Telling Stories in the Face of Danger

Language Renewal in Native American Communities

Edited by

Paul V. Kroskrity

University of Oklahoma Press : Norman

CHAPTER 9

SILENCE BEFORE THE VOID

Language Extinction, Maliseet Storytelling, and the Semiotics of Survival

Bernard C. Perley

The third-grade students in the classroom were agitated with excitement because the Native language teacher was going to tell them a story. After everyone in the classroom had settled down to listen, the teacher began telling the students that they were going to hear a Kloskap story. The teacher then asked, "Does anyone know who Koluskap is?"[1] One student straightened up and said, "Yeah, that's what my mom calls my dad!" The teacher and I both smiled as we suppressed our laughter; the name "Koluskap" has been translated into English as "liar."[2] The teacher proceeded to explain to the students that Kloskap was the Great Chief of the Maliseets. He was responsible for transforming the landscape and the animals so that the Maliseets could live happy lives. After that brief introduction, the teacher began to read "The Coming of Gluskabi" from Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac's 1998 text *Keepers of the Earth*. After the reading of the story she instructed students to draw and color their favorite part of the story.

The above ethnographic vignette is typical of the storytelling portion of the Native language class at Mah-Sos Elementary School on Tobique First Nation in New Brunswick, Canada.[3] The vignette is an example of significant changes in Maliseet language use and Maliseet storytelling practice. Not only was the story presented in English, the story was *read* to the students. The absence of the Maliseet language in the Maliseet language classroom during a story reading is indicative of a dangerous juncture for Maliseet language use and Maliseet storytelling practice. That juncture is *the silence before the void.*

What do I mean by "silence"? It is rare to hear the traditional Maliseet stories told in the Maliseet language. Maliseet communities are witnessing the silencing of the Maliseet language in most cultural domains—

particularly storytelling. What do I mean by "the void"? Language scholars and advocates have argued that the loss of a language is a loss of "diversity" of distinct cultures (Crystal 2000; Grenoble and Whaley 1998; Hinton and Hale 2001; Mithun 2004; Nettle and Romaine 2000), "human knowledge" (Crystal 2000; Harrison 2007; Wilson 2005), and "identity" (Crystal 2000; Wilson 2005). The Maliseet void, then, is the loss of distinct culture, distinct knowledge, and distinct identity. The gradual loss of the Maliseet language in Maliseet storytelling, the retelling of Maliseet stories by non-Maliseet storytellers and scholars, and the predominant use of English while *reading* Maliseet stories are key transformations in Maliseet storytelling that present several linguistic and cultural dangers for Maliseet communities. The greatest of these dangers are the extinction of the Maliseet language as well as the collateral extinctions of distinct Maliseet culture, knowledge, and identity. The precarious state of the Maliseet language and Maliseet storytelling practice is the result of a long process of transformation.

I had returned to my birthplace to do my anthropological fieldwork in the mid-1990s. My primary focus was on language politics in Canada and the causes of Maliseet language endangerment. I have learned that there is no simple explanation for how or why the Maliseet language and Maliseet storytelling practice have reached states of endangerment. However, an exploration of Maliseet storytelling transformation over the past one hundred years can provide some insights into the kinds of changes that lead to Maliseet stories now being read in English and the Maliseet language now in danger of becoming extinct.

The focus of this chapter is Maliseet storytelling that has been variously categorized as legends, tales, texts, and stories by scholars over the past century. The common characteristic in the collections discussed here is their respective representations of Maliseet oral poetics.[4] These categories and representations often reflect the ideologies of their particular times (Bauman and Briggs 2003; Briggs and Bauman 1992). When viewed in isolation they do not reveal the trajectory toward language death and storytelling silence, but by comparing representations across texts the trajectory toward silence can be summarized as a series of representational shifts. The first indicates a shift from the oral performance to textual representation, or from interdiscursivity (face-to-face conversations and storytelling) to entextualization (writing down face-to-face exchanges into textual form) (Silverstein 2005). The second representational shift is from early collections of texts to varieties of contemporaneous representations.

This shift may be analyzed as a move from entextualization to generic intertextuality (creative rewriting of stories from previously written texts) (Briggs and Bauman 1992). The third shift is from popular representations to oral poetic practice. I describe this phase as a shift from intertextuality (creative rewriting of stories from previously written texts) back to interdiscursivity.

These three shifts also reflect changes in salvage ideologies. The first period, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century salvage anthropology, was "salvage work as documentation." The second period of salvage work, the early 1960s, was "salvage work as preservation." The third (and current) mode of salvage work is "salvage work as revitalization." These shifts in representation and salvage work can be summarized as *entextualization as documentation*, *intertexuality as preservation*, and *interdiscursivity as revitalization.* To facilitate the analysis, I compare different representations of a Maliseet story describing the origin of the Tobique Rock. The story is of particular importance to Tobique First Nation because the "rock" is located at Neswakik on Tobique First Nation. The changes in representing the story in the three periods identified above reflect the changes in Maliseet language use in Maliseet stories.

The Maliseet story of the Tobique Rock is shared by many First Nations communities, including the Passamaquoddy people (who speak a "mutually intelligible" dialect of an Eastern Algonquian language (Goddard 1978:70; LeSourd 2007:viii), Penobscots, Abenakis, and Micmacs. Including the Maliseets, these five nations constitute the Wabanaki Confederacy, and today members of the Confederacy refer to themselves collectively as "the people of the dawn." The Wabanakis are also "Algonquin" because they speak (or spoke) varieties of Eastern Algonquin languages. The geographic center for the ethnographic examples and discussion in this chapter is the Maliseet community of Tobique First Nation, New Brunswick, Canada. However, the examples also come from neighboring areas of northeastern North America along the national border where the other Wabanaki nations are located. The spelling and nomenclatural variations reflect the representations used by the storyteller or collector.

THE POETICS OF EXTINCTION

The Maliseet language has been diagnosed as "on the verge of extinction."[5] There are many factors contributing to Maliseet language death. Most of them are similar to those identified by Schmidt (1990) as the loci of language death and attrition: assimilatory pressures from educational institutions, the hegemonic role of the mass media in further promoting English and other state languages, and missionization—a process that further bolsters the state-endorsed religion and language. Additional factors that contribute to the endangerment of Maliseet include massive social change and the metamorphosis of speech communities through social transformations such as mixed marriages, emigration, relocation, and, most important, cessation of Native language use in particular speech genres in particular speech events and domains.

Maliseet storytelling is just one of many Maliseet speech genres that have undergone radical transformation. This chapter focuses on scholars and storytellers who have *represented* Maliseet texts at three different times over that the past 120 years. I use the term "representation" instead of "translation" to foreground the initial separation of Maliseet stories from Maliseet voices and Maliseet people through the process of writing down what Maliseet speakers and storytellers had said into a textual form that can be reinterpreted at a later time.[6] This process of rendering discourse into text is also informed by the methods and practices of each period of time. Each "scholar" (translator) renders cohesiveness and coherence to texts as conditioned by his or her milieu. A close examination of the early representations of Maliseet texts by Charles G. Leland at the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth century illustrates "salvage work as documentation" through entextualization.

Leland stated, in 1884, that his collection of Algonquin legends was his attempt "simply to collect and preserve valuable material." His reason: "I believe that when the Indian shall have passed away there will come far better ethnologists than I am, who will be more obliged to me for collecting raw material than for cooking it." Leland's modesty seems disingenuous when one sees how he "cooked" the corpus of Algonquin stories by compiling them into a form that supported his argument that the collected stories were the equal of any Norse saga (Leland 1992) and that the mythology was "far grander" than Schoolcraft's Chippewa corpus (Leland 1992:iii; Parkhill 1997). In his introduction, Leland makes his argument for the merit of the Algonquin legends, but he erases Algonquin interpretations of the stories by privileging his own interpretations: "When it is born in mind that the most ancient and mythic of these legends have been taken down from the trembling memories of old squaws who never understood their inner meaning, or from ordinary *senaps* who had not thought of them

since boyhood, it will be seen that the preservation of a mass of prose poems, equal in bulk to the Kalevala or Heldenbuch, is indeed almost miraculous" (Leland 1992:13).

Leland's representation of the Tobique Rock story is in prose and in English only.

> Up on the Tobiac are two salt-water rocks (that is, rocks by the ocean-side, near a freshwater stream). The Great Beaver, standing there one day, was seen by Glooskap miles away, who had forbidden him that place. Then picking up a large rock where he stood by the shore, he threw it all that distance at the Beaver, who indeed dodged it; but when another came, the beast ran into a mountain, and has never come forth to this day. But the rocks which the master threw are yet to be seen. (Leland 1992:21)

Though this excerpt seems unremarkable by itself, a comparison with his 1902 version reveals a change in Leland's philosophy regarding representing Algonquin "legends":

> Yet another tradition tells
> That after cutting the dam
> The Master sat and watched,
> And yet no Beaver came forth,
> For Kwabit had escaped by a hole
> Which led back to the other side;
> Kulóskap then tore up
> A rock and he threw it
> Very far indeed,
> One hundred and fifty miles,
> To frighten the Beaver back;
> But over the Grand Falls
> Kwabit had gone in haste
> And so for the time escaped;
> Yet the stone remaineth there
> As a wonder to this day. (Leland and Prince 1902:115–16)

This second representation of the Tobique Rock story was a collaborative project with John D. Prince in their 1902 publication *Kulóscap the Master*. This is a significant departure for Leland because he has rendered

his collected stories in "English metre" and enlisted the assistance of Prince to "revise, correct, and compare [his] metrical version with the original text" (Leland and Prince 1902:13). He recalls that he had heard the stories were originally sung in verse and wanted to produce an authentic version by reinterpreting them in verse. He rationalizes this new representation: "A few of the poems contained in this volume have already appeared in prose form in the 'Algonquin Legends of New England.' As these were in fact poetry, or chanted in rude measure, I had at first the intention to give them in English in their original form and to group all those referring to the divinity in an epic, as Lonnrot made the Finnish Kalevala, or Homer his own great works. This I have to a degree accomplished in the present volume" (Leland and Prince 1902:15–16).

This statement reveals Leland's preoccupation not only with polite literary sensibilities but also with his projected audience. In short, Leland was intent on preserving the "poetry" but not the "rude measure" of Algonquin poetry and chants. He is clearly conflicted about his new representation: "I with great care put the Mitchell Anglo-Algonkin into English metre, having been impressed, while at work, with the exquisitely naïve and fresh character of the original, which, while it often reminded me of Norse Poetry, in many passages had strictly a life and beauty of its own" (Leland and Prince 1902:12).

There is no question that Leland had high regard for Algonquin epic poetry, but his representation was rendered into polite literary forms rather than Algonquin "rude measure." Leland's "poetics" effectively erased Indian voices from their own stories, and Leland's and Prince's authorial license could be justified by their anticipation that the audience for their representations were people of European descent with modern literary sensibilities. It seemed, by the end of the nineteenth century, that the erasure of Indian voices was a regrettable inevitability. As Leland notes, "I venture to say from the deepest conviction that it will be no small occasion of astonishment and chagrin, a hundred years hence, when the last Algonkin Indian of the *Wabano* shall have passed away, that so few among our literary or cultured folk cared enough to collect this connected aboriginal literature" (Leland and Prince 1902:15).

Leland's collaborator in the epic poem, John Dyneley Prince, shared Leland's sentiment about the vanishing race: "Let then our labor in this work suffice merely to present to the English-speaking public a few interesting and characteristic specimens of the traditions of a rapidly perishing race—a race which fifty years from now will have hardly a single living

representative" (Leland and Prince 1902:40). Leland's estimate of the projected extinction of the Wabanaki peoples was one hundred years and Prince's estimate was fifty years. Both men were convinced that the Indians would disappear but that their own important salvage work of writing down the "poetic" speech (entextualizing) and documenting the stories would live on.

Prince continued to work on his own Algonquin legends project and in 1921 published his *Passamaquoddy Texts*. What had changed in the intervening years? Prince distinguishes his collection from the others as a reproduction from memory of original documents that were destroyed in a fire in 1911. He states that "other matter" has appeared in other publications in "imperfect form." Specifically, "poetical and inexact English renderings of some of the Kuloskap material . . . have appeared in Leland and Prince 'Kuloskap the Master'" (Prince 1921:3). In Prince's revisiting of the previous representations, he clearly is uncomfortable with the "imperfect" forms the 1902 representations took. His key points of contention are the poetic forms and the English forms of the earlier representations. His 1921 Passamaquoddy collection represents his solution to achieving representational accuracy (or perfection, as Prince insinuates).

Some important differences between Leland's representation and Prince's begin with Prince's introductory notes. Prince explicitly mentions the Maliseet as part of the Algonquin family, whereas Leland never mentions the Maliseet at all. Prince makes no mention of Indians vanishing or becoming extinct. Instead, he presents a couple of pages devoted to a phonological explanation of his Passamaquoddy transcription. Despite representing the "tales" in prose, a key additional difference is in the fact that he also represents them in the aboriginal language, Passamaquoddy. His representation of the Tobique Rock story (Prince 1921:38–39) provides a marked contrast to Leland's "imperfect" representations:

> *Kuloskap potmat nidcans'l; etudi-wikweta'kw sopek-apskw naka w'telakan kwilotanhan; pekw's en nil'muk Ne(k)wutkok. Nit-te metc-teke etek epastuk Wulastukuk.*
>
> Kuloskap drives away the young one; he picks up a salt water rock and throws it, seeking to hit him; it sticks fast by Ne(k)wutkook. It is still there right in the middle of the St. John's River.

The most significant difference between Prince's and Leland's versions is the inclusion of Passamaquoddy text on the preceding page opposite the English text. Prince has moved away from Leland's preoccupation with polite literary forms, scholarly obsession with world-class epics, and the uncritical representation of Maliseet (Passamaquoddy) voices. Instead, Prince's use of Passamaquoddy and his word-for-word translation is his attempt to minimize the distance between face-to-face storytelling by aboriginal storytellers (the interdiscursive breach) and nonaboriginal readers.

These three different versions of representing the Tobique Rock story, and their authors' statements regarding the imminent disappearance of the Maliseet people, reveal the prevailing attitude toward collecting and writing down Maliseet texts as "salvage work as documentation." Each text draws from a prior discursive practice (storytelling event) that required breaking the discursive continuity in order to create bounded texts that could be taken out of aboriginal communities (decontextualized) and repackaged and retold (recontextualized) for audiences with literary sensibilities. This was the beginning of the uncoupling of the Maliseet stories from the Maliseet language. Equally important, it anticipated the uncoupling of the Maliseet language from the Maliseet people. In less than five decades, a new round of representations of Maliseet stories would coincide with a new phase of salvage work that perpetuated the "vanishing Indian" sentiment as well as the continued transformation of aboriginal stories into literary representations. It was also the time when the Maliseet language "tipped" toward the void.

INTERTEXTUALITY AND TIPPING TOWARD THE VOID: "REWRITING THE STORIES"

The Leland and Prince representations of Maliseet stories were produced in a period of "salvage work as documentation." Documentation by writing down purported face-to-face storytelling events initiated the uncoupling of the Maliseet language from Maliseet stories. Fifty years later, a second phase of salvage work continued the uncoupling of the Maliseet language from Maliseet stories, but it also initiated the uncoupling of the Maliseet language from the Maliseet community. But first, the process of "writing it down" uncoupled the stories from their aboriginal contexts. This was accomplished through entextualization because the process rendered the oral poetic event as an object, which, in turn, "serves to render the text extractable from the context of production" (Bauman 2004:4). This

is significant because the act of "writing it down" allows the scholar or reader to place the "text" into new settings and toward new purposes.[7] In the Maliseet case, the processes of taking the stories away from Maliseet contexts (decontextualization) and redirecting them to non-Maliseet audiences (recontextualization) indicates a shift from *performance* to *reading,* as evidenced by the opening vignette. This shift is accomplished through processes of rewriting the stories (intertextuality) that also unwittingly initiates "salvage work as preservation" processes.

In 1962, three weekend folklorists were collecting folktales to fulfill a Saturday extension course requirement.[8] One of the trio submitted two seven-inch reels of tape and "about twenty pages" of text to the instructor.[9] The editor (and instructor), Edward Ives, recounts his own surprise that stories are still being told by Maliseet storytellers to Maliseet audiences. In his introductory comments regarding the provenience, contextualization, and editing of the collection, Ives shares thoughts regarding the displacement of aboriginal antiquity with civilizing modernity:

> Now the birchbark canoes are in the museums, what wigwams there are are in the tourist business, and the Indians are in the reservations. They wear the white man's clothes, practice his religion, go to his schools, and eat his food. Acculturation has gone a long way here in the Northeast, and it will go even farther, we can be sure, perhaps even to a time when the old ways will not even be what they are today: a tale, a legend, a bright place in the forest dark at the back of the mind, something told in the old tongue by a mother to her daughter of a long winter evening. (Ives 1964:6)

Ives's sentiments are the perpetuation of discourses of "vanishing" inherited from fifty years earlier. According to him, the Indians may not be vanishing but their aboriginal way of life certainly is. Ives's phrase "something told in the old tongue by a mother to her daughter" suggests that despite the success of acculturation he has been privy to unexpected primordial continuity of aboriginal interdiscusive practice.[10] Significantly, Ives notes that the storyteller "preferred to tell her tales in Malecite rather than English," but this did not prevent him from editing out the original discursive representation in Maliseet. His "writing down" of aboriginal face-to-face storytelling was intended "to make the stories easier to read." Ives accomplished this by omitting "meaningless" phrases, providing titles for the stories, standardizing spelling, and making omissions but not

noting all of them, among others. Just as Leland had done fifty years earlier, Ives was representing aboriginal stories in an intertextually (an alien "literary" form) suitable form for a literate audience. Just how was this accomplished, and what are the results of this "readability" editing?

> [Kluskap] picked up a rock and tried to hit him, but this beaver was too smart, too fast for him. He went up the St. John River, and the first hiding place he came to was going up on that Pokiok Falls. That's where he struck the first rock landed. So this beaver thought that was too much for him. So he went further up the St. John River, and right now you can see them rocks. I mean you can't now; since they built the dam [i.e. at Beechwood] they're all under water. There's two big rocks. [[Speaking to her daughter, Mrs. Black]]: You've seen them, huhh? [Mrs. Black:Uhmhm]. They call [them] "Tobique Rocks." There's one about three miles below Perth and one right here at the mouth of the Tobique. Well, a little below. [[Aside:]] Oh, right here! I thought I was over in the point! [i.e. at the reservation]. And one at the Grand Falls. That's what made the falls. (Ives 1964:17)

Ives indicates that the story was transcribed from a tape recording. His editorial contributions were marked with brackets and underlined words. Stage directions, gestures, and false starts were omitted. Ives's entextualization does reflect more colloquial speech forms than do the representations of the Tobique Rock stories described earlier. Through his editing process, Ives did attempt to preserve the immediacy of the interdiscursive exchange; but, in the end, it is still a text artifact designed to have greater "readability." Ives consciously shifts from discursive forms to literate forms. He does so in English despite having a recording of the Maliseet available for transcription. The decision to render Maliseet stories into readable and literate forms would be echoed by a contemporary non-Maliseet "storyteller" who made no attempt to evoke the immediacy of aboriginal (Maliseet) interdiscursivity.

While Ives was writing down a storytelling event, Kay Hill, another storyteller in the Canadian Maritimes, promoted her own representations of Wabanaki stories. Hill's work is an example of stories rewritten from previous publications and texts (entextualization as intertexuality). Her goal was to retell the stories for public consumption. The venue for public consumption was television. In the short, two-plus pages of the foreword

to *Glooskap and His Magic: Legends of the Wabanaki Indians* (1963), Hill describes her involvement in representing Wabanaki stories as a part of a larger production:

> These stories, so far as we know, were first told in the wigwams of the Wabanaki Indians, long before the White Man came to North America. Later, white men learned them from the Indian, translating and preserving them in book form. In August, 1960, I was invited to adapt the published Legends to a new art form, that of television, for a program called "Indian Legends," conceived and produced by Mr. Sandy Lumsden of CBHT, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Miss Kathleen Currie, Chief Librarian of the Children's Department of the Halifax Memorial Library, dressed in Indian costume, appeared before the cameras and related the stories, with graphics and background music and sound. (Hill 1963:7)

I quote at length to include Hill's summary history of "Indian Legends" and the role she played in the television production. Although it is not explicitly stated, the White Man learning the stories and preserving them in book form evokes the idea of vanishing cultures expressed by Ives and Leland. Curiously, Hill goes on to describe the chief librarian "dressed in Indian costume" relating the stories accompanied by the "graphics and background music and sound" that only television can make possible. These comments and activities indicate the growing distance between Maliseet language and Maliseet stories. The separation of Maliseet voices from Maliseet people (decontextualization) and the repackaging and rewriting for non-Maliseet audiences (recontextualization) underscore the shift toward collateral uncoupling of the stories from Maliseet language, landscape, and experience. Hill's "literary" retelling of Wabanaki stories does not include the Wabanaki people. The irony in her participation in the television program is that not only are white men and women telling Indian stories, they are "playing Indian" too.

Kay Hill was not the one "playing Indian," but she was the one invited to entextualize the "Indian Legends." Her involvement in the television program led to her subsequent project of "preserving" her representations of Wabanaki stories in book form. The television show became entextualized as a children's book, thereby relegating the Wabanaki stories to the status of children's stories. But the prior representations from original

discursive events did not conform to literary standards, and Hill was compelled to render them suitable for children:

> Much of the original material meticulously recorded by Rand and Leland was found to be unsuitable for an audience of children. Although generally moral in tone, the Legends contained a great deal of religious symbolism, meaningful only to the Indian, as well as some savage and erotic elements. They were inclined to wander down byways in the course of which the characters changed disconcertingly not only from good to evil, but from human to animal. Children today are accustomed to the Aristotelian concept of a unified story with a beginning, middle, and end. It therefore seemed necessary to tighten plots, develop characterization, and invent incidents to explain motivation. In doing this, I merely followed the example of the Indian storytellers themselves who, in passing on the songs and poems of the Old Time, departed in a large degree from the original poetry, omitting some incidents and adding others as memory served. (Hill 1963:8–9)

It is unclear whether Hill means children of European descent or a universal "all children." What is certain is her self-assuredness in assuming authorial discretion in the editing of Wabanaki stories. Her justification that she is "merely following the example of the Indian storytellers themselves" does little to acknowledge the absence of Wabanaki voices. Her intertextual representation (rewriting from Rand and Leland) of the stories in an "Aristotelian concept" of children's stories is a decontextualization of Wabanaki stories that are subsequently stripped of their linguistic and cultural contexts.

Unfortunately, Hill did not entextualize the Tobique Rock story. It would have been interesting to compare her version to Ives's. In any case, both authors/editors anticipated a reading public who are not Maliseet (or Wabanaki). Their literary presumptions in rewriting Maliseet stories into English furthered the uncoupling of the stories from the Maliseet language and Maliseet contexts. Despite the presence of contemporary Maliseet and Wabanaki peoples, the authors/editors overlooked the face-to-face storytelling practices that were occurring while their respective texts were being published. In the 1960s, then, the Maliseets had already vanished from their stories. It seemed that all that was left to do was salvage what

was left of Indian stories by "preserving" the stories in book form. Ives's representation of Maliseet stories is the 1960s break with interdiscusivity, and Hill's representations illustrate intertextuality in practice. Taken together, Ives and Hill display key differences in rewriting Maliseet stories. Ives attempts to bring some fidelity to the storytelling genre, whereas Hill takes basic elements from Wabanaki stories to render them appropriate for television and popular children's books. Both, however, direct their (inter) texts to nonaboriginal audiences.

These two approaches to rewriting Maliseet stories coincide with active processes of assimilation and enculturation in Canada in the 1950s and 1960s. While non-Indian storytellers were publishing repackaged and rewritten story collections, other agents working in and near Indian communities were working to dis-integrate Indian people from Indian language, culture, and identity through programs of "enfranchisement" by amending the Indian Act (Clatworthy 2003). The assimilatory forces that continued to dis-integrate the Maliseet language from Maliseet people and Maliseet worlds would find their greatest expression in Canada's White Paper of 1969, the policy to abolish the "Indian Act" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996:17) and thereby eliminate the category "Indian" from government programs and services. The assault on aboriginal worlds contributed to the loss of the Maliseet language in Maliseet storytelling, forced restriction of Maliseet language use in Maliseet communities, and tipped the Maliseet community of Tobique First Nation toward the void of language death.

Awareness of these collateral extinctions made the "preservation" of Maliseet stories by nonaboriginal story collectors a worthy endeavor. However, what was being preserved had less to do with the Maliseet and more to do with the preservation of the nonaboriginal imagination. The reinterpretation of Maliseet stories as literary products indicates how great the gap between Maliseet stories and Maliseet worlds had become.[11] Not only are the stories written in English, but they are also directed at non-Maliseet audiences. Nevertheless, this did not preclude the possible reintegration of Maliseet stories with the Maliseet language and landscape and into Maliseet lives. The collective aboriginal resistance to the White Paper and the growing solidarity of First Nations activism in the 1970s had resulted in a growing movement for aboriginal self-determination. The aforementioned gap may have served the nonaboriginal story collectors, but Canada's First Nations would take advantage of it for their own

purposes. Significantly, for Tobique First Nation this gap is serving as the catalyst for creative rewriting of Maliseet stories by Maliseet people for the Maliseet community.

FROM INTERTEXTUALITY BACK TO INTERDISCURSIVITY: "WRITING IT DOWN TO SPEAK MALISEET"

When the teacher read the Kloskap story to the children in the classroom, she was participating in what was once a Maliseet face-to-face storytelling event that transformed into the literate practice of reading Maliseet stories. The story had been entextualized and rewritten for general audiences. Over one hundred years have passed since Leland "wrote down" the stories from the "trembling memories of old squaws." We cannot ignore the ideologies that compelled the story collectors (Leland, Prince, Ives, Hill, and others not mentioned in this chapter) to "document" and "preserve" the stories or how those ideologies influenced their representations of the stories. The ideologies as well as the representations echo across the decades.[12] All representations are reflections of the collector/performer/ethnographer. As a Native ethnographer, I exploit the "gaps" between the texts over the past one hundred years to reconfigure, repurpose, and redirect the stories.

Each representation in isolation cannot reveal the "larger sociohistorical frameworks" of discourse. Furthermore, discourse is only one aspect of representation. Each discursive event is embedded in a broader semiotic field. "Attempts to study discourse are, in effect, attempts to study the co-deployment of linguistic and nonlinguistic signs in social interaction" (Agha 2005:1). A performer's (or ethnographer's) choice of reconfiguring, repurposing, and redirection across the gap, as well as the question of whether the performer's attempts are ratified by audiences, must be analyzed across semiotic encounters. Not only must reconfiguration, repurposing, and redirection across the gap be analyzed, but attention must be paid to intertextual variations and hybridity.

Briggs and Bauman suggest that generic hybridity is the mixing of discursive genres within a given event (Briggs and Bauman 1992:7). I agree with their characterization of generic hybridity, but I conceive Maliseet forms of generic hybridity to encompass a broader semiotic field that includes nonlinguistic signs such as landscape, images, and clothing. Furthermore, by positing a broader semiotic form of generic/creative hybridity,

I argue that doing so can widen the gap. By widening the gap, I can reconfigure across "texts" to promote a return to Maliseet interdiscursivity—in other words, initiate Maliseet storytelling in the Maliseet language.

One hundred years ago Leland and Prince entextualized Algonquin discursive events. Today, I am entextualizing Maliseet intertextual artifacts. This chapter's opening vignette presents tangible evidence of the silencing of the Maliseet language from Maliseet stories. Furthermore, it also depicts the *reading* of the stories—not the *telling* of the stories—in the Native language classroom. Whereas the two earlier phases of salvage work were "salvage work as documentation" and "salvage work as preservation," my entextualization projects represent "salvage work as revitalization." As Agha (2005) notes, any analysis of discourse must consider nonlinguistic as well as linguistic signs. More important, the recognition of the codependence of linguistic and nonlinguistic signs is fundamental to understanding social interactions. The previous phases of salvage work marked differing dis-integrations of the Maliseet language from Maliseet stories. My work is intended to reintegrate nonlinguistic signs with linguistic signs for the sole purpose of encouraging the retelling of Maliseet stories in the Maliseet language.

One such project, my graphic novel, has drawings of specific places on and near Tobique First Nation. The graphic novel incorporates mythic time and the present in the retelling of the Tobique Rock story. The illustrations also differentiate conceptions of time through the size of the frames and the rendering techniques (e.g., larger frames for larger time periods, and gestural drawings for mythic time versus more precise drawings for the present time). The scope of generic/creative hybridity is expanded to include representations of Maliseet landscapes, Maliseet people, and Maliseet mythic time. Generic/creative hybridity is not limited to discursive genres. In the graphic novel, generic hybridity includes texts. In the category of texts I include graphic images, framing devices, and type fonts. In short, it is not just the language that I am attempting to salvage; it is also the landscape, the stories, and the Maliseet peoples' experience.

At a UNESCO conference in 2002, I argued that sharing the story was about the reenchantment of the landscape (Perley 2003). In 2007, when I shared the Tobique Rock story (Perley 2007), it was not just a children's story; rather, it was a story for all of us, and it is relevant to issues of today. The graphic novel is my latest sharing of the Tobique Rock story. I am currently working on the Maliseet translation so the text will be in English as well as Maliseet. The Maliseet version is intended to serve as a catalyst for

telling the story in Maliseet, not in English, and not read in English or Maliseet. My graphic novel is "salvage work as revitalization" in practice.

CONCLUSION: SEMIOTICS OF SURVIVAL

Intertextuality (rewriting texts) is a heuristic concept that is valuable for tracing the reconfiguration, repurposing, and redirection between texts from different periods and scholars/performers. Equally important, it is also useful for discerning the political and ideological implications behind the choices made by scholars/performers in the degree of widening of interpretive gaps. Bauman's use of intertextuality is notable for his insistence on the discourse of the performer and his recognition that the performer may initiate the mediation of the process of textually representing (entextualization) the discursive event between the performer and the ethnographer (2004:161–62). Nonetheless, Bauman's analysis is still just one more example of separating face-to-face interactions from the moment of storytelling (decontextualization) and repackaging the storytelling moment (recontextualized) as a textual artifact (entextualization) of "Other's words" into one more ethnographic representation of dialogue (Bauman 2004; Clifford 1988). More important, Bauman's goal is to trace the reconfigured, repurposed, and redirected texts to discern creative rewriting and to understand the implications for widening interpretive gaps in the performance of dialogue.

My examples above do not have the benefit of firsthand observation of oral poetic performance. The Maliseet representations of the Tobique Rock story are intertextual in the broader sense of the term. I agree with Bauman when he explicitly states that intertexuality is the "relational orientation of a text to other texts" (2004:4). But I also agree with Allen that "the text becomes the intertext" (2000:1). By incorporating both formulations of intertexuality I purposefully incorporate broad semiotic fields across disparate discursive (intertextual) events so they may be deployed in varieties of social interactions and domains. My approach echoes Agha's characterization of semiosis and social relations whereby he states, "The social relevance of inter-event semiosis, its capacity to formulate and maintain social formations, depends on a complex interplay between language and nonlanguage" (2005:4). By introducing the local landscape through drawings of recognizable places, sketching representations of contemporary Maliseet-ness, and invoking Maliseet oral poetic literatures, I take advantage

In anger, Apotamkon began fighting Klohskap. The two of them fought furiously!

Apotamkon realized he couldn't win so he escaped from Klohskap in the muddy water.

Klohskap couldn't catch the monster so he scooped out a huge rock from the riverbed.

Klohskap then tossed the rock

forty

In doing so, he created the falls at Grand Falls and that rock is known today as The Tobique Rock.

Apotamkon.

he missed

But

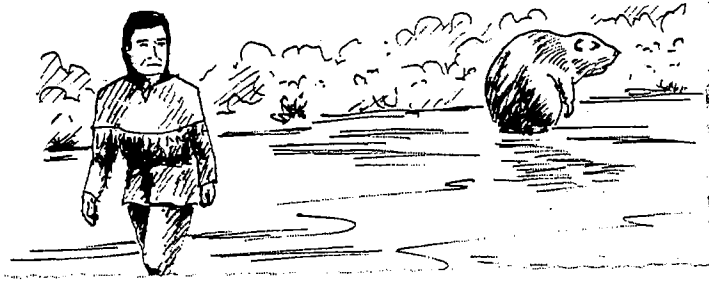
downriver.

kilometers

So, Klohskap transformed himself into a giant beaver and swam after Apotamkon.

He caught the monster farther down the river and there they continued fighting.

The two of them fought for days! Finally,



they were both too exhausted to fight any more. So they went their separate ways, knowing they would continue their fight another time.

Maliseet story as graphic novel. Bernard Perley.

of the gap to create a new text that I deploy in the service of promoting interdiscursivity. I do not want members of the community merely to read the text. I want them to "experience the text," because place is critical as a meaningful part of the reading. Most important, the text is intended to encourage face-to-face interdiscursivity. The graphic novel is not supposed to sit on a shelf and collect dust. It is designed to defy the silence before the void. It is designed to provoke Maliseet community members to *tell* the story to one another in Maliseet.

NOTES

1. The spelling used by the Maliseet language teacher when I was conducting fieldwork in 1997 was "Koluskap." There are numerous spellings as well as variations in the name of the Wabanaki hero figure among the Wabanaki nations, such as Gluskabi (Abenaki), Glooskap (Passamaquoddy and Penobscot), and Glooscap (Micmac). The spelling variation in the illustration from my graphic novel, "Klohskap," is based on my memory of an earlier recommendation for proper spelling and proper pronunciation from a community elder. After a recent consultation with the elder, I was corrected and advised that the proper spelling should be "Kloskap." The text follows that recommendation. It should be noted that the elder is also my mother, who is a fluent speaker of Maliseet and English. See also note 2.

2. In the recently published Passamaquoddy-Maliseet dictionary (Francis and Leavitt 2008:196), "Koluskap" is the "name of first man, according to Wabanaki oral tradition," whereas the word for "liar" is "koluskapiyiw." Nevertheless, "koluskap" is commonly used to denote "liar" as well as the culture hero in the Tobique community. See also Ives (1964:17).

3. I have been granted permission by the chief of Tobique First Nation to use the actual name of the community in my professional publications.

4. James Clifford (1988:43) had argued that ethnographic accounts "remain *representations* of dialogue" between the ethnographer and the informant. Bauman (2004:161), however, places the emphasis on the performer as the source of the representation process in anticipation of the ethnographer's mediational relay.

5. "On the verge of extinction" is the assessment made in a comparative study of the respective state of language vitality for aboriginal languages in Canada ranging from "viable" to "extinct" (Perley 2011). Other recent assessments categorized the Maliseet language as "severely endangered" (UNESCO, n.d., interactive atlas, accessed 2010) and as "viable small" (Statistics Canada; see Norris and MacCon 2003:176).

6. This is also the ethnographic interdiscursive break (Silverstein 2005) from oral-discursive Maliseet storytelling events through the entextualization by non-Maliseet (and, later, Maliseet) storytellers and scholars. Bauman and Briggs define entextualization as "the process of rendering discourse extractable, of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit—a *text*—that can be lifted out of its interactional setting" (Bauman and Briggs 1990:73). Bauman elaborates by stating that entextualization accomplishes the important task of producing a "text" that can be "bounded off to a degree from its discursive surround (its co-text), internally cohesive (tied together by various formal devices), and coherent (semantically intelligible)" (Bauman 2004:4). Silverstein describes interdiscursivity as "a structural relationship of two or more situations, and an indexical one at that. Within any situation in which we participate, we can experience the relationship by a semiotic act of 'point-to,' which of course implies point-to from someplace (the arrow or pointing finger starts somewhere and ends somewhere else). It is situational locatability, interdiscursivity can be seen to be a strategic positioning of participants in a semiotic event such that an inter(co(n)textual structure emerges" (2005:9).

7. Bauman states that "entextualization potentiates decontextualization" but points out that the process does not end there: "But decontextualization from one context must involve recontextualization in another, which is to recognize the potential for texts to circulate, to be spoken again in another context" (2004:4). Briggs and Bauman focus on performance in their analysis of entextualization.

8. Delores Daigle, Marilyn Daigle, and Geraldine Hegeman were the three women collecting folktales.

9. Ives attributes this work to Geraldine Hegeman.

10. The "mother" (and storyteller) is identified as Mrs. Viola Soloman (my grandmother), and her "daughter" is Mrs. Henrietta Black (my mother).

11. The intertextual practices of Ives and Hill were practices of decontextualization. An important product of decontextualization of texts through entextualization and their subsequent circulation through recontextualization is what Briggs and Bauman have called the intertextual gap (Bauman 2004, 2005; Briggs and Bauman 1992). In the Maliseet case, intertextual gaps can enable both the loss of the Maliseet language in Maliseet storytelling and the revitalization of the Maliseet language through generic intertextuality. It should be noted that Bauman has stated that "interdiscursivity" is a "better general term . . . reserving *intertextuality* for matters having to do with texts" (2005:146).

12. Bauman states that "each act of textual production presupposes antecedent texts and anticipates prospective ones." Furthermore, as Bauman paraphrases

Bakhtin, "the orientation of the now-said to the already-said and the to-be-said, is ubiquitous and foundational, comprehending all of the ways that utterances can resonate with other utterances and constitutive of consciousness, society, and culture." Each representation of a particular speech event, therefore, is indexical of "prior situational contexts" as well as "emergent elements" that forge "links to the adjacent discourse, the ongoing social interaction, instrumental or strategic agendas, and other situational and extrasituational factors that interact with generic orienting frameworks in shaping the production and reception of the utterance." More important, "these in turn will influence the ways in which the constituent features of the generic framework are variably mobilized, opening the way to generic reconfiguration and change. Thus, generic intertextuality inevitably involves the production of what Charles Briggs and I have called the "intertextual gap." Bauman recognizes that the "alignment" and "calibration" of texts across the gap can have serious political and ideological implications depending on how closely the calibration across the gap conforms to perceived orthodoxy or how widening the gap can be viewed as adaptive strategies to "emergent circumstances and agendas" (Bauman 2004:4–7). Each representation, then, reflects the ideological and political situatedness of the performer/ethnographer.

CHAPTER 10

TO GIVE AN IMAGINATION TO THE LISTENER

Replicating Proper Ways of Speaking in and through Contemporary Navajo Poetry

Anthony K. Webster

This chapter concerns the relationship between the oral tradition of storytelling among Navajos and contemporary written Navajo poetry that can be and is performed orally. When Navajos talk of contemporary poetry in Navajo, they often speak of poetry as *hane'* 'narrative, story.' In fact, many Navajo poets directly link their poetry with the oral tradition (here understood as encompassing narratives, chants, and song). As Navajo poet Laura Tohe once pointed out about her poetry, "This is not just my voice, but the voice of my ancestors." Here we need to remember that for many Navajos contemporary poetry is not considered to be the sole invention of a creative individual. Although the individual voice, the individual poet, is important, this importance is mitigated by acknowledgment of the words of those who have come before. Contemporary Navajo poetry is often intentionally "traditionalized" (Bauman 2004), that is, explicitly linked with poetic features of the oral tradition. Navajo poetry is often, though not always, narrative in structure. In this chapter I suggest some of the ways that contemporary Navajo poetry aids in the circulation of language ideologies about proper language use among Navajos. In using language ideologies, I follow Kroskrity (2004:498) and understand them as "beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social world." I also suggest something of the tension in the ways that Navajo, as a language, is represented by Navajo poets and the ways that tension aids in creating an imagined Navajo language community.

The Navajo Nation, covering parts of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, is roughly the size of West Virginia. According to the 2000 U.S.