

2023

A Chronicle of Place: Three Novellas and a Critical Dissertation on Compositional Process with a Contextual Analysis of Annie Proulx's 'Barkskins' and Michael Cunningham's 'The Hours'

Chamberlain, Helen

<https://pearl.plymouth.ac.uk/handle/10026.1/21570>

<http://dx.doi.org/10.24382/5106>

University of Plymouth

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**UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH**

A CHRONICLE OF PLACE

Three novellas

&

A Critical Dissertation on Compositional Process with a Contextual Analysis of
Annie Proulx's *Barkskins* and Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*

by

Helen Chamberlain

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Society and Culture

November 2023

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the citizens of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe, whose land and history inspired me to write this thesis. In particular, I would like to thank Kerri Helme and Paula Peters for sharing their heritage with me and for showing me the woods and waterways of Mashpee, MA.

I am indebted to my supervisors, Professor Anthony Caleshu and Dr. Kathryn Napier Gray, for their knowledge and guidance throughout the writing of this thesis; and to the Doctoral College at the University of Plymouth.

My gratitude to the Charlton Foundation for facilitating my research in Mashpee and Plymouth, MA; to Jo Loosemore at The Box Museum, Plymouth, UK; and to the Plimoth Patuxet Museum in Plymouth, MA for accommodating me in the Scholar's Residence and granting me access to their Research Library.

Finally, I would like to say a very special thank you to my children for their unwavering support and encouragement; to my late husband, Simon, my advocate at the start and my inspiration to finish; and to my family and friends, for their faith, help and understanding.

Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee. Work submitted for this research degree at the University of Plymouth has not formed part of any other degree either at the University of Plymouth or at another establishment.

Word count of thesis (including Works Cited and Appendices): 92,748

Signed: Helen Chamberlain

Date: 1st November 2023

Abstract

Name of Candidate: Helen Chamberlain

Title: A Chronicle of Place: Three Novellas and A Critical Dissertation on Compositional Process with a Contextual Analysis of Annie Proulx's *Barkskins* and Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*

This thesis is presented in two parts: a work of fiction in the form of three interconnected novellas exploring settler colonialism of Native north-east America (New England), with a critical dissertation as supplement. The research encompasses four main areas: archival; contextual; experiential and the primary field of practice research. Of particular importance to the research was field work conducted in the U.S., which included meetings with Wampanoag educators and artists, and interviews and archival research at the Plimoth Patuxet Museum.

The research has been informed by the work of several writers, both historical and contemporary. Primary and secondary historical sources include William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* and the 'captivity' narrative of Mary Rowlandson. Two contemporary works of fiction are explored and serve as case-studies for the creative work: Annie Proulx's *Barkskins*, which includes the themes of story, landscape and legacy from a postcolonial perspective; and an appraisal of the structural form of Michael Cunningham's *The Hours* as an interconnected trilogy of narratives. The critical element also examines the process of research toward writing a historical narrative, addressing the challenges which arise from writing the past and, particularly, from including an Indigenous element when writing from a non-Indigenous perspective.

As a mode of practice research, the trilogy interrogates a number of ideas, including the transcendent nature of story over time. Using examples of oral tradition and the metanarrative form, it reflects upon the legacy of colonialism upon both the land and the Wampanoag people, and originates a greater exchange between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

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A Chronicle of Place

Three Novellas

**[The creative element of this thesis has been removed
due to embargo]**

Compositional Process

1. Introduction: Transporting Legend

Over 900 years ago, Henry I granted the town of Tavistock a market charter. Since 1860, the Pannier Market has been held in the grand, stone hall which stands adjacent to the River Tavy, in the middle of this stannary town in Devon. It is the perfect place for browsing and one of my favourite places to visit is the second-hand bookshop at its far end. I seldom pass without having a look to see if there are any treasures hidden away on the shelves. On one particular Autumn morning, I discovered a slim, mossy green paperback entitled *Dartmoor Legends Retold* (Gant and Copley). It was rather battered and stained, with a childlike letter 'F' scrawled in blue ink on the front cover. Below it was a dark, hooded figure riding a large stallion under a wizened, bare-branched tree. On the back cover, along with the price of 95p, was a Country Code with advice on how to enjoy the moor safely. The last rule was to 'Be Prepared' with the warning that "The moor can be treacherous. Mists can come down quickly blotting out the landscape" urging the use of a map, compass and proper clothing. It was the sort of book I would have loved as a child, promising a heady mix of half-truths and adventure, and my interest in the somewhat tatty book demonstrated that I had not changed that much over the years.

Dartmoor is a place of hidden river valleys and vast tracts of open moorland punctuated by statuesque, misshapen tors and the ruins of ancient settlements. While the geography and history are well-worth contemplation, it is the supernatural legends that have captured the imagination of the locals and given rise to the 'naming' of many various moorland landmarks. For example, Vixen Tor is named after the witch Vixana who, in the legend of *The Witch of Vixen Tor*, conjures up mists to lure unwary travellers to their deaths in a bog, and is pushed over the edge of a tor by a handsome stranger. Likewise,

the famous Dartmoor Dewerstone is named after 'Old Dewer' or the Devil who rides his black horse across the moor, often with a pack of hounds, in several legends. Those same names have now been legitimised and appear in type on modern Ordnance Survey maps of the area.

The distinction between legend and fable is useful to consider at this juncture. So many of the legends contained within my Dartmoor anthology are moralistic in nature, asking the reader to reflect upon the consequences of their actions; as such, they can more accurately be described as fables. The stories can further be thought of in terms of how they move from supernatural fable to fact, from an oral tale of superstition to a reliable place marker. The anthology sat on my bookshelf until I watched a documentary about the journey of the *Mayflower* from England to America, whose passengers have colloquially become known as the Pilgrim Fathers. The journey of the Pilgrim Fathers is a familiar one, both here and particularly in the United States, where the event has traditionally been cherished by many as denoting the 'origins' of modern America, in so doing itself assuming a mythic quality. However, when a group of people from one country travels to another, there is not merely a physical displacement at play; there is also necessarily a displacement of values and culture. I was reminded of the Dartmoor book and this in turn ignited the questions that lie at the heart of my thesis:

What if the most important aspect of a journey is not that of the people themselves, but of the stories they carry with them?

What happens when a story, born out of one distinct landscape, is displaced to another new and unfamiliar environment?

Can stories adapt and evolve through time, as people do?

The documentary I watched prompted my preliminary desk-based research into the *Mayflower* crossing. I learned that the journey of the Pilgrims had a rather

inauspicious start, involving not one, but two ships. The Pilgrims had initially been known as 'Separatists', having previously sought freedom of religious worship by illegally separating themselves from the Protestant church in England and escaping to Leiden, in the Dutch Republic, to form a new religious community. In 1620, they departed Leiden on the *Speedwell* heading for Southampton, where she would meet her sister ship the *Mayflower* and the two vessels set sail for the 'New World'. In Southampton, they would join their fellow passengers, a group of "Strangers" (Bradford, 44) recruited by the enterprise's investors to make up the numbers of those who had decided to remain in Leiden. However, the *Speedwell* promptly sprang a leak and was forced to make two unscheduled stops to make repairs, the latter in Plymouth, Devon. Here, the unreliable *Speedwell* was abandoned, her passengers and crew forced to amalgamate and continue their journey aboard the *Mayflower* alone. Passenger numbers had to be reduced, and many volunteered to abandon the voyage which, always a precarious prospect, had by then appeared even more so. It was this moment of turmoil on the dockside at Plymouth which provided me with an opportunity for creative thought and artistic licence; the idea that it might have been possible for a local person to take the place of one of the Strangers on the *Mayflower*, specifically a storyteller from Dartmoor. As such, my initial research into the *Mayflower* acted as a springboard for the practice-as-research element of my PhD: the writing of a trilogy of thematically interconnected novellas.

The trilogy is set in New England, but in three separate time periods: 1620s, 1920 and 2020. In the first novella, *Eleanor's Story*, I placed a Dartmoor legend on the *Mayflower* as if it were a living person, enabling it to travel to a new land where it encounters an unfamiliar landscape and culture. As time passes, it embeds itself into this new landscape, just as the Dartmoor legends have done on the moor. Whilst the original Dartmoor legend forms the primary connection between all three of my novellas, there

are also smaller connecting threads which run through the entire collection, such as landmarks within the landscape, personal possessions and historical artefacts. By aligning the legend with the passing of time, I am consistently asking the reader to reflect back upon the past whilst also being made aware of the new and significant ways in which the story is being played out in the present (specifically, the ransacking of the landscape and the effects of this upon the Indigenous people). Whilst the novellas move forward in time, there is however a constant oscillation at play between the past and the present. The 1920 archaeological excavation in *Sowams* recalls the Indigenous village described in *Eleanor's Story*, and the raiding of burial mounds by the English settlers. Likewise, *The Pond*, set in 2020, looks back to a time when the concept of land ownership did not exist.

In her essay 'In Search of *Alias Grace*', Margaret Atwood reflects upon the purposes of this process within novels with a historical setting. She describes it as a "questioning and assessing climate – where did we come from, how did we get from there to here, where are we going, who are we now" (1512). My thesis employs the same techniques, through the use of a changing and transported legend, to reflect upon the past and thereby question the present so "by taking a long hard look backwards, we place ourselves" (Atwood, 1512).

2. Substantive and Secondary Research

It almost goes without saying, but I needed to write the first novella, *Eleanor's Story*, before I could write *Sowams* and *The Pond*. Writing *Eleanor's Story* provided me with a research base in terms of history, storytelling and setting, which I would draw upon in the later novellas.

My initial research for *Eleanor's Story* encompassed two main areas: firstly, sourcing a Dartmoor legend which I could incorporate; and secondly, reading primary and secondary historical accounts for the journey of the *Mayflower* and the subsequent English settlement in Plymouth, New England. The principal component of *Eleanor's Story* is the legend itself; the novella's impetus to reach the point at which the legend can be told. In effect, the purpose of the characters is to allow the legend to be introduced. In *Sowams* and *The Pond*, the legend becomes more 'embedded' and the characters 'live out' the story as plot in a more traditionally novelistic style. Whilst I could simply have invented a legend to serve my creative purposes, I wanted to discover whether there might be an authentic Dartmoor legend which resonated with the events and implications of this particular historical example of early colonisation. I was motivated from the outset by the idea of merging the imaginary with the real, with blurring the line between fiction and history. Finding an authentic Dartmoor legend, itself a fictional response to an existent landscape, would reinforce this impulse. Moreover, it would serve as a kind of originary story for my own fictional writing.

I had to look further afield than my second-hand book and went on a quest to read as many Dartmoor legends as I could source; visiting libraries, local museums and searching online resources. William Crossing, the 19th-century writer and chronicler, is considered to be one of the most authoritative voices on Devonshire folktales and in his *Folklore and Legends of Dartmoor*, I discovered an untitled legend with a vicar as its

central character, whose downfall at the hands of the Devil was caused by his illicit pursuit of treasure hidden in an ancient burial chamber on the moor (44). This legend embodies the dichotomy which lies at the heart of the Plymouth colony, namely the precarious coexistence of the pursuit of both religion and money. The main impetus for the establishment of the colony had been the desire for freedom of religious practice; however, the colony's success and longevity were dependent upon repaying loans to and gaining profits for their investors, the Merchant Adventurers, through the export of furs and timber. I created the character of Eleanor Hope, a young girl who leaves her drunken father and Dartmoor home to find a new life aboard the *Mayflower*. She captivates her fellow passengers with her gift for storytelling, and the legend of the vicar becomes *Eleanor's Story*.

In order to write *Eleanor's Story* with convincing verisimilitude, I had to conduct substantial historical research, beginning with *Of Plymouth Plantation*, the seminal work by William Bradford. Born in Yorkshire in around 1590, Bradford had from a young age become interested in the reform of the English Protestant church, specifically ridding it of the legacy of Roman Catholicism. Believing that the Puritans' proposals for reform were inadequate and that separating from the church was the only recourse (albeit an unlawful one under James I's rule), he became one of the founders of the Separatist movement and eventually left the country illegally in 1607 to establish a community in the religiously tolerant Dutch Republic. By 1620, the community numbered almost four hundred and a small group decided to establish a new religious colony, this time in 'New England'.

Bradford had become one of the most respected members of the Leiden community and his influence continued in the new Plymouth colony; he was elected Governor of the colony no less than five times over the course of his life. *Of Plymouth*

Plantation is Bradford's journal, written between 1630 and 1651, in which he details the history of the Leiden community from 1608, the journey of the *Mayflower* in 1620 and the first thirty years of the Plymouth colony. Regarded as one of the most important and cherished historical records of early America, it is an invaluable resource for researching the lives of the first settlers. It provides an insight into their motivations for leaving Europe; both the fearlessness and trepidation involved in establishing the new colony in an unknown land; as well as a fascinating, and often disconcerting, account of the events of their early years in New England, ones initially blighted by disease, hardship and death.

Mourt's Relation is another of the very few contemporary accounts of those early years. Written by both Bradford and Edward Winslow, it was a booklet written primarily for publication in London where George Morton (also known as George Mourt), a fellow Separatist, helped with the colony's business affairs. As is always the case when examining primary historical sources, it is necessary to be mindful of the authorship of a document and the wider context in which it was written. In this case, these accounts were intended to reach the colony's London investors, reassuring them of the viability and potential success of the colony; as such, Winslow's account is weighted very favourably toward the colonists. An additional secondary resource was Nathaniel Philbrick's *Mayflower*, which amalgamates these primary resources and contextualises the moment of settlement at Plymouth within the sphere of historical tensions between Indigenous tribes in the region and the consequences already being felt from European exploration, as well as the collapse of the brokered peace between the English and the Pokanoket (later Wampanoag) tribe in subsequent years.

One notable aspect of Winslow's document are his accounts of the first encounters with the Indigenous people, particularly his description of what has been termed the 'First Thanksgiving', where both settlers and the Indigenous Pokanoket/Wampanoag

tribe come together in celebration. This event is hardly touched upon in Bradford's journal and described only briefly by Winslow, who in essence describes the colonists celebrating their traditional English Harvest Festival, joined by the Indigenous people, who also held their own traditional thanksgiving ceremonies throughout the year. Jay Parini notes how "[every] nation requires a story ... about its origins, a self-defining mythos that says something about the character of the people and how they operate in the larger world and among each other" (52).

The Plymouth colony was by no means the first attempt at colonisation in America; there had been several failed attempts previously; such as at Roanoke, North Carolina in 1587, as well as the colony at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. The latter has been described as

hardly a candidate for a national symbol, since it was initially settled by men only, who were looked upon as a rowdy crowd, interested simply in personal gain. Also, relations with the native Powhatan Indians were marked by periods of conflict from the very beginning, whereas the Plymouth settlers concluded a peace treaty with the local Wampanoag people that lasted for over half a century. (Deetz and Deetz, 16)

Bradford's manuscript was first published in America in 1861, just prior to the Civil War, and Abraham Lincoln promptly created a national Thanksgiving holiday, thereby "elevating to legendary status a minor incident in the Pilgrims' story - a mythical moment with some use during a time of profound national crisis" (Parini, 53).

The more research I undertook, the more it became evident that modern America has been built upon the stories it has chosen to believe, discarding or overlooking the ones that were inconvenient to its ambitions; in so doing, demonstrating a coalescence of history with fiction. Emanuel J. Mickel observes that since the literature of the Ancient Greeks, "the writing of history has been entwined with fiction" (57), citing the example of Homer's *Iliad* which was heralded as a supreme and authentic record of a seminal

moment in Greek history, despite the amount of time that had elapsed between the event itself and the poet's narrative. He quotes the contemporary historian Strabo, who wrote that "poetry is a kind of elementary philosophy ... that instructs us ... in character, emotions, and actions" (Mickel, 58) and observes that Homer "bedecked" (58) the Trojan War and Odysseus' return with myth and stories which were not "wholly untrue; they contained a truth within them" (58). Similarly, the myth of the first Thanksgiving feast has a kernel of truth to it and has been used to instruct future generations about the 'exemplary' characteristics of the early settlers and the 'peaceful' interactions with their Indigenous neighbours, despite the fact that this peaceful episode was in fact short-lived and discordant with America's subsequent and long historical record with regard to the mistreatment of Indigenous people. Conforming with "that desire to know one's past" (Mickel, 59) and with the historical genealogy of America's colonists existing far across the Atlantic, this myth became America's new originary story, ignoring the fact that it occurred many thousands of years after the first archaeological evidence of its Indigenous population.

My creative work reflects upon this tension between history and fiction, the actual and the imaginary, by examining story as a method of communicating factual truth. It also calls to attention the idea of reliability of differing methodologies by juxtaposing examples of written and oral storytelling, and alternating narrators. By adding a secondary narrator in the character of Eleanor Hope as the storyteller who relates the original legend, *Eleanor's Story* evolved quite naturally into the form of a metanarrative. Indeed, one of the revisions I made to my first draft was to make the primary narrator Samuel Walker more aware of his role as a storyteller, including interruptions to his narrative in the form of asides to the reader and footnotes to his journal at moments when he wishes to pause to tell the reader about an incidental fact or event. I also include a

section where Walker allows another character, Edward Winslow, to assume temporarily the role of narrator. As such, the act of storytelling within the novella becomes fluid, mimicking the oral form of conversation. More broadly, the novella itself frames these examples of oral storytelling within the form of the journal, and incorporates other written forms of communication, such as newspapers and letters, through which I explore the concepts of authenticity and reliability. I have continued this exploration of the written versus the oral in *Sowams* and *The Pond*, which both include examples of historical 'found' documents within their plots. In *The Pond*, the main character serves as both narrator and author as she writes creatively about her reflections on the landscape surrounding her home.

Setting *Eleanor's Story* in the 17th century, adopting the literary form of a historical journal and writing about an actual historical event presented an additional set of challenges for me as a writer. Firstly, I had to undertake a substantial amount of research into everyday life in the 17th century in order to ensure that my descriptions and details were historically correct. This had to encompass both the English way of life, as the settlers in essence replicated this in New England; but also research into the early years of the Plymouth colony, both historically and geographically. George Francis Dow's *Every Day Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* was a valuable resource in this respect. In addition, I had to gain an understanding of the settlers themselves; their earlier lives, the religious impetus for their departure from England and something of their characters. It felt at times as if I were conducting research for a history degree and it was necessary for me to develop the skill of recognising the point at which I had gained sufficient information for a writer as opposed to the extensive knowledge of a historian, having begun to overstep that line on several occasions initially. Ian McEwan describes this line as carrying with it a weight of responsibility:

It is an eerie, intrusive matter, inserting imaginary characters into actual historical events. A certain freedom is suddenly compromised; as one crosses and re-crosses the lines between fantasy and the historical record, one feels a weighty obligation to strict accuracy.

I initially felt the weight of this responsibility, both in writing about the historical past, but particularly when writing about actual historical figures. However, my attitude altered and the 'burden' lightened when I acknowledged two facts. The first was to recognise that even my primary historical sources were subjective and open to interpretation. Indeed, E.L. Doctorow has described all historical records as "faux history as it is construed by power, as it is perverted for political purposes, as it is hammered into serviceable myth by those who take advantage of its plasticity" (7), and observing that it is for this reason that history has "to be written and rewritten from one generation to another" (7).

The second realisation was that, because of this, there was necessarily a space outside of that which has been documented and, provided that my writing achieved verisimilitude, I could write confidently and creatively into that space. Henry James described how the writer has the power "to guess the unseen from the seen, to trace the implication of things, to judge the whole piece by the pattern" (Doctorow, 5). Once I had practised this skill in *Eleanor's Story*, I was able then to apply it to *Sowams*, in which I include the real historical figure of Charles Carr, an archaeologist in the early 20th century. More significantly, gaining the insight, skills and freedom to write creatively around the historical research enabled me to include an Indigenous element into my work without compromising the requirement for authenticity and sensitivity.

3. Writing the Wampanoag: Voice and the Jeopardy of Cultural Appropriation

It immediately became clear from my initial research that one of the most interesting and challenging aspects of the history of the Plymouth colony was the relationship between the English settlers and the Indigenous Pokanoket/Wampanoag tribe. Although this was not an aspect that I had envisaged writing about, it was one I clearly could not ignore and therefore in a sense had no choice but to write about. From the outset then, I was presented with two unforeseen complexities to my writing; firstly, how could I incorporate an authentic Indigenous element into my work without risking cultural appropriation? Secondly, how could I research this Indigenous element seemingly without any non-European historical sources?

Addressing the first question, I quickly discarded the notion of writing from an Indigenous character's perspective, which I felt would not only be inappropriate but impossible in fact. Nevertheless, my writing needed both to achieve verisimilitude and incorporate an authentic narrative voice. Both strands of my initial research provided me with a solution to this apparent dilemma. During my research into Dartmoor legends, I had particularly liked the way that Crossing had framed his collection with his own perspective, providing forewords to each legend which included descriptions of the Dartmoor landscape and reflections upon his own walks on the moor as he explored the landmarks and locality of the stories he recounted. This technique contextualised the legends and added an additional layer of storytelling to the structure of his writing. Likewise, the primary historical accounts of the colony had been communicated in the form of journals and letters, the defining literary structure of the 17th century. I decided to take my lead from these sources and write *Eleanor's Story* as a journal in the first person. I adopted the perspective of a 17th-century European settler, which allowed me to write from a viewpoint with which I was more comfortable. My primary narrator, the

fictional English settler Samuel Walker, assumes the role of a 'framing character' through whose eyes the reader encounters the Pokanoket/Wampanoag people. As such, I was able to include an Indigenous element without risking cultural appropriation, providing I wrote authentically. Samuel Walker also frames the narrative of the Dartmoor legend, in much the same way as *Crossing* framed his collection of stories.

An additional complication when writing *Eleanor's Story* and *Sowams* was needing to adopt a suitable narrative voice of the period, whilst adjusting it for a contemporary reader. This was particularly the case with the former as the style of language in the 17th century is so far removed from the present day. As Hilary Mantel notes of her own writing:

[t]hose of us who write about the far past, beyond living memory, beyond the reach of recording instruments, have harder problems to solve. How do you give the past a human voice without betraying it or making your reader furiously impatient?

Her answer to this dilemma is to "accept that you will never be authentic" and aim to capture instead the tone of the period. She goes on to observe that "[t]he really important thing is that they shouldn't express ideas they couldn't have had and feelings they wouldn't have had". One of the most challenging elements of my writing was to write accurately and sensitively about the sophisticated culture and societal structure of the Wampanoag, while necessarily adopting the blinkered European (and later American) perspective of the period. Yet it was essential that this was included, as one of my aims as a writer was for the reader to reflect upon this perspective and upon the viewpoints, actions and lasting consequences which it has engendered, not only in *Eleanor's Story*, but across the trilogy. For this reason, I chose to retain the use of terms such as 'savage' and 'Indian' initially (in *Eleanor's Story* and *Sowams*), as uncomfortable as they were to write, because they were commonly in use at the time and are indicative of the

colonist/American perspective of the period. In *The Pond*, the language changes to reflect the growing awareness of diversity in the 21st century. As Mantel observes: “[b]ut the past doesn't respect the sensitivities of the present. The reader should be braced by the shock of the old; or why write about the past at all?” Whilst I would not place my novellas in the territory of ‘shocking’, I am aware that some of the language and attitudes included in *Eleanor's Story* and *Sowams* would be offensive to Indigenous people today.

Having met several tribal members on my US research trips, I was comfortable writing the modern voice of Cassie, the young Wampanoag woman in the contemporary time period of *The Pond*; and indeed, I felt it was important that I did. Wampanoag educator Paula Peters recounted to me how so many Americans believe that her people died out hundreds of years ago and are unaware that they are a modern people who, as she put it, “live in typical homes, drive cars and have jobs” (295). I felt I could sensitively imagine the voices of Joseph and his uncle Abram in 1920, a time when Residential Schools and societal pressure were, tragically, forcing the Wampanoag people to abandon their language in favour of American English. In *Eleanor's Story*, I felt that I could write the voice of Hobbamock, who lived for many years with the English settlers at Plymouth and conducted business between the English and the neighbouring tribes; he would therefore almost certainly have had a good grasp of the English language. Even so, I was conscious not to use specific words from the Wôpanâak language, which is copyrighted (Helme, 288), other than ubiquitous words which have found their way into the American lexicon, such as *moccasin*, or widely-known Native foods such as *nasaump*. However, my line of cultural appropriation was drawn firmly against attempting to replicate the voices of other Indigenous people in the 17th century, and I relied primarily on my ‘framing’ characters to relay their conversations to the reader.

One problem remained: how to undertake reliable research into the Wampanoag tribe when so much of the Native American historical record takes the form of oral stories, creative works of art and items of cultural heritage. There was information contained within the primary historical sources relating to the Indigenous people; however, these were written entirely from a European perspective and therefore very much subjective and incomplete. To illustrate the danger in drawing too much information solely from European historical writings, I will cite an example taken from *The Captivity Narrative of Mary Rowlandson*. Rowlandson's diary describes her capture by the Wampanoag during King Philip's War in 1676 in a series of twenty 'removes' or journeys, from the day of her capture through to her subsequent release almost twelve weeks later. The diary was published to great acclaim in 1682 on both sides of the Atlantic. In one section, Rowlandson encounters a Native American woman named Weetamoo, whom she describes in the following terms:

A severe and proud dame she was, bestowing every day in dressing herself neat as much time as any of the gentry of the land: powdering her hair, and painting her face, going with necklaces, with jewels in her ears, and bracelets upon her hands. (sec. 19)

Weetamoo is portrayed as self-entitled, cruel and disrespectful. Rowlandson's perspective, however, is limited by her own experience as a 17th-century English woman and European concepts of femininity. She failed, or perhaps refused, to recognise Weetamoo's identity and status as one of the most powerful military and political leaders of the region. She was, in fact, the *sachem* or leader of the Pocasset people by birth right, the Queen of the Narragansett people by marriage, the previous Queen of the Wampanoag prior to the death of her husband and the sister-in-law to the Wampanoag *sachem* at the time of King Philip's War.

Like *Mourt's Relation*, the publication of Rowlandson's narrative had a purpose to serve. With an introduction by Increase Mather, the influential Puritan minister, the publication, with all its misunderstandings and inaccuracies, "confirms for both colonial women and British readers back home the validity and essential nature of the status quo ... using the most powerful Indian woman in New England as a cipher for all of the dangers of the cross-contamination of gendered and racial spheres" (Potter, 164). The reasons for the publication of such historical texts must be taken into consideration and, whilst they may illuminate the European perspective and motivations of the time, they cannot be relied upon as accurate representations of the Indigenous culture they describe.

In an effort to supplement my research, I visited the British Museum to view their Native American exhibits; however, there were only a few artefacts relating to the very specific region of the north-east to which my writing relates, and I was sufficiently aware of the subtleties of each tribal nation to be mindful of drawing comparisons between the customs or artefacts from other regions. Being based in the United Kingdom, I felt very much at a disadvantage. I was able to source a handful of books which were relevant, such as Weinstein-Farson's *The Wampanoag* and Virginia Baker's *Massasoit's Town: Sowams in Pokanoket*. This latter work, first published in 1904, describes the Wampanoag homeland that existed when the English settlers first arrived on the shores of New England, which I describe in *Eleanor's Story*. The book led me to an academic work edited by Susan Gibson, which I was able to access in the British Library, describing the archaeological excavation of the settlement at Burr's Hill in Warren, Rhode Island that was undertaken in 1913 by Charles Carr. This inspired the plot for the second novella, *Sowams*, with its allusions to the ransacking of the landscape in the original legend. Containing articles describing the many Wampanoag artefacts discovered in the excavation, as well as maps and Charles Carr's detailed notes and drawings from his

excavation, it was an invaluable resource to illuminate the Wampanoag way of life through the objects they used. It also gave me an insight into how Indigenous sites have been viewed and treated over the years. The excavation of sacred tribal burial grounds in the 20th century resonated with some of the practices I had read about in the 17th-century journals, a consistency of behaviour over the centuries which was uncomfortable to acknowledge.

4. History, Story and Landscape

As my research progressed, I realised that, in order to gain a greater understanding of Wampanoag history and culture, I needed to expand my definition of what constituted 'research'; that I was to a degree being bound by traditional, Western, and often colonialist, methodologies. Nancy Peterson, in discussing the work of Indigenous author Louise Erdrich, writes that:

a documentary history of Native America would necessarily be based on treaties, legislative acts, and other documents written or commissioned in the name of the United States government and subsequently (ab)used to take land from Indigenous peoples. The history of treaty making and treaty breaking with Native Americans demonstrates that such documents are not autonomous, objective, or transparent statements but texts open to interpretation by whoever is in power. (985)

In an effort to redress the imbalance of being "unrepresented or misrepresented in traditional historical narratives" (984), Erdrich in her novel *Tracks* forges, using Diana Fuss's term, "a new historicity" (Peterson, 983) by using two narrators, juxtaposing the oral and textual perspectives of history and presenting to the reader the notion that history is open to interpretation. The picture is a complicated one, for there is also a written Indigenous historical record, albeit one that has been overlooked and is only recently coming to light in works such as Lisa Brooks' *The Common Pot*. Brooks quotes Muskogee author Craig Womack, who warns against "oppositional thinking that separates orality and literacy wherein the oral constitutes authentic culture and the written contaminated culture" (xxi), adding that "such notions may actually hinder our understanding of a 'vast, and vastly understudied, written tradition' in Native America" (xxi).

The most valuable Indigenous research came from my field work in New England in 2016 and 2019. On my first trip I was able to visit the Pilgrim Hall Museum and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Museum. On the second trip, I undertook research on behalf

of The Box Museum in Plymouth (UK); this new research has been credited in the development of their 'Mayflower 400: Legend and Legacy' exhibition in September 2020 and in their educational programmes (*The Box, Education and Stories from the Shells*). I was privileged to meet and interview Wampanoag educators Paula Peters and Kerri Helme, who shared aspects of their Indigenous heritage and culture. With Paula, I visited the Mashpee Tribal Reservation, seeing the ponds and waterways which are so important to the Wampanoag people, the tribal headquarters and the Weetumuw school, part of the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project. I met Jonathan Perry, an Aquinnah Wampanoag dancer, artist, speaker and carver; he explained his artistic process and choice of materials, as well as his ambitions for his creative work. I also met with directors at the Plimouth Patuxet Museum to discuss how they incorporate Wampanoag culture and history into their educational programmes and exhibitions, and how to establish the boundaries of what is and is not appropriate to include and share regarding Wampanoag heritage. This consideration of the boundaries of cultural appropriation was of immense value for my own research and writing.

With specific reference to my thesis, I had the opportunity to tour the museum which seeks to replicate the Plimouth colony, the Indigenous homeland of Patuxet and the *Mayflower*; all of which informed my research and the writing of *Eleanor's Story*. To gather research for *Sowams*, I engaged in archival research at the museum's research library and archive centre, where I sourced texts relating to the Wampanoag, such as Meredith P. Luze's *Living the History: The Role of Archaeology in the Interpretation of the Wampanoag Homesite at Plimoth Plantation*. I went on to visit the site of the burial ground and researched materials in the George Hail Library. I toured the area around Warren and visited Rough Point, a mansion in Newport, Rhode Island, which provided inspiration for Gertrude Hoffman's mansion, The Cedars, in *Sowams*. Finally, I visited the Robbins

Museum of Archaeology in Middleborough, where I viewed pre-contact archaeological evidence of Wampanoag sites.

It was during this trip that the plot of the last novella, *The Pond*, began to take shape. A young Wampanoag woman told me about the difficulty she was experiencing accessing a pond which had been within the boundaries of tribal land and had traditionally been used as place to gather for recreation, but which was now privately owned, fenced off and padlocked. She had wanted to take her child to the pond to recreate the childhood of her ancestors and was saddened that this cultural tradition would not be made available for him. During my tour of Mashpee, I walked ancient Wampanoag pathways and learned about the problem of overbuilding in the area, now a magnet for luxury property developers, as well as the accompanying issue of pollution in the local waterways. I realised from these conversations that the treasure, previously buried in the original legend, had now become the landscape itself and that it was still being systematically ransacked and slowly destroyed, for economic profit. This was a process that had begun more than four hundred years earlier, when the forests had first been destroyed for timber, the animals over-hunted for fur and the land sold or taken, and enclosed.

By enlarging the scope of my research methodologies, as well as integrating research from these varied historical records within my own creative writing, my research examines accepted concepts of fiction and non-fiction and contributes to the questioning of the definition of history itself. Adding to Doctorow's reference to the "plasticity" (7) of history, Mickel writes:

what we ourselves think we know to be true from personal experience is really so fictionalised by our own relative perceptions and beliefs – our own modernism – that it is itself merely a personal version of events, or that history itself is prisoner to the word and cannot really be known ... Moreover, though it is true that humans can never claim that they can communicate what they

see, feel, or understand exactly to anyone else, we nonetheless do communicate and are more or less understood. So the writer of history communicates what he writes and is more or less understood. His own narrative records the events as he saw and understood them. In that the witness to events must pass away, the once-lived historical moment or series of events cannot be preserved more than in language and artifacts. (58)

This is particularly pertinent when considering the importance of storytelling within the Indigenous historical record, which demands that accepted Western definitions of fact and reliability, and concurrently some of the long-held assumptions of the European historical record, be re-examined. In 'This Long Looked for Event', Annette Kolodny observes that even newly-coined terms such as 'pre-Contact' are historically inaccurate:

I hope to gesture toward a new kind of history that honors what I call the experiential knowledge embedded in Indigenous traditions. This leads inevitably to the decoupling of the concepts of 'contact' and 'discovery' as one and the same thing. And this approach effectively deconstructs the by-now oversimplified construction of 'contact' as always and everywhere a *first* contact, that is, an event singular and unprecedented. (91)

By researching the oral and written histories of the Penobscot Nation, Kolodny demonstrates that Indigenous encounters with Europeans were in fact multiple, took place over many years and, in the earlier cases, were not viewed with trepidation due to the superiority in numbers of the Indigenous people at that time. Kolodny highlights the absence of dates within these historical records, which placed more emphasis on the events themselves and the actions or emotions they engendered than the exact point in time in which they occurred. This stands in contrast to the idea of a 'before' and 'after' in a traditional, linear timeline of history; as well as challenging the over-simplified view (and indeed one still imbued with a colonialist slant) of the Native Americans of the past as a passive people unable to withstand the arrival of the Europeans. To ignore or dismiss this Indigenous experiential form of history as being 'lesser' in terms of authenticity and reliability, "inevitably distorts and diminishes the histories of both Native Americans and Europeans" (Kolodny, 107).

Similarly, my thesis has been informed by experiential research, a method which I had not foreseen at the outset, but one which was of the most significance. In my field work, I was struck by the echoes of the past that were still visible in the places that I visited; from original species of trees which have survived, such as the sassafras and white pine; to ancient Indigenous tracks in the woods; to place names such as First Encounter Beach or the Sagamore Bridge linking Cape Cod to the mainland, built in 1933 and adopting one of the Wampanoag names for leader. I was reminded of a passage in Edward Winslow's journal where he recounts a custom of the Indigenous people as they journeyed from one place to another:

Instead of records and chronicles, they take this course. Where any remarkable act is done, in memory of it, either in the place, or by some pathway near adjoining, they make a round hole in the ground, about a foot deep, and as much over; which when others passing by behold, they inquire the cause and occasion of the same, which being once known, they are careful to acquaint all men, as occasion serveth, therewith; and lest such holes should be filled or grown up by any accident, as men pass by, they will oft renew the same; by which means many things of great antiquity are fresh in memory. So that as a man travelleth, if he can understand his guide, his journey will be the less tedious, by reason of the many historical discourses [which] will be related unto him. (66)

This resonated with my own experience of walking on Dartmoor, where legend and landscape are also intertwined and I included this Indigenous custom in *Eleanor's Story*. Brooks quotes Cree scholar Winona Wheeler, who states that the "land is mnemonic" (*Common Pot*, xxiv). Once you know the stories, it is impossible not to see and experience them in the landscape. Story leaves its footprint on the land just as surely as any human. Yet, concurrently, it appears that much of the Indigenous story still remains invisible to large sections of America, whether in the national consciousness, historical record or bodies of literature. Brooks writes that she was:

disturbed to open up a fairly recent volume titled *The Futures of American Studies* to find that not one Indigenous scholar had been included in the collection of essays and that 'Native Americans' were treated only

momentarily and largely as subjects of study, not as intellectuals who might have something to say about the future of the field. (*Common Pot*, xxxvii)

The Wampanoag people are fighting to hold onto their history and culture whilst still living a modern American life. Helme described it to me as like “living with a foot in two canoes” (289). In *Dawnland Voices*, Aquinnah Wampanoag Linda Coombs writes of her desire to:

tell our story – to add it back into the historical record ... Not telling what happened does not change the fact of its happening ... It is a matter that all of us see the history of the 17th century (or any time period) holistically. There are no sides, but only one whole story. (Senier, 476)

Taking these elements of my thesis, namely the interconnections between story, landscape and history; the representation of the Indigenous; and the transportation of legend or story across three time periods, led me to examine the work of two particular authors, Annie Proulx and Michael Cunningham, which I will discuss in the ‘Contextual’ chapter of this dissertation.

Contextual Analysis

1. Introduction: 'Indian' Stereotypes in American Literature

When we consider the fiction of writers such as Louise Erdrich and the work of academics such as Lisa Brooks, it becomes evident that, in wanting to 'set the record straight', each is concerned with communicating accurately the distinctive subtleties of their own Indigenous history and culture. This impulse stands in opposition to the generic and inaccurate portrayals of the figure of the 'Indian', which were contained within the historical accounts from the early years of colonisation and, by the eighteenth century, had become absorbed into Non-Indigenous literary fiction, where it would remain even to the present day. The term 'Indian', a misnomer from the very beginning due to Columbus' mistaken estimation that he had encountered *los Indios* on the continent of Asia, nevertheless continued to misrepresent the Indigenous peoples of North America throughout the subsequent centuries. Robert F. Berkhofer observes that:

The first residents of the Americas were by modern estimates divided into at least two thousand cultures and more societies, practiced a multiplicity of customs and lifestyles, held an enormous variety of values and beliefs, spoke numerous languages mutually unintelligible to the many speakers, and did not conceive of themselves as a single people ... (3)

It is interesting that Roger Williams, the seventeenth-century Puritan minister and founder of Providence Plantation (later to become Rhode Island) distinguishes between the generic terms which were imposed onto the Indigenous people and the specific tribal names by which they chose to be known (although he chose not to list these):

First, those of the English giving: as Natives, Salvages, Indians, Wild-men, (so the Dutch call them Wilden), Abergeny men, Pagans, Barbarians, Heathen.
Secondly, their Names, which they give themselves. (4)

In this section, I will set out three principal stereotypes of the Indigenous peoples of the North American continent: the 'Bad' or 'Savage' Indian, the 'Noble' Indian and the

'Vanishing' or 'Assimilated' Indian, illustrating how they have been perpetuated throughout the American literary canon.

The decision by early writers to reduce the diversity of the Indigenous peoples into a defined set of stereotypes was not coincidental; it served the ambitions of the major European powers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as they pursued their colonial expansion first into the south and then the north of the American continent. Those first European explorers, comparing what they observed of the Indigenous culture with their own, deduced that the 'savages' of the 'wilderness' must necessarily be without law, government or religion, leading to the popular French rhyme: "sans roi, sans loi, sans foi" (Rowe, 5). Rowe observes that "[religion] was the most important basis for the distinction between 'us' and 'them' in sixteenth-century Europe, and 'we' in a broad sense were Christians, while 'they' were heathen" (6). This sense of 'the other', alongside the coalescence of the terms 'Indian', 'savage' and 'heathen' led to the image of the 'Bad Indian' in desperate need of conversion in terms of both civility and Christianity; the "savage and brutish men which range up and down, little otherwise than the wild beasts of the same", as Bradford had described them (25). In subsequent centuries, this stereotypical image of the Indian migrated from the historical letters and journals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries into the realms of fiction. John Underhill's 1638 description of the Indians of New England as "the devil's instruments" (Cave, 30) immediately calls to mind *The Tempest*, written in the 1610s, and Shakespeare's description of Caliban, the Indigenous inhabitant of Prospero's island, as "a born devil" (Shakespeare, 4.1.1239), the offspring of an unnatural union between the Devil and the witch Sycorax. This image of the Bad or Savage Indian can also be seen in James Fenimore Cooper's portrayal of the Huron tribe in *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), where the Indian Chief Magua is described as "repulsive" (8) and "a red devil" (34). The image continued

in the Western dime novels of the late nineteenth century celebrating a mythologised Wild West culture, and on into the twentieth century in Hollywood's classic Westerns with the cowboy hero triumphing over the tribes of the Plains, whose long, feathered headdresses and wigwams themselves became a misinformed stereotype of "the quintessential American Indian in the eyes of the White citizens of the United States and elsewhere" (Berkhofer, 150). Traditional Native headdresses and homes are in fact, and quite obviously, as diverse and varied as the tribes themselves as they adapted to the contrasting landscapes of the continent; from the cedar hats and button blankets of the Northwest Coastal tribes to the woven headbands and cedar-clad *wetu* domes of the Wampanoag on the East coast.

Yet, in order to "prove [the Indian] capable of conversion" (40), there had also to be an image of the 'Good Indian', one who embodied the potential for betterment:

let us not thinke that these men are so simple as some have supposed them: for they are of bodie lustie, strong, and very nimble: they are a very understanding generation, quicke of apprehension, suddaine in their dispatches, subtile in their dealings, exquisite in their inventions, and industrious in their labour. (Porter, 337).

This in turn led to a romanticising of the image into the second category of representation I want to discuss, that of the 'Noble Indian'. This image is also present in Fenimore Cooper's novel, where the young Indian warriors are likened to "some precious relic of the Grecian chisel" (43) and "an unblemished specimen of the noblest proportions of man" (43). In Longfellow's epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha*, written in 1855, the Indian chief is depicted as portraying similarly Romantic ideals, both in his persona and in terms of his relationship with the natural world:

By the shore of Gitche Gumee,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
At the doorway of his wigwam,
In the pleasant Summer morning,
Hiawatha stood and waited.

All the air was full of freshness,
All the earth was bright and joyous,
And before him, through the sunshine,
Westward toward the neighboring forest
Passed in golden swarms the Ahmo,
Passed the bees, the honey-makers,
Burning, singing in the sunshine. (XXII)

Jennifer Dyar observes that 'Indianness' was:

attractive to whites because it touched a chord in their own distant past, it was also alluring because of its extreme dissimilarity to present civilized society. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries especially, it represented the wild, 'libidinous, irrational, violent, dangerous' Other. (820)

Just as Indians were viewed as both 'Good' and 'Bad' and the two contradictions could sit, if not happily, at least necessarily side by side, so the land which they inhabited was viewed by the early explorers as both "a hideous and desolate wilderness" (62) and an Edenic idyll:

an idea was born, out of fantasy, out of violence, the idea that there exists in the world a people who live in an actual Garden of Eden, a state of nature, before the giving of laws, before the forming of government. This imagined history of America became an English book of Genesis, their new truth. (Lepore, 30)

This polarity can be seen at play in *The Scarlet Letter*, where Hawthorne asks the reader to decide whether "the moral wilderness" (137) lies in the unfettered freedom of the outlying woods or in fact within the strict rules of Puritan society. Hester Prynne, in her banishment, discovers that her "intellect and heart had their home, as it were, in desert places, where she roamed as freely as the wild Indian in his woods..." (150).

William Bradford, in referencing this "desert wilderness" (78) and incorporating a passage from Deuteronomy in his journal, likens the arrival of the Separatists in New England to the deliverance of God's chosen people from Egypt into "a land flowing with milk and honey" (*New King James Bible*, Deut. 6.3). This desire to return to a perceived state of innocent interaction with an untainted natural world was expounded by Thoreau

in *Walden*: “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach” (271). He, like Longfellow, aligns an authentic experience of both Nature and Life with ‘Indianness’:

If, then, we would indeed restore mankind by truly Indian, botanic, magnetic, or natural means, let us first be as simple and well as Nature ourselves, dispel the clouds which over our brows, and take up a little life into our pores. (260)

Quoting James A. Clifton, Dyar highlights the number of White Europeans who had, since the colonial period, chosen to live amongst their Indian neighbours, who “did not typically reject persons because of the color of their skin but focused rather on the learnable and acquirable ethnic designators such as ‘language, culturally appropriate behavior, social affiliation, and loyalty” (823). However, the majority of Europeans living amongst the Indians during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would have been captured against their will, leading to the new literary genre of the ‘Captivity Narrative’. Originally employed by Puritan ministers such as Cotton Mather as a way to promote the savagery and spiritual deficiency of the Indian way of life, Dyar observes that it had by the nineteenth century become less theologically dogmatic and therefore allowed White Americans vicariously to “participate in Indianness while rejecting physical Indians” (828). Likewise, “many Europeans over the course of the settler-Indian relationship participated in the appropriation of particular, desired elements of Indian culture into European society, a process that further contributed to the separation of Indianness from Indians” (Dyar, 829). From clothing and language to customs and traditions, that which was desired was appropriated, and that which was undesired was at best unacknowledged, at worst eradicated. Thoreau’s journal documenting his simple life in the woods has become not only a seminal work within the American literary canon, but evolved the concept of ‘life on the frontier’ into the modern era.

This process of appropriation and separation led to the third significant image of the 'Vanishing Indian' or 'Assimilated Outsider' (Cotton, 54). This image also embodies a contradictory duality. It could either "represent the combination of what was best in the 'red' and 'white' worlds, resulting in a being that was superior to both races" (54) or "exemplify the worst of the two cultures, displaying all the corruption and negative stereotypes of both and essentially making themselves an outsider from all societies" (54). An example of the latter would be Injun Joe in *Huckleberry Finn* (1884), a character of unredeemable evil whose purpose is to highlight the opposite characteristics of Finn. As such, Twain "repeats the pattern of the writers before him who dealt with Indians – he uses the savage to explain Anglo society" (McNutt, 233). In contrast, Chief Bromden in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) "is torn between the desire to maintain his Indian heritage and the necessity of developing behavior acceptable to the dominant white culture" (Ware, 95). His Indigenous father's name, 'The Pine That Stands Tallest', is usurped by the surname of his white mother, whose presence to him becomes "bigger than Papa and me together" (Kesey, 188); and even that name is reduced to 'Broom' by his fellow inmates. Having no tribal land left to return to, when he finally escapes he "runs toward the highway in the same direction the dog had run. This repeated image indicates that like the dog's fate, Bromden's fate is uncertain" (Ware, 100).

Whilst 21st-century Non-Indigenous readers, living in a multicultural and globalised world, may have gained a greater understanding of the deficiencies of the original concept of the 'Savage Indian', it is important to stress that the latter portrayals of the 'Noble' and 'Vanishing Indian' are equally as constricting and misinformed. There is still a process of appropriation at play within any portrayal which seeks to contain a culture within a set of 'acceptable' or 'understandable' boundaries, the effect of which

deny that culture the means or recognition to exist and evolve within the wider modern sphere.

It can be argued that a romanticisation of the Indigenous North American culture still exists today where cultural artefacts, both historical and contemporary, are respected and appreciated; yet the same understanding and reverence is not granted to traditional Indigenous homelands, where issues such as deforestation are more easily recognised as a threat to the climate than to its Indigenous peoples. Equally, it is possible for the Non-Indigenous to appreciate the beauty of an Indigenous culture and landscape, whilst ignoring the generational trauma which has gone before and is still present in the form of anxiety concerning the continuation of Indigenous traditions and homelands; much like a child covering their eyes in a game of hide and seek and believing they cannot be seen, a lack of recognition does not equate to a lack of existence.

Any archetype is lacking in nuance and has the effect of a 'freezing in time', denying the possibility for an individual to be part of a modern, living culture. There can be no separation of past from present, and the modern Indigenous people are not detached from their historical predecessors. This re-balancing is of course present within and intrinsic to all Indigenous literatures, both contemporary and historical. There is much debate currently about the place of fiction when writing across boundaries of race and culture. At the extreme is Lionel Shriver's hope that "the concept of cultural appropriation is a passing fad" (Shriver, *Guardian*) as it threatens "our right to write fiction at all" (Shriver, *Spectator*). Philip Hensher has stated that:

The only thing worth saying about the issue of cultural appropriation is that it has nothing to do with identity, and everything about quality. Good writing can do whatever it feels like doing. Bad writing can't do anything ... The key point is that as few extra-literary concerns as possible should stand in the way of good writers – not the claim that no one should ever write about experience not their own, nor the sustenance of ancient privileges of race, education, sexuality and class. (Hensher, *Guardian*)

The Irish writer Kit de Waal acknowledges the many great authors who have “crossed the boundary from what they know to what they imagine”, including Gustave Flaubert (*Madame Bovary*), Kazuo Ishiguro (*Remains of the Day*) and Mark Haddon (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*). However, she makes the distinction between equal cultural exchange and cultural appropriation, where the latter is “due to the presence of a colonial element and imbalance of power”; yet she does not believe that this should prohibit the writer of fiction:

As writers we have to be the other – without it we would have no literature, no great stories, no murder mysteries, no great romances, no historical novels, no science fiction, no fantasy – but when we become the other we need always to act with respect and recognise the value of what we discover, show by our attitudes and our acknowledgements that we aren’t just appropriating but are seeking to understand.

There is, I believe, a space for a non-Indigenous writer to explore the Indigenous perspective through a non-Indigenous lens, whilst always being aware of the inadequacies of this viewpoint. Writing with sensitivity is possible if it is done in the spirit of challenging misrepresentation and gaining new understanding. In this instance, my own lived experience is relevant because of the historical past; my own culture is part of the story and it is a story which should, I believe, be examined and reflected upon. This process of reflection toward a greater understanding is not only relevant, but necessary wherever there has been a colonial presence. Barbara Nicholson is an Elder of the Wadi Wadi people in the Illawarrra region of Australia, as well as a poet and academic; she states in an interview with a non-Indigenous Australian writer that “Contact history is shared history. I think you should be allowed to write about that” (McKinnon). I would argue that it is vital that we do.

2. A Re-appraisal of the Landscape and Narrative Structure

In order to illustrate the changes on the land and its Indigenous inhabitants over the centuries since the arrival of the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620, it was important that the land in question remained the same throughout my trilogy of novellas; namely a 60-mile radius of traditional Wampanoag tribal land around Cape Cod and Rhode Island. In this way, the reader revisits the same place in each novella and is able to compare it to its previous incarnation. *Eleanor's Story* is set in the tribal land of the Pokanoket (Wampanoag), firstly in Plymouth, Cape Cod with a subsequent journey to the tribal headquarters in Sowams. In the second novella, *Sowams*, Warren, Rhode Island is revealed to be the site of the 17th-century tribal village; and completing the trilogy, *The Pond* revolves around the pond described during Samuel Walker's journey to Sowams in *Eleanor's Story*.

By presenting the landscape in the first instance as tribal, the reader is made aware that subsequent geographical delineations of state (in this case of Massachusetts and Rhode Island) are only a recent distinction from an Indigenous viewpoint. Indeed, the original tribal delineations of land would have been based on language, with the Wampanoag people belonging to the Algonquian nation which crosses the modern national border into what is now North-Eastern Canada (Helme, 284). Native Land Digital has undertaken an exercise to map the world according to the Indigenous people who inhabited the land, setting out to “[bring] an awareness of the real lived history of Indigenous peoples and nations in a long era of colonialism” (Native Land, ‘Why It Matters’). The ‘delineations’, if they can be described as such, are much more fluid, frequently superimposing each other to reflect changes over time and overflowing from the land into the sea. Similarly Brooks, in *The Common Pot*, remaps the American North-East according to the waterways, so vital to the Indigenous people of that area. The result

of both exercises is a landscape which is unfamiliar to the non-Indigenous observer, requiring a re-appraisal of what we (the non-Indigenous reader) think we already know.

This re-appraisal of the land is intrinsic to Annie Proulx's novel *Barkskins*, which examines the impact of European colonisation in North America and across the world from the late 17th-century through to the modern day. As such, it shares similar thematic concerns with my own work and I wanted to explore her work in this light. By focussing on the ever-expanding timber industry, Proulx illustrates the devastating effect of deforestation not only on the landscape and the natural world, but also upon the lives and traditions of the Indigenous people. Whilst Proulx has written a novel of over 750 pages long, spanning a period of more than 300 years, I decided to write three interconnected novellas, covering a similar timeframe but with each acting as a 'snapshot' in time. Michael Cunningham employs a similar structural technique in *The Hours*, in which he recontextualises Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and writes three narratives, in three separate time periods. I examine the structure of his work, specifically the various ways in which the narrative threads interconnect with each other and with Woolf's original novel.

3. Story, Landscape and Legacy in Annie Proulx's *Barkskins*

Barkskins begins in 1693 with the arrival of two French indentured labourers, René Sel and Charles Duquet, in Wobik, New France (now modern-day Canada). They work as woodcutters for Monsieur Trépagny, with the promise of their own land after a three-year indenture. Sel enters a forced marriage with Mari, an Indigenous Mi'kmaw woman, in return for substantial land from his master. In contrast Duquet, eager to gain immediate wealth, runs away after only a short period. Ostensibly, the remainder of the novel tracks the lives of these two bloodlines over the next three hundred years. However, this is in fact secondary to the central storyline of the novel, which charts the monetarisation of the forest by colonists along the Canadian Eastern Seaboard, and the legacy of this not only on the landscape, but also on the lives of the Indigenous people whose lives and culture have been reliant upon the forest for thousands of years.

Proulx is celebrated as a writer for her sense of place and has stated that the landscape is always her starting point of creativity:

Everything comes from landscape ... Every single thing I write, I start with the landscape. I start with the climate, the description. Only when that is done – the particular place that affects what food people eat, how they make their livings and so forth – and the story rolls out of landscape. (Wyoming)

In her previous short stories and novels, the place has been a particular state or a unique area within a state, such as the wide plains of Wyoming in *Brokeback Mountain* or the arid Texas panhandle in *That Old Ace in the Hole*. In *Barkskins*, the place is the forest, not only in North America but across the world. As Proulx observes:

For me, the chief character in the long story was the forest, the great now long-lost forest(s) of the world. The characters, as interesting as they were to develop, were there to carry the story of how we have cut and destroyed the wooden world. (Leyshon)

Even when a chapter is set in the city or at sea, the forest is a continuous presence within the novel. However, it is more than a mere backdrop; it underpins all the characters'

actions and belief systems. Proulx has stated she thinks of her work less as an environmental novel and

more in the sense of a writerly nod to human interplay with climate change, what some in the humanities and arts are beginning to think of as a cultural response to the environmental changes we have inherited in the so-called Anthropocene. (Leysdon)

Indeed, Byron Willistone suggests that *Barkskins* is “the first great novel of the Anthropocene” (241), arguing that because the era is so vast and sprawling, it requires an equally “temporally sprawling” (241) novel in order to gain a true understanding of the legacy of historical human interaction with nature:

[Proulx] depicts our ecologically parlous present and the dark future that likely awaits us as the twin historical upshots of a history of environmental degradation beginning in the seventeenth century. (241)

In many ways, *Barkskins* is an unwieldy novel, filled with such an array of characters it is hard for the reader to retain control of them. The lives of some of these characters occupy several chapters; others take up only a few lines. The reckless and brutal deforestation of the land is replicated in what feels at times like an ever-increasing succession of deaths. This approach has garnered some criticism, notably from novelist Philip Hensher who goes as far as to say that the book is “inimical to what the novel form does best” (Hensher, *Spectator*), primarily due to the “colossal” period of time it covers which leads to “a number of problems for the novelist. No character will be given much room to breathe, and some are born and die of old age with increasing rapidity”. Anthony Cummins, however, comments that “[by] making everyone so brutally disposable, Proulx invites us to care more about the context than about any individual story: the environment is at least as important as anyone in it”. Yet, it is also more than this. There is a symbiosis at play between the human and non-human. As the novel progresses, it becomes increasingly evident that what is happening to the land is also happening to the

people and that the two are irrevocably conjoined. This same sentiment lies at the heart of the legend in *Eleanor's Story* and Eleanor's subsequent warning to Samuel Walker, albeit unheeded, that our actions have profound consequences both for us and for the landscape.

In her podcast 'This Land', Rebecca Nagle states that "what makes Indigenous people Indigenous is our connection to the land. Being forced to leave struck at the core of who we are". From the outset, Proulx portrays this permeability between the boundaries of the land with its Indigenous inhabitants, sets it against the lack of affinity with the land demonstrated by the European settlers, and charts the devastating consequences of the separation of a land from its people. As such, Proulx is writing from both an ecological and postcolonial standpoint. Whilst I would not place my writing in the genre of 'eco-literature', it does ask the reader to reconsider the past and the history of America from a postcolonial viewpoint. In choosing to set her story in 'New France' in the 17th century, Proulx necessarily has to write about the Indigenous Mi'kmaq inhabitants; in the same way that I, as a writer, became aware that I would have to include the Indigenous Wampanoag in my own work, as discussed in the previous chapter. Although I am conscious that Proulx is a non-Indigenous writer, the environmental themes of her work necessarily interconnect with Indigenous traditions and ways of thinking. Therefore, in examining Proulx's work, I have also looked to Indigenous writers and scholars as they describe and analyse their relationship with land and the natural world.

Proulx highlights three primary viewpoints or ways of understanding the land: Indigenous, colonial and religious; and her story weaves its way through each, setting one against the other. Describing the Indigenous perspective, Proulx often uses imagery to link the Mi'kmaq people with the natural world. When Achille sees the clouds of a moose's

breath in the early morning mist, he remarks that “these puffs were like the lives of men and animals, brief, then swallowed up in the air” (191) and Kuntaw muses “Were not René Sel’s children and grandchildren as he had been, like leaves that fall on moving water, to be carried where the stream takes them?” (203) The Indigenous character Mari demonstrates a deep knowledge and understanding of the forest, placing juniper branches on the fire for their aroma, using willow leaves and tamarack bark as medicine and making eel traps to replace Trepagny’s ineffective fish hooks. She believes that the forest is “a living entity, as vital as the waterways, filled with the gifts of medicine, food, shelter, tool material, which everyone discovered and remembered. One lived with it in harmony and gratitude” (51). Her opinion that the practice of land clearance is foolish, however, is dismissed by René Sel as “woman’s talk” (51). Later, Mari’s mourning for the loss of the woodland and the disappearance of the medicinal plants which grow there is described as a “streak of vengeance” (119) that is part of the Indians’ character. This symbiosis between the people and place is what Robin Wall Kimmerer, writing as a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, refers to as ‘reciprocity’, a relationship of balance between humans and plants where each is dependent upon the other for survival:

People can take too much and exceed the capacity of the plants to share again. That’s the voice of hard experience that resonates in the teachings of ‘never take more than half.’ And yet, they also teach that we can take too little. If we allow traditions to die, relationships to fade, the land will suffer. (166)

The first impression of the landscape in *Barkskins*, however, is that of the Frenchman René Sel, who sees a “dark vast forest, inimical wilderness” (3). Trepagny and Sel walk through “a chaos of deadfalls, victims of some great windstorm” (5); the flora includes hemlock and “branches [which] droop like dark funereal swags” (5). They are both ill-suited and ill-prepared for their surroundings, stumbling on tree roots, bitten by

mosquitoes and blackflies and their legs cramping from fatigue. This idea of the inhospitable, uncivilised wilderness reflects the pervading European attitude of the 17th century, as corroborated by my own research. Bradford describes the moment the colonists aboard the *Mayflower* first set eyes on the shores of Cape Cod in 1620:

Besids, what could they see but a hideous & desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and willd men? ... ye whole countrie, full of woods & thickets, represented a wild & savage heiw. (62)

Samuel Walker, the narrator of *Eleanor's Story*, reflects these same sentiments:

I heard an eerie sound coming from behind me, a kind of wailing and howling the like of which I had not heard before. The noise emanated from the depths of the shadowy forest that covered the hills all around me. I was overtaken by a sudden awareness that I was completely exposed. The fort and village below me suddenly seemed very small indeed, set in the midst of a vast and menacing wilderness.

Entwined with this European idea of an inhospitable wilderness is the concept of the forest as “enormous and limitless” (Proulx, 51), a delusion reiterated by numerous characters throughout *Barkskins*; which needs to be tamed and cultivated for man's use. Within less than thirty years, the impact of this attitude upon the Indigenous settlement at Wobik is evident:

The smoke-thickened years passed, and Crown corvée work gangs widened the west trail to a road. More settlers came into the forest. Every morning the sound of distant and near chopping annoyed woodpeckers who imagined rivals, then, feeling outnumbered, fled to wilder parts. The trees groaned and fell, men planted maize between the stumps. The deer and moose retreated, the wolves followed them north. (57)

It is insinuated that this incessant destruction will prove to be detrimental not only to the perpetrators, but to humankind itself in this battle of man against nature. Ultimately, René is found dead and scalped, his neck cut and his hands still on his axe as he cuts his last cedar tree. In *Eleanor's Story*, Eleanor has learned the Indigenous ways herself and her retelling of the Dartmoor legend is a warning, if not a prophecy, of the future

destruction of both the land and the people; albeit one which is not understood by Samuel Walker until toward the end of his life.

The colonial view of the land as an undiscovered wilderness is directly linked with the idea that land is a commodity, ripe for exploitation; a view expounded by the major European powers in the early 18th-century as they raced to become the first to explore uncharted waters and set up trade routes not only in the 'New World', but across the globe. The Dartmoor legend at the core of my work describes plundering the landscape for personal gain and this is a thread which connects all three of my novellas. In *Eleanor's Story*, the English settlers repay the loans from their investors by engaging in the timber and fur trade. In *Sowams*, the land is excavated to reveal the site of the Indigenous village and burial site, with the artefacts uncovered seen as valuable collectibles and museum artefacts. In *The Pond*, the traditional tribal land of the Wampanoag has been parcelled up as private, prime real estate, and Mackinley Properties is about to make a lucrative sale of land for property development.

In *Barkskins*, Toppunt embodies this sense of the land as a source of potential wealth when he states: "There is everything in the world if you only know where to find it and how to get it" (89). Duquet attempts to find the one object which will prove to be the most profitable, settling first for the fur trade which quickly changes from a simple exchange of goods to something more business-like and ruthless. We see the Indians through European eyes, reduced to "red men who gave away their furs in return for terrible and vision-invoking spirits" (67). Natural resources are now solely an avenue toward wealth, and that avenue is indiscriminate: "what resource existed in this new world that was limitless, that had value, that could build a fortune?" (68) Discarding various living creatures, Duquet settles upon "one everlasting commodity that Europe lacked: the forest" (69). Just as Duquet evolves from a woodcutter to a merchant, so the

forest has changed from a natural feature into “his forest enterprise” (96). The reasons for ransacking nature are seen to change and evolve with time. First it is beaver fur for men’s hats and timber for ship’s masts, but when Duquet returns from Amsterdam, he finds new charcoal kilns and men cutting the maples to make charcoal for gunpowder to use in Queen Anne’s War.

There is a gathering momentum within the novel as the forest economy increases in value and scope. Duquet travels first to France and Amsterdam, then on to China, becoming a wealthy businessman on the back of his fur and wood trading. Jinot Sel accompanies Albert Bone to New Zealand in search of the perfect tree from which to manufacture his axes. We see the expansion of development away from the individual and into enterprise and mechanisation. In Maine, areas of cleared forest have given rise to towns with “saloons, eateries, hotels and palaces of pleasure” (381) and “a crazy taste for invention and improvement blew through the state like a dust storm” (381). Circular saws are getting larger, and there is the advent of steam engines and gas lighting; all factors contributing to increased productivity.

As *Barkskins* progresses, we begin to witness the legacy of this expansion. Firstly, we see the beginnings of the concept of family legacy, the seeds from which the future great dynasties of America would grow. Duquet now wants “great and permanent wealth, wealth for a hundred years” (68), not only for himself, but for his children. For the first time he is concerned with his legacy and the continuation of the family name. In *Sowams*, Gertrude Hoffman is an embodiment of this same drive to succeed which gave birth to ‘The American Dream’; her mansion and parties in Newport, Rhode Island, extravagant emblems of her own family’s wealth and success. In my novellas, as in *Barkskins*, the idea of family legacy goes hand-in-hand with the idea of ownership. In Proulx’s novel, Duquet is incensed that English woodcutters are cutting down “*his timber*” (135). Later, we see

this unfamiliar concept affecting Mari's children when Renardette falsely lays claim to René Sel's house. While two of his children, Zoë and Achille, are angered by this, his son Elphège questions the very assumption of ownership or the "sense of property" (157): "Was the house René's to give? Was it even Trépagny's? All this was French, French ideas, French ways. English ways, English words, French words. Invaders' ways" (158). This same practice is at play on a macro level. When Mari's children learn that their mother's homeland, Mi'kma'gi, has been given by the French king to the British, Theotiste asks "How can that be? It is not the land of the French king to give. It is ours" (169). We see that there is a fundamental lack of understanding about the status of the Indians, who view themselves as "allies of the French king" (170) and active participants in the developing political landscape. The Europeans, however, unused to the appearance and nature of Indigenous power, view them only as subjects. It was this viewpoint that would go on to shape American historiography and its portrayal of the Indigenous people as being without agency in many cases, as discussed in the previous chapter.

We see also the legacy upon the landscape. When Duquet revisits Wobik, he is momentarily frightened by the changes that he sees:

Where was the forest? The landscape has been corrupted. The village had swollen by fifty houses, a grain mill, a water-powered sawmill, a large sheep commons. The forest had been pushed out of sight, and in the place of woodlands were rough fields with crops growing between the stumps. The muddy trail west was now a fair road. For a moment he was frightened; if miles of forest could be removed so quickly by a few men with axes, was the forest then as vulnerable as beaver? (118)

His response, however, is merely to repeat his well-worn mantra that "[these] forests could not disappear. In New France they were vast and eternal" (118).

The transfer of land ownership and the destruction of tribal lands leaves a lasting legacy on the Mi'kmaq people themselves, who are relegated to a life of wandering as they strive to find fellow tribal members and a new homeland. Ultimately, Mari's descendants

become scattered and are perpetually on the move. Various generations move through New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Maine looking for a place which feels like home: “they wandered often, looking for food, for a haven, for a cleft in the rock that would open into that world that had been torn from them” (610). This echoes the characters of Joseph and Abram in *Sowams*, whose ancestors have been displaced from their original tribal lands and who, at the close of the novella, are seen simply to move on once again.

Soon the younger Mi’kmaq generations begin to change in their preferences and choices. In Mi’kma’gi, Theotiste and Elphège, as well as hunting, now make axe handles for money in order to buy metal pots, tools and weapons and take on work for the land surveyors and as labourers building the new roads. Whether by choice or necessity, in order to survive the Mi’kmaq have had to adapt, adopting a finely balanced life between the American and Indigenous. There is a sad irony to the fact that, like Joseph and Abram, they have to make their living for and within the system which has contributed to their tribe’s demise. As Sosep predicted:

But I wish to tell you that if we Mi’kmaw people are to survive we must constantly hold to the thought of Mi’kmaw ways in our minds. We will live in two worlds. We must keep our Mi’kmaw world – where we, the plants, animals and birds are all persons together who help each other – fresh in our thoughts and lives. We must renew and revere the vision in our minds so it can stand against this outside force that encroaches. Otherwise we could not bear it. (Proulx, 181)

Similarly, in *Sowams*, Abram displays this internalisation of the traditional ways, alive in his thoughts, his language whispered only when he is alone. When we see the Sel children in Chapter 31 of *Barkskins*, their lives have irrevocably changed. Elphège is half-blind; Théotiste has been killed fighting English tree-choppers on Mi’kmaq territorial land; Noë has died; Auguste has been drinking, broken English laws and been imprisoned and now classed as “a bad Indian” (201) who thinks one day he will kill an Englishman. Achille has learned to be ruthless when under attack and becomes known as “the killer

Indian, the reincarnation of the bloodthirsty savages who had massacred settlers in earlier times” (201). The devastation continues through the generations. René Sel’s great-grandson, Tonny, goes to find work in the lumber camps, but the forest is unfamiliar to him and he is entirely unprepared. Forced to travel by canoe, he knows the vessel only as an upturned place of shelter and he drowns. He symbolises a generation of Indigenous lost sons and absent fathers: he, “like countless other fathers, slipped into the past” (277).

Lastly, we see the landscape and the Mi’kmaq people through a third and final lens; that of the missionary Père Crème. Initially, he appears to display an accurate understanding of the Mi’kmaq culture from having spent time amongst the people:

among the Mi’kmaq he began to keep a notebook of their rich vocabularies of geological structures, weather and season, plants, animals, mythological creatures, rivers and tides. He saw that they were so tightly knitted into the natural world that their language could only reflect the union and that neither could be separated from the other. They seemed to believe they had grown from this place as trees grow from the soil, as new stones emerge above ground in spring. (149)

Yet, in keeping his notebook, he is displaying a typically European pursuit: the need to catalogue and define as a means of understanding. He later undermines these beginnings of cultural understanding with the equally European desire for order and containment:

They do not have orderly Lives as we do In vain I tell them to give over so much hunting and make Gardens, grow Grains and Food Stuffs, to put order in their Days. They will have none of it. Therefore many French people call them lazy because they do not till the Earth. (152)

Père Crème is very much a man of his time. During this period of the eighteenth century, the wealth of flora, fauna and artefacts which had been gathered as a consequence of the expansion in global exploration was being ordered and catalogued for the first time. In 1753, Carl Linnaeus published his *Species Plantarum*, the first work to list every known species of plant and assign a Latinized binary nomenclature to each one. Crème aligns this need to order and tame the wilderness with a Christian duty to

'improve' the land "as Scriptures show" (Proulx, 179). He states that the Indians "do not understand that the White Man who struggles and strives to reduce the Forest's grip has exerted his God-given Right to claim the cleared Land as his own" (180). Here we seem to have come full circle as his words echo the sentiments of the Pilgrim Fathers in the 17th century:

In the end, all arguments for and against emigrating to America ended with the conviction that God wanted them to go. Instead of Europe, perhaps America, a continent previously dominated by the Catholic powers of Spain and France, was where God intended to bring the reformed Protestant Church to perfection. It was the Leideners' patriotic and spiritual duty to plant a godly English plantation in the New World. "We verily believe and trust the Lord is with us," they wrote, "and that He will graciously prosper our endeavors according to the simplicity of our hearts therein." Their time in Leiden, they now realized, had been a mere rehearsal for the real adventure. (Philbrick, 6)

The legacy of the missionary movement is one which Proulx has portrayed as inherent to deforestation. Proulx has stated that one of the epigraphs to the novel is key to the understanding of the book (Rock). The epigraph, a quote from Lynn White Jr., reads: "By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects". Proulx's Christian characters display little understanding of or regard for the Indigenous people and she conceives new personas of "fisher-hunter-missionaries" (606), labelling the missionary as yet another figure who ransacks, this time not only the land but the people. She aligns the European drive to manage the 'wilderness' with a parallel desire to convert and subjugate the Indigenous people, a merging of Capitalism and Christianity, and thereby steps into the realms of ecotheology.

This question of what constitutes true knowledge and understanding lies very much at the heart of *Barkskins*. Kuntaw remarks that it is necessary "[not] to remember like a lesson ... but to know, to feel" (Proulx, 278). As one form of knowledge increases

with the rise of formal education, so another more experiential form of knowledge and understanding is slowly being lost. It is a dichotomy that Kimmerer addresses:

In moving from a childhood in the woods to the university I had unknowingly shifted between worldviews, from a natural history of experience, in which I knew plants as teachers and companions to whom I was linked with mutual responsibility, into the realms of science. The questions scientists raised were not 'Who are you?' but 'What is it?' No one asked plants, 'What can you tell us?' The primary question was 'How does it work?' The botany I was taught was reductionist, mechanistic, and strictly objective. Plants were reduced to objects; they were not subjects. (41)

In *Barkskins*, the forest is the subject. In order to illustrate the true legacy of deforestation over the centuries, Proulx necessarily has to shift the reader's perspective away from the human to the non-human, otherwise the changes are too small to even notice. As such, the novel can be seen as "a form of ecological realism that strives to represent the natural world more accurately by inhabiting the scale and perspective of the arboreal" (Miller, 711).

Proulx also challenges the traditional form, structure and expectations of the novel to further her exploration of place. Berthold Schoene describes the novel as being both arboreal and rhizomic in nature. For example, Proulx's seventy chapter headings appear entirely arbitrary as she disrupts conventional methods of understanding and concepts of linearity. If the reader is looking for a traditional sense of order or meaning in the contents list, they are nowhere to be found, varying from 'hair' to 'Lavinia' to 'boreal forest'. Whilst Proulx has chosen to divide the contents into sections delineated into certain time periods, these dates frequently overlap, backtrack and on occasion miss out years altogether. Schoene likens this to dendrochronology, where the date of events and the pace of environmental change is measured by the annual growth rings in trees, each one unique and able to be cross-dated with other trees. Similarly, whilst at first the reader is relieved to discover that Proulx has helpfully included two family trees at the end of

the book to help make sense of the multitude of characters, it quickly becomes evident that these too are equally riddled with confusion as family lines inter-marry, adopt, change names and are fractured by death and separation. They are

primarily rhizomic, disrupting anthropogenic order with a predilection for the feral and unforeseeable. In the same way as her table of contents is suggestive of an arborealisation of history, her family trees disperse into a rhizosphere of freely intersecting familial clumps. (Schoene, sec. 3)

In *Barkskins'* sprawling web of literary branches and roots, Proulx deliberately makes it difficult for the reader to keep a grasp on traditionally Western concepts of history. When linear dates become unreliable and individuals become insignificant, we are left only with the history of place. In this respect, Proulx is showing us another way of thinking, one more aligned with traditional Indigenous knowledge. Brooks writes about "place-worlds" (*Common Pot*, xxiii) and reframes historical landscapes by examining the work of Native writers. She quotes historian Waziyatawin Angela Wilson:

An Indigenous perspective may differ from a Western historian's in the emphasis each places on time and place and its role in history. While many historical stories from Indigenous oral traditions do not contain information on when a particular event occurred (especially according to a Julian or Gregorian calendar), the stories often contain detailed information about where specific events took place. (xxiii-xxiv)

and also writer and academic Vine Deloria Jr., a member of the Standing Rock Sioux (Lakota) nation, who observes that:

Indian tribes combine history and geography so that they have a 'sacred geography', that is to say, every location within their original homeland has a multitude of stories that recount the migrations, revelations, and particularly historical incidents that cumulatively produced the tribe in its current condition. (xxiii)

This concept of history imprinting itself upon the landscape in the form of story is one which sits at the very heart of my own creative work. In essence, this is a demonstration of the symbiotic relationship between people and the landscape, both carrying stories within them. Brooks quotes Wheeler's statement that the "land ... has its own set of

memories, and when the old people go out on the land it nudges or reminds them, and their memories are rekindled" (*Common Pot*, xxiv). This is reminiscent of Winslow's memory or story holes, as cited in the previous chapter. They are described by my character Hobbamock in *Eleanor's Story*:

At one point, he stopped by a small thicket to show me a circular indentation in the ground, no more than a foot deep. He told me that it was at that very place where his grandfather had been injured whilst out hunting and had been carried all the way back to his village, where he died a few days later. It was customary for the Indians to mark such events by scraping away at the ground to form these hollows. Thus, if they knew the story of what had happened there, they would pass it on to their companions, ensuring that the tales of their ancestors passed from one generation to the next.

Although Proulx certainly disrupts the linear structure of the traditional novelistic plot, by choosing to follow familial dynasties she cannot escape it entirely. Whilst my novellas progress in years, there is concurrently a sense of travelling back in time; each one revisiting a place to discover the legend retold. The characters, much like the travellers described in Winslow's journal, allow the landscape of the present to reveal its story, to uncover the memories that remain there so that their legacy continues. In doing so, the reader is required to view history not in terms of a 'before and after', but as an act of reflection, to understand the landscape's story and consider its implications and legacy.

4. Structure and Interrelation in Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*

Structure sits at the heart of Cunningham's novel *The Hours*, which re-contextualises Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. It shares an overt similarity with my own creative work as it takes the form of three parallel narratives, each set in a different time period, and I wanted to analyse Cunningham's structural methods in light of my own. The first narrative, *Mrs Dalloway*, is set in New York in the late 1990s with Clarissa Vaughan preparing to throw a party to celebrate the literary achievement of her best friend Richard, who is dying of Aids. The second, *Mrs Woolf*, depicts Woolf herself, living in Richmond in 1923 as she wrestles with both her mental health and writing the opening of her novel *Mrs Dalloway*. The third, *Mrs Brown*, is set in 1949 and centres around Laura Brown, a housewife in suburban Los Angeles, constrained by society's expectations of her as a wife and mother. There is also a brief fourth component in the form of a prologue which describes Woolf's suicide in 1941. Like myself, Cunningham had to navigate including a real person as a fictional character which brings with it its own difficulties, as highlighted previously. However, he has the additional burden of the fact that it is a person whose life and manner of death is extremely well-known. Michael Whitworth, in his book on Woolf, has stated that Cunningham's prologue leads to a reduction in Woolf's identity and status:

That frame itself interprets Woolf's life in the light of her death: by beginning the novel with Woolf's death, Cunningham makes her a suicide first, and a writer second. All biographies must necessarily reduce lives to themes and to coherent narratives, but the structure that Cunningham creates is potentially very reductive: it encourages the reader to see every detail of Woolf's life as prefiguring her death. (219)

Cunningham, however, offers a simpler rationale for beginning his novel in this way, demonstrating that a converse interpretation is equally valid:

I thought, yes, she had these dark periods ... and we think of her as a woman who ended her life, but she also had transcendent moments which she

recorded for us and I thought, you know what, let's get the death out of the way early. Let's just let people know that yes, she did kill herself, but it's not the most important thing to know about her, and it seemed that we should leave her in the novel not with a stone in her pocket walking to a river, but going on with her life. (Mullan)

Birgit Spengler also notes the criticisms levelled at Cunningham for using “the icon of modernism as a character in his novel and ... Woolf's tragic suicide as a crowd-puller” (51). Whitworth later acknowledges that his own perceived ‘reduction’ in Woolf is mitigated to some degree by the fact that the theme of suicide is one which relates to the other main characters within the novel. There is an interconnection of theme at play, not merely a single moment of fictional re-enactment: against the backdrop of Woolf's actual death, Clarissa Vaughan muses on the “struggle to go on living, no matter how compromised, no matter how harmed” (Cunningham, 15); Laura Brown's moment of escape includes a brief contemplation of suicide; and Richard Brown, plagued by voices in his head, is unable to face the interminable hours of his day. As such, the prologue stands as an embodiment of one of several connections between Cunningham's three narratives. I was interested to identify these connections and observe how Cunningham incorporates them into each of his narratives, as this was something which I set out to do within my own novellas.

One of the overarching connections is Cunningham's style of writing, which draws direct parallels with Woolf's own narrative methods. The prologue ends with a confluence of characters whose individual experiences of a particular time and place converge at a single point:

Here they are, on a day early in the Second World War: the boy and his mother on the bridge, the stick floating over the water's surface and Virginia's body at the river's bottom, as if she is dreaming of the surface, the stick, the boy and his mother, the sky and the rooks. An olive-drab truck rolls across the bridge loaded with soldiers in uniform, who wave to the boy who has just thrown the stick ... All this enters the bridge, resounds through its wood and stone, and

enters Virginia's body. Her face, pressed sideways to the piling, absorbs it all: the truck and the soldiers, the mother and the child. (Cunningham, 8)

This is reminiscent of Septimus Smith's experience in *Mrs Dalloway* when he feels that the leaves are "being connected by millions of fibres with his own body, there on the seat, fanned it up and down; when the branch stretched he, too, made that statement" (Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* 24). From the outset, Cunningham aligns his own narrative style with Woolf's technique of blurring the lines between the external and internal, real and imaginary, tangible and intangible. At times, the similarities are very evident; Cunningham's use of parentheses, for example, when switching from the external to the internal: "She walks past one of the farm workers (is his name John?)" (3). Like Woolf, Cunningham also shifts seamlessly from one consciousness to another:

[Clarissa] straightens her shoulders as she stands at the corner of Eighth Street and Fifth Avenue, waiting for the light. There she is, thinks Willie Bass, who passes her some mornings just about here. The old beauty, the old hippie, hair still long and defiantly gray, out on her morning rounds in jeans and a man's cotton shirt. (13)

In contrast, my novellas are not connected in any way by a similarity in writing style; in fact, they are each very distinct due to the differences in the time periods in which they are set. In *Eleanor's Story* in particular, I set out to write authentically in the narrative voice of a 17th-century journal writer, whilst also adapting it to the modern reader, as outlined in my discussion of my compositional process. The two overarching connections within my work are place, as discussed in the previous section, and plot through the use and retelling of the Dartmoor legend. In *Eleanor's Story*, Eleanor first recounts the Dartmoor legend from her homeland, with its depiction of a covetous vicar raiding a burial chamber of its treasure. Unbeknownst to Samuel Walker, the tale was in fact a portent for what would happen in his own lifetime and the part he played in it becomes clear to him at the end of his life. The legend then replicates itself in the plot of *Sowams*,

with the archaeological excavation of the Wampanoag village and burial site; and once again in *The Pond*, as tribal land is about to be sold and dug up for prime estate development.

There are similarities too in the plot structure of *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Hours*. As passers-by wonder in *Mrs Dalloway* whether they might have seen a glimpse of the Prime Minister in a passing car, so Cunningham's Clarissa Vaughan thinks she may have seen a famous actress appear from a film set trailer outside the flower shop. When the character of Virginia Woolf contemplates the bombers flying above her in the park, the reader is reminded of the scene in *Mrs Dalloway* when crowds in The Mall, as well as Rezia and Septimus Smith in Regents Park, watch an aeroplane writing words in the sky. In my own work, it is the original Dartmoor legend which is repeated in the plots of the subsequent novellas.

There are also, however, several smaller connections between each of Cunningham's narratives and Woolf's novel; similar to musical *leitmotifs*, these symbols act as constant reminders of their shared identities. As Clarissa Dalloway buys roses for her party in Woolf's novel, so too does Clarissa Vaughan in Cunningham's. In both instances, the culminating events will be touched by tragedy with the deaths of Septimus Smith in one and Richard Brown in the other. This image of the rose as tainted beauty is replicated in each narrative. In the park, Virginia Woolf walks along the gravelled pathways edged with roses as she contemplates the "park of the underworld, more marvelous and terrible than this; it is the root from which these lawns and arbors grow" (Cunningham, 30). Laura Brown wants to buy roses for her husband's birthday, but he pre-empts this by buying a bouquet of "complex, slightly sinister beauty" (43). The yellow roses with which she attempts to decorate the cake are lopsided and too close to the

writing, prompting her to discard the cake in the bin; and when Vanessa Bell's children discover a dead thrush, Virginia suggests placing it on a bed of grass and yellow roses.

Each narrative features an illicit kiss, as does *Mrs Dalloway*. In her youth, Clarissa Vaughan had kissed Richard when he was in a relationship with Louis; Laura Brown unexpectedly kisses her neighbour Kitty; and Virginia kisses her sister Vanessa with "an innocent kiss, innocent enough, but just now, in this kitchen, behind Nelly's back, it feels like the most delicious and forbidden of pleasures" (Cunningham, 154). It is this kiss that inspires the fictional Woolf to include a kiss in her novel, alluding to the scene in *Mrs Dalloway* when Clarissa shares a kiss with Sally Seton, one which becomes "the most exquisite moment of her whole life" (Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* 38).

In the aeroplane scene in *Mrs Dalloway*, the 'sky-writing' is read differently by each character, the letters varying with each differing perspective. The concept of truth being subjective and open to interpretation lies at the heart of Woolf's writing as a modernist, whose work conveys "how the conscious mind experiences reality not just as something that can be measured by universal norms, but as something deeply personal and particular" (Nicol, 19). As I studied the work of Cunningham and Woolf, I realised that, as a writer, I was also dealing with the "personal and particular" (Nicol, 19) within the larger sphere of colonisation and its legacy. I have, in effect, written three stories about three individuals (Samuel Walker, Leonard Brooks and Bea Mackinley) and placed them under a microscope to find out what they reveal about the larger forces at play in the macro: namely, the forces of colonisation, the appropriation of land and possessions, and the concept of land as property. This approach was, I believe, shaped primarily by my research field work in the US, when I realised that one begins to gain a greater understanding of the past, in all its vastness and complication, by observing objects, both

colonial and Native, by witnessing Indigenous customs and practices, and by the stories and memories of the Indigenous people themselves.

I wanted to communicate this interplay between the macro and the micro by connecting each of my novellas through the use of objects. The copper chain worn by Massasoit in *Eleanor's Story*, a present from the English colonists, reappears during the excavation in *Sowams*, by then a valuable 'treasure' ripe for exploitation. There is also the repeated use of written communication in the form of letters, newspaper articles and journal-writing across all three novellas. In *The Pond*, Bea reads the local newspaper headline about the proposed, and controversial, land development by her husband. In *Sowams*, Leonard learns about the devastating fire at The Cedars from a newspaper article, just as Samuel Walker, at the end of his life, learns of the destruction of Sowams in a letter from an acquaintance. Walker's habit of writing a journal is also replicated by Bea in *The Pond* as she reflects upon her marriage and home.

The greater effect of this, however, is how the reader experiences time. The significance of the objects themselves or the associations they recall mean that the reader is constantly re-evaluating the present through a re-understanding of the past. In a similar way, in both Cunningham and Woolf's works, the present, past and future in are seen as almost interchangeable, fluid and open to interpretation, dependent upon the individual's own experience. Characters are seen to question past decisions and contemplate alternative futures. Just as Woolf's Clarissa Dalloway continually questions her decision not to marry Peter Walsh and wonders what her life would have been like if she had, so Clarissa Vaughan recognises that her argument with Richard was a definitive moment "at which one possible future ended and a new one began" (Cunningham, 52). Woolf's novel opens with Clarissa Dalloway deciding to buy flowers and, within a matter of a few sentences, she is not merely recalling herself as an eighteen-year-old in her

childhood home but experiencing the same sensations as the past bursts into the present: “For so it had always seemed to her when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the open air” (Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* 3). In *The Hours*, Clarissa Vaughan leaves the flower shop with her bouquet and believes that while she is walking into the present, the shop owner will remain forever in the past. Yet, as she walks along and sees a pigeon, she immediately relives an event from her own past: “the scattering of pigeons with feet the color of pencil erasers (a bird had flown in through the open window of her fourth-grade classroom, violent, dreadful)” (Cunningham, 49). Similarly, when she sees two young girls, their future selves become equally as real to her: “these two girls will grow to middle and then old age, either wither or bloat; the cemeteries in which they’re buried will fall eventually into ruin, the grass grown wild, browsed at night by dogs” (50).

Yet, at the same time, both Cunningham and Woolf also portray time as structured and immovable, thereby contrasting the experience of external, physical time and internal, psychological time. *Mrs Dalloway* takes place on a single day, 13th June 1923, and the novel resonates with the chimes of Big Ben counting out the hours of Clarissa’s day. Indeed, Cunningham adopted Woolf’s original working title for his own novel and, although *Mrs Dalloway* is not divided into twelve chapters as such, it was written as twelve section breaks with the longest coinciding with midday. Likewise, each of Cunningham’s narratives also occur on one day. This basic framework links all three narratives with the novel which inspired them. Upon publication, Woolf’s novel inevitably drew comparisons with the form of Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Despite her declaration that “never did any book so bore me” (Woolf, *Letters* 183), she writes about him so frequently in her diaries and letters that it is difficult not to imagine that the work did at the very least have a profound effect upon her. It was only latterly that she appeared to

acknowledge this, remarking that what she had attempted to achieve in her writing was “probably being better done by Mr. Joyce” (Woolf, *Diaries* 114).

In my own creative work, time is presented on the one hand as structured and linear; the novellas progress forward in time across the centuries. However, I set out also to introduce a circularity to the timeframe through the interconnections within the trilogy to allow the reader to continually re-evaluate the past, and allow it to inform his/her response to the present, as well as shape an imagined future. This was in fact a process which I myself experienced when writing my thesis, as my research consistently changed and challenged my own perceptions of the past. My objective as a writer was to present these challenges to the reader, without necessarily offering resolution. In creating the character of Bea in *The Pond* as narrator and writer, I realised in hindsight that she embodies my own journey of reflection and reappraisal as a researcher and writer, as well as my desired response from the reader. The trilogy’s ending is deliberately uncertain and unresolved; the future can be shaped by the legend repeating itself once more, its message unheeded; or, just as Bea releases her small patch of land from being contained, the future can be transformed by an imagining of possibilities, informed by the past. Eleanor Hope in *Eleanor’s Story* is re-envisioned in the young storyteller Willow in *The Pond*. The vivid flames of the devastating fires at the end of *Eleanor’s Story* and *Sowams* are replicated in the sky in the final paragraphs of *The Pond* with the myriad colours of a setting sun. They are a reminder of the acts of torching and arson at the end of the previous novellas. They are also a reminder of Nature’s wildfires which regenerate the pitch pines of Cape Cod, and an intimation that there may be a new story to tell.

Conclusion

In an address to the American English Institute, Leslie Marmon Silko refers to a metaphor she uses in her novel *Ceremony*, likening the stories of her Pueblo heritage to a spider's web:

with many little threads radiating from a center, criss-crossing each other. As with the web, the structure will emerge as it is made and you must simply listen and trust, as the Pueblo people do, that meaning will be made. (Fiedler and Baker, 54)

This web metaphor resonates with my experience of my PhD, both in terms of the research process and the subject matter of my creative writing. When one thinks of the spider starting its web, it begins with a single thread, a straight line from which emanates the finished, intricate, circular web. The writing of my first novella, *Eleanor's Story*, began with a singular idea: to explore the journey of the Pilgrim Fathers in the light of a specific Dartmoor legend. I had an expectation of where my research might take me; however, like the spider's web, the thread soon changed direction and I found myself in a place I had not envisaged. My research trajectory brought me to the Wampanoag people and to an unexpected point of intricacy with the realisation that I wanted to write about a culture of which I had no experience or knowledge; a point of complication too, as I navigated the risk of cultural appropriation.

Silko's metaphor speaks of interrelation and connectivity. In learning about Wampanoag history and culture, my research necessarily became trans-disciplinary, traversing the boundaries of literature into history, art and archaeology. It began with a wide-ranging literature review: of academic journals, works of fiction and non-fiction, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. This led me to pursue field work across the Atlantic (in Massachusetts and Rhode Island), and generate new research for a museum exhibition and educational programmes in the UK. I met with Wampanoag artists and

educators to hear their stories and experiences, conducting interviews with Wampanoag tribal members and museum educators, who in turn introduced me to Wampanoag art and music. This experience provided me with invaluable creative inspiration and an even greater awareness of the sensitivity of writing about the Wampanoag people, but also encouragement from those I met to do so. I was particularly honoured that *Eleanor's Story* was read by Kerri Helme, a member of the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe and cultural instructor for the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation.

At the heart of my thesis sits the interrelation between story and landscape; specifically, the primacy of story embedded in place as a means of understanding the past, reflecting on the present and imagining the future. As Brooks comments, “[we] love fiction for its ability to transport us to imagined places and times without requiring us to follow a strictly chronological path” (*Primacy*, 311). Like the spider’s web, there is linearity in my creative writing in terms of its temporal framework as it moves forward, but there is also circularity in its continual remembrance and re-evaluation of the past, how it informs the present and how it might determine the future.

Kimmerer describes “a web of reciprocity, of giving and taking” (20) and “the circle of life making life, the chain of reciprocity” (20); Wai Chee Dimock, arguing that American literature is necessarily connected to the global literary works which have informed it, asserts that “literature, [rather] than being a discrete entity ... is better seen as a crisscrossing set of pathways, ways, open-ended and ever multiplying, weaving in and out of other geographies, other languages and cultures” (3). I have sought to discover these points of connection with the Wampanoag people and their history in order to create an original work of fiction, shaped by my accompanying research. I accepted the risks inherent with this endeavour as a writer and developed ways of addressing them with sensitivity. Through the use of storytelling and by allowing the landscape to reveal

its own story, my project re-evaluates how we view history and truth and, by weaving these threads together, hopes to bring us closer toward a greater understanding of what Paula Peters calls “the real story of what actually happened” (295).

If it is impossible to know the grand narrative, it is possible to evoke a story which in its expression of character and conflict imagines the plight of the immigrant and the Indigenous (*Eleanor's Story*); the position of the wealthy and those who aspire to be so (*Sowams*); and the conversations between a privileged landowner and a young woman whose spiritual connection to the land precedes the concept of ownership (*The Pond*). By giving agency to the land to present to us the story of its history, it is possible to reveal what has lain hidden from the historical record, to discard the inaccuracies of historical fabrication, and create a new place of understanding for the non-Indigenous reader of Indigenous history and culture.

Notes

The epigraph is taken from *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, p. 386.

p.75: The quoted extract attributed to General Guy M. Fessenden is taken from a letter written by Gen. Fessenden which appeared in the *Warren Telegraph*, dated 2nd June, 1860, as replicated in *Massasoit's Town: Sowams in Pokanoket* by Virginia Baker, p. 38.

p.191: Quotation taken from *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin, p. 51.

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APPENDIX 1

Research Trip Itinerary

Week One – 26th- 30th August 2019

- Monday: Arrived at Plimoth Plantation
Met with Jessica Rudden-Dube (Deputy Director, Public Engagement)
Discussed my plans and objectives for visit.
- Tuesday: Met with Richard Pickering (Deputy Director)
Discussion re overview of topics and challenges of putting together educational programmes incorporating Wampanoag elements.
Met with Vicki Oman (Director of Museum Programs and School Services)
Discussed specific ideas for exhibitions and learning programmes.
- Wednesday: Met with Kerri Helme (Guest Experience and Cultural Programs Manager)
Discussed specific elements of Wampanoag culture & history to be included in programmes and challenges/boundaries to be aware of. Also discussed my PhD research.
Tour of Plantation Museum, Wampanoag Homesite & Craft Center
Gathered useful information and photographs for both my own research and The Box Museum, Plymouth, UK.

Thursday: Met with Steven & Paula Peters, Mashpee Reservation

Tour of important sites in Mashpee with Paula Peters. Discussion with Paula about important elements to be communicated to UK audiences and her hopes for the 400th Anniversary.

Met with Jade Luiz, (Curator of Collections, Plimoth Plantation)

Conducted PhD research in Archive Center, Plimoth Plantation.

Researched texts relating to the Wampanoag, including archaeological finds and the Burr's Hill excavation of Wampanoag Burial Ground in Warren, RI.

Friday: *Continued PhD research in Archive Center*

Week Two – 3rd – 7th September 2019

Tuesday: Returned to Mashpee to take photographs for The Box Museum & my research

Drove to Rhode Island

Wednesday: Visited Robbins Museum of Archaeology, Middleborough, MA

Researched pre-contact archaeological evidence of Wampanoag sites & gained contacts for The Box team.

Met with Jonathan Perry, Wampanoag artist

Interviewed Jonathan to gather information to add to the online resource for students at Plymouth College of Art (UK) relating to artists' exhibitions at The Box Museum.

Thursday: PhD Research in Warren, RI

Visited sites relating to my creative writing: George Hail Library; historical streets in the town including the waterfront; Burr's Hill area, site of archaeological excavation in 1913.

Researched reference material held at the library relating to history of Warren.

Drove to other sites of interest including Kickemuit River and Narragansett Bay to take photographs for The Box and PhD research.

Friday: PhD Research in Newport, RI
Tour of Rough Point (Gilded Age mansion) and coastline of Newport as research for my creative writing.

Saturday: Attended re-launch of Mayflower II, Mystic Seaport, CT
Took photographs and notes for The Box Museum.

My objectives for this research trip were:

- to meet Wampanoag educators and artists in order to shape how The Box Museum in the UK can share their story authentically and appropriately
- to meet with educators at Plimoth Plantation to discuss ways in which they have successfully implemented these elements into their learning programmes and exhibitions
- in particular, to establish the boundaries for what is and is not appropriate to use and share with reference to Wampanoag history and culture for UK audiences

Some of the key findings from my trip have been:

The necessity to include information about the Wampanoag pre-European contact; looking at archaeological excavations of Native artefacts in New England and learning about the trade which already existed between different tribal nations prior to European contact.

The importance of communicating the extent of Wampanoag land & the different groups/bands within the Nation; the sophistication of their culture and society in the 17th century.

Ways for teachers to link the Mayflower story and Wampanoag society/culture into the UK national curriculum e.g. environmental aspect to Native way of life; science behind how Native people lived and farmed; living with religious and political differences; geography, immigration, colonisation/Empire, as well as land boundaries by language, not ownership.

Definition of cultural appropriation and the need to exercise caution in relation to activities around Wampanoag culture, such as basket-weaving, weaving, story-telling, singing, use of Wampanoag language. Concentrating on process & techniques, rather than replication.

A resource of Mayflower-related learning programmes held at Plimoth Plantation which could be replicated in the UK e.g. interactive theatre productions, walking tours, 'hands-on' creative activities and games.

Exploration of the place of Wampum within Native culture, particularly its varied meanings as not only a currency, but a signifier of honour and commemoration; the impact of climate change on the shell-gathering for Wampum production.

The importance of highlighting that Wampanoag culture is alive and evolving in the 21st century; that they are trying to hold onto their Native culture whilst also working as lawyers, politicians etc.

Ways to include the Native perspective in the Mayflower 400 anniversary e.g. Skype interviews, artist interviews & collaborations, the use of Wampanoag language.

The importance of including and exploring differing perspectives for anniversaries such as Mayflower 400 and Thanksgiving.

APPENDIX 2

Interviews

Richard Pickering

Deputy Director, Plimoth Plantation

Objective: to work alongside Wampanoag in order to shape how English museum educators share their story authentically and appropriately.

N.B. Native (not Native American) or Indigenous (a native who is living in their original tribal land). Although 'Native American' and 'Indian' are considered ok to use in other parts of the US.

Discussion about the challenges for The Box team in delivering the Wampanoag story to an English audience.

It's very important to communicate that the nature of race differs from the 1670s to now. In the 17th century, it was very much a case of realpolitik. Massasoit needed the power of the stranger. In the early period, Natives in the region were being buoyed up by the English against the Narragansett.

Once the English realised that there were more plentiful furs to be found in Maine, they moved up country to the Abenaki. Conflicts became racially based in order to justify the settlers' use of the land.

Another challenge for The Box is being ingrained in a traditional museum environment. Plimoth Plantation has the advantage of being a Living History Museum.

What do you see as the key points that the learning programme must include about the Wampanoag history, culture & society?

It is imperative to communicate the extent of the Wampanoag land & the different groups/bands within the Nation. There is not one Native perspective on this! Think of it as being similar to Christian theology – there is an idea of a synthesised society, but that doesn't mean there is one.

What do you see as the cultural parameters or boundaries of what may and may not be appropriate for English learning facilitators to share with English audiences both in museum and in schools?

A question to ask Kerri Helme, Mashpee Wampanoag tribal member.

Content – language. Any boundaries in terms of using language? Considering an online resource for terminology. Is there something we could look at as reference?

Ask Paula Peters or Kerri Helme. Although the Wampanoag are one people, there are differences based on locale. More elision of communities now than there probably was in early times, but also a lot more inter-movement because of smaller numbers.

With reference to the Wampum project in particular, what concepts are important for an English audience to understand about the significance of wampum to the Wampanoag?

Ask Kerri Helme – consider the transformation of the bead from a decorative spiritual object into a form of currency. But again, it changes over time. Again, saying 'it means this' is over-simplifying. Nuance of where are you standing in time. Who is relating to the

bead? John Billington, having been lost and found by the Natives, returned draped in beads and the English probably didn't have any idea what that meant.

How do we navigate presenting the Wampanoag of the past and those of the present?

Ask Kerri Helme/ Linda Coombs/ Paula Peters. Perhaps thinking of a way of exploring Pow Wow, when Wampanoag come together every July. Sharing community. Could possibly be used as a metaphor for coming together. Iroquois gifted their music to the Wampanoag because theirs was lost. Now there is a lot of fusion music going on.

Discussion of other ideas for The Box & learning programmes:

'Waking the Ancestors' production for the Smithsonian one of the best things they've organised for Plimoth Plantation; combined Church of England hymns and bible passages with traditional Wampanoag music and dances.

Two plays which were performed at Plimoth:

'I would be no persecutor' (set in a jail cell, teenage girl & father, illegal marriage, father is a broken man & requires her to marry properly). Then actors step out of character to discuss ideas and situations within the play with the audience. Very effective with teenage audience as themes resonated with their own experiences.

'So Dreadful a Judgement' Capt. Benjamin Church.

Scripted portion 20 mins long. Real people in real events they had to live through.

Walking tours of sites downtown with a Native guide have been very informative – and then contrasting with the English perspective.

Plymouth (UK) enters the story by accident. How were they ‘kindly used & courteously entertained’ in Plymouth? Was it just because it was a maritime community? When Samuel Fuller dies in 1633, he tells his executor that he needs to make a payment to John Chew. What was the settlers’ continued relationship with Plymouth? Google the will of Samuel Fuller.

Vicky Oman

Director of Museum Programs and School Services, Plimoth Plantation

Objective: to work alongside Wampanoag in order to shape how English museum educators share their story authentically and appropriately.

Discussion about the challenges for The Box team in delivering the Wampanoag story to an English audience.

What hands-on programmes can you do that aren't considered cultural appropriation?

It's a fine line. Technologies were developed elsewhere too: methods of weaving and pot-making. Finger weaving exists in English culture too. So what becomes an issue are the designs, and sometimes the techniques. The *designs* are what makes the things Wampanoag. Are they going to make retail items from the wampum necklace and if so, is that ok?

Plimoth ran a communication/literacy program. Ways of education in English culture were oral & written. To understand the Wampanoag culture, people were given a grid showing that Wampanoag tell stories using images. You could look at the wampum belt as a way of telling a story.

One example of a problem: there is a universal Native concept of the no-face doll. Because they want their children to appreciate themselves on the inside not on appearance. There was an Eastern legend about it. Someone was handing out a story from internet, but it was not Wampanoag.

So Plimoth produced a handout – incorporating the legend – with a map explaining the different regions, thereby acknowledging both the provenance & complications involved.

It's imperative that people are not seen as 'North American Indigenous'. There is so much diversity. They're the people from exactly where they are. To mistake or merge them is to remove their identity. Different communities come together & share things like music, but they are individual.

They have encountered problems with going into schools & the children are wearing feathers in their hair, paper bag vests that look like leather. Replicating cultural things like clothing is not a way to honour a people. Especially because it comes from a living thing. Life to sustain life was necessary for survival, but it was also intrinsic to their spirituality. A way to honour life: thank the creator for the life; thank the creature that the life came from.

Desire of people to imitate as a form of flattery, but for Natives it's appropriation. It's difficult or impossible to find a parallel elsewhere because of the unique history and situation of the Native and Indigenous people. Keep communicating – but you need to already have established trust & respect.

What do you see as the key points that the learning programme must include about the Wampanoag history, culture & society?

How will you convince teachers that they need to do this lesson plan, especially in the UK? Teachers need to justify the money they're spending on the field trip to the museum.

Make sure that the programmes are practical so that they fit in with their curriculum.

Where does it fit? This is the challenge.

The Wampanoag sustained themselves on the land, using responsible, controlled forest management. They never thought of a production mentality, sustenance mentality. Life was less stressful – stress of surviving. No word for work in Wampanoag. Just being.

Archaeology of pre-contact items. To show just how long these people had been here.

With reference to the Wampum project in particular, what concepts are important for an English audience to understand about the significance of wampum to the Wampanoag?

What would you like audiences to be aware of whilst looking at the wampum necklace?

Wampum became valuable because it belonged to this place. No other indigenous people had the wampum purple colour. Making a belt with this bead was not a currency; it was a signifier of honour. It did not have a value because they did not have a production mentality. Look at fluidity of meaning with wampum.

Sometimes they would trade with it e.g. to Great Lakes. Then the Europeans enter the picture. Native people were good at getting furs and so it was profitable for the English to use the Native people to get furs for them. English realised that wampum could be valuable and start recruiting Natives to make wampum.

It is interesting to look at how a culture changes when it becomes a production or capitalist economy.

In order to survive, they changed their relationship with the land and with each other because of the Europeans. Alliances and conflicts were created that would never have been there. Competition introduced.

We are reliant on English reports of Native things.

The Wampanoag culture is alive and evolving. The Pow Wow never existed in the 1620s.

What do you think would be the most effective way of communicating these key points? Do you have any suggestions/ideas for techniques, activities or resources which learning facilitators might use to engage English audiences with Wampanoag material? What have you found to be most successful at Plimoth Plantation?

Having a native person to talk to is really powerful.

One of ways they engage children is looking at what an object was made out of and how it was made. Kids love to touch furs – what animal did it come from? Look at a tool and learn that sinew was made from a deer. How many necessities of life you can take care of with just natural materials?

Looking at a beaver pelt and saying that it came from a beaver is not cultural appropriation. Understanding how people survived before technology is interesting to

kids. Put them in the mind frame that stores don't exist!! This can be a mind bender for some children. Maybe this could be in the form of a challenge or puzzle. How would you make this?

You could hire Natives to make reproductions of 17th-century objects & pay them for them. Hands-on activities. Look at political and religious extremism and the inability for people to co-exist with differences, instead of learning from differences. Ask Linda Coombs/Paula Peters about activities that would be appropriate.

What do you see as the cultural parameters or boundaries of what may and may not be appropriate for English learning facilitators to share with English audiences both in museum and in schools?

Any process that involves an expression of spirituality or identity e.g. don't copy a bag that Kerri Helme wove because she made it from her own experiences.

Wouldn't give them a native design to copy. But they do make pinch pots or coil pots or finger weaving.

Making money from something that has not helped the Wampanoag people e.g. merchandising. Unless the merchandising is done with Linda & Paula and they're in the loop with the money.

Singing songs is not appropriate. Playing music on (authentic) audio may be ok, but not replicating it with drums, sticks etc.

Using images of objects ok? Ask Paula Peters & Linda Coombs. Beading, but not a belt or a design. Use bigger tubes for younger children.

Content – language. Any boundaries in terms of using language? Considering an online resource for terminology. Is there something we could look at as reference?

Wampanoag Language Reclamation Project. Have on their website English words that came from Wampanoag. Vicky feels it would be ok to use these as long as you cite them.

Eliot Bible – source for Wampanoag words. Vicky doesn't think there would be a problem with reproducing a page from that bible.

However, you would need to acknowledge that the bible led to conversion, led to language became illegal and then became the source of reclamation. Explain that the language is animate & inanimate; the language is a reflection of the culture. Ask Linda Coombs and Paula Peters if they could provide a selection of words for you to use.

Five or ten years ago, they were not able to use the language at all. It could be in a film, but not in sold DVDs.

Vicky's understanding is that Roger Williams glossary is not necessarily accurate. Ask Linda Coombs & Paula Peters about the accuracy of the Roger Williams' glossary.

How do we navigate presenting the Wampanoag of the past and those of the present?

Statue of Massasoit in Plymouth on the Day of Mourning. To provide the perspective that Thanksgiving is a Day of Mourning. This anniversary is a birth and a death of something. It is important to include this in the Anniversary. A win for one culture is always a loss for another?

Lots of people like to talk about this as an immigration story; the story of emigration and conquering. They did not come here to integrate.

What have we lost? Look at issue of climate change / science. Look at the science behind how Native people planted corn & squash.

There is the possibility of looking at the difference between colonisation and Empire. What was lost, what was gained. Vicki can't think of a single gain for the Native culture.

Look at maps and look at them from different perspectives. Port Louis; Patuxet; Plymouth. The name that stuck was the culture that won. Look at story through maps. Some Native place names are retained, but most are gone.

What lasting impact would you like this anniversary and accompanying exhibitions/learning projects to have on an English audience?

Everyone will come with a different agenda: beginning of freedom of religion, first holocaust, Pilgrim descendants, those interested in ships, Native people honouring the people that were here first. Everyone will come for different reasons. They will engage

with the story like it's their story, but they will be able to see the other perspectives too. No one will feel that their story has not been represented, but people will see that there are other stories and other perspectives.

It should be a safe space for people to come together and engage with the story on their level and at least recognise the other perspective.

Kerri Helme

Guest Experience and Cultural Programs Manager, Plimoth Plantation

Objective: to work alongside Wampanoag in order to shape how English museum educators share their story authentically and appropriately.

Discussion about the challenges for The Box team in delivering the Wampanoag story to an English audience.

Telling our story so that modern people don't start to feel guilty. People tend to shut down when they feel guilty. The way around this is to tell stories from both sides. Sometimes visitors end up in tears.

Some historical events are not suitable for all ages. You have to bear in mind the mixed audience – who's listening. It's important to gauge the audience.

Kerri felt that the lack of awareness in the UK is probably a good thing, an opportunity to educate.

What do you see as the key points that the learning programme must include about the Wampanoag history, culture & society?

Pre-contact history. We have 13,000 years of history. We are one of the few tribes who have never left their homeland. It is imperative to look at how they lived before the English arrived.

Also post-contact history (i.e. after the first Thanksgiving, which is the point at which many Americans end their knowledge). Imperative to communicate that they are a living, breathing people in 2020.

Also that they are a sovereign nation separate from the US. They do not consider themselves as Americans.

We had a discussion about the continent and the difference in the ways we picture it. I have a picture of the US, Canada divided into states and provinces as represented on globes and maps. Kerri pictures Turtle Island as the whole continent (America and Canada together). When she pictures the separations within the continent, she pictures it by language group. Algonquin – from Nova Scotia down to Chesapeake Bay, Virginia and out west to the Great Lakes. Same language, but different dialects. Wampanoag was south of Boston, west to Narragansett Bay and out to Cape Cod. It included 69 towns all speaking same dialect. The continent is distinguished by language not geography.

Mohican was spoken in the western part of MA, but their language is closer to Lenape which is from Manhattan (the grandfather language).

Entire Wampanoag was not on board with making friends with English.

There could be a male or female sachem. Clan mothers could overrule the sachem. Clan mother = the top elected grandmother. She could replace the whole family line if necessary.

The Wampanoag word for Woman means 'the one who has the final say'. Wampanoag word for Man 'he whose feet travel the earth'.

It is important to communicate the Wampanoag community and family structure. Man moves into the woman's community. Children are born into their mother's clan, not their fathers.

Mary Rowlandson could not understand Weetamoo's status. Pilgrims did not recognise the status or role of women either.

Either son or daughter would inherit title from sachem. Clan mother might make that decision. Women brought in the majority of food; 70% was coming from the women. Men's work took them away from home.

Natural resources and land were plentiful. Pilgrims witnessed work of women in village. Often the men were resting. Children were not expected to work at all. Therefore the culture was misunderstood. But they only worked for 3-4 hours a day at busiest time of day.

Women – jobs to do with giving of life e.g. caring for children, cooking. Men – jobs to do with taking away of life e.g. burning out big boats, hunting, fishing, trapping.

Singing and dancing was a form of prayer, but also recreation. Powwow was a person – a medicine person / healer.

In the 1630s/1640s there was no Pow wowing. Medicine people couldn't practise their craft. This involved singing and dancing as an aspect of healing. So it transformed into a ban on those practices also.

Calendar based around 13 moons. 28 days in each moon. Celebrations connected to moon phases involved several days of singing and dancing.

Strawberry Thanksgiving – first berry that's ripe. Moon of Forgiveness. Oral history – brother & sister who loved each other, in woods, came across forked path. Argued over it. Girl split off. Missed her brother. Cried. Tears fell & strawberries grew and gave to brother to make amends. Forgive all past grievances.

Green Corn Thanksgiving – finally ripe enough to eat. The New Year is in May.

They don't use prayer as a request for something. Native prayer is a form of thanks.

Creator / monotheism is a form of colonialism.

Roger Williams identified at least 38 spirits. All natural things have a spirit, animate & inanimate.

What do you think would be the most effective way of communicating these key points?

Having a Native person to talk to is really powerful.

Do you have any suggestions/ideas for techniques, activities or resources which learning facilitators might use to engage English audiences with Wampanoag material? What have you found to be most successful at Plimoth Plantation?

What hands-on programmes can you do that aren't considered cultural appropriation?

With children, don't go into it too much. If they're not old enough to hear the real story, don't teach it. Otherwise you're just making it into a fairy tale. Use touching/feeling materials. Look at how things were made. Look at medicines we used. Perhaps have plants which are used.

Look at creation stories. Check with Paula if she's ok with that. Mashup & story of island of Martha's Vineyard. Just need to check authenticity. Aquinnah Cultural Center - anyone there would help with story of Mashup.

Recordings of music & singing are fine. Touching artefacts is fine. Kerri would donate items. Video recordings of Native artisans. She thinks Paula would be ok with that.

Mini interior of a wetu. People could go in and sit on benches. Bags, deerskins. Paula should be ok with that.

Absolutely no dressing up. No head dresses. Paula Peters agrees.

Use of imagery is fine. Photos of Plimoth site & Natives should be fine with permission.

Rachel Perez took some professional photos of the homesite, which could be requested.

What do you see as the cultural parameters or boundaries of what may and may not be appropriate for English learning facilitators to share with English audiences both in museum and in schools?

Stick to generic processes and techniques. Don't replicate designs. No to reproducing the language.

Content – language. Any boundaries in terms of using language? Considering an online resource for terminology. Is there something we could look at as reference?

Always use the Wampanoag name. Any word you can find online should be fine. It is a copyrighted language. Permission must be sought from the Language Reclamation Project.

Pooped – peewee – raccoon – skunk – all Wampanoag words.

I asked about the accuracy of Roger Williams' glossary. Kerri's response was that it's good, but it's not Wampanoag. It's Narragansett.

With reference to the Wampum project in particular, what concepts are important for an English audience to understand about the significance of wampum to the Wampanoag?

Wampum is so precious. The shell has to come from MA Bay or Long Island Sound. Belts would not just honour treaties, but marriages, family lines. Wampum is widespread, not just Wampanoag.

There is now pollution in bays – cloudiness of water stops Eel Grass growing and it's becoming sandy.

Farms grow quahogs for food and they grow faster, but there's no purple. These are taking over the natural shells.

Most peace treaties have a wampum belt to mark it.

Their value is because they honour the workmanship. The shell is as fragile as porcelain. It has to be drilled underwater.

Margaret Bruchac from University of Pennsylvania – Abenaki – worked at Sturbridge Village. She lectures about Wampum.

Can you give me an idea of the present situation for the Wampanoag? The current challenges.

Holding onto what little land is left. When Native people were granted reservations in the 19th century, they were given the worse land possible. Lot of people elsewhere want to get off the reservations. The Wampanoag at Mashpee have prime location land, and so it is hard to hold onto. The government are trying to take them to court, challenge their sovereignty and right to own land, to have housing. Keeping people in Mashpee is a challenge.

But Kerri is filled with hope for the youth – projects such as going back to their way of praying, language programmes in schools & camps, songs & dances. Youth is spearheading the future.

How do we navigate presenting the Wampanoag of the past and those of the present?

Living with a foot in two canoes is how they describe it – doing what you have to do to retain their traditions and culture but also live in the modern world.

What lasting impact would you like this anniversary and accompanying exhibitions/learning projects to have on an English audience?

“For the British, to go back to what was the original intent. The Wampanoag need allies! The best outcome would be for people to realise that we still exist, that we are a living, breathing people. And for you to support us. To be a voice when ours cannot be heard. For you to honour the original intention of the treaty between the Wampanoag people and the English.”

Paula Peters, Mashpee Reservation

Objective: to work alongside Wampanoag in order to shape how English museum educators share their story authentically and appropriately.

Discussion about the challenges for The Box team in delivering the Wampanoag story to an English audience.

The biggest challenge is that The Box does not have someone from the Wampanoag nation to interpret the history. But they can't be everywhere. Consultation with Wampanoag people & Wampanoag historians is critical in order to get the story right and they understand that.

It would be good if there was some accessibility – Paula could make a recommendation. Could we have a Skype session with a Wampanoag tribal member perhaps? Paula could organise this. There could be a presenter/speaker in the US who could then Skype audience in UK for questions people might have.

What do you see as the key points that the learning programme must include about the Wampanoag history, culture & society?

“We are still here. It is vital that you stress the point that we are a living people. This may sound obvious, but it's not. When I was a little kid, I was in 1st grade living in Philadelphia learning about Thanksgiving. The teacher said everybody had died. Sometimes it seems like my whole life has been telling people that I'm still here.”

It's essential for adults and children to know that the culture that was encountered by colonists was not primitive or uncivilized. It was just different.

Paula was asked to edit curriculum for 3rd grade level and they got to the part about King Philip's War. It sounded like it was spontaneous – but you have to talk about the injustices, the domination over the land, the sovereignty of Wampanoag was being violated. It was not just an event – you have to explore the reasons and conflicts and address the fact that the picture was complicated.

When talking about the civility of the Wampanoag, it is important to stress that there was spirituality & religious belief among the Wampanoag and that it was simply different to the English. There was a benefit for the English to take that narrow view of religion in that even though they weren't aligned with the Catholic church, the manifest destiny identified Wampanoag as savages and authorised people to go in and view them as having no rights.

What do you think would be the most effective way of communicating these key points?

A Wampanoag person obviously. The Skype idea would be good. All The Box can do is ensure that the picture is communicated in a balanced way. The Box already give Wampanoag an opportunity to review which is good.

When plans are more formulated, it would be good to see those plans in more detail - more information about exactly how & where things will be displayed. (London Guildhall – she saw where Wampum belt would be displayed?)

What do you see as the cultural parameters or boundaries of what may and may not be appropriate for English learning facilitators to share with English audiences both in museum and in schools?

She needs to give it some thought. Games they could play, weaving activities. Making corn husk dolls. Making pots, working with clay. Concentrating on processes and techniques that are present in other resources, but not replicating Wampanoag designs.

Do you have any suggestions/ideas for techniques, activities or resources which learning facilitators might use to engage English audiences with Wampanoag material?

Trading game – some children might have skins, some might have pots, some might have wampum.

Circle of life game. Each child represents different element of circle of life – bear, river, bird, boy, girl, mountain. Drive down to river, change oil & put oil in the river. When we did that, what's happening to you fish?? Fish are dead, what's happening to you bear? Dramatise the importance of respecting all things in nature, and communicate what was so important to the Wampanoag way of life.

Content – language. Any boundaries in terms of using language? Considering an online resource for terminology. Is there something we could look at as reference?

It's important to communicate that there was a separate language and that this was a sticking point. People had to try to learn to understand each other and learn to translate words e.g. Bowl.

Paula could ask the Emerging School and the Language Reclamation Project. They are still trying to learn the language. The people organising it have agreed that they don't share the language outside of the community without express permission. We would have to liaise with the Language Reclamation Project.

We could perhaps have an exhibit showing a cup, a bowl, etc with the Wampanoag word. Interactive – where the word is expressed correctly for you.

With reference to the Wampum project in particular, what concepts are important for an English audience to understand about the significance of wampum to the Wampanoag?

Paula has already sent over copy on this. Has Jo received this? Paula was waiting for response on this.

What would you like audiences to be aware of whilst looking at the wampum belt?

This belt is not a museum piece but part of the community. Again, in the paperwork sent over.

Can you give me an idea of the present situation for the Wampanoag? The current challenges.

Paula would not answer this question. It is too painful and too political to talk about.

How do we navigate presenting the Wampanoag of the past and those of the present?

Learn about the Language Reclamation Project. Learn about the modern-day culture of the community.

Find out about the current daily life of the Wampanoag. It's important to know that they live in typical homes, drive cars and have jobs. Show Wampanoag doing jobs like everyone else. Politicians, lawyers etc.

What lasting impact would you like this anniversary and accompanying exhibitions/learning projects to have on an English audience?

"I would like them to recognise the impact that their colonising efforts had on other parts of the world. Not just those on Turtle Island, but everywhere they went. In that process, things that get sacrificed are centuries old arts, culture, language – everything that make up the uniqueness of a people.

Now the UK realises the value of multi-culturalism and diversity. And all societies are the better for it.

I would like people to come away with knowing the true history, the real story of what actually happened. The story didn't begin in 1620. There were deeds and actions that happened long before that that had lasting consequences."

APPENDIX 3

Interview with Jonathan Perry

Aquinnah Wampanoag artist

4th September 2019

Intention:

That is a hard question to answer. I am inspired by many things – research, reading. If an individual/organisation/museum requests something that invokes a specific thought or feeling, I'm inspired by what I think would best suit that space or exhibition. I never know if I'm right. I look at ways of conveying the message. Then I build my project around that. Other times it's very specific – if I'm creating something that's very specific. I can be artistic in method when creating a reproduction for an exhibit or collector, there are certain restraints in the appropriate making of it using traditional methods. I can be creative but I'm also bound by traditional guidelines.

I think art inherently communicates. Anything can be viewed as art and anything can convey a feeling or thought or reaction. It can create anger or confusion, spark interest. It can be romantic, it can be scary, so many things, but inherently we are impacted by people's way of processing anything and everything around us. There have been anthropological studies on people's reaction to colour and space. The way people enter a shopping plaza. We are living beings who are affected by our space and artistic expression is the pinnacle of that. It's finding the touch points that will convey that.

I enjoy working with natural materials, working with my inspiration at the time. A traditional view from my people is when you're creating something, you're just a vehicle or tool in which the being within the material is seeking its way of being viewed.

So I'm not sure I'm creating something as much as releasing what's there to be viewed by others. That's acknowledging and celebrating the living elements of the material and how it's connected to the Creator and life. I'm not there to force it to be something it's not or doing something to serve myself. I'm there to help it be seen. That's the traditional Aquinnah Wampanoag view and how I perceive my role. I am the maker, but I'm inspired by what's already there and guided by those teachings and that respect.

Creativity:

I feel like so many times it's different depending on my mood; where I am; my influences. An idea may just pop into my head and then I just start building off of that. It's holistic, I guess, in that I feel that I'm the type of person who is constantly building towards something. Everything I learn, feel, experience, every want & need of mine is constantly building my skill set, knowledge, hopes and efforts so I could just pick up a process or material and do something that was lucrative, but devoid of continuing to tell the story of who I am, but I don't tend to do that. Everything I make and do is reminding people that I am Aquinnah Wampanoag; that I am a contemporary designer/maker, that I'm connected to a long, complex society with its own practices and structured language, artistic expression and responsibilities to its generations and that influences and guides me, and I take that into consideration into all my efforts in life.

I think risk-taking is vital. If you're not taking risks, then you're not growing or changing. There is an element of risk in everything you do. Risk-taking in art is mandatory because without it you don't really create anything, you just push envelopes. It's much like the battle Native people have in being viewed as fine artists. We're judged by whether we're doing Indian art and if we're not, we're devalued. As opposed to creating artwork and we happen to be Native. We're all influenced by our teachers, mentors, landscapes so

as a Native person who's an artist, I can't remove this from what I make, but it doesn't devalue what I do.

Wearing my identity is risk-taking in the art world. Letting people know who and what I am, but still expecting people to view me in the Fine Art world. I demand both. I should be who I am and respected for my art. I choose to be open and honest about my teachers, my mentors, my training. I expect to be respected. If I fail in my process, I am due that same level of criticism as any other artist. I don't fail because of my identity.

That being said, I don't believe there is such a thing as failure. The only failure that can exist is an artist's failure to respect their own work; when you're not happy and criticising yourself and you can't move on from that. The audience's failure to respect an artist's work is maybe the failure of the venue to gain the right audience, because everything speaks to someone. So is there such a thing as failure? Especially something as subjective as art, because if one person is inspired by a piece of artwork then that artist has succeeded. It's not about liking; it's not a competition because there are so many different artists who have evoked all kinds of feelings and responses to their work. It's not about refined processes. One potter may use a very energetic and finished process to convey what they're trying to say; the next may use a different process. Are they equal or are they not? It's so subjective. Rembrandt appeals to some people, not all. At the end of the day, it's the emotion that's evoked by the viewer, regardless of age or standing or the reasoning for collective viewing/ displaying. There is no such thing as failure. The biggest failure would be to not continue to create.

Materials & Processes:

I use predominately natural materials. I haven't really worked in synthetics. I haven't personally created glass work, not that I'd be opposed to it. But all sorts of metals: gold,

silver, copper, iron, steel. If I'm going to hand create ear wires for a wearable piece of artwork, then I do have to take into consideration people's need for a stable metal. Not everyone likes copper's tendency to go green. So I'll work with rose gold. I've worked with ivory because of traditional harvesting (where the ivory is a secondary by-product e.g. baleen and walrus tusk from Native people in Alaska. Or fossilised mammoth ivory. Fishing trawlers might sometimes come up with fossilised mammoth tusks). My family were whalers and as a result my mother was a scrimshander, so I've learnt that skill from her. I do like traditional as well as contemporary artforms. I use wood. Animal horn, antler and materials like that I use fairly frequently.

My tribal nation has beached whale rights. So I can take possession of whale; whale bone, baleen or teeth could be distributed to people as a traditional material. What ends up happening is because of that situation I would have the right to work on and make traditional artwork from that material. We also have the right to access dead sea turtles, killed by speed boat strikes, plastic bags, fishing nets. But we don't have the right to market those pieces. So government laws can undermine artistic expression for materials through systems that are not our responsibility. We're not responsible for the collapse of marine mammals, but as resources become rarer and species become extinct, it affects us. I'm sure other artists around the world have similar experiences. The disappearance of species with which we have a strong relationship is a challenge. Basket makers using traditional Ash wood are having difficulty finding ash trees because of the emerald ash beetle brought here through import of wood from Asia. Kelly Church, a basket maker, has started to use copper and other materials and puts the emerald beetle into her baskets as part of her pieces, acknowledging that this is a dying art form.

There are specialised methods of dealing with ivory, bone and antler. For scrimshaw, you have to find the least porous areas of the material and apply a fine polish before you can etch; sometimes multiple layers of inking and etching. Originally this would have been hand polishing; today I can use machinery.

For metalwork, I use cold hammering – heating, quick cooling, then hammering – or stretching metals like copper. Every hammer strike hardens the copper so it becomes harder and denser. Slow process for forming a bowl or sculpture or jewellery.

I use fire hardening or heat hardening wood, and fire burnishing for shaping in wood sculpturing, for example in canoe making. This is the traditional method for shaping wood. Fire will shape wood better than hand carving most of the time, but I may do a combination of traditional and modern. I can use machinery and modern carving knives. Everything has its way of processing material differently. So I choose a method depending on what I want to get out of the piece.

I'm a blend of the traditional and modern/contemporary and therefore so is my art. I'm not bound by rules, only by the reality of the world I live in. Everything else is a possibility. I don't like using glasses or goggles; I don't like the separation from the piece.

The toll that various art forms take on the creator is never taken into consideration when valuing their work. People go blind, sustain injuries; stone dust causes breathing problems, even death. One of the shell carvers I knew who was a master, he died in his 40s from shell dust which had caused lung damage. That is very rarely taken into consideration. That's a tremendous sacrifice for the love of creating and conveying story, for taking something and turning it into a completely different thing. To lose one's life trying to make the world better. A muralist who's creating something and loses their life; is the compensation consummate to what it took to do that work; for the thousands of people who walk past that mural most of the time not knowing who that maker was.

To me that's sacrifice. Incalculable sacrifice. But where would we be without it? Or who would we be?

I've done collaborative pieces and worked with other artists, but for the most part I work on my own. You're not always compatible with other people. I'm pretty easy-going, but I have my own methods and views and ways of expressing myself which may not sit well with others. That's probably not uncommon. But I am extremely appreciative of other artists' methods and work. My own work has given me a heightened appreciation of others' work.

I sometimes work with assistant. It depends on the project. I carved a 27-foot canoe, so I needed an assistant for that. One of the reasons I sometimes work in a team is that I want to be surpassed by the next generation. In our culture, we want the younger people to learn from our knowledge and processes so they can be better than us. We want the student to become the teacher. If my lifetime of crude knowledge is handed on to someone younger, they have longer to become better. Because of technology we're better in a way, but worse off too; the spiritual and mental benefits of handing on knowledge have disappeared. The control and reasoning have disappeared.

How do I choose materials that are not going to have a negative impact on the environment? Do I use gold knowing its history? Or will I be devalued for choosing not to use it? But I choose not to use it because of my ethical standards and my history. Most gold is recycled gold from people who have been used or murdered. Do I reclaim it? How do I tell that story? What's the spiritual impact of handling something like that and selling it on? Being part of that journey? These are just questions, not necessarily things I have answers to.

I was at a Native Fine Arts market in Arizona, one of the biggest in the country attended by thousands of people. Buyers come in to look at the pieces. I remember being so offended because someone came through, probably a collector or gallery owner. A woman was appreciating some copper earrings of mine. I use copper because in my culture it is the most valued metal because of its medicinal properties and reflective properties amongst other things. This gentleman, without probably knowing anything about Native metal traditions, pointed to this piece, picked it up and said "It's thin. They use copper because it's cheaper." He was obviously an 'authority' and making sure he was viewed as an authority, and yet he knew nothing, at least not about my work. Without asking me about my reasons for using copper, which has nothing to do with the traditional western idea of metals, he perpetuated this miscomprehension. This is the danger of the artist's voice being taken away.

My studio is wherever I am. I've sat in meetings and created a piece because it's better to be creating than be part of a non-constructive meeting. I've gone to favourite places in the woods or on the beach. Somewhere environmentally healthy. I work in my living room with my three-year-old son painting at the table beside me, quite content with his childish comments and observations and with the paint being splattered around. Being a father, experiencing that, is another element in my journey and it has changed me. What I had as one of my work spaces is now his playroom, that's the way life is.

It all depends on the materials I'm working with. If I'm shaping with fire it's outdoors, whether on my property or on tribal lands in Aquinnah. It has to be outdoors. There's no way I can do some of my work inside any structure. Sometimes I'll harvest materials and work right there, just as my ancestors would have done.

Communication:

It's important to have the artist interviews and engagement, to understand who the creator behind the creation is and why. It's important to have a level of respect for people who are makers and you see that in a lot of ways. Fashion designers who create a piece and then mass produce them with a company name. Slow art or slow fashion, buying an individual piece versus buying a mass-produced piece that was handled by a small team. How the people's stories and realities are removed from the marketing collective world. The only way that balance is regained is if the artist becomes valued like their work, then they're returned to their work with a voice. But that is very rare. Part of the problem is the devaluing of the making of things, the makers of things, the growing experiences that make those people create things that can bring joy to a large number of people or a select person. The idea of taking part of the beauty of the creation away by removing the voice of the creator – it doesn't benefit anyone, including the buyer of the work. I think it's changing a bit. One of the great things about the digital world is that people can get on all sorts of platforms, make a break beyond what was historically a very controlled world. Collectors can find artists in a lot of different places, a stone carver in northern Alaska, and they can go from an unknown element and work not getting outside a region to suddenly being known worldwide. Artistic work can be elevated so far beyond the old days of collectors and galleries who would decide who was profitable or who should be elevated. Things are less regulated, but there's still a long way to go.

I'm not putting all galleries or museums or collectors in the same boat. There have been forward-thinking people engaging with artists who have started to change those institutions' way of approaching the fine arts world. I don't mind creating in front of people. I like the opportunity to explain my work and process, where I come from and what's meaningful for me. I'm not sure how I feel about how people interpret my work

because I'm not sure if they will have enough knowledge base about where I come from, why I choose the materials I choose, why I have certain designs and certain ways of creating my work. Much like the gentleman in the copper story, who tried to fill in the blank based on his own knowledge and awareness, there's a lack of awareness of North-Eastern Native people in the US and internationally, which needs to be addressed in order for people to be educated enough to freely speak about things. Ultimately, there has to be a level of due diligence with anything we do. A need for people to have a dialect with Indigenous people in order to comment authentically on us or our work; otherwise you'd just be grabbing at straws and possibly causing offence. You are taking a part of the artist anyway, so you may as well know about the artist. People that collect or exhibit Van Gogh know about Van Gogh. The artist needs to have an opportunity to have a voice and enter the conversation. Just like societies around the globe have to have a voice in the telling of their story, otherwise a lot of mistakes are made, misconceptions are perpetuated and the devaluing of a society occurs, just as the devaluing of the artist can occur.

Research & Context:

I've been in a museum or gallery several times a month for most of my life. At times that's because my work is there or because I'm consulting. I do a lot of historical research, scientific process research, environmental research, linguistic research. Linguistic study helps me to ground myself in the traditions, spiritual practices, missing components of stories, and also helps me to identify the values and meaning of symbols. We have a descriptive language, so there's a lot of knowledge hidden in the language. I conduct research about material processing, environmental changes and loss of resources. Being a natural material artist, I'm reliant on a healthy world which we no longer have.

Critical Reflection:

I'm always evaluating and re-evaluating my work. I'm a bit of a perfectionist, so I question when I decide a piece is finished. Ultimately, you can keep working endlessly until you have nothing left. I think there is truth to the notion of the tortured artist; you have inspiration and vision and hopes around what you're creating and then you can surpass in some ways and fall short in other ways of what your expectations were and where do you stop? A million people could love what you do and you could still have a problem. Is the audience's perception what matters or is it our ancestors who matters – that our work respects our families? There are so many ways to look at it and try to answer the question we always have in hearts and minds – is it enough?

Further discussion:

Jonathan was very pleased with our desire to 'get the line correct' for our exhibitions and learning programmes in the UK.

He acknowledged the problem we will have with the absence of Native people. He mentioned that he had previously suggested coming over to the UK to do a dug-out canoe demonstration. Bringing a different perspective would be very powerful.

Mayflower2020 is not just a single activity, but a changing point to build a better future. A turning point, not just a reflection. An opportunity to build relationships and correct the silence.