eight points of the octagonal “Identity Ordeal Graphic” represent eight of many decisions that each man made as he attempted to navigate his way towards the goals that he set for himself. The goals may be varied: occupational, marital, social, religious or financial, but the paths followed to achieve the goals are ostensibly the same. The goal must first be chosen and decision made to achieve that goal. Goals were formulated at the “Call to Adventure.” For my informants it was a clearly defined and defining point in their lives. It was a memory of a time in their early lives that stood out as a pivot point, a fork in their roadway to maturation.

My informants told me that they had set goals for themselves early in their lives. They related these goals to their self worth. Even though my informants are from dissimilar backgrounds and they chose different occupations and life paths,

they all professed to the belief that their reputation was at the centre of their livelihood and their self-worth. A belief that Malcolm Gladwell calls a “Culture of Honour” (Gladwell 2008, 167). Morgan Colbourne was in the military, Duke Collins was in the merchant marine, Vince Collins was a fisherman and a musician, David Fleming was a self-confessed “criminal,” Mark Genge was an Anglican Bishop, Nigel Rusted was a medical doctor and Ben Scott was a dragger captain yet they all felt the same about their obligations to their respective occupations, to their families, to Newfoundland and to themselves.

Accompanying the “Identity Ordeal Cycle” graphic I have attached a legend that explains the eight decision points on the octagon. It would be cluttered and confusing to have all but the most basic information on the graphic. The legend identifies the specific participants involved at the decisions points for each of my informants. Each informant followed the same path, but at each decision point my informants often had different people act as helper. My informants crossed over the “Adventure Threshold” for different reasons, their “Identity Ordeals” were unique and diverse pressures caused their return.

Within the overall structure of the “Identity Ordeal Cycle” I used some of the ideas developed by work of William Labov and Joshua Waletzky in their 1967 “Narrative Analysis” (Labov and Waletzky 1977). When I unpacked some of the

life-experience narratives of my informants I recognized similar structures in their use of language, such as references to “hard times” and “hard men.” Labov and Waletzky’s focus on the use vernacular speech in story-telling, folktales, memoirs, interviews and everyday speech helped me to isolate specific words and phrases that identified significant similarities in the social and cultural background of my informants. Labov and Waletzky’s ideas allowed me to recognize culturally specific language I might have missed because of my Newfoundland background. The graphic on page 130 shows the eight corners of the cycle, from Call to Adventure through Helper, Crossing Over, Tests, Identity Ordeal, Fight, Return Crossing, Helper and back to Call to Adventure and the legend on page 131 identifies the important feature of each point to each informant. The rotation is clockwise and the arrow at each corner indicates a decision opportunity in the life path of my informants. The most important decision is the first, the decision to seek out adventure. The men that I included in my research all took the first step, and subsequently decided at each decision opportunity to continue to move forward. The legend on page 131 explains the specific details of each of decision point for each informant. For some informants, the Call to Adventure was an interest in a specific occupation therefore work-related; for some it was an economic necessity and for others it was simply adventure. The helpers were often

different as well. The helpers at the cross-over point were also often different from those at the return crossing point. Each man experienced his movement through the "Identity Ordeal Cycle" in his way subject to his original decision combined with each subsequent decision along the way. There are some similarities in the reasons my informants gave for beginning on their path. Duke Collins, Vince Collins and Ben Scott all stated that their call to adventure was both work and service based, while Mark Genge's and Nigel Rusted's reasons were purely service based.

Identity Ordeal Cycle

Tell me, Muse, of the man of many ways, who
was driven far journeys. ... Many were they whose
cities he saw, whose minds he learned of, many
the pains he suffered in his spirit on the wide sea,
struggling for his own life and the homecoming
of his companions - The Odyssey of Homer, Book 1

Identity Ordeal Cycle - Morgan Colbourne

Call to Adventure:

Morgan Colbourne was born in 1943 in St. Anthony on north east tip of the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland. He lived there from his birth until his graduation from high school. He lived a life of boyhood adventures exploring the

shoreline near his home. His call to adventure developed out of his interest to see the world outside his isolated outport home. His life path to adventure was not towards the natural world but away from it. His Identity Ordeal Cycle began when he decided to leave St. Anthony to explore Newfoundland. He headed for St. John's. For Morgan St. John's was a metropolis. It was a "world-away" from his life in St. Anthony. He didn't intend to leave the island. He only wanted to explore Newfoundland.

Helper:

Morgan's helper on his way to his life adventure was his education, specifically his teachers. He wanted to learn and he wanted to use what he had learned in his life's work. His father wanted him to become a fisherman like himself. He wanted Morgan to stay and become the human machinery that the outport fishing life demanded. Morgan didn't want to become a fisherman, just because his father wanted him to, or just because he was young and fit and strong and would be good at it. He wanted more.

Crossing:

When Morgan chose to leave St. Anthony he started a journey of many sequentially-connected events that led to him crossing his adventure threshold. The first and therefore the most important was his leaving his outport home and

family. Without the interest and will to leave the security of the life that he knew and understood for one of unknown futures Morgan would not have started his adventure cycle. (This is true of all informants.) The next decision that led Morgan directly to him crossing the adventure threshold and leaving Newfoundland was his decision to join the military. It was surely the most life-altering decision that he made and the one that took him the farthest distance in terms of geography as well as personal and cultural identity.

Morgan's technical training as a welder and his decision to join the military led to his leaving Newfoundland. Although for Morgan it was a time in his life that helped to fortify his belief in himself, it was also a time that threatened his cultural identity the most. The military has often been described as a mother, in that it looks after you for life and in death and makes all your decisions for you. Unfortunately, it also takes away many personal choices as well. For Morgan, his years in the military were rewarding, however they were also the only years of his life, other than those years when he was a young boy, when he had the least control over his future. His decisions were made for him in most cases and he told me that he only knew after the fact when the military had orchestrated most of the conditions that led to his next occupational or travel experience.

Tests:

Morgan told me that the military had planned his participation in the special forces division because he had perfected special underwater skills in cutting and welding for which they had future needs. Morgan's many skills took him further and further away from Newfoundland. The greater his working skill-set, the more tests he successfully passed, and the greater the distance it took him away from his home and his sense of who he was culturally. For Morgan crossing over the adventure threshold and his continued success in all the test that the military subjected him to led to his identity ordeal and therefore to his decision to return to Newfoundland. His leaving and his successes contained the reasons for his return.

Identity Ordeal:

Morgan told me that the very thing that made him a Newfoundlander was the thing that took him away from Newfoundland. His work-based outport skill-set was his most valuable asset. He told me of one event that led to his decision to do the hard work that would eventually take him back to Newfoundland. The company was on a bivouac in the north. (On this, like many other occasions, Morgan could not and would not tell me where they were or why they were there.) It was raining, cold and windy. One of the tents had a tear in it and it was leaking and they had no repair kits with them. One of the officers came into the tent where Morgan was and asked if there were any Newfoundlanders in the tent. Morgan

identified himself and therefore he volunteered. By the looks that Morgan gave me as he told this story it was clear that Morgan thought the officer knew he was a Newfoundlander before he asked the question and that he would identify himself as a Newfoundlander when asked. The fact that the officer only approached one tent supported Morgan's suspicions. Morgan fixed the tent with a piece of his waterproof pants, a candle, and a lighter.

For Morgan this simple story was a metaphor for his future. If he stayed in the military he was sure that it would keep him away from Newfoundland. Morgan was sure that if stayed away from Newfoundland he, or at least the Newfoundland part of him, would surely be consumed by the needs of the military. And without the support of the culture of his origin he would cease to be the Newfoundland man that he was and wanted to be.

Flight:

Morgan returned to Newfoundland as soon as he left the military. For him the flight and the return which led to the adventure threshold crossing were both instigated by him and completely under his control therefore they was no helper other than himself.

Identity Ordeal Cycle - Captain Duke Collins

Call to Adventure:

Duke Collins was born 1930 in Carmanville, Newfoundland, an outport community on the shore of Hamilton Sound. Hamilton Sound is a large body of water protected from the north by Fogo Island. His grandfather and father owned and operated a merchant marine cargo business. Duke's call to adventure came as a natural consequence as he accepted the sea-based life style of his family. He didn't leave his family to travel towards his adventure, he joined the family business and followed the other men in his family as they shipped cargo across the Atlantic Ocean.

Duke grew up on his family's sailing ships. Going to sea was as normal for Duke as taking a school bus is for most young people today. Duke's Identity Ordeal Cycle began just after World War Two when he traveled with his father to San Francisco to buy a decommissioned ship from the American Navy. For Duke it was the first time that he thought about his life and what he wanted to become. After his return to Newfoundland he had successfully passed the first of his many test as a sailor and he had decided how he would spend the rest of his life.

Helper:

Duke's helper was his father. Duke's father built the sailing ships that he sailed. Duke's grandfather did the same. Duke's father and grandfather were his

mentors. They took him along on their adventures. He learned how to sail and how to become a captain as he learned to love the sea.

Crossing:

When Duke went to San Francisco he left the sail-powered outport-world of Newfoundland and the waters of the North Atlantic and he entered the steel-hulled diesel-driven world of California and the waters of the Pacific. He crossed over a continent by air and train and returned by sea. He steamed south through a hurricane passing through the Panama Canal before he turned seventeen. He was well aware that he had crossed over a threshold of adventure into a new life and along with it came an understanding of the path his life would take.

When Duke left Newfoundland for San Francisco it started a sequence of related events that took him through the complete identity ordeal cycle before he returned home. He was tested by the natural elements as well as by his father and the other sailors on the trip home. With the help of his father he crossed over the adventure threshold and moved through his tests, his identity ordeal, his flight and his return crossing before he turned seventeen. He returned to Newfoundland a confident young sailor who knew exactly what he wanted to become and how he wanted to spend his life.

Captain Duke Collins' life became an interconnected series of adventures on

the sea. In many ways he lived on the adventure threshold for most of his occupational life. He told me if he had the opportunity to live it all over again he would choose to be a sailor again. (Bob Bartlett said the same in *The Log of Bob Bartlett* 2006, 307)

Identity Ordeal Cycle - David Fleming

Call to Adventure:

David Fleming was born in 1940 in the small outport community of Portugal Cove, a few miles north of St. John's on the Avalon Peninsula. David did not choose his call to adventure; it was foisted upon him by religious-educational conditions beyond his control. He was an outspoken young man who did not take criticism well. A typical classroom conflict with one of his teachers, a Roman Catholic nun, led to a confrontation between Fleming and the Roman Catholic priest who was the principal of the elementary school that Fleming was attending. The conflict became violent and Fleming left school before he turned fourteen.

Helper:

Fleming's helper on his first movement across the adventure threshold was also his antagonist not his protagonist. Unlike my other informants, for Fleming most of his movement towards and through his adventure cycle was driven by conflict. He rarely moved towards positive life experience but instead moved away

from what he perceived as the negative consequences of any compromising behaviour. Once he crossed over his adventure threshold his helpers and tests were all part of his continued life as a criminal.

He was tested by the other criminals in his social group as they proceeded to improve their skills as safe-crackers and thieves. He was further tested by the legal system as he succeeded in building a reputation as a noteworthy criminal in St. John's. He was caught and tried many times for his exploits in and around St. John's. He achieved fame for his failure. This fortified his belief that any compromise would only weaken him as a man and as a criminal. His public reputation was a result of his legal convictions, whereas his professional reputation was a result of his successes. Much of his criminal life remains unknown to the everyday public, the reality of his daily life is known only to others who plied the same trade.

Crossing:

David Fleming's principal adventure threshold crossing came about as a result of his continued incarceration for his habitual criminal conduct. It led directly to his identity ordeal. He was convicted and sentenced and incarcerated many times at the penitentiary in St. John's and because the types of criminal activity he was convicted of and the subsequent sentences that he received

combined with overcrowding in the penitentiary in St. John's he was also incarcerated in many of the other penitentiaries across Canada. It was during these legally-enforced extended stays away from Newfoundland that he experienced his identity crisis. As soon as he was released from his last stay in prison in Nova Scotia he returned to Newfoundland vowing never to leave again.

He was again arrested, charged and convicted as soon as he returned to Portugal Cove. This last incarceration proved to be Fleming's Achilles' heel. The Crown attested that he was an habitual criminal and they proceeded against him with the charge of dangerous offender. David Fleming contested the charge for the extent of his incarceration and with the help of his lawyer Bob Buckingham successfully defended himself and was finally released from prison. Although the last charges against David Fleming were eventually overturned, he had been in prison for almost a decade trying to prove his innocence. Although Fleming was finally successful in winning his release from prison, his achievement was short-lived. He died of cancer on March 29, 2004, a few months after his release. David Fleming believed that he contracted cancer from inhaling second-hand smoke during his years in prison. Cancer became a cruel benefactor for Fleming. His failing health was the mitigating circumstance that led to his release from prison.

Identity Ordeal Cycle - Mark Genge

Call to Adventure:

Mark Genge's life stands in stark contrast to that of David Fleming. Their specific calls to adventure could not be more different. Bishop Mark received his call to the ministry while on a walk back to the grocery store that he and his brothers operated in the west end of St. John's. He described it as an awakening. He told me that the sun shone through the clouds straight at him and specifically for him and that it was a call to serve the spiritual needs of his fellow Newfoundlanders and that it came directly from God. He immediately told his mother and father who acted as his earthly helpers.

Helper:

Bishop Genge attributed many of his achievements, as he attempted to follow his call to the ministry, to the help that he received from his parents. They were supportive of his efforts and understanding of his desires. But he ultimately attributed his success to "the will of God."

Crossing:

Bishop Genge and his wife left Newfoundland many times. It was necessary for them to leave Newfoundland for extended periods of time to achieve their

educational and religious goals and these sojourns were definitely adventures, but they never dissuaded Bishop Mark or his wife from their chosen path. They returned each time, although there were many possible greater opportunities on the mainland as well as in England, where they lived together while continuing their educations. He was tested many times by the opportunities offered him while he was away. He realized, as a result of these tests, that his true test awaited him within his ministry in Newfoundland. Bishop Genge told me that he lived the greatest of all adventures, the path of Jesus. In following the path set out for him by God, he felt that he gained a greater understanding of himself as a man and as a Newfoundlander.

Identity Ordeal Cycle - Nigel Rusted

Call to Adventure:

Nigel Rusted was born in Salvage, Bonavista Bay on July 1st, 1907, where his father was an Anglican minister. The family moved there to Cupids, Conception Bay, and finally to St. John's as his father's career in the ministry grew. Nigel Rusted decided early that he wanted to be a doctor. He attended university in St. John's and finished his degree in Nova Scotia. At first glance this alone might seem to be an adventure crossing for any young man early in the

nineteenth century but for Nigel it was all just fun. His call to adventure came as an his opportunity to serve Newfoundlanders in the isolated outports of Newfoundland, first on the Labrador in 1930 and 1931 and again later on the South Coast in 1935. During the final years of his medical training he served on the hospital ship the S. S. *Kyle* as it serviced the outport communities along the Labrador coast. After graduation in 1935 he served again this time on the M. V. *Lady Anderson* as it serviced the medical needs of the outports along the South Coast of Newfoundland from Burnt Islands to Coombs Cove. This was indeed a call to adventure and it proved to be the occupational and personal opportunity that Rusted needed. During his summers on the Labrador coast and his year on the South Coast Dr. Rusted developed his commitment to the medical needs of his fellow Newfoundlanders, while at the same time he strengthened his own cultural connections to Newfoundland and to it's people.

Helper:

Dr. Rusted admitted that there were many people who helped him to achieve his sense of his personal and cultural self. He attributes much of his early successes to his parents, but he also credits his continued success, as a doctor and as a Newfoundlander, to many people who helped him along the way, from politicians such as Sir John Puddester who christened the M. V. *Lady Anderson*,

religious leaders such as Canon A. H. Howitt a family friend who gave the prayer of dedication and finally to his many patients who eventually, after many failures and much practice, made him into a doctor.

Return:

Nigel Rusted had many opportunities to work and live away. He was offered positions in the United States and in Canada. Each time some happenstance event interceded and changed his path allowing him to return to Newfoundland. Dr. Rusted attributes luck not fate with the ultimate responsibility for him returning to Newfoundland, but he takes full credit for his decisions and continued efforts to stay in Newfoundland.

Identity Ordeal Cycle - Ben Scott

Call to Adventure:

Ben Scott was born in Little Harbour, Fortune Bay, in 1914, on the South Coast of Newfoundland. He was born into a fishing family in a fishing community. His future was a certainty. He was going to fish. The only choice that he had was where he was going to fish, how he was going to fish, what type of fish he was going to catch. His success was determined by hard work. His call to adventure came when he was young. As a young boy he started hand-lining for codfish from

a dory. His family was part of the inshore fishery and it was his responsibility, as a member of an outport working family, to fish as soon as he was able. His life revolved around the sea and the cod stocks along the South Coast of Newfoundland. He fished out of his home community for many years building the experience and knowledge he would need to be successful later in life when he went out on his own. He had many minor calls to adventure such as going to the Labrador to cut wood when he was still a young teenager. However, he would not call such trips adventures, just part of what every outport young man was doing.

His fundamental call to adventure came when he accepted a position as a captain of one of the then-new steel-hulled dragger fishing boats used to fish for cod on the Grand Banks. It was a significant change from the ships that he was used to piloting and one that he said he knew was going to be the death of the off-shore fishery in Newfoundland. This occupational choice combined with his knowledge of the negative affects that these fish-killing methods would have on Newfoundland led him to his Identity Ordeal.

He was tested many times during his years at sea and he was proud of the fact that he had never lost a man at sea. He achieved fame when he was named a "high-liner" (Story D. N. E. 1982, 253) by his employers, Job Brothers of St. John's. He told me that he never doubted himself or the men that he sailed with,

because he hand-picked the men in his crew. He was offered work in Nova Scotia and in Maine but he refused any long-term work away because it would take him away from Newfoundland for too long. Ben Scott never wavered in his belief in himself, his men or his life in Newfoundland. His helper in all of his adventures was always his wife. To Ben Scott she represented all that is of value in Newfoundland. Each time he went to sea he vowed to his wife that he would return to her, and he never failed her.

All of my informants traveled through the Identity Ordeal Cycle in their own way. Each man was tested in many ways, too many to describe in detail. Each man made a cognitive decision to stay in Newfoundland even through they all had to leave for extended periods of time. It was their leaving that enforced their will to return and remain in Newfoundland.

Chapter Six: Other Themes: Gardens and Good men

We watch with particular interest those stories
that are about us, that speak to who we are.
The fundamental thing about culture is that
it's who we are. (Colm Feore, interview with
Jian Ghomeshi, *Q*, CBC Radio, November 24, 2008)

Recent work about men's traditional culture includes *It's a Working Man's Town: Male Working-Class Culture* by Thomas Dunk. In his second edition preface he revisits many of the social and economic theories about class and working-class men that he discussed in the earlier book. He states his underlying intentions for writing the preface when he states, "we now know more about the operation of race, ethnicity, gender, age, place and sexual persuasion than we did and this has immeasurably enlightened our understanding of the social world" (Dunk 2003, xvii).

Dunk's study is an important adjunct to my thesis research because it is an in-depth investigation into the working-lives of men. He states in print many of the opinions that I have only been brave enough to think. He clearly has an affinity for the men that he researched, a problem that I struggled with and one that surely impacted my objectivity, just as it seems to have impacted his. His writing shows his respect for these men and also it discloses a dichotomy of thinking that he

explains when he says, “ The rules of lob-ball ... or the logic of male, working-class common-sense thought are rarely useful items of discussion at academic dinner parties if one is hoping to impress colleagues with one’s depth of esoteric learning or the mysteries of one’s unique culture” (Dunk 2003, xv).

The “physically tough guys” (Dunk 2003, xxiii) that Dunk talks about, when he places the men in his study in the same category as the working-class men who were seen as real men as a result of their rescue actions during and after September 11, 2001, are cut from the same cloth as the men that I interviewed for my thesis in Newfoundland. They are either physically and mentally well suited for the work that they do or they have been able to adapt to the demanding conditions of their work.

Dunk makes another point of value for me and my research on the last page of preface. He is commenting on the changes that have taken place in the years since he did the original research. Many of his informants have married and are raising children. Dunk points out the prominent influence of family culture when he says, “Yet our conversation also highlighted the way children are being socialized into familiar behavioural patterns” (Dunk 2003, xxiv). His comment reminded me of the stories my informants told about their years growing up in their own families of origin in Newfoundland and how important those family

structures were to their sense of who they were and what they could become.

Dunk states, “Men live their actions.” If we are to accept Dunk’s premise, that men live through and by what they do, then their actions must in many ways define who they are. He further explains his statement by saying, “This ‘unconscious’ structure [what he calls an ideology] permeates society, it is a medium or fabric from which men cannot be extricated, for it is the way we live: in ideology, ... *by and through ideology* [italics in original]” (Dunk 2006, 37).

The men in Dunk’s study group all work in the same occupation and therefore exhibit many like-minded attitudes and behaviours. His work is important in that it details many socio-political and socio-economic attitudes of a selected group of working men. However, the men in his subject group are connected specifically by occupation and not by place of birth and/or the culture of that place of birth. The men in his study group are also younger and still living their work years. My informants, like myself, are all retired and therefore looking back on their work-lives. That being said he does discuss some of the ideas that I struggled with in my thesis. For example, in chapter six he states “Common sense and anti-intellectualism are important themes in working-class culture” (Dunk 2006, 132). These ideas are important, but they were not germane to my thesis. They do not help me in my attempts to understand how older men build their

identities.

Another recent work that discusses some of the same ideas that I include in my thesis is *Men at Play: A Working Understanding of Professional Hockey*. In his book Robidoux states that games such as hockey, “engage oneself completely in the working environment” (Robidoux c2001, 16) and he uses Caillois's concept of work that is “engaged in with precise limits of time and place.” to proof that games that are “essentially a separate occupation carefully isolated from the rest of life” (Caillois 1961,6) become productive mechanism within the working class social structure. Robidoux attests that men who play professional games, such as hockey, are required to produce a game persona, public image of themselves that they perform at their game-based occupations. Within the male-based game-as-work paradigm that Robidoux established in his book his discussions about male character performance as a public image work well to establish a marketable monetary-based performance of male-as-sport-hero. However, the men in his study group are as much actors as they are artisans and their public personas are more a refection of their hockey fans entertainment needs than they are of any work-based requirements of their occupational skill-set.

Robidoux discusses games as though they are work because those who play them professionally are paid to play, they are still games. My research has been

primarily work-life based tied to the social and family needs of men in Newfoundland. I asked no questions about hockey, or games like hockey, and my informants offered no information or opinions about professional games during the interviews. As my interests were primarily work-life related my questions were designed to obtain information about my informants early work-lives.

Chris Rojek states: "Hegemony is therefore to be understood as a type of domination which is based on the active consent of the subordinate group" (Rojek 1985, 31). Although all of my informants spoke about the difficulties in their various occupations that resulted from their specific occupational administrations, the fish merchants, the hospital medical board, the police, it was not their main concern. The hegemony that all of my informants struggled with was the natural world where they worked: the sea, the fight against disease, distance and time.

In an interview with Kathryn Sorrells, associate editor of *The Edge*, *The E-Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Edward T. Hall said, "The reality of the culture is defined by the people who share it. Not really anything else" (Sorrells 1998, 4). In other words, the substance of a culture can only be truly understood by members of that culture. Culture is by nature focused inward not outward, especially in times of political or economic stress or in multi-cultural or inter-cultural situations. What any researcher studying any culture from outside that

culture learns, may only be what seeps out by accident, or conversely what is presented by the culture to defend itself from degradation from outside sources. Therefore, any researcher who is from outside the social group being investigated will invariably have an etic understanding of the internal workings of that culture. Communications used within the culture are emic, both specific to that culture and an indicator of that culture. "Culture is holistic" (Hall 1966, 5). All the parts are connected and any one part is representative of the whole. A single word can represent a whole culture.

In 1983 Peter Neary and Patrick O'Flaherty compiled a sequence of pictures that captured the gist of outport cultural life in Newfoundland during the early 1900s. They titled the book *Part of the Main: An Illustrated History of Newfoundland and Labrador*. Neary and O'Flaherty hint at their reasons for assembling this "visual history" (Neary, O'Flaherty 1983 preface) by using "Part of the Main" as the opening part of the Title. "Part of the main" is taken from John Donne's Meditation XVII. Meditation XVII emphasizes the connectedness of all mankind. In a holistic way any one man is representative of all men. In the same way "Part of the Main" connects the people of Newfoundland to the history of Newfoundland and it connects people who live in Newfoundland today with all of the other peoples who have lived in Newfoundland. It connects the people to the

soil and to the rocks, and it connects the people to the water and to the fish. The one is in the other and the other in the one. They are all “part of the main.” Any Newfoundlander can by this sense represent all Newfoundlanders.

Donne’s Meditation XVII has been the source of other book titles as well, for example *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway. Most of Hemingway’s novels feature a uniquely Hemingway male hero. In the 2005 documentary volume of Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*, Philip Young, the American literature critic, well known for his essays on Hemingway, called this character a “code hero” (Hemingway 2005). Code heroes are men who are emblematic of the culture they represent. They follow the code of behaviour of their culture. They are holistic heroes of their cultures, in that within them all parts of their culture can be seen. They are also men who are sentient; they are aware of who they are and how they are connected to their respective cultures. As different and as disparate as the works of Donne, Hemingway and Neary and O’Flaherty may seem they all discuss the same issues: the connectedness of all things in nature, the connectedness of a people to their place and space and therefore the connectedness of a people to their cultural context. The esoteric musings by Donne, the gritty writing by Hemingway and the artistic pictorial representations brought together by Neary and O’Flaherty are all saying the same thing – culture is

holistic.

In the introduction to *The Drama of the Gifted Child: The Search for the True Self*, Alice Miller said, “We live in a culture that encourages us not to take our own suffering seriously, but rather to make light of it or even to laugh about it. What is more, this attitude is regarded as a virtue, and many people are proud of their lack of sensitivity toward their own fate” (Miller 1990 xi). During my research I spoke to many older Newfoundland men, as well as other older men in Ireland and Ontario. Many of the men I talked to exhibited just such a lighthearted view of their lives lived. I was not able to interview all of these men, even though they may have had much to say. However what they did say to me informed my research. What I learned about older men and their connection to their culture has fueled my research. Their well-aged understandings of their role in their many occupations and the connection of their occupations to their specific cultures, helped to focus my research. My search for a hero construct amongst the life stories of these older, men and subsequently the older men I interviewed in Newfoundland, dissipated and my research developed into the equally important investigation of male occupational life and language. As John Murphy told me in 2005, it seems heroes are an expensive luxury only tolerated if the society has enough disposable resources to maintain such iconic individuals.

John Murphy had recently retired as the host of *The Fisheries Broadcast*, a CBC Radio program, when I met with him to discuss my interest in heroes in Newfoundland for this thesis. John spent the last years of his professional life as a host and interviewer on radio in Newfoundland and because of his position he had many hours of experience talking to many older Newfoundland men. Many of the men he interviewed were men who spent their life on the sea around Newfoundland and in the woods on the island as well as in Labrador. During one of our talks he told me that many of the men he interviewed had a less-than-serious attitude about their fate. He said that it was common for these men to downplay their efforts on the sea, as sailors and as fishermen. John went on to say that, "The men that I interviewed usually minimized the dangerous nature of their occupations" (Murphy disc #1: 11:40) John also told me that many of the older men that he had interviewed had stories, and that their stories were important to them. (Murphy disc #1: 14:20). John told me that in the right circumstance these men would tell their stories because their stories illustrated their lives and gave meaning to their efforts.

Noah Richler in his book *This Is My Country - What's Yours* makes a strong link between stories, culture and identity. One of the main points of his book is that stories are cultural maps. This theme is common amongst many first nation

peoples as well. Andrew Marquette, a friend and teaching colleague of mine and full-blooded Cree, used stories of his people, as a teaching platform to outline his personal history, and to draw out the personal histories of his students. Stories told in context, become memorable events in the educational lives of students. Andrew started his teaching career as a technical teacher and ended it as a principal. He was known for using stories as fixing points to create a context and give students a sense of their own identity. Stories as a teaching platform highlight the connections between cultures by pointing out the many similarities that exist.

Stories are cultural identity maps, a kind of cultural GPS. They amplify common life themes in any culture. Richler calls stories “soldiers” and he says that they do battle to maintain cultural identity. He also says that if we lose our stories we lose the world that they navigate: “Any place is only a landscape until it is animated by the stories that provide its identity” (Richler 2006, 6).

During my investigations and research in Newfoundland I was often asked “Where do you belong?” A simple interpretation of this question might be: Where are you from? But that kind of “dictionary definition” translation leaves too much out. My own cultural common knowledge tells me that a clearer translation (an “unpacked” translation) might include other questions such as: Who are your people? How are you connected to me? How are you connected to the place I’m

from? Do you acknowledge the place I'm from? On my exploratory summer camping trip to Newfoundland in 2000 to help me decide if I really wanted to retire to Newfoundland, I met an older woman at the craft store in North Sydney. I was waiting for the ferry to arrive and I was browsing about in the dock-side tourist shops. She owned and operated the shop and I noticed that there was a heavy concentration of Newfoundland material in the shop. She told me that her mother was a Newfoundlander and that she had spent most of her summer vacations on the Burin Peninsula. I told her that I had an aunt from Garnish, an outport in Fortune Bay on the Burin Peninsula, and my admission resulted in the full barrage of just such questions designed to discover what, if any, family connections there were between us. In a short time she discovered that we were distant cousins on her mother's side. I realized then, or should I say re-affirmed then, my culturally inculcated belief that the most important stories are the stories that connect the people of Newfoundland to Newfoundland and the people of Newfoundland to each other, no matter where they may live.

My informants used the stories they told about themselves and their work in the same way. Their stories, told in their own way, are cultural maps that detail their cultural and occupational identity, including their male identity – their life in my words. I recognized my informants' cultural status. It's important that I did,

because it created a strong bond between us. I believe by listening to their stories I was able to capture a little of their life history complete with culture and identity still attached.

My informants were all strong-minded men who were not afraid to disagree with me, nor were they afraid to chide me when they thought I was misinformed or out of line. Each informant enforced their intention to be understood in their own way: Skipper Scott would stand and bang his fist on the table to let me know that I was in deep water; Bishop Genge would lower his voice and gentle tut-tut me to remind me I was overstepping my place; David Fleming would become silent and still. Their words and actions reminded me that my intention has always been to give a fair representation of the lives they lived. Their reprimands reinforced my concerns about the many misrepresentation of Newfoundlanders (and other cultures) that I have experienced during my life on the mainland. Growing up as a Newfoundlander in Ontario left me with a sensitivity towards any cultural misappropriation or misuse of cultural norms. As a teacher I worked hard to lift unnecessary stereotyping. After twenty five-years of teaching against stereotypical prejudice I don't want to be counted among those who, as Louis Tapardjuk the First Nation's Emcee of *The Festival of the Return of the Sun* said, "in our schools ... teach our language but not our culture" (Richler 2006, 90).

Human individuals born at any time, anywhere, live in
the rhythms of their time. This is the foundation of identity.
(Blacking 1983, 89)

When I was a young boy I played in the dirt. I dug in it. I sat in it. I piled it up. I spread it out flat. I had a visceral connection to the feel and the smell of the soil in my backyard. The best smell in the world was that of moist spring soil warmed by the morning sun. My favourite toy was an old block of wood, which became whatever I wanted: a road grader, a truck, a tank, or a tractor. When I grew into a young man my fascination for soil waned, but I continued to be aware of the men around me who persisted to play in the earth. A neighbour we all called "Old Grandpa Bower" on his good days or "Old Grumpy Bower" on his bad days was a retired custodian. He had a two-acre garden that ran along the back of all the houses on our block. He had arthritis and walked and worked on two hand-made sticks he called his second set of legs. Nonetheless, he grew everything that flowered from towering Sunflowers that followed the sun from sunrise to sunset, to ground-grasping Vinca (*Catharanthus roseus*) sometimes called Madagascar Periwinkle, and every kind of vegetable and fruit that would grow in Ontario. He grew everything that you could eat that would grow in the ground, from strawberries to pears, sprouts to snow peas and mint to dill.

He and his wife ate from the garden from early spring through to the first

snow. Everything that they could not eat or readily use they gave away to the surrounding neighbours. He didn't can or freeze anything from his garden. He preferred that others ate it fresh from the dirt. I remember seeing him in the garden from first light to the end of the day. As a young man I didn't know much about the work required to grow the food nor the value of food given away. But I did wonder at the amount of time spent cultivating the soil in the wet spring and harvesting the produce in the cold days of fall.

It was only when my father retired early because his health was failing and he started growing tomatoes that I began to understand some of the reasons older men garden. Whenever I visited my father after he retired, from June through to October, I left with a bag of tomatoes. It became a tradition. My children began calling all tomatoes, "Grandpa's tomatoes." I could never refuse the bag of tomatoes whether I needed them or not. I couldn't spurn the smile he had on his face as he ceremoniously handed me the bag. As my children grew he began to perform the ceremony with them instead of me. It became a family ceremony. It became a privilege to be the one to carry the tomatoes home. I started gardening in the back yard of the first apartment I had after I moved out of my parents' house. It started as Morning Glory and Clematis winding up the back stairs to the second floor entrance. It soon became tomatoes and beets at the end of the yard.

Old Grandpa Bower, my father, and I enjoyed growing food that we could eat. It seemed that simple to me when I was young. It seemed that simple to me before I listened to my interviews I recorded with my informants. At first I thought my informants simply enjoyed growing food that they could eat, just as I had. It was only when I started analyzing the interviews that I discovered the significance of gardens and gardening to the older Newfoundland men in my research group. I was aware of the importance of backyard grapevines and basement-fermented wine to my Portuguese friends fathers and grandfathers. I knew that the zucchini and the tomato patches in my Italian friends' fathers' and grandfathers' gardens fleshed out the sauces and salads served on summer afternoons. I didn't know that the root vegetable gardens that filled the root cellars of my informants were as important a cultural marker to them as were as the grapes-to-wine and zucchini-to-sauce gardens were to the older men in my Portuguese and Italian friends' families.

Richard Bauman said "the essential task in the ethnography of performance is to determine the culture-specific constellations of communicative means that serve to key performance in particular communities" (Bauman 1984, 22). At first, I didn't connect gardens and gardening to the performance of cultural masculinity. Bauman's words temporarily confused me. But after reading and rereading the

quote I did understand his ideas. Bauman's concept of "constellations of communication" reminded me of my high school friends and their grandfathers' gardens. Those backyard grapevines and tomato patches that I visited after school were culturally specific maps of masculinity of the men who made them. I finally understood that those gardens were more than plots of ground used to grow vegetables. And I further understood that those men who chose to work the ground were not just gardeners by mere "situational identity" (Blacking 1983, 89).

Gardens are symbols used to communicate the social value of older men in many cultures. The garden and the organization of that garden is a key performance within many cultures: English, Italian, Portuguese, Greek and Newfoundland.

Gardens and gardening became one of the themes of the interviews because it had been, and still was a theme in the lives of the men that I interviewed. My informants talked about gardens early in the interview schedule, about helping out their parents and grandparents in their gardens when they were young boys and, after retiring, all my informants gardened or talked about gardening. We often met in gardens and I was often offered produce from their gardens. I mistook the gardens as a convenience, a pleasant place to sit outside under the trees on a warm summer's day. I misread gardens and talk of gardens as just more of the usual small talk about the weather and how nice it is to get outside in the fresh air, now

that it's not raining. The small talk seemed to be just the mundane beginnings of any afternoon sit down chat.

While reviewing the notes that I jotted down at the start of the interviews I took notice of the setting of each interview and I further noticed how many times I met with more than one informant in a garden or in a garden-like setting. While listening to the recorded interviews and taking notes as a beginning to analyzing the content of those interviews I noticed the many times that discussions of gardens and gardening became a topic. First, I saw gardens as a context issue. We were sitting in a garden so a discussion of gardens was an easy transition from a cold start at the beginning of an interview series to the seemingly more important questions about the past occupations that I thought would be the meat of the interview. Second, I saw gardens as a context issue, just a pleasant place to sit and talk away from the house and the many trappings of a past life. Only after I had some time to process the experience did I finally recognized that gardens were both content and context.

My informants were showing me that their gardens were as much a part of their past (and present) lives as were their occupational accreditations and/or collections of photographs of ship sailed, or furniture hand-made. It was all part of who they had been and who they still were. All of my informants, in their

occupationally-specific way, considered themselves integral to the continued supply of food needed by their families. They were using their gardens as the visual text of their cultural identity, and they were using their gardens as the context in which they wanted to discuss their lives. Many of my informants intentionally chose to meet in their gardens. Others decided to meet in a comfortable room, usually a room that mirrored their past life, overlooking their gardens. My informants' preference to meet in their gardens or overlooking their gardens was purposefully not serendipitous. My informants' choice of their garden was a carefully engineered physical statement of their past and present character and of their continued cultural usefulness.

In the outports, Newfoundland houses appear to be tossed on any green half-flat spot above the wash and below the rocky outcrops. The houses are commonly erected in the deepest part of the bay, out of the winds of the headland and away from the stages where offal drifts out on the tides, or sinks and lodges in the bottom. Although the placement of the houses may look random their positions on the land has been carefully chosen. They are carefully placed so that the best possible view of the water is afforded those who stay, and watch, and wait. The hills behind the houses supply fresh water and wood for building and burning, as well as wild game such as rabbit and moose. If suitable building sites are plentiful,

as in Calvert (Pocius 1991, 158 - 162), the houses stretch out separated by vegetable gardens and fields. Flat land is often scarce, as in Upper Island Cove, where many of my Lundrigan relatives lived, so the houses climb the hills upwards from the mouth of the bay stacked over and back so each house can be seen from the water, and each house can see the water.

Farley Mowat, in his book *Bay of Spirits* (2006) describes many such scenes from the outports of the South Coast of Newfoundland. One roof overlooks the roof of the one in front and below. This is a purposeful visual connection to the sea. The placement of the houses and stages form a spacial connectedness, a blueprint for the social and work-life patterns of the people. In a physical way the paths and walkways are organized to mirror the social organization of the community. The same rule of order can be seen in most of the outport communities that circumnavigate the island: "life is the sharing of space" (Pocius 1992, 298).

Patrick Carroll, in a personal communication regarding his research in Placentia, reported that the kitchen, the working end of the home, was constructed on the water side of the house to allow an unobstructed view of the water. This was a commonsense convenience for mothers and wives whose working lives revolved around cooking and cleaning, constant care and feeding, and waiting and watching. The sea has been the source of survival for the large families common in

past years in Newfoundland. It makes sense that it would stand in the forefront of daily work-life of everybody in the community. Bob Bartlett expressed some of the same sentiments in *The Log of Bob Bartlett* (Bartlett 2006, 80).

Newfoundland is an island of bays. It is a place where life has been focused at the water's edge. Newfoundland has been part of Canada for almost six decades but it has never been part of North America, never been part of the "mainland." It is connected today to Vancouver and Toronto by politics and electronics but that has not changed Newfoundland's physical connection to Boston and the West Indies by water and work. Skipper Ben Scott, Captain Duke Collins, Morgan Colbourne, and others spoke of the many times that they sailed to such places as well as many the other ports of call, all connected to Newfoundland by work and water. Farley Mowat says that until he toured the outports he thought they were isolated. But to his surprise and as an affront to his big city arrogance he met many men and women who had traveled the world by water and visited many places that even he dreamed of seeing (Mowat 2006, 202). What Newfoundland is can never be separated from what it was. The use of "Newfoundlander" as a name for the people who lived and worked on the Island became common and "by the end of the nineteenth century Newfoundlanders had emerged as an identifiable group" (Rompkey 2006, 64). The name has endured, as diverse and as thick with meaning

as the many dialects and accents that still prevalent in Newfoundland.

Home life and work life were inseparable for many of the earlier settlers of the Island. The Smiths and the Coopers of many such cultures are so named because they are called after the work that they do. European surnames migrated to North America with the early European settlers. The surnames remained but those born on the island soon lost their continental cultural connections and became islanders. They became Newfoundlanders (Story D. N. E. 1982, 347). The surnames in my family (Bishop, Gosse, Collins, Lundrigan) are considered Newfoundland family names, not European. The people who are born in Newfoundland do not consider themselves from Newfoundland, they think of themselves as Newfoundland. Their lives lived and their work-life efforts represent the society that developed out of need and the will to survive. Newfoundland men learned to look to the sea for work. They also learned to look to the Island for strength, their wives for solace and their families for security, "As long as you has the missus and the youngsters and your health, you're a wealthy man" is common expression in my family growing up (Personal conversation Vern Lundrigan, 1989). And it is a sentiment expressed in many ways by the older Newfoundlanders I spoke to as well as those that I interviewed. By "expressed" I do not mean words or phrases that I can easily quote in this thesis, instead I mean

glances, looks, inhalations, nods, pauses, winks and smiles at appropriate times and to appropriate people. Words are usually used to describe things and events. They are commonly carefully chosen to clearly define the speaker's intent. The words chosen also define the speaker as much as they do the item or event. The nods, winks and smiles are just as carefully chosen and their intent as attentively defined as words spoken or printed or cited as source material in academic writings.

In 1964 Alan Dundes said, "Perhaps the most common external criterion used to define folklore is the way in which it is transmitted. Folklorists are wont to say that folklore is, or is in, an 'oral tradition.' Yet many forms of folklore are not transmitted orally at all" (Dundes 1964, 251). Dundes was referring to a statement made by Richard Dorson that to be folklore it must "live in the mouths of people for at least several generations" (Dorson 1952, 7). Talk of gardens and gardening has definitely "lived in the mouths" and in the family work traditions of the people of Newfoundland for many generations.

Dundes' article is an important tool in any discussion of the use of "context" to inform the "text." As Dundes says later in the same article, "The text of an item of folklore is essentially a version or a single telling of a tale, a recitation of a proverb, a singing of a folksong." and "The context of an item of folklore is the

specific situation in which that particular item is actually employed” (Dundes 1964, 256). The gardens in which any one of my informants and I sat in during the interview is as much, if not more, an item of folklore than is the discussions of gardens that took place. In the same way that any classroom is a working part of the curriculum being taught, the garden setting used by my informants was a working part of the life stories that they were trying to tell. My informants may not have used text (words) to tell me about their lives now that they are retired, but they surely used the garden context as a setting to stage a post-occupational performance of their past lives. The silences in the interviews, the spaces left between the spoken words, were flooded with the smells and sights of the natural world of a Newfoundland garden, an aesthetic contextual representation of their lives. In their own way my informants were paraphrasing Dundes, when he said, “one can easily see that what is unsaid is much more important than what is said. In fact, the text alone is almost meaningless to members of another culture” (Dundes, 1964, 263).

“A Good man”

Every child's life is attended by a congregation of adults who teach him or her important things about this world where we live. If a child is lucky, the lessons add up, in a positive way, and the child grows to be an adventurous, outward-looking soul, a soul who trusts the universe and believes good things of the people who inhabit it. - Stewart McLean (McLean 2003, 89)

The words that my informants used to described their work also became descriptors of their own self character and worth. The social structure of work on the sea became the norm, and therefore the language of the people of the island. It is out of this working-world tied to the sea that the distinctive words and sounds of language in Newfoundland developed. My investigations and discussions of the use of the term “good man” helped me to understand many aspects of work life in Newfoundland, specifically the work life of the older Newfoundland men that I selected and interviewed..

If Edward T. Hall was right and “communication constitutes the core of culture” (Hall, 1966 1) then the words and gestures used by Newfoundlanders to define themselves have great weight. The value in discovering what collection of social and occupational traits combine to create what Newfoundlanders call a “good man” is that the term is used in Newfoundland to define the kind of man

worth becoming. In an attempt to define the nature of those individuals who have been deemed a “good man” it is necessary to rule out many social situations and therefore implied meanings applied to the term. To that end I have limited my discussions of the use of the term “good man” to the men that I interviewed.

The occupational value of any man is determined by the core group of men within that occupation. As Captain Bob Bartlett wrote in his log, when he was trying to describe the men that he choose to sail with: “However, down in our hearts we are old-fashioned ‘windjammers’ and we think of the sea in terms of wind and rigging; and we tend to choose our men for their mechanical perfection” (Bartlett 2006, 27). This log entry is in the chapter entitled “The Sea is a Hard Master.” Bartlett’s words highlight the reality of the everyday life of the Newfoundlanders who worked the sea. The captain is master of his vessel and his crew but the sea is master of all. Captain, crew and ship are all subject to the will of the waves and all three are surely judged by their actions. They were judged by the wind-whipped water of the Newfoundland winter’s nor’westers.

It is not always your actions that you are judged by, but instead your reactions. I learned this lesson from the older Newfoundland men who all had a hand in raising me. It is a major tenet in a working man’s code of behaviour. My informants told me that the measure of a man is what he does with what the world

throws at him, and how he behaves in the “hard times.” I asked Ben Scott how he had the nerve to go out to sea in bad weather and he said “When the ship is ready, you go” (Scott disc # 2: 12:00). This belief is central to a working group’s core values. The world of work sets the standard. The occupation will determine the criteria that will be used to judge its members. The larger social group then adopts the decisions of the occupation. There are many common expression in Newfoundland that highlight this fact and show routes back to the sea. During the interviews my informants used idioms to express themselves. Skipper Scott, Duke Collins, Vince Collins, as well as my Uncles Dave Collins and Don Collins all, in reference to me, paraphrased the often used expression, “Those who can, do; those who can’t, teach.” Or as Dave Collins put it about me, “No good for the sea, might as well teach” (Personal conversation Dave Collins 2003). Dave Collins is a retired electrician, he has never worked on the sea. His use of such a chiding statement on me, a teacher, shows how deep such belief-based statements are ingrained in the social fabric of many of the traditional trades of Newfoundland.

Dave Collins’ statement includes two occupations and it shows by comparison where each is the ranked. Bishop Genge also used much the same words but in his case he was telling me about how the same statement had been used about him by the older Newfoundland men that he knew when he was young.

He informed me that it was used as humour but humour with intent. The meaning guised in humour was clear to him, as it was to me. It is also clear to me that my informants were, light-heartedly, keeping me in my place. As part of my introduction to my research I told all the men that I spoke to about my years as a teacher. And I also told them that I am the first male in my direct line of Lundrigan men who has not worked the sea. Although my informants accepted me into their confidence, and in many ways the story of their life, I'm sure the knowledge that I had no real sea legs added to my already heavy CBFA reputation. In my defense I told all my informants a story from my past. Although, I thought biting into an unseen wave when I was seventeen and sinking a thirteen-foot aluminum skiff a mile off shore in Georgian Bay in Ontario was a shipwreck event, it did little to bolster my seafarer status.

Bartlett doesn't use the term "good man" in his log. But it is clear that he is describing the same handful of characteristics when he talks about the "hard men" who taught him about the sea while he was growing up in outport Newfoundland or when he tells of the many tough men he sailed with and when he describes the men of strength he served with in the American Navy after the First World War. He compares all men to these examples of men from his work-life. He also cites the constables of the outports of Newfoundland amongst the many goodmen who,

by their actions, wore their character on their sleeves, whether in uniform or not. Bartlett writes of one that he was “one of the many striking characters in our part of the world” (Bartlett 2006, 249). Bartlett also writes of another that he was “one of the finest men I even knew” (Bartlett 2006, 272). He is clearly telling his readers about the qualities of the men he sailed with. He is defining the kind of men who in his time might be called a “good hand” or a “good fellow.” Both are versions of the kind of man Skipper Scott called a “good man.” Bartlett makes his point about the importance of honesty clear when he says, “I have seen a Navy man on a bridge make a mistake and not have any reason especially for telling what he had done. But it was a matter of tradition, it seemed, not to try to hide behind any sort of alibi. I tell you that makes a big difference when you are trying to work with people” (Bartlett 2006, 263).

It is clear from the many efforts that Bartlett makes to define these men that they were important social and occupational models in his life. Bartlett spent most of his working life at sea. He valued men who would say what they were going to do and then did what they said. Occupations such as Bartlett's demand dependability and accountability of action. The lives of men who worked on the water depended on an unforgiving code of honesty of action and acceptance of blame. Bartlett expected the same from his men as he did from himself, a

dedication to work. He refused to define himself by direct reference but he mirrored his thoughts on his own character when he described the male characteristics he deemed worthy.

Defining maleness starts early for most children and the first reference source is usually their own father. Bartlett commonly refers to his father, uncles and grandfathers and great-uncles when he tries to describe how and when he learned the attributes of men. Bartlett gives credit to the older men in his life for learning the skill-set that kept him employed and alive while at sea. All of the men interviewed referenced their fathers when they struggled to tell how they became men. It usually begins with play. Games are for fun and games for education. Then games turn to chores guised as fun. My informants told me that as children they played at work. Their games were derived from workday social and work-based activities (Colbourne disc #2: 45:10), (Collins disc #1: 9:40), (Genge disc #2: 03:00), (Rusted disc#2: 42:00).

Language is a social occupation. It is a social mechanism intended to communicate information, motion, emotion, tension, and intention. The words chosen are often heavy with history, action, and time. The words chosen reference things from the past; events that give them shape and weight and meaning. Words can never stand by themselves as they are simply, "element[s] in the social process

of language” (R. Williams 1983, 22). And “Language is a social phenomenon. It is a shared system of codified values” (J. Williams 1993, 91). In light of what Raymond Williams and Joanne Williams have said it is difficult enough to define a single word, if defining is possible at all. When there is a compound word that has parts that may have separate meanings it complicates an already complex situation. The term “good man” is composed of two seemingly simple words. The word “good” and the word “man.” It appears a little too obvious, at first glance, to even spend time attempting to define these two common words. But, as Raymond Williams discusses in *Keywords*, words comprise a vocabulary, a shared collection of words and their meanings used by a specific social group (R. Williams 1983).

This select list of words has meanings and uses that have developed over time and there has been some organized consensus as to those meanings. The older men that interviewed had their own cultural specific meaning for the two-word term “good man.” For the men that I interviewed, the term referred to an occupational ability, as in “good at their trade.” It did not refer to good in the moral sense or religious sense. Instead it meant competent at their craft, consistent in their delivery of that craft, dependable under stress and, unflinching in the face of life threatening situations.

In his book *The Tipping Point* Malcolm Gladwell uses the word “sticky”

(Gladwell 2002, 89-132) to define why some trends catch on and others don't. The basis of his argument is that it is face-to-face, word-of mouth, communication that creates social changes and it is the same verbal intercourse that continues its success. Gladwell concluded that in the wrong context the words have no "stickiness." He attests that stickiness is dependent on trust by those involved in the social or occupational discourse. Embedded warnings in localized stories told by the people within their neighbourhood (or occupation) have stickiness because they have content and context (Gladwell 2002, 254-255). In the same way the term "good man" in context in the outports of Newfoundland or on the deck of a ship has stickiness. It was, and still is, used to describe a specific male character trait. A model of behaviour to be followed. It has content and context and it stuck.

There is a reciprocal beneficial relationship between the men who work in occupations where the demands of the job put the men at risk. The "goodmen" in any such occupational group are linked, strung together in a communal circle, one that serves the end result – the safety of all in the group. In the work-life experiences of my informants the responsibility of one is the responsibility to all, whether that responsibility be the safe return from the sea with the holds full (Scott), or the successful completion of the road to an isolated outport (Genge), or a military foray into another country with a positive result (Colbourne), or the late

night levering of a safe that once belonged to others (Flemming). The term has the same meaning and stickiness because it has the same context although the situations seem different. The context is couched in the occupation setting in the group of like-minded men all working towards the same end.

In each of the occupational experiences I cited in the last paragraph, my informants knew that they could depend on the men that they worked with. In each event the men were working in dangerous situations. In each event the safety of all men was dependent on the actions or reactions of each and every man. Also, in each event there were other uncontrollable factors to the work. Whether it be water, bog, hostile forces or the police, the men involved needed to know that all the other men were made of a like mettle. In such situations, master mariner papers, degrees from universities, military standing or a street rap sheet were never enough to guarantee a man's character. A codified recommendation from other man known to be of significant worth was always the determining factor. If one of these known men-of-character vouched for another's dependability by naming him a "good man," then all other guarantees were not needed. In the hand-to-hand working-world of fishermen, clergy, soldiers and criminals, to be called a "good man" is as good it gets.

There are many Newfoundlanders who have memories of men from their

youth whom they idealized, men who impressed them as men of strength and honesty and honour, men who were dependable – “goodmen.” Gordon Pinsent, in his book *By The Way*, discusses the forces that shaped his character and in turn the many characters that he created in his occupation as a stage and film actor. CBC reported that Pinsent tells a picture by speaking in words to listeners who all have the memory to recall the image and therefore see the words in original shape and colour and form (CBC *Newsworld* November 8, 2004). When Pinsent talks about the men he remembers from his youth there must be others who when reading his words, hearing him say them, reconstitute a mental picture of a similar man. Pinsent uses these memories of men to build the characters that he becomes for the short time he stands on stage, in the limelight, in another man’s shoes.

These were most likely working mill heroes with strong forearms and shirt sleeves modestly rolled up to the elbows, not needing further proof of the muscles above. And their smells. What was that my hometown heroes smelled of? It’s never been marketed, that’s for sure. Essence of hard work, pulp and paper, sawdust, earth, Target tobacco, good deeds, confidence, contentment, and a touch of forefather. (Pinsent 1992, 42)

Pinsent uses words to paint pictures in the minds of his readers. A picture is worth a thousand words, but it doesn’t always take a thousand words to paint a picture. It often takes just one holistic, holographic word. One term can often elicit a mental photograph or even a complete scene. Terms like “concentration camp”

and “napalm” immediately extort negative images. Words like “Christmas” and “boil-up” often exact happy times. Personal memories and cultural memories and occupational memories are often stored as narratives. Narratives act in the same way as photographs do in that they contain volumes of information. A single item in a photograph can excite and open a chapter of personal memory. As a drama and theatre teacher, I found that the use of a mental picture was always the best way to access personal memories and it is a common way for storytellers to remember long and involved stories. The memory pictures act as a visual kernel narrative.

Kernel narratives are agents of memory extraction and as such they contain cultural and occupational material (Kalcik 1975). A single word can open a picture or a narrative. Terms and phrases such as “good man” are connectors to cultural meaning. They act as translators for the transmission of meaning from a personal memory to a cultural memory and from an single individual’s understanding to the group’s recognition. For the men I interviewed the term “good man” acted as a kernel narrative. It was used to identify males with hero-like characteristics.

Although the men in my study were from different places in Newfoundland and as a result of their varying social and educational backgrounds they chose different occupations they all admired similar masculine traits. They identified

men with those characteristics by verbally placing them within a framework of cultural significance. Goodmen and heroes (men of social stature) are made by framing them within a context of expedient worth. Soldiers are heroes during times of war, and farmers during a famine, and in this way, the good man and the hero are performers. They become the social focus, the focal point of tension between the needs of the group and the realization of those needs. At different times different people adopt the role of hero. When we are children a parent may be the hero, when we are teenagers a revolutionary may be the hero, when we are young adults a lover may be the hero, and when we are old a politician may be a hero. The hero is created to suit the needs of the situation and the needs of the group.

Just as collective memory is a construct designed to provide “continuity to culture” not an “original experience” (Sturkin:1997, 259) a hero is cultural creation created to act as a cohesive agent in a cultural context. The hero is defined by the group that it serves, and because the traits of the hero are controlled by the culture that created it, it serves the social, political and commercial needs of that culture. In England in the 1940s Winston Churchill became a hero because he served the needs of a culture that felt as though it was on the brink of extinction, and because he presented a solution to that crisis. At the same time, in Grand Falls, Newfoundland, the men who worked in the paper-mill were heroes to Gordon

Pinsent because they modeled strength. And strength is always a situationally-constructed socially-desired behaviour. The men in Pinsent's memories connected him to his culture, his geography and his occupation. They supplied models of language, behavior, culture and custom. They echoed his past and they told of his future. In a culture and geography that traded hard work for success, the strength of a man's forearm and the length of his stride were indicators of future accomplishments.

The word pictures drawn by many of the authors that I have read in preparation for and as part of the research for this thesis are carefully crafted images designed to evoke memories of men, men worth remembering. There is a commonality to the characters described, a "universal" model of the everyday working man. The model that has social "stickiness," will persist. Religions have often supplied socially acceptable heroes. And in Newfoundland religion has been one of the main social engines responsible for molding men and their behavior. Wm. Paul Young describes just such a model in his book *The Shack*. Young word-paints the Judeo-Christian archetype carpenter Christ-figure good-man hero that has become one of the mainstays of many such characters when he says,

He appeared Middle Eastern and was dressed like a laborer, complete with tool belt and gloves. He stood easily leaning against the door jamb with arms crossed in front of him, wearing jeans covered with wood dust and a plaid shirt with

sleeves rolled just above the elbows, revealing well-muscled forearms. His features were pleasant enough, but he was not particularly handsome – not a man who would stick out in a crowd. But his eyes and smile lit up his face. (Young 2007, 86)

Young, Pincent, Mowat (and others) are all purposefully using culturally encoded kernal narrative terms in their writing to create mythic characters. The specific words used, such as “covered with wood dust” and “well-muscled forearms,” use text to define the man being described while using context to reference the cultural model. The culturally-specific terms used by the writers that I have listed (and others) as well as my informants have been discussed as “technologies of memory” by Sturkin (Sturkin 1997) and as “kernel narratives” by Kalcik (Kalcik 1975) and others. They act as modifiers to encode the terms used by my informants (and others), terms such as “good man” (and others) with specific occupational and cultural meanings that resonate with history and meaning in the oral and written literature of Newfoundland.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Hamlet: Give me that man
 That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
 in my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
 As I do thee.

Hamlet, 3.2.71 - 74

With these words Hamlet tells Horatio of his respect for him as a friend and as a man while at the same time he informs the audience of the reasons for his performance of madness – like Demosthenes – he was in search of a “good man.”

This thesis is based on research that I carried out in 2002-03 and 2005-06 on the vernacular use of occupational narratives that selected older men in Newfoundland used to define their masculinity and culture. As part of the requirement for my leave of absence from my teaching position with the Avon District Board of Education in Ontario, I had to return to Ontario and teach for one year before I was eligible for retirement. The interruption due to my required return to work proved to be a benefit as it allowed me time to digest the material that I had collected.

The thesis is an investigation of the identity-based, culturally-significant work-related memories that my informants chose to tell me. It is an investigation of the performance of cultural masculinity by selected older Newfoundland men as

reflected through their memories of their occupational work-life experiences. It examines the life memories of my informants from their earliest memories of their place of birth and family of origin, through their educational and occupational choices, to their retirement decisions and their reflections and reminiscences of their lives. Without relying on the stereotypical belief in the “handy outport Newfoundlander” the original research centered on the social mechanisms that create heroes. However, after meeting and interviewing my informants, I realized that my concept of a Newfoundland hero was more myth than it was reality, based perhaps on the myopic view of Newfoundland that had developed as a result of my being raised as a Newfoundlander within one of the many Newfoundland enclaves in mainland Canada, and because of the refusal of all of the older men that I spoke to be labeled a “hero” by any definition.

To understand the life path of each informant and to be able to compare the life paths all of my informants I found that I needed a way to view their lives from their birth through their occupational experiences to their retirement. I developed an “Identity Ordeal Cycle” based on the work of Joseph Campbell (1949) that showed in a graphic format how culture and masculinity impacted on the life choices of my informants. I found that – structurally in a narratological sense – each informant experienced and told about many of the same life stresses as a

result of being born in Newfoundland and the occupational necessity of working “away.” Their lives and the decisions that they made were informed by the fact that they were all determined to stay in, or return to, Newfoundland. Their determination to return to Newfoundland to be “buried in earth that remembers them” became one of the major themes of the interviews. It was the single most important issue in the work histories of the men that I interviewed.

I found, in the lives of my informants, that the performance of occupationally based cultural masculinity persists long after retirement. I also found that the occupational, social and family values of the older men that I included in my study were often validated through their continued performance of their individual cultural identities as they worked in their gardens, made furniture, acted as experienced, although well-worn, pseudo-parents to their grandchildren, continued to be caring husbands to their wives, or in memory of their wives, and especially for me, as they sat patiently while they were interviewed. Gardens became one of the themes that developed during the interviews. There has been research done on gardens in Newfoundland, but not specifically on gardens as an expression of cultural masculinity. It is one of the themes of my research that deserves future investigation.

I touched on, but did not fully develop, other topics that came up during my

research. Newfoundlander status and Newfoundland culture is often stereotypically declared by the preparation of comfort foods such as fish and brewis, and salt beef and cabbage. Newfoundland food was always a focus when my family of origin gathered together with other Newfoundlanders in mainland Canada, especially when anybody from “downhome” came to visit. Newfoundland food as an indication of a sense of cultural self was one of the themes of the interviews that I did not cultivate.

Newfoundland status is also proclaimed by music selections such as “The Ryans and the Pitmans,” “I’s the Bye,” “Jack Was Every Inch a Sailor” and others. Newfoundland music was not part of my research, however I found that Newfoundland culture is expressed – it lives in the mouths of Newfoundlanders – by language and accent as well as by music. My informants’ use of words, such as “good man” and other terms, often defined their sense of self-awareness for themselves as well as other Newfoundlanders. I partially developed my informants’ use of the term “good man” but, more investigation is needed in the area of Newfoundland’s culturally-specific, occupational terminology and to expand and interpret the preliminary findings that I have reported on my informants’ use of culturally-specific terms, such as “good man.”

MUNFLA contains many interviews of older Newfoundland men from the

past century. Today folklorists need to turn their attention to the lives of contemporary men. For instance, men who interview men as part of their work, journalist and folklorist among them, whose occupational life stories could be collected as occupational narratives. The processes of investigation that they used, what they learned about themselves and their own occupational culture, and their personal reflections on their findings are all topics that should be developed in future research.

My greatest regret is that I had so little time to talk to, interview and understand the older men who participated in my research. I only realized after completing my research, reflecting on that research and writing this thesis that the men that I interviewed, although “hard men” in their memories of themselves as young men, had all become sweet men with an elegance and grace that only comes from the self-realization that they had survived all the ordeals of life, except one, death, the final ordeal of life. More time, effort and research is needed to record the lives and experiences of such “goodmen” as those who chose to spend so much of their valuable time during some of their last days educating me and informing my research.

Index A: List of Interviews for this Thesis

<u>Informant</u>	<u>Interview #</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interview time</u>	<u>Date</u>
1. Colbourne, Morgan	#1	at Middle Cove Beach	46:30 min.	07/25/02
2. Colbourne, Morgan	#2	at his home in St. John's	59:44 min.	08/02/02
3. Colbourne, Morgan	#3	at his home in St. John's	49:53 min.	10/02/02
4. Collins, Duke	#1	at his home in St. John's	40:00 min.	08/26/02
5. Collins, Duke	#2	at his home in St. John's	31:00 min.	08/29/02
6. Collins, Vince	#1	at my home St. John's	55:00 min.	02/14/04
7. Collins, Vince	#2	at my home St. John	31:00 min.	02/14/04
8. Doyle, Wilf	#1	at his home in Harbour Main	1:13:18 min.	03/26/02
9. Doyle, Wilf	#2	at his home in Harbour Main	15:38 min.	03/26/02
10. Fleming, David	#1	at the penitentiary in St. John's	1:19:28 min.	04/23/03
11. Fleming, David	#2	at the penitentiary in St. John's	16:00 min.	04/25/03
12. Fleming, David	#3	at the penitentiary in St. John's	12:01 min.	05/08/03
13. Fleming, David	#4	at the penitentiary in St. John's	1:34:15 min.	05/08/03
14. Fleming, David	#5	at the penitentiary in St. John's	1:37:65 min.	05/13/03
15. Fleming, David	#6	at the penitentiary in St. John's	1:33:56 min.	05/20/03
16. Fleming, David	#7	at the penitentiary in St. John's	1:43:26 min.	05/27/03
17. Genge, Mark	#1	at his home in St. John's	51:11 min.	07/21/02
18. Genge, Mark	#2	at his home in St. John's	30:42 min.	07/29/02
19. Genge, Mark	#3	at his home in St. John's	38:20 min.	08/14/02
20. Genge, Mark	#4	at his home in St. John's	1:17:47 min.	08/21/02
21. Genge, Mark	#5	at his home in St. John's	47:03 min.	08/31/02
22. Martin, Pat	#1	at his home in St. John's	36:27 min.	03/17/03
23. Rusted, Nigel	#1	at his home in St. John's	54:17 min.	01/26/03
24. Rusted, Nigel	#2	at his home in St. John's	47:31 min.	02/02/03
25. Scott, Ben	#1	at his home in St. John's	32:00 min.	08/19/02
26. Scott, Ben	#2	at his home in St. John's	34:02 min.	08/21/02
27. Scott, Ben	#3	at his home in St. John's	28:21 min	08/23/02
28 Verkley, Paul	#1	at The Swan, Swan, Ireland	1:03:04 min.	03/16/05
Riehl, Mel				

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