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**The Spatial Dimensions Of Landscape And Cultural Identity:
A Case Study Of The Magdalen Islands, Quebec**

By

**Brian Lindsay Burke
A Thesis submitted
to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
School of Canadian Studies**

**Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
April 07
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**The undersigned recommend to the Faculty
of Graduate Studies and Research acceptance of the thesis**

**“The Spatial Dimensions of Landscapes
and Cultural Identity: A Case Study of the
Magdalen Islands, Quebec”**

submitted by Brian L. Burke, B.A.

**in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts**

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Abstract

Studies done in a wide variety of academic disciplines demonstrate that people, culture, and the physical environment are inherently intertwined. This case study investigates the relationship between culture and landscape in the Magdalen Islands. In particular, it uses literary analysis to explore the role of historical experiences of the spatial dimensions of landscape in molding Madelinot cultural identity. The experiences captured and recorded in biographical, fictional, poetic, and historical writings about a Madelinot cultural context bring together a number of ideas expressing this relationship. This examination also identifies the influence of landscape in shaping cultural narratives in the Islands. This thesis looks at Madelinot cultural identity in a way which has not been done before.

Acknowledgements

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Preface

Many Québécois and Acadian academics, artists, and authors have captured the spirit of the Magdalen Islands in their works over the years. A relatively small portion of these works, however, are available in English translation. As a result, the Islands remain virtually unknown outside French Canada. The primary reason for my interest in this project is to increase awareness of the vibrant and dynamic Madelinot culture among English Canadians.

As a native-born Madelinot, the spectacular and powerful landscape of the Magdalen Islands is a repository of my most cherished memories. It is a landscape with which I strongly identify and represents everything that I know and love. Although selecting narrative texts for this study was a difficult task, the choices made are highly expressive of the depth and nature of our historical relationship with the archipelago's landscape. This study is intended to acquaint its readers with some of the materials pertaining to our culture, share some of the landscape experiences which have shaped it, and stimulate interests in it for future investigations within an English language context.

Introduction

The Magdalen Islands is an archipelago situated in the south-central portion of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The chain of islands is approximately sixty miles in length and runs in a southwest/northeasterly direction. It is located ninety five kilometers from Cape Breton Island and two hundred and fifteen kilometers from the Gaspé peninsula. The archipelago is comprised of a dozen tiny islands of which six are connected by long stretches of sand dunes. Its total land mass encompasses less than fifty thousand acres. Its population exceeds fourteen thousand inhabitants making it one of the most densely populated rural regions of Canada (Cayo, 1991: 35).

The Madelinot people are closely linked to the archipelago's unique landscape. They are directly descended from the 250 Acadian refugees who arrived in the late 18th century from St. Pierre and Miquelon, a French outpost which had attracted to them many Acadian families deported from Nova Scotia (Halliday, 1973: 9). When the French Revolution of 1789 eventually reached the tiny Islands dividing the loyalties of its inhabitants, the Acadians fled to the isolated and uninhabited Magdalen Islands in search of sanctuary. The Acadians immediately began the colonization of the Islands. The archipelago's historical isolation has shaped almost every aspect of their culture. For example, narrative texts about a Madelinot cultural context demonstrate that many of the Islander's ritual activities and values and beliefs have emerged from their struggles to survive a reclusive maritime life. This historical physical and psychological relationship with the archipelago's landscape has contributed significantly to their strong sense of identity and attachment to place.

Today, the Magdalen Islands represents a region of the Province of Quebec. They were annexed to the province in 1895. Some 14, 000 French speaking people still inhabit the Islands, almost all of them Acadian (Halliday, 1973: 9). For example, this is evidenced by the large number of Acadian surnames found in the Islands such as Aucoin, Longépée, and Harvie. There are more people in the Magdalen Islands with these surnames than in the entire city of Montreal (Halliday, 1973: 9). Although a regular ferry service to Prince Edward Island and flights to mainland Quebec have increased their links to the rest of the continent, relatively few Madelinots leave the Islands for a long period of time. Most of them choose to remain and pursue the enduring traditional Acadian lifestyle of fishing and farming. The large number of public service jobs created in recent years by the provincial government has also encouraged educated Madelinots to stay at home (Cayo, 1991: 40). Although historical ties with the Islands have been weakened by a modern lifestyle, it is clear that landscape remains a key factor in the organization of Madelinot culture and cultural experience in the archipelago (Shields, 1986: 2).

My interest in the relationship between culture and landscape in the Magdalen Islands arises mainly from research papers written for a seminar course on landscape and cultural identity in Canada. My research for this particular project failed to uncover any study devoted specifically to the implications of landscape experiences in defining Madelinot cultural identity. Past studies on the Islands have traditionally limited their research to environmental issues, local history, and material culture. Thusfar, no study has attempted to explore the issues with which this thesis deals. For example, my analysis of literary portrayals of local culture establishes the direct import of individual and collective experiences of the spatial dimensions of landscape on the construction of

Madelinot cultural identity. It elucidates the ways in which landscape experiences have worked to define Madelinot culture and consciousness by focusing on the unequivocal historical realities that literature dealing with the Islands represents (Kelly, 1993). This thesis offers an original way of looking at an important and overlooked factor in studies pertaining to this distinctive maritime culture.

This thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 provides a review of the works which inform this study and which seek to explain some of the complexities of the relationship between culture and landscape. This discussion raises and addresses broader issues of place, space, history, and memory and their role as active agents in cultural experiences of landscape. Links between culture and environment are established which demonstrate the possible ways in which landscape experiences contribute to formulations of cultural identity. The discussion culminates in a framework for a case study which uses literary analysis as a means of exploring the relationship between culture and landscape in the Magdalen Islands.

Chapter 2 consists of an analysis of a variety of narrative texts dealing with the Islands and their people. This is used as a means of exploring the dynamics of the interplay between the Madelinot people and the archipelago's landscape. Textual representations of their historical landscape experiences serve to qualify them as a key factor in shaping their culture and illustrate some of the effects of this shaping. Specific passages drawn from the texts selected for analysis are interpreted in relation to the ideas considered in the theoretical chapter. This discussion also designates the role of the Madelinot landscape in shaping the narrative selections.

Chapter 3 includes a discourse analysis of the narrative texts reviewed in the preceding chapter. The texts are located within a particular discursive framework to reveal their intertextualities and the ways in which they work to produce a broader image of Madelinot culture and identity. This examination also entails a general discussion of the links between narrative texts and cultural meaning. This suggests the possible consequences of literary texts about a Magdalen Islands cultural context for Madelinot cultural identity.

In summary, this study proposes an exploration into Madelinot cultural identity premised on literary articulations of the historical realities of the relationship between culture and landscape in the Magdalen Islands. A discourse analysis of the narrative selections aims to illustrate how Madelinot cultural identity has been shaped by meaningful experiences of the spatial dimensions of landscape. This approach also suggests the value of narrative texts in the Madelinot people's perceptions of their culture and the historical conditions through which it materialized. In general, the main objective is to reveal landscape experiences as a primary element of the constitution of Madelinot cultural identity.

Chapter 1

Theoretical Perspectives

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the relationship between the terms landscape, place, space, and cultural identity. This is done by examining some of the significant theories which inform this study and their assumptions about the ways in which cultural identities are constructed in relation to the physical environment within which they are located. Issues of history and memory are also raised and addressed in order to emphasize their role in cultural identity formation. This investigation culminates in the establishment of a framework through which the perspectives looked at in the chapter may be used as a basis for the subsequent literary analysis of Madelinot cultural identity.

The primary and secondary theories used in this chapter were raised and developed within a broad range of academic disciplines and, in this regard, they reflect a wide array of perspectives and themes concerning the association between cultural identity and the physical environment. The main theme identified in the theoretical analysis is the strong association between the terms landscape, place, and space and its role in the foundations of cultural identity. An understanding of this association and the profound psychological links between people and place is vital in any attempt to interpret cultural identity and the mechanisms through which it has been constructed. A second theme recognized as fundamental is the relationship between landscape, history, and memory and its effects on cultural identity formation. Past individual and collective experiences of place are important in the process by which cultural identities are formed.

A third theme is the relationship between culture and literature and its role as a key factor in understanding the links between people, landscape, and cultural identity.

1.2 Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is a fundamental feature of a community's existence (Larouche, 1997) and it is the primary mechanism through which it expresses its differences from others. With each generation a community's history is written and rewritten and "then through a process of socialized learning" (Lewis, 1995: 366) is often accepted as representational of its culture¹; thus, contributing to its understandings of itself. Many theorists (Wilson, 1980; Davis, 1995; Wenger, 1997), imply that this process represents a form of cultural memory² and the perspectives recorded become thought of as something of collective significance in terms of shaping a culturally identifiable community to which people feel connected. Articulated within representations of its cultural identity is a wide array of cultural values and beliefs through which a community expresses itself and binds its members together in a shared sense of purpose (Buttimer, 1980). Ideals and conventions contribute to a people's understandings of themselves and their cultural identity by allowing them to situate themselves within the contexts of a specific group, history, and culture (Davis, 1995). They also function as a filter through which a community's interpretations of the world are conveyed within the context of a larger society.³ When we speak of cultural identity in its most relevant sense it generally incorporates everything that is considered to be representative of a community's existence. A community constructs its cultural identity by linking itself to both its past and present worlds by means of understanding and reaffirming the roots out of which it emerged. Green (1984) suggests that it is generally constructed and developed over time

in relation to various aspects of history, region, and place “internalized and lived” (Kelly, 1993: 4) by its members. In short, manifestations of cultural identity are often rooted in a shared past constructed of individual and collective experiences of place (Hummon, 1992: 258).

1.3 Landscape, Place, And Space

Von Maltzahn (1994:109) claims that landscape is “the experiential space of everyday life which requires the presence of not only actual land but of oneself with our particular point of view.” He implies that our relationship with the landscape is formed by our experiences of the components that make it up. This relationship encompasses many spatial experiences influencing our perceptions of the physical environment. How are landscape experiences spatial in nature? We are connected to landscape physically and psychologically in time. It constitutes a space within which we experience ourselves in relation to our surroundings. It is by locating ourselves in relation to the structures that inwardly and outwardly express our cultural characteristics that we become conscious of place (Golledge and Stimson, 1997: 393).⁴ As Von Maltzahn (1994:110) interprets it, “landscapes are structured and determinate in their composition.” In the traditional sense, landscape is literally that which surrounds us. It is composed of an integration of the natural and built environments. It is an organized use of geographical space which is essential in the linkage between people and place. This way of perceiving landscape suggests a form of place construction by means of which people interpret and become attached to the built structures of a locality (Quantic, 1995). It further suggests that landscape is a socially constructed use of space exhibiting the realities of our existence (Shields, 1986). How does the organization of landscape and its features affect the nature

of our identification with place? Von Maltzahn suggests that we have space, which is homogenous and neutral, in which we culturally construct place. Landscape has an emotional impact on us and the meanings that places exhibit permit us to separate ourselves from others and shape our cultural identity. We are linked to place by what is present in our environment. The emotional aspect of our relationship with the landscape and this time-space connection have profound cultural implications in terms of generating a strong sense of place identity. It is through this association that we become aware of the nature of the physical space that we occupy which shapes our image of place. Our emotional experiences of landscape influence, to a large degree, the way that we perceive, interpret, and interact with it.

In their perspective, Altman and Chemers (1980:1) assert that in order to understand the relationship between people, the physical environment, and culture “we must consider the three as a unity.” They suggest that this association can be understood as an interdependent social system in which each of the constituent parts may be considered as significant in terms of a culture’s social life⁵ and identity. How does this association affect the nature of our landscape experiences? The landscape features, the valleys, oceans, beaches, and communities all have an impact on the way in which we assess our surroundings. People use these spaces in an organized way to build places of social interaction through which a particular social system may be articulated, developed, and maintained. People are not only physically located within the landscape but are an intrinsic and participatory part of it. This further contributes to the strong psychological links between people and place and their feelings of place attachment.⁶ As Altman and Chemers (1980:6) interpret it, this is evidence that the physical environment does have a

substantial impact on a culture's development in terms of "customs, lifestyle, and behaviors." The impact of certain landscape features on a culture can be a powerful determinant in the development of its values and beliefs.⁷ This is often the result of intense interactions with the landscape and its relevant components over time. What are the implications of these interactions on our everyday lives? Altman and Chemers imply that this interactive alliance gives rise to the search for cultural meaning in our surroundings. For example, certain landscape features can influence our perceptions of them because they represent some facet or event that has had an acute emotional affect on our relationship with place. Responses to place reveal a space from which we are able to locate and draw a sense of ourselves capturing the essence of our relationship with the physical environment (Kelly, 1993: 2). This is precisely why the landscape features, whether natural or constructed, are often understood as being particularly significant in the lives of the people who share them. Reaction to place involves perceptions of the location which over time take on symbolic cultural significance to reflect our cultural values and beliefs, aspirations, and notions about our identity as a community.

In another perspective, Jay Appleton (1975:84)⁸ suggests that the human experience of landscape is determined by people's ability to effectively "use their environment to further their biological needs." His "habitat theory" suggests that our perceptions of the landscape around us are influenced by the "prospects" that it offers us as a "refuge" for our survival. This implies that the environmental features of the landscape exemplify something meaningful and valuable about our existence. This way of thinking about landscape emphasizes the importance of geographical spaces and their composition in the development of place identity. The conditions of the environment in

which we physically and emotionally construct place can serve to remind us of our origins and the ways that it has nurtured our culture (Marcus, 1992: 89). The conditions confronting us in our habitat are often reminiscent of past history and to the lives of previous generations and their experiences and achievements in terms of survival. The natural and built components of our environment can resonate with the physical and psychological realities of place which are of common concern to each generation confronted by them. We conceive of landscape as a place containing many individual and collective life experiences influenced by the environmental context within which they were experienced (Buttimer, 1980; Aitken et al., 1989). Consequently, we endow the landscape and its composition with symbolic meaning and value.⁹ Appleton argues that our physical and perceptual experiences of landscape may be premised on the recognition of its character and make-up as a natural space. What, then, can be said about this relationship and culture? The explicit interplay between people and their surroundings reflects their attitudes about the physical environment and generates explanations about their practices with regard to it. As Appleton (1975:2) suggests, "Landscape is a kind of backcloth to the whole stage of human activity." Landscape, in this sense, is socially constructed by means of rituals and traditions. This also leads to the relevance of cultural practices in interpreting the social meanings that places exhibit. Certain experiences of the geographical composition of landscape may even have an impact on why we like or dislike certain places. We are attached to some places more than others because they fulfill certain emotional or physical needs;¹⁰ thus, they represent a cultural experience.

Tuan (1979:93) suggests that landscape can be viewed as a "clue to a region's human personality." This implies that the human aspect of landscape can be understood

by evaluating the visual material aspects of place which exhibit certain cultural qualities unique to our community, particularly the built structures of place. These structures display a community's social practices and the rituals that define its everyday life (Dear and Wolch, 1989: 9). They also make apparent the various ways in which a culture can experience the physical elements of a geographical space by subtly referring to the depth and nature of its past interactions with it. This evokes assumptions about the nature and character of the community. What can we learn about a culture from the visual aspects of place? We can see in the landscape how its constituent parts have a bearing on the ways in which people react toward it. They can evoke images of how a culture integrates into an environment and functions within it. The material aspects of place mirror people's attitudes about place and how they emerged from relations with the landscape. This ultimately contributes to the ways in which they assess their surroundings. As Tuan (1979:93) proposes, landscape offers us "a mental image in which visual elements of the landscape suggest, and are interwoven with, relations and values that can not be seen." What is seen in the landscape underscores the connection between a culture and landscape components and its role as a basis for cultural development (Riley, 1992). How, then, may we apprehend the connection between the visual elements of landscape and culture? Tuan implies that landscape may be viewed as a centre of cultural activity by means of which a community and its environment both develop a distinct and coherent personality. Our experiences of the geographical spaces in which we make our home is a determinant in the construction of our cultural character traits. The unique attributes of which our culture is composed are reflected in the places we construct and the rituals that unfold within them. This process contributes to our understandings of our thoughts and

feelings about place and the nature of its composition as both a natural and socially constructed environment. The visual elements of landscape corroborate, to a large degree, the ways in which we relate to our environment and how it is implicated in our state of mind.

In short, experiencing the landscape within the context of social interactions and the ways that we remember them can influence our emotional responses to place and our sense of identification with it. It is often through memories of relationships formed with people that we develop a shared sense of the past, present, and future giving us the power to sustain the cultural aspects of place that differentiate us from others.

1.4 Landscape, History, And Memory

Lowenthal (1975:5) asserts that the “features and patterns of landscape make sense to us because we share a history with them.” He suggests that the past is a collection of memories of place and that it is a fundamental component in shaping and developing our community in the present. It functions as a mechanism through which we are able to uncover explanations about our identity and how it evolved in relation to the landscape. The temporal aspects of place document the social and cultural realities of place development. This also suggests that they are fundamental components in the process of individual and collective self-definition.¹¹ There is a strong connection between past individual and collective experience and landscape components which influences our perceptions and interpretations of it. How does this relationship affect a culture? Recollections of historic encounters with certain landscape features can affect our perceptions of them because they are believed to express certain social or cultural characteristics of our community (Newman, 1997). They can reveal details to a culture

about the challenges that their ancestors struggled over in the past which work to define their culture in a particular way. In this respect, a sense of place identity materializes in relation to the cultural meaning derived from historical place experiences. This influences our interpretations of ourselves and the place in which we live. How do historical interactions with the landscape influence our views of it? As Lowenthal (1975:6) interprets it, past experiences of landscape are often “incarnate in the things we build and the landscapes we create.” The built structures of the landscape are often highly representative of our perceptions of our environment. They illustrate our past experiences of it and the ways that we remember them. Encounters and interactions between people and landscape over a long period of time mark the character of a place and cultivate the history in which they maintain their identity. Anchored within these remembered landscape experiences are conceptions of place which contribute to our understandings of the ways in which the physical environment has been implicated in the evolution of our culture and identity. The landscape conveys explanations about the ways that we have learned to adapt and blend in with our environment by means of historical experiences of place. In general terms, the interplay between built form and natural space situates us in the past, present, and future.

Meinig (1979:172) suggests that past landscape experiences can be considered important in terms of “what we understand to be the nature of our society and its essential history(....)” Landscape experiences can work to reveal explanations about the construction of our culture and our subjective experiences of our physical environment. How is memory implicated in landscape experience? Memories of place experiences often allude to the ways that we have been shaped culturally by our environmental

experience (Aitken et al., 1989: 218). They particularly authenticate the role of landscape in understanding the shared values and beliefs that we exhibit and how they transpired in relation to landscape experiences. We learn to self-consciously understand the correlation between the landscape and our culture and the reasons behind the nature of our relations with it. How, then, is our present landscape experience affected by past interactions with it? Memories of historical interactions with the landscape conditions the way that we relate to it in terms of making us more aware of the past. They evoke meanings and symbols with which we associate our sense of identity. Meinig (1979:164) implies that landscapes are “a part of the shared set of ideas and memories and feelings which bind people together.” We endow particular landscape features with symbolic meaning because they are believed to highlight the historical conditions under which certain cultural activities played out in the landscape have taken on form. Our sense of continuity and place connection is nurtured by memories of significant landscape experiences (Marcus, 1992: 87). They can be powerful reminders of people and events that have had an impact on our cultural development. The landscape and its components contribute to the preservation of our heritage¹² by reflecting our ideals and conventions and the history from which they emerged.

Sopher (1979:136) implies that “landscape can be in large part that of the remembered field of familiar experience.” The interplay between time and landscape contributes to our ability to create collective recollections of place experiences that marked the daily life of our community. Although a culture’s landscape experiences vary significantly across time and space, they usually connote many cultural meanings involving the retention of people and things from which we are separated in time and

G

space. Memorable landscape experiences are important in terms of linking us to these common aspects of place understood as characterizing the nature of our culture and home. How may we apprehend the meaning conveyed through the intertwining of these elements? A wide array of common interests and relationships are communicated to cultures within the context of historical place experiences (Brodie, 1994). Our understandings of the common connections that bind us together can influence our evaluation of place experiences. In this respect, our interpretations of the cultural meanings derived from landscape experiences may be premised on memories of our experiences of specific landscape components. How do these experiences contribute to our relationship with the landscape? As Sopher (1979:138) suggests, they can encourage "A consensus that a particular component of the landscape stands for place." Certain landscape features may be understood as being highly representative of how the landscape was socially experienced in history; thus, endowing place with humanistic qualities. This gives the landscape a sense of home which is the most remembered aspect of place. In general, we begin to self-consciously recognize these place distinctions as artifacts of our common past and collective cultural experience of landscape.

To summarize, the intertwining of the spatial dimensions of landscape and culture is a key factor in shaping communities and their collective identities. Landscapes and the meanings that they exhibit suggest the significance of the physical environment in our social and cultural history. The natural and built elements of landscape express in explicit and implicit ways our history, values and beliefs, and attitudes and feelings about ourselves and our home. The landscape provides tangible evidence of the essence of a

culture's existence and the roots from which the nature of its everyday life emerged and developed.

1.5 Literature And Culture

The relationship between literature and culture is an interesting approach to exploring a people's historical and continuously evolving relationship with a place. In this respect, the choice of literary analysis as a means of exploring the relationship between culture and landscape is important for two reasons (Thompson, 1967: 1). First of all, literature that concentrates on a particular culture locates it in time and space through a collection of representations composed of the blending of fiction and reality (Quantic, 1995). The explicit interplay between literature, fiction, and actual historical reality often constitutes a cultural expression that provides clear evidence that the landscape can be directly implicated in the construction of cultural identity. The language of literature does more than just give an account of the elements that make up the physical environment. It frequently underscores the place of landscape in our social and cultural history and serves to remind us that the past can be relived and have an impact on the present (New, 1997). Secondly, and with this in mind, literature can also serve to reveal the inter-relatedness of history, culture, the natural and built environments, and the spatial dimensions of landscape as powerful determinants in people's interpretations of themselves and their world (Kelly, 1993; New, 1997). It can suggest to us, through the discourse and images elucidated in the texts (Kelly, 1993: 41),¹³ that place and space are the essence of community life from which a sense of identity may emerge and develop in the surrounding landscape. In general terms,

literature often articulates the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which people have experienced the landscape within which they are located.

1.6 Case Study

The Magdalen Islands has acquired a reputation as a unique landscape influencing a variety of literary activities, particularly in more recent years. The archipelago's inspiring geographical setting in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and its epic seafaring history have given rise to a rich literary heritage in which the landscape occupies a position of prominence. Literature about the Islands is also highly representative of the homogeneous Madelinot culture that evolved in isolation for nearly three hundred years (CAMI, 1993). The landscape has shaped almost every facet of the Islands' cultural history, particularly since the arrival of the first permanent Acadian settlers. Literary representations of the relationship between the local landscape and the Madelinot people's relentless struggle to survive it clearly delineate that the landscape is directly implicated in defining their very existence and identity as a people. In addition, they provide insights into the ways in which the powerful forces of place have worked historically to influence the thoughts and ideas of its dwellers about the realities that the landscape represents for them as a culture.

In this project, I propose a case study of cultural identity in the Magdalen Islands. I will not make broad generalizations about the mentality of the Madelinot people or their collective identity. This study will put forth a way of viewing, interpreting, and understanding the relationship between the Islands' landscape and the evolution of Madelinot cultural identity (New, 1997). A knowledge of the inter-connectedness of the terms discussed in the chapter is, however, important in establishing a general

understanding of the implications of historical subjective experiences of the physical environment on cultural identity (Kelly, 1993).

This study proposes a literary analysis of a variety of virtually unexplored texts which highlight the overt cultural associations between people and place in the Islands, including biographies, fiction, poetry, and historical texts. It is within this particular context that the themes, discourse, and images in literature about the Islands will be examined to demonstrate that the physical environment plays an important role in shaping the cultural values and practices of Islanders ultimately contributing to the development of their cultural identity (Altman and Chemers, 1980). Thematic representations of the interactions between Islanders and the landscape will also be drawn from the texts selected for analysis to investigate the ways in which the Madelinot people have had a direct and profound affect in shaping the Islands' landscape in terms of the historical process of adaptation and survival (Appleton, 1975; Lowenthal, 1975; Altman and Chemers, 1980; Aitken et al., 1989). This analysis will also seek to make evident that the common elements that inspire the symbols and images, discourse, attitudes, and values represented in the texts arise from the landscape itself and the emotional significance that the Madelinot people assign to it (Altman and Chemers, 1980).

Chapter 2

Spaces of Representation: Literature And The Magdalen Islands

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I begin each textual analysis by briefly introducing and situating the author of the text in a social, cultural, and historical context. This permits me to locate the authors in relation to their works in terms of understanding the ways in which their lives are tied to, and affected by, the subjects and places with which their narratives deal. This also serves to demonstrate the wide range of literary works that have been inspired by the culturally distinctive relationship between the Madelinot people and the Islands which has been preserved in the discourse and images of these cultural forms (Kelly, 1993). This is a good starting point for an investigation into the various literary representations of the cultural and historical aspects of this relationship, and the ways in which they have been implicated in fostering and defining the cultural identity of the Madelinot people.

I then analyze the texts chosen for the purpose of this study, either wholly or in part, in a specific sequence. I begin by examining two biographies which progressively reconstruct their subject's lives within the context of a factually based sequence of events. I believe that these biographies provide the most revealing and concrete examples of the profound linkages between people and place in the Islands. This is followed by an exploration of some contemporary fiction in which representations of these historical linkages often occupy a place of centrality. Since fictional works are closely related to biographies in both style and structure, I feel this to be a logical way for the chapter to progress. The last two sections of the chapter consist of an examination of

poetry and historical texts. Since the spatial dimensions of landscape are more overtly expressed in these texts, I feel it necessary to situate and explore them within relative proximity of one another. In all of these examples, the Madelinot people's relationship with the Islands is identified through an analysis of certain passages drawn from the texts. This aids me in conjecturing about the ways in which the identity of this culture has been constructed by means of relations with, and perceptions of, the terms reviewed in the intellectual framework outlined in Chapter 1. I plan to demonstrate that the explicit notions expressed about their relations with the landscape represents a commonalty existing in the local culture that enunciates a strong sense of self, of community, and attachment to place.

Finally, I suggest that when we begin to review the wide variety of writings dealing with the Magdalen Islands we immediately see that the physical qualities of place, history, and shared beliefs about the character of their people are all central in the narratives presented (Marcus, 1990). Many of these writings, some of which are widely known among the Islands' population, offer detailed and emotional descriptions of the Madelinot people's encounters with the local landscape. The authors of the writings also situate the local people within a social, cultural, and historical context which is a fundamental tool in understanding them as a people. This captures their subjective experiences of the physical and social qualities of place and the ways in which they have been shaped by them.

2.2 Biographies and the Islands

Rita Lapierre-Otis is directly linked in many ways with the subject and place with which her biography deals. Her 1997 biography of her mother, Angèle des Iles, unfolds

in the Islands at the beginning of the century before Angèle's forced migration to Québec. The biography is an account of her mother's early social and cultural heritage in the Islands and constitutes, to a large degree, a personal effort to rediscover the origins out of which Lapierre-Otis' own sense of self has emerged.

As Lapierre-Otis' biography opens, the importance of place in shaping her mother's sense of identity is immediately evident. She begins her account by locating her mother in a landscape ravaged by the spanish flu in the spring of 1919. We instantly begin to understand the defining role that the Islands play in influencing her perceptions of herself and of this place. While getting dressed on an early spring morning, Angèle overhears the final words of a conversation between her brother Paul and their father concerning the family's decision to sell their home and land in the Islands and move to mainland Québec. Angèle is instantaneously panicked by what she hears and frantically begins mulling over a series of worrisome scenarios about an unknown future in exile¹⁴ from her place in the world (Olschner, 1997: 130). Hysterical upon hearing of this decision, Angèle descends from her room and runs outside into the embrace of the Madelinot landscape where she finds comfort and peace of mind from her despair. This incident marks the first in a series of revealing experiences of landscape emphasizing the role of the physical environment in fostering Angèle's sense of self and her enduring sense of belonging to this place. Of this experience, the author writes:

Son regard lointain s'était subitement enveloppé d'une lourde mélancolie. Bien ancrée dans ce décor, elle essaya de mettre de l'ordre dans ses idées. Inquiète, elle prit soudain conscience de la pureté de l'air et voulut s'en imprégner pour ne jamais l'oublier. Elle respira à fond pour calmer son immense tristesse...Souvent envahie par cet étrange sentiment d'appartenance à ce paysage rassurant, certains matins comme celui-là, Angèle croyait renaître(...). (23-25)

In this passage, it is clear that her feeling of belonging to the archipelago is influenced by perceptual and sensual experiences of place which are enhanced by the physical conditions of the environment (Larsen, 1997: 223). Her attachment to this place appears to be nourished by her awareness of it in terms of its composition which she perceives to be the embodiment of her own existence (Olmsted, 1995; Meyer, 1997). Realizing that she will soon be dislocated from the environment within which she finds and anchors her sense of self, she savors her surroundings in a conscious effort to imprint the distinctive qualities of this place in her memory. This makes place transportable across time and space (Lewis, 1995; Murthy, 1996). In her later physical separation from it, memory allows Angèle to “reconcile the deep and alluring attachment to place” (Kelly, 1993: 2) which haunts her in her feeling of displacement. As the biographer makes evident in her account of the months prior to the dreaded day of departure for Québec, the archipelago’s unique and almost exotic landscape plays an intrinsic role in influencing the way that Angèle’s perceives her sense of being and her home.

In the biographer’s account of the days following our initial contact with Angèle, she continues to reinforce her portrait of a young Acadian girl molding herself within the Islands’ landscape, continuously creating a sense of place for herself (Murthy, 1996: 47). The author makes us believe that her mother’s reluctance to leave the archipelago is nourished by a sense of the unknown and an unwillingness to leave behind the things which inspire her imagination and with which she associates her sense of self. Lapierre-Otis suggests that her mother’s attachment to the Islands comes from a sensation of being tied to the objects, people, and places composing their unique landscape. This is amply described in the biographer’s nostalgic look at Angèle’s reactions to people and place in

the village of Étang-du-Nord where she spends many of her childhood days daydreaming.¹⁵ She writes:

Angèle toujours absorbée dans ses pensées, songeait à la grande ville(...)Seule avec son secret, elle se laissait envoûter par son coin de pays dont le charme envahissait à cet instant tout son être(...)l'Étang-du-Nord,(...)Angèle voyait soudain se dérouler les images des lieux qui lui étaient importants. L'atelier de Jack Lapierre, le forgeron(...)Puis se profila le magasin à Binet où les gens se rencontraient pour chercher la malle et discuter entre eux. (31-34)

This is a palpable representation of Angèle's childhood in the Islands. Her responses to the landscape are suggestive of her fear of being disconnected from the people and places which concretize her sense of belonging to it (Murthy, 1996; Olschner, 1997). Although she dreams of discovering the world outside of her village, her fear of it seems to be fostered by the knowledge that it is really nothing more than an empty space void of the people and things that tie her to the Islands. Her conception of her seaside hometown is a place of many social and cultural characteristics (Norton, 1989: 116). She locates both her past and present here and it "embodies both reaction to context, to previously experienced circumstances" (Golledge and Stimson, 1997: 391) through which her sense of being materializes. In contrast to the empty material space of the unknown, her village is a place of many social and cultural qualities possessing specific meaning and importance which have a certain impact on her existential experience (Norton, 1989: 71). This is a place to which she is able to attach faces and memories; thus, capturing a sense of security and community. By refusing to succumb to the probability of having to reconstruct all of this outside of what exists in the Islands, even in an imaginary form, the likelihood of the disintegration of her intimate and valued relationship with them is escaped even if for only a short time.

As Lapierre-Otis takes us further into her exploration of her mother's past the importance of the landscape, particularly the omnipresent sea, is increasingly evident in Angèle's drive to forge meaning out of her existence in the Islands. Lapierre-Otis emphasizes the importance of being close to familiar places which represent centres of ritual and tradition. Much of Angèle's life and experiences in the Islands frequently unfolds in the company of her sister Alphonsine with whom she often embarks on many emotional childhood journeys throughout the Islands' landscape. Encountering the Islands in the presence of her sister reinforces her attachment to place through an intense combination of interactions with both people and aspects of place (Applewhite, 1985: 51). Lapierre-Otis illustrates this connection in relating the sisters' summer morning ritual of clam digging along the shores of Étang-du-Nord:

Les deux soeurs(...)avancèrent sur la grève ruisselante où quelques traces de sabots et de roues fraîchement creusées apparaissaient comme des fossiles millénaires. Ces empreintes inscrites dans le sable semblent immobiliser le temps et le lieu. Pour Angèle, elles témoignent de ses racines et de son bonheur d'enfant(...)Parfois les filles marchaient pieds nus dans les vaguelettes au bord de la rive, mais jamais très loin, car elles trouvaient l'eau trop froide et ce n'était peut-être prudent(...)Angèle au cours de son enfance avait puisé dans cette mer changeante une vitalité qui avait nourri son âme d'artiste. (45-47)

The biographer's emphasis on history in this passage indicates that this is a place that fills both Angèle's past and present worlds and is perceived as an idyllic place which pervades her with a sense of identity. She is at the centre of this world and seems to draw a sense of security and permanence from the sight of the imprints left behind in the sand by the previous visitors to this place (Olschner, 1997: 131). Although the symbolic impact of these imprints brings on a feeling of ease and comfort, she remains fully conscious of the dangers that are also present in this place (Appleton, 1975: 1). This indicates an

awareness of place learned through encounters with it over a long period of time. Her attachment to this particular beach also appears to be formulated through a combination of experiences of it involving subtle reminders of historical rituals and the natural surroundings implicated in their evolution. The many images evoked of the traditional way of life, identity, and heritage which characterize this setting have a powerful psychological impact on Angèle and are key forces in uniting her with this place (Wenger, 1997). These are the things that draw her into the landscape and “are all fundamental elements” (Litteljohn, 1971: 38) in inspiring her imagination and creativity. In Angèle’s mind, without them she would be lost and overcome by a feeling of disorientation in an unknown empty space. Lapierre-Otis stresses the importance of rituals and traditions as key components in her mother’s experience of place and their role in the evolution of her sense of identity and belonging to the Islands (Wenger, 1997).

As the biographer delves deeper into Angèle’s past, it becomes increasingly evident that much of her sense of self and connection to the Islands is also constructed and anchored in the realm of the social context in which she is located (Buttimer, 1980; Wilson, 1980). Lapierre-Otis’ account often situates Angèle in the places behind which many of the local rituals and traditions materialize.¹⁶ This indicates that many of her most intense and defining experiences are produced in relation to the collectivity of which she is a part. In general, much of Angèle’s understanding of herself and her view of place is apparent in the author’s account of the social manifestations in which “a strong association between the landscape and the customs, the way of life, and the individual” (Altman and Chemers, 1980: 1) transpires. By locating her subject within the framework of a particular social group the biographer’s work demonstrates that Angèle’s

life and identity are, to a large degree, formed by her shared sense of place with the group. Lapierre-Otis provides us with a clear example of this in an account of Angèle's ritual attendance at the Sunday morning church service. She writes:

Les fioritures dorées qui décoraient cette somptueuse église Saint-Pierre de Lavernière(...)marquait l'importance accordée au culte et la fierté des paroissiens de cette bourgade(...)Angèle tournait la tête et repéra l'endroit où elle prenait place(...)lors de sa communion solennelle,(...)une drôle de sensation envahit tout son être et de beaux souvenirs surgirent du plus profond d'elle-même(...)De retour à la maison(...)les membres de la famille dégustèrent le bon rôti de porc qu'Anastasie avait cuit le matin même(...)Chacun mangea donc à sa faim et après avoir aidé à la vaisselle, Angèle, sa soeur et les amies allaient pouvoir profiter d'une excursion qui les mènerait jusqu'au renclos d'en haut. (84-86)

It is quite clear in this excerpt that Angèle attributes tremendous importance to this family ritual. It functions as a mechanism that reveals how she conceptualizes her perceptions of place by means of "the social network of people" (Wilson, 1980: 135) within which she experiences it. First, Angèle's interpretation of the outer appearance of the church immediately suggests that this is a place of sacred value in her life as well as in that of her community (Appleton, 1975: 81). As she approaches it, she is filled with a sense of pride and delights in its majestic appearance from which she seems to draw meaning relating to its significance in her community's past as well as in her own personal history. It is an integral part of the landscape which exemplifies the origins of the faith, traditions, and values conceived as representing the spirit of her people in their existence (Appleton, 1975: 81). Further, from the inside Angèle perceives the church as a place that symbolizes some of the intimate personal experiences which characterize her. It represents a site through which her connection to her community was reinforced by the ritual act of communion; thus, serving as a place for the reaffirmation of her roots which

contributes to her sense of identity. Although her recollections of past experiences of this place incline more toward an individual experience, they are related to the profound social circumstances surrounding her. This place generates many positive images which “provide for attachment, retention, and development of self-identity” (Godkin, 1980: 79), particularly those of community and family. The church and the rituals affiliated with it reinforce the social bonds that link Angèle to people and place suggesting that this is an essential component in the shaping of her identity (Buttimer, 1980; Wilson, 1980).

As Lapierre-Otis advances with her explanations of Angèle’s family life, she continues to build upon the idea of the family as particularly important social context in terms of its relevance in shaping Angèle’s sense of identity and attachment to place. By taking this particular approach in relating much of Angèle’s story, she is able to reveal and reinforce the significance of rituals and traditions as powerful components in the process by which Angèle’s sense of being emerges. She reflects the depth and nature of the effects of rituals and traditions on Angèle in her account of the prominent position held by the stove in her family life during the harsh winter months. She writes:

Le poêle demeurait donc la pièce maîtresse des foyers acadiens autour duquel se concentraient la plupart des activités hivernales. Le dur hiver, on le sait, façonnait la vie des Madelinots et chaque famille devait tirer profit de cet élément essentiel à la survie. Le poêle, comme les autres instruments de travail ou de musique, remplissait le temps et l’espace(...)le poêle demeurait le symbole qui la rattachait aux souvenirs de sa...tante Adéline(...)Pour Angèle le poêle(...)amenait ses pensées à la dure réalité de la vie quotidienne(...)dont elle était de plus en plus consciente. (127-128)

In this passage, the stove functions as a means by which Angèle is able to locate herself within a significant cultural experience (Lowenthal, 1975; Murthy, 1996). Her sensation of being tied to this place is supported by the activities unfolding around the stove which

strengthen family bonds and the sense of identity that they can generate. The stove is “a vital, an invaluable component” (Litteljohn, 1971: 36) of Angèle’s experience of place and symbolizes the ritual exercises that she perceives to be in danger of disappearing. It acts as a memory mechanism enabling her to remain united with her lineage in both the past and present worlds (Lewis, 1995; Olmsted, 1995; Meyer, 1997). This empowers her to safeguard the valued rituals and intimate relationships with the people that define her life the most. The stove also represents her family’s perseverance in their quest to survive the Islands’ harsh winter landscape. The activities that unfold around it testify to their conquest of the moral isolation imposed upon them by it. Angèle views all of this as testimony to their success in adapting and creating a home in this landscape where they continue to develop and express some of the most tangible characteristics of their vibrant and traditional culture (Litteljohn, 1971; Ian and Shields, 1997).

As Lapierre-Otis brings us closer to the moment of Angèle’s departure from the Islands, she illustrates that the “rugged and pristine beauty” (Ian and Shields, 1997: 391) of the landscape is central in the process by which Angèle’s identity emerges and develops. She does this through descriptions of the meanings that Angèle associates with the landscape, such as family history, feelings of continuity and permanence, and hope for the future (Olschner, 1997: 131). This following excerpt illustrates this point:

Elle avait emmagasiné dans sa mémoire, des images, des situations et des événements dont les souvenirs s’estomperaient peut-être, mais dont les traces demeuraient indélébiles(...)l’image de la mer(...)lui rappellera pour toujours son appartenance au peuple acadien(...)Elles l’imprimèrent dans leur mémoire et se laissèrent griser par les subtiles odeurs de champs et de salant qui s’en dégageaient(...)Ni l’une ni l’autre ne voulut briser le silence dans cette nature où le temps ne comptait désormais plus(...)Angèle et Alphonsine prirent conscience que leurs pas d’enfants venaient de marquer les dernières traces de leurs racines. (183-184)

It is obvious that Angèle's close links with family and community are embodied in the geographical realities of place. The landscapes of her childhood give rise and form to her sense of identity and belonging to place. In this sense, the archipelago's landscape stretches beyond its own conventional purposes to symbolize all things associated with Angèle's historical subjective experiences of place (Murthy, 1996). The intertwining of the elements comprising the natural and built realities of the landscape, the ocean, the houses, family, history, and memory clearly function in unison to reveal explanations about Angèle's origins. These explanations impress upon her a profound existential experience giving rise to an impressionable individual with a view of herself and place in which "each reinforces the identity of the other" (Davis, 1995: 20). The coalescence of historical and geographical conditions is a key component in molding Angèle's identity and in her fierce determination to preserve it from eroding. This is apparent in the biographer's depiction of her final responses to her surroundings. She is aware of the power of memory in making place transportable and in serving as a site in which she can always maintain her sense of self (Lewis, 1995; Murthy, 1996). As indicated in the biography's preface, after more than a half of a century of exile Angèle's sense of identity and belonging to the landscapes of her past remain intact:

Elle reconnaissait l'odeur de la mer, la couleur de l'espace, la texture du sol et la qualité d'âme des habitants des Îles. Ainsi, le temps n'avait pas réussi à diluer cet attachement à ses origines, à son peuple acadien. À l'encontre de sa mère qui abandonna ses Îles sans regret, Angèle tout au long de sa vie leur a voué un attachement que le temps a idéalisé.
(15)

The 1979 biography Auguste LeBourdais, by Azade Harvey, chronicles the triumphs and tragedies of its subject by retracing the steps of his life and legacy as a

mariner. Harvey, a biographer and a native of the Islands, documents many of the physical and mental challenges that confronted LeBourdais' from his first contact with the local landscape to the final days of his historical integration into the Madelinot community. LeBourdais' triumphant story is firmly embedded into the Islands folklore where he has achieved the status of a local folk hero.¹⁷ Unlike Angèle Molaison's story of exile, LeBourdais' deals with an unexpected integration into a foreign landscape.

Harvey opens his illuminating biography with an optimistic account of the mariner's triumphant quest to survive the harsh forces of nature that leave him shipwrecked and near death in the Magdalen Islands in the winter of 1871. This work focuses on LeBourdais' struggle to come to terms with his life in isolation as a handicapped mariner longing to return to his seafaring past. As the biography begins in the port of Québec City, Harvey paints a portrait of a strong young man measuring more than six feet tall and weighing nearly three hundred pounds as he climbs aboard the "SS Wasp" while her crew prepares for their long voyage to Belgium. While crossing the Gulf of St. Lawrence near the archipelago they encounter a violent storm marking LeBourdais' first and important "experience and understanding of the landscape" (Von Maltzahn, 1994: 112) in which he later makes a home. Following a terrifying confrontation with the powerful wrath of the ocean the "SS Wasp" and all of her crew, with the exception of LeBourdais, are destroyed. He later finds himself alone and stranded in a blizzard on a barren beach. He manages to make his way to a nearby hay shed where he falls unconscious and stays for three days. As Harvey's book retraces LeBourdais' life in the Islands, we can see that this incident marks the first in a series of physical and psychological experiences of landscape to have a profound and lasting

effect on his life in the archipelago. Harvey's account of LeBourdais' story reveals both the explicit and implicit ways in which this man's journey inside himself is provoked by the power of a significant landscape which forces him to "confront the past(...)or be destroyed in the process" (Olmsted, 1997: 249). His real journey begins following his rescue by three Madelinot men several days after the incident which forcedly stranded him in this merciless and hostile landscape. A victim of severe frost bite in his quest to overcome the odds, LeBourdais endures the desperate measures often taken by the Madelinot people to survive in their physical isolation. Both of his legs are amputated with the aid of nothing more than a handsaw and a local alcoholic concoction used as an anesthetic to numb the pain. As a mariner descended from a long line of seamen, the loss of his legs represents a traumatic experience that remains etched deep into his memory throughout his life. LeBourdais, as a stranded seaman in a place that he interprets as an antagonistic environment, feels compelled to forge a new relationship with the sea which he now denounces (Olmsted, 1995; Meyer, 1997). He suggests this in a letter to his parents which describes his first encounter with the Islands. He writes:

Le temps était si terrible que je vous dirai point ce qu'il en suit, seulement moi qui s'est sauvé et la vie m'a coûté cher. J'ai vu la mort proche de moi(...)le mauvais temps continua toujours avec violence je passeai ce temps-là sur la dune de sable(...)à l'abri du vent, sans voir personne, la neige qui tombait sur moi et mon butin gelé, sans feu, couché sur la terre, la seule nourriture que je pouvais recueillir était de la neige(...)jamais je ne pourrai retourner à la mer. (37-39)

In this passage, we immediately see how his first encounter with the powerful conditions of this environment has altered his perceptions of that which is fundamentally important in the lives of mariners wishing to feel complete, the sea (Olmsted, 1995; Meyer, 1997). Although the events that he writes about in his letter only unfolded in his most recent

past, his recollections of them indicate that these experiences have been implicated in shaping his attitude about place and in redefining his perceptions of it. These events mark a turning point in LeBourdais' life as he embarks on a "new path to the future" (Sandweiss, 1994: 89) providing him the opportunity to redefine himself in the present while coming to terms with the past (Olmsted, 1995; Meyer, 1997).

Harvey's biography marks the convergence of LeBourdais' past and present in the relating of the mariner's return to Québec City the following spring where he finally receives formal medical treatment. His time in the hospital signifies a period of reflection and represents a space in which LeBourdais' existential experience is revealed (Murthy, 1996). The memory of his intense encounter with the Madelinot sea works to change his perspectives of it. The past and present, however, are united forcing the realization that "It is the sea of no limit(...)representing consciousness, self-definition" (Applewhite, 1985: 5). LeBourdais' recollection of this particular experience of place may represent his conscious choice to remain attached to the past within which lies the very core of his identity. Of this revelation, Harvey writes:

Auguste n'était pas homme à se confiner dans une ville, habitué qu'il était aux voyages de par son métier de marin et attiré par les grandes espaces. Il entrait à peine dans la trentaine et, à cet âge, on éprouve encore le besoin d'être actif. A Québec, il lui manquait la mer, le large et tout ce qui vous fait rêver. (43)

He is tormented by the past and his incapability of functioning as an able seaman in the present. His unwillingness in forgetting these life altering experiences may represent an attempt to defy his agony and learn "to live with it, to coexist and embrace it - not to be consumed by it - and to learn as well how to live beyond it" (Olmsted, 1997: 254). In this sense, his memory of a place experience acts as a site of transformation in which he

defeats the ghosts of the past and reaffirms his identity and claim to his legacy (Lewis, 1995). Following several months of regenerating his mind and body in the city LeBourdais returns to the Islands to face the landscapes out of which his roots emerged.

Following his return to the archipelago, LeBourdais promptly takes a position as a telegraph operator in the newly established government telegraph office in Grosse-Ile. In Harvey's view, this position marks another important step for LeBourdais in forming a new alliance with the sea helping him to make sense out of his experience as a mariner (Murthy, 1996). This position represents a tangible way of remaining linked to his legacy and traditional way of life by being close enough to it to be invigorated by a sense of the past (Applewhite, 1985: 43). Harvey poetically demonstrates LeBourdais' new appreciation of the sea and its place in his life in the following passage:

La mer à perte de vue, et à l'horizon la merveilleuse île Brion, voilà le décor qui s'offrait à Auguste. Enfin, il pouvait humer le vent du large, sentir l'odeur du goémon, suivre le vol des oiseaux de mer, écouter le clapotis des vagues sur la falaise auquel se mêlait le bruit des messages transmis aux bateaux passant au large...près du lieu où(...)il avait fait naufrage, il défiait la mer du regard avec un sourire au coin des lèvres(...)Oh! toi, ma belle, tu n'as pas réussi à me posséder, comme tu as eu les autres membres de mon équipage. (47-49)

This passage represents LeBourdais' acceptance of his fate and indicates that the retention of his most profound encounter with this familiar natural space is a source of "physical(...)and spiritual renewal" (Wright and Mattson, 1996: 3). Harvey's description of LeBourdais' reunion with this dominating feature of the Islands' landscape is reminiscent of their intimate relationship in the past and suggests the prominent role of the sea in the mariner's rediscovery and reconstruction of himself in the present (Murthy, 1996). The biographer's romantic portrait of the sea and the subtlety of LeBourdais' reaction to it also suggests that "despite its formidable obstacles" (Meyer, 1995: 118)

there can be no other home for the subject. His entire existence is framed within, and defined by, this natural space (Olmsted, 1995; Meyer, 1997). This reunion marks a fundamentally important moment in LeBourdais' life and exemplifies a true understanding of himself and his place in the world.

At the closing of the biography LeBourdais, now content with himself and well established in the Islands for nearly forty years, is an integral and respected part of the Madelinot community. As the archipelago's telegraph operator he represents a vital source of communication between Islanders and the mainland and symbolizes, to a large degree, their conquest of the moral and geographical isolation imposed upon them by the sea.¹⁸ LeBourdais defeats most of the challenges presented to him by the places and events that permanently altered his life (Lewis, 1995). Harvey's account, however, illustrates that his existence remains very much shaped by the landscapes of a familiar past (Marcus, 1996). Here is an excerpt that demonstrates this point:

C'était un S.O.S. venant du "SS Karpathe" qui naviguait au large de la Nouvelle Écosse. Il annonçait que, le "SS Titanic", venait de sombrer à la suite d'une collision avec un iceberg(...)La nouvelle(...)lui fit revivre de sinistres souvenirs: ceux de son propre naufrage quarante-et-un ans plus tôt et des souffrances qui s'ensuivirent. Les pauvres malheureux, pensa-t-il, pourvu qu'ils n'aient pas à endurer les souffrances que j'ai moi-même endurées après le naufrage du Wasp. Ses yeux remplirent de larmes. (65-66)

This passage suggests that the sea is the site of LeBourdais' memory and serves to remind him of its power to affect his life in the present (Lowenthal, 1975; Wenger, 1997). His entire past is reincarnated in this event which produces an acute emotional reaction from LeBourdais. The emotional effects of this incident on LeBourdais also indicate that his present state of mind and his "mood and feelings are intertwined" (Altman and Chemers, 1980: 21) with the sea. This tragedy transcends time and space and works to

symbolically reproduce his personal past affording him the ability to empathize with the people involved. We can see that the sea refuses to let him forget the anguish of his earlier violent confrontation with it. This makes him painfully conscious of the connection between his present life, the past, and the sea as the embodiment of his existence (Olmsted, 1995; Meyer, 1997). He is identified with the sea and it is within the context of this natural space that he experiences the essence of his being.

The sea is the “spatial unit privileged” (Larsen, 1997: 223) by the author in relating the life of Auguste LeBourdais in the Magdalen Islands. In his account of his subject’s experiences of place the sea takes on the role of memory linking this man to his past in which his true sense of self is located. This functions as a mechanism through which the metamorphosis and reconstruction of his identity transpires. By situating him within the confines of a space that encompasses both his past and present worlds, Harvey’s work demonstrates how this man’s experiences of landscape endow him with an identity correlating to that of the Madelinot collectivity into which he integrates. The sea is a symbol representing “undoubtedly survival” (Atwood, 1972: 32) by means of which LeBourdais becomes conscious of his deepest sense of self and the nature of the culture to which he has become solidly connected (Kelly, 1993). As Harvey’s final words indicate in the closing of the book, the nature of his life was as determined by the sea as the history of the sea itself was written by the existence of men like Lebourdais:

À l’automne de 1919, Auguste fut gravement malade(...)le 20 février il tomba dans un état comateux puis morut dans la soirée du 29 février(...)Avec la mort de ce grand homme, de ce héros, s’éteignait également l’époque de la navigation à voile, époque merveilleuse où les hommes ne manquait pas de courage (75)

These two biographies similarly demonstrate the powerful impact of historical landscape experiences in shaping people and place in the Islands by underscoring the transcendent nature of their consequences. They make evident that physical and psychological experiences of the Islands landscape stretch beyond the boundaries of time and space and work to define a common understanding and image of place. These texts also reinforce the place of the local landscape in the evolution of the Islands' social and cultural history. In this respect, both of these biographies are highly representative of the first two thematic associations identified in chapter 1 of this study.

2.3 Fiction And The Islands

Jean Lemieux's novels Le Trésor de Brion and La Lune Rouge are a successful blend of fiction and reality which is highly representative of the Madelinot character and culture. Although one novel is an adult murder mystery and the other an adventure story for young adults, the author situates the stories and their characters in similar time frames against a backdrop of mystery, beauty, and symbolic places that have long characterized the Islands' people. Lemieux, a medical doctor from Iberville, has been a resident of the Islands since 1980.

His 1991 novel Le Trésor de Brion, depicts an historical landscape of mysteries and legends rising from the sea. Lemieux's use of the landscape in this novel is essential to the plot development and in generating images of a culture defined historically by the physical environment. He takes advantage of his personal interest in the archipelago's rich history as a marine graveyard¹⁹ in shaping his narrative and in creating vignettes of a people innately bound to the landscape physically and psychologically. In this novel, the story revolves primarily around a young and spirited Madelinot teenager named

Guillaume Cormier who embarks on an adventurous quest to find a lost treasure on Brion Island. Throughout his journey he profoundly experiences a unique landscape that almost seems as if it was created for adventure. The author's descriptions of the landscape give us a sense of the significance of place in molding Guillaume's character and imagination. He does this in one of the final sequences of the novel by detailing Guillaume's sentimental responses to the landscapes of his village, Havre-Aubert.

Lemieux writes:

Il alla s'accouder à la fenêtre. Sous ses yeux, la marée montante roulait les golets de l'anse. À sa gauche, le soleil descendait derrière les Demoiselles. À sa droite, surmonté du musée et des socles en ciment des vieilles citernes de la Irving, le cap Gridley. Entre les deux s'étendait la mince croissant de la Grave. Guillaume bascula deux siècles plus tôt. Il vit ses ancêtres acadiens revenir du large dans leurs doris. Il les vit décharger leur morue et l'éviscérer sur la grève, sur des étais assiégés par les goélands. Il vit les femmes, foulard sur la tête, disposer les filets de poisson sur les vigneaux pour les faire sécher au soleil(...)Son imagination s'enflammait. (161)

The combination of images of "the social environment and physical environment" (Hummon, 1992: 256) in this excerpt seem to contribute to Guillaume's sense of adventure. His romantic image of Havre-Aubert depicts a strong attachment to place that is rooted deep in the historical landscapes around which his village evolved. Reflections on the traditional rituals of his community indicate that he understands them to be representative of more than just a way of life. He conceives of them as symbols of his identity and heritage linking him to a rich seafaring legacy that inspires his imagination and desire to return to a time of adventure and intrigue (Olmsted, 1995; Meyer, 1997). The author's focus on the local elements of place and Guillaume's cultural history also establishes a connection between place and the contours of his imagination. His journey

into the landscapes of the past is a reflection on his own cultural experiences of Havre-Aubert and their power in fostering his experience of place on different levels.

The power of the landscape in shaping Guillaume's inner thoughts and feelings can also be seen in an earlier passage in the novel. In this passage, the landscape is endowed with exotic and captivating qualities which work to filter it "through into the consciousness" (Kadish, 1987: 52) of the young adventurer fostering his determination to live out his Madelinot legacy. This is a revealing passage detailing one of his most intimate encounters with the ocean. Of it, Lemieux writes:

Finalement, l'humanité n'était qu'un accident dans l'évolution du monde. Lui, Guillaume Cormier, n'était qu'un peu d'eau de mer galvanisée par cette âme dont parlaient les curés dans leurs églises, les poètes dans leurs chansons. Quand il naviguait à la barre du Par là-bas, il regardait toute cette vie qui s'agitait autour de lui, semblable à celle qui coulait dans ses veines. Il pensait aux noyés, aux marins du Nadine qui avaient coulé dans la mer glacée par une nuit de décembre. Au dernier moment, les hommes avaient dû éprouver une sensation d'engourdissement, d'abandon, qui ressemblait à l'amour. (137-138)

Guillaume's romanticized images of the seascape implies that he conceives of it as a place of cultural beginnings and endings ultimately constituting an integral "part of his personal destiny" (Thompson, 1967: 126). The emphasis placed on the relationship between his thoughts and feelings and the historical specificity of the landscape also suggests that it represents a space from which he draws his sense of identity and individuality. The author's focus on the coalescence of the past and present and life and death works to influence and maintain Guillaume's curiosity in the landscape reinforcing his attachment to it (Olmsted, 1995; Meyer, 1997). His conceptions of the sea indicate that he has developed a strong personal relationship with it from which has evolved a

kind of equilibrium between the mystery and power that it represents and his desire to be an integral part of it.

The 1992 novel La Lune Rouge, is a contemporary murder mystery set in the small and isolated Madelinot community of Entry Island. As in Lemieux's earlier narrative, the landscape occupies a place of centrality in the novel in terms of shaping the plot and the characters around which the story revolves. The author begins his story with an account of the mysterious death of a young woman named Charlene Collins and the emotional reaction that it generates from her longtime friend, Thomas, upon hearing of this tragedy. The author's approach in opening his story, however, exceeds the traditional limits of a contemporary mystery novel. Instead of painting a dark and violent portrait of the victim's death, the author focuses on some of the more inward and personal meanings expressed by the strong psychological connection between people and place in the Islands (Bullen, 1986: 32). Lemieux details Thomas' remembered childhood experiences of the local landscape which are triggered by his emotional response to Charlene's untimely death. He writes:

Quand j'étais petit, je mettais mon grand chandail de laine et j'allais me coucher dans le vent quand il faisait tempête(...)J'étendais les bras et m'allongeais contre le mur d'air qui m'assaillait. Le vent coulait, fraternel dans mon dos. Je volais ainsi, à angle aigu avec le sol, jusqu'à ce qu'une saute de vent me fasse tomber(...)Ce doit être agréable de se faire tuer par le vent. (16)

This passage illustrates how unexpected and powerful events can evoke memories of past landscape experiences that define people and place in a particular way. Thomas' recollections of his subliminal childhood experiences of place suggest that he is struggling to maintain the characteristic innocence of place which Charlene's murder is working to transform (Lewis, 1995). It is with the peaceful and breathtaking landscapes

of his most memorable years that he associates himself which, to a large degree, are “suddenly and radically” (Bullen, 1986: 62) being altered by this incident. It seems clear that Thomas is seeking refuge in the embrace of the natural and secure landscapes of the past which counteract the dark and unknown place that is developing around him. Remembering the way that it was allows him to sustain his emotional connection to this idyllic childhood place in face of the present circumstances which threaten to destroy it (Olmsted, 1997). The power of memory permits him to briefly situate himself outside of the turmoil of the changing landscape of his home and recapture some of the qualities of place that he perceives to be rapidly disappearing from it in light of the current situation.

In the chapters following Thomas’ nostalgic return to his childhood²⁰ in the midst of an evolving mystery, Lemieux continues to paint a portrait of a small island community shaped emotionally by the landscape in which they have made their home. He frames his characters in a setting in which the progression of their daily lives seems to be controlled by the landscape itself. His use of the landscape stresses its role in shaping the plot of the story and the character of the local people who become entangled in it. This account of a meeting between François Robidoux, a character bearing a striking resemblance to the author, and Mrs. Patterson illustrates this point. He writes:

La frontière entre la fable et la réalité était mouvante dans ce pays. Madame Patterson était demurée, malgré vingt-cinq ans de résidence, une étrangère sujette aux peurs et aux calomnies. Le vent reprenait. Désormais sûr de coucher sur l’île, François Robidoux s’attarda dans chaque cuisine. Il commençait à comprendre pourquoi ces gens soumis à une dure existence vivaient souvent jusqu’à un âge avancé. Quand le vent s’élevait, quand les Demoiselles glissaient sous la brume, quand la poudrerie dansait entre les maisons, il n’y avait rien à faire que d’attendre. Le temps s’arrêtait. (57)

This excerpt depicts the local landscape as “a privileged place” (Kadish, 1987: 34) for a suspense story. Lemieux’s description of the harsh and lonely landscape suggests that the local people’s thoughts, attitudes, and feelings about strangers and the outside world emerge from the isolated existence to which they have been subjugated for so long. The harsh physical and psychological portrait that the author paints of the landscape establishes a connection to the character’s state of mind serving to reinforce the profound and enduring links between people and place (Bullen, 1986). His account of François Robidoux’s contemplation of the Madelinot landscape demonstrates this point by underscoring the immediate affects of this place and its composition on his psyche as a newcomer unaccustomed to life in a community amid the raw forces of nature. It is evident that the young doctor’s perceptions of the local residents are being directly influenced by the forceful and dominating presence of the surrounding landscape (Paul, 1992). It is by intermingling the actual qualities of place and the eminent features of a mystery novel that Lemieux sets the tone of his novel and provides a true to life image of his characters.

The author’s descriptions of the landscape are more than just descriptions of the local scenery. It remains evident throughout the novel that the landscape is a significant factor in sustaining the plot and in setting the mood of the story (Bullen, 1986: 36). The author accomplishes this task by perceptually situating his characters within specific landscape experiences that generate clues about the psychological implications of their relationship with place. Lemieux often recreates his characters most vivid past experiences of place as a means of highlighting their “moral strengths and weaknesses” (Bullen, 1986: 98). This is particularly evident halfway through the novel when he

details Mrs. Patterson's recollections of her first year as a practising nurse on Entry Island in the winter months of 1959. Of this experience, he writes:

L'infirmière, les yeux mi-clos, riait de bon coeur. Elle essuya du revers de la main le rimmel qui coulait de ses paupières. Elle restait assise, bien droite, son verre vide à la main, une écolière turbulente attendait sa punition(...)Elle avait quitté sa prison de blé à Saskatoon pour venir s'enfermer sur une île battue par l' Atlantique. Les gens du continent qui vivaient aux Îles devaient partager une curieuse fatalité intérieure(...)Le premier hiver a été dur. Il y a eu de la méningite. Un enfant est mort. Un autre est devenu sourd(....)(80-81)

The author's depiction of Entry Island as a bleak and harsh landscape goes "beyond the physical level" (Kadish, 1987: 81) to suggest a landscape that is particularly challenging to survive psychologically. Lemieux's emphasis on sickness and death within the embrace of isolation lends to the mysterious power of place in affecting Mrs. Patterson's state of mind (Olmsted, 1997). Although she is obviously a survivor, her emotional response to the memory of one of her most profound experiences of place suggests that she has not completely escaped the mental anguish that was imposed on her by the hostile nature of this environment. The author reinforces the emotional depth and power of this past experience of Entry Island by integrating the local landscape with her state of mind (Squire, 1992: 141). In general, he uses the landscape as a means of stressing the tensions in his characters' lives which serves to create realistic impressions of an environment having a powerful impact on molding the character of Islanders.

Lemieux uses the landscape in many different ways in this novel which culminates in a variety of cultural associations between people and place that further contribute to the suspenseful nature of his story. Many of the author's characteristic depictions of the landscape "draw parallels between the author's fictional world" (Squire, 1992: 138) and the culture within which the story deals. We are provided a good

example of this early in the novel when François Robidoux becomes increasingly entangled in the details of Mrs. Patterson's first winter on Entry Island which she habitually recorded in the pages of her journal. The young doctor begins to recognize and understand some of the trials and tensions related to life in this community for outsiders from the circumstances surrounding Mrs. Patterson's long and stressful integration into this island community. Of this experience, she recounts:

Le 9 janvier 1959

La fatigue me ronge et j'ai envie de pleurer. Quelle idée de venir m'enterrer ici? Je n'ai pas l'âme d'une missionnaire. Ce n'est pas un pays pour une femme seule. J'y demeurais dix ans que je ne serais jamais des leurs. (109)

Lemieux's use of the landscape in this passage is suggestive of a bewildering and uninviting environment which is essential in "the systematic creation of a mystery" (Faris, 1988: 1). The associations made between Mrs. Patterson's emotional state and the landscape reflect the difficulties faced by newcomers in terms of physically and psychologically integrating into it. The intertwining of the images of a closed and confined landscape and an emotionally hostile atmosphere indicate that the elements of place are integral in shaping the community's attitudes and cultural sensibility toward outsiders (Squire, 1992). The meticulous details of Mrs. Patterson's sense of being alone amid the people of this island also reinforces the image of a community and an environment unwilling to embrace strangers. The author further develops and concretizes these ideas later in the novel in a passage detailing the scene of the crime. His account of François Robidoux's arrival at the scene of the crime in the middle of a debate about the cause of Charlene's death similarly supports the connection between place and local perceptions of outsiders. He writes:

Elle s'est peut-être suicidée, dit quelqu'un. On ne la connaissait pas. Elle était un peu fêlée. Elle a dû tomber, dit le maire. Elle sortait parfois la nuit pour marcher sur les falaises(...)Un consensus s'établit à l'effet qu'il s'agissait d'un accident(...)Des grognements s'élevèrent parmi les hommes. Ils prirent conscience de la présence de François Robidoux parmi eux. Un malaise fit surface(...). (156-157)

The meanings generated by the linkages that the author establishes between the young stranger François Robidoux and the hostilities expressed by the local residents toward him imply that this community's unceasing mistrust and unacceptance of newcomers originates in the harsh landscape. It seems clear that the landscape in which the mystery is evolving is significant in terms of serving as a metaphor for an island culture "virtually sealed off from the world" (Halliday, 1973: 11). The perceived image of the young doctor as an intruder meddling in the affairs of the community catches the essence of a distant island culture and the turbulent landscape that fostered it (Bordessa, 1992). The cultural associations that Lemieux makes evident by intertwining the actual historical physical features of place and the emotional state of his characters serves to draw his readers into his story for a suspenseful and realistic experience of place.

As the novel winds down to its compelling conclusion, Lemieux further "exploits something of the symbolic power" (Bullen, 1986: 42) of place in establishing a connection between the local culture, the landscape, and the narrative. In a passage near the end of the novel, Lemieux details one of François Robidoux's more intimate and personal experiences of the island's landscape bringing him to a closer understanding of the people and place into which he will integrate on similar physical and psychological levels as Mrs. Patterson did many years previous. This excerpt particularly illustrates how the young outsider's physical experiences of the landscape elements transpire into a psychological experience having a profound effect on him and his understandings of the

nature of the community in which he finds himself (Bordessa, 1992). Of it, the author writes:

La nuit tombait. Il s'assit dans l'herbe froide. Il essaya de récapituler les faits, mais l'obscurité, le vent, l'omniprésence de la mer dans son dos, lui donnait le vertige. L'espace d'un instant, il se vit au sommet d'un pic immense, les étoiles à portée de la main. Il ferma les yeux. La mort, la nuit, les hauteurs, il avait peur de tout. (227)

This passage suggests that François Robidoux's understanding of the island community is influenced by his experience of the landscape's physical components. The young doctor's overwhelming sense of subjugation to the dominant features of the landscape implies that he apprehends this place as an oppressive environment. This is a key factor in contributing to his understanding of the strong ties between the cultural traits of the local people and the landscape (Riley, 1992: 16). It seems clear that the author's vivid description of François Robidoux's reaction to the conditions of place signifies a period of psychological immersion into the landscape. His sense of fear of place indicates that he is beginning to comprehend the power of the landscape in bonding people to it and in shaping the cultural nature of the community established within it.

Paul Chantraine's short story *La Femme du Capitaine*, appearing in his 1994 collection of short stories Le Grand Bal des baleines, is a contemporary story of a young city woman's struggle to adapt to the conditions of a foreign Madelinot landscape. Chantraine, born in Belgium and a resident of the Islands for more than twenty years, successfully captures and recreates many of the emotional and defining experiences of place lived by the Islands' residents through the generations.

Chantraine sets his story against a backdrop of a typical cold and bleak Madelinot winter serving to create images of a psychologically challenging atmosphere. The

narrative's appeal relies heavily on Georgette, the central character, and her effort to adapt and become a part of the local landscape. The significant emotional challenge that she will confront in her effort to integrate into the culture, to which she is connected by means of her marriage to a local fisherman, is made immediately evident in a sequence in the opening paragraphs of the narrative. In this sequence, we find Georgette among a gathering of local women patiently awaiting the return of their husbands from a fishing trip while a winter storm brews outside. The author writes:

Contrairement aux autres femmes de pêcheurs, Georgette n'était pas une fille de bord de mer; elle ne possédait pas cette espèce de fatalisme que des générations de résignation aux coups de sort ont imprimé au caractère des gens des côtes en général et des épouses de pêcheurs en particulier. Elles pilotent leur maisonée d'un main de fer sur le gouvernail, sans flancher, par les pires tourments, comme si elles acceptaient au fond d'elles-mêmes la tragédie, comme une incontournable virtualité de l'existence. Or, cela la révoltait. Jamais elle n'avait pu ni ne pourrait composer avec elle. (21)

Chantraine instantly paints a portrait of a woman grappling with the conditions of a landscape which "could cause real hardship" (Halliday, 1973: 11). Unlike the local women who possess an experience and knowledge in surviving the hinterlands that spans several generations, she hails from a domesticated urban environment and has yet to develop the internal strength and stamina necessary to contend with the imposing psychological obstacles raised before her by this environment. Chantraine's description of Georgette's feelings and her readiness to surrender to the power of the present circumstances alludes to a testing and domineering landscape capable of influencing human emotions. Emerging from his depiction of Georgette's emotional state is a romanticized image of the epic struggle between a culture and place which is an historical and predominating feature of Madelinot life.

In the final sequence of the narrative, the author portrays a much stronger woman learning to deal with trials and tensions of life in this remote corner of the world. In it, we can see that Georgette is beginning to fathom the harsh realities of life so often faced by women in this landscape. The realization that her husband is not coming home represents the final stage of her integration into the local culture. Chantraine writes:

Quelque part dans sa tête(...)Georgette entendait sa voix, la voix forte de Gilles, qui lui hurlait à travers la tempête qu'il fallait qu'elle tienne bon, qu'elle tienne jusqu'au bout, qu'elle soit la dernière à lâcher, à baisser pavillon, et qu'elle le devait, parce qu'elle l'était plus que jamais en ce moment terrible, la femme du capitaine. (38)

The events described in this sequence express a turning point in Georgette's life. They suggest that she "is in the process of becoming" (Olmsted, 1997: 264) a part of the landscape that is working to shape her fate as a fisherman's wife. Chantraine's emphasis on the echoing of Gilles' voice in her head implies that Georgette has learned to survive by distancing herself psychologically from the intense forces of place. This sequence projects a realistic vision of the emotional conditions of everyday life endured by local women in the Islands for more than a century and the ways that they contribute to their notions about place and the meanings that it holds for them.

Le Lutin des Mers and Héritiers du Vent, by Gervais Pomerleau, are also fictional works that emphasize many of the social and cultural distinctions of the Madelinot people. In these two novels, the author develops his narratives and characters in opposing worlds at different periods in the Islands' history. The first of the two books is a young adult novel that explores a young girl's determination to understand the government's environmental decision-making process which has profound effects on the social and cultural dimensions of modern day life in the Islands. The second is an

imaginative supernatural tale which unfolds at the turn of the century and highlights the intelligence, strength, and courage of the Madelinot people. Pomerleau is a native of Jonquière now residing in the village around which his narratives revolve.

In his novel Le Lutin des Mers, published in 1995, Pomerleau sets his narrative in a contemporary landscape “shaped jointly by the social and the natural elements” (Wallace and Shields, 1997: 386) of place. It is a realistic tale inspired by the controversial events surrounding the raising of the Irving Whale in the fall of 1994. The story revolves around a young girl named Caroline Poirier and her attempt to capture the attention of the federal environment minister regarding her concerns about this endeavor. The author gives form to his narrative by reflecting on the evolving postmodern attitude of the Madelinot people toward the landscape. This attitude mirrors and confirms their historical reality and coalescence with the environment. This passage conveys this reality:

Tu as dit, madame la ministre, dans un discours à Ottawa, que tu ne voulais pas être accusée de n’avoir rien fait dans le dossier du Irving Whale. Serait-il plus intéressant pour toi, madame la ministre, d’être accusée de t’être portée à la solde des compagnies pétrolières, comme dit mon père?

Au nom de la morue
disparue
Au nom du crabe
sur ta table
Au nom des oiseaux
tremblant pour leur peau
Au nom des Madelinots
qui en ont plein le dos
Au nom du homard
avant qu’il soit trop tard

Madame la ministre, pense-y avant de te contenter de renflouer le Irving Whale. Nous voulons qu’il quitte notre environnement. Oui. Mais nous voulons qu’il soit vidé avant. Plus tard, ça pourrait bien être trop tard, madame la ministre. Pense-y. Pense à la terre que tu prépares pour tes enfants si tu en as. Et si tu n’en as pas, ce n’est pas une raison pour ne pas te préoccuper de ceux des autres. (67)

The perspective communicated in this passage is highly expressive of the cultural significance of the natural environment in shaping the Madelinot people's heritage and cultural identity. It seems clear that nature is deemed to be a sacred part of the local landscape representing "the natural richness of man's essence" (Laptev, 1975: 57). The author's focus on Caroline's disenchantment with the government's indifference toward local concerns about some of the environmental issues relating to the project evokes images of a culture fighting to maintain its natural integrity. The issues of contemporary environmentalism that she brings to the minister's attention further indicate that she understands the natural environment to be a key factor in sustaining the local culture (Wallace and Shields, 1997). The overt cultural associations that Pomerleau makes evident between the local people and the environment elicit images of an emerging postmodern culture formed by a "longstanding and nuanced relationship with nature" (Wallace and Shields, 1997: 388). His representations of local sensitivity to environmental issues illuminate the inevitable infiltration of environmental movements into the archipelago's cultural heritage giving it new dimensions. Caroline's letter symbolically illustrates that this ultimately contributes to a greater awareness, understanding, and pride in Madelinot culture and the landscape that sustains it (Nicol, 1968).

In his 1997 novel Héritiers du Vent, Pomerleau takes full advantage of the predominating geographical conditions of place in relating his tale of terror. His narrative unfolds in a bleak and windswept archipelago terrorized by a pack of wild dogs in the winter months of 1909. Portrayals of his Madelinot character's relations with the Islands' landscape in face of this monstrosity culminate in an explicit illustration of some

of the striking and characteristic features of the local culture cultivated by historical interactions with the environment. An example of this is provided early in the novel when a young fisherman's wife, Parmélia Cormier, is awakened from her sleep late at night by an intense fear that something has happened to her husband who is away on another island preparing for a fishing expedition. She is awakened at the very moment that her husband is confronted and killed by a pack of wild dogs. Of it, the author writes:

Au même moment, trempée par la sueur, Parmélia réveillée depuis peu, assise dans son lit au Portage-du-Cap, eut la certitude enracinée au coeur qu'un malheur sans nom venait de frapper son mari. Que lui était-il arrivé? Elle l'ignorait. Mais elle comprenait sans l'ombre d'un doute qu'il s'agissait de quelque chose d'une gravité extrême. La maison craqua comme si elle allait s'enfontrer, comme un château de cartes, et ce craquement soudain rappela à la femme que, depuis deux jours pleins, le vent avait fait main basse sur l'archipel. (16-17)

The author uses the landscape in this excerpt to convey some "psychologically significant information" (Thompson, 1967: 128) about the personal meanings that the archipelago's landscape holds for islanders. Parmélia's psychic connection with her husband implies that this is a personal quality nurtured by an acute awareness of the powerful physical forces of place and her feelings of inferiority toward them. Pomerleau reinforces her profound knowledge of the unpredictable and uncontrollable environment by intertwining the landscape features with the spatial elements of the supernatural. Intermingling landscape components with a transcendent quality of human emotions ultimately culminates in the creation of a forboding atmosphere which contributes to Parmélia's sense of the threatening nature of their environment and the need to be consciously aware of its dangers in surviving it (Faris, 1988: 1). This all serves to intensify her psychological connection and experience of place keeping her in a constant state of vigilance.

Pomerleau uses the landscape in such a way that he reveals “the heart and inner meaning” (Bullen, 1986: 143) of the culture. This is clear in the final sequence of the novel when he depicts the local people’s attempt to break their winter isolation by setting a molasses barrel adrift with a message sealed inside of it requesting help.²¹ He writes:

Avec ce ponchon, non seulement c’est son aide que nous demandons à Notre Seigneur Jésus Christ, mais également l’aide du vent sur lequel il a l’autorité, auquel il peut non seulement imposer le silence comme il l’a prouvé en compagnie de ses apôtres, mais encore il peut lui imposer une route à suivre. Il nous a donné le vent en héritage et, si nous ne pouvons pas le faire fructifier, il nous a été permis de l’utiliser. Nous vous prions donc, Seigneur Dieu, de maintenir notre vaisseau dans le meilleur sillage. Nous vous supplions, cependant, Seigneur Dieu, de faire en sorte de n’accéder à notre requête, que si vous nous en trouvez dignes. (165-166)

The linkages that Pomerleau establishes between the natural environment and religion in this passage “become an image of the Kingdom of God” (Scott, 1992: 175). The stress placed on the explicit expressions of faith in the will of God is suggestive of a people who rely heavily on their spiritual convictions in face of an imposing sense of alienation from the outside world. Although their attitudes toward the natural environment indicate that they feel blessed by the landscape that they have inherited, they are fully aware of their inability to exercise any control over it (Halliday, 1973: 12). The images emerging from this excerpt delineate a culture possessing a strong religious tradition inspired and sustained by their relations with the forces of nature. Pomerleau’s depiction of his character’s zealous belief and trust in God is also a realistic portrait of the traditional Roman Catholic values of the Madelinot people (Scott, 1992).

The characteristic landscapes of religion and tradition remain prevalent throughout the novel. Pomerleau often situates his characters within a “sacred space” (Lacroix, 1980: 25) which illustrates the righteous character and nature of the Madelinot

community. This is nowhere more apparent than in a sequence halfway through the novel detailing the local ritual Christmas Eve mass. Pomerleau writes:

Si Jésus est descendu sur terre, poursuit père Arseneau, c'est aussi pour rassasier ceux qui ont faim et soif de justice. Et, parlant de faim et de soif, vous devez, mes biens chers frères, profiter de cette période de réjouissances qui vous est offerte pour vous rappeler qu'il y en a, dans cette paroisse, qui ont faim et soif tout court. Vous devez garder à l'esprit que, pendant que vous vous réjouissez, pendant que vous fêtez, d'autres s'endormiront, cette nuit, l'estomac torturé par la faim. (77)

What is most striking about this passage is that the whole stress of it lies on the Madelinot people's unbreachable "sense of community" (Scott, 1992: 175). Their spirit of brotherhood and enduring sense of humanity prevails even in the face of extreme hardship and desperation. Pomerleau creates a true to life image of a people with a vibrant belief in helping one another in their quest for subsistence in "a landscape of exposure" (Appleton, 1978: 8). He reinforces the image of a community characteristically sensitive to the needs of others by situating them within an emotional and turbulent holiday landscape. The realistic depiction of the local holiday custom in this excerpt suggests that the spirit of brotherhood is an intrinsic part of the Madelinot cultural consciousness fostered by their struggle with nature for survival.

It is evident that the Madelinot people's historical relations with the Islands' landscape is a key factor in shaping and inspiring the fictional narratives reviewed. The authors make use of their concrete descriptions of the landscape and its components in creating some true to life representations of the cultural implications of this culture's historical struggles for subsistence in the powerful and dominating physical landscape that is the Magdalen Islands. This is particularly obvious in the psychological treatment of the characters and in the recreations of local cultural practices and historical events.

Although various aspects of the first two themes identified in the theoretical chapter of this study may be identified in each of the individual texts looked at in this section, the intertwining of fiction and historical reality makes them particularly representative of the third theme relating to the relationship between literature and culture.

2.4 Poetry and the Islands

In Georges Langford's anthology Le Premier Voyageur, published in 1992, several of the poetic works reflect an Islands' landscape that is continuously changing and always in movement. Inspired by many years of travelling and exploring foreign and exotic landscapes around the world, Langford writes of childhood experiences, travel, and typical Madelinot social rituals. His works are representative of the place experiences of their subjects, the culture with which they deal, and the poet. His representations of their physical and psychological relations with the landscape provide insights into the ways that this culture's identity and consciousness has been shaped by it (Lewis, 1995; Wenger, 1997). Langford, born in the Islands in 1948, continues to reside there.

Langford's perpetual use of the travel theme permits the subjects in many of his works to transcend the borders of time and space and situate themselves in opposing worlds by means of which they are able to locate a personal identity (Murthy, 1996: 48). In the poem *Le Frigidaire*, this process is clearly delineated in the opening stanza which underscores the subject's contrasting notions of the city and the Islands as places. The subject anchors himself in the remembered landscapes of the Islands as he finds himself struggling to survive his "spatial displacement" (Murthy, 1996: 52) in the hostile and foreign ambiance of the city:

Moi qui avais des belles îles
Des buttes et des sillons
Me v'là perdu en ville
Tout seul dans des millions
J'vis sur les autobus
Au *Pizza King* du coin
Le monde me parle pas plus
Que si j'étais un chien (129)

Lines 1-2 suggest that the cold and unknown landscapes of the city serve to revive the subject's attachment to the Islands as his point of origin where he returns, at least on a psychological level, to the characteristic aspects of place with which he identifies (Olschner, 1997: 126). His solitary condition in the unfamiliar surroundings of the city, indicated in lines 3-7, also sparks an acute awareness of his physical separation from what he views as a significant part of his being. Memories of his place of origin permit him to cross time and space and come to terms with his displacement in the impersonal and foreign urban ambiance (Murthy, 1996). The temporal forces of memory allow him to distance himself from the harsh realities of his present world and relocate himself psychologically where his "sense of self is anchored to the place in which it was experienced" (Godkin, 1980: 79). Although the poem's subject is always physically fixed in the unknown urban landscape, the moving bus is highly representative of the transcendent quality of his imagination which enables him to remain emotionally rooted in the familiar and character defining landscapes of the Islands (Lewis, 1995). The subject's physical separation from his Islands' home results in an internal voyage of self discovery. His sense of belonging to the landscapes of his past are reinforced by the realities of place confronting him in his present.

Langford's poetry articulates a sentimental attachment to place that is reminiscent of his own intimate experiences and is quite often representative of his explorations into

his sense of being (Murthy, 1996). Inspired by many years of travelling beyond the geographical boundaries of the Islands, the travel theme serves as a means by which the poet embarks on a personal identity-quest in terms of locating himself in relation to his permanent surroundings (Olschner, 1997). The spatial and temporal associations evident in his poems work to identify some of the experiences with which he associates cultural meaning with respect to his sense of identity. In *Marins de Normandie*, the poet's play on the Islands' connection to foreign lands seems to be an effort to access the roots out of which his personal sense of "individual existence" (Olschner, 1997: 130) emerged:

Marins de Normandie
De Bretagne ou d'Irlande
Vous qui êtes partis
Sombrier si loin de Londres
Vous refaites à bord
Les manoeuvres d'alors
Tout le long de nos ports
Vous arrivez encore (171)

Lines 1-4 of the opening stanza set the tone and substance of this poem. They work to suggest that it is a portrait of the poet's personal endeavor in situating his identity in relation to the people and places conceived as being the very origins of his existence (Murthy, 1996; Olschner, 1997). The poem is somewhat autobiographical in nature and constitutes an expression in which the past and present landscapes of the poet's world converge eliciting a knowledge that he possesses a cultural history (Murthy, 1996). The poet also implies in the final two lines of the stanza that "the continuity and continuation" (Olschner, 1997: 130) of his personal identity is situated and maintained within the remnants of his forefathers' historical presence in the Islands. The many tiny seaports dotting the landscape are conceived by the poet as tangible artifacts of his cultural history serving to unite him with his origins in time and space. The importance that the poet

attaches to these characteristic features of the landscape implies that he views them as significant factors in the evolution of his cultural identity. The ports are perceived as places of comings and goings integrated into the fabric of his everyday life (Larsen, 1997). They represent time spanning spaces within which explanations about himself are revealed providing him with a sense of cultural identity.

The characteristic and historical landscape of the archipelago is also frequently depicted by Langford as a social space displaying some of the concrete cultural implications that it has on Islanders. He often paints a picture of a geographic setting having many social dimensions influenced by relations between the landscape and its dwellers (Buttimer, 1980; Wilson, 1980). Much of his work illustrates many of the social activities and rituals that unfold in the Islands demonstrating how the “common landscape is a source of shared meaning and emotion” (Riley, 1992: 27). Many of Langford’s compositions tend to underscore the interdependent associations between the social elements and natural conditions of place in the construction of Madelinot culture and identity (Altman and Chemers, 1980). These associations are made particularly evident in the first two verses of his poetic folksong *Le tour des maisons*. Langford stresses the landscape as an influential component in the local social and cultural process:

C’était en plein coeur d’hiver
Il venait un vent d’enfer
On est allés faire le tour des maisons
Le grand ch’min était bouché
Pour êtr’ sûrs d’ pas s’écarter
On a coupé en travers chez Raymond

La vie est courte, et quand même
Souvent le temps est bien long
On part avec ceux qu’on aime
On fait le tour des maisons (123)

These two verses elucidate the prominent role of the landscape in shaping one of the most commonly practiced rituals by the Madelinot people during the long winter months in the Islands. The poet's representation of this winter ritual depicts a social and cultural process that has developed in relation to the environment (Aitken et al., 1989). As indicated in the second verse, the winter go-around is a socially valued group ritual by means of which the local people have been bound together in their quest to overcome the emotionally draining elements of physical isolation. Being a part of a social group in face of some of the more hostile elements of place provides a them with a shared sense of purpose and a lasting sense of belonging to the community (Meinig, 1979). This is also implied in the opening verse in which the poet begins to paint the Madelinot community as a series of social experiences inspired by encounters with the landscape within the contexts of time and space (Sopher, 1979). In this process, the people draw a sense of character and local identity from these experiences which eventually come to symbolize all of the social values and beliefs of their community. In general, Langford's composition suggests that Madelinot identity materializes and takes shape within a certain social context which is sustained by the landscape that inspires it.

The poetic works reviewed in this section provide illuminating examples of the interactions between local people and the Islands within the context of time and space. This is done by elucidating the characteristic nature of the relationship between people and the elements comprising their physical environment. They are also highly illustrative of the emotional connection between the Madelinot people and place and the enduring effects of the Islands' landscape on their state of mind. These works connect particularly well to the first theme identified in the previous chapter of this study by means of the

many associations made evident in them between the spatial dimensions of landscape and individual and collective identity.

2.5 Historical Texts And The Islands

Captains Of The Shoals, written twenty years ago by Frédéric Landry and revised in 1993, documents the role of the sea in the Madelinot people's laborious quest for survival.²² It looks at the ramifications of their relations with the sea on their social and cultural practices. Landry was born and raised in the Islands and his book echoes his sentimental attachment to the Islands and their historical seafaring heritage. It looks primarily at the ways in which the rituals, lives, and behavior of the Madelinot people have been shaped by their historical interactions with the natural environment as much as its personality has been altered by interactions with its courageous dwellers (Altman and Chemers, 1980). He demonstrates that the Madelinot people have come to an understanding with the physical environment that once exerted exceptional physical and psychological control over their lives. His book indicates that they have learned that their environment is "powerful, uncontrollable, and unpredictable, and that all people can do is adapt the best they can, be fatalistic, and accept the good and the bad from the environment" (Altman and Chemers, 1980: 16) because they are subordinate to it and its elements. Landry suggests that this often tense and hostile relationship is embodied in the experiences of everyday life in the Islands and has given rise to the tenacity, perseverance, and wisdom of their people. It is in the traditional rituals of the local people that the implications of the physical environment on their cultural values and beliefs is most profoundly reflected. For example, the following passage illustrates how

the environment affects the way that the archipelago's fishermen think about, and evaluate, the landscape around them:

The men in my surroundings, most of them fishermen, held no diplomas or degrees; for me, they had the necessary knowledge, rich with oral traditions and experience. They travelled over an immense sea and observed their environment attentively. At the helm of a small fishing boat or at the wheel of a ship of average tonnage, they had time to think. On the sea nothing is dull; everything changes, even the horizon, increasing our awareness of the relativity of things and time(...)If the horizon showed signs of wind for the next day, they would work on their plots of land which compensated for the meager catch of an entire fishing season. With calmness and patience, they would wait for more clement weather before returning to sea. (13-14)

The psychological description of the fishermen in this passage implies that they have learned to adapt to the vast expanse of the landscape and to understand the changing patterns within it by means of recollecting past experiences of it. They are never apathetic to the infinite flow of changes that unfold within their living space and have learned to endure and work with them as a means of survival (Appelton, 1975; Altman and Chemers, 1980). Their ability to read and interpret the frequency of the transformations that take place in the surrounding landscape illustrates their identity as a people who are a part of, and continuously being shaped by, their physical environment (Altman and Chemers, 1980). Landry's book makes evident that the symbolic messages that the fishermen derive from their experiences of the spatial and temporal qualities of place play a crucial role in their articulation of self, their rituals, beliefs, and customs.

Les Iles de la Madeleine: vie matérielle et sociale, written by Acadian folklorist Père Anselme Chiasson in 1981, chronicles the origins and nature of many historical socio-cultural traditions of the Madelinot people. Descriptions of their character and attachment to place are evident in the many examples highlighting their crusade to subsist

in their traditional way of life. Reflections on their relations with place are expressive of how their character has evolved and they how have survived collectively for centuries by means of their profound knowledge of it. He makes clear that their sense of place and identity is fostered by some “unmeasurable but comprehensible mix of place characteristics that(...)influences people positively or negatively toward it” (Golledge and Stimson, 1997: 414). This excerpt describes the implications of place on their character:

Les gens des Iles, au fond peu nombreux, se connaissaient tous. Ils accomplissaient la même austerité de vie et vibraient aux mêmes sentiments. Dans ce milieu relativement fermé, les vertus d’entraide et d’esprit fraternel se sont conservées jusqu’à tout récemment(...)En somme, les Madelinots formaient comme une grande famille dont les liens étaient d’autant plus étroits que leur isolement plus prononcé. Il ne faudrait pas croire pour autant qu’ils étaient renfermées sur eux-mêmes et encore moins, timides. Loin de là! Habitues aux vastes horizons, aux tempêtes de la mer, aux dangers de la chasse aux loups marins, les Madelinots étaient reconnu pour n’avoir froid aux yeux ni manquer de cran. Forts physiquement, intelligents, champions de la réplique rapide et spirituelle, ils ne se laissaient pas impressionner par un étranger fiérot ou un interlocuteur prétentieux, et mal en aurait pas ceux-ci s’ils avaient voulu faire de l’esprit à leurs dépens, car en ce domaine, ils auraient vite appris qu’ils n’étaient pas de taille à se mesurer avec eux(...)Sérieux aux besoin, comme les gens de la mer savent l’être, ils se montrent capables de faire face calmement à des problèmes, de peser le pour et le contre sans se laisser emporter par les sentiments ni par les envolés oratoires d’un intervenant opportuniste. (259-260)

This passage reinforces the idea that the cultural attitudes and values and beliefs of the Madelinot people have been inspired by their environmental experience. As detailed in the passage, they have evolved over time in a relatively isolated landscape. Their cultural traits have emerged from the sense of subjugation that they often feel toward the landscape and its unpredictablity (Appelton, 1975; Altman and Chemers, 1980). It is in face of the seemingly infinite space and its harsh physical composition that their common beliefs and daily rituals have been fostered and passed on through the generations to

become defining attributes of the Madelinot people. It seems clear that physical and moral detachment from the outside world forced them to rely on each other in overcoming the stress and tensions of life in their spatial seclusion. This has resulted in a collective agreement on relating and identifying with place (Meinig, 1979). The passage also indicates that their understanding of the spatial realities of place is passed on to future generations because it is believed that “A preoccupation with one’s survival is necessarily also a preoccupation with the obstacles to that survival” (Atwood, 1972: 33). All of this demonstrates that the Madelinot people have developed a relationship with place in which each is directly affected by the other (Altman and Chemers, 1980).

Visage des Iles, written by Robert Parisé in 1969, is an illustrative look at the Magdalen Islands which was inspired by the author’s initial contact with them as a school boy in the writings of Frère Marie-Victorin of the Écoles Chrétiennes in Montreal.²³ His book is a sociological study of the Islands highlighting the impact of their physical setting on the Madelinot people’s way of life. Parisé, a former school teacher, was raised in Sept-Iles where his parents fostered his interest in the Islands with their stories about the courage of the town’s Madelinot founders. The book contains many descriptions of the Islander’s character and their feelings about the archipelago’s landscape. For example:

OH! La magnifique vision! Notre soleil madelinot nous quitte pour son repos du soir: comme tout travailleur, il a besoin d’une sieste. L’astre attire sur lui les exclamations: “Comme c’est beau!”...” Regarde ce tableau!” Le ciel prend tout à coup une nouvelle teinte du bleu, il passe au rouge, entre-melé de vert et de doré; la mer revêt sa robe de bal, couleur d’arc-en-ciel. Un paysage incomparable se reflète dans l’immensité des eaux: toutes les habitations se dessinent en croquis charmants, ballotées par les vagues calmes de la cour tranquille. Lentement il s’éloigne. On ne découvre qu’une parcelle de sa tête et sa majesté se manifeste encore. Enfin, le voilà rentré dans l’horizon, laissant à son épouse la lune une tache à remplir. (36)

The colorful images evoked in this passage are reminiscent of a beautiful and mysterious landscape which works to influence the subject's spatial experience of his environment (Olmsted, 1995; Meyer, 1997). His evaluation of the landscape features reflects his freedom of movement to explore his environment and its seemingly endless boundaries. It is clear that he is becoming more aware of the nature of place by means of exploring the spatial dimensions of its environmental construction (Murthy, 1996; Olschner, 1997). Explorations into the core of the landscape's composition also adds psychological dimensions to his experience of it. Intimate experiences of the incomparable conditions comprising this place profoundly affect his sense of identification with it and his feelings of belonging to it (Appelton, 1975).

Parisé also depicts a landscape symbolically serving to convince the Madelinot people of the nature of their culture and identity. Every culture has "a single or unifying symbol at its core. The symbol, then - be it a word, phrase, idea, image, or all of these - functions like a symbol of beliefs(...)and helps the people in it to co-operate for common ends" (Atwood, 1972: 31). Parisé's work makes this explicitly clear in his portrayals of the Madelinot people's historical relationship with the sea. For instance:

La chose la plus belle, la chose la plus prompte, la chose la plus splendide, la chose la plus enivrante, voilà ce que c'est la mer. Combien de fois je l'ai admirée, alors que ses vagues se brisaient sur les rochers, alors qu'elles venaient mourir sur la plage, alors qu'elles me charmaient. Parfois, elle amenait tout sur son passage. Malheur à ceux qui s'y trouvaient. Parfois, de malheureux pêcheurs ont payé de leur vie certaines imprudences. Ils croyaient connaître celle qui les faisait vivre. Elle fut parfois aussi maître de leur vie. En fureur, combien a-t-elle été admirée, combien aussi a-t-elle fait pleurer!...OH! Combien de bonheur tu as créé, mer de l'Acadie, combien as-tu fait de malheureux aussi, mais comme il n'y a rien de parfait sur terre, je suis obligé de te pardonner. Sois toujours le symbole de la fierté acadienne. (39-40)

This passage evokes images of the sea as “the first natural space” (Lacroix, 1980: 11) confronting the Madelinot people in their quest for subsistence. The subject’s conceptions of the sea imply that his relationship with it is marked by traumatic past experiences of it. The experiences described in the passage are highly expressive of the transcendency of the struggle between Islanders and the sea to conquer the physical space that they share (Appelton, 1975). The subject’s perceptions of the sea also encompass the dimensions of both life and death (Lewis, 1995; Olmsted, 1995; Meyer, 1997). This suggests that he conceives of it as the essence of human existence in the Islands inspiring the belief that its “forces and influences and actions, though imperceptible to the senses, are nevertheless real” (Von Maltzahn, 1994: 20). This sequence illustrates that the ambiguities of the Madelinot people’s relationship with the sea constitute the foundations of their existence. The sea that affords them the opportunity for survival threatens their very existence at the same time (Appelton, 1975).

Parisé’s study also captures the significance of history in defining the Madelinot people’s relationship with place and in shaping their interpretations of the landscape in which they have made their home. The Madelinot people’s relationship with the past is important and there is a strong connection between history, culture, and landscape in the Islands (Lowenthal, 1975). This is often evident in their expressions of a shared sense of place and connection to the distinct characteristics of the archipelago that they inhabit. The past elicits strong links between Islanders and place giving the landscape both meaning and value for them (Appelton, 1975; Altman and Chemers, 1980). This is amply expressed in the following sequence from Parisé’s book which is reminiscent of

some of the historical experiences of place contributing to the symbolic significance of the landscape in the lives of the Madelinot people:

L'histoire du peuple madelinot n'est autre chose qu'une véritable épopée. Elle se lit comme un roman. Leur histoire est tragique, leur livre de famille ne porte d'autre tache que celle des larmes brûlantes des ancêtres acadiens, car ils sont presque tous les arrière-petit-fils des déportés de Grand-Pré(...)une fois remis des suites de la Déportation, eurent à subir l'esclavage des grands Seigneurs puis encore des exploiters de toute sorte: Alors, on les voit à nouveau sur de frêles embarcations affronter les mers en furie, s'en allant fonder au loin des villages qui gardent toujours la marque de leur héroïsme. (19-20)

This passage relates the Madelinot experience and the way in which the archipelago's landscape has been given meaning and value in terms of cultural history (Lowenthal, 1975). The emphasis placed on the spatio-temporal aspects of the Islander's landscape experiences reveals explanations about how it has been imprinted in their cultural consciousness. The Madelinot people's assessment of the surrounding landscape is strongly influenced by historical events emerging from another time and place (Lowenthal, 1975; Meinig, 1979). The landscape is interpreted in terms of the symbolic associations made between past cultural experiences and landscape components (Gilledge and Stimson, 1997: 414). It is evident that the Madelinot people's interpretations of themselves and their relations with place are profoundly influenced by landscape experiences occurring in another dimension. Memories of these events obviously evoke a mass of messages, meanings, and symbols with which they associate their identity and sense of place (Meinig, 1979; Sopher, 1979). They have given the landscape salience based on collective experiences of it in history which have come to represent "bare survival in the face of hostile elements" (Atwood, 1972: 32).

Mia and Klaus' 1994 pictorial celebration of the Islands Les Iles de la Madeleine, with text by Jean Royer, contains many poetic descriptions of the archipelago's spectacular landscape which are highly reminiscent of the Madelinot people's sentimental attachment to it. Royer's text makes our experience of the book's visual images of place more concrete by means of extending our "understanding of people and settings" (Harms and Lettow, 1993; 364). He depicts a landscape spontaneously changing which influences the Islander's emotional responses to it. The following passage from his text demonstrates this point:

La lumière boréale signe la métamorphose des vents et découpe le paysage avec une netteté étonnante. Cette lumière est l'alliée du ciel, de la terre et de la mer ensemble. Elle nous invente un paradis. Nous voici au commencement du monde, où naît ce qui est vie et beauté(...)Il arrive donc qu'aux îles son "lieu du monde", cet endroit où l'on se sent passionnément bien, entre douceur et force de vivre. Un lieu où les secrets émergent comme les îles de la mer. Un lieu où chacun se retrouve confronté à soi-même, à ses désirs comme à ses regrets. Un lieu où la communication avec le reste de l'humanité s'accomplit à même les rythmes de la nature et des saisons intérieures. Il faut parler des Iles de la Madeleine d'un lieu révélateur. (7)

This passage implies that the Madelinot landscape has completely penetrated the various levels of its people's consciousness. Royer seems to use the transformations taking place in the landscape as a metaphor for the Islander's internal landscape experiences (Murthy, 1996; Olschner, 1997). Depictions of the archipelago as a place of revelations suggest its power in influencing their interior journeys into the self. Images of the converging forces of nature are also highly symbolic of an "analogue for the process of introspection" (Murthy, 1996: 49). Royer's text suggests that the Islander's most profound subjective experiences of place are defined within the boundaries of their psychic space suggesting that place is itself situated and experienced internally. This

excerpt amplifies the relationship between interior and exterior experiences of landscape and its consequences on the Islander's sense of identity and their attachment to place.

These historical texts make clear that the physical environment has undoubtedly been a significant factor in the development of the values, beliefs, and rituals characterizing Madelinot cultural identity. They also delineate the role of landscape in influencing Islander's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about their place in the world and the evolution of their collective consciousness.²⁴ They portray a people culturally defined by their historical experiences of the many internal and external dimensions of the landscape in which they live. In short, numerous examples of these experiences concretely connect these texts to the first of the three thematic associations recognized in the theoretical analysis as significant in the formation of cultural identity.

Chapter 3

Discourse Analysis:

The Language Of Place And Identity

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I carry out a discourse analysis of the narrative texts examined in the preceding chapter. This analysis elucidates how the textual features that they have in common function as a whole to produce a broader image of Madelinot culture and identity. It reveals how these texts function as cultural and historical expressions which work to influence Madelinot perceptions of their cultural experiences of the Islands. This supports the literary analysis of the impact of landscape experiences on the development of Madelinot cultural identity.

My analysis identifies the discourse characterizing the narrative texts from which the passages cited were drawn (Kelly, 1993: 3). The similar contexts in which the narratives are located are considered in order to develop a greater understanding of the linkages between the culture and place with which they deal. Evaluating their discourse reinforces previously expressed ideas about Madelinot experiences of the Islands' landscape and its components. This analysis culminates in a discussion of the implications of the cultural meaning arising from narrative texts for Madelinot cultural identity (Shukman, 1977).

The framework within which my discourse analysis is constructed is similar to Kelly's (1993)²⁵ study. The narrative texts examined are deconstructed and explained within a cultural and historical context. The degree to which Madelinot cultural identity can be linked to historical landscape experiences is illustrated by stressing the realities that they represent. This approach reveals how linkages are formed between culture and

landscape through lived experiences of place. The impact of Madelinot experiences of landscape in history are qualified by means of examining the spaces through which they are reproduced.

3.2 Cultural History As Discourse

A review of the cultural and historical contexts around which the texts studied are structured is a key component of this analysis. This is important in order to understand how the linkages between landscape and cultural identity in the Islands have been constructed historically. Focusing on the intersections of an isolated geographical location, an epic centuries-old seafaring heritage, and community rituals strengthens the literary analysis of the impact of the relations between Islanders and landscape. Modern means of communication and transportation have improved relations with the outside world. Many aspects of Madelinot lifestyle, however, still bespeak isolation. For instance, the common quayside gathering of people where the ferry docks suggests that the Madelinot people still feel cut off from the continent (Cayo, 1991: 32). This focus also qualifies the role of narratives as representational spaces through which these historical relations are “communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored” (Kelly, 1993: 7) helping to shape their cultural identity. Situating the texts within a particular discursive framework contributes to historical knowledge about their content and the cultural meaning arising from them (Burdell, 1997).

It seems clear from the texts examined in the previous chapter that representations and interpretations of Madelinot cultural identity emerge from the basic elements constituting their cultural history.²⁶ This is evident in Harvey’s (1979) and Lapierre-Otis’ (1997) biographical narratives. A preoccupation with historical landscape experiences in

these texts explicates how the identity of a “biographical subject gradually evolved” (Makolkin, 1996: 99). The process of identity construction and reconstruction is represented by exploring the facts of the impact of these experiences on their subjectivities. For example, reflections on LeBourdais’ life and death experiences of the Madelinot sea contribute to Harvey’s depictions of his subject’s relations with it as an ongoing love/hate relationship. The images and voices of the many drowned Madelinot mariners symbolically arising from the sea acknowledge how maritime life shaped LeBourdais’ deepest sense of self as a born seaman. His life story is reminiscent of two centuries of legendary tales about the many mariners who have perished in the numerous tricky shoals and currents in the waters around the Islands, such as those of the *Miracle* wrecked in 1847.²⁷ Further, identities are also formulated by affiliating their subjects with places and institutions which symbolically represent the cultural processes by means of which they are linked to the community.²⁸ Lapierre-Otis does this by situating her subject within the context of colorful Acadian cultural rituals at home and in church. Depictions of Angèle’s psychological responses to local customs and the social meaning arising from them underscores their impact on her sense of identity. Reconstructing and tying their subject’s lives to historic place experiences and events “that were important in the private life of the person” (Makolkin, 1996: 91) concretizes their links to the Islands. Relating their biographical subject’s life experiences in relation to the historical socio-cultural contexts out of which they materialized attends to the formation of identities “defined by, with and through place” (Kelly, 1993: 4). This demonstrates how their lives become increasingly intertwined with the landscape’s components; thus, illustrating the basis of their feelings of attachment and belonging to it. Historical cultural ties spanning

more than two centuries are ultimately revealed. The impact of physical and psychological experiences of landscape on human subjectivity is qualified in these biographical narratives.

The fictional works of Lemieux (1991)(1992), Chantraine (1994), and Pomerleau (1995)(1997) provide “an initial understanding of the story-level portrayal of identity and difference” by anchoring their narratives within the constraints of an understood cultural history. These works project images of a culture constructed in relation to introspective experiences influenced by a variety of historical landscape experiences. The impact of these experiences are often conveyed by situating their characters within specific socio-cultural contexts using the “systems of beliefs, values, and categories by reference to which a person comprehends the world” (Staels, 1995: 9) to illustrate their conscious and unconscious mental states. This is evident in Lemieux’s 1992 mystery novel in which depictions of the “outsider’s” mental experiences of place are strengthened by emphasizing the stress of being caught in the social constraints of a homogeneous culture (Staels, 1995: 13). These narratives are similarly intertwined with specific places and events which acknowledge and represent the conditions of the human experience in the Islands (Shukman, 1977: 103). For example, Pomerleau’s 1997 novel and Chantraine’s 1994 short story do this by emphasizing the power of geography in nurturing their character’s psychic links to one another. This can only be realized within the margins of a culture shaped by the multiplicity of its historical relations with an environment physically disconnected from the world by infinite horizons and the vastness of the sea (Staels, 1995: 12). These links are the legacy of their Acadian heritage which is marked by memories of families torn apart and separated from one another by the immensity of a

continent. The collection of ideas constituting these fictional narratives convey the intricacies of the historical realities which inspired them and which they represent. Their stories emerge and are developed within the realm of converging worlds to become spaces of “cultural representation” (Burdell, 1997: 66) filled with the historical elements out of which cultural identity materializes. In addition, factually based representations of the relationships between Islanders and the maritime landscape are reproduced and centred within the plots of the narratives. This culminates in interpretations of culture and identity which reflect people’s past and present relations with it. This is done by stressing the symbolic significance of the landscape as a space of cultural experience and self-reflection. This is evidenced in Lemieux’s (1991) and Pomerleau’s (1995) novels which incorporate actual historical events, in particular the sinking of the fishing vessel *The Nadine* and the petroleum barge *The Irving Whale*.²⁹ The loss of life and environmental damage represented by these events have had a powerful and lasting psychological impact on local people. These incidents remind local people of the fragile balance between their existence and nature which fosters their awareness of the threat of cultural extinction. This provides a clear picture of the confluence of culture and landscape as “an array of intersections where distinct processes crisscross from within and beyond its borders” (Burdell, 1997: 56) to symbolize cultural identity. The fictional world becomes more like the real world in these narratives by incorporating factual aspects of the culture and landscape with which they are concerned.

Cultural history also has an enormous influence on Landry’s (1992) poetry “in the sense that it derives its chief interest and value from the personality and purpose of its author in the historical conditions under which he wrote” (Watson, 1969: 70). His poems

are structured within the framework of a personal relationship with place involving spatial experiences of the empirical world (Burdell, 1997: 191). His cultural history and background are explored in his poetry through spatial and oppositional concepts. For example, movement through contrasting, foreign, and understood worlds illustrates the diverse and intricate socio-cultural associations between the poet and the Madelinot landscape. Contrasting rural and urban images express the poet's preference for well-known seascapes over bewildering cityscapes. His experience of home becomes more meaningful when perceived from the outside. Movement provides the poet with "the best opportunity to perceive, and perception is a central activity" (Appleton, 1978: 7) in the process of self-reflection. The links between landscape and identity are consciously experienced and explored by bridging the gaps of time and space. This reveals the ways in which he is linked to the "historical, cultural, social" (Leggo, 1998: 187) characteristics of the Islands. For example, images of rural landscapes, fishing harbours, and winter go arounds are suggestive of a ritual atmosphere in which the slower pace of life is a defining quality of Madelinot cultural identity. The context of cultural heritage opens a space in which the relationship between the Islands and the poet's consciousness is expressed.

The historical texts written by Parisé (1969), Landry (1978), Chiasson (1980), and Mia and Klaus (1994) are narrated within the context of an historical space that attends closely to an Acadian world which signifies "a stable identity" (Hodge, 1990: 185). For example, their works demonstrate that rituals and traditions endure for many generations serving to unify a culture's past and present (Shukman, 1977: 102). They stress the traditional maritime way of life that has been maintained by the Madelinot people since

the arrival of the first Acadian settlers to the Islands. They evoke images of Acadian pioneers courageously colonizing a harsh land to rebuild their lives and salvage a culture devastated by colonial oppression. These texts demonstrate how a culture's distinctions arise from its ancestral heritage and evolve by means of its descendants' conscious retention of them. In addition, these texts reflect the Madelinot people in their full historical relations with the Islands' landscape. They are conceived of as a culture historically bound to the landscape's components. For example, depictions of seaports, fishing boats, and seascapes generate images of everyday life which symbolize the physical and psychological foundations of their relations with the Islands. They portray a relationship of dependance in which the Madelinot people rely on the sea which has isolated them from the world for their subsistence. Reflections on these connections often extend beyond the boundaries of a single historical period to produce insights into the "long evolution by which the thoughts and efforts of man have passed through the successive stages" (Watson, 1969: 219) in the evolutionary process of identity formation. These narratives prioritize a view of culture and identity constructed in the context of recollections of environmental experiences which unite people. This reinforces the historical and crucial role that landscape plays in defining a coherent Madelinot personality.

It is clear that the relationship between the Madelinot people and the Islands is disclosed in the cultural and historical discourse around which these narrative texts are constructed (Leggo, 1998: 187). These texts also designate the influence of the Magdalen Islands on narrative interpretations of the culture concerned. This interplay between texts and place results in expressions that define the historical essence of

Madelinot culture which contributes to the preservation and promotion of Madelinot identity.

3.3 Madelinot Texts And Cultural Meaning

Madelinot texts can provide us with an understanding of their individual and collective landscape experiences by depicting the historical processes which bind them to the Magdalen Islands. The interplay between fiction and reality in the narratives offers “different understandings” (Kelly, 1993: 42) of who they are as a people by means of situating their experiences in a broad range of literary genres.³⁰ Chronicles of Madelinot heros, fictional interpretations of the Islander’s lives, and historical accounts of place give their community “a more lasting shape” (Lowenthal, 1998: 18) and permit them to share in a common cultural narrative. For instance, the fictional works examined in this study illustrate how the shared beliefs and values embedded in Madelinot culture emerged from material and moral relations with the landscape at a time when isolation was almost complete, such as the blessing of the fleets and harbours.³¹ Further, the variety of Madelinot texts available affords them the opportunity to rediscover their cultural heritage by throwing “new light on it and enables us to understand something about it which we had not grasped before” (Appleton, 1978: 5). They serve as forms of expression in which the prominence of landscape experiences in the socio-historical construction of their culture is often illustrated, particularly in terms of cultural survival. Landscape is revealed in literature about a Madelinot cultural context as an active agent in defining the lives of their cultural icons, nurturing their cultural habits, and shaping the material content of the narratives within which they frame and preserve their past for future generations. For instance, landscape functions in all of the literature reviewed as a

source of physical and psychological information about Madelinot culture. In particular, the origins of the Madelinot people's strong sense of attachment and belonging to the Islands are revealed. Madelinot texts communicate the symbolic messages behind individual and collective experiences of the Islands to reveal landscape as a powerful determinant in molding the distinctive qualities of Madelinot cultural identity, particularly their perseverance and courage. Landscape is depicted in the texts as a repository of cultural experience; thus, it works to inspire and contribute to the development of a rich and virtually unexplored Madelinot literary tradition. In addition, the texts and their content bind them to the personalities and places characterizing them. The biographical narratives reviewed demonstrate this by revealing how landscape helped to create local heroes and define the Madelinot character. In particular, they keep incredible legends and stories alive which color the archipelago's culture ultimately instilling a sense of pride in its inhabitants.³² Further, the texts also locate the Madelinot people "in relation to each other" (Kelly, 1993: 11) and the world in which they live. Their narratives mirror not only the specific features of Madelinot culture but also the reality of their everyday relations with the elements of landscape. The historical texts dealing with the Islands are striking examples of this. These texts are successful at locating the Madelinot people culturally by creating images of the historical way of life out of which particular aspects of their present lifestyle emerged. In particular, they serve to remind the Madelinot people of the laborious undertakings of their Acadian ancestors in colonizing and surviving the Islands.³³ Moreover, the multiplicity of symbols and messages arising from the material content of Madelinot texts function as "an expression of consciousness" (Shukman, 1977: 70) of the dynamics of their relationship with the

landscape. Manifestations of cultural identity emerge from reproductions of the contexts which inspired them. For instance, Langford's poetic works are highly expressive of how local social and cultural rituals influence his internal experiences of the Islands.³⁴ Langford's depictions of the Madelinot landscape illustrate its active role in guiding him in his identity quest.

To summarize, we can draw cultural "meaning from a text by focusing on how a text works rhetorically" (Leggo, 1998: 187) to represent and interpret the socio-cultural context with which it is concerned. As forms of cultural expression, Madelinot texts can be understood as artifacts within which the historical relations between culture and environment are reconstructed and work actively to secure a place in the construction of their cultural identity (Kelly, 1993: 41). Finally, increasing awareness of Madelinot texts through community libraries, bookstores, local schools, and academic projects helps to embed their material content in the Islander's cultural consciousness from where it can act as a mechanism for self-reflection (Kelly, 1993). The Madelinot people continue to adopt the conveniences of a modern lifestyle threatening their historical cultural ties to the past. Their social and political ties to Quebec continue to be reinforced by radio, television, and government services (Cayo, 1991: 40). The recent surge in Madelinot texts, however, helps to counteract this process. The historical landscape experiences that have worked to shape the Madelinot community endures in the discourse and images of the texts. The texts are a fundamental driving force in linking the Madelinot people to personalities, places, and events that imbue them with a sense of identity.

Conclusion

This study has offered a new approach to investigating the historical relationship between culture and landscape in the Magdalen Islands. It has tried to show how Madelinot cultural identity has been shaped by a range of individual and collective experiences of landscape. A wide variety of issues has been dealt with. At the outset some works of the past exploring the connections between people, culture, and landscape were reviewed. This examination revealed the multi-faceted role of landscape in attesting and affirming a culture's identity. It demonstrated how the natural and built structures of landscape situate a culture in time and space strengthening its sense of identity and attachment to place. The discussion revealed that a mass of meanings and messages emanate from landscape components which speak to a culture of the experiences and achievements of past generations. This examination provided the groundwork for a literary analysis of the ways in which landscape experiences influence and, in turn, is influenced by Madelinot culture (Golledge and Stimson, 1997: 392).

When analyzed in relation to these theoretical works, the narrative selections provide a clear picture of the confluence of Madelinot culture and landscape. Factual treatments of the historical, cultural, and social contexts around which the narratives are constructed illustrated the role of landscape experiences in shaping local cultural practices and values and beliefs. The analysis revealed that Madelinot cultural identity is framed within a myriad of internal and external experiences of the spatial dimensions of the Islands' landscape. In broadest terms, an analysis of passages filled with cultural representation and environmental symbolism unveiled the physical and psychological information emerging from the landscape (Golledge and Stimson, 1997: 393).

In what followed, a discourse analysis of the narrative selections provided a clearer picture of how they function as sources of knowledge about Madelinot cultural identity (Kelly, 1993: 41). This analysis demonstrated how the textual discourse works to portray landscape experiences as a determinant of Madelinot cultural unity, permanence, and continuity. The discussion was ended by explaining how the narratives identify, preserve, and communicate the heritage aspect of historical landscape experiences. This explained how they contribute to the shaping of Madelinot cultural identity.

Notes

¹ “The term culture(...)refers to beliefs and perceptions, values and norms, customs and behaviors(...)shared among a group of people in a consensual way(...)and implies that these shared beliefs, values, and styles of behavior are passed on to others, especially children, and that the socialization and education of new members of the culture help preserve consensus from one generation to the next.”, see Altman, Irwin and Chemers, Martin, Culture and Environment, (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 1980). p. 3.

² “Memory(...)is a source of knowledge. This means that it does more than provide a set of categories, through which, in an unselfconscious way, a group experiences its surroundings; it also provides the group with material for conscious reflection.”, see Hughes, Diane Owen, “Introduction,” Time: Histories and Ethnographies, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995). p. 9.

³ “members of a social class or sub-cultural group(...)tend to occupy different occupations and have different incomes, live in different neighborhoods, send their children to different schools, and in general, live in different worlds, each with its own array of distinctive attitudes and values.”, see Kilby, Richard W., The Study of Human Values, (Lanham: University Press of America Inc., 1993). p. 23.

⁴ “Our human landscape is our unwitting autobiography, reflecting our tastes, our values, our aspirations, and even our fears, in tangible visual form.” see Lewis, Peirce F., “Axioms for Reading the Landscape.”, The Interpretation Of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays, ed. D.W. Meinig (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 12 :11-32.

⁵ “Social life(...)is made up of the mass of individuals who constitute society, the manner in which they have settled upon the earth, the nature and configuration of those things of all kinds which affect collective relationships(...)directly or indirectly(...)”, see Némédi, Dénes, “Collective Consciousness, Morphology, And Collective Representations: Durkheim’s Sociology of Knowledge 1894-1900.”, *Sociological Perspectives*, 38, no. 1, (Spring 1995), 45:41-56.

⁶ “Place attachment is the symbolic relationship formed by people giving culturally shared emotional/affective meanings to a particular space or piece of land that provides the basis for the individual’s and group’s understanding of and relations to the environment.”, see Low, Setha M., “Symbolic Ties That Bind: Place Attachment In The Plaza.”, Place Attachment, eds. Setha M. Low and Irwin Altman (NewYork: Plenum Press, 1992), 165:165-185.

⁷ “values are beliefs as to what is good, best, and their opposites-bad, worst, and wrong(...)In other words, if consciously experienced, a value is a full sense of what is best (or worst) of how things ought (or ought not) to be, of what is right and good (or wrong and bad).”, see endnote 3, p. 32.

⁸ Appleton explores these issues within the context of poetry to illustrate the theories discussed in The Experience of Landscape. See Appelton, Jay, The Poetry Of Habitat, (Hull: Tranby Printers Limited, 1978).

⁹ "There are many dimensions to meanings ascribed to place(...)People have not only intellectual, imaginary, and symbolic conceptions of place, but also personal and social associations with place-based networks of interaction and affiliation.", see Buttmer, Anne, "Home, Reach, And The Sense Of Place.", The Human Experience of Space and Place, eds. Anne Buttmer and David Seamon (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1980), 166:166-187.

¹⁰ "The places in a person's world(...)are profound centres of meanings and symbols of experience(...)reservoirs of significant life experiences lying at the centre of a person's identity and sense of psychological well being.", see Godkin, Michael A., "Identity And Place: Clinical Applications Based On Notions Of Rootedness And Uprootedness.", The Human Experience of Space and Place, eds. Anne Buttmer and David Seamon (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1980), 73:73-85.

¹¹ "The self is something which has a development, it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity, that is, develops, in the given individual, as a result of his relations to that process as a whole, and to no other individuals within that process.", see Wilson, Bobby M., "Social Space and Symbolic Interaction.", The Human Experience of Space and Place, eds. Anne Buttmer and David Seamon (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1980), 140:135-145.

¹² "To share a legacy is to belong to a family, a community, a race, a nation. What each inherits is in some measure unique, but common commitments bind us to others within our group.", see Lowenthal, David, Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History, (New York: The Free Press, 1996), p. 2.

¹³ "As significations or representations of history, language, culture, and identity,(...)all books,(...)explain in certain ways particular versions of social relations of history, language, culture, and identity. These versions can work to suggest to readers, through the discourses of understanding available to us, who we are and might become(...)", see Kelly, Ursula, Marketing Place: Cultural Politics, Regionalism and Reading, (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1993), p. 41.

¹⁴ "When we regard the place where we were born, grew up and spent a significant part of our existence as a biotope assigned to us that may have functioned as a second skin, then the person who was relocated was, 'exiled,'.", see Olschner, Leonard, "A Poetics of Place Günter Kunert's Poem Sequence "Herbstanbruch in Arkadien" from his Volume *Fremd daheim.*", *Studies In 20th Century Literature*, 21, no. 1, (Winter 1997), 124:123-136.

¹⁵ "The relationship between community and place is indeed a very powerful one in which each reinforces the identity of the other(...)In short, people are their place and a place is its people, and however readily these may be separated in conceptual terms, in experience they are not easily differentiated.", see Davis, Edward, "Place and Cultural Identity Among Guatemalan Indians: The Fragility of Goodness.", *The Geographical Bulletin*, 37, no. 1, (May 1995), 20:18-28.

¹⁶ The church and religious holidays played a crucial role in the development of the Madelinot people's social lives in their historical isolation from the continent. See Deux cents ans d'histoire, (Beauport: Les Impressions J.L. Inc., 1993), pp.167-187.

¹⁷ See Frédéric Landry, Pièges de sable, (Les Éditions La Boussole, 1994), pp. 95-98.

¹⁸ LeBourdais' determination to establish a permanent means of communication between the Islands and the rest of the continent ended in 1881 when the federal government finally opened a telegraph office in Grosse-Ile easing the Madelinot people's historical moral isolation from the outside world. See endnote 16, pp. 120-122.

¹⁹ See also endnote 17.

²⁰ "Nostalgia(...)relies on the collection of fragments of memories and out of them it builds up an idealised image of a desirable haven. The fragments have to be loaded with pleasurable associations, otherwise the image they create will not stimulate pleasure and the emotions which result will not truly be nostalgic.", see endnote 8, p. 27.

²¹ This is a recreation of an actual event which made its way into Madelinot folklore in the winter of 1910. During the harsh winter months the telegraph cable linking the Magdalen Islands to the mainland broke making communication with the outside world virtually impossible until the arrival of spring. For the complete story of *Le Ponchon* see Landry, Frédéric, Captains Of The Shoals, (Les Éditions La Boussole, 1993), pp. 18-21.

²² See also endnote 17.

²³ See Marie-Victorin, Frère, Chez les Madelinots, (Montréal: Écoles Chrétiennes, 1921).

²⁴ "collective consciousness as the totality of representations which are collective in the sense that they are present in several minds(...)is not a specific mode of integration, but a general condition of society.", see endnote 5, 42:41-56.

²⁵ Kelly examines the impact of Newfoundland books on culture and identity in that province. Her analysis demonstrates how social identities are constructed in Newfoundland books through discursive representations of historical social relations of power. See endnote 13.

²⁶ "The originality of the Madelinot culture comes principally from Acadia and Quebec but also from its historic isolation. At one time shipwrecks and commerce were major contacts with the outside world. This culture is still alive today, whether it be the language, art, economy or town and country development.", see Association Touristique Régionale Des Iles, Iles de la Madeleine, (Ministère du Tourisme, 1994), p. 13.

²⁷ "The Miracle, a 626-ton barque with over 400 Irish immigrants aboard,(...)floundered in a storm off Ile de l'Est on the night of May 19, 1847. Dysentery had weakened almost everyone on the ship, and some 150 died, at least half of them by exposure rather than drowning.", see Halliday, Hugh A., "The lonely Magdalen Islands.", *Canadian Geographical Journal*, 36, no. 1, (January 1973), 4:2-13.

²⁸ The Rt. Rev. George Jehoshaphat Mountain, Third Bishop of Quebec, experienced the difficulties of linking the families of Grosse-Ile and Entry Island together in a religious tradition during his visit to the Islands on July 04, 1850. In his journal he declared, "A church must be built, at once, upon each of the two islands just mentioned, which are upwards of thirty miles apart-and it will indeed be a grateful sight, when according to present hope it shall please God that these structures, very humble though they may be, shall rise among the habitations to indicate blessing and to sanctify the character of the settlements;-a grateful site when the islanders and their children shall at last be seen stately gathering together to worship Him(...)", see Diocese of Quebec, *Anniversary Newsletter of the Magdalen Islands Mission 1850-1975*, 2, no. 7, (July 1975), p. 8.

²⁹ "If few Madelinots have been shipwrecked in their home Islands, many have come to grief on fishing expeditions in the Gulf and along the north shore of the St. Lawrence.", see endnote 27, 6:2-13.

³⁰ For example, "There is contained in Newfoundland literature, some of it, a voice that is so clear and setting that is so revealing, so fresh, because it is so recognizable, that you are home and you know that the people talking, the characters being described, the struggles being faced, are right in your own backyard.", see also endnote 13, p. 30.

³¹ Stories of heroic Madelinot landscape experiences inspire local fiction the most. For example, "One winter day two men, Paul Chennell and Rubin Welsh set out in a fishing boat off the Magdalenes, and a gale of wind blew them out to sea. A change of wind carried them into the mouth of Grand Entry Harbour. There they became trapped in the ice. Three other men, Alan Clarke, Jack Keaton, and Daniel Dunn went out on the thin ice in an attempt to save them. Clarke crawled along the jagged ice pack with two dory oars and a rope. Finally, they reached the boat, drove a line through the painter, and hauled the two men almost to shore. Jack Keaton and Daniel Dunn then hitched a horse to the boat and pulled it high on the beach. Clarke had been struggling on the broken ice continuously for almost eight hours, and his clothes were frozen stiff.", see CAMI, The Jewels of the Gulf, (Summerside: Williams and Crue Ltd., 1982), p. 30.

³² A legendary Madelinot tale worth noting is the mysterious loss of the schooner *Flash* which left Havre-Aubert in November of 1863 for Quebec. According to the legend, "With her sailed the *Canayen* headed for Baie-St-Paul. The weather was fine, but the *Flash* never reached her destination. No bodies were ever found and only a few traces of wreckage were washed up on the northern dunes of the Magdalens. The disappearance of the *Flash* was a marine mystery. Fifteen years later the truth came out in a death-bed confession by the cook of the *Canayen*. The evening of the departure, with the Magdalens barely over the horizon, the crew of the north shore vessel had boarded the *Flash* and in a bloody struggle had massacred the crew. The murderous sailors then plundered the *Flash* and scuttled her in what was probably the last case of piracy in Canadian history.", see also endnote 27, 7:6-13.

³³ "The newly-arrived Madelinot presumed that the lands they settled were their own. In April, 1798, however, the British government granted title to the Islands to Captain (later Admiral) Sir Isaac Coffin. The new owner regarded the Acadians as tenants under obligation to pay him rent; the Madelinots objected on the grounds that they had arrived first. At one point in the dispute Coffin threatened to clear the islands of people. His quarrel with the Madelinots continued until his death in 1839. The dispute was kept alive by his heirs, and was not resolved until 1895, when a Quebec statute enabled the inhabitants to purchase their lands from the Coffin estate. The tangled dispute had long term effects. It discouraged local initiatives in agriculture, and even into this century has left a legacy of confused land titles. The dispute with Sir Isaac Coffin and his heirs, however, so stunted agriculture that fishing soon became virtually the only local industry.", see also endnote 27, 9:6-13.

³⁴ Many of the Madelinot people's most profound and historical experiences of the Islands transpired within the context of social and cultural rituals during the long winter months. Numerous accounts of memorable experiences have been documented in unpublished booklets. For example, *CAMI'S Memories of Yesteryear* in which elderly Islanders reminisce about the traditional Madelinot way of life. In one example Doris Aitkens Boudreau remembers that, "There were parties for knitting socks, mitts, gloves, fishing mitts and cuffs to pull on over the wrist to protect the arms while fishing. Many a long night was filled with enjoyment by story telling and the feeling of belonging when everyone got together. At the same time, the knitting was done and it never seemed to be a chore. About ten ladies would gather at one house and bring their knitting needles. As yarn was made up in skeins, they would put a skein over one person's arm and ball it off into a ball, and it was ready for the evening. They would knit new feet on five pairs of socks in one evening, or start five pairs of new socks. The next night ten more ladies would come and finish up the new socks. Each lady would knit up one mitt in an evening. You could hear the needles clicking as they worked. They would arrive at five in the evening and work until about nine o'clock. If we kids were good, sometimes we could stay up and have some of the delicious food that the table was filled with.", see CAMI, *Memories of Yesteryear*, July 1997, Museum Archives, Grosse-Ile.

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