Assumptions of Irishness in the Fairylore of Newfoundland

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A thesis submitted to the

School of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Department of Folklore

Memorial University of Newfoundland

October 2022

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

Abstract

Fairies are one of the most significant traditions of supernatural belief on the island of

Newfoundland: not the sparkly Disney characters, but mischievous and dangerous creatures that

exist on the borders between known and unknown landscapes (Narváez 1991). An equally

interesting tradition is the stereotype of Irishness in Newfoundland. Although initially colonized

by immigrants from the British Isles, the island is now home to numerous ethnicities, and yet

Irishness continues to shape much of the conceptualization of identity in Newfoundland. In this

thesis, my goal is to explore the relationship between fairylore and Irishness. I find that, while

negative associations between Irishness and "superstitiousness" can and do limit conceptions of

fairylore, contemporary conceptualizations of fairylore are much more complex, and provide

many benefits to Newfoundland tradition-bearers.

Acknowledgements

Writing a thesis is a difficult and isolating task at the best of times, and a global pandemic cannot exactly be called the best of times. For my sanity, I owe thanks to the family and friends who have supported and encouraged me during the past two years. For my research, I owe thanks to the lovely people who agreed to share their stories with me. And for the completed manuscript you see before you, I owe a thousand thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Daniel Peretti.

Mom, Dad, Chris, Alex, and Joey – you believed in me long before I did, encouraged me when I felt like giving up, and supported me all the way through. All my love and thanks.

Isaac – you are the most patient person I have ever met. Thank you for letting me rant, buying me chocolate, and providing a shoulder to cry on. I love you.

Emma, Emily, and all my other dear friends – your promises to read my thesis motivated me to keep writing, and your enthusiasm convinced me I should. Thank you.

Cameron, Des, Eric, Kaitlyn, Kathleen, Ken, Krissy, Michelle, Patrick, Shawn and Tara – your stories and wisdom were invaluable. Thank you for taking the time to share them with me.

Dan – your patience, experience, and sense of humor in the face of my panic and endless questions reassured me that my thesis was not, in fact, complete garbage. Thank you so much.

Finally, thank you to Dr. Mariya Lesiv, Dr. Jillian Gould, and Dr. Sarah Gordon, who helped improve my thesis, and to all my professors in the Department of Folklore at Memorial, and to the staff at MUNFLA, who aided and abetted my research attempts throughout my education. I am also thankful to the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Memorial University for funding my research. And thank you to all those who continue to tell stories of the fairies of Newfoundland.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The goal of this thesis is to explore the relationship between fairylore and Irishness in Newfoundland,[1] and to move beyond stereotypes to determine the opinions of tradition-bearers and the benefits of the fairylore tradition. In this introductory chapter, I will define my terms, explain both the geographic and temporal context, describe my motivation for this thesis and introduce myself, outline my argument, describe my methodology, and provide brief summaries of the subsequent chapters.

Definitions and Context

In my thesis statement provided above, there are some rather ambiguous terms that I need to define. First, the fairies – who are they, or what are they? And according to whom? Then, I will define "stereotype" and "superstitiousness," and situate them relative to belief. Next, I will introduce the context of Newfoundland in order to explain what I mean by "an Irish Newfoundland." Finally, I will situate my thesis temporally.

Fairies

"Fairy" is a loaded term. We've seen elements of fairies present in folk tradition as early as 500 AD. Fairies are often placed either "between man and angels" (Briggs 1976, xvii), or, more generally, in a category that covers "that whole area of the supernatural which is not claimed by angels, devils or ghosts" (*ibid*). Even when narrowed down to apply only to small, magical creatures, this term has been used to describe a vast array of beings. For example, Pucks and pixies were mischievous creatures that caused mayhem in England, and the creature called Dobs was known to help around the house in Britain. In Scotland, there were the seelies, and in

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[1] In this thesis, I consider only the island of Newfoundland, excluding Labrador. This is due to the limited amount of information available about fairies in Labrador. Although some of the findings and implications of my thesis may apply to Labrador as well, to make such claims would require a significant amount of additional research outside the scope of this project.

Cornwall, Piskies and Knockers (Young & Houlbrook 2018). In Ireland, the fairies were known as the *sídhe* (Shee), and they built fairy forts called raths, lived under fairy trees, and cursed people who disturbed them (Tolbert 2016). Then, in the early 1900s, the perception began to change.

One of the earliest media examples that illustrated the changing views of fairies was the Cottingley fairy hoax. In 1917, two cousins, Elsie Wright, 16, and Frances Griffiths, 9 years old at the time, took two photos of themselves in a garden with fairies (Simpson & Roud 2003). Many people at the time believed that these photos were genuine, as the first commercial camera was sold in 1888, only thirty years before these photos were taken, so photoshop and photo editing in general was brand new. However, others were more skeptical, Elsie's father among them. In addition to perhaps being skeptical about the existence of supernatural phenomena like fairies, they may have doubted the authenticity of the photos on the grounds that they resembled pretty, carefree, miniature women more than the mercurial, oft-mischievous deities of folklore. In 1920, the girls were given a camera each and asked to take more photos of the fairies. Left alone, they took two more of themselves with the fairies, and one of a fairy den. These were analyzed by a number of photography companies, and the results were inconclusive. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author of Sherlock Holmes, who had been intrigued by the original two photos, considered this proof that they were genuine, and used these photos to illustrate an article about fairies that he wrote for Strand magazine in 1920 (Simpson & Roud 2003; Doyle 1920). Doyle was a self-described Spiritualist, and he saw these photos as evidence of psychic phenomena. Elsie and Frances refused to state that the fairy photos were fakes until 1983. Then they explained that they had cut out pictures of dancing women from a book, added wings, and propped them up with hair pins in order to take the first four photos (Simpson & Roud 2003).

However, they disagreed about the last photo – Elsie said it was a fake, Frances said it was real, and they each claimed that they had been the one to take it.

Only a few decades after the Cottingley fairies appeared, challenging previous notions of fairies, Disney brought J.M. Barrie's Tinkerbell to the screen in the film *Peter Pan* in 1953. Although she was a mischievous and morally ambiguous character in Barrie's play and subsequent novel, her on-screen appearance had been subjected to Disney's standard process of infantilization, in the sense of making things cute, easily-digestible and pretty. Although the character of Tinkerbell is rather mischievous in both the book and the movie, she is depicted on-screen as small and harmless. She is also loyal to a human, namely Peter Pan, which runs counter to previous conceptualizations of the fairies. Since then, popular conceptions of fairies have embraced the cute, happy, friendly version depicted in photos and films in the 20th century. Concurrently with the rise in scientific rationalism in the 20th century, fairies fell out of folk belief, and became harmless, on-screen sidekicks.

However, this paper is about fairylore in Newfoundland. Alongside the newer depictions, the island's fairylore tradition has maintained earlier conceptualizations of fairies, which place fairies in a liminal space both geographically and morally. As Rieti (1990; 1991) and Narváez (1991) explain in their work on fairies in Newfoundland, these creatures live and are encountered on the boundaries between known and unknown space, and behave in unexpected and often damaging ways, whether by leading someone into the woods so that they get lost for hours or even days, or by causing bodily harm to them. The fairies that I will discuss in this thesis, then, are best described as being "betwixt and between" (Silvester 1999, 5) and should by no means be equated with the pretty, sparkly fairies of Disney or Cottingley.

Superstitiousness and Stereotypes

As stated previously, the primary goal in this thesis is to examine the stereotype of Irishness in Newfoundland, which is often associated with superstitiousness. First, I need to define "stereotype." According to American folklorist William A. Wilson, stereotypes "fail to take into account differences and assume that what is true of one group member will be true of them all" (2006, 204). Alongside, and perhaps contributing to, the "goofy Newfie" stereotype in Newfoundland (Byrne 1997, 236; King & Clarke 2002) is the "the popular Newfoundland Irish stereotype" (Casey 1986, 213-14), or what I call the "stereotype of Irishness in Newfoundland." Although I will define Irishness later on in my thesis, what I mean by the "stereotype of Irishness in Newfoundland" is the oversimplified opinion and uncritical judgement that Newfoundland is largely, indeed even exclusively, of Irish origin, and home to Irish culture, Irish folklore, and Irish music. Although it certainly has significant Irish heritage, and may even be "the most Irish place outside of Ireland" (Osborne 2015), to reduce the entire island of Newfoundland to this one part of its history performs a disservice to all citizens of the island.

Secondly, I suggest a relationship between Irishness and superstitiousness. This concept I found whilst reading folklorist Barbara Rieti's excellent book about fairies, *Strange Terrain: The Fairy World in Newfoundland* (1991). Although she is adamantly against this stereotype, several of her informants, when talking about the Irishness of fairies, equate Irishness with superstitiousness, and thus fairy beliefs as superstition. These quotes I discuss in Chapter Two. Tolbert's thesis (2016) also reflects this association. He discusses an American news article that makes fun of the Irish for delaying construction out of respect for the fairies, saying, "The sarcasm and casual racism of this passage [of the article] speak volumes about American popular perceptions of both the fairies and the Irish […] Such stories could easily be used (indeed, were

and are used) in the formation of national stereotypes, which in turn can and do impact policymaking. Beyond their immediate, local contexts, the significance of fairy narratives may have been lost, a situation ripe for the creation of such stereotypes" (2016, 92). Although Tolbert does not use the term "superstition" when talking about this stereotype, he does use the word "belief," and there is significant overlap between the two categories. Notable American folklorist Alan Dundes, taking issue with definitions of superstition that focus solely on the question of belief or religious affiliation, posits this definition: "Superstitions are traditional expressions of one or more conditions and one or more results with some of the conditions signs and others causes" (Dundes 1961, 28). This definition has come under fire as a neutral definition that does not address the negative connotations of the term (Valk 2008, 14). In common parlance, to call something a "superstition" is to "characterize [it] as erroneous, silly or even dangerous" (Valk 2008, 15), a form of "othering" that, as folklorist Alexander Krappe points out, "designates the sum of belief and practices shared by other people in so far as they differ from our own. What we believe and practice ourselves is, of course, Religion" (1964, 203, cited in Mullen 2000). Indeed, superstitions, as well as stereotypes, have been used to devastating effect in world history by racist and misled peoples (see Mieder 1982). To call the Irish superstitious, as many of Rieti's informants do, and then to attribute fairylore to the Irish, is thus to dismiss fairylore as "wrong" or "backwards" when using "superstitious" in a negative way. This problematic connection between superstitiousness and Irishness is one of many reasons why I wish to interrogate the perceived connections between Irishness and fairylore.

I have already indicated some of my motivations for writing this thesis. First, I think that fairylore benefits from various influences besides Irishness that are hitherto under-represented in discourse and scholarship. I also hypothesize that stereotyping Newfoundland as a strictly "Irish"

place, as I show in Chapter Four that many people do, prevents people of other descent from feeling included on this island, and from being recognized for their contributions to the culture and folklore of Newfoundland. Second, Irishness has been associated with superstitiousness, as I will demonstrate through my fieldwork, and this relationship carries significant negative baggage into the discussion of fairylore, and indeed of folklore and folk beliefs in general. By deconstructing these relationships, these perceived but perhaps underexamined connections and stereotypes, I hope to contribute to a more inclusive and varied conception of Newfoundland.

Belief

Before continuing any further, I must point out that the subject of fairylore will never escape the question of belief. Indeed, what prominent English folklorist Katharine Briggs pointed out fifty years ago remains true to this day: "The folklorist who specializes in fairy-lore is often asked if he believes in fairies – that is, in fairies as subjective reality" (1976, xviii). I agree with her, both from a personal standpoint and in the context of this thesis, that this is an irrelevant question. For readers who are curious, as many of my informants have been, I must state up front that I neither believe nor disbelieve in the fairies, but rather have a healthy degree of skepticism coupled with equal amounts of imagination. Further positioning of myself in this work will be done in a subsequent section.

I will go a step further than Briggs by arguing that it also matters little to my thesis whether or not the people who shared their stories with me believe in fairies as subjective, corporeal reality. There are many reasons people may choose to pass on a folk belief, and, in my experience, the most common reasons are either that the folk belief is an important part of their culture or heritage, or that, while they may not willingly state that they believe, they are also unwilling to state that they do not believe it. Indeed, in fairy stories, the consequences of firmly

stating that fairies do not exist, or attempting to prove their non-existence, are reason enough for the fairies to enact revenge against you. On the spectrum of belief, some of the fairy stories included in this thesis were told to me by ardent believers, who accepted fairies as a fact of life, while others were relayed with high amounts of skepticism and often accompanied by more "rational" explanations for the events described in the stories.

Finally, the term belief is also inherently biased, because it "calls into question its own validity: we usually describe our own belief as 'knowledge'" (Motz 1998, 340, cited from Mullen 2000). Thus, to use terminology like "beliefs" when discussing people's stories is not only unproductive, but a disservice to them and their confidence in me.

Newfoundland

For those unfamiliar with Newfoundland, it is a large island off the East coast of Canada, which joined Canada in 1949, after a brief period of independence, to become part of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). 92% of the province's 536,000 people live on the island itself, referred to as Newfoundland. The original inhabitants of Newfoundland were the Mi'kmaq and the Beothuk peoples. There may also have been some overlap with the Innu and Inuit peoples of Labrador (Heritage 2000a). During the "quest for the New World" in the 1400s and 1500s, European fishermen came to Newfoundland and found an ocean full of fish (Sider 2003, 72-3). Settlers came to Newfoundland from directly across the Atlantic; primarily Ireland and England (Sider 2003, 79), but also from France during the 17th century, although these were later pushed out by the British (Heritage 1997). The Beothuk are thought to have been completely wiped out as a culture, due to factors contested to this day, but undoubtedly set in motion by the arrival of European colonizers (Sider 2003, 96). In a story that has become all too familiar, the hegemony of Great Britain defined Newfoundland in the subsequent centuries, up

until the present day. This included the dissemination of Christianity, the English language, and British culture and folklore (Heritage 2000b). Today, more than half of the population identifies as descendants from the British Isles (Jeudy 2021). 36% of the island is of English descent, 20% is of Irish descent, 6.5% is of Scottish descent, and 58,800 people, or 11% of the island's population, identify as Indigenous (Statistics Canada 2017). Dozens of other ethnic origins are also reflected in Newfoundland, including Nigerian, Egyptian, South African, Iranian, Lebanese, Pakistani, Filipino, Australian, and more (Statistics Canada 2017).

Temporal Situation

This thesis is written at a unique time in history. In 2021 and 2022, not only am I writing in the Age of Technology, when getting lost in the woods is practically impossible due to the GPS capabilities of all smart phones, but I am also writing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, all of my research has been conducted virtually, using social media as a main platform of data collection, personal communication and recruitment, with the exception of the fieldtrips I have taken to the location of fairy stories and fairy tourist attractions (as described in Chapter Four).

Conducting research during the pandemic may have influenced my thesis in several ways. First, isolation and lockdowns may have encouraged people to engaged with folklore when they would not have, otherwise. Many people have turned to storytelling and other forms of culture and creative expression as emotional outlets and sources of comfort during the pandemic (Craycraft 2020), and the positive feedback I have received from all those who have heard about or participated in my research may be partially thanks to the tumultuous time we are living in. For this I can only be grateful, however horrible the pandemic has otherwise been. Second, remote research has allowed me to interview people in rural places, and Newfoundlanders living

in other countries. Many people have improved or developed their virtual communication during the pandemic, which may have given them the confidence to be interviewed through a video call with me, when they would not have been willing to a few years prior. Third, and rather less optimistically, interviewing someone over a phone or Zoom call can negatively affect the quality of the conversation. Some people are less comfortable speaking via Zoom than they are in person, and so may not have told me everything they would have in a face-to-face setting. This may occasionally have resulted in more shallow interviews that do not reflect the deeply personal feelings people may have about fairies. Being unable to see or read body language through a video call may also have limited my own ability to interpret and respond correctly to my interviewees, thus detracting from or misdirecting the course of the conversation.

Although I have already discussed "belief," I feel I need to touch on the significance of writing a thesis about supernatural beings in Newfoundland during the 21st century. As readers are undoubtedly well aware, 2022 is post-postmodernism, or at the end of postmodernism (depending who you talk to and their outlook on life – these things, after all, are subjective). Modernism, that slippery term, roughly coincides with the rise of scientific rationalism following industrialization and the enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries. Such a timeline comes dangerously close to relegating supernatural belief, juxtaposed with science and rationality, to the distant past, or to those societies we deem to be "developing," as opposed to "developed." This is completely inaccurate, as many other scholars have demonstrated (Boas [1932] 2021, 18-19, 152; Goldstein 2007, 63; Wilson 2006, 48); supernatural belief can be and has been subjected to the scientific method (Goldstein 2007, 66-70), can be experiential (Hufford 1982; 1995), and is continually prevalent in all societies, regardless of their level of "development" (Goldstein, Grider & Thomas 2007). In subsequent chapters, I refer to the "goofy Newfie" stereotype that

Newfoundlanders are often subjected to (Byrne 1997, 236; King & Clarke 2002). This perception of Newfoundland, as illiterate and unintelligent, is inaccurate and outdated, but unfortunately has had significant influence over mainland Canada's and America's opinions of Newfoundland. In this thesis, I mention this stereotype in order to contextualize certain opinions about or constructions of identity; I am in no way supporting that stereotype, nor do I believe that Newfoundlanders are any more "goofy" than anyone else in Canada, or elsewhere. I think it is an incredible blessing and remarkable achievement that fairylore continues to exist in Newfoundland, and I have the utmost respect for the people of Newfoundland who so highly value their cultural heritage, traditions and folklore.

Positionality

In order to clarify not only my motivation for writing this thesis, but also my positionality given the context and subject matter, I will now provide a short introduction to myself. I am from British Columbia and moved to Corner Brook, NL, for a year in 2017 during my bachelor's degree. I then went on exchange to Ireland and Denmark, for four months each, before returning to Newfoundland, to the St. John's campus of Memorial University, to finish my bachelor's degree and now my master's degree. Although I was introduced to the concept of fairies, not the popular culture version but the traditional Newfoundland version, in 2017, it was through the course FOLK1000: Introduction to Folklore, and I did not hear any personal experience narratives at that time. It was not until I moved to St. John's that fairies became a more frequent topic of discussion, and I heard stories here and there about these mischievous, liminal beings. Thus, after living in St. John's for two and a half years, my experience with fairies is telling, but limited. Telling, in that, as a CFA (Come from Away)[2] living in the urban center of

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[2] A "Come From Away" is a person living in Newfoundland who is from somewhere else.

Newfoundland, whose life was fairly consumed by academia, I still encountered traditional fairies. Limited, in that I have no personal experiences with them, have no relatives who have encountered them or told me stories about them, and have heard very few fairy stories outside of my thesis research. My starting point, then, was an outsider whose perception of fairies was, and remains, heavily influenced by the popular depiction of fairies best represented by Tinkerbell and the like. As a researcher, then, my task has been to hear and accept fairy stories as valuable knowledge about Newfoundland, its people and its culture, without disregarding the potential for fairies' subjective reality.

Argument

Having explained the relevant terms and concepts, situated my thesis contextually, and explained my personal motivations for conducting this research, the structure of my argument will be very straightforward. As I outline in the chapter descriptions below, the bulk of my argument will take place in Chapter Five. This is where I will provide popular and traditional conceptions of Newfoundland fairylore, demonstrate their relationship with Irishness, and outline the benefits and limitations of this relationship for the storytellers and other citizens of the island.

There are two methods for data collection and analysis: qualitative and quantitative. As is the norm in folklore, I will rely heavily on qualitative methods. However, I will also take advantage of the great amounts of fairylore that have been collected in Newfoundland to utilize quantitative methods – namely, I will determine the percentage of my resources that utilize "Irishness" in their consideration of fairylore, and to what extent. Qualitatively, I will explain what I found about fairies in contemporary fairylore, situate it with respect to stereotypes of Newfoundland and Irishness, separate the tradition from "superstitiousness" through standard structural analysis, and then demonstrate, with help from my quantitative analysis, how Irishness

so deeply permeates and influences the description and dissemination of past and present fairylore, in both popular and traditional cultural narratives.

Methodology

Because of COVID-19, I have used several remote research methods. Additionally, since I am attempting to observe somewhat implicit assumptions about the connection between fairies and Ireland, I utilize direct communication (on Facebook and through interviews) as well as indirect communication on the subject, such as tourism resources and children's literature. I use the terms "fairies" and "fairylore" while recognizing that tradition-bearers may use other terms, such as "brownies," "the Good People," or even "mackadandies." I also recognize that people may have multiple, co-existing conceptualizations of fairies, and seek to identify distinctions when possible (and relevant).

First, I have conducted phone and Zoom interviews with people from Newfoundland to gather their thoughts on fairylore. I found people to interview primarily by posting on Facebook groups. My interviewees are men and women who are currently living in or who were raised in Newfoundland, and they range in age from twenty to seventy. I ask questions such as "Who first told fairy stories in Newfoundland?" and "Are fairies similar to leprechauns? Why or why not?" (see Appendix A for a full list of interview questions). I also ask questions related to the interviewees' personal ancestry and specific community, to identify potential community and familial trends and influences. I have also gathered numerous archival interview recordings that pertain to fairies, and I compared both Newfoundland and Ireland archival materials, as exemplified by Dierdre Nuttall (1996).

Second, I have reviewed more than thirty tourism websites and blog posts related to fairies and the Irish in Newfoundland, as well as twelve local children's books on the subject.

This has helped me gain a broader understanding of how Newfoundland is portrayed by others, and how certain Newfoundlanders portray themselves, utilizing Jansen's esoteric/exoteric perspectives (1959).

Third, I have searched through Facebook pages and groups related to Newfoundland to find mentions of fairies and/or Irishness. I have also had numerous conversations with people via Facebook messenger, in the process of looking for interviewees, that included fairy stories and perspectives on my topic. This provides another facet of personal interaction and conversation that is, in some ways, less "performed" than a formal interview.

Fourth, in addition to the aforementioned archival interviews, I have also looked at textual archival materials from the past twenty years, such as old course papers, questionnaires, and folklore survey cards (FSC). These materials were collected, in general, by folklore students at Memorial University (MUN), and deposited into MUN's Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA). While fairylore archival materials collected prior to the year 2000 were used by Simmonds (2005) and Silvester (1999), I found a large body of fairylore in the archive that had been collected over the past twenty years, and which is hitherto unused. Additionally, limiting my research to the past twenty years keeps my analysis and findings comparatively up-to-date.

Finally, I have visited several fairy tourism sites and the locations of several of the fairy stories that I collected. I took fieldnotes and photos, with the hope of reproducing for my readers the landscape and situations of fairy tourism and fairy stories that one might encounter in Newfoundland.

These different methods have enabled me to gain an understanding of broad, general opinions as well as individual ones on the subject of fairies, within the time frame and research constraints of a master's thesis.

A Word on Scope

In this thesis, I am interested specifically in majority heritage groups such as English, Irish, Scottish, and French descendants here in Newfoundland, as well as Indigenous groups. Other groups, and certainly many non-Western groups, have certainly made their mark on the island's culture, economy and folklore. However, it is outside the scope of this thesis to delve into the complex interplay of the religions, beliefs and cultures of these groups as they pertain to fairylore. Everyone who agreed to speak with me, whether via Facebook or virtual interview, was of English, Irish, French, Scottish or Indigenous descent. Perhaps future research can explore the perspectives on fairylore of non-Western minority groups in Newfoundland.

I was also limited by the number of people I could interview. Although ideally I would speak with a representative sample of Newfoundlanders about fairylore in order to determine the general opinions of Newfoundlanders on this topic, I have no space to do so in a master's thesis. Thus, I have chosen a small sample of people to interview to gain a deeper understanding of the topic, and I have gathered information from the archive and from Facebook in order to determine what Newfoundlanders, *in general*, are saying about fairylore. I do not presume to know what *all* Newfoundlanders think about fairylore or Irishness, and my discussions of "Newfoundlanders" should be understood in this context.

Structure

My thesis is comprised of six chapters, which, in brief, introduce my topic, describe my fieldwork, provide an overview of the relevant literature, outline the role and presence of Irishness in Newfoundland, argue that fairies signal and reinforce stereotypes of Irishness, and describe the implications and limitations of my research.

In Chapter Two, creatively deemed "Literature Review," I review the relevant literature. I first contextualize Newfoundland. Then, drawing from Barbara Rieti and other recent fairylore scholars, I introduce the genre of fairylore in Newfoundland, and describe the scope of recent study and scholarship about fairies. I then do the same for Irish fairylore, and briefly compare and contrast the two. I also identify gaps in fairylore literature. I then introduce identity in Newfoundland, explaining contemporary perspectives on identity construction in the province, before specifically discussing Irishness in Newfoundland. This chapter lays the groundwork for my thesis argument, which will be laid out in the next few chapters.

In Chapter Three, "The Irish in Newfoundland," I go into more depth about the presence of Irishness in Newfoundland. I first describe in greater depth the history and significance of Irishness in Newfoundland. Then, utilizing Jansen's concepts of esoteric and exoteric perspectives, I analyze presentations and assumptions of Irishness in Newfoundland scholarship, folklore, popular Culture and personal narrative. I conclude by identifying gaps in Newfoundland's discourse of identity, which I will examine in more depth in Chapter Five.

In Chapter Four, entitled "Fairylore in Newfoundland," I describe my fieldwork and ethnographic practices. In this chapter I provide the bulk of the fairy stories and other materials I have collected. I draw in materials I have gathered online, including social media posts and tourism blogs and websites, alongside field observations and personal interviews. By combining esoteric and exoteric perspectives, and consulting public sources as well as conducting interviews, I gain a comprehensive understanding of fairylore in Newfoundland.

In Chapter Five, entitled "Fairylore and Irishness in Newfoundland," I build on previous chapters by analyzing the relationship between fairylore and Irishness in Newfoundland. I first summarize and discuss exoteric interpretations of Irishness, including my own. I then introduce

my informants, discussing who tells fairylore in Newfoundland, and where that lore takes place. Next, I summarize and discuss esoteric assumptions of Irishness and superstitiousness in Newfoundland fairylore. Finally, I highlight the benefits and limitations of these assumptions.

In Chapter Six, the "Conclusion," I explain the thesis' theoretical contributions, practical implications, and limitations. I highlight overlooked aspects of fairylore in Newfoundland, such as the Indigenous folklore regarding fairies, and fairylore from the UK. I then suggest further directions of fairylore research and possible tourism opportunities.

Having clarified the terms, methods and structure of my thesis, I will now examine what previous literature has to say about fairylore in Newfoundland.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of any good literature review is to bring the reader up to date on the pre-existing scholarship about the terms and concepts that inform this research. My thesis focuses on the relationship between fairylore and Irishness in Newfoundland. Thus, the two main concepts in this chapter are fairylore and Irishness, and particularly how they influence one another. I therefore situate the history of Newfoundland fairylore studies in the broader context of Newfoundland and its folklore, and I compare this briefly to the study of fairylore in Ireland. Next, I look at Irishness, particularly its intersection with Irish and Newfoundland folklore, in an attempt to draw out the context of and existing perspectives on Irishness in Newfoundland. I then clarify my use of the term Irishness in my thesis. These concepts build the foundation for my research by providing the necessary history and context while illustrating the gaps in and problems with previous literature, and existing assumptions about Newfoundland and its folklore. Throughout, I highlight the methods and theories that I will be borrowing from this literature theorize my key concepts. Thus, in this chapter, I explore how I came to the conclusion that fairylore might signal and reinforce the stereotype of Irishness in Newfoundland.

Contextualization of Newfoundland

As a child, I was fascinated by fairies. I had a big purple book full of sparkly pictures of fairies and advice about where to find them and what their houses and clothes looked like. My friend and I would hunt through the garden for them, convincing each other we had caught a glimpse of a little fairy face between the leaves of the rhododendron. This was a game I grew out of as a teenager, when it lost its magic, and my world grew bigger than the backyard of my parents' house. Imagine my surprise as an adult when I moved to Newfoundland for university and found myself once again surrounded by fairies. In my very first folklore course, I read Peter

Narváez's article "Newfoundland Berry Pickers 'in the Fairies'" (1991), and discovered that Newfoundland fairies are mischievous, dangerous creatures that will lead innocent people, both young and old, astray. Intriguingly, Narváez points out that, while notable folklorist Richard Dorson stated that fairies were "rooted in the soil" of Great Britain, and couldn't make the passage across the Atlantic to North America, fairylore has flourished in Newfoundland (4). Indeed, Barbara Rieti published an excellent and extensive book about fairies, *Strange Terrain* (1991), which demonstrates that fairy belief not only exists in Newfoundland, but exercises significant influence across the island.

There are numerous reasons fairylore took root in Newfoundland, when it fell by the wayside in other parts of the world. First, Newfoundland was settled predominantly by people from Great Britain, where fairylore has existed for generations. Second, it is a relatively isolated community that was affected by "scientific rationalism" much later than the mainland (Rieti 1989, 88-9).

As discussed in Chapter One, Newfoundland was largely colonized by people from the British Isles, particularly England and Ireland, and to a lesser extent Scotland and Wales. One of the traditions common to the British Isles was a belief in fairies. Indeed, almost all fairylore anthologies are from England or Ireland. These collections include *Fairies and Folk of Ireland* (Frost 1900), *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* (Evans-Wentz 1911), and, perhaps most famously, W.B. Yeats's *Fairy and Folk Tales of Ireland* ([1890] 2018), originally titled *Fairies and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry.* Although I will analyze similarities and differences between Newfoundland and Irish fairylore in the next section, suffice to say at this point that the fairies of these British anthologies bear close resemblance to the fairies of Newfoundland, as described by Narváez and Rieti.

Thus, fairylore in Newfoundland has a long history behind it, having been inherited from the British Isles as early as 1500. However, immigrants from the British Isles settled in many parts of North America – not only Newfoundland. Why, then, is fairylore so prevalent in Newfoundland when it failed to take root in other parts of North America? To explain this, I turn to the history of colonized Newfoundland.

Fishermen were among the first immigrants to Newfoundland. Although they originally made only brief trips to gather fish during the warmer months before sailing back to Europe for the winter, they eventually realized that it was more practical to stay year-round (Sider 2003, 73). This was due not only to the danger of crossing the Atlantic in small fishing vessels, but also the increasing popularity of fishing in Newfoundland. Certain parts of the coastline were more hospitable than others, and the best fishing grounds were highly desirable, and hotly contested. In order to secure the best fishing spot, it became necessary to stay there during the winter (*ibid*). As these fishing communities grew, settlers began to travel inland, and further around the coast, and discovered vast forests. In the late 1800s, logging became a significant industry in Newfoundland. Men would leave their families for weeks or months at a time, to live at a logging camp to cut and transport timber (Ashton 1985). By 1900, forty to fifty million board feet per year were being sold to overseas markets (11).

These two occupations, fishing and logging, were united by two common themes: isolation and manual labor. Boats and logging camps left little room for entertainment like dancing, music or reading, and literacy in Newfoundland remained low well into the 20th century (Rieti 1989, 91; Webb 2016, 70). One of the main forms of entertainment, therefore, was storytelling. Even when hands were occupied, fishermen and loggers could entertain each other

with Jack tales (Lovelace 2001), recitations (Kelly & Forsyth 2018), and supernatural stories (Jarvis 2004).

Additionally, Newfoundland itself is very isolated. The island is accessible only by boat, and now plane, and large parts of the island were inaccessible and undesirable well into the 20th century due to the rocky, infertile ground (which gave rise to its nickname the Rock) as well as the high winds and heavy snowfall (Duncan 1987; Ward 2018). Thus, modern technology such as the TV and radio were latecomers to Newfoundland, and even books and other print media were hard to come by on the island (Rieti 1989, 88-9). In their houses as well as at work, Newfoundlanders turned to music and storytelling for entertainment (Ashton 1985, 113-14; Webb 2016, 70).

The fact that Newfoundland is isolated, dependent on manual labour and settled by those from the British Isles certainly makes it a prime candidate for the presence of folk music and narratives. However, these conditions are found elsewhere, too; the same could probably be said for areas of Northern Canada and the Appalachian region of the USA. The prevalence of fairies in Newfoundland, when they are not as common elsewhere, could perhaps be due to the presumed Irishness of Newfoundland, as Rieti notes (1991, 217), although she argues that fairylore is certainly present outside of Newfoundland as well. Fairylore in academia was largely the domain of Irish scholars, who collected from Irish people (Rieti 1991, 217; Yeats [1890] 2018); this perception may have led to the acceptance of fairylore in Newfoundland when it did not take root elsewhere. Assumptions about the Irishness of Newfoundland will be discussed below. Narváez suggests an alternate theory (1991); he argues that immigrants to Newfoundland, unlike those to other areas of North America, were already familiar with the work they were performing there, as the large majority of immigrants in the 18th and 19th centuries were

fishermen (4). They also encountered a new land that resembled their own, with similar weather patterns, rocky shores and rugged landscapes. Thus, it was conceivable that Newfoundland would host creatures similar to those of the British Isles (5). For these reasons, fairylore has flourished in Newfoundland for centuries, and is still found there today.

Fairylore in Newfoundland and Ireland

In this section, I provide a comparison of fairylore in Newfoundland and Ireland. I first describe fairylore in Newfoundland, and then fairylore in Ireland. I then identify some similarities and differences between the two. Finally, I explain current connections between fairylore and Irishness in the existing body of literature, using examples from both academic and popular works.

Fairylore in Newfoundland

Rieti (1990; 1991) and Narváez (1991) have conducted the most thorough studies of fairylore in Newfoundland. More recent studies include Niko Silvester's master's thesis on fairy offerings in earth-centered religions (1999), a chapter of Tara Simmond's Master's thesis about supernatural beings of Newfoundland folklore (2005), and Karin Murray-Bergquist's article about food and fairies (2021). Silvester explores the different types of fairy offerings, and the reasons for offering food, alcohol and other gifts to the fairies. She concludes that some people make offerings to communicate with or show respect for the fairies, while others do so to alleviate the perceived danger of their fairy neighbours, who may cause harm to their family or home if not appeased. Simmonds (2005) draws exclusively from Rieti (1990, 1991), Narváez (1991), and firsthand accounts from MUNFLA to make the argument that fairies reflect the dangerous and untamed aspects of the forest, and fairy stories communicate people's fear of the wild. Murray-Bergquist (2021) makes a similar argument about fairies representing danger;

however, by focusing on the protective role of bread in these stories, she points out two different fears: "the first is the perils of the environment […] the second is that of human cruelty" (2021, 96). With these recent perspectives in mind, in this section, I will summarize Rieti's and Narváez's conclusions about Newfoundland fairies.

First, Rieti and Narváez, echoed by Simmonds, argue that fairies are "*liminal personae*" (Narváez 1991, 3), existing on the boundaries between the known and the unknown. One of the more common explanations for the existence of fairies is that they were angels that had been cast out of heaven, but were not accepted into hell, so they went into the earth (6). Even on the earth, they exist in liminal spaces; people in Newfoundland encounter fairies when they stray too far from land that is known into land that is not. Berry pickers are a common example of victims of the fairies, as they wander far and wide to look for berries, and can stray into unknown territory (Narváez 1991). The border between the woods and the wild is a common location for fairies (Simmonds 2005, 71). In Newfoundland, "the woods" is considered areas of vegetation and forest that are known and frequented by a community, and "the forest" or "the wilderness" refers to places where people do not often go (Norman 2011). Thus, fairies can serve as gatekeepers, reminding people when they've strayed too far. Indeed, Murray-Bergquist suggests that taking bread into the woods, one of the most common ways to ward off the fairies, is in effect taking a small part of civilization or humanity along with you into wild places (2021, 86-87); it is the "civilized" nature of the food that works to repel the fairies.[3] Fairies can also be found in marshy areas, and around ponds, lakes and rivers (Simmonds 2005, 64). In the marshes, fairies are more commonly seen via light; people who venture near the marshes at night describe seeing a ball of

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[3] This is not always the case; some people suggest that, if you are being chased or led astray by the fairies, you should toss the bread to them as an offering or a distraction to save yourself.

light floating in or beyond the marshes. These lights are known, unsurprisingly, as fairy lights (Simmonds 2005, 65).

Second, Narváez and Rieti point out that fairies are not wholly good or wholly bad, but can be perceived as either, or can transition between the two (Rieti 1991, 15). They can be harmless, such as those often heard by berry pickers to warn them to go away. Fairy laughter, bells or music are described by these berry pickers, explaining their close encounters with the fairies. Of the twenty-four narratives Narváez transcribes, only ten have overtly negative outcomes; in the other fourteen, humans are unaffected or benefit from their encounters with the fairies (1991, 10-15). By far the most common fairy experience is being "led away." In these stories, people disappear for hours or days at a time, only to turn up somewhere unexpected, often covered in flowers, eating berries, or doing something else to signify that they were taken by the fairies. These narratives range from benign to malevolent. Some people describe having heard lovely music and eaten berries while they were missing, and turn up unharmed. Others are found with ripped clothing and physical ailments or deformities. I include one account of a woman who experienced pain in her jawbone after an encounter with the fairies, and had to go to the hospital for the removal of her jawbone (Adams 2013). Other people who encounter the fairies never return. Indeed, it is believed that if you follow fairy lights, you will be led away, never to be seen again (Simmonds 2005, 64).

Third, Rieti (1991) and Narváez (1991) conclude that fairylore is, in essence, about humans. As Rieti points out, the narratives follow humans home after fairy encounters, while fairies fade out of the story; humans are the actors, subjects and storytellers of fairy narratives: "Stories which have fairies as main characters are a literary genre" (Rieti 1991, 215). Fairies can be met and experienced by humans, and can affect humans in drastic ways, but the crux of the

story remains with the actions or reactions of the humans. Narváez explains that there are several reasons why people might choose to relate a fairy story (1991). First, in a place where, historically, labor has been outdoors and often in wild or semi-wild spaces, fairies provide a culturally sanctioned explanation for the incompetence of humans. In fairy narratives, people being led astray by the fairies are often not conscious of or not able to recall the event afterwards, and have no control over the events (335-8). For those who have lost their way in the woods, or lost track of time, fairies can be a more apt or more socially acceptable explanation than the "truth." Second, fairies can function as a cover-up for illicit activities or poor behavior (334-5). Straying far afield trying to pick as many berries as possible, instead of helping others, is poor berry-picking behavior; having been led astray by the fairies is outside of one's control, and thus excusable. Sexual deviance, such as premarital sex, could make a young person a pariah or unmarriable in rural communities; blaming the fairies for torn clothing, bruising, or even pregnancy was a preferable explanation (*ibid*). Third, fairies are a true, and inherent, part of Newfoundland's culture and landscape; thus, people may describe encounters with fairies simply because they had an experience that could only be explained through fairylore. Such experience-centered belief is a key part of explaining the inexplicable, and providing comfort in times of uncertainty (Rieti 1991, 212-13) Whether or not people will continue to tell fairy stories is up to us, Rieti concludes (216). Perhaps a new, culturally acceptable explanation, such as aliens, will gain more traction and usurp the position of fairies. However, both Rieti and Narváez point out that the need for fairy stories will continue to exist, and the interest many Newfoundlanders continue to have in them is testament of that fact.

In sum, fairylore in Newfoundland is concerned with the "betwixt and between" – civilization versus wilderness, good versus evil, human versus deity (Silvester 1999, 5).

Ireland's fairylore tradition is much older than that of Newfoundland. The fairylore of Ireland originated in Irish pre-Christian religion (Tolbert 2016, 20); fairies were associated with the ancient gods (93). In fact, Ireland has a name for the land of the fairies, which is seen as a parallel world to ours: Tír-na-nÓg, or the Land of the Young. This is the land to which people are taken by the fairies in Ireland (18; Cashman 2016, 145).

Scholars have identified a number of unique aspects of fairylore belief in Ireland. First, the etiological story of fairies as fallen angels is largely taken for granted in Irish fairylore, and is cited and explained in depth by scholars (Cashman 2016, 156-58, 224, 246-47; Glassie 1982, 547, 779-80; Glassie [2006] 2016, 21, 231, 301-2). However, not all Irish tradition-bearers believe this; Lysaght's informant, Jenny McGlynn, believes that "the fairies are the ancient dead who live on in the mounds and hills" (1991, 31). Glassie found several fairylore traditions in the town of Ballymenone, in Northern Ireland (1982; [2006] 2016). He heard tales of fairy abduction and fairy punishment ([2006] 2016, 529-32), but his observations focused on the relationship between fairies and gold. Fairies, much like the popular conception of leprechauns, were thought to be able to lead people to buried gold, and many of the stories Glassie recounts involve people, generally men, attempting to follow a fairy's instructions to find gold, and inevitably failing (1982, 547; [2006] 2016, 316-17, 526-27). This fairylore belief tradition is reflected in McGlynn's repertoire of fairy stories from the midlands of Ireland (Lysaght 1991, 25). Glassie's informants also mention that iron and steel can be used to protect oneself from the fairies ([2006] 2016, 311). Cashman notes that fairylore in Ireland often functions as a projection of the human world onto the fairy world (2016, 181). Thus, fairies punish those who trespass, destroy nature,

and behave selfishly or cruelly, while rewarding, or promising to reward, those who work hard and behave generously to others and to the fairies.

In his dissertation on supernatural belief, Tolbert concludes that fairies are inextricably tied to the landscape of Ireland: whether or not they "truly" exist, and whether or not people still believe in them, their mark on the landscape in the form of fairy forts, fairy trees, or other landmarks, continues to affect Irish discourse, practice and policy – and even civil planning (2016, 154-5). Their influence is especially potent as they add to the already multivarious meanings of local landmarks, which can indicate the presence of Celtic or Norse peoples in Ireland many centuries ago and communicate the boundaries and practices of local communities, by connecting the physical landscape to the metaphysical realm of the supernatural (152). Fairy trees and fairy forts (called raths) are two habitations of the fairies, and are by nature tied to the land. Fairy trees, often hawthorn bushes, are known by the locals to be inhabited by fairies. These trees connect our world to theirs, and to uproot them is to bring upon yourself a curse. In 1999, Eddie Lenihan, a well-known Irish storyteller, protested the planned construction of a highway that would demolish a fairy tree. After significant delays and increased expenses, as no one was willing to cut down the tree, the highway was diverted (Tolbert 2016, viii). Again in 2015, Lenihan protested the construction of a pharmaceutical factory over a fairy fort. Construction workers from another part of the country had to be hired to complete the project, as the local crew would not (26-7). A similar event occurred in 1971, when a bulldozer blew up while attempting to cut down a twelve-foot-tall hawthorn tree inhabited by the fairies (2). The company, Ferenka, did eventually build on that site, but they were plagued with problems and closed after six years.

Although the previous examples demonstrate the implications for companies that disturb

their habitations, Irish fairies also inflicted punishment on the individuals who dared to disturb

them. Tolbert recounts a story in which the teller's friend attempted to dig up a fairy fort to prove

the non-existence of fairies, and had to stop when his knee swelled up. His leg was permanently

crippled (Tolbert 2016, 78). Similarly, Lysaght's informant, Jenny McGlynn, from an English-

speaking area of central Ireland, tells several stories about the encounters individuals in her

community, including her husband, had when they disrupted a fairy rath called "the Rusheen,"

leaving them injured or otherwise punished (1991, 30-31). Lysaght emphasizes that McGlynn's

most ardent fairylore beliefs were tied to local landmarks – namely, the Rusheen (40). Glassie

also identified the emphasis on fairy raths, or forths, as his informants called them (1982, 66-68;

[2006] 2016, 306-8, 526-29). Cashman (2016) also recounts several stories that his informant,

Packy Jim, told him about fairy encounters at fairy bushes, trees, and forts (154-55, 162-3). Ó

Giolláin emphasizes the importance of local landmarks to continued belief, and the centrality of

these landmarks in popular fairylore (1991, 211). Again, the emphasis is on the disruption of

fairy habitations, or undue proximity to them, and the locations of these habitations are generally

well-known in the community (Tolbert 2016, 80).

Glassie concludes that Irish fairies "belong to the past" ([2006] 2016, 317-18, 329).

Referencing the past tense used by his informants, Glassie relegates fairies to the bygone era of

"fires lit on the floor and travel on horseback" (318). Similarly, Ó Giolláin concludes that

fairylore belief has survived much longer in Ireland than in other parts of the world, and

particularly Western Europe, such as England, due to its continued relevance, rather than the

"backward-ness" or superstitiousness of the Irish; urbanization and industrialization were

relatively late to Ireland (1991, 212). He suggests that, when the stories cease to become

relevant, as they are likely to do as Ireland becomes more urban and industrial, fairy belief will die out (Ó Giolláin 1991, 208-9). A similar argument could be made for Newfoundland, as I suggested previously. However, he and other scholars also recognize the persistence of fairylore – what Barbara Rieti calls "always going and never gone" (1991, 1-2). Glassie notes that the continual predictions of the death of the tradition have thus far failed to come true ([2006] 2016, 296); Cashman echoes this, recounting Packy Jim's explanation of "why the fairies seem scarce today" (163), even as he goes on to tell more fairy stories. Lysaght concludes that belief can vary according to the particular tradition-bearer – however, paramount to her informant, as to other storytellers, are the quality of the story and the tradition and the practice of sharing this knowledge through the generations (1991, 40). Indeed, contrary to Glassie and Ó Giolláin's assertions that fairylore is not relevant to urbanized, industrialized countries, fairy stories are still told in Ireland, just as they are in Newfoundland.

These stories, although related more to disruption of fairy habitations than the errant behavior of individuals, has significant similarities to the fairylore of Newfoundland. First, of course, is the threatening nature of the fairies. Contrary to the popular conceptions of fairies as nice, cute creatures that have taken root in much of the world (thanks largely to Disney and other media) fairies in Newfoundland and Ireland remain mischievous and dangerous. In Newfoundland, just the threat of being led away by the fairies is enough to establish boundaries and dictate behaviour. These stories were often used to warn people not to walk by themselves at night or in the wilderness, nor to stray too far for berries or firewood (Narváez 1991, 20-22). In Ireland, fairies could be used to delay or prevent unwanted development or construction, both by companies and by individuals. In both traditions, angry fairies were known to lash out with fairy squalls, sudden storms, or fairy blasts, painful welts that appeared unexpectedly and that burst to

reveal twigs, leaves or other natural elements (Lysaght 1991; Rieti 1990, 139, 167; Tolbert 2016). Victims led astray by the fairies often went insane or came back changed, harmed or deformed in some way (Narváez 1991; Rieti 1991; Tolbert 2016). Both fairylore traditions thus also serve as a form of social control.

The main difference in the two fairylore traditions is the differing human actions that are punishable by the fairies. Irish fairylore centers on destructive behavior; conflicts between fairies and people arise when individuals or companies threaten to demolish their homes. On the other side of the Atlantic, Newfoundland narratives focus on boundary-making; fairies punish those who stray into wild and unknown spaces, far from civilization. Thus, while Newfoundland tradition-bearers can protect themselves by bringing a piece of civilization with them in the form of bread, the Irish protect themselves with precious iron or steel tools – rarer, and perhaps more destructive, representations of civilization. These differences can be understood by examining differences between the islands themselves. Newfoundland and Labrador has a population of about 530,000, with the island of Newfoundland accounting for about 92% of that (World Population Review, 2021). On the other hand, Ireland has a population of almost five million (World Population Review, 2021). Additionally, Ireland has been under European, and particularly British, influence far longer than Newfoundland has. It is also smaller, at 69,000km^2, than the island of Newfoundland's 109,000km^2 (World Population Review, 2021). Ireland, having far less space for ten times as many people, is naturally more developed and has less unknown space. The landscape also affects this; while Ireland has 770,000 hectares of forest, (Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine 2020, 5), only 11% of its land mass, Newfoundland has five million hectares of forest - just under half its total land mass (Department of Education 2009, 263). In Newfoundland, fairies are gatekeepers in liminal spaces, and fairy

stories "reflect the struggles and hard-won survival of culture and human creation, and the tenuous imposition of order on the wilderness" (Rieti 1991, 3). In Ireland, the wilderness has largely disappeared, but the fairies remain.

Fairylore Literature

Fairylore is one of the most thoroughly studied forms of folklore in Newfoundland (Silvester 1999, 3). Rieti and Narváez did a wonderful job describing and analyzing these creatures, and students and folklorists have amassed an impressive collection of fairylore in MUNFLA (Simmonds 2005, 71). However, these works have glossed over a topic that should be problematized: the "Irishness," or "superstitiousness," of fairylore.

Rieti alludes to the link between Newfoundland fairies and Irish fairies several times in *Strange Terrain*. For example, she equates the changeling stories in Newfoundland with those in Ireland (1991, 43), and describes one particular story that is told in both islands (128). She also criticizes the assumptions of Irishness by a Newfoundland author, Margaret Duley, who describes a character in her novel *Cold Pastoral* who has an encounter with the fairies as "Pure Irish, I'd say by the sounds of her. I know the shore she comes from" (179, cited from Duley 1939, 53). The character is from Trinity Bay, Newfoundland. Although Rieti dislikes the stereotype of Irishness in this story, she clearly articulates a link between Irishness and superstitiousness with reference to fairylore by transcribing an interview in which two Newfoundland women explain that "the old Irish priests," who were "right from Ireland," would talk about fairies, "and that's because the Irish were so superstitious" (191-2). One of the interviewees, Annie Hayes, explains that her daughter Molly "declares that she has 'no Irish at all' in her" (193), using Irishness to mean superstitiousness, not Irish ancestry.

Margaret Duley was not the only Newfoundland author to equate the fairies with Irishness in her writing. Robert Furey, a well-known Newfoundland storyteller and author, introduces in *As the Old Folks Would Say* a character who has knowledge about the fairies because "her great-great-grandfather had come straight from Ireland before the famine" (2017, 132). Later in the story, a fairy says, when talking about a changeling story, "It was terrible how they started that story, you know. In County Cork, I believe it was, in my great-great-great-grandmother's time" (133). Although his stories are meant to be understood as fiction, the subtitle of the book, *Stories, Tall Tales and Truths of Newfoundland and Labrador*, is rather ambivalent about the nature of the stories, and Furey still conveys the association of fairies with the Irish quite clearly.

Alice Lannon and Mike McCarthy, in *Fables, Fairies and Folklore of Newfoundland*, describe fairylore in Newfoundland as follows: "This belief in the Fairies, or Little People, was very strong in all parts of Newfoundland, but especially so in areas with a strong Irish or Breton background, and was still pretty general even in the first half of the twentieth century" (1991, 31). They also suggest that the belief that fairies are fallen angels "came from Ireland with the first Irish settlers" (32).

Such stereotypes, when considered in the larger context of Newfoundland, are highly problematic. Fairylore, in part due to its prevalence and familiarity, as well as its suggested ties to Ireland, forms an ideal prism through which to view questions of identity and stereotype in Newfoundland. However, before delving into the issues associated with relegating fairylore in Newfoundland to a strictly Irish tradition, it is important to clarify the ties between Ireland and Newfoundland, and explain the prevalence of Irishness. In the next section, I will introduce identity in Newfoundland, and explain how and why folklore plays a large part in its

construction, before reviewing Irishness on the island. My hope is that gaining a better understanding of the role that Irishness plays in Newfoundland identity will set the stage for understanding the real and perceived connections between Irishness and Newfoundland fairylore.

Identity in Newfoundland

In this section, I refer to Newfoundland *nationalism*, even though the island is not a self-governing nation, simply because it would be needlessly confusing to do otherwise, given that the concepts surrounding nationalism so easily apply to Newfoundland, regardless of its political structure (Thomsen 2010). Because the term "nationalism" has both academic and vernacular uses, I will reiterate Franz Boas' definition of nationalism. He suggests that nationalism is borne out of the memory of a unified national history and the collective ownership of certain national art and literature (1945, 118). He defines nationalism in its purest form as "merely the expression of the intense desire to develop freely the national cultural ideals" (120). The rhetoric of nationalism has been used to promote violence, racism, and even war, so it is worth differentiating between Newfoundland nationalism and the nationalism of other groups. As previously stated, Newfoundland is not self-governed and there is no political nationalist movement towards independence in Newfoundland (Baker 2014). While Newfoundland does emphasize its differences from other provinces and countries, this has not resulted in violence or civil unrest. However, Baker (2014) proposes that Newfoundland identity operates like a unique Newfoundland "ethnicity," and Cadigan (2009) argues that the existence of a unique ethnic identity and pre-Confederation solidarity allows for a unique "Newfoundland nationalism" that defines a collection of diverse peoples as one united group (Cadigan 2009). This is the concept I will use to cover the variety of manifestations of nationalism in vernacular discourse on the island. However, even after narrowing down this definition, nationalism has political, ethnic,

cultural, religious and romantic facets; therefore, in this section, I explore a few of these in greater depth.

Newfoundland has a unique brand of political nationalism. It was a self-governing state from 1907 to 1934. Due to economic hardship following the first World War and the decline of the codfish population, it rejoined Britain in 1934. However, Newfoundland became prosperous following the second World War, and sought to regain its status as a Dominion. When put to a vote, citizens instead chose to join Canada, and the island became the newest province in 1949. Since then, NL has remained one of the smallest and poorest provinces in the country, and has suffered derogatory slurs and stereotypes at the hands of Americans and other Canadians (King & Clarke, 2002). This history of independence followed by degradation has resulted in what Alan Dundes has termed a "nationalistic inferiority complex" (1985). Newfoundland works hard to construct and maintain its identity apart from Canada. This will be demonstrated with a few examples, below, when discussing the intersections of these theories of nationalism.

Johann Gottfried Herder's concept of romantic nationalism may be useful at this point (Wilson 2006). One of the founding theories of the discipline of folklore, this concept was utilized in the late eighteenth century to develop nationalism in nations that contained multiple states, cultures or ethnicities by emphasizing "passion and instinct instead of reason, national differences instead of common aspirations, and, above all, the building of nations on the traditions and myths of the past—that is, on folklore—instead of on the political realities of the present" (Wilson 2006, 109-110). The most famous proponents of this theory are undoubtedly the Grimm brothers; Wilhelm and Jakob considered it their task to create in the German psyche a favourable image of the nation of Germany: one with its own folklore and culture, that could stand against opposing forces (Wilson 2006, 119). To do this, they collected oral narratives from

the German peasantry, which they compiled into anthologies and sold back to German citizens. Similar quests have been carried out in Finland, with the *Kalevala*, and in Slavic countries (Wilson 2006, 121).

Out of this concept came Benedict Anderson's term "imagined communities" (2006). He suggests that imagined communities are those in which community members cannot personally know every other member, so they must imagine parts of the community to which they belong. One of the clearest examples of an imagined community is a nation; not all Germans know one another, and so work must be done to construct an imagined community. It is easy to see how romantic nationalism fits into this idea, and this is where I posit Newfoundland cultural nationalism fits into this discourse.

Newfoundland is the only place in Canada with a degree-granting Folklore program offered in English (Laval University in Quebec has a folklore program offered in French). Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador offers Bachelor, Master, and Doctor of Philosophy folklore programs. This has resulted in, or arguably resulted from, high amounts of folklore on the island. Newfoundlanders have their own dictionary (the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*), which contains over 200,000 words. Multiple pubs host traditional music nights featuring local musicians and narrators who tell localized Jack tales. One of the most obviously unique and nationalistic Newfoundland traditions is the "Screech-In," which is performed on outsiders to make them honorary Newfoundlanders. This involves "drinking Screech [a type of Jamaican rum], kissing a codfish, and taking part in dialogue with a presiding officer, the chief 'Screecher' (who is dressed in 'traditional' Newfoundland fisher garb), in an exaggerated Newfoundland accent. The tourist receives a certificate at the end attesting to his/her status as an honorary '*Newfie*'" (King & Clarke 2002, 541). This ceremony relies on stereotypes

of what it means to be a Newfoundlander, requiring the tourist to eat (cod), drink (rum), and talk (using slang) like a Newfoundlander before "becoming" one. This is known to be an invented tradition, likely created in the 1950s or 1960s, post-confederation (Byrne 1997, 239). However, this tradition was recently contested for being a trivialization of Newfoundland culture and history, and for pandering to the stereotype of the "goofy Newfie" (Byrne 1997, 243-46; King & Clarke 2002). This stereotype, first imposed on Newfoundlanders by outsiders in the late 1930s, considers the typical Newfoundlander to be "eternally happy, embarrassingly hospitable, and full of fun, deferential to his betters (read any non-Newfoundlander), but fiercely proud of his homeland and his way of life" (Byrne 1997, 238). Perpetuating this stereotype is the "Newfie joke," which differentiates Newfoundlanders from mainlanders (other Canadians) and Americans, essentially making fun of "Newfies" for their lack of intelligence or modernity (*ibid*). For example, the following joke, told in the online forum for an Albertan magazine, makes fun of Newfoundlanders by comparing them negatively to Nova Scotians: "Do you know how Newfoundland was created? By Nova Scotians throwing rocks into the ocean. Do you know how Newfoundland was eventually populated? By those who weren't clever enough to let go of the rocks" (Bushmaster 2017). Notably, a significant number of Newfoundlanders have moved to Alberta for work. Another joke, published in Corner Brook, NL, by a Newfoundlander in a book entitled *Newfie Jokes*, pushes back against this joking tradition: "What is black, blue, and floats in the bay? A mainlander, after telling a Newfie joke" (Tulk 1971, 79). In both the "Newfie" jokes told by outsiders, as well as those told by Newfoundlanders, whether self-adulating or self-deprecating, there is a clear differentiation between Newfoundlanders and mainlanders. It is perhaps not coincidental that the Folklore Department was founded about twenty years after Newfoundland joined Canada. This construction of a body of "national" Newfoundland culture

and folklore can be identified as a form of romantic cultural nationalism, which contributes to

Newfoundland's unique culture and identity while resisting the negative stereotypes of

Newfoundlanders imposed by outsiders.

Within this larger context of Newfoundland nationalism, we find the concept of Irishness,

which will be discussed in the next section.

The Irish in Newfoundland: What is "Irishness"?

Newfoundland is a fairly diverse place, represented by numerous ethnicities, including

many from the British Isles. However, the overwhelming representation of the island is that of a

North American Ireland (Farquharson 2008; Walsh 2009). Newfoundland has been termed "the

most Irish place outside of Ireland" (McGinn 2000, 8, cited from Osborne 2015, 80). It certainly

shares some similarities; both are islands in the Atlantic Ocean with rocky coasts, temperate

climates characterized by adverse weather such as rain or wind, and friendly people. Both speak

English and have similar histories of subjugation by the British.

Irish nationalism has been heavily studied in Newfoundland (Mannion 2018; McCarthy

1982; Wilson 2009). Irish folklore and culture are ever-present in Newfoundland (Casey 1986;

Lalor 2009). Newfoundland tourism plays up the similarities: Newfoundland folk music is often

advertised as Newfoundland Irish music, for example (Trew 2005, 44), and downtown St. John's

sports a pub called Shamrock City. Newfoundland place names are often similar to those in

Ireland, such as Kildare (a county in Ireland and neighbourhood in St. John's), or refer to Ireland

directly, such as the Irish Loop, a road circuit that loops around the Eastern part of the Avalon

peninsula (Keough 2008). Even folklore studies have highlighted these connections, examining

similarities in folk music (Osborne 2015), vernacular dance (Walsh 2009), and even legends

(Nuttall 1996).

It is worth noting that Newfoundland is not the only place where you can find this phenomenon; over seventy million people around the world claim to have Irish heritage (McWilliams & Murray 2018, 1-2), despite the fact that Ireland's population has not yet broken five million (World Population Review 2021). This perhaps speaks, again, to the national inferiority complex shared by Newfoundland and Ireland. Both are small, and neither has a large economy, army, or other significant sway on the global stage (ter Haar 2017). Both have been or are currently being dominated by a larger nation; Ireland and Newfoundland were settled and controlled by the British for several hundred years, and Newfoundland continues to answer to the federal government of Canada. The fact that citizens of both islands utilize romantic nationalism to imagine a shared community, even while far removed from the nation they are imagining, speaks to the importance of this conceptualization of identity.

In my thesis, I use the term "Irishness" instead of Irish nationalism. Farquharson suggests that many people perceive the connection between Newfoundland and Ireland as either 1) the innate feeling of similarity or unidentifiable connection, or 2) the products or mannerisms of Irishness constructed and promoted by tourism or cultural heritage campaigns, such as the Irish-like accent or prevalence of "trad" music and fiddlers (Farquharson 2008, 10). These categories do not necessarily correspond to nationalism, as they can be experienced by everyone, not only those with ties to Ireland. Thus, I define Irishness as an imagined and internalized notion of connection to Ireland made manifest in tangible and intangible cultural products and expressions, rather than being based on lived experiences (Osborne 2015, 84; Walsh 2009, 118).

Conclusion

It has now become clear that fairies in Newfoundland and Ireland share many similarities. Liminal, ambivalent creatures somewhere between humans and deities, they are intimately tied

to the land, and yet they managed to sail across the Atlantic to find new roots. Fairylore in Newfoundland has subsequently flourished due to the isolated nature of the island itself as well as the occupations therein. It has also been attributed to the Irish, as opposed to the English or Scottish who also immigrated to Newfoundland, perhaps because of the similarities between these two islands; their identity and nationalism are characterized through romanticization and imagination, and they both have inferiority complexes that have resulted in a strong emphasis on folklore, including oral narration. However, digging past the comparison of these two fairylore traditions to unearth other influences has thus far been sidelined – a gap in the literature that this thesis seeks to address.

CHAPTER THREE: IRISHNESS IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Newfoundland is a fairly diverse place, populated by numerous ethnicities, and yet the overwhelming representation of the island is that of a North American Ireland (Farquharson 2008; Walsh 2009). In this chapter, I will provide an overview of the representations of Irishness in these varying sectors of the island, and highlight areas in which other voices have been excluded from Newfoundland's national narrative.

When discussing Irishness in Newfoundland, it is helpful to use William Jansen's concept of the esoteric-exoteric factor in folklore (1959). Jansen defines four types of esoteric and exoteric perspectives. Esoteric 1 refers to what a group thinks of itself. Exoteric 1 refers to what one group think of another. Esoteric 2 reflects what one group thinks that another group thinks of it (or, what group A thinks that group B thinks of group A). Finally, exoteric 2 refers to what group A thinks that group B thinks that group A thinks of group B. In reference to Newfoundland, I will discuss in this chapter what Newfoundlanders think of themselves (esoteric 1), what they think of the Irish (exoteric 1), and what they think that other people, such as tourists, think of them (esoteric 2). I will also discuss what outside sources think about Newfoundland (exoteric 1).

Irishness

The Irish began to arrive in Newfoundland in the late 16th century, as servants of English fishermen (McCarthy 1982; Sider 2003). The English would often leave these Irish servants to claim their fishing spot over the winter, resulting in Irish outports along the coast of Newfoundland, particularly on the southern and eastern shores of the Avalon Peninsula. Similarly, in the early 1800s, particularly the 20s and 30s, great waves of Irish people immigrated to North America, including Newfoundland, to escape the impending potato famine

(which occurred from 1845-1852). The potato famine had the worst effect on the west and south of Ireland, and it is notable that the majority of immigrants from Ireland to Newfoundland were from that area, particularly the counties of Waterford and Wexford (Mannion & Handcock 1993).

Just over a hundred years after the United Irish uprising, Newfoundland gained independent status as a Dominion. From 1907-1934, Newfoundland was a self-governing state equal to Canada under the British commonwealth. The founding fathers of this independent state were largely Irish Roman Catholic (Thomsen 2010, 110) – thus, "the Newfoundland nation was forged in the image of the Irish" (114). Clearly, in the Irishness of Newfoundland, there are political underpinnings.

Religion also plays a role in the Irishness of Newfoundland. Once Irish people immigrated to Newfoundland, they become known as simply "Irish," instead of being differentiated according to their individual county. This term was then specified to mean "Irish Catholic" in opposition to the English protestants. This caused Irish Protestants to identify with Scottish or English protestants instead (Wilson 2009, 50). Thus, by the mid-1900s, Irishness in Newfoundland was synonymous with Irish *Catholic*-ness.

Now, the majority of the Irish in Newfoundland consider themselves to be of Irish descent, not from Ireland directly (*Statistics Canada* 2017). This leads to various forms of "Irishness." For example, someone might have been born in Ireland, but moved to Newfoundland as a small child. Thus, although they identify as Irish and feel strong ties to Ireland, the way they understand the connection between Ireland and Newfoundland would still be largely influenced by Newfoundland's Irishness. Similarly, someone born and raised in

Newfoundland, who has never been to Ireland, may nevertheless choose to identify with their

Irish roots, and embrace their Irish heritage as distinct from their Newfoundland heritage.

Irishness is important to understanding the role of Ireland, and the Irish, in Newfoundland

identity-making. The Irish in Newfoundland conceive of themselves both as Irish and as

Newfoundlanders (esoteric 1). Utilizing a lens of "Irishness" allows us to unpack more complex

relationships, such as the perception of Ireland by Newfoundlanders and the perception of

Newfoundland by the Irish (exoteric 1), as well as what those living in Newfoundland think that

other people think about Newfoundland's connection to Ireland (esoteric 2).

In the following sections, I will examine perceptions and constructions of Irishness in

Newfoundland folklore, popular culture and personal narrative.

Irishness in Folklore

Walsh (2008) suggests that the real and perceived similarities between Newfoundland

and Ireland have caused Newfoundland to model much of its culture after Ireland, and she

suggests that the Department of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland is one facet

in which this modelling takes place. It is easy to see the connections when reading folklore

studies of Newfoundland. I will explore Irishness in two different examples of Newfoundland

folklore: folk music and step dancing.

Far and away the most common representation of Irishness in Newfoundland is in its folk

music. Everett (2016) and Osborne (2015) have addressed these connections explicitly in their

work on Newfoundland folk music, but almost every mention of Newfoundland folk music,

whether in published articles, interviews, or news stories, refers to it as "Irish/Newfoundland

music" (https://www.oreillyspub.com/), "traditional Irish-Newfoundland music" (*Downhome

Magazine* 2019), "Irish Newfoundland music" (*VOCM* 2020), or some other combination of the

two. Indeed, the prevalence of fiddle music alone, combined with a similar repertoire of "trad" music between the two nations, is enough to immediately associate the two.

There are many types of music in Newfoundland; the island has rock bands, blues musicians, jazz music venues, and more. However, when the term "Newfoundland folk music" is used, it connotes "traditional music," which is defined by Holly Everett as follows:

> The term "traditional music," in the sense that it is employed in provincial tourism marketing (see, e.g., the provincial tourism website at www.newfoundlandlabrador.com), refers to music made via acoustic instruments including guitars, accordions, fiddles, bodhrans, and concertinas, and engaging with folk or vernacular idioms as developed in Europe and North America. The music is often referred to as Irish-Newfoundland music, due to the heavy influence of Irish immigrants on the island's culture (Everett 2016, 113).

Although the connection between Irish and Newfoundland is now quite explicit, it is also a new one. Osborne argues that, although music may have been brought over from Ireland during the period of heavy immigration in the 19th century, Newfoundland folk music was only recast as "Irish" in the last thirty years (2015). The use of Irish lyrics, melodies and instruments has been enabled by radio and more recent media forms, which allow musicians to listen to Irish folk music and borrow ideas and techniques. Similarly, travel between the two islands occurred more frequently over the last sixty years due to the advent of commercial air travel, so musicians from Newfoundland could go to Ireland, and vice-versa, in order to facilitate an exchange of music.

This crossover in folk music between Ireland and Newfoundland has taken the form of borrowed melodies and lyrics, as previously stated, as well as the renaming of songs and melodies with Newfoundland names. A good example of the crossover between these two folk music traditions is the album *Island to Island: Traditional Music from Ireland and Newfoundland* (Creagh & Desplanques 2003). This album compares music from musicians from Cork, Ireland and St. John's, Newfoundland. There are evident similarities between the two groups of songs. For example, track number four features two songs by two different musicians:

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"Johnny Doherty's," from Newfoundland, and "The Ravelled Hank of Yarn," from Ireland. The two melodies are very similar, and both are played on accordions. Another example of the crossover between the folk music of Newfoundland and Ireland is "Star of Logy Bay." The McNulty Family, a group of Newfoundland musicians, learned this song while on tour around Newfoundland. They then recorded it to the Irish tune "The Hills of Glenshee"; this version went on to be one of the most popular versions of "Star of Logy Bay" in all of Newfoundland (Osborne 2015). Similarly, MacDonald points out that "all sorts of English and Newfoundland songs are still performed, although they have been recast as Irish-sounding through instrumentation and arrangements" (1999, 189).

A second example of Irishness in Newfoundland folklore is step dancing. Popularized in Ireland by "Riverdance," step dancing involves performing intricate footwork while maintaining a still, stable and upright upper body (Walsh 2008). Step dancing was brought to Newfoundland by the Christian Brothers, a group of Irish religious men who came to Newfoundland to teach in the late 1800s (Walsh 2008; FitzGerald 2001). In the 1930s, they formed the group St. Pat's Dancers, a group that still performs today. However, the step dancing tradition was originally adopted in vernacular, casual settings such as the Newfoundland "kitchen party." Due to the recent resurgence of interest in step dancing in Newfoundland, thanks to Riverdance, step dancing has gone from the kitchen to the stage (Walsh 2008).

Although the step dancing tradition in Newfoundland is very similar to that in Ireland, as it originated in Ireland, there are some distinct differences between traditional step dancing and the Irish Riverdance. One of the most obvious is the differing footwear. Step dancing in Newfoundland kitchen parties and other vernacular settings was traditionally done with leather-soled shoes – casual shoes that anyone might have. However, the sound of leather soles is much

quieter than tap dancing shoes and cannot be heard when dancers are performing on a stage for a large audience. Thus, step dancers in Newfoundland now use regular tap shoes. However, Irish step dancers use modified tap shoes that allow them to stand on their toes. This has led to different steps and choreographies in Ireland than in Newfoundland, as the dancers have different levels of foot mobility.

Lest I conflate the two genres of step dancing too closely, I should clarify that practitioners and keen observers have noted that the traditional step dancing adopted from the Christian Brothers in Newfoundland more than eighty years ago differs significantly from Riverdance. In fact, Irish dancers also distinguish between traditional step dancing and the popular Riverdance. However, in the tourist imaginary as well as vernacular discourse, Newfoundland step dancing is often associated with the Irish. Walsh sums this up nicely: "Although a majority of the population of Newfoundland and Labrador is of English descent, it is arguable that Irish popular entertainments have had more staying power (and certainly more consumer appeal, especially in the tourist industry) in Newfoundland and Labrador culture. Because step dancing is intrinsically linked to its Irish roots, Irish identity is found here" (Walsh 2008, 131).

In this section, I have quoted from academic articles for my sources, so it is difficult to determine what the practitioners of folk music and step dancing are attempting to communicate about themselves and others. However, some observations can be made. First, it is clear that Newfoundland step dancers and traditional musicians have been inspired by the popularity of Riverdance and Irish folk music, indicating that they perceive these styles of dancing and music to be valuable and desirable, and, equally, that the similarity between the two dancing and music traditions is something to be appreciated and embraced, not dismissed. Thus, Newfoundland step

dancers and traditional Newfoundland musicians communicate a deep appreciation of both the

Newfoundland tradition (esoteric 1) and the Irish tradition (exoteric 1). Second, these dancers

and musicians have moved their performances from kitchen parties to pubs and stages, indicating

an awareness of tourists' and the general public's desire to see these traditions (esoteric 2).

Indeed, by switching from leather to tap shoes, and by setting Newfoundland lyrics to Irish

melodies or recasting English folk songs as Irish, these dancers and musicians not only recognize

an audience appreciation of the tradition, but recognize that the audience appreciates the

Irishness of the tradition. The following quote from Bob Hallett, co-founder of Great Big Sea,

sums up this perspective nicely: "In my experience, tourists and conventioneers have zero

interest in local jazz, blues, rock, etc. They expect to see and hear and be entertained by

traditional music [meaning Irish-Newfoundland music] and musicians in Newfoundland, and if

they seek out any musical experience at all, it will be one based on that notion" (c.f. Everett

2016, 121).

Irishness in Popular Culture

Irishness can be found in Newfoundland popular culture as well. I use popular culture to

encompass not only popular musicians and artists, but also TV shows and channels, newspapers

and news websites, sports, politics, fashion and technology.

To begin again with music, there are numerous popular musicians in Newfoundland that

connote Irishness explicitly or implicitly, even through their names alone. The Sons of Erin, the

Celtic Connection and the Irish Descendants are three popular bands who have chosen to identify

explicitly with the Irish connections of Newfoundland music. The original four members of the

Sons of Erin were all born in Ireland, but met and began performing after moving to

Newfoundland. The band has built its success in Newfoundland, going from playing at local

pubs for beer to performing all around the world. The band leader, Ralph O'Brien, even started

an Irish pub in St. John's, called Erin's Pub, which is still in business, although it is now owned

by Great Big Sea founder Bob Hallett (Goudie 2018). The Irish Descendants are another popular

Newfoundland band. Formed in 1990 by four Newfoundland musicians, the band has had

continuing success today. On a site advertising them, they were described as follows: "There is

no place in Canada with any deeper Irish roots than Newfoundland, and The Irish Descendants

have captured the essence of the music with their exquisitely produced, award-winning

recordings, including a wide range from haunting ballads to high energy tapping reels" (*last.fm*

2008). It is important to note that it is difficult to make distinctions between popular and

traditional musicians in Newfoundland, and what the musicians are considered to be vernacularly

may differ from how they advertise themselves and think of themselves. Additionally, a self-

described traditional musician may choose to incorporate modern instruments or exclude

vernacular language from their music, thus making it less "traditional," according to the

definition that Everett put forward (see page 41).

The TV Show *Republic of Doyle* is another great example of Irishness in Newfoundland.

The popular, six-season show, which was first aired on CBC in 2010, was filmed exclusively in

Newfoundland, mostly in St. John's, where it is set, and features a number of Newfoundlanders

in its cast, including the lead actor and writer Allan Hawco, lead actress Krystin Pellerin, and

several others. Notably, Hawco's co-star Sean McGinley is from Donegal, Ireland. In the show,

McGinley plays Hawco's father, Malachy Doyle. Doyle is the twelfth most common surname in

Ireland (*Ireland Calling*, n.d.). Thus, the title of the show brings to mind Ireland, even though it

is set in Newfoundland, because Ireland is a republic, but Newfoundland never was.

Outside of TV and music, Irishness is commonly found in news articles as well. On the Irish news site Independent.ie, there is an article about the loss of the direct flight from Dublin to St. John's, which was cancelled by WestJet in November of 2018. The article quoted Kieran Cronin, a librarian at the Centre for Newfoundland and Labrador Studies at the Waterford Institute of Technology, who wrote an open letter to WestJet that communicated his dismay at the cancellation, as well as the "disappointment" among the Irish and Newfoundlanders. The article states that he "praised the connection between Newfoundland and Irish history," and quotes from an interview with Cronin, in which he stated that "Henry Winton commented back in the mid 19th century that 'Newfoundland is merely Waterford parted from the sea.' I would go a step further and say that 'Newfoundland is merely the Southeast of Ireland parted from the sea'" (Farrell 2018). Another news article, this one from the *Irish Times*, is titled "The most Irish island in the world," followed by the lead sentences: "The residents of Newfoundland don't like being called 'Newfies' or Canadians, but you can call them Irish. And the town of Tilting, on its little-brother island of Fogo, is 'Irish on the rocks'" (Enright 2013).

In these examples of popular culture and discourse, we can see various forms of eso- and exoteric interpretations of both Newfoundland and Ireland. The Sons of Erin are Irish people performing Irish folk music for Newfoundlanders. They interpret Newfoundlanders as being appreciative of Irish music and culture, and indeed see Newfoundland folk music as being very similar to Irish music (Goudie 2018). Thus, their opinions reflect and embrace Irishness, because they are freely embracing and expressing their Irish culture and traditions. In this way, they reflect what they think of their own Irish tradition (esoteric 1), as well as what they think Newfoundlanders think of their Irish music (esoteric 2). On the other hand, the Irish Descendants express Irishness in their reflection of imagined connections to the Irish, and Irish folk music,

despite being Newfoundlanders. In this way, they are portraying what they think of

Newfoundland and Newfoundland folk music (esoteric 1), as well as how they perceive of their

connections to the Irish, and Irish folk music (exoteric 1). This is also the case for the *Republic of*

Doyle. Both of the news articles I quoted are written by Irish news sites, and both articulate

tangible and intangible connections to Newfoundland, and in this way, they are also utilizing

esoteric 1 and exoteric 1 by communicating what they think of themselves (Ireland) as well as

what they think of Newfoundland.

<center>**Irishness in Personal Narrative**</center>

In this section, I look exclusively at esoteric interpretations of Irishness in Newfoundland,

both through what Newfoundlanders think of themselves, as well as what they think that others

think of Newfoundland. In this section, I quote from seven archived interviews with

Newfoundlanders, who discuss some aspects of Irishness in Newfoundland, including

superstitiousness, the "Irish influence" and the Newfoundland accent. Five of the seven

interviews took place in the last ten years; the other two are older, having occurred in 2001 and

1992.

Barbara Rieti, writing about fairies in Newfoundland in the late 1980s and early 1990s,

laments that Irishness, both in Newfoundland and elsewhere, is associated with superstitiousness

(Rieti 1991, 173; 191-3). However, this is a stereotype that persists, even in recent interviews

with local Newfoundlanders, such as those quoted below. Sally Peddle, living in Spaniard's Bay,

points to the Irishness of fairy stories, suggesting that "the interesting things that happened here"

can be attributed to the Irish (2017, 29:35[4]). Similarly, Cavelle Sheppard, from Mount Pearl,

states that "most superstitions, I think, came from Ireland; we had a lot of teachers came out

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[4] References that include time stamps, such as this one, are from publicly-accessible archival interviews.

from Ireland, especially in the West end, and they brought a lot of superstitions with them" (2001, 11:35). She describes one teacher, who was from Ireland, and "still believed in fairies" (12:05). Brenda MacDonald, from St. John's, also points to the Irishness of fairies and other supernatural beliefs. She repeats a story told to her by her mother about a fairy "blast," and when asked where it came from, responded "Irish, I think it's Irish; well, fairies and stuff I kinda consider very Irish, even though none of my—both my parents and all of their people are all from England. There's no Irish in my family at all. But there was a lot of Irish influence" (2013, 53:21).

This "Irish influence" appears in many of the interviews. MacDonald emphasizes the Irish influence on religion, explaining that even though her family was English, not Irish, "We were in a Catholic neighbourhood; we went to Catholic schools. You weren't allowed to say the word 'Protestant,' you said 'non-Catholic.' [Pause] But that was the way we grew up, and we, everybody in the neighbourhood went to confession on Saturdays, yep. And then mass in the morning, cuz you'd fast, and then you'd get Holy Communion" (2013, 54:16). Similarly, Peddle suggests that there is a very prevalent Irish influence in local Newfoundland furniture, to the point that it is more pronounced than the English influence (2017, 29:40). This influence is also clearly observed by local musicians, which is unsurprising, given the previous discussion about the connections between Newfoundland and Irish folk music. Musician Scott Ring describes this influence as follows:

> Most of the [music] here in St. John's is obviously from Ireland. So we just change our own lyrics, try to duplicate the melodies best we can, and that's why it's become bastardized Irish music. […] When I go to Ireland, and I say "Now that's a Newfoundland song." And they say, "Oh no no no, that's an Irish song." So pretty well every Newfoundland song, especially the tunes. Now Rufus Guinchard and […] they play lots of tunes, but if you listen to their material, there's a lot of Irish stuff in there, it's the stuff they would've picked up off the radio […] So the music here is different, but it's the same. The Irish come over here – I play with a lot of Irish musicians – and they come

here, and we have things called singles, which in Ireland are called pocas. So the music is there, it's obvious you can tell where it comes from (2013, 00:51).

Finally, many of the interviews discussed the Irishness of the Newfoundland accent. Randy Ring, well-known Newfoundland musician from Quidi Vidi and grandfather of Scott Ring, describes playing accordion in a pub in Dublin, and being mistaken for Irish: "And they asked me what part of Wexford I was from. And then when I told them Newfoundland, and they introduced me and everything else, and they said, 'This fella actually is more Irish than us guys'" (2013, 12:14). Interestingly, Ring describes the music he plays as "all Irish music," not Newfoundland music. Jacqueline Mair, from Witless Bay, was also mistaken for Irish when she was in Scotland:

> My youngest son was actually born at the Aberdeen maternity hospital, and the nurses asked me what part of Ireland I was from. And they couldn't believe – because they said, "Oh, did you immigrate to Canada?" I said, "No, I'm from Canada." They said, "Oh, did you immigrate to Canada?" I said, "No, I'm *from* Canada." But, it's Newfoundland, which is entirely different, from, you know, and if you've never been to Canada, try explaining it to somebody. Because you know when you hear a Canadian accent, it sounds, pretty, you know—I'm sure there are distinctions, but it's a very North American sound, you know what I mean? [Interviewer: Are you interested in the Dictionary of Newfoundland-] I have the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, yep (2014, 27:03).

Brenda MacDonald also talked about her father's accent, which, although he was of English descent, sounded distinctly Irish: "I mean my father talked really Irish, even though, you know, generations lived here in Newfoundland. But he still spoke—a lot of his words were very Irish, very. A lot of books that I read, things that I say, [it] was only because my father said it! And it was written in these books, so it came over from Ireland. So that's how big the influence was, right?" (2013, 53:39).

The participants in these interviews have different explanations as to where this Irish influence came from. MacDonald points to living in a Catholic neighbourhood, the implication being that living side-by-side with Irish Catholic neighbours for generations in Newfoundland

had caused her English family to sound Irish and tell Irish fairy stories (2013). Mair (2014) differentiates between Canada and Newfoundland, suggesting that the Irish were more influential on the island than the mainland. Scott Ring implies that much of the overlap was caused both by musicians travelling to and from Ireland and Newfoundland and by listening to Irish songs on the radio (2013). On the other hand, Sheppard (2001) and Aloysius O'Brien (1992a), from St. John's, link this influence to the immigration of the Irish to Newfoundland in the 1800s. Sheppard describes the teachers who came from Ireland (2001). O'Brien connects this to the immigration of the "Irish youngsters" in the 1820s and 30s (1992a, 52:15), as well as to the commercial fishery that had been in operation since the 1700s: "I would say most Newfoundlanders, no matter how Irish his name is, he can go back and trace an English ancestor. And by the same token, great numbers of English people, can claim an Irish ancestor. So I would say, maybe, they say, 35% is Irish. So when you're going by the names, I'm sure half, or more, would have an Irish ancestor. […] Because the connections was so close between the west country of England, and the southeast of Ireland. Several hundred years of close commercial connection" (1992b, 24:03). O'Brien himself has Irish ancestry on both his mother's and father's sides of the family. Of course, having settled on the island, Irish immigrants would create Irish Catholic settlements, which would in turn influence the English Protestants who moved there later. However, it is interesting to note that few of the interviewees drew attention to the tangible historic connection between Newfoundland and Ireland through the fishery and immigration.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored Irishness in Newfoundland through folklore, popular culture, and personal narrative. It is clear that Irishness is present in many areas of Newfoundland culture. This concept allows us to achieve a better understanding of what

Newfoundlanders think of themselves and others, as well as how the Irish see Newfoundland, and what Newfoundlanders think that others think of them. Additionally, this discussion has highlighted the prevalence of Irishness in dominant narratives about Newfoundland.

However, Irishness is not the only influence on Newfoundland culture and identity, nor were the Irish the sole, or even the majority of the immigrants to Newfoundland. As mentioned on pages 41-43, the English were also very significant to the development of Newfoundland. The majority of immigrants to Newfoundland were English, with the exception of the large influx of the Irish in the 1800s due to the impending famine, and the British controlled the island, including its trade and political structure, for over 250 years. However, as MacDonald points out with reference to Newfoundland folk music (2013), the influence of the English has been actively erased from provincial identity discourse and heritage conservation over the past fifty years.

The Scottish and French also immigrated to Newfoundland in large numbers, and yet, in the majority of Newfoundland, their influence is not well-known or recognized. There are of course exceptions to this; the west coast of Newfoundland, particularly the Codroy Valley, is much more cognizant of its Scottish heritage, and the Port-au-Port Peninsula still has a significant community of French-speaking Newfoundlanders. However, the French and Scottish influence on Newfoundland folk music and dance has largely been ignored in vernacular practice, academic scholarship and news coverage. Newfoundland even has an official tartan, a particular type of Scottish textile, designed by Sam Wilansky in the early 1960s (*Government of Canada* 2017). However, this tartan is almost never represented in Newfoundland tourism, costuming or other representations of Newfoundland. Other groups, such as Chinese and Lebanese Newfoundlanders, have also had a large influence on areas of Newfoundland.

Finally, the oldest ethnic groups to exist on the island, the Beothuk, Mi'kmaq, and to some extent the Innu (*Heritage* 2000), had effectively been erased from Newfoundland's narrative until very recently. There are currently movements to recognize the importance of these Indigenous cultures and their traditions, and efforts have been made to foster the growth of these traditions following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action in 2015. However, process has been slow, and Irishness continues to dominate Newfoundland's national discourse.

CHAPTER FOUR: FIELDWORK – FAIRIES IN NEWFOUNDLAND

This chapter will outline the field materials I have collected, the relevant demographics of those from whom I collected this material, and what the collected material says about Irishness and fairies in Newfoundland.

The material herein is from numerous sources, varying from public to semi-private. For public material, such as published children's books and tourism blogs and websites, I do not change the names of the authors, but use the name or pseudonym indicated in the published material. For semi-public material, such as posts or comments on Facebook pages and groups, as well as for material I collected from MUNFLA, I avoid identifiers and present data in an agglomerated way as much as possible. When quoting directly from archival or Facebook sources, I do not include names or dates that may decrease the anonymity of the sources; for the few longer quotes that contain personal beliefs or opinions, I have attained the permission of the authors. This treatment of semi-public data is in line with the ethical research guidelines for Facebook put forward by criminologist and researcher Roxana Willis (2019). Finally, for the interviews and private Facebook conversations I have conducted, I use the preferred name or pseudonym chosen by the participant. All demographic information is presented either in agglomeration, separate from identifiers, or with the participant's permission.

The following section will introduce fairylore as a genre, expanding upon my introduction to fairies in Chapter One, before delving into exoteric viewpoints from tourist materials and social media, and then into esoteric viewpoints from social media, children's literature, archival materials and my interviews. Demographic data will be provided when available.

Genre

Fairylore is difficult to pin down to one genre. It fits awkwardly in any domain, prompting more questions than answers. First, is it material culture or oral tradition? People certainly talk about the fairies, but many fairylore practices involve using physical objects to ward off the fairies, or giving them offerings. If we decide to push fairylore into the domain of oral tradition, concluding that the great deal of stories and personal narratives warrants such classification, we then need to consider further specificity: are they legends, myths, folktales, proverbs, or simply personal experience narratives? Or, to approach the question from a different angle, are they part of folk religion, supernatural folklore, or folklife? One of the reasons fairylore is so interesting, and potentially also so long-lasting, is because it bleeds into all of these genres (as we will see in the following sections!). It is not my intent to provide a thorough analysis of how fairylore does and does not fit into each genre; such a task, though interesting and informative, deserves more attention than I am able to give it in this thesis. I will simply slot fairylore into three basic (and definitely overlapping) domains, and provide some indication of which genres and/or folklore topics are most relevant to each.

First, fairies are part of popular culture. As many of my interviewees explain, this popular alteration of an ancient tradition has come to coexist with more traditional versions of the fairies. The fictionalization of the tradition, presented as it is in fantasy worlds on-screen (such as Neverland in *Peter Pan*) and in books and games (such as the Feyrealm in *Dungeons and Dragons*), has resulted in a changing perspective that relegates fairies and fairylore to fantasy in many people's minds. This perspective can cause people, particularly those of the younger generations, to hear traditional fairy stories as folktales. One of the defining traits of folktales is a belief that they are fiction; however, they are often (if not exclusively) set in the real world, or a

version of the real world in which fairy tale logic and characters exist. Thus, stories containing fairies and set in the real world, as all Newfoundland fairy stories are, could be interpreted as folk tales. Many of the participants in this study who expressed doubt or disbelief in the fairies suggested that fairy stories were told to them as young children as a way to keep them in line, and prevent them from straying too far away, as the following recollection demonstrates:

> "If you go too far in the woods the fairies will take you." When I was small I would often wander off in the woods, so one day while we were in the garden my mom told me, "If you go too far in the woods the fairies will take you." I listened to my mom and stayed away from the woods. From then on when I went to the garden with my mom I was very bored because I was afraid to go in the woods and therefore had nothing better to do around there. Man was I gullible to believe this nonsense. If I would have known she would not have kept me out of them woods, to think all these years that I was bored silly I could have been exploring the wilderness but instead I just sat down and watched my mom plant a garden. Boy she got me some good! Ha! Ha! (2016-201, 11-12).

This falls in line with one of William Bascom's suggested functions of folklore: conformity (1954, 346). The mother in this excerpt exerts control over her child by expressing a belief about the fairies that warns them of the dangers of running off. Thus, it is easy, for those who don't believe in fairies, and yet hear traditional Newfoundland fairy stories, to resolve conflicting popular and traditional conceptions of fairies by interpreting traditional stories as folk tales or beliefs told by the elderly to encourage conformity and keep them safe as young kids.

Second, fairies are part of certain pagan and earth-centered religions. Fairies in this belief system function as supernatural beings somewhere between deities and humans, and are often considered living manifestations of the earth, or the earth's energy (Goodrich 2015, 24-31, 85-94). Fairylore thus becomes part of a larger religious myth – myth, here, used to mean "a story of gods, a religious account of the beginning of the world, the creation, fundamental events, the exemplary deeds of the gods as a result of which the world, nature and culture were created together with all the parts thereof and given their order, which still obtains" (Honko 1984, 49). In

particular, fairies are part of the "given order" of nature, confirming the "religious values" of nature and environmental preservation (*ibid*). For example, my interviewee Tara White, a middle-aged Newfoundlander, explains that fairies "can be very protective of certain elements in nature, so if they know that your energy is not a good energy [...] they will play tricks on you in order to get you away" (2022). Although fairies, in White's description, do not exactly demonstrate "patterns of behaviour to be imitated" (Honko 1984, 49), as some deities or supernatural beings do, they also contribute to order-making in the world, reinforcing boundaries and protecting the environment. Indeed, some modern pagans, such as my interviewee, Cameron, worship fairies alongside gods and other deities (2021). When describing her fairy worship practices, Cameron explains, "I usually set up an altar in my home, and I have a small one in my bedroom right now. It actually has a fairy statue on it that's there all year round. I don't ever take it down. I tend to kinda do a mix, because Dionysus, which is the Greek God of wine and ecstasy, is associated with Beltane as well, and so I tend to bring in a little bit of Greek and a little bit of the fairy in one" (2021).

Third and finally, fairies exist in what I call traditional Newfoundland fairylore. Traditional, as in passed down from person to person within a community, and Newfoundland, as in involving specific locations and people in Newfoundland. This is the domain in which belief is most murky, ranging from belief to disbelief and encompassing everything in between. This conceptualization is where fairies as supernatural beings, separate from religion, coincide with everyday life.[5] Although by no means specific to Newfoundland, as many other places also

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[5] I would be remiss not to mention the concept of vernacular or lived religion at this point. These terms were coined by Leonard Primiano, a preeminent folklore and religious studies scholar, and Robert Orsi, a religious studies professor with a focus on American history and Catholic studies, respectively. They refer to the idea that religion cannot be separated into "folk" religion and "official" religion, as everyone's individual beliefs and opinions will be informed by their individual experiences and interpretations of religious texts and practices. They also point out that religion is, of course, part of everyday life. Although fairies certainly can be part of vernacular/lived religion (for example, one popular etiological story explains that, when Lucifer and his angels were cast out of heaven, some of

have traditional fairylore, this traditional, as opposed to religious or popular, understanding of fairies is historically the most common type of fairylore in Newfoundland, and the most relevant to my thesis due to its historical and contemporary connections to the British Isles, and its wide-reaching prevalence and influence in Newfoundland. Those who engage with traditional Newfoundland fairylore often approach the topic from the angle of personal narrative or legend. Some people have had personal experiences with the fairies, and some have only heard stories from family or community members. As one would expect from legends, community or family fairy stories are often told about a distant relative or neighbour – frequently a great-aunt or -uncle, or an elderly person or a family in the community. These stories are usually mono-episodic and place-based; people can often name the exact pond or patch of woods where they got "taken by the fairies." The legend lens is perhaps the most useful for my thesis, based on the complex dialogue or debate about belief (Dégh 2001, 97), rhetoric of truth (Oring 2008), and connection to geography (Halpert 1971, 50) often involved in legends and in traditional Newfoundland fairylore.

I discuss my fieldwork, in the following sections, bearing in mind the multiplicities of traditions and beliefs involved in contemporary fairylore.

Exoteric Opinions

Although the bulk of my thesis concerns what some Newfoundlanders think of and about themselves, with regards to identity and culture, I also need to consider briefly what others think of them – that is, I need to take into account exoteric opinions, in addition to esoteric ones (Jansen 1959). Although there are multiple types of exoteric opinions, here I am concerned only

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the angels were not accepted in either heaven or hell, and thus went into the earth, and became fairies; this clearly fits into a Christian worldview), I separate traditional Newfoundland fairylore from religion simply because it is not confined to, nor defined by, religious belief, whether Christian or other. Also, as I will argue later on with respect to the English/Protestant and Irish/Catholic connections, fairylore is not bound by denominational divides.

with what outsiders think of Newfoundland. I examine this through tourism resources that I found online, including blogs, websites, and Facebook groups.

<div align="center">*Tourism*</div>

After searching Google and Facebook using variations of the term "Newfoundland tourism," and reviewing the results, I found an e-book – *The Shipping News* by Annie Proulx – two Facebook groups – Travelling NL and Explore Beautiful Canada – and thirty blogs and websites that had at least one section or page dedicated to Newfoundland tourism. A complete bibliography of these tourism sources is included in Appendix B. Within these resources, I searched for variations of "fairy," "Irish," "superstition" and "supernatural." Of these sources, eleven mention connections between Newfoundland and Ireland, only three mention the fairies, and none make a connection between Irishness and fairies, nor do any mention superstitiousness or the supernatural.

Newfoundland and Irishness in Tourism

The connections between Ireland and Newfoundland in tourism literature range from explicit and extensive to brief or implicit. The majority of the comments focus on the history of Irish immigrants to Newfoundland maintaining tangible Irish heritage, and on the observable similarities such as accents, landscape, folk music, etc.

Descriptions of the history of Irish immigration to Newfoundland in tourism sources are usually limited to brief mentions of the fishing industry, and maybe a list of other ethnic influences. As Zoe, author from *Canadian Affair,* says, "The culture and heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador runs deep. Coloured by Irish, English, French and Indigenous influences, the rich tales and traditions can be experienced all over the province" (Zoe n.d.). Amy Rosen, author for *Perceptive Travel,* concisely connects immigration, the fishery and

accents in Newfoundland: "The isolated people here lived and died by the sea ever since this land was settled by the English and Irish (plus some Scots and French, hence the warbly accent) who came to fish for cod" (Rosen 2017). The blog *Everything Everywhere* uses the immigration history of NL to paint a favourable picture of the province: "Historically, the province is home to a wide range of ethnicity including French, Irish and the local tribes in this province. This makes travel to Newfoundland and Labrador exciting – there is so much culture to explore" (*Everything Everywhere* n.d.). The history of Irish immigration to Newfoundland is clearly well-established in tourists' perceptions of Newfoundland. However, most of the tourist blogs and websites mention the immigration of the Scottish, English, and French as well as that of the Irish. Thus, other examples are necessary to support my assertion that there is an exoteric assumption of Irishness in Newfoundland.

One of the most notable exoteric connections to Irishness is the Newfoundland accent – many people perceive it as being very similar to an Irish accent. The author of the blog *Everything Everywhere* explains: "The population of this province is also linguistically homogeneous with nearly 98% of the population speaking English. The non-English speaking residents are divided between French and Irish" (*Everything Everywhere* n.d.). Although it is not true that Newfoundland has a noticeable percentage of Irish-speaking residents (according to a recent census, there are around fifty people in the province who speak Irish, or about 0.01% of the population (Statistics Canada 2017)), it is true that English is the mother tongue of 97% of the population of Newfoundland, spoken by 99% of the population. The authors of *Hand Luggage Only* describe the Newfoundland accent as follows: "When you meet a local Newfoundlander, you'd be forgiven for thinking you're in Ireland. The Irish essentially moved over here ages ago and for some reason, that accent never changed. I guess the communities

were separated from the rest of Canada by the sheer size of the place and so, if you ever

wondered what Irish accents sounded like years ago, this is the place for it" (*Hand Luggage Only*

n.d.). In rural communities, the "Newfoundland accent" may certainly be similar to "what Irish

accents sounded like years ago" – however, the accents of the majority of the population, living

in or around St. John's (Simms & Greenwood 2015), are indistinguishable from other Canadian

or even American accents.

Finally, some of the tourism sources identify tangible connections between the folklore

and culture of Newfoundland, and that of Ireland. For example, one post on the Facebook page

Travelling NL connects the Newfoundland practice of mummering to both England and Ireland:

"Mummering, or mumming, is a Christmas-time house-visiting tradition practised in

Newfoundland, Ireland and parts of the United Kingdom. An old Christmas custom from

England and Ireland, mummering in a version of its modern form can be traced back in

Newfoundland into the 19th century." These perceived and tangible connections to Ireland in the

tourist imaginary are best summarized in the words of the blogger Kate:

> When I got back from my trip to Newfoundland, I would tell people,
> "Newfoundland is a lot like Ireland, but more colorful and with fewer tourists."
> What does "like Ireland" mean, anyway? Is it that the locals welcome you like
> family, speak with borderline incomprehensible accents, and tell the most
> wonderful stories? Is it that the weather's nothing to write home about and you
> could be in a winter jacket in July, but rain or shine, the place reverberates with
> spectacular beauty? Is it that folk music fills the air, not as an act put on for
> visitors, but as part of the cultural fabric of the society? Because that's
> Newfoundland! […] Many Newfoundlanders are of Irish origin — a big reason
> why the Newfoundland accent has Irish undertones and the pub scene of St.
> John's could rival that of Galway (*Adventurous Kate* n.d.).

Even Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism's website uses the oft-repeated saying that

Newfoundland is "the most Irish place outside of Ireland" – indeed, the website has an entire

article, with this saying in the title, that explains five ways in which Newfoundland and Ireland

are similar: landscape, language, places, people, and St. Patricks' Day (*Newfoundland and Labrador* n.d.). I will now move from Irishness in tourism resources to fairies.

Newfoundland and Fairies in Tourism

Although only three of my tourism sources mention fairies, they make some interesting connections. One of the three posts that mentions fairies is on the Facebook group "Travelling NL," in response to the question "If you could pick just one place in Newfoundland and Labrador to visit, where would you go, and why?" One commentor answered, "Gros Morn[e] National Park. I here [hear] there are fairies there." Another post that mentions fairies, "Top Ten Tips for Visiting Newfoundland," is from *A Luxury Travel Blog*. The author mentions fairies in connection to the English when describing the town of Cupids: "It is virtually impossible not to fall under the spell of this 400 year old village, the first English colony in Canada. Stop in at The Cupids Legacy Centre, a beautifully designed museum that brings to life the fascinating story of John's Guy's (the first settler) colony. Don't miss the rooftop faerie garden" (Nieder 2014). Finally, the third mention of fairies is in the post "Five Hikes Along the Baccalieu Coastal Drive," on Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism's website, in the description of the Baccalieu View Walking Trail in Red Head Cove. The author states, "Wide boardwalks and crushed stone pathways through undulating terrain best describe the first half of the trail. As you leave the wide-open marshes, you will soon be in the thick of a forest of weather-stunted trees. Be on the lookout for trail fairies, as you will happen upon their miniature dwellings in the forest" (*Newfoundland and Labrador* n.d.).

The Esoteric/Exoteric Connection in Tourism

In this section, I consider how the fairy tourist attractions constructed in Newfoundland by Newfoundlanders have influenced the exoteric perceptions of fairies in Newfoundland, as described previously.

Although it is difficult to know why the person in the first example thought that fairies might be in Gros Morne National Park, the next two connections are fairly obvious. Although the town of Cupids is not named after the Roman god of love, Cupid, the name does put one in mind of small, winged creatures, and the town leans into this whimsy, especially at the Legacy Centre. I visited the Legacy Centre on August 14, 2021. The Centre comprises a small museum, gift shop, and library on the first floor, a large meeting room for events on the second floor, and a garden on the roof. This is the garden to which the commenter refers, as there are many small statues of fairies in the garden (see figure 1). The museum section also has several references to folklore, such as the painting *Richard Whitbourne sees a mermaid in St. John's Harbour in 1610*, which is presented along with Whitbourne's description of his interaction with the mermaid. There is also a large quote on one wall that reads: "Whenever we went on the hills picking berries we would be warned – both to listen for strange music and not to follow it for any reason, as it would surely be the fairies trying to lure us away." A young, female tour guide, who was from Cupids, was showing me around the Centre. When I asked her about the fairy garden, she suggested that the reason for the garden was the strong prevalence of fairylore in the community. She also suggested that the surrounding woods contributed to the strength of the lore. She explained that, as a child, she was warned against going in the woods for fear of being "taken" by the fairies and coming back different or "crazy." She also mentioned that many people in the town were "superstitious." It is clear that the Centre's staff have embraced this local folklore,

and it is not surprising that a visitor to the Cupids Legacy Centre would remark upon the fairies, as Nieder did (2014).

Figure 1: Fairy statues in the rooftop garden at Cupids Legacy Centre. Photos taken by author.

The second explicit tourism connection to fairies is about the fairy houses on the Baccalieu View Walking Trail in Red Head Cove. Although the post previously referenced does not give any additional information, I found pictures of the trail on the Facebook group Hiking in Newfoundland and Labrador (Hike NL). This trail has a large sign that reads, "The Fairy Path," as well as two smaller signs along the way; the first reads: "Warning: Planning on visiting the Baccalieu View Walking Trail? Be sure to carry bread in your pocket or turn your hat backwards as a FAIRY HOUSE has been discovered on the trail. We'll not be responsible if you are carried away! Note: If you do not have a hat or bread, you can appease the fairies by saying the trail

name backwards while turning around twice. – Mary Lou and Marion."[6] The second small sign

is more informational, explaining who the fairies are, where they live, and listing a few common

"legends" that are told about the fairies along with the words "Watch out for the Fairies!" in

large font. Also along the trail are a small, wooden, bright yellow "Wishing Well" and a few

"fairy houses" – stumps approximately two feet tall with shingled roofs and small, decorative

doors and windows made with bits of wood and rope. It is notable that, although the tourism blog

post that mentions these fairy houses is on Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism's official

website, the fairy signs and houses built along the Baccalieu View Walking Trail appear to be

privately made and owned – many of the signs are credited to "Mary Lou and Marion."

It is worth noting that, in my own exploration of Newfoundland, I have found a few more

tourist attractions that incorporate fairies. Similar to the Baccalieu View Walking Trail, many

paths and trails in Newfoundland have small fairy houses or fairy doors attached to trees along

the way. There is a small path going from Durness Street to MacBeth Drive in Airport Heights,

St. John's, along which Elaine Thibault, local resident, has installed more than fifty small fairy

doors. She also added a mailbox, labelled "Fairy and Gnome Postal Services" so that children

can write letters to the fairies. There is a sign next to it with painted hand prints that reads, "If

you believe in magic, place your hands here, close your eyes and count to ten, let the fairies take

all your worries away." Although this positive interpretation of the fairies might seem like a

stretch when compared to traditional fairylore, as Thibault explains, "Fairies can be good or bad.

But my fairies are nice and they make you feel better, they take your worries away. That's the

most important thing" (Kelland 2019). There is also a company called Fairy Door Tours,

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[6] Saying the trail name backwards while turning around twice is not a practice I have encountered elsewhere, and may be a reflection of the adaptation of fairylore in tourist attractions to popular fairy depictions as discussed below. However, saying one's own name backwards is known to be a good way to escape from the fairies (2001-074; 2005-331).

operating in St. John's, NL and Saskatoon, SK, which organizes short tours for children to see

fairy doors along trails, listen to fairy stories and give the fairies gifts. The Tour in St. John's is

located in Pippy Park and is run by Tina White, who, though familiar with the traditional

depictions of fairies in Newfoundland, felt the need to use the more popular, positive

representations of fairies in order to connect with her young audiences (Fleming, 2021).

Participants in the Fairy Door Tours are generally ages two to eight (*ibid*). Additionally, fairies

are often incorporated into statues, such as the Peter Pan statue and The Connaught Stone in

Bowring Park, St. John's (see figure 2, below). These fairies resemble popular conceptions of

Figure 2:
Top: The Connaught Stone.
Bottom left: The Peter Pan Statue in Bowring Park, St. John's.
Bottom right: Close-up of a fairy in the Peter Pan Statue.
Photos taken by author.

fairies more closely than traditional conceptions; they are small, pretty women wearing dresses. Indeed, these exoteric conceptions of fairies in Newfoundland tourism seem to adapt Newfoundland fairy traditions to more popular conceptions, describing the fairies as mischievous creatures that can be benign or dangerous, but depicting them as pleasant-looking creatures that live in cute, often sparkly, brightly-colored homes that humans are welcome to see and touch.

Facebook

In the previous section, I mentioned two Facebook groups that I looked at in order to observe informal communication about tourism in Newfoundland. I continued my research on Facebook by searching for groups about fairies, because I wanted to find out what people who believed in fairies thought about their connections to Ireland, as well as if there was a strong Newfoundland presence on these pages. I found six Facebook groups that indicated some belief that fairies were real creatures (i.e. I excluded groups about exclusively popular culture fairies such as Tinkerbell). These groups were The Faerie Wanderers (created June 15, 2015, 80,900 members), Fairies and Folklore (created Feb 5, 2022, 1200 members), Dark Faeries (created May 16, 2018, 8200 members), Fairies are Real (created Sept 11, 2019, 2100 members), Real Fairies Group (created Apr 4, 2019, 9000 members), and True Encounters, Stories and Sightings of Fairies and Folklore (created Dec 18, 2020, 3100 members). There were no groups about Irish fairies or Newfoundland fairies. Thus, although these groups are esoteric in the sense that they participate in fairylore, they are exoteric to Newfoundland fairylore, specifically. All of these groups contain numerous posts and comments connecting fairies with the Irish/Ireland. However, only four mention Newfoundland. One post, in the Group "Fairies and Folklore," ties Newfoundland, fairies and Ireland together: "We were brought up with fairies and elves and magic as children. Here in Newfoundland the music is similar to Ireland and they also believed

in fairies as children. Where I live on the Southern Shore the broug [brogue] is like they just came over from Ireland. Some of the older ones you have a job to understand."

Fairies and Irishness on Facebook

The connections between Ireland and fairies were well-established in all six of these Facebook groups, with the exception of the group Fairies and Folklore, which was created on Feb 5, 2022, so it does not have many posts, and only three about Ireland. I searched for "Irish" and "Ireland" in each group, and found hundreds, if not thousands, of posts for each search term in five of the groups. The vast majority of these posts recognize Celtic roots of the English[7] fairylore tradition. It would be impossible for me to analyze every post that connects fairies with Ireland, so I have selected the top five results from each of my search terms on each of the fairy Facebook groups, and analyzed these fifty posts, plus the three posts from Fairies and Folklore, for a total of fifty-three posts.

To organize these posts, I created five categories to determine what type of information each post shared: personal stories or images, artwork, fictional fairy stories,[8] facts about fairies or Irish folklore, and links to or excerpts from blogs, videos, websites or books. I also noted whether or not each post was about fairies and/or about Ireland, specifically, and if it mentioned Celtic fairy roots or mythology. Some posts qualified for multiple categories, and some fit in no categories, so the totals from each category do not necessarily align with the total number of posts.

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[7] I use English here to refer to the language. All of my research was conducted in English, and I therefore assume that the vast majority of the people whose words and information I have found are from parts of the world where English is a prominent first or second language, such as Canada, the USA, Great Britain, Scandinavia, Australia, Iceland, and certain areas of north-western Europe and south-Eastern Africa. Had I searched in other languages, I may have found other fairylore groups with different beliefs and traditions.
[8] I differentiate between fictional fairy stories and other categories because all of these groups focus on the reality of fairies, so they accept most folklore, personal accounts and media excerpts and stories as fact. Fictional fairy narratives are those explicitly stated to have been made up by the author of the post.

Out of the fifty-three posts, seventeen included personal stories or images, five depicted artwork, four told fictional fairy narratives, fifteen described facts about fairies or folklore, and eighteen contained links to or excerpts from other media. Notably, the group The Faerie Wanderers had the most personal stories and images (six) as well as the most artwork (four). This included, for example, a post captioned "A couple of pics from fairyland, Ireland," followed by eight photos of forested areas and trees taken in Kerry, Ireland. Ironically, the group Fairies are Real had the most fictional fairy narratives (two). The group Dark Faeries had the most posts with facts about fairies (seven). These posts included information about the origins of fairies, different types of fairies, and fairy portals. For example, one post describes the "Sluagh": "Of all the wonders and terrors in Irish folklore there are few quite so terrifying as the Sluagh. Tales were told of their wild hunt long before the coming of Christianity to Ireland. In the form of a vast flock of black ravens twined about with undulating shadows they came, the echoes of their wings being found in stories of ill-omened birds heralding bad times ahead." This is a quote from the description of the Sluagh on the website Emerald Isle (https://emeraldisle.ie/sluagh). Other posts describe the "pooka" and the "Korrigans." Finally, True Encounters, Stories and Sightings of Fairies and Folklore had the most links to and excerpts from other media (six). These include a link to a video about making pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, captioned "Do you offer your first pancake to the *fairies*? In Ireland we do!", and a link to a video explaining that there are "a lot of similarities between Irish and Swedish folklore (and some definite differences too!). Did you know they also had fairy changelings there?" These videos are created by the same YouTube account, *Diary of a Ditch Witch*. It also includes an excerpt from the book *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* by W. Y. Evans (1911), including the following quote: "Peasant and other Irish seers do not usually speak of the Sidhe as being little, but as being tall: an old schoolmaster in

the West of Ireland described them to me from his own visions as tall beautiful people, and he used some Gaelic words, which I took as meaning that they were shining with every colour."

Additionally, of the fifty-three posts, twenty-nine were about fairies, specifically, thirty-five were about Ireland or Irish traditions, and nineteen mentioned Celtic fairylore roots or Celtic mythology. Different groups seemed to have different themes; for example, the Real Fairies Group had most posts about fairies and Ireland, specifically, at nine and eight, respectively. However, its posts only mentioned Celtic roots or mythology twice. By contrast, Dark Faeries had only three posts about fairies, specifically, and only four about Ireland, specifically, but seven posts that mentioned Celtic roots or mythology. Real Fairies Group had several links to articles in *Irish Times* about fairies in Ireland, such as "From ringfort to ring road: The destruction of Ireland's fairy forts," several descriptions of Irish fairies or Irish gods, such as The Water Horse, "one of the Good Folk who is known to dwell on both land, and in the dark, deep lakes of Ireland," as well as personal queries about Irish fairylore. The posts from other groups were more varied, often including posts about other areas of folklore besides fairylore.

This collection of fifty-three posts from these six Facebook groups demonstrates the various ways that people with an interest in fairies perceive their connections to Ireland. People are interested in learning about the Irish origins of fairies, the different types of Irish fairies, and connections between Irish mythology, religion and folklore, as well as in sharing their personal stories, thoughts, artwork and queries about Irish fairies and folklore. This is often, though not always, connected to the Celtic roots or mythology of fairies delineated by many scholars, such as W. Y. Evans.

I will include one final example. The following was posted by a woman on February 8, 2022, in one of the groups, along with a picture of her living room, in which there is a cat sitting

on a couch and looking towards an armchair, where there is a small, brownish shape that is not in focus:

> I took this picture a couple days ago and it has me freaked out. My cats often stare at things we don't see and I am always snapping pictures but this was the first time I caught something! I intrigued and a little afraid. Some think it is a House Brownie. It looks hairy to us and others and like it is sitting down in the floor holding something. We left out a pint of Irish Whiskey for two nights a fresh glass and some looked like it was drank! Left out a broken cookie last night but it didn't eat it. We have had paranormal activity since we moved in in 1997. Our house is 70 years old. Look in the lower bottom right. I am also a Christian with a cross in my living room.[9]

This post generated a lot of discussion – twenty comments followed the post, discussing what the creature depicted in the photo might be, why it was in this woman's house, and how she should behave around it. The general consensus was that it was, in fact, a brownie, a creature which was described as being similar to fairies and gnomes, but more kindly disposed towards humans. People suggested that it was there because she and her husband were kind, hard-working, and good caretakers of animals and the earth. It is unclear where the woman is from, although she describes her ancestry as "German/Russian/Austria-Hungary," and her husband's as "Irish/German/English and American Indian." This, in combination with her language and religion, suggests that she is likely American. This makes her offering of *Irish* Whiskey particularly interesting. That she would assume that Irish Whiskey is a Brownie's drink of choice, and that no one in the lively comment section would dispute this, suggests an implicit assumption of the Irishness of fairies that goes beyond the tangible Irish origins or Irish fairy types discussed elsewhere.

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[9] This post is included with the permission of the author, who wishes to remain anonymous.

Newfoundland and Fairies on Facebook

In the four groups that mention Newfoundland, nine posts or comments mention Newfoundland fairies. The Faerie Wanderers and the True Encounters, Stories and Sightings of Fairies and Folklore groups did not mention Newfoundland. The group Fairies and Folklore has the quote previously mentioned, connecting Newfoundland, Ireland and the fairies. The groups Fairies are Real and Real Fairies Group each have one post by a Newfoundlander: "Thank you so much for accepting me. I live in Newfoundland Canada and there are many stories here about fairies," and "Thank you for adding me I'm from Newfoundland and have been told many stories about fairies all my life," respectively. These posts suggest that Newfoundlanders with an interest in their local fairylore may join fairy-themed Facebook groups in an attempt to learn more about the tradition or to find a community of like-minded people, but that these online communities do not necessarily recognize Newfoundland as a place that is significant to fairy belief.

The group Dark Faeries has the most posts about Newfoundland fairies: four. These posts include a poem by a Newfoundlander, a YouTube video that mentions the local fairy circle in Harbour Grace, and two episodes of a fairy-specific podcast that use fairy stories from Newfoundland. The poem, entitled "The Wearing of the Green," and written by Donna Dudley, begins, "Green is claimed, somewhat vainly,/by the Fae of Newfoundland!/And woe to the human,/wearing any green hues!" It tells the story of a young man who takes off his green coat to take a nap, only to be awoken and captured by the jealous fairies. He eventually escapes and returns to his village, and the poem ends, "Sure, 'tis wise to respect/the laws of the Wee Folk,/if ever, to Newfoundland,/you make your way!"[10] This poem is clearly based on the story "The

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[10] Dudley published an anthology of fairy stories on Amazon in 2015, entitled *Where Magic Lives!: Poems of Fairies and Fancy. Over 150 Original Poems.* She is from West Tennessee, USA.

Fairy Captive" in Alice Lannon and Mike McCarthy's book *Fables, Fairies and Folklore of Newfoundland* (1991). Also in the Dark Faeries group are two posts by the creator of the YouTube channel Discovering Newfoundland, in which they advertise the video of their visit to the fairy circle in Harbour Grace. This video has been taken down since they posted it in April 2021; I suspect this is because the fairy circle is on private property, and people are not allowed to visit it. Finally, there are two posts that advertise episodes of the podcast *Encounters with the Good People*. The first of these episodes is "Sting of a Fairy Thorn," in which the podcast creator introduces, reflects on, and retells the story "The Fairy Thorn" (Lannon & McCarthy 1991). The second episode, "A Case of Faerie Revenge," introduces, reflects on and retells Lannon and McCarthy's tale, "The Fairy Captive" (1991). It is notable that all of this content was created in 2021, and yet Lannon and McCarthy's book, on which so much of it was based, was published in 1991. It seems that Lannon and McCarthy's book has managed to become the go-to book for fairy stories in Newfoundland, despite the fact that it contains only two. A scan for "Newfoundland fairy stories" in a number of news and other media articles results in references to Rieti's book *Strange Terrain* (1991), personal interviews with Newfoundlanders, and a number of pages and ads for Tom Dawe's book *Spirited Away: Fairy Stories of Old Newfoundland,* recently published (2017) by Running the Goat Books and Broadsides. This suggests that, with the exception of *Spirited Away,* Lannon and McCarthy's *Fables, Fairies and Folklore of Newfoundland* remains the only non-scholarly and easily-accessible work on fairies in Newfoundland.

In summary, the exoteric opinions on fairies and Irishness in Newfoundland in tourism and social media focus on the "official," published or public narratives and traditions. Tourists and bloggers visiting Newfoundland notice, perhaps unsurprisingly, the aspects of Irishness that

Newfoundland's Tourism board highlights: landscape, language, and people, in particular. They also notice the physical tourist attractions built to draw attention to the fairylore of the island, such as fairy statues, fairy doors, and signs about fairies. Discussion on the Facebook groups I examined extends official discourse into the sphere of personal experience, drawing in "official" narratives like blogs, websites, articles and books to back up their personal stories, opinions and beliefs.

Esoteric Opinions

In the previous section, I described exoteric, or outsider, opinions about fairies and Irishness and their connection to Newfoundland. Now, I turn to insider perspectives by examining a different set of Facebook groups, as well as children's books, archival sources and personal interviews with Newfoundlanders. These sources reveal how some Newfoundlanders think about themselves.

Facebook

Facebook is an ideal venue for public, naturally-occurring conversations about every topic under the sun. In this section, I examine the fairylore from Facebook groups that are specifically about Newfoundland. Through various searches, I found fourteen pages or groups that were about Newfoundland; of these, eight actually mention the fairies – one in a passing comment on a photo, and the other seven in at least two posts. Of the fourteen original Newfoundland pages, eight mentioned the Irish, or Ireland. Significantly, these are the same eight groups that mention fairies, suggesting that these pages are the most relevant to my research, and the other six were perhaps about less related topics (for example, I am not surprised that Newfoundland Recipes and Geological Wonders of Newfoundland and Labrador did not mention the fairies). I will therefore look at the discussion about fairies, the discussion about

Irishness, and any overlap between the two, in the eight relevant groups and pages: Haunted and Spooky Newfoundland (created May 13, 2020, 13,800 members), Come and Sit a Spell (created Dec 1, 2021, 2900 members), Newfoundlanders and Labradorians Around the World (created Mar 24, 2017, 26,100 members), Growing Up in Newfoundland (created Jun 4, 2012, 76,600 members), Newfoundland Sayings (created May 7, 2020, 51,100 members), Hiking in Newfoundland and Labrador (created Jul 7, 2014, 39,900 members), Travelling Newfoundland and Labrador (created Jun 4, 2017, 15,800 members), and Abandoned and Historic Newfoundland and Labrador (created Dec 30, 2017, 25,100 members). It is notable that conversations on Facebook tend to include brief statements, as opposed to stories or lengthy reflections. Most of the fairy beliefs and legends discussed in this section, therefore, are expressed as dites, or short statements of belief, rather than stories. However, there were several lengthy fairy stories on these Facebook groups, both in the posts and the comments.

Newfoundland and Fairies on Facebook

The groups Haunted and Spooky Newfoundland and Newfoundland Sayings had the most fairy discussion, each with numerous posts and dozens of comments about fairies, fairy rings, fairy stories, etc. Growing Up in Newfoundland and Hiking in NL also had multiple posts and many comments about fairies. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians Around the World had a few posts and comments, and Come and Sit a Spell and Abandoned and Historic Newfoundland each had six or seven comments or posts that mentioned fairies. Travelling NL had only one comment about fairies, which is described in a latter section.

The posts in Haunted and Spooky Newfoundland and Newfoundland Sayings often told fairy stories or asked others to tell fairy stories. The comments were far more interesting, as people reported different types of fairy offerings; the effects and appearances of fairy rings,

circles or paths; the locations of fairies or fairy-related events; strategies to defend oneself against the fairies, such as carrying bread crumbs or turning clothes inside out; the role of fairies or their dispositions, whether good or evil; comparisons to other creatures, such as pucas, leprechauns and banshees; personal or second-hand fairy narratives, often involving lost time or being led away by the fairies; fairy activity in or near their homes; things that anger or please the fairies, such as whistling and protecting nature, respectively; and more. For example, one person posted: "Anyone have any stories about fairies? It seems to be mostly an older generation thing, as I haven't heard anything recent. Feel free to share some!" This received more than sixty comments, such as "my uncle wouldn't go in the woods unless he had a pocket full of bread crumbs," "I was told a story about my dad's older brother being 'fairy legged' .. Very light on his feet. he could run around the gunnels of a trap boat," and "My mother told me stories about them…According to her if you went in the woods they would say your name and you try to follow the voice and you get lost."

There was also much discussion about the "truth" of these stories and traditions; for example, one person posted a photo of a circle of mushrooms in the grass, with the caption "a fairy ring has appeared in my yard." People responded, some trying to help ward off the fairies: "flip ya socks inside out," others arguing that there is nothing to be afraid of: "I haves them every year. Just mushrooms. Lol." Two people agreed with this comment, but another responded: "there's science and then there's folklore. Will-o-the-wisps are just bog gas, ghost photos are just a trick of the light, and the old hag is just sleep paralysis… or they aren't." Other comments suggested that, whether or not they were true, scary fairy stories were likely told to stop children from misbehaving or keep them close by.

Posts and comments on other groups also included links to videos and blogs with fairy stories, pictures of fairy caps, warnings about the fairies, sayings about the fairies (like "not enough to baptize a fairy"), and pictures of fairy doors, houses, gardens, and statues found on walking or hiking trails around the island.

Newfoundland and Irishness on Facebook

Five of the groups had numerous posts about Newfoundland's similarities to Ireland, and three had only a few. Travelling NL had a post with a link to an episode from the podcast *A Newfoundland Minute* entitled "The Irish Loop." Growing Up in Newfoundland had one post praising Newfoundland's unique dialect, and attributing it to, among other things, the Irish and English heritage of the island. It also had a post that compared pictures of Ireland to those of Newfoundland; this post received several comments in agreement. Abandoned and Historic Newfoundland had a similar comment about the Irishness of Newfoundland's landscape, in addition to one post about holy objects on windowsills and in doorways, and one about root cellars, both of which, the authors claimed, are traditions from Ireland.

Of the other five groups, Haunted and Spooky Newfoundland has around ten relevant posts, Come and Sit a Spell has just over twenty, and the others have well over a hundred posts and comments that are about, or mention, Irishness or Ireland. Because Haunted and Spooky Newfoundland and Newfoundland Sayings are the groups with the most discussion about fairies in general, and have significant discussion about fairies and Irishness, as I will discuss below, I choose to focus on the Irishness represented in only those two groups.

In Haunted and Spooky Newfoundland, there were posts about a Samhain event at O'Brien's farm, a mention of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, a few mentions of the Irish Loop, a mention of the "Irish-type accent" in Newfoundland, and a discussion of banshees, which were

described as "a fae-type creature that originated in Ireland, and it's said a woman can become a banshee by dying during childbirth or getting murdered by her husband. They are known to foresee death, and their cries shrieks moans and wails are said to be the banshee warning us, and mourning the lost soul she foresaw dying." There were also two personal narratives about paranormal experiences, one set in Ireland, and the other during which the author said, "I saw a man walking down Bonaventure Ave as I drove by, dressed in a full Irish outfit, kilt, and stuff. I'm confident it was a ghost" (Verge 2021).

Newfoundland Sayings, as the name suggests, had a lot of words and sayings that were thought to be of Irish descent. People speculated about where and when it came to Newfoundland, and what Irish words certain phrases might have come from. There were also discussions of traditions and practices thought to be Irish, such as mumming or janneying, along with Irish jokes, Irish words, and, most commonly, the Irish influence on the Newfoundland accent. There were also a few stories about Irish grandparents or other relatives immigrating to Newfoundland from Ireland. One post I found of particular interest asked, "I know we all recognize as Newfoundlanders here, but do you feel closer to Ireland or England or Scotland perhaps?" This post garnered 125 comments, most simply stating one or another country, others providing a bit of commentary: "My ancestors hailed from England many moons ago.....but I don't feel connected....I am from Newfoundland.. [music note emoji]." In total, fifty-eight people said they felt closer to their Irish background, twenty-five with their English background, and nine with their Scottish background. Five said they felt closer to their Welsh background, instead, and one to their French background. Nine refused to answer, but identified solely as a Canadian and/or a Newfoundlander. Some people differentiated between their background and their identity, such as the person who commented the following: "Ireland, but my roots are in

England." This suggests that many Newfoundlanders choose to identify with the Irish part of Newfoundland's culture, even if they, personally, have no Irish ancestors.

Clearly, those living in Newfoundland identify many of their words, sayings, and traditions as coming from Ireland. Many people also recognize the similarity between Newfoundland and Ireland's accents.

Fairies and Irishness on Facebook

Of the eight relevant groups, six explicitly and sometimes implicitly connected the fairies to the Irish or to Ireland, and of these six, three had only one comment making this connection. One post in the group Abandoned and Historic Newfoundland, which was asking the other members of the group for fairy stories, received the comment, "Look up Irish folklorist Deirdre Nuttall. She did a comparative study of the folklore of Southern Ireland and the Avalon Peninsula. [There] was a fair bit of focus on the fairies. She stayed with us a couple of months." Nuttall wrote a brief article for MUN's graduate student journal *Culture and Tradition* entitled "The Card Players and the Devil: A Comparative Study" (Nuttall 1996); however, Nuttall's main purpose in Newfoundland was to complete research for her PhD dissertation, which was published by University College Dublin and entitled "Identification and analysis of a selection of migratory legends in Southeast Ireland and Newfoundland" (Nuttall 1998). One picture, posted in the group Travelling Newfoundland and Labrador, received the comment, "When I look at this great picture I can imagine all kinds of fairies hiding behind the tree roots, and leprechauns hiding their gold. Amazing shot." Although not an explicit connection to Ireland, this post does mention both fairies and leprechauns as peopling the same space. One person posted the following in the group Newfoundlanders and Labradorians Around the World: "Fairies in #Newfoundland did not just come from Ireland! Our fairies are a mix of Irish fairies, West

Country English pixies and even French fairies from communities on the West Coast of the island. Newfoundland fairies are famous for playing tricks and leading people astray. (Remember to keep bread in your pocket if you're out in the woods on a fine Fall day.)" Interestingly, this post recognizes and rebuts assumptions of the Irishness of Newfoundland fairies.

Two groups each had three comments about the connections between fairies and Irishness: Haunted and Spooky Newfoundland, and Growing Up in Newfoundland. In the group Growing Up in Newfoundland, there were three posts connecting fairies and Irishness. One person commented on a picture of mossy ground saying, "As a kid I always thought fairies and leprecha[u]ns lived in this moss.....I still like to believe they do." Another person commented on a fairy story: "Good stories to keep the kids away from the bogs at night. Left-overs from our pre-Christian heritage in England/Ireland. I don't recall hearing about fairies taking anyone in the NE, but we had stories of "Old Man Shalloway" to keep us close to town after dark [smile emoji]" Another comment, taking a more favourable turn, stated, "My grandfather was from the Southern Shore (Witless Bay). …and to this day, I still remember the stories he would tell us about the fairies (with his strong Irish accent, he pronounced it as "the furries"). [smile emoji]." The smile emojis in these comments could simply indicate happiness at the memories of treasured elders sharing family traditions, but could also indicate amusement, showing that the commenters' were smiling at stories that may have been scary when they were children. The connections in Haunted and Spooky Newfoundland are even more oblique. These comments again point out the Celtic or Old-World heritage of the fairies, saying, "It's Celtic Folklore," and "The fairies were brought over to NL with the early settlers." One comment goes into greater depth: "According to legend, when the English, Irish, Scots, and Welsh emigrated to Atlantic

Canada, the wee folk of their native isles followed them. Whether we call them leprechauns, "little people," or fairies, they made themselves at home in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island." These comments refer to immigration to Newfoundland not only from Ireland, but also from England, Scotland, and other countries.

Interestingly, although Haunted and Spooky Newfoundland has the most posts and comments about fairies, Newfoundland Sayings had the most connections between fairies and Irishness: fifteen. Eight posts suggested that fairies had been brought over from Ireland or were part of Irish and/or Catholic tradition; for example, one person commented, "My Nanny told us about the fairies her grand-parents brought with them from Ireland. She kept us busy in her yard all summer long looking for these little ones." Another stated, "I think that was a Catholic Irish thing…I don't remember being scared," to which someone replied: "It's definitely an Irish thing, but I'm not sure it's just Catholic, but I wouldn't doubt it." Three comments explained fairy stories by associating them with Irish superstitiousness; for example, "Lots of old superstitions were brought over from Ireland, England etc.," and "Nan always said I was a changeling [laughing emoji] […] Just a regular superstitious Irish Nanny [laughing emoji]." There were also three posts about fairies in Ireland, or in Irish-settled places in Newfoundland such as the Irish Loop: "I visited my daughter's Irish parents[-in-law] in Sligo, Ireland. I noticed a ring of stones (good-sized stones) in the meadow beyond their house and asked what it was. Mary said – oh, that's just a fairies' ring."

It is worth noting that Haunted and Spooky Newfoundland has about nineteen posts per month, and 13,537 members (as of March 30, 2022); Growing Up in Newfoundland has about 1552 posts per month, and 75,306 members; and Newfoundland Sayings has about 328 posts per month, and 51,103 total members. It is perhaps unsurprising that Haunted and Spooky

Newfoundland has more focus on the fairies, but less discussion about family and heritage, whereas the other two groups, with their higher rates of posts and comments, have significant amounts of discussion about the fairies, but are perhaps more interested in looking at them holistically, as part of the broader culture.

Summary

One of the most interesting observations of this section is the basic fact that discussion of Irish roots and Ireland accompanies almost all fairylore discussion on social media. Given enough time, someone will bring up an Irish relative who tells them fairy stories, or their experience in Ireland, or the Celtic or Irish roots of fairy stories. Also notable is the constant negotiating of belief, and the connections between Irish traditions and personal identity. These dites are often inextricably tied to family history and heritage, as many people were told fairy stories by elderly relatives.

Children's Literature

I looked at twelve children's books written by Newfoundland authors, or about Newfoundland, that had some connection to the fairies. These books, acquired from local Newfoundland libraries, ranged from picture books for preschoolers and young learners to longer (200+ page) chapter books for preteens, and even a short but descriptive erotica advertised "for young adults." Of the authors, three were men, seven were women, and two were unspecified (initials provided). Of these books, all were about the fairies, and all had connections to Newfoundland, although only five of the stories were explicitly set in Newfoundland. Three of the other books hint that the setting is based on Newfoundland, using worldbuilding elements like "a small saltbox house by the ocean" (Noordhof 2020), "gunner's mitts" (Davis 2007) described as a mitten with a thumb and forefinger, similar to Newfoundland's "trigger mittens,"

and elements common to Newfoundland fairy stories such as berry picking, being "led away by the fairies," and others. The remaining four books were set in unspecified fantasy locations. Additionally, five of the books make comparisons or references to Ireland, or Irish fairies or folklore.

Newfoundland and Fairies in Children's Literature

In order to make observations from these books about fairies in Newfoundland, and fairies' associations with Ireland, it is important to first determine to what extent the authors are writing about traditional Newfoundland fairies, versus other popular or religious versions of fairies, or perhaps an entirely made-up type of fairy. All of the books take creative liberties with the traditional versions of Newfoundland fairies, with the exception of *Spirited Away: Fairy Stories of Old Newfoundland* (Dawe 2017), which is an annotated collection of Newfoundland fairy stories. However, *The Ghost Road,* a long chapter book for children and teens by Charis Cotter, a Newfoundland author who has written more than twenty children's books, contains perhaps the most "authentic" depiction of traditional Newfoundland fairies, according to the definition I provided on pages 56-57 and the stories told by Newfoundlanders in my interviews and archival materials, in the following sections. It describes traditions such as taking bread in one's pockets to defend against the fairies, and encountering fairy paths near the community (2018, 24-29). However, most of the stories include aspects of Newfoundland fairies, such as their duality (good vs bad fairies), association with green and red colors, slight size, resemblance to little men, and association with nature. A few also mention the changeling tradition.

Harold Davis, in *The Starrigans of Little Brook Bottom,* a short chapter book for early readers, introduces his fairy character, Krab, thusly: "Many creatures never knew quite what to make of him. A human, if one chanced upon him, and depending on just where in the world the

meeting occurred, would have called him a leprechaun, an elf, or, most likely, a fairy. Krab, you see, was one of the little people—he was a starrigan" (2007, 2). He goes on to describe Krab as small, hairy, and pot-bellied, with a large head and brown eyes. Krab and his friends, the other starrigans, end up saving a little girl, who had been led away from her home by "crunnocks," which are the evil counterparts to the starrigans. Interestingly, while the fairies themselves can distinguish between starrigans and crunnocks, the humans in the story cannot, and are unaware of the forces at work in leading the girl away and bringing her back. This can be read as an explanation of why people in Newfoundland will be led away by the fairies, and potentially hurt, only to be returned a few days, weeks, or months later, thus exemplifying the duality of the fairies. Collins' story, *The Secret of the Fairy Ring* (2019)*, a chapter book for older children, also focuses on this duality, portraying the fairies as creatures who help the main character, and wish to avenge the death of two small girls in the community, but who do so by committing murder.

In Noordhof's picture book *The New Recruits* (2020) and Churchill's chapter book *The Last Tree* (2019), the fairies are associated with the color green. They are depicted in all-green clothing, and many of the images within, as well as the cover art, feature the color green. In many of the stories, including *The Fairies of Billy's Gully* (Kennedy 2009), *The Riddle* (Abbott 2017), *The Hidden World* (Baird 1999), and *Flossy's Fairy Adventure* (Strang 2020), the fairies are described as small, humanoid creatures. Indeed, in *The Fairies of Billy's Gully* (Kennedy 2009), a picture book, they are only one centimeter tall. Most often, they are associated with nature. In *The Starrigans of Little Brook Bottom* (Davis 2007)*, Krab, the other starrigans, and the crunnocks are at home in nature, and live in the woods. They are unaffected by the cold and rain, even while the human girl is suffering. Similarly, the main character of *The Fairies of Billy's Gully,* a small human boy, must leave his house and go to the nearby gully in order to find his

fairy friends. In *Flossy's Fairy Adventure*, a very simple picture book, the fairy character is described as "a spirit of the earth" (Strang 2020, 10) In *The Last Tree,* Churchill explains that elves, humans and fairies came from trees that fell, but the fairies' refused to fall, highlighting once again their deep connection to nature, which outweighs that of other creatures.

Irishness in Children's Literature

Following this discussion, I feel confident that ten of the twelve books have sufficient similarities to Newfoundland, and Newfoundland fairylore, in order to consider their reflections of Irishness. Six of the books have such reflections. *The Starrigans of Little Brook Bottom* only reflects the similarity between fairies and leprechauns, suggesting that "depending on just where in the world the meeting occurred, [a human] would have called [Krab] a leprechaun, an elf, or, most likely, a fairy" (Davis 2007, 2). *The Riddle,* a longer chapter book for older children, contains only two oblique references – the character's grandfather sings "My Wild Irish Rose" in one scene, and in another, the character is told to "get a grip – next thing you'll see leprechauns" (Abbott 2017, 39). The main character does end up seeing fairies, but she does not see leprechauns, suggesting some fluidity between the two concepts. Dawe, in *Spirited Away: Fairy Stories of Old Newfoundland*, suggests an Irish origin for the popular etiological story of fairies as fallen angels (2017, 58). *The Last Tree* doesn't contain any explicit references to Ireland or Irishness, but the name of one of the locations in the story is "Kerr," and the people from there are the "Kerrish," and drink "Kerrish stout," which is described as "thick and black." To my knowledge, there is no "thick and black" stout more famous than Guinness, and no place with the name Kerr, besides County Kerry, in Ireland. The book also has characters who are kelpies and selkies – these creatures are part of Celtic mythology, and are found in both Irish and Scottish folklore. Although it is certainly not a direct reference to Ireland, I think it is fair to say that part

of what influenced the author's description of a compelling fantasy place is an association with Irishness. It is noteworthy that fairies and superstition are also associated in the book (Churchill 2019, 180).

The two books that contain the most references to Ireland, and the Irishness of fairies and Newfoundland, are *The Hidden World* (Baird 1999) and *The Ghost Road* (Cotter 2018). Both of these chapter books are set in Newfoundland, and have fairies that are fairly similar to traditional Newfoundland fairies. In *The Ghost Road,* the main character, reflecting on her knowledge of Newfoundland as she prepares to move there from the USA, says, "I knew they talked with a lilting, almost Irish accent" (Cotter 2018, 17). She goes on to find out that she is "a true Finn," and that the Finns are a family that moved to Newfoundland from Ireland several generations previously (29). Her relatives in Newfoundland, including her aunt, have "a slight, Irish lilt" to their voices (31), and live in a town, Buckle, that was settled by the Irish in the 1820s (54). The main character also learns that the Irish are associated with Second Sight, more so than other people (65). This becomes an important element of the book, as it transpires that the main character herself has Second Sight, which is described as the ability to see supernatural things, such as the fairy path that runs through the community. In *The Hidden World,* the main character grew up in Newfoundland, but she has similar Irish roots. The people of her town are described as speaking "with an odd, almost Irish accent" (Baird 1999, 14) – this wording is almost identical to that of Cotter's. Additionally, the main character's Grandma, who originally told her about the fairies, was from Ireland (29). Although Baird describes Second Sight as being Scottish (31), rather than Irish, the fairy stories and traditions performed by the main character's mother and grandmother are said to "go right back to the Irish fairy-faith" (33). The main character also learns about fairy raths, which is an Irish term for fairy forts.

It is interesting that, of the ten books about fairies I could find that had connections to

Newfoundland and reflections of Newfoundland fairylore, more than half also referenced

Ireland, or Irishness (however obliquely). It is, of course, impossible to say with any certainty

how the authors of these books truly feel about the connections between Ireland, Newfoundland

and the fairies simply from reading these books, without doing further research, which is outside

the scope of this work. However, I was able to find interviews with Alison Baird, Charis Cotter

and Michelle Churchill about their books *The Hidden World, The Ghost Road,* and *The Last Tree*

(respectively). I also, of course, interviewed Patrick Collins about his book, *The Secret of the*

Fairy Ring – our conversation is discussed in a later section. Baird explains that she wanted to

write a fantasy story about Newfoundland, but:

> I couldn't seem to get the story started. I was reading a book of Newfoundland
> folklore, and I came across a section on fairies, and I hadn't realized that because
> most Newfoundland settlers were Irish they brought the Irish fairy traditions over
> with them when they immigrated. So in the small Newfoundland outports there'd
> be stories of the sort that would be told in Ireland about the fairies abducting
> people, and coming across fairies dancing in the woods, and the spells they would
> cast on people. Then right away I knew that I had my premise (Schellenberg &
> Switzer 2003).

It is perhaps unsurprising that Baird's novel contains many references to Irishness, given that her

perspective of fairies in Newfoundland attributes them exclusively to the Irish. Cotter does not

discuss the fairies in her interview, but she does explain that "My mother's family is from

Ireland, and I have a strong sense of my female Irish ancestors" (Kalb 2018). She also discusses

the setting of the story as being very personal to her, as the ghost road in the story is based on a

road she can see out her living room window in her home in Newfoundland. She describes the

landscape of Newfoundland functioning like a character in the story, and fairies could perhaps be

interpreted as part of that landscape, given the frequent use of fairy landmarks in the story, such

as fairy paths and fairy bridges (Cotter 2018, 24-29). Churchill mentions fairies only in passing

in her interview, when describing the many creatures she put in *The Last Tree.* She says she included fairies because she heard a lot of fairy stories growing up, and this book was written as "a love letter to my childhood" (EngenBooks 2019). Churchill grew up in Newfoundland. She also describes selkies and kelpies as fairy creatures of Irish and Scottish mythology. However, she does not discuss Irishness, nor whether or not Kerr was based on Ireland.

I turn, then, to personal narratives and conversations with Newfoundlanders who are familiar with the fairies.

Archival Sources

Before conducting my personal interviews, I look to previous findings from other researchers that have been deposited in MUNFLA. I rely heavily on Folklore Survey Cards (FSC), as they contain a large amount of fairylore from a wide array of people. Although there are many FSC with fairylore from as early as the 1960s, I chose to limit my search to the 21st century, as previous fairylore scholarship was mostly published in the 1990s, and even more recent works such as Simmonds' thesis (2005) rely heavily on older sources from the 1900s. Thus, recent archival sources are under-studied while older sources have been used repeatedly in fairylore scholarship. I found 112 FSC from 2000 to 2018 that contain fairylore, often paraphrased or quoted word-for-word from tradition-bearers. I also look at around twenty other sources, such as student papers and tape-recorded interviews. Additionally, I have gathered twenty-two fairy stories and interviews from other places on the web, such as YouTube videos, blogs, and other archives. A complete list of my collected archival sources is available in Appendix C.

Before delving into the contents of these materials, I'll provide some demographic data. There was a roughly equal split between male and female[11] participants; of the twenty-two fairy stories from the Internet, thirteen were told by men, and nine by women. The 112 FSC included eighty-six female participants and fifty-two male participants.[12] The additional materials did not necessarily include real names, but seemed roughly evenly split between men and women. It is worth mentioning that, while women dominated the FSC fairylore material, these FSC are collected by students, and of the collectors, seventy-four were women and only twenty-four were men. This suggests to me that folklore studies at MUN is a female-dominated field (an observation reflected in my own personal experiences taking undergraduate- and graduate-level folklore courses), which may reflect the larger number of female tradition-bearers that were consulted for the FSC. I will discuss gender with reference to fairylore in more depth in Chapter Five.

I also made note of any specific locations tied to the fairy stories, and have indicated these locations in the Map in figure 3, below. As the students were likely living, and definitely studying, in St. John's during the time when they would have been collecting FSC, it is unsurprising that the most popular place for stories is St. John's and the surrounding towns. However, it is surprising just how far some of these stories travelled – particularly from rural areas and areas in the north or west coasts. These findings will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter.

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[11] I assumed the gender of people in written sources based on their first names and, if included, the pronouns used to refer to them. This is by no means a flawless method, and is meant to give a general indication of gender trends rather than exact percentages.
[12] Some FSCs included multiple participants.

Fairies and Newfoundland in Archival Sources

With more than 150 resources at my disposal for this section, there is much I could say about fairies in Newfoundland. That, in itself, is an interesting observation. The plenitude of stories, combined with the large number of young folklore students who were so interested in collecting and writing about fairy stories during their studies, suggests to me that Rieti's astute observation was correct – fairy stories are "always going and never gone" (1991, 1-2). This phrase describes the paradox of the constant backwards referencing of fairylore tellers, who explain that the tradition is old, passed down by elders, and dying out, while continuing to tell new fairy stories.

Many of the informants either were elderly or had been taught these stories or traditions by their elderly grandparents or other relatives. Most of the student papers and interviews I looked at considered fairy stories as one aspect of the life of the informant, and analyzed the context as well as the text of the fairy stories. Of the public records of Newfoundland fairylore across the web, most are articles or blogs remarking on the interesting nature of fairy belief in Newfoundland (if they are written by outsiders), or videos displaying the skill of local storytellers telling full-length fairy stories (if they are from insiders). Of the FSC, many contain cryptic notes about warnings or traditions about fairies, such as bringing bread in one's pockets before going into the woods, or being warned by parents or relatives to use caution walking home at night, going berry picking, or straying far afield elsewhere. Some did recount short fairy stories, and some contained short statements or descriptions about whether or not the informants believed in these stories or traditions.

Many of the stories and traditions follow the same theme, and readers will be unsurprised to learn that, during my transcription of these 150+ sources, I discovered little that was new or

shocking. Most people were warned to fear or be respectful of the fairies (2001-140; 2005-019; 2005-041; 2018-160); to take measures to protect themselves from the fairies, such as turning clothes inside out (2001-074; 2005-050; 2005-100; 2006-266; 2008-013; 2016-401), wearing odd socks (2005-074; 2005-301; 2006-279; 2012-015), bringing along breadcrumbs or crusts of bread (2001-097; 2001-132; 2005-008; 2006-235; 2006-273; 2009-062; 2017-038; 2018-145), or swearing (2009-034); to be aware of their surroundings and not be fooled by lights (99-393; 2005-042; 2006-251), music (Maddigan 2014; 2005-081; 2006-218; 2016-446), voices (2005-041; 2006-239; 2006-249), or other strange phenomena in the woods; (2002-054; 2006-200; 2006-297; 2008-015; 2011-186); and to protect one another by calling for lost friends (2001-074; 2005-331; 2006-239; 2008-018) or following their footprints (2001-074; 2007-082).

As previously suggested, these sources clearly illustrate Rieti's concept of "always going and never gone" (1991, 1-2). Although these young collectors and their informants are clearly familiar with the fairy tradition, they frequently assert that the tradition is old, or dying out. One informant says: "Belief in fairies was extremely common in the past when children got lost in the woods" (2005-307). Another says: "This was a common tradition in my community many years ago: when women went into the woods berry picking by themselves they would put their sweater on inside out so the fairies would not take them" (2008-013). Another man says, "It was commonly told to children that fairies lived in the woods around Fair Haven" (2005-012). However, other suggest that some of these traditions are still common in Newfoundland. One collector explains: "To keep Newfoundland fairies away when walking in wooded areas, carry bread in one's pocket. Madonna Spurrell was informed by a relative, and this is a common ritual for many Newfoundlanders" (2008-005). Another person says the belief is common, but only in

older people: "It is common knowledge among older people of my community that turning your socks inside out keeps the fairies away" (2016-240).

When it comes to the question of belief, this duality is even clearer. Many collectors and informants stated that the stories or traditions they were sharing were old beliefs, perhaps believed by older members of the community, but not by themselves. One informant says, "This was an old belief that was held by the inhabitants of Rushoon" (91-331). Another, more general comment, states that "A common belief concerning the fairies was that fairies would take children" (2005-019). One collector says of her informant that "Even though my cousins husband did not believe this, his grandparents and parents did" (2006-302). Two informants describe how their grandfathers told them stories "as if he honestly believed that such things existed" (2005-291), even though they did not profess the same beliefs (2005-291; 2016-240). Some informants state that they believed as children, but no longer do: "Man was I gullible to believe this nonsense. If I would have known she [the informant's mother] would not have kept me out of them woods" (2016-201). On the other hand, some continue to believe: "I believe in them hardcore, never goes in the woods with the right side [of my clothes] out!" (2009-062)

Clearly, a culture of persistent storytelling and fairy traditions conflicts with modern interpretations of science and rationality, forcing tradition-bearers to continue ascribing to the stories and traditions they have been taught, while relegating them to a distant, but beloved and not-too-far-removed, past. In the words of Newfoundland resident Jenny Follet, "You don't hear much about the fairies anymore. Over the years, the fairies have been driven further into the woods because of so much noise and bright lights. The world is after becoming much more modern than it was sixty years ago" (2016-446, 5-6). The traditions, stories and beliefs are

undoubtedly rich and varied, and perform numerous functions, from amusement to protection, that continue to serve a purpose to this day.

Irishness and Newfoundland in Archival Sources

In a brief search of MUNFLA materials, I found only two recent papers that connect Ireland and Newfoundland. They are both about Newfoundland musicians who choose to play Irish, or Irish Newfoundland, music. Kayla Mercer's informant, Michael Greeley, states, "Newfoundland is a province with a folk musical heritage based on the Irish traditions that were brought to our shores centuries ago. Instruments that are played in both Newfoundland an Irish music that make these two types of music very similar are instruments such as the fiddle accordion an the bodhran which are used and played by many Newfoundland entertainers" (2012-026, 10). She asks if he finds Ireland and Newfoundland music to be similar, and he responds, "Very very similar… Same kind of style of music, you know, just probably written about different things but the same style of music. And of course, Ireland and Newfoundland [are] pretty well similar anyways. Landscape, weather. I mean it's basically, you know. And the music and everything is the same, so you know" (2012-026, 30). He also explains that Irish music, or Irish Newfoundland music, is most popular in Newfoundland venues, and therefore most lucrative for musicians: "Here in Newfoundland, too, if you want to be busy at the music you play, and play at different venues, Irish Newfoundland music is the music to play" (2012-026). Erica Peddle, interviewing Brad Walsh, finds that he prefers to play old and new Irish music, often with a twist, and that he was inspired by hearing Irish songs in pubs and from his grandfather (2012-028).

Fairies and Irishness in Archival Sources

Interestingly, although there were many FSC about fairylore, none of the ones I looked at contained any mention of the Irish, Ireland, or even Celtic traditions. I did find several associations from other materials – five of the web fairy stories and six other archival sources connected fairies and Irishness.

Unsurprisingly, of these eleven sources, eight attributed fairy stories to the Irish directly, explaining that the Irish brought fairies over to Newfoundland from Ireland, and that these stories continue to be told by Irish descendants. For example, consider the following excerpt from a student paper: "The story of the fairies is widely known in Newfoundland. There is talk that they originated from the settlement of the Irish when they immigrated during the late 18th century in the first half of the 19th century" (2006-021, 1). Another paper states something similar: "the belief in little people had existed within Newfoundland since the early 17th century, and has been the strongest in areas with the deepest Irish or Breton roots - those ranging from the outskirts of St. John's and taking in all of the Saint Mary's Bay region where a thick Irish accent can still be found today" (2006-034, 3). The student cites Lannon and McCarthy, pages 31-32 (1991), which I discuss elsewhere. Storyteller Hubert Furey, telling a story he composed for a storytelling evening in St. John's, includes the lines, "Ah, you don't believe in fairies, they're just stories, Irish tales, brought over here in the days gone by, in the time of ships with sails" (Furey 2013). In an interview, one person again attributed fairies to the Irish, and attributes this to the Irish's alleged superstitiousness: "when people didn't understand something, when something strange happened, they'd attribute it to the fairies" (F31524c). Other connections include the following description of storyteller Clarence Squires, who "is known across the Irish Loop as a teller of stories" (Sebastien 2013), and the following excerpt from an article about a

trial involving fairies: "The Irish born Judge Conroy did not challenge the veracity of the story about being carried away by the fairies" (Dohey 2018).

Three sources compared fairies to other magical, Irish creatures. One informant, during an interview, associated fairies with leprechauns (2007-082). Another informant, telling a fairy story, stated: "He looked up and there's a little creature, a little man or woman, they called that a fairy, not like the Irish leprechaun, but a fairy" (F31524c). One student wrote a paper about the banshee tradition in Newfoundland. Following a familiar argument, the student claims banshee belief was brought to Newfoundland by Irish immigrants and is still held by some Irish immigrants (2005-119). She cites several FSC in which Newfoundlanders describe stories or beliefs about the banshee, or bibe, including one which states: "The older children would frighten us by saying "watch out the banshees will get you." Banshee, meaning fairies. "The wind she howled like a banshee." This is apparently an old Irish folktale from an ancestor" (76-143, 34). The student suggests that there seems to be an old, implicit Irish connection between banshees and fairies, but that there is not enough evidence in Newfoundland to support this (2005-119).

Summary

Interestingly, in this section of esoteric perspectives, we find that, despite the large quantity of Newfoundland fairylore material in the archive, there are very limited references to the Irish or Ireland within these sources. One possible reason that other sources contained these connections between Irishness and fairies when the FSC did not may be simply because the FSC are so small, which limits the amount of conjecture and context that can be included. Most of the FSC contain only a specific story, saying or tradition. Student papers and interviews, as well as

lengthy discussion in other forums, such as social media, have much more room to discuss context, including sources and ancestry, giving rise to more discussion about Irishness.

Interviews

Recruitment process

To find people to interview, I reached out on four different Facebook groups that, based on my research on Facebook, had the most fairy-related discussion: Come and Sit a Spell, Haunted and Spooky Newfoundland, Growing Up in Newfoundland, and Newfoundland Sayings. I asked people to contact me if they were interested in sharing "stories, experiences, beliefs or opinions about fairies." There was a considerable amount of interest in my posts, which altogether garnered 120 comments and many more "likes." Thirty-one people messaged me with stories, comments, or general interest, and eight agreed to be interviewed. I had brief conversations via Facebook with the other twenty-three. I also reached out to the Harbour Grace Town Council, at the suggestion of someone on Facebook, and was put in touch with two more people, who agreed to be interviewed. In total, I collected eleven interviews: nine via Zoom or telephone,[13] and two via Facebook. Some of my interviewees agreed to be quoted directly, and some preferred to only be paraphrased; this is reflected in the presentation of data in this section.

Demographic Data

Of the twenty-three people who messaged me privately on Facebook with stories or other comments, eighteen were women, and only five were men. Of my interviewees, six were women and four were men; Kaitlyn's interviewee, Eric, is male. Notably, I spoke with all six women via phone or Zoom, but of my four male interviewees, two preferred to be interviewed via FB chat (although in one case this was due to a significant time difference). Also, one of my male

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[13] One of these interviews was conducted by my interviewee, Kaitlyn, with her friend Eric. This interview recording was generously shared with me by Kaitlyn, with Eric's permission.

interviewees was the only person I reached out to individually to speak to. Of the women I

interviewed, two were in their twenties, two were in their thirties or forties, and two were in their

fifties or sixties. Of the men, one was in his thirties or forties, and two were in their fifties and

sixties.[14] I was not looking for age or gender diversity, specifically, and the results, particularly

the wide age range, somewhat surprised me, and further reinforces that fairy stories are "always

going and never gone" (Rieti 1991, 1-2). I also made note of the locations where my

interviewees were raised, and any additional locations of the stories they mention (figure 3).

Figure 3: Map of fairy story locations, with close-ups of south-east Newfoundland and the northern Avalon Peninsula. Red dots correspond to locations mentioned in FSC, and green dots correspond to locations mentioned in interviews. The numbers beside some names (e.g. "Freshwater (x2)") indicate the number of fairy stories that mention this location – where there is no number, there is only one corresponding fairy story. Map created by the author.

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[14] Some biographical information has been excluded, at the request of the interviewee(s).

Fairies and Newfoundland in Interviews

Every one of the people I interviewed had been raised in Newfoundland. In order to understand the common threads, underlying assumptions and unique differences between personal fairylore experience in Newfoundland, in this section, I will introduce each of my interviewees individually, providing basic biographical information when possible alongside their views on fairylore. I begin with my female interviewees.

Kaitlyn, a woman in her early twenties, grew up in Spaniard's Bay, hearing fairy stories from her grandparents. Aware of the popular conceptions of fairies as cute and nice, Kaitlyn describes Newfoundland fairies as very different: small, mean, and wingless people. She was warned by her grandparents to carry bread or coins in her pockets to ward off the fairies, and to avoid rocks and mushrooms set in perfect circles, especially at night. Kaitlyn only knows of the Newfoundland and popular conceptualizations of fairies, but suggests that fairylore was brought over to Newfoundland by Old World countries like England, Scotland and Ireland. She explains to me that tourist representations of fairies are good, as they recognize the cultural beliefs of Newfoundlanders, but that they reflect only parts of Newfoundland fairylore, and exclude others. When asked if she would continue Newfoundland fairy traditions, she said that she will definitely tell fairy stories to future generations, but only as stories – not fact (Kaitlyn 2022).

Krissy, a woman in her mid-twenties, told me all about the fairylore she learned growing up in St. Lawrence. In this small community, her grandfather and uncles were the storytellers, and shared their experiences with fairies, spirits and jack-o'-lanterns. She told me stories about her uncle's encounter with a jack-o'-lantern in a bog while he was hunting, and her aunt's experience with a changeling who had replaced her baby. She also described the warning she received, such as to watch out for the fairies, and avoid stepping on mushrooms. She was also

familiar with two conflicting interpretations of fairies – cute, humanoid, and winged versus ugly, scary, and hobgoblin-like. She points out, however, that much of the imagery is the same; all fairies are associated with mushrooms, green grass, and forests, and are often described or depicted as taking shelter in nature, such as under mushrooms known as "fairy caps." Although accepting of popular, "cute" depictions of fairies, she explains that she is protective of her culture, finds popular depictions a bit trivializing, and wants to pass on traditional Newfoundland fairylore to future generations. When asked about belief in the fairies, she explained that she believed in them as a child, spending many happy hours hunting for them in backyards and gardens, and that she continues to enjoy the fairy stories and traditions, but now finds certain aspects of fairylore hard to believe (Krissy 2022).

Michelle, a young mom in her thirties, described learning fairylore from her nan, or grandmother, and passing it on to her children. Her nan, who was raised on Sagona Island, told stories about people being led stray, and about passing babies through tree branches to protect them from the fairies, or, as she called, them, the good people. Her nan made Michelle wear her jacket backwards and put bread in her pockets before playing in the patch of woods near her house. Michelle described realizing that there were differences between her conceptualization and her classmates' conceptualizations of fairies – cute and pretty versus mischievous and scary. Although her nan had never seen one, Michelle was told to watch out for anyone small, wearing the color green and a little hat, who gave her a bad feeling. Michelle explained that the nice, touristy depictions of fairies are fine, but that children should be aware that it's not reflective of Newfoundland's culture. When she herself visited a fairy ring in Ireland, she made sure to bring bread to give to them, and treated the area respectfully. She also brought back small wildflowers, which she made into necklaces for her children. She explains that her children are well aware of

traditional fairylore, and that she makes them bring bread in their pockets when they go play in the woods, just as her nan did with her (Michelle 2022).

Cameron, a woman in her thirties or forties from Colliers, describes the complementary influences of traditional Newfoundland fairylore and Earth-centered paganism that led to her beliefs in fairies. As a child growing up in Newfoundland, she remembers being told, "If you hear the footsteps, don't turn around. If you hear the laughter don't follow it; don't go through this meadow at this time, and especially during the month of May" (Cameron 2021). She describes the community beliefs:

> So our area was very ridden with fairy stories, and everybody always had different ones, you know. It wasn't uncommon to have people carrying breadcrumbs around in their pockets and stuff like that, because those little things that we said, "Oh, that'll deter the fairies." Silver, and bread crumbs. So we always had that kind of stuff around, like I always carried quarters and stuff in my pocket when I was kid, and a teenager, and stuff like that. Especially when we'd be in the woods, hanging out, having fires and that kind of stuff. You know, we'd run down the path […] because we didn't want to be there too long by ourselves, because we knew that the areas were just known to be fairy mounds and known to be fairy rings around. And you just. Didn't want to disturb them and you didn't want to get caught.

Now, incorporating fairies into her pagan beliefs, she continues to show respect for the fairies: "I try probably even more so with the fairies than I do with the gods not to offend, because the little things can be seen as a slight. So I really, really try to make sure that I don't do that." However, she also gives and receives gifts from the fairies; she has an altar to the fairies with a fairy statue and flowers on it and makes offerings with different symbolic items. Regarding the popular, tourist portrayals of fairies, she says, "I don't really see anything wrong with it because it does make people understand a bit more about the culture, because it is so ingrained in our culture. Especially rural areas for sure, you know, we're just taught that along with everyday normal safety. […] Maybe it was more of an older tradition thing, and maybe the younger generation

isn't doing it anymore? But I grew up with, with it being just an everyday part of my life and it was just a very normal thing. So I really hope that people understand that side of it, too, along with the tourism side of it."

Tara White, a woman in her forties or fifties, also blends traditional Newfoundland fairylore with her spirituality. Raised in Newfoundland, she nevertheless did not learn about the fairies until she was in her forties. She then started to engage more with her spirituality, which has involved learning more about her connection with nature and with fairies. As she explains, "I have seen fairies. And sometimes when I record on my YouTube channel, you can actually see them around me and people will say, 'Oh look,' and I go, 'Yeah, they're around me all the time.' So they get shocked. Then I just go, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, ignore them, they're just around me'" (White 2022). She describes fairies as protectors of nature and sacred places:

> [The fairies] can be very much playful, and they can play rude tricks on you, too. […] They can be very protective of certain elements in nature, so if they know that your energy is not a good energy and you're coming around a tree or a [sacred place], they will play tricks on you in order to get you away. And they can even use your energy against you too. And that's not, they're not being fearful, they're just being protective.

With reference to the scary fairy stories and warnings about fairies given to children in Newfoundland, she says, "How can you explain to a child what's sacred means? Right, so in order to not have them go certain places, you would invoke fear." She concludes:

> So yeah, fairies, fairies don't tend to live in communities. They stayed out around in nature. Because they don't want to bother with us silly humans who are playing, playing around with life. Basically. They like to be running around in nature a lot. Now, fairies change too. They can change their way of thinking and everything else, too. Fairies don't stay.

Now living in Gander, White continues to research fairies and fairylore, learning more about their relations to nature and to people.

Kathleen, a woman in her sixties, was raised in St. John's, near Pippy Park. She explains that her family has an unusually strong ability to recognize the supernatural, and had many experiences with ghosts, spirits, and other supernatural phenomena. Although she did not have many stories about the fairies in particular, she remembers how they influenced her upbringing: "I was only 10 years old at the time, but you know not being allowed out after midnight because the fairy folk were out and everything. […] I remember my grandmother talking about changelings and everything. Of course now we know it was just folklore, but my grandmother very much believed the old ways and the little people and all that" (Kathleen 2021). She also describes going for Sunday picnics on weekends: "And I do remember like my mother and my Grandfather saying, 'Don't go over there. That's the fairy circle.' But I mean it would just be a circle of flowers or anything."

Ken told me a number of fairy stories from his hometown in Newfoundland. He described a local spot, known as the "fairy brake," where people would often encounter the fairies. He himself had three experiences with fairies there. The first time, it became dark and he got disoriented – suddenly, he heard a loud noise, like "a herd of elephants" (Ken 2022), and he ran back up the path towards the road. Another time, he and his friend were picking bakeapples when they spotted a cabin in the woods: "I knew it wasn't real. But it was clear. It was in the middle of a big hole. I marked a juniper tree. [I] went back the next day - not even a sign of that cabin." The third time, he was also picking bakeapples when he experienced an unnatural wind that bent the trees, but failed to drive away a large swarm of flies. He describes one other experience:

> Now in another location. Outside of [the fairy brake]. I believe I see one. Yellow
> and green suit. I caught it in the corner of my eye. I waited, then made the quick
> look. It had a black flash behind it. It was maybe a foot [tall]. I see it long enough

just to say I see it. Now maybe that was my imagination. But my uncle seen it on another occasion. When he put the cross back over his door. He never see it after.

Ken explains that many people in his community heard and told fairy stories, and had fairy experiences, particularly near the fairy brake – however, he also states, "I've heard of fairy-like stories everywhere," and mentions similar traditions in Indigenous communities.

Shawn Morrissey, a man in his thirties from the Carbonear-Victoria area, shared some opinions, beliefs and stories about the fairies. He describes hearing stories from elder family friends, his grandparents, and his father, and sharing fairy stories with his friends. He explains what he was taught: "I was told a lot of things common to fairy lore: avoid certain places in the woods; stuff bread in your pocket if you go in the woods; turn clothing inside out, especially a jacket; don't tease or taunt the fairies" (Morrissey 2022). His reactions to these stories and warnings reflected the spectrum of belief common to the Newfoundland fairylore tradition:

> I was fascinated by the fairy stories and quite afraid of them when I was younger. As I grew older, though, I never knew what to make of the fairy stories, even though I did have my own experiences. Regardless, those who told me and warned me about fairies (and ghosts) were people I trusted. At the very least, they firmly believed in the fairies and were adamant their experiences with the little people were real. That had value, and I still feel that way today. At the very least, fairies are integral to Newfoundland folklore and I feel that should be respected.

He recounts two stories about the fairies. In one, a few of his relatives were out hunting, and started taunting the fairies – daring them to show themselves. When they left the woods, their hunting gear went missing, and when one of them stepped into the shower, his clothes went missing. Morrissey also recounts a personal experience, in which he and a few friends, and a dog, were walking through the woods:

> We were fairly deep into the Mash when the dog, who was off his leash, started to whimper. The pup sniffed around a bush. We thought he may have smelt a rabbit at first, but he seemed too frightened for that. My buddy who owned the dog was worried a bull moose would charge the dog, so he called the dog back to leash him. It was then that we heard unusual sounds coming from beyond the bush

where the dog was sniffing. I can only describe them as a blend of whooshing and chattering. We had never heard anything like that before. The sounds started to come from all around us, each time in a different place, sometimes close, other times far off. We were all pretty unnerved (full on frightened, I'd say) and decided to head back the way we came. I remembered the stories about the Mash fairies but didn't say anything at the time. We didn't experience anything else on the way out. When I mentioned to my buddies later about the fairy lore of the Mash, they said they thought of the same thing.

Morrissey explained this part of the woods, known as the Mash: "I heard a lot of people say the Mash was haunted and/or full of fairies, particularly the woods surrounding it. A friend's grandfather claimed he saw dozens of fairies in the Mash when he was a young man."

Morrissey identifies that fairy stories and supernatural folk creatures exist all over the world, and the dissemination of belief has come to influence many interpretations of fairies. When I asked how he felt about popular and tourist depictions of fairies, he stated:

I'm not especially fussed about the way fairies are described in pop culture, or even in 19th century art. I don't think it affects Newfoundland fairy lore in any way. I do have a little laugh for myself, though, when I see fairies depicted as you mentioned. There is a place for that, I suppose, but I despise the idea of Disney and its ilk determining the movement of folklore instead of storytellers and our elders.

Des, a school teacher from Harbour Grace South, first heard about fairies as a child, around eight years old. He explains that his father and grandparents were great storytellers, and would warn Des to take bread in his pockets when berry picking. They believed it was bad luck to talk about the fairies, and would call them the little people or the good people instead. However, Des notes that there was stronger fairy belief in Bryant's Cove and Upper Island Cove than in Harbour Grace South. His grandmother, from Bryant's Cove, talked a lot about the fairies:

She would talk about little people, probably with red hats, and greyish colour skin, a couple of feet tall. They could be [playing] music. They'd lead you astray. Usually when you're berry picking. So usually late August, early September. That

must have been a prime time for the fairies, must have been. Because they would always try to lead you astray when you went berry picking. (Des 2022)

He recounts a fairy story she told him about the fairies trying to lead her away while she was berry picking. She also told a story about a changeling:

She told a story about [a] foggy evening and there was a baby in the crib outside and when the lady came home, the baby was changed into an old man. There was a gentlemen next door, and he went in the house, and put a shovel in the stove and got some hot ashes, and shouted "Come to get your baby now." And when he went back in the house, the baby was fine.

He continues with another of her stories:

There's another story she talks about is, but someone seen a little boy with no hair and he had a mug in his hand. He would offer the mug. To the person. And as the story goes, if you took the mug. Then that's it, they had you. They take you if you took the mug. Then they would take him, do whatever. I don't know what they do with you. But they would take you and lead you further astray, I suppose.

Des also talked about a gentleman in Bryant's Cove known as Fairy John. This was a man with little education who had an experience that the community assumed was with the fairies, and ended up in a wheelchair. He was very smart and had good penmanship – skills that, along with his incident, earned him an association with the supernatural power of the fairies, due to the reputation of changelings and fairies being unnaturally smart or talented (as Patrick discusses, below). When I asked Des if he believed in the fairies, he responded, "I don't know if I did or not. But kind of like, you almost didn't want to not believe in them, just in case. Just in case there was something to it." Des, like other interviewees, thinks that the tourist representation of fairies is not reflective of Newfoundland fairylore, but believes it is important to continue engaging with this tradition. He describes talking to his grade five class about the fairies: "Around Halloween we start talking stories and strange events, and I start telling them about fairies and they just couldn't get enough. They wanted me to keep telling the stories."

Patrick, a well-known Newfoundland author in his sixties, is from the part of Harbour Grace formerly known as Riverhead. He wrote the book *The Secret of the Fairy Ring,* about the fairy ring in Harbour Grace, which prompted me to reach out to him. He explains that Riverhead was a very Irish place, and was full of folklore and fairy stories. His grandparents came directly from Ireland, and he heard fairy stories from his parents and older siblings, and shared them with his friends. His father and uncle were storytellers, and taught him that there are good and bad fairies. His father also told him about getting lost in the woods, walking in circles for hours, and finally escaping around daybreak. Patrick explained that he had a similar experience recently, but did not attribute it to the fairies. He says his father and mother were "half serious" when saying what you should and shouldn't do with the fairies. He was taught to bring bread in his pockets and turn his clothing inside out to ward off the fairies. He thought of them as little people, like gnomes, with deformed features, long hair, and squeaky voices, who could be friendly if you were nice. He explained that fairy caps signified where the fairies congregated, and a fairy ring of trees or rocks could form a circle to show fairy occupation. He also warned that some fairies were beyond devious and would do wrong things, such as steal babies and replace them with changelings. Changelings were highly intelligent, and might go from being slow in school to being very bright. They could end up doing really great or really bad things. Fairies also never forgot grudges until you made restitution. Patrick also explained that he had recently seen more literature and fairy attractions like the Fairy Door Tours, that grew out of popular concepts of the fairies. He explains that children have a renewed interest in the fairies, and reminisces on the fun aspects of fairies, such as saying "that crowd's in the fairies," meaning that those people were being foolish, or saying "he's a little fairy," meaning that someone was being silly.

My final informant is the family friend who my first interviewee, Kaitlyn, interviewed for her own research about the fairies. Eric grew up in Upper Island Cove and expresses firm belief in the fairies. "There's a lot of things you can't explain," he reasons, and the fairies are his answer. Describing his hometown, he says,

> There was older people in that area that believed in fairies until the day they died. Some of the things that we used to have to do that they used to strictly enforce with us, when we went berry picking or we went over the hills. You know, just playing children's games you'd have to turn your coat inside out. You'd have to have bread crumbs in your pocket. You would have to carry a red piece of cloth in your pocket (Jewer 2019).

He also described having to pull socks over his pantlegs to prevent fairies from running up his pants, because they were described as quite small, and generally invisible until they wanted to be seen. He described the common tale of losing time to the fairies: "[People] would say that they were in the woods and right out of nowhere they would happen to be talking to someone, a fairy, and they figured they had a conversation with them for ten minutes, and when they were got back with their buddies they realized they were probably gone for four, five, six hours." He also recounted the story of a girl whose coffin was carried to a bridge, but could not cross, because there was a fairy hiding in it, and fairies fear water. Estimating that fairy stories have existed for at least four hundred years in Newfoundland, he explains their prevalence:

> You go to different communities in Newfoundland, you'll hear all the different little stories of fairies, all the different communities and the way they dealt with them. In Harbor Grace they used to have what they called fairy rings. There was a circle of rocks and the fairies used to get around and do their little dance and chant their spells. Every area had their own little thing right?

Talking about the perceived decline in fairy stories in recent years, Eric explains that people don't have time for them now, and no longer spend as much time in the woods.

Irishness and Newfoundland in Interviews

In order to determine my interviewee's thoughts about the Irish and Irishness in Newfoundland, as well as Newfoundland's connections to Ireland, I asked three questions: "Are there a lot of people from Ireland here in Newfoundland, do you think?," "What impact would you say the Irish had on Newfoundland?" and "Where is your family from, originally?" The first two questions I ask at the very end of the interview, to ensure that my personal focus on Irishness does not influence what my interviewees say about fairies during in the interviews. In this way, I attempted to avoid leading them towards associations between fairies and Irishness. However, on the consent forms, completed prior to the interviews, I do describe my research, and as part of that description I talk about Irishness, so it is possible that interviewees may have tailored their responses to my research topic in light of that information. Six of my interviewees make connections between Ireland and Newfoundland.

Kaitlyn, Kathleen and Krissy identify similarities between Newfoundland and Ireland through direct descent, religion, and accents. Kaitlyn said that many people in Newfoundland were from Ireland, or were descended from the Irish. She went on to say that the Irish had a big impact on Newfoundland, particularly in the realm of culture and tradition. She references the oft-repeated description of Newfoundland as "Canada's Ireland" (Kaitlyn 2022). Kathleen identifies several different ethnicities that moved to Newfoundland, saying, "Newfoundland is Cockney, English, Irish, Scottish and whatever else is thrown in there," but she goes on to describe religious similarities between Newfoundland and Ireland: "Newfoundland is very, very much like Ireland, with feuding Catholics and Protestants […] I don't know about today, probably not so much today […] But when I was growing up, oh yes, very much. Catholics and Protestants didn't really associate a whole lot" (Kathleen 2021). Krissy also suggests a

connection between Newfoundland's Irish and religious heritage. She explains that her grandmother, being Irish and Catholic, had a grotto for Mary in her backyard. She also describes, somewhat humorously, praying to Saint Anthony when things went missing, which she attributes to her family's Irish heritage. Krissy also reflected on the similarities between the food she ate growing up and the food she ate in Ireland, speculating about whether or not her Irish Newfoundland food was due to Newfoundland's Irishness, or simply her family's Irish heritage, as much of her family is from Ireland, originally (Krissy 2022). Both Krissy and Kaitlyn also pointed out similarities between the Newfoundland and Ireland accent, Krissy describing being mistaken for Irish instead of a Newfoundlander.

Patrick, Ken, and Shawn Morrissey identify the Irish roots of their specific communities in Newfoundland. Patrick describes growing up in Riverhead, just outside of Harbour Grace, explaining that it was the Irish capital of the area, with Irish accents and Irish traditions. He explains that his own ancestors were all from Ireland. He also explains that Riverhead seemed to have maintained certain aspects of Irish folklore and culture more so than Ireland itself did (Patrick 2022). Ken says similar things about the community he grew up in: "My home area of Newfoundland is basically descended from Wexford and Kilkenny, Ireland. I'm sure some of the traditional knowledge I know is from those places." He also notes the Irish influence on his accent, saying, "Most days my dialect is pure Wexford" (Ken 2022). Finally, Morrissey, describing his upbringing in the Carbonear-Victoria area, says, "I guess it's about as religious as any area in Newfoundland. We're of Irish heritage so we're Catholic" (Morrissey 2022).

In response to my questions about Irishness, Des, Michelle and Cameron did not attribute Newfoundland's culture and identity to any one ethnicity, which is perhaps due to their English heritage. However, they did suggest connections between fairylore in Ireland and in

Newfoundland, as I will discuss in the next section. Tara White focused more on the religious aspects of Newfoundland, discussing the influence of the Catholic Church on Newfoundland. Eric was asked different questions in his interview, as it was conducted by someone else and given to me to use, so they did not talk about Newfoundland's ethnic background or identity.

In addition to the identification of Irish immigration to Newfoundland, and its influence on the Newfoundland accent, one common thread between these and previous associations between Newfoundland and Ireland is the correlation between the Irish and Catholicism. This point will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Fairies and Irishness in Interviews

When attempting to surmise the implicit connections between fairies and Irishness during interviews, I asked four questions: "Are fairies specific to Newfoundland, do you think?," "Have you heard about fairies anywhere else?/Who else talks about fairies?," "Does your family/community background have anything to do with knowing about the fairies?" and "Who first told fairy stories in Newfoundland?" Although I did not ask every one of these questions in every interview, ten of my interviewees, and one person who messaged me on Facebook, discussed connections between fairies and Irishness, or Ireland.

Several interviewees attributed fairylore and other parts of Newfoundland culture and traditions to the Irish. When asked if fairylore was specific to Newfoundland, Morrissey responded, "I don't think fairy lore itself is specific to Newfoundland, considering it's a dissemination of Irish lore from settlers to the island" (Morrissey 2022). Similarly, Kaitlyn states that the Irish were the first people to tell fairy stories in Newfoundland, due to early Irish immigration to Newfoundland (Kaitlyn 2022). Ken also explains that his knowledge of fairylore is "a result of both community and family that originated in Ireland" (Ken 2022). Lisa Codner-

O'Flaherty connects her community with her Irish ancestry: "I grew up hearing all about the faeries here in NL. My grandmother was from Bay Bulls and her ancestors were Irish. She'd tell us not to go into the woods or the faeries would get us. Of course, that's the first place I'd go!" She also describes the fairies as a connecting point between her and her Irish husband: "My husband grew up on the west coast of Ireland. He has lots of stories about the faeries! One of the first questions I asked him before deciding to date him was 'Do you believe in faeries[?]' He said 'Of course!' We were married six months later!" (Codner-O'Flaherty 2022). Kathleen, explaining her family's unusual level of empathy and sensitivity to the supernatural, says: "I know we do have Irish roots. I don't know how far back they go," and she continues later on in the interview to explain, "The old ways and the old stories and everything are all embedded in Irish roots" (Kathleen 2021). Krissy also explains that she grew up being told a lot of folk tales that revealed a significant Irish influence, likely due to her family's Irish roots (Krissy 2022). Cameron also practices "old, old traditions" as part of her spirituality, including dancing around the maypole and celebrating Beltane, which she describes as "Celtic Irish" traditions that "are definitely from Ireland" (Cameron 2021). Her own background is around 50% Irish, and she describes "trying to learn more about Ireland, and trying to dig out my roots and [become] really connected with Ireland," because she appreciates the thriving Irish traditions, like a strong belief in fairies, as evidenced by the protection of certain trees, such as hawthorns, which are thought to be fairy trees (Cameron 2021). Tara White also looks to Ireland for much of her spiritual connection to fairies and to nature. She explains, "Ireland had a lot of mystics, and a lot of sages and a lot of Oracles. But so did Newfoundland. But we were so fearful to talk about it […] we don't put importance on our own traditions and they're dying away. They're dying away. And that's what made our connection to Irish folklore so very important" (White 2022).

However, there was also a lot of discussion in the interviews about difference in the traditions from Ireland and England, and those towns that were more Irish or English. Eric explains that people immigrating to Newfoundland from the Old World, particularly England, Scotland and Ireland, brought over their own traditions, and that, while the Irish were responsible for belief in leprechauns, the English were the ones who brought over fairylore: "You've got the fairies. That originated from England. […] That's where I figured it came from, myself personally. And of course you get into the Irish [*word unclear*] and they had leprechauns. Probably all along the same lines" (Eric 2019). Des and Patrick both recognize the potential influence of English fairylore, but make less definitive distinctions. Des, a teacher, describes preparing for a Heritage Fair in a small-town high school: "We talked about possible topics and you know, knowing that the community with Irish I mentioned to them. I said there, 'Are there any stories here about the fairies?' They said, 'On my gosh, sir. Yes there is.' And it just took off from there" (Des 2022). However, he goes on to complicate this assumption:

> If I start talking about fairies in, when I was in high school. Well, they'd think that I was mad. Because they- it wasn't part of their tradition, even though it was a very strong Irish, very very strong Irish community in Harbour Grace. For some reason, fairies wasn't something that was talked about (Des 2022).

Thus, while one Irish community had a lot of fairylore, another Irish community did not. To complicate matters further, Des talks about the strong fairylore tradition in Upper Island Cove and Bryant's Cove, and then says, "This was something I don't understand about in Bryant's Cove, 'cause it's mostly an English community. There were some Irish people in the community, and maybe [fairylore] was a holdover from when the Irish people or the Irish descendants were living there as well, and just got mixed up with the local lore in the community" (Des 2022). Patrick also talks about this "mixing up" of tradition, explaining that, while he heard fairy stories from his Irish family and Irish community, he met many people with English families, or from

English towns, who held very similar beliefs and traditions. He explains that these traditions probably mixed and influenced each other over time, particularly in the last seventy years, when the communities became more accessible to one another.

In these examples, we can see that opinion remains divided about the Irishness of fairylore in my interviews, with some saying that fairies are an exclusively Irish tradition, while other identify them as English, or a mix of the two. Family and community heritage, as well as personal religious and spiritual belief systems, all influence these opinions.

Conclusion

As I identified at the beginning of the chapter, there are three main domains into which fairylore can fit: popular culture fairies, religious fairylore, and traditional fairylore. We have seen how all three types of fairylore are present in Newfoundland. Indeed, in the eleven interviews examined previously, we see how these three genres can be combined, so that Newfoundland tradition-bearers (and outsiders) can hold several conceptualizations of fairies simultaneously. Many fairy stories and fairylore traditions are very similar across geographic areas, through time, and between genders.

From the various exoteric and esoteric interpretations I have presented here, we can observe a variety of perspectives on Newfoundland fairylore and its relation to Irishness. In exoteric tourism resources, we see a few references to the Irishness of Newfoundland, but almost none to fairylore. In the fairylore Facebook groups, there are numerous references to Irishness, and almost none to Newfoundland. In tourist attractions created and presented by Newfoundlanders, we see a reflection of popular conceptions of fairies, which bears little resemblance to traditional Newfoundland fairylore and does not reference Irishness. On the other hand, within esoteric interpretations of fairylore, Irishness appears consistently in longer fairy

stories and discussion about fairylore, but not in brief descriptions such as those written on FSCs. Thus, while previous discussion of exoteric and esoteric opinions provides a broad survey of perspectives inside and outside of Newfoundland, my interviews allow us to delve more deeply into the complex questions of belief, ancestry, and folklore interpretation and dissemination.

In the following chapter, I will use the compelling reflections of my interviewees, complemented by my other ethnographic data, to assert the influence of Irishness on Newfoundland fairylore.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE IRISHNESS OF FAIRYLORE

Introduction

In the previous chapters, we have observed the esoteric and exoteric reflections about fairylore of tourists, those on social media, and various Newfoundlanders. These observations show a high level of engagement with and affection for this tradition, as well as recognition of its value and concern that it is dying out. These taken together support Rieti's argument that fairylore seems to be "always going and never gone" (1991, 1-3). While people tell fairy stories and describe fairylore traditions, they lament their disappearance and seek to revive them. This leads to a highly stable pattern of stories and traditions. By this I mean that a wide range of people, of all ages and genders and geographical locations, remember similar traditions and tell similar stories. Although there are certainly interesting versions of fairylore that transpose old stories or beliefs into modern-day settings, by and large, fairy stories continue to centre around the woods and the marshes, and stories and traditions continue to focus on protecting oneself from the wilderness through bread crumbs, inside-out clothes, and certain other practices. Berry picking continues to be an important part of many stories, as both the setting and the inciting incident, and stories are passed down from older relatives, such as grandparents, and elderly neighbours. The emphasis on maintaining this tradition has thus lead to strong internal consistency. In this chapter, I demonstrate how "Irishness" is one of the aspects of this tradition that has had continued presence and importance in Newfoundland fairylore. Although this may help to ensure its survival, due to the strong influence Irish culture has had on Newfoundland, and the way it continues to be embraced and celebrated over other aspects of Newfoundland's ancestry, clinging to the "Irishness" of fairylore also functions to exclude and neglect people and

practices from this tradition, ultimately restricting its growth and resonance with twenty-first-century Newfoundlanders.

Exoteric Interpretations

Some of the forces that influence Newfoundland fairylore are external, so I was interested in finding out what outsiders had to say about Newfoundland fairylore and its Irishness. As Jansen (1959) explains, there are four types of esoteric and exoteric opinions. Thus far, when looking at opinions about fairylore, I have considered only Exoteric 1, what outsiders think of Newfoundland and its fairylore, and Esoteric 1, what Newfoundlanders think of themselves and their own fairylore. However, I have not discussed the effect that one can have on the other – this is encapsulated in Esoteric 2: what Newfoundlanders think that outsiders think of Newfoundlanders. Many people adapt their behavior to change how others perceive them, or perhaps to meet the expectations of others, depending on their levels of public self-consciousness (Cheek & Briggs 1982). Newfoundland is a poor, isolated, sparsely-populated island with somewhat of an inferiority complex, and it constructs much of its identity around the idea of a unique, autonomous Newfoundland, separate from the rest of Canada (as I discussed in Chapter Two). Thus, it can reasonably be assumed that some Newfoundlanders may take into account the opinions that outsiders hold of Newfoundlanders, they and may adjust their behavior in response. In this section, I examine to what extent Irishness influences exoteric interpretations of Newfoundland fairylore (Exoteric 1), bearing in mind that this may influence the transmission of the fairylore itself (due to Esoteric 2).

My Perspective

The first exoteric opinion I need to examine is my own. As a CFA (Come From Away), my opinions about Newfoundland fairylore are undoubtedly exoteric; I have never been warned

about the fairies by an elderly neighbour or relative; I have never carried bread crumbs in my pockets or turned my socks inside out; I have never had a personal experience with fairies. When I began this research, I started from the assumption that the majority of tradition-bearers attributed Newfoundland fairylore to the Irish. I assumed that this did not accurately reflect the actual history of fairylore in Newfoundland, and that it served to exclude groups of people, particularly the English, Scottish, French, Innu and Mi'kmaq, from participating in this well-known Newfoundland folk tradition. My opinion was based largely on Rieti's consternation with her interviewees', and some popular authors', attribution of fairylore to the Irish (as described in Chapter Two). Although I have attempted to approach my research with an open mind, and to not jump to any conclusions, readers must bear in mind during this discussion that my research was focused on Irishness in fairylore from the beginning, and this may have influenced which sources I chose to examine, and who was more likely to speak to me (as discussed in Chapter Four).

I turn now to the exoteric interpretations of Newfoundland fairylore found in tourism sources and Facebook groups.

Tourist Perspectives

Only three tourism sources mentioned the fairies, although roughly a third of the sources discussed the Irishness of Newfoundland and none made a connection between the two. In my observations of tourist attractions and statues involving the fairies in Newfoundland, such as the Cupids Legacy Centre, the fairy walk in Airport Heights, and the fairy statues in Bowring Park, I did not find any explicit connections between fairies and Irishness. This suggests that tourists do not necessarily influence the Irishness of Newfoundland fairylore, as they are seemingly not aware of the connections to Irish fairylore, and simply see Newfoundland fairies as an

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exclusively Newfoundland tradition or belief. However, tourists are unlikely to have heard of

fairies in Newfoundland prior to visiting, given the dearth of fairylore in popular tourism

resources, as well as its uniqueness; those unfamiliar with the concept of fairies as real beings in

which people believe, as I was when I moved here, would be unlikely to seek out fairylore, and

Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism does not focus on fairylore in any of their tourism

materials, as far as I could find.[15] This also suggests that Newfoundlanders, and indeed the

Tourism board of Newfoundland and Labrador, are not making any explicit connections between

fairies and Irishness in fairy tourist attractions on the island. This can perhaps be explained by

my interviewees' reflections on fairies in Newfoundland's tourism.

Seven of my interviewees had opinions about Newfoundland's use of fairies in tourism.

All seven identified a difference between the kind of fairies depicted in tourist attractions and

traditional Newfoundland fairies. They associated the tourist fairies with popular culture

depictions of fairies as cute and friendly, whereas traditional Newfoundland fairies were ugly,

scary and potentially dangerous. Some interviewees disliked this difference; Krissy explained

that she is very protective of her culture, and she finds the popular depictions of fairies to be cute

but annoying. Similarly, Shawn says, "I do have a little laugh for myself, though, when I see

fairies depicted as you mentioned. There is a place for that, I suppose, but I despise the idea of

Disney and its ilk determining the movement of folklore instead of storytellers and our elders"

(Morrissey 2022). However, others did not mind the popular, "cute" depiction:

> Now, I haven't seen the statue of the fairy in the park in St. John's, but that's more
> like a pixie kind of fairy, like an Arthur Conan Doyle kind of fairy, [MK: yeah]
> with the pixie dust kind of thing? But see the fairies I envision aren't a cute little

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[15] We could speculate about the reason for this; perhaps NL Tourism wishes to downplay folklore in light of other cultural elements, or perhaps they think that fairies are not influential enough, or that there are not enough fairy tourist attractions to have a whole page of their website devoted solely to the fairies. More likely, in my opinion, is that NL Tourism has many aspects of NL culture on which to focus, and chooses to emphasize friendliness, colorfulness and fishing, into which fairylore does not fit very easily.

Walt Disney fairies. [MK: Right] They're little gnome-type, grey, creepy little dudes. That are, you know, a little bit scary. They don't look as friendly and as welcoming as a pixie. But then again, if you're going to put a statue in a park and going to say it's a fairy, you're not going to put a scary thing up that's going to frighten kids (Des 2022).

Pat has a similar opinion, explaining that it is good to pass on fairylore, but not in a way that scares kids. Doing it playfully, with good intent, is the best way to involve the next generation in fairylore.

As all my interviewees agree that tourist depictions of fairies do not reflect traditional Newfoundland fairylore, we can perhaps assume that those who construct and promote fairy tourist attractions share Des and Patrick's opinions that fairylore, while important, should be shared in an approachable, non-threatening way. Michelle also speculates that younger generations may not associate fairies with traditional Newfoundland fairies, so attempting to depict them accurately in tourism attractions might actually detract from the purpose of the attraction, which is to engage tourists with this tradition. Thus, the version of Newfoundland fairies that tourists see may be more similar to the popular depictions they are already familiar with, and thus, the unique nature and heritage of Newfoundland fairies, such as Irishness, would not be noticeable.

Non-Newfoundland Fairies

In my examination of fairy Facebook groups, we see a different phenomenon in exoteric interpretations of fairylore in Newfoundland. On the one hand, tourists recognized the fairy presence in Newfoundland, but found them cute and appealing, and did not associate them with Irishness. On the other hand, in Facebook groups focused on the "reality" of fairies, whether in folklore, religion, or nature, people recognized the darker, more mischievous character of traditional fairies, and also associated them with Ireland and Irishness. There were easily

hundreds of posts and comments that made this connection, many creatively elaborating on it by creating Irish fairy art, giving fairies Irish whisky, or otherwise incorporating this connection into their active belief in fairies (see Chapter Four). This stands in contrast to their association with other countries. For example, in the group Dark Faeries, eighty-two posts mentioned Ireland, twenty-two posts connected fairies to England, thirty-eight to Britain, and forty to Scotland. There was significant overlap between these posts, as many would say "from Scotland and Ireland" or "parts of Britain such as England and Scotland," for example. Assuming other groups follow the same pattern, this suggests that, while people certainly recognize the fairy folklore of England and Scotland, Ireland receives the most attention and credit in modern fairy belief.

However, only nine posts mentioned Newfoundland fairies, specifically, and the majority of these posts are created by Newfoundlanders who have joined these groups or are citing Lannon and McCarthy's book about Newfoundland folklore. Although the posts connecting fairies and Newfoundland in these groups cannot be considered exoteric opinions, as they are created by or with the help of Newfoundlanders, this group does suggest an interesting give and take between exoteric and esoteric interpretations of Newfoundland fairylore. Presumably, those Newfoundlanders who joined groups about "real" fairies have recognized fairylore in Newfoundland and are attempting to connect more deeply with it. Once joining, they would be exposed to the numerous posts and comments about fairies and Irishness, among other things, which might influence their own opinions about Newfoundland fairies. If the majority of people in the English-speaking world who believe in fairies also associate them with Ireland, then Newfoundlanders who are exposed to these outside opinions might also associate Newfoundland fairies with Ireland, or Irishness. I turn, then, to the opinions of Newfoundlanders.

Who are the Folk?

A favourite article of mine by Alan Dundes, "Who are the Folk?" (1980), asks us to examine the people behind the folklore that we study, and the author concludes that everyone is the folk; everyone has folk beliefs, performs folk traditions, and are part of folk groups. With this in mind, before explaining the esoteric opinions about fairylore, it is important to examine who tells fairylore in Newfoundland. In this section, I consider the age, gender and geographic location of the tradition-bearers that I consult. I then look at the ancestry of each community they are from, in order to determine some of the possible historic and ethnic influences on their folklore. It is important to note that the information in this section is based on the dates, names and descriptions provided, and that I was not able to collect all the information for every participant.

Age

On Facebook, there is an age limit for making an account, so I can assume that all those who participated in the Facebook groups were over thirteen. From profile pictures and language, as well as information provided in their comments, I gathered that many of these people were middle-aged or elderly; they often had a spouse or children in their profile pictures, used clear language and occasionally complex or unusual words, and sometimes reflected on events that happened many years ago. For example, one man explained that he hosted Deirdre Nuttall when she came to Newfoundland to conduct research in 1996. From the quality of language and author biographies provided in the children's literature, I can assume that the authors are adults. Further information about these participants' ages was not available.

There was slightly more information available about the archival sources' ages. The Folklore Survey Cards (FSC) have a section requesting information about the informant, such as

their relationship to the collector, their home community, and their age. Although this information was not always provided, I was able to note the ages of many of the informants. In general, just under a third were peers to the collectors, in their teens or twenties; about half were a generation above the collectors, in their thirties to fifties; and under a quarter were elderly – in their sixties or older. A similar trend appeared in my interviewees – two were in their twenties, five in their thirties to fifties, and three in their sixties or seventies. This finding surprised me, because many people say that they heard these stories or learned these traditions from their grandparents, so I assumed that this transmission of folklore skipped a generation, being passed from grandparent to grandchild. I may also have been expecting older informants due to the consistent refrain of "the older people in our community believed…" and the reference to fairylore as an "old" tradition brought over from the Old World (2006-239; 2006-285; 2018-153; Eric 2022; Kaitlyn 2022).

However, close examination shows that these findings are quite natural. Given that myself and previous student folklore collectors are in university, and therefore quite young, it is unsurprising that a significant portion of our informants are also young. Students looking to complete their assigned ten or twenty survey cards for their folklore class would likely ask friends or classmates for folklore that they know. This might also explain the high proportion of aunts, uncles, and parents who were consulted. Another factor is technology; it is fairly easy to collect information for an FSC via email or social media. It is much less convenient to visit someone's house, sit down with a cup of tea, and talk. This is one reason I also chose to recruit via Facebook. However, older generations sometimes struggle to learn how to use new technology, and this can lead to fewer elderly people being consulted for small, quick

assignments such as survey cards. It also leads to fewer elderly people participating in Facebook group chats about fairylore.

In summary, about half of my informants on Facebook, in children's literature, from archival sources and in interviews were middle-aged, and the remaining half is fairly evenly split between young adults and elderly people. However, due to the young age of the archival source collectors, the age restrictions on Facebook, and the accessibility issues of technology, this finding should be considered in the context of this study, and may not apply to the entirety of tradition-bearers in Newfoundland.

Gender

As discussed in Chapter Four, the majority of my research participants in archival materials, in interviews, and in children's literature were women: about 65%. I did not examine the gender of people on Facebook, but a brief review of those posts shows many contributions from both men and women. Although, as I explained previously, this trend towards female informants may be due to the high number of female, as opposed to male, folklore collectors, it is still worth examining why women might be more likely to tell fairylore.

Notably, Rieti (1990; 1991), Narváez (1991), Simmonds (2005), and Silvester (1999) do not discuss gender with reference to fairylore storytellers and informants. However, Silvester frequently mentions female-specific denominations of pagan religion, such as wiccans and witches (1999). Narváez and Rieti (1990; 1991) discuss changeling beliefs, and Narváez also points out that women and young children were primarily responsible for picking berries for their families (1991, 341-42). The female emphasis in many earth-centered and pagan religions suggests that there may be a greater number of women who participate in this aspect of fairylore. Similarly, the domination of berry picking by women suggests that stories about berry picking

would be more relevant to, and more likely to happen to, women. Women might also have cause to be more concerned about the fairies. Not only were they the primary berry-pickers, but women were also the primary caretakers of small children. Many fairy stories focus on protecting small children and babies, whether from wandering away, being led away by the fairies, or being taken and replaced with a changeling. Thus, women may have been more likely to tell fairy stories, as they would be responsible for the day-to-day safety of their small children. Also, women were and continue to be most vulnerable to violence and crime at the hands of others, particularly while alone. Indeed, Narváez suggests that one possible function of fairy stories was to cover up violence done to women by members of the community (1991, 21). I would also suggest that fairy stories could be told to warn young women against going out in the woods by themselves. In small communities where going into the woods to pick berries or cut firewood is a necessity, these stories could be a way to explain the dangers of the woods to outdoorsy young women without scaring them.

Thus, the trend of fairy stories being told by women has a few plausible causes, in addition to my and other students' collection methods. However, there are numerous functions of fairy stories, and cultural relevance does not determine belief. As Hufford argues, personal experience, within the cultural frame presented by the community, can lead to belief (1982), indicating that men can also develop firm belief in fairies, even when they have not necessarily been warned about the fairies personally. Both men and women continue to tell and experience fairy stories.

Geographic Location

I move on now to the geographic location of each storyteller, and any additional locations of the stories they tell. I have mapped the locations mentioned in my archival sources and

interviews. I chose to map these locations because, in general, I have more information about the

fairylore told in archival sources and in my interviews, and am better able to explain trends and

clusters. Additionally, I have explicit consent from my interviewees (with one exception, which

has been excluded accordingly) and from the archival informants to use all the information

provided in my research. I attempt to identify trends and general opinions from Facebook, and

avoid including identifying information, such as specific locations.

The map in figure 1, below, depicts the locations of storytellers and fairy stories mentioned

in interviews and archival sources. The red dots correspond to locations mentioned in archival

sources, and the green dots are those mentioned in interviews. As we can see, the majority of the

locations are on the Avalon Peninsula and south-eastern shore. Given that myself and other

student researchers study in St. John's, it is unsurprising that the most popular location of fairy

stories and storytellers is St. John's and the surrounding areas (Mt. Pearl, the Goulds, etc.). Also

unsurprising is the high number of stories from the northern arm of the Avalon between Trinity

Bay and Conception Bay. This is one of the most heavily populated areas of Newfoundland. It is

also relatively close to St. John's, suggesting that many students studying in St. John's could go

home to those areas on weekends or during holidays to collect folklore. Finally, the remaining

stories, scattered along the north and west coast of Newfoundland, roughly follow the path of the

Trans-Canada Highway, which enables easy access to the north and west coasts of the island

from the Avalon peninsula.

However, when compared to the map in figure 2, several unexpected findings can be

observed. Figure 2 depicts the percentage of settlement of Newfoundland by Roman Catholics as

of 1836 (the year of a significant Newfoundland census). Irish settlement in Newfoundland

peaked during the early 1800s and began to decrease in the 1830s. As the vast majority of

Roman Catholic immigrants to Newfoundland during the late 18th and early 19th centuries were Irish, this map can be considered an accurate map of the Irish ancestry of the towns of Newfoundland (Mannion & Handcock 1993). The blue line on this map indicates the French Shore. In accordance with the Treaty of Utrecht, and later the Treaty of Versailles, Newfoundland was under the sovereignty of England, and the French were no longer allowed to create permanent settlements; however, they were allowed to fish along the French Shore from 1783-1904 (Higgins 2009a). In 1904, they surrendered their right to this shore, and French activity around Newfoundland was largely confined to St. Pierre and Miquelon (on this map, the unmarked island at the southern tip of the Burin peninsula) (*Ibid*). As Scottish settlement of Newfoundland occurred primarily during the 1840s to 1860s, and numbers remained quite low (416 Scots lived in Newfoundland as of 1857) (Higgins 2009b), the population of Newfoundland

Figure 4: Map of fairy story and storyteller locations in Newfoundland. South-eastern Newfoundland and the northern Avalon Peninsula are zoomed in for easier viewing. Map created by the author.
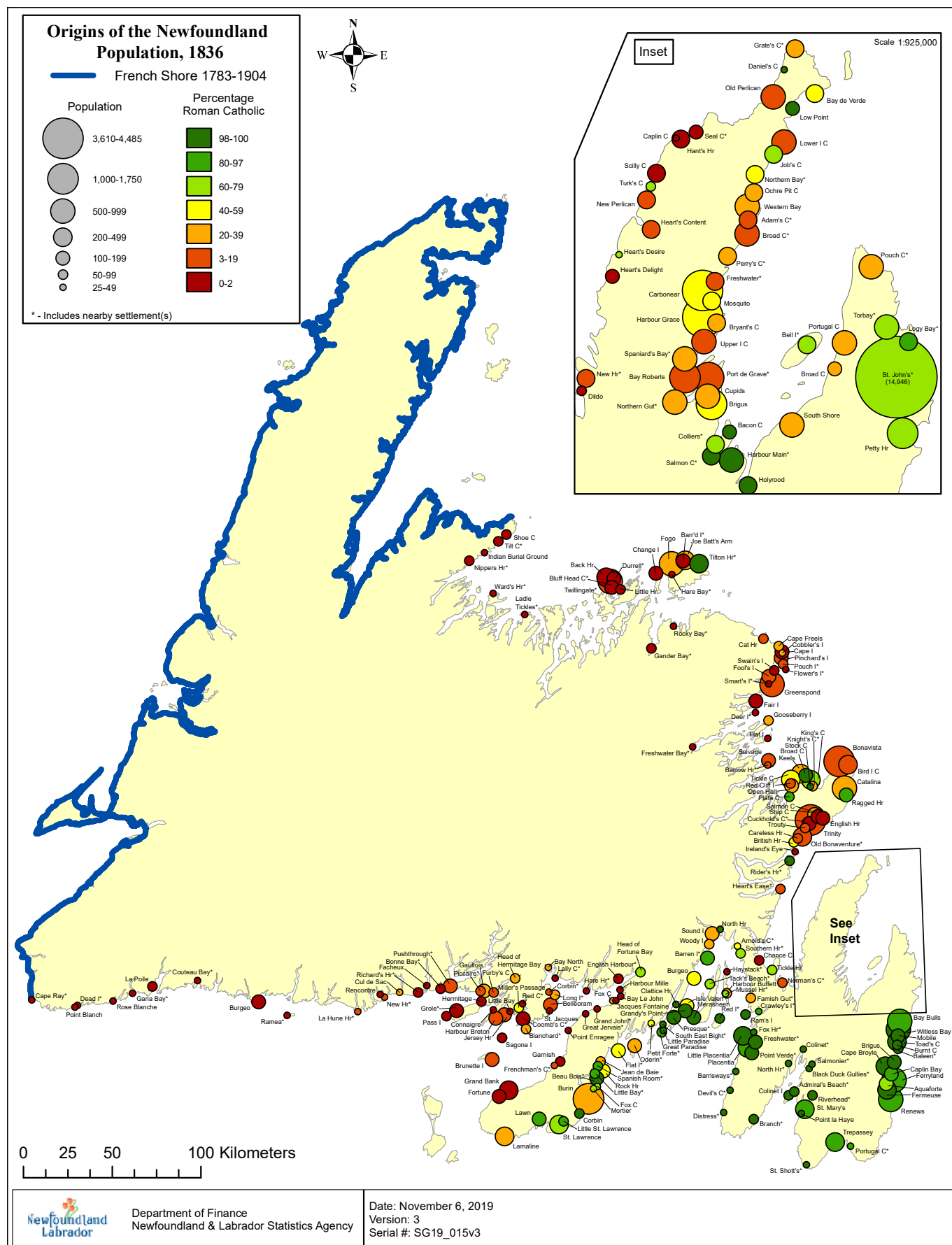
Figure 5: Origins of the Newfoundland Population, 1836. Image credit: John Mannion. Used with permission.

towns not accounted for by the Irish Roman Catholics roughly correlates with the percentage of English immigrants to Newfoundland (Mannion & Handcock 1993) - as of 1857, only 2.3% of Newfoundland's population identified as neither Catholic nor Protestant (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1981).

If we accept the assumption that fairies were brought to Newfoundland by the Irish, we would then expect the fairy stories I have collected to come from towns that have a higher percentage of Irish ancestry, such as the south and east coasts of the Avalon peninsula, or the southern-most shore of Conception Bay. However, there are significant differences between these two maps. First, eight of the story locations are a significant distance away from St. John's, along the north, south or west coasts of Newfoundland (from Little Heart's Ease to Codroy). Southwestern Newfoundland, particularly the fertile areas around the Codroy Valley and St. George's Bay, was largely settled by Highland Scots. As indicated in figure 2, the vast majority of Irish immigrants remained on or around the Avalon peninsula. Tilton Harbour, now known as Tilting, is perhaps the most notable exception to this generalization, as it was settled almost exclusively by the Irish but is on the North coast, and yet it is not one of the eight remote story locations. Second, the story locations on the Burin peninsula are split between Irish and non-Irish towns; Saint Lawrence, Little Saint Lawrence and Marystown (known as Mortier Bay until 1909) were primarily Irish, but Oderin and the towns on the north side of the Burin peninsula were not. Third, the large number of stories from the arm of the Avalon between Trinity Bay and Conception Bay (what I will refer to as the Baccalieu Arm), is quite surprising. Indeed, of all the story locations on the Baccalieu Arm, only Harbour Grace had a significant percent of Irish immigrants, and yet, as my informant Des explains, when he was growing up, "Even though it was a very strong Irish – very, very strong Irish community in Harbour Grace. For some reason,

fairies wasn't something that was talked about" (Des 2022). Des found that the nearby towns, Upper Island Cove and Bryant's Cove, had far more fairylore, despite being less Irish. This tallies with what I found; twelve of my collected fairy stories took place in towns on the Baccalieu Arm, despite their low percentage of Irish ancestry. Fourth, and perhaps most surprising, only three of the stories come from the east coast of the Avalon peninsula, where there was the highest concentration of exclusively Irish settlement. Given the strong influence of Irish culture on this part of the Avalon (now known as part of the Irish Loop), one would expect that numerous fairy stories would come from this location.

This sets up my next section nicely. I have introduced my own expectations and other exoteric interpretations of the Irishness of Newfoundland fairylore; I have also discussed how the data about my informants, such as their age, gender and town of origin, met or subverted these expectations. I will now turn to the opinions of Newfoundlanders themselves.

Esoteric Interpretations

As previously explained, in this section, I will summarize the esoteric opinions about fairies and Irishness in Newfoundland, consider how the correlation between Irishness and "superstitiousness" is understood by Newfoundlanders, and discuss takeaways regarding ancestry and folklore. This comprises the stories, comments, and discussions about fairies that I found in Newfoundland Facebook pages, Newfoundland children's literature, archival documents, and interviews.

Quantitative Data

Quantitatively, my data does not suggest a correlation between Irishness and fairylore. Of the 154 archival and online fairy stories I collected, only eleven, or 7.1%, made connections to Ireland or Irishness. Of my Facebook materials, there were only twenty-four comments or posts

about the Irishness of fairylore. I found a total of 864 posts and comments about fairies in the eight Facebook groups, meaning that connections to Irishness comprised only 2.8% of this discussion. Only one of the twenty-five people who messaged me privately on Facebook mentioned Ireland (4%). Of the ten children's books relevant to Newfoundland fairies, six, or 60%, made connections to Ireland. However, these sources, with the exception of the twenty archival student papers, did not go into depth about their personal beliefs and opinions regarding fairylore. Many of the comments and posts on Facebook were quite short, and discussion was usually limited to sharing stories or traditions that people had heard, and occasionally asking where in Newfoundland people had heard or learned this fairylore. Similarly, the FSC generally only described a story or tradition, and did not provide contextual information. In contrast, of my eleven interviews, without me asking specific questions about Ireland and the Irishness of fairies, ten interviewees drew connections between Newfoundland fairies and Ireland or Irishness. Although this certainly might have been prompted by my research description, which they read before the interview, several of my interviewees described going to Ireland and actively noticing or even seeking out fairy forts or fairy stories while they were there, suggesting that they had already made these connections. I will now look at what these different sources had to say about the Irishness of fairies.

Qualitative Data

In Chapter Four, I included paraphrases and quotes of the connections my sources made between Newfoundland fairies and Irishness. As I summarized in the previous section, eleven archival and online fairy stories, twenty-four Facebook posts or comments, one private message, six children's books, and ten interviews made these connections. In this section, I will look at this information comprehensively in order to draw conclusions about the general assumptions

and connections Newfoundlanders make to Irishness while telling fairylore. These can be organized according to three main themes: Irish creatures, Irish origins, and the "Irishness" of fairies.

First, at least nine of my sources made connections between Newfoundland fairies and other Irish creatures. Most connected fairies to leprechauns, which they all saw as uniquely Irish. Some differentiated between fairies and leprechauns, seeing them as two separate creatures that share the same space. For example, two comments on Facebook, both commenting on pictures of nature, say that they can imagine both fairies and leprechauns "hiding behind the tree roots" or living in the moss. One informant in an archival interview, while telling a fairy story, described seeing a fairy, and emphasized that it was not an "Irish leprechaun, but a fairy" (F31524c). Other sources suggest that they are the same creature, but are called different things in different places. For example, one archival informant, during an interview, associated fairies with leprechauns (2007-082), and one Facebook comment and one of the children's books suggest that "fairy" and "leprechaun," among other terms, are different names for the same creature (Davis 2007, 2). Finally, one archival student paper compares the Irish banshee, or bibe, to Newfoundland fairies, suggesting a similar origin story for each – that they were brought from Ireland to Newfoundland (2005-119) - and citing one source that suggests that some people used the two terms interchangeably (76-143).

Second, ten of my sources identified aspects of fairylore that were or seemed Irish, or they used Irishness as a way to validate the information they shared about fairies. This involved establishing a character's Irish roots, describing a storyteller's Irish accent, or invoking a general "Irishness" through small, specific details. One Facebook commenter describes hearing fairy stories from their grandfather, who was from Witless Bay, on the Irish Loop, and had a "strong,

Irish accent." The main characters of two books, *The Ghost Road* (Cotter 2018) and *The Hidden World* (Baird 1999), both live in towns where the people have an "odd" or "lilting," "almost Irish accent" (Cotter 2018, 17, 31; Baird 1999, 14). The main character of *The Ghost Road* is also descended from Irish people, and lives in Buckle, which is described as being settled by the Irish in the 1820s (Cotter 2018, 54). Three other books also contain references to "Irishness" – in *The Riddle,* the main character's grandfather sings "My Wild Irish Rose" (Abbott 2017), in *Spirited Away: Fairies Stories of Old Newfoundland,* Dawe attributes the etiological story of the fairies to the Irish (2017, 58), and in *The Last Tree,* one of the story settings is the land of Kerr, which has many similarities to Ireland, even though it is meant to be a fantasy setting, such as its "thick and black" stout (Churchill 2019). Finally, several of my interviewees attributed "old" traditions, stories or customs to "Irish roots" (Cameron 2021; Kathleen 2021; White 2022). For example, Cameron, as part of her spirituality, practices several traditions that she describes as "Celtic Irish," such as dancing around the maypole and celebrating Beltane.

Third, thirty-three of my sources, including ten of my interviews, stated or implied that fairylore came directly, and even exclusively, from Ireland to Newfoundland. Fourteen Facebook posts and comments attribute fairylore to the Irish, whether by calling it Celtic or Irish folklore, saying it was "brought over to Newfoundland with the early settlers," or explaining that their Irish grandparents had brought their traditions with them from Ireland. Several comments also described their experiences with fairylore in Ireland, or in Irish-settled places in Newfoundland like the Irish Loop, describing their encounters with fairy forts and fairy stories. One of the children's books, *The Hidden World,* describes the fairy beliefs of the grandmother of the main character as going "right back to the Irish fairy-faith" (Baird 1999, 33). Eleven of the archival and web sources attributed fairies to the Irish, naming Irish immigration (2006-021, 1; Furey

2013), the enduring nature of Irish traditions and the Irish accent (2006-034, 3), and the superstitiousness of the Irish (Dohey 2018; F31524c) as explanatory factors. Additionally, ten of my interviewees brought up the Irish roots of fairylore in Newfoundland. Seven of my interviewees stated that fairylore came directly or exclusively from Ireland to Newfoundland – three pushed back against this narrative, suggesting that fairylore probably came over to Newfoundland from the early settlers, but cannot be attributed exclusively to the Irish (Des 2022; Patrick 2022). Indeed, one interviewee stated that fairylore came from England, not from Ireland (Eric 2019).

<p align="center">*Superstitiousness*</p>

Before discussing these findings, I want to note the correlations my sources identified between the Irish and superstitiousness. Thirteen of my sources made connections between the Irish and/or fairies and superstitiousness. Three Facebook comments, when discussing Newfoundland fairylore, called it Irish superstition, or, in one case, stated that it was told to them by "a regular superstitious Irish Nanny." Two of the children's books, both of which are about fairies, name superstitions that they attribute to the Irish. Churchill associates fairies with superstition (2019, 180), and Cotter's main character learns that she has Second Sight, which enables her to see supernatural things, and which is an Irish trait passed on to her by Irish ancestors (2018, 65). One of my interviewees, Kathleen, described the superstitions of her family, who were Protestant but lived in a Catholic neighbourhood: "You know, when you grow up the way I did, you know even the staunch Catholics and everything still had their own little superstitions and beliefs and everything, like chasing crows away and smacking the cat theories, because, you know, if their ears are flat, it means it's gonna rain. Cows lying down the field means it's gonna rain. You know all these little things that today we call omens, back then it was

just a way of life" (2021). Although she continues to practice many traditions that would fall

under the umbrella of superstitions, or omens, she pushes back against the word "superstition":

> I will not blow out a candle because if you do you're blowing all your good
> fortune and everything away from you. So I'll either use the snuffer or wet my
> fingers, [I] do it that way. You know the little things like that. There's an awful
> lot of superstition and folklore and everything in Wiccan and Druids and any kind
> of pagan religion. […] When I see a butterfly the first thing I do is say, "Hi
> mom." You know, so me too. I'm still steeped in, not so much superstition, but
> folklore, as you would call it.

Finally, seven of my archival sources associated fairies with superstition. Although most did not

mention Irishness explicitly, one archival interview directly correlated all three: "Grandmother

used to tell us about [the fairies], we would laugh about it. People were beginning to get over

some of their superstitions. Superstitions were so rife […] A lot of those fairies must have

originated in Ireland, we had a fairly strong Irish connection, and I think they brought with them,

and when people didn't understand something, when something strange happened, they'd

attribute it to the fairies" (F31524c). Another associates fairies and superstition with

Catholicism:

> In Roman Catholic tradition, the month of May was devoted to the blessed mother
> Mary. Consequently, May altars were set up in schools and in homes. […] Also,
> children and some adults would wear a medal of Mary attached to a blue ribbon
> on the lapel of their coats or jackets. "Religion and superstition would seem to
> very often blend into one another," and during the month of May, children were
> warned not to go into the woods because May was the month of fairies. The
> wearing of the blessed virgin medal and ribbon may have been meant to protect
> one against the fairies (2005-019).

The collector indicates that the informant was very skeptical about this belief. The other five

archival sources, comprising four FSC and one interview, do not mention religion or ethnicity at

all. The interviewee explains that she conceives of fairylore as a superstition more than a belief,

stating that most people who know about the fairy tradition say they don't believe in fairies

anymore, but still wear clothes or socks inside out or backwards when going in the woods (2016-

401, 3). Three of the FSCs describe practices to protect oneself from the fairies as superstitions. One collector, after recounting a fairy story about a man who was taken by the fairies because he was wearing a green shirt, told to her by the informant, says of the informant: "When she commented on the superstition she says she is superstitious and believes in it" (2005-048). It is unclear whether this wording, particularly the use of the word "superstition," is the informant's or the collector's. Another informant, the collector's grandmother, reminisces about her experiences growing up: "We had no car of course, now this was in the dark, we would go to our uncles, and the same was true when my cousins were visiting us. We would place a piece of bread in our coat, so if the fairies came, they would take the bread and not you. You know, people also thought that about baby carriages. My parents told us that it was superstition. How silly were we!" (2006-298). A third collector describes her informant's information about wearing clothes inside out to protect himself from the fairies as an "interesting superstition/remedy" (2006-302). Finally, one collector described the fairy stories and traditions that her neighbour heard as a child from "old folk" in his community; she then says: "[My neighbour] also talked about how superstitious the older fisherman in his community of Witless Bay were" (2006-285). Witless Bay is a town on the Irish Loop, and has significant Irish ancestry – as of 1836, the population was 542, 540 of whom were Roman Catholic; the population is now just over 1600.

Discussion

One of my guiding research questions has been, "How do Newfoundlanders use fairies to understand their ancestry, or vice-versa?" To summarize my findings, then: many Newfoundlanders associate fairies with leprechauns and other Irish creatures, they use Irishness as a way of explaining and authenticating traditions such as fairylore, and, most significantly,

when given time to discuss and delve into their opinions about fairies, Newfoundlanders often attribute this belief to the Irish. Additionally, fairylore is often defined as a superstition, and the Irish are often associated with superstitiousness. We have, then, the following diagram:
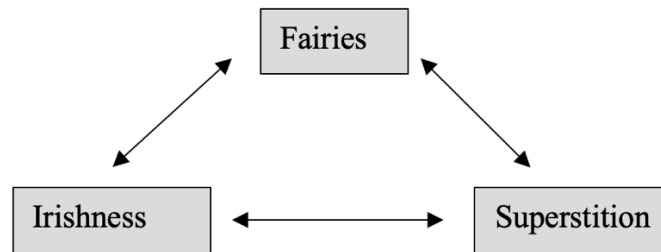

Figure 6: Diagram of the relationship between fairies, superstition and Irishness.

Each concept has associations with the others in cultural discourse. Someone attempting to describe the Irishness of their community or their beliefs might list several superstitions, of which one is carrying bread crumbs in one's pocket, and so arrive at fairylore. Similarly, someone might tell a fairy story, and then explain its presence in their story repertoire by stating that their family is very Irish, and the Irish are very superstitious. Before I discuss the implications of these connections, I want to highlight a few interesting features of this data.

First, I found the association between fairies and leprechauns, and fairies and the banshee, completely unexpected. I had never encountered leprechaun stories or tourist memorabilia of leprechauns in Newfoundland, and, perhaps because of the representations of leprechauns in popular culture, I assumed that they were not associated with the fairies in the minds of Newfoundlanders. When I visited Ireland, I found many tourist and popular depictions of leprechauns that had commodified the tradition, portraying them as cute and friendly and seriously trivialized (see Goldstein 2007, 171-205, for a discussion of the commodification of belief). However, if it is true that Newfoundlanders associate fairies with Irishness, and Irishness with leprechauns, then the leap is perhaps not as large as I assumed. Indeed, as Briggs explains:

"For some reason the Leprecaun is now used to represent all kinds of Irish fairies" (1976, 264). Although the term "fairy" is also now used in Ireland, it may be assumed that Newfoundlanders whose ancestors were from Ireland might be familiar with the older usage of "leprechaun" to refer to all Irish fairies. On the other hand, the connection between the banshee and Newfoundland fairies seems to be much more tenuous. There are a number of different names for the banshee, which correspond with different areas of Britain and different story traditions: *bean si, bean nighe,* Little-washer-by-the-ford, and *baobhan sith*, among others (Briggs 1976, 14-20). In Highland Scottish, *banshi* means fairy woman (Briggs [1959] 1977, 184), but the term is more commonly known, in both Scotland and Ireland, as a gruesome woman who wails, washes clothes and foretells death, but who can be forced to grant wishes under certain conditions (*ibid*). This supernatural creature is quite different from Newfoundland fairy traditions. However, the connection between the two may be a holdover of the "fairy woman" definition of the term.

Second, the "Irishness" of the Newfoundland accent is one of the most commonly referenced connections between Newfoundland and Ireland. This thread was pervasive throughout both exoteric and esoteric reflections on Newfoundland culture, and particularly fairylore. This finding is interested but perhaps predictable. Scholars distinguish between two forms of Newfoundland English: Newfoundland Vernacular Irish English (NVIE) and Newfoundland Vernacular of British, West Country English (NVBE) (Sundkvist 2013, 149). The former is largely found in towns of Irish ancestry, and is a result of the long isolation of Irish immigrants from Ireland as well as the fusing of the Irish accent with other accents encountered in Newfoundland, including English, Scottish, and, later, American (149-150); thus, the assertion that the Newfoundland accent of people in towns with Irish ancestry sounds like an Irish accent

is quite correct. However, as I mentioned previously, the Newfoundland accent in St John's has become highly diluted from immigration and travel, and the Newfoundland accent in towns of English descent is, of course, not derived from the Irish accent, but from the English. To the untrained ear, however, the two might sound indistinguishable. This begs the question – why the association with the Irish accent, if the Newfoundland accent is equally influence by the English accent? Although I do not have sufficient ethnographic data to determine any firm answers to this question, I have established, both here and in previous chapters, that Newfoundlanders often emphasize their Irish heritage over their English heritage. Whatever the reason, Newfoundlanders may enjoy or appreciate the similarity between theirs and the Irish accent. Additionally, Newfoundlanders as well as outsiders may be familiar with the Irish, or "Oirish" stereotyped accent. Sundkvist, an English professor with a specialization in linguistics, explains: "Such stereotypes have been exported so widely and so frequently through films and other popular media that they are by now well established among many people, including those with little exposure to genuine Irish speech" (2013, 159). Although the accent of Southwest England has certainly also been stereotyped (*ibid*), those hearing a strong Newfoundland accent for the first time, devoid of context, may identify it as being similar to the "Oirish" accent.

Third, there are multiple generalizations regarding Irishness and Catholicism that I have thus far avoided addressing, but are implicit to discussions of belief and tradition in Irish-settled areas of Newfoundland. I have mentioned that Roman Catholic indicates Irish, and that certain communities would be predominantly Catholic or predominantly Protestant. As Nuttall points out (2021), Irish Protestants have historically been overlooked in discussions of Irish culture, history, and, most importantly for my research, emigration. Protestants in Ireland were assumed to be rich landowners, often part of, or with ties to, the English aristocracy. However, such

generalizations are not entirely accurate, as a small percentage of the Irish working class were and continue to be Protestant. However, in Newfoundland, as in Ireland, it was true that, from the eighteenth and into the twentieth centuries, "Protestant" was more or less synonymous with "English," and "Catholic" with "Irish" (Thomsen 2010, 113-14). Newfoundland also had bitter feuds between Catholics and Protestants – indeed, my informant Kathleen remembers the tension of being raised Protestant in a Catholic neighbourhood: "I would be out playing and my grandmother would come to the door and yell. 'Git in here, you git in here now! Don't you be playing with them [Catholics]!' And it's like, who am I supposed to play with? Everybody's Catholic!" (2021). However, this was not necessarily true province-wide – Patrick Mannion suggests that, by the late 1800s, the Irish had successfully entered, and were proportionally represented, in all but the highest socio-economic strata in St. John's (2018, 25). However, the Roman Catholic population has represented the largest religious demographic of St. John's from 1836 to the present day (Mannion & Handcock 1993; Mannion 2018, 23; Statistics Canada 2001). The question of Irish Catholicism regarding fairylore in Newfoundland is aptly summarized by the following conversation, found in the Facebook comments on a post about fairies in Newfoundland Sayings; someone commented, "I think that was a Catholic Irish thing…I don't remember being scared," to which someone replied: "It's definitely an Irish thing, but I'm not sure it's just Catholic, but I wouldn't doubt it." The lines are drawn, but fuzzy.

Fourth, the stereotype of superstitiousness in fairylore and Irishness against which Rieti argued so adamantly (1991) seems not to have vanished. Despite academic rejection of the term "superstition" (Valk 2008) and its negative connotations, colloquial usage continues. This use is both positive and affirming as well as negative and derogatory. A few of my examples in the preceding section involve people calling themselves "superstitious," or describing their own

beliefs as "superstitions" (2005-048; Kathleen 2021). Others use the word to describe the beliefs of others, such as one man who explains that, during his childhood, "People were beginning to get over some of their superstitions" (F31524c). This dual meaning may explain the term's continued prevalence; if people use the term both positively and negatively, to refer to both themselves and others, then perhaps the term is not as innately biased and condescending as academics have previously assumed. However, it is worth noting that its usage appears to have decreased, appearing in only a small percentage of fairylore discourse in Newfoundland, as I discuss on pages 131-133. As for superstition's association with Irishness, we can look to Irish national character. In the early 1900s, the Irish were keen to emphasize their differences from England; namely, that they were rural, Irish-speaking and Catholic (Briody 2008, 45). One such attempt resulted in the foundation of the Irish Folklore Commission in 1935, which was concerned with the collection and preservation of Irish folklore (20-21). Part of their rejection of the influence of the English on Ireland was to emphasize their pre-English origins, particularly Gaelic and Celtic languages, cultures, and beliefs (45, 49). Thus, folklore, and to some extent Celtic religion and beliefs, played a key role in the esoteric formation of Irish character. However, exoteric perspectives during the 1900s were largely concerned with negative aspects of Irish character, and particularly the Irish peasantry (Romani 1997, 193-4). Thus, the Irish were accused of being superstitious by the English, a derogatory claim generally aimed at Ireland's Catholicism (199). The association of Irishness with superstition is perhaps not surprising, given its traction in both esoteric and exoteric conceptualizations of Ireland's national character – on the one hand, as a positive affirmation of Ireland's rich folklore and religious roots, and on the other hand, as a criticism of Irish intelligence and rationality.

I do not have the resources to "prove" whether or not fairylore was first introduced to Newfoundland by the Irish and has since retained only traits of the Irish, and not the English, fairylore tradition. However, this does seem to be the consensus in Newfoundland fairylore discourse. I will now turn, then, to the implications of these assumptions for Newfoundlanders by considering how they have limited perspectives on fairylore and the broader Newfoundland culture.

Benefits and Limitations of the Stereotype

As an outsider to Newfoundland, with limited familiarity with the island's culture and identity, I assumed that, should fairylore be associated primarily with Irishness, this would limit the tradition by excluding large portions of the population. However, I discovered a number of reasons why this association has become so prevalent, and they lead to some interesting benefits to folklore and to Newfoundlanders.

Firstly, this association allows for the inclusion of fairylore in diverse religious beliefs. Kathleen, Cameron and Tara White were all able to incorporate fairies into their spiritual beliefs, and they often did so by associating them with their Irish roots. From what I have observed from the "real fairies" groups on Facebook, Celtic roots and spirituality are very important to many pagan and earth-centred religions, and practices that involve both, such as Beltane and Samhain customs, often allow for the incorporation of fairylore. For example, Cameron talks about the traditional Newfoundland belief that fairies are more active during the month of May; she explains that this is because the veil between our world and the supernatural, or spiritual, world is thinnest around Beltane, which occurs at the beginning of May (2021). Similarly, Tara White laments the decrease in Newfoundland's focus on folk beliefs and traditions in recent years, and she connects her beliefs and traditions to those in Ireland. Indeed, when seeking guidance in her

spirituality, White describes turning to people in Ireland, such as dowsers, who "are still talking about, you, know, the goddess and the importance of drumming and the importance of sageing and being in nature and things like that - they're holding their own over there" (2022). Whether or not Ireland does have a stronger connection to ancient Celtic rituals is not the point – it is significant that people from Newfoundland, such as White and Cameron, see their ties to Ireland as particularly important.[16] However, fairylore also fits into Christianity – particularly Catholicism. As I have discussed, many people who share fairy stories attribute the tradition to older, Irish, Catholic relatives or neighbours. Several of my sources discuss the traditions or beliefs of Catholics with reference to fairylore (2005-019; Kathleen 2021). Additionally, Dawe (2017) and other scholars (Lannon & McCarthy 1991, 32; Narváez 1991, 6) attribute the etiological story of fairies as fallen angels to the Irish, and more particularly to Catholics. Thus, fairies fit into Catholics lived, or vernacular, religion (Orsi 2003; Primiano 1995)

Second, this association actually enables those without tangible ties to Irish culture and heritage to participate in the Irishness of the Newfoundland culture through participation in the fairylore tradition. As folklorist David Hufford explains, beliefs can typically be adopted one of two ways: either you are told something, so you believe it, or you experience something, and this leads to a new belief (1982). The latter, or experience-centred theory of belief, allows those who have moved to a new culture, or do not fit the dominant culture, such as, for example, Scottish or French immigrants to Newfoundland, to participate in the beliefs of the dominant culture with some measure of authenticity. I argue that this is important to Newfoundlanders who disseminate fairylore, in particular, because it seems that some Newfoundlanders *want* to be Irish, or

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[16] Jenny Butler has done extensive research on paganism in Ireland; see her article "Contemporary Pagan Pilgrimage: Ritual and Re-Storying in the Irish Landscape" (2020) and her book chapter "Druidry in Contemporary Ireland" (2005).

participate in Irishness, even if they do not have Irish ancestry. Take, for example, the poll on the Newfoundland Sayings Facebook group about which ethnicity Newfoundlanders identified with most. 54% of the 107 respondents felt closer to Newfoundland's Irish background, while only 23% identified with their English background. If these results accurately reflected the ancestry of the entirety of the Newfoundland population, the results would favor the English. Although the majority of respondents could certainly have been of Irish descent, some even explained that they identified more with the island's Irish heritage than with their own, personal, English heritage. There were no similar comments from the Irish about the English. Perhaps English people living in primarily Irish towns, or recent immigrants from places other than Ireland to Newfoundland, would seek out ways to connect with Irishness. Fairylore, as a belief that can arise through experience as well as cultural dissemination, would be an accessible connection.[17]

Third, the tangible historic roots of the fairylore tradition, which have observable landmarks in Ireland and are still part of popular Irish discourse, strengthen and authenticate the Newfoundland fairylore tradition. Newfoundland has limited influence as a small and isolated island. Ireland, with a population ten times the size and a much longer history of religious and cultural conflict, is arguably much more globally influential than Newfoundland in the realms of culture and folklore. This is particularly relevant to fairylore. There are numerous news articles about the Irish fairies, thanks in large part to their conflict with large companies and commercial construction (see my discussion of Irish fairylore in Chapter Two). Fairylore is also more evident in the Irish landscape; with fewer hectares of forest per square kilometer than Newfoundland, and substantially more farmland, the Irish have had to work their land around fairy forts and fairy trees, whereas Newfoundlanders, by and large, can simply avoid fairy landmarks. Similarly,

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[17] This is not to say that people do not have authentic experiences with fairies that lead them to authentic belief. This is simply one hypothetical benefit of the Irishness of fairylore to a specific segment of the population.

the ties between Ireland and fairylore are well-established on Facebook fairylore groups. The strength and visibility of the Irish fairylore tradition can thus serve to authenticate and contextualize Newfoundland fairylore; specific ties between Ireland and Newfoundland fairylore, then, would no doubt be appreciated. This is again reflected in the many trips to Ireland taken by my interviewees, who sought out or were pleased to find a thriving fairylore tradition in Ireland, which in turn influenced their own conceptualizations of Newfoundland fairylore (Cameron 2021; Michelle 2022; Patrick 2022; White 2022).

Despite these benefits, I also observed some potential limitations to the fairylore tradition and to Newfoundlanders in general because of the assumptions of Irishness: structural uniformity and rigidity, and storyteller limitations.

First, the narratives themselves exhibit structural uniformity. The strong cultural core of these narratives, based in a history of immigration and distant Irish ancestry rather than lived experience, has resulted in stories that are repetitive and often vague. There are numerous fairylore traditions in the British Isles, including those from Scotland, Wales and England, and there are additional fairylore traditions from other countries, such as France, as well as from Indigenous groups such as the Mi'kmaq. All of these ethnicities are present in Newfoundland, and yet the only variation in Newfoundland fairylore derives from associations with Irishness – particularly leprechauns and banshees. In the six "real fairies" groups on Facebook that I examined in Chapter Four, there were mentions of numerous other creatures related to fairies or under the umbrella of fairies, demonstrating their persistence in traditions and beliefs, and yet these have had almost no influence in Newfoundland. For example, in Chapter Four, I quote one post about a "house brownie" that someone captured on camera. Brownies are present in Scottish and English and occasionally Welsh folklore, particularly in the Scottish Lowlands and north-

east of England, and are traditionally described as small, brown men who help out around a house (Briggs 1976, 45-46). They are kind as long as they are treated well, which typically involves leaving out food and drink for them at night, and showing appreciation for their work, but they can turn angry and bitter if disrespected or neglected (*ibid*). Another commonly mentioned creature is the Welsh *pooka* (or "puca"), also known as the English *puck* (Briggs 1976, 336-8). This creature is known to be a shape-shifter, and is fond of playing tricks on people, but can also be helpful. A similar creature can be found in the Mi'kmaq tradition; the mikumwessuk are "little people like dwarves or fairies. They are generally benevolent forest spirits but can be dangerous if they are disrespected" (*Native Languages of the Americas* n.d.). One of the archival sources I found is a student paper about the fairy traditions of their family; the student's father had both Mi'kmaq and Irish heritage and was familiar with both fairy traditions. The student's father explains: "[Fairy stories] come from all over. I suspect that Irish, French and [Indigenous] people all have their own take on such stories. I know for example, that my father's side of the family didn't refer to fairies as little people. And they were not usually found near water. So I guess these stories have come from all over. I doubt you could pin a specific location on fairylore collectively" (2011-120). He shows how different fairylore traditions can easily merge to form part of a cohesive perspective on fairies. I found this paper incredibly interesting to read. It also demonstrates that the Newfoundland fairylore tradition has been unnecessarily limited by focusing solely on one specific type of narrative that fits with conceptualizations of "Irishness." Similarly, there are differences in the practices and beliefs of fairylore in Newfoundland, Ireland and England. Fairies in Ireland are mischievous, or borderline evil, creatures, who sided with the Devil, or remained neutral, in the war between God and the Devil , and are respected and even feared by many Irish people (Cashman 2016, 156-58;

Glassie [2006] 2016, 21; Tolbert 2016). However, in the English tradition, fairies can be either

good or evil, and humans and fairies are known to help one another, intermingle, or feed each

other bread or milk (Bord & Bord [1995] 2006, 60-61, 76-77, 85-86). In the Scottish tradition,

fairies actually bring good luck (Creighton [1968] 2004, 104-5). In Newfoundland, fairies

certainly do not bring good luck and almost never provide food or drinks for humans; while

humans will occasionally offer food or drinks to the fairies to keep the peace, these offerings are

more common in pagan and earth-centred religions as opposed to traditional Newfoundland

fairylore. The morality of Newfoundland fairies is much more similar to that of Irish fairies; they

are dangerous and unpredictable, and should not be tested or disturbed.

Second, the Irishness of fairylore means that it exhibits strong rigidity. This relates to my

previous point – fairylore's continual references to the past, and emphasis on the history of Irish

immigration and Catholic roots in certain communities in Newfoundland, makes it difficult for

the tradition to adapt to the popular media depictions of fairies as cute, friendly, harmless

creatures. As I show on pages 116-117, all of my interviewees, and many of my other sources,

expressed discomfort or frustration with these popular depictions because they trivialized

traditional Newfoundland fairies. However, there are opportunities for Newfoundland fairylore

to incorporate or adapt to certain elements of popular fairylore. For example, two of my

interviewees note that, while J.M. Barrie's Tinkerbell looks quite cute and pretty, and is depicted

as such in Disney's version of *Peter Pan*, she is actually quite dangerous, and almost kills

multiple characters. Indeed, Michelle (2022) sees Tinkerbell as quite similar to Newfoundland

fairies. She described how, growing up, the other children saw fairies as cute and pretty, but she

was taught to fear them, just like the mischievous side of Tinkerbell that you see in the movie

Peter Pan, and even more so in the book. Michelle describes Tinkerbell as more than just a nice

fairy, which she felt was reflective of her own experience growing up with Newfoundland fairies, whom she was taught to fear. This example shows the potential of Newfoundland fairylore to complement or even incorporate modern depictions of fairies when given the opportunity.

Finally, the Irish focus has limited the storytellers themselves. Attributing the tradition exclusively to the Irish denies and excludes the experiences of those not of Irish descent. Authenticity is only granted to those with verifiable Irish roots, those who heard it from someone Irish, or those who have had personal experiences with the fairies. Thus, we have accounts that emphasize the "Irish" accent of the elderly person from whom they heard the story. Additionally, this means that the narratives are believable only as long as they fit with established narrative traditions; thus, young people can't make up new fairy stories that will be accepted into the Newfoundland fairylore canon. For example, one person commented on a Facebook post asking for fairy stories, saying "Talc Mines! There's a puca up there. Google 'puca Celtic folklore.'" The responses called into question the authenticity of this claim, saying "How do you know? Have you had an experience with it?" and claiming to have heard a different, albeit similar, tradition about "a Bigfoot type creature." Whether or not this latter comment was serious, or making fun of the original commenter, is difficult to say, as Bigfoot is often synonymous with "fake." Another example is one commenter who talked about their uncle being "fairy legged," meaning that he was light on his feet, and another commenter corrected them, saying "fairy led." Although this example is not about heritage, it nonetheless demonstrates that more established narratives, such as being "fairy led," are more acceptable in fairylore discourse than more unusual narratives. Interestingly, the clearest examples of the exclusionary force of the heritage associations of fairylore are those of the Irish being unwilling to share fairy stories. Tara

lamented the role of the Catholic Church in stamping out folk medicine and folk beliefs, particularly those regarding supernatural beings like fairies. Similarly, Des described how, growing up in the Irish Harbour Grace, he could not tell fairy stories in school for fear of being thought "mad"; the only fairy stories that he heard were from his English grandmother, who had moved to Harbour Grace from the English community Bryant's Cove. This inability to retell the fairy stories he heard growing up with his peers may have excluded him from the tradition; when I asked him to tell me fairy stories, he recounted only those told by his grandmother and her son, and described his belief in the fairies as being based on what he had heard, not from personal experience with the fairies. Had I interviewed more people, I could perhaps have found more examples like Des's, except from an Irish perspective, of being unable to tell fairy stories based on one's background. This example highlights the importance of community, as opposed to heritage, in the dissemination of fairylore. While a person's heritage may contribute to their body of folklore knowledge, particularly if members of their immediate family are storytellers, their community will determine which stories they hear and tell in public, and what folklore will be present in tourism resources, local landmarks, and more.

It is worth noting that Newfoundland fairylore was not as exclusionary of the non-Irish as I thought it would be. Perhaps this is due to the difficulty of identifying what is missing; it is easier, when studying fairylore, to find people who can talk about the sharing of fairy stories than it is to find people who talk about being *unable* to tell their fairy stories. However, I also found that the "Irishness" of the fairy stories can actually help include people in the broader culture of Newfoundland through personal experiences. Additionally, to my surprise, many of the storytellers I encountered in archival sources and interviews were quite young, of English descent, or otherwise detached from the Irish storytelling tradition. They made the tradition their

own by negotiating traditional and popular depictions of fairies. Indeed, in one interesting

archival student paper, the informant had actually merged a popular legend, "The Boyfriend's

Death,"[18] with the Newfoundland fairylore tradition (2005-139). The student author of this paper

recounted a version of "The Boyfriend's Death" told by their friend in which the boyfriend's

killer was not an escaped convict or otherwise dangerous person, but was in fact the fairies (7).

The girlfriend's grandmother explains this to her at the end of the story: "The grandmother tells

her that she was stuck on a fairy path and the fairies were angry that the two of them and their

car were in their way" (*ibid*). This is an interesting example how the multiple types of folklore

that a Newfoundland teenager might encounter can merge, and it showcases the adaptability of

fairylore; unfortunately, this is the only example of this type of merging that I was able to find.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the exoteric correlations between fairies and Irishness,

introduced my Newfoundland sources, and then summarized the esoteric correlations. I then

discussed the benefits and limitations of this perspective, both on Newfoundland fairylore and on

Newfoundlanders themselves. I found that my initial expectation, that Newfoundland fairylore

was attributed to the Irish, was in fact correct in exoteric fairylore conceptualizations, but that

this perspective had some unexpected benefits, such as opportunities for cultural inclusion and

strengthening, in addition to a few limitations, such as lack of diversity and adaptability.

In the next chapter, I will describe the implications of this perspective and its benefits and

limitations. I will also outline future areas of research and my thesis' theoretical contributions to

the field of folklore, as well as to fairylore itself.

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[18] In this classic legend, a girlfriend and boyfriend drive to a secluded place to make out. The boyfriend is forced to leave the car for some reason, often because they are out of gas. He is killed by a murderous intruder, but the girlfriend does not realize this until the police come and lead her away from the car, often hours later (Dégh 2001, 106).

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

In my thesis thus far, I have outlined my personal positionality and motivations, as well as my research objectives. I have considered the history of European immigration to Newfoundland, the island's cultural context, and the history of fairylore on the island, and compared that to Irish fairylore. I then delved into the role that Irishness plays in contemporary Newfoundland culture, and the various esoteric and exoteric interpretations of Irishness on the island. Turning to fairylore, specifically, I outlined the esoteric and exoteric opinions, traditions and stories about fairies in Newfoundland, and explained how superstitiousness was understood in those contexts. I included information about the people telling fairylore, such as gender, age, and geographic region. Finally, in the previous chapter, I argued that tradition-bearing Newfoundlanders conceive of fairylore's connections to Irishness in three specific ways: fairies' similarities to other Irish creatures, the intangible "Irishness" of fairylore (conveyed in details such as accent), and the Celtic origins of Newfoundland fairylore as passed down from Irish immigrants. I identify that these connections can actually include diverse people and religions while strengthening the fairylore tradition, but can also limit the diversity and adaptability of the narratives and storytellers. In this chapter, I will consider the relevance of these findings to Newfoundland today, by outlining this thesis' theoretical contributions and practical implications. I will also discuss some limitations of my research and suggest areas for further research.

Theoretical Contributions

My research makes several theoretical contributions to contemporary research, in the areas of folklore, fairylore, ethnicity and research methods.

First, my research contributes to the contemporary study of Newfoundland folklore by pushing back against the "always going and never gone" (Rieti 1991) narrative still prevalent in cultural and folkloric discourse. This thesis demonstrates the continued significance and relevance of fairy stories in Newfoundland, despite and even alongside contradictory rationalistic narratives. Demonstrating how folklore is and can be used to both include and exclude others, as discussed previously, highlights the importance of this field. Complex issues like racism, classism, and sexism can also be examined through fairylore in future research. For example, considering the uses to which fairy stories have been put by women in the past, to protect both themselves and others (Narváez 1991, 354-58), and comparing that to the continued use of fairylore by women today, can reveal contemporary areas of inequality and danger for women. Additionally, the large number of people who expressed interest in this project, particularly during a global pandemic, is further proof of the importance of folklore and especially storytelling to mental health, wellness and culture during times of crisis and disconnection. My Facebook recruitment posts garnered more than 120 comments, and many more "likes," and more than twenty people messaged me privately or via email to contribute to this research. This project also indicates that the digitization of folklore, and folkloric communication, does not dampen its importance or "traditionality."

Additionally, my research extends our understanding of why this extinction narrative occurs in folklore. Rieti suggests that the reason people assume that fairylore is dying out is because it so often refers to past events, is set in the past, or is in some way historically oriented. It evokes a nostalgic past in which folk beliefs were held unquestioningly, and supernatural creatures lived alongside humans – in contrast to the present, fraught with technological innovation and scientific rationalism (1991, 181). Having heard participants in this tradition

reflect this nostalgia both in interviews and on Facebook, I have to agree with Rieti's conclusion; however, I think there is also a nationalistic component. I have described how Newfoundland seeks to create its identity separate from the rest of Canada; fairylore, being a uniquely Newfoundland tradition (in Canada),[19] contributes to the individuality and "folk"-ness of Newfoundland that is so heavily advertised. More than this, I noticed many of my sources used fairylore to connect with their hometowns or regions in Newfoundland. Even those now living elsewhere, or even out of province, could recall the exact patch of woods, pond, or trail where they had a fairy encounter, and could describe the relative or neighbour who rushed to their aid. Consider Patrick, who connected fairylore with his love of Harbour Grace in his book, *The Secret of the Fairy Ring,* which uses real history, landmarks and folklore to create a fictional story. When I asked Krissy if she will continue the tradition of telling fairy stories to the next generation, she responded: "I am a Newfoundlander first and foremost, always have been, always will be. […] It's always been important to me to keep that side of myself. It's a big part of who I am. So yeah, the fairy stories would happen. In fact, my partner gets them now. [laughs]" (2022). In our conversation, Krissy described fairylore as being intrinsically connected to her identity as a Newfoundlander. The need to keep fairylore alive, despite its orientation towards the past, may be tied to the need to uphold a unique Newfoundland identity. Newfoundland is characterized by a provincial inferiority complex, as I discussed in Chapter Two; it could be argued that anxiety around the absorption of Newfoundland into Canada has been translated into anxiety regarding the possibility of the disappearance of unique Newfoundland folklore and traditions such as fairy stories.

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[19] By and large, that is. Certainly there are some fairylore traditions in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, and there are stories of the *mikumwessuk* across the ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq people.

Second, this thesis contributes to fairylore scholarship by looking holistically at fairylore in Newfoundland and taking into account the various manifestations of fairies in popular culture, tourism, religious practices and personal narratives. I spoke to young people who blend depictions of fairies in movies with the Newfoundland fairy stories they heard as children to form part of a holistic worldview. I also spoke to people for whom Newfoundland fairylore is important to their spirituality, which, among other functions, connects them to the earth and to their community. This thesis also updates provincial fairylore scholarship, which is by now more than thirty years old, by using contemporary means to collect contemporary fairylore narratives. Indeed, all of my collected data, including Facebook posts and comments, children's books, and archival materials, was created post-1991, which is the date of publication for Rieti's *Strange Terrain*, Narváez's *The Good People,* and Lannon and McCarthy's *Fables, Fairies and Folklore of Newfoundland.* Finally, and most importantly, this thesis explicitly addresses the questions of ethnicity and authenticity, which have been hitherto mentioned but unexamined in Newfoundland fairylore scholarship.

Third, this thesis updates the research on identity-making and concepts of "Irishness" in Newfoundland by questioning Newfoundland identity and its construction. As I show in Chapter Three, Irishness is largely taken for granted in Newfoundland culture and history, and Newfoundland undoubtedly emphasizes its Irish heritage over other aspects of its heritage, such as English, Scottish, French, or Indigenous. By taking one specific part of Newfoundland's culture, namely fairylore, this thesis forms a case study for the examination of ethnic heritage in Newfoundland culture. I take into account esoteric and exoteric perspectives, utilizing many different sources to draw from a wide range of demographics. I also contextualize fairylore within Newfoundland folklore, and Irishness within Newfoundland culture, so as to establish the

separate, pre-existing functions of these elements before considering their relationship to one another. I thereby establish an up-to-date analysis of Irishness in Newfoundland, through the lens of fairylore. This reveals not only the importance of Irishness to many Newfoundlanders, but establishes factual evidence for its influence on fairylore, and the corresponding benefits and limitations.

Finally, this thesis contributes to our understanding of ethnographic research methods. Although, as I discuss below, the temporal situation of my thesis during COVID-19 has imposed limitations upon my research, it has also provided a fascinating and unprecedented context for research that has enabled me to write a thesis entirely using digital and archival ethnography. Previously, online or telephone interviews were considered a last resort, and in-person research was privileged. My thesis contributes to the new wave of digital-based research, proving that digital ethnography, whether necessitated by global upheaval or simply geographic distance, can be just as valuable as in-person ethnography. I demonstrate how researchers can merge several different digital mediums to collect different types of data, just as in-person ethnographers would use methods such as photography, writing field notes and video recording to collect a variety of data. Previous research has not relied on Facebook or other social media pre-COVID-19 (with a few notable exceptions[20]), so the question of public versus private discussion on Facebook, and the corresponding need for informed consent, is still in its early stages. In this thesis I demonstrate one way in which this issue can be handled.

Practical Implications

My research has several practical implications for policy and practice regarding tourism, folklore and specifically fairylore in Newfoundland.

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[20] See the special issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* volume 131, number 522 (2018), and Trevor J. Blank's *Folk Culture in the Digital Age: The Emergent Dynamics of Human Interaction* (2012)*,* particularly chapter nine.

First, this thesis has important implications for policy regarding research funding and arts-based grants in Newfoundland. My sources clearly demonstrate the continued value and relevance of folklore in Newfoundland. The practice and study of folklore, and specifically fairylore, should be supported going forward. Participating in Newfoundland folk traditions, and in aspects of Newfoundland identity related to Irishness and other ethnicities, can contribute to social cohesion and community spirit, as well as provide outlets for creativity and religious practices. This can strengthen Newfoundland's unique culture and identity, which is a compelling part of its appeal, both to tourists and to residents.

Second, my research has several implications for the tourism industry in Newfoundland. I began this research under the assumption that Newfoundland's emphasis on Irishness was limiting the culture and identity of Newfoundlanders and being exclusionary towards those not of Irish descent. I assumed that tourism's focus on Irishness, through frequent uses of the color green, shamrock imagery, and references to Ireland in Newfoundland music and band names, was also limiting exoteric perspectives of the island, to its detriment. However, I found that this was not the case; my Irish and non-Irish interviewees happily engaged in the "Irishness" of Newfoundland, and tourists enjoy the similarities, while recognizing that it is one of the many different heritages that have influenced Newfoundland's culture and identity. As I discussed with reference to the exoteric tourist blogs and Facebook posts, references to Newfoundland's Irish heritage and immigration from Ireland to Newfoundland were often accompanied by mentions of the same history regarding English, Scottish, and French immigration. Thus, I would encourage the tourism industry, and those who design private tourist attractions, like the Baccalieu View Walking Trail in Red Head Cove, to continue utilizing Irish heritage and culture. However, if fairylore is any indication, a focus on Irishness exclusively can also limit the scope and

adaptability of a tradition. Thus, an incorporation of other heritages into Newfoundland tourism, such as Scottish, French, and particularly English, could enable new traditions and narratives to come into the limelight, thus diversifying and strengthening the uniqueness of Newfoundland's culture, in the eyes of both insiders and outsiders.

Third, the tourist industry also needs to think carefully about its depictions of fairies in light of my research. Many of my informants, all of whom live, or have lived, in Newfoundland for more than twenty years, expressed frustration or amusement at the tourism's interpretation of Newfoundland fairylore, as they saw it as a trivialization instead of a celebration of fairylore. They took offense particularly to the reliance on popular culture in the visual depictions of fairies themselves, which show small, cute, women with wings and wearing dresses, when the traditional Newfoundland fairy is typically described as deformed, ugly and male. Although several informants warn against making tourist attractions for children too scary or disturbing, incorporating the traditional descriptions of fairies into tourist attractions would not only respect and reflect the beliefs of tradition-bearers, but would also add interest to these attractions by representing a new type of fairy, unknown to tourists from outside Newfoundland. Respecting traditional fairylore could involve depicting fairies authentically, but could also involve calling them "the little people" or "the good people" instead of "fairies," and teaching respect for the fairies instead of engagement with them (which is the current trend in fairy tourist attractions).

Fourth, although I do not expect my research to reach the eyes of many tradition-bearers, I hope that this thesis will encourage participants in fairylore in Newfoundland. I have demonstrated fairylore's continued relevance and significance while rebutted the perception of fairylore as a disappearing supernatural belief by showcasing the many uses to which it is put in contemporary practice. I hope that Newfoundlanders will continue to participate in this tradition,

and that storytellers, practitioners, and folklore enthusiasts will wholeheartedly embrace all aspects of this tradition, including Irishness, as well as Scottishness, Englishness, and Indigenousness, recognizing and valuing the multiplicity of "authentic" traditional Newfoundland fairylore.

Limitations

My research has several limitations related to its structure and methodology as well as my own role as the researcher.

My positionality poses several limitations on this research. I am a young, female student researcher, which may limit the people who choose to talk to me, and what they choose to say. For example, the majority of my interviewees and those who messaged me on Facebook were women; although, as I discussed in Chapter Five, there are several reasons why fairylore might be more relevant to women, this imbalance could also be due to the fact that I am a woman. Similarly, I am not from Newfoundland, so my interpretations and assumptions are all exoteric. There are limitations to being both an insider and an outsider when conducting research; my exoteric perspective has given me a fairly objective perspective on Newfoundland and has enabled me to notice interesting or unusual aspects of Newfoundland culture that a Newfoundlander might overlook or dismiss.

Theoretically, I am limited by my focus on the field of folklore, specifically. As a folklore Masters student with a BA in folklore, I am not as familiar with other relevant fields, such as anthropology, history, geography, gender studies, and psychology. Other perspectives on the topic of fairylore, such as those of a historian or psychologist, would no doubt shed different light on the matter. Thus, my avoidance of theories outside the realm of folklore have necessarily limited my thesis. Folklore is, by nature, quite interdisciplinary, but further incorporation of

outside theories may have elucidated other findings that would add significance and complexity to my thesis.

Methodologically, I encountered numerous limitations. First, I was conducting research during the COVID-19 pandemic. I was never able to meet my informants in person, but, more importantly, the entire world was being changed during this time, and people were stressed. Although storytelling is a proven way to improve mental health and relieve stress, it is also a privilege to be able to take time and use technology in order to participate in someone else's research. Thus, COVID-19 imposed difficulties on myself as well as on my informants. Second, due to COVID-19, I was performing digital ethnography. This method, while accessible and wide-reaching, also results in decontextualization. I faced a lack of information about my informants, both interviewees and those on Facebook and blogs, restricting the amount of information I had to work with. I also encountered ethical complications, as digital ethnography is a relatively new field and research via social media has largely been ignored by qualitative research ethics boards. Another limitation of digital ethnography is that information collected online is unverifiable. However, by respectfully engaging with sources' comments, building rapport, and making comparisons between stories and assertions, I hope to have mitigated this limitation. Additionally, each of my data collection methods have inherent limitations. My archival sources were likewise decontextualized, as there was often little to no information about the informants, and the information provided was not written in a standardized way, making it difficult to determine if the informant had been quoted directly, paraphrased, or made up. This information is also collected by students, most of whom were female, which significantly limits the circles in which data was collected. Similarly, my interviewees were limited to those who had Facebook or email, as I conducted most of my recruitment on specific Facebook groups.

Finally, the trend in my data overall suggested disproportionate representation of educated women from the Avalon peninsula, particularly St. John's. Although it could certainly be true that this demographic is primarily responsible for fairylore in Newfoundland, this is not necessarily the case, and more thorough research of fairylore intentionally involving a proportionate representation of the Newfoundland population might well find different results than I did.

Finally, the nature of a thesis imposes inherent limitations on research. I had a set, brief time period in which to conduct all my research. Several times in the preceding chapters, I indicate areas of research I was unable to pursue due to my limited time frame. I also had limited flexibility in my research path once my research plan gained ethics approval, as my time frame does not allow for the lengthy process of altering or completing a new ethics application. Thus, I could not deviate from my research plan or proposal in any significant way, even if the research warranted it. Thankfully, this was not much of an issue with this thesis. Additionally, theses are essentially research test-runs for students, so I cannot (and have not) made any ground-breaking claims about my area of research.

Directions for Further Research

In response to my thesis limitations outlines in the previous section, in this section I suggest three main areas that would benefit from further research: other fairylore influences, fairylore in vernacular religion, and Newfoundland identity and Irishness in folklore.

First, more research should be done to understand the different roots of fairylore and to examine how different fairylore traditions complement and contrast with one another. As I identified in Chapter Five, there are numerous different types of fairies from numerous different nations, including the Scottish, English, Welsh, French and Mi'kmaq. For example, I discussed

beliefs regarding brownies, pookas, and the mikumwessuk. These creatures were all mentioned by my sources, particularly on the "real fairies" Facebook groups, and yet I could find little to no contemporary scholarship about current beliefs and traditions regarding these creatures. Additionally, in this thesis, I do not utilize structural analysis to identify the similarities between Newfoundland fairies, Irish fairies, and others, as I approach this topic from the question of esoteric opinions and traditions. However, further research could be done to consider how or why certain fairylore traditions and beliefs remain, and where they originated from. My research was also focused around St. John's, and my informants were largely women between the ages of twenty and seventy; further research would need to be done in order to confirm my findings Newfoundland-wide. Finally, little to no research has been done on fairylore in Labrador, and particularly Indigenous fairylore, such as the mikumwessuk of the Mi'kmaq. This topic would further flesh out our understanding of fairylore in Newfoundland.

Second, Newfoundland fairylore is an interesting case study for the way in which folklore and traditional beliefs and practices influence religion, particularly the adoption of new religions, such as converts to paganism or earth-centred religions. How people reconcile traditional beliefs with pagan, neo-religious beliefs is an important topic for further study, as it demonstrates and can potentially explain people's changes of faith and beliefs, and what is considered real and important in people's religious lives. As previously discussed, and thoroughly proven by Goldstein (2007), supernatural and religious beliefs have not decreased with the rise of scientific rationalism; people interpret events in highly rational ways, and come to conclusions, whether natural or supernatural, based on experience and evidence. The study of fairylore and other types of folklore as they are adopted into New Age religions can further illuminate how people choose

what they believe, and how cultural and spiritual beliefs are formed. Such research is essential to understanding religious acts of terrorism, aggression, and racism.

Third, although recent research has identified the Irishness of Newfoundland culture, it has generally focused on the limitations imposed upon Newfoundland by this association, or the ethnicities and heritage that Irishness excludes. However, I have identified several benefits that have resulted from fairylore's Irishness, including increased inclusivity and enduring relevance. Although it is important to identify exclusions and limitations, such as that the fairylore heritage of the Scottish, Welsh and Mi'kmaq has been excluded from Newfoundland fairylore, it is also worth addressing the benefits of Irishness to Newfoundland. Similarly, questions of identity formation need to consider authenticity as well as adaptability and endurance. For example, fairy stories about ugly, wingless little people are certainly more "authentic" to traditional Irish and Newfoundland fairylore than those with cute, harmless-looking fairies, but the former resonates far less with young people and outsiders than the latter, making it difficult to bridge the gap in understanding tradition versus popular depictions of fairies. Finally, as the population of Newfoundland becomes increasingly centralized around St. John's, and increasingly influenced by the cultures of other countries, particularly that of the USA, the conceptualization of a unique Newfoundland identity may need to be revisited.

Conclusion

Previous scholars have concluded, quite reasonably, that fairylore will continue to exist as long as it is relevant and meaningful to those who share it (Glassie [2006] 2016; Narváez 1991; Ó G>, in text: Giolláin 1991; Rieti 1991). Despite Newfoundland's increasing embrace of scientific rationalism and modern technology, and tradition-bearers' continual predictions of fairylore's demise, people continue to share fairy stories, carry bread in their pockets, and seek out fairy

rings and trees. It seems that fairylore has certain elements that ensure its continued relevance to many Newfoundlanders. Perhaps one of these elements, for better or worse, is the Irishness of the tradition; fairylore fits easily into the depiction of Newfoundland that mirrors Ireland: fun and folkloric.

I discovered, while writing this thesis, that a fellow master's student at Memorial University, Kathleen Fleming, was also writing her thesis about Newfoundland fairylore. She tackles its representations in tourism and popular culture, specifically, and examines the new ways that fairylore continues to be adapted going forward. I hope that our combined interest in this tradition reflects a renewal in fairylore scholarship in the province, and that tourists, researchers and practitioners will continue to take the tradition in new and interesting directions. There is much to say on the subject, and my thesis considers one small part of the broader, multi-faceted Newfoundland fairylore tradition.

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Basic biographical questions:
       Where are you from?/Where were you raised?
       Tell me about your upbringing.
       How long have you lived/did you live in Newfoundland?
       Do you have family here (in NL)?
       Tell me a bit about your community (in NL). Who lives there? Where did they come from originally?
Could you tell me about the fairies?
       Who are they?
       Where did they come from?
       What do they look like?
       Who told you about the fairies?
       Did/does your community talk about fairies?
       Are fairies similar to leprechauns? Why/why not?
Did you ever have an encounter with the fairies?
       Where did that happen?
       Who was with you?
       Had you heard of fairies before that?/What did you know about fairies before this?
       Have you told this story before? How did people respond?
Are fairies specific to Newfoundland, do you think?
       Have you heard about fairies anywhere else?/Who else talks about fairies?
       Does your family/community background have anything to do with knowing about the fairies?
       Who first told fairy stories in NL?
What do you think of the tourist attractions about fairies (like the statue in Bowring Park/the Fairy Door Tours/the Pippy Park fairy tour/etc)?
       Are they accurate?
       What do they say about Newfoundland?
       What part of NL do they (re)present?
       How would you describe the Newfoundland culture, or identity?
My research is also about the Irish in Newfoundland.
       Are there a lot of people from Ireland here in NL, do you think?
       What impact would you say the Irish had on Newfoundland?
       Is your family from Ireland, originally?
Do you have anything else you've been meaning to say?
Do you have any questions for me?

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Appendix C – Archival Sources

Manuscripts:	2005-041	2006-237
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2006-019	2005-057	2006-251
2006-021	2005-059	2006-252
2006-034	2005-068	2006-260
2006-314	2005-069	2006-266
2007-082	2005-074	2006-272
2011-120	2005-078	2006-273
2011-186	2005-081	2006-277
2012-015	2005-082	2006-279
2012-026	2005-087	2006-282
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97-049	2005-271	2008-038
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2001-074	2005-292	2008-048
2001-097	2005-300	2009-034
2001-120	2005-301	2009-054
2001-126	2005-307	2009-062
2001-132	2005-311	2016-180
2001-140	2005-312	2016-201
2001-144	2005-324	2016-205
2001-145	2005-331	2016-240
2001-165	2005-335	2016-241
2005-008	2006-200	2017-038
2005-010	2006-207	2017-052
2005-012	2006-213	2018-140
2005-019	2006-214	2018-142
2005-020	2006-218	2018-145
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