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Vernacular Health Moralities and Culinary Tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador

This article addresses class-based moral judgments as a crucial aspect of both informal and consciously constructed kinds of culinary tourism in the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Interview and survey data, as well as Internet travelogues, further reveal the development and negotiation of vernacular health moralities that influence the ways in which certain foods are culturally constructed to convey status.

Introduction

This article is based on research concerning culinary tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. With some notable exceptions (e.g., Bourdieu 1984; Goody 1982; Lewis 1997; Marriott 1968; Montañó 1992, 1997; Warde and Martens 2000; Weismantel 1988), the construction of cultural others, as linked to food and class, remains largely unexamined in the social sciences and humanities. My data show that regardless of the variety of food with which they may be presented, tourists consistently make choices in keeping with their class location. Moreover, the continual reassertion of class identity through food reproduces socioeconomic hierarchies of power and control. Thus, expanding the conceptual framework developed by Lucy M. Long (1998, 2003), this article shows that the assertion of status through the demonstration of taste is a crucial aspect of both informal and consciously constructed kinds of culinary tourism.

In Canada, this power dynamic finds its expression in the political realm as part of debates about the ailing health care system and the attendant near-panic concerning the projected effects of rising obesity rates. Its folkloric manifestation comes in the form of evolving vernacular health moralities. I am using this phrase to refer to moral frameworks, constructed from a variety of sources (including traditional, popular, and Western biomedical cultures) and employed by individuals in their everyday health decisions, including food consumption. I employ the word “vernacular” here, rather than “lay,” to avoid the dichotomy between “lay” and “professional” implied by that term (Backett 1992). Examining data on tourists’ perceptions of Newfound-

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land foods collected from fieldwork, the mass media, and local vernacular culture, this article considers the linkages of food, class, morality, and tourism, as demonstrated in the context of culinary tourism in the province.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada's easternmost province, covers 405,720 square kilometers, more than three times the total area of the other three Atlantic provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island). Its population, however, numbers just over 506,000, as of July 2007. The majority live on the Avalon Peninsula, where the provincial capital of St. John's is located. Other commercial hubs include Grand Falls–Windsor in central Newfoundland, Corner Brook on the island's west coast, and Happy Valley–Goose Bay in central Labrador. A large segment of the population of Newfoundland and Labrador has until recently been employed in various fisheries, working either off- or on-shore to procure and process cod, crab, lobster, and shrimp. The cod fishery—the industry that led to the settlement and development of the province—was severely curtailed by a moratorium on fishing northern cod in 1992. The fishing ban, “an economic tragedy of unprecedented proportions,” continues to this day, and it now includes capelin, salmon, and turbot (Narváez 1997:1). Since the devastating moratorium, the province has looked toward high-tech development, greater natural resource extraction, and tourism as important growth areas to offset the blow of the dwindling fishery. However, even with promising economic prospects fueled by a rapidly developing oil industry, Newfoundland and Labrador suffers from out-migration, as financially strapped residents leave the east coast for the oil fields of Alberta, one of Canada's wealthiest provinces.

First a British colony, and then for a brief period self-governing, Newfoundland (as it was officially called prior to the change to “Newfoundland and Labrador” in 2001) became a province of Canada only in 1949, following an extremely close referendum (see Story 1990; Hiller 1993). Christie Davies (1990) credits both the province's relatively recent entry into confederation and its location—Cape Spear, Newfoundland, is the easternmost point of North America—with its marginal position in the Canadian imaginary. As a demonstration of this temporal and geographic marginality, Davies documents numerous examples of the “Newfie” joke, a variant of the formulaic ethnic jokes that circulate in somewhat fixed form about marginalized groups around the world. However, while Davies concludes that Newfie jokes are good-natured at their core, many residents of the province believe such expressive forms to be evidence that Newfoundlanders remain a group that may be harshly and maliciously ridiculed without fear of reprisals.

The term “Newfie” itself, sometimes used affectionately in esoteric contexts, remains a contentious expression. While it has been traced back to the Canadian and American military personnel living and working on the island during World War II, Patrick Byrne argues that the “stereotype [it represents] had been some time in the making” (1997:236). By 1900, the island was already known for its unique folklife. As a kind of geographically protected repository of English, Irish, and Scottish forms,

well known for numerous ballads and folktales still active in oral tradition, as well as for its own vigorous traditions of locally created expressive culture, Newfoundland had already been the subject of two articles in the *Journal of American Folklore* by the turn of the twentieth century. Byrne details “the emergence of ‘Newfieland’” in documents ranging from academic studies to the government’s own early tourism-marketing efforts (1997:237–9). The early stereotype of a friendly, spirited, and yet naïve and backward people later developed into one of living, breathing Newfie jokes. As Byrne outlines,

What began to emerge to replace the traditional culture of the fisherfolk was “Newfieland” peopled by “Newfies”—a place out of step with time, inhabited by the numskull figure of the “Newfie” joke, too stupid to realize his own ineptitude and alien status vis-à-vis mainstream North American society, but eternally happy, embarrassingly hospitable, and full of fun, deferential to his betters (read any non-Newfoundlander), but fiercely proud of his homeland and his way of life. (1997:238)

Having lived in St. John’s for just over a decade at the time of this writing, I can confirm the active maintenance of the Newfie stereotype, by locals and nonlocals alike. As previously noted, “Newfie” is a term that may be employed with apparently sincere fondness or wielded like a weapon. As one of my students commented during a class discussion of the word, “‘Newfie’ is our own ‘n-word.’”

Furthermore, as Canada’s newest province, Newfoundland and Labrador is a canvas upon which visitors often express a longing for various romantic ideals of traditional cultures. Sociologist Jacinthe Bessière has examined the contemporary tourist’s frequent desire for a “re-activation of well-established stereotypes about nature and purity” in rural France (1998:22). Examining Newfoundland and Labrador tourism materials, it is easy to conclude that this is exactly what is being offered, and in turn consumed, both by resident and visiting vacationers. In 2002, for example, *Globe and Mail* columnist Karen von Hahn declared, “Newfoundland is a trip off the edge of the modern world. . . . Its very remoteness offers not only achingly beautiful natural scenery, but also a last little oasis of authenticity” (2002:L3). Bessière explains further that food is often a marker of such authenticity, writing that “cuisine with a country touch, and ‘natural’ products have increased in popularity: black bread or bread baked in brick ovens, farm fresh products, country buffets and straight-from-the-farm delicatessen meat. Regional cuisine and country home-style Sunday lunches are often featured at higher priced restaurants” (1998:24). While it is true that popular perceptions of the province, as well as locally produced tourist information, bolster a similar vision of Newfoundland and Labrador, what tourists seek is actually a complicated mix of typically rural and urban offerings.

The traveler often desires a delicate balance between the familiar and the exotic, a phenomenon that I have observed in my own research. Survey respondents reported various techniques for identifying locally popular eateries. While some may attempt an “authentically local” experience, however, including food, accommodation, and entertainment, others simply endeavor to deviate from their usual routines. Thus, an Indian, Lebanese, or Japanese restaurant may be equally as attractive as one featuring Atlantic

Canadian fare. By contrast, after a day of dealing with unfamiliar streets, businesses, and people, the tourist may seek comfort in familiar foods. As Daniel J. Boorstin noted, “The modern American tourist . . . has come to expect both more strangeness and more familiarity than the world naturally offers” (1964:79). Even when enmeshed in a quest for difference, travelers often express surprise when they find it. Visitors from Ontario and Manitoba, for example, are sometimes genuinely puzzled by the relative lack of farmland that they encounter in Newfoundland and Labrador. This sameness/difference paradox is also at work in the exclamations over the number of fast-food restaurants in the province (discussed in detail below). Together, the observations declare, “How can things be so different and yet so much the same!” While travelers actively seek difference, they continue to look for comfort in the known. Further, Canadians and Americans traveling within North America expect the conveniences and services that are common features of Western postindustrial society. For example, an anthropologist conducting research on tourism in remote areas of Alaska describes a Wisconsin couple who were shocked because they were unable to buy a quart of milk while driving to Fairbanks via the Dalton Highway, a dirt road originally constructed exclusively for use by oil-industry workers servicing the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and only recently opened to the public (Nuttall 1997:228). The paradox presented by conflicting desires for a romantic rurality as well as all the amenities of contemporary civilization is a significant challenge for those in the business of tourism, culinary or otherwise.

Engaging with or attempting to avoid local foodways constitutes another integral part of the tourist’s construction of the other. Published travel accounts and personal letters are therefore critical to the folkloristic study of culinary tourism (Yoder 2001:117). Moreover, as Charles Camp has observed, such reports often underscore “[t]he most basic and stereotypical of cultural characterizations—the stuff of elementary school geographies and popular travelogues [that] make primary reference to the specific foods various peoples eat and often describe the physical and cultural attributes of whole societies in terms of these foods” (1997:367). Thus, examining the negotiation of culinary tourism can shed light on the tourists’ construction of cultural others and the role that body weight can play in this process. We may cast critical eyes toward Progressive Era moral crusaders’ attempts to reform traditional diets (Levenstein 1988; Shapiro 1986), but it is increasingly clear that contemporary North American society connects food and morality with increasing rigidity in an atmosphere of what Raymond Sokolov calls “nouveau Puritanism” (1999:32). This study documents and analyzes a critical five-year period in the development of the Newfoundland and Labrador tourism industry, a period particularly important to its culinary tourism. During this time, media coverage of the “obesity epidemic” greatly influenced the tourist gaze, and an analysis of this situation can provide insight into the influence of class and vernacular health moralities on tourist perceptions of a region.

Methodology

In 2002, I began research on the interplay between government- and industry-based culinary tourism initiatives and traditional Newfoundland and Labrador foodways. I was interested in how traditional foods were being marketed to and received by

tourists from outside the province, and the project combined field research with the analysis of electronic and print advertising, government and industry reports, Internet travelogues (which I will hereafter refer to as “vernacular travelogues”; Everett 2007), survey and qualitative interview data, and tourist ephemera such as promotional brochures and flyers. The fieldwork included participant observation, primarily as a guest at bed-and-breakfasts (B&Bs) across the province, and qualitative interviews. As a resident of Newfoundland and Labrador’s capital city, St. John’s, I was also able to conduct participant-observation field research at numerous tourist events during high season. Finally, I designed and administered a questionnaire in the latter stages of research that respondents completed and returned by post or e-mail.

Potential respondents were solicited in a number of ways. I left questionnaires in self-addressed, stamped envelopes at B&Bs I visited in the province, as well as at other locations where tourist literature was on display. Over a three-month period in 2003 (July through September), I posted a flyer advertising the study in downtown St. John’s. Variations of the flyer were posted as the opportunity arose in other locations in both Canada and the United States. Over a fifteen-month period from mid-2003 to late 2004, I received ninety-four completed questionnaires from across North America.

Culinary Tourism in Canada

Culinary tourism is perceived within the tourism industry as a promising arena. In September 2003, articles in Canadian newspapers announced that “culinary tourism is hot” and that the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) was eager to develop Canada’s unique culinary product(s) accordingly (see, e.g., Kennedy 2003). As a confederation of provinces and a “nation of immigrants” (Iacovetta 1998), Canada faces a number of challenges in its quest to present a uniquely Canadian culinary tourism product. A lively, ongoing debate in the industry centers on the question of whether it is even possible, or desirable, to speak of a singular “Canadian cuisine” (Deneault 2002:2). Further, in the context of Canada’s confederation, this market has been dominated by Québec, as a New World outpost of French cooking with its own well-regarded artisanal traditions.

To find a way out of a tourism slump that began in 2002, the CTC counted on the appeal of all things culinary. Using a variety of media (such as travel and restaurant guides, Web sites, and television advertising), both national and provincial organizations worked to highlight regional specialties while creating a broadly based, positive image of “cuisine in Canada.” Along with product development, the industry had to consider the symbolic production of foods (Cook 1994)—the ways in which certain foods are culturally constructed to hold meaning and thus enhance, or spoil, identity (Goffman 1964). Reports generated for the CTC identify the typical “culinary tourist” as a highly educated individual, tending to earn upwards of \$80,000 annually (Deneault 2003). Culinary tourism products, therefore, are often geared toward this particular demographic.

As Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and others have demonstrated, identity is intimately connected to socioeconomic status. In positioning itself in the developing culinary tourism market, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador must negotiate the

contact zone (Pratt 1992) between working-class regional foodways and middle-to-upper-class mainstream Western cuisine—a space where the ideological underpinning of culinary tourism collides with the exigencies of everyday life. Part of this negotiation entails addressing a significant cultural shift in attitudes toward food, as the ideals of the health-food movement move from the counterculture (Belasco 1993; Dubisch 1981) to the mainstream. Another element is the reality of food provisioning in Newfoundland and Labrador in comparison with the promotion of the province as a culinary tourism destination.

During my research, I was made acutely aware of this disconnection between the everyday experience of many in the province and the seemingly inherent class bias of culinary tourism. For example, on a grocery-shopping trip in St. John's during the fieldwork period, I unwittingly caused something of a kerfuffle. The two orange tomatoes-on-the-vine that I had excitedly put in my cart, without checking the price, rang in at \$2.93. Neither the cashier nor those she consulted could believe that the figure was correct. I was surprised myself. How could two small tomatoes, beautiful or not, cost almost three dollars? As a growing number of employees consulted produce price lists and examined the fruit, the customers behind me in line became noticeably irritated. I began to feel conspicuous and considered asking the cashier to forget about the tomatoes. With an average annual personal income of just under \$26,000 and a provincial unemployment rate of 15.2 percent in 2005, many in the province would find those tomatoes to be an extravagant, if not impossible, purchase.

According to *The Cost of Eating in Newfoundland and Labrador*, a report prepared by Marg Ewtushik on behalf of Dietitians of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health Association, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers (2003), almost a quarter of Newfoundlanders lack the necessary disposable income to cover the minimum costs of food, shelter, clothing, and transportation. Moreover, the report found that “[f]ood insecure low-income families tend to buy cheaper high-calorie foods out of necessity (rather than choice) over more expensive healthy food choices including fruits and vegetables.” For such families, purchasing enough nutritious foods to ensure physical well-being would consume from 28 to 119 percent of available income. Consequently, Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest per capita use of food banks in the country. Exoteric evaluations of food consumption, as briefly witnessed in restaurants or grocery stores, may not take such economic restrictions into account.

Statistics such as I have cited above, however, influence media portrayals of the province as a “vast and scenic welfare ghetto” fixed in time (Wente 2005:A19). Perhaps this is also why, following my explanation of my research, many people asked incredulously, “Culinary tourism?! In Newfoundland?!” Until very recently, the province's reputation with regard to dining out has not been particularly positive (Everett 2005). For example, in 2004 local entrepreneur Wade McLoughlan filed a report on St. John's for the Canadian fashion magazine *Flare*, explaining that when he arrived in Newfoundland in the early 1990s, “There were no cafés, few decent restaurants, and the only clothing shops downtown were stalwarts from the 60s and 70s.” Fortunately, he concludes, there are now “fine restaurants galore” (2004:72). However, the food served in these establishments was not traditional Newfoundland fare

but “fusion cuisine with Thai and Japanese influences” (2004:73). During the research period, traditional Newfoundland foods were just beginning to be considered in the context of culinary tourism.

Traditional Foodways in Newfoundland and Labrador

In theory, culinary tourism is based around locally produced foodstuffs prepared in both traditional and new ways, which connects dining opportunities to local culture and thereby renders the fulfillment of a biological imperative as a culturally enriching experience. Culinary tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador thus includes and builds on traditional foodways developed from regional adaptations of English, Irish, and Scottish culinary practices, with the important addition of indigenous flora, fauna, and *fruits de mer*.¹ As French fishers also worked the waters of Newfoundland’s south and west coasts, there is also an Acadian influence, but this has not been as well documented. In addition, the province is home to four native peoples, including the Mi’kmaq of Newfoundland and the Inuit, Innu, and Métis of Labrador.²

Area inhabitants have long relied on indigenous plants. Blossoms, fruit, and greenery have been utilized for both culinary and medicinal purposes. Dogberries, for example, were used to make wine and jelly, as well as to restore the appetite.³ Of the province’s land mammals, both native and introduced, caribou, moose, arctic hare, and snowshoe hare (locally referred to as “rabbit”) have been the major game animals, with the moose remaining the most important today (Gray 1977). Significant game birds in the regional diet include duck, turr (murre), and partridge (ptarmigan). While imported foodstuffs are available in the province now as never before, many families still consider hunted or fished game to be an important element of both diet and traditional social activity. Particular individuals within extended families have often developed roles as regular providers of certain types of game.

Fish and other sea creatures are perhaps the best-known element of the province’s typical diet (followed closely by moose and berries). Historically, cod has been king, and this is reflected in traditional meal patterns and cookbooks.⁴ Illustrating cod’s importance, the popular cookbook *Fat-back and Molasses* offers forty-nine seafood recipes; of these, thirty-four, or just shy of 70 percent, are for cod.⁵ Other fish locally consumed include brook trout, caplin, halibut, herring, and salmon.

Due to a short growing season and unfavorable soil conditions, large-scale agriculture was not prominent in the development of Newfoundland and Labrador’s foodways. In addition, farming was officially discouraged during the area’s early settlement, as it was feared that such activity would detract from the execution of the fishery (Murray 2002; Story 1990). Thus, Pamela Gray contends that “[t]here really was not even time to benefit from the potential agricultural resources for during the growing season the men, and many women, were busy with the work of the fisheries” (1977:15; see also Story 1990:21). This is not to say, however, that the cultivation of certain foods has not contributed to culinary practice. John T. Omohundro points out that, although horticultural activity was always secondary to fishing and later logging, “there is good evidence that settlers arrived with sufficient horticultural skills and traditions to cleverly exploit what little Newfoundland had

to offer the cultivator. If they were poor farmers, the fault lay—at various times and places—with the physical conditions, political pressures, or economic distractions” (1994:103). Cabbage, root vegetables (including beets, carrots, onions, turnips, and potatoes), and small fruits (such as currants, plums, and rhubarb) have been and continue to be important domestic crops (Horan 1991). Visitors to the province witness this continuing horticultural activity in the form of roadside and gravel-pit gardens (Fleming 1981; Omohundro 1994). As Omohundro writes, “Self-sufficiency, a basic axiom of Newfoundland culture for hundreds of years, is still valued by home producers” (1994:135). Thus, canning and other means of preserving fruits, meats, and vegetables were valuable skills in the early days of settlement and continue to typify domestic practice.⁶

Perhaps the most beloved of the province’s indigenous plants are the wide variety of berries, including strawberries, blackberries, currants, bakeapples, raspberries, squashberries, blueberries, partridgeberries, marshberries, teaberries, gooseberries, and the aforementioned dogberries. As I have discussed in detail elsewhere (Everett 2007), berry picking is an annual, traditional activity that local residents eagerly anticipate and enjoy. The collected berries are utilized chiefly in the home, but they may also be sold by the roadside or to local grocery stores. Tourists are exposed to Newfoundlanders’ and Labradorians’ use of the berries in the jams and jellies that often adorn B&B breakfast tables. These same jams and jellies add flavor to other traditional dishes and are frequently used as pie filling.

While Newfoundland and Labrador shares its Acadian, English, French, Irish, Scottish, and First Nations heritage with other maritime provinces, it also lays claim to uniquely regional foods. A list of such foods would have to include both homemade and mass-manufactured products ranging from deep fried caplin to Purity Jam Jams cookies. While food-related practices are some of the most stable cultural traditions (see, e.g., Theophano 1991), foodways in Newfoundland and Labrador have been affected by factors such as international trade and the rise of agro-industry giants, as have traditional diets the world over. As elsewhere in North America, grocery stores in the province offer apples from New Zealand and oranges from South Africa, alongside locally grown spinach and carrots. Traditional dishes demanding considerable time and effort vie with the ease, affordability, and popular appeal of fast-food meals.

Environmental conditions and political realities also impinge on traditional diets. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the dependence on cod is necessarily changing because of the decimation of stocks and the federally mandated moratoria. Medical anthropologist and native Newfoundlander Maura Hanrahan has noted that since the 1950s, salt fish and cod in general have declined in the Newfoundland diet. “It seems,” she writes, “that fish, salted or otherwise, will never again be at the core of the Newfoundland diet” (2001:iv). Fellow St. John’s residents have bemoaned the difficulty of getting fresh cod in the last few years. During my fieldwork, locals complained that the best fishing is now reserved for tourists and foreign fishing vessels. At the same time, Canadians are being encouraged to eat more fish as part of a healthy lifestyle. Although the local diet now includes more fresh fruit and vegetables, there is more consumption of “junk” food as well.

While the loss of traditional food preparation and commensal practices is cer-

tainly a concern, folklorists and other cultural specialists also recognize the dynamism present in foodways systems and the constant interaction between tradition and innovation. As Hanrahan observes, "One of the things that I have learned . . . is that, in terms of our diets and foodways, change has been the only constant" (2001:iv). Newfoundland and Labrador's foodways did not develop in isolation. Given the province's long history of international trade and travel, it is not necessarily the origin of a particular foodstuff that is most important to the local culture, but rather the end product and its incorporation into the beliefs and practices that determine its significance here.⁷ Accordingly, Newfoundlanders who move away from the island may pine after both Jiggs' dinner and Fanta Pineapple Soda, mom's fish and brewis as well as fish and chips from the Big R restaurant (Antle 2002).⁸ Similarly, visitors to the area identify both traditional dishes such as fish and brewis and commercial products unavailable in their own area, such as Purity Peanut Butter Kisses, as regionally unique foods.

A traditional meal pattern documented in the mid-1970s was as follows:

- Sunday—fresh roast or fowl and salt meat dinner with duff (boiled pudding)
- Monday—stew or hash made from Sunday leftovers
- Tuesday—salt meat dinner
- Wednesday—fish
- Thursday—cooked meat and vegetables or salt meat dinner
- Friday—fish (often fish and brewis or salt fish and potatoes)
- Saturday—pea soup and dough boys (or dumplings) or baked beans (Gray 1977:106)

Currently, some aspects of the pattern still hold, with a general preference for a boiled dinner (such as Jiggs' dinner) on Sunday, leftovers from Sunday's dinner on Monday, and fish on Friday. However, traditional meals are now interspersed with foods eaten in households across North America—pasta, casseroles, stir-fries (both with and without meat), and the ubiquitous fast-food take-out meals of fried chicken, hamburgers, pizza, and, in Atlantic Canada, fish and chips. It is this latter category that troubles visitors the most, as fast food—no matter how integral to daily life in any locale—does not generally fit into popular notions of culinary tourism, as they are currently constructed. Although the most frequently cited objection to fast food, and particularly to fast fried food, is its unhealthiness, I will demonstrate that class and morality play a role here as well.

Everything Fried

While I anticipated comments pertaining to health concerns when I began this research, I was struck by the ways in which this issue ran through so many of my conversations, interviews, and survey responses. In addition to analyzing the historic development of and resurgent interest in culinary tourism in the tourism industry, I used three foods or food categories as case studies: seal meat, wild and cultivated berries, and what I focus on here, a variety of foodstuffs that fall into the broad category of fried food.

On a clear August morning in 2003, I dropped off a stack of questionnaires at the tourism information center in downtown St. John's. As I placed them on a display shelf alongside brochures for whale- and bird-watching tours and local B&Bs, I caught the eye of Neal, an employee, as he spoke to a group of four tourists. "Maybe you'd like to take this survey," he said as he pointed in my direction. The two men and two women, whom I soon learned were visiting from Ontario, joked that there would not be enough room to write down everything they had eaten. Then, one of the men asked if the study was about "how people get fat." I said no, and proceeded with my well-practiced, one-sentence explanation of my project: "I'm looking at how people's impressions of a particular culture are affected by the food they eat while visiting." The taller of the two men nodded thoughtfully and said, "Well, they like everything fried in Newfoundland, right?"

And, in fact, the aspect of Newfoundland and Labrador foodways most consistently commented upon by tourists was the prevalence of fried foods. In my initial conversations with people traveling on the Great Northern Peninsula, on the island's west coast, it was frequently a topic of significant concern, particularly for those on restricted diets because of cardiac or circulatory conditions and also for vegetarians. There is a general perception among tourists that the diet of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is unhealthy. This may be due to a number of factors, including summaries of local foodways in popular travel guides, media reportage on regional and national health surveys (see below), and fiction and nonfiction writings by local authors set in the province.

An example comes from Patrick O'Flaherty's *Come Near at Your Peril: A Visitor's Guide to the Island of Newfoundland*. First published in 1992 and updated in new editions as recently as 1998, the book was mentioned to me by a number of tourists as one that had stimulated their interest in coming to the province or that they had read in preparation for the trip. In the chapter entitled "Eating," O'Flaherty explains:

Newfoundland restaurants stay afloat by appealing to the local trade. With few exceptions, they don't cater to tourists. So you will eat what Newfoundlanders eat. I don't know why this is, but Newfoundlanders in restaurants . . . mostly eat fried food, sometimes in batter so thick that you must dig a quarter- to half-inch to see what's inside. Fried usually means deep-fried in batter; pan-fried is what the menu might say if simple frying is meant. It is well to be alert to such distinctions. If, say, you want a grilled lamb chop or a pasta dish, you may have to look long and hard for it. ([1992] 1998:32)

Although dining options in the province's larger centers, and especially in the city of St. John's, have changed dramatically even since the latest edition of O'Flaherty's book was published, as Sussman and Ünel point out with regard to tourism in general, visitors to a particular area are more likely to fit their experience into culturally conditioned categories than to recognize that which would defy their expectations (2000:210). Further, while O'Flaherty makes a clear distinction between domestic and commercial consumption, readers may well overlook the important phrase, "Newfoundlanders in restaurants." In the tourist gaze, foods eaten in restaurants are frequently conflated with

those eaten in the home. Moreover, eating out as a leisure activity has only gained popularity in the province in the last forty or so years. As Gray observed in 1977, "the general pattern of Newfoundland foodways is that food is traditionally associated with the home. The best meals in Newfoundland are not in restaurants but in Newfoundlanders' homes" (108). One of Gray's informants stated that, until very recently, it was considered an offense to be taken out to a restaurant rather than offered a meal in a host's house: "restaurants were for strangers" (109). Even with considerable changes in the variety of restaurants operating in the province, locals continue to make a clear distinction between commercially prepared foods and domestic cookery, with a preference for the latter. However, such an esoteric distinction is not one explained in travel guides or journalistic travel accounts.

More likely adding to tourists' ready cache of information about Newfoundland foodways, the Canadian national newspaper *The Globe and Mail* ran, in the summer of 2001, a special series on the "obesity epidemic," which identified the province as having the second-highest percentage of overweight or obese individuals in the country, behind Prince Edward Island, as well as the lowest proportion of active individuals (Picard 2001a, 2001b, 2001c). That same year, a Statistics Canada report revealed that about 30 percent of Canadians were overweight, with Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick competing for the dubious distinction of "fattest province" (Statistics Canada 2001). While the report inspired a flurry of reaction from various governmental bodies, it is perhaps most significant to examine the impression that it apparently left in the national psyche, strengthening stereotypes already in place.

For example, a professor who moved from Québec to Newfoundland in 2002 told me that Montreal newspapers had run a number of stories commenting on the obesity of Newfoundlanders. My subsequent searches of Montreal newspaper archives did not reveal any articles singling out Newfoundland and Labrador, but rather ones that were generally concerned with the obesity epidemic and that were almost identical to those that ran in local and national newspapers. With regard to the construction and maintenance of stereotypes, the account of such articles is of as much or more consequence to the folklorist as the actual stories themselves. Moreover, the professor's knowledge of the articles came not from reading them but from *hearing about them from others*. This secondhand sourcing did not prevent the professor from discussing these articles and constructing an image of Newfoundlanders as a group from them.⁹ Certainly, according to statistical information, there are a high percentage of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are overweight. However, the rankings do not mean that *all* Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are overweight (about 40 percent are not, depending on the survey consulted) or that typical serving sizes in local restaurants—what is actually being served there—are solely to blame for the excess weight.

The following year, though, Campbell Morrison (2003) reported in the *St. John's Telegram* that children in Atlantic Canada have the highest rates of obesity in the country. Following the release of a study by the Association for Canadian Studies, the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC) News reported in April 2005 that Newfoundland and Labrador had the highest rate of obese residents (CBC Newfoundland and Labrador 2005). In other words, tourists were arriving expecting to find obesity

and its contributing factors everywhere, and so they did. One of those contributors was fried food in all its forms.

The perception of the province as a last bastion of fried food has even inspired local restaurateurs. On September 2, 2002, Jacqui Hunter, who opened Java Jack's in Rocky Harbour, a town on the island's west coast, explained on the regional CBC radio program "The Morning Show" that she knew that visitors wanted "an alternative to the deep-fried." Her restaurant specializes in nouvelle cuisine treatments of local foods, as well as espresso-based hot and cold beverages. It is popular with tourists, judging from the crowds that I encountered there on each of my three visits in July 2002 and two visits in July 2004. Conversely, Gina Hodge, co-owner of The Norseman restaurant in L'Anse aux Meadows, has experienced "some trouble getting the locals in because they can't get deep fried food" there (Robertson 2004:E20), reinforcing O'Flaherty's description of "Newfoundlanders in restaurants."

Fried Food and the Tourist

Both in casual conversation and survey responses, visitors to the province made frequent mention of fried foods. Inspired by these comments, I searched the Internet for similar observations embedded in vernacular travelogues to see if this theme appeared there as well. What I found confirmed that fried food was a seemingly universal concern for tourists to the province. I will discuss just a few examples here.¹⁰ For instance, the Coadys, a couple from a distant province, noted their impression of Newfoundland food on a Web site detailing their recent visit to the island. Fried food is omnipresent in Newfoundland, they explained, and salads are few and far between. Their Web site states that on the trip, they developed an affection for Tim Hortons, a chain of donut shops popular across Canada, because the food was familiar and not deep fried.¹¹ The Coadys' comments suggest that, aside from the potato, there is an absence of vegetables in Newfoundland. Although vegetables do indeed grow on the island, as previously noted—for example, lettuce, spinach, cabbage, carrots, parsnips, and turnips are all important components of both traditional and present-day diets—this may not be apparent to a visitor simply from perusing restaurant menus.

While a lack of knowledge about local agriculture may not be uncommon among tourists in any locale, the Coadys' comments also highlight an important disjuncture in the general public's understanding of modern food-distribution systems, as well as the tendency to exoticize Newfoundland and Labrador. Because the province is repeatedly portrayed in the popular news and entertainment media, as well as in its own tourism campaigns, as markedly different from the rest of Canada, a tourist might easily assume that commercial systems with which they are familiar do not exist there. Indeed, while allowing for the conventional use of poetic license in travel writing (Duncan and Gregory 1999; Gilbert and Johnston 2002; Holland and Huggan 1998), it is interesting to note that the Coadys refer to the province as "a foreign land."

Continuing the theme of salads (or the lack thereof), in 2003 an anatomy professor from California responded to my initial query about his Newfoundland travel photographs on the Internet, explaining, "The food people eat in Newfoundland blew me away as far as quantity and type. Being a salad eating Californian it was an

interesting experience indeed.” When I asked Professor Tate to elaborate by e-mail, he responded:

My biggest surprise about Newfoundland food was the large portion size, the use of gravy on lots of entrees, the lack of choices of salad and dressing, the frequent frying of fish and other entrees, and the very rich desserts. . . . I am sorry but I found “Newfoundland food” to be a bit too rich for my taste. As a professor of anatomy I was interested to know the incidence of cardiovascular disease in the general population. After two days of eating typical provincial food I found myself eating a typical lunch and then having only a small salad for dinner. In this manner I didn’t gain an extra pound in weight, unlike some of my co-travelers.

Tate’s comments reveal the often-implicit link tourists make between what is served in restaurants and what is typically consumed in domestic settings. Based on his brief time in the province, he assumes that both the foodstuffs and portion sizes he encountered in commercial establishments are identical to what is served in local homes. Again, there is an emphasis on salads, in contrast to what is perceived as the characteristic Newfoundland diet. In addition, he links the rich foods and large portions to disease rates in the population at large. Finally, his statement as a whole reasserts his own status as a healthy person who has both knowledge of proper nutrition and the discipline to put it into practice. This is in contrast to Newfoundlanders and even his own traveling companions, and it dovetails with Sidney Mintz’s observation that North Americans “seem especially prone to characterize eating habits as morally good or bad, and to juggle their food intake in an attempt to create a moral equilibrium” (2002:31). Tate’s assessment was characteristic of the informal discussions I had with visitors to the province, in which the prevalence of, and apparent local preference for, fried foods was often contrasted with a perceived lack of access to or interest in fresh fruits and vegetables.

Constructing Vernacular Health Moralities

As Carole Counihan points out, “Eating sparingly is a measure of proper human behavior in the United States and many other cultures” (1999:121). Thus, even as travelers construct the locations they visit through their culinary experience, they continuously construct themselves, not only in relation to the vacationscape in question, but also to their home environment and their accompanying sense of self, in all of its dimensions. In 2003, a couple who toured the province by RV wrote in a survey response:

We quickly became aware of the limitations in food choices because so many fruits and vegetables had to come to you by boat. . . . [We were] surprised at the limited choices of salad and other healthier fruit and vegetable based dishes in restaurants. Appalled by the huge section of frozen fried nugget-type dishes in the market. I guess that is real convenient for families, but that stuff’ll kill you. Ditto the huge portions of French fried potatoes that everyone seemed to be eating, often covered with gravy or cheese.

It is important to emphasize again that respondents frequently described with surprise circumstances that are common to their own places of residence, such as the prevalence of fast-food establishments or the large portion sizes served at restaurants across North America. In this statement, for example, the “huge” selection of frozen fried entrees is singled out. Placing a wide selection of ready-to-eat items at the entrance to a grocery store is an industry-wide practice in both North America and Europe. Moreover, such foods are the “third most popular items” at supermarkets across Canada (Hennessy 2004:142).

Shopping and cooking for themselves the majority of the time, this couple clearly became familiar with both grocery store and restaurant offerings. Like the professor, they make assumptions about the local diet based on foods available for purchase commercially. Their remarks imply that they would have preferred to eat more fruits and vegetables while in the province and at the same time to have avoided fried foods. Further judgment of local eating habits encompasses both the foodstuffs (french fries, gravy, and cheese) and the portion sizes. Like the professor, the couple asserts their own healthful habits, including their ability to discipline bodily appetites, as integral to their identity.

A number of recent studies (e.g., Belasco 1993; Counihan 1999; Rozin 1999) assert that eating is perceived as moral behavior. As Counihan notes, “class, race, ethnic, and gender boundaries are maintained by eating differences. . . . Voluntary restraint and freedom of choice toward food differentiate well-fed, well-off people from poor people with hunger and limited ways to satisfy it” (1999:126). In Western societies, the ideal body type is slender and fit, a sign of “discipline, success and conformity” to sociocultural ideals, whereas “fat people are stereotyped as undisciplined, self-indulgent, unhealthy, lazy, untrustworthy, unwilling and non-conforming” (Bell and Valentine 1997:35–6; see also Dejong 1980; Dejong and Kleck 1986; Fries and Croyle 1993). In vernacular travelogues, and in answer to questions I posed, many people differentiate themselves as individuals who could afford, in terms of both money and time, to vacation. The data presented here suggest that visitors to the province also distinguish themselves as knowledgeable about nutrition and fitness, and as physically and financially able to pursue the goals of what they understand to be a healthful lifestyle, thus directly embodying responsible citizenship.

Pierre Bourdieu’s work is particularly relevant here, as he argues that “the body is the most indisputable materialization of class taste” (1984:190). Discussing Bourdieu’s central argument and the concept of “habitus,” Mike Featherstone explains that:

The differential formation of habitus for different groups and classes will result in a “natural” disposition to produce certain practices and to classify and judge the practices of others. . . . This set of taken-for-granted preferences is evident in the [individual’s] sense of the appropriateness and validity of his taste for cultural goods and practices—art, food, drink, sport, hobbies etc. Habitus . . . is *embodied* being inscribed onto the body and made apparent in body size, volume, demeanor, ways of eating, drinking, walking, sitting, speaking, making gestures, etc. (1987:123)

Bourdieu's assertions are based on a 1960s survey of over one thousand French citizens. The data revealed clear correlations between the respondents' class locations and their eating habits (including their preferences regarding food preparation and table manners) and attitudes toward the body in general. Similar research conducted in the United Kingdom in the 1980s and 1990s revealed analogous connections between class, food preparation, and consumption (Calnan 1990; Mennell, Murcott, and van Otterloo 1992). As Bell and Valentine pithily sum up, "the educated classes are more likely to bake or grill their food, whereas lower classes fry it" (1997:43), and further distinctions around class lines are often based on such cooking methods.

These ideas are clearly reflected in my data. A Nova Scotian interviewee's priorities when evaluating an eatery, for instance, include cleanliness and whether or not "they serve non-greasy things." Similarly, a visitor from Alberta looked for "cleanly cooked (i.e., *not* fried) seafood" (emphasis in the original). The association of cleanliness with certain food-preparation methods thus renders a moral judgment upon both the producer and consumer of such foods. In this moral equation, "greasy" foods are not just unhealthy but, because they are not "cleanly cooked," unclean or dirty. James Overton (1996) has traced the social construction of dirt and litter in Newfoundland, including the infamous "Newfie" jokes portraying Newfoundlanders as, among other things, dirty, poor, and indiscriminate eaters (see also Thomas 1976). Reiterating Mary Douglas's work on purity and danger (1966), Overton writes, "For many, dirt clearly represents moral, political and physical disorder. . . . Dirt is a metaphor for all that disrupts the moral universe" (1996:98). Consequently, a perceived lack of cleanliness—here in relation to cooking method—may be conflated with immorality. The socially constructed moral implications of fried food are thus far reaching, representing food choice as a kind of moral behavior and making a "bad" or unhealthy choice a potentially immoral and dangerous one. Furthermore, fried food is not yet generally included in what William Roseberry describes as the "spectrum of foods—including wines, beers, waters, breads, cheese, sauces, and the like—through which one can cultivate and display 'taste' and 'discrimination'" (2002:150).¹² Thus, fried food both is unhealthy and confers low status.

A retired economist living on an island off the coast of the southern United States also commented at length on the amount of fried foods she and her husband encountered on local restaurant menus. Nancy Smith wrote, "We had not anticipated that so much of the cuisine would be based on frying, although chefs were generally obliging about grilling or poaching fish. (Unfortunately poaching fish leaves it pretty tasteless, but at least it won't mess with your cardio system.) The limited supply and variety of fresh vegetables and fruit was noticeable in the [Great Northern] Peninsula, too, although very understandable." In response to other survey questions, Smith emphasized that health is her main priority with regard to food and travel, noting that neither she nor her husband eat meat or fried foods. Smith went on to draw links between the widespread frying habit and a lack of knowledge about proper nutrition. However, while Tate made explicit connections between unhealthy cooking practices and poor health in the province, Smith pragmatically emphasized the commercial drawbacks. She made comparisons between her island home and New-

foundland, as island cultures and economies. When asked about her impression of Newfoundland and Labrador culture, in relation to local foods, she opined:

Our food experiences mirrored the fact that the Northern Peninsula and Labrador are struggling, rooted in traditional ways of doing things, suffering economic hardship and trying to maximize every available resource. We felt that they try to offer you the best that they have and appreciated that. However, I think that with some changes in food preparation, dining experiences would be more enjoyable. We live on an island here and know well how juicy and sweet fresh fish tastes when it is grilled over an open fire with minimal seasonings. People come here as tourists and pay lots of money to eat like that because you just don't get that in large cities. Newfoundland and Labrador have wonderful fish, but in most of the province it is fried or poached to death and then smothered in sauce.

While her comments as a whole demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of food production, distribution, and preparation issues, which is not unexpected from a high-level economist, her elaborations also highlight a common paradox in local tourism that I noted previously—the simultaneous desire for the exotic and the familiar.

For example, the presence of well-established fast-food chain restaurants is sometimes perceived as a symbol of progress and Western sophistication by residents and visitors in countries such as China, Saudi Arabia, and Brazil (Schlosser 2002; Watson 2002). When I visited the Caribbean island of St. Lucia in 1992, for example, the teenagers with whose family I boarded were quite keen to show me the new Kentucky Fried Chicken that had recently opened in downtown Castries. In Newfoundland and Labrador, conversely, chain restaurants are viewed with disappointment and disapproval by many travelers. Tourists to the province seek the old-fashioned and quaint, and they do not want their sight lines, or waistlines, ruined by McDonald's (Butcher 2002; McKay 1994). Further, traveling as they are within the familiar monoculture of North America, tourists expect easy access to fresh vegetables whenever they desire them. Visitors to Newfoundland and Labrador make negative, class-based assumptions about the province founded solely on the *availability* of fried food in commercial eateries. The desire for both a romanticized past and the comforts of twenty-first-century Western society also points to a contradiction that Counihan identifies as “central to consumer capitalism: the tension between the pleasures of consumption and the moral superiority deriving from abstention” (1999:115). Vernacular health moralities demonstrate this tension in the judgments that tourists make, both of their own and others' eating habits.

While North American doctors and other health professionals have warned the general public for decades about the negative consequences of overeating fried foods, Newfoundland and Labrador is certainly not the only geopolitically bounded area to count fried foods among its traditional or popular cuisine. Scotland, for example, is well known among travelers for its deep-fried haggis, deep-fried Mars bars, and deep-fried pizza (Bearn 2003; Dow 1995; Morrison and Petticrew 2004). In terms of fatty foods, the southern United States has long had a reputation for unhealthy traditional cuisines. But as cultural commentator Margaret Visser asserts, “[m]odern North

Americans have recently learned to be terrified by fat, any fat at all” (1999:125). Psychologist Paul Rozin elaborates,

This has led, at least among Americans, to frequent new concerns about particular dietary items, and has promoted tendencies to ignore it all, or to overact to it all, or to develop simplifying heuristics that take the uncertainty out of every bite. One unfortunate heuristic is that foods are either good or bad for health. The level of intake drops out of the question. Thus, a substantial percent of Americans think of fat and salt as toxins: even a trace of each in food is considered unhealthy. (1999:17)

Nancy Smith’s comments offer another important insight into the frequent diatribes against fried food I encountered during the fieldwork period, in addition to those related to health. As many scholars of colonialism have noted (e.g., Arneil 1996; Gillen and Ghosh 2007; Said 1978), a common rationale for imperial domination is that the colonial subject lacks the ability to make the best, most efficient use of its own resources. As a guiding principle, it allows the political and economic aggressor to assert control over a less powerful society “for its own good,” whether or not the judgment is based on the reality of the situation in question. Although the contemporary province of Newfoundland and Labrador is a modern society fully integrated into Canada, tourists often perceive the area as set apart from the rest of North America in space, time, and development. Such paternalism—a key component of the imperialist project of which travelogues have been a “major linchpin” (Gilbert and Johnston 2002:10)—continues to find expression in exoteric criticism of local foodways. At a B&B in Rocky Harbour, for example, I encountered couples from Maryland and Ontario who were surprised that “everything is fried,” especially in light of the fact that “the staples seem so healthy.” Similarly, a couple from Ontario wrote in retraced, bold letters on a survey, “*Don’t* deep fry gorgeous seafood in batter!” From their perspective, therefore, it does not matter whether local, regular customers prefer this method of preparation or not. Tourists do not like it, so it should not be done.

A Deep-Fried Paradox

Any discussion of Newfoundland and Labrador’s regional foodways would be incomplete, however, without a specific mention of fish and chips, a longstanding “proletarian hunger killer” (Mintz 1979:70; see also Tames 1973; Tannahill 2002). In contrast to the study participants quoted above, others sought out the province’s popular twosome. Guests from Australia, mainland Canada, and the United States who stayed at my home during the research period—including a vegetarian and a woman in her sixties who follows a strict low-fat, low-salt diet—all requested fish and/or chips as one of their first meals on Newfoundland soil. For one couple, fish and chips from Ches’s, a popular fish-and-chips shop first established in downtown St. John’s and now with locations throughout the city, became a daily food ritual.

Susan Coen explains that Newfoundlanders have “emotional, psychological, cultural, and physical ties . . . to fish and chips” (1980:49). Fish and chips is a favorite vacation food of Newfoundlanders who are living outside the province as well. A

member of the Canadian Armed Forces living in New Brunswick wrote that he always looks forward to a visit to Ches's when he returns home to Newfoundland. A graduate student at Dalhousie University in Halifax simply responded, "mmm . . . chips, dressing, and gravy . . . mmm." In like manner, a grade school teacher living on the Avalon Peninsula noted that the only regional dish that he and his wife routinely seek out while traveling within the province is fish and chips. Students have told me about how, when visiting relatives and friends, they drive directly from the St. John's airport to their favorite fish-and-chips shop. In 2003, a couple originally from Jamaica but now living in Florida, who were visiting family friends in the province, included fish and chips at Ches's on their list of "musts." Conversely, locals also take fish and chips to those living away, traveling by airplane with take-out containers from a favorite chip shop on their laps (chromedome 2004).

In contrast to nonresidents' concerns about fried foods in general, Coen has documented a local distinction between fish and chips and other fast foods. She quotes Don Murray, the operator of a snack bar: "But it's only junk food they [fast food chains] give out anyhow; it's not really good food. It doesn't really fill you up. I'd rather sit down to a fish 'n' chips than a hamburger. It's a part of the basic diet. You always got to eat some sort of fish and meat instead of the ground-up scrap they serve in fast food chains" (1980:52–3). Murray distinguishes between the "staple," fish, and what would now be labeled the "empty calories" of a typical fast-food chain meal. Henry Larkin, proprietor of Henry's Lunch Room, maintained that his fish and chips were not fattening, as his batter recipe was designed to "seal off the fat from the fish" (Coen 1980:51–2). Thus, local purveyors of fried fish (and other foodstuffs) believed their products to be distinct from, and more healthful than, other commercial fast foods. Some methods of frying, as well as certain frying oils, are indeed more healthful than others, as food-science research has demonstrated (see, e.g., O'Neil 2006; Rossell 2001).

In addition to local beliefs about the healthfulness of fried fish, fish-and-chips shops have long been important spaces of social interaction, as Jillian Gould documented in a 2002 unpublished paper. As the shops have generally been family businesses, they also represent local occupational tradition. Fish and chips have played an important part in the religious life of the city as well. The Catholic practice of eating fish on Friday meant that many shops were patronized at least once a week. Even for nonpracticing Catholics, the Good Friday "feed of fish 'n' chips" remains an annual custom, so much so that businesses regularly promote it in their on-site and print advertising.

As David Booth writes, "What a person eats is a matter of what he or she thinks and feels—about the particular food materials available, the body they go into, and the personal and social meaning of each eating and drinking occasion" (1998:99). The majority of the tourists quoted in this article analyzed provincial foodways and culture on the basis of what was available to them as travelers. As a result, they did not consider each food item in terms of its local sociocultural contexts and the meanings that it holds for Newfoundlanders. Moreover, as Anne Murcott argues, "the social distribution of taste has itself to be joined into discussions of uneven access to

food. This will mean unraveling elaborated notions of 'food and non-food' that resolves into 'good food' and 'bad food.' Working class notions of tasty food are notoriously at odds with their middle class counterparts" (1999:333). Vernacular health moralities, drawing from different modalities and hierarchies of discourse, reinforce class biases that are normalized as simple distinctions between "good" and "bad" foods, habits, and, ultimately, individuals, while eliding issues of unequal access and diverse sociocultural value systems.

Conclusion

Issues of identity, class, morality, and civic responsibility shape visitors' perceptions of local foodways. Travelers' commentaries on the amount of fried foods on menus across Newfoundland and Labrador reflect some aspects of local traditional and vernacular culture, such as the primacy of cod as a staple and the local popularity of fish and chips. However, such comments are a direct reflection of contemporary Western concerns with weight and its socioeconomic consequences.

For many visitors to the province, the perceived popularity of fried foods, interpreted alongside current health and disease statistics, is a powerful demonstration of the consequences of poor eating habits. In countries with socialized medicine, like Canada, obesity may also be construed as poor citizenry. In both political and popular discourse, such an interpretation is based on the idea, as food policy analyst Rod McRae put it on the television program *Reinventing the World*, that "in Canada . . . we are all paying for each other's diseases" (Springbett and MacAndrew 2000). At the nexus of food, morality, and the quotidian performance of responsible citizenry, local bodies are assessed and often found wanting by the tourist gaze (Desmond 1999). This gaze is also conditioned by the popular discourses of travel guides, newspaper and magazine articles, and site-specific works of fiction and nonfiction.

The data presented here demonstrate the continuing links between social class and food consumption, revealing a polysemic dialogue around the pleasures and responsibilities of abundance. Influenced by such links, evolving vernacular health moralities significantly affect tourist responses to the culture of Newfoundland and Labrador and to culinary tourism in general. While proponents of culinary tourism often posit a direct link between food consumption and cultural appreciation, it is important to recognize the ways in which long-standing stereotypes of specific groups or regions may complicate this simple equation. As a case study, the examination of tourists' comments regarding Newfoundland and Labrador foodways highlights the cultural interplay characterizing the formation and development of vernacular health moralities, revealing what Martha Gimenez has called "the contradiction between chronic inequality and universalistic and egalitarian hegemonic ideologies" that are simultaneously inscribed and elided every day (1995:262). The implications of these moralities bring the folkloristic study of culinary tourism into the realm of public policy (e.g., current debates about "fat taxes"; Everett 2005), and they underscore the continuing importance of ethnographically documenting the imbrication of class and vernacular culture. Furthermore, it is in such documentation that folklorists can

contribute to a more holistic, culturally grounded understanding of what it means, to both hosts and guests, to be healthy.

Notes

This article would not have been possible without the participation of visitors to the province and those who hosted them. I am indebted to all those who completed my questionnaires, as well as to those who corresponded with me by e-mail. Pseudonyms have been used for these participants. Deepest thanks are also due to David and Barbara Adams, Jeannie Billard, Rita and Cecil Davis, Lerley and Rod Bryenton, and Kevin Gushue and the staff of Tourism St. John's, who kindly shared their vast knowledge of the tourism business with me, as well as Barbara Gravinese, my research assistant. Diane Tye provided important insights and guidance throughout the research period. Early versions of this study were presented at the annual meetings of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada/L'Association canadienne d'ethnologie et de folklore and the American Folklore Society, and I appreciated the many helpful comments offered by colleagues. Finally, I gratefully acknowledge the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Institute for Social and Economic Research, and the J. R. Smallwood Foundation for Newfoundland and Labrador Studies for their support of this project.

1. The most detailed folkloristic work to date on traditional Newfoundland foodways is Pamela Gray's 1977 master's thesis. In 2001, Maura Hanrahan and Marg Ewtushik published an important foodways and nutrition bibliography that also provides useful subtopic overviews.

2. Newfoundland's native Beothuks were wiped out through disease and violent conflict with Euroamerican settlers by 1829.

3. Imported foodstuffs were also used in a number of ways. Physician and medical historian John Crellin reports, for example, the use of apples "for the treatment of both diarrhoea and constipation" in different formulations (1994:74–5).

4. It has often been observed that in Newfoundland, the word "fish" means "cod," while other kinds of fish are specified by name (see, e.g., Casselman 1998; Gray 1977; Jespersen 1974; Story 1990). Thus, a recipe for "fish stew" would be understood locally as meaning cod stew.

5. Now in its fourth printing, *Fat-back and Molasses* is one of the best known and widely used cookbooks in the province. Edited by United Church clergyman Ivan F. Jespersen, with drawings by his twelve-year-old daughter Lorie, the recipes come mainly from members of the United Church. Jespersen notes that he also included recipes from a mimeographed booklet, titled *The Labrador Cookbook*.

6. Hanrahan hypothesizes that aboriginal people aided European immigrants in adapting to the new environment and realizing the potential of incorporating hunting and gathering into their previously agriculturally oriented lifestyles in their countries of origin (2001:ii–iii).

7. See Howes (1996) for a discussion of such creolization with particular reference to Coca-Cola in non-Western societies. See Watson (2002) on the creolization of McDonald's in China.

8. Jiggs' dinner is a type of boiled dinner common in Atlantic Canada and New England (Doudiet 1975:229) and one that Gray's informants most consistently identified as a traditional Newfoundland food (1977:156–9). Traditionally eaten as the main meal of the day on Sunday afternoons, this one-pot dinner typically consists of salt meat, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, turnips, and peas pudding. A number of popular and academic writers have addressed the origins of the dish's name. For example, while both Casselman (1998:42) and George (1999) argue for its roots in either widespread or localized meanings of the word "jig," (e.g., "dance," "a method of fishing (to hook)," "a romantic date"), Gray traces the name to the "Maggie Jiggs" comic strip (also called "Bringing up Father"), which ran in Hearst newspapers beginning in 1913 (1977:160–1). In Labrador, the dish is also known as "Labrador Dinner" (Jespersen 1974:36).

Fish and brewis, also known as "fisherman's brewis" or simply "brewis," combines salt cod, hard bread or hard tack (the "brewis"), and scrunchins (small cubes of fried fatback pork). Hanrahan writes that it "is often considered the quintessential Newfoundland meal, . . . [and] the focus of social occasions for many Newfoundlanders" (2001:i). Gray found it to be the second-most cited dish in her survey of "tra-

ditional Newfoundland food" (156). Gray also notes that respondents classified commercial products such as Purity brand lemon cream biscuits and bologna as traditional foods.

9. On the interplay of rumor and popular media in intergroup folklore, see, for example, Paredes (1958), Rosnow and Fine (1976), and Turner (1993).

10. See Everett (2005) for further documentation.

11. The Coadys' comments are also interesting given the foods that Tim Hortons restaurants serve. While they do offer nonfried foods such as sandwiches and soups, the majority of their business comes from the sale of coffee, coffee-based drinks, and baked goods such as donuts, which hold their own in terms of fat content (Penfold 2002).

12. It is important to note, though, that there are those who value knowledge of fast foods, including all things fried, and make distinctions between good and bad junk food—much the same way an oenophile might distinguish between wines (see, e.g., Dickey 2003). Additionally, Roseberry's statement does not draw the implicit distinction made between, for example, Stilton cheese, as opposed to Kraft Cracker Barrel cheeses, or Budweiser in a can as compared with a local microbrew.

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